

"Reflections"

Logline:

"The birth of a new lake threatens the birth of a new life.
Can Patrick Walker prevent one creation to save another?"

FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. THE MBULO VALLEY. DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO. SUNSET.

An expansive valley filled with dense sharp green trees,
surrounded by looming mountains on every side. The image
is silvery and concave around the edges. It begins to warp
and shine.

The image is being reflected in a large silver locket
suspended from the rear view mirror of a vehicle.

The sound of jeep doors slamming shut.

PATRICK WALKER (39) and DENVER RALEIGH (61) stand either
side of the red jeep. They look out over the valley into
the fading red sky of evening. Both are wearing yellow
safety hats and jackets with the logo of MACKAULEY
LOGISTICS on the back.

They walk the short distance to the valley edge in silence,
the crunch of shale under their boots mixed with the sound
of animals below coming out to drink in the safety of the
gathering dusk.

The valley looks like a baby's crib with steep walls on
three sides. The fourth side on which they stand is at a
much lesser gradient.

EXT. MBULO VALLEY FLOOR. SUNSET.

The evening sunlight breaks through the canopy, hitting
the lush and dense forest floor.

A Squirrel Monkey forages for food amongst the dead leaves,
carefully carrying its small baby on its back.

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. THE MBULO VALLEY. DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO. SUNSET.

Denver puts a fatherly arm around Patrick.

DENVER

You should be proud my boy.

Patrick smiles and nods.

PATRICK

I am.

He picks up a loose stone and hurls it into the valley below.

EXT. MBULO VALLEY FLOOR. DUSK.

The Squirrel Monkey's foraging is interrupted by a stone
crashing through the canopy, narrowly missing the baby on
its back.

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. THE MBULO VALLEY. DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO. SUNSET.

PATRICK

I just hope there's enough
explosives.

For the first time, the view behind the men is now visible.
Far off to the left of them is a large concrete dam. A
safe distance away to the far right is a corrugated iron
shack surrounded by barb wire. A red warning light turns
lazily, matching the evening sun.

DENVER

We've gone over the figures a
hundred times. Don't worry so much.

Patrick shrugs his shoulders.

DENVER

You're like a mirror of me, Pat.
I was just the same at your age.
Relax! We're going to bring life.

Denver looks at his watch.

DENVER

Just imagine it! In under twelve
hours all this will be lake.
Incredible isn't it? Water-giving
life for thousands of people.
They'll probably name the town
they've got planned after you!

He clicks his fingers and winks at Patrick.

DENVER

You're the daddy!

Patrick also looks at his watch.

PATRICK

Speaking of which, I'd better
head back.

DENVER

Ah yes. How is Laura? Not long
to go now?

PATRICK

Nearly a week overdue actually.
If she's not dropped by Tuesday
they're going to induce in Kinshasa.

Patrick walks back towards the jeep, repeatedly throwing
then catching his safety hat.

Denver continues to stare out across the valley. He throws open his arms and breathes deeply.

DENVER
New life everywhere!

INT. PATRICK'S JEEP. NIGHT.

The silver locket suspended from the rear view mirror swings with each bump in the dirt track. Patrick swings the steering wheel violently trying to compensate for the non-existent road.

In the headlights of the jeep a make-shift cabin appears.

He comes to a stop and applies the handbrake.

EXT. PORCH. PATRICK AND LAURA'S CABIN. NIGHT.

A single kerosene lamp lights the wooden entrance area. The buzz of night insects is heard as large moths play in the orange glow.

Patrick twirls the car-keys nonchalantly around his index finger. He reaches out to push open the door but his foot bangs against something hard, preventing connection.

A large black hold-all bag is in the doorway.

With a look of fear on his face, Patrick leaps the bag and kicks open the door.

INT. PATRICK AND LAURA'S CABIN. NIGHT.

The cabin is sparse but homely. Patrick scans the room in the half-light. LAURA WALKER (34) sits on a wooden chair hyperventilating, her legs spread out and hands covering her swollen belly.

