

Phobia 39

by
Glenn Bresciani

Glenn Bresciani
Keenakurt@yahoo.com.au

FADE IN:

INT. SHOPPING MALL- DAY

JEFFERY is age 32. He wears overalls and muddy work boots. Jeffery walks through a crowded shopping mall.

TOYSHOP

A cheerful man in his late 40's stands behind the shop counter. He has a childish grin on his face. The man's name is CHARLIE.

CHARLIE

Hello sir! How can I help you?

Jeffery stands in front of the counter. He is on edge, glances nervously around the shop.

JEFFERY

I'm after a Flumper toy. I promised my daughter I'd get her one for her birthday.

CHARLIE

Gosh! This'll be the tenth Flumper toy I've sold today.

Charlie moves away from the counter, disappears down one of the shop's narrow aisles.

CHARLIE (O.C.)

I haven't seen a toy this popular since the Cabbage Patch Kids back in the 80's.

JEFFERY

Is it a plush toy?

Charlie returns to the counter with a big plump plush toy in his hands.

CHARLIE

You betcha! Isn't it adorable?

Charlie holds Flumper at arms length for Jeffery to take.

Jeffery stares at the plush with wide-eyed terror. His breathing quickens as his legs give way. He collapses onto the floor, still staring wide-eyed at Flumper.

Charlie is startled, takes a step back, arms wrapped around Flumper.

Jeffery is now hyperventilating. He crawls on his hands and knees towards the shop's front entrance.

INT. FRONT ENTRANCE OF TOYSHOP- DAY.

People passing by gawk at Jeffery who crawls on his hands and knees. Charlie stands in the entrance, still clutching Flumper. Jeffery jumps to his feet, runs off screaming. People are affected by Jeffery's panic. They start screaming in fear and run for their lives. A stampede of shoppers rush toward the mall's front entrance, Jeffery at the lead.

EXT. TAXI STAND- LATER

Jeffery leans on the bonnet of a taxi. His body is tight with anxiety.

A woman wearing a taxi uniform, walks toward the taxi. Her name is ASHLEY and she carries a Flumper toy wrapped up in birthday paper.

Jeffery backs away from the front of the Vehicle as Ashley places the toy on the bonnet of the car.

Ashley removes a pen and notebook from the breast pocket of her uniform, passes it to Jeffery.

ASHLEY

You better write down your home address so I don't forget it.

Jeffery scribbles his address in the notebook.

JEFFERY

If I'd known Flumper was a plush toy, I would never have promised my daughter I'd get her one.

Jeffery hands back the notebook and pen to Ashley, gives her two twenty-dollar notes.

ASHLEY

How the hell did you become shit scared of plush toys?

JEFFERY

Well . . .

FLASH BACK

INT. BACK YARD - DAY

Jeffery is eight, pretends to be a superhero by wearing a towel like a cape. His teddy bear has a tea towel for a cape.

On the other side of the yard, Jeffery's father mows the lawn.

JEFFERY
Fly to the rescue Teddy.

Jeffery throws his plush toy across the yard. It lands in the path of the lawn mower.

Jeffery waves his arms at his father.

JEFFERY
Dad! Stop!

Father gives his son a big cheerful wave and smile.

The lawn mower rolls closer to the teddy bear.

Jeffery jumps up and down, starts to cry.

JEFFERY
Dad! My teddy!

The lawn mower is almost on top of the plush toy . . .

A SKY DIVER in a teddy bear costume crash lands on top of Father. The parachute flops onto the grass.

Jeffery screams like a girl. Oh the horror.

The Sky Diver jumps up, performs a happy dance, stops, looks around.

SKY DIVER
What the fuck? This ain't the soccer stadium.

BACK TO PRESENT

JEFFERY
Um . . . it's complicated.

ASHLEY
I bet it is.

JEFFERY
Thanks for doing this. I appreciate it, really I do.

Ashley looks at Jeffery with concern. She gives him a business card.

ASHLEY
This doctor owes me a favour. Go see him now. Tell him I sent you.

Ashley places the toy inside her Taxi. Jeffery studies the business card, frowns.

JEFFERY

This Dr. Morrison is a
psychologist.

ASHLEY

That's right. If you can't take
this plush toy home to your
daughter, how the hell are you
gonna cope with it in your house?

Jeffery considers this. Ashley has made a valid point.

INT. DR MORRISON'S OFFICE- DAY.

