

The Paranormal Investigators (P.I.'s)

By

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ACT ONE

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

BATES CRAWFORD(female, 15, short dark hair and glasses) races down an alley towards CAMERA. KADE FINLEY (male, 15, scrawny, shaggy blond hair) sidekick extraordinaire, sprints alongside her. A group of typical teenage jocks give chase.

HEAD JOCK

You wanna flirt with my girlfriend  
you freak? You're dead Bates! Dead!  
Come on! Let's get 'em!

Kade looks back, eyes wide with panic.

KADE

I told you it was a bad idea!  
They're gonna kill us!

BATES

Shut up Kade!

KADE

You shut up Bates!

The end of the alley offers two choices. Angry teens or abandoned Murphy House.

Bates and Kade escape into the house. The jocks don't follow, rumors about the haunted Murphy House run rampant in town. They stand guard outside, trapping Bates and Kade.

INT. MURPHY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Bates and Kade collapse against a dirty wall, panting. The living room is derelict, covered in debris and decay.

KADE

Great, we're stuck in the Murphy  
Murder House. You just had to flirt  
with Dana, didn't you? You flirted  
with her and now we're gonna die in  
here!

Kade begins to mutter angrily to himself more than Bates.

KADE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, my mom is gonna find  
that dirty magazine under my bed!  
Then she's gonna check my browser

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KADE (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
history! I might as well just die  
here.

Kade stops rant and looks up in frustration.

KADE (CONT'D)  
Bates, are you even listening to  
me? You gave me the magazine! You  
flirted Dana. This is all your  
fault! Own it--what are you doing?

BATES  
Look around you!

Bates gestures wildly with her arms, slowly turning around.

BATES (CONT'D)  
We are in the Murphy Murder House!  
How cool is this? Forget about the  
stupid magazine! And your browser  
history! Your mom doesn't even know  
how to turn the computer on! You  
still have a VCR and it's flashing  
12:00!

Kade opens his mouth, angry retort ready. Then closes his  
mouth and nods in agreement.

BATES (CONT'D)  
And you have seen Dana right? What  
self respecting lesbian would not  
flirt with her? I think they'd take  
away my LPGA membership.

Kade stares in disbelief and shakes his head. He looks  
around, focusing on a child's ROCKING HORSE in the corner.

KADE  
Creepy shit. Creepy house full of  
creepy shit.

He continues to speak to himself.

KADE (CONT'D)  
You know, I could've been best  
friends with Jamie Hunter. 2nd  
grade. Gave me his pudding cup,  
said let's be best friends. I mean,  
who doesn't like pudding cups?  
Wouldn't be standing here, in a  
murder house waiting for the walls  
to bleed.

(CONTINUED)

Bates reaches out to touch said wall when Kade frantically bats her hand away.

KADE

What are you doing? Don't disturb  
the murder house!

BATES

I just wanted to see what was  
underneath! It looks like a drawing  
of something!

KADE

Or a gateway to Hell!

Kade again smacks her hand away, receiving another glare from Bates. He glares back.

KADE

Gateway. To. Hell.

Bates rolls her eyes and grabs for the wallpaper, only to be smacked once more by Kade.

KADE

Sorry, that was just reflex that  
time.

CAMERA zooms in on faint PENTAGRAM visible as she lets the wallpaper fall back down.

KADE

What happened here anyway? All I  
know is that it's old and creepy.  
Like the school librarian.

BATES

I heard my parents talking about it  
once. Old man Murphy was into some  
black magic devil stuff. He went  
crazy one night and killed his  
wife. He killed himself before the  
police got here.

Kade gives Bates a blank stare.

BATES

What? What's the matter?

KADE

And you're excited to be here? What  
is wrong with you?

BATES  
How much time do you have?

Bates turns and starts walking away from Kade.

KADE  
Where are you going?

BATES  
(Gestures up with her hand)  
Going upstairs!

She takes two steps upstairs when they hear a door creak loudly above them. She pauses mid-step, turns around and points in the opposite direction.

BATES (CONT'D)  
Going to the kitchen!

She retreats and they walk through the living room to the kitchen. CAMERA pans out wide to catch the ROCKING HORSE as it starts rocking back and forth.

INT. MURPHY HOUSE KITCHEN - SAME

Kade starts coughing as the dust in the room gets kicked up. Bates smirks and pounds on her best friend's back.

BATES  
Time to quit smoking?

KADE  
Shut up. We're probably gonna get the black lung or something.

BATES AND KADE  
If you suffer from mesothelioma...

Footsteps above interrupt their infomercial. Eyes snap up to follow the sound, slowly making it's way over them. It pauses, then continues in the direction of the stairs.

BATES  
Do you think those jerks got in here?

KADE  
How would they get in here? We were out front! It's the Murphy Murder House! I told you not to disturb the Murphy Murder House but no! (throws hands in the air) You never listen to me!

(CONTINUED)

The kitchen door slams shut. Cabinet doors swing open and close, rattling loudly. Bates and Kade cling to each other as the chaos intensifies.

It all stops, suddenly. The basement door creaks open, beckoning. They share a look

KADE

Yeah, no. Gateway to Hell.

The kitchen door violently slams open, creating a hole in the wall behind it. They scream, and make a run for it.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CLOSED MARSHALL MENTAL INSTITUTE - NIGHT -  
PRESENT

Bates and Kade, (now 30 years old), stand in front of the abandoned Marshall Mental Institute, a monstrous dark building.

KADE

This is such a bad idea...

BATES

Shut up!

KADE

You shut up!

They reach the steps and begin to climb. Bates forgets to mention the missing top step to Kade, smirking as he awkwardly misses the step and stumbles off to the side.

BATES

Are you drunk?

KADE

I swear to God, sometimes it's like you're still 15.

BATES

I wish I could quit you too!

They stop in front of a large set of double doors, focus is on the OMINOUS RUSTED NO TRESPASSING SIGN. Bates points at it as Kade laughs.

KADE

I still can't believe someone actually gave you a key for this place!

(CONTINUED)

BATES

I was a little shocked as well until I met the real estate agent for the property. Remember Dana?

KADE

Dana from high school?

A smug nod and a wink from Bates confirms it.

BATES

Yup, still hot! And not with that jerk anymore. At least, I hope not since she gave me her number!

KADE

I don't even know why that surprises me. Maybe you two can go get a drink later, providing neither one of us gets shanked by a homeless person in here.

Bates unlocks the PADLOCK chained around the double doors and with all the stylings of a Price is Right model, throws the doors open.

INT. MARSHALL MENTAL INSTITUTE - NIGHT

Bates and Kade step forward, FLASHLIGHTS on. A FADED DIRECTIONAL SIGN offers up the following areas: ADMITTANCE, SHOCK THERAPY, ACTIVITY ROOM, LOUNGE, HYDROTHERAPY, and MEDICAL.

