**Unreliable Narrator**

In fiction (as implemented in literature, film, theatre, etc.) an **unreliable narrator**… is a narrator whose credibility has been seriously compromised… This unreliability can be due to psychological instability, a powerful bias, a lack of knowledge, or even a deliberate attempt to deceive the reader or audience. Unreliable narrators are usually first-person narrators, but third-person narrators can also be unreliable.1

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**Just One More Night**

*He* threatened me again last night or was it last week or last month or last year said he wasn’t going to rest until he took down another one of those German bitches already came into my room the other night but that big fat black nurse they *all* have that nigger smell stopped him dragged him out of my room screaming said if he didn’t stop it he was going up to the third floor but I just have to make it *one* more night because Roxie Rick and and *and* are coming to see me tomorrow but he hates me *so* much that he found a way into my mind I hate you I hate you you will pay for what your *dog* husband and brothers did bitch I’m going to kill you he is saying to me right now but I just have to make it *one* more night because Roxanne Ricky and and *and* are coming to see me tomorrow they will protect me**.**

**Paranoid Schizophrenia**

People with schizophrenia may hear voices other people don't hear or they may believe that others are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or plotting to harm them. These experiences are terrifying and can cause fearfulness, withdrawal, or extreme agitation. People with schizophrenia may not make sense when they talk, may sit for hours without moving or talking much, or may seem perfectly fine until they talk about what they are really thinking. Because many people with schizophrenia have difficulty holding a job or caring for themselves, the burden on their families and society is significant as well.2

**The T.V. Room**

Every Tuesday and Thursday night Mom and Uncle Jerry go to visit Grandma Mae at the care center. Depending on if I’m staying after school for jazz guitar and if Dad is still sleeping, we either drive with Mom, or meet them later on in the evening for dinner; always McDonalds, Burger King, or KFC that Mom picks up before hand from across the street opposite the care center. I try to practice as much possible, and I get the feeling that Dad works harder than he should to sleep as much as possible.

Our mission is contingent on our mode of travel. If we drive separate, we are in luck as they are already in the relatively safe refuge of the T.V. room. In such cases, our mission is to get ourselves to the T.V. room as soon as possible. If we travel with Mom, our mission is to get ourselves *and* Grandma Mae into the T.V. room with the least amount of lingering in the hallway as possible. Either way, our mission is the same – get to the T.V. room as soon as possible.

Either required course of action feels like a Kamikaze mission. The only survival strategy that Dad and I have found is to stick together as there is strength in numbers. The second that Dad and I walk into the front door and pass the nurse’s station, we enter the 30 yard long minefield, with residents cemented in their wheelchairs lining the walls of the mono-colored, white hallway. We step cautiously as we are never sure which mines are dormant duds of past wars, and which are still active and ready to destroy. We risk catastrophic explosions with each step.

BOOM!

“Jack! You came to see me! I’ve missed you so much… What? You’re not my Jack?”

BOOM!

“Why won’t *they* just let me die?”

BOOM!

“If *they* put you up on the third floor, *they* torture you! I hear the screams all night!”

We got lucky tonight, only three casualties. And, there is just one resident in the T.V. room. The rest must be in the cafeteria for dinner. Just that poor old man in the wheelchair watching infomercials with the volume turned up so loud that none of us can hear each other talking. Maybe this is a good thing. I never know what to say anyways. But, if I hear him mutter “Goddamn Nazi bitches,” or that damn “Shamwow!” commercial one more time, I think I might lose my mind too.

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| --- | --- |
| **Reality?** | **Reality** |
| Hear what, Grandma?  Who, that old man in the wheelchair, Grandma?  But he didn’t say anything to you, Grandma. He’s just sitting there. Watching T.V. Talking to himself.  I do believe you, Grandma. It’s just that I don’t think he’s in his right mind.  It’s not directed at you! He’s sick! You’ll be fine, Grandma!  Grandma, *please*…  Why are you doing this to us! | Did… did you *h*-*hear* that?  *He’s* talking to me again. Says he’s going to get me.  *Ssh!* He’s listening to us. If he hears you, he’ll hurt me even more.  Why don’t you *believe* me?  *He* hurts me! Comes in my room at night and hurts me!  **……….**  *He* tried to choke me again last night.  I wish he would just kill me! |