DR MORRISON sits at his desk, trying hard to stop laughing. His hands are hidden under his desk. Jeffery sits opposite Morrison, looking nervous and on edge.

MORRISON

Ah jeez. I'm so sorry Mr. Kirby.
(Laughter) This is so
unprofessional of me.

Jeffery scowls as Morrison succeeds in composing himself. Suddenly Morrison thrusts a teddy bear across the table towards Jeffery.

Jeffery leaps off his chair, dashes to the other side of the room. He is frightened and agitated.

Morrison bursts out laughing again, wipes tears from his eyes.

MORRISON

I'm sorry Mr. Kirby. I won't do
that again. I promise.

Dr. Morrison drops the teddy bear under his desk. Jeffery takes a few steps closer to Dr. Morrison.

JEFFERY

So can you cure my phobia?

Morrison clears his throat. He has had his fun and is now back in professional medical mode.

MORRISON

Yes, of coarse. I'm just unsure on
how to go about it.

JEFFERY

What do ya mean?

MORRISON

Well, your phobia is what we refer to in medical terms as PHOBIA 39

JEFFERY

Huh?

MORRISON

PHOBIA 39. It's a label for phobia's that have no medical records.

JEFFERY

Ah, fair enough. But there must be some sort a quick fix? Right?

MORRISON

There is no quick fix for any phobia. It will take several-

JEFFERY

Drugs! What about drugs! There must be some sort of medication?

Dr. Morrison is flustered by Jeffery's urgent outburst.

JEFFERY

My daughter is having her birthday party tonight. I'm too terrified to attend her party because she just got a brand new plush toy! I can't miss my daughter's birthday party.

Dr. Morrison is thoughtful for a beat.

MORRISON

Well as far as a quick fix goes, there's one method I can try. But it is a radical procedure.

JEFFERY

I'll try anything.

MORRISON

In your case, we may be able to cure your phobia by making you become what you most fear.

EXT. FRONT LAWN. JEFFERY'S HOUSE- DAY

A work Ute parks in the driveway of an average suburban home. Balloons and streamers are tied to the letterbox.

The driver's door of the Ute opens and large furry feet step out of the vehicle.

A person dressed in a bulky, teddy bear costume walks onto the front lawn and faces the house. Their body language expresses frustration even through the thickness of the bear costume.

The person removes the bear costume's head to reveal Jeffery underneath. He is scared.

JEFFERY

C'mon Jeff. You can do this.

Jeffery looks determined as he places the costumes head back on and marches toward the front door of his home.

INT. JEFFERY'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM- DAY.

NATALIE, Jeffery's wife. She opens the front door than steps back, shakes her head.

NATALIE

Ah Jeff. You've got to be kidding.

Jeffery enters the lounge room in his bear suit.

JEFFERY

It's supposed to cure my phobia.
Doctor's orders.

NATALIE

What doctor?

AMANDA (O.C.)

Daddy!

Jeffery's daughter AMANDA bursts into the lounge room. She is a preschooler and cute as a button. She stops at the sight of the bear costume. She looks at it suspiciously.

JEFFERY

Happy birthday Princess.

AMANDA

Who are you?

Jeffery moves toward his daughter, arms outstretched.

JEFFERY

It's your daddy silly.

Amanda is uncertain, mouth open wide as she stares up and up at the huge plump teddy bear.

AMANDA

My daddy's not a bear.

The big furry feet of the costume cause Jeffery to trip over the corner of the lounge chair. Jeffery crash lands on top of his daughter who squeals a high-pitched scream.

Natalie moves fast, grabs a hand full of plush, rolls Jeffery off their daughter.

Amanda clings to Natalie, stares at the teddy bear suit with wide-eyed terror.

NATALIE

Jeff you idiot! You've traumatized our daughter!

Jeffery scrambles to his feet.

JEFFERY

Princess! I'm so sorry.

Jeffery reaches out for his daughter. Amanda screams, cowers behind Natalie.

Natalie grabs Amanda's birthday present, tears off the wrapping paper to reveal the Flumper toy.

Natalie thrusts the plush toy at Jeffery who stumbles backward in terror.

Natalie moves forward, shoves the Flumper toy in Jeffery's face, like a crucifix thrust at a vampire.

Jeffery screams like a girl, stumbles out the front door.

EXT. JEFFERY'S HOUSE. FRONT YARD- DAY.

Jeffery belly flops on to the front lawn.

NATALIE

For Christ sake! They're just fur material stuffed with beans and fluff!

