



# The Cleaners

**By Moritz Riesewieck and Hans Block**

## SYNOPSIS:

A look at the shadow industry of digital cleaning, where the Internet rids itself of what it doesn't like.

While the policies on permissible content are written in Silicon Valley, the global headquarters for content moderation is in the city of Manila in the Philippines. Tens of thousands of young people are employed here as "digital scavengers," paid to sift through thousands of often deeply troubling images and videos a day, leading to lasting psychological impacts. ***The Cleaners*** delves into the lives of five of these content moderators, uncovering the complexities and nuances of their often-traumatic working lives.

In a parallel struggle, we meet people around the globe whose lives are dramatically affected by online censorship. Terrorist propaganda and radicalized opinions are rife on social media sites to the extent that they are now fueling systemic political change and sporadic acts of genocide around the world.

Evolving from a shared social vision of a global village to a web of fake news and radicalization, the film charts the rise and fall of social media's utopian ideology. – *from Gebrueder Beetz films* – [press kit](#)

*"The Cleaners"... introduces us to a handful of these hidden, meagerly paid office workers, cogs in a shadow business headquartered mainly in Manila . . . (whose job) looks like a contracted, Kafkaesque immersion in the world's travesties with little thought into what the consequences of this scavenging means."* - by Robert Abele, LA Times [Full Review](#)

*"You'll learn more about Facebook's devastating relationship to the Myanmar genocide of the Rohingya Muslims in the 88 minutes of this incredibly timely German documentary than you will from four hours of Apple News bits, bites and bobs."* [CJ Johnson, ABC News, Australia](#)

## AWARDS

- Sundance Film Festival  
Grand Jury Prize, World Cinema Documentary (Nominee)
- German Director's Award METROPOLIS 2018  
Best Director - Documentary
- International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights  
Gilda Vieira de Mello Award
- It's All True - International Documentary Film Festival  
Honorable Mention
- PRIX EUROPA  
Best European TV Documentary of the Year

**February 20, 6:30 PM**  
**Room 202, Luce Hall**  
*88 minutes, in English*