

WALLS OF THE MIND

Written by

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Logline: "A psychiatrist visits an institutionalized school shooter who still believes he's attending university."

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INT. LECTURE HALL (DAY)

TRENT HUGHES (19) nervously sits in a plastic chair in front of a long, empty lecture hall. He wears sweats and a hoodie, comfort clothes. Beside him is another empty chair, similar to his. He observes the room, twitching, and adjusting himself energetically like he's trying to escape, but doesn't move from the chair. His forearms remain firmly on the arms of the chair and they never move.

Across the room, a door opens. In walks DR. THOMPSON (Late 40s), professionally dressed in BLACK. Her presence is like a warm and welcoming mother. She's holding a laptop and some other papers.

DR. THOMPSON  
Good morning, Trent.

Trent greets her eagerly without standing. He has a slight Midwest accent, typical of an urbanized trailer park kid.

TRENT  
Hello, hello, hello professor.

Dr. Thompson looks at Trent and jots down a note. She takes the seat beside Trent.

DR. THOMPSON  
It's Dr. Thompson, Trent. I'm here to evaluate you again today. Same questions as before: Are you aware of what you're here for?

Trent looks around.

TRENT  
To learn, learn, learn I suppose, doct-- professor.

DR. THOMPSON  
Learn about what?

TRENT  
I... can't remember, professor. I'm sorry, I suppose so much has happened I barely remember what I am here to learn about, prof-- octor.

DR. THOMPSON  
That's alright, Trent. Can you tell me about what happened last week?

Trent's face drops.

TRENT

What's there to say, docto--  
professor?

DR. THOMPSON

You did something terrible, it's  
why you're here, you understand?

TRENT

I understand you may think so.

DR. THOMPSON

Do you feel bad about what you did?

TRENT

Why should I, I, I professor?

Dr. Thompson makes the motion of jotting another note down. She does the movements of writing something down on her laptop case without a pen in her hand.

DR. THOMPSON

You hurt and killed a lot of people  
at school, Trent.

TRENT

I did what I did.

DR. THOMPSON

So, how would you describe how you  
felt afterwards?

Trent ponders the question for a beat.

TRENT

I feel bad I was caught so quickly,  
professor.

DR. THOMPSON

What about your victims' families?  
Don't you think they'll be sad?

TRENT

I suppose so.

DR. THOMPSON

Does that change how you feel?

TRENT

No, doctor.

Dr. Thompson looks at her laptop. As she does, her laptop changes to files CLIPBOARD and pen.

Her clipboard contains files on Trent including photos of the crime scene and of the victims. She flips through her files, then back at Trent.

DR. THOMPSON

Do you mind if I ask you about your family, your parents, Trent?

Trent starts tensing up, hesitating before responding.

TRENT

I suppose I don't mind, Dr. Thompson.

DR. THOMPSON

Your father, what was he like?

TRENT

Daddy was there. Daddy came home from work, sat down in the same old chair at the same time, everyday and wouldn't say a peep.

DR. THOMPSON

Did you ever try to get his attention?

TRENT

A few times, doctor.

DR. THOMPSON

Did he ever respond?

TRENT

Only when Daddy had a few drinks. Then Daddy would get up and hit me upside the head a few times. Right here, doctor.

Trent lowers his head, motion towards the top of his skull with his hands without moving his arms from the armrests.

DR. THOMPSON

I'm sorry that happened to you, Trent.

TRENT

I don't pay it no mind. I was good and took it, doctor.

DR. THOMPSON

What about your mother? Didn't she try and stop it?

TRENT

She tried her best, doctor. But then Daddy would start to hit her too. Then I would make sure that Daddy would only hurt me.

DR. THOMPSON

What was your mother like, Trent?

Trent's tenseness eases. The way he acts is more like he's talking to a friend and less like talking to a doctor.

TRENT

She was a bit like you, Miss. She was always worried sick about me, running around and trying to help me. I remember, I was so alone when I came to university. All my friends were gone, I had no one, but Momma. Then she...

Trent begins tearing up, trying to speak, but no words.

DR. THOMPSON

It's alright, Trent. I know it may hurt to remember.

TRENT

Momma was so nice and soft, a kind and gentle woman. She didn't deserve to go out like that like some animal who wandered on the street.

