

SHADOW OF A THOUGHT

By

Jared Shayne

Draft #1
9/03/04 through 9/16/04

CAST

Steven Bernard - Documentary Director
Lilly Connors - Documentary Host
Jamie FitzPatrick - Documentary Cameraman
Alexis Shaw - Documentary Researcher
Adrian Bates - Hotel Manager
Hag #1 - Evil Bitch
Hag #2 - Another Evil Bitch

EXT. PUTNAM MOUNTAIN - ROAD - DAY

We're in rural Pennsylvania, a few days before Halloween. The trees are bare, their golden-yellow-brown cargo recently fallen onto the cold hard ground. A VAN passes us, speeding towards the far-off mountaintop.

INT. STEVEN'S VAN - CONTINUING

Four people occupy the van, all of them amateur documentary filmmakers. Driving is JAMIE FITZPATRICK, the cameraman and editor. Sitting next to him, is LILLY CONNORS, the hostess. Cuddling in the back ALEXIS SHAW, the group's researcher, and their director, STEVEN BERNARD. "Magic Carpet Ride" by Steppenwolf blares from the radio. As Alexis snuggles up to him, Steven checks his watch, taps Jamie on the shoulder.

STEVEN
(yelling)
Hey! Turn it down!

JAMIE
(yelling)
What?!

STEVEN
(yelling)
I said, turn it down!

JAMIE
(yelling)
WHAT?!

STEVEN
(yelling)
Turn off the music before I - -

Lilly reaches and turns off the radio.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
(still yelling)
... Fire your ass!

He pauses as he realizes he can stop screaming. He scowls to Lilly.

STEVEN
Thank you.

LILLY
Not a problem.

Steven checks his watch again, sighs.

ALEXIS

Hey, babe, what's the rush? I thought getting there was supposed to be half the fun!

STEVEN

Yeah, well not on this trip. Besides, I don't really want to be out in these woods in the dark.

The rest of the team balks. Lilly laughs out loud.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

What?

ALEXIS

That's just a story.

STEVEN

Oh, yeah?! Well, if you don't believe the stories, why are you guys coming along anyway?

LILLY

I'm here for one reason; to get the credit I need to graduate my field reporting class.

JAMIE

I'm here for one reason, too: the money.

STEVEN

What money?

JAMIE

Hey, man, a little's better than nothing.

STEVEN

Whatever.

JAMIE

So, what is the story with this place, exactly? I've too busy getting the sound equipment to notice.

ALEXIS

Okay, get this: way back in the late 1890's, a cabal of old hags

set up their own settlement in
the woods outside the resort.

JAMIE
(snickering)
Witches?

ALEXIS
It gets better; people in the
resort started disappearing. The
townsfolk blamed the witch
cabal, and hanged all of them.
Ever since then, large wolves
have been seen in the woods at
night, vampire bats infest the
caves north of here, the
occasional guest still
disappears, and
(in best Count Dracula
voice)
some claim to have seen spirits.
The witches' spirits!

Jamie and Lilly join in as Alexis laughs. Steven snarls
at them.

STEVEN
It's not a story, okay? It's
true!

LILLY
And you now this, how?

STEVEN
Remember how I told you I used
to vacation here as a kid?

JAMIE
Oh man, don't tell us you think
you saw a ghost!

STEVEN
I know I saw a ghost! I barely
escaped with my life!

Steven is visibly upset.

ALEXIS
Come on, Steve, we're just
having a bit of fun.

STEVEN
Whatever.

LILLY

Well, I guess we're about to find out if that old story is true. There it is.

She points, as they round a bend and the massive GOLDEN LAKE HOTEL becomes visible. (Hotel to be filmed on location at Mohonk Mountain House.) It is large, gothic, and more than a little foreboding. Halloween decorations abound. Steven smiles.

INT. GOLDEN LAKE HOTEL - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

The foursome lugs their luggage into the lobby. Steven's friends look around in awe.

LILLY

This place is great!

JAMIE

Look at the staircase! Does that thing go all the way to the top floor?!

STEVEN

No, just part way.

ALEXIS

We better check in.

Jamie approaches the MAIN DESK. A MIDDLE-AGED man has his back turned to them.

JAMIE

Excuse me, mister?

No response.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Oh, mister?

The man wheels around. This is the hotel manager, ADRIAN BATES.

BATES

YEEESSS?!

STEVEN

Hey, Adrian.

BATES

Well well well, if it isn't young Steven Bernard? I haven't

seen you for so many years; how are you?!

STEVEN

I'm fine. Adrian, this is Alexis Shaw, our researcher; Jamie FitzPatrick, our cameraman and editor; and Lilly Connors, our host. We're here about the documentary.

BATES

What?

STEVEN

Didn't anyone tell you? We're here to shoot a documentary about your hotel!

