

TROLL (Excerpt)

by

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Alex and Carol have returned to Carol's Brooklyn apartment after a date. Carol has knocked Alex out and is tying him to a chair in her living room. Three actors in chubby bluebird costumes are perched around the stage. They speak as and from Twitter.

CAROL

This is insane. Ok. We're doing this. You can do this, Carol, pull it together.

She fastens his legs together, his arms behind his back, then puts a piece of duct tape over his mouth.

She drags him, attached to the chair, into the office.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I didn't kill you did I?

She turns on the one lamp and checks his pulse. He's alive, he's just unconscious.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Great, great, great, great, great.

She turns the lamp off and goes to leave. She pauses and turns it on again. She aims it at his face.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Where were you on the night of April 18th?

She laughs nervously.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Ok.

She swings the lamp up and down, practicing aiming it at him.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Oh God. This is dumb.

She turns the lamp off again. She closes the door, going into the living room and leaving him in the office. She leans against the door for a moment, collecting herself.

We can see him slumped over, dimly lit only by slight light from the night outside.

Carol bustles around the apartment, doing nothing.

CAROL (CONT'D)

(freaking out, quietly to herself)

Carol what are you doing you're going to get yourself sent to prison.

She opens the door again. He's still out.

CAROL (CONT'D)

(to his unconscious body)

Too late now. You've already knocked him out. You're done.

She closes the door again.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You've kidnapped. You're a kidnapper.

She goes into the bathroom and reappears, brushing her teeth with vigor.

She opens the door to her bedroom, walks in and walks out again. She checks her phone. Sits on the couch. Brushes her teeth. Stands up, still brushing. Eventually, she opens the door to the office.

CAROL (CONT'D)

(through toothbrush)

Wow, he's really out.

She leaves the door to the office open and goes into the bathroom. The sound of her spitting and rinsing. She reemerges, no longer brushing her teeth. She sits on the couch, waiting. She stands and goes into the kitchen, opens and closes her refrigerator.

She goes into the office and turns the light on again.

Nope.

CAROL (CONT'D)

She turns it out again.

Why am I still wearing this?

CAROL (CONT'D)

She closes the door and crosses to her bedroom, taking a sip of her wine on the way by. As she walks, she works to remove her wig.

Jesus, Carol, you're losing it. Stop talking to yourself.

CAROL (CONT'D)

She disappears into her bedroom. It's quiet for a long beat. Alex is alone on stage.

Suddenly, he comes to, panicking.

He starts to freak out, but with all the soundproofing, she doesn't immediately hear him. He makes more noise.

Finally, Carol re-emerges, no wig, wearing a silk kimono and her glasses, walking fast. Underneath, her hair is a different color and shorter.

She whips open the office door.

Can you hold on just a minute?

CAROL (CONT'D)

She quickly closes the door again and disappears through the living room back into her bedroom.

At first, he is still and silent. Then, when she doesn't immediately return, he starts to struggle.

His panicked, muffled sounds and movements slowly intensify.

Finally, Carol comes back out. She wears a nice pair of cotton pajamas now under the kimono, which she ties and then unties before entering the office. She pumps herself up, then rushes in and points the lamp at his face. A perfect shot.

CAROL (CONT'D)

(forcefully)

Tell me you recognize me.

He furrows his brow.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Do you?

Slowly, he nods.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I needed to talk to you. Nod that you won't scream.

He nods. She removes the duct tape from his mouth.

ALEX

(immediately screaming)

HELP-

She slaps the tape back on.

CAROL

Alright, fine, I'll wait.

She turns the light out and closes the door. He continues to fight and struggle, trying to make noise through the tape. It's more like a tantrum than real panic.

The birds return. Lights change. A faint whining sound is heard.

BIRD TWO

You are a hero, Carol! Senators decimated. Sad!

BIRD ONE

Don't talk like that.

BIRD THREE

This privacy-violating list is racist against white people. How would you like it if I violated you like this?

BIRD ONE

What?

BIRD THREE

Bet you'd like that, wouldn't you?

BIRD TWO

Republican't trust fund baby!

BIRD ONE

(to Bird Two)

You're not helping-

(to Bird Three)

-what did you say?

