

# Behind Blue Eyes

Emmalene Pawlak

I couldn't help but wonder whether or not he knew this day would come; the day he would get caught. When Luke first told me I had to wear a 'wire' I imagined having to carry a black box the size of an iPad under my bra. Caleb, Luke's Detective brother, attached what he called a "super mini covert wireless camera" to the third button on my blouse. Caleb said the device was something the police department bought from the *Spy Store* in the US. Evidently, a retired police officer started the company and helped advance the technology of undercover cameras over the last few years. Caleb explained that the camera was going to record everything in 'real time' to their van, parked ninety meters from the clinic. The device would capture sound as well as stream high definition video footage to the van.

"It's almost impossible to detect. If you pay too much attention to your top it's pretty likely that he'll know what's going on. Just act natural and don't try to prompt him too much, okay?" I trusted Caleb because Luke trusted Caleb, and I trusted Luke with my life.

"Okay, got it."

A petite brunette woman bounced past us in hot pink bike shorts with her headphones blasting. She jogged on the spot as she waited for the cars to pass her. She crossed over and ran away from the *Perth Clinic* car park, ducking her head to avoid the branches of

a eucalyptus tree.

“Are you alright? Like, you’re not going to lose your shit or anything?”

I smiled and shook my head. I was losing my shit and Luke knew it.

“I’m okay... I’m just...Like...What if he rips my top open? He’s done it before; he’s just ripped it off.” I was talking too quickly. It was usually during this point in *Law and Order SVU* that Detective Benson would ask the victim if they were still okay to go through with the operation.

“ You need to stay calm...only unbutton the top two buttons... not the third one. You can probably show him enough just from undoing the top two.” Caleb’s eyes always made their way to his shoes whenever he spoke to me. Luke told me there was a high chance that Caleb was still a virgin so it didn’t offend me that his gaze was locked on his leather boots.

“Avianna, this is the same as any other session you have with him. All you have to do is make sure he doesn’t touch the third button on your shirt. Move his hands to your ass or something,” Luke said. He took a sip from his white foam cup filled with black coffee. He wanted all of us to drink black coffee because he said it made him feel like we were having a real life stakeout. Yet he was the only one with a coffee.

“What if he knows what’s going on? Three days ago, he said I wasn’t allowed to have relationships with the hospital staff and that included kitchen staff. He fucking knows, Luke,” I said.

I could see Janette, the schizophrenic from room 232 sitting on the porch steps of the clinic. The doctors had recently told her that she smoked too much. She was chewing on a piece of gum as she used her index finger to twist and pull her hair out of her head.

“He’s just trying to screw with you, Av. He’s a fucking pig and he’s going to pay for it.”

No one spoke. Caleb was still looking at his shoes. The small bottle of *Inderal* in my cardigan pocket rattled like *Tic Tac*'s as I walked over to the curb and sat in front of the white clinic gates. I couldn't recall how many I'd taken today so I took another two just in case. As I examined the tiny camera on my shirt I remembered Luke telling me that he couldn't wait to 'free me'. I had told him that I wasn't in jail.

"Then why haven't you left?" he had asked.

"Because I belong here."

Caleb's jeans vibrated. "Hello?...Be there in two." He finally lifted his gaze to mine.

"That was Rick. They've set the monitors up in the van. They're ready to roll when we are. We'll be in the van listening to everything, so if we suspect foul play we'll be in that room within two minutes. You ready to roll?"

I wasn't ready to roll at all. Two years ago I read *Alice Sebold's* memoir, *Lucky*.

Throughout the book she would say, "You save yourself or you remain unsaved". I scribbled the quote down in my journal and would often rewrite it every few months. I began to feel convinced that I could save myself. Now, I wasn't so sure.

I know she didn't want me to see her cry. I think she cried because she felt guilty. No mother wants to admit their daughter to a mental clinic. I knew she had no choice.

During my blackouts, I was destroying entire rooms in the house. One morning when I came out to the kitchen, she was sitting at the table with cuts across her cheeks and welts on her temples. She was cupping her *Starbucks* coffee mug in her palms and tapping her fingernails on the handle.

"Did the cat attack you in your sleep again?" I had asked.

"No, you did."

I watched her stand at the clinic reception desk and blow me a kiss. She reached into her brown leather hand bag and retrieved a tissue. She always kept those miniature *Kleenex* packets in her bag; she never knew when she was going to have to dab blood off her cheeks. A sixty-something year old nurse appeared from behind the desk. As she brushed past me, I was hit in the face by a gust of rose oil and jasmine. She gently held my elbow as we walked through the labyrinth of corridors and up two flights of stairs. There was obviously a cleaner at the clinic on call 24/7. The entire third floor reeked of disinfectant and hand sanitizer. As we approached room 231, I noticed a small basket hanging from the door knob. Propped inside the basket was a bottle of *Dettol* hand sanitizer, an A5 note pad and a black *Perth Clinic* pen.

