

Crispy Jim

written by

Shaun Baland

(916) 316-1377
Shaunbaland@gmail.com

INT. HAMILTON HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Wood paneling and olive green metal furniture from the 70's.
Motel artwork.

ALEX HARRIS (25M) taps his foot nervously. He adjusts his poorly knotted tie. Rubs his palms on his pants.

Across the metal desk, BEATRICE WAINSWORTH (65F) scans a handwritten application. She takes off her glasses. Eyes Alex.

BEATRICE
OK, Alex. Job's yours.

ALEX
Yeah? Thanks so much ma'am!

She holds a hand up. Not so fast, junior. She fans an envelope of cash.

BEATRICE
Here's the deal, kid. \$2,000 cash.

She drops it in the desk drawer.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)
Payable in full at 6am. You leave before that, you get shit. Clear?

Alex shrugs. Nods.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)
You on that social media bullshit?

He shakes his head.

ALEX
No, ma'am. I wouldn't even know how to start--

BEATRICE
Good, I'll need your phone. No photos, video, nothing posted anywhere. Just invites more attention.

Alex leans in. Interested.

ALEX
Attention? What do you-- What is this place?

BEATRICE

This place, Alex, is evil and
haunted as fuck. Pardon my
language.

Alex laughs.

ALEX

Evil? I don't believe in ghosts,
ma'am.

His eyes widen. Smiles. She doesn't smile back.

He hands his phone to her.

BEATRICE

You will. Just stay out of the
basement and keep teenagers from
sneaking in and it'll be an easy
two grand. See you at 6am.

She locks cash and phone in the drawer. They shake hands.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Good luck.

INT. HAMILTON HOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

He adjusts a generic black SECURITY t-shirt. Ties his white
and blue Nike Hustles.

He pulls another cellphone from his backpack. Opens an app
and begins a livestream video.

ALEX

Guys, we're in. I've been able to
access the infamous Hamilton House
on fucking Halloween!

He strolls out of the office and into the rest of--

INT. HAMILTON HOUSE

Dark hallways and rooms. Dated decor. The old place is
creepy as fuck.

The floor creaks as he explores. Old photographs line the
walls.

Alex sits in a leather recliner. Holds his phone's camera to
his face.

ALEX

For those of you who live in a
cave, check out the story of
Hamilton House--

He opens a prerecorded video in his creepiest narrator voice.

Grainy, faded color image and video of Hamilton House and the
neighborhood. VW bugs and Ford Pintos parked on the street.

*Back in the 70's, this was a
funeral home with a
crematorium.*

Footage of men and women in formal black clothing. Gathered
on the funeral home steps. Seated for a service.

*Men and women in the area
began going missing in 1974. By
1979, dozens of missing persons had
police baffled.*

Headlines of missing persons. Footage of police officers
with bushy mustaches and sideburns answering phones and
scribbling notes.

*Then, the calls started. Strange,
ominous calls from men and women
begging the police for help.*

Images of the missing men and women.

*Calls were eventually traced here,
to the basement phone of the
crematorium.*

Black and white photos of the basement. Officers reviewing a
bulletin board map.

*They suspected James Ellis
Berkeley, the 43 year old
maintenance man for the funeral
home.*

Images of the suspect. Deep, sunken cheekbones. Pimple-
scarred skin. Receding hairline. And dead, black eyes.

*When they moved in on him, he
barricaded himself in the
basement. When cops burst
in, they found him burning alive in
the crematorium oven.*

A single grainy image of the oven door opened. Officers covering their faces with handkerchiefs.

*On the floor outside the oven,
dozens of intricately carved wooden
figures.*

Image of dozens of small carvings. Intricate. Painted. Small versions of each victim.

*Police believe Berkeley- labeled by
the officers as Crispy Jim- made
the trophy keepsakes to remember
his victims.*

Image of a younger Crispy Jim in a rocking chair on the funeral home porch, carving a small figurine.

*Law enforcement has spent decades
trying to identify the ashes in the
oven. To date, only a dozen of his
victims have been positively
identified.*

A grid of a dozen images of men and women. A gruesome class photo. Dozens of squares with a question mark in them.

*The funeral home closed after the
gruesome discovery. It has been a
hotspot for paranormal enthusiasts
for decades.*

Images of visitors -mostly teenagers- in front of the boarded-up funeral home. Many carry little carvings of themselves.

Images of the home with creepy silhouettes circled. Ghosts?

