

THE BOOT RIVETER

Written by

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A True Story

SUPER: WHITECHAPEL. LONDON 1887

FADE IN:

EXT. BATTY STREET - EARLY MORNING

Beneath a thick fog the faint flicker of a GAS LAMP illuminates the darkened narrow street.

The street consists of tenement blocks and three story houses upon each side of the road.

ZOOM IN AND PAN THROUGH NUMBER 16.

The ground floor consists of two rooms; a bedroom and a kitchen. A passage leads to a backyard that consists of a shed. These rooms are occupied by landlady LEAH LIPSKI (30's) and her husband PHILIP (30's), including their six young children all under ten years old.

A staircase of ten steps leads to the first floor which consists of two rooms: one back, and one front.

The front room is occupied by Polish immigrant ISAAC ANGEL (21), and his pregnant wife of six months MIRIAM (22).

The room at the back is occupied by MRS LEVY (30's) and RACHAEL RUBENSTEIN (Late 20's).

There is another short staircase which consists a small WINDOW 12ft from sill to pavement. From this window you can command a view of the bed in Isaac and Miriam's Angel's room below.

The top floor consists of one room, occupied by another Polish Jew ISRAEL LIPSKI (22). This room is converted into a workshop with a fitted bench.

The church clock strikes the hour.

INT. ISAAC ANGEL'S ROOM - EARLY HOURS

Boot riveter Isaac Angel opens his big brown eyes and throws out an arm to check the time on his silver pocket watch.

CU: Six o clock.

He turns to face his sleeping wife and whispers.

ISAAC

I have to get up.

Her cheeks are red and she looks radiant for this hour of the morning.

MIRIAM

(Softly)

All right.

He rolls out of bed and slides into a pair of work trousers, then slips into a white shirt which he takes off a nail in the wall.

He leans over a small wooden table beneath the window, covered by a muslin blind and says a quiet prayer, then kisses his wife gently upon the head.

ISAAC

I will be back for lunch at two.

MIRIAM

I will have it ready.

ISAAC

Samuel will come for his boots.
Give them to him and tell him I
will speak to him later.

MIRIAM

I will.

She gets up and locks the door upon his exit then lies back down upon the bed.

INT. ISRAEL LIPSKI'S ROOM - MORNING

Walking stick maker Israel Lipski anxiously paces the floor, before he exits wearing a white shirt and black trousers.

He walks barefoot as he descends the stairs and enters-

BACKYARD

He opens the closet door and begins searching inside.

Philip appears behind him and taps him on the shoulder

PHILIP

What are you looking for?

ISRAEL LIPSKI

A piece of pipe.

PHILIP

What do you want it for?

ISRAEL LIPSKI

I want it for my sticks.

Lipski then reenters the house and climbs the stairs.

EXT. 16 BATTY STREET

Polish Immigrant SIMON ROSENBLOOM (20's) knocks on the front door. It is soon opened by Lipski.

ROSENBLOOM

Good morning, mister Lipski. You said to come for work.

ISRAEL LIPSKI

Yes. Come in.

Rosenbloom follows him up the stairs to his-

INT. WORKSHOP

There are work tools laid out at the far end of the workbench and sticks scattered about the room.

There is a bed and a sofa situated perpendicular to the door, and a window half opened to the left.

A table situated by the window has two wooden chairs. There are a number of cups and soup bowls upon the table.

Lipski picks up a top end.

ISRAEL LIPSKI /

You can bend these top ends first, then fine file them.

Rosenbloom immediately takes off his coat and sets to work.

ISRAEL LIPSKI /

There will come another man - a filer. He will require another vice. I will go and buy another one, and a sponge for the boy to varnish with when he comes.

Lipski slips on a pair of black boots, then a short jacket and a cap before he exits.

Rosenbloom carries on working at the bench.

Beat.

Mrs Levy opens the front door as the landlady enters carrying a pot of hot water.

She spots Israel Lipski standing redundantly in the passage.

LANDLADY

I'm making coffee. Do you want one?

ISRAEL LIPSKI

Yes. I'll be back soon.

LANDLADY

I'll leave it on the table for when you get back.

Lipski exits.

Philip kisses Leah and exits the house.

Beat.

INT. WORKROOM

A perturbed Lipski enters.

