

NIGHTMARES IN "THE MYSTERY HOUSE"

By

David Gegia

FADE IN:

EXT. MARTVILL, PA. - DAY

A stand-alone estate in a rich community surrounded by dense woods.

Next to the entrance of the driveway is a sign that says:
"WELCOME TO THE MYSTERY HOUSE."

The driveway leads to a weird-looking, modern mansion with a big fountain in front of it.

A car moves slowly up the driveway.

INT. CAR - DAY

ALAN (33), a slim and handsome man with black hair pushed back. He drives the car.

ALICIA (28), a nice girl with a pleasant smile sits next to him.

ALAN

That's the house I sold a few months ago.

ALICIA

It looks nice.

She glances at the fountain that contains three devils leaning back into one-another.

The devils stand under an open umbrella and water flows from the top of it.

Suddenly Alicia sees one of the devils blinks his eye. She stares...

ALAN

It's the illusion...

(smiles)

...Created by the falling water
and your moving point of view.

ALICIA

Did your father do that?

Alan nods.

ALAN
The house... The fountain...
Everything...

EXT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

The car stops in front of a large staircase leading to the central door.

The odd figures of mythological monsters stand in both sides of the staircase.

Alan and Alicia get out of the car. Alicia eyes the house.

ALAN
...I did not become as a great
architect as he was...

They head to the entrance.

ALAN
...He was calling me "a loser."

Alan grins. Opens the door.

ALAN
It was his last project.

They enter.

INT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

Alan and Alicia tour the house. The interior is impressive. Alicia is charmed.

ALICIA
It's gorgeous!

ALAN
Do you like it?

ALICIA
Do I like it? I love it!

She stops looking around. Turns to Alan.

ALICIA
But why is it so... cheap?

Alan shrugs.

ALAN
Because nobody wants to buy it,
I guess.

ALICIA
(astonished)
Why?

ALAN
For those that are not rich, it's
too expensive and for those that
are...

Alan glances at Alicia.

ALAN
...Well, let's just say, the rich
do not buy cursed houses.

ALICIA
This house is cursed?

ALAN
That's what the neighbors say.

ALICIA
That's so stupid!

ALAN
I think they have a good
reason--

ALICIA
(ironically)
I know their good reason, "the
house was built on the cemetery!"
Right?

Alan smiles. Hesitates to say something for a while.

ALAN

I sold this house to a family
from New York. But they left
it because their children were
seeing...

(looks at Alicia)

...A ghost.

Alicia is not impressed...

ALICIA

And... that's it?

A beat.

ALAN

Besides two consecutive double
murders... that's it.

ALICIA

(astonished)

Two double murders? In this house?

Alan nods.

SUPER: FEW MONTHS AGO

EXT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

The end of a small party.

Some elegantly dressed guests cheerfully leave the house.

Mr. and Mrs. NEDVED stand at the open doorway.

MIKHAIL "MIKE" NEDVED (31) is an unattractive man with a
timid smile and a strong East European accent.

His wife LINDA NEDVED (27) is a strikingly pretty woman.

They thank the guests for coming.

MR. and MRS. GILLMOR are the last to leave the house.

MRS. GILLMOR (60) is a slightly overweight lady. She always
speaks emotionally.

MRS. GILLMOR

...Such beautiful young people!
We are happy that you are going
to live here--

DR. GILLMOR

I must admit that the food was
delicious... exceptionally delicious!

DR. GILLMOR (62) is a man with black eyes settled deeply
under a bush of thick eyebrows. He is drunk.

MIKE

Oh, thank you! We are glad that
you liked it.

MRS. GILLMOR

(to Linda)

When will you come to my house?

Mrs. Gillmor leans towards Linda, lowers her voice.

MRS. GILLMOR

...I'll tell you more about Susan,
okay?

LINDA

(smiling)

Okay, Mrs. Gillmor. And thanks for
coming..

They say their goodbyes. The Gillmors leave.

INT. HOUSE - ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Mike closes the door. Looks at Linda.

MIKE

Everybody liked it! We must hire
him. What do you think?

They head to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A nice, big, perfectly equipped kitchen.

HERODOTUS (45), a solidly built cook with a tattoo on his right hand takes off his uniform.

Mike and Linda enter.

LINDA
Mr. Herodotus.

Herodotus turns.

LINDA
Thank you, Mr. Herodotus. You did a great job!

Herodotus does not respond. Smiles.

MIKE
Mr. Herodotus. My wife, and me we need a cook. Somebody like you so...

Mike glances at Linda. Looks back at Herodotus.

MIKE
...We thought maybe you would like to work for us?

Herodotus takes his time before answering. Hangs his uniform. Smiles again.

HERODOTUS
Why not? It's simply a question of--

MIKE
Money? No problem! I'm a rich man. I can pay well.

HERODOTUS
If the money is not a problem, fine. I'll come... let's say... Monday?

MIKE
Great! Monday is great!

Mike visibly pleased, shakes hands with Herodotus.

MIKE

(to Linda)

Good. We have the cook. We just need a housekeeper. Right?

A faint smile crosses Linda's face. Both turn. Leave.

Close to the door, Mike stops suddenly.

MIKE

Mr. Herodotus, is it your real name, "Herodotus?"

HERODOTUS

It's my nickname... I like to tell the stories of a Greek writer, "Herodotus..." Have you heard of him?

Mike glances at Linda like, "did you hear about him?" Linda shakes her head, "no."

Mike looks at Herodotus. Squeezes his eyes.

MIKE

Are those stories as good as your food?

HERODOTUS

Even better when combined with one glass of good red wine

MIKE

Good food... good wine... good stories!

(glens at Linda)

That's exactly what I always wanted!

Mike looks happy. Points his finger to Herodotus.

MIKE

See you Monday, Mr. Herodotus!

Mike and Linda exit.

Herodotus' gentle smile disappears as soon as they leave.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

TERESA (50), a Spanish woman with short black hair cleans a refrigerator.

All of a sudden, she HEARS a scratching NOISE. Looks towards the storage room. Nothing..

She continues.

Another NOISE.

Teresa freezes. Undecided for a while, she finally approaches the storage room, carefully opens the door.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - EVENING

Teresa steps in. Feels around for a switch. Can't find it.

The light from the kitchen is not strong enough to brighten the storage room.

Sensing someone's presence behind her, Teresa's expression changes. She turns around... SCREAMS.

TERESA

(startled)

Oh, it's you, Mr. Herodotus!

HERODOTUS

What are you doing in the dark?

Herodotus turns the light on. Teresa observes the room full of wine bottles, utensils, boxes..

TERESA

I just heard a noise like..

She tries to find an exact word to describe the noise. Herodotus reaches the switch. Turns the light off.

TERESA

I heard something like..

Teresa sneaks one last look over her shoulder before she exits the room.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Herodotus tastes a meal. Adds some spices. Mixes it.

Teresa takes the plates out of the dishwasher, puts them in the cabinet.

HERODOTUS

Teresa, did you know there was
a murder in this house?

Teresa drops the plate. BANG.

TERESA

(astonished)

No...

HERODOTUS

The previous owners were
murdered here and--

TERESA

Oh, my God!

Herodotus sees Teresa's concerned expression. A look of amusement crosses his face.

HERODOTUS

Wait, I'm not finished yet...

(dramatic voice)

...Nobody lived in "The Mystery
House" for a long time! The
first owner died three weeks
after building this house...

Herodotus walks to a big conventional oven.

HERODOTUS

...The second owners left this
house soon after they moved in!

(glances at Teresa)

Do you know why?

Teresa shakes her head.

HERODOTUS

They were seeing a ghost!

Teresa makes some unintelligible sound. Herodotus opens the oven.

HERODOTUS

And the third owners... I just told you about them. They were killed!

TERESA

Santa Maria! This house is haunted!

Herodotus removes golden pumpkin bread from the oven. Puts it on the table.

Teresa stays motionless for a while. Then gathers the parts of the broken plate.

She looks worried. Herodotus glances at her. Feels himself guilty...

HERODOTUS

C'mon, Teresa! Ghosts do not exist. They--

TERESA

(strong accent)

No... They exist! I have seen them before! Some of them are good but most of them are bad, very bad.

Herodotus smiles sarcastically.

TERESA

I heard a strange noise coming from...

(looks at the storage room)

..That room.

HERODOTUS

Don't worry about those noises. There are always weird sounds coming from that wall.

Herodotus points to the wall between the kitchen and the storage room.

TERESA
(suspicious)
Why?

HERODOTUS
Because this is a nice house.
It's not like our apartments.
It has cooling and heating
systems installed inside the
walls... Engines, fans--

TERESA
Mr. Herodotus, did the ghost
kill the previous owners?

HERODOTUS
Teresa, please...
(smiles)
...Do not call me "mister" and
do not ask me stupid questions,
okay? I told you, ghosts do
not exist!

TERESA
Okay... But... who did kill them?

HERODOTUS
Their housekeeper did.

Teresa stares at Herodotus, her mouth agape.

INT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - EVENING

Mike and Linda are in a darkened movie theater room.

They watch a horror film.

There is a faint KNOCK at the door. Deeply absorbed in the movie, they do not hear it.

The KNOCK continues. Mike hears it. Exits.

Linda watches the film. A room with a large black curtain appears on a big screen.

Suspense MUSIC appropriate for horror films FADES gradually.

Abruptly the distinctive sound of a human voice whispers.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mike's going to kill you,
Linda... Mike's going to
kill you...

LINDA

What?

Linda rewinds the film. After a beat of silence...

VOICE (V.O.)

Mike's going to kill you,
Linda... Mike's going to
kill you...

Linda stares at the screen. She looks disturbed.

Mike enters. Smiles.

MIKE

Herodotus is very upset.
He apologizes. Says supper
will be delayed.

Linda rewinds the movie one more time. Pushes the "PLAY" button without paying any attention to Mike.

LINDA

Listen to this!

Mike watches the movie. Sees a room with a large black curtain.

Linda freezes, expecting the dreadful voice to sound. There is no voice.

Linda pushes the button again.

MIKE

What are you doing?

LINDA

One minute! There was a
voice...

No voice.

EXT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

The moon's unusually bright light shapes "The Mystery House's" weird structure.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is big.

One of the walls has two doors: one - for a big walk-in closet, another - for a master bathroom.

The wall across the entrance has a large sliding door leading to the balcony.

A king size bed leans against the third wall. Mike and Linda make love on it. Mike on top works hard.

His passionate VOICE becomes LOUDER as he moves faster up and down.

Linda's face is cold. She does not feel any pleasure and does not even try to fake it.

Suddenly she raises her head. Looks at the balcony.