“Get settled, sweetie. Your clinic psychiatrist is Doctor Peyton. He’ll be here in about ten minutes for a little consultation, okay?” I smiled and nodded politely as I rubbed the hand sanitizer through my fingers and onto the tops of my hands.

My room had a single bed with white sheets that looked like they were stained with sweat, urine and probably vomit. The yellow paint was peeling off the roof around the head of the ceiling fan. The wardrobe was tiny. Even before opening it, I knew it wouldn’t fit all of my clothes in it. A white cotton bath robe hung on the right of the wardrobe, coupled with a pair of greyish slippers that looked like they had been dropped in a sink full of bile. As I started for the bathroom, I heard a knock at the door.

I didn’t know if it was Doctor Peyton or not. He was holding a white manila folder and wearing a charcoal grey suit. He wasn’t exactly what I had expected. I assumed I would meet a man in his late forties. Seemingly I had guessed the age correctly, but his looks were something I hadn’t anticipated. He stepped into the room and closed the door

behind him.

“Avianna? Hi. I’m Doctor Peyton. Welcome to *Perth Clinic*. Obviously the circumstances aren’t great but I’m sure we’ll get you out of here in no time.”

I smiled weakly. Hearing that a stranger had faith in me wasn’t enough to make me smile with my teeth.

“I have received your medical files from your referring GP...Doctor Carter?”

I nodded. He pulled a ballpoint pen out of his suit jacket and started clicking it as his read through his notes. Suitably, his fingernails were pearly white and perfectly clipped.

“I just wanted to have a short chat with you and try to get to know you. Maybe we can touch base on your medical history and what’s been going on lately.” His voice was suave and soothing. I could imagine him being one of those motivational speakers who spoke to single women about how to find love in an otherwise loveless world. He looked the part too. His teal eyes stared back at me waiting for me to talk.

“Um...Well, I...I’ve always struggled to...to be happy. Two years ago, in my last year of high school, I tried to overdose...” The lump in my throat prevented me from swallowing. I swilled the excess saliva around my mouth and pushed it under my tongue. I could still feel the scar from my piercing.

“A few months after that, my dad committed suicide...” I waited for a response from him. He just stared back at me, waiting for me to continue.

“A few weeks later, I started having black outs...I got pretty violent with my mum last week. She had to go to hospital in the middle of the night and I...I have... night terrors.”

I was embarrassed that this was his first impression of me. His black, curly hair fell into his eyes as he bent his head to write. He nodded to himself, as if the paper were talking to him.

“It seems to me that you have Depression and may have developed Bipolar. I think you possess the biological makeup for Bipolar but it has taken a serious traumatic event to trigger an actual episode”.

*An actual episode.* I felt like a passive smoker inadvertently inhaling his words. I was too afraid to tell him that I’d had more than one episode. They began when I was six. Dad had been asking me how school was while I was in the bath. During the conversation, I tried to drown myself. When I didn’t answer him for a few seconds, he came running into the bathroom and hauled me out of the water. His screams were quickly transformed into sobs as he held my tiny, naked body against his t-shirt. I stared back at him, still wondering what it would feel like to float above ground, furtively cursing him for robbing me of such magic.

“Avi, what’s going on behind those blue eyes of yours?” He never found out.

“It’s treatable through therapy and medication. I’m going to prescribe you an antidepressant and a mood stabilizer...Perhaps a sedative to help you sleep.” My most recent hobby had been reading through *medschat*, an online forum for patients. Most people on anti-psychotic medication said it left them feeling numb and content; I couldn’t wait.

“It’s good that I can monitor you in the clinic because it means I can fast track the process.”

As I nodded in agreement, I glanced over at the pale green curtains hanging either side of the window. A hand shot out from one of the curtains and beckoned for me to come closer. I closed my eyes and felt myself hurl out of the window and land face down on the concrete in the car park; fragments of my face caught in the cracks of the pavement. I bit down hard on the side of my cheek and turned back to Doctor Peyton. He had

walked across the room and was standing next to me. He brushed his hair out of his eyes with his hand and then rested it on my shoulder.

“You know, it’s a shame you can’t see how beautiful you are, Avianna.” His fingers waltzed down my arm and onto my thigh. Even though it was April, it was twenty five degrees outside. I was wearing my yellow and white *Bettina Liano* halter neck dress. I used to wear it with beige wedges when dad and I went to the movies. Now, I just wore it with thongs. He gently sprawled his fingers out over my thigh and used his thumb to push the seam of my dress up my leg. He smiled like a sixteen year old boy as he thrust his hand into my underwear.

“Stop it! Get off me!” I shoved him in the chest as hard as I could. He barely moved.

“Stop being difficult, Avianna.” He threw me down on the bed and straddled me. As he pressed his knees against my elbows, I could smell the stale stench of sweat and citrus washing detergent on the crotch of his pants.

“Get off me!”

He bent down and breathed hard into my mouth, biting my bottom lip.