ISRAEL LIPSKI

(To Rosenbloom)

The shop is still closed.

He helps Rosenbloom to bend some top ends before he exits again.

Beat.

Lipski returns with a local boy - RICHARD PITMAN 16.

ISRAEL LIPSKI /

(To Rosenbloom)

I am going to buy a sponge for the boy to varnish with.

He leaves Pitman in the room with Rosenbloom.

Beat.

Russian born locksmith ISAAC SCHMUSS (30's) enters the room and observes Pitman and Rosenbloom working at the bench. He mumbles something incoherent to Rosenbloom and they briefly speak.

The Boy taps a hammer annoyingly at the workbench.

ROSENBLOOM
(Angrily to Boy)
Get on with your work! Stop
knocking about like that!

SCHMUSS
I go breakfast. I come back.

Schmuss exits while Rosenbloom and Pitman carry on working.

GROUND FLOOR

Mrs Levy calls up the stairs.

MRS LEVY
Israel, your coffee is getting
cold.

PITMAN O.S
He ain't here!

Mrs Levy shakes her head in annoyance then exits the house with landlady Leah.

Rachael Rubenstein brings a chair to the front door and places it just outside. She sits down while two small children play in the passage behind her.

Hebrew teacher SAMUEL SPIERS (30's) appears in front of her and attempts to enter the house. She blocks his path.

RACHAEL RUBENSTEIN
Where'd you think you're going?

SPIERS
Upstairs.

RACHAEL RUBENSTEIN
Why?

SPIERS
I'm going to Angel's room to see
if my boots are done.

The children run down the passage into the backyard. Rachael Rubenstein chases after them, leaving Spiers standing outside the house. He is joined by another man and they begin talking to one another.

INT/EXT. MR. SCHMIDT'S SHOP - DAY

Lipski approaches the tall, bearded SHOPKEEPER.

ISRAEL LIPSKI

I want to buy a vice. How much?

SHOPKEEPER

Three-shillings, sixpence.

ISRAEL LIPSKI

I only have three-shillings-fourpence.

SHOPKEEPER

It is not enough. It is three-shillings-sixpence. Please leave my shop if you cannot afford to buy it.

ISRAEL LIPSKI

What time does the oil shop open?

SHOPKEEPER

Eight-thirty. Now please leave my shop.

Lipski exits.

He stands outside and waits for the oil shop to open.

INT. OIL SHOP - DAY

Israel Lipski enters as the PROPRIETOR opens up.

PROPRIETOR

What can I get you?

ISRAEL LIPSKI

A pennyworth of aqua fortis.

Israel Lipski produces a PHIAL and hands it to the Proprietor who fills it with AQUA FORTIS.

PROPRIETOR

What do you want it for?

ISRAEL LIPSKI

I am a stick maker. I want it for staining sticks.

PROPRIETOR

It is poisonous. Be careful not to spill it.

Proprietor corks the phial and hands it back to him.

INT. 16 BATTY STREET - DAY

Israel Lipski and Schmuss stand upon the staircase, They look through the window and down upon Miriam Angel. She lies on the bed in her chemise.

SCHMUSS

(To Israel Lipski)

Give me the bottle.

ISRAEL LIPSKI

What are you going to do with it?

SCHMUSS

Rob her.

He hands him the phial and they descend the stairs towards her room.

INT/EXT. ISAAC ANGEL'S ROOM

Schmuss bends down and puts his finger through a round hole in the door. He uses pliers to turn the key on the inside lock before they enter.

Panicked, Miriam climbs off the bed and approaches them, before she is knocked unconscious by Schmuss.

Israel Lipski removes his hat and coat and drops them upon the floor at the base of the bedstead.

She falls back upon the bed and Schmuss leans over her and pours the aqua fortis down her throat, causing her to spew violently.

During his panic Israel Lipski attempts to leave. Schmuss blocks his path as the aqua fortis spills out.

Schmuss attempts to pour what's left of the aqua fortis down Israel Lipski's throat as a brief tussle ensues b'twixt.

Israel Lipski cowers before Schmuss exits the room.

He turns the key with the pliers and locks Israel Lipski inside the room.

Israel Lipski climbs to his feet and looks down upon Miriam lying helpless and semi-naked upon the bed. Her chemise pulled up to her breast.

