Steve Hopstaken (952) 994-1683
hopstaken@[gmail.com](file:///Users/SteveHopstaken/Dropbox/Documents/Screenplays/2013/gmail.com)

 **“A Man Among Ghosts”**

A man finds himself haunted by ghosts of the living.

In this psychological horror story, a man is haunted by numerous ghosts, but these ghosts are of people who aren‘t dead. Is he losing his mind? Are the people in his life trying to drive him insane? As his paranoia ramps up, he discovers the truth is even more bizarre; he is being haunted by ghosts from the future that want him to stop the apocalypse.

**Synopsis**

David, a thirty-something computer programmer watches his friends get married and settle down. He realizes he is stuck in an adolescent rut and starts adulting. He buys an old house in a run-down neighborhood: 2030 Hill St. He gets it at auction for a great price since it needs so much work and a murder took place in the house.

The house is in even worse shape than he thought and he discovers he isn’t cut out for rehabbing houses. It doesn’t help that dead crows come raining down on his house, or that a feral cat and a homeless man keep finding their way inside.

David’s project to fix up both the house and himself is sidelined, however, when he is diagnosed with a brain tumor, and given less than a year to live. The doctor tells him the tumor will give him dementia long before the end.

Despondent, David slits his wrists in the bathtub of his house. As his life drains away, he has second thoughts and dials 911. Weak and delirious, he sees a hallucination of a beautiful woman bathed in light. As he passes out, she whispers, “We are with you now. Everything will be alright.”

Only a week after the failed suicide attempt, David’s luck changes remarkably. He undergoes a new laser therapy to remove the tumor. While under the laser he sees a series of horrifying images of people burning in hell. But the experimental treatment works and he is miraculously cured. That same week his lucky streak continues; he meets and starts dating Cassandra, a beautiful public relations professional, and his magician friend Gary gets a gig on the Tonight Show.

With his new lease on life, he tackles the house repairs with renewed gusto. But he soon discovers he’s not alone. First, he finds the names “Fitz” and “Kang” mysteriously written in the fog of his bathroom mirror. Then he starts seeing ghosts which have appeared to have died horrible deaths, not only in his house, but everywhere he goes. He fears his tumor is back and causing these hallucinations.

Once again, he sees the homeless man in his living room, but this time as a ghost, badly burned and pleading with David to save him. Other ghosts join the haunting; a man with no eyes who appears in his kitchen; a terrifying man engulfed in flames; and a family of ghosts who merely sit on his sofa watching television.

Things take another bizarre turn when he realizes that all his ghosts are of real, alive people. He sees the ghost from his kitchen alive and well on the bus, and follows him back to his office. He confronts the man and discovers that his name is Mullins, and he used to own the house. Police killed his brother in the house during a drug raid and the property was seized by the government and sold at auction. Mullins offers to buy the house from David saying it was his childhood home.

Ghosts begin to call David on his cell phone telling him to “Kill Fitz.” At work he is haunted by a woman in the bathroom who melts before his eyes. She pleads for his help and tells him to “kill Fitz.” When he returns to his desk, he is introduced to the same woman, who is starting that day as a temp. He fears he must be insane, but how did he hallucinate a person he hadn’t met yet?

Shaken, he goes to the roof for a smoke and sees a coworker who tells him, “Hell is full,” then throws himself over the edge. David flees back inside where he sees the co-worker alive and well in the break room.

He goes home sick and that night he checks into a hotel to escape the ghosts and get a good night’s sleep, but even there they torment him. A ghost with a horribly mangled face tries to drown him while he is taking a bath. A vision of Cassandra appears, and chases away the malevolent spirit and saves David from drowning. She tells him, “We are growing stronger as the day approaches,” and disappears.

Now he is not only worried about his sanity, but his life. At least one of the ghosts wants him dead and can hurt him in the real world.

David seeks the help of a paranormal investigator who thinks what David is experiencing is real and that his life is in danger. He tells David he must discover what the ghosts want from him. The key seems to be Fitz and Kang.

That night David and Cassandra spend the night at his house. He is glad to have company; perhaps the visions will stop when she is there. But when David gets up in the middle of the night for some aspirin, he returns to find Cassandra passed out on the floor from an overdose of sleeping pills. He tries to revive her, and she says, “I’m so sorry, it’s all my fault, I thought it would work. Forgive me.” He tries to dial 911 on his cell phone, but it won’t connect and “2030” is blinking on the phone’s screen.

He rushes downstairs to use the house phone and finds Cassandra coming out of the kitchen, alive and well and apparently unaware of what just took place upstairs. She tells him it must have been a bad dream.