Mike stops.

MIKE

What!?

LINDA

Nothing... Thought somebody was...
Nothing.

Mike continues.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A dark, long hallway.

Faint moonlight streams through a big balcony, divides the hallway into two equal parts shadow and light.

A large staircase coming up from the first floor ends in the middle of the hallway.

A strange SILHOUETTE appears on the top step for a split second.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda lies in bed. She stares at the ceiling. Mike is beside her, drinks a cocktail from a long glass.

LINDA

...I'm still thinking about Susan Riddell...

Linda glances at Mike.

LINDA

...Mrs. Gillmor said Susan was also seeing a ghost.

Mike puts the glass on his bedside table. Smiles, shakes his head.

MIKE

C'mon! You are old enough not to believe this shit.

LINDA

Mrs. Gillmor knew Susan very well and she--

MIKE

Mrs. Gillmor could not know them "very well!" The Riddells lived here only two or three weeks...

Linda does not argue. She remains quiet.

MIKE

...It was not a ghost she was seeing! It was their housekeeper who was posing as a ghost!

Mike goes to the bathroom to brush his teeth.

MIKE (O.S.)
(muffled voice
as he brushes)
Police found Halloween costumes
and LSD drugs in the guest room..

Mike steps back into the bedroom with a white spot of toothpaste on his chin.

MIKE
..The housekeeper was sleeping
there.

He approaches the sliding door. Looks out to the pool in the backyard.

MIKE
I can't wait for summer to come.
I'm going to dive directly from
this balcony.

Linda rolls her eyes. Mike closes the curtain. The sliding door disappears behind the long and heavy curtain.

Mike goes to bed. Kisses Linda.

MIKE
Don't listen to Mrs. Gillmor.
Looks like she speaks too much,
okay? Good night.

Mike turns off the light.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is dark and quiet. Linda lies in bed next to Mike. A sheet partially covers her naked body.

She sleeps restlessly.

The curtain moves slightly. There is somebody behind it.

Sudden brusque NOISE makes Linda to wake up. She observes the room with a concerned expression.

Everything seems OK. She realizes she had a bad dream.

LINDA

Oh...

Linda turns to Mike. Sees him sleeping peacefully.

She relaxes. Closes her eyes.

In the background, the curtain moves again.

An unusually white hand appears from it.

The hand disappears as soon as Linda moves.

She turns to her left side. Punches her pillow. Puts her head on it comfortably.

Closes her eyes and... opens them again.

Sharpening her focus, Linda sees a pair of shoes protruding from below the curtain.

Scared to death, Linda tries to turn the light on. Pushes a switch of the bedside lamp. No light.

The curtain moves. Linda SCREAMS. Jumps to Mike's side. Pulls him.

MIKE

(confused)

What... what the hell--

Mike lights his bedside lamp. Looks at trembling Linda.

MIKE

(worried)

What's wrong?

Mike looks around. Everything seems OK.

LINDA

(pointing curtain)

There, there is somebody... I saw feet!

Mike glances around looking for something he can use as a weapon, finds nothing.

He does not see any feet either. He crosses the room prudently.

Gathering courage, Mike pulls back the curtain. Sees a ghost. Jumps back.

Linda SCREAMS.

MIKE

Shit!

He relaxes. Realizes, "a ghost" was his own reflection on the door pane!

MIKE

(smiling)

Almost got a heart attack.

Linda still looks scared.

LINDA

Mike! The balcony... check the balcony!

MIKE

It's empty, darling. Nobody is out there.

Linda insists.

LINDA

Please, Mike! Check the fucking balcony!

Mike opens the door. Goes out. Glances around. Steps back.

MIKE

It's cold outside!

He closes the door.

MIKE

You had a bad dream. So do I sometimes...

He goes to bed.

A look of fear, doubt, and confusion crosses Linda's face.

Mike tries to comfort her with kisses.

MIKE

Once I had a nightmare. The
most--

LINDA

Mike, was the door locked?

Mike thinks for a second then with a convincing voice..

MIKE

Of course it was!

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Linda and Mike sit around a table that is set for three.

Herodotus puts a plate in front of Mike.

MIKE

Hmm, it smells so delicious!
What is it?

HERODOTUS

"Le Beuf Bourguignon"

Herodotus takes a bottle of red wine. Uncorks it.

HERODOTUS

I'm sure you will like it.

Mike puts a small piece of meat in his mouth. Chews.

MIKE

Not bad. I like it...
(still chewing)
...Yea, it's good, very good!

Herodotus smiles as he pours red wine into Linda's glass.

He next pours a glass for Mike.

HERODOTUS

(to Mike)

Now try this Georgian wine. It represents a perfect balance of elegance and power. Drinking it, you will taste fresh apricot and plum flavors.

Herodotus puts the bottle on the table. Takes his place next to Mike.

Mike tastes the wine. Looks at Herodotus with a guilty expression.

MIKE

Sorry, but I can't taste any apricot...

HERODOTUS

Can you taste the plum flavor?

MIKE

(disappointed)

No, but I like it.

HERODOTUS

(smiling)

It took me three years of constant drinking before I recognized those tastes. But don't worry, a few months of training and you'll be a good "connoisseur"--

LINDA

(sarcastically)

Or a good alcoholic!

MIKE

I don't want to be an alcoholic.

(sadly)

It killed my parents.

An awkward silence. Herodotus tries to change the subject.

He notices that Linda is not eating much...

HERODOTUS
You don't like it?

LINDA
No, I like it! I just--

MIKE
She had a bad dream, yesterday.

Linda gives Mike an angry look.

Herodotus does not see it.

HERODOTUS
Really?
(to Linda)
What was the dream about?

LINDA
It does not matter. A bad dream
is a bad dream...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Teresa takes out a pair of white latex gloves from the
drawer.

Her face is cold, unpleasant.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Herodotus talks about dreams. Mike listens attentively.
Linda eats slowly.

HERODOTUS
...Each dream has its meaning. And
a bad dream does not necessarily
mean something bad will happen
to you. Sometimes a nice dream
is even worse! If you want I'll
tell you what had happened to
Croesus...

MIKE
Of course we want! You know I
love your stories.

Herodotus pours more wine into Mike's empty glass and tells a story with his smooth baritone voice.

HERODOTUS

As you already know Croesus was the greatest king of his era. Once he dreamed he would conquer a rich and powerful neighboring country. He immediately sent his servants to Pythia. Pythia was an oracle who could interpret a meaning of any dream... She analyzed what Croesus had seen and sent him back the message: "Croesus, if you wage war against your neighbor you will destroy one of the greatest kingdoms in the world"...

Herodotus makes a pause. Extends his hand. Reaches for his glass.

HERODOTUS

...Croesus was very happy to hear that. Now he was certain that his dream predicted him more fame and glory than he already had...

INT. SECOND FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

There is a motion detector light in front of the staircase.

An unusually white hand pushes the detector's panel slightly up.

BACK TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Herodotus drinks his wine. Mike looks at him.

MIKE

Then?

HERODOTUS

Then he went to war against his neighbor and... lost! He destroyed the world's biggest kingdom. His own kingdom! He was furious and it was all his fault. He was supposed to ask, which of the greatest kingdoms he was going to destroy, his own or his neighbor's one...

(looks at Linda)

...Do you see now how a nice dream can turn into an ugly one?

Linda looks irritated. Mike nods.

MIKE

I always try to interpret my dreams in a good way--

HERODOTUS

Because you are an optimist! Someone who is a pessimist--

LINDA

(irritated)

I had a nightmare, Herodotus! Not a dream! And...

(to Mike)

...Please, stop this stupid conversation, okay?

Linda leaves the table. Mike shrugs, glances at Herodotus. Herodotus looks sorry.

HERODOTUS

Did I--

MIKE

No, no! Just a bad mood...

(sighs)

...When I met her she was so funny and--

(shrugs)

I don't know...

Mike looks worried. Rises. Exits.

INT. KITCHEN - REFRIGERATOR - NIGHT

There are many products inside the refrigerator. Mike's cocktail is on the top shelf.

Some kind of white powder falls into the glass.

INT. STAIRCASE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Linda with a cocktail in her hand walks up the stairs.

The light coming from the first floor turns off itself as Linda advances to the second floor.

Approaching a dark hallway, she steps up more prudently as she notices that the motion-detecting light fails to go on.

The moonlight entering from the balcony is enough for Linda to move forward safely.

Suddenly she HEARS some unintelligible WHISPERING coming from the left side of the hallway.

She looks over there. Sees a noose dangling from the ceiling.

Scared, she jumps up the remaining stairs, runs towards the bedroom.

The motion-detecting light goes on. It illuminates the hallway.

Before entering into the room, Linda glimpses at the noose's direction.

There is no noose. She sighs.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda enters in. Puts the cocktail on Mike's bedside table.

Mike speaks on the phone.

MIKE
... Tomorrow is the first
(MORE)

MIKE (cont'd)
anniversary since I met my
beautiful wife. So...
(beat)
Saturday? Saturday is great.
We'll be there! Thanks... Good
night.

Mike hangs up the phone, reaches for his cocktail. Linda
takes a remote control. Turns the TV off.

MIKE
The Gillmors invited us. Saturday
night...

He glances at Linda.

MIKE
Is something wrong darling?

LINDA
Everything is wrong in this house!
The light in the hallway--

MIKE
(with smile)
Does not work properly!

Linda gives Mike a puzzled look.

MIKE
Don't worry. It's not a ghost
and it has nothing to do with
the house either. I saw Teresa
dusting--

Mike drinks his cocktail.

MIKE
She probably touched a sensor of
the motion detector... That's why
the light goes on too late.

Mike puts his glass.

Linda does not look as worried as she was before.

MIKE

I'll fix it tomorrow. Before, I
used to fix something everyday.
If not my lucky ticket, I--

LINDA

I think I saw a noose in the
hallway.

MIKE

(curious)
A noose? What noose?

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mike and Linda have a guest; Linda's brother BRAD LEEN
(32), not a tall man with nervously blinking small eyes.

They eat entrée and talk about the previous owners of "THE
MYSTERY HOUSE."

LINDA

(to Brad)
...The architect, the first owner
died suddenly--

MIKE

"Suddenly?" C'mon, Linda! He
was over 80!

Linda does not pay any attention to Mike's "protest."

She continues...

LINDA

(to Brad)
Next owners had daughters,
twins. They were seeing a
ghost in their bedroom.
The ghost was--

MIKE

They were lying Linda!

LINDA

Why? Why should they lie?

MIKE

I'll tell you why! The girls were born and grown up in New York City. Do you think they would want to live here, in Martvill? Look around... Mountains and lakes... that's it! We don't have any neighbors younger than the Gillmors!

