

LEO BLIE



David B. Reid

For all inquiries regarding this short story, including literary agency and publishing,
Please contact **David B. Reid** at:
contact@drdavidreid.com

© 2008, David B. Reid. All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means,
electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information
storage or retrieval system without the express written permission of the author, except in
the case of brief quotations used in reviews.

This short story is one of several that are available from David Reid's website. This short
story and several completed novels are currently available for publication. For more
information please visit:

<http://www.drdavidreid.com>

Leo Blie

by

David B. Reid

“She wouldn’t fucking die,” he told me. “He kept pounding her head but she wouldn’t fucking die. She just rolled around then curled up in a ball and he kept pounding her with it. It was awful. I could hear her skull crack. It was like a fucking walnut,” he said squeezing his head as if warding off a pending migraine. “Blood was everywhere. She just wouldn’t fucking die,” he said again.

Like any well-trained therapist, I sought clarification and asked, “When you say *he* kept pounding her in the head don’t you mean *you*?”

“No,” Dickie declared. “Not me,” he said with conviction; his contorted face conveying shock that I’d even suggest such a horrid thing. “It’s like I told you, I’m not sure who he was. But the woman . . . the woman he was beating that was definitely Julie. I could see her clear as day.”

Just as I was about to free myself from his unconvincing denial of guilt, Dickie McNally told me about an invasive dream that continues to plague him night after night. It was a poor note to end a therapy session on, but since he was my last patient for the day I had the luxury of lingering a little longer and decided to hear him out.

“Go on,” I urged, sinking back into my chair.

“Well like I said, I know it was Julie. I’m sure of that. And in a sick sorta way, I wanted the guy to finish her off.”

“Why’s that?” I asked.

He hesitated, knowing he was in the presence of a seasoned shrink and proceed with caution. He slumped in the cold metal chair wringing his hands in his lap. The psychiatrist retained by the State’s Attorney postulated in his evaluation report that the compulsive finger wrestling was nothing other than Dickie’s guilty mind tending to bloodied hands that wouldn’t come clean.

“Because it was so awful,” he said now kneading his knuckles. “I just wanted it to be over. I wanted all of it to be over.”

I leaned in, resting both elbows on the arms of my chair, and realized the man sitting across from me had repressed the murder of his fiancée. I was baring witness to the heinous act now digging its way out of his subconscious mind by means of a recurrent nightmare.

“You okay there, Dickie?” I asked trying to sound sincere, all the while knowing my patient’s ability to trust me hadn’t yet developed. In retrospect, of all the people I’ve worked with over the years, inmates tend to be the most willing and able to divulge their life secrets, readily throwing caution to the wind while riding the cathartic wave for all it’s worth. After all, a good emotional purging cleanses the darkened soul and paves the way for a more adaptive philosophy for any man destined to spend his life behind bars.

I repeated myself. “You okay, Dickie?”

“Yeah, I’m okay. My ass is just a little sore from sitting here that’s all. You mind if I walk around a bit?”

“Not at all,” I said. After all, he was of no immediate threat to me, and I thought a good leg-stretch might just grease his mind and permit a little therapeutic introspection.

He slowly sauntered around the windowless office like a nearly crippled senior citizen navigating on uneven terrain. Casually taking note of my diplomas and Escher prints, he sighed as if something was on his mind, but nothing was coming out. Eventually he found himself standing before my bookcase glancing at the bindings, his eyes darting from one title to the next. One section seemed particularly appealing as his eyes came to a rest on a series of texts dedicated to clinical evaluations of inmates and defendants pleading not guilty by reason of insanity. Too little too late for Dickie McNally since his own insanity defense failed and twelve of the most unsympathetic human beings gathered in one room sentenced him to three consecutive life sentences.

The psychiatrist retained by the prosecution argued that Dickie appreciated right from wrong the moment he picked up the maul and proceeded to crack the skull of an innocent woman. Before the judge banged his gavel one last time, Richard “Dickie” McNally was found guilty of murder in the third degree, making him one of the seventy-five percent of all NGRI cases that failed to convince a jury of his peers that he was literally out of his mind at the time of the offense.

“Well, I don’t know what else to tell you,” he continued. “She didn’t die, I know that,” he said, still scanning the tall bookcase, looking at nothing in particular.

“You do?” I asked.

“Yeah, she was still breathing when it was over. That’s always the last thing I remember before waking up.”

“You know Dickie, you really haven’t told me how your dream begins.”

“How it begins?” he said, turning around, conveying another puzzled look.

“Didn’t I tell you that already?”

