

JOHN L SCOTT



THE LADY IN
THE BASEMENT

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A fateful meeting with **“THE LADY IN THE BASEMENT”**

THE “ACCIDENT”

While out prospecting, canvassing a neighborhood for new deals, John Scott Realtor is upbeat enjoying the sunny day and excited for the possibilities. Shuffling listings and attempting to drive simultaneously, I was unable to notice the car that pulled out in front of me. Surprised by the sound of crashing metal, I look up to see I have collided with this older lady in her Cadillac. The older black lady with a fantastic wig and smooth skin appears very unhappy and is about to cuss me out no doubt. The lady is not hurt but extremely tense and concerned for her Cadillac that was once perfect. I begin to apologize and calm her down with the fact that I did not see her pull out, but I would take full responsibility and repair her car back to its perfect original state. Her mean face goes away and turns into a kind smile, and she says “everything happens for a reason.” After realizing my front wheel bearing is broken, I quickly jump on the shuttle bus to the airport car rental.

While on the shuttle bus I say hello to a middle-aged white man & his daughter “Angelique” around age 7 who won’t stop smiling at me. At first, I thought it may have been nervous energy, but after she would not stop glaring at me, I knew it was more, she wanted to interact. Her father was neatly dressed in a button-up shirt and Levi’s jeans, and also greeted

me with a warm smile. After talking with light conversation, he explained, “I’m here on business of my family estate and have many properties to deal with, especially the 22,000 sq. ft. mansion for which I am the trustee.” I told them of my accident and my profession as a Realtor, quickly explaining “I would like the opportunity to represent you and execute the sale of your family estate”. His response was surprising & openly accepting, he was gracious in his reply as he leaned over touching my arm and said, “We can talk about that.” The little girl looked at me, smiled with gleam, she clapped her hands as if to celebrate with me, Yayy!! Lol

THE PALATIAL ESTATE:

I was invited to interview with David “Trustee” for the Job. Upon arriving at the property I was astonished by the structure. It was palace-like, built against the mountains overlooking the city, it features 11 bedrooms, 7 bathrooms, a library, 3 kitchens and 2 guest homes for family and caretakers. I had performed my due diligence and was able to reconcile the value at 16 million dollars low and 19 million high. I printed out full color packets and was ready to do the presentation of my life. Leading through a Tuscany stair-well with large dark stained wood steps curving to the top was the library, filled with antique/rare books, some of which were valued at \$100,000 dollars apiece. I then realized I was not alone, other Realtors were there to compete for the Job and business.

THE INTERVIEW:

David the trustee was there with his real estate attorney, but today the look on his face was all business, not as casual as I'd seen him before on the shuttle. He invited us all to sit and explain why we should be selected to sell the multimillion-dollar estate. The first to speak was a clear amateur, he wore a short sleeve collar shirt with the name of his company embroidered on the chest and sleeve. The next group was the opposite, possibly the best in the business. They are the million-dollar listing crew. Three of them dressed in the finest Italian clothes with \$500 boots from London. They had the history of selling these types of properties and showed a carefree attitude of not being too thirsty. Josh began to boast that the estate needed them, they did not need the estate. Then came my turn to speak. I first showed my appreciation for his time and the opportunity to present. I explained that every deal I obtain is a gift from God in Heaven, and that my job is to be a Blessing in return to the family. Understanding the "legacy" of his family and representing the history of the estate in a manner which would make his ancestors proud. Further I concluded with confidence, "this is an opportunity listing of a lifetime and [John L Scott Real Estate](#) is local but also global. This [Exceptional Homes](#) experience would guide my steps of life, leading me here to be the Realtor of this 100-year-old estate, established through

much painstaking hard work before I was born.” David looked over at his attorney and smiled, the attorney winked back at David while nodding his head, after which they excused the other brokers from the room. The trustee David then said to me those magic words, “You got it!!!! What are the next steps?” Filled with goosebumps all over my body, I held my composure and said with authority, “I will do an inspection of the entire property, the plumbing, the roof, and The Basement.”

THE BASEMENT:

After inspecting the entire property, the groundskeeper led me to the basement. There was a loud machinery noise from the heating engines with clouds of steam covering much of my visibility. I did a visual inspection as much as I could, withstanding the wet steam I noticed past the large water heaters in the back of the dark room was a bed. The closer I got, there seemed to be someone in the bed, under the covers, I could only see long starch white hair pulled over the dingy sheets, it was a lady!?

Creepy and scary, she looked like a ghost! The hair stood up on my head as she turned and looked at me with eyes that glowed like white flashlights, her eyes pierced right through me. She opened her mouth, but no words came out, but I could still hear the terrifying pain and suffering calling out for help! In fear for my life having witness this deranged 100-year-old lady, I ran from this crazy looking lady in the basement. I was indeed terrified.

THE FAMILY ARRIVES:

Days later the family members came to town in order to claim antiques and personal effects. I met two other sons and one daughter with teenage children. As they looked through antique furniture and picked over the personal items, they seemed to complain among themselves of what would be divided. They discarded any family memorabilia, pictures, awards, etc., they were only interested in things that could be sold quickly for cash. I later learned that two of the descendants did not speak with their mother and never cared to visit when they were in-town. The teenage children had no recollection of their grandmother as they were not allowed to have a relationship with her. They did inform me that none of them were named as trustees because they alienated their mother and placed her in the basement. So when company would come by they would not be bothered or embarrassed by the stories of her late husband and how hard they worked to gain the wealth and properties they acquired. It turns out the grandfather started his first business as a shoe shiner, he obtained a business license and was the first shoeshine company in 1954. Together they went on to garden properties and mow lawns before they built their large real estate portfolio. The family pulled me to the side and told me to “sell the property as fast as possible for the cheapest price so they could be done with it” All Cash if possible!

