

"WHAT ABOUT BOB"

By

Tom Schulman

FADE IN:

BABY STEPS SCENE

Bob Wiley enters the office of Dr. Leo Marvin.

BOB

Thank you for working me in.

HANDSHAKE. BOB PROTECTS HIMSELF WITH A HANDKERCHIEF.

DR. MARVIN

Hello.

BOB

Should I call you Dr. Marvin, or Leo?

DR. MARVIN

Whichever you like.

BOB

Call me Bob.

DR. MARVIN

Bob.

BOB

Is that your family?

DR. MARVIN

Yes.

BOB

Oh, wait. Let me guess. I'm very good at this. Uh, that's Harriet, and then Ronnie, Gretchen, and Rita. Uh, wait, wait a second, uh, Cecelia, Dorothy, and this is Kenneth, and Bambi.

DR. MARVIN

This is my son Sigmund, and my wife Faye, and my Daughter Anna, and that's my sister Lily.

BOB

Lily, I was close. It's a beautiful family.

DR. MARVIN

Thank you. Have a seat.

THEY SIT DOWN. AFTER A PAUSE DR. MARVIN INDICATES FOR BOB TO START.

BOB

Why don't I start, huh? The simplest way to put it, I have problems. I worry about diseases, so I have trouble touching things. In public places it's almost impossible. I have a real big problem moving.

DR. MARVIN

Talk about, "moving."

BOB

As long as I'm in my apartment I'm okay. But when I wanna go out I get, "weird."

DR. MARVIN

Talk about "weird."

BOB

Talk about "weird." Well, I get dizzy spells, nausea, cold sweats, hot sweats, fever blisters, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, blurred vision, involuntary trembling, dead hands, numb lips, fingernail sensitivity, pelvic discomfort.

DR. MARVIN

So the real question is, "What is the crisis, Bob?" "What is it that you are truly afraid of?"

BOB

What if my heart stops beating? What if I'm looking for a bathroom, I can't find it, and my bladder explodes? Have you ever heard of Tourette Syndrome?

DR MARVIN

Mhmm.

BOB

Involuntarily shouting profanity?

DR MARVIN

It's exceptionally rare.

BOB

Shit it ain't, son of a bitch! Bastard! Douche bag! Twat! Numb nuts! Dick Head! Bitch!

DR. MARVIN

Why exactly are you doing this?

BOB

If I fake it then I don't have it. You know it's the same with the cardiac arrest-

BOB FAKES A CARDIAC ARREST AND COLLAPSES ON THE FLOOR

DR. MARVIN

Are you married?

BOB

I'm divorced.

DR. MARVIN

Would you like to talk about that?

BOB

There are two types of people in this world: those who like Neil Diamond, and those who don't. My ex wife loves him.

DR. MARVIN

I see. So what you're saying is that even though you are an almost paralyzed multi-phobic personality that is in a constant state of panic, your wife did not leave you, you left her because she liked Neil Diamond.

BOB

Now, you're saying that maybe, maybe I didn't leave her because she likes Neil Diamond, but maybe, maybe she left me?

DR. MARVIN

Yes.

BOB

Ow, Ow... Ow! Ow, Ow. [DEEP BREATH] Dr. Marvin, you can help me. For the first time in my life I feel like there's hope. I feel like I can be somebody.

DR. MARVIN

Bob, there's an old saying that the best psychiatrist in the world is the one right inside of you.

BOB

Yeah.

DR. MARVIN

I can help you. Yes.

BOB

Thank you.

DR. MARVIN

Bob, there is a groundbreaking new book that has just come out, ah! Now, not everything in this book, of course, applies to you, but I'm sure that you can see when you see the title exactly how it could help.

BOB

Baby Steps?

DR. MARVIN

It means setting small reasonable goals for yourself one day at a time, one tiny step at a time.

BOB

Baby Steps.

DR. MARVIN

For instance, when you leave this office, don't think about everything you have to do in order to get out of the building just think of what you must do to get out of this room. And when you get to the hall, deal with that hall, and so forth. You see?

BOB

Baby Steps.

DR. MARVIN

Baby Steps.

BOB

Oh, boy! Baby Steps, Baby Steps. Baby steps through the office. Baby Steps out the door.

BOB EXITS

BOB RE ENTERS

BOB

[To Dr. Marvin] It works. [To secretary outside] It works. All I have to do is take one little step at a time, and I can do anything. Baby steps around the office. Baby steps around the office.

DR. MARVIN

That should give you a lot to digest while I'm on vacation.

BOB

V- Vacation?

DR. MARVIN

Oh, certainly my secretary told you. As of this afternoon, I'm taking my family on vacation until Labor Day.

BOB

That's a month. What if I need you? What if I need to talk?

DR. MARVIN

Well, my associate, Dr. Harmon would be happy to talk. And Bob, I'll be back. Just read Baby Steps.

BOB

Baby steps, out of the office..

DR. MARVIN

Very good.

BOB

Baby steps, to the hall..

DR. MARVIN

Very good, Bob, keep going.

BOB OPENS THE DOOR

DR. MARVIN

That's it. Bye! I'll see you in a month.

BOB

Baby steps to the elevator. Baby steps to  
the elevator.

DOOR CLOSES BEHIND BOB

DR. MARVIN PICKS UP VOICE RECORDER

DR. MARVIN

July 31st, Bob Wiley, introductory  
interview: multi-phobic personality,  
characterized by acute separation anxiety,  
and extreme need for family connections.  
Bill the usual rate for the interview, and  
\$29.95 for the book.