

Asylum Blues

By Ken Brosky

Begin Recording:

To start off with, I'm not crazy. If you think I'm crazy we can stop this entire thing right now and you can take me back to my cell. The only reason I'm here is because of my parents. My rich-ass parents who couldn't stand having a son who stuttered like a retard. They were embarrassed of me, embarrassed of their own son, for Christ's sake! I think what set them off was a few years ago when I turned sixteen and they threw a big party with all sorts of government officials. The mayor asked me what my name is and I got nervous and couldn't control my stuttering. Took me an entire minute to say "Noah."

My parents were obviously embarrassed of their pathetic excuse for a son. Who would want their kid running around stuttering to a bunch of their rich friends? God forbid someone be imperfect in our household! God forbid we not get perfect grades and full scholarships to Harvard or one of those uptight pansy-ass universities only preppy boys and girls go to.

No, you can't have any imperfections when you're a part of high society, no matter what. So my parents—with all their money—had me committed here. I checked my charts once and they said I had "Possible Multiple Personality Disorder," whatever the Hell that means. But I know I don't have it, and that's all that matters. There's probably nothing I can do about it anyways. Even if I could convince you doctor bastards I wasn't insane, you wouldn't let me out. No, you wouldn't. My parents just have too

much influence. You have the fucking east wing of the building named after them, for Christ's sake!

I'm getting to the story. I just wanted you to know that I'm on the level, because this story is fucked-up enough and it'll be hard enough to believe coming from a sane guy. Yeah, it's all about him. He's the reason you found me covered in blood last night. You got a cigarette? No, I'll light it. Okay, let's get to the story.

Stop Recording:

What follows is the eyewitness account from patient 22543.

Begin recording:

Shit, doc. The least you could do is say my real name. No? Well fuck you then. Okay, here we go.

I room with Sammy Franklin. I've roomed with him for four years, since I was sixteen. He was here before me, a couple of years before. I guess he's just got a mental imbalance. Easily confused, unable to distinguish reality from imagination. He's got some pills he takes every day. I tried one; it didn't do shit.

Sorry. Well, me and him are close. Good friends so long as he stays on his pills. He needs them to stay keep from losing touch with reality. So yeah, he should definitely be here. This is important because after the first killing, me and him were on our own and you gotta understand that it was a long time we were running around. I think he may have lost it a bit towards the end.

It was two days ago when they brought in this John Doe fella. We were in the conversation room playing cards with these two catatonic bastards for cigarettes. Two orderlies came through the door, dragging this tall-ass guy who looked like he came right from a Black Sabbath concert. He was screaming something about Satan and God and all that craziness and they had to call big Josh to get him through the doors that led to our rooms. Or should I say “cells?” Just a joke, Doc. Well, him and Josh share this moment where they’re both looking at each other, and then he just lets the three take him away.

Well, we didn’t think nothing of it, me and Sammy. The other two were just staring at their cards like a bunch of zombies. I wouldn’t be surprised if they didn’t even notice what had just happened at all. Well, we got plenty of mega-crazies that come and go just as quickly. I’ve seen my fair share of fakers who’re trying to avoid going to prison, and the guy we had just seen was definitely not a faker. You could just tell by looking at him that he was fucking crazy.

We finished our last hand of gin and me and Sammy grabbed our pills and went to the TV so we could watch the back-to-back SIMPSONS episodes. I swear, Doc: that’s

the highlight of my day, right there. Two SIMPSONS episodes every night, that's butter. All of us semi-normal guys just eat it up. The nurses say it's not healthy, but I tell you: I can see every one of us who watches it just twice as happy afterwards. After SIMPSONS, we just talk like we're all normal. Never mind if one of us is unable to stay in reality without pills, or one of us can't bring himself to face the outside world, or whatever else our problems are; we're all normal after the SIMPSONS.

The point is that the fat-ass nurse Edna usually brings in new patients after they've settled them in and put them into the white "uniforms." She'll introduce them to all of us semi-normals—you know, the kind that are pretty much free to do just about anything because we just have minor problems. Hell, most of the semi-normals committed themselves, for crying out loud! I'm not supposed to be there, but I think most of the doctors know by now that I don't really have a multiple personality disorder. Sammy can come as long as the nurses have seen him take his pills for the day.