BACK TO THE BASEMENT BIG REVEAL:

I knew eventually it would be totally necessary for me to re-enter the basement, was I seeing things? Was there really a Lady in the basement? I had to face my fears, deep inside I needed to understand if what I saw was not actually there at all? If this was a ghost warning me away or something more tangible - Stepping over that threshold was like crossing into another world. The crumbling walls groaned like a dying beast, the fear in every child's nightmare, for me they were nothing more than stories, until that night. After hearing the weird stories from the family, I concluded she could be there, moreover not being a doctor I would be unable to diagnose her condition. With her being 100 years old, I feared the worst and sensing the end was near. I did feel a call from the lady in the basement, as-though a spell had been placed over me, the realization was I had no choice, I was NOT going to run away this time.

The basement was quiet with a stillness, I alone stepped in, trembling by the sound of my own footsteps, terrified and eager - afraid to see her wasting away, not wanting to gaze upon what death has done. Would she be just dust, a shell of a wooden body? Approaching her bed, I could see the outline shape of a body, I listened for breathing but could only hear the heavy pumping of blood racing through my heart. There at her bedside

I surrendered my fears and reached for the sheets. I would look into her black soul and put the final nail in her spiritual coffin. I was stopped short, at the furthest edge of my vision I caught a dark shape lingering near the heaters, it appeared to be a woman.

The strangeness of this hourglass figure with the posture and the uncomfortable sensation that it was watching me. I released a slight gasp as I saw it take a step forward. I prayed to God, that if I lived through this horror I would never return to the Basement.

The dark shadow moved from her face like clouds moving away to sunlight, her face became clear, her beauty was ravishing. She had a passionate charm that no man could resist, all fear was removed. No more than 27 years old, I lost myself in the perfect lines of her face that God drew with a paintbrush. I had no defense against her smile at which point I became her helpless victim. “Angelique,” she laughed her name. Her knee-high silk dress was in flower print, she danced as she walked me up the balcony steps. Her intellect was cunning and confident, I would follow her through the enormous hallways - destination unknown. I was quiet as she sang cheerful songs of redemption, like an angel... she spoke about her loves of the past who fell short and how she turned them all down. I would agree with bright eyes... “You are too good for them.” She whispered the story of a spell that had been broken, how she gave her heart to a stranger, that

one day they would marry and be together forever. She revealed “I never want to grow old,” and further “I never want to be helpless where people had to take care of me.” I would be close behind her while she shared intimate details of her family and sins that I could not unlearn. The deep dark secrets and resentment of her family not loving her and only waiting for her to die, so they might inherit her wealth. Only David would be there caring when sickness fell upon her, showering her with the only thing that money could not buy, LOVE. Upon her death, the night she died, only David was at her bedside. She revealed to me a clause in the Trust, and the location of a will hidden in the basement. It makes David the sole heir to her wealth and estate. (EXCLUDING ALL OTHER DESCENDANTS). I was thankful for learning something new that day, thankful for meeting Angelique “The Lady in the Basement”

THE DEAL

The Realtor team was in the Library with buyers and awaited our answer. With an enormous amount of enthusiasm the brothers and sister told me the offer was 9 million dollars and the buyer would close immediately! They felt this deal was FAIR and were ready to accept and close. David the trustee stood by my side and asked, what do you think about this offer John? I replied “this is a joke right?” The brothers and family quickly replied they like the offer, because they can finally close this chapter and “move on”. I explained that the real offer does not start with a 9. The agent and his buyers waited in the library of the estate for our answer. I told David and the family, we would go into the conference room located just off the library and negotiate with potential buyers and agents. Everyone began to relocate to the conference room. A team of agents with their buyers, dressed sharply and looking quite dapper in their Imani suits, bright-eyed and bushy tales, they all sat down across a long glass table which stretched the length of the conference room. They had much chatter and laughs between themselves before settling down in their seats to talk. After the room got quiet I walked out to the adjoining horse stable Atrium. (they could see me through the glass walls) I then stood on the bleachers that were covered by roses and perfectly manicured hedges. The most beautiful garden inside the atrium and gazed up at the 20 foot

high Plexiglas ceilings. This was indeed one of the most breath-taking features of the property. It was an area for hosting gatherings & guests, while admiring the beauty of the champion horses they raised. It became apparent, I was reassessing the value and uniqueness of the estate.

After smelling the roses (that Angelique planted with her own hands) I walked back to my seat. Following a moment of awkward silence, I asked the agents “what is your real offer? before they could answer, I asked, does your buyer really want the property or can they just take it or leave it? Because the sellers only want to sell to someone who REALLY wants the property, will cherish and love it the way Angelique did. When I mentioned their mothers name, the family looked at me with confusion, almost to say, how did you know? You never met her, but I did - in the basement. I then told them their offer would not be considered or countered, it was too disrespectful to the family and would expose my trustee seller for lawsuits in the future. I told the family the meeting was over and we had to walk-away from this buyer. The buyers then consulted with their agents in a whisper and returned with a full price offer for 19 million. The family was in shock with a pleasurable disbelief. There would be further shock when I revealed the uncovered will written by “The Lady in the Basement”.

After the meeting with David, I gave him a sincere congratulations! I thanked him for his trust and what a blessing it was to meet him and his

daughter on the shuttle that day. David looked at me with a blank stare and said, Thank YOU John! The pleasure was mine, but I don't have a daughter. -)

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