BRAD

(to Linda)

Mike's suggestion seems pretty believable.

LINDA

And the feet that I saw, does not seem "pretty believable?"

Brad shrugs.

BRAD

It was a nightmare... You always have nightmares!

LINDA

Okay, maybe it was a nightmare but what about the noose... or a dreadful voice I heard when I was watching the movie? It could not--

MIKE

Oh, I'm glad you reminded me of that!

(to Brad)

That evening, we saw an old movie where the killer was hidden in the room and his shoes were protruding from the curtain...

(to Linda)

...And the same day, you had the nightmare with the shoes under the curtain!

Linda shakes her head. Arguing with them makes no sense.

She changes the subject.

LINDA

(to Brad)

Maybe you will stay tonight?

MIKE

Yeah. It'll be great! We'll have a tasty dinner with nice stories from Herodotus. After a few glasses of red wine, you'll going to feel yourself surrounded by the kings, tyrants and heroes of the ancient Greece... Herodotus is an excellent storyteller, believe me! We do not eat without him--

BRAD

I'm sorry, Mike. I can't. I really have to be in New York, tonight.

(to Linda)

You are nervous, I know. But soon everything will be okay, believe me! You pay too much attention to those stupid stories about the previous owners--

MIKE

That's exactly what I'm saying!

Herodotus enters followed by Teresa. He pushes a cart.

MIKE

(joyful)

Oh, here you are!

Herodotus takes meals from the cart. Puts them on the table. Teresa gathers used plates.

MIKE

Wow! It looks so tasty. What is it, Herodotus?

HERODOTUS

This is "The Pheasant and Truffle Risotto"...

Mike looks down at his nicely presented plate of "The Pheasant and Truffle Risotto."

INT. DR. GILLMOR'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Pair of fish sticks, mashed potatoes, and some vegetables carelessly arranged on a big plate.

Dr. Gillmor looks at it. Grimaces.

He wears a navy color pullover, blue jeans, and stylish shoes. The shoes look familiar!

MRS. GILLMOR

I love fish sticks!

Mrs. Gillmor grabs her fork from the table. Dr. Gillmor puts his fork on the table.

DR. GILLMOR

When they come, please, don't talk too much, okay..?

He takes a newspaper.

DR. GILLMOR

...Especially about the Riddells and their ghosts...

BACK TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mike, Linda, and Brad have a nicely decorated cake for dessert. Listening to Herodotus, they eat their cake.

Herodotus tells a story using his great talent of narrator.

HERODOTUS

...So the kingdom of Croesus received a visit from the philosopher named Solon. Croesus proudly show him all of his enormous wealth and asked: "Solon, do you know anybody happier and luckier than me?"...

Herodotus stops for a second. Gulps his wine.

HERODOTUS

...Solon said, "Croesus, I don't think you are a lucky person at all as far as you are still alive. Rich and powerful today, you can die poor and powerless tomorrow. Remember, no two days are the same in a man's life, and happiness does not last forever"...

(to Brad)

...Do you know what Croesus had thought?

BRAD

(ironically)

Not yet.

HERODOTUS

He thought Solon was stupid!
But soon when he found himself enslaved and hung on a fire he changed his mind.

Herodotus' look slides from Mike to Linda. It stops at Brad.

HERODOTUS

See? Even a king can lose everything! That's why "Herodotus" does not advice to wish someone's good luck if this someone is still alive! Mike won the millions but that was in the past. Nobody knows what will happen to him in the future... Maybe he'll be killed...

Linda and Brad exchange a strange look with each other. Herodotus and Mike do not see it.

HERODOTUS

...Or Linda will fall in love with somebody else?

MIKE
(chuckling)
Do you still wish to have my good
luck Brad?

BRAD
Of course I do!

Brad's eyes blink nervously.

BRAD
When did you come to America,
three years ago?

MIKE
About then.

BRAD
Hundred bucks in your pocket?

MIKE
Hundred fifty.

BRAD
And look at you now! I must
be stupid not to wish your
luck!

Brad looks at Herodotus.

BRAD
All the books are made to fool
people, Herodotus! I never
read a book with a good advice
in it, believe me!

Mike glances at Herodotus. Herodotus smiles gently.

HERODOTUS
I believe you, Brad. I believe
you... Nowadays there are more
writers than readers. Everybody
tries to write something...

Herodotus rises. Takes an empty bottle of wine.

HERODOTUS

...Even the prostitutes are publishing their memoirs and diaries! Don't read them, Brad...

He heads towards the kitchen.

HERODOTUS

(walking)

...Switch to "Herodotus" and you'll find a lot of good advices in it.

He exits. Mike grins, glances at Brad. Brad's eyes flash.

BRAD

I don't need his fucking advices!

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

Mike says something to Linda. Kisses her. Goes to his car. Linda walks to Brad.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - GUEST ROOM - DAY

A navy-blue color curtain darkens the room. There is somebody here.

A tiny sunbeam enters into the room from the slightly open heavy curtain. It shapes a strange silhouette.

The silhouette looks outside. Sees Mike. He detaches a new fishing boat from his "HAMMER"

Far from him, Brad and Linda have an agitated conversation. Linda looks angry.

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

Brad embraces his sister.

BRAD

...It will be over. Just one more week, okay?

Brad grins. Linda nods without saying anything. She does not look angry anymore.

Mike pulls over his car.

MIKE
Last chance to change your mind!

BRAD
No, no! I have to go!

Brad sits next to Mike. Linda watches them leaving.

Then she strides towards the house. Something catches her attention.

She stops, gazes. Sees that the curtain of the guest room is slightly open.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - GUEST ROOM - DAY

The silhouette's unusually white hand closes the curtain.

The room becomes completely dark.

INT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

Linda rushes to the second floor.

LINDA
Teresa! Teresa!

TERESA
Yes, ma'am.

Hands full of cleaning products, Teresa comes out of the master bedroom.

She wears white latex gloves.

LINDA
You were in the guest room!

TERESA
No, ma'am.

Linda looks at her with suspicion.

LINDA
Give me the key of--

TERESA
It's open, ma'am.

LINDA
(angry)
I know! Give me the fucking key!

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

The door opens widely.

Linda with a sense of fear and precaution appears at the open doorway.

She turns the light on. Observes the nicely furnished room.

She does not dare enter inside. Reaches a switch. Turns the light off. Closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Linda locks the door. Puts the key in her pocket. Heads for the first floor.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Linda enters.

LINDA
Mr. Herodotus!

Herodotus turns with a big knife in his hand.

Startled, Linda backs up.

Herodotus's face is twisted. His eyes are wet and red. He looks terrible.

HERODOTUS
(with apology)
Sorry. Did I scare you?

Herodotus puts down his knife.

HERODOTUS
I'm allergic to onions. I was

not always like that... Are you
okay?

LINDA
You scared--

HERODOTUS
I'm sorry, I did not--

LINDA
(sighs)
Okay. It's okay...

Linda leaves. She looks tired, very tired.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - EVENING

Linda is naked. She opens the shower. Leans against the
wall. Lets hot water flow over her head.

The NOISE of falling water fills the room. There is a fan
on the wall.

It turns fast.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Something is cooking in a small pot. The door of the
storage room is closed.

Herodotus is not here. The kitchen is empty.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

The mirror is completely covered by steam. The fan does not
work anymore.

Linda feels something is wrong. Gradually water becomes
hotter.

Linda tries to reduce heat. Turns the faucet. No result.
Water continues boiling.

LINDA
Shit...!

Foggy.

EXT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - EVENING

Two headlights pierce the fog. Black "HAMMER" approaches the fountain.

The car's engine shuts off and lights go off. Mike gets out. Disappears into the house.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Linda looks nervous. The water is so hot; she steps out of the bathtub.

She struggles for breath in the dense steam. Makes her way to the door. Turns the knob.

LINDA
(in a panic)
C'mon! Please...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

An unusually white hand holds the knob tightly.

BACK TO:

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Linda desperately tries to open the door. Exhausted she gives up.

Thick steam covers her naked body lying on the floor.

INT. DR. GILLMOR'S HOUSE - EVENING

Dr. Gillmor, Mrs. Gillmor, Mike, and Linda sit in the dining room. Linda looks sad.

They discuss Linda's recent accident.

Mrs. Gillmor is particularly active in this conversation.

MRS. GILLMOR
(to her husband)
...So how do you explain that--

DR. GILLMOR

(nervously)

I do not explain anything! Mike already explained it but you never listen to people! It could have happened to anybody! I often make hot water instead of cold when I'm relaxed under the shower. And those round doorknobs! They are always tricky to turn. Especially if your hands are wet. Moreover, do not forget! She was in a panic! Anything may happen when people are in a panic!

MRS. GILLMOR

And the fan? Why did the fan stop working? Because of;
(mimicking)
"She was in a panic"?

Linda's reserved smile encourages Mrs. Gillmor.

MRS. GILLMOR

"Anything may happen when people are in a panic." The fans do not stop working because people are in a panic!

DR. GILLMOR

Maybe she forgot to turn it on!

MRS. GILLMOR

Maybe she DID NOT forgot to turn it on!

MIKE

(smiling)

The fan was supposed to go on automatically. Even now it works very well.

MRS. GILLMOR

(victoriously)

See?

Dr. Gillmor looks defeated. Glances at Mike. Smiles.

DR. GILLMOR
I must admit... I lost it again!

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

The rain starts as "HAMMER" approaches the house.

Mike and Linda get out of the car and rush to the door, jumping on the stairs.

Once near the door, they HEAR a low RUMBLE of thunder preceded by a glow.

Mike gets a key out of his pocket.

MIKE
Dr. Gillmor says that by foot
it takes less than ten minutes
to walk from our pool to their
backyard. Did you know that?

Linda does not answer. She looks at the window. Sees a small beam of light in the kitchen.

The light disappears abruptly. Linda gazes but cannot distinguish anything in the dark.

The next glow of blue lasts enough time to see somebody's black SHADOW moving in the kitchen.

One more flash and... the shadow is gone.

Mike aware of nothing opens the door. Backs up to let Linda pass. Linda transfixed stares at the window.

LINDA
(scared)
Somebody is there, Mike!

MIKE
Where?

LINDA
In the kitchen!

MIKE

It's dark over there!

LINDA

There was a beam... The fridge
was open--

Mike does not believe her. Smiles.

MIKE

C'mon, Linda!

Linda looks desperate.

MIKE

OK, okay! I'll check! Stay
here. Don't move!

Mike goes inside and passes the dining room. Linda sees him
entering into the kitchen.

