

Blain's Defense

By

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EXT. BEDROCK, CA 1914- AN OLD WESTERN FARM TOWN-NIGHT

Lightning strikes. A young woman stumbles towards the town square. She is panting heavily in pain--

An old shopkeeper looks out the window of his closed general store, at the woman--

Lightning strikes. Electricity flashes in her mind as she winces in pain. She is shaking uncontrollably. Her eyes are bloodshot. Blood has been running down her ears and nose.

DYING WOMAN

hu.. he... help...

The shopkeeper runs out the door and approaches the woman--

SHOPKEEPER

Miss? Miss? What is going on?

Lightning. The woman opens her mouth to scream but is hardly able to make a sound. Her shaking never stops--

The shopkeeper grabs the woman and holds her steady. He sees her pain, her eyes. She is distracted. She is trying to speak. Only fragments---

DYING WOMAN

Ek.. A.... Ab... wuh--

She coughs and jolts forward. blood sprays from her mouth--

The shopkeeper is sprayed in blood and the woman falls to the ground--

SHOPKEEPER

Just stay put dear. Don't move...

He looks towards the saloon and it's Nightlife. He calls for help. Lightning.

SHOPKEEPER

HELP!!!... WE NEED HELP!!!...

He gives his attention back to the woman.

SHOPKEEPER

Wait right here darling. I need to get help. I need to get the doctor.

Her bloodshot eyes look up at the old man. She is trembling and confused. Her head is shaking.

(CONTINUED)

The old man continues to call for help as he runs towards the saloon. Lightning crashes. He opens the door.

The saloon is filled with a variety of townsfolk. A balding bar tender turns his attention to the old shopkeeper.

BARTENDER

Henry, you're covered in blood.

HENRY

(exhausted)

Please help. There is a hurt woman outside. Where is Dr. Hyman?

BARTENDER

(startled, he moves towards the door)

He was here about an hour ago. Where is she?

Several of the townsfolk move towards and out the door to see what's going on.

Henry and the bartender approach the woman.

She is slumped on the ground facing away. She had crawled to the side of the town's bank. Something is written on the white paneling in blood.

The bartender kneels and turns the woman over.

BARTENDER

Miss?! Miss?!

The woman's is lifeless. Her eyes are wide open.

The bartender takes stares. Henry is close behind and covers his mouth at the horrible site.

BARTENDER

Oh dear... oh no...

A young man from the town approaches.

The bartender turns to the young man.

BARTENDER

William. Go get the Sheriff.

EXT. DAY BEDROCK TOWN SQUARE

Fred, a simple man wearing an eye patch has his hands out as he is trying to vocalize to the gathered townsfolk about the situation.

FRED

Alright folks. Everybody needs to let the sheriff have his space. This is a crime scene. And we are the only ones *qualified* to have an opinion. Now you need to just step back and let the sheriff do his work.

Fred takes a few paces backwards and approaches the sheriff, a man in black. He is looking away at the crime scene. Fred leans in and says in the sheriffs ear.

FRED

How was that? I think I got the point across. You don't need all them crazy people around. (sniffs) Stupid idiots!

Sheriff Blain Connolly is deep in thought.

FRED

Sheriff? Blain? You see somethin'?

Blain doesn't divert his attention.

BLAIN

Do you know what that says?

FRED

What? (he looks at the bloody message) Sheriff. (quietly) You know I can't read?!

BLAIN

Well I can, and your guess would be as good as mine.

Fred looks again. We see the word, "Abwehr" written in blood on the side of the building.

FRED

(trying to sound it out)
aaa..b...wu....

(CONTINUED)

BLAIN

Abwehr? I have no idea? I think someone would normally write something pertaining to their death in their final moments? Not practice their ABC's...

FRED

(very serious)

Do you think it's a code?

Blain looks at Fred.

BLAIN

Could be. Do you know this woman?

FRED

No? (distracted by a towns person)
Hey? What did I say? Back up?
Nobody wants your theories.

BLAIN

Go start asking around, if anyone knows who this woman is.

FRED

Ask who?

BLAIN

(looking towards the crowd)

Them.

Fred looks back. Looks at the sheriff

FRED

(embarrassed)

But I just asked them to... (he stops whining) Hey you! I want to talk to you!

Blain watches Fred. He begins to question the people. Blain looks back at the word written in blood and the poor woman laying lifeless underneath.

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE

The body of the woman lies on the doctors table. Dr. Lindsey Hyman, an attractive blond-haired man, holds the woman's lifeless hand up. He investigates under the nails. Her fingertips are black, nails chipped and broken.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSEY

Well sheriff, it seems as though we have quite a mystery on our hands.

BLAIN

What killed her Lindsey?

LINDSEY

It's hard to say? There are no punctures or broken bones. This must have been internal. A rupture? Disease perhaps? She may be a prostitute.

Blain looks at Lindsey inquisitively.

