

# MOUSE

Fourth Revision

By

Justin Tagg

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16 Stonefield Avenue,  
Lincoln  
LN2 1QL

(0) 7780 334386  
[justintagg@me.com](mailto:justintagg@me.com)

FADE IN:

Black. Titles over.

DELTA WAVES throb like a persistent sea, echoing around a giant empty room.

Scratchy, muted, vinyl music 'THE FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE' crackles into action at the other side of a dense wall.

DARK PASSENGER  
[harsh whisper]  
Don't wake up-

FX: A door SLAMS.

INT. BARE ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

But he already has.

Pupils wide, ANDERSON sits bolt upright, eyes shooting from one corner of the room to another. His anonymous KAKI top and GREY TROUSERS barely grant him an outline against the muted backdrop of a dusty green CHESTERFIELD ARMCHAIR.

Bare concrete walls and flickering strip lights throw hard, angry shadows into each corner, leaving the centre harshly illuminated.

A large FADED PERSIAN RUG is the only other human touch in the room. A simple kitchenette rests at the far side, built from melamine and breeze blocks. An industrial speaker, buried into the ceiling chugs out 'THE FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE'.

Anderson looks down to a thick, hard bound book resting in his lap-

-fingers flicking open the first page-

-to show a plan drawing of a small room, no measurements just pencil etchings depicting a chair and small kitchenette. (We can tell this is the room he is sat in)

FX: The music stops.

He turns the page to find a similar plan but with an 'X' scrawled into the corner of the room, behind the kitchenette.

Lifting his eyes from the book Anderson scans the floor, leaning across his chair to give him a better view of a WHITE MOUSE, twitching it's nose, looking back towards him.

He flips the page to find the same plan but now the X appears to indicate a spot to his right where a large oversized MOUSE HOLE has been kicked into the wall.

He looks back to find the mouse still sat within the kitchenette.

ANDERSON gets up from his chair but a LOUD AGGRESSIVE KNOCKING surprises him and he drops the book on the floor, grabbing at it swiftly as the mouse runs past him-  
-and into a HUGE MOUSEHOLE in the wall.

FX: Loud knocking, a fist thumping on wood.

Anderson gets down on his knees and peers in through the MOUSE HOLE-

FX: Urgent knocking

-and pulls himself in through the hole, twisting his body until he can squeeze through the gap.

INT. MOUSE HOLE

Andersons breathing quickens as he hears a DOOR CLICKING OPEN.

He peers carefully into the room to see a pair of feet in white BOILER SUIT enter.

Anderson draws back into the shadows of the space between the walls noting an 'X' scratched into the floor just inside the hole.

Peering back into the room, the feet leave, CLICKING the door shut behind.

Anderson crawls on hands and knees through the wall passage, briefly lit entering total darkness until he reaches a single shaft of dim light creeping in through another MOUSE HOLE.

INT. BARREN ROOM - TIME UNKOWN

A room identical to the first in every way, a CHESTERFIELD ARMCHAIR, bare concrete walls and breeze block kitchen.

And a MOUSE HOLE on the far wall with ANDERSON peering through before-

-he pulls himself out, belly down.

Standing up, brushing himself down Anderson takes a long breath as-

- a door opposite opens. A man in a WHITE BOILER SUIT struggles in, backwards, dragging a limp body behind him.

Anderson flings himself behind the kitchenette and hides, hands pressed into the floor, knees up to his chest.

Peering through a hole in the kitchenette he sees the very edges of a man being sat upright in a chair by the man in the white boiler suit, but we cannot see his face. A book is placed on the lap of the man in the chair and the man in the boiler suit steps back, softly.

Anderson slides himself deep into the corner of the kitchenette where he finds a-

-MOUSE nibbling on a piece of cheese by his feet.

FX: Door Slams. THE FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE begins

Peering once more through the gap, Anderson sees that the man in the white suit has gone and the man's arm is stirring. We still cannot see his face.

The mouse creeps forward, away from Anderson's feet.

FX: The music stops. A beat. Footsteps on a creaky floorboard tell Anderson that the other man has got out of his seat.

A muted shadow, a darkness, sweeps over the kitchen area and Anderson pushes back hard against the cabinets before seeing the cheese-

-grabbing it and flinging it through the gap in the kitchenette-

The mouse scurries off and the footsteps on the creaking floorboards move further away, taking the shadow with them.

FX: FX: Loud knocking on the door, book THUD on floor

Anderson sits tight, trying to catch every one of his own breaths. He peers through the gap in the kitchenette to see a pair of legs disappear into the mouse hole.

-FX: The door clicks open.

Anderson grips the material on his trousers tightly and sinks his head to his knees, grating his teeth, clenching his jaw as the FOOTSTEPS move away and out of the room.

The door clicks shut again and Anderson can hear the scraping, thud of a man hauling himself along the space between two walls.

He pulls himself up the work surface, supporting himself carefully.

