

# Film Review: The Nightmare



The Nightmare is a collection of interviews with real people who suffer from sleep paralysis, spliced with reenactments of the nightmares they experience while suffering from sleep paralysis. That may sound a bit too simple, but that is all there really is.

What started as a promising concept quickly devolves into a third-rate cable channel haunting show replete with sub Unsolved Mysteries re-enactments. Rodney Ascher is making a habit out of these “barely a documentary” documentaries. The subject and interviewees are inherently interesting, but since we are only given their stories and the re-enactments of them, we have no starting point from which to understand sleep paralysis or the study of the phenomena. The inclusion of a single medical professional to explain what we do know about sleep paralysis and what ongoing studies there are to understand it would have benefited the film greatly. It also could have been useful to interview someone who has studied the nightmares and visions themselves to understand why various people throughout the world and of different time periods have experienced similar visions and sensations.

Unfortunately it seems like there is something fascinating in this good-looking movie and a couple of the recreations of the nightmares are positively creepy. But the whole experience just left me wanting more info and wondering why *The Nightmare* never gets past what should have been the first act of the documentary. Ascher’s previous *Room 237* was similarly disjointed, but that style worked for that film since its subject matter was entirely opinion-based. I guess you could do worse if you decide to check this out when it pops up on Netflix or Hulu, but I certainly can not recommend anyone go out of their way or spend any extra money to watch this in its current VOD release.

*The Nightmare* (2015); Director: Rodney Ascher