

A Psychopath

By Pete Malicki

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Cast

Theo: late thirties, skinny-normal build.

Scene

Theo sits. He is largely unemotional and speaks with a wry, sardonic tone throughout. The lights come up and he studies the audience before speaking.

THEO: People have called me a hero, a killer, a saint and a psychopath. They even used to say the first three all in the same sentence: hero, killer, saint.

Maybe you're thinking "army." Prancing around the desert saving his country from the towelheads or whoever. Well, that ain't me. I don't give three tosses about my country and I sure as hell don't want to die for it. I'm not a cop or a bodyguard or anyone else where you'd expect "killer" and "hero" to go together.

My name is Mark Theo Carter and until recently I lived a completely unremarkable life. Last five years I hardly worked a day and more or less lived off welfare. I'm not a *stupid* person, but I'll be the first to admit I'm inherently lazy. If someone else wants to do something for me I'm not going to get in their way. The only thing most of you would find interesting about my last five years is that I killed sixteen people. Only got charged for four of them but that was more than enough for the life sentence.

I did the first one not too long after I quit my job. My latest de facto relationship had just broken down and I was going through some shit. Killing someone wasn't exactly on my things-to-do list but, you know, the right situation crops up and you never know what might happen.

It was late at night on a Wednesday. There I was walking through Hyde Park when I come across what looks like a couple of teenagers having a root. Not many people go in the dark spots around here but I always walk in a direct line to where I want to go. When I get closer I see the guy has his hand clamped down on the girl's mouth and there's something glinting in the lamplight. He sees me and freaks a bit, holding what I can now see is a knife at her throat. "Fuck off or I cut the bitch," he says.

What a charmer, I think. I keep walking towards him. She can't move her head but her terrified eyes fix on me. He gives me that "second and last warning" bullshit so I say to him, "You ever done this before, boy? You're holding that little butter knife like you're ready to spread some vegemite on your toast." I'm real close now. I can see he's still got his pants on. "If you don't mind me getting her a little messy I can show you a trick or two with your Swiss Army."

The guy stares at me for a long moment. He recognises a stronger male. The girl's so scared she can't move a muscle, let alone work up the breath for a good scream. I crouch down beside her head and shoulders and look the guy straight in the eyes. He's curious so he hands me the knife.

I feel this overpowering hatred take control of me. This sensation is way too strong for me to deal with and I need to get rid of it, fast. I grab the knife and it's over in a second. His throat is gashed open and he collapses in a heap of bleeding dead shit. I pull his body away from the girl and offer her my hand. She lies there whimpering for almost a minute before I pull her to her feet and send her on her merry way.

Got off without so much as a wrist slap for this one. Girl told the court he attacked me and I somehow managed to take his weapon and defend myself. Media called me a hero and the girl's family were ready to bloody knight me.

The second guy didn't get me quite the same reception. It was an accident, but he's one of the four I was charged for icing. I'd been helping my brother out loading electronics into his store at 3am. I drove off when I was done but came back ten minutes later because I forgot my wallet. Now there's this guy in there stuffing cameras into a garbage bag. "Oy!" I yell, and he spins around to find my fist breaking his nose.

I thought it'd be over in two seconds but this guy was tough. He hit me right back and we ended up on the floor. I rolled on top of him and grabbed a fistful of his long Fabio hair. Made it real easy to smash his head into the ground. It was years later before they pinned it on me but if I hadn't killed the fucker I might not have got life.

Before my trial, the shrinks all agreed I was a psychopath. Most people wouldn't have the first clue what this is. You see movies with complete crazies killing people at random or making skin suits or whatever, but that's not what a psycho is. Quite simply, we're people who don't feel guilt, remorse or empathy. That's the biggest distinction between me and you. It doesn't mean we're naturally wired to kill or that we enjoy it or seek it out, we just don't feel anything when it happens. It's like having a cup of fucking tea.

