

Cast of Characters

PERNEY
MRS. APROM
VLYNN
MARIA
THE TRUCKER
PURPLE HAired KID

QUALMS
By Cameron Davis

(A tall, high light fades on the wooden narrow stage. The stage becomes brightened, revealing a two story office building that heads 'Local Physicians' at the top, a doctor's office. A man is seated at the second floor of the office, and a woman waits patiently at the entrance room, first floor.)

Setting

In an old, battered, dirty downtown doctor's office of two stories intersecting a very busy street corner.

Time

Late in the afternoon. Traffic jammed, rushed hour.

Prologue

(Local Physicians was a small time doctor's office located in the downtown of Detroit, Michigan. A small building stacked on the intersection of two

major roads of the debacle automobile city, business for this hopeful physician's office was acceptingly slow as it was operated by one and only one front secretary clerk, MRS. AROM. The office was opened on weekdays and MRS. APROM worked every day from Monday through Friday, the same days she'd been working since the office opened six years ago. Though the name suggests otherwise, Local Physicians has only one certified doctor, Physician PERNEY, who opened the place in hopes that his independent business would grow and that the office would soon become one of the most well established Doctors office's in the area, employing plenty of affluent physicians. But, six years to the fact, the seed never blossomed and business for this two story physician office remained stagnant. The epic collapsed of the automobile industry in Detroit was never expected and MRS. APROM and Doctor PERNEY were still the only employees of Local Physicians. To date, they had only seven dependent clients. Random walk-ins rarely occurred and that was why it was so dramatic when a well dressed middle aged man came barging in the front office doors sweating and panting, saying that his name was VLYNN Daley and he needed help now.)

VLYNN. *(Breathing hard:)* I need to see a physician please.

MRS. APROM. May I ask—do you have an appointment?

VLYNN. No. I just want to see somebody. Just need a little help, that's all.

MRS. APROM. *(Lightly grinning:)* Very well. I'd like for you to know that I can't guarantee you anything because you came in unplanned and unexpected. Usually, walk-ins have to wait anywhere from thirty minutes to two hours for a doctor. And you will have to sign some slips.

VLYNN. Can I just see a fucking doctor?

MRS. APROM. *(Noticing his serious tone:)* I'll see what I can do. Let me give one of our doctors a call to see if he is available to assist you.

(MRS. APROM grabs her secretary phone and says a few exacting words to the doctor while VLYNN waits, fidgeting.)

MRS. APROM. You can go upstairs and see Doctor Perney. He said he can jam you in quick.

(VLYNN limps up the stairs and into Doctor PERNEY'S office where they shake hands and greet each other. The audience watches them greet each other on the second floor. MRS. APROM goes back to work down at the first floor. Doctor PERNEY offered him a seat and notices his limp and his sweating and the nametag on the left side of his button up short sleeve shirt that reads VLYNN in bold letters.)

PERNEY. Doctor Perney here. Nice to meet you Mr. Daley. How are you?

VLYNN. I'm still living, so I'm still miserable. Can I ask you something Doctor? Is that your secretary down there?

PERNEY. Yeah, you like her? Pretty isn't she.

VLYNN. Get rid of her. You'd get more business.

PERNEY. *(Laughing:)* Ha. She's been here as long as I have. I can't get rid of her. Now what can I do for you Mr. Daley, or can I call you Vlynn?

(Just then a door to the back of the office swept open. A woman, MARIA, dressed in all black comes out the 'Restroom', pulling a black leather coat over her shoulders as she walks toward the men.)

MARIA. Okay doc. I appreciate your service once again. Same time next Thursday?

PERNEY. Yes; of course. See you next Thursday.

MARIA. I plan on putting your diet into action starting today. Oh yeah, and I may need a brace for my back. The motorcycle can get rough on it sometimes. Especially out there on the highway.

PERNEY. That highways no joke. We have one of the fiercest in South Detroit. I'll order you one ASAP.

MARIA. Will you. I'll appreciate it.

PERNEY. Drive safe, Maria.

VLYNN. (*Wiping his face:*) Is that one of your clients?

(Watching her leave.)

PERNEY. Obviously. Now where were we Mr. Daley? Or can I call you Vlynn?