BATES

Well, where should we start?

KADE

Wow, all those places sound like they'd be super fun!

Bates holds out her hand, indicating each separate area at a time as if they were vowels on *Wheel of Fortune*.

KADE

And no Bates, Vanna White'ing doesn't help either.

BATES

What's that Lassie? Timmy wants to start at the top and work our way down? Good plan! Let's go!

Decision made, by Bates as usual, the duo trek upstairs.

(CONTINUED)

After several empty rooms, the last room in the hallway yields an OLD HOSPITAL BED tucked away in the corner, a WHEELCHAIR resting at the foot of the bed. Both have RESTRAINTS attached to them.

KADE

I don't care if I go spinning crop  
circle crazy, please do not put me  
in a place like this!

BATES

Ditto...

CAMERA pans a wall full of graffiti, "It was more fun in Hell" repeated, written from ceiling to floor. Opposite wall shows rows and rows of disfigured stick people.

Photos and video of the bed, wheelchair and graffiti are taken, Bates and Kade lost in somber thoughts of how life must have been here.

They get three doors down when they hear a faint rattle.

KADE

Please tell me that was your fidget  
spinner...

BATES

I don't have a fidget spinner!

Bates pauses for a second.

BATES

Well, I do have one but I didn't  
bring with me!

Faint rattle occurs again, followed by a slight grating noise, like something being dragged across the floor.

They backtrack to the room with the bed and wheelchair in it.

KADE

So, this could be the asbestos  
talking that I'm sure we're  
inhaling here, but wasn't the  
wheelchair in that corner over  
there? At the end of the bed?

BATES

Yeah.

As they stare at the wheelchair, they don't notice the ghostly figure of a nurse silently walk past the outside of the room.

It isn't until she's passed that Bates registers something in her peripheral vision and spins around. Kade looks out as well, questioningly.

Bates shrugs her shoulders, unsure when she feels something bump against the backs of her legs. She freezes, looks over her shoulder.

The wheelchair of nightmares is directly behind her.

Kade looks down, then quickly back up at Bates.

BATES AND KADE

Crap...

They scramble out of the room and try to compose themselves.

BATES

OK, let's just take a moment here and remember, this is why we came here! To see evidence of the paranormal!

KADE

What's this 'we' stuff? You got someone in your pocket? Mission accomplished! Let's go home!

BATES

Back to the first floor?

KADE

I'll take it! Whatever gets me closer to the door!

At the end of the hallway, out of their sight, stands a nurse, LARGE BLACK BLEEDING EYES AND MOUTH, fixated on Bates and Kade as they walk away. Then she turns and walks away.

Back downstairs, they enter an old operating room with a GURNEY in the middle of the floor and a dirty cracked SINK in the corner.

DIAGRAMS OF HUMAN ANATOMY cover the walls. Crude dark writing on the back wall proclaims "I taste like the dreams of mad men."

(CONTINUED)

KADE

Well, (pauses) this is a happy place.

BATES

I read that this place used to perform some of the first lobotomies here. Depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, hell, headaches or backaches, everything could be fixed with a ice pick to the eye socket (mimes jabbing something in her eye).

KADE

Probably cheaper and less painful than a chiropractor.

Bates reaches out to touch the diagrams on the walls.

BATES

The good Dr. Marshall here thought all mental illnesses were caused by infections. So if he cut out or removed the infection, the patient is cured, right?

She pauses. Kade emphatically shakes his head no.

BATES (CONT'D)

So he would remove people's teeth with pliers, thinking that's where infections started. When that didn't work, he started removing other body parts, trying to find the infection. He would just keep removing pieces of people.

KADE

Why can't we ever have normal conversations? Like, let's talk about women. I like women, you like women. I'm not even jealous that you have more game than I do! I made my peace with that back in high school.

BATES

You are a great wingman! (pointing at Kade emphatically)

(CONTINUED)

KADE

Exactly! So let's talk about women.  
And not about women losing their  
teeth or other body parts.

Conversation stops with the very distinct sound of a door shutting. Kade closes his eyes in resignation.

Bates walks over to the door and yanks. No luck. She rattles the door handle and throws her weight against it, nothing.

In the silence, she hears dripping coming from behind her. She turns and eyes Kade.

BATES

Tell me you didn't just pee  
yourself!

KADE

No, but I'm seriously thinking  
about it.

More drips. Bates, her phone out, videotaping, walks towards to sink. Upon inspection, BLOOD RED DROPS are appearing, accumulating faster and faster.

She backs away rapidly and steps on something hard. It scrunches between her shoe and the linoleum. Bending down, she picks up a TOOTH and once she realizes what it is, she drops it and yells.

KADE

I don't want to know what it is, do  
I?

BATES

It's a tooth!

Bates looks up at Kade, and notices Kade hypnotized by something behind her. She shakes her head, vehemently.

BATES

I'm not gonna look. I'm good. I'm  
ready to go. Gonna call it a night.  
Gonna give Dana a call, maybe get a  
late supper, cross her off my  
bucket list. Yup, ready to go...

KADE

Bates... You need to look!

Bates slowly turns her head at whatever has Kade captivated.

(CONTINUED)

In the corner stands the shadowy figure of a doctor, complete with STAINED SCRUBS and STETHOSCOPE around his neck. He takes one jerky step towards the two of them, a pair of BLOODY PLIERS in his hand and an ICE PICK in the other.

BATES

Run!

They run for the door, slamming into it with the force of both their freaked out bodies, causing it to fly open. They don't stop until they are back outside.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

INT. BATES AND KADE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bates posts the photos and video from the night before on their Youtube channel and reads the comments.

Most are not what would be considered helpful or what passes for constructive criticism.

BATES

Hey, listen to this! 'You guys should open your own ghost hunting firm and film it! I'd pay to watch you two dorks make idiots of yourselves!'

KADE

Well, that's completely unnecessary.

BATES

Here's the thing though, we should totally do that!

KADE

You want us to make idiots of ourselves? I'm so confused as to what we've been doing so far...

BATES

No, not that! (throws pen at Kade)  
We should start an actual paranormal investigating service for hire! Other people out there have to be experiencing the paranormal and who can they call to help them?

KADE

You're just asking me to insert a Ghostbusters reference here.

BATES

As long as it's the Paul Feig one!

KADE

Yeah, I know, you're saving yourself for Kate Mckinnon...

(CONTINUED)

BATES

You say that like it's a bad thing! Seriously though, they could call us! Remember what happened to us? People laughed, we were a joke.

