

PLAY DEAD
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The deserted street of an abandoned town. DEBRIS litters the empty sidewalks.

A few VEHICLES have been left behind, parked at odd angles. Their doors left open, as if vacated in a hurry.

MAN (V.O.)
When the civilized world came to an
end, it happened fast.

The town is eerily silent. Only a light breeze.

MAN (V.O.) (cont'd)
The virus spread like a bush fire,
and by the time people realized what
it was, it was too late.

All the STOREFRONT WINDOWS have been smashed in and their contents looted.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Litter blows through the vacant forecourt. The words "NO GAS" have been sprayed on the windows.

A SKELETON sits propped up against a gas pump. All the flesh has been stripped from its frame.

MAN (V.O.)
In every city and every country
people died in record numbers. It was
a global pandemic. The end of mankind
as we knew it.

Suddenly, the sound of FOOTSTEPS. Slow and listless.

MAN (V.O.) (cont'd)
Then the darndest thing happened. The
dead started to rise.

A SHADOW looms over the skeleton and a figure staggers into view... A ZOMBIE.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A GROUP OF THE UNDEAD, all in various states of decay, slowly approach the town.

They shuffle along the street, aimless.

Some wander in and out of buildings. Others weave through the abandoned vehicles.

MAN (V.O.)

It wasn't long before the dead outnumbered the living. The weak went first, and they went fast.

Among the horde is a zombie in a TRAPPER HAT. It shambles off to the side of the street and enters a HARDWARE STORE.

MAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

Only the strongest and smartest were able to survive.

INT - SECOND FLOOR ROOM - DAY

The trapper hat zombie stands by a window that overlooks the street below.

MAN (V.O.)

And that's what I am...

It places a cigarette between its blood stained lips and lights it.

MAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

A survivor.

He takes a long pull on the cigarette and blows out smoke as he watches the parade of walking corpses outside.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A zombie haphazardly shuffles through a narrow alleyway.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)

It didn't take me long to realize that the best way to survive was to blend in.

As it passes a dumpster, Trapper Hat leaps out, tackles it to the floor and STABS a knife into its head, finishing it.

He rips the knife from the creature's skull and uses it to open up its mid-section.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)
That's what separates me from the others. I don't need bullets. I don't need backup. I just do what it takes.

He reaches in, takes two handfuls of blood and innards, smears them over his body and face. Gives himself a fresh coat of gore.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Trapper Hat hobbles out of the hardware store doorway and blends in unnoticed with the other zombies.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
It doesn't take much to outsmart the dead. So long as you move like them, smell like them and sound like them, they're easily fooled.

The horde keeps on moving through the town.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)
The only thing I have to do is keep out of the rain. So long as the shit I cover myself in doesn't get washed away, I'm all good.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The dead have splintered into two groups -- one that keeps to the road, and another that lumbers towards some trees.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
I can't remember the last time I felt warm water on my skin. God knows how long it's been since I brushed my teeth.

Trapper Hat is part of the group headed for the woodland. He keeps on with grim determination.

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

Trapper Hat's group of zombies cross a field. A LARGE BARN is in the near distance.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
Hell, sometimes I think I have more
in common with the dead than I do the
survivors.

INT - ABANDONED BARN - NIGHT

Trapper Hat sits in the darkened barn. A sliver of moonlight creeps in through a crack in the roof, providing the slightest illumination.

He sucks the last breath of life from a cigarette and tosses the butt.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
The only thing that keeps me human is
the memory of what I've lost.

He reaches into his jacket and produces a--

PHOTOGRAPH

Trapper Hat (40), his WIFE (35) and SON (14) in happier times. They smile for the camera in front of a log cabin.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
I shouldn't have left them alone.

EXT - FOREST - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

Trapper Hat walks through the foliage, rifle slung over his shoulder, carrying TWO DEAD RABBITS.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
I tell myself they were weak and
needed food. I tell myself they were
sick and had fevers.

Suddenly, he sees something through the trees. He drops the rabbits and takes off running.

EXT - LOG CABIN - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

The cabin is ENGULFED IN FLAMES, smoke billowing into the orange sky.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
But deep down I know I left them
unarmed.

A DOZEN ZOMBIES stagger around, some drawn to the flames. Several of the dead lie in burning heaps on the floor.

Trapper Hat arrives on the scene, eyes wide in horror. No sign of his wife or son.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)
I know I left them unprotected.