Soon Mike comes back with a cocktail in his hand and a
friendly smile on his face.

MIKE

I kicked his ass. You can come
in now.

Linda shakes her head.

LINDA

But I saw--

Striking thunder muffles Linda's voice. The storm is in
progress.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness.

Sporadic flash of lightning passes through the widely open
curtain and shortly lights the room.

An ECHO of thunder periodically aborts a SOUND of the rain.

Linda and Mike sleep in their bed. There is an empty
cocktail glass on Mike's bedside table.

EXT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

The rain intensifies. Approached storm cracks the sky.
"THE MYSTERY HOUSE" looks gloomier than ever.

BACK TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM-NIGHT

Linda opens her eyes. She hears some unintelligible
WHISPERING coming from the closet.

Mike is not beside her. Quietly, Linda walks to the closet.
Listens.

MIKE (O.S.)

...She wants my money. She wants to
kill me. Make me the best meal
you have ever done. Use her heart.
Throw everything else away--

Horrorified, Linda runs to the...

FIRST FLOOR

... and tries to escape via the central door but she cannot
open it. Runs to the...

KITCHEN

It is dark here. A blue flash lights the room periodically.

Linda takes a knife. Leans her back against the
refrigerator. Breathes heavily.

She feels the door behind her move. Turns. Backs up.

A SMALL DEVIL with a cocktail glass in his hand steps out
of the refrigerator.

Linda's eyes go wide. The devil looks exactly like the
sculpture from the fountain.

DEVIL

Wonna a glass of cocktail,
Linda?

He advances on Linda. Blinks his eye. Opens his mouth, and...
A huge shower of blood covers Linda's body. She SCREAMS.

END OF DREAM.

BACK TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda sleeps. Seeing a bad dream, she lets out a muffled cry.

LINDA

Muuh...

She wakes up. Looks around.

A HEAVY HEART BEATING: DIG! DOG! DIG! DOG...! She turns to Mike.

A NOISE of heavy rain penetrating into the room gradually MUFFLES Linda's slowing HEART BEAT.

A bright blue glow enters through the balcony and illuminates Mike.

He peacefully snores with his left hand under his cheek. Looking at him, Linda's face shows a sign of disgust.

As the glow passes, the SOUND of thunder PIERCES the darkened bedroom.

Another flash and... Somebody's chilling shadow appears on the wall across the room.

Linda's heart goes crazy again: DIG! DOG! DIG! DOG!

She turns her head slowly. An extra flash proves her worst expectation.

In the background, somebody wearing a raincoat stands on the balcony.

He leans his unusually white hands against the door pane. Looks at Linda's direction.

Petrified, Linda jumps to Mike's side. Trembling and crying, she uncontrollably punches him.

LINDA
Mike... Mike!

MIKE
(confused)
What... what's...

Mike turns the light on. Scans the room quickly. Sees nothing alarming.

MIKE
Okay, everything is--

LINDA
There's somebody on the balcony!

Mike looks at the balcony. It is empty.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

An unusually white hand takes a latex glove from the table. Puts it on the other hand.

Both hands mix seasoned ground meat. Herodotus makes supper.

Teresa sits at the table. Drinks coffee.

TERESA
...She does not come for breakfast anymore... She sleeps until noon... What's wrong with her?

Herodotus glances at Teresa. Smiles.

HERODOTUS
She's seeing a ghost. No?

Teresa ignores his sarcasm.

TERESA
I don't understand why Mr. Riddell bought this cursed house!

HERODOTUS

He bought it by Internet...

Herodotus finishes mixing the meat. Takes his gloves off.

HERODOTUS

...Did not know anything about
the rumor...

He covers the meat with silver paper.

HERODOTUS

...Plus, he got it for almost half
the price.

TERESA

I wouldn't want a cursed house!
Not even for free! I'm--

The SOUND of a car engine and headlights of Linda's SUV
approaching the house stops Teresa.

Both look through the window. They see Linda stepping out
of the car.

Herodotus watches her enter the house. Teresa stares at the
car.

HERODOTUS

She looks beautiful today.

TERESA

(not sure)
I think somebody is there.

HERODOTUS

Where?

TERESA

There... in the car!

Both gaze at Linda's SUV. The car seems empty.

HERODOTUS

(smiling)
The car is empty, Teresa. Stop
hallucinating, okay?

Teresa wants to reply. Opens her mouth but...

LINDA (O.S.)
Teresa! Teresa!

Teresa leaves, shaking her head.

Herodotus glances one more time at Linda's SUV. Then turns and continues preparing the supper.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda is not sleeping. She looks at the digital clock. It is 01.03am. Mike sleeps.

Like always, an empty cocktail glass stands on his bedside table.

INT. STAIRCASE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A BLACK SHADOW quietly moves up to the stairs.

As it approaches the second floor, faint moonlight entering from the balcony reveals A MAN in black.

It is TOM COGAN (30).

Walking soundlessly, he approaches the bedroom and leans against the door. Listens. Turns the doorknob slowly.

Somebody appears in the background.

Tom stops. Sensing danger, he turns...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda stares at the clock. She HEARS something. The doorknob moves slowly. Linda sees that.

The doorknob briskly returns to its initial position. The NOISE of a struggle comes from the hallway.

It stops abruptly. Silence.

The digital clock skips from 01.06am to 01.07am.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Somebody wearing a raincoat drags Tom's lifeless body.

They gradually disappear in the dark of faraway hallway.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda with her strained face waits for something to happen. Nothing happens. She falls asleep.

EXT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

A beautiful night transfers to a beautiful morning.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Linda wakes up. Turns quickly. Sees her husband snoring serenely.

A trace of anger passes through her face. She goes to the...

BATHROOM

Linda sprinkles the water on her face. Looks in the mirror.

There is a message written in red. It reads, "I WATCH (a painted eye) YOU, MY LOVE."

Her face turns pale...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

A SCREAM and SOUND of shattering glasses awakes Mike. He runs to the...

BATHROOM

Sees Linda lying and bleeding among the shattered pieces of the mirror.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Grilled Trout, white wine and his own lecture in the field of psychology provides Dr. Gillmor with much enjoyment.

Mike listens to him attentively. He does not eat too much.

DR. GILLMOR

...Mr. Riddell never believed in ghosts. But his wife, Susan did. The women are more emotional and fragile than men. Moreover, they are very superstitious! Susan was not an exception.

Dr. Gillmor washes down a piece of fish with a half glass of wine and continues.

DR. GILLMOR

Imagine now, Susan enters on the driveway. Notices a sign; "Welcome to The Mystery House." Sees a big, creepy mansion with a weird fountain provoking fear and fright!

Here, Dr. Gillmor raises his finger.

DR. GILLMOR

Add to this what she hears later! The first owner dies here let's say "unexpectedly" and the next owners see a ghost! "Voila!" The nightmares are prescribed!

Dr. Gillmor empties his glass. The more he drinks the more he speaks...

DR. GILLMOR

Susan started to have nightmares and the housekeeper, this...

He tries to find an exact word.

DR. GILLMOR

...This bitch... used it for her dirty business! Instead of antidepressants that I prescribed her, she was giving Susan pills causing her hallucinations!

Dr. Gillmor puts the last remaining piece of fish in his mouth.

DR. GILLMOR

Linda has the same psychological problem. Thanks God, she has not the same housekeeper! So with the proper medication--

Herodotus enters with a dessert on the plate. Dr. Gillmor stops talking. Looks at Herodotus.

DR. GILLMOR

I must admit that the Trout was delicious!

HERODOTUS

Thank you, sir.

Herodotus smiles. Pours more wine into Dr. Gillmor's glass. Exits.

Dr. Gillmor points to his piece of cake.

DR. GILLMOR

He did it, or he just bought it?

MIKE

He cooks everything... even bread he makes it here, in the kitchen.

Dr. Gillmor shakes his head.

DR. GILLMOR

My cook buys everything! She just warms up a frozen meal and... chats with my wife! That's it!

Mike seems less interested about his cook.

MIKE

Did the Riddells know that their housekeeper was--

DR. GILLMOR

Ex-con?...

Mike nods.

DR. GILLMOR
I don't know...

Dr. Gillmor shrugs. Continues...

DR. GILLMOR
...But I know that Mr. Riddell
"helped" Susan to have
nightmares!

Mike looks at Doctor curiously.

DR. GILLMOR
Yes my friend... He had a whole
collection of horror movies!
Those movies have enormous
impacts--

Mike's expression changes. He wants to say something but
hesitates.

Dr. Gillmor sees that.

DR. GILLMOR
...You want to say some--

MIKE
We found those movies in a
closet.

DR. GILLMOR
And you watched them!

Mike does not answer. Like a child punished for his
wrongdoing, Mike looks down at his empty plate.

DR. GILLMOR
(shouts)
Humans...!

Mike startles.

DR. GILLMOR
...We are the most dangerous
"ghosts" in the universe! We
do so much harm to each other--

He stops. Sighs.

DR. GILLMOR

(sadly)

...I feel guilty myself, too!

MIKE

Guilty? Why?

DR. GILLMOR

Two days before the murder,
Mr. Riddell called me and
we were sitting in this
room. He seemed very upset...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mr. Riddell (50), a bold and not very pleasant man sits
across Dr. Gillmor.

RIDDELL

... Susan insists that the ghost
asks for one million dollars!
If we give him that amount
there'll be no more ghosts in
this house! Ha! A ghost asking
for money... Ha! Can you imagine
that?

DR. GILLMOR

(thoughtfully)

Maybe you'll give them--

Mr. Riddell looks at Dr. Gillmor like, "are you out of your
mind?"

DR. GILLMOR

I mean... Put the money on the
table and show it to Mrs. Riddell.
Next morning, when she finds that
the money is intact... See what I
mean?

BACK TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Gillmor finishes remembering. Empties his glass.

DR. GILLMOR

...Police found the Riddells
shot in their bed. The money
and jewelry was gone. The
housekeeper also was gone.
By the way, she's still at
large! You know that?!

Mike nods. Dr. Gillmor wipes his lips with a napkin. He is drunk.

MIKE

Dr. Gillmor, did you know the
first owner... the architect?

Dr. Gillmor's face changes.

DR.GILLMOR

No. We never met. I'm a church
going guy and he... I heard he
was a very strange person... A
member of some kind of Satanic
Sect... Just look at this
house!

Dr. Gillmor stands up. Takes his medical briefcase.

Mike stands up, too.

DR. GILLMOR

About the house!

They walk toward the exit.

DR. GILLMOR

My advice will be; take Linda
somewhere for a few weeks.
Hire a contractor and make them
remove all those stupid, scary
figures!

