

Radio Play: Fear Between Floors; Ray – trapped in elevator and witnesses murder

START

(MUSIC: NED plays an ominous chord.)

(MORTY steps up to the opposite microphone.)

(MUSIC: NED plays the Fear Between Floors theme.)

RAY. My name is Ray Vernon and I'm thirty two years old. I'm a paper hanger with a wife and a mortgage. Right about now my wife's probably putting dinner on the table. I wish I were there and not here. But here I am. Stuck.

(MUSIC: Theme stops playing.)

Right under this button in front of me it says "Ring for Emergency."

(SOUND: Muted ring.)

I push it and nothing happens. No response. Beneath this button is another one. The words under it say "Emergency Stop." I sure don't need that one. I'm stopped alright. Right between the third and second floors of this old three story building. It's been converted into an apartment building by the Whitney's. They're the well-to-do couple who just bought the building as a fixer upper. They hired me to paper their apartment on the second floor. I was supposed to do theirs and then paper the apartments on the first and third floor.

There's an old deaf woman who lives in the first floor apartment by the name of Mrs. Martin. I don't imagine there's a ghost of a chance that she'll hear the emergency bell. There's an attractive young woman by the name of Nancy Taylor who lives on the third floor. She works at Mr. Whitney's office. She hasn't been home all day. So, here I am. Trapped in this old fashioned elevator between two floors. It's a small elevator. Big enough for maybe two or three people.

(SOUND: The shake of an iron gate.)

There's an iron gate in front of me. And this lever for floor stops.

(SOUND: Lever moving back and forth.)

The elevator car is about nine feet high. I'm surrounded by three cherry walls. Just above me there's a ceiling with a single bulb that lights the elevator. I can see a small door about 12 inches square right next to the bulb. I don't know what that's for.

(SOUND: RAY getting down on the floor.)

If I get down on the floor like this I can see right into the Whitney's apartment through a gap no bigger than a quarter inch. To think I was in that room only fifteen minutes ago.

(SOUND: RAY getting to his feet.)

There's no way I can get in there through that narrow gap. Just to my left are two other buttons. One with an arrow on it that points upward and another with an arrow that points down. I wish I would have paid better attention to that fifteen minutes ago. Fifteen minutes ago it was 6 p.m. sharp. I decided to get my things together so I could be home for dinner at 6:30. When I got in the elevator my hands were full and I pushed the "up" button instead of the "down" button. Like a dummy, I panicked and pushed the "Emergency Stop" button. And here it stopped. And here I am.

(SOUND: Knocking on the door.)

Someone's knocking on the Whitney's door.

(SOUND: RAY getting on the floor.)

Hey! Hey, I'm stuck in here!

(SOUND: Door opens.)

MRS. MARTIN. Mr. Whitney? Mrs. Whitney? Is anyone home?

RAY. It's Mrs. Martin from downstairs. Mrs. Martin! It's me the paper hanger. I'm stuck on this elevator?

MRS. MARTIN. Mrs. Whitney? It doesn't look like anyone's home. I'll just come back later.

RAY. Mrs. Martin! Help me, I'm...

(SOUND: Door shuts.)

Gone. She's deaf alright. I couldn't have made more racket than that.

(SOUND: RAY gets up from floor.)

Now what do I do? If I'm not home in fifteen minutes my wife'll start worrying. I've got to get out of here somehow. Wait that little door on the ceiling. That must be some sort of service door to the elevator shaft. If I could just jump up and...

(SOUND: RAY jumping up and down.)

I...can't...get to it. Wait, here I'll use this wallpaper scraper to reach. If I can just...jump...high enough...

(SOUND: Glass breaking.)

Wonderful. Now I broke the light bulb. It's already getting dark. When did Mrs. Whitney say she's be home? Just later tonight. Oh, what's the use. I'm not going anywhere until someone comes home.

(SOUND: RAY sitting.)

I might as well sit here and wait. I put in a long day and I'm exhausted. All that jumping and hollering really took it out of me. (Yawns.) Now, I'm getting tired sitting here in the dark. Maybe if I just...

END

(MUSIC: NED plays surreal lullaby music for a short period of time. He fades the music out as ELI and NANCY's voice are heard.)

ELI. You've got to settle down!

NANCY. But do you understand what you're suggesting?