

116 Seconds

A Public Service Announcement

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"People who treat other people as less than human must not be surprised when the bread they have cast on the waters comes floating back to them, poisoned."

- James Baldwin

EXT. CAL ANDERSON PARK - BOBBY MORRIS PLAYFIELD - MORNING

A windy, overcast summer sunrise on Capitol Hill.

KYLE - a young, unsheltered, Deaf Black man - sits with his elderly dog, DIEGO.

There's no sound or audio. We hear nothing.

Kyle scratches Diego's head and Diego smiles up at him.

EDGAR - an old Latino man, also Deaf and houseless - SCURRIES into frame, eyes wide and frantic, his face glazed with fear.

(They use Sign Language to communicate, which is subtitled.)

EDGAR
the police

KYLE
what

EDGAR
police are here

INSIDE HIS TENT

Kyle clumsily takes inventory of his belongings and dwindling supplies. With calloused hands, he wistfully feels the tent's canvas, silently absorbing his modest surroundings, clinging tightly to a squandering sense of comfort.

Diego SNIFFS the air. Anxiously wags his tail.

Kyle peers through the tent's mesh window--

Across the Playfield: BIKE COPS crudely cruise onto the synthetic turf, instantly provoking PROTESTERS. RIOT COPS march together, forming a dense wall - their unified front - arrogantly brandishing wooden riot-sticks for "protection".

Unnerved, Kyle hastily begins stuffing his belongings into a sweat-stained pillowcase: his tattered copy of a James Baldwin book, some unused AAA batteries, travel-size shampoo, mismatched socks, makeshift dog toys--

Edgar's head pops into the tent.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
they say we have two minutes

ON THE PLAYFIELD

Total zoo; apocalyptic; *Book of Revelations*.

Kyle and Edgar struggle to deconstruct their tent amidst the COMMOTION. Rain falls from the darkened charcoal sky.

PROTESTERS vehemently argue with COPS - and are immediately met with EXCESSIVE FORCE and PEPPER SPRAY - which mushrooms into MORE CHAOS - PUSHING & GRABBING & SNATCHING & PULLING - the tent COLLAPSES - PEOPLE get TRAMPLED.

Diego starts BARKING. **No sound.**

EDGAR (CONT'D)
(in Sign Language)
let's go let's go let's go

Kyle closely follows - clutching his pillowcase - his belongings hugged tightly against his chest - his sunken, sullen eyes frantically scanning the entirety of the park--

To his left: a RIOT COP SHATTERS a FEMALE PROTESTER'S TEETH with his riot-stick, RIPS down her Covid-mask, and TEARGASSES her into oblivion.

WHIP PAN to REVEAL: a group of BIKE COPS SMASHING and STOMPING - LAUGHING, HIGH-FIVING - BEATING and TAUNTING a defenseless TRANS PROTESTER who cowers on the concrete, huddled in the fetal position, SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER

but we cannot hear a word.

Kyle GAGS. COUGHS. He looks *violently* ill.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
(in Sign Language)
keep walking keep walking ke--

Without warning, Edgar is SNATCHED with brute force by a crew of PLAIN-CLOTHES HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICERS who grind Edgar into the ground, binding his wrists with Zip-Ties - making it impossible for him to continue communicating with Kyle.

Edgar's face becomes stained with PURE TERROR as the OFFICERS haul him into an UNMARKED VAN and SLIDE the door SHUT as the van SQUEALS into oncoming traffic--

Kyle backs away - disillusioned - *gravely ill now* - the whole world spinning and spiraling and crumbling beneath him...

He reaches out for Diego...

But there is no dog.

Maybe there never was one.

Kyle frantically scours the park - dazed by the brutality - terrified by his once-familiar surroundings - disheartened by the depravity - shell-shocked by the military response, the tank-like vehicles and war machines - SMOKE CANISTERS being DEPLOYED - glimpses of '99 WTO - shades of '02 Mardi Gras - shots from '17 Charlottesville - hatred unfolding for future generations.

The city unraveling right before our eyes - Kyle's crying now - frantically searching for Diego - his best friend - his entire life - his everything - dissolving - vanishing in real-time - melting away - his tears, like the rain, flowing harder now.

Kyle squeezes his eyes shut and silently starts to mumble PRAYERS but BUMPS into the barrel-chest of a RIOT OFFICER armed with a PELLET GUN - already YELLING and SHOUTING MUTED THREATS--

Kyle desperately attempts to plead that he's Deaf - but it's too late - it doesn't matter - it won't change anything - the Officer has already leveled his weapon - has already taken these actions as a threat - has already aimed his pistol point-blank at Kyle's horrified face, his FOREFINGER flirting with the curve of the stiff trigger as we abruptly--

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK FRAME

Silence.

THE END.