Dr. Gillmor stops. Puts his hand on Mike's shoulder.

DR. GILLMOR
And don't forget to change the
name. It's important! Okay?

MIKE
Okay, Doctor...

They exit.

INT. ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Mike helps Dr. Gillmor put his coat on.

DR. GILLMOR
...I'm not a psychologist but
I think she does not trust
you any more, because you
do not believe her! So next
time she tells you that she
saw someone or something in
the house, do not start to
argue or contradict! Call
the police and make them
search the house. Okay?
Maybe it will help...

Dr. Gillmor puts his hat on. Leaves.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Linda is in bed. She has her left hand bandaged. Speaks on
the cell phone.

A hairdryer lies beside her. It works. Makes a NOISE.

Linda looks angry. Tries not to scream.

LINDA
...I left him in my car! Then, I
don't know!--
(beat)
He could change his mind at the
last moment? Is that what you
are saying--?
(beat)
Forget about him! Just forget--!

INT. STAIRCASE AREA - DAY

Teresa walks up. She has a tray in her hand.

BACK TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

LINDA

There's someone who wants to
drive me crazy... or make me look
crazy--

(beat)

It could be one of them! It could
be both of them! It could--

Linda glances at the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Teresa puts her ear against the door. Tries to hear Linda's
conversation but she cannot.

The heavy oak door and the noise of working hairdryer
muffle most of Linda's words.

BACK TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

LINDA

Maybe he killed his wives back
in his own fucking country!

(beat)

To get the insurance--

(beat)

Money is never enough, okay?

I want you here! I need--

A KNOCK. Linda says "bye." Flips her cell phone. Takes the
hairdryer.

Teresa enters.

TERESA

Your lunch, ma'am.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Herodotus prepares "The Farsh." Teresa mops.

TERESA

...I'll leave as soon as I'll find
another job!

HERODOTUS

Why?

TERESA

(lowers voice)
I don't like this house...
(almost whispering)
...I feel something horrible will
happen here! You--

Herodotus opens the refrigerator. Looks inside...

HERODOTUS

(upset)
I always miss some food! Where
is the fucking sour cream?

TERESA

I don't know, I--

HERODOTUS

Maybe you put it in the garbage...
like the cheese you--

TERESA

It was not my fault! It had a bad
look and it was stinking like--

HERODOTUS

Please, Teresa! Don't throw
anything without--

TERESA

I swear I did not--

HERODOTUS

Okay, okay, forget about it!

Herodotus closes the door. Looks upset.

HERODOTUS

I'm preparing "The Farsh" for tomorrow... I can't do it without the sour cream!

He glances at Teresa. It is obvious he wants to ask a favor but hesitates.

TERESA

If you want, I'll go buy some.

HERODOTUS

You will save my life, Teresa!

Teresa grins. Reveals a gap between her two front teeth.

TERESA

I'm going right now!

Teresa washes her hands.

TERESA

Oh, I almost forgot! Don't make the cocktail, tonight. Mike did not drink it yesterday either. He wants to stay vigilant all night.

She takes her uniform off.

TERESA

Does your cocktail really help to sleep?

HERODOTUS

Of course not. I told Mike it does, but...

(laughs)

...He's too trustful.

Teresa leaves. Herodotus gets the glass of cocktail out of the refrigerator.

Takes a gulp. The taste is somewhat different than he expected, but...

HERODOTUS
(himself)
Not so bad.

He exits.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Teresa rushes in. Puts the sour cream on the table.

TERESA
Herodotus!

She sees the door of the storage room is slightly open.
Assumes Herodotus is there..

TERESA
I am going home! The sour cream
is on the table, okay?

A beat. Then...

VOICE (O.S.)
OK!

Exiting, Teresa stops. This "OK" seems a bit strange but
her doubt last only for a split second.

She leaves.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

TV glows in the dark. There is a soccer game on a big
screen.

Mike is asleep.

TV Turns off abruptly. The dark gets its true color.

TV goes on again. A blurred image of Tom Cogan appears on
it.

Tom chained to a pillar near a toilet looks nervous. He has
tape over his mouth.

This image quickly transforms into another image.

A bold man, Mr. Riddell watches naked children on his computer.

TV turns off and goes on again a few times.

Linda sleeps restlessly. Suddenly...

VOICE (V.O.)
(dreadful voice)
Show time, Linda!

Linda opens her eyes. Aware of something's or someone's presence, she prudently observes the room.

TV is off. There is an absolute silence. Linda turns to Mike's side. Sees, the closet door is slightly open.

Linda gazes. Somebody watches her from the closet. Linda pushes Mike.

LINDA
(whispering)
Mike... Mike...

A human shaped shadow leaves the closet and sneaks out of the bedroom.

LINDA
(screaming)
Mike! Mike!

Mike opens his eyes.

LINDA
Did you see him? Did you--?

MIKE
See what... I--

LINDA
I saw him, Mike! I saw!

Mike reaches his bedside table. Gets out a gun.

MIKE
Ok! Calm down... I'll call the police!

Mike calls.

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

Two police cars arrive.

INT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

Mike opens the door. Four POLICEMEN enter.

MIKE

My wife saw a stranger in the
house!

CAPTAIN LECLERK (45) says something to his colleagues.
Follows Mike.

INT. FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Three police officers carefully search for an intruder.

DINING ROOM

Two police officers enter, holding their guns tightly. One
of them turns the light on.

They see the room is empty. They move forward to the
kitchen.

LIVING ROOM

The door opens slowly. An armed policeman's shadow
carefully steps in.

TV is on. The empty glass of a cocktail stands on a small
table.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Captain Leclerk stands next to Mike. Talks to Linda. Linda
lies in bed. She looks frustrated.

CAPTAIN

...It's practically impossible.
Your security system is directly
linked to--

VOICE (O.S.)
Captain! We have somebody here!

Mike's jaw drops open.

MIKE
What? I can't believe it!

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

Herodotus sits in a police car. One of the policemen steps out of the car. Heads to the house.

INT. HOUSE - ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Captain Leclerk speaks to Mike.

CAPTAIN
...He claims he was waiting for
the sour cream. Felt himself
tired, went to the living room
and fell asleep.

MIKE
I don't think he's lying..

Mike makes a skeptic face.

MIKE
...I think he has nothing to do
with--

He stops talking as the policeman enters.

POLICEMAN
Bartholomew Coin is his real
name. He served 25 years for
a double murder. Was released
August 20.

Mike is stunned. Captain Leclerk turns to him.

CAPTAIN
And now, what do you think now,
Mr. Nedved?

MIKE
(absently)
I don't know... I ...
(to himself)
...Double murder?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

An unusually white hand takes a piece of cotton.

Dr. Gillmor wears white latex gloves as he cleans Linda's wound.

Mike stands nearby. Speaks with some excitement and disbelieve.

MIKE
...He served 25 years for killing
his wife and her lover!

Dr. Gillmor shakes his head.

DR. GILLMOR
Unbelievable!
(astonished)
But where did he learn to--

MIKE
In jail! From the Cooking
Magazines! He even worked there
in the kitchen...

Mike walks to the balcony.

MIKE
...He had two things to read,
Cooking Magazines and "Herodotus."

LINDA
That's why he was so obsessed
with his stupid stories!

Dr. Gillmor nods.

DR. GILLMOR
Almost every killer has some
kind of obsession.

Mike stares at the pool in the backyard.

MIKE
(to himself)
I liked his stories...

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike and Dr. Gillmor sit around the table.

They drink. No food.

One bottle of vodka stands on the table. It is almost empty.

MIKE
...She was thinking that I
was planning some kind of
conspiracy against her!

Mike shakes his head. He looks sad.

MIKE
I never believed her! I was
so stupid!

DR. GILLMOR
Come on! It's not your fault!
Her depression, nightmares,
and hallucinations could
mislead any--

MIKE
Hallucinations?

DR. GILLMOR
The noose... voices--

MIKE
Ah, yea...
(sighs)
I hope it's over now.

Dr. Gillmor turns. Crosses his legs. He wears the same familiar shoes!

DR. GILLMOR

I must admit, Mike. I'm able to picture Herodotus as a killer but... the maniac?

He gets a skeptic face.

DR. GILLMORE

I can't imagine him sniffing a woman's underwear... or stealing it... or wearing it.

Mike sighs.

MIKE

It's hard to believe for me also!

He pours more vodka into his glass.

MIKE

I never had a friend. He was like... my friend...

He empties his glass.

MIKE

What he was doing--
(shakes his head)
I don't know!

Mike is drunk.

INT. HERODOTUS' APARTEMENT - EVENING

Herodotus's apartment looks neat and ascetic.

There is a newspaper on the table. It is open on the page of advertisements.

One of the ads reads, "A COOK WITH 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE MAKES SMALL PARTIES (10-20 PEOPLE) CALL HERODOTUS. TEL: 321 456 0987"

Herodotus drinks red wine. Watches a food channel.

He pushes the button of the remote control as soon as a commercial starts.

He looks sad and bored. Suddenly something on TV catches his attention.

Herodotus makes a last gulp. Puts the empty glass next to the wine bottle. Leans towards the TV.

TV: NEWS AT 6PM:

A REPORTER stands in front of "THE MYSTERY HOUSE."
POLICEMEN and PARAMEDICS can be seen in the background.

REPORTER

...Another double murder took place in "The Mystery House." This morning, Police found Mr. Nedved, a new owner of "The Mystery House" in the guest room with a gun in his hand. He appeared to be in a state of shock...

In the background, Paramedics gather around somebody's covered body.

REPORTER

...Apparently, Mr. Nedved killed his wife, Mrs. Linda Nedved and her lover, whose identity still is not revealed. Their bodies were discovered in the guest room, shot in bed! I want to remind you that six months ago, Mr. and Mrs. Riddell, the previous owners of "The Mystery House" were killed here by their housekeeper, Graciela Perez...

TV shows Graciela's photo for a few seconds.

Unhappy Hispanic woman (50) with long, light-colored hair holds a tag with her name on it.

GRACIELA PEREZ slightly resembles Teresa. Herodotus does not see it. He pours wine into his glass.

HERODOTUS

(astonished)

Indeed... "Happiness does not last forever."

REPORTER

...Graciela Perez, who was once condemned for fraud and money extortion, stole about two million dollars from the Riddells. Police still can't find her...

The phone rings. Herodotus extends his hand.

HERODOTUS

(on the phone)

Yes, it's me...

(beat)

OK, I'll be there, Detective...

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

DETECTIVE CLAWSON (35) has a very kind face. Does not look like the other detectives shown on TV.

He sits at his desk in front of Herodotus.

