

STONE EYES

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FADE IN:

EXT. SYDNEY - DAY

CU - HARBOUR BRIDGE

The following montage plays in fast forward.

Images of PEOPLE:

- A) Working - all kinds of jobs (indoors and outdoors);
- B) In cars, boats, buses and trains;
- C) Swimming, surfing, sunning it at the beach;
- D) Falling out of bars, drunk;
- E) Sitting, sullenly, with family at Christmas.

ROBERT (V.O.)
(a soft, gravelly
voice)

We rush through every day looking forward to a weekend, a holiday, a night out, or anything that might constitute an escape from our monotonous routines. Some of us dread work. Some of us live to work. We sweat over a family function, a trip, a journey, even Christmas dinner. We wish away time, and most of us fail to notice anything new in a day. We blink away seconds without really seeing.

THE HUMAN EYE

Every detail can be seen in the blue iris. The pupil alters in size, ominously, given such an extreme close-up.

As the rest of the voice over is articulated, we pass through the pupil and begin a journey through the workings of the eye. From the retina to the optic nerve, right up until contact with the brain, when light becomes image. At this point the image shifts perspective to that of one from the eye as it looks through the viewfinder of a camera. The eye blinks. The shutter snaps closed and then open. A photograph is taken.

ROBERT (V.O.)
What if what you are looking at
right now was to be your last
image, view, sight, or your final
optical vista in life?
(MORE)

ROBERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Your eyes snap shut, capturing that image like a photograph. The image sets to become a still image that never shifts from your memory, and all you saw before that just backs up to it like the annuals of a life of family albums in recorded motion. What you see from this point on can only be an assumption of an image, a collage built from the fabrics of what used to design your perspective. Your pictures will be built out of what others say, what you taste, touch, hear and smell. Color will be no more than a memory. Frightening.

EXT. ROCKS - OCEAN - EARLY MORNING

SUPER: Australia, 1975.

A light mist lingers above the water, though SURFERS are clearly visible. Such conditions, along with the possibility of shark attacks, give the whole vista an eerie semblance.

Freelance photographer ROBERT STEPHENS (late 20s) stands back from his tripod mounted SLR camera. He's ruggedly handsome, with a scar above his left eye, and has magnetic blue eyes. The moment keeps him and he maintains his gaze toward the ocean.

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

A surfer, SURFER 1, snaps out of his straddle, lies on the board and paddles. As the water bulges he paddles harder, and harder. Almost about to be lifted out of the water and in time with the wave rearing its head, he pops up and drops down the face of the wave.

Good conditions, good waves. Surfer 1 rides along the wave before pulling out and dropping back into calm water and straddling his board once again.

The mist slowly clears. In the b.g. Robert is on the rocks taking pictures of the surf.

EXT. BEACH CAR PARK - SAME

A surfboard leans against a battered old station wagon, next to which Robert finishes getting suited up. He grabs the board and jogs down to the shore.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

AMANDA STEPHENS (late 20s), Robert's high school sweetheart and wife, is stressed. She's elegant and dressed in a suit. She paces the room.

AMANDA

Bloody hell.

She slaps her hands on the sideboard.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Damn you Robert.

She leans with both hands on the sideboard and closes her eyes.

AMY STEPHENS (4 years old) appears in the doorway in her pyjamas. Suffering from a heavy cold, she looks like a ghost.

AMY

Mommy?

Amanda's eyes snap open and she instantaneously moves over and crouches down to her daughter.

Lifting her up.

AMANDA

Hey sweetie. You should be in bed.

She walks out of the room with Amy in her arms.

AMY (O.S.)

Will you lie with me?

AMANDA (O.S.)

Until daddy comes, then I have to go out.

EXT. DRIVE - STEPHENS' HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Robert pulls in. He rushes into the house.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Sweetie. Hello? Manda?

INT. STEPHENS' HOUSE - AMY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Amy is asleep in bed. Amanda lies curled up, on top of the bed covers, also lost to slumber.

Robert peers in. He walks over and touches Amanda's shoulder. She stirs, looks at him from the fringes of sleep, softly for a moment, and then quickly snaps wide-awake. She gets up quickly, though careful not to alarm Amy. She leads Robert out of the room.

INT. STEPHENS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Amanda stands, hands on hips, and faces Robert. The ensuing, somewhat heated, conversation goes on in a strained low volume.

ROBERT

What?

Before she can answer.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(remembers;
regretful)

Shit. I'm-

Amanda cuts him off venomously.

AMANDA

Sorry? That word is starting to get on my nerves.

ROBERT

I forgot-

She interjects before he finishes his sentence.

AMANDA

That word too.

ROBERT

Come on Manda, I, you knew I had to take photographs.

AMANDA

You don't have to do anything, you're freelance.

Robert cuts in.

ROBERT

(defensively)

I have deadlines, I have contracts-

AMANDA

You don't have one now though?

ROBERT

I...

AMANDA

Which is why I had an interview today Robert. I need to start work again. We need money.

She takes a breath. Robert is lost for words.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Surfing?

Robert nods.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You have a child Robert. We have a mortgage and bills to pay. You can't live like some beach bum. It's either me or you. If I don't work it's you back teaching.

ROBERT

I can do it if you want?

AMANDA

You hate it. You knew Amy was ill. You knew I had to be out this morning. Is it that difficult? Just once? Sacrifice your impulses for us. It's not like I'm asking you to give them up. Just work with me Robert.

She picks up her handbag and turns to leave.

ROBERT

Where are you going?

AMANDA

Hopefully, I still have a chance.

She stops to look at him a moment.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(a wry smile)

Sometimes it feels like I'm living with two kids, you know?

He smirks. She walks out.

