

EMOTION IS DEAD

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INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Two sets of legs walk down a long hospital corridor. Shiny black shoes. Neat blue trousers.

THE DISTANT SOUND OF A LOCAL TV NEWS REPORT.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S)

They're called in to all kinds of emergencies, but today Police responded to one of their own. A patrol car in the front bedroom of an Elizabeth South home.

A NURSE points two young POLICE OFFICERS down another long hospital hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

The news continues on a small TV high in the corner of the room. On the screen a police vehicle is submerged in the front wall of a suburban house.

The two young Police Officers enter the room. They stand and watch the TV. They share a laugh.

OFFICER NGUYEN (24) turns and kneels at the foot of a hospital bed. He struggles to attach a camcorder to a tripod.

OFFICER MCADAM (26) continues watching the TV. (Improvised reaction to the news story).

OFFICER MCADAM

(turning to Nguyen)

You know how to use that thing right?

OFFICER NGUYEN

You just worry about your shit mate--

Officer Nguyen flips out the camera's viewfinder, then looks for the 'ON' switch. He can't find it. Beat.

Officer McAdam shakes his head-- Bends down and twists a small knob on the camera-- THE CAMERA TURNS ON.

This is the first time we see BROCK (19). Intelligent. Innocent. EMOTIONLESS. He's poorly framed in the camera's viewfinder. He sits up on the hospital bed watching the TV. His bed surrounded by flowers and cards.

THE SOUND OF THE TV NEWS STORY CONTINUES.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

Police say they'll now look at a number of factors, including how fast the patrol car was traveling and whether its brakes failed in the lead up to the crash--

BROCK

(under his breath)

Sometimes the walls run into you.

OFFICER MCADAM (O.S.)

What's that now?

Brock lifts the remote control and turns the TV off. The two Police Officers take a seat beside the bed.

OFFICER MCADAM (CONT'D)

(to Nguyen)

That thing rolling?

OFFICER NGUYEN

Yeah mate.

Lights-- Camera-- Action!

Officer Nguyen points at Brock like he imagines a Hollywood director would. Officer McAdam scoffs at his partner's ridiculousness.

OFFICER MCADAM (O.S.)

Interview one with Brock Barnes.

Lyell McEwan Hospital. May One.

Twenty twenty two--

(looks at watch)

It's now-- 11:05am--

Brock looks directly into the camera. His expression cold, and calculated.

OFFICER NGUYEN (O.S.)

Brock-- Why don't you tell us how it all started mate--

Brock blinks. He looks at both officers. Left then right. He slowly closes his eyes and thinks where to begin.

THE SOUND OF SKATEBOARD WHEELS ROLLING DOWNHILL.

EXT. STREET - DAY

BROCK skateboards down a pretty road in a leafy hillside suburb. He admires the houses he rolls past. Happy children bounce on a trampoline. Wealth. Success.

Brock is dressed all in black. Black polo shirt. Black skinny jeans. Black skate shoes. Black sweat band on his wrist.

He picks up speed and snakes downhill.

EXT. HUGE HOUSE - DAY

Brock hides his skateboard in roadside shrubbery.

He checks his phone as he walks down a long driveway toward a huge house.

Brock rings the doorbell. Beat. No answer.

He looks down at his phone-- Angle on THE GARDN APP open on screen (Uber for gardening). He checks the address. He's at the right place.

Brock reaches for the bell again. He rings the bell just as the door opens. The HOME OWNER (mid-fifties), a born winner, peers out.

HOME OWNER
(confident)
GARDN boy?

BROCK
(meek)
Yes sir.

HOME OWNER
Where's your equipment?

BROCK
(beat)
Ah-- We don't provide equipment--

HOME OWNER
(annoyed)
That's a pretty extortionate rate
for a gardener with no equipment--

A silent stand off. Long Beat.

BROCK
Do you have equipment?

The Home Owner steps outside followed by his dog. He walks past Brock and heads for the garage.

HOME OWNER

Come on--

Brock obediently follows. They pass a fancy car and boat parked in the driveway. The garage door lifts automatically.

INT. HUGE HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

The Home Owner leads Brock into the garage. They move toward a selection of shiny new garden tools-- A lawn mower, Whipper snipper, Hedge trimmers-- The lot.

HOME OWNER

You can start by mowing the lawns, then trim the hedges nice and square-- Rake the leaves, spray the weeds, aerate the grass, prune the fruit trees, clean the pool and scatter some mulch on the garden beds front and back-- There's some mulch just out there--

The Home Owner points out the garage door toward a trailer piled high with mulch.

BROCK

(nervous)

You only booked me for three hours--

HOME OWNER

Yeah?

Brock takes a deep breath and looks down at his feet.

BROCK

Well-- That's a lot--

HOME OWNER

I'll just pay for however long it takes.

