

SOUTH AFRICA 21 OCTOBER 1977

A LONELY PLACE TO DIE

The teaser cuts between the reality of the tortured mind and eyes of mosquito, a young schizophrenic - "MOSQUITO'S REALITY", and "THE REALITY" of the men pursuing him.

TEASER

EXT. VELD, GULLY - NIGHT

In a gully between grass-and-frost-covered hills, MOSQUITO, 24, bare feet, in light farm worker overall, stumbles over frost-covered tufts of dry grass.

CLOSE ON: His face distorted in fear, wild eyes darting, searching, frequent glances over his shoulder at:

EXT. TOP OF THE HILL - NIGHT

REALITY: The headlights of a pick up truck appear.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY - Two large beams of searing lights burn smoldering tunnels in the grass, melt the frost. Steam and smoke rises in trillions of sparks that singe his hair as they come down.

EXT. GULLY - NIGHT

REALITY: Mosquito utters an animal groan/scream, naked fear, cowers and rubs his head vigorously to stop the sparks from setting his hair alight.

EXT. DOWNHILL BEHIND MOSQUITO - NIGHT

MOSQUITO'S REALITY: In the distance three huge and terrifying gigantic monsters charge towards him, their heads almost touching the sky. The howling of ravenous predators bellowing for his execution punches holes in his ears. The fire from their huge eyes set flames to his hair.

REALITY: Two men, dressed in warm civilian gear, hurry down the slope. The light from their torches sweep the veld in front of them, no singed grass.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY: The light beams burn a path towards him, smoke and steam swirl into the clouds.

REALITY: Mosquito runs up the other side of the gully, crying, choking sounds. He stares over his shoulder as he runs, trips, falls, gets up, runs. Suddenly he stops, fevered and fearful eyes look up at the sky. A cornered animal.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY. The sky descends slowly, the underside rests on the crest of the hill in front of him, opaque, the surface of a rippling lake seen from below. The air swoops down and brushes against the top of his head.

REALITY: Mosquito ducks, arms stretch full length upwards to hold up the imaginary sky. Crouching low, he stumbles on. The sky starts to swallow him.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY: His knees buckle under the weight of the sky. He has to push very hard to keep it up. It comes lower, it is swallowing him, suffocates him. His arms shot up and tries to hold it away from his head. His hands sink into the softness, cottonwool. So hard... so hard.

Scorching steam tears through his open mouth and then charges back in, burning a path down his throat and into his lungs. Close-by a steam train speeds out of control down a hill.

An owl calls his name.

OWL (O.S.)

Mosquitooo! Mosquitooo! Shoa! Shoa!

Mosquitooo! Shoeleng!

(Die! Die! Dead!)

REALITY: Mosquito stumbles forward, arms straining upwards, looking for all the world like he is pushing up weights in a gym. wild eyes search for something only he can see. He clutches his heaving chest and gasps for breath.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY: Train gone, owl no more, only empty darkness. The terrifying giants, the scorching beams... everything swallowed up by the nothingness. Close in front, the slope ends in the place where the world ends The sky drops lower, presses down, crawls into ears, nose, eyes. Frantic. Must dig it out, the sky clings tight, claws digs into his flesh.

On the hill in front a dark grove of pines, branching beckoning, invites him to safety, a place to hide. Crouching, he stumbles towards the forest and safety. The pines rush forward to meet and shelter him. Then the owl, close by now, calls his name again.

OWL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mosquitooo! Mosquitooo!

SMASH CUT TO

REALITY: An owl in a lone tree, curiously surveys the world around him.

OWL (CONT'D)

Hoo-hoo, Hoo-hoo.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY: Relief, the sky lifts, hovers above his head. He runs faster, his feet sure in the darkness as they carry him faster and faster towards safety.

REALITY: The pursuers are now closer to the fleeing man. Their torches scan the slope, just short of reaching him.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY. His pursuers materialize out of the sky, close now, but still too far for their fire tunnels to reach him. Close in front the forest, almost there.. almost there.