ROBERT

Good luck.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

A group of BOYS (20s) shoot hoops. One boy, DARYL BRODIE, stands out thanks to a curiously attractive combination of red hair, blue eyes and dark skin.

He is 21 years old and has Irish/ Aborigine roots. He turns, shoots, and scores. Weasel faced and lanky PHIL LONDON (20) isn't amused.

As Daryl jogs back from the basket Phil barges into him.

PHIL

Watch it.

Daryl drops him a look.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Tough guy.

He walks after Daryl and pushes Daryl in the back. Daryl lurches forward. He gathers himself and turns to look back at the court, ready for the game to resume. Calm. Phil faces up to him.

DARYL

What?

PHIL

You scared?

DARYL

Of what?

PHIL

Bloody freak.

DARYL

Fuck you.

PHIL

Fuck me? Fuck you, and when I'm done I'll fuck your mother.

Looks back at his team-mates with a smug grin.

PHIL (CONT'D)

(to Daryl)

What you got to say abo-

Before Phil can complete his insult, Daryl throws one, two, three punches in quick succession. Boxer sharpness. Phil is sent crashing to the ground. The rest of the boys quickly pile in, some with Daryl, others against him. Fists fly, boots land, blood spills. In amongst all the chaos Phil lies sprawled out, unconscious.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Two sun-beaten burly detectives, CREED (30s) and MEARS (40s), sit across the table from Daryl. Daryl has a thick lip and a bloody eyebrow.

CREED

You broke the kid's jaw, cheekbone
and left him with concussion, not
to mention any of the other poor
bastards you managed to clip.

Daryl looks about the room.

DARYL

Don't you offer cigarettes and
coffee to people in here?

CREED

We're not on TV, mate.

DARYL

Just as well I don't drink the shit
or smoke then isn't it, mate?

CREED

Tough guy?

DARYL

Not particularly.

MEARS

You box? Karate?

DARYL

I know how to look after myself.

MEARS

No shit.

CREED

You seem like a good kid, under
that sinking bravado you got going
right now.

Daryl shrugs.

MEARS

(glancing at the
paperwork)

Good kid maybe, but this isn't your
first time either. Similar incident
to this one, and a graffiti charge.

DARYL

That was an art project.

Daryl stares at Mears.

MEARS

Not what it says here.

DARYL
(baiting Mears)
And what do you say?

MEARS
Graffiti's graffiti.

Daryl sits back with a rye smile on his face.

DARYL
Right.

Creed gestures a 'what the fuck' to his partner, who simply shrugs.

MEARS
He's a fucking wise guy.

Daryl sits calmly.

CREED
(to Daryl)
So you like art. Drawing? Painting?

DARYL
What? You my psychologist now?

MEARS
Do you have one?

DARYL
Do you?

To Daryl.

CREED
Why did you do it?

DARYL
Why did I do what?

MEARS
Stop being so fucking insolent,
kid.

DARYL
Am I getting to you?

MEARS
(smiles)
No.

DARYL
Tell me when I am then you'll know
why I threw the punch.

CREED

Do you want us to call anyone, your folks?

Daryl clenches his jaw, before grinning.

MEARS

Fuck me, kid. Just make it easy on yourself.

DARYL

Fuck my mother, he said.

MEARS

You kick the shit out of him for that?

DARYL

Don't have a mother.

He looks at Creed.

DARYL (CONT'D)

And as for calling someone, don't have a father either. So anybody insults me by saying they're going to fuck either of them and I'll kick the shit out of them. Happy?

Creed looks over the paperwork.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Cancer, both. Luck isn't shy when it partners bad.

CREED

I'm sorry.

DARYL

Why? It's not your fault.

MEARS

Still doesn't justify what you did. And you won't avoid prison this time.

DARYL

I guess I'm the one who should feel sorry then?

Mears stands and leaves the room. Daryl stares blankly at the table. Creed watches him.

CREED

I get that it's difficult, Daryl. Hell, I probably would have done the same, if I was in your shoes. But that doesn't mean it's right.

DARYL

I know.

CREED

I'd like to give you a chance.

DARYL

But you can't?

CREED

Do you know who the guy you beat on was?

DARYL

I just go down there to play. Sometimes I've seen the people before, sometimes there are some new faces. Never played with this guy so just heard his name on the court. London, or some shit like that. A nickname, maybe.

CREED

Philip London. He comes from a pretty prominent, well-to-do family and from what I know of them, they're likely to press charges.

Daryl nods, takes a deep breath and appears lost in the moment.

CREED (CONT'D)

Sorry mate.

Mears returns with two cups of coffee. He sits down, laying one in front of Creed and sipping the other.

MEARS

Sorry mate, you said you didn't drink the shit.

Daryl smiles.

DARYL

Do you really mean it?

MEARS

What?

DARYL

Reckon 'sorry' should be redefined as a vague sentimental reflex to an awkward or failing situation. An empty gesture.

MEARS

What are you talking about?

Creed smiles to himself.

DARYL
Overused words. Toilet words. But
then you probably know plenty about
them, don't you?

Mears looks at Creed. Creed shrugs and sips his own coffee.

DARYL (CONT'D)
What are my chances?

CREED
You'll serve time.

Beat.

DARYL
(to Mears)
Is it true what they say?

MEARS
About bull queers?

Creed glares at Mears.

CREED
(to Daryl)
Don't think about that shit.

DARYL
(to Mears)
About men like you upholding the
law, because you haven't got the
balls to break it.

Mears lunges for Daryl, knocking him off his chair, as
Creed piles in to separate them.

EXT. SYDNEY - SYDNEY HOSPITAL - EARLY EVENING

The sun has just set, leaving the city bask in its
afterglow.

Hospital lights glow in the f.g.

Ambulances come and go. HOSPITAL PERSONNEL scurry about
their business. PATIENTS wander in, others are led in, and
some are carried in.