

YO-YO THERAPY

WRITTEN BY

MAND PASKUSKI

FADE IN:

INT. SKYSCRAPER NEW YORK - DAY

STUART (30's), A paranoid, self-suspected psychopath turns the HANDLE to a stuffy waiting room.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

A Maintenance MAN (50's), installs LETTER DECALS on an OFFICE DOOR spelling:

DR. OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER.

PENELOPE (30's), the receptionist, sits CLACKING her TALONS on a COMPUTER KEYBOARD.

Stuart grabs a fistful of Penelope's hair and SLAMS her head on the KEYBOARD SIX times.

A CHUNK of PLASTIC LETTER and TEETH go flying.

BLOOD LEAKS from Penelope's NOSE. She opens a COMPACT and applies RED LIPSTICK as though nothing out of the ordinary has happened.

SNAP! She shuts it and gives Stuart a BLOODY SMILE.

He snaps out of his DAYDREAM.

PENELOPE (MUFFLED)
(friendly)
Stuart?

He focuses on her mouth.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
Stuart? Y'okay?

STUART
Oh. Hi Penelope. I'm fine, thank-you. Lost my head there for a minute. It's back on.

She giggles.

PENELOPE
Have a seat Stu, he's just wrapping up.

Stuart sits in a pea green chair with ROUGH SCRATCHY FABRIC.

STUART

What happened to the old chairs?

PENELOPE

Oh yeah, aren't those great?
Doc said the office could use some
green.

His EYE TWITCHES.

His hands CLUTCH either side of Penelope's face.

He aggressively sands her cheek against the bristly arm rest.

Her skin erodes. She screams.

Stuart screams, too. A maniac.

Again, he snaps out of his daydream as...

DOCTOR OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (40-50's) enters the office from
his side of the door. He wears hip ROUND GLASSES, and loafers
with a crest on the tops.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Shall we?

Stuart stands.

INT. DR. OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER'S OFFICE - DAY

Offenstoppenheimer strides in and sits. His thumb hovers over
a CLICK PEN and...

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK-CLICK-CLICK. CLICKITY CLICK CLICK.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Where would you like to start? Your
violent thoughts against women?
Misogyny? Patriarchal dismantling?
Sexism, perhaps?

Stuart laughs.

STUART

Is that all?

Offenstoppenheimer writes something down.

CLICK CLICK CLICK.

Stuart gets up to snoop.

On a SHELF there is: A PICTURE of Offenstoppenheimer in a triathlon, a PHD certificate, A small bust of Sigmund Freud, A phrenology map, leather bound psychology books, a psychiatry achievement award with Dr. Oliver Offenstoppenheimer's name engraved at the bottom and...

A YO-YO.

Stuart picks it up.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Interesting selection. Have you heard of Yo-Yo Therapy Stuart?

STUART

What?

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Yo-Yo Therapy. It works wonders with kids, would you like me to show you?

Offenstoppenheimer grabs another Yo-Yo on his desk and places the string loop around his middle finger.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

You see, sometimes in life we tie ourselves to things we don't like, or things we think we have to do in order to play a part. We do this to appease the people we care about, or pretend to care about and to feel significance. Parents, school, jobs, relationships. We tie ourselves to these things in small or albeit on occasion big ways, to feel fulfillment and validation.

He loosens the slack and lets the yo-yo drop to the ground.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

We hold fear in us that if we let these things go they won't come back to us and we'll end up alone forever.

The yo-yo slides back up.

He drops it down, again.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Sometimes in life we hit a "block". We stall.

(MORE)

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 We're stuck in place, spinning and
 spinning in our own coiling minds
 driving ourselves into a tizzy.

The yo-yo spins in a trick at the bottom of the string.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 But really, all we have to do, is
 be patient with ourselves and
 surrender to that feeling,
 because...

It pops back up into his palm.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
 What goes down must inevitably come
 back up.

STUART
 Yo-Yo Therapy.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER
 Yo-Yo Therapy.

Stuart takes the yo-yo back to examine it.

STUART
 Do you think I'm going mad?

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER
 Do you think you're going mad?

STUART
 What am I paying you for, Doc?

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

Stuart's eye twitches.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER
 Tell me more about the thoughts.
 The - flashes.

