

BLACK MOLD

Episode 101 - "Bugged"

written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. DINGY APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

A COCKROACH skitters across the floor, seeking out crumbs, its antennae probing the air for scent and danger.

THE COCKROACH'S POV: stained and scuffed linoleum floor zooms beneath. Antennae dance on either side of the frame.

AHEAD: A ROACH MOTEL. The roach races into the bowels of the Motel. Roaches check in...

The DOOR to the apartment opens in the background, out of focus, the Roach Motel in foreground--a grand establishment.

A HUMAN enters. Tosses the keys to the table.

A hand stubs out a cigarette in a tray filled with butts.

A new cigarette is brought to lips, a lighter flames the tip. There's the sucking intake, and then:

MISO VICIOUS (45). Scar down one cheek, mad glint in her Asian eyes, haughty demeanor--not your typical TV heroine, that's for sure. Time will tell if you'll like her.

Her shithole--yes, it's pretty bad--studio apartment is the kind of place you live when you can't afford anything else, or you just don't give a shit--AKA, MISO'S LIFE PHILOSOPHY.

Ratty futon in one corner. Thrift store lamp. Bare walls, except for a single Polaroid photo of a Korean man in military uniform with a young girl tacked to the wall.

A bean bag chair completes the ensemble (what is she, a 20-something college dudebro?).

Miso stares at the photo.

MISO
(in Korean)
<Another long day, another little
dollar. Just a little longer, and I'll
be there.>

Miso sees another cockroach investigating the roach motel. Her face goes from a scowl to a snarl.

MISO
You son of a bitch!!!

She throws a magazine at the cockroach, which skitters away.

A massive cloud of cigarette smoke swirls--

INT. MISO'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

STEAM. The shower bleeds brown sludge, coughs, then it's clear. Dollar store underwear falls to floor, kicked aside.

Miso checks the mirror--face inscrutable. The mileage tells us she's seen some shit. Something to think about, kiddos: take care of your skin...

She steps into the steam.

COCKROACH POV: floor-level, angling along the tub toward the toilet, skittering movement.

A cockroach jets in a hole behind the toilet. We follow it--

INT. HOLE IN THE WALL

--to the pipes and insulation, going from white to gray to BLACK as an infestation grows--FUZZY BLACK MOLD, like a visible virus, on every surface--

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Miso smokes. In the shower. Yes, that's happening.

Hot, steaming water cascades down her back--a second later she SHRIEKS as it goes cold!

MISO
FREEZING!! AHH!!

--she scrambles, falling over, pulling the shower curtain down with her, face mashed into the mold-infested tile. She SNORTS, breathes out through her nose--SNEEZES--

Facing the ceiling, she notices the corner--BLACK MOLD. She gets to her feet. Squints at the corner--

She opens a cabinet, rummages past toilet paper to grab the TUB-N-TILE cleaner--casually ignoring the fucking HANDGUN--

There is a KNOCK on her front door--she freezes. Another knock. Balls. A third knock. more insistent. angry even.

PEEPHOLE POV: a beady-eyed LARGE MAN.

INT. MISO'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The door opens, revealing the landlord about to knock again but his eyes pop like he's just seen his sister's ta-tas.

--or rather, his tenant's--

Miso is wet, naked, and still smoking that cigarette. If looks could kill, she'd be dictator of a country well into its third decade of totalitarian rule.

MAX (60s): He's momentarily fazed by her nudity. He recovers, scratches his butt, resigned to his life of wearing once-white tank tops, now best described as hotdog-water color.

MAX

We use American calendar here in America. It is eighth already, Missy...

He's got a vaguely Eastern European accent.

MISO

It's Miso, not Missy. Your racism is noted. You sure you're not from here?

MAX

Is not racist to state fact.

His eyes pervily slide down her body like they're at a water park, hitting every curve.

MISO

I found black mold in my bathroom. And my shower keeps switching to cold water.

He glances down.

MAX

Yes. I can tell.

MISO

Whaddyou want?

MAX

Need that check or I have to give you boot. And I put you on list, get passed around to other landlords. They no rent to you either. Need by Friday!

He adjusts the cigar and clenches his jaw, eyes her figure one more time before heading off--

MISO

What list? A list of women you've spied on through peepholes you installed in this rat trap slum house? You'd better not put me on your list! You'd better not have a list at all, MAX!

EXT. SUNSHINE TV STUDIOS - NIGHT

A brick building. Satellite dishes and a large antenna array. Not for nothing: it's the exact shape as Miso's Roach Motel.

Bright lights from a beater car sweep through swirling snow as the car approaches the gate.

It pulls in, revealing Miso, smoking yet another cigarette, as she passes a sign: "NO SMOKING WITHIN FIFTY FEET."

INT. SUNSHINE STUDIOS, PARKING GARAGE LEVEL 5 - NIGHT

With a BANG the car shuts off. She emerges, dressed in blue coveralls. The PATCH on her chest reads "MISO VICIOUS, JANITORIAL." She tosses her cigarette into a pile of butts.

INT. SUNSHINE STUDIOS, BROADCAST BOOTH - NIGHT

PRODUCER PHIL MAYHEW thumbs through program notes. He's schlubby and exudes a nervous energy you'd expect from a guy whose main thrill is getting pegged.

PAST THE GLASS: cityscape backdrop behind an anchor desk where over-the-hill SUSAN (35) checks a mirror. Salt-and-pepper-haired JARED (40) rubs his chiseled jaw.

PHIL

Chad, let's step through the tapes.
AND... roll on B. Annnd Sound up.

NEWSY THEME MUSIC swells. A MALE ANNOUNCER intones:

ANNOUNCER (FILTERED)

Live from W-O-K-E in downtown Tulsa,
this is Oklahoma's own News 11 at 11
with Susan Humes and Jared Peabody, and
Simon Castor with weather and sports.

PHIL

Take it A. And go B. Hold B for Jared's
smile--and--go A.

SUSAN (FILTERED)

Heavy winds blew over a construction
crane, dropping twenty-eight tons of
steel on terrified pedestrians below.

JARED (FILTERED)

Geologists measured a 4.7 magnitude
quake at approximately 4pm this
afternoon. Local environmental groups
say it's due to fracking.

PHIL
 Alright, back to A.

SUSAN (FILTERED)
 Two local women say they were contacted by a man claiming to be a government agent with information about a deadly viral outbreak, but local authorities say he made off with thousands of dollars in jewelry instead.

A KNOCK at the production booth door, followed by Miso entering in reverse, headphones on and pulling a janitorial cart full of cleaning supplies. She does not notice Phil.

PHIL
 Hey, we're in the middle of the broadcast, can you--

Miso--headphones--can't hear.

PHIL
 No, Susan--sorry--one--

He clips the mic and stands, taps Miso on the shoulder--

She turns. She pulls that face you make when you slice your finger with the super sharp knife--at first nothing, then total surprise and fear as the blood rushes out.

From Miso's POV: Phil isn't Phil. Rather, Phil is a HUMAN-SIZED COCKROACH. And he's ANGRY--

Miso SCREAMS--reaches for her cart--hand scrambling, finds a spray bottle--she SPRAYS the cleaning solution in Phil's face. Phil ROARS, but it sounds like CHITTERING instead...

News anchors look confused while trying not to look confused.

SUSAN (FILTERED)
 And, uh, parts of Tulsa were littered tonight with hundreds of flyers advertising--uh--hundreds of flyers--

PHIL advances, antennae waving and claws clicking--he grabs her and she SCREAMS--and fights him off--

Miso falls back, crashing against her cleaning cart and head smashes against the wall, and everything GOES BLACK.