
OPEN HOUSE

(aka Elf Space)

[10 minute] [13 minute]

by Jeff Goode
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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

REALTOR

COUPLE #1 – the JOHNSONS:

The Missus
The Mister

COUPLE #2 – the CRUIKSHANKS:

Kath
Krænphnrgl

**characters may be of any gender

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LIGHTS UP ON: LIVING ROOM of a VACANT HOUSE.

A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM, off.

REALTOR enters through the front door, showing the house to a couple – THE JOHNSONS – MISTER AND MISSUS.

REALTOR Come in, come in!
MISTER What the hell was that?
REALTOR They're probably not from around here.

REALTOR closes the front door, locks it.

MISSUS (looking around) Wow. Honey, look.
MISTER (irritable) I see it. I'm right here, too.
REALTOR Now, what I love about this place is the sunlight.

MISTER There's no sunlight.
REALTOR Exactly. It's completely blocked.
MISSUS Because it's after dark.
MISTER It's almost midnight.
REALTOR Yes. But even during the day, this place gets almost no exposure.
(*points out the window*) You see? There's a tree blocking this window.
MISSUS Oh, look, it's that horrible dead tree we saw in the front yard. **And it's right in the way of the view.**
REALTOR And that beautiful creeping ivy over the front door wraps around that whole side of the house. So almost nothing gets through. Isn't that amazing?
MISSUS No direct sunlight is amazing?
MISTER Are you assuming we're vampires?
REALTOR (*deadly serious*) I would never assume something like that.
MISTER (*befuddled*) No, I know. Why would you?
REALTOR What you do in the privacy of your own home is none of my commission.
MISSUS That's kind of you. I suppose.
MISTER Yes. Thanks for not jumping to any weird conclusions.
REALTOR I had a client once who turned out to be a dwarf. But we sold her the house anyway.
MISTER How do you "turn out" to be a dwarf?
REALTOR But you did request a later appointment for me to show you the house.
MISTER Later in the day.
MISSUS Later in the afternoon.
MISTER Not late at night.
MISSUS This neighborhood is terrifying after dark.
MISTER That ivy is going to give me nightmares.
REALTOR Ah. My mistake. Well, we're here now. So let's make the best of it.

REALTOR offers them a bowl of garlic cloves.

REALTOR Here you go.
MISTER What's this?
REALTOR Garlic. In case you need it.
MISTER For what?
MISSUS Are we going to sauté something?
REALTOR You said you're not vampires.
MISTER Yes, and...?

REALTOR shrugs.

REALTOR Your funeral.

REALTOR stuffs garlic cloves into own pockets.

REALTOR Just kidding. There won't be a funeral.

MISSUS is still pondering the tree problem.

MISSUS I suppose we could always cut that tree down.
REALTOR Oh no, you don't want to do that.
MISSUS No?
REALTOR That tree has a lot of character.
MISSUS Really?
REALTOR And a very long criminal record.
MISTER How would a tree...?
MISSUS Oh you mean like a hanging tree? In the olden times!
REALTOR More like a stabbing tree. [In the late 70's.](#)

REALTOR crosses to the center of the room.

REALTOR Now what I love about this place is all the shelf space!
MISSUS Um... I don't mean to be rude, but I don't see any shelves.
MISTER There are no shelves. The house is completely empty.
REALTOR There's no shelves now, but there's space for so many. Just imagine how much shelving you can put in! (*gesturing*) [Here. And here. You could hide a whole library.](#)
[MISTER Why would you hide a library?](#)
[REALTOR](#) Shelves over here. All along this wall. Maybe a little shelf here. Elf on the shelf.
MISSUS That would be cute.
MISTER I'm sorry, what?

REALTOR crosses toward the kitchen.

REALTOR And wait till you see the kitchen! Shelves over the sink. Elves under the counter. Shelves in the pantry, of course.
MISTER I'm sorry, did you say "elves"?
REALTOR In the pantry? No, shelves in the pantry. It's a little narrow, but they're small, so you can squeeze in a whole wall of shelves on both sides. And, of course, elves in the cupboard.
MISSUS Are you saying "elves" or "shelves"?
REALTOR In the pantry or the cupboard?
MISTER Everywhere!
REALTOR I suppose that's up to you. I'm not going to tell you how to run your household.
MISSUS Huh?!?
REALTOR Now what could really use some shelves is this little area here.

