

THE FREQUENCY OF FEAR

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. VICTORIAN MANSION - FOYER - NIGHT

STELLA REESE (29) stands at open front door, waving at unseen friends who've just left. A brief FLASH OF LIGHT followed by a low growl of THUNDER warns of an approaching storm.

STELLA

Thanks for coming Amy, Jim!

She shuts door and sighs. Stella looks cute in her cowgirl outfit, which she fills out quite nicely. The cowboy holster she's wearing holds a walkie-talkie.

She smiles as she looks around foyer -- at fake blood spatters on walls, and the spiderwebs artfully draped from the tall ceiling.

Her smile disappears when her eyes follow staircase steps to the darkness at the top.

LIVING ROOM

TONY REESE (33), sprawled on an old sofa, sips from a beer can. His features are pleasant and his cowboy outfit hangs loosely on his thin frame. In his two-gun holster is a walkie-talkie and a flashlight.

Stella enters the room, takes in the after-party debris littering room and shakes her head.

STELLA

Let's pack up the gear and get out,
Tony. Some bad weather is coming
our way.

Tony drains his beer and stands up.

TONY

Sounds like a plan. Kick-ass party,
huh? No way is Sutter's Halloween
party next year going to top ours.

STELLA

Yeah, we scared the hell out of
'em. They couldn't wait to get the
hell out of here.

TONY

Yeah, the scavenger hunt for the shrunk heads was a little intense.

Stella makes a half-hearted effort at picking up cans and bottles.

STELLA

That sound generator was a dirty trick, though. That thing is scary!

TONY

The secret is having the right subwoofer pumping out the infrasound.

Tony stops her from collecting any more trash.

TONY (CONT'D)

C'mon, Stella, we can come back this weekend and clean up the mess.

Stella nods, crosses to the adjoining dining room.

TONY (CONT'D)

And, of course, you need to pump out the right frequency.

DINING ROOM

Tony follows Stella to the dining table. On table are two laptops and four hard cases. Scattered on table are walkie-talkies and flashlights. In a pile are 12 fist-sized "shrunk heads" that look real.

STELLA

Right. The "frequency of fear."

TONY

It's scientific, Stel. Sound waves under 20 Hertz can cause fear, paranoia, hallucinations --

They stop in front of the two laptops. Each screen is split into four windows, each window showing a grainy green-and-black night-vision image of various rooms in the mansion.

STELLA

Yeah, yeah -- that gray lady ghost in Coventry, England. Wherever the hell that is.

TONY

Exactly. This guy Tandy uncovered a
19 Hertz standing wave in a pub
cellar where the ghost was seen.

STELLA

Sure it wasn't the ale causing the
ghost?

Tony gives her a quick kiss and steps to the adjoining
kitchen.

TONY

I'm going to turn on the lights in
the rest of the house so I can
collect the cameras.

Stella nods, starts packing away the gear.

BASEMENT

The door at the top of the stairs opens and Tony steps
through. He turns on his flashlight and walks down. At bottom
of stairs he stops, opens the cover on fuse box, studies the
markings -- and freezes when he hears faint SKITTERINGS
behind him.

He whips the flashlight around the room but all he sees is
discarded furniture, appliances, and boxes of crap, all
covered in dust and spiderwebs.

He turns back to the fuse box and throws some switches. He
grabs the walkie-talkie and keys it on.

TONY

Hey, Stel, are you there?

STELLA (V.O.)

(filtered)

What's up?

TONY

Would you check to see if the
lights are on?

STELLA

(filtered)

On my way.

He keeps the flashlight beam moving about room.

FOYER

Stella climbs down the stairs from the second floor, illuminated from above by the second-floor hallway light. She stops at bottom of stairs and talks into walkie-talkie.

STELLA

Tony, the lights are on on the second floor. I'm going to check the other rooms down here.

TONY

(filtered)

Thanks, Stel.

Stella puts away walkie-talkie in her holster.

BASEMENT

At top of the stairs, Tony flicks up the light switch by the door and light bulb in room FLARES brightly before exploding, and he catches a glimpse of SHADOWY THINGS fleeing the light.

KITCHEN

Tony all but falls backwards out of the door to basement. He holds on to a counter and takes a deep breath.

TONY

Just my imagination...

He looks at the windows as they rattle and briefly glow from a LIGHTNING FLASH.

A moment later he's stunned by a WOMAN'S AGONIZED SCREAM coming from somewhere within the house. The scream echoes and re-echoes.

DINING ROOM

Tony hurries in from the kitchen and checks the laptops. The eight images are now in normal view since the lights are on.

TONY

Stella! Stella!

(shakes head)

Now I'm channeling Tennessee Williams...

Stella isn't visible in any of the images. He punches the table and runs out of the room. And doesn't see:

INSERT - LAPTOP

The LIGHT GOES OUT in one of the bedrooms and camera automatically switches to night-vision mode: a door from another room slowly opens...and an AMORPHOUS BLACK FORM emerges.

FOYER

Stella comes in from the hallway that leads into foyer and Tony comes in from the other side and they almost collide.

TONY

Thank God you're okay.