She gives him a pained wink and weak smile.

PATRICK
How far apart?

She forces the words out between shallow breaths.

LAURA
Twenty minutes. Getting shorter.

PATRICK
I'm so sorry, I should've been here.

He cautiously slips his arm under her shoulder and together they move to the door.

EXT. PORCH. PATRICK AND LAURA'S CABIN. NIGHT.

He helps her into the jeep's passenger seat.

LAURA

My overnight bag. Pat, the hold-all.

Patrick shuts the passenger door and returns for the bag.

He throws it into the back seat and starts up the car.

He leans over and carefully pulls the seat belt across Laura's belly, leaving his own.

The dry earth explodes around the tires as the jeep wheel-spins away from the cabin.

EXT. DIRT TRACK. ALONGSIDE MBULO VALLEY EDGE. NIGHT.

The jeep dips and weaves at breakneck speed, negotiating the pitted mountain dirt track.

INT. PATRICK'S JEEP. NIGHT.

Patrick crouches over the wheel, the silver locket banging into the right side of his face as he focuses on the road.

Laura continues to shallow breathe.

LAURA

Pat. Slow down. We have time.

PATRICK

Cool, cool. Just want to get there.

Laura puts her hand on his arm.

LAURA

We have time.

The headlights offer little illumination against the impenetrable forest night.

A Squirrel Monkey with baby on its back leaps across the path of the jeep, visible only for an instant in the weak beam.

Laura sees the mother and baby.

LAURA

Look out!

Patrick instinctively swerves to the left.

EXT. DIRT TRACK. ALONGSIDE MBULO VALLEY EDGE. NIGHT.

The jeep careers off the track and down the near vertical valley wall.

INT. PATRICK'S JEEP. NIGHT.

Patrick and Laura spin round helplessly as black roots and thick foliage smash against the windscreen.

Laura's hand reaches out for Patrick's in the frozen moment.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR. MBULO VALLEY. DAWN.

Early morning mist hangs ghostly above the forest floor.

Patrick is sprawled on the ground, the silver locket on his chest. Reflected in its polished surface is the crashed jeep tangled up in vines and broken branches, shafts of sunlight crack across its twisted metal.

Patrick sits up, staring at the carnage.

Laura remains in the passenger seat. A thin line of blood flowing from her left nostril.

Patrick tries to stand, causing the locket to roll off his belly.

Putting it in his trouser pocket he jumps up. The sickening crunch of bone is heard as he puts weight on his left leg.

His scream echoes across the valley bouncing off the crib-like walls.

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. THE MBULO VALLEY. DAWN.

A match scrapes down the MACKAULEY LOGISTICS logo from left to right. As it passes the centre, the phosphorus tip sparks into life.

The flame lights the cigarette of a Congolese man leaning against the corrugated iron shack on which the logo is fixed.

Denver Raleigh walks towards the small control shack, the red warning beacon spinning on its roof.

Patrick's distant and faint scream rings out, carried on the morning mist. Denver pauses and looks at the company logo.

Two Congolese men in yellow protective hats wait by the entrance, smoking. They greet him as he approaches.

DENVER

Good morning Gentlemen. T minus
two hours I believe? Should we
not be sounding the warning siren?

The men throw down their cigarettes as Denver walks past, pulling a face behind his back.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR. MBULO VALLEY. DAWN.

Patrick is at the jeep. He rips open the hanging door and touches Laura's face, gently wiping away the crusted blood from her nostril with a dirty finger.

Her eyes flicker open.

PATRICK

Hey, it's ok. Everything's ok.
Don't try to move.

She starts to panic.

LAURA

I can't move!

He looks down and sees the seat belt holding her in place.

He leans across her and releases it.

She begins to move more freely.

PATRICK

Can you feel everything?

She instinctively touches her belly. A look of relief.

LAURA

I can feel her kicking. She's
kicking Pat!