REALTOR leads them to a slightly unusual spot in the floor plan.

REALTOR Full disclosure: The house was built over an ancient burial ground. Now, I'm not legally required to tell you that, because no one was killed inside the house. But you will get complaints.

MISSUS From the neighbors?

REALTOR (*whispers*) The neighbors do not need to know.

MISSUS I did feel a chill up my spine, as we walked over here.

REALTOR That's because there's a ventilation duct right there.

MISTER You see? It's not ghosts, it's air conditioning.

REALTOR But they did install the air conditioning.

MISSUS Who? The ghosts?

REALTOR Well, they weren't ghosts at the time. (*gestures at the unusual area*) So the architects always considered this area to be a problem spot. But you put a little shelf here; a smaller elf in the corner; you won't even notice.

MISTER It's like you're saying "shelves", but I'm hearing "elves".

REALTOR Are you?

REALTOR goes to the closet, takes out a broom, pounds on the wall/ceiling/floor.

REALTOR (*shouts*) Keep it down in there / up there / down there.

MISTER Okay, what was that? What did you just do? Is there someone in there / up there / down there?

REALTOR returns the broom to the closet.

REALTOR Which brings us to the witch closet! Plenty of room for brooms in here. It doesn't have to be brooms. She could put anything.

MISTER I'm sorry, "Witch closet"?

REALTOR This one. Right here.

MISTER No, it sounded like— What did you—? What you said before.

REALTOR Oh that. Just a play on words. "Room for brooms." But she could put anything.

MISTER "Witch" is what you said before.

REALTOR (*a little defensive*) I know I did, sir. Or ma'am.

MISTER Because you would never assume?

REALTOR What you do in the privacy of your own undergarments...

MISTER But if you had to guess...?

MISSUS (*calming*) Now, honey... (*to REALTOR*) It's okay. We just thought you were talking about witches before.

REALTOR Oh, I would never. What if they heard you?

MISTER Who?

REALTOR surreptitiously indicates the closet.

REALTOR (*sotto voce*) The you-know-who in the you-know-where. But it's really the ones on the school board you've got to worry about.

MISSUS I wanted to ask about that.

MISTER Nope. Belay that. Staying on topic.

MISTER pointedly points at the closet.

MISTER Are there witches? Living in this closet? In your opinion?

MISSUS Sweetie, calm down.

REALTOR *I don't think I like your tone.*

MISTER *I don't think I like your grip on reality.*

REALTOR What the previous owner did in the privacy of their own witch closet, is none of my...

MISTER Aha! Witch closet! Witch closet!!

REALTOR This one!! This one right here!!!

MISTER No, you said it! (*to MISSUS*) You heard it! I'm not imagining things. (*glaring at REALTOR*) Which makes one of us...

MISSUS It did sound like you said "witch closet".

REALTOR Look, I'm sorry you're not familiar with realtor lingo. It's just a name. We can call it the Fairy Closet if that will make you happy.

MISTER Why? Will there be fairies in it?

REALTOR What you do in the privacy of your own fairy closet...

MISSUS *We don't have a fairy closet.*

REALTOR *Ah, but you would if you lived here! But you have to bring your own.*

MISTER We don't have any fairies!

REALTOR Oh, that's too bad. Would you like me to get you some? I could ask around.

MISTER No!

MISSUS But thank you.

MISTER We won't be needing any fairies! Or witches or vampires!

MISSUS Or elves.

MISTER And especially not elves!

REALTOR Then who's going to do all your cooking?

MISTER *Huh?*

MISSUS Who's gonna—What now?

REALTOR *Who's going to cook for you? And do all your chores?*

(blank stares)

REALTOR Cobble your shoes?

(blanker stares)

REALTOR If you don't have elves?

MISTER Aha! You did say "elves"! I heard it that time!!

REALTOR Why? What did you think I said?

MISSUS / MISTER Shelves!! / Elves!!

REALTOR Oookay... You guys need to get your stories straight.

MISTER *And we cobble our own shoes, thank you very much!!*

REALTOR Well, if you change your mind, I can give you some referrals.
(shouts) You hear that, boys! Get your resumes together.

MISSUS Why do you keep doing that?
(shouting upstairs) Who is up there?

REALTOR I'd rather not say.

MISTER Is it elves?