Clearing my throat, I leaned back in my chair. “Why no Dickie, you sure haven’t. Did you think you already told me the entire dream?”

“I don’t know, Doc. I’m not really sure what I told you,” he said.

“You want to take a little break, Dickie? Go outside for a smoke? Maybe get something to eat or drink?” I asked, knowing I needed to pace what was quickly becoming an extended but potentially productive interview. The stale smell of cigarette smoke coming from his DOC issued uniform kept me mindful of his likely need for a nicotine fix in the not too distant future. Now seemed a good a time as any.

My offer for food and a smoke seemed to catch him a bit off guard as if genuine consideration extended his way was an uncommon, if ever appreciated, event. “Uh, I don’t smoke,” he told me. “But I am getting kinda hungry.”

“That’s fine Dickie. What can I get for you?” I asked and wondered why he denied being a smoker when his eau-de-nicotine said otherwise.

“Actually, I’d love a good burger. I suppose I could go on out and bring it back. But I don’t know how much more time we have before my appointment’s over. And I’m not even sure I know where there’s a hamburger joint around here.”

Was he serious? Did he actually think he could just leave and go fetch himself a Big Mac? I shook my head and waved my hand. “No, no,” I said, “Don’t worry about that Dickie. We’ll get you a hamburger. How ‘bout some fries with that?” I asked still wondering if he seriously thought he could leave the prison or if this was just confirming evidence supporting what the prosecution argued was his persistent attempt at feigning his lost grip on sanity.

“Sure,” he said. “That’d be fine. And a Diet Coke if you don’t mind.”

“No problem. I’ll take care of it. And we’ve got plenty of time to talk. You just take your time okay?”

“Sure,” he said.

After calling down to the mess hall and ordering a hamburger and fries for my patient, I encouraged him to tell me everything he remembered about his dream. He reluctantly returned to his chair, sitting gingerly as if suffering from a bad case of bleeding hemorrhoids and fell silent.

“While we wait for your food why don’t you go ahead and tell me about this man you see beating your fiancée?” I suggested. “And if there’s anything that’s difficult to discuss, don’t worry about it for now. It can always wait until our next session.”

He nodded, grateful for the go-slow message.

He said, “But that’s just the thing, it’s really not that difficult to talk about since I’m not sure what it’s all about anyhow. I’m beginning to wonder if it all just isn’t my subconscious telling me that maybe Julie and I aren’t ready to get married yet. Maybe it just isn’t meant to be right now.”

“You shouldn’t get married?” I repeated.

“Yeah, you know, maybe it’s my mind trying to tell me something. Trying to give me some kind of message. Hell I don’t know, maybe its just them pre-wedding jitters. I’m pretty sure that’s what Julie thinks.”

I felt my eyebrows wrinkle my forehead, likely giving away my perplexity. *That’s what Julie thinks? Julie’s not thinking anything, my friend. Julie, I am sorry to say is pushing up daisies.* “Pre-wedding jitters, huh?” I heard myself say, avoiding the Julie’s-not-dead-yet delusion for the time being.

“Yeah. In the dream, from what I remember Julie’s getting it on with this guy. It’s like I can see them from a distance but not real clear,” he said, holding his hands out like he was about to catch an imaginary football (or strangle Julie’s neck). “I know it’s her. I can’t really see her, but I just know it’s her. But the guy... I don’t know who he is. He’s not too clear. You know what I mean?”

“Sure,” I said, all the while thinking he was well acquainted with both players in the dream.

“Then all of a sudden – BAM! She goes psycho on him” he declared. “She starts beating the shit outta him. Smacking him upside the head with both hands. She just goes wild and keeps slapping him and spitting at him until he finally pushes her down and runs out of the bedroom. I remember that pretty clearly because I always see the crack of his ass as he’s running away. It’s kind of stupid to say but when I see that—when I see him running out like that—I feel kinda sad for him. Like he’s vulnerable or something. I don’t know, maybe because he’s naked, I guess. Is that weird or what?” he asked looking up at me.

“No, I don’t think that’s weird. In a way it makes sense that you feel that way because you’re seeing him exposed. Like you said he’s vulnerable.”

“Yeah, I guess so. But it seems weird that I’d feel that way.”

“So then what happened?” I pressed. “What else do you remember?”

“Well sometimes that’s where the dream ends and I just wake up. But sometimes that’s where it gets real bad. If I keep dreaming, I see her sitting up in bed still yelling at him even though he’s not in the room with her. She just keeps screaming at him. Telling what a selfish asshole he is. How she hates him and wishes he was dead.”