“Later, I’ll give you something to help stop you from being so difficult.”

I sunk my teeth into his ear until he fell backwards, setting my elbows free. I scrambled off the bed and started for the door. I managed to take three steps before I felt him tear me back by my pony tail.

“The nurses will sedate you tonight, after I tell them you attacked me.”

My throat stretched like an elastic band as he pulled my head backwards to face the ceiling.

“It’s time to be quiet now.” I squeezed my eyes shut as he pushed my face into the wall and kneed me in the back of the head.

Tuesdays at *Perth Clinic* were my least favourite day of the week. Breakfast was baked beans and dinner was roast pork. Beans made me gassy and pork gave me diarrhoea. As I entered the dining room, the patients formed a single line. Everyone took slow intermittent steps, it looked like we were all making our way down the aisle to our groom; our ugly, unappealing groom. As I reached the front of the cue, Luke stopped chopping zucchini and walked over.

“Here are your berries, diarrhoea free.”

Luke had been a cook at the clinic for about five months. The first time we met, he had approached me in the visiting lounge after listening to me tell my mum that I had irritable bowel syndrome every Wednesday morning.

“Thanks Luke. But I was thinking that today is the day I have two serves of baked beans.” He wiped his hands on his apron and handed me the bowl.

“You go surfing this weekend?” I knew he had. I always knew when he had been surfing. The skin under his eyes went another shade darker and his blonde hair looked matted and dry. Sometimes, I could still smell the salt in it.

“Yeah, sure did. Caleb and I went to Scabs on Sunday. I was going to call you but then I saw I had your phone. I forgot to give it back to you when you asked me to charge it.” Luke had bought me a pre-paid *Nokia* mobile phone. I wasn’t allowed to have a mobile phone at the clinic, so Luke bought me one to use to chat to him and mum. If Doctor Peyton knew about it, he would probably start to schedule two sessions a day as punishment.

“Yeah, I forgot about it too. Come past my room at like eight o’clock tonight and drop it off if you want.”

Luke ran his fingers through his hair and scratched the back of his neck. I think he



realised he still had sand in it.

“Sure. I knock off at eight tonight anyway.” He paused for a moment then let out a loud sigh. “So, I gave Caleb your number. I thought it would be easier for him to call you rather than me being middle man type thing.”

“Okay, that’s cool. Did you tell him when to call?”

“I told him to call between two and three in the morning. I told him about the nurses and their roster and all that shit. He said he’ll call you on his way home from the station.”

The nurses came and shone torches into the patient’s rooms every night at one and four o’clock. There was usually a three hour window that allowed for some solid sleep. I probably wouldn’t be getting any tonight.

“Thanks Lukey. What would I do without you?”

“You’d be a prisoner in here for the rest of your life.”

The first time Luke kissed me was after I told him about my sessions with Doctor Peyton. He promised that he would save me. It took him three months to convince me to let him. He winked at me then turned back to the pile of zucchini on the stainless steel kitchen bench.

As he sat in his maroon leather arm chair behind his desk, I knew what was coming next. He licked his dry, cracked lips, and pushed his black, greasy hair behind his ears.

“You know, Avianna. You’ll never be released from here. I will increase your medication and continue to reject your release forms...” His words trailed off and got lost amongst the old psychiatry books in his six foot tall timber bookcase. I stared at a scratch in the satin varnish. During our second session, I went to throw his rectangular metal paper weight at him. It missed and hit the book case instead.

Specs of saliva sprayed out of his mouth and landed on my fingers. I was bent over with my hands flat on the desk. My *Inderal* started to rattle in my pocket as my arms began to tremble. He got up from the arm chair and walked around the desk to stand directly behind me.

“Now you’re being a good girl.”

“I’m going to get you, you fucking prick.”

“No one believes anything that comes out of the mouth of a mental patient, Avianna.”

His smirk was justifiable. He was right. It’s the reason I had kept his secret for so long.

“You’re going to get caught.”

I grimaced as I felt his warm breath on the back of my neck.

“How, Avianna? How the fuck do you plan on catching me out?”

I felt his fingers slither under my skirt. I bit hard into my bottom lip and turned my head to face him.

“You’re fucking scum.”

He hit me over the head with the paper weight and pushed my face into the desk; the blood from my mouth staining the sheets of paper spread out over it. I went to launch myself forward in hopes of sliding across the top of the desk and kicking him in the teeth. As I went to jolt upwards I heard someone pushing against the door. After several thumps, it burst open. Luke ran over to me with his apron and covered me while I pulled my skirt down. Caleb and three other guys from the *Sex Assault Squad* rushed over to Doctor Peyton and pinned him up against the bookcase. A tall, *Sylvester Stallone* lookalike read the Miranda rights to him. Luke slowly walked over to the book case and stood close enough to Doctor Peyton so that he could smell the black coffee on his

breath from this morning.

“Secrets out, Doc.”