

Peter and the Wolf

by [Peter Glassman](#) (January 2024)



Portrait of a Werewolf– Fritz Scholder, 1990

At St. Albans Naval Hospital, Long Island, New York, I was required to run the ER as the JMOOD (Junior Medical Officer of the Day) for one 24-hour period and one full weekend at 1-to 2-month intervals.

LT (JG) Findel was my nurse assistant during one of my weekend assignments. “Dr. Glassman, two marine MPs are here with a prisoner for a brig physical.”

A serious Marine MP Sergeant stared at me, “Sir, we have this three striper Army sergeant for brig physical examination.” The boyish 27-year-old Army sergeant was in handcuffs and leg irons joined together by a system of shiny chrome chains.

I read the report, “He was arrested in Central Park for chasing and biting people?”

The shackled man spoke, “Sir, I was walking in Central Park. I don’t recall contact with any civilians, least of all biting them.”

The MP grimaced, “Dr. Glassman, he must have this brig physical, Sir.”

It was a military requirement that all pre-jailed soldiers undergo a physical examination before incarceration. St. Albans was the only New York Military Hospital within the City’s borders. The prisoner’s name was Darryl Wolfson. He seemed intelligent and cooperative—not the biting kind. I motioned Corpswave Trask to assist me with Wolfson.

The MP glared, “I would not remove the restraints, Sir. It took four of us to contain this guy when the NYPD gave him to us. If we remove the cuffs and chains, he becomes your problem—we leave.”†

The Marines complied after I signed the transfer documents. They removed their prisoner's (now my patient's) restraints. Wolfson readily agreed to this and the Brig physical. I would have to admit him to our locked psychiatry ward.

Wolfson stripped down to his shorts for my examination. The City's MPs had gone. As I listened to Wolfson's chest, a loud sound hurt my ears. I looked up at him. His heavily muscled body was sweating. The previous whites of his eyes were now injected with dilating blood vessels. He was breathing heavily, salivating, and emitting a guttural growl.

Nurse Findel ran into the room. "Owooooooo," Wolfson let out a piercing howl. "Oh my God! What's happening? What do you want me to do, Dr. Glassman?"

"Call our MPs. Call security."

"Owooooooo," Wolfson charged at me. I ducked under an exam table and dove under the curtain into the next exam cubicle. He tore down the curtain and picked up a metal stool. I ran to the main hall and back into an adjacent ER room with Wolfson in pursuit.

"Sir, what can I do? My God!" Findel was near panic. Corpswave Trask hid under a desk.

I had to get help and shouted, "Draw up 150 mg of Thorazine." I disappeared back into the ER exam room with Wolfson dripping secretions, his hair wild, and his undershorts clinging to his sweaty pelvis.

"Our MPs are here. Security is here," Findel announced while drawing up the Thorazine.

"Have them grab this guy. He's going to bite me for God's sake!"

Nearly all of our MPs and security people were former patients and combat Vietnam returnees. They were impressed into our MP

service while awaiting back-to-duty orders.

Three St. Albans security MPs pounced on Wolfson as he chased me in and out of the ER treatment rooms.

“Owooooooo,” Wolfson dislodged two and carried one MP on his back as he resumed his pursuit of trying to eat my body.

Findel shouted, “I have the 150 mg of Thorazine drawn up.”

I passed her in the hall with Wolfson and the attached MP only a few feet behind. “Inject the damn thing right through his shorts. Hurry, I can’t keep this up all night.”

She knelt and wielded the Thorazine syringe like she was stabbing a mortal enemy.

“Hey, that hurts.” The clinging MP shouted. He got the full load into the back of his thigh. The next time around the MP let go of Wolfson as the Thorazine turned him into a sleeping rubber mannequin. The other two MPs pulled their man into an empty room.

“I’ll get another dose ready,” Findel shouted.