She coughs violently as she rolls on her side and spills blood from her mouth.

INTERCUT:

Israel Lipski puts his hand over her mouth as he strokes her naked thigh and breast.

Isaac's DINAH ANGEL (40's) climbs the stairs to the first floor. She bangs her fist upon the door of the room.

DINAH ANGEL

Miriam? Miriam, open up, it's me,
Dinah.

Israel Lipski looks at the door aghast, then he hides himself under the bed.

END INTERCUT.

The sound of a HAMMER banging from upstairs can be heard.

DINAH ANGEL /

Miriam, it's me, Dinah. Are you
in there.

Silence as she tries the lock.

Mrs Levy climbs the stairs to the first floor where she confronts Dinah.

MRS LEVY

(Concerned)

What's wrong?

DINAH ANGEL

(Panicked)

It's Miriam, my daughter in law.
She does not answer when I call
her.

Mrs Levy bends down and looks through a small hole in the door. She attempts to turn the key in the lock.

MRS LEVY

The key is still in the lock. It
is locked from inside.

She rushes upstairs to the landing where she looks down upon Miriam's room.

Her POV: Miriam upon the bed with her head turned to the side.

She rushes back down the stairs and attempts to force the door open with her shoulder and knees, as Dinah and Rachael Rubenstein assist.

Eventually they force the door open and enter the room.

Mrs Levy goes to Miriam who lies half naked whilst unconscious. Yellow bile leaks from the side of her mouth and there is blood on her chemise and upon the mattress.

She takes her by the arm and attempts to wake her, without success.

MRS LEVY

She's not breathing. Get the
doctor, quickly!

She quickly exits the room and then the house.

Dinah exits the room in shock while she sobs hysterically. Rachael Rubenstein also exits the room in sheer panic.

Simon Rosenbloom and Richard Pitman descend the stairs and look inside the room as Miriam lies dead on the bed.

Landlady returns with DR. JOHN KAYE 50's - a balding man with a long bushy grey beard.

He enters the room and quickly goes to Miriam's cadaver. He feels for a pulse as he looks down at her injuries.

He soon spots Israel Lipski hiding under the bed and pulls him up by the arm, before he slaps his face to see if he's conscious.

Israel Lipski opens his eyes wide as the Doctor inspects him further to ascertain his condition.

DR KAYE

(Calls out)

Get the police.

Beat.

Two BAILIFFS arrive and grab Lipski by the arm, before they lead him out of the door.

BAILIFF

Right then! C'mon, you wretch!

DR KAYE

(To Bailiffs)

He needs to be taken to hospital for tests. He may have inflicted injuries.

INT/EXT. COBBLERS WORKSHOP - DAY

Isaac works at a bench when a frantic Mrs Levy enters.

MRS LEVY

Isaac! Come quickly! You must come! It's your wife! She has been attacked!

He looks at her aghast, then immediately grabs his coat.

ISAAC

But what's happened to her?

MRS LEVY

She was attacked by a lodger. The police have taken him away. They say he attacked her in her room.

Highly disturbed, he follows her out of the building.

ISAAC

But what did he do to her?

She struggles to keep up with him as he runs towards his lodgings.

MRS LEVY

They won't say.

EXT/INT. BATTY STREET DWELLING

They arrive to a crowd gathering outside the dwelling.

A BLUDGER (Constable) stops him from entering his room

ISAAC

(Stricken)

I'm husband of woman who's been attacked. Please, you must let me see my wife. I must see her at once.

BLUDGER

Nobody enters this room until we've removed her body.

ISAAC

But I - I must see my wife now! I am husband! Please, you must let me see my wife!

BLUDGER

I've been given strict orders not to let anyone through, and that includes next of kin.

ISAAC

But I - I must see my wife! I am husband!

BLUDGER

You can enter after we've removed her body.

ISSAC

What happened to her?

BLUDGER

I'm not obliged to answer that question.

ISAAC

But what about baby?

BLUDGER

I dunno anything about a baby.

Dinah Angel sobs as she comforts him and leads back down the stairs towards the pavement.

DINAH ANGEL

It was the stick maker. He was hiding under her bed when the doctor arrived.

ISSAC

What did he do to her?

