

WAVES

A SHORT FILM

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The sound of intensifying rain permeates the darkness as two disembodied voices begin to converse.

The gravelly voice of an older woman speaks out.

WOMAN (O.S.)

I'm listening, Mal. Take all the time you need.

A younger male responds hesitantly.

MAN (O.S.)

I c...

A beat.

MAN (CONT'D, O.S.)

It's just hard to put into words, Elle.

FADE IN:

1 EXT. OCEAN - DAY

A bird's eye view of a vast, unending ocean. For now, it's calm yet infinitely expansive. The skies are clear and the sun's shining.

Moving closer, there's a small speck of yellow and green nestled among the expanse of blue.

Closer still, and it becomes clearer what the speck is; A SMALL TROPICAL ISLAND.

2 EXT. SMALL ISLAND - OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT - DAY

A young man, MALCOLM, hangs clothes on a washing line outside a small single-floor building.

The sound of CRACKING THUNDER echoes through the air.

Malcolm glances up at the horizon, but the skies are CLEAR and the water's CALM. He spins to survey the horizon on all sides. The view is the same; sunny skies and calm ocean that stretch as far as the eye can see.

3 INT. APARTMENT - DESK - DAY

Malcolm sits on a desk-chair and talks into the laptop on his desk in a cramped studio apartment.

His desk rests against a wall with a window, overlooking the beach. Malcolm studies the horizon through the window as he speaks.

MALCOLM

I ordered a couple yesterday, so they should get here next week.

He spins around in his desk-chair and peers through an open skylight in the centre of the roof.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

They're actually getting pretty good at dropping packages right inside.

He traces the path from the skylight to the floor with his finger. He spins his chair back around as he continues talking.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

It's actua... Shit.

A look of dread falls across Malcolm's face. A different voice replies, sounding a little more distorted and fuzzier than Malcolm's.

A (O.S.)

Malcolm, you alright?... Mal?

The beach-facing view has suddenly changed. A 30-METRE TALL WAVE approaches the island, seemingly appearing from nowhere.

Malcolm sighs and replies defeatedly. This is FAMILIAR to him.

MALCOLM

Another wave.

A (O.S.)

Don't sh...

Malcolm closes his laptop and his breathing rate increases. He tightly presses his eyelids together.

Familiarity doesn't make his experience any easier.

He attempts to steady his breathing as he goes outside for a better look.

The width of the wave appears to span INFINTELY in both directions. It hastily approaches the island and appears to increase in speed.

Malcolm rushes towards the nearby washing line. He haphazardly grabs as much of his now-dried clothing as he

can fit in his arms.

4 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

He rushes back indoors and towards his cupboard. He pries it open with his foot, revealing all his possessions wrapped in large zip-lock bags.

He grabs an empty bag and stuffs his clothing into it. He grabs another and spins around, but the wave is mere metres away from the island's edge.

A look of panic covers Malcolm's face. He drops the plastic bag and turns back around as the wave SMASHES into his apartment and water FLOODS in through the door and windows. He grabs a lifejacket from his cupboard and barely has time to fit it over his head before the water whisks him off his feet and swirls him around the room.

The water level rises rapidly as Malcolm holds his breath, UNCONTROLLABLY bobbing above and below the water's surface as he desperately tries to fasten the life jacket clips around his waist.

Ocean water has completely filled the apartment. Malcolm is COMPLETELY SUBMERGED. The current continues swirling him around the apartment.

Malcolm finally secures the clips and pulls a tab that inflates the lifejacket. It's enough to combat the current and send him floating upwards. He softly bumps against the ceiling. Malcolm tries to paddle his way to the skylight, just a few metres away, but his limbs won't let him, he's flailing wildly with no effect.

Malcolm claws at the ceiling, trying to propel himself to the open skylight. He's so close but seemingly an eternity away. There are vague scratch-marks on the ceiling from previous attempts.

A small current propels Malcolm towards the skylight. He finally gets a grip on its edge and pushes himself through, sending him slowly upwards, away from the floating wreckage in his apartment. But he's RUNNING OUT OF AIR.

As Malcolm floats upwards, we hear a stranger's voice off-screen.

B (O.S.)
How long?

MALCOLM (O.S.)

I don't know. Sometimes a few minutes,
sometimes it lasts weeks or months.

