



Ghosts

Director's treatment by
Tom Kingsley

Who is this guy?

Hello, I'm Tom. I love comedy and ghosts. This show genuinely couldn't be further up my street. So it's been very exciting to think about how I could help it come to life. Here's a relatively thorough document explaining how I see the series.

But first, here are two pages introducing me, and the two main things I like to direct.

1: Silly, fun, warm-hearted comedies



Jamie Demetriou and Robert Popper's estate agent sitcom **Stath Lets Flats** (C4) featuring Natasia Demetriou, Katy Wix and Dustin Demri-Burns.



BAFTA nominated vlogger spoof **Pls Like**, featuring Liam Williams, Tim Key and Lolly Adefope.



Pariahs, starring Jamie Demetriou and Ellie White playing various different characters.

2: Odd spooky dramas with inventive VFX

True Horror - a C4 docudrama about ghosts in a Welsh farmhouse. Horror experts FrightFest said it was 'pleasingly old-fashioned' and 'reminiscent of Ghostwatch', which was good news.

Oh God, a strange Sky comedy short where Jamie Demetriou slowly and painfully turns into a car. Also, he plays identical twins.

TRUE HORROR



A woman with dark hair styled in an updo is shown in profile, looking into a large, ornate mirror. The room is dimly lit with warm, golden light, likely from a lamp or candle. The mirror's frame is highly decorative with intricate carvings. The woman is wearing a dark, possibly black, dress with a lace or ruffled collar. The overall mood is elegant and classic.

*Right. Moving on.
Let's take a closer look
at the tone of the
whole series.*

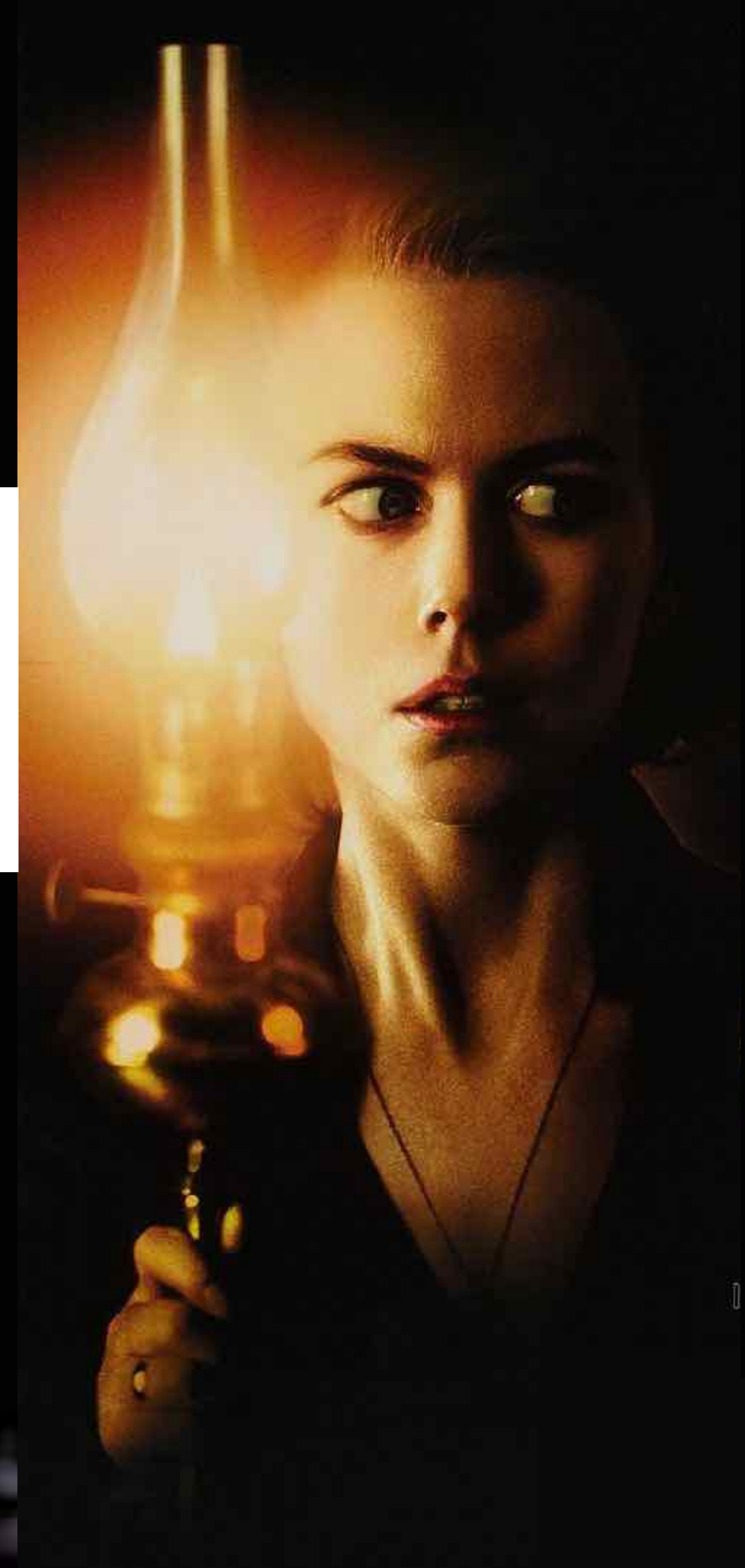
On the next few pages, I've put together some references for all the different tones that I think should go into this show.