Bates thinks for a moment, then smiles.

BATES

Ah yes, of course, absolutely positively delightful! Well, why don't I just whip out the sign-in book and we can get started, hmmmmmm?

Jamie and the others shoot glances at Steven. This Bates guy is one weird dude.

INT. GOLDEN LAKE HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

The four friends stand in a long hallway, dimly lit and drab. Lilly stands in front of a camcorder, while Alexis dabs her with make-up and Steven carefully watches Jamie setup the camera.

STEVEN

Remember, I want to do this is the least number of takes possible. So try not to screw up too badly!

LILLY

Wow. How's that for friendly director commentary?

JAMIE

Yeah, lighten up dude. It's just a third-rate documentary for a crappy community college, it's not like you're directing the next "Alien" movie or something.

Steven angrily stomps over to Jamie and gets in his face.

STEVEN

This may be a crappy documentary, but it's my crappy documentary, and it also happens to be my ticket out of this sucky college and into a professional film school. So just shut-up, and do what I tell you, okay?!

JAMIE

What wrong with you, Stevie? You've been acting like an utter jackass since we got here?!

Steven looks like he's seriously considering hitting Jamie, but Alexis interrupts.

ALEXIS

We're ready here.

Steven still has Jamie pressed into a corner.

JAMIE

You want to move, so I can film this thing, or what?

Reluctantly, Steven steps backs, and Jamie finishes setting up the camera.

JAMIE

Okey doky, all set.

STEVEN

And roll 'em...and...action!

Jamie, unnoticed, rolls his eyes at Steven's overzealous direction.

LILLY

We're here in the South Wing of Golden Lake Hotel, where the disappearance of General Anthony Howard occurred in late May, 1906. General Howard was a military instructor at Westpoint Academy, and was known to vacation here at the hotel from time to time. However, one evening, we left his room, and never came back. Some say he

defected to live in Russia, but others say it was the Blood Fang Witches, who still supposedly haunt this resort.

Suddenly, a shadow on the wall jolt to life, setting out a shrill shrieking sound before flying off the wall and out the window. The friends yell in surprise and confusion.

LILLY

What was that?

JAMIE

Yeah, man, what was that! That was crazy, man!

ALEXIS

Maybe it's on the footage?

Steven, amid the confusion, keeps to himself, looking extremely anxious.

INT. STEVEN AND ALEXIS' ROOM - NIGHT

The group is clustered around a laptop, where they are watching the footage shot earlier.

LILLY

(on tape)

...who still supposedly haunt this resort.

There is no shadow following, just raised voices. Alexis, Lilly, and Jamie share a disappointed look. Alexis turns to Steven.

ALEXIS

So...was that one of your ghosts?

STEVEN

That? No. That was just a shadow, Lex.

LILLY

Last time I checked, shadow's don't scream, Steven, not to mention flying out the window.

JAMIE

Ah, man, maybe he's right. Something else made the noise, like a rat on the floor or

something. Stevie's campfire
spook stories got us all freaked
out.

STEVEN

Well, we're not going to find
anything else out tonight. And I
want you all rested tomorrow for
the shoot. So go the bed, and
get some sleep.

INT. STEVEN AND ALEXIS' ROOM - LATER

Steven and Alexis lay in bed, asleep. A thin wailing
sound echoes from somewhere in the distance. Steven's
eyes shoot open. He slowly, as if in a trance, climbs out
of bed and opens the door, slipping into the darkness. A
moment later, Alexis wakes up, just in time to see her
boyfriend leaving.

ALEXIS

Steve?

No response.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Steven?

Quickly, she slides on some slippers and follows his into
the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alexis walks into the dark hallway, slowly
growing uneasy.

ALEXIS

Steven? Steven, where are you?

A low moaning emanates from the shadows. Alexis slowly
heads into the dark hall. It almost looks the darkness
has formed a solid wall, an impenetrable barrier. She
reaches out a trembling hand.

ALEXIS

(in a frightened
whisper)

Steve?

A leering face lunges at her from the darkness! She jumps
back, and screams. The face moves closer...to reveal
Jamie, laughing his head off.

JAMIE

(laughing)
 Oh, oh Lex, you should have seen
 your face. I wish I had my
 camera with me.

Meanwhile, Alexis is recovering.

ALEXIS
 Jamie, you shit! That's not
 funny! What are you doing out
 here anyway?

JAMIE
 I heard your stupid boyfriend
 screaming, so I came to check it
 out.

ALEXIS
 Screaming? Steven wasn't
 screaming! He just left our room
 like a minute ago!

In the distance, Steven's screams echo hollowly.

JAMIE
 See?

They hear a strange sound, like a mummified corpse trying
 to breath. The duo can just barely make out a shape
 moving towards them.

JAMIE
 Yo! That you, Stevie?

The shape doesn't answer.