Without warning a barbed wire fence leaps up out of the darkness and charges at him, tears into his face. He throws himself backwards.

REALITY: Mosquito charges into a barbed wire fence, falls, rolls down the slope, digs his fingers into the icy ground, to stop himself. He stops face down, his fingers anchoring him.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY. The angry fence towers above him, rows of scowling teeth reach for his face, his arms. On the other side of the fence - the end of the world. The sky touches the top of the fence and slowly, slowly start to devour him. He gets onto his hands and knees, grunting he arches his back, strains against sky.

The forest vanishes into the devouring mouth of the sky. Behind him the blistering beams of light eagerly reach out to engulf him. He's trapped between the fence, the vast nothingness, the searing lights and the sky. He pushes the sky back, the skin on his hands and his arms shrivels and flakes off. Nowhere to go. No place to hide. He rolls onto his side, draws his knees up to his chin and buries his face between them.

The underside of the sky, like cotton wool, folds around his body. All sight, all knowledge, everything disappears. He is caught in the vastness of silent emptiness, nothingness.

REALITY: The first pursuer reaches Mosquito, the light of his torch falls on the shivering, curled up body.

PURSUER #1

(waves torch)

He's here! Johan, here!

(soft, to himself)

The bastard's not running now.

MOSQUITO'S REALITY: A blinding beam shoots out at him, its searing flames touch the side of his face, his skin shrivels up and millions of burning flakes spiral up from his body into the nothingness. The heaviness of the owl settles on his chest, pecks at his eyes. Hd has to chase the owl away.

REALITY: In the light of the torch Mosquito moans, thrashes wildly as if fighting something off his chest.

The rest of the pursuer arrives. One of them kicks Mosquito against his head.

PURSUER #2

Bastard! We'll fuck him up good
before we hand him over. That's all
they understand.

END OF TEASER

CREDITS

INT. YUDEL'S OFFICE - DAY

YUDEL GORDON, 40, fiddles with the built-in heater in his cluttered government office. He is small in every dimension with piercing dark eyes and wild black hair that curls uncontrollably around his ears. He is dressed in a dark brown suit, the knot of his tie half-way down his chest. A scatter-brained professor type inclined to solve problems by talking softly to himself.

YUDEL

(to himself)

The old sod's inhuman. Doesn't he
feel the cold?

He gives the heater a frustrated kick. Starts to search for something on his desk, in his drawers, in his pockets, finally in his briefcase.

YUDEL (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Must've left the damn thing at
home. Rosa's gonna to kill me.

He dials a number.

ROSA (O.S.)

Hello.

YUDEL

Rosa, I...

ROSA (O.S.)
 (interrupts)
 Yes, Yudel, I found the shopping
 list where...

He puts the phone down, interrupting her, hangs his jacket over the back of his chair, shuffles papers, looks around, bored shitless. His phone shrills for attention.

YUDEL (ON PHONE)
 Dr Williamson, good morning, Sir.
 (listens)
 The annual inventory? Yes, yes, I
 know.
 (listens)
 Two weeks overdue? Really? I'll see
 to it immediately. Sir, about my
 heater...

A click, followed by the dialing tone.

YUDEL (CONT'D)
 Dr Williamson?

Yudel looks at the phone for a short beat before putting it down, speculatively glances at the contents of his office.

YUDEL'S POV. His cluttered desk, chairs, filing cabinet, computer...

YUDEL (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 Damn.

JACKSON, 50, bumps the door open with his buttocks and backs in, the door starts to close on the tray he is carrying, a foot shoots out to keep it open. Too late, tea spilled into the saucer, he flashes a big gap-toothie grin at Yudel.

The name on the outside of the open door: "Y GORDON, CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGIST."

JACKSON
 Auh, sorry, Sir, I get more.

He starts to leave.

YUDEL
 Jackson, wait. Don't worry about
 the tea.
 (beat)
 Can you read and write?