

The Screams

By

Anthony J. Russo

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[ajrscreenworks@verizon.net](mailto:ajrscreenworks@verizon.net)

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - NIGHT

DR. COLIN HARRISON (50's) stands outside a room. Dread is etched on his face.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
It's okay, Emily. I promise this  
won't hurt.

EMILY (O.S.)  
No, no, please no...

Dr. Harrison forces his eyes shut.

A blood-chilling, high-pitched SCREAM... formed in the most terrifying of places... over... and over...

Tears squeeze out from behind Dr. Harrison's closed eyes.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Harrison, dressed in hospital patient attire, sits across from DR. SHEILA WINTERS (40s).

DR. WINTERS  
Did you sleep well?

Dr. Harrison shakes his head "no".

DR. WINTERS (CONT'D)  
So the new medication's not helping  
then?

Dr. Harrison rakes his hands across his face.

Dr. Winters stares at him with as much sympathy as a psychiatrist can muster.

Dr. Harrison holds his face in his palms. He removes his hands and looks past Dr. Winters.

Dr. Winters opens a file. She flips through it.

DR. WINTERS  
No relief. Symptoms persisting  
since late 2005. Committed in 2008.

Dr. Winters looks up. She forces a smile.

DR. HARRISON  
 Sheila, look, I know they assigned  
 you because we were colleagues  
 once. But it's never going to stop.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR/HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dr. Harrison wobbles down the hallway. Emily's SCREAM  
 reverberates, growing progressively louder.

He holds his ear with one hand and reaches for the wall with  
 the other. The SCREAM persists.

He glances into a room. A YOUNG NURSE sits bedside, giving  
 care to a frail, young FEMALE PATIENT.

YOUNG NURSE  
 There, there. Is that better? How  
 about I sing to you? Would you like  
 that?

Dr. Harrison steadies himself. A look of calm overtakes him.

He searches with his eyes for the scream... but there is  
 only silence.

DR. WINTERS (V.O.)  
 What made you change your mind  
 about hypnosis?

Dr. Harrison walks away from the room. THE SCREAM returns.

DR. HARRISON (V.O.)  
 Does it matter? Let's just do it  
 already.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Harrison sits upright on a couch, legs extended, eyes  
 closed. Dr. Winters sits on a chair beside him, pad in hand.

INT. EMILY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

EMILY (20s) sits upright and rigid in bed, eyes wide,  
 unblinking, laser focused.

An ORDERLY tries to force Emily back down onto the bed. She  
 won't move.

Dr. Harrison stands in the doorway. Pity doesn't do justice  
 to the look on his face.

DR. HARRISON (V.O.)  
The worst part was the dementia.  
She had gone someplace else in her  
head in order to deal with the  
disease.

Emily's mouth begins to move wildly. Her stare remains.

DR. HARRISON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
She started to speak in tongues. It  
was gibberish really. Who could  
tell. Maybe she thought she was  
communicating. But it was the  
screams that will haunt me until  
the day I die.

Emily SCREAMS.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Harrison sits in a chair across from Dr. Winters.

DR. HARRISON  
Yet somehow, even after her  
diagnosis, she found the courage to  
fall in love again.

INT. EMILY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Emily sits upright. She holds the phone receiver to her ear.

EMILY  
Kyle? Is that you? I don't  
understand why you don't come to  
see me anymore, Kyle. Are you - are  
you breaking up with me?

DR. HARRISON (V.O.)  
I didn't blame him really. It was  
too tough to see. All the plans we  
made. The catering hall. The  
invitations. We thought she'd make  
it to the ceremony.

Emily drops the phone.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - NIGHT

Dr. Harrison stands outside Emily's room... waiting... anticipating... until finally Emily SCREAMS.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Harrison quietly sobs, his face in his hands. Dr. Winters touches his arm.

DR. WINTERS  
Colin? Can you continue?

Dr. Harrison wipes his face. He takes a deep breath.

DR. WINTERS (CONT'D)  
Go on.

DR. HARRISON  
There's nothing left to say.

DR. WINTERS  
What are you feeling right now?

Dr. Harrison puts his face back in his hands.

DR. HARRISON  
I feel... I feel as if I... I  
couldn't say goodbye to my  
daughter. I couldn't save my baby  
girl! I couldn't comfort her! Ease  
her suffering in any way. As a  
doctor or as a father.

Dr. Harrison's face shakes as he starts to cry.

DR. WINTERS  
You need to say the words, Colin.  
It's not your fault. You didn't  
find out until it was too late.

Dr. Harrison violently shakes his head "no".

DR. WINTERS (CONT'D)  
Your daughter died of AIDS, Colin.

Dr. Harrison covers his ears... as the SCREAM comes.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR/HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dr. Harrison stumbles, disoriented, down the hallway.  
Emily's SCREAMS seem to chase him.

He approaches the room of the frail female patient. The young nurse sits beside the bed. She dips a swab into a cup of water and dabs it on the parched lips of the patient.

YOUNG NURSE

Why don't you get some rest now?

The young nurse pushes the hair from the patient's eyes.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)

(singing)

Hush little baby, don't say a word.  
Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird.  
And if that mockingbird don't sing,  
mama's gonna buy you a diamond  
ring...

Dr. Harrison stands transfixed. Emily's SCREAMS gradually subside... replaced by the strains of the lullaby.

The patient closes her eyes. The young nurse gets up and walks toward the door.

The young nurse stumbles into an oblivious Dr. Harrison.

YOUNG NURSE

Oh, excuse me...

The young nurse pauses, eliciting an introduction with her eyes.

DR. HARRISON

Oh, Colin - Colin Harrison.

YOUNG NURSE

Nice to meet you Colin.

Dr. Harrison and the young nurse stare at the sleeping patient.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)

So sad really. She doesn't have  
much time left.

Dr. Harrison shakes his head in pity.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Parents are gone as well. I'm just  
 glad I can comfort her.

Dr. Harrison raises his head. His eyes widen. His tilts his  
 head. Silence.

DR. HARRISON  
 I haven't seen you here before,  
 nurse. Are you new?

Dr. Harrison steps into the doorway of the room.

YOUNG NURSE (V.O.)  
 Yes. Angel of Mercy.

Dr. Harrison whirls around to face the young nurse.

DR. HARRISON  
 What did you just say?

YOUNG NURSE  
 I transferred here a couple of  
 weeks ago. From Angel of Mercy  
 Hospital.

A smile finds its way across Dr. Harrison's lips.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Why don't you go in and sit with  
 her?

Dr. Harrison is taken aback.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)  
 I won't tell.

Dr. Harrison slowly approaches the bedside. He sits in the  
 chair. The young nurse stands a few feet behind him.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)  
 It's sad. But as long as you have  
 someone there for you in the end...

Dr. Harrison stares at the sleeping patient.

DR. HARRISON  
 (singing)  
 Hush little baby. Don't say a word.  
 (through his tears)  
 Daddy's gonna buy you a  
 mockingbird...

FADE OUT.