KADE

Bates, we came running out of that stupid house screaming 'It's haunted! We're gonna to die!' to anyone who was within shouting distance.

Kade pauses as he thinks.

KADE (CONT'D)

Hell, even to some that weren't within shouting distance. Point being, we didn't really use much tact.

BATES

Tact or no tact, we knew what happened in there and we got made fun of and made to feel like crap about it. We wouldn't make people feel like crap! We could really help people!

KADE

You're serious about this, aren't you?

BATES

I have never been more serious about anything in my life, (pauses) other than my hatred of Crocs.

KADE

Fair enough.

BATES

Who better to investigate and help people than us? We've experienced our share of the paranormal.

KADE

We have a tendency to run out of buildings, screaming as loud as we can. Something to work on if we want to instill some trust in our customers. And we might need to, oh, I don't know, actually learn

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KADE (cont'd)  
how to conduct a proper  
investigation? Not just, well that  
looks creepy, we should check it  
out!

BATES  
Please, we have the Internet and  
Netflix. How else does anyone learn  
anything these days?

KADE  
And you think people will actually  
hire us to do this?

Their office door opens. MRS. STRONG (older woman, in early  
60's) enters with her daughter DELANEY STRONG (30, dark  
hair, dark eyes, cynicism oozing off of her).

MRS. STRONG  
Hi, are you the two that post the  
videos on Youtube, the Paranormal  
Investigators?

BATES  
That depends, are we being sued?

MRS. STRONG  
No, my name is Mrs. Strong and this  
is my daughter Delaney. I want to  
hire you. I think my house is  
haunted.

BATES  
Yahtzee!

KADE  
Your house is haunted? Like,  
actually haunted? Freaky stuff  
happening, not just mice or  
squirrels in the attic?

Mrs. Strong exchanges a glance with her daughter, who shakes  
her head, not thrilled to be a part of this.

MRS. STRONG  
Yes, I think so. I mean, I don't  
know if I have mice or squirrels in  
the attic but I don't think they're  
the problem, if I do. What do you  
think Delaney?

(CONTINUED)

DELANEY STRONG

That this is a complete waste of time.

BATES

Please, tell us how you really feel! Hey, wait a minute... have we met?

Kade elbows Bates in the side, shooting her a glare.

KADE

Bates, not the time. That's not even a good line! I admire your spirit though.

Bates steps away from Kade, fixated on the brunette in front of her, trying to place her.

BATES

No, really. You look familiar...

Bates snaps and points excitedly at Delaney.

BATES

Now I know! You were at the lecture at Smith College a couple weeks ago!

DELANEY

Nope, you got the wrong girl.

KADE

What lecture are you talking about?

BATES

That one by the guy who is the demonologist. Remember? You didn't wanna go, you said he looked like our fifth grade teacher and you wouldn't be able to pay attention?

KADE

Oh yeah! Uncanny resemblance, freaked me out!

BATES

Right?

BATES

But you (turns and points at Delaney again) you were there! You were in the row in front of me. I would remember those legs anywhere!

(CONTINUED)

Kade facepalms while Delaney looks unsure if she should be offended or flattered.

DELANEY

I have no idea what you're talking about!

BATES

It was you! You stayed after to talk to the guy. I know, because I wanted to talk to you... I mean, talk to him. About ghosts. And demons. And stuff. But you were there-

Delaney throws her hands up in exasperation and interrupts.

DELANEY

Fine! I was there! I wanted to get some information about what was going on at my mom's house. There had to be an explanation. And not this haunted ghost crap you two are trying to sell.

Bates clutches her chest and exchanges a wounded look with Kade.

BATES

Look, we got off to a rocky start. My name is Bates and this is Kade. Whether you believe it or not, it sounds like you are having problems of the paranormal nature, which is our specialty.

Delaney has heard enough.

DELANEY

No, nope. We're not doing this. Let's go mom.

Delaney turns around to walk out of the office but her mom grabs her arm.

MRS. STRONG

Delaney! You didn't want to listen to me, or help me! So I found help on my own! You don't have to be here! You can leave if you want.

Mrs. Strong and Delaney have a quiet stare down until Bates tries to break the ice.

(CONTINUED)

BATES

Look, Delaney, that's a beautiful name by the way... She doesn't mean that, you should definitely stay. Can I get you something to drink? Perhaps my phone number? Email address? Twitter?

Kade reaches out to smack Bates upside her head.

KADE

Please stop, you're embarrassing yourself and you're embarrassing me.

BATES

Sorry. Let's try this again. Mrs. Strong, why do you think your house is haunted?

MRS. STRONG

At first I thought I was hearing things and that maybe I was just leaving doors open. I don't know, I didn't really know what else to think.

Mrs. Strong stops, looks away from everyone, lost in thought.

MRS. STRONG

But the other night, the other night I knew I wasn't seeing things or making things up.

BATES

What happened?

INT. MRS. STRONG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Mrs. Strong sits, flipping through a MAGAZINE. A light scratching is heard faintly over the sounds of the television. She puts the magazine down and mutes the TV. She cocks her head to the side, trying to place the noise.

It comes again, louder, abruptly, and she jumps slightly in her chair, placing her hand against her suddenly racing heart. It lasts only second before it's quiet again.

She goes back to her puzzle, oblivious to the growing dark shadow that begins slowly creeping up the wall behind her, closer and closer.

She turns once again, feeling unnerved. Her eyes widening at the sight in front of her and her mouth opens in a scream as the scratching noise resumes and the shadows overwhelm her.

INT. BATES AND KADE'S OFFICE - DAY - END FLASHBACK

The three surrounding Mrs. Strong listen to her intensely as she finishes.

MRS. STRONG

I've never been that scared in my entire life! Shadows aren't supposed to move like that! Shadows aren't supposed to attack you!

Bates and Kade eye each other excitedly.

BATES  
Shadow people!

KADE  
Holy crap!

Delaney and her mother look at them in disbelief.

DELANEY

What the hell are shadow people?

KADE

Shadow people are dark masses, that look like the outlines of people but don't have any real form or weight to it, they're not solid. They're usually thought of as leftover spirits, ghosts.

BATES

People think there are different types of shadow people. Some act as protectors, or guardians. Simply there to watch over us. But others are dark, evil, demonic entities. How did you feel when you saw it?

MRS. STRONG

I was terrified! This large black mass was coming right at me! It felt like it was going to hurt me.

BATES  
Don't think that sounds like a good shadow person...

KADE  
I would concur.

(CONTINUED)

BATES

Mrs. Strong, we would be happy to come out to your place and investigate.

MRS. STRONG

Oh thank you so much! I feel better already! Delaney, isn't that great?

DELANEY STRONG

Super. Why don't you go on out to the car mom and I'll give the two amigos here our address OK?