STUART
 They're nothing really. Everyone
 has thoughts.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER
 This is what you're paying me for.
 If you don't talk, I can't help
 you.

STUART

They're violent in nature. Graphic. Vivid. So vivid in fact they feel real sometimes and I have to come back to my own head.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Hmm.

(beat)

Every day?

STUART

(lying)

No.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Describe "Come back to my own head."

Offenstoppenheimer blinks, unconvinced.

STUART

I saw a kid kill a bird once. Didn't know his real name. I only knew him as Tommy Six-Strings. But I remember this little sparrow got his wing all caught up in a mesh fence. And it was stuck, see? I think someone meant it to be stuck. So it gets its wing snagged and can't fly and it's just flappin' there all strung out and freaked... and Six-Stings walks over to it and looks at it a while. More than a while, like watchin' it writhe was somethin' to see. And then, out of nowhere, he grabs it by the neck and twists. He twisted so hard I thought the thing's head would pop right off, but it didn't... it just plopped over, broke. It's eyes didn't even close, it was just this bendy-necked sparrow dead on a fence with a wounded wing.

(beat)

I thought it was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen in my life. And ever since I was jealous it was Tommy and not me that did it.

Offenstoppenheimer writes something down.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Your father's in prison, isn't he Stuart? And your grandfather too?

STUART

You think it's genetic, Doc? Like, hereditary? This thing I got?

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

What do you think the "thing" is?

Stuart's EYE TWITCHES.

STUART

I think I might be bad.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Why?

STUART

Cause normal people don't think this way right? Don't get jealous of bird killers.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

On the contrary, I would argue that many people have many violent thoughts, it's just about whether or not they act on them. In practice we would describe them as "intrusives." Why just the other day I counselled a married couple who were ready to throw in the towel. They're both quite ready to kill each other, they were very expressive on the subject. In fact, that's a very common one, actually come to think of it.

STUART

Intrusives, huh?

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Exactly.

STUART

I'm confused. All this shrank stuff, it's a lot to process.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Have you acted on your intrusive thoughts Stuart?

CLICK CLICK CLICK. CLICKITY CLICK CLICK CLICK.

Stuart holds out the Yo-Yo, he lets it drop to the ground.

He struggles with the STRING.

STUART

It's heavier than I thought it
would be.

Oppenstoppenheimer observes him, paying careful attention to
the yo-yo.

STUART (CONT'D)

(to himself)

"Just let it go" he says. Easy. No
big deal.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Accepting that it might not come
back is the only way you'll be able
to let it go.

Stuart sighs, the Yo-yo drops and rises effortlessly.

He smiles.

He tries to get fancy and swings it from side to side.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Oh well, that's not exactly... now
hang on Stuart, careful!

The Yo-Yo swings across the top of Offenstoppenheimer's head
and almost hits him.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

Stuart!

(beat)

Alright come on that's enough for
now, stop!

STUART

I like this, it's fun!

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

Stuart, give me the yo-yo.

Stuart swings it around like a lasso.

The Yo-Yo's STRING circles around Offenstoppenheimer's NECK.

The STRING YANKS off Stuart's finger but he thinks it's just
another one of his daydreams.

STUART

I never played with these as a kid.
My mother never let me have toys.

The Yo-Yo TWISTS around Offentoppenheimer's neck and wraps him in a death lock - like a noose.

Offenstoppenheimer's feet fumble heavily from left to right as he wrestles with the string.

OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER

(choking)

Help!

He watches blankly as the yo-yo CUTS the doctor's THROAT wide open.

BLOOD SMATTERS across Stuart's face.

STUART

My intrusives, they are a problem
and they just seem to keep getting
worse and worse. Even now I'm
having a terrible vision of you and
this damned Yo-Yo.

Offenstoppenheimer's lifeless body hits the ground and then...

Silence.

STUART (CONT'D)

Sometimes they run a little long.

A thick, wet, inky dollop of BLOOD runs down Offenstopper's cheek.

Stuart's body PRICKLES with realization. His fingertips touch his face.

He tastes the blood on his fingertips.

He breathes heavily as he turns around to look at the body.

He SMACKS his cheeks.

STUART (CONT'D)

Wake up. Wake up you son of a
bitch. Oh dear God. Oh, what the
fuck!

