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## Madison: Lights, cameras, action!

### Garfield Avenue home is setting for psychological thriller 'The Attic'

**BY JENNA M. MCKNIGHT  
DAILY RECORD**

MADISON -- Some spruce up their lawns. Others slap on a fresh coat of paint.

But when it came to putting their house on the market -- and trying to attract buyers -- the Malaroche family had a different strategy.

They agreed to let an independent film company shoot a psychological thriller called "The Attic" in their three-story Victorian home listed for \$2.1 million. The arrangement meant Christine Malaroche, her husband and two daughters would have to live in a Morristown hotel room for three weeks while a film crew took over their 7,500-square-foot, 18-room Garfield Avenue home.

"You might call that a big temporary downsize," said Christine Malaroche, 53, with a laugh.

On Friday, filming was under way at the Malaroche home, which has a for sale sign planted at the front edge of the 1.5 acre property. The crews arrived Oct. 26 and will continue shooting the full-length film through Nov. 17.

The family stops by daily. Lucy Malaroche, a 17-year-old senior at Madison High School, was there on Friday with a friend.

#### 'So cool'

"It's weird to think about it, the fact that there's a murder going on in my house," she said, pointing to a stretcher in the living room.

A few moments prior, with cameras rolling, an actress was on the stretcher with a paramedic hovering over her.

"It's fun watching the production and how everything comes together," Lucy Malaroche said. "My friends are really so astonished. They go, 'Oh my God. That's so cool.'"



**TYSON TRISH / DAILY RECORD**

Jason Lewis (playing John Trevor) and Elisabeth Moss (playing Emma Callan) rehearse a scene from 'The Attic' during filming in Madison.



**TYSON TRISH / DAILY RECORD**

Jason Lewis and Elisabeth Moss, above, rehearse a scene from 'The Attic' with supporting cast members in Madison Friday.

This is the second movie being filmed in the borough this week -- and the third this year. On Tuesday, scenes for "Spinning into Butter," a drama starring Sarah Jessica Parker and Beau Bridges, were shot at Drew University. In March, crews descended upon Madison to shoot scenes from "The Family Stone," starring Parker, Diane Keaton, Claire Danes and Luke Wilson, among others.

### Quaint town

Filmmakers say they like Madison for its quaint character and close proximity to New York City. That certainly was the draw for producers of "The Attic."

They were looking for a house near the city that was charismatic and a bit spooky. They found the Malaroche home about two months ago through a Morristown Realtor, Catherine Montgomery, who in turn got them in touch with a Madison Realtor.

"I never had liked any of the houses I had seen," said producer Tom Malloy, who wrote the script and stars in the film. "The second I stepped out of the car, I said, 'This is the house.'

"It's got such character to it," he said. "There definitely are spirits in this house."

The Malaroches moved into the house, built in 1890, when they returned from France about 20 years ago. Earlier this year, Christine Malaroche's father died in the house at the age of 78.

"I think he would be for this movie," Christine Malaroche said.

The movie is about a girl who is determined to uncover her family's secrets after she is attacked, in the attic, by the ghost of her identical twin.

The movie is directed by Mary Lambert, director of the highly acclaimed 1989 horror flick, "Pet Sematary."

Starring in "The Attic" are Elisabeth Moss, best known for her role as the president's daughter on "The West Wing," and Jason Lewis, who played Samantha's struggling actor boyfriend, Smith Jerrod, in "Sex and the City."

### Festival-bound

Producers said they are looking for a distributor and might "do the festival route," citing film festivals in Toronto and Sundance. They hope it will appear in theaters next year.

All of the scenes from the movie are being shot in the house or in the carriage house out back. Rooms that won't be used in scenes have been converted into dressing rooms or makeup rooms or cool-down rooms for actors. A food tent is set up in the backyard.

While some of the antique couches and wooden tables are being used in the sets, most of the family's furnishings were packed up and stored in the basement. The film crew also made a few temporary modifications, like putting up green tile around the fireplace and fake wood paneling in the breakfast nook.



**TYSON TRISH / DAILY RECORD**

Christine Malaroche with daughters Charlotte, left, and Lucy on the set of 'The Attic,' which is being filmed in their Madison home.

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Russ Terlecki, one of the producers, said the house is supposed to look somewhat vacant.

"In the script, the family has just moved in," he said, "so it's kind of empty."

Christine Malaroche is mum about how much the film company is paying her family for use of the house, but she did say it's enough to cover the family's \$5,000 hotel bill.

The family also might appear in the movie. In one scene, they play stunned neighbors standing in the distance. Their Siamese cat, Harry, has pranced through a few scenes, and the director said he probably will show up in the movie.

"He's kind of charming them to death," Christine Malaroche said.

As to whether the movie will help attract home buyers, only time will tell, said Peggy Lee Peterson, the family's real estate agent. She has yet to show the house to any prospective buyers during the film shoot.

"It's definitely going to bring attention to it," Peterson said. "It's a special house, for sure."

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