

ONE MAN'S TRASH

Written by

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INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

JOEL, 50, sits at a small table in the middle of his cluttered front room. Enjoying a cup of coffee and a slice of toast, he's literally surrounded by stacks of cardboard boxes and trash bags. An extreme hoarder, there's barely enough space to get in and out. The whole room, filled with trash.

Joel finishes his toast and drinks down his coffee. He then stands up from the table and gingerly makes his way out of the front room.

Holding the empty plate in one hand and the now empty cup in the other, he has to 'crab walk' to get himself in between the stacks of boxes.

A quite ridiculous way to move around your own home.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Even more boxes and bags piled high inside the kitchen, from the floor to the ceiling. Almost the whole space is taken up by 'stuff.'

Joel enters, still holding onto his plate and cup and still forced to crab walk to be able to navigate through.

He reaches the sink. He has to stretch to be able to reach it. With enormous difficulty he washes up the plate and cup. Leaving them on the side to dry.

How he is able to get anything done living like this is a mystery.

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - DAY

Unlike the inside of the house which is a pure horror show, the garden is nothing short of prize winning.

Not a single blade of grass is out of place. Perfection in garden form. Colourful flowers, topiary trees, and a bird feeder to rival any other.

Joel sits outside, on a small decking area. Relaxing peacefully in a rocking chair.

JOEL

(musing)

I sometimes wish I were a bird, so that I could live out here in this garden.

(MORE)

## JOEL (CONT'D)

I'd nest in the trees, I'd bath in the little pools of water by the rocks. And I'd feed until I was full. I'd like to be a robin. God forbid becoming a pigeon. The homeless crackhead of bird society. Maybe a I'd be a crow. The cool gangster of the bird world. Or are they the drugs dealers? Hmmm. So, in the bird universe who's the police? I guess... seagulls?

As he wonders aloud to himself, several filled up and extra strong looking trash bags are thrown over his tall fence.

Joel's home and garden are completely sealed off from the outside world, but someone has decided to simply launch several laden trash bags right on over. Crushing flowers, plants and even knocking over and breaking his prized bird feeder.

At first he's stunned, frozen at the sight of this trash bag attack, but the moment the bird feeder is crushed Joel drops down to his knees and lets out a terrible sounding, pain filled scream. Like someone witnessing the murder of a loved one.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Joel sits on the floor, the broken pieces of his prized bird feeder piled up in his arms. He's sobbing, an emotional wreck.

POLICE OFFICER STAN, 29, knocks on the window looking into the front room, he waves at Joel to get his attention.

POLICE OFFICER STAN

Excuse me sir, you called us about a possible hate crime?

Joel wipes his tears away then waves for Stan come on in.

JOEL

Let yourself in. The front doors open.

Stan looks at all the boxes and trash bags inside the front room. He shakes his head, chuckles to himself.

STAN

I'm sorry sir, but I don't think I can get in there.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)  
(taps a hand against his  
stomach)

Too many fried breakfasts I'm  
afraid. And to be honest, if I did  
get in there I don't know how I'd  
get out again.

JOEL  
I don't want to talk to you through  
a god damn window. I want to report  
a crime and I don't feel like  
shouting.

STAN  
That's OK sir, I think I've got  
this.

Stan skilfully and probably illegally forces open the window,  
sticking his head inside. He smiles, reaching out he strokes  
the stacks of boxes that are in reaching distance, in awe.

STAN (CONT'D)  
Wow. This must have taken you years  
to gather up?

Joel slowly stands.

JOEL  
You broke my window?

STAN  
Not broken sir, just forced open.  
I'll close it again once we're  
done.

Joel shows him the broken bird feeder.

JOEL  
I want whoever did this to be  
caught. And if you have to shoot  
them then so be it.

STAN  
I'll do my best. How did it happen?

JOEL  
They threw trash bags into my  
garden. Ten or twelve of them.  
Vandals.

STAN  
Oh yeah, in your garden? I saw them  
when I came in. Trash bags  
everywhere.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

But once I got to this point I kind of thought they were yours.

Joel frowns.

JOEL

Why on earth would you think they were mine? In my garden!

Stan gestures to the inside of the front room.

STAN

Well, all this. Trash bags seem to be kind of your thing. If you don't mind me saying.

JOEL

How dare you, I want your name and badge number!

Stan rolls his eyes.

STAN

Alright sir.

JOEL

Stay right where you are.

Joel drops the broken pieces of the bird feeder to the floor then attempts to 'storm out' of the front room. Which is impossible with there being hardly any room to move.

He once again 'crab walks' in between the boxes and trash bags towards the door.

Stan watches him from the window, intrigued and can't help but smile.