VLYNN. Call me Vlynn. If you haven't noticed I've got a limp in my left leg and I think something maybe broken. I was wondering if you can scan it or X-ray it and find out if anything is broke or needs surgery. Think you can do that or is that too much for your *very* busy office, doctor?

PERNEY. Excuse me Mr. Daley, but I'll call you Vlynn. I am a well certified physician and I am highly capable and more than qualified to carry out whatever medical tasks that are needed to satisfy a client. But if you're trying to make a minor degrading comment at my office here then I won't allow it. You can leave before you attempt another attack at my office.

(VLYNN staggers around the office with his limp then takes a seat in front of Dr. PERNEY who was seated at the head of his office table, unmoved.)

VLYNN. I do not wish to negatively approach you or your office in any way. I would just like a quick X-ray or whatever it is you do to check broken joints. A quick checkup and I'm gone. I have a job to get to too you know.

PERNEY. Vlynn, this is my office and I am the doctor. You are not one of my clients and you will not tell me what I will or will not do with my profession. Considering your physical state, you should not be in such a rush to get back to wherever it is you work. You are drenched in sweat, you look stressed, and you may have something broken. And judging from the nametag and the way you're dressed, I take to it that you are a car salesman.

(PERNEY'S hands were on the tip of the desk, elbows in the air. He looked unraveled. VLYNN was not looking at the physician but at the window out of the building, into the city of Detroit.)

VLYNN. You are a very smart man Doctor Perney. Smart enough to draw accurate conclusions. And as you know, the economy and car industry here in Detroit has fallen to shambles. I am a car salesman and I have fell victim to the harsh effects of our dour automobile crisis. My house has foreclosed, my car was repossessed and my wife took off with our kids and didn't even tell me where.

PERNEY. Good thing you don't run a doctor's office or that would be closed too.

VLYNN. You can give criticism but you can't take it. What's with that picture?

PERNEY. *(Hands folded together:)* Thy office, thy rules. That's it. Either you accept it or you don't.

VLYNN. Know what I say—Fuck that! Compared to the isolated car lots that I am associated with, your practice is indeed very busy based off the fact that you have a client in your office.

PERNEY. Enough Mr. Vlynn. I have had enough of your social talk. Do you wish to demote me to the status of that of holding rank as your personal psychologist?

VLYNN. Who gives a damn what I or anyone else wants?

PERNEY. *(Shooked:)* Well, you aren't the only one with grudges. I was divorced to a woman that I still very much love. We bared no children together. Ever-rye day I regret setting up my medical practice here in Michigan. The profits are barely enough to cover the expenses of the building. I live here in my office.

(VLYNN looks around the room and shakes his head coldly.)

VLYNN. Do you remember Sam Larckes, the car salesman that died two months ago? By any chance do you recall his death Sir, Perney?

(PERNEY looks directly at VLYNN. VLYNN'S right fist is balled up and the other is on his left knee. He has the look of a mad man.)

PERNEY. Sure. You talking about the salesman who died after being locked up in a Mazda Sedan. The one who overheated and fainted in the car after hours in the extreme heat? Rumor has it that he accidentally locked himself in. Sure, I remember him.

VLynn. (*Looking away:*) Well it wasn't an accident.

PERNEY. What do you mean 'it wasn't an accident'? Were you there? Did you see it? Then how in the devils house do you know. The man's death was highly publicized; it was the *Detroit Tribunes* Headliner.

(VLynn suddenly realizes that Doctor PERNEY has a big mouth. Literally. He wonders if his shoe would fit in his mouth.)

VLynn. The stories involving him being locked in the Mazda are all fallacious and made up. The incident is still under investigation. I know because I killed him.

(PERNEY looks at this questionable man in his office then stares at the ground beneath him.)

PERNEY. Mr. Daley sir, please don't come here making false accusations about things that are out of someone's control. Both yours and mine's.

VLynn. (*Looking out the window:*) It's true. He was about to make a sell and I stopped him. Point blank suffocated him in the car with an engine rag I was using while detailing the car when he told me he'd made a sell on it. His body I stashed in the attic up in the roof. This was our first sale in 2 months and I just couldn't let him have it. It would be too big a boost of him for the company and I needed some money way too much.

PERNEY. (*Shocked:*) Jesus, Vlynn. You aren't lying, are you?

