

Be Careful...

by

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OVER BLACK

MIKE (V.O.)

Nothing turns out the way you
thought it would when you're a
kid.

(beat)

When I was little I wished I was
older. 'Cos Mum and Dad told me
that when I was older I could be
whatever I wanted...

FADE IN:

1 INT. UNSEEN ROOM (CU. DRAWING PAPER) - DAY 1

ECU: COLOURED PEN

An unseen artist draws a picture with coloured pens.

Child-like MUSIC plays, matching the level of artistic
ability.

MIKE (V.O.)

I wanted to be an astronaut...

Reveal a drawing of an astronaut.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Then I wanted to be a movie
star...

The artist adds a crude-looking film camera to the drawing
of the astronaut.

The artist hums as he works, but remains unseen. The focus
on what's being created.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Somehow I ended up here...

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON 2

MIKE slumps at his desk in his plush but austere office.
36, in good shape, thinning hair. Looks like he's been
tired for a long time.

Late afternoon sun streams in. On the desk, a half-empty
bottle of top-shelf vodka and a glass.

He fills in an official-looking form. Sits back in his
chair, rubs his eyes.

Pours himself a shot. Downs it. His computer screen saver kicks in. A photo of a boy at a beach with his family, seven years old. His bright, cherubic face lights up the screen, full of happiness.

SIMONE, 32, attractive in a bookish sort of way, plainly dressed, enters the office with some paperwork.

She comes in and waters the only plant in the office - a flowering succulent.

SIMONE
I was gonna head off.
(vaguely hopeful)
Unless you need me?

MIKE
(shakes his head)
Nah, I'm good.

Simone pauses, uncertain whether to continue. After a beat -

SIMONE
I'm not catching up with the
girls 'til seven if you want to--

MIKE
I should get going.

SIMONE
Sure. Take care.

She smiles and leaves. Mike sits alone for a moment, lost in thought. He refills his glass, stares at the image of the boy on the computer.

The sound of seagulls SQUAWKING, waves CRASHING, delighted children SQUEALING...

CUT TO:

A FLASHBACK: EXT. WALL - NIGHT A

Very brief CU: a couple make out in the shadows of an alley.

CUT BACK TO:

2a INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON 2a

Mike is snapped out of his reverie. He downs his drink, grabs his jacket, heads out.

CUT TO:

3 INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - AFTERNOON 3

Mike crosses the gloomy car park, chirps the alarm on his black, late model BMW.

He's about to get in when he thinks he sees something in the shadows. He stares into the darkness. Nothing.

CUT TO:

B FLASHBACK: EXT. WALL - NIGHT B

Another quick flash: two people mashed together. Grunts and heavy breathing. Too quick to see who it is or what's happening.

CUT BACK TO:

3a INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - AFTERNOON 3a

Mike gets in his car, guns the engine, drives off.

CUT TO:

4 INT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - EVENING 4

Business people head home and party people head into town.

A train pulls into the platform.

A woman gets off: FI. 35, make-up applied, ready for action. She heads purposefully toward the exit.

CUT TO:

5 INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - NIGHT 5

Fi turns from the barman, drink in hand, surveys the room.

Her eyes scrutinise the patrons. She heads to a bar stool, settles in.

A smartly-dressed man saunters over with a charming smile.

CHARMING MAN

Hey. I saw you come in. I--

She barely looks up.

FI

Piss off.

Decides to cut his losses, heads back to his mates.

CHARMING MAN
Dyke bitch.

She ignores him. Goes back to her drink.

TIME PASSES.

Mike enters. Fi's immediately attentive. Her eyes never leave him as he crosses to the bar and orders a drink.

He waits for his drink, very much alone in the crowd.

His eyes meet Fi's. She gives him an intense look, a seductive grin. Slightly taken aback, Mike gives her a perfunctory smile in response and turns away.

His drink arrives. The barman takes his money.

Mike steals another glance at Fi. She holds his gaze. Mike looks uncertain.

CUT TO:

C FLASHBACK: INT. AUCKLAND BAR - NIGHT C

A different bar, a different WOMAN. She sits in a booth.

This one also grins seductively at Mike.

CUT BACK TO:

5a INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - NIGHT 5a

Mike resolutely returns to his drink, fingers gripped tight around the glass. He downs it.

Fi gathers her drink and saunters over.

FI
Don't I know you?

Mike's not charmed.

FI (CONT'D)
I'm going for the prize for the world's worst pick-up line.

MIKE
You don't know me.

FI
Okay... how about - do you come here often?

Mike just shrugs, dismissive.

Fi empties her glass, holds it aloft.

FI (CONT'D)
 (to bartender)
 Same again.
 (indicates Mike)
 This one needs a refill too.

MIKE
 Not shy, are you?

FI
 What? I'm not your type?

In fact, probably not. But Mike's clearly attracted all the same. Something about her... He's conflicted.

FI (CONT'D)
 Or maybe you're waiting for someone?

He considers a response. Realises he has none. She looks slightly victorious.

FI (CONT'D)
 All right, then.

The bartender brings two drinks. Sets them down. Fi waits expectantly. After a beat Mike downs his drink. Fi smiles.

FI (CONT'D)
 So...?

MIKE
 Mike.

FI
 Mike - what do you do?

MIKE
 I try to guess when people will die.

Fi's smile wavers. For a moment it looks like she might leave. Mike grins, sardonic.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Little actuary joke.

Fi signals to the bartender for another drink.

FI
 Funny. Real ice breaker.

The bartender pours a shot.

DISSOLVE TO:

5b

LATER:

5b

Another drink is poured. Empty shot glasses indicate time has passed.

FI

Another?

MIKE

I've had enough.