Stella looks at the front door as the vertical windows flanking it FLASH brightly, followed by a loud THUNDER boom.

TONY (CONT'D)

Where did the scream come from?

STELLA

Scream? What're you talking about?

TONY

I heard a scream. Scared the hell out of me.

STELLA

There was no scream, Tony.

TONY

What? No!

(beat)

It sounded like...like the scream in my dream...

STELLA

Maybe that machine of yours -- the fear machine -- maybe it temporarily unwired your mind?

Tony shakes his head and runs up the stairs.

Stella follows him with worried eyes -- and is startled when the door is blown open by a gust of wind that sends debris and rain pelting her. She grabs door and struggles to close it.

Outside, a bolt of LIGHTNING spiderwebs the dark sky, and in the flash of light see and ADULT-SIZED FIGURE dashing across yard. The Figure looks like a blob of spreading black ink.

TONY (O.S.)
(from upstairs)
Hello? Is anyone up here?!

Stella manages to close door then scrambles away, scared.

TONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(from upstairs)
Hello? Anyone up here?!

SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY

Stella runs up stairs and stops at top to get her bearings. The long hallway has multiple doorways leading off it.

TONY (O.S.)
(from last room)
Hello? Anyone here?!

Stella puts a hand over her stomach, grimaces, then sprints down hallway to the last room.

BEDROOM

Tony sits on bed, lost in thought. He glances up as Stella pushes into the room looking distraught.

TONY
I can't find her.

STELLA
We have to get out of this damn house. I just saw -- I don't know what I saw!

The lone window in the room starts shaking severely.

TONY
Yes. I feel the fear, too. This is much worse than my infrasound generator.
(beat)
Of course, it could also just be the storm. The lower atmospheric pressure can screw up your nervous system -

STELLA
Enough, Tony! Let's get out!

A sudden BLAST of wind shatters window and glass shards fly at Stella and Tony, who turn away just in time.

The whole house shakes and over the cacophony of sound can be heard the wailing of a TORNADO WARNING SIREN.

TONY

Tornado!

SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY

Stella and Tony dash to the stairwell. Stella suddenly comes to a stop and looks around wildly.

TONY

What?

STELLA

I just ran through something cold.
Freezing!

TONY

That sucks.

He grabs her by an arm and all but drags her down steps.

FOYER

Stella and Tony stumble out of the stairwell, then pause to wipe away glass shards still clinging to them.

Then they get pelted with more glass shards when the windows and front door are blown in.

They cling to each other and fight to remain on their feet. Tony turns to go deeper into the house but Stella digs her feet in.

STELLA

Are you crazy? We have to get to
the basement!

TONY

No! It's not safe!

Stella rips free of his hold.

STELLA

Safer than up here!

Something large CRASHES into another part of the house and the LIGHTS flicker and die.

TONY

Aw shit!

He turns on his flashlight and lets Stella drag him in the opposite direction.

BASEMENT

The door at top of stairs opens and Stella and Tony force their way in. It takes both of them to close it.

Tony's flashlight beam leads the way down. At bottom of the stairs, they collapse to the steps.

STELLA

You're right.

(beat)

The fear down here is...so bad....
And don't tell me it's the fucking
weather!

Tony shines the flashlight shakily around the basement.

TONY

We should be o -

The word dies on his lips when the flashlight moves past a BLACKNESS forming in the dark...

A LOW RUMBLING builds in intensity, and the house starts vibrating violently, and then the HOUSE SHRIEKS as it sheds siding and shingles and bricks and windows.

In the dying flashlight beam the Blackness coalesces into a human shape that drifts closer to Stella and Tony.

The two leap to their feet. Stella backs up a few steps and covers her mouth with her hands to stifle the screams.

The flashlight beam dies but it's not needed:

In the heart of the Blackness erupts a RAGING INFERNO. And in the middle of the fire is a teenage girl:

MANDY

Her body is streaked with writhing veins of molten fire and charred flesh; and her face sloughs off, revealing blackening muscles beneath; and the lipless mouth is open in a perpetual scream of agony; and her lidless eyes are pitiless smoking holes.

BACK TO SCENE

Tony is paralyzed by the horrific sight but he takes an involuntary step toward it.

TONY

Mandy?

Mandy's arms open wide in invitation.

Stella's scream is crushed by the TRAIN ROAR of the tornado smashing full-bore into the house above. She holds on to the bannister for her life as sections of the ceiling peel off, and some of the junk in the basement is sucked out.

But around the burning apparition all is CALM. Tony cries and shivers in mortal fear as he walks into Mandy's welcoming embrace and he lets out an AGONIZED SCREAM as he bursts into flames.

Mandy and Tony and the fire are engulfed by the Blackness, and the Blackness shrinks to a point, then the Blackness shrinks into nothingness.

SILENCE

The tornado has passed.

STELLA

Still clinging to the bannister, sobs quietly.

EXT. VICTORIAN MANSION - DAWN

The once stately mansion is now a spread-out pile of rubble. A disheveled Stella wanders around the debris in a daze.

STELLA

No...no...

FADE OUT.

THE END