Closing his eyes, he continues with his dream: “Then out of nowhere he comes sprinting back into the bedroom holding a maul in his hand. And that just pisses her off even more. It’s like she just eggs him on. Even begs him to beat her up. It’s like she’s not scared of him. She doesn’t think he’ll do it. She just keeps yellin at him. Calls him a big pussy.

“But he keeps coming at her. And I can tell he’s gonna hit her with that thing. He wraps both hands around it like it’s a baseball bat. Then he stands still and smiles at her. He’s just standing there smiling. She keeps yelling and he just smiles back. Then he swings the damn thing over his right shoulder and says, ‘Yeah that’s right, I’m finally gonna break bad bitch.’ And that’s when he levels the edge of the blade right on top of her head. BAM! BAM! BAM!” Dickie cried, swiftly swinging his hands through the air like he was in a wood splitting contest. “But she just doesn’t fucking die. If only she would die, then he’d stop pounding her,” he said, catching his breath.

Looking to his lap, I notice Dickie turned the volume up on his hand wringing as his mind likely finished replaying what he believed to be no more than an invasive dream. As I sat there silently watching Dickie McNally gently sway back and forth in his chair, I wasn’t sure if I was witnessing an Academy Award winning performance or genuine emotional regression.

I thought about the medical records I reviewed earlier that day. Most were rather skeletal and offered little insight other than that Richard McNally had a primitive personality disorder involving dependent, borderline, and paranoid traits. There were a few scribbled lines here and there documenting what appeared to be a rather volatile and at times aggressive relationship between he and his girlfriend, Julie Palmer, who from what I could gather was no prize for even the most desperate of lonely men.

According to the police report, when the deed was done Dickie McNally was literally found red-handed, curled in the corner of Julie Palmer’s bedroom like a opossum feigning death on the side of the road. The two-page handwritten report went on to reveal that Julie Palmer’s naked and battered body was sprawled out on the bed surrounded by a pool of drying blood. A pair of empty eyes peeked through swollen cheeks and a dislocated jaw jutted out of her head as if it was about to take a bite out of her own face. The murder weapon was found resting in Dickie McNally’s lap like a consoling pet comforting his distressed master. The handle was smeared with bloody fingerprints; the metal head pasted with flecks of Julie Palmer’s skull, bits of brain matter, and matted hair strands clung to fresh scalp. Easiest game of clue ever played: *Mr. McNally, in the bedroom, with the maul*

Forensic examination verified that she and Dickie had sex moments before he stopped pounding her with his penis and replaced it with a ten-pound maul. There were no eyewitnesses to the murder. Dickie called 911 and reported the crime himself, however the 911 tape submitted by a desperate defense attorney sounded nothing like Richard McNally. The voice on the tape had a slight southern drawl and a hint of limited formal schooling. Dickie was a professor of sociology at Stephen Shepard Community College. Nonetheless, voice analysis confirmed the prosecution’s suspicions that Dickie McNally disguised his voice hoping to convince the jury that he was a madman who belonged in a psychiatric institution rather behind bars sharing shower stalls and slippery soap with other hardcore convicts.

Dickie's legal counsel plead not guilty by reason of insanity. The psychiatric community, usually silent and nowhere to be found when some desperate soul is about to take a nose-dive off the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, crawled out from under their proverbial Freudian couches and knocked down the State's Attorney's doors begging for the opportunity to help put this sociopath behind bars. The prosecution finally settled on Dr. Kevin Blair who rumor had it was paid a handsome \$10,000 for his two-hour interview of the defendant, seven-page typed report, and expert witness testimony. Looking to Dickie, I took notice of his hands now supporting a heavy head above his lap. The same hands that months ago gripped a 25-pound maul used to bludgeoned a woman to death. The same hands that minutes before the lethal beating, caressed her face, her stomach, her breasts, her ass, and anything else he cared to grope at the time.

Animals, I thought looking at him. *We're all fucking animals.*

Just then, a knock at the door interrupted my stream of consciousness. It was Dickie's lunch.

"Help yourself," I said as the officer dropped the bag on my desk. "Get yourself a bite to eat, but please go on with your story," I encouraged.

Freeing his head from his hands, looking as if he just awoke or fell out of some mystical trance he muttered, "Huh?" then noticed the bag of food. "Oh yeah, okay thanks."

He opened the grease-stained bag and retrieved a still steaming hamburger. After freeing it from its white paper wrapper, he held it awkwardly, placing his thumbs on the top bun and his fingers underneath, flipped it over and took his first bite. Looking up after swallowing his mouthful, he clarified the idiosyncratic table manners: "I like the taste of the sesame seeds against my tongue instead uh the roof of my mouth."

