

Voices In My Head

by

Roger Goldsmith

(A Screenplay)

11 Parade View Mansions
Royal Gate
Southsea
Hants
PO4 9XJ

0044 7951750165
roger.goldsmith@ntlworld.com
www.rogergoldsmith.co.uk

BASIS FOR THE STORY

The script is loosely based on the story of a paranoid schizophrenic, John Barrett, who had an obsession with knives. In January 2002, he stabbed three people in a hospital waiting area and in April that year, showing symptoms of psychotic mental illness, was detained under the Mental Health Act.

Yet in October 2003, following treatment at Springfield Hospital, Tooting, a Mental Health Review Tribunal controversially ruled that he should be freed. The conditions included him living at his home address in Putney, undergoing monthly medical reviews, taking prescribed medication and being screened for drugs.

Against Barrett's wishes, he was admitted again on an informal basis' on September 1 2004. Yet that very day, without seeing Barrett, it was decided that he should be allowed 'ground leave' for an hour.

Barrett, 43, immediately absconded, armed himself with an array of kitchen knives and the following day attacked and killed Denis Finnegan, 50, as he cycled through Richmond Park in South-West London. Barrett told police that voices in his head had told him to kill someone'. He conducted a chilling process of elimination', deciding not to kill a woman, child or an elderly person.

I thought the 'process of elimination' aspect interesting and worth developing. Allowing us the audience to play God and decide who we think of the characters John Bernard (character in my script) encounters in the park, he should kill.

Roger Goldsmith

FADE IN.

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - DAY

We open on a bright spring afternoon. A Psychiatric Hospital in the background of a large park area, surrounded by trees.

JOHN BERNARD(late 40s) walks briskly away from the hospital. He wears chinos and a pullover over a shirt.

EXT. A ROAD OF TERRACED HOUSES - DAY

LYNNE(30s) stands at an open front door. A pleasant, kindly face. She waves and smiles. The SOUND of a CAR driving off. Lynne closes the front door.

EXT. A HIGH STREET - DAY

JOHN BERNARD walks along the high street. He stops outside of a hardware store, suddenly.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - HALL- DAY

LYNNE leans against the closed door, her hands behind her back, reflective, deep in thought.

EXT. A HIGH STREET(CONT'D) - DAY

JOHN BERNARD leaves the hardware store. He takes a bag out of his chino pocket as he walks. We see it is a long-handled KITCHEN KNIFE.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE stands looking in a wall mirror brushing her hair. Her strokes become slower as she thinks of something deeper. She stops brushing and just stares.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

JOHN BERNARD stops at the entrance to the park, suddenly, as if commanded to do so. Looks towards the park.

JOHN BERNARD(V.O.)
I will kill someone in the park
today. Someone is going to die.

A PARK - DAY

WILLIAM(60s) rosy cheeks, rides his bike. A canvas bag in a basket on the front.

IRIS(late 70s) wearing a macintosh, carrying a wicker basket with a bunch of cut FLOWERS in, walks on the path.

ALAN(60s) sits on a park bench, looking forlorn, staring ahead blankly.

AMY(20s) blonde hair, glamorous, wearing a Burberry macintosh, walks briskly, using her mobile phone.

JASON(20) skinny, wearing a black hoodie, black jeans walks with his hands in his pockets.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE keeps looking in the mirror. The SOUND of a HOUSE PHONE.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

LYNNE picks up the house phone.

LYNNE
(into phone)
Hello.

INT. HOSPITAL - OFFICE - DAY

A DOCTOR(40s) slim and dark haired, wearing a black suit, severe-looking, a little like Franz Kafka, sits at a desk.

DOCTOR
(into phone)
Mrs Perkins?

INTERCUT

LYNNE
Yes?

DOCTOR
John Bernard's gone missing.

LYNNE
Gone missing? What do you mean?

DOCTOR
He was given 'ground leave' for an hour. He never returned.

LYNNE
 'Ground leave'? I don't
 understand. What does that mean?

DOCTOR
 He was let out of the hospital
 unsupervised.

LYNNE
 Unsupervised? Why?

DOCTOR
 It was a mistake, Mrs Perkins. A
 hospital error. It should never
 have happened.

LYNNE
 (devastated)
 A mistake! The mistake was
 letting out when you did. He
 wasn't ready to go home. / He
 never took his medication at home.
 Though God knows I tried. I tried...