BROCK

(looking at feet)

Yeah cool-- It's just I've got stuff to do tonight--

The Home Owner looks at Brock with contempt.

HOME OWNER
 (referring to the app)
 Must be hard to keep five stars on
 here--

Brock doesn't react to the unsubtle threat.

HOME OWNER (CONT'D)
 Look, if you get it all done I'll
 give you a nice tip-- Fair?

The Home Owner extends his hand. Beat. Brock reluctantly
 shakes it. Negotiation over.

HOME OWNER (CONT'D)
 (walking out with dog)
 --And be generous with that mulch.
 Eight to ten centimeters the whole
 way round. Too thin and it's
 useless--

Brock looks back at the huge pile of mulch. Defeated.

EXT. HUGE HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

Brock selects a playlist on his phone-- EMO BANGERS.

SOMETHING LIKE 'AFI, MISS MURDER' PLAYS OVER TITLE SEQUENCE.

Brock yanks the lawnmower's starting chord with his skinny
 arm. He yanks to the beat. It starts on the third pull.

MUSIC BUILDS as Brock mows the lawn. He synchronizes his
 steps and nods his head to the beat.

Brock trims hedges and rakes leaves. He moves more and more
 to the music. Montage of garden work.

He cleans leaves out of the pool with a pool scoop. He starts
 to dance, subtle at first but quickly evolving into a FULL-ON
 WEIRD-ASS EMO DANCE.

Brock uses the pool scoop as a microphone. In his mind he's
 singing on a stage to thousands of adoring fans.

QUICK CUT MONTAGE OF EMO SINGERS ON STAGE.

Brock thrashes his limbs wildly, screaming along to the
 song's epic climax at the top of his lungs (From 02:16).

BROCK
 (singing)
*What's the rift that twists within
 this furthest mystery?*
 (MORE)

BROCK (CONT'D)
*I would gladly bet my life upon it.
 At the cost of love your ray of
 light will fizzle out-- Without
 hope--*

INT. HUGE HOUSE - SUN ROOM - DAY

The Home Owner and his CONSERVATIVE WIFE watch Brock dance and sing beside the pool from inside the house. They share a look-- 'WHAT A FREAK!'

BROCK
 (screaming)
*Hooooooooowwwwwllllll-- When the
 empty sand just flowing through our
 empty skin and we're searching for
 what we were promised--*

TITLE ON SCREEN: **EMOTION IS DEAD**

EXT. HUGE HOUSE - POOL - DAY

The Home Owner stands behind Brock.

CUT THE BACKGROUND MUSIC.

BROCK
 (full volume scream)
*THEY WON'T EVER LET US BLOW OUR
 FILTHY HANDS APART--
 AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!*

Without the backing track Brock sounds like a dying animal.

The Home Owner taps him on the shoulder. Brock removes his headphones. The rock star fades-- The unemotional meek boy returns.

HOME OWNER
 (genuinely concerned)
 You alright mate?

Brock mumbles an awkward apology and looks down at his feet.

HOME OWNER (CONT'D)
 We're heading off for the weekend--
 Think you can put the gear away and
 shut the garage when you're done?

Brock looks up at the garage, then over to the Home Owner's Wife sitting in the passenger seat of a fancy car. She's against the idea.

HOME OWNER (CONT'D)

Great-- There's a button just
inside the door--

The Home Owner walks to the car. He shrugs his shoulders to his wife. She's clearly not happy.

Brock watches the car drive away towing the huge boat behind it. He offers a feeble wave, still holding the pool scoop.

EXT. HUGE HOUSE - YARD - LATER

Sweat drips as Brock shovels mulch from a little red trailer into a wheelbarrow. He wipes his brow with a black bandanna. He looks up at the house. He tilts his head. He throws the shovel to the ground.

EXT. HUGE HOUSE - DAY

Brock presses his hands up against the glass. He peers inside. Everything looks shiny and beautiful.

He spots a liquor cart.

Brock tentatively twists the front door knob. It turns. The door opens. He's in.

INT. HUGE HOUSE - DAY

Brock steps inside. He moves straight for the booze and makes himself a cocktail. He adds dehydrated fruit and a miniature umbrella on top.

He explores the house sipping his cocktail. He casually picks up items then placed them back down.

He tries on a hats from a coat rack. He takes a tote bag off the rack. He leaves one hat on his head.

He places random objects into the bag-- A Coffee grinder. A papier-mâché skull from Mexico. A miniature Eiffel Tower.

He opens the fridge, still wearing the hat. He helps himself to a square of chocolate.

INT. HUGE HOUSE - MAN CAVE - DAY

Brock pokes his head into a room full of musical equipment, band posters from the 60's and 70's and a record player.

