

MISDIRECTION

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FADE IN:

BEGIN TITLE

Falling newspapers advertise a series of random home robberies. FRANCIS (62) headlines each one as the wronged homeowner accusing one man.

We finish on one advertising a feather duster as the newest clue - NEATLY SWEEPED SHELVES BETRAY SINISTER PRESENCE.

END TITLE

CUT TO:

1 EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A rundown home, isolated, with a "SOLD" sign in front. Two silhouettes stare: one downstairs, one upstairs. The blinds SNAP shut.

CUT TO:

2 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A stack of moving boxes sits in the corner. A record player perches atop one, BLASTING music.

A hand reaches into frame and swaps out the record. We pan up to reveal JOHN (22), a handsome lad grooving to the beat. He's in all-black, slightly worn, yet well-fitted clothes with thin plastic gloves. A feather duster sticks out of his back pocket.

CUT TO:

3 INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Slightly more lived in. A closet of black clothes in the corner. ROBERT (21), in all black, also with a feather duster, paces the room.

CUT TO:

4 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

John's phone, adorned with a company's seal, BUZZES. He answers.

JOHN

Now's not a good time. I'm at the

place. It's huge.

CUT TO:

5 INT. HOUSE - HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He wanders into the hall.

JOHN

Don't worry about him.

CUT TO:

6 INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Robert's leaning out when he stumbles, catching himself with a finger.

ROBERT

Damn it!

A sudden silence from downstairs. Robert backs up. John bursts in.

JOHN

I know you're in here!

Silence. He waits. Gathers up his courage.

JOHN

That's right. Stay hidden!

He bounces on his feet, preparing for a fight. Nothing. Slowly, he backs out of the room. Under the bed, Robert SIGHS in relief. He heads to the door.

CUT TO:

7 INT. HOUSE - HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

At the bottom of the stairs, Robert pauses. He scans the hall. At the end - a door! Freedom! Robert begins to creep down the hall. At every slight SHUFFLE or SCRAPE, he freezes.

CUT TO:

8 INT. HOUSE - HALL - DAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Robert flies into a room. The hall is empty. After a beat, John pokes his head out to look down the hall. He retreats just as Robert pokes his head out to look down the hall.

Robert retreats.

Slowly, the two emerge from their respective rooms, backs to each other. They stare down their sides of the hall. A slight BREATH of relief from each as they take a step back - right into each other.

They freeze. A slow turn to stare at the other. Shock. And then each adopts an air of superiority.

JOHN

You!

ROBERT (OVER HIM)

What are you -

JOHN (OVER HIM)

The nerve -

John lunges at Robert, who trips over himself getting out of the way. Robert pulls out his phone while scrambling back.

ROBERT (OVER HIM)

I'm calling -

JOHN (OVER HIM)

Oh you're calling - ?

Robert jumps to his feet and runs. John follows.

CUT TO:

9 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Robert enters, SLAMMING the door in John's face and leaning against it. He slips his phone back in his pocket and scans the room.

JOHN (O.S)

You're gonna be sorry!

ROBERT

Would you shut up already?

Robert locks the door and steps away. He begins shaking the windows. They're stuck.

JOHN (O.S.)

I got you right where I want you! And I'm calling my people!

Off-screen, the phone BEEPS as John enters a number. Robert tries the last window. Also stuck.

ROBERT  
You've got to be kidding me.

Robert, frantic, goes back to the door as John enters the last number.

JOHN (O.S.)  
Karen? Look -

There's no voice on the other end. Robert SNICKERS with the realization. He leans against the door frame.

ROBERT  
You're not calling anyone.

John spins away.

JOHN (O.S.)  
You won't believe it! There's a man here!

Robert LAUGHS, and casually whips open the door.

CUT TO:

10 INT. HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

JOHN  
And he's laughing! Like I'M in the wrong!

Robert strolls up and SLAPS the phone away. It CLATTERS to the ground.

JOHN  
You dick!

ROBERT  
You're not fooling anybody.

JOHN  
You shouldn't be here.

ROBERT  
Says the person making up a phone call.

JOHN  
It doesn't matter-

ROBERT  
It's MY place.

JOHN  
And yet you haven't called anyone-

ROBERT  
Because I can prove it.

JOHN  
Sure.

Robert pulls out his phone with a smug expression.

ROBERT  
You're the one who made a fake phone  
call. Ball's in your court...*buddy*.

John stares at the phone, considering. His eyes meet  
Robert's.

JOHN  
Fine.

CUT TO:

11 INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Robert enters the room and walks over to the closet. He  
points at the clothes and then at himself smugly.

ROBERT  
See?

John looks at the clothes.

JOHN  
That's your proof?

He points to his own all-black clothes.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I'm wearing the same thing. This  
proves nothing.

ROBERT  
Um...

John strides over to the closet and flips through the clothes. Robert regains some confidence. He crosses his arms.

ROBERT

Where's the mudroom?

JOHN

The mudroom?

ROBERT

You keep talking and talking about how much of a mistake I made. What about you? Any homeowner should know where the mudroom is.

JOHN

The hell is a mudroom?

ROBERT

You're proving my point.

JOHN

Or you're just an idiot. No one calls it a mudroom.

Robert waits.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Fine. You'll be sorry you asked.

He leads Robert out of the room.

CUT TO:

12 INT. HOUSE - HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They walk down the hall towards a door.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Obviously I know where the "mudroom" is. Do you know how much I paid for this house? You're going to be so sorry when the service comes back. I'll tell them all about the strange man in my house who wouldn't leave, and claimed that he belonged, and asked me the stupidest questions -

John throws open the door with a flourish. It's the living room. He pauses in astonishment. Robert LAUGHS.

Robert walks over to a different door in the hall. He pauses for emphasis, and then, still LAUGHING, throws that door open. It's a bathroom. His LAUGH falters. The two stare at each other.

ROBERT  
 (shakily)  
 I had someone else buy the place for me.

John stares him down. He nods slightly.

JOHN  
 Same.

The two look at each other, hunting for weakness.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

John frantically draws a floor plan of the house. Robert stands behind him holding a stopwatch counting down from 30 seconds. The watch goes off. John has only completed two rooms - the rest are question marks.

Robert turns on a faucet and promptly burns his hand. John LAUGHS, waves him away, and tries. He also burns himself.

The two sword fight with their feather dusters in the living room.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

13 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The two stand on opposite ends of the living room, exhausted. The feather dusters lay beside them. Robert peels his gloves off and sticks them in a back pocket. John does not.

ROBERT  
 So, if it's your place, why are you wearing gloves?

JOHN  
 Germaphobe. You?

ROBERT  
 Just in case I need to sword fight an intruder.

The two share a brief smile.

A car pulls up outside. The two turn to the window in unison and then back to each other.

ROBERT

Who?-

The BEEPING of an alarm pad is heard. The two leap to their feet and run.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

They rush out the back door, catching their breath at the edge of the yard.

They look at each other, disbelief passing between them.

JOHN

So you...

ROBERT

No...and you?...

JOHN

No.

They LAUGH. Shake their heads.

CUT TO:

15 INT. HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Francis enters the house, WHISTLING. He flips on a light and sees the damage. The suitcase THUDS to the floor.

FRANCIS

Not again.

FADE OUT.