He takes aim with the rifle, GUNS DOWN three approaching zombies, then CLICK! Empty.

A SEVERELY DECOMPOSED ZOMBIE makes a slow lunge for him. He uses the rifle butt to bash it away.

He stares at the burning cabin. Cries out in anguish.

INT - ABANDONED BARN - NIGHT

Trapper Hat wipes a tear from his bloodied cheek. Puts the photo away.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
I did my best to make them strong.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Trapper Hat and his son lie atop a hillside. His son holds a HUNTING RIFLE, his eye pressed to the scope.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
I'd tried to teach my son everything
I knew. Teach him to be a survivor.

RIFLE SCOPE POV

Tracking A DEER that hops through waist-high grass, headed towards a small wooded area.

The deer suddenly stops, startled.

The cross hair moves steadily to the deer's head.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
He just wasn't ready to survive this.

The deer turns and looks directly into the scope.

BLAM!

EXT. STREET - DAY

A ZOMBIE'S head snaps backwards as a bullet explodes through it's skull. The corpse crumples to the ground.

A MOTORBIKE tears down the street carrying TWO SURVIVORS.

THE PASSENGER holds a GLOCK, BLASTING at the dead as they speed past.

BLAM-BLAM! Another zombie is hit in the head.

THE RIDER hoots and hollers as the second corpse falls.

RIDER

You got 'im!

BEHIND AN ABANDONED CAR

Trapper Hat lies motionless on the sidewalk.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)

The first thing I learned after the
shit hit the fan was that the living
were just as dangerous as the dead.

The ROAR of the motorbike and GUNSHOTS in the distance.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)

I've seen them rob, rape, beat and
kill indiscriminately, and without
remorse.

The motorbike gets LOUDER as it nears.

Trapper hat closes his eyes. Grimaces. BLAM-BLAM-BLAM!

A zombie collapses to the sidewalk beside him.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)

There were times when I could have
done something. Could have helped
their victims. But I didn't. Some
might say there's a name for people
like me, and that name is coward. But
I don't care. Playing dead is what
keeps me alive.

When the motorbike sounds a safe distance away, Trapper Hat reopens his eyes.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)
And I intend to stay alive.

He sees the corpse beside him, it's head blown apart.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

The DEAD shamble around a looted store. The place is trashed and all the shelves are empty.

MAN (V.O.)
The others will run out of bullets.
Run out of energy. Run out of places
to hide.

Trapper Hat staggers down an aisle and notices something on the floor -- A CANDY BAR.

MAN (V.O.) (cont'd)
All I need is my smarts, my
instinct...

He pauses for a moment. Too many zombies around. He can't get it without giving himself away.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
And my will to survive.

He shuffles away and leaves the precious food behind.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A children's play area, out in the open. A small GROUP OF ZOMBIES are huddled on the floor near a set of swings.

The CORPSE of a large man is being torn apart by them. Blood SLOSHES as flesh is ripped and innards are pulled.

Among the feasting horde is Trapper Hat.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.)
By any means necessary.

He reluctantly reaches down and grabs a handful of human flesh. Raises it to his mouth and bites down.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)
Whatever it takes.

He chews slowly on the raw bloody meat. A tear rolls down his cheek.

TRAPPER HAT (V.O.) (cont'd)
I. Will. Survive.

Trapper Hat suddenly stops eating. He's seen something in the near distance.

He drops the piece of flesh and slowly rises from the horde.

BLAM! A bullet punches into his head, snapping it back and sending a spray of bloody mist into the air.

EXT. COPSE OF TREES - DAY

A YOUNG MAN holds a RIFLE to his face, his eye pressed to the scope.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Was it him?

He lowers the rifle, revealing his face -- it's Trapper Hat's son (now 16).

SON
I'm pretty sure it was. It was definitely his hat and coat.

He glances sideways to the woman -- Trapper Hat's wife. She wipes a tear from her cheek. Nods in acceptance.

WIFE
Thank you.

The son shoulders his rifle.

SON
We should get out of here. The gun shot will attract them.

He places a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

SON (cont'd)
We can come back later when the area's cleared. Take care of the body.

She smiles, pats his hand lovingly. They turn and walk away into the trees.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Trapper Hat's dead body lies prone on the ground, fresh blood still running from both the bullet hole and his mouth.

The zombies continue to feast on their victim, uninterested in his corpse.

FADE OUT.