Mrs. Strong pats her daughter on her shoulder. With a relieved smile at Bates and Kade, who return it happily, she walks out of the office.

As soon as she leaves, Delaney turns to Bates, her finger already in her face.

DELANEY

Listen up ghostbuster!

Bates points at herself questioningly.

DELANEY

This is my mom we're talking about! I don't know what actually happened but so help me god, if you are trying to take advantage of her, I will kick your...

Bates hastily interrupts her.

BATES

Whoa! Easy! I'm not trying to do anything here other than help your mother.

Delaney doesn't like what's happening but she doesn't see anything in Bates other than someone genuinely wanting to help.

BATES (CONT'D)

Trust me, I know what it's like when something happens that you can't explain and no one believes you. It sucks. I wouldn't do that to your mother. I wouldn't do that to anyone.

(CONTINUED)

Delaney nods her head slowly, still not looking away from Bates. She grabs a piece of paper off a desk and writes down her mother's address and phone number.

BATES

You should probably put your number down too. I mean, just in case we can't get a hold of your mother.

With an exasperated look, Delaney adds her cell number underneath her mother's.

BATES (CONT'D)

Just saying, cell reception. It can be sketchy sometimes.

DELANEY STRONG

Please call before you come over.

BATES AND KADE

(waving)

Bye!

It's takes all of ten seconds after Delaney leaves before Bates turns to Kade, a determined look in her eye, some might say it's the eye of the tiger.

BATES

Cue the 80's training montage because it's go time!

INT. BATES AND KADE'S OFFICE - MORNING, AFTERNOON, EVENING AND BEYOND - MONTAGE

-Bates sitting at the computer watching every reality ghost hunting show on Netflix and scribbling notes frantically

-Kade searching the Internet on ghost hunting procedures from actual paranormal investigative firms

-Bates sitting at the computer watching *The Exorcist* and scribbling notes frantically

-Kade searching the Internet for proper investigative tools needed for a paranormal investigation

-Bates sitting at the computer watching *Ghostbusters* and scribbling notes frantically

-Kade ordering all the proper tools needed for a paranormal investigation

(CONTINUED)

-Bates sitting at the computer watching *Poltergeist* and scribbling notes frantically

-Kade changing the password for the Netflix account

-Bates and Kade driving around town, picking up all the proper tools needed for a paranormal investigation as Bates pouts about Kade changing the Netflix password

END MONTAGE

EXT. STRONG HOUSE - DUSK

They arrive at Mrs. Strong's house and an already skeptical Delaney greets them.

It only gets worse when she is presented with flowers from Bates.

KADE  
(whispered from the corner of  
his mouth)  
When the hell did you get flowers?

A nonchalant shrug from Bates is his answer.

Delaney takes the flowers from an eager Bates with a muted thanks and ushers them inside.

INT. STRONG HOUSE - DUSK

Mrs. Strong greets them in the living room and the four of them sit down.

Bates shoves Kade out of the way to sit next to Delaney on the couch.

BATES  
I know we talked briefly at our  
office about what's been happening  
but we were hoping you could give  
us some more information.

KADE  
Like, when did you first notice  
something happening, was it  
something in particular?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. STRONG

I first noticed something was going on when I started finding doors open that I swore I shut. It wasn't a big deal, I blamed the wind. I knew it was something more when I closed the basement door and it popped right back open in front of me. I knew I latched it but I watched it with my own eyes as it just opened right back up.

KADE

It's always the basement!

BATES

Right? Other than saving you in a tornado, what good are they, really?

DELANEY

Hey, Tweedledee and Tweedledum, how about you stay on topic huh? What happened after that?

MRS. STRONG

I tried to put it out of my mind, tried to tell myself it's just an old house, it's drafty and things like this happen. I didn't want it to be anything else.

DELANEY

Mom...

Mrs. Strong tries to smile reassuringly at Delaney, sitting across from her as she continues.

MRS. STRONG

I started seeing things, just real quick glimpses, out of the corner of my eye. I'd turn and look and there wouldn't be anything there. I didn't know what to do.

DELANEY

Why didn't you tell me?

MRS. STRONG

I did. You wanted to take me to get my eyes checked, remember? What was it you said, cataracts?

Delaney looks away, shame filters in. Bates pats her shoulder in sympathy. To her amazement, she doesn't get punched for it.

(CONTINUED)

Mrs. Strong continues her story.

MRS. STRONG

I would start finding things in odd places, places I know I didn't leave them in. Magazines, newspapers, TV remote. I'd set it down and the next thing I know it's in another room.

Bates leans closer to Delaney and whispers to her.

BATES

That happens to me all the time. It may not be a paranormal thing.

DELANEY

Oh, so it's an idiot thing?

BATES

I feel like you say that with affection. (pause) Also, you smell really nice. And I mean that in most non creepy way possible.

Delaney elbows her and gestures for her mom to continue.

MRS. STRONG

I didn't feel threatened by what was happening, just unsettled. The threatening came later. I was watching TV one night and the lights started flickering. When I got up, they went out completely and I knew, I just knew there was someone watching me. I couldn't move, I just stood there. The lights came back on and I saw it. This shadow, just standing there, looking back at me.

BATES

What did you do?

MRS. STRONG

I closed my eyes and when I opened them up, it was gone.

Delaney quickly stands up and faces her mom, upset clear on her face.

(CONTINUED)

DELANEY STRONG

You never told me that happened!  
Why didn't you say anything?

MRS. STRONG

You didn't want to hear it. I don't  
blame you, I would've thought I  
sounded crazy if I heard it. I  
wondered myself. But I know what I  
saw.

KADE

We believe you Mrs. Strong. And  
we're gonna do our best to figure  
out what's going on here.

MRS. STRONG

Thank you so much! You have no idea  
how relieved I am that at least  
someone believes me! That I'm not  
crazy!

Delaney feels like she has let down her mother. Bates moves to comfort her. Delaney glares and Bates nonchalantly runs her hand through her hair, as if that was the plan all along.

BATES

Mrs. Strong, if you don't mind,  
we're gonna go ahead and get our  
equipment set up. We have some  
night vision cameras and audio  
recording stuff as well as a  
thermal imaging camera.

KADE

I thought we didn't have the money  
for the thermal imaging camera.

BATES

Yeah, about that. You got a credit  
limit increase on your credit card,  
did you know that?

KADE

No, I was not aware of that.

BATES

Remember that the next time you  
change the Netflix password on me.

Bates and Kade start bringing in equipment. They set up cameras in the living room, in the kitchen also getting the basement door, in Mrs. Strong's bedroom and one in the basement.