She looks down between her feet and sees a puddle of fluid on the jeep floor. A large dark stain has also appeared on her light khaki trousers.

LAURA

My waters broke. A car-crash is
some enema I guess!

She smiles at him.

PATRICK

Let's get you out of here. Come
on girl. Everything is going to
be OK.

The warning siren is heard, distant but urgent.

Patrick freezes mid getting her out of the jeep.

PATRICK

Jesus Christ!

He helps her to a nearby tree and rests her down.

He looks at his watch. The glass face is cracked but "8.AM." is still visible on the digital display.

PATRICK

God no! We've less than two hours.

Laura starts hyperventilating.

LAURA

Oh Pat. It's coming. It's really coming.

Patrick looks in the direction of the siren.

PATRICK

I know!

LAURA

No. The baby!

Patrick looks back at her then turns to the crashed jeep, finally looking up in the direction of the siren.

PATRICK

What do I do? Oh shit, what do I do?

LAURA

Don't leave me Pat. Oh god, I can feel her pushing. It's now. Now!

She begins to unbuckle her trousers and tries to pull them off.

Patrick helps her.

PATRICK

Shit, in two hours they're going to explode the dam, Laura. This whole valley will be under a billion gallons of water. We've got to move... Now!

Her breathing becomes even shallower. She is clearly in great pain.

LAURA

I'm not moving anywhere! Oh God! Get... help... get... help.

Patrick looks up at the escarpment they fell down. He lurches towards its sheer face.

He makes a few hesitant grabs for branches, but it is too steep.

He hobbles back to Laura.

PATRICK

It's too steep, baby. I've busted my leg real bad.

Laura starts to cry: pain mixed with fear.

PATRICK

I can't get us out in time so
I've got to stop them blowing up
the dam.

LAURA

But that means...

PATRICK

...Running towards the dam. I've
no choice, the other three sides
of the valley are too steep to
climb. We're like turds in a
toilet waiting for the flush.

LAURA

You'll never make it. Base has
to be miles away.

He crouches down next to her.

PATRICK

I've got to try. If I move fast
I figure...

He winces and grabs his leg as he tries to stand.

He grabs a strong branch and snaps it off, stripping the
leaves.

LAURA

Pat?

He collects some twine from a bush behind her head and
fashions a splint for his leg.

Taking the locket from his pocket, he moves to Laura one
last time and presses it against her belly.

PATRICK

I'll make it. I'll be back for
you I swear it.

He turns and begins to run as best he can towards the siren.

About to be obscured by the bushes he pauses and
reflexively rushes back to Laura.

He throws his arms around her.

PATRICK

I fucking love you.

She nods through the pain.

LAURA

Go!

Patrick disappears into the undergrowth.

Laura huddles into the tree, clutching her belly.

A Squirrel Monkey climbs down the tree clutching its young baby and, surprised by Laura at the foot, scampers to a nearby bush.

Reflected in the monkey's eyes, Laura begins her final contractions.

INT. MACKAULEY LOGISTICS HUT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. DAY.

Denver looks through a pair of binoculars.

CUT TO

Through the two black circles a white flag is visible, fluttering on the breeze.

CUT BACK TO

Denver lowers the binoculars and picks up a large black walkie-talkie.

DENVER

Yep. All clear. We have go ahead... over.

A voice is heard in the receiver.

VOICE.

Roger that. Countdown set. Detonation in T-minus thirty minutes. Over out.

Denver rests the binoculars on the control panel in front of him. He twists a dial and "30:00" appears in red digital numbers.

His hand moves to the right of this display to reveal a large red button. His fingers tap the button expectantly.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR. MBULO VALLEY. DAY.

Patrick stumbles like a despairing drunk through the thick undergrowth, reaching out for tree trunks as support, pausing only to look at his watch and this spurs him on even more recklessly.

EXT. MACKAULEY LOGISTICS HUT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. DAY.

Two black jeeps pull up outside the hut.

A delegation of six official looking men exit the vehicles.