He heads straight for the record collection. He flips through. The Beatles. Zeppelin. Dylan-- Nothing he likes.

He comes across 'THE BEACH BOYS-- PET SOUNDS'. He picks it up with reverence. He slides the record out the sleeve. It's mint.

He slides the record into his tote bag and exits the room.

(Option 02 // He puts PET SOUNDS on the record player - SOMETHING LIKE BEACH BOYS - WOULDN'T IT BE NICE PLAYS)

INT. HUGE HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - DAY

Brock enters a home office sipping his cocktail. The tote bag full of stolen trinkets over his shoulder. Hat on his head.

He sits down on the office chair and turns the computer on. He scrolls the recent search history. He clicks a link.

Graphic porn pops up on screen. WE HEAR THE PORN BUT DON'T SEE IT. From the look on Brock's face it's pretty hardcore. He's a little disgusted.

BROCK
What the fuck--

Brock minimized the porn window but the sound continues. It builds to a climax.

Brock spots a document on screen-- 'PASSWORDS'. Beat. He clicks it.

He scrolls down a long spreadsheet of INTERNET PASSWORDS, BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS and all sorts of secret data.

He spots a USB stick on the desk. Beat.

He reaches for the USB stick and plugs it into the computer.

He drags the 'PASSWORDS' file onto the USB.

THE SOUND OF PORN BUILDS TO A CLIMAX. YES. YES. YES.

Brock removes the USB from the computer and holds it in front of his eyes. EMOTIONLESS.

THE SOUND OF AN ORGASM.

EXT. ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY - DAY

A young couple kiss on the Adelaide University lawns.

SLOW MOTION SUB-CULTURE MONTAGE: The University in full swing--
 - Diverse students chat, play and work together--- Hippies,
 Geeks, Yuppies, Muslims, Jocks, Preppies, Goths.

EXT. ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY - QUAD - DAY

Brock sits alone in a pretty university quad drinking a smoothie. He wears headphones and reads a book.

HUNTER (19) a preppy kid with foppish hair creeps up behind him and SHOUTS IN HIS EAR.

HUNTER

HEY!

BROCK

(unfazed)

Hey man.

Hunter sits down. He talks with a street swagger that doesn't quite match his privileged white-boy aesthetic.

HUNTER

You're one cold-ass mother fucker
 dude--

Brock removes his ear buds and continues reading.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

(referring to the book)

You never fucking stop do ya bro?

Hunter reaches for the book.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

(reading poorly)

NOMAD CAPITALIST-- HOW TO RECLAIM
 YOUR FREEDOM WITH OFFSHORE BANK
 ACCOUNTS--

(beat)

That's not on the reading list.

BROCK

I finished the reading list--

HUNTER

(mocking)

I finished the reading list--

(serious)

You're a fucking nerd--

You know that right?

Brock dog-ears the page and puts the book down.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
How was ya weekend?

BROCK
Not bad-- Yours?

Hunter only asked so he could answer.

HUNTER
Ah man-- Fucking nuts!
Dad took us out on the boat.
I was wake surfing for like--
forever. Here, check it out--

Hunter shoves his phone under Brock's nose. A video is pre-loaded on screen. THE SOUND OF KIDS CHEERING FOR HUNTER AS HE WAKE SURFS.

BROCK
Cool.

HUNTER
How bout you?

BROCK
Ah--
(thinking quick)
Just hung out by the pool--
(Hunter's not impressed)
Had a few drinks-- Listened to some
music-- Pretty standard.

Hunter looks down at his big shiny watch.

HUNTER
(interrupting)
Shit man-- Economics.

Brock grabs his book. They rush off together.

INT. UNIVERSITY - LECTURE HALL - DAY

STUDENTS find their seats in a busy lecture hall. A BEARDED LECTURER stands up front. A simple line graph is projected behind him.

LECTURER
Alright guys, take your seats.
Phones off--
(the students obey)
Can anyone tell me what this is?

Silence. A skinny arm with a black sweatband slowly raises.
The lecturer points.

LECTURER (CONT'D)

Brock?

BROCK

A supply and demand curve.

LECTURER

Very good-- And what's this point
here?

The lecturer points his laser to where the two curves meet.

BROCK

Equilibrium.

LECTURER

(impressed)

Someone's done the reading.

HUNTER

(under his breath)

Nerd.

LECTURER

And why is this important?

The Lecturer roves the lecture hall searching for a different
student to answer. Beat. He looks back toward Brock.

LECTURER (CONT'D)

Help us out Brock--

BROCK

It's the point where supply meets
demand, which is how we determine
the market value of any product or
service in a free market economy--

The Lecturer smiles. He's impressed. He continues the lesson.

Brock notices a beautiful blonde girl (LAUREN) looking back
at him with admiration. He quickly looks away-- Bashful.