JOEL (CONT'D)

You just wait there.

STAN

I'm not going anywhere sir.

Slowly, very slowly Joel get to the door and exits.

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - DAY

Joel watches as Stan drops to the ground, grabs hold of one the thrown over trash bags. He rips it open and it's filled with children's clothes and toys.

STAN  
What on earth.

Joel moves in for a closer look himself.

JOEL  
I don't get it, it's just toddlers  
clothes and toys. Why?

Stan reaches over to another one of the trash bags, doing the same he rips it open to find that it's more of the same. Filled with children's clothes and toys.

STAN  
More of the same.

JOEL  
But why my garden?

STAN  
Seeing this stuff like this. It  
just seems sad to me.

Joel checks all the other bags himself. All the same.

JOEL  
Well now I don't know what to  
think.

STAN  
Not what you were expecting?

Joel shakes his head.

JOEL  
I was expecting trash. But these  
are someone's special memories. All  
these things here, they were at one  
time cherished. Loved. Each and  
everything here in these bags is a  
memory of a happy time that can  
never be relived.

STAN  
Is that what all those boxes and  
bags inside your house are filled  
with? Happy memories?

Joel nods. Both of them now just look more than a little bit sad.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Joel, all alone again crawls over the top of a pile of his own trash bags in order to get to the window, the same window that Police officer Stan spoke to him through.

Joel tests the window that Stan forced open. Pulls it open with ease. He shakes his head, disgusted.

JOEL

That bastard broke my window! I guess I'll have to fix it now. I should never have called the cops in the first place.

As he says this he looks out into his back garden and sees more large heavy duty trash bags being thrown in, crushing his flowers.

JOEL (CONT'D)

No! Not this time.

Joel shoves open the window and crawls out, landing outside with a loud, dull thud. Right on his head.

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - DAY

More and more trash bags land inside the garden. Lifting himself up off the ground, Joel races over, starts picking up the trash bags and throwing them back over the fence.

A sort of tennis match now takes shape. Another trash bag comes over the fence, only for Joel to throw it back.

Back and forth we go, Joel refusing to give up. The same bag flying back and forth over the top of the fence.

After a while of this, Joel throws it again, but this time it hits something on the other side. A male voice lets out a cry.

MALE VOICE

(O.S)

Ouch, that hurt. Right on my head.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Joel exits through his imposing garden gates, stepping outside for the first time in who knows how long. He sees MATT, 30, on the floor, rubbing his head, the trash bag that bonked him on the ground beside him.

Joel sees him and is nothing short of completely shocked. He comes over to Matt and stop, looking down at him with hands on his hips.

JOEL

What the hell do you think you're doing?

Matt looks back up at him, giving Joel a shy smile.

MATT

Hey Dad.

JOEL

Well, what are you doing?

Matt shrugs, he needs a moment to think about this. Not sure what the answer is, hasn't given too much thought to what he's being doing himself.

MATT

I didn't want to throw them away. They're my children's clothes and my children's toys. But I couldn't keep them at home. The clothes don't fit and the toys don't interest them anymore. So I was stuck. But I thought I'd give them to the one person who I knew would never throw them out. You.

(shakes his head)

It was all just coming so crowded at home. Abby was threatening to take the kids and end the marriage. We were both scared that I was becoming a hoarder like my Dad. Like you. And I didn't want that. I never wanted that to happen. I was supposed to throw them all away. And the idea of doing that made me feel sick. People said to me, take them to the dump. But I just couldn't do it. I'm stuck. It's a big joke. But I can't live like you. And I'm sorry how that sounds but I can't. I can't allow myself to become a hoarder like you. So I'm really stuck. And I'm scared. I feel like I'm having a breakdown.

Joel slowly sits down on the ground beside him.



JOEL  
You could have come and spoken to  
me if this is how you were feeling.

Matt can't help but laugh.

MATT  
No I couldn't Dad. This is the  
first time you've left your house  
in how many years?

Joel shrugs.

JOEL  
I Don't know.

MATT  
So, do you really think I could  
have just come and spoken to you?

JOEL  
I guess not.

MATT  
So what made you come out?

Joel gives him a tired smile.

JOEL  
I wanted to catch the bastard  
that's being destroying my garden.

MATT  
Well, you caught me.

Joel puts an arm around Matt and Matt rests his head against  
his Dad's shoulder.

JOEL  
So what do we do now?

MATT  
I think we both need help.

Joel nods, no denying it.

JOEL  
Lets just sit here for a while  
first.

Matt smiles. Joel falls silent. They both remain sitting on  
the ground together, enjoying this little moment between each  
other.

**FADE TO BLACK**

**THE END**