Denver walks towards them, hand outstretched.

A man wearing a dark blue army uniform and reflective sunglasses steps forward from the group taking the offered hand.

DENVER

General. Everything is set. We have perfect conditions.

The General nods, his face remaining expressionless.

DENVER

Detonation in twenty minutes. Perhaps the General would like to push the button?

Denver points back towards the hut.

The General pushes past him, followed by his entourage.

Denver pulls a face behind his back.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR. MBULO VALLEY. DAY.

Patrick stumbles on. The undergrowth is getting thicker.

Tears of pain cloud his eyes, distorting his vision.

A thick branch, camouflaged against the dark bush, brutally cracks his head.

He screams and falls to his knees, twisting round in agony.

The silver locket falls out of his pocket and onto the floor.

He stands up and blindly continues to walk, unaware that he is now moving back in the direction he's come from.

INT. MACKAULEY LOGISTICS HUT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. DAY.

The General's finger hovers over the red button on the control panel.

The digital clock beside it briefly reads "09:01" before clicking down to "09:00".

With seven people inside the small hut it is too cramped. Denver reaches for the binoculars and steps out into the sun.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR. MBULO VALLEY. DAY.

Patrick looks down at his watch. A mixture of sweat and blood from his fresh wound drips from his forehead onto the cracked dial.

His foot catches on a dead log and he falls painfully.

He bangs his fists on the brittle bark in frustration.

At his new eye-level, something shiny catches the sunlight a short distance in front of him.

He crawls towards it and uncovers his silver locket.

PATRICK

How can it be in front of me?

His dirty and bruised face is reflected in the locket's mirrored surface.

PATRICK

Must be going in fucking circles.

A Squirrel Monkey, baby clinging to its neck, darts in front of him and climbs a nearby tree.

Putting the locket around his own neck, Patrick removes his leg splint and follows.

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT EDGE. DAY.

Denver stares out over the valley, binoculars at his side. The warning siren ceases and an eerie silence descends.

CUT TO

The digital countdown reads "02:58".

CUT BACK TO

Denver looks at his watch.

The distant sound of a baby crying is heard. Fragile yet insistent.

Denver scans the horizon with a puzzled look on his face.

EXT. THE CANOPY. MBULO VALLEY. DAY.

Patrick begins the slow ascent of the tree. He bends his knee to accommodate each branch, the excruciating pain registering on his face.

Reaching the uppermost branch his head then torso clear the treeline.

He looks out across the valley, twisting round, searching for the north escarpment.

The corrugated iron control room is visible in the distance, clearly too far away to be of use.

CUT TO

The digital countdown reads "01:40".

CUT BACK TO

Patrick breaks down and begins to cry. His tears splash the locket around his neck causing it to reflect the sunlight even more keenly.

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT EDGE. DAY.

The baby cry is heard a second time causing Denver to scan the endless treeline. Something catches his eye, glinting in the far distance.

He raises his binoculars to better study the canopy.

The two black circles of the binoculars swing wildly across the blurred tree tops. Green interrupted only by a flash of silvery reflective metal.

Denver focuses on the shimmering to reveal Patrick and the locket. His head is hung low and he beats the exposed tree branch with his fists in obvious despair.

INT. MACKAULEY LOGISTICS HUT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. DAY.

The digital countdown reads "00:12".

EXT. THE CANOPY. MBULO VALLEY. DAY.

A pride of Squirrel Monkeys jump excitedly in a tree. They beat their fists on the branches in a panic.

INT. MACKAULEY LOGISTICS HUT. NORTH ESCARPMENT. DAY.

The General removes his sunglasses and carefully places them next to the red detonator button.

In the reflective lenses of the glasses, the General can be seen raising his finger above the detonator.

EXT. NORTH ESCARPMENT EDGE. DAY.

Denver's mouth falls open. He drops the binoculars and looks behind him to the control shack.

Reflected in the lenses of the binoculars Denver begins his run.

FADE OUT.