They're all from films I love very much.



Authentic ghost story

Ghosts isn't actually a scary ghost story, but it contains the bones of one. This is a fun family sitcom - it's just that occasionally we pop into a lovingly recreated version of the richly atmospheric world of classic English horror. *The Innocents*, *The Haunting*, *The Woman in Black*, and *The Others* all share the damp musty DNA of dark corridors and faded grandeur. It's important that we capture this specific feeling - while remembering that it's generally only a backdrop.





Affectionate spoofs of ghostly tropes

Fondly referencing classic spooky themes, but undercutting them at every turn. This only works if the people making the spoof genuinely like what they're spoofing.





Lovely idiots on a mission

There's something so satisfying and joyful about seeing a bunch of misfits team up to try and accomplish something. When the ghosts team up to try and scare the newcomers away, you know exactly what the plan is meant to be - but you also know these silly characters are going to get it stupidly wrong, and it's going to be very funny to watch them slowly go off the rails... until it all somehow works out at the end.



Fishes out of water

Well this is a bit of a curveball, because *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is a veeery strong ingredient. But if you ignore the singing and dancing, it is a bit similar to how Alison and Mark are plunged into a weird gothic adventure. It's a good example of a comedy taking a very solemn genre-based aesthetic, and then doing something very silly with it.



*Lighting: not too dark,
but not too bright either.*



For comedy to work, you need to see everyone's faces brightly and clearly. If everyone's shrouded in spooky gloom then it's not going to be funny. And it's got to be funny.

But still! There's a middle ground where you make sure to keep everything visible and clear and funny, but you still keep a lot more atmosphere than you'd normally get in TV.





Angles

With such a large cast, I'd like to introduce more exciting blocking - when you have lots of characters standing in a row, the shot can start to look like a school photo.





Wide-angle lenses and slightly wonky/stylised camera angles make it feel funny and dynamic. This isn't a boring historical drama: it's modern.






The state of the house

In the taster, I think the outside looks too nice! Sure, it's not a ruin, cos it was inhabited up until very recently - but let's let it have gone more to seed. A garden overgrown with nettles, dead bushes, some broken windows, a hole in the roof. Bingham House should have its own arc throughout the series - so once Alison and Mike start their renovations, we'll see the house change more dramatically if it starts in a more decrepit state.



The spooky bits



For the most part, this is a warm and inviting family comedy. But there are some key moments when the joke is how the classic ghost story atmosphere is suddenly being subverted - like when the gang goes to meet Helen for the first time, and she turns out to be less terrifying than they expected. For that to work, we need to have created some properly effective moments of ghost story magic.

I've found that when directing gently spooky horror moments, it's important to be simple and uncomplicated about it. Just have one thing in the shot that is clearly meant to be unsettling - everything in the shot is normal except for one silhouetted figure in the distance, or someone standing oddly with their face hidden.

Meanwhile, when Lady Button falls out the window, it's about finding the balance where it's not so tight that it's gory, but also not so wide that we can't easily read what's going on.

Bonus idea: a ghost cat?

In the Ice Age movies, they frequently cut away to the silent-movie slapstick of Scrat the nut-hunting sabre-toothed squirrel. They're just bonus sketches, but they're a lovely ingredient peppered throughout the movies.

I wonder if we could have our own version of Scrat. A cat who - after surviving nine deaths without incident - hasn't noticed that she really is finally dead. She can see the (living) mice in the house, but they can't see her. It's confusing for her, and funny for the audience. A lonely version of Tom and Jerry.

The Ghost Cat lies in wait for a mouse, but when she pounces triumphantly, her paws always pass straight through. And it's not always about mice. We'd see the cat run to the edge of the grounds and be teleported back to the other side of the garden. Be accidentally sat on by Alison, or walloped by a builder's spade - but the cat's always unscathed.

I mean, this is all very presumptuous of me. These are just little bonus cutaways to include maybe a couple of times an episode, at times where the scenes don't need to run directly on to each other. So it's certainly not crucial for the plot - but it could be a nice way to get some extra funny interludes in there.

they thought this was a nice idea, but no thank you



If we did this, it'd all be filmed by a B Camera team when A Camera is in a different room. So it wouldn't take up any extra time. The mouse stuff would involve doing two passes - one for the cat, and one for the mouse. I've filmed ghostly stuff with animals before - you can't always force them to do something: sometimes you just have to wait patiently for ages until they do the right thing by mistake.



Bye!

Thank you very much for reading this. There's a lot more I'd like to say, but this document is long enough as it is.

I had so much fun reading the script and the series outline. I love this warm friendly humour, and the beautiful atmospheric setting. It's a really special idea for a series, and I would be absolutely bowled over with delight and excitement if I got to direct this. So if there's anything else you need to know, please do ask.

Best wishes,
Tom