INT. MRS. STRONG'S KITCHEN - DUSK

After set up, Bates, Kade and Delaney are in the kitchen area, waiting for complete darkness. Mrs. Strong leaves.

Bates and Kade raid the refrigerator after Delaney reluctantly gave them permission.

DELANEY

Earlier, you said you knew what it was like to have something happen to you, that you couldn't explain. Was that a selling point or did you actually have something to back that up?

Bates looks at Delaney for a moment before setting her JAR OF PICKLES down.

BATES

When we were fifteen, we got chased into this creepy old abandoned house in our neighborhood.

DELANEY

You got chased into it?

KADE

Yeah, our fearless leader thought it would be a good job to piss off the biggest jerk in our class. We had two options, haunted house or beat down.

DELANEY

Do I even wanna know what you did and why you were being chased?

KADE

You gotta understand, this guy was, probably still is, a huge jerk.

Bates happily interrupts.

BATES

Who is no longer dating Dana! Got that cleared up!

(CONTINUED)

KADE

Anyway... Typical high school bully. And he made our lives a daily hell. Gave Bates crap nonstop about her, well... herself.

BATES

He started in on me one day, about not being the most... girly girl. I said I didn't understand why he had such a problem with it because his girlfriend sure didn't.

DELANEY STRONG

Ahh... I can see that not going over well.

KADE

Not so much, no. The best part though, his girlfriend is standing there and Bates winks at her and she winks back! So he flips out, rallies the jockians and let the chase begin!

BATES

We really should've gone out for track or the cross country with the amount of running we did. It's kinda a shame.

KADE

We take off, and end up at the aforementioned Murphy Murder House. They chased us into the house but they wouldn't go in themselves. And Bates over here, well, she was like a kid in a candy store.

BATES

It was pretty awesome!

KADE

Yeah, well, we have very different definitions of the word awesome. And it stopped being awesome when we realized we weren't the only ones in the house!

BATES

There was a slight dip in the awesomeness at that point.

(CONTINUED)

KADE

Footsteps above us, kitchen door slams shut, cabinet doors start opening and closing on their own. Pretty sure I peed a little. We ran, screaming like little girls.

BATES

Anyway, we told everyone what happened, no one believed us. Called us crazy. Didn't even give us a chance. Not even our parents.

Bates and Kade exchange a look, lost in memories until Delaney breaks the silence.

DELANEY

So, I gotta ask... what happened with the jerk who chased you?

BATES

Oh, he was waiting for us the next day and kicked my ass. Typical day for me.

Kade nudges Bates with a shoulder.

Delaney shoots her a perplexed look, not sure if she should feel bad or be exasperated.

Bates quietly goes back to her jar of pickles.

INT. MRS. STRONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOVING

They start the investigation in the living room. Bates has the AUDIO RECORDER in her hand and begins walking around the living room.

BATES

I'm talking to the spirits that are in the house with us. Can you show us something? Can you give us a sign?

Bates' first question sets off an impromptu sing-a-long.

KADE

I saw the sign, and it opened up my eyes...

BATES

I saw the sign, life is demanding, without understanding

Big finish, includes 90's dance moves.

(CONTINUED)

BATES AND KADE

I saw the sign and it opened up my eyes, I saw the sign. No one's gonna drag you up to get into the light where you belong. But where do you belong?

Both take an exhausted bow at the end, out of breath.

BATES

Holy crap, I forgot how much energy the running man took!

DELANEY

You're both idiots. What are you doing?

KADE

Have you heard of EVP's? Electronic Voice Phenomenon? we try to capture sounds or voices from ghosts. We ask questions and then listen back to the recordings.

DELANEY

And that is an actual thing?

BATES

Oh yeah! Some ghost hunters were investigating an old tuberculosis hospital where children had died. They did an EVP session there and when they listened, you could hear a little girl singing, clear as day, volume going up and down, like she was moving around.

DELANEY

Seriously?

KADE

Yeah, it was pretty chilling and that's not even a creepy one where some demon voice shouts 'Get out' or 'die' or something.

The investigation continues in the living room as Kade takes photos and uses the THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA, looking for cold spots.

DELANEY

Cold spots?

(CONTINUED)

KADE

People believe that ghosts pull energy when they form. This makes the surrounding areas colder than the rest. Cold spots could be an indicator of paranormal activity.

With no activity and no noticeable temperature drops, they move on.

Out of sight, the TV turns on. It's fuzzy white, static, until something dark, ominous, crosses in front of it. Then it turns back off.

They enter Mrs. Strong's bedroom. Bates repeats the EVP procedure. Kade reads a slight drop in temperature in the room but no other signs.

They move on.

INT. MRS. STRONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT - BASEMENT

Bates stands at the top of a steep set of wooden stairs and flips a wall switch, casting the basement in a dull, yellow light.

With Kade and Delaney behind her, she inches down the steps.

At the bottom of the steps, Bates takes a moment, looking around. She readies the audio recorder and steps forward.

BATES

Give us a sign that there is someone here that would like to communicate with us.

Kade slides around Bates and starts taking photos with the thermal imaging camera. Delaney remains on the bottom step.

BATES

Can you close the door, turn the light off, move something? Let us know you're here?

Bates looks questioningly at Kade, silently checking if he is getting anything. Negative.

Bates moves deeper into the basement.

BATES

Come on! Show yourself! What, you can scare an old lady but you won't do anything in front of us? Pansy!

(CONTINUED)

Delaney leans forward from the steps and loudly whispers to Bates and Kade.

DELANEY

I may be new to this but is provoking whatever this is a good thing? Do we want a pissed off ghost?

KADE

Would you rather whatever this is do something to Bates or to your mother?

Delaney glances over at Bates.

DELANEY

Oh, Bates for sure!

KADE

That's what I thought.

BATES

I can hear you, you know!

DELANEY

Not trying to hide anything!

Bates finishes walking around the basement and they head upstairs.

INT. MRS. STRONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOVING

Back upstairs, they continue the investigation but there are no noises, no doors opening or closing and no shadow people.

Delaney only grows more and more frustrated as the night goes on with no evidence to show for it.

Finally, around 3:00am, they call it quits. They pack up their equipment in silence, as Delaney stews besides them.

BATES

So, we'll go over the evidence and let you know what we find. In the mean time--

Delaney explodes mid-sentence.

DELANEY

What evidence? Nothing happened tonight! No ghostly shadows or

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DELANEY (cont'd)  
doors opening and closing,  
mysterious noises. Nothing! I don't  
know what my mom saw but I didn't  
see anything. And she's gonna be  
crushed because you two idiots sat  
here and encouraged her!

KADE  
Hey wait a minute! (pause) I know  
it doesn't seem like we got  
anything but we don't know that  
yet!

Delaney has had enough.