DETECTIVE

...Did you ever see this man in "The Mystery House"?

He shows a photo. Herodotus shakes his head, "no."

DETECTIVE

Did you ever hear about him?

HERODOTUS

I have no idea who he is.

DETECTIVE

This is Tom Cogan. Brad Leen said he was Linda's ex-boyfriend. Brad

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (cont'd)
 did not know if they were still
 seeing each other but I thought
 somebody in the house should
 know something--

HERODOTUS
 I never heard about him.

Detective persists.

DETECTIVE
 Maybe there's something you can
 say? Something that could help--

HERODOTUS
 I... I don't know...

Herodotus thinks for a while.

HERODOTUS
 There's only one thing I could
 probably say...

Detective prepares his notepad.

HERODOTUS
 ...Mike does not look like a killer!

Detective puts his notepad. He looks deceived.

DETECTIVE
 Mr. Coin, we judge people by
 their behavior, not by their
 "look." You too, you don't
 look like a kill--

HERODOTUS
 (irritated)
 I was young and I was stupid,
 okay?! Mike is different!

DETECTIVE
 Okay!... But who else could do
 it?!

Herodotus shrugs.

DETECTIVE

Mike did it! When we got there,
he still was in the guest room,
holding his gun...

Detective rises. Herodotus too.

DETECTIVE

...And before you leave I want to
tell you something..

Detective walks to the door.

DETECTIVE

...In my list of suspects you are
number two, Mr. Coin. So don't
try to rule out Mike... It will
hurt you.

Herodotus nods. Then...

HERODOTUS

And still... I don't believe he
could kill somebody.

Detective gasps. They exit.

SUPER: NOWADAYS

INT. RESTAURANT "METRO PIZZA" - NIGHT

The restaurant is not busy.

There are only three workers in the kitchen.

One of them is Herodotus. He cuts zucchinis and tells a
story.

RICK (22) peels potatoes. The skins of peeled potatoes fly
around the garbage bag, only a few fall inside.

FERNANDO (24) mixes a boiling pot.

HERODOTUS

...As the pharaoh was told that
(MORE)

HERODOTUS (cont'd)
 he was going to die after a
 hundred nights, he ordered his
 people to light the torches.
 Consequently, the sky of Egypt
 was illuminated 24 hours. The
 pharaoh slept only after the
 sunrise! Never at night! He
 was thinking he could mislead
 his destiny...

Herodotus glances at his listeners.

HERODOTUS
 ...Can you imagine how stupid he
 was? And it's a true story! It's
 not a legend!

Fernando turns, never stops mixing the pot...

FERNANDO
 So what happened then? Did he die?

The pot falls. Fernando tries to catch it. Cannot.

FERNANDO
 Shit!

The pot falls down. BANG! Hot meal spills around.

LUIGI (50) owner of the restaurant enters. He looks angry.

LUIGI
 What's wrong!

RICK
 Fernando burnt his hand, boss!

Luigi looks at Fernando... then at Herodotus.

LUIGI
 (to Herodotus)
 Still telling your stupid stories,
 hah?

Herodotus does not answer.

Luigi turns to Fernando.

LUIGI

I wish you burned your head!
I can't leave you for a second...

Herodotus's cell phone rings. He answers the phone as Luigi continues to curse.

HERODOTUS

(on phone)
Yes. It's me, Herodotus...
(beat)
How did you learn about me?
(beat)
Ah, Dr. Gillmor...

Herodotus' gloomy face gradually turns glad.

HERODOTUS

Do you know I...?
(beat)
Well, if it's not a problem
for you, fine! I'll be there
tomorrow.

Rick cleaning the mess with a mop passes near Herodotus.

RICK

So did he die or not?

Still thinking about the phone call, Herodotus does not hear his question.

HERODOTUS

What?

Rick glances at Luigi. He is angry. Looks at Rick.

RICK

Sorry, boss!

He restarts to mop more vigorously.

HERODOTUS

(himself)
"No two days are the same..."

LUIGI

What?

HERODOTUS

Boss, I just got a new job!

Luigi's angry face turns even angrier.

INT. "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DINING ROOM - DAY

Herodotus sets the table. Alicia helps him. She looks happy. Talks about her husband.

ALICIA

...Alan sold his construction company. Then he came back to Philadelphia and we got married.

HERODOTUS

So you got married recently.

ALICIA

Yeah. January 3. January 4, Alan found out that this house was on sale. He was very excited--

HERODOTUS

(smiling)

Why? He likes cursed houses?

Alicia

(chuckling)

No, no... It was built by his father. Alan himself was supervising the construction and he's sure there is nothing wrong with "The Mystery House."

HERODOTUS

And you? Are not you afraid?

ALICIA

No. Not really... I don't believe in cursed houses. As Alan says--

She stops as she sees through the window a car approaching the house.

ALICIA

Oh, here he comes!

Herodotus looks out the window. Alicia exits.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Alicia eats her dessert. Herodotus sips his wine. Looks at Alan, waiting.

Alan finishes his meal. Wipes his lips.

ALAN

Delicious!

Herodotus smiles gladly.

HERODOTUS

I wanted to ask you something...
I need a list of products that
you like... or dislike. It could
make my job--

ALAN

No problem, Mr. Herodotus, but
first...

Alan looks at Alicia. Smiles.

ALAN

...I think... We must thank
Mrs. Gillmor!

Alicia chuckles.

A look of curiosity crosses Herodotus' face.

ALICIA

Dr. Gillmor wanted to hire you
but Mrs. Gillmor refused--

HERODOTUS

Oh, I'm glad she did it.

ALICIA

We are, too! Doctor said that
you were the best cook--

ALAN

He also said that you were the
best storyteller!

HERODOTUS

(curious)
He never heard my stories!

ALICIA

(smiling)
Maybe but... We still want to
hear your stories.

Herodotus glances at Alan.

ALAN

I've loved to hear stories
since I was a baby. So...

Herodotus looks happy.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is clean and neat, as always. There is a SOUND
of working oven.

Herodotus puts a turkey on a tray.

In the background, somebody's abnormally WHITE FACE appears
in the window.

Herodotus turns but sees nothing. The face is gone.

Herodotus opens the oven. Puts the turkey inside.

Closes the oven and on its door pane, he sees a reflection
of the white face gazing at him through the window.

Herodotus turns as fast as he can. The face is gone! Again,
he does not see anything.

He takes his knife. Walks out.

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - NIGHT

Herodotus stands at the open doorway. Looks outside for a while.

Then turns back into the house. Closes the door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Herodotus enters. Puts his knife on the table. Somebody's black shadow passes behind him.

Herodotus goes to the oven. Opens its door and...

FFFRRRR

All of a sudden, a strange CREATURE with enormous NOISE flies out of the oven.

END OF DREAM

INT. HERODOTUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herodotus sleeps in his bed. Abruptly he wakes up covered in sweat. Looks around.

A faint light of neon enters from a window.

A bunch of food magazines lies on a bedside table. A thick book on top of it is "HISTORIES" of "HERODOTUS."

Herodotus HEARS a NOISE. Stands up. Goes to the door soundless.

Listens. HEARS somebody WALKING in the living room.

He takes a gyps statuette of "HERODOTUS" from the shelf. Looks at it.

Glances around to find something else. Nothing.

Disappointed, he sighs. Leans closer against the wall as the door opens slowly.

A MAN with a gun steps in. Herodotus smashes the statuette into his face.

The intruder MAKES some unintelligible SOUND. Runs back to the...

LIVING ROOM

... Herodotus CHASES him. After a short struggle, he KNOCKS the stranger down.

Herodotus turns the light on. Approaches the man. Bends down to get a better look...

HERODOTUS

Brad?

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

Herodotus sits at the desk. Detective Clawson enters.

DETECTIVE

Brad thinks that you are the killer!

Detective takes his place.

HERODOTUS

Why does he think so?

DETECTIVE

One. You were convicted for a similar crime. Two. You had access to "The Mystery House." Three. Police found you--

HERODOTUS

(smiling)

C'mon detective! You know this is bullshit!

DETECTIVE

Me, I know but... Brad believes Mike!

Herodotus' eyes go wide...

HERODOTUS

Mike says that I killed--

DETECTIVE
Not exactly but...

Detective finds Mike's file. Extends it to Herodotus.

DETECTIVE
...It's Mike's new statement. You
can read it...

Herodotus reads.

FLASH BACK:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike lies motionless in his bed. Linda is not there.

Mike opens his eyes. Sees A GHOST sitting on the edge of his bed.

The ghost with a grey dress and curly hair looks like an ancient Greek.

Mike's face does not express any fear.

GHOST
(odd accent)
...I'm the famous "Thief from
Baghdad" and I came to help you...

Mike listens. His eyes show that he is drugged.

GHOST
I came to open your eyes, Mike!
Your wife cheats on you... look!

The ghost points to TV. Linda's naked back appears on it. She has sex with a man.

Mike cannot see the man. Sees only his hands handcuffed to a bed head.

Linda is on top. Her naked body moves gracefully.

Mike wants to say something. Cannot. Struggles to keep his eyes open.

A drug prevails. The ghost puts the gun in Mike's hand.

GHOST

They are in the guest room.
Kill them Mike... Go kill them!

Mike cannot resist anymore. Closes his eyes. TV turns off.

The ghost stands up and disappears from view.

FLASH BACK:

INT. GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Mike sits on the floor leaning his back against a wall.
Some undistinguished NOISE wakes him up.

TERESA (O.S.)

Mrs. Nedved! Hello...!

Mike sees his gun in his hand.

He looks around wondering. And in this very moment,
something dramatic catches his attention.

He stands up. Sees Linda lying in bed. Tom Cogan is beside
her. Both are dead.

TERESA (O.S.)

(voice approaching)
Mrs. Nedved! Hello...! Mrs. Nedved...!

Mike looks down at his gun.

FLASH BACK:

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

A Policeman leads handcuffed Mike. Mike has an abnormal
look.

MIKE

(to policeman)
She was cheating on me... she was
cheating...

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

DETECTIVE
(sarcastically)
See? We have a new suspect,
"The Thief from Baghdad."

Herodotus stops reading. Puts the file aside...

DETECTIVE
Brad believes that you are
"the ghost," you killed them
and you stole the money!

HERODOTUS
(astonished)
What money?

DETECTIVE
Mike claims he had \$200 000
in his house...

Detective takes Mike's statement. Puts it into the drawer.
Looks at Herodotus.

DETECTIVE
Seems crazy, hah?

Herodotus nods. He looks confused.

DETECTIVE
He tries to avoid justice!
You know criminals. They
always invent something...

Detective stands up.

Herodotus rises too.