Oh what's that look on your faces? I know you all came here to feel superior but it's all a little bit early for your holier-than-thou act to start. I was a saint for the first twenty-eight years of my life, you know. Didn't hardly hurt a fly. The rapist set me off and it was only after him that I killed people. In my early twenties I actually worked at a charity helping the poor. I volunteered one evening a week at an animal shelter *and* I was a Lifeguard. I never felt anything for any of these causes but your intellect and your emotions are quite separate things, so I did what I thought was right even though I didn't get the thrill of do-goodery all you would have.

The third guy was on a train, of all places. He was listening to that awful fucking doof doof music real loud on his phone and using his keys to graffiti the walls. The kid was getting under my skin so I pushed him in the shoulder and told him to cut that shit out. He said "Don't touch me, cunt" and kept at it.

I don't like being called names so I took his keys and put them out the nearest window. He took a swipe at my face and a minute later I've choked the little dick to death.

Four, five and six were all in a similar fashion. Young fuck-up type guys doing something anti-social in my face who didn't like it when I told them to stop. Pretty easy to finish what they started with me. Had one guy blow smoke in my face and put his cigarette out on my arm when I told him off for it. I actually enjoyed icing him.

Theo pauses and looks at a few audience members.

THEO: Okay, I know what you're thinking. This is where the line's no longer blurry. Theo's crossed all the way through the grey and he's nothing but pure psycho now. Starting fights with losers and icing them is pretty uncool, yeah? Well you know what? I don't think you're all that great yourselves. Go on, who of you have ever helped a homeless? Like, *really* helped one. Given them a grand or two or a place to stay. You're all middle class – you could do it if you wanted to. How many of you eat meat? You all know what goes on there. Overcrowded cages, diseases, Indonesian fucking abattoirs. A torturous life and a worse death but you turn a blind eye because it tastes good, right? Look at your clothes and shoes. Child labour, slave wages, women drowning newborn children in toilets so they don't lose their shitty jobs. You say you care, but you're still wearing the

shit. Me, I'm a psychopath. I have a physiological reason not to give a toss about the above inhumanity we're all a part of. Don't you reckon that makes you kinda worse than me?

Anyway, you all didn't come to find out how miserable *you* are. This is about Theo Carter and his sixteen victims. Seven was drunk and picked a fight with me, which I well and truly won. Eight and nine were drug dealers from my old high school peddling shit in my neighbourhood. I told 'em where to go and one of them pulled a gun, so I shot them both in the laneway near my unit. Ten was... what? Is this boring you? Want me to skip ahead?

Fine, so the last guy was known to me. I used to get Christmas cards from him after I saved his life eight years back. He was down at Bondi and got his stupid arse caught in a rip, so being a Lifeguard it was up to me to rescue him. This guy bought me and the others a few drinks to thank me for the extra life. Seemed like a decent fella.

A few years later, he bumps into my friend Sam from the surf club. Buys her a few drinks, snogs her, and ends up taking her home. She gets cold feet as the beers wear off but he doesn't take no for an answer so he rapes her a couple of times. She's too chicken to go to the cops so he gets away with it.

I see him all these years later on Pitt Street. I saved this fucker's life and he thanks the world by sexually assaulting my friend. So I ask myself, "Why help people?" If this prick had drowned, he wouldn't've been around to diddle Sam. It made me realise I could do society a much bigger favour by icing people I *know* are bad than saving ones who may or may not be good. A dead scumbag is a dead scumbag, but a living person could do anything. So I took out the only weapon I had – a pen – and I stabbed this guy in the neck right in the middle of Pitt Street. Everyone started screaming and he fell onto the ground and tried to crawl away, bleeding all over damn place. I watched him for three whole minutes before some cop had his gun in my face. Before you know it, I'm in the slammer with a life sentence.

Anyway, that's my story. Make of it what you will and judge me as much as you see fit. God knows I'm judging *you* hypocritical shitbags.

I'm Theo Carter: hero, killer, psychopath.