

HEROES

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FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

It's the end of the day and the lot's filling up quickly. Parents pass by, all heading to

EXT. MEADOWBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

An American flag flies out front of the one story, brick building. School buses lined in a row near the baseball diamond. Behind that is a playground.

INT. RED SUV - DAY

DAVID GONZALES (34), rubs a hand through his short-cropped hair. Still in his work uniform, he sits behind the wheel of the idling car talking on his cell.

DAVID

Yeah. I'm here right now...

(yawns)

No, I'm not gonna fall asleep... Oh, don't be silly. I'm not gonna forget to pick up our son.

Through the windshield, he spots a MAN as he passes by -- dark clothes, black boots, and a long bulky overcoat.

The man turns, looks directly at David.

DAVID

So, you're gonna be at the pool or does he have hockey tonight?

A gust of wind and the man's coat opens briefly. The muzzle of a rifle makes a brief but unmistakable appearance, then is quickly tucked back in.

DAVID

(trails off)

Yeah, yeah... I'll meet you there...

David doesn't shut off the phone, just drops it on the floor.

The man disappears behind a truck as David blindly fumbles for the door handle.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

David's legs feel weak. He palms the hood of the car for support. The wind whips his face, blows a tear down his cheek.

The man in the overcoat is thirty yards away, heading towards the school and no one seems to notice.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE

A WOMAN waits with her hand on the front door. A BUZZER sounds, she opens it.

PARKING LOT

Overcoat man sees her, quickens his pace. He's close.

David tries to run but stumbles. He falls to his knees, scrapes his hands along the pavement. He recovers and takes off once more, legs like noodles.

Adrenaline kicks in. He speeds up, determined, never taking his eyes off...

... The overcoat man as he cuts across the grass where the flagpole is, up onto the walk to the

SCHOOL ENTRANCE

The woman who got buzzed in enters. The door is closing fast.

The muzzle of a rifle wedges in at the last second.

A gloved hand swings the door wide. Overcoat man enters.

PARKING LOT

David watches. His legs do not betray him again as he quickly gathers speed.

The front door slowly starts to close.

David, heart POUNDING in his ears, GROANS painfully as the first semi-automatic SHOTS ring out.

People turn. Someone SCREAMS. Confusion.

He cuts across the lawn, up the walk to the

ENTRANCE

His hand stops the door just before it closes. He throws it open and steps inside.

INT. MEADOWBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

His eyes dart around. He sees no one, nothing, except a BANNER on the wall that proclaims --

"OUR FUTURES ARE BRIGHT!"

Then it all comes clear... Blood streaked across the floor lead to the crumpled body of the woman who just entered.

A MAN in a suit sprawled out next to her.

POP, POP, POP! to the right, down the hall. The gunman takes aim, fires his weapon at a terrified WOMAN.

WOMAN

No... No!

She hits the floor. Muffled SCREAMS from everywhere, doors SLAM shut.

David spots the gunman before he disappears down a corridor -- just a quick flash of black and another *POP!*

A bullet WHIZZES past David's ear.

Another WOMAN lies on the floor, blood soaked and choking, shot in the neck. Her mouth opens and closes, like a fish out of water gasping for air.

He steps around her.

His back to David, the gunman now fifteen feet away... ten... five...

He whirls around -- clean shaven, boyish in appearance. Dark circles under his glazed, soulless eyes as if he hasn't slept in a week.

He raises the rifle as David pounces. The two men struggle. David grips the barrel of the gun. He can't free it away. A shot blast into the ceiling.

David strikes him in the mouth as another shot shatters the window of an office.

He hits him again and again until his jaw rattles loose. Two bloody teeth CLINK as they hit the floor.

His face twisted and swollen, the gunman kicks David back with a sharp blow from his boot.

From his knees, David reaches out to make one last desperate attempt for the rifle and...

POP!

David's eyes blink with the deafening REPORT. He doesn't realize he's been hit, but the hole in his chest speaks otherwise.

He looks incredulously at his wound, then slowly glances up and --

A bloody finger squeezes a trigger, a recoil...

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. DARK VOID

David sits up in a midnight blackness that has no shape. A nothingness with no walls for sound to bounce off, no floor to walk on.

Yet, *something* of substance is present in the dark.

Too confused to speak, too alone to feel afraid, he reaches for his chest. The wounds he'd incurred, seemingly moments ago, have all but disappeared.

He rises, steps forward and begins an endless march down a long tunnel of black nothingness.

After a while, in the distance... someone, or something, approaches. Blurry and small, alien-like.

Disjointed pieces mesh together until they reveal a human form, ambling closer.

Recognition replaces confusion. David watches as LEONARD (6), comes into view. He touches his son on the cheek as a bittersweet smile appears on his face.

LEONARD

Hi, Daddy.

DAVID

Hey, buddy. Oh, I missed you. I missed you so much.

LEONARD

I missed you, too.

He kisses David on the cheek.

DAVID

But, how'd you know I was here?

LEONARD

I didn't. I just...knew.

DAVID

Your friends from school? Are they here, too?

LEONARD

Yep. But, they went on ahead. I told them I had to find you first.

DAVID

Len, I... I don't think you're supposed to be here. I was supposed to come pick you up.

Leonard quietly shakes his head.

DAVID

Maybe... Maybe if I focus real hard I can send you back. You know? Back with Mommy, and Julia...

David shuts his eyes tight, scrunches his face.

LEONARD

(giggles)

You look silly.

DAVID

Then I guess we are supposed to be here.

Leonard nods, takes his father's hand, and together they continue on through the tunnel.

LEONARD

Are we ghosts, daddy?

David considers this.

DAVID

I don't feel like a ghost. What do you think?

Leonard pinches his arm.

LEONARD

I feel real to me.

DAVID

(laughs)

Yeah, me too.

LEONARD

Daddy?

DAVID

Yes?

LEONARD

Can we go back and haunt Mommy and Julia? You know, not scary like, but... Maybe sweep the floor for her. Or help her out.

David smiles.

DAVID

I don't know. I don't even know if we can do that. We might scare them.

LEONARD

Oh, I don't wanna scare them.

DAVID

Yeah. Your mother might get freaked out if she saw a broom sweeping the kitchen all by itself.

LEONARD

Because she wouldn't be able to see us...

DAVID

Right.

They march a bit further in silence until, ahead of them, a LIGHT appears. A great light, burning brightly with swirling rainbow colors at its core, pushing the darkness away.

DAVID

(points)

You see that?

LEONARD

Yeah. I think that's where we're supposed to go.

DAVID

I think you're right.

The light gets brighter until the darkness has all but disappeared. They stop.

LEONARD

What's on the other side?

DAVID

I don't know. Maybe... Maybe something beautiful.

LEONARD

Daddy, pick me up.

David does so.

DAVID

What's the matter? You scared?

Leonard shakes his head.

LEONARD

No. I just wanted you to pick me up.

David kisses Leonard on the forehead, smiles.

DAVID

Okay.

They step in.

FADE OUT.