He breathes in, out, then in, in and in again... Bending in two he holds his weight by placing his hands on his knees then-

-pushes off and KICKS the Chesterfield Armchair hard, raising it slightly off the ground. Grabbing the book he marches boldly to the door-

INT. CORRIDOR - TIME UNKNOWN

-clicking the door open carefully, looking out to his right and then to his left to

-A man in a white boiler suit running right for him, he swings instinctively with the book, catching him full on the jaw-

-the man in the white boiler suit collapses into a heap on the floor... his leg twitches for a moment, then goes limp.

Anderson looks closer, his hood is still throbbing softly with the weight of somebody breathing underneath.

Looking up and down the corridor, Anderson takes a hold oh the helmet and slides it off.

Inside is a man who looks identical to him, unconscious. For a second Anderson loses it, falling backwards, he glances hopelessly up the corridor again, the bright red corridor, all doors and carpet. Strip lighting runs the length and leaves pools of fluffy light on the floor at perfectly regular intervals.

He clenches his fist, grips at his hair briefly but seems to pull himself together and continue to strip the man of his hood and boiler suit.

INT. CORRIDOR. MOMENTS LATER

Anderson drags a limp body down the centre of the corridor.

INT. ANOTHER BARE ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Anderson CLICKS the door open of another room further down the corridor and drags the limp body of a man, backwards.

He places him carefully in the only chair in the room and looks carefully toward the kitchenette where a familiar hand can just be made out pressed hard into the kitchen floor.

He takes a look at the book in his hand then places the book into the lap of the man in the chair and leaves, SLAMMING the door.

INTO CORRIDOR - TIME UNKNOWN

Anderson pauses briefly outside the door, hearing the muted tones of THE FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE begin at the other side.

Out of the corner of his eye Anderson sees another figure in a white boiler suit a few doors down in the corridor-

-who, seeing Anderson, turns and runs at full speed down the corridor away from him. Anderson raises a hand to stop him just as-

-a door, far down the corridor opens and another CLONE OF ANDERSON creeps out, looking right then left, holding a book before turning to see the man running towards him-

Anderson ducks into a room opposite as-

-the clone of Anderson hits the man in a white boiler suit square in the face with a heavy book.

INT. BARE ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Another identical room. Bare concrete walls, chesterfield armchair, kitchenette, oversized mouse hole.

Anderson takes a moment. A respite. Until-

FX: -A noise behind the far wall.

Anderson throws himself behind the chesterfield armchair and hazards a glance as a man hauls himself out of a large mouse hole at the other side of the room and then, to his left-

The door CLICKS open, a man in a white boiler suit walks in backwards dragging another CLONE OF ANDERSON.

INT. BARE ROOM - BEHIND CHESTERFIELD ARMCHAIR

Anderson hears the swift THUD of the first man dropping behind the kitchen counter.

He can then barely open his eyes as a heavy, sack body is dropped into the chair he is hidden behind. He breathes swiftly through his nose, time stops for a moment until-

FX: DOOR SLAM. FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE begins.

He feels the chair lighten behind him. Lighten and shift slightly.

FX: Floorboard creak

Then, out of the corner of his eye he sees a piece of cheese bounce into the mouse hole, landing right on an X, scratched into the floor.

FX: KNOCK ON DOOR

From behind the chair Anderson grips the carpet. He hears the scratching on the lino floor of the kitchenette as the man begins to panic and sees the legs of another man slip slowly into the mouse hole.

FX: DOOR CLICKS OPEN

We close in on Andersons face. FOOTSTEPS ENTER.

INT. BARE ROOM - BEHIND CHESTERFIELD ARMCHAIR cont.

A beat.

FX: Then SLOWLY TAP AWAY, the door CLICKS shut.

Anderson ventures to move but then hears the first man pulling himself up, breathing hard and finally

KICKING the chair hard, it briefly leaves the ground, Anderson's hands instinctively wrap around his head.

Footsteps walk in front of the chair and then slowly out of the door

FX: THUD as book hits man in jaw outside room.

Anderson runs his hands through his hair, clasping them behind his neck.

FX: body being dragged on carpet outside of the room.

Anderson gets up slowly and surveys the room, now empty.

INT. BARE ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Anderson looks behind the kitchen work surface, examining the floor, finding a scuffed X on the floor. He looks back to the CHESTERFIELD ARMCHAIR and can see the remains of a black X branded into the seat.

The CHESTERFIELD ARMCHAIR has shifted marginally out of position to reveal-

-BLACK TAPE X's under the feet.

Anderson pauses for a moment, before pushing the whole chair and, seeing black tape under each foot he flings the chair backwards and pulls at the rug.

Revealing tiny 'X' markers on the floor in black tape, indicating the placing of each corner.

INT. CORRIDOR DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Anderson shuts the door softly as he leaves the room before hearing a-

-DOOR SLAM down the corridor to his left, he looks to see another man in white boiler suit who motions towards him but Anderson-



-peels off and runs in the other direction.