DELANEY  
Whatever. I don't care. It was a  
waste of time and now I have to try  
and tell my mom her house isn't  
haunted. We shouldn't have done  
this. Can you guys just go? Please?

Bates nods dejectedly and her and Kade walk out the door.  
She turns at the last minute to catch Delaney's eye.

BATES  
Call me? (pause) I mean, if  
anything happens? You could call me  
and I'd, we, would come right over!  
No matter the time! Like, lickety  
split.

DELANEY  
Yeah, I don't think that's gonna  
happen.

Kade pulls Bates toward the car. He waves at Delaney as she  
closes the door and the two get in the car. They sit in the  
car for a quiet moment before Bates turns to Kade.

BATES  
I just used the words 'lickety  
split' out loud. (pause) In a  
conversation. (pause) With a  
gorgeous woman.

Kade stares straight ahead.

KADE  
Yeah...

Bates hangs her head in dismay as Kade starts the car.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BATES AND KADE'S OFFICE - DAY

A depressed Bates sits behind her desk, absentmindedly twirling a pen as she stares off into space.

Across the room, Kade sits at his desk. He glances at Bates with a worried look.

KADE

Hey, what's up? You OK?

BATES

Just disappointed about last night, you know? I feel bad for Mrs. Strong.

KADE

This doesn't have anything to do with Delaney chewing your ass, does it? I know you like her.

BATES

Well, (pauses) that didn't help anything. I don't know, I just don't have a good feeling about it.

KADE

That could be because you actually used the word 'lickety split' last night.

Bates closes her eyes and leans back in embarrassment.

BATES

(still can't believe it)  
Please don't remind me.

KADE

I'm afraid that one's gonna get years and years of mileage! Have you gone through the recordings and footage from last night?

BATES

No, not yet. (pauses) Probably no point in it.

Kade looks at Bates expectantly. She heaves a sigh and pulls her laptop towards her. She puts on her HEADPHONES and brings up the footage.

(CONTINUED)

After an hour of silence, broken only by the clicking of keys, Bates jumps up excitedly, sending her desk chair rolling back against the wall.

BATES  
Holy shit!

Bates struggles to stand up, headphones still on and connected to the laptop. After an awkward dance, she manages to rip the headphones off and stand upright.

Kade looks over at her, gestures for her to continue.

KADE  
What? What is it?

BATES  
Get over here! You need to see this! (beckons Kade over frantically)

Kade leans over the desk to see what Bates is looking at. The dark footage is of the kitchen, showing the table and chairs where they had sat earlier.

KADE  
What am I looking at? Nothing's happening.

BATES  
Just wait! You'll see it!

Kade leans forward, squinting, when he sees it. The chair he sat in that night moves.

It slides back from the table as if someone was sitting there and they had gotten up. There is no one in sight.

KADE  
Holy shit!

The video continues. The chair slides back in. Then it abruptly slides back out from the table again, more forcefully as the basement door swings opens.

Bates and Kade watch as they see the TV turn on and off, multiple times.

They see themselves on camera, walk back into the living room. When Delaney enters, a black shadowy figure follows behind her as she walks by.

The shadow stops in front of the camera, turns, faces it head on. It tilts it's head as if thinking.

(CONTINUED)

Then the black mass rushes at the camera, causing both Bates and Kade to yell and back away from the laptop.

BATES

We have to go back there! We gotta go back now!

KADE

And do what? Ask whatever's there to politely leave?

BATES

We have to do something!

KADE

I agree but let's figure out what first!

A shared moment of silence as Bates and Kade think. Then they look at each as the same idea hits both of them.

BATES AND KADE

Freddie!

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Angry group of parishioners surround a blond woman with her hands up. The blond woman is Freddie (30's, eccentric, unfiltered). A large BAPTISM TUB behind her.

FREDDIE

I think we all need to just calm down!

ANGRY MAN

Calm down? Calm down? You want me to calm down?

FREDDIE

Yes, you've said it three times now, so I think you get what I'm asking.

Angry mob closes in on Freddie.

FREDDIE

Look, this was my first baptism!

(CONTINUED)

ANGRY MAN

And you ruined it! You ruined my son's baptism!

FREDDIE

I don't necessarily think I ruined it...

ANGRY MAN

You dunked my kid in a large tub of water, repeatedly. And while my son was floundering away, my wife asked if he found Jesus and you asked was if she was sure this was where he fell in!

FREDDIE

Yes, (pause) in hindsight, maybe we did NOT need a moment of levity right there.

The mob surges forward and Freddie decides it's time to take her leave. She ducks around the crowd and heads for the door.

FREDDIE

Please don't forget to call me for all your priestly needs! I make house calls!

CUT TO:

INT. BATES AND KADE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bates picks up the phone.

BATES

I'll call her but you pack up this stuff. We gotta show it to Delaney!

BATES

(into phone)

Hey Freddie! It's Bates. Yeah, listen. We have some priestly needs. (pause) What? No it's not a baptism.

Bates and Kade exchange a confused look.

BATES

(into phone)

It's a house cleansing. Yeah, a house cleansing. Seriously? Watch

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BATES (cont'd)  
Poltergeist and the Exorcist on  
Netflix! We'll be over shortly!

Bates hangs up and nods to Kade. He packs up their laptop.

They grab their things and run out the door.

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

EXT. STRONG HOUSE - NIGHT

They pull up as Mrs. Strong and Delaney run out, looking terrified as the door slams shut behind them on its own.

Bates and Kade jump out of the car and run over to where Mrs. Strong and Delaney are standing, looking back at the house in horror.

BATES

What's going on? What's happening?

DELANEY

I never thought that I would say this, but I'm actually happy to see you Bates! Something's going on in that house!

KADE

What do you mean, something's going on in the house?

DELANEY

Did I stutter? I mean something's going on in that house! I don't know what it is but I know that it's probably your fault!

BATES AND KADE

Hey!

Delaney faces Bates and begins yelling again while poking her in the chest with her finger.

DELANEY

It has to be your fault! Nothing was happening. We spent the night in there, and nothing happened. You probably have hours of footage of nothing happening and now all of a sudden my mom is living in the Poltergeist house!

BATES

Um, (pauses) actually, about that hours of footage of nothing...

KADE

We have something to show you.

(CONTINUED)

Bates pulls her LAPTOP out of the car and opens it up to the saved video files from the investigation.

At the end, when the shadow rushes the screen, Mrs. Strong and Delaney both let out a yell and jump back. Delaney looks at Bates as if she can't believe what she just saw.

DELANEY

Great. In my mother's house, when one door closes, and another opens, that just means it's haunted!

FREDDIE

I would buy that shirt.

