

OPEN HOUSE

WRITTEN BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME, INVITING NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A "For Sale" sign stabbed into the lush grassy earth. Next to that sign, another: **OPEN HOUSE TODAY.**

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Nicely furnished. Afternoon sun reflects off the patio and brightens the living room.

KITCHEN

Real estate agent STAN MIRCOVICH, 50, doing paperwork. Slams down a pen in frustration. Pens shatters into pieces.

Stan is a stout man stuffed in a powder blue suit.

SOMETHING low to the ground scampers into the house.

Followed by approaching FOOTSTEPS in pursuit. Stan looks up.

OFFICER PAYNE charges through the open front door. Pulls to a stop. Breathing hard.

His head on a swivel. Darting eyes process the surroundings.

ENTRANCE HALLWAY

Payne sees Stan stumble out of the kitchen.

STAN
For the love of god.

OFFICER PAYNE
Where'd she go?

Payne, 30, is clad in a navy shirt and pants. His dark hair tucked under a ball cap that reads, PRIVATE SECURITY.

STAN
Who are you?

Payne raises his hand in disarming fashion.

OFFICER PAYNE
... Officer Payne... in
pursuit of a suspect?

STAN
What suspect?

Payne centers his gaze on Stan. Adrenaline still pumping.

OFFICER PAYNE
Female, about 60, black hair,
dressed all in black. Fled to
this house. Armed. Dangerous.

STAN
Nobody came this way. And I
mean nobody.

OFFICER PAYNE
Just the same, requesting
permission to search the
premises.

Officer Payne flashes his ID. Hands Stan a business card.
Stan examines the card, then the officer.

STAN
You're not even a real cop.

OFFICER PAYNE
I'm private security, sir.
Just hired by the HOA.

STAN
Well, request denied.

OFFICER PAYNE
Excuse me. Maybe you didn't
catch what I said.

STAN
Maybe you didn't catch what I
said. NO suspect here. NO
search necessary. No means
fuck NO and fuck you.

The two men lock eyes. Officer Payne backs off.

He sees a stack of Stan's business cards. Nabs a card. Payne
compares the mini-photo on the card with Stan's mug.

OFFICER PAYNE
What's with the attitude? I'm
doing my job.

Stan grins. Payne shrugs.

OFFICER PAYNE
I'm Officer Dan Payne, Status
Security.

(MORE)

OFFICER PAYNE (CONT'D)

We've been hired to halt the
rash of residential
burglaries in this area.

STAN

Heard nothing about any
burglaries.

OFFICER PAYNE

I'm telling you straight.

Payne holds his position. His expression stern.

OFFICER PAYNE

Can we start over? Please.

Stan relents. Let's out a breath.

STAN

Stan Mircovich, Abbott Real
Estate. Staging what I
thought was an Open House.

The officer extends a hand. Stan accepts. They shake.

OFFICER PAYNE

Stan, I need your help. Can
you call the homeowners. Get
permission. It is important.

Stan cautiously pulls his phone and makes a call.

Officer Payne paces, as Stan CHATTERS on the phone. Payne
then wanders into the

LIVING ROOM

His eyes roaming all corners. He strolls to the screen door.
Peeks out. Checks the screen. It's locked.

The officer moseys back toward the entrance way. His
attention drawn toward the semi-dark hallway to his right.

Stan emerges from the kitchen.

STAN

Thumbs up.

OFFICER PAYNE

Thank you, Stan. Where does
this hallway lead?

STAN

To three bedrooms, including
a Master. One guest bathroom.

OFFICER PAYNE

Any back doors? Side doors?
Garage entrances?

STAN

Nope. Not through there.

OFFICER PAYNE

Give me ten minutes, will ya?

STAN

No worries.

OFFICER PAYNE

Please wait in the kitchen.
Or step out. Precautionary.

Stan pulls a cigarette and heads for the front door.

OFFICER PAYNE

And shut door behind you. I
don't need any looky-loos.

STAN

Crack me up. Haven't had a
fuckin' looky-loo all day.

He exits the home. Door closes behind him.

Payne redirects his attention to the

HALLWAY

The officer stalks the corridor like a leopard. Left hand,
donning a black glove, hangs low.

His other hand, ungloved, poised by his right side. Touching
a leather holster.

A holster that cradles a black SMITH & WESSON handgun.

The officer creeps with trepidation. He swallows hard. Right
hand curls around his weapon. Pistol eases out.

Gun raised. Locks in a one-handed grip. Payne's arm trembles.

OFFICER PAYNE

(loud)

I know you hear me. So, why
me? Huh? Why me...

A line of sweat rolls into his eyes. He blinks.

His thick, rubber-soled shoes step gingerly. Then a floor board SQUEAKS. The officer halts.

OFFICER PAYNE

This has to end. Now.

Payne resumes with measured steps. Toward the bathroom. His eyes peeled ahead. Then, he freezes.

Eyes flair wide. Like sauces. ZERO on a target.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Stan checks the time on his phone. Drops his cigarette. Mashes it. Trudges back to the house.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The RE Agent steps inside. Pushes the door wide.

STAN

We clear? Well?

No response. Stan saunters to the head of the

HALLWAY

Stops. Stares down its length. Sees

OFFICER PAYNE

At the other end. Facing a wall. The officer's head sags down. Shoulders slumped. His back to Stan.

STAN

Payne... ?

Payne turns to Stan. Holding something. In his LEFT HAND.

The agent's eyes are riveted on the officer.

Both of Stan's fists roll into tight balls. He assumes a fighting stance. Blood pressure rising.

STAN

... don't you fuck with me.