I looked over my shoulder. Without the added weight of the MP to slow him down, Wolfson was gaining. He threw the stool away. I had only three more laps left in me. Flash bulbs went off. Someone was taking pictures of this—damn.

Findel found new courage, “Okay, I’m going to give it another go.” She latched onto Wolfson’s boxer shorts.

Wolfson turned around. His shorts were now around his thighs but Findel wasn’t letting go. Wolfson’s muscular bare butt was her target. She rammed the 18 gauge needled syringe to its hub and injected the Thorazine. “Owooooooo.” Wolfson’s howl began to decrease in amplitude. He moved slowly, like someone trying to run through invisible quicksand. He finally lay on the floor with red eyes, dripping saliva, and noisy respirations.

My lungs were on fire. I was sweating as much as Wolfson and bent down to check him out.

“Findel, have our MPs get a straitjacket on him.” I looked up at my heroic nurse. Her cap was gone, her hair all over the place, her face flushed, but she had the look of victory as she held up a straitjacket.

†

When I got home after weekend duty, my wife told me she had already heard about “Peter and the Wolf” as the hospital rumor mill had named it.

†

I was again JMOOD and in the ER another weekend a month later. Corpswave Trask was also on duty.

At 10 PM a patient from the minimum care unit arrived with his ward corpsman. Trask alerted me to his abdominal pain complaint. Belly pain could be anything from food poisoning to appendicitis. I questioned and examined the patient.

“I don’t know doc. I was asleep and had a sudden sharp pain near my belly button.” He clutched his midsection.

The only physical finding was tenderness and redness above his navel. I got lab results and an x-ray. Nothing was diagnostic. “I’ll check you again in the morning.”

At midnight, another minimum care unit patient was escorted with the same complaint. Again I could only find a reddened area above his umbilicus.

At 2 AM a third patient appeared. This time the history was a little different and frightening. The soldier had been sleeping with a sheet pulled over his head, Vietnam anti-mosquito style like the others, when he felt the sudden onset of sharp pain in his “mid-tummy”.

"Was there anything else you remember at the time you experienced the pain—anything at all?"

"Oh, yeah Doc, there was one thing. I heard a howling noise. It was like a dog wailing and baying. It seemed so real it almost woke me up, and then I had the pain."

Trask and I looked at his abdomen with open mouths. Trask spoke my thoughts. "Teeth marks, you were bitten soldier. Those are human bite marks." She turned to me, "Sir, it's 'Peter and the wolf,' again." She covered her mouth and looked at me. "Oops. Sorry, Sir, but it must be him—Sergeant Wolfson. He's on the loose."

"Trask, call psychiatry and have them do a bed check for Wolfson. And look outside. Tell me if you see the moon."

She complied, "Sir, the moon is full, and Wolfson has escaped the locked nut ward."

I called security. "Remember that werewolf crazy from last month? He's on the minimum care unit biting patients. Find him and call me. I'll come with the sedation."

"What next, sir?" Trask was excited and not fearful this time.

"When security calls back we're going down there with 150 mg of Thorazine—two doses in case we need a spare like last time."

We immobilized Wolfson in a plastic surgery minimum care ward. Wolfson was in a clean uniform with his hair frizzed up, sweat marks on his chest and under his arms, and the whites of his eyes were bright red again. His adrenalin was at an attack level. Wolfson was growling, spitting, dripping saliva, and snapping his jaws.

"Trask, hand me the syringe." I plunged the needle right through his uniform pants into his bottom. Within two minutes Wolfson melted into limp, doughy submission, and his

straitjacketed torso was strapped onto a gurney. Somehow, Wolfson had managed to get hold of his uniform and walked out with the visitors from his ward.

†

It's now been 39 years later. I'll never forget Army Sgt. Darryl Wolfson and my brief brush with him as a psychiatrist-diagnosed lycanthrope* patient.

*Lycanthrope: mental disorder in which the patient believes that he is a wolf.

This story is an excerpt from my short story collection, US Naval Hospital.

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