Edna didn't bring in the new guy to get acquainted, so we figured he was one of the mega-psychos you guys store on third floor in them little padded boxes. Helluva way to help a guy get sane, Doc, putting them in a little box with nothing to do. Helluva way.

The point is that she never brought him down. That's probably why he went ape, because you guys wouldn't let him watch SIMPSONS.

Looks? Shit, he's hard to describe, really.

He's pretty tall, like about least six feet or so. Skinny, not too tan complexion. A little goatee under his chin, and sideburns. Really long black hair, like how all the grunge bands wore theirs. Right out of a Black Sabbath concert, Doc. He had it pinned back when he came in, but I bet they took the rubber band out so he wouldn't try and choke on it later or something stupid like that. He had a strong build, though. Like, he was skinny enough, but it still took three orderlies to get him to his room. And you know what? He didn't even look like he was trying to fight back. He just stood in the doorway with this grin on his face, looking back at all of us while the three orderlies pushed from behind. And they're pretty big orderlies! I know that the Jordan dude played arena football for awhile down in Milwaukee.

Well, we definitely didn't see any trouble coming. None of us did. And for the rest of the night, it was pretty quiet. Me and Sammy were in our room after the Quiet Hours started at 9:00. There's no point in trying to get to sleep any time before 11:00 with that Nikita fella directly above us screaming himself to sleep. Yeah, you guys haven't done shit to solve that problem. How many times have we complained? Yeah, twenty-four sounds about right. But hey, don't listen to us.

Speaking of God, I should probably finish this story for you.

Nikita stopped screaming at 9:00. That was the first thing me and Sammy noticed. The second thing we noticed was that our rooms unlocked. In fact, every room on our

floor unlocked. Sammy thought it was some kind of power outage, maybe a storm hit a power line; we wouldn't know since our room has no windows, Doc. I figured there was a fire somewhere, maybe above us on third floor where all the real crazies were.

One of the guards ran past our door towards the staircase at the end of the hall. He was yelling for all of us to stay in our rooms. I snuck a peek outside and saw that he was going up to the third floor, so I knew there wasn't any problem with the semi-normals on first floor. Then I got to wondering what in the Hell was going on on the third floor. I remembered earlier in the day, the scary looking guy, and I had an idea that he had something to do with it.

The first mistake was sending every orderly up to the third floor, because all of the semi-crazies on second decided to leave their cells and start walking around. I don't care what you say about them, Doc; they are really fucked-up. Me and Sammy decided it probably wouldn't be wise to hang around there when all of them noticed us in our room with the door open. They don't like us, Doc. They don't like how we get to hang out with the semi-normals on first floor all the time. They sure as Hell don't like the fact that we get to watch the SIMPSONS, either.

So we snuck up to third floor. Big mistake, Doc. Big mistake.

We ran up the stairs and checked out what was going on through the window on the door. There was a guard laying on the ground right in the middle of the hall, and

another one further down the hall. There was more going on at the end of the hall, but I couldn't really see because most of the overhead lights were broken.

We opened the door and checked out the night guard lying on the ground. We flipped him over and he had this huge hole in this stomach, Doc! I tried to lift up his head, because his mouth was full of blood.

"Four-three-six-six-six," the guard gurgled. His eyes didn't close, but I heard him stop breathing and set him down. We figured the number he gave us was the number of someone in the asylum, and I knew that nurses didn't enter patient data into their computer systems until they've been evaluated. That meant 43666's entrance papers were sitting on the Nurse's desk, in the "to do" pile. I've been in there a few times for misconduct, and I knew right where her "to do" pile was.

The second we turned to go back to first floor, there was a scream from down the hall. There was another guard at the far end of the hall, but no one else now. Then there's another scream, and this nasty-ass noise as if someone at the end of the hall was pounding ground chuck meat. Then the guy we saw come in that day walks out of one of the cells and he's just covered in blood. Even his hair was soaked in blood, clinging to his thin face. He looks at us and we look at him and he smiles this sly smile like we're all part of a secret and then he walks into the next room and there's more screams and then there's more screams and me and Sammy realize that this guy is fucking killing everyone in these rooms and *then* we realize that all of the crazies are strapped down in their beds

so we run into the room closest to the door and try to un-strap one of them but then we hear in the next room *more* screams so we get the flying fuck outta there and run down those stairs like no other and get back to the second floor!