CAROL

(to Alex, through the door)

You can shut up when you're ready to talk.

The birds return to their perches at the edges of the stage. Carol flips through the coffee table book Alex was looking at earlier.

Eventually, Alex gives up. To the degree he can move, his body language says, "Let's get this over with."

Carol hears the silence. She waits, then opens the door. She turns the lamp on normally, leaving it in place.

CAROL (CONT'D)

So. Ready?

He nods. She gently removes the duct tape. He doesn't scream.

ALEX

(not gently)

It's you.

I needed to meet you. CAROL

Wish you'd consulted me. ALEX

I never thought you'd fall for it. I mean, you didn't recognize me? CAROL

You're more attractive in person. ALEX

Fuck you. CAROL

As they talk, Alex struggles to free his hands, to no avail.

I thought liberals were supposed to be nice. ALEX

Don't make this about that. This is about you and me. CAROL

You want to fuck me? ALEX

What? No, of course not. CAROL

Then why am I here? ALEX

Because this has to end. CAROL

What? ALEX

The torture! CAROL

Of what, the whales? ALEX

OF ME!

CAROL

ALEX

You did that to yourself.

CAROL

I send myself hate mail? I email myself to kill myself? I tweet death threats at myself every day?

ALEX

You know what I mean. You caused it.

CAROL

The only thing I did was my job.

ALEX

Your job is being a cunt?

CAROL

My job is being a journalist.

ALEX

You got what you deserved and now, what, you're going to murder me?

CAROL

Of course not.

ALEX

Then why am I tied up in what appears to be the most depressing home office in Cobble Hill?

CAROL

I didn't think you'd go for it of your own free will.

ALEX

I wouldn't, you sociopath! Untie me and this can be water under the bridge. I'm sure you'll only get a few years in prison for this... episode. Unless you plead insanity maybe?

CAROL

Don't make me the animal here.

ALEX

Poor Carol ruins hundreds of lives and begs not to have her own disturbed.

CAROL
DO NOT MAKE ME THE ANIMAL HERE.

ALEX
You did this, Carol, it was all you. What are you planning to do to me, then?

CAROL
I hadn't thought that far.

ALEX
Are you going to hit me? Hurt me? Torture me?

CAROL
I don't know. Maybe.

ALEX
Kind of an overreaction to a few little tweets, don't you think?

CAROL
A few little tweets?! Fuck you.

ALEX
Emotional. Typical woman.

CAROL
Blech! Fuck you! Don't you know what you've done to me?

ALEX
I never touched you.

CAROL
You didn't have to.

ALEX
What, you got your feelings hurt?

CAROL
I have had to change my email, lock my accounts, change my phone number over and over and over. I get my mail sent to a PO Box. I lived in a hotel for two months. And it did nothing.

ALEX
Good men lost their jobs because of that crap you posted online.

CAROL
They lost their jobs because they were attending KKK meetings.

ALEX

One or two of them, maybe, what about the others?

CAROL

Losing a re-election campaign isn't like getting fired.

ALEX

What are they supposed to do now?

CAROL

Is Fox News hiring?

ALEX

How long can you deflect the guilt?

CAROL

Guilt?! I did the right thing. And what did I get?

ALEX

Going rates? A few hundred, maybe even a few thousand if your post was, you know, sponsored-

CAROL

Oh please, don't give me that Soros crap. You know I had to move my parents out of their nursing home to another state? I can't sleep. You need to leave me alone. Please, please, leave me alone.

ALEX

Mm, no thanks.

CAROL

Is this a game to you?

ALEX

Sort of.

CAROL

Leave me alone!

ALEX

Please don't yell at me.

CAROL

How dare you ask for civility?

ALEX

I'm civil. I'm the most civil.

Carol storms out. She searches the living room for her phone.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(calling after her)

You don't deserve to be left alone, Carol. You don't deserve anything but what you're getting.

She finds the phone and reads from it.

CAROL

"Hug your loved ones before you leave home today." / "Kill yourself you illiterate cunt." I'm very much literate, by the way, of all the things. This one's just a photo with jizz photoshopped on my face.

ALEX

I'm amazed I didn't recognize you. Your ugly face. Your stupid mouth. The way your eyes squint when you're getting worked up.