5 EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Malcolm's head breaches the surface and he desperately gulps air, alongside mouthfuls of oceanwater.

The sky has taken on a grey hue and it's raining torrentially. The TERRIFYING SOUNDS of lightning CRACKING against the ocean's surface and the EAR-PIERCING booms of thunder are constantly heard.

The water's surface is choppy and Malcolm struggles to stay afloat, swallowing water and air as he tries to catch his breath.

B (O.S.)

So, you just swim and wait?

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Well, I can't really swim so I just sort of... just try to keep floating.

B (O.S.)

Damn.

6 EXT. OCEAN - EVENING

The sky is darker and the sun is setting. The storm still RAGES ON.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Yea, but that's just how it is.

B (O.S.)

How long was it this time?

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Only a day and a half.

Malcolm looks exhausted. He continues struggling to stay afloat, his head occasionally dunking below the water's surface.

The rain ABRUPTLY stops, and the clouds IMMEDIATELY dissipate. The ocean becomes calm for a few seconds.

Then SUDDENLY, the water level descends rapidly and Malcolm is pulled downwards. He's thrown against the beach with a wet THUD.

7 EXT. BEACH — EVENING

Water drains away from the beach and surrounding island IMPOSSIBLY fast. Traces of the wave have disappeared just as suddenly as it appeared.

Malcolm's exhausted frame shivers uncontrollably. He crawls on his hands and knees towards his apartment.

B (O.S.)

Man, I can't imagine what that's like. I mean, I get storm's occasionally, but never giant waves and shit.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Yea, it's... not fun.

8 INT. APARTMENT — EVENING

Malcolm's clothes are drenched, and every AUDIBLY DAMP step is a reminder of what took place, yet he slowly moves around his apartment collecting soaked objects off the floor and putting them back in their place.

B (O.S.)

Are you alright now?

A beat.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Sure... yea.

Malcolm picks up his laptop from the floor, opens it, shakes some water from it, then fans it out to dry.

B (CONT'D, O.S.)

Really? Because that sounds really intense. I don't know if I could handle that.

9 INT. APARTMENT — NIGHT

Malcolm slowly walks towards his bed. He lazily removes his clothing, throwing them into a corner as he does so. He collapses onto his bed with a squishy wet SQUELCH.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

It's... it's fine. I get through it. Enough about me though, what's going on with you?

10 INT. APARTMENT — DAY

Malcolm sits at his desk, talking to B through his laptop.

B (O.S.)

Well. You would not believe what happened to me yesterday. So, I was out trying out some new...

B's voice fades, as do the ambient sounds.

Malcolm smiles and nods along to the story. He laughs occasionally.

There is a vast emptiness behind his eyes.

11 EXT. BEACH - DAY

Malcolm kneels down to collect a few coconuts, dropped from the trees above. He throws one into a nearby basket.

As it lands Malcolm is SWIFTLY BLINDSIDED by a wave that crashes into him from behind and jettisons him 20 metres UPWARDS as the water level rapidly rises around him.

A storm brews as grey clouds quickly form and cascade rain DOWNWARDS. The sounds of raucous thunder and sights of dazzling lightning seem to dance around Malcolm.

Malcolm splashes and panics as he can barely breath. Like a yo-yo, he dips above and below the surface several times, STRUGGLING FOR BREATH in every moment.

Just as suddenly as it came, the wave subsides and drops Malcolm onto the sandy beach. But the storm persists, keeping the heavy rain, BLINDING lightning, and DEAFENING thunder.

Malcolm splutters and coughs as he lays on the ground. He props himself up on his arms wearily as he continues to cough violently, then he vomits rainwater.

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS:

The storm continues RAGING throughout. Sounds of RUMBLING thunder and SPARKS of lightning occurring constantly. The island is flooded in ankle-deep ocean water.

12 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rain pours into the apartment through the skylight. Malcolm pulls a lever on his wall, closing the skylight.

13 EXT. BEACH - DAY

Malcolm picks up a few pieces of clothing floating on the flooded beach.

A flash of lightning STRIKES the tree he's standing next to, sending shards of wood SPLINTERING everywhere. The tree falls, but Malcolm ignores the entire ordeal, continuing to collect his clothing.