I nodded like I understood and watched him chomp down on a double-decker burger as pink sauce dribbled from the corner of his mouth. He reflexively wiped the glob with his hand, removing any evidence of its existence as a clean pile of napkins on the table went untouched. He gazed at me and smiled. His changed demeanor was quite out of character for a man, who only moments ago, was detached and dysthymic.

"It's good," he said after his third or fourth bite. "Ain't ya hungry?" he asked with a neck-stretching swallow.

"No I'm fine. I can eat later," I told him.

"So what else you needin' to know there Doc? He tell ya everything you need to know?"

His use of a personal pronoun caught me by surprise. *Did we suddenly get overtaken by some yet to be identified spirit?* I watched him devour the rest of his sandwich, knowing Dickie McNally wouldn't eat a hamburger like an uncouth barbarian. The man sitting before me wasn't Dickie McNally. I wasn't sure who he was or what he was doing inside Richard McNally's body, but it most certainly wasn't Dickie. His eyes told me so.

"Well I'm not sure," I answered. "Is there something you can add to his story?"

"I could add a lot, Doc, but it seems ain't nobody 'round here interested in what I got to say."

"I might be interested," I said.

Taking his last bite then licking his fingers, again bypassing the napkin, he glanced at me and said, "That right?"

“Sure,” I said as chills danced up my spine knowing I had come face to face with a genuine multiple personality disorder. His facial expressions, physical mannerisms, posture, and sense of self-assurance were nothing like the inmate who walked into my office not less than sixty minutes ago.

“Well, I suppose Dickie told you he didn’t do nothing. Right?”

“He doesn’t seem to remember doing anything. He tells it like it was some kind of a dream. At least that’s what I’ve been able to deduce thus far.”

“Do me a favor there ,Doc, and don’t be usin’ no big words on me like *deduced* okay? I ain’t got no more than a fifth grade education and even that wasn’t very good for helpin’ me learn to read and write.”

“I’m sorry, I’ll try to be cognizant of that,” I said realizing I did it again as the words spilled out of my mouth.

“Now there ya go again usin’ them big words,” he scolded. “Look, you just ask me what you wanna know ‘bout Dickie and what happened that night at his girlfriend’s house and I’ll tell ya just how it all went down. But before we get goin’ on that, I’m gonna need me a smoke break. You think that’s something we can arrange?”

“Sure,” I said then ushered him out of my office and outside where he bummed a cigarette and a light from the first passing inmate. I waited with him while he took a moment to savor the cigarette as if it were his last.

Looking straight ahead, he said, “I don’t get to do this much ya know since Dickie don’t smoke, so when I get the chance I enjoy every drag. He hates it, but I need my smokes.”

As I listened to him talk, I wondered if Dickie was even aware of this tenant renting space in his body. Or what it must be like to be a non-smoker who suddenly and unexpectedly appreciates the aftertaste of tar and nicotine from a cigarette he doesn’t ever recall smoking.

“He hates it does he?” I repeated.

“Yeah but he gets over it eventually. That’s just the way it goes.”

“So what should I call you?” I asked.

Taking his last drag then slowly exhaling a thin stream of smoke from the corner of his mouth, he said, “Call me by the name they gave me.”

“And exactly what name is that?” I asked now, holding the door as I waited for him to snuff out his cigarette.

“Blie. Leo Blie.”

He led the way back to my office appearing quite willing to continue our conversation and offer his insights on Dickie McNally. Taking his seat with his hands pressed into his pockets as if he caught a chill, he kept silent, waiting for me to return to my chair. I grabbed a pen and a pad of paper thinking his report deserving of immediate documentation, but he quickly disapproved of my intentions.

“You don’t want to do that, Doc,” he said. “You just go on and sit back and listen up. If you need to be writin’ down anything you just wait to do that later. For now, just kick back and listen.”

Not wanting to destroy what appeared to be a reasonable therapeutic bond I did as asked and made myself comfortable.

“First thing,” he said picking at his fingernails, “Dickie mighta killed that bitch, but he weren’t alone.”

Before I could utter a word, he held up his hand to silence me and continued talking.

“She would beat the livin’ shit outta him everyday and he fuckin’ took it like the pussy he was. But he’s not entirely to blame for what he done. No sir, that wasn’t all his doin’. It was, no offense now, Doc,” he said pausing and glancing up, then back down again to tend to his fingernails. “It was that shrink a his,” he said confidently, now holding his hand out, apparently pleased with the efficiency of his self-grooming.