VLynn. (*Stifflingly:*) No, not one bit. After I made the sell I fondled him back in the car to make it look like he died in the car. That was also the last sell we made. Today there was almost another sell made. But it wasn't followed through.

(Doctor PERNEY was attentive, listening and looking straight at this man gone insane in front of him whose words stabbed him.)

PERNEY. (*Banging his fists on the table:*) Dammit Vlynn! What are you, on a killing spree? Who did you kill this time?

VLYNN. Just about an hour ago one of my fellow salesmen came in with a hopeful client who wanted to test drive a car. When they went test driving I went with them and sat in the back seat. When the client had to stop to use the restroom, that's when I made my move. I hopped in the front seat, turned the car on, and accelerated straight forward.

PERNEY. DALEY!

(He appeared to be melting.)

VLYNN. I just wanted to shake the young man up enough to the point where he'd get scared and get out. I wasn't trying to hurt him. But in an instant, though, we were approaching a cliff and I knew I wouldn't be able to slow down in time. I got out in time before the car went down. My left knee got caught up in the steering wheel when I jumped out. The kid couldn't make it.

(PERNEY was speechless—it was safe to say. VLYNN remains his sight on the window.)

PERNEY. Vlynn how could you...the injustice and crime of your actions...and to a kid... *HOW COULD YOU!*

VLYNN. (*Standing:*) I know the cruelty of it and I feel horrible about my ordeals. The fact that I have told you means I have to flee. And now. Don't feel compelled that you have to react or confess what I have told you because I will be gone in a piff.

(Looking directly at PERNEY, VLYNN leaves the room. PERNEY was still sitting at his table, not sure what to say, if anything, do, or how to react. He could hear MRS. APROM say her farewells to VLYNN as he excused himself from the building.)

MRS. APROM. Did you get assisted okay?

(A pause—No reply. So she continues.)

MRS. APROM. Very well. (*Leading VLYNN out, the door slams shut behind her. Yelling:*) You have a nice day sir.

(From upstairs, PERNEY *opens his blinds from out of his window. Watching VLYN walk, he sees a lot a lot of traffic outside of the office.*)

(PERNEY *watches VLYNN cross the street. He watches him step into the opposite side of ongoing traffic from the top of his office window.*)

(*A big cardboard box shaped like a semi truck files onto the stage and hits VLYNN, running him over, laying him on the ground. The light fades off of him.*)

(*He watchesd as VLYNN sought out a semi-truck that was going over the speed limit. He watched as he paced the truck. He watched as he paced the truck and stepped in front of the 2 ton truck, blowing his body parts to pieces. PERNEY witnessed a suicide.*)

(PERNEY *could read THE TRUCKERS lips:*)

THE TRUCKER. WHAT THE—

(*The cardboard truck exits the stage in the dark area.*)

(*As he leaves:*) GOD!

PERNEY. Jesus Christ.

(PERNEY *sits alone at his office table and meditates. The light hits him right in the center.*)

PERNEY. What just happened?

(*He thinks: At least I haven't told MRS. APROM, and that was good. He didn't want her to know. At least not yet. Suddenly his phone rang and he reluctantly picked it up. It was MRS. APROM.*)

PERNEY. Not now Aprom, I'm not in the mood.

MRS. APROM. Doctor a kid just came in claiming he needs professional help. I told him no and he ran upstairs to your office anyway. Expect him.

PERNEY. *(Taking in a deep breath:)* What is this, ‘Doctors office going wild’?

MRS. APROM. By the way, is everything okay up there? It sounded like I heard yelling coming up yonder when Mr. Daley was in your office. And, when he left he looked pretty shook up. Everything go Okay?

PERNEY. *(Closes his eyes over the phone:)* I might as well tell you. Aprom look out your window. Then dial 911. This is a Code Red. I should have told you earlier. Mr. Daley is dead.

(She hangs up. Knocks come from the office door. PERNEY opens the door to see a kid with purple hair beaming up at him.)

PURPLE HAired KID. Doctor! This is important.

PERNEY. This isn’t a good time kid.

PURPLE HAired KID. Doctor I think I have a whole in my heart from being abducted by aliens. On top of that, I just saw a man’s knee lying in the front of the door to this building!

(The lights fade out, all on Doctor PERNEY.)

End of Play