Mike looks a little worse for wear. Fi, not so much.

FI

So where's your place?

Mike looks uncomfortable. Fi reaches over, puts her hand on his thigh.

FI (CONT'D)

Relax. What's the worst that can happen?

Mike reaches a decision.

MIKE

Yeah...

He downs the last of his drink. Fi smiles. He drops some bills on the bar. They head out.

CUT TO:

6

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

6

Fi surveys the impressive apartment with a view of the harbour. It's modern, tasteful - but somehow cold. Mike pours two drinks.

FI

Nice place.

MIKE

It's all right.

He hands her a drink. Puts his arms around her. Nuzzles her neck. She gently extricates herself, moves away. Explores.

Fi spies a lone photo on a side board: A family on the beach in the 1970's: A young boy with his sister. In a large, heavy silver frame. Fi points to the boy (whom we recognise from the screensaver shot on Mike's PC.)

FI

This you?

Mike nods. Fi looks closer at the picture.

FI (CONT'D)
Just a kid...

She sets it aside.

MIKE
(cynical)
With his whole life in front of
him...

Fi picks up on his tone. Can't quite disguise the
bitterness in her own voice.

FI
Looks like you've done okay.

Mike waves dismissively. Quickly downs his drink. Gets
animated.

MIKE
But it's never as much as you
thought it'd be, is it? You're
never as rich as you thought. Or
as famous, or as happy. Then
something happens...

He trails off.

CUT TO:

D FLASHBACK: EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

D

Mike makes out with the woman from the bar. They're clearly
both drunk. He places her on the balcony railing. She holds
his shoulders and leans back ever-so-slightly, caught up in
the passion of the moment...

She loses her balance. Topples backwards. Terror registers
on her face.

Mike grabs for her but she goes down. Hits her head on the
hard pavement with a sickening thud.

Mike stands above her, breathing hard, as she lies sprawled
awkwardly on the asphalt. Blood pools under her head.

CUT BACK TO:

6a INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

6a

MIKE
Things don't turn out the way you
thought they would when you're a
kid.

Fi's lost in her own troubling thoughts. She struggles to hold back tears.

FI

No. They don't.

Mike's too busy navel-gazing to notice what's up with her.

MIKE

When I was little I wished I was older. 'Cos Mum and Dad told me I could be whatever I wanted to be when I was older. I wanted to be an astronaut. Then I wanted to be a movie star. And no one tells you it's stupid 'cos, hey, you're a kid - why shouldn't you be allowed to dream?

(beat)

Somehow I ended up here...

FI

My sister wanted to be princess.

Something in Fi's voice momentarily stops Mike in his tracks.

FI (CONT'D)

Mum told her little girls from Timaru couldn't be princesses. Turns out she was right.

For a moment there's a tiny connection between the two of them. Like Mike might reach out to her. The moment passes.

MIKE

Maybe it's better to be honest about it.

Fi looks up, angry at his response. Angry with herself. Mike goes back to the drinks cabinet. Pours himself another. Without looking up -

MIKE (CONT'D)

Sometimes I wish I could have that back. The innocence. The possibilities. Just be that little kid again, you know?

No response. Mike turns, puzzled. Looks round just in time to see the photo frame swung at his head. It connects with a sickening smash. He goes down in a heap.

Fi discards the frame. Grabs a vodka bottle sitting on the bench in front of her. Holds it like a club and brings it down on Mike's head (o.o.s.) with staggering ferocity. She swings the bottle again. Again. And again.

She stops, breathing hard.

DISSOLVE TO:

E FLASHBACK: INT. COURTROOM - DAY

E

CU: MIKE

Mike stands, anxious look on his face. Off-screen, a judge addresses the foreman of the jury.

JUDGE (O.S.)
On the sole count of the
indictment, manslaughter, do you
find the defendant guilty or not
guilty?

Mike holds his breath.

JURY FOREMAN (O.S.)
We find the defendant not guilty,
your Honour.

Mike exhales, relieved. His attorney standing next to him shakes his hand.

Reveal the distraught family of the deceased, sitting in the public gallery behind Mike. A young woman sits with them wearing distinctive dark glasses. Despite sporting a different hair style, it's clearly Fi. A tear escapes her glasses and trickles down her pretty face.

MATCH FADE TO:

6b INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

6b

CU: FI

Fi looks down at Mike (O.O.S.), Her breathing slows. She looks shaken, not fully able to process what just happened. She collects herself. Puts on the distinctive dark glasses. Straightens herself out and prepares to leave.

SOUND FX: Child-like MUSIC takes us to...

FADE TO:

7 INT. HOSPITAL WARD - MORNING

7

ECU: COLOURED PEN DRAWING

...a child's picture of a family at the beach. The pen is held by an adult hand.

SIMONE (O.S.)
Knock, knock. How are we today?

Simone stands in the ward's doorway holding flowers.

The private hospital room is full of colourful flowers. It has a warm, inviting feel to it. Sun streams in. The walls are covered with child-like drawings (including the one from the opening scene of the astronaut and movie camera).

With some effort, Simone attempts good cheer. She holds up the flowers.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
Sunflowers.

Mike sits in a wheelchair by the window in a hospital gown.

Paper and coloured pens are on his lap. His head is bandaged. The bruising on his face is faded but still visible.

He gestures proudly to his picture.

Simone speaks gently, as to a child. She's only just holding it together.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
That's lovely Mike. Really nice.

Mike beams, happy as a sand boy. His wish come true.

FADE TO:

F FLASHBACK: EXT. BEACH - DAY

F

Home movie of a young Mike. He plays with his family.

Happy, excited, innocent.

His whole life in front of him. He waves happily.

The film runs out.

FADE OUT.

THE END