**The Phone Call**

***Scene****:* *Sunday Night. 3:15 AM. Roxanne Filipkowski is shaken awake by ringing telephone. She knows that a call at this time of night can only mean one of two things; there is a problem at her husband’s work or something has happened to her mother suffering from dementia and paranoid schizophrenia at the Maplewood Care Center.*

*(Phone rings sharply. Roxanne jerks awake, frantically running her hands across the nightstand in the dark room to answer the phone.)*

ROXANNE: (*Stuttering from disorientation, still sounding like half asleep)* Hel-hello? Dick? Is everything ok?

NURSE: Um, yes, Mrs. Filipkowski, this is Robin calling from Maplewood Care Ce…

ROXANNE: *(Frantically interrupting before nurse can finish)* Oh God! What’s wrong? What happened to Mom?

NURSE: Mae is fine, but she had a little bit of an accident tonight…

ROXANNE: *(Out of extreme impatience, cuts nurse off before she can finish)* Out with it! What the hell happened?

NURSE: Well… (*long* *hesitation)* another one of the residents attacked Mae in her sleep tonight.

ROXANNE: *(Stuttering again from pure shock)* Wh-what? H-how could you let this happen?

NURSE: Mrs. Filipkowski, your mother is *fine*. The other patient is a very sick man suffering from shell-shock and RPD. Please try to understand, he…

ROXANNE: *(Infuriated and yelling*, *cuts nurse off again before she can finish)* I don’t give a fuck what his *reason* was! He had no right to hurt my mother! Let me talk to Mom right now.

NURSE: Mrs. Filipkowski, it would be… *(long hesitation)* unwise to rile her up more than she already is, why don’t you…

ROXANNE: *(Trying with all of her strength to maintain control of her voice*) No. I’m coming over right now to straighten this out. I WANT this man placed on the third floor so he can’t hurt Mom again.

*(Roxanne slams phone down and frantically dresses to leave)*

**Car 271**

*Car 271, we have report of a white, middle-aged woman who appears to have randomly entered Maplewood Care Center, 1900 Sherren Ave E, approximately 10 minutes ago at 3:30am, striking an employee working behind the center’s reception desk. As reported by the resident initially alerting us of the incident, the woman continues to linger and violently yell at the staff. The motive for the attack is unclear. We see that your patrol is nearby on Sherren’s 1800 block, please re-route and investigate. No reported weapon, but high probability of escalating violence. Exercise extreme caution.*

Dear Reader,

As you finish my multigenre paper, you might still be asking yourself “What was ‘real’? What was ‘made up’?” Every time I try to reflect on these events that began in 2000 and increased in pain and severity until my grandmother was laid to a well-deserved rest in 2005, I still don’t feel as though I actually “know” what really happened and what didn’t. And frankly, I still don’t know if I want to.

My grandmother was telling us the truth that there was another resident out to kill her. My grandmother was telling us the truth that he snuck into her room and tried to strangle her while she slept a number of times. That much is fact. But, what was that actually *like* for my grandmother? Being in constant fear for her life and not being able to convince any of her loved ones that she was telling the truth must have made the other nightmares as caused by her deteriorating mind feel like nothing more than a toothache.

My mother did not actually attack the nurse when she drove to the care center at 3:30 am following the news of the incident. That was fiction. But, what was that actually *like* for my mother? This bizarre incident must have felt like the biggest, most unfair intrusion and insult on the face of the earth as she was trying to protect and care her mother as her mother had once protected and cared for her. To this day, not a holiday goes by that my mother doesn’t talk about how much she misses my Grandma and how she wanted to “kill” the nurse that nearly allowed her to be taken from us even sooner. As if it would have been fair to ask my Grandma Mae to stick around just for us anyways.

And then there is me, too afraid to feel for someone who felt for and loved me more than anything in the world. Too afraid to experience a little pain when my grandmother lived in an absolute hell. This paper was my opportunity to finally feel for someone that deserves all of the feeling for in the world. Although you didn’t know her, it is of my hope that you feel something for and understand as best as you can such a wonderful person after finishing my paper. Thank you for taking the time to read.

Lovingly,

Rick Lee Filipkowski

Works Cited

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