Officer Payne steps out of the hallway. Ashen faced. Eyes vacant. He moseys around Stan on his way to the kitchen.

Payne hands Stan an 8x11 sheet of writing paper as he passes. Stan looks bewildered. Lowers his eyes to...

INSERT:

Drawn in black and white, a severed hand holding an axe.

KITCHEN - LATER

The men huddle at a dining table. The drawing between them.

STAN

Why not call Metro? 9-1-1?

OFFICER PAYNE

Come arrest somebody who drew
a severed hand? That'll work.

(sighs)

Stan. There's more to this.

Officer Payne positions his left hand above the drawing. He peels off the black glove. Reveals a

PROSTHETIC HAND

Which perfectly matches the severed hand in the drawing.

OFFICER PAYNE

It's personal.

Stan rears back in his seat. Confused.

OFFICER PAYNE

It's astonishing. I know. But
what we're dealing with isn't
human. She's a witch.

STAN

Tell me I'm being pranked.

OFFICER PAYNE

She's using me as a vessel.

Stan stares at Payne. His comfort level waning by the minute.

OFFICER PAYNE

There was an incident in
Valentine, Texas. Maybe you
heard about it. A serial
killer who hid in homes that
were ready for sale. Till
nightfall. And then... well,
they never did catch the
murderer.

(MORE)

OFFICER PAYNE (CONT'D)

It was a ghost, some say.
They were wrong. It's the
workings of a witch.

STAN

You need to go. Homeowners
will be home soon.

CLICKING from the hallway. Like the nails of an animal. Stan
rises. Darts to the hallway. Flips the hallway light.

STAN

I saw it. A dog. Holy shit.
All this yacking over a
fucking dog?!

OFFICER PAYNE

Not a dog. That's her cover.
She's tricking you.

STAN

Listen, Payne. Get that thing
out of this house. Or I will.

Payne removes a small handgun from an ankle holster. Hands
the gun to a reluctant and confused Stan.

OFFICER PAYNE

You're my backup.

STAN

No. You're backup is 911.

Payne strides down the hall. Flips the light switch.
Disappears around the turn.

Stan immediately calls 9-1-1. Waiting for the dispatcher.

A gunshot. A SHRIEK from the hallway.

STAN

Payne?

Stan is still. A call coming through. His phone lights up.

OFFICER PAYNE (O.S.)

Help me.

Before Stan can react – the electricity blows. Darkness.

Stan hears the scratchy CLATTER of a running animal. It's
nails raking the hardwood floor. Galloping full speed.

Turning a corner. Darting his way. A weird LAUGH.

Stan GASPS.

SMASH CUT:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Homeowners MEL and LINDSEY step through the front door. All the lights in the home are on. Nothing else unusual.

MEL

Stan the man with no plan.

LINDSEY

Deal with it in the morning,
I'm pooped.

MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Mel and Lindsey dead to the world. Snoring lightly. When, Mel's phone rings. JARRING.

He reaches for the night stand. Grabs his phone. Answers.

MEL

Yeah? Stan, that you?

Mel still groggy, sits up in bed.

MEL

Can't understand a thing
you're saying. Call back.

It is midnight. Mel falls back to sleep.

LATER

Mel's phone rings again. Three AM.

MEL

Stan? What... slow down.
Something dangerous? Where?
In the house?

Disconnected. Mel calls Stan back. Waits. No answer.

LINDSEY

Babe, what's up?

MEL

Stan said something about a
danger in the house.

Mel tries again. Calls Stan. Lindsey sits up in bed.

LINDSEY
What kind of danger?

MEL
I'll find out.

Faint ringing in the house. Lindsey perks up

LINDSEY
Isn't that Stan's ring tone?

Mel lowers his phone. Listens. He immediately ends the call.
The distant ringing stops.

Mel calls Stan again. The distant ringing returns.

LINDSEY
His phone is in the house?

MEL
But he just called... from
his phone.

Turns on the light. Spins a troubled look at Lindsey.

LINDSEY
You don't think...

MEL
I don't know what to think.

Mel gets out of bed.

MEL
Call 911. I'm gonna check it
out. Probably nothing.

Lindsey waits in the room. And waits.

She finally calls Mel on his cell.

No answer. But she can hear Mel's phone ringing. Lindsey
opens the bedroom door. A golf club in her clutches.

Mel's ringing phone is LOUD.

LINDSEY
Mel?

LIGHTED HALLWAY

Lindsey treks along the cool corridor. Follows Mel's RINGING
phone. She peeks around corner.

LINDSEY
Mel? Where are you?

Sees Mel's phone on the floor. She approaches. Looks down.

INSERT

An image of two bodies: Stan and Mel, both decapitated.

A drop of blood fall. Splashes on Mel's phone.

Lindsey cranes her head up. The cover to the attic is gone.

She drops her cell. It lands next to Mel's phone.

She GURGLES. Feet kicking as she is hauled up into the attic.

From the attic: a wicked WHACK. Then a heavy THUD. A minute passes. Lindsey's phone chimes:

INSERT

An image of three headless bodies: Stan, Mel and Lindsey.

HALLWAY light is killed. Darkness.

FRONT DOOR

creaks open. Something enters. The CLACKING sound of its clawed feet patter into the hallway.

ATTIC

Staring down into the dark hallway is Officer Payne. Specked with blood. Lit faintly by his cell phone flashlight.

His prosthetic hand and bloody axe crash to the hallway floor.

OFFICER PAYNE
No more killings. Please.

A CACKLE from the blackness below.

Payne spins the flashlight down. A weak beam of light on a

FOUR-LEGGED CREATURE

Cut low the floor. The body of a dog. And the head of a

CACKLING WITCH.

FADE OUT.