REALTOR I don't want to assume.

MISTER Oh for God's sake!

MISSUS Honey, language!

MISTER Is there someone living in the crawl space?

REALTOR The elf space?

MISTER No!

REALTOR Yes.

MISTER There's no such thing as "elf space" because there's no such thing as elves!

REALTOR Oh but "crawl space" is okay, because creepy crawlies are real?

MISTER No! Nothing is real!

REALTOR Oh. Wow. You just blew my mind.

MISTER Next you'll be telling me the living room will make a great playpen for my unicorns!

REALTOR Don't be ridiculous.

MISSUS Yes, dear. Calm down.

REALTOR You have a huge yard. Why would you keep them inside?

MISTER Why would I keep them anywhere?

MISSUS Because unicorns are magnificent, dear.

REALTOR And there's a stable in the garage.

MISSUS There is?

MISTER Why??

MISSUS Yes, I'm not sure I understand why.

REALTOR I thought we went over that.

MISTER For the unicorns?

REALTOR Well, for the centaurs, but you could use it for unicorns. I mean, it's a free country. But fair warning: Unicorns are notoriously difficult to houstrain. Especially, if you plan on keeping them indoors. And I'm pretty sure local ordinance doesn't allow it. So I'm afraid I would have to report you to Animal Control.

MISTER Yes! Please do! Tell them I'm making unicorn stir-fry in my kitchen elf sweatshop!

REALTOR Ew.

MISSUS Oh, gross.

REALTOR Too soon.

MISSUS Yes—What?

REALTOR *(changing the subject)* Now what I love about this place is the school district.

MISSUS Yes, I was meaning to ask about that.

REALTOR The public schools are very good here.

MISSUS Actually, we were thinking about home schooling.

REALTOR Of course, of course. You gotta start 'em off young.
MISSUS Start them off at what?
REALTOR Well, I think it's wonderful that you care enough about your kids that you want to indoctrinate them yourself. But you can't do everything yourself. Who's gonna teach them chemistry or gym class?
MISSUS That's a good point.
REALTOR It sounds like your kids are gonna need cobbling, at the very least. And probably some home-ec classes. (*aside to MISTER*) I mean, you don't want this one teachin' 'em how to cook. Am I right?
MISTER Ha!

MISSUS glares.

MISTER (*catches self*) I was laughing with you, not at—
MISSUS I was not laughing.
REALTOR Now if you don't mind parochial education, the coven schools offer some wonderful after-school programs.
MISSUS The coven?
REALTOR And one of the best preschools in the country. If you ignore those silly rumors.
MISTER What rumors?
REALTOR I'd rather not say.
MISSUS (*figures it out*) Oh my God...
REALTOR Ssh! Language, please! What if they hear you?
MISTER What silly rumors??
REALTOR (*changing the subject*) Now what I love about this place is the statute of limitations!
MISSUS Are there rumors that the coven preschool practices child sacrifice? And you think that's silly?
REALTOR Well, I mean, how much practice do you need, really? They're so small.
MISTER Oh my God...
REALTOR What a pair of loving parents do in the privacy of their own charter school...
MISTER Oh my God!!
MISSUS Okay, we're just going to go now.
REALTOR Y'know what? That's probably best. I've got another showing at midnight. And I am going to have to re-adjust the whole chi in here.

REALTOR starts burning sage. MISTER is trying to decide whether to be offended.

MISSUS Honey... Honey... Let's just go.
MISTER I'm reporting you to animal control!

MISSUS and MISTER attempt to storm out, but they struggle briefly with the lock on the front door. They finally get it open to reveal:

A SECOND COUPLE standing in the doorway. One of them has TUSKS. The other is obviously a WITCH.

MISSUS & MISTER (*BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM!*) Aaaaaaaagh!

Then they rush out. REALTOR beckons the new couple in.

REALTOR Come in! Come in!

TROLL What the hell was that?

REALTOR They're probably not from around here.

CRONE (*looking around*) Wow. Honey, look.

TROLL (*irritable*) I see it. I'm right here, too.

REALTOR Now what I love about this place is all the shelf space. There's no shelves now but just imagine how many you can put in. Shelves over here. All along here. Maybe a little shelf here.

TROLL I'm sorry, what?—Did you say "shelves"?

CRONE Now honey, calm down...

END OF PLAY