BLAIN

Why does she have those red marks around her forehead?

The forehead of the woman seems to have been burned.

LINDSEY

Those? Those could be self-mutilation? Maybe something else?

Blain see's the woman's dead eyes. She looks sad and innocent. He see's bruising around her wrists.

BLAIN

Like electricity to the forehead given to a mental patient.

The Doctor is taken by Blain's statement.

LINDSEY

Perhaps. But I doubt that is what killed her. That kind of a jolt would result in much more tissue damage. No, she probably had a disease.

BLAIN

Mmm hmm. And the blood coming out of her ears and nose? The way she spit blood all over Henry?

The doctor is getting annoyed but keeping it level.

LINDSEY

Tuberculosis Sheriff. It is very common in women and children and I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LINDSEY (cont'd)

have treated many cases of it lately. She also could have had a venereal disease. Organ damage. There are so many things. Blain, you need to let me do my job and keep your opinions on hold? I have been a coroner and a doctor in many cities and I have seen *many* of these cases, and believe me Sheriff, there isn't always a definitive answer. But, almost always, it is just a disease, so long as the person isn't missing part of their body. Now please Sheriff. Let me work. I will get back with you later. I have to run some tests.

Blain stares at Lindsey. Blain takes in a deep breathe.

BLAIN

Thank you Doctor. I will let you get back to your work. Please. Let me know if you find out anything else?

Blain exits the room.

Fred is waiting in the front room of the doctor's office. He gets up and meets with Blain.

FRED

Well Sheriff, did you find out what killed her?

Blain is thinking about something.

BLAIN

Yes Fred. She may be a prostitute? Or a mental patient? Perhaps a trained performer at the Barnum Bailey Circus?

FRED

(confused)

What?

BLAIN

What the hell does Abwehr mean?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

(still confused if not more so)

I.. don't know? Maybe it's a foreign word? Like tamale? Or Mexico?

Blain nods his head.

BLAIN

Could be? Could be a lot of things?
I am going to go talk to Ms. Jennings.

INT. SCHOOL- DAY

A young pretty woman with dark hair, Charlotte Jennings, is cleaning up her classroom. She bends over to pick up a dropped assignment. She gets up. The sheriff steps in the doorway and knocks on the door.

BLAIN

Ms. Jennings.

CHARLOTTE

(looking over at the Sheriff)
Yes Blain?

BLAIN

(stepping in to the classroom)
Could I have a moment of your time?
I wanted to ask you a few questions about...

CHARLOTTE

A murder?

BLAIN

(pausing to answer)
Yes... You think it's a murder?

CHARLOTTE

Well, a young woman no one has ever seen comes stumbling into town covered in blood, in severe distress, crawls to my fathers bank, and writes a cryptic message, and dies. Then we ask ourselves, "Do you think this is a murder?"

(CONTINUED)

BLAIN
(coily)
Well... It could be a disease?

CHARLOTTE
(baffled)
Really?... Who elected you?

Blain smiles for the first time.

BLAIN
You did.

CHARLOTTE
No I did not. I voted for Fred. He
is much more observant when he
isn't poking out his own eye.

BLAIN
Hey now.

CHARLOTTE
I am serious.

Blain laughs.

BLAIN
Well... I think I agree with you,
about the murder. The only problem
is, I have a doctor who thinks
otherwise.

CHARLOTTE
(sarcastically)
Dr. Hyman? But he is educated. He
is from the big city.

BLAIN
Ha. I figured you would say
something to that regard. Yes. Our
good doctor does not think this was
foul play. No, he see's this as
illness. Possibly a rupture.
Possibly a prostitutes demise.

Charlotte doesn't like the bad taste.

BLAIN
Charlotte, can you help me?

She smiles

CHARLOTTE

What do you need?

BLAIN

What languages do you speak?

She smiles bigger.

CHARLOTTE

English, French, Spanish... German.

BLAIN

Do you know what this word means?

Blain hands her a paper. She looks at it.

CHARLOTTE

(she takes in a breath)

Yes. I do.

BLAIN

Alright. What is it?

CHARLOTTE

Words have lots of meanings
Sheriff. Fall, for instance, can
mean.. an action. Like falling to
the ground. It can be a season. It
can also be non-literal, like the
fall of an empire... of values?

BLAIN

Yes. So what does Abwehr mean?

CHARLOTTE

Abwehr (pronounces correctly). It
means defense.

Blain is a little confused.

BLAIN

Alright. Why did a dying woman
write defense on a wall?

CHARLOTTE

Because defense can mean so many
things to a person. Or people?

BLAIN

What are you getting at, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Back in Germany before my parents came here they used to play a game when they were kids. The purpose of the game was to find out information about the other team and then let yours know so that you could have the upper hand. So whether it was, where the flag was hidden, or what the secret code word was, you had to have the upper hand. So, you would trade a member of your team to the other and the other team would do the same. That person would then help you with hiding the item, or coming up with the word and then have to tell his team about it. But they would have to do it from the other side and not get caught, because they were pretending to be part of the other team. They had to be very quiet about it. They couldn't cross the line. They had to keep distance. Kids would leave notes. Use non-verbal communications. Lots of different things. The game was won when the other team figured out what you were hiding.

