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The Old Mulberry Tree

David Lazoff

My name is... John. I am 31 years old, and I have the most beautiful wife in the world.

Her name is Shannon, and she smells like hand soap... I like hand soap.

Shannon and I have been married for 8 years now, and we have a son named Steven.

I love my family and our home here in Oklahoma, but there's one thing I love more than all of that put together... the old mulberry tree.

As Jonathan Patton once said, "You have to see it to believe it, unless you make belief out of the unseen." Meet John. John suffers from Alzheimer's, and often forgets major events in his life. Even in forgotten memories we are able to remember... the old mulberry tree.

Every morning I wake up, put on my good socks and boots and I walk outside to smell the morning air, and talk to my best friend. I would tell him about everything, and anything that would happen to me. Who is my best friend? Well, the mulberry tree of course. The doctors say I can't remember too good, so sometimes I will write notes and put them inside the mulberry tree for me to find later.

What happened to Shannon? Shannon is inside cooking dinner, silly, she knows that we men like to eat good on a Sunday. Steve is usually out in the yard playing with his red toy fire truck, sometimes I like to play with him too, but Steve says that I am embarrassing and that I should go read the newspaper or something. I try to, but I get so distracted that I try to make the words into pictures, and then I daydream about those pictures.

Do I remember the accident? What accident? What happened? No, Shannon is okay, okay I tell you! She's inside cooking dinner. Steve? What about Steve? He's probably out in the yard playing. What does August 14th, 1993 mean to me? I don't know... Can you stop with these questions? You are making my head hurt real bad.

Reporter: There are reports that a mentally handicapped man in Gilmore, Oklahoma has hung his wife from the branch of a tree in his front yard, snapped his son's neck and tied him to his mother's body.

Sometimes I like to look at the words and make them into pictures, in my mind I can see the mulberry tree and I start to grab this note from it, but when I touched it, it disappeared.

Then I saw this man who looked like me come out of the house, and he had a rope and crowbar and he walks behind my wife who was picking berries from the mulberry tree and hits her in the back of the head, and ties this rope around her neck and hangs her from the branch that was bare.

Steve was crying and screaming for help and the man walked up and hugged him as he snapped his little neck in two.

That man just stared at me, and walked closer and closer till he whispered into my ear.

He said "You did this; you forgot all about me didn't ya? The little pounding in your head, that was me trying to get out, and look what happened when I did, I did this, isn't it beautiful?"

My name is John, and I am 31 years old. I have the most beautiful wife in the world, and a son named Steven. They both mean the world to me, and I murdered both of them. Why? Because he told me to, but who is he? The Mulberry tree of course, he lives inside of me and I live inside of him. He said we could only stay friends if it were just me and him. So I did it, I killed them, the note right here says so.