

DIVE

by

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BLACK

SUPER: Opening titles and credits.

An oxygen tank HISSES. A valve CREAKS loose. SHORT BREATHS evolve into LONG, STEADY BREATHING THROUGH A RESPIRATOR.

SPLASH.

FADE IN:

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

A scuba diver floats in blue, surrounded by disappearing bubbles. This is DALTON C. RILEY (17) in his element.

The still water blankets Dalton as he levitates. Inside his mask, his eyes well with the hint of tears.

EXT. HOME - POOL - CONTINUOUS

Rising like a periscope, Dalton's head breaks the water's surface.

The above ground pool sits antithetic to the brittle, terrestrial backyard surrounding the blue oasis. This is an Arizona summer -- burnt-up-brown and flat.

Dalton sinks back into his oasis.

EXT. HOME - BACKYARD - MORNING

Dalton flip-flops across the barren lawn.

Dalton's wet suit clings to his lanky body. It's his uniform. His skin.

Dalton walks through the open sliding-glass door of his run-down, pre-fab home and slams the door shut.

INT. HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Large flipper footprints trail behind Dalton as he walks through the kitchen, past his haggard MOTHER (44) who is busy at the stove.

The only sound in Dalton's ears is the TONE OF THE OCEAN.

Dalton's mother's face lifts with a concerned smile. Her mouth moves, pleading with Dalton, but her words fall on deaf ears.

Dalton stops for a moment, remaining silent, watching his mother mop up his flippered footprints with a towel.

Dalton's mother, defeated, hunches to her hands and knees and continues to scrub the floor.

INT. HOME - DALTON'S ROOM - DAY

Dalton SLAMS his door. He's alone.

Stripping off his scuba gear his eyes wander along his walls, blue and soaking with posters and pictures of sea life. Pictures of Dalton and his father hang prominently.

The pictures of Dalton and his father begin to move, to play. Tiny home videos of each moment.

Laying on the floor, his eyes zone to the ceiling. Dalton's walls come to life. Lapping at the floorboards are waves. His ears are tuned to the TONE OF THE OCEAN.

With a KNOCK, THE OCEAN drains away.

MOTHER (O.C.)  
Dalton. Breakfast.

INT. HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Dalton breezes past the kitchen table, grabbing a piece of toast from his prepared plate of food, and leaves through the sliding glass door.

Dalton's mother drops her fork to her plate, alone at a table set for two.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Dalton pedals hard on his rusted bicycle down a cracked road. The land is bleak around him.

A whale swims majestically behind him. A HONK forces Dalton to swerve, nearly losing control. A large truck roars past.

EXT. HI DE HO COMICS - DAY

Dalton skids to a stop in front of an empty bike rack, leans his bike in place, and enters the run down comic book store.

INT. HI DE HO COMICS - DAY

Dalton fingers a few comics in front of a massive wall of material.

At the register, ERNIE, a round, pudgy 9 year old, DINGS a bell. He's barely able to see over the counter.

ERNIE  
Hello? Excuse me.

A large EMPLOYEE leans over the counter.

EMPLOYEE  
What's up, little man?

ERNIE  
I'd like to return this.

Ernie produces a comic book from his backpack, sets it on the counter.

ERNIE (CONT'D)  
The ending was all wrong. I don't even want it in my sight. Just take it back.

The Employee, taken aback:

EMPLOYEE  
You do realize this isn't a library?

ERNIE  
Do you?

A long beat.

EMPLOYEE  
Wait. What?

INT. HI DE HO COMICS - MOMENTS LATER

Dalton is lost within a comic.

ERNIE (O.C.)  
Can you believe them? Some customer  
service.

Dalton looks down. Ernie give a wide, toothy smile.

ERNIE (CONT'D)  
Name's Ernie. Whatcha got there?

DALTON  
New issue.  
(beat)  
I've really gotta be going, though.

ERNIE  
Oh, okay.

Dalton walks to the register, checks out.

EXT. HI DE HO COMICS - DAY

Dalton situates his bike.

ERNIE (O.C.)  
So, you got a name?

Startled, Dalton drops his bag. Ernie picks it up.

ERNIE (CONT'D)  
Oh, man! I read all this! I mean,  
how cool is this issue.

Ernie starts to act out a particularly energetic fight scene.

Dalton snatches the bag back.

DALTON  
Yeah. Well, I've really gotta go.

Dalton starts to ride away.

DALTON (CONT'D)  
Name's Dalton, by the way.

Ernie smiles, waves too eagerly.