ALEXIS
 Steven?

Suddenly, a loud wailing fills the air.

CREATURE POV

From a strange POV, we race at Alexis and Jamie. They
 scream. The wailing and screaming echoes into...

INT. GOLDEN LAKE HOTEL - MORNING

A concerned Lilly approaches Steven, who is talking with
 Adrian Bates.

LILLY
 Steve. What's going on?

STEVEN

It's Lex and Jamie. They're missing.

LILLY

Missing? What do you mean, missing? They can't be missing, this is a resort, not some jungle! They have to around here somewhere.

STEVEN

Lilly, calm down. Now, the police are searching the forest, if they find anything, we'll be the first to know.

(turns to Bates)

Right, Mr. Bates?

BATES

Yes yes yes. Well, after me, of course.

Steven leads Lilly away.

STEVEN

Now, Lilly. I know you're worried about our friends, so am I. I mean, my girlfriend's out there somewhere. But I don't think they'd want us to quit and go home. I'm planning on staying in this hotel until our friends are found - -

LILLY

So am I...

STEVEN

...And I think we should continue our work...for them.

LILLY

Are you insane?! Jamie and Lex are gone, and you're thinking about the documentary?!

STEVEN

Lillian, Lillian, I'm thinking of our friends. They're not quitters, and we shouldn't be either. We owe it to them - -

LILLY

We owe it to them to be here
when they're found. That is the
reason, and the only reason, why
I'm staying. So go film your own
documentary, you shithead!

Lilly stomps away, leaving Steven behind.

INT. LILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lilly lies asleep, tossing and turning. She wakes when
she hears what sounds like Lex's voice.

LEX'S VOICE

Help me.

Lilly sits up.

LEX'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Heeeelp!

Lilly frowns. It sounds like it's coming from the window.
She goes over to the window, and looks out, calling.

LILLY

Lex! Leeeex!

The answer drifts from the trees.

LEX'S VOICE

I'm here! Help, me, Lillian.
Help me!

As she looks out at the woods, she sees what looks like a
campfire in the distance. She throws on a jacket and runs
into the hall.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Lilly runs through the forest, flashlight in hand. She
calls out into the darkness.

LILLY

Lex?! Lex, where are you?

LEX'S VOICE

Heeere.

Lilly is finally close to the campfire. As she gets close
to the clearing, the fire becomes visible. Also visible
are THREE FORMS gathered around it. Voices can be heard.
As she reaches the entrance to the clearing she can see
that Steven is one of the people before the fire. She
gasps, and ducks down. Steven looks into the forest: for

a moment we think he sees her, but then it seems he's only looking into the night. We intercut between the three gathered in the clearing and Lilly as she watches from the shrubs.

INT/EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Steven turns to the TWO OTHERS, who are covered in thick rags.

STEVEN
The third is coming.

One of the figures responds with a deep, hissing voice.

FIGURE 1
She had better have some meat on her. The others did not. And we need fresh flesh!

The other figure barks out a sharp laugh.

FIGURE 2
Look at them. There's no meat!

She pulls two round objects from a leather sack. Lilly strains to see. The second figure dangles the objects in front of the fire. They are the heads of Lex and Jamie, still screaming in frozen terror! Lilly suppresses a scream, but leaps back, breaking a twig. Suddenly, the two rag-covered figures straighten, and remove their hoods. They once were women, but now they are shriveled and decomposing husks. They are green skinned, with big yellow eyes and sharp fangs. And they are very, very dead. HAG 1 turns to glare at Lilly, seemingly seeing her through the trees.

HAG 1
She is here!

Hag 2 points at Lilly, and lets out a loud, long screech! Lilly screams and runs away, back towards the hotel. Steven's face hardens.

STEVEN
I'll get her.

He takes off after her, into the forest.
EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

We follow both Lilly as she runs away, and Steven as he chases her. The chase continues for about a minute, as she races back for the hotel. However, nearly there, she trips on a root and falls to the ground. She looks up,

and sees Steven coming towards her. She freezes, unable to make a sound. She is nearly is tears.

STEVEN

So now you believe me...don't you?

LILLY

Why, Steven? Why?!

STEVEN

Why? To stay alive. You see, I did meet something strange when I came here as a boy. The Blood Fang Witches. And they told me the only way I could stay alive, was if I brought hem fresh flesh. And you're next.

LILLY

Please, Steven. Please let me go.

Steven looks as if me may consider it for a split second, but it's only a shadow of a thought before his faces hardens into a snarl.

STEVEN

No.

He slowly moves towards her.

From the forest, a giant face made of fog appears, it's mouth opening to swallow Lilly.

LILLY'S POV

The face comes straight at her, it's mouth gaping.

LILLY (CONT'D)

No...no...

(the mouth swallows her)

NOOOO!

FADE OUT

The End

9/16/04