DOCTOR
 Mrs Perkins...

LYNNE cries.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Mrs Perkins. Aside from making
 his way to you, is there anywhere
 else you think he might go? A
 favourite place? Somewhere he
 liked to visit?

LYNNE
 I'm sorry, I can't...

DOCTOR
 Mrs Perkins. Please. We need your
 help.

LYNNE drops the phone and collapses against the wall.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

JOHN BERNARD looks towards WILLIAM from a distance.

CLOSE on William. He gets off his bike and walks towards
 a park bench, and IRIS, sitting, with a wicker basket in
 her lap.

WILLIAM
 (annoyingly brightly)
 Hello. How are you?

William is sitting with Iris. He is drinking from his flask, eating a sandwich.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)
Lovely day today.

He takes a deep breath.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)
First day of my retirement. I was
in banking. Lloyds. Forty five
years service. Quite something, ah?

ANGLE on ALAN sitting on a park bench. He looks at his watch. He looks distraught.

ANGLE on AMY, walking, talking on the phone.

AMY
(into phone)
£10 million pounds the judge
awarded me. People in court
shouted, accusing me of only
marrying him for his money. Laugh.

ANGLE on JASON. From his POV he sees Iris sitting with William.

John Bernard puts his hand in the knife pocket.

JOHN BERNARD(V.O.)
Who God? Who do you want me to kill?

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE sits on a sofa, her head in her hands. She looks up.

INT. HOSPITAL - OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

The DOCTOR sits behind a desk, facing JOHN BERNARD and LYNNE sitting together. John Bernard fidgets restlessly crosses and uncrosses his legs, rubs his forehead vigorously.

DOCTOR
How do you know it's God?

JOHN BERNARD
Course it's God.

DOCTOR
Do you believe in God?

JOHN BERNARD
Everybody believes in God. He's
our fucking salvation.

DOCTOR

You think it's God talking to you?

JOHN BERNARD

Don't think. I know. It's not me.
Not my voice. I know my voice.

(holds a hand in
front of his mouth
and talks)

This is my voice. I can hear my
voice.

(touches his head)

In here.

(knocks on his head)

In here, it's God. God's voice.

And when he speaks I listen.

DOCTOR

The way you did when you stabbed
those three innocent people at
the bus stop?

JOHN BERNARD

I have to do what he says.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE sits on the sofa.

LYNNE

Dear God. Help him. Please.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

JOHN BERNARD walking in the park.

WILLIAM sits with IRIS, munching on a sandwich. Full of
himself. Iris stares ahead, not interested in any of this.

WILLIAM

(very smugly)

One of the advantages of working
in a bank. They teach you the
value of saving from an early age.
Started paying in for my pension
when I was twenty. Built quite a
nest egg.

He offers her a sandwich.

WILLIAM(CONT'D)

What was your name again?

ALAN is sitting on the bench. He's on the phone.

ALAN
 (into phone)
 It's what I thought it might
 be...Yes. Doris, I'm so sorry.
 Wanted to tell you on the phone.
 Couldn't face seeing you and
 telling you....Where? Sitting in
 the park.

He closes out the call and looks ahead.

AMY walking, talking on the phone. Very excited.

AMY
 I told the court I'd remained a
 loyal and faithful wife to him
 all the time he was sick. 'Lying
 gold digging bitch' someone
 called out. Laugh.

IRIS walking, carrying her wicker basket. We see JASON
 running after her. He grabs the basket out of her hand and
 runs on. Iris is too shocked to react at first. She stands
 still watching him run in the distance.

IRIS
 HELP! HELP! THIEF! THIEF!

Jason running. The FLOWERS drop out.

Back on Iris, her arms in the air, in anguish.

IRIS
 (limply, resigned, weary)
 Come back. Give me my basket back.

John Bernard watches Jason run in the distance.

JOHN BERNARD (V.O.)
 I want you to kill someone before
 eleven o'clock.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE is looking out of the window. She looks at her watch.
 It shows 10.30.

INT. JOHN BERNARD'S FLAT - LOUNGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

JOHN BERNARD is sitting on the sofa, head in his hands.
 Looks very distraught and agitated. LYNNE sits down with
 him. She holds his hand, tries to touch him. He pushes her
 away. She tries to cuddle up to him. He pushes her
 forcibly away. Mutters 'Fuck Off' and stands.