Well, the second floor was just wild when we got there. All the semi-crazies were just walking around talking to walls and one of them was even trying to make his way down the staircase when we got to him. Sammy and me took him into a room and we decided the best thing to do would be to get to first floor and try to call the police. I counted three dead orderlies on third floor, which meant that there was still one somewhere in the building, but God knows what he was doing. The only phone we've ever seen in this place was the phone in the head nurse's office, so that's where we headed.

I got to the first floor and most of the people were still in their cells. Their doors are never locked anyways, but they started getting suspicious when us two semi-crazies came flying down their hallway. George Goodberry—the nervous fellow always playing checkers—stopped us and asked us what was going on. I tried to explain as best I could, but I just started stuttering like crazy, like back when I was a kid. So now we got old George trying to calm us down and send us back upstairs and that's when the screaming starts on second floor. We could hear it through the ceiling, and it just sent a shiver down my spine. I knew what was happening up there. The moment George instinctively looked up, we bolted past him and plowed our way through the door that led to the offices.

A couple of the semi-normals followed us, including George. We locked the door behind us. We had to, Doc; that guy was making his way down and no one wanted to sit around for him to visit their room.

I broke the window to the nurse's office and made my way in just when we started hearing screams coming from down the hall past the locked door. The nurse's office is the big one about halfway down the row of offices, just before the room opens up into the lounge where we all watch SIMPSONS. She had her phone sitting on her desk, all right, but no dial tone. Come to think of it, I don't think there was any outside electricity in the complex at that point. I could hear the emergency generator in the basement humming then because it's right below the nurse's office. When you've spent a couple years in the Asylum, Doc, you know the entire place pretty well.

And then the guy was standing there in the doorway. I looked around and realized that me and Sammy were the only ones left alive, unless you counted 43666. He had his entire fist down old George's mouth. Poor George's were popping out of their sockets. The other two that had followed us were both on the floor with similar holes in their guts. One of 'em was still gurgling and puking up blood and that's about when poor Sammy pissed his pants.

If you could have seen 43666 standing there in the doorway, you would have known how he could have done everything that happened that night. He had that same calm grin on his face, like he was so sure that whatever he was doing would happen

without a hitch. He was just drenched in blood, and that was the first time that I noticed he was still wearing the all-black getup that he had worn the day before when the orderlies dragged him in, not the standard white scrubs all the crazies and semi-crazies had to wear. When you see him you just feel ice-cold all over and you're surprised that you don't see your breath mist when you exhale. That's how strong the feeling is.

He ignored us and walked right to the nurse's desk. He started leafing through the folders strewn about until he found the one that had his number written across the cover. He grabbed the folder and ripped it into tiny shreds without a hint of effort. We just watched him do this, unable to move.

Then 43666 looked at us. He didn't have that grin on his face anymore.

"Where is the basement?" he asked us in this deep, raspy voice. He sounded like he had smoked too much when he was younger.

I could see that Sammy wasn't going to talk, so I told him that it was at the other end of the hall, opposite the staircase that went up. It wouldn't unlock without the Nurse's key, but I didn't tell him that.

The crazy mutherfucker took one step towards us when one of the orderlies, drenched in blood, burst into the room, screaming. He had his taser out and jammed it into 43666's side, and 43666 fell back slightly. Finally, we recovered from shock and got

the hell outta there and ran back down the hall. The door we had locked was torn off its hinges, so we ran through it and jumped into the nearest room. There was a body in there, blood everywhere, but we didn't care. We crouched behind the door and waited. It smelled horrible.

Someone screamed, then silence. More silence. I forced a glance down the hall and saw the door to the basement smashed apart. Right there, Doc, I realized that we had to either get the Hell outta here or save the day. So guess what we did?

Hell no, Doc, we got the Hell outta there! Unfortunately for us, the only set of doors that led outside were locked. So we sat there in the big lounge room, in the pitch black, trying to figure out what to do. We sure as shit didn't want to go into the dark basement with that psycho down there. Besides, what was down there, anyways? An emergency generator, a walk-in freezer, a few storage rooms, and the kitchen and dining area on the far end directly under the rooms.