As he runs a door opens in front of him-

-A CLONE OF ANDERSON, no boiler suit, steps out and Anderson

-stops DEAD in his tracks..

-just avoiding a heavy book being swung towards him, which hits the wall HARD, bouncing back, knocking the CLONE off his feet and revealing an X scratched into the wall where the book struck. Anderson swings out with his own arms pulling the man behind him and sending him sprawling out into the corridor.

-He dashes on, rounding corner after corner until he comes to a single door at the end of the corridor.

-Crashing into it he knocks loudly

No answer. He waits for a few moments more before KNOCKING again. Again, no answer.

He pushes the door open firmly and walks in, surveying the scene.

The room appears empty but a second glance reveals,

A finger tip, just lit, on the other side of the mouse hole. A foot peeping out from the kitchenette and the flapping edges of a white boiler suit behind the chair.

Anderson leaves at speed.

He flings open every door he sees and spies

-a man in a white boiler suit placing another into a chair-

-a man crawling out of a mouse hole, looking surprised to see him-

-a man in white boiler suit dragging another down the corridor-

-and finally he opens a door onto some stairs. An alarm sounds.

Anderson runs up the stairs until he reaches a heavy steel door. He thrusts it open and crumbles out onto the roof, sucking in a lungful of air.

The wind whistles past him as he kicks the steel door shut behind him.

FX: SLAM, followed by a SLAM and another SLAM in the far distance. An echo?

The roof is in darkness and in split levels. He can see the stars, pin pricks in the black sky, light cloud flickering in front of them replicating the fluorescents from inside.

A smile breaks through briefly onto Andersons face. He takes a deep, full breath in through his nose and clambers forward, pulling himself up a small IRON LADDER.

-He pulls himself slowly up over the top rung of the ladder and looks out ahead

-to the slate grey roof in front-

-and, beyond, emerging through the fluorescent mist-

-a sea of identical rooftops beyond, like squares on a chess board, perfectly symmetrical.

Each rooftop belongs to a building seemingly forged out of a single piece of concrete and drawn by a child's hand. Aside from thick bars of fluorescent lighting clinging to each rooftop no details have been added but for a series of MATTE BLACK RECTANGLES where windows should be. Information and colour have simply let go, leaving only the most basic components of a partially remembered dream.

Anderson creeps forward, in total shadow-

-making for a pool of light, spilling out from the fluorescents on the roof opposite and just touching the edge of this one.

As his feet touch the light, and the rest of him follows, pushing onward to the edge of the building-

-to the sheer scale of the scene unfolding in front of him-

-the hundreds of identical rooftops laid out like tiles,  
far into the distance, each caught by a pool of light, he  
sees, on the roof opposite-

-another him, staring back.

And on all of the other rooftops too, Anderson.

Andersons soft, wet eyes catch those of his nearest  
double, on the rooftop opposite. Somewhere in the  
distance THE FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE is barely made out,  
echoing, distorting a thousand times over, diluting into  
long, flat, drones.

His eyes crease and close tightly, gripping the tear  
which has formed in the corner.

The twins gaze hopelessly into each others eyes-

-before Anderson launches himself forward into a frantic  
SPRINT, forcing his body forward, CHARGING toward the  
edge-

-his double mirroring his every step.

For a moment they are running directly towards each other  
before they jump-

-and the air becomes a closed breath. Hollow Silence.

Anderson falls into darkness.

It is not a smile that creeps onto his face. But a look  
of quiet indignation, which evaporates as soon as he  
sees-

-an INFLATABLE CRASH MAT, emblazoned with an ominous 'X'

He starts screaming even before his body crumples into  
the mat below and he flips around, screaming-

-yelling-

-breaking.

INT. BARREN ROOM DAY - TIME UNKNOWN

FX: DELTA WAVES thump amongst a group of crouching figures who all bare a striking resemblance to ANDERSON.

One Anderson is slumped in a chair. Another behind a kitchen work surface and a final man, in a white boiler suit, is hiding behind a chair.

INT. MOUSE ROOM - DAY

A wall of cages-

-in each one a white mouse.

INT CORRIDOR DAY

A man, frozen, in white boiler suit, holds the legs of another Anderson clone.

EXT ROOFTOPS

The rooftops become tiles, which become pixels against the black sky. All identical.

INT BARREN ROOM - DAY

An x, barely legible, marked in red on a black and white linoneum floor.

VOICEOVER

Don't wake up.

A tiny mouse is placed, perfectly over the X.

FX: Door Slam

FADE OUT:

THE FLAT FOOT FLOOGIE plays over credits.

*He dreams.*

*His mind floods with images he cannot recognise, his feet tingle with the memory of surfaces they have never stood on as the dark passenger whispers urgently into his ear,*

*"Don't wake up"*

*But he already has.*

*From 'MOUSE' - short story*