LYNNE(V.O.)
He's getting abusive.

DOCTOR(V.O.)
Abusive?

LYNNE (V.O.)
Angry. For no reason. Threatening
to hit me. Wild mood swings. One
minute calm. The next...

INT. HOSPITAL - OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

LYNNE sits in front of the DOCTOR.

DOCTOR
Bring him in. We'll assess him.

LYNNE
(anxiously)
And you'll keep him in?

DOCTOR
We'll assess him, Mrs Perkins.

LYNNE
And not release him until you
think he's ready? And not a
danger to people outside?
(no reply)
Doctor?

The Doctor moves papers in front of him. And impatiently.

DOCTOR
Ten o'clock Mrs Perkins.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE is looking out of the window.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

DAVE(late 30s) is walking on the grass with EMILY(5).
Emily holds a KITE as big as her.

EMILY
Can we fly the kite now, Daddy?

DAVE
There's no wind.

EMILY
Can we try though?

DAVE
(annoyed)
Emily. It's not going to work.
There's no wind.

Emily breaks free from Dave and runs with the kite, without success. She turns back to Dave, disappointed.

DAVE(CONT'D)
What did I tell you?

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

WILLIAM sits on the grass, his bike beside him, drinking tea from the flask cup.

JASON sits on the grass. Laughs. Pleased with himself. Looks in the wicker basket. A large ENVELOPE full of £20 notes. He screeches.

JASON
YES!

His VOICE ECHOES.

IRIS walks towards the bunch of FLOWERS on the ground. She smiles. Bends down and picks them up. Cries.

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

CLOSE on John Bernard.

JOHN BERNARD(V.O.)
Who God? Who do you want me to kill?

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

LYNNE sits on the sofa, drinking coffee. SOUND of the HOUSE PHONE.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

LYNNE picks up the phone. Full of anticipation. She can hardly contain herself.

LYNNE
(into phone)
Have you found him?

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

DAVE is on the phone. EMILY is standing by him, crying.

DAVE
(into phone)
Lynne...

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

LYNNE on the phone.

LYNNE
(into phone)
What is it?

INTERCUT

EMILY is crying, holding her tummy.

DAVE
I'm bringing Emily home. She said
she's got a stomach ache.

LYNNE
Where are you?

DAVE
In the park. She wanted to fly
her kite. But there's no wind.

Emily looking towards JOHN BERNARD in the distance.

EMILY
Look, Daddy, there's John Bernard.

LYNNE
What did she say?

DAVE
John Bernard's in the park.

LYNNE
Oh no.

Lynne puts the phone down. Dave goes on talking. We hear what he says from Lynne's phone not replaced properly.

DAVE (V.O.)
If I find out that maniac puts
one foot in the house with my
daughter around, I'll take you
to court and get full custody.
(beat)
Did you hear what I said?

EXT. A ROAD OF TERRACED HOUSES - DAY

LYNNE gets in a Taxi.

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

EMILY looks towards JOHN BERNARD in the distance. DAVE closes out the call. Turns to Emily, a few feet away.

EMILY

I want to see John Bernard. He reads me stories.

DAVE

He does what?

Dave takes her hand and pulls her away.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's get you out of here.

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

JOHN BERNARD looks towards ALAN sitting on the park bench.

JOHN BERNARD (V.O)

You will not kill a woman. Or a child. You will kill a man.

Alan stands up from the park bench.

JOHN BERNARD

Wait!

John Bernard walks towards him. He puts his hands in his pocket and stares at Alan.

INT. A TAXI- MOVING - DAY

From LYNNE'S POV she sees the park ahead.

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

JOHN BERNARD walks close to ALAN.

JOHN BERNARD

What's your name?

ALAN

Alan Prescott. Why? Who are you?

JOHN BERNARD
I'm God. That's who I am.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE PARK - DAY

Lynne's taxi pulls up outside of the entrance to the park.
LYNNE gets out of the taxi.

DAVE and EMILY walk towards the entrance.

Lynne runs to her daughter and holds her close.

LYNNE
My darling...

EMILY
I'm not feeling very well, Mummy.

DAVE
I thought that maniac was locked up.