Then it hit me: why did the doors on every floor unlock in the first place? It had to be the other orderly, the one that's been missing this whole time. He had to have switched off the power locks in the basement. He was helping 43666.

Well what did I have to lose? I was never getting out of this place; I knew that even then. So I told Sammy I'm gonna grab the taser from the dead guard in the nurse's office and try and stop the dude. Sammy says he's with me, so we head back to the

office. I got the piece sure enough, and we searched the nurse's drawers for something Sammy could use. We found a baton, so we decided that Sammy would go for the orderly and I would go for 43666. I figured a shock to the neck would stun that bastard pretty good.

We crept down into the basement, down the stairs and into the main hallway. There's a light on in the generator room, so we tip-toe our way over there. I peered my head in and I saw 43666 and the other orderly—it's big ugly Josh who patrols third floor—standing next to him. He's facing us but he didn't see us. He didn't see much of anything; his eyes were glazed over and bleeding like crazy. So was his scalp, and his ears. And his nose. And his mouth. 43666 points to the generator and Josh walks over to it. 43666 tells Josh to open the generator's power box, so Josh does, like he's in a trance.

You didn't find much of Josh left, did you, Doc? That's because the next thing 43666 told him to do was clutch the positive charges. Guess what happened next? Yup, the poor fool grabbed 'em and sizzled like a wet steak on a hot grill. God, it smelled awful. I almost puked, but I could see our opportunity: 43666 was watching Josh grill with that sly grin on his face, his back to us.

I ran at him with the taser outstretched. Sammy came, too, and dove past me, clubbing 43666's knee. He fell slightly, enough for his neck to be within reach of my taser. I shoved it as hard as I could into the back of his neck and felt the prongs dig into his thick skin. He screamed hard, but still managed to throw me off his back. I slammed

into the concrete wall and watched 43666 stumble into the hallway. He was heading towards the kitchen.

Sammy caught up to him first and bashed him in the face with the baton. This time, it didn't even stun him and he backhanded poor Sammy good. I heard Sammy's jaw break then as I made my way out of the room but I didn't stop running until I was on 43666 again. This time, I jammed the taser in his underarm. It didn't do much more than give him a bad case of the shakes, and he threw me across the kitchen.

Sammy was leaning against the walk-in fridge, and I was just opposite him against the wall. And then there's 43666 standing in the middle of the kitchen. He made a motion with his hand and the large preparation table moved to one of the corners of the room. Just like that.

43666 laughed hard right then and there, telling us how he was stronger now and that he could open up a hole to Hell. We didn't think all that much of it until he rolled up his sleeves—figuratively speaking, of course—and grabbed at the ground with both hands. Suddenly, there was a small black hole that started growing really quickly and I could feel the heat emanating from it. We didn't mind it, though. It was a dry heat after all, Doc.

We watched this hole get bigger and I realized I was probably gonna die right then and there, so I ran at the guy one more time with the taster. Sammy ran too; he was

closer and got there first, unfortunately. 43666 grabbed him and laughed in his face and just punched a hole in poor Sammy's stomach. I got there right at that point and jumped on the bastard one last time. I took the taser and jammed it into his eye socket. He let out this bad-ass scream that made my eardrums pound and then we were both falling back into the hole. He clutched the corner of the table, screaming, and I could feel the hole trying to pull us in. The taser was still in 43666's eye, and I pulled it out and jammed it into his other eye. He screamed hard again and I took the chance to crawl over him and grab the table. I tell you Doc: I was scared shitless. I didn't want to go to Hell. I would rather rot away on second floor than spend eternity in Hell. Actually, if you want me to be honest, I actually considered jumping in. Ha ha ha!

I kicked 43666 hard enough in the arm for him to lose his grip and he fell in the hole. Then it closed up. And that's probably where your boys came in. I guess they found me lying there on the table. I passed out after all that went down, Doc. I'm only human after all.

So that's why I was covered in blood, and that's the story. Tough to believe? I don't blame you. Say, can you get me a pack of cigarettes before you send me back to my cell? Bad for me? Heh, ain't like I'm gonna be leaving this place any time soon anyways, Doc.

End recording.

No witnesses. No record of a patient 43666. Recommendation of Dr. Stanley T.

Grohman: Patient 22543's multiple personality syndrome is cause. Close the case.