*Its been a bed and breakfast,
haunted house, and other things over
the years. All businesses had to
close due to disturbing activity
noted by guests.*

A chain link fence. Locked around the property.

*When curious visitors began to
disappear, the new owners closed
the property permanently.*

*No one has explored the home in
years. And no one has ever filmed
here. Until now.*

Cut back to Alex's livestream. He stands at the basement door.

Slow pans on it for dramatic effect.

He leans in close to the camera.

He smiles.

Opens the basement door. A skin-crawling creak.

Flips on the basement light.

Descends the stairs. One creaky step at a time.

Scans the cold, damp room. Pauses on the old, rusty oven door.

He reaches for the oven's handle. Rusted shut. It doesn't budge.

A single light bulb struggles light the space.

He explores.

Dusty. Dark. Cold.

Some old furniture and boxes stacked in one corner.

Silence broken by--

RRRRRIIIIIINNNNNGGGGG

Alex jumps at the sound of a telephone. Echoes in the concrete room.

RRRRRIIIIIINNNNNGGGGG

He reaches the pile of furniture. Moves boxes aside. On a shelf, a dusty, old--

Vintage yellow rotary-dial telephone.

He stares at it.

RRRRRIIIIIINNNNNGGGGG

Jumps again.

He hesitates. Reaches for the receiver. Slowly lifts to his ear. Holds his cell phone near it.

Static.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Hel-hello?

Static, then a scratchy response--

WOMAN (O.S.)
Please. Please send help. He has
me locked in this room. It's dark.
I'm so scared. I think he's gonna
hurt me. Please send--

The phone disconnects.

His eyes widen. Mouth drops. He looks into his cell phone.

ALEX
Oh my GOD, people. Please tell me
that call came across. I swear
this is not fake. We just got a
call from an actual--

RRRIIINNNGGG

His smile fades.

His hand shakes as he reaches for the phone.

He answers. Holds his cell phone near the receiver to hear a
different voice. A man--

MAN (O.S.)
Hello? I need help. A man has me
trapped. I'm in the basement of
the--

Call disconnects. Alex shakes his head.

Exhales loudly.

He pulls at the cord. Not connected to the wall.

He covers his mouth. He stumbles backwards.

RRRIIINNNGGG

He stumbles backwards.

ALEX
Nope. Fuck this.

He scrambles up the stairs. The door to the house is LOCKED.

He panics. Tries to control his breathing.

RRRIIINNNGGG

He jumps.

Checks his cell signal. Nothing. The broadcast has ended.

Drops his cell's phone.

Pounds and punches at the door. It doesn't budge.

Descends the stairs and roams the room in search for one bar of service.

Nothing.

RRRIIINNNGGG

He knocks the receiver off the phone. Attempts to ignore it.

Searches for another exit but hears--

A muffled voice.

He turns. Eyes frozen on the phone's receiver.

He lifts the receiver to his head. Closes his eyes.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hello?

A scratchy, static sound clears and he hears--

Himself.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Please. Please send help. I'm in
the basement, doing a broadcast.
I'm trapped.

Alex drops the receiver. As he backs up, we see legs sticking out of the open oven door. He backs into them.

Jumps. Screams. Notices the white and blue Nikes. HIS SHOES.

He screams just as--

The dangling light goes out.

Darkness. Complete darkness.

The sound of his heavy breathing, then--

His blood-curling scream.

A struggle. He cries. Resists SOMETHING. Fights SOMEONE.

His screaming is muted with the sound of an oven door slamming shut.

His screams muffled inside the oven.

The basement glows orange from the oven's fire. The distant screams stop.

INT. HAMILTON HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

The deadbolt unlocks. Door opens. Beatrice enters.

She glances at the empty desk. Heads straight to the basement door.

INT. BASEMENT

She flips on the light switch and descends the stairs. She reaches bottom. A small carved wooden figurine on the ground beneath the oven. A carving of a man wearing a security shirt and Nikes.

RRRIIINNNGGG

She smiles. Answers.

BEATRICE

You're welcome. Yes, the idiot's broadcast should bring lots of attention. You'll eat again soon, Jim. I promise.

She opens a cabinet. Places Alex's figurine in a cabinet. The cabinet door remains open.

As she ascends the stairs, we focus on the detail of the cabinet shelf. Dozens of intricate, detailed figurines.

The light shuts off. Sound of the door locking.

CUT TO BLACK