Lynne looks over their shoulder towards the park.

DAVE (CONT'D)
What's he doing out of hospital?

Lynne looks towards the park. This is a hard one for her.

LYNNE
Take her back to your place. Please.

DAVE
What did you say?

LYNNE
Please, Dave. Just do it.

She kisses her daughter.

EMILY
Mummy!

LYNNE
I'll see you later, my darling.
Go with Daddy.

DAVE
You wait till the court hears
about this.

Lynne walks off. Emily calls out.

EMILY
Mummy. Come back!

Dave shakes his head, smiles, as he walks away holding
Emily's hand.

Emily calls out as Lynne gets further away.

EMILY(CONT'D)

MUMMY!

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

JOHN BERNARD with ALAN.

JOHN BERNARD

You're not going to die, Alan
Prescott.

ALAN

I have three months to live. I
have cancer.

JOHN BERNARD

I'm God. And I'm telling you. You
won't die.

John Bernard puts out a hand to Alan.

JOHN BERNARD(CONT'D)

Trust in God Alan Prescott. Pray
like fuck. You'll be all right.

For some reason, Alan shakes his hand, somewhat limply,
looking at John Bernard all the time.

MOMENTS LATER

Lynne desperately looks around.

LYNNE

(to herself)
Where are you John Bernard?

OUTSIDE OF THE PARK

EMILY walking with DAVE. She suddenly breaks away from him.
Runs back in the park.

DAVE

(calling out)
Emily. Come back!

EX. IN THE PARK - DAY

JASON sits on the grass, lying on his front, smoking,
looking at the wad of money.

CHARLOTTE(20s) is beside him. She looks in the wicker
basket. She takes out a note. Reads it.

CHARLOTTE

Jason...

JASON

What?

CHARLOTTE

This letter...

JASON

What about it?

CHARLOTTE

A letter to undertakers. The woman. Iris Chapman. The money was for the undertakers to pay for her husband's funeral. It says here.

JASON

So?

CHARLOTTE

And this...

She looks at a newspaper cutting.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

A newspaper clipping. He died in this park. He had a heart attack. They were out walking together. Last week.

He looks at her. After a few seconds.

JASON

So?

EXT. IN THE PARK - DAY

LYNNE walking.

WILLIAM rides his bike towards her, smiling, annoyingly.

AMY is talking on the phone, walking close to the park entrance.

IRIS lays the bunch of FLOWERS on the pathway, close to a waste bin. She puts her hands together and prays.

ON Lynne walking.

LYNNE walk close to a clump of trees.

CLOSE on Lynne as she sees something ahead

LYNNE stops walking. She sees JOHN BERNARD lying in long grass, on his back. She goes closer to him. She sees a KNIFE in his chest.

EMILY runs towards Lynne.

Lynne walks slowly to John Bernard, kneels down. His look is serene. She strokes his forehead.

EMILY(O.S.)

Mummy! Mummy!

Lynne stands up.

LYNNE

Emily. Stay there!

Emily stops dead in her tracks. Lynne goes to her. Lynne puts her arms around her daughter. Covers her face.

EMILY

What is it, Mummy?

ANGLE on IRIS walking towards them, holding the wicker basket. Over Emily's shoulder, Lynne sees IRIS.

INT. A TAXI - MOVING - DAY

LYNNE sits next to EMILY in the back of the taxi.

EMILY

I loved John Bernard, Mummy. He read me stories.

LYNNE

I know you did.

EMILY

He was my friend.

LYNNE

He was my friend, too.

INT. LYNNE'S HOUSE - EMILY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

EMILY is sitting up in bed. JOHN BERNARD sitting on the bed, closes the book and kisses her. He looks back towards the door at LYNNE. Their eyes meet.

INT. A TAXI - MOVING - DAY

CLOSE on LYNNE smiling reflectively.

EMILY

Daddy never reads me stories.

EXT. CHURCH GROUNDS - DAY

LYNNE is walking hand-in-hand with EMILY to the Chapel. ALAN stands outside of the chapel, dressed in a suit. His WIFE beside him. They smile at her. Alan steps forward.

ALAN

I'm very sorry.

LYNNE

Thank you. Do I know you?

ALAN

No. You don't know me.

Lynne smiles and enters the chapel with Emily.

FADE OUT.