

SAINTLINESS

Written by

Auteur

FADE IN:

EXT. VENTURA MOTEL - NIGHT

The sound of heavy footsteps grows louder in the dark, like a warning or a countdown. The scene opens on a seedy Ventura motel. Its VACANCY sign flickers with a weary buzz, half the rooms glowing faintly from the bluish flicker of televisions. The parking lot is neither whole nor empty, just occupied enough to feel unsafe. This is a place that exists in between, a liminal corner of the world where secrets are performed nightly and forgotten by morning.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - NIGHT

ANDY (20), awkward and out of place, slips into the office. His posture screams discomfort, his eyes darting nervously. Behind the counter sits CARL (39), overweight and unkempt, shirt stained, glasses smudged. He toys with a pen, watching Andy with amused contempt.

CARL

(smirking)

Got your quarters counted right this time?

Andy doesn't respond. He places a carefully rolled stack of coins on the counter. Carl picks them up slowly, counting with exaggerated care.

CARL (CONT'D)

Room Eight. Same as always.

Carl holds the key just out of reach, enjoying Andy's discomfort. Finally, he drops it onto the counter with a clatter. Andy snatches it up and hurries out without a word.

INT. ROOM 8 - NIGHT

Andy closes the door firmly behind him, locks it. His shoulders loosen slightly. This is his sanctuary. He washes his face with the thin motel towel, combs his hair with meticulous care. Checks his watch: 11:28 PM. His room is nearly barren: bed, lamp, television, chair. But Andy

positions the chair by the window, angled for the best vantage point. He's waiting.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Through the window, Andy watches the parking lot. People coming and going, fragments of stories played out in car doors slamming, brief conversations, hurried movements. Then he sees them.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

JOHN (40), thin and swaggering in a cheap hat, leans against his car like he owns the world. With him is JANE (23), attractive but hollow-eyed, moving with practiced seduction that doesn't reach her detached gaze. They head toward Room 9.

INT. ROOM 8 - CONTINUOUS

Andy is alive now. He presses his ear to the thin wall, listening to muffled voices. Not enough. He pulls a painting from the wall, revealing a small hole behind it. He bends down, first pressing his ear, then his eye to the keyhole into another world.

INT. ROOM 9 - CONTINUOUS

John and Jane are already half-undressed. John's movements are blunt and forceful. Jane plays along, but her eyes stare past him, toward the ceiling, toward nothing. She is present but absent, enduring rather than engaging.

INT. ROOM 8 - CONTINUOUS

Andy watches with wide eyes, breath shallow. Excitement builds, then falters. This isn't passion. This is mechanical, empty. The emptiness lives in Jane's eyes. His fantasy crumbles in real time. Shame mixes with fascination, desire with pity.

INT. ROOM 9 - CONTINUOUS

A car outside flicks its headlights. For a brief moment, Andy's face is illuminated through the hole. Jane's eyes

widen. They lock on his. The direction of the gaze reverses. He is seen. Caught.

INT. ROOM 8 - CONTINUOUS

Andy jerks back from the hole, heart pounding. The voyeur's power collapses. Shame floods in. John finishes, throws cash onto the bed, leaves without ceremony.

INT. ROOM 9 - MOMENTS LATER

Jane lingers. She knows Andy is there. She rises, dresses slowly, deliberately. Steps into the hallway.

INT. ROOM 8 - CONTINUOUS

A knock on Andy's door. He freezes. Another knock, sharper. The doorknob rattles. Andy grips the knob to hold it still, sweat slicking his palms. He thinks she might enter, but then she stops. Slowly, she leans into his peephole, looking straight back into the lens he has always used to look out. She cannot see him exactly, but the act is enough. The watcher has become the watched.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jane withdraws, scans the hallway as if confirming what she already knows, then walks away.

INT. ROOM 8 - CONTINUOUS

Andy backs into the darkness of his room, diminished. He dresses quickly, checks the window, ensures the lot is clear, then slips out. Smaller than when he arrived.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Jane crosses the parking lot, her glance occasionally drifting back toward Room 8. Inside the office, two keys rest on the counter, 8 and 9, side by side. Silent symbols of connection and separation. The story ends without resolution, but with the unsettling weight of guilt, shame, and exposure.

FADE OUT.