DETECTIVE
"The thief from Baghdad!" Ha...!
"Quell imagination!"

They exit.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Alan, Alicia, and Herodotus sit around the table.

Alan manages perfectly to eat and to talk, simultaneously.

ALAN

...He wakes up earlier and finds out that his wife who usually slept until noon, is not in the room! He takes his gun and what does he see?

Alan glances at Alicia, then at Herodotus.

ALAN

His beloved wife cheats on him in his own house! In a fit of rage he kills them. He's so shocked that he does not even try to hide his crime! Later in jail, when the shock passes, he finds a perfect person to blame; the ghost!

ALICIA

But who's going to believe it?

ALAN

The neighbors already did! Did you forget Mrs. Gillmor?

Alan sips his wine. Raises his finger.

ALAN

And you can always find people like Mrs. Gillmor among the jurors! Right?

Alicia leans towards Alan. Kisses him. Looks at Herodotus.

ALICIA

(smiling)

My husband is genius! Don't you think so?

Herodotus grins. Nods.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

HERODOTUS

Did you see this photo, Detective?

Herodotus is visibly excited as he puts a newspaper down in front of Detective Clawson. Detective looks at it.

There is a picture of Graciela Perez in this newspaper. This picture is not made by police. Graciela smiles gladly.

She looks like Teresa.

DETECTIVE

And so? We have her pictures--

HERODOTUS

In your pictures she has a miserable face. Here, she is smiling and she looks exactly like Teresa!

Detective gazes down at the newspaper... Scratches his head.

DETECTIVE

We thought she had left for Mexico--

Detective takes a blue file. He looks disturbed.

DETECTIVE

To be frank we did not even put the posters in Martvill--

Detective finds Teresa's phone number. Makes a call.

DETECTIVE

It's crazy... I hope she'll pick up the phone!

(beat)

Fuck! Bitch!

Detective drops the phone. Leans back.

FLASH BACK:

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

Detective Clawson and Teresa sit around the desk.

Teresa speaks fervently. Yes, she looks like Graciela... somehow.

TERESA

...She was cheating on Mike! No doubt! I even saw Tom in her car! She banned me to enter in the guest room! Now I know why! She was putting pills in Mike's cocktail--

Detective with his notepad stares at Teresa.

DETECTIVE

Mrs. Gutierrez, you are the best witness I ever had!

TERESA

Oh, thank you...

She grins. Reveals the gap between her two front teeth.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

Detective takes another file. Searches for a phone number in it.

Seems like he got some idea.

DETECTIVE

Teresa had a gap between her front teeth, right?

HERODOTUS

(astonished)

Yes.

DETECTIVE

(excited)

We can't see Graciela's
(MORE)

DETECTIVE (cont'd)
 teeth here...
 (points newspaper)
 but we can call to your
 predecessor... the guy who
 cooked for Riddells...

Detective finds the number he was looking for. Calls.

DETECTIVE
 Hi, it's a Detective Clawson.
 Do you remember me, Mr. Wong?

MR. WONG (V.O.)
 (Asian accent)
 Oh, Detective Clouseau! Of
 course I remember--

Detective shakes his head. Covers the phone by his palm.

DETECTIVE
 (to Herodotus)
 Stupid!
 (to Mr. Wong)
 Not Clouseau! C-L-A-W-S-O-N...
 N, Mr. Wong.

MR. WONG (V.O.)
 Sorry, Detective Clawson!

DETECTIVE
 Now it's good! I have one
 question for you... Did Graciela
 have a gap between her front
 teeth?

MR. WONG (V.O.)
 What?

DETECTIVE
 (to Herodotus)
 Stupid!
 (to Wong, spelling)
 Did Graciela Perez have a
 gap between her two front
 teeth?

MR. WONG (V.O.)
A gap? No. She had very nice
teeth... white like sour cream!

DETECTIVE
(joyful)
Thank you, Mr. Wong!

Detective hangs the phone. Sighs.

DETECTIVE
They are not the same!

He's relieved.

DETECTIVE
You scared me Mr. Coin!

He smiles. Gets a mood to talk.

DETECTIVE
Do you know what's funny?

Herodotus does not answer. He looks disappointed. Detective
continues.

DETECTIVE
People with different
professions make different
associations!

Detective glances at Herodotus. Sees he does not get it.
Tries to explain.

DETECTIVE
Mr. Wong is a cook, so he
compares everything to food!

Herodotus still has no reaction. Detective continues...

DETECTIVE
When the Riddells were killed
I asked him if he had observed
anything strange, anything
unusual... Do you know what he
said?

HERODOTUS
(without enthusiasm)
What he say?

DETECTIVE
He said that the food was
missing! Sour cream! Ha!
"Teeth, white like sour
cream." Ha! Stupid!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alan and Alicia sleep peacefully.

Suddenly a strange distorted voice from nowhere, becomes clearer and louder.

VOICE (O.S.)
Alicia, you're going to die.

Alicia opens her eyes. Rolls over and... freezes.

The devil from the fountain lies beside her. He blinks his eye.

DEVIL
(distorted voice)
Welcome to "The Mystery house"
sweetie!

END OF DREAM.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Alicia jolts up startled awake by her dream.

She glances at Alan. Sighs. Goes to the bathroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM'S WALK-IN CLOSET - MORNING

The room is long. One of the walls is entirely covered by a mirror.

Alicia stands near an oak closet. She pulls one dress, second, third..

Finally she finds what she was looking for. Takes it.
Turns.

SCREAMS.

Alan's smiling face appears in the mirror.

ALICIA
You scared me, Alan!

Still smiling, Alan kisses his wife. Then he opens his closet.

ALAN
How was your sleep?

ALICIA
Very bad...

Alan sighs.

ALAN
Okay, how about this! You go
to your parents for a while
and when you come back...

Alan chooses a shirt. Closes the closet.

ALAN
instead of this scary grey house
you'll find a beautiful, joyful
white mansion. What do you think?

ALICIA
I think it'll be great!

ALAN
I'll prove that I'm not as a bad
architect as my father thought I
was... And we'll change the name
also--

ALICIA
(exited)
I'll choose the name!

Alan smiles. Kisses her.

ALAN

Okay, the deal is done. I'll
fix the house, you choose
the name.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Herodotus enters. Washes his hands. Puts his uniform on.
Approaches the refrigerator. Sees a note on the door.

He reads it.

HERODOTUS

(aloud)

"We went to the city. We'll be
back tomorrow for lunchtime.
Alicia. Here's the list of
products. Alan likes: Sour
cream..."

Herodotus makes his face like, "how can people like sour
cream?" Then...

HERODOTUS

(thoughtful)

Sour cream?

A look of excitement crosses his face.

DETECTIVE'S VOICE (V.O.)

He said that food was missing!
Sour cream! Ha...

HERODOTUS'S VOICE (V.O.)

I always miss some food! Where's
the fucking sour cream?

Herodotus observes the room. He phones Detective Clawson.

HERODOTUS

Detective, It's me, Mr. Coin--
(beat)
Mike did not kill them!--
(beat)
Somebody else did. I just
(MORE)

HERODOTUS (cont'd)
remembered, I never told Mike
a story about the "The Thief
from Baghdad"...

FLASH TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

There are only two people in the kitchen, Herodotus and
Teresa. Herodotus tells a story.

HERODOTUS
...The son of an architect became
a very smart thief. People
called him "The thief from
Baghdad." He was so famed
and so popular, even the king
gave him his daughter for a
wife. He was the most famous
criminal in ancient times!

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN-DAY

HERODOTUS
(on phone)
...Mike never heard this story so
he could not invent "The Thief
from Baghdad!" He's telling the
truth!

Agitated, Herodotus cannot clearly explain everything.

HERODOTUS
I mean that "The ghost" really
exists and he had really visited
Mike that night!--
(beat, irritated)
Of course I do not believe in
ghosts!
(beat)
No, I can't, I'm in "The Mystery
House." I'll tell you everything
later... soon... when I find the
proof, Okay?

Herodotus pushes the button. Glances at the clock.
Lunchtime approaches!

TERESA (V.O)

I heard a strange noise coming
from that room.

Herodotus looks at the storage room. Goes there.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Herodotus turns the light on. Scans the room. Comes closer
to the oak shelves.

Solidly made blocks of shelves are tightly set next to each
other.

Herodotus sees nothing strange. Decides to walk out of the
room when something catches his attention.

He stops. Gazes. Sees one block has six shelves while the
others have only five. Examines it.

An extra shelf is set only 3 inches from the floor.
Herodotus bends down. Slides his hand under the shelf.

Feels something. Presses on it. The block moves.

Behind "the secret door," inside the thick wall, he finds a
large pipe leading up.

The pipe has short extensions on it. No doubts; it is made
to climb on.

Herodotus climbs up. Sees the light coming from the top.

Climbing inside the wall is not easy for solidly built
Herodotus.

Somewhere in the middle of his way, his cell phone RINGS.

Herodotus stops. Looks at the screen. Sees Detective
Clawson is calling him.

He wants to answer but drops the phone. The phone falls
down and does not stop to ring for a while.

HERODOTUS

Shit!

Eager to see what is on the top, he continues to climb.

INT. BENEATH THE ROOF - DAY

Herodotus stands in the center of a large and low attic. Astonished, he stares around.

A bright light enters through the square panes integrated into the roof. A long rope dangles from one of those panes.

The place looks completely furnished. It has everything; a bed, desk, chair, toilet... even a bathtub.

Another three large pipes similar to one that Herodotus used to climb up go down in a different part of the attic.

One of them has an electric engine fixed on it apparently to lift up heavy things.

Herodotus sees a raincoat... a noose.

A few Halloween costumes hang near the bathtub.

He continues to wander around. Approaches the place where Tom Cogan was chained.

Steps on a dirty empty plate. Looks down. Sees a chain attached to a pillar behind the toilet.

HERODOTUS

(curious)

Had a dog?

Herodotus walks to the desk. Passes by a big LCD monitor hung under the roof.

On the desk, there is a remote control, a box of theatrical makeup and a black panel with small buttons on it.

Herodotus pulls a drawer. Sees drugs, medical supplies, and white latex gloves... He closes the drawer.

Takes the remote control. Pushes the "POWER" button. The monitor comes alive.

Thanks to 12 surveillance cameras, he can simultaneously observe almost every room and every corner of "The Mystery House."

HERODOTUS

Wow!

He looks down at the panel. Pushes the buttons "SPEAK" and "MOVIE ROOM." Speaks into a microphone.

INT. MOVIE THEATER ROOM - DAY

HERODOTUS' VOICE (V.O.)

I found you. "A famous thief..."