Delaney looks in surprise at Freddie, finally realizing someone else was there with Bates and Kade.

DELANEY STRONG

Who the hell are you? (looks at Freddie) Who the hell is this? And what are you (more chest poking at Bates) going to do about my mother's house?

BATES

Oh, yeah. This is Freddie. She's a Minister!

DELANEY STRONG

Of what?

KADE

Of the Internet? She's really an ordained Minister.

FREDDIE

I got the framed certificate to prove it baby! That cost a little bit extra but I think it was a smart investment.

Freddie looks around proudly after her statement.

BATES

Right, (pause) so we have an ordained Minister, holy water and a bible. We're gonna go cleanse your mother's house.

MRS. STRONG

Have you ever cleansed a house?

Mrs. Strong looks over to Freddie, still looking proud.

(CONTINUED)

FREDDIE

While I have not performed an actual house cleansing yet, I have researched and studied them at great length and feel very confident that we will be successful!

Freddie throws her arms around Bates and Kade, looking confident.

Delaney simply glares at everyone again and stands by her mother. Freddie glances sideways to Bates and whispers.

FREDDIE

That one has some trust issues!

BATES

Tell me about it!

FREDDIE

Let's do this!

Freddie claps her hands and leads into the Strong house, followed by Bates and Kade, with Delaney and her mother trailing behind.

INT. MRS. STRONG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They barely make it to the living room when the entry door slams shut. Everyone jumps and Freddie lets out a very undignified yell.

Delaney marches up to Bates, reaches out and grabs her face and locks eyes with her.

DELANEY

You will fix this. I don't care what you do, or how you do it, but you will fix this! My mother is not living in the Poltergeist house!

Bates frantically nods her head as best as she can while Delaney still has a grip on her jaw.

FREDDIE

Are you two dating?

Bates and Delaney whip around to look at Freddie.

(CONTINUED)

BATES AND DELANEY

What??

FREDDIE

Just, there's a lot of tension  
there! (pause) Just saying!

Delaney quickly lets go of Bates' face and moves closer to her mother again.

Bates rubs her jaw and shoots a quick wink at Delaney, which is met with another scowl.

KADE

Maybe we should just get started,  
yeah?

BATES AND DELANEY

Yes!

Bates joins Kade and Freddie by the sofa. Freddie pulls out a worn BIBLE and a BOTTLE OF HOLY WATER, blessed by Freddie herself.

FREDDIE

Alright, let Mortal Kombat begin!  
(imitates gong sound) We start in  
the back and work our way forward  
yeah? On three, go team! One, two,  
three!

BATES, KADE, DELANEY, MRS. STRONG AND  
FREDDIE - ALL AT DIFFERENT INTERVALS  
Go team!

FREDDIE

There we go! Got the positive  
spirits flowing already!

Freddie leads the group to the back of the house, to Delaney's old room. She enters, splashes holy water in the air and loudly speaks a blessing.

FREDDIE

In the name of His Holiness, I ask  
for peace and joy to inhabit this  
room and it's occupants. May your  
spirit flow through and fill this  
home with peace, removing all  
negative entities that dwell here.

She splashes some more holy water at the end and leads the group to the next room. Bates and Kade look mildly surprised, Freddie sounds official. This may work.

(CONTINUED)

As soon as they entered Mrs. Strong's bedroom, they feel the difference though.

The air in the room seems heavier, oppressive. Bates feels the hair on the back on her neck stand up.

Mrs. Strong clutches Delaney's hand.

Kade looks around the room waiting for something to jump out at them. Freddie stutters slightly at the beginning of the blessing but finishes strong.

They walk single file down the basement steps. As they reach the bottom, Bates turns to Delaney.

BATES

I didn't mention this before, but your basement is like, (pauses) a serial killer basement. It's where people come to die.

DELANEY

I know, OK? I always hated coming down here as a kid.

KADE

All that's really missing is a big hole in the center of the floor with a lady in it and some guy screaming about putting the lotion on or someone's getting the hose.

DELANEY

Not helping Kade!

KADE

Just saying...

Freddie takes the opportunity to chime in as well.

FREDDIE

Do you think I'm pretty? I'd do me...

Bates, Kade and Freddie all crack a grin as Mrs. Strong and Delaney look at them in disbelief.

DELANEY

Really? You're gonna quote *Silence of the Lambs* right now? There is something fundamentally wrong with all three of you.

(CONTINUED)

BATES, KADE, AND FREDDIE

Sorry!

Freddie once again steps forward to begin her routine when the lights goes out.

Mrs. Strong latches onto her daughter more firmly and Delaney reaches out and grabs Bates' hand.

DELANEY

One smarmy comment and I'll rip  
this hand off and beat you with it.

Bates simply squeezes Delaney's hand back and says nothing.

BATES

Hey Freddie, might be a good time  
to ah, cleanse the basement, yeah?

Freddie splashes her holy water around when the doors to the storage area start to open and close on their own.

By the end of the blessing, the doors are slamming open and shut. The light is flickering on and off.

Bates, still holding Delaney's hand, leads everyone back upstairs, the basement door slamming behind them.

Back in the living room, the pictures on the wall rattle.

KADE

Freddie, what's going on?

FREDDIE

Not real sure. I'm thinking someone  
or something isn't real happy that  
we're doing what we're doing.

Freddie uncaps the holy water when one of the pictures falls off the wall. Then another.

BATES

Hey Freddie, why don't we try and  
hurry this-ouch!

A book comes flies off a shelf and connects with her head.

BATES

Son of a...

More books fly off the shelf. Delaney and her mother take refuge behind the sofa.

(CONTINUED)

Bates and Kade stand their ground, guarding Freddie from getting hit as she tries to finish. The poise and confidence from earlier nowhere to be found.

FREDDIE

The power of Christ compels you!  
The power of Christ compels you!

BATES

This isn't working Freddie! I thought you knew what you were doing!

FREDDIE

I was ordained online, for \$30! It included a very nice wooden framed certificate! Conducting an exorcism wasn't covered in the 60 minute course!

She throws more water randomly around the room and crosses herself repeatedly.

KADE

You said you researched this extensively!

BATES

And I told you to watch *The Exorcist* and at least the last half of *Poltergeist*!

FREDDIE

I tried but someone changed their Netflix password!

KADE

OK, maybe not the time to be arguing about this!

BATES

Oh, and when would be better? When the walls are bleeding? When a portal to hell opens up? Ouch!

Bates takes a coaster to the head and dives behind the sofa.

BATES

I am having horrific flashbacks to dodgeball days in gym class!

Mrs. Strong hides behind the sofa with Delaney, trying to avoid the chaos inside her living room.

MRS. STRONG

Is this how it normally works  
sweetie?

