

Strangers Come at Night

By

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Based on the short story by Daniel Botha

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FADE IN:

BLACKNESS

Two GUN SHOTS ring out.

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - NIGHT

SUPER: UGANDA, 1973

Grass huts spread out unevenly amongst each other. A mixture of adults and young teenagers run around in a frenzy of chaos, firing bullets at one another.

It is difficult to see who is fighting who.

A young boy, DUMO (10), a scar stretching from his left eye to his mouth crouches by an entrance of a grass hut. He fires a round, sending a nearby man sprawling to the floor.

Dumo smiles, pleased with himself.

INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

SUPER: PRESENT DAY, U.S.A

A crowd is seated in a large hall. All eyes are on a black man standing in front of a microphone. He has a scar stretching from his left eye to his mouth... an older DUMO.

DUMO

(into microphone)

I often get asked why I made the decision to come here, to America. A lot of them aren't aware of what we, the people of Uganda, had to go through. What I, a child living in Uganda had to go through.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - NIGHT

The younger Dumo remains crouched behind a grass hut. He fires more rounds in the direction of running adults. None of the adults fall.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

The older Dumo takes a drink of water. His hand runs over his scar.

DUMO

Ladies and Gentlemen, I stand before you today, a living victim of Joseph Kony's endeavors in Uganda.

A loud reaction from the crowd, all shocked.

DUMO

Stolen from our parents in the dead of night, we were forced to fight. I was given my first fire-arm when I was eight. I was forced into battle when I was nine. Kony, himself, tried to make the fighting an enjoyable experience. He would offer us sweet treats for every man we killed.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

The sun beats down on about 20 young children as they practice shooting targets a few metre away. Some INSTRUCTORS march around the training field.

Dumo clutches his assault rifle. He aims it at a distant target, fires, knocks the target down.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S.)

Good work, Dumo.

The Instructor takes a small chocolate from his pocket. He hands it to Dumo.

INSTRUCTOR

Let's see more of that great fighting out in the battlefield.

The Instructor walks off.

Dumo pops the chocolate into his mouth. He smiles, contempt with himself.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

The older Dumo looks blankly at his audience.

DUMO

I soon found myself enjoying it  
all. I got a kick out of it. I  
liked watching them die.

Some mumbling in the crowd.

DUMO

It's sick, right?

Nods of agreement.

DUMO

Kony managed to do something that  
you wouldn't expect anybody to do.  
He made monsters of us.

(beat)

He made monsters of US! Little  
kids! Children no younger than six!  
I used to play soccer with my  
friends, but there I was... taking  
somebody's life.

Dumo starts to break down.

DUMO

Actually watching these men fall to  
the ground after I shot them! And I  
enjoyed it! It was a game to us!

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. RAINFOREST - DAY

A group of Kony's kids run through the forest, shooting at a  
group of retreating soldiers.

Dumo runs beside two other black boys, JABU (12) and PHULANI  
(11).

They stop, strategically placing themselves behind a large  
tree.

PHULANI

How many have you got, so far?

(CONTINUED)

JABU

Three.

DUMO

Six.

Phulani laughs.

Jabu quickly fires at an escaping soldier. He falls to the ground, dead.

JABU

Make that four.

Dumo and Phulani laugh as they head back into battle.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

Dumo has another drink of water.

DUMO

Am I ashamed to admit that I took part in a game, where you counted all the people you killed? Yes.

(beat)

My two friends, Jabu and Phulani, died that day. Kony's men didn't care. I begged for a proper burial. They refused, saying "they had it coming!" It was then that I realized I had to get away. I had to run.

(beat)

So, I did.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. GRASS HUT - NIGHT

dumo rises from his sleeping mat, cautious. He looks out the small entrance of a doorway. A sentry walks past.

Dumo gets up. He creeps over to the door, peaking out.

DUMO'S POV: THE VILLAGE

as we see a reasonably empty village. A few NIGHT GUARDS patrol around.

Dumo walks bag to his sleeping mat. He rolls it up.

(CONTINUED)

He then grabs his assault rifle from the nearby wall. He breathes in, before running out of the doorway.

END FLASHBACK.

FADE TO:

BLACKNESS

Two GUN SHOTS ring out.

INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

Dumo stands in front of the crowd. A few wipe tears from their eyes.

DUMO

I'm here to raise awareness. I'm here to put an end to Kony, to bring justice to Uganda. For too long the rich world has ignored what the poor world suffer. For too long my own people have suffered. Now I'm asking you to step in and help. It's time for this to stop.

Dumo nods his head, bringing an end to his speech.

The crowd all hop to their feet, applauding. A few crowd members pat Dumo on the back as he sits in a vacant seat in the front row.

A tear rolls down his cheek.

FADE OUT.

THE END.