(responding to her rant)

Oh, so you don't believe in free speech?

CAROL

That's not what free speech is for.

ALEX

Spoken like a true fascist.

In the living room, she screams silently to herself.

The lights change and the birds run forward to center stage.

BIRD TWO

This is terrible how they're talking to this journalist. We support you Carol, we love you!

BIRD THREE

The liberal bias here is astounding. Hard to read.

BIRD TWO

Will you shut up?

BIRD THREE

Looks like snowflake didn't have a good rebuttal for my point. Liberals always resort to insults and emotion.

BIRD TWO

The facts are already in the article. They're right there.

BIRD THREE

Let's see the real facts. This is unconscionable.

BIRD ONE

The facts are here! The facts are here.

The lights change and the birds retreat again, perching on Carol's furniture.

ALEX

I didn't do enough research. Hard to believe I missed it. It's a good wig.

CAROL

I got it to hide from you. Ironic, I suppose-

ALEX

And yet, I did my research, didn't I? I found you no matter what you did, where you tried to hide.

As he talks, Carol notices the pantyhose she'd left out.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Online, in Oregon, over the phone. Over and over and over. And now here I am in your home-

She balls up the pantyhose and stuffs them in his mouth. She exits again. She returns with some printed out sheets.

CAROL

Yes, you're absolutely despicable. Here's what we're going to do.

ALEX

(through pantyhose)

The 36 questions that lead to love?

BIRD ONE

(from her corner, hollering)

New York Times Article: The 36 Questions That Lead To Looove.

CAROL

Yeah.

He spits out the pantyhose and laughs abruptly.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I had this idea-

ALEX

So you do want to fuck me.

CAROL

I do not want to fuck you.

ALEX

Well, anything's worth a shot. Is this what you planned? When you decided to, you know, kidnap me?

CAROL

Yeah. Fuck off. I'm not evil-

ALEX

And I am?

CAROL

I've never done anything like this before.

ALEX

Who's done anything like this before?

CAROL

Can you stop?

ALEX

What?

CAROL

Acting like a normal person. I know you're not one.

ALEX

I'll let that one go. So, an exercise from the failing New York Times?

CAROL

You sound brainless when you parrot things like that.

ALEX

Thanks for the note, scamp. Looking forward to getting to know you.

CAROL

It's from a real study, the New York Times didn't write this, a psychologist did. Arthur Aron from Stony Brook.

ALEX

So you admit the reporting at the Times is flawed-

CAROL

And, like, a team. I just think, maybe, if we can get a little closer, get to know each other better, we can work this out.

ALEX

You should really just kill me.

CAROL

I don't see that happening. Question 1. "Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?"

ALEX

Whom?

CAROL

Well?

ALEX

You first. It's your experiment. Maybe you can make me fall in love with you.

CAROL

I just want you to see me as- ok. I guess... Barack Obama.

ALEX

Oh, blow me.

CAROL

It's true! He's got a great energy. You wouldn't want to have dinner with Barack Obama?

ALEX

No!

What's your answer? CAROL

Dead or alive? ALEX

Sure. CAROL

Adolf Hitler. ALEX

Fuck you. CAROL

Let's do this without judging each other, please, Carol. ALEX

It's not going to work if you don't take it seriously. CAROL

I am taking it seriously. ALEX

Fine. Yours is Adolf Hitler, mine is Barack Obama. CAROL

The man had some great ideas. ALEX

You are a walking booger. CAROL

Actually, I'm a tied up booger, at the moment. ALEX
(beat)

The four of us at Nobu would be quite the sight.

Right. 2. "Would you like to be famous? In what way?" CAROL

I am famous and I'd like to be famous in exactly the way I am. When my followers hear about this... you'll never sleep again. ALEX

CAROL

I don't sleep now. You don't want to be more famous?

ALEX

I'd love to be more powerful. Not necessarily more famous. Your turn.

CAROL

No. I want to hide. I never want to be seen again.

ALEX

Bullshit. Everyone wants to be famous, most of all journalists.

CAROL

Maybe I did once, not anymore.

ALEX

You love playing the victim, don't you?

CAROL

I'm not playing the victim, I am the victim!

ALEX

Then why am I the one duct taped to a chair?

CAROL

Touché.