DR. THOMPSON

Trent--

Trent becomes angry, rocking and jerking around in the chair.

TRENT

The driver turned her to roadkill. The driver, the driver, the driver. I knew it was him, I knew it, I knew it, doctor. I'll never forget his face, doctor. Or what they said to me that day, doctor.

DR. THOMPSON

What? Who said what to you?

He flips from anger to sadness, then back again.

TRENT

I tried telling them, doctor. I told them. It was the professor, doctor.

DR. THOMPSON

You thought the professor was--

TRENT

I don't "think" it was, I know it was, doctor. And you know what they said?

DR. THOMPSON

Who is they? What did they say?

Using a mocking voice, Trent remembers. He starts hearing a growing LAUGHTER in his ears.

TRENT

They called me "paranoid," "schizo," "crazy." They wanted to throw me in the loony house. I'm telling you, doctor. That was them, doctor.

DR. THOMPSON

They were scared, Trent. They didn't mean to hurt you.

TRENT

I tried to warn them, doctor. They acted like they couldn't understand me. I knew who the professor was, I knew what I was gonna do then and there.

DR. THOMPSON

You tried to warn them?

Trent's POV: His vision goes foggy for a moment, but he blinks and when it clears, sees that Dr. Thompson's clothes have changed from professional to a WHITE doctor's coat.

TRENT

I stood up in front of the class, doctor. I told the professor who he was, doctor. They laughed at me, I told them what I would do and didn't believe me, doctor. I still remember all their faces, doctor.

DR. THOMPSON

Whose faces?

Trent closes his eyes, tightly holding them shut, trying to picture faces. He takes no pleasure in remembering. The surrounding room fades to a monochrome black and white, but both Trent and Dr. Thompson remain in color. An empty chair in one of the backrows move slightly, turning to Trent.

TRENT

Stacy Andrews. Blonde hair, blue doe eyes like the ocean. She sat to the left of me, just over there. I don't remember exactly what she said before, but I know she was a screamer.

Dr. Thompson looks through her notes, also looking around. She finds a list of several victims from the shooting, accompanied with school photos of the students that are almost identical to the descriptions Trent gives. Another chair up front moves.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Parker Ingraham. Large fella with dark brown hair, almost black, but not quite. He sat up front, here. I didn't want to shoot him, but he tried to stop me. I can't remember what he tried to do exactly.

DR. THOMPSON

I thought you said you didn't feel bad for what you did?

The laughter STOPS. Trent blinks his eyes open.

TRENT

I don't, doctor. Least of all...

Trent closes his eyes again, but this time in a more relaxed pose, but still without pleasure.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Professor Zimmerman. Bald, mousey man with glasses. The type I'd see hunched in the library. He was the one who hurt Momma, he was the only one I wanted to hurt. I can't even remember what he tried to say in the end, doctor.

Trent opens his eyes again.

DR. THOMPSON

These people you hurt and killed, you remember them so vividly.

(MORE)

DR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
It's almost as if you have some  
remorse for them, no?

TRENT  
I simply remember their faces,  
doctor. No remorse, I suppose.

DR. THOMPSON  
Your mother...

Trent smiles.

DR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
What do you suppose she'd think of  
you now, Trent? What you did?

His smile drops and he freezes. The surrounding begins to  
fade and whiten.

DR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)  
She loved you, very much, but I'm  
sure she didn't want you to hurt  
anyone. I don't know where exactly  
you think we are, but she wouldn't  
want you to end up here.

Trent's comfort clothes turn into a sterile HOSPITAL GOWN.  
RESTRAINTS on his wrists and legs are now visible. The room  
is now fully white.

TRENT  
They said bad things, they hurt my  
feel--

DR. THOMPSON  
She was kind and gentle, she  
would've wanted you to be the same.

TRENT  
I didn't mean to hurt them, only  
him. Where's Momma? Momma? Momma?

Trent starts looking around hysterically. He cries and Dr.  
Thompson stands and leans over, comforting him. She pats  
Trent on the back, whispering to him, even if he is too  
hysterical to listen.

DR. THOMPSON  
You did great today, Trent. I'll  
see you again tomorrow, all right?  
I'll do all I can to help.