14 INT. APARTMENT - KITCHENETTE - EVENING

Malcolm wades towards the stove of the built-in kitchenette. There's a pan on the hob, and the ingredients are smoking. The power cuts.

CUT TO BLACK.

Malcolm sighs.

FADE IN:

15 INT. APARTMENT - DESK - DAY

Malcolm opens his cupboard and rifles through the drawers, looking for SOMETHING. He spins around when the front door suddenly BURST'S OPEN and the skylight BENDS INWARD under the pressure, both sending TORRENTS of water flooding into the apartment; another wave strikes the island.

16 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Malcolm, completely soaked and wearing his lifejacket, shivers as he walks towards his apartment. The wave has passed, but knee-deep water floods the island and the storm continues.

Another wave hits him in the back suddenly.

17 EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

A current jettisons Malcolm towards his apartment. He holds his arms up to brace himself, but the force crashes him against the corner of the building, tearing his lifejacket and cutting his chest. He clutches his chest and shouts. Instead of sound leaving his mouth, there are bubbles of PRECIOUS AIR, which disappear upwards.

END OF SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS.

18 EXT. ROOF - DAY

Torrential rain keeps pouring. Malcolm sits on the roof of his apartment. Blood seeps through his shirt from his

chest.

He squints and looks to the horizon, past the thick falling rain. A 10-metre wave appears in the distance.

Malcolm looks stoic. He carefully climbs down from the roof and takes a beat to stare at the oncoming wave.

He walks onto the flooded beach and sits down in the now ankle-deep water. He stares at the wave and waits as it approaches.

Many off-screen voices are heard as the wave gains speed towards the island.

C(O.S.)

Build a barricade.

D (O.S.)

Have you tried moving somewhere else?

E (O.S.)

Waves must just feel bigger than they actually are. You'll be alright.

FASTER STILL, the wave moves towards Malcolm.

F (O.S.)

Get a raft or boat or something.

G (O.S.)

Think about all the good things on your island.

CLOSER and closer, the wave thunders towards the island. Malcolm does nothing.

H (O.S.)

I'm not saying I don't believe you. But it's a tropical island, waves like that don't seem possible.

I (O.S.)

You really should learn how to swim.

The wave is seconds away.

J (O.S.)

Can't be that bad, can it? Just tough it out.

The wave crashes into the island and slams into Malcolm,

KNOCKING him backwards and lifting him up in the ensuing flood. The storm becomes MORE INTENSE as rain suddenly falls faster and heavier.

Malcolm doesn't flail or try to stay afloat. He grimaces as he's helplessly thrown above and below the water's surface, regardless of his efforts.

He coughs and splutters as he struggles to breathe, swallowing water as he tries to take in air.

He continues to struggle as the storm's audio fades out and a voice fades in.

K (O.S.)

Can I ask a stupid question?

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Sure.

K (O.S.)

I don't mean to sound like an arsehole but... why do you keep trying?

MALCOLM (O.S.)

I don't know. Sometimes I don't. It doesn't really matter what I do. Feels kinda out of my control.

K (O.S.)

So... you're just going to give up?

MALCOLM (O.S.)

I'm still here, aren't I?

K (O.S.)

One day man. One day you'll figure it out.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Honestly, I sort of accepted the fact the waves will probably never go away.

K (O.S.)

They will. I know they will. Just have some faith.

Malcolm's TONE SHIFTS. He becomes FLIPPANT, almost hostile.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Well it's been about twelve years and they haven't, but since you suggested it, I'll wish really hard. Then they might just

magically disappear!

A beat.

Malcolm's voice calms.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

I'm sorry. That was un...

A dial tone plays.

19 EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Bird's eye view of Malcolm continuing to struggle against the ocean and storm.

The sound of intensifying rain permeates the scene.

SLOW ZOOM OUT as a familiar gravelly voice speaks.

ELLE (O.S.)

I'm listening Mal. Take all the time you need.

MALCOLM responds hesitantly.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

I c...

A beat.

MALCOLM (CONT'D, O.S.)

It's just hard to put into words, Elle..

Malcolm continues, stumbling through words as his voice breaks.

MALCOLM (CONT'D, O.S.)

It's exhausting. I'm... It's like I'm trapped in my own head... Trapped on an island. And... and there are these waves...

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END