David’s magician friend Gary offers another theory. He suggests that these people, including Cassandra, are trying to make him think he’s crazy, perhaps to get him to leave the house. After all, he barely knows Cassandra, Mullins might have hired her and a group of grifters to get him to sell the house. Maybe the drug dealer hid money somewhere inside. Gary tells him it would be easy to fake most of the visions David has experienced.

Gary spends the night at David’s house, and they set up a video camera. David is glad to not be spending the night alone. His relief is only temporary, however, as he sees the shadow of a ghost in his bathtub. He rips back the shower curtain to see a vision of himself with his wrists slit. The words “Kill Fitz” are written on the wall.

The next morning they review the tape, and on a single frame David and Gary see the ghost family sitting on David’s sofa, complete with the cat David saw earlier in his kitchen. The family is horrified by something they are watching on TV.

David has the paranormal investigator check out the house. He finds hotspots all over the house, which is odd because ghosts usually show up as cold spots. He picks up a strange sound, inaudible to the human ear, and boosts it. The sound is hundreds of people screaming. The paranormal investigator fears David’s house is on a hell-mouth, a place where the barrier between the living and dead is very thin. They check out the basement, where he finds a very hot spot on the dirt floor. A scratching sound comes from the coal bin and when they open it hundreds of rats come pouring out.

David and the investigator fight their way back upstairs where the ghost cat scares the rats away. David realized the ghost cat was trying to protect him just as Cassandra’s ghost had done in the hotel room.

Not wanting to stay in the house, David goes to Cassandra’s apartment. But when Cassandra is momentarily called away and David finds himself alone in the apartment, he sees the ghost of a young woman who tells him “We are stronger now, but he is even stronger.” Before he can ask who “he” is, the ghost with the mangled face appears and attacks David physically. David fights him off until the live Cassandra returns and the ghost disappears.

Later at a bar, David is shocked to meet Cassandra’s new client, a congressman named Fitz who is on the short list as a presidential contender. On the TV over the bar, the ghosts show David a newscast from the year 2030, where president Fitz launches a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the Chinese Premier named Kang. David has the terrible realization that the ghosts have been haunting him from the future, not the past. And if he doesn’t stop Fitz, the whole world will be destroyed.

That night, David, Cassandra and Fitz go to one of Gary’s magic shows. David is horrified when Gary does an act involving a man engulfed in flames. Later, with his sanity hanging by a thread, he accuses Gary of being behind the whole thing. Gary claims he just wanted David to see how easy it would be to fake the ghosts, even a complicated one like the ghost on fire.

The next day David goes to Cassandra’s apartment. There is no answer but as he turns to leave, the burning ghost appears and goes through the door into the apartment. David busts down the door only to find Cassandra there with Fitz. They have been sleeping together.

The paranormal investigator calls David and tells him he might have a way to “uncouple” him from the ghosts for good and says he will meet David at his house.

On the way home, David is confronted by the ghost of himself at a stop light. He holds up his wrists to show they are slit and bleeding. He rushes up to the car and tells him, “You, we, can stop this!”

David speeds off, only to find the ghost of the investigator in his backseat. He tells David now that he is dead, he understands what the ghosts want and that David must kill Fitz to save the world.

Back at the house, the ghosts continue to haunt him and tell him he must kill Fitz. Cassandra’s ghost lures Fitz to the house with a phone call. David invites him in and apologizes for busting in on him and Cassandra. When Fitz isn’t looking, David takes a baseball bat and bashes in his face. David buries Fitz in the basement.

Later, on a park bench, David watches children playing and feels good that he has ultimately done a good thing.

He returns home and is getting food out of the refrigerator. When he shuts the door, he sees a new ghost of a disfigured little girl standing there. He jumps back. Another new ghost of an old man is behind him. A third ghost, a young soldier, is sitting at his table.

The ghosts tell him, “Kill Kang. Twenty-Thirty-Four.” He realizes he has only delayed the inventible and killing Fitz alone wasn’t enough to alter the future.

The police pull up to David’s house with Cassandra. Fitz’s cell phone was traced to David’s house and is still pinging from his basement.

Six months later the ghost family from before are moving in. The kids are playing in the yard and the cat is sunning itself on the steps. The father is talking to the new landlord, Mullins. He asks Mullins if they really did find a body in the basement. Mullins tells him yes. The man was killed by a jealous boyfriend who now is doing a life sentence.

David is in his prison cell talking to a man in a suit who says they can get him out on an insanity plea, that David’s work is not over. A guard looks into the cell to see David is alone talking to himself.

In the last chapter, a Chinese man in a Hong Kong apartment is brushing his teeth. His head is bandaged. He received the head injury as a stuntman on a kung fu movie and has just been released from the hospital. He rinses with a glass of water and bends down to spit. When he comes back up again the word “Kang” is written in Chinese in the fog on the mirror. Confused he wipes it off and then it is replaced with the words “Find David,” in English.

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