Natalie slams the front door shut.

Jeffery slowly staggers to his feet. His head is bowed in misery as he shuffles away from the house, stopping at the letterbox to look at the balloons with HAPPY BIRTHDAY written on them.

JEFFERY

Shit. I can't live like this anymore.

Jeffery's gaze moves away from the balloons to the next-door neighbor's front yard.

EXT. NEIGHBORS FRONT LAWN- DAY.

A six-year old girl named TINA is having a tea party with three plush toys. The toys and the girl are seated on small plastic chairs around a plastic table.

As Jeffery glares at the plush toys, the mitten like hands of the costume curl into a ball and a harsh, quick breathing can be heard in the head of the costume.

Tina pauses in the middle of pouring a cup of tea for one of her Plush toys. She stares with opened mouth awe at a large teddy bear striding towards her table.

Jeffery kicks one of the plush toys off its seat and sits down.

TINA

Wow! You're the biggest teddy bear
I've ever seen.

INT. JEFFERY'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM- DAY.

Natalie holds her sobbing daughter as she pulls back the window curtains.

NATALIE

Look Honey. See. Your daddy is
just being silly in a big
silly bear suit.

Amanda's tears switch off. She is intrigued by the sight out the window. She giggles.

AMANDA

Daddy's having a tea party.

NATALIE

That's right. Daddy's just
having fun.

EXT. NEIGHBORS FRONT LAWN- DAY.

Tina offers the giant teddy bear a cup on a saucer.

TINA

Would you like a cup of tea?

Jeffery ignores Tina. He glares at the plush toys.

JEFFERY

I'm missing my daughter's birthday
party? You like that? Huh?

The plush toys stare back at Jeffery, permanent smiles stitched into the plush fabric of their faces.

JEFFERY

Yeah. I'm talking to you fur fuck.
You like it when I'm miserable?

Jeffery lunges forward, grabs a plush toy.

JEFFERY

WELL FUCK YOU!

The plate and saucer slips out of Tina's hand. She gawks in disbelief as Jeffery rips the head off the plush toy.

JEFFERY

From now on I'm taking control! You
got that?

Tina shrieks in terror. Jeffery grabs another toy, tears its limbs off.

INT. JEFFERY'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM- DAY.

Amanda screams at maximum volume.

Natalie wraps her arms around her kicking daughter, hurries her away from the window.

EXT. NEIGHBORS FRONT LAWN- DAY.

The front door opens and a belligerent man in his late thirties storms onto the front lawn. He is HARRY, Tina's father.

HARRY

OI! Get away from my daughter!

Jeffery jumps to his feet, backs away from the table.

Harry charges across the lawn, crash tackles the big bear.

Harry punches Jeffery on the nose of his bear costume.

The head of the bear costume tumbles off Jeffery's head as he collapses onto the lawn. Jeffery still clutches the plush toy. He stares at in disbelief.

Harry recognizes Jeffery, becomes dumbfounded.

HARRY

Jeffery?

Jeffery continues to stare at the plush toy in his hand. He has a big grin on his face.

JEFFERY
I don't believe it!

Jeffery jumps to his feet. He is ecstatic. He returns the plush toy to Tina- minus a limb.

JEFFERY
I'm cured! I'm finally cured!

Harry and Tina gawk at Jeffery, befuddled.

HARRY
Yeah, if you say so.

Jeffery peels off the bear suit, grinning triumphantly.

JEFFERY
I'm cured! I'm cured!

EXT. JEFFERY'S HOUSE. FRONT LAWN- DAY.

Jeffery runs toward the front door of his house.

JEFFERY
Hey Honey! I've overcome my fear of plush toys!

Jeffery disappears into the house.

INT. JEFFERY'S HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM- DAY.

Jeffery glides into the room, super happy.

JEFFERY
Good news princess. Daddy is cured! Now you can have a whole room full of teddy bears.

Natalie sits on the lounge, cradling her trembling, frightened daughter.

Jeffery picks the Flumper up off the floor.

JEFFERY
You dropped your birthday present Princess.

Jeffery passes the Flumper toy to Amanda.

Amanda screams, slaps the toy out of her father's hand. She runs circles around the room, screams high pitched.

Natalie snatches up the Flumper.

She opens the front door, throws the plush toy out of the house.

Amanda stops running and screaming. She is relaxed.

Jeffery sighs, slumps his shoulders.

Natalie crosses her arm as she scowls at her husband.

FADE TO BLACK