“I’m sorry, did you say his shrink?” I asked thinking I needed to get a witness, like maybe the Warden, into my office pronto.

“That’s right. His shrink. I don’t know his name, he never told me. None of ‘em have as a matter a fact.”

“None of whom?” I asked getting a bit annoyed with the morsels of obtuse data he tossed my way.

“None uh the others. There are more of us you know,” he said sucking his teeth to free bits of burger and sesame seeds lodged between them.

“There are more of you?” I echoed beginning to believe I was an unwitting victim of the latest installment of Candid Camera.

“Yup. It ain’t just me and Dickie. There’s more.”

“How many more?”

“Don’t know that Doc. It ain’t like I counted. And don’t waste your time askin’ Dickie neither cuz he don’t know a thing about it. We keep him out of it. It’s best that way,” he said.

I let out a sigh, readily revealing my frustration. I’d read about multiple personality disorders, or what was now known in professional circles as Dissociative Identity Disorder. Many of my colleagues dismissed the notion, but I personally reviewed enough professional articles to realize the human mind was quite capable of splitting into separate, independently functioning units. The most convincing of those studies was a creative undertaking by a group of mental health professionals at the University of Virginia who examined handwriting samples, brainwaves, brain metabolism, and even polygraphs of individuals claiming to suffer from DID. Though their selective sample was small, the clinically significant difference evidenced on EEG recordings between separate personalities within one “host” had me sold.

“I won’t waste my time asking him then,” I told him. “But, tell me how’s Dickie’s therapist involved?”

“He’s the one that got Dickie to kill her. She was his patient too you know. He’d been fuckin’ her for a good while till the day she flew into his office and told him she was pullin’ the plug on all of it. Said she was gonna call his supervisors or whoever and report him to the authorities. Knowin’ his ass was on the line, he spill’t the beans to Dickie and told him all about how he’d been fuckin’ his girlfriend since the day the met. Told him there was a condom full uh his sperm that he throwed in her trashcan the last time he was over there. Told him he should check it out hisself if he didn’t believe him. He tole Dickie how sorry he was and did a real good job makin’ it look like it was all Julie’s fault. Course Dickie worshipped the ground this asshole walked on, and by the time Dickie left his office he was pretty well certain that the bitch not only took advantage of him but the doc too.

“That doctor knew Dickie well enough to know just what he was gonna do to her. It was like Dickie was the gun and the doc loaded it and cocked the trigger. When they was done talkin’, Dickie drove straight to Julie’s and when he got there, like usual, she’s all hot and horny and ready to get it on. Ole Dickie thought to hisself, ‘Sure, why the hell not? Let’s have one for the road, bitch.’ So he starts screwin’ her, the whole time knowin’ what he’s gonna do when he’s done bangin’ that thing. Just fuckin’ pissed him off and when he couldn’t take it no more, that’s when Randy come out and took over,” he said then laughed, tossing his head back like he was possessed by some evil spirit.

“Oh Randy... Randy,” he said now shaking his head. “Randy’s the angry one. Shit, he could kill anybody anytime, includin’ that man from Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood if he set his mind to it. Nobody wants to fuck with Randy.”

I sat there, finding it hard to believe a word this man was saying. Actually, I didn’t know what to believe so I just listened. And he kept talking like it was a story he’d told a million times over.

“When Randy comes out, you best look out,” he warned. “That fucker is one angry sonofabitch. And he sure showed it that night after he looked through the trash and found that condom sittin’ there just like the doc told him it would be. He went and grabbed that maul from outta the kitchen and when he come back in the bedroom he just started goin’ to town all over her shit.”

“So did you see all of this too?” I asked.

“No. Hell no. I don’t get to see no fun like that. Wish I did, but I didn’t come ‘round till Dickie ended up in here. The others tole me all about it. Dickie just couldn’t handle bein’ locked up you know, so I helped out. It’s what I do. I help out, just like now,” he said with a grin that could peel paint off a wall.

“I see,” I said. “You know Leo you told me earlier that you use the name *they* gave you. What do you mean by that? Who’s *they*?”

“The people out here, I reckon,” he said looking down at the DOC number sewn above his shirt pocket. “See here? It says Leo Blie. See?”

I looked at the patch and corrected him. “Actually Leo, that’s your prison number. 3178037,” I said.

“That ain’t how it reads from here, Doc. These ain’t numbers, they’s letters.” Dropping his chin to his chest, he held out the top of his shirt. Pointing to each number, one after the other he read it just like he saw it.

“See here, it spells L-E-O-B-L-I-E.”

The End