

Beyond Treatment

written by Thorsten Loos

loos.thorsten@web.de

FADE IN:

INT. COUCH DOCTOR OFFICE - DAY

A noticeably haggard, troubled man sits in a wheelchair. His appearance is unkempt. Long hair, unwashed for weeks. Shabby clothes, stubbles on his face. This is LARRY FAYMAN, forty-two years old, looks like ninety.

He sits in front of an empty desk and stares out of the window. Seems apathetic.

FOOTSTEPS come closer. A DOOR is opened.

An attractive woman in her thirties, expensive suit, prim and proper from head to toe, blocks Larry's view as she sits down on the other side of the desk. This is DR. EMILIA BOYD.

She puts on her glasses. Opens a file on the desk. Browses through it.

She gets stuck at a specific page. Shakes her head as she reads it silently.

EMILIA

Larry, Larry, Larry. Another three complaints this week?

Larry's eyes focus on her but his expression is idle.

EMILIA

Nighttime disturbances, common assaults. You still got these flashbacks?

Larry nods impassively.

Emilia lays her glasses down on the desk. Eyes him with worry lines on her forehead.

EMILIA

Really, Larry - I don't know what else I could do for you. I've tried just about anything I could think of. I think you're beyond treatment.

Angst manifests in his face. He hysterically shakes his head. He knows that term well...

LARRY

(whiny)

No... Please... Don't send me back to the clinic. Not the clinic again...

Emilia frowns.

EMILIA

I'm sorry, Larry but I don't think I've got a choice. I really tried to help you, and all this isn't your fault, I know that. But you're a danger. For yourself and for others.

Tears flood his eyes. He begs for his life.

LARRY

Doctor... Please... Give me one more chance. Just a week. I promise, there won't be any more complaints! I beg you!

Emilia leans back in her chair. Eyes him sceptically.

EMILIA

One more week. And if it doesn't work, you go back to the clinic. No backtalk. No arguments. You won't make a fuss of it? You promise me that?

LARRY

(agitated, crying)

I promise! I swear! Whatever you want! But don't send me back there...

Emilia looks sharply at him.

EMILIA

If I let you go now, can you guarantee you won't harm yourself?

Larry drops his head. Still crying.

LARRY

Fucking look at me! If I had the guts to kill myself I'd have done so a long time ago!

She eyes the human wreckage in front of her with a scrutinizing look. Seems convincing.

EMILIA

Alright, Larry. I'll see you next wednesday then. And don't forget our deal, okay?

His crying turns into tears of relief.

INT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

The doors of an ELEVATOR open. Larry rolls out and down the corridor. Tries to avoid even the slightest noise as he passes by a couple of apartment doors.

He rummages around in the pockets of his holey jacket and finds his keyring. Unlocks the door to his apartment and dashes it open with his elbow.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

His place is a mess. Plastic bags with empty beer cans, old newspapers, dirty clothes all over the place.

He adroitly slaloms around the clutter. Stops next to his dog-eared bed.

He heaves himself up from the wheelchair and throws his upper body on the bed. Struggles a bit until he lies in a comfortable stance.

He breathes heavily. His eyelids droop shut.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - A FEW YEARS EARLIER

His apartment is tidy. Not comparable to today's landfill.

Larry's fine as well. Smart appearance. Short haircut. Wears a suit and sits at a desk. Types on his notebook, browses through filing folders.

A woman, about his age, enters the room behind him. It's HELEN, his wife.

She gently puts a hand on his shoulder. Pecks him.

HELEN

You work too much, darling.

Larry smiles. Holds her hand.

LARRY

Sorry, dear. I'll just have to finish this report, or Richard will neck me tomorrow.

She steps next to a shelf and picks up a book.

HELEN

Fine, then I'll have to spend the time in the bathtub with this book instead.

A spoiled smile crosses her face as Larry's eyes widen.

He laughs with a thrill of anticipation.

LARRY

Just you wait! As soon as I'm done here, you'll have a bath you won't forget in a hurry!

She provocatively minces past him and towards the bathroom.

HELEN

(amused)

Don't let me wait too long, honey.

Larry smiles and looks after her until she disappears in the bathroom and shuts the door behind her. He turns back to his desk. His smile fades away.

As he dives back into his report, the apartment door is kicked open with a loud, DRONING BANG.

Larry winces. Yanks around on his chair.

He's terrified to see a MAN with an assault rifle, all dressed in black, his face covered under a black ski mask.

LARRY

(in panic)

What the... Who on earth are you?

The man trains his gun on him without a word.

In this moment, Helen tears the bathroom door open. The door hits the attacker, his rifle plummets to the ground.

HELEN

Larry, are you okay? What was that sound?

The attacker recovers, grabs Helen's nude body from behind. Helen SCREAMS.

Instinctively, Larry pulls a drawer open. Grabs a gun and releases the safety catch.

Helen fights with the guy. Manages to knee him in the guts.

