

CHARLIE'S CHOICE

by

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INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - DAY

A wall with photos. The perfect family: father, mother, two kids. A kid's drawing pinned to the wall with the text "Best daddy in the World". A framed newspaper article with a photo of the father shaking the Major's hand: "Charlie Flowers Saves Church". A clock on the table reads 12:30.

Someone SNORES.

PAN to the back of the head of a man sleeping peacefully. This is CHARLIE FLOWERS, in his 30s.

A PHONE rings somewhere. Charlie wakes up.

CHARLIE

Mmmph?

Charlie turns around, opens his eyes. Sees the phone on the table. He is going to say something.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Mmmph. MMMPH!

But he can't. He has a mouth gag with a bright red ball covering his mouth. He tries to move.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

MMMMPH! MMPH!

But he can't because he's wearing a STRAIGHT JACKET. Now he realizes there's an arm hugging him.

RACK FOCUS to reveal BILLY, laying unconscious upside down, his head on Charlie's feet. He is naked. And maybe dead?

Charlie's eyes widen in horror.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

MMMMMMMMMPH!

The phone keeps RINGING. Charlie tries to answer but of course he can't. Instead he falls from the bed and hits his head with the bedside table. The phone falls on his head. He starts BLEEDING.

The ANSWERING MACHINE kicks on. A very furious HELEN speaks.

HELEN (V.O.)

Where are you? The Principal called me from the girl's school. You better have a good reason. Going home now.

KIDS (V.O.)
One more time! One more time!

HELEN (V.O.)
Kids, shut up!

The call ends. Charlie gets on his feet as good as he can. He looks at himself in the mirror. He's also wearing some funny underwear, stockings and high heels. The blood is dripping onto the jacket. There's a woolen scarf hanging from the mirror.

CHARLIE
(muffled)
Come on!

He hears the front door opening. He freezes.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE / ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Charlie's mother, SUSAN, in her 50s, enters with her own key carrying two bags of groceries.

SUSAN
It's Grandma! Anybody home?

She walks to the kitchen, leaves the groceries on a table. Then walks up the stairs to the bedroom.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - DAY

Charlie puts his ear to the door, listens to his mother's footsteps. Panic!

CHARLIE
Mmmphhh!

Charlie kicks desperately Billy, trying to push him out of his bed.

CUT TO:

Susan opens the door and looks inside.

SUSAN
Oh, my Goodness!

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal a mess of a room... but no trace of Charlie or Billy.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

My son's woman has no idea how to
keep a house.

She leaves the bedroom and goes down the stairs.

The door to the closet moves slightly. Some fingers try to
keep it closed.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE / CLOSET - DAY

Charlie is in the closet embraced to Billy in a weird
position. Billy wakes up.

BILLY

Uhm?

CHARLIE

Sssssh!

BILLY

(sassy)

Mmmm... One more time?

CHARLIE

MMMMMMMMPH!!

Charlie jumps out of the closet.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - DAY

Helen curses under her breath while her chaotic children
scream on the back seat.

KID #1

Please, play the song one more
time!

KID #2

One more time!

As Helen tries to call again, an ambulance overtakes her with
its blaring SIRENS on. She looks at it, confused.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - DAY

Susan is cooking with HARD ROCK MUSIC playing on the radio.
She bobs her head to the music.

A hand opens a drawer with difficulties. Looks for something inside. It takes a spoon... discards it. A potato peeler... discarded.

Susan walks in front of the table. The hand disappears.

Behind the table, Charlie lies in an impossible position so that Susan cannot see him.

Susan comes back with some spices. Turns the dial. Some news.

The hand goes back to the drawer. A corkscrew... discarded. A knife! Yes! The hand takes it.

RADIO

... Still no news from the man who
escaped from the asylum this
morning. He's very dangerous and
may be armed. Please stay home ...

Susan looks at the radio, alarmed. Then she looks out of the window.

POV SUSAN - As Charlie walks out and tries to cut himself out of the straight jacket, which is soaked in blood. He has his back to Susan.

Susan gasps. Turns off the radio. She hears distant SIRENS. The front door opens.

HELEN

We are home!

Susan panics. She runs to the front door.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Charlie tries to free himself with the knife. He manages to free one arm, which he waves in the air like a maniac. Blood everywhere.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - DAY

Susan brings Helen to the kitchen window. Points out to Charlie.

SUSAN

See? It's the maniac on the loose!

Helen is shocked.

HELEN

Oh my--

POV HELEN - Charlie struggles with the jacket. Now we see his face.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Wait a minute...

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Charlie has nearly freed himself from the jacket.

MAN IN WHITE COAT (V.O.)

Take it easy, buddy. We are your friends. We'll take you home.

Charlie looks up and sees two MEN IN COAT, walking slowly towards him. They carry a new straight jacket.

CHARLIE

(muffled)

It's not what it seems.

HELEN (V.O.)

Charlie Flowers!

Charlie turns around and sees a furious Helen, arms crossed over her chest. Susan and the kids are with her. Billy comes into frame, behind them, covering his parts with the woolen scarf. He scratches his butt, smiles at Charlie.

BILLY

What's up, mate?

Charlie is in the middle of the sidewalk. The men in white suits on one side, Helen and her family (and Billy) on the other. Charlie looks to both of them several times.

Charlie sighs, defeated. Then walks to the men in white suits.

THE END