BLAIN

They were spys. That is what you are getting at?

CHARLOTTE

The name of the game was Abwehr, Sheriff Connolly...

BLAIN

Alright, so what does a spy have to do with her death?

CHARLOTTE

I have heard this word used in newspapers my sister brought me Carson City. People fear that there may be German operatives in our country. And they fear that they may be trying to figure things out about Americans to use against us. They call themselves Abwehr.

(CONTINUED)

BLAIN

Alright, so she knew something about a German spy in our midst?

CHARLOTTE

I think so. I think she was being experimented on. She had signs of severe mental trauma. Signs of electrical burns on her temples.

BLAIN

And who could perform something like that in this town? I doubt she walked here in that state all the way from out of town.

CHARLOTTE

Just me. Or Doctor Hyman. And I don't have that kind of equipment nor do I have access to them. But he may. He is on the board of directors at the university for mental health patients.

BLAIN

Yep. That is awfully suspicious... You really need to finish medical school.

CHARLOTTE

You really need to read a newspaper.

Blain laughs.

BLAIN

You are correct. Just to think, I came here to ask you to point me in a direction. And it's like you had the whole thing figured out. Waiting.

CHARLOTTE

Well, this is a small town. And a lot of other people may have had a curiosity to bring a note with a strange word on it to the only person that knows a foreign language in the town.

BLAIN

Did Henry come in?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

BLAIN

Does he know what you told me?

CHARLOTTE

We may have figured it out together.

BLAIN

That's not good.

CHARLOTTE

Why? Henry is a smart man.

BLAIN

Because if what you are saying is true, about Dr. Hyman, than he may be a very dangerous man.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF SCHOOLHOUSE- DAY.

Blain exits the school. Fred is waiting outside by the horses.

BLAIN

Good work today Fred.

FRED

What did I do?

BLAIN

Just like you said. Tamales. Mexico.

FRED

I knew it!

BLAIN

Only it was Germany. Abwehr.

FRED

Alright. (confused) What does that mean?

BLAIN

It means we need to go visit the Doctor right now.

Blain and Fred get on their horses and head back towards town.

EXT. TOWN- NIGHT HAS JUST SET.

Blain and Fred approach. The town is in disarray. Several shops are on fire. A young man runs towards the Sheriff.

YOUNG MAN

Sheriff! Sheriff! We were trying to find you. The General store set fire! We are trying to put it out. We can't find Henry anywhere.

Blain jumps off the horse and runs towards the fire. Men are passing buckets of water trying to stop the fire from spreading.

BLAIN

Has anyone seen Henry?! Has anyone seen the Doctor Hyman?!

The men continue to work on the flames.

INT. AN UNDERGROUND CELLAR-DARK

Henry is strapped to a chair. He is sweaty and in pain. He has a wired contraption attached to his head. Dr. Hyman steps in.

LINDSEY

Henry, what did that young woman say to you? Did she tell you about anything else?

Henry is panicked

HENRY

I don't know? She couldn't hardly speak.

LINDSEY

Henry. I don't like lies. I will make you talk. I know how to make Americans talk.

Lindsey turns a dial on a strange looking electronic machine.

Henry whips his head back and stiffens in pain. He makes painful noises.

Lindsey turns the dial down.

(CONTINUED)

LINDSEY
What did she say?

HENRY
(defeated)
I don't know?

LINDSEY
(pausing)
Ok... I believe you. I have another
question now?

HENRY
What do you want from me?

Lindsey laughs to himself. He is irritated at the old man.

LINDSEY
I want you to tell me who told you
I was hiding something? That's what
you said. And I don't think you
came up with that theory on your
own.

HENRY
I did. I have always known. You are
an evil man. You are a spy. I know
what Abwehr means.

LINDSEY
(interrupting)
No you don't. Do you know why?

HENRY
What?... Why?

LINDSEY
Because.... You. Don't. Speak.
German.

Lindsey turns the dial. Henry screams. The sound permeates
through the scene.

EXT. TOWN- NIGHT- THE TOWN IS ON FIRE

Sheriff Connolly desperately helps as the townsfolk try to
stop the town from burning to the ground.

Blain throws the water to the flames.

He remembers Dr. Hyman standing above the woman. Holding her
hand.

(CONTINUED)

Blain throws another bucket.

He remembers Dr. Hyman's self righteous smirk as he told him that he was out of line.

Blain looks into the fire.

He remembers Dr Hyman as he left his autopsy room. Looking at him.

The fire burns uncontrollably.

Blain stares right back into it. His town has been infiltrated. His country.

The End.