BACK TO:

INT. BENEATH THE ROOF - DAY

HERODOTUS

...From the attic"

Herodotus releases the buttons. Turns. Sees a grey sheet lying on the bed. Takes it.

FLASH TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

"A ghost" with an ancient Greek face and grey "Greek dress" sits on the edge of Mike's bed.

GHOST

(odd accent)

...I'm the famous "Thief from Baghdad"
and I came to help you...

"The ghost" is Alan...

BACK TO:

INT. BENEATH THE ROOF - DAY

Herodotus drops the sheet onto the bed.

HERODOTUS
"The thief from Baghdad" could
not be a Greek...

Abruptly he HEARS a SOUND. Turns with a concerned face.

One of the many cameras shows a car approaching "The
Mystery House"

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

The car stops. Alan and Alicia step out. A small, black
Labrador jumps out of the car, too. Alicia chases him.

Alan makes his way to the house.

BACK TO:

INT. BENEATH THE ROOF - DAY

Herodotus rushes to the nearest pipe. Climbs down.

Somewhere near the second floor, he realizes - he took the
wrong pipe! Stops.

HERODOTUS
Shit!

He looks down. It is dark over there.

Decides to climb up. His back touches the wall. The wall
moves.

Herodotus steps in a dark room. It is the walk-in closet of
the...

MASTER BEDROOM.

After brief NOISES, he bolts out of the closet with women's
underwear attached to his right leg.

He rushes to the hallway.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alan enters. Herodotus dices the carrots.

ALAN

Mr. Herodotus, we are back. Is lunch ready?

HERODOTUS

Yes... almost.

Herodotus answers without turning. Never stops dicing.

Alan sees that the carrots are not peeled. He looks at Herodotus from head to toe.

There is no underwear attached to his leg.

ALAN

Are you okay, Mr. Herodotus?

HERODOTUS

Yes, sure.

Alan turns to exit.

Herodotus' cell phone RINGS.

Its muffled SOUND coming from the storage room becomes increasingly LOUDER.

Herodotus takes diced carrots. Puts them into the blender. Pushes the button.

He does it fast.

RRRRR...

The blender's NOISE covers the SOUND of the cell phone.

Alan stops near the door for one second... Then exits.

Herodotus sighs. Turns the blender off. Wipes his face. Runs to the...

STORAGE ROOM.

He enters inside the wall. Finds the phone. Closes "the secret door" and steps back in to the...

KITCHEN

He pushes the button intending to answer the call. Alan enters with a gun in his hand.

Herodotus discreetly puts the phone behind the blender.

ALAN

Did you find the attic?

HERODOTUS

(loudly)

I did, Alan!

ALAN

You should not!

Alan gets a silencer out of his pocket.

HERODOTUS

(louder)

You killed them! You are "The thief from Baghdad!"

ALAN

(smiling cynically)

Yes, and I'll be the most famous criminal of--

Alan has a problem putting the silencer on his gun.

He glances at it for an instant and in next moment, he sees a big cutting board coming to his face.

Alan skips back to avoid it. Too late. The board hits him.

Herodotus uses gained seconds to attack Alan. He jumps on him and they are pushed out of the kitchen to the..

DINING ROOM.

While wrestling, the gun slips far from the wrestlers.

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

Alicia plays with the puppy. She wants to catch him but the puppy with a long stick in his mouth escapes.

BACK TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Alan lies on the floor. Herodotus pushes a piece of chair against his throat using all his mass.

Alan resists but the mass of Herodotus prevails.

Alan chokes. Just before he loses conscience, he HEARS two gun SHOTS.

BANG... BANG.

Herodotus drops to the floor wounded.

Alicia with the gun in her hand stands near the door. Her face expresses horror.

Herodotus crawls back. Breathing heavily, he leans his back against a wall.

ALAN

Kill him, Alicia! He wanted to kill me!...

HERODOTUS

Alicia, please... call the police!

ALAN

...He wanted to kill us, kill him!

Wounded in his left leg, Alan stands up as fast as he can.

HERODOTUS

Alan killed everybody--

ALICIA

I don't believe you, Herodotus!

ALAN

He's "The ghost," Alicia. kill him!--

HERODOTUS

Please, just call the police...

Herodotus tries to speak fast as he sees Alan advancing on Alicia.

HERODOTUS

There's a secret attic--

ALAN

Don't listen to him, Alicia! You know his stories...

Limping, Alan approaches Alicia.

ALAN

Give me the gun!

Alicia seems undecided. Does not know what to do, whom to believe.

ALICIA

I'll call the police!

ALAN

Don't call! Give me that--

Trying to grab the gun, Alan jumps toward Alicia.

Alicia mechanically backs up. Steps on the puppy. The puppy YELLS.

Alan and Alicia fall dawn together. Herodotus HEARS a gun SHOT.

ALAN

Oh, my God! Alicia...

Alicia opens her eyes full of pain. She tries to say something...

ALICIA

You did not kill anybody, did you?

Alan does not answer. He looks mad. Alicia closes her eyes.

ALAN

Oh, no! No!

Alan unzips Alicia's jacket...

ALAN
Everything was so great!
You ruined--

Lifts her sweater...

ALAN
Why? Why did you do that?

Herodotus looks sad.

HERODOTUS
(breathing heavily)
I don't know...

Alan rips Alicia's shirt open...

ALAN
You don't know!...

He reveals her bleeding wound...

ALAN
...You never know anything...

A look of anger passes through his face...

ALAN
...Beside your food...

He takes the gun...

ALAN
...And your stories!

Wounded, Alan stands up as fast as he can. Aims...

Herodotus closes his eyes.

BANG! BANG!

Alan collapses.

Herodotus opens his eyes. Sees Detective Clawson.

HERODOTUS
 (himself)
 "No two days are the same..."

DETECTIVE
 What?

THE SIRENS of approaching ambulances MUFFLE Herodotus' voice.

EXT. FRONT OF "THE MYSTERY HOUSE" - DAY

Some PARAMEDICS rush wounded Herodotus and Alicia to an ambulance.

TWO OTHERS carry Alan's covered body.

SEQUENCE OF FLASHS:

INT. ATTIC - DAY

HERODOTUS
 ...His father did not die
 "suddenly" and he never was
 a member of any Satanic Sect
 either...

The big LCD monitor is on. Alan watches it.

One of the cameras shows two GIRLS and their PARENTS standing in front of "The Mystery House."

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
 Alan's plan was simple: sell the
 house, make it look like it's
 haunted and buy it back when
 the price's dropped...

INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alan enters the room. He wears an old man's Halloween costume. Two girls are sleeping in their beds.

Alan takes a nice porcelain doll. Cuts its head off. Leaves the room.

One of the girls opens her eyes.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Alan looks at the monitor. One camera shows Mr. Riddell watching naked children on his computer.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
Maybe he never intended to kill
anybody... Maybe Mr. Riddell
would not leave the house...

Another camera shows Graciela. She sneaks out of the master bedroom.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Graciela looks at herself in the mirror. Smiles.

A nice diamond necklace shines on her neck.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
...Or Alan decided they deserved
to die... We'll never know that...

Alan with a gun in his hand appears behind Graciela. BANG!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alan enters in. The Riddells sleep in their bed.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
...But what we know is that he
killed them...

Alan approaches the bed. BANG! BANG! BANG!

Goes to the nightstand. Grabs an open briefcase full of money.

EXT. WOOD - NIGHT

Alan pushes Graciela's dead body into the grave.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
...And he made it look like Graciela
did it...

INT. ATTIC - EVENING

Alan watches the monitor. One camera shows Herodotus telling a story to Mike and Linda.

Another camera shows Teresa cleaning the kitchen.

INT. ATTIC - EVENING

Alan watches the monitor with great interest. It shows Herodotus telling the story about "The thief from Baghdad" to Teresa.

The other cameras do not show Mike and Linda. They are not at home.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
He probably enjoyed watching his
own "reality show..."

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The dark. A blue glow enters into the room.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
He watched it...

Alan opens the refrigerator. Puts a white powder in Mike's cocktail. Takes the sour cream out. Closes the door.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
...He participated in it.

Alan sees Linda gazing at his direction through the kitchen window. He goes to the storage room.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

HERODOTUS (V.O.)
And he intervened in it when Brad
hired Tom to kill Mike...

Alan sees Linda on the monitor. She approaches the front door and deactivates a security alarm.

Alan stands up. Puts his raincoat on. Glances at the monitor. Sees Tom entering the house.

Alan opens the drawer. Takes a bottle of Chloroform from it. Goes to the pipe.

LATER

Alan stands near the pipe. The cord, dangled from the electric engine moves up. It lifts Tom's senseless body.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)

..Brad lied. He wanted to hide his
crime. Tom never was Linda's lover.
Seems like Alan saved Mike's life.

LATER

Tom chained to the pillar sits on the floor. Alan, wearing a pair of familiar stylish shoes watches the monitor.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)

And when the time came he directed
the show's last episode..

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Alan is not here. The monitor is on.

One of the cameras shows Mike and Linda sleeping in their bed. Alan appears with a syringe in his hand. He approaches Mike.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens. Alan pushes scared Linda into the room.

Tom handcuffed to the bed head with his hands looks confused.

His face shows that he cannot understand what is going on.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

The camera shows naked Linda on top of Tom. Alan appears. Kills them.

LATER

Alan is in the cabinet room. He opens the safe. Takes the money.

HERODOTUS (V.O.)

He had everything planned
very well...

LATER

Alan sits on the edge of Mike's bed. He gives him his gun. Mike closes his eyes.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens. Alan drags Mike's unconscious body into the room.

INT. ATTIC - MORNING

Alan watches the Monitor. It shows Teresa walking in the hallway. Alan smiles.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner. Mike, Herodotus, Dr. Gillmor, and Mrs. Gillmor sit around the table.

HERODOTUS

...He had everything executed very
well. If not for his attic, we
could never know the secret of
"The Mystery House"

Teresa enters. She holds two bottles of red wine.

MR. GILLMOR

I always knew there were no ghosts
in this house!

(looks at Mrs. Gillmor)

Admit it darling... Ghosts do not
exist!

Herodotus uncorks the bottle. Looks at Mrs. Gillmor.

Waiting for a fierce reaction, Mike also looks at Mrs. Gillmor.

But it is Teresa who speaks out first...

TERESA

No, Dr. Gillmor! They exist!
I have seen them before!

MRS. GILLMORE

(delighted)

See?

Mike and Herodotus chuckle. Dr. Gillmor shakes his head.
Looks at them.

DR. GILLMOR

So guys, when we go fishing, hah?

FADE OUT:

THE END