DINAH ANGEL

She was poisoned, the doctor said.

Defeated and exasperated, Isaac, with cap in hand turns away and stumbles across the cobblestone street where he gazes up at his bedsit window during his lament.

He is joined by Mrs Levy, who attempts to console him.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. SCHMIDT'S SHOP - SAME DAY

Schmuss stands in conversation with the Shopkeeper.

SHOPKEEPER

Did you hear there is a woman dead at sixteen Batty Street?

SCHMUSS

I heard it.

SHOPKEEPER

They have locked him up - The stickmaker who was here earlier today to buy a vice.

SCHMUSS

I saw him earlier.

INT. NEWGATE PRISON YARD - DAY

Israel Lipski stands upon a gibbet. The noose around his neck tightened by the HANGMAN.

A PRISON GUARD monitors proceedings.

A MINISTER from the Church stands with the TORA opened.

GUARD

(To Israel Lipski)

D'you have any last words before we commence with your execution?

ISRAEL LIPSKI

Yes! I did not do it. I never touched her. You have made a mistake. It was Schmuss who did it. It was Schmuss. It was him who killed her. I did not do it, I say!

GUARD

You were found guilty by the Queen's Court. Let's proceed.

Guard gestures to the Hangman, who then proceeds with execution, as the Minister makes the sign of the cross.

MINISTER

Israel Lipski, may God have mercy upon your soul.

Hangman pulls the lever and the latch gives way.

Israel Lipski swings like a fish caught in a hook.

INT/EXT. BATTY STREET DWELLING - NIGHT

Drunk and dispirited, Isaac Angel returns with his BROTHER 20's and SISTER 20's.

ISAAC

Lipski, you must pay for my wife!

He is quickly confronted by landlady Leah Lipski and her husband Philip.

LANDLADY

Isaac, what are you doing here? You know you cannot come here again. You're drunk. You need to leave at once.

ISAAC

It's your fault! You Lipski's are murderers! You must pay for my wife!

He lunges at her, then drags her by the hair as she screams blue murder. Philip attempts to pull him off of her.

ISAAC /
You must pay for my wife! I must
kill you as my wife has been
killed!

He kicks and punches her viciously about the stomach and legs with his size twelve metal capped boots, causing her to cough violently, until she sheds blood.

Philip and his Brother finally pull him away, then drag him out of the building.

INT. GEORGE STREET - DAY

A CONSTABLE bangs his fists upon the door of a decrepit tenement block.

Isaac opens the door. A leather apron tied around his waist.

CONSTABLE
Are you Isaac Angel?

ISAAC
Yes.

CONSTABLE
Right! I'm arresting you for a
assaulting Leah Lipski. You're
coming with me, Guttersnipe.

ISAAC
But she must pay for my wife!

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Isaac sits upon the cold, damp floor. His head tucked into his lap.

A burly STATION SERGEANT approaches. He points his finger at him.

STATION SERGEANT
Angel, stand up.

Isaac gets to his feet.

STATION SERGEANT /
 You have committed a violent act
 upon Leah Lipski, the landlady at
 your previous abode. You will be
 taken to the Beak first thing in
 the morning. And you better be
 able to explain yourself, or else
 it's the clink for you.

Isaac nods his head. His angry eyes glazed, his beard soiled
 with saliva.

ISAAC
 She must pay for my wife.

STATION SERGEANT
 Why must she?

ISAAC
 She is a Lipski. All Lipski's are
 murderers.

STATION SERGEANT
 You just make sure you can speak
 up for yourself in front of the
 Beak. Your vengeance towards that
 woman was completely unnecessary
 in my opinion.

He walks off jangling his keys.

INT. COURT - DAY

Isaac stands in front of the BEAK. A mere pitiful reflection
 of his once self.

BEAK
 (Taps gavel)
 Have you anything to say, before
 I pass sentence upon you, Isaac
 Angel?

He looks down and shakes his head.

BEAK /
 Are you sorry for what you have
 done?

He nods his head.

BEAK /

In the circumstance of you losing
your wife, I order you to be
bound over to keep the peace for
one year. Do you understand?

He acknowledges with another nod of the head.

BEAK

You are free to go.

Broken and lost, Isaac is met by his Mother and she walks him
home.

DISSOLVE.

THE END