He examines the body, and sees the broken yo-yo string.

He looks back to his own hand where the other half of it dangles from his middle finger.

STUART (CONT'D)

Oh balls.

Stuart touches Offenstoppenheimer's shoulder.

STUART (CONT'D)

No, no no no no no no NO!
(to Offenstoppenheimer)
I needed you Doc!

He UN-COILS the string noose.

He turns the body upward to face the ceiling.

A NOISE from behind the office door.

He presses his ear against it, to listen for signs of trouble.

PENELOPE (O.S.)

Doctor Offenstoppenheimer's office
how can I help you?

(beat)

He's out of town that weekend but I
can book you in for the following--

STUART

Fuck.

Stuart looks at the CLOCK on the wall.

He attempts to hoist the body up and back into the chair opposite him.

It is a giant struggle.

BLOOD LEAKS from the open wound and onto Stuart.

The TORSO slides down in an awkward slump.

Offenstoppenheimer's neck falls forward, Stuart grabs clumps of hair to stabilize him.

He takes time to place a pen in his hand.

Now out of breath, SWEATY and BLOOD SOAKED he paces nervously.

STUART (CONT'D)
 Okay Doc, I need your advice. You gotta tell me what to do here. I mean, what do I do here?

Stuart plays with Offenstoppenheimer's jaw.

STUART (CONT'D)
 (mock voice)
 Well Stuart, you just murdered me in cold blood, by accident.
 (to self)
 By accident?
 (mock voice)
 You did it on purpose?!!??
 (to Doctor)
 I don't know! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!
 (beat)
 Fuck!
 (to self)
 Now look,
 (to Doctor)
 You be you, I'll be me, we'll continue, I still got twenty minutes left Doc. You wanna know about my childhood? My memories and shit, I'll tell you about it!

Offenstoppenheimer's head falls straight back, his eyes wide open and lifeless.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

PENELOPE (O.S.)
 Doctor Offenstoppenheimer?

Stuart LEAPS to the door. He presses himself against it.

STUART
 (mock voice)
 I'm in a session Penelope.

PENELOPE (O.S.)
 I know I'm sorry but it's DOCTOR WINSLOW on the line. He says it's urgent, and he needs to speak to you right away.

Stuart looks to the desk PHONE RED LIGHT BLINKING.

STUART
 (mock Voice)
 I'll take it in here.

PENELOPE (O.S.)

Okay.

Stuart takes a deep breath and answers the TELEPHONE.

DOCTOR WINSLOW (40's-50's), Offenstoppenheimer's long time friend and partner in psychiatry on the line.

STUART

(mock Voice)

Hello?

DR. WINSLOW (FILTERED)

Ollie! Thank God you're alright.
Listen, don't speak! Grunt once for
no, twice for yes, understand?

STUART

Mm-hm.

DR. WINSLOW (FILTERED)

your client Stuart Hargraves, he's
just been declared a suspect in a
quadruple homicide. An old deaf
woman, a barista, a taxi driver and
Mr. Hargrave's ex wife Karla have
all been killed this morning! I'd
forgotten his name till I looked at
the involuntary commitment form
you'd put in for him last week! And
then I spoke to Penelope... Is he
with you now?

Stuart considers his answer.

STUART

Mm-hm.

DR. WINSLOW (FILTERED)

Christ. Alright look, I've already
notified the police that you might
be in danger so they're on their
way now!

Stuart looks to the office door.

DR. WINSLOW (FILTERED) (CONT'D)

I'll stay on the line with you till
they get there.

Stuart sets the phone down, gently.

He exists the office door leaving it open a sliver

INT. WAITING ROOM - LATER

On the floor covered in BLOOD, GREEN PEA COLOURED FABRIC FUZZ and BROKEN KEYBOARD LETTERS lay Penelope.

DEAD.

Stuart steps over her carefully.

He looks back, two dead body's in his wake.

STUART

Awe, nuts.

The yo-yo slides down its string clasped from his middle finger and...

Swiftly pops back up into his palm.

CUT TO BLACK.

CREDITS.

TAG

INT. OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER OFFICE - DAY

THE MAINTENANCE MAN CHIPS away the DECAL LETTERS:
DR.OFFENSTOPPENHEIMER.