The guy staggers back for a moment, leaving an open field of fire for Larry. But he can't. He's paralyzed. His finger refuses to move.

HELEN

(craving)

Larry!!!

The attacker recovers. Picks up his rifle. Helen's body is thrown back into the bathroom as a SALVE OF BULLETS perforates her.

Larry is stunned. Terrified. Going through the horror of his life. He still points his gun at the man, but his finger won't obey to his brain.

The attacker eyes Larry. Glances into the bathroom as he passes by the door. Rises his rifle and aims.

Larry stares right into the muzzle flashes of another SALVE OF BULLETS before we return --

BACK TO PRESENT

-- where the run-down version of Larry SCREAMS LIKE A BANSHEE as he jolts up from his bed. He screams and screams, can't seem to calm down.

A NEIGHBOUR hammers against the keen-eared wall.

NEIGHBOUR

(furiously)

Stop it already you goddamn freak!
I swear I'll wring your neck if you
don't stop!

Larry tears his eyes wide open. The disturbance... a complaint... the clinic. He presses his hands on his mouth in an attempt to chasten the sounds he can't control.

His screaming slowly ebbs away and transforms into a silent, desperate crying fit.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Larry stops his wheelchair in front of the sink. Stares at the mirror, indifferent, void of any hope.

He opens the small mirror cabinet. Picks out a tube of balm.

He GROANS as he raises his sweatshirt and touches a couple of scarred bullet holes. Makes a painful grimace as he applies some of the balm on the wounds.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He rolls to his desk. Stares at THE drawer. Reaches out to pull it open, but shies back. Squints his eyes and picks up a package of pills instead. Dry-swallows two of them.

Back in front of his bed, he uses his arms to prop himself up from the wheelchair, but --

-- an extremely loud KNOCK against his apartment door stuns him. He slips out of control and lands on the floor.

BAAAAM! Another one. Sounds like someone's trying to kick the door open.

Larry gasps for breath. His eyes widen. He pulls himself up at the bed. Reaches out for his wheelchair.

BAAAAM! Another kick. Larry finally gets hold of his wheelchair. Laboriously climbs back in.

BAAAAM! A piece of the doorframe splinters off with this last kick. The door's still sealed, but for Larry it's now or never.

He hectically rolls back to his desk. Pulls the drawer open. Grabs the gun and points it at the door.

With an EAR-DEAFENING NOISE, the door finally breaks into pieces. Larry stares at the dark hallway with horror.

A person, all dressed in black, face covered under a black ski mask steps in.

Larry's whole body shakes, he can barely point his gun into the right direction. He tries to move his finger, but it doesn't react.

The stranger points his gun at him.

Larry shouts out a crazy BATTLE CRY. Yanks his other hand up to the gun. He contorts his face as he tries to pull the trigger with both forefingers, using all the power he is able to raise.

BAAANG!

A shot. The attacker stumbles backwards.

BAAANG! BAAANG! BAAANG!

Larry fires and fires. His fingers are unstoppable. Even keeps pulling the trigger after the magazine is empty.

After a while, he controls himself. Drops the gun on the floor and stares at the attacker with wide open eyes.

He rolls next to the lifeless body. Nudges it. No reaction. Takes a deep breath and raises the attacker's ski mask.

He's close to going into hysterics as he stares at the face: It's Emilia, his psychiatrist!

His pupils wander around hectically as he tries to make sense of this. Much to his surprise, Emilia casts her eyes open and eyes him directly. Larry can't avoid a FRANTIC OUTCRY.

Emilia sits up. Lays a hand on his knees.

EMILIA

Larry! ... Larry, calm down! It's just me, Doctor Boyd.

Larry's whole body shivers. He's horror-struck.

EMILIA

I figured this was the only way to cure you. It's called exposure therapy.

Larry still can't make sense of all this.

LARRY

But the gun... I pulled the trigger...

EMILIA

Blank ammunition. The housekeeper was kind enough to let me into your apartment so I could exchange them.

Larry lets the words sink in.

LARRY

(to himself)

Blank ammunition...

EMILIA

Now that you've relived the shocking situation and mastered it, I'm confident you'll be alright again.

LARRY

(to himself)

Alright again...

TIME CUT:

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - WEEKS LATER

The place is clean and tidy. We hear someone BANG IN NAILS with a HAMMER.

It's Larry, now wearing a clean leisure suit. His hair is cut short again and he's clean-shaven.

He nails thick, wooden planks at his new door. One after another. The whole door is covered with multiple layers.

He finally drops the hammer. Washes the sweat out of his face and happily eyes his work.

He rolls back to his desk, revealing an automatic rifle, mounted on a gun rack. It's pointed at the door.

He curls his wheelchair behind it. Grabs it like a german machine gunner on D-Day. Ready to shoot whatever dares to pass through this door.

With a sadistic grin on Larry's face, we...

FADE OUT

THE END