DELANEY

No mom, I'm pretty sure we're  
operating way off the reservation  
right now.

Delaney shoves Bates back out from behind the sofa where she  
was trying to hide with them.

DELANEY

Get out there and fix this Bates!

BATES

Alright! Enough!

Bates stands up angrily.

BATES

Kade, let's try and keep the flying  
projectiles away from Freddie long  
enough for her to finish this  
stupid thing!

Kade nods and runs over to Freddie.

BATES

Freddie, you better pray like  
you've never prayed before! I'm  
talking some Bon Jovi *Living on a  
Prayer* type praying.

The matching coaster from earlier flies at Bates as she  
ducks down.

BATES

I am tired of getting hit with  
things! It's like childhood all  
over again! We're finishing this  
thing right now or my name isn't  
Bates freaking Crawford!

Freddie stops with the random holy water and self crossing  
to look at Bates.

FREDDIE

That's an awful middle name Bates!  
I mean, were your parents drunk  
whe-

(CONTINUED)

BATES  
Shut up and pray!

KADE  
Shut up and pray!

Bates and Kade deflect the majority of the flying objects from Freddie as she finishes the blessing.

With a louder voice and a fearless tone, Freddie repeats, louder and louder as she splashed the holy water around the room.

They work their way into the kitchen and complete the blessing. Things start to quiet down. Finally, after another lap around the living room, everything is quiet.

The air is no longer oppressive, lighter.

Delaney and her mother step out from behind the sofa, feeling the difference as nothing flies at them.

They join Bates, Kade and Freddie in the middle of the room, looking at the destruction. Pictures off the wall and books scattered everywhere.

A particularly vicious cat coaster that took a chunk out of Bates' head was laying on the floor.

Delaney walks over to Bates and hands her a Kleenex.

DELANEY STRONG  
You're bleeding. You OK?

BATES  
Flesh wound. Are we having a moment?

DELANEY  
Please don't ruin it.

BATES  
Deal.(pauses) Who uses coasters anyway?

DELANEY STRONG  
Civilized people.

BATES  
Well, yeah, that makes sense.

A quick check around the house, the basement and back up. Satisfied the house was no longer attacking them, they walk back outside.

(CONTINUED)

FREDDIE

And now, as the only part of  
*Poltergeist* that I remember, (big  
pause) I now declare.. this house  
is clean.

KADE

Actually, I think that was Ace  
Ventura...

DELANEY

I don't even know what to say.

BATES

We get that a lot...

MRS. STRONG

Thank you! Thank you so much! For  
believing me. For helping. I can  
never thank you all enough.

BATES

You're welcome. We're just glad we  
could help.

DELANEY STRONG

And completely destroy my mother's  
house...

With an awkward hug between Bates and Delaney followed by a  
'Call me,' Bates, Kade and Freddie leave.

**END OF ACT FOUR**

(CONTINUED)

ACT FIVE

INT. BATES AND KADE'S OFFICE - DAY

The P.I.'s back at work.

Bates sits at her desk, uploading footage. Kade sits across from her, checking his credit card statement and glaring at Bates.

Neither one of them hears their door open as Delaney walks in.

DELANEY

Did you know that some guy died in my mom's house, years before she bought it?

Kade and Bates look up, surprised to see Delaney leaning against the doorjamb.

BATES

That (pauses, nods thoughtfully) explains quite a bit actually.

KADE

How did you find that out?

Delaney straightens up and walks over to the chair in front of Bates desk and sits down.

DELANEY

I looked at the property tax records. Got the name of the guy and then Google'd him.

BATES

What did we do before Google?

KADE

I think they had these places called libraries... remember those?

DELANEY

Anyway... so apparently he fell down the basement stairs. He was there awhile, no family, no nothing.

BATES

Damn basements!

(CONTINUED)

KADE

I really think they should disclose  
that sort of information to the  
next property owner...

DELANEY

Agreed.

Delaney stands, walks around the office. An X-FILES 'I want  
to believe' POSTER hangs on a wall. Pictures of famous  
haunted locations. Amityville, Waverly Hills.

DELANEY

So this is what you do all day?  
Hang out and talk about haunted  
stuff?

Bates and Kade exchange slightly affronted looks.

KADE

Of course not!

BATES

Sometimes we play Words with  
Friends. I'm pretty kickass at it.  
Wordsmith, right here!

Kade wads up a piece of paper and throws it at Bates.

KADE

Well, not all of us grew up reading  
encyclopedias!

BATES

Hate the game not the playa!

DELANEY

You used to read encyclopedias?

BATES

That was all you got out of that  
conversation? (pause) No, I didn't  
read encyclopedias when I was  
growing up!

Kade mimics flipping book pages and pushes up imaginary  
glasses.

DELANEY

You two are idiots.

Bates and Kade grin in response.

(CONTINUED)

BATES

Not that I'm not happy to see you, because you're pretty much my favorite person... but did something happen? Wait, (pause) are you here because you missed me? I knew it! We did have a moment!

DELANEY STRONG

No, that's definitely not why I'm here.

Kade gets a frightened look on his face as he eyes Delaney.

KADE

Please don't tell me your mother's house is haunted again!

Bates looks up in horror.

BATES

Seriously, because I had nightmares about that cat coaster! You're hot but I'm not going back there!

DELANEY STRONG

No, that's not it either. Although it's kinda about that. I know I gave you guys a hard time, (pause) OK, mainly you Bates, but you gotta understand that I don't, I don't get this stuff at all.

Delaney waves an arm in the general direction of the pictures and posters.

DELANEY

I am a practical person. Black and white. So when I don't understand something, it makes me really uncomfortable.

BATES

(mumbles)

Which causes you to lash out at people...

DELANEY

(continues on)

I didn't know how to help my mother. I didn't know how to listen to her or how to believe her. (pause) But you guys did. I don't

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DELANEY (cont'd)  
want that to happen again. I want  
to understand this stuff. Well...  
maybe not that stuff (points to  
photo of alien autopsy).

Bates and Kade share a confused look with each other before  
turning back to Delaney.

KADE  
So you want us to tutor you in the  
ways of the paranormal?

DELANEY  
No Yoda. I'm sure I will regret  
this but I want to tag-along. I  
don't understand this but I want  
to. The EVP and thermal imaging  
stuff, it was interesting.

BATES  
There's a lot of science and  
research behind investigating the  
paranormal. You'd actually be  
really good at that part of it.  
It's fascinating once you get into  
it!

DELANEY  
That I can get behind. Besides,  
given the state you left my  
mother's house in, you guys need a  
babysitter when you do these  
things.

BATES  
So it's not because you missed me?

DELANEY  
Shut up Bates!

**END OF ACT FIVE**

END