EXT. TOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Once across the street, Dalton sees two BULLIES hassling Ernie. After a bit, the bullies walk away laughing. Ernie kicks at the sidewalk, begins to act out the fight scene again, then mopes away.

EXT. UNDERWATER - AFTERNOON

Dalton sinks to the bottom of the pool. Sitting cross-legged, bubbles erupt around Dalton's face.

Fish, as if drawn in the water, begin to swim around Dalton. Kelp rises around him. A round shadow starts to eclipse the sun.

Dalton looks up and from above the water's surface, Ernie's face creeps into Dalton's view.

EXT. HOME - POOL - CONTINUOUS

Dalton floats to the surface, his eyes bobbing parallel to the water's edge.

ERNIE (MUFFLED)  
You're a scuba diver?!

Dalton removes his respirator, mask, his wet suit's head-piece.

ERNIE (CONT'D)  
That's so awesome. You've got to be like the only one in the whole state.

DALTON  
How'd you find me?

ERNIE  
Saw your bike.  
(beat)  
And I might have followed you home.

DALTON  
What do you want?

ERNIE  
Don't want anything. Come on, who do you take me for?

Dalton waits.

ERNIE (CONT'D)  
Okay. Maybe, you know, if you want to. Maybe you could teach me?

DALTON  
I don't think so.

ERNIE  
Come on. I can be like your  
prodigy.

DALTON  
Protégé.

ERNIE  
Whatever. Tomato, Potato.

DALTON  
I can't. You don't have a suit and  
I'm really not qualified. No. I  
can't.

ERNIE  
Please?

DALTON  
No. I really have to keep  
practicing. Just go home, okay.

Dalton replaces his head-piece, mask, and respirator.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Dalton sinks. Ernie continues to watch him, then disappears.

A bothersome fish slinks in front of Dalton. He swipes it  
away.

INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dalton and his mother sit in the darkened room watching TV.

Dalton's mother starts to speak, but stops. SIGHS.

THE TONE OF THE OCEAN washes over Dalton.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Dalton is now fully outfitted in his scuba gear, still  
sitting on the couch watching TV. Bubbles erupt around his  
face.

A home video of a younger Dalton and his father diving  
together plays on the TV.

His eyes well with tears.

INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dalton's eyes open. The house is SILENT.

A thin sliver of light streams from Dalton's mother's cracked door.

INT. HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dalton creeps toward the door, peers through the crack.

INT. HOME - MOTHER'S ROOM - NIGHT

A soft glow is spread across Dalton's mother's face as images of Dalton's mother and his father are projected on to the wall in front of her.

Dalton's mother rocks on the edge of her bed, holding Dalton's scuba gear.

The film spins images of Dalton's father and Dalton's mother at sea.

INT. HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dalton melts to the floor, his back against the door frame. He cries.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Fully outfitted in his scuba gear, Dalton pedals fast down the road on his bike.

Fish and sea life chase him. The TONE OF THE OCEAN is grating, panicked.

EXT. HOME - POOL - DAY

Ernie waddles to the side of the pool. He's dressed in a homemade scuba outfit crafted from taped-together black, plastic garbage bags, a child's mask and snorkel, and ping-pong paddles attached to his feet like flippers.

Ernie ties two Ziplock bags filled with rocks around his waist. He tests their weight.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Dalton, still in scuba gear, continues to pedal fast. The fish are swarming around him. The TONE OF THE OCEAN is overwhelming.

Dalton swerves, over-corrects, and skids across the road.

Dalton kicks his bike with his flippered foot, holds his ears.

EXT. HOME - POOL - DAY

Ernie is poised on the edge of the pool.

He dips his paddled foot into the water, resituates himself.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Dalton, still in scuba gear, attempts to replace the chain on his bike. His hand slips, the chain pops free again.

Dalton rises to kick the bike again as a van passes in front of him, its HORN BLAZING.

Dalton is no longer wearing his scuba gear.

EXT. HOME - POOL - DAY

Ernie jumps into the pool and sinks immediately.

EXT. HOME - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

SPLASH. Dalton pushes his broken bike to the ground and sprints to the pool.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Dalton grasps for Ernie as he flails, pinned to the pool's bottom.

Dalton, with Ernie under his arm, ascends to the surface.

EXT. HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Dalton and Ernie, soaking wet, lay on the burnt-up ground beside the pool. Their BREATHING is uneven.

Dalton sits up, wrapping his arms around his knees.

DALTON  
What the hell were you thinking?

ERNIE  
(through heavy breaths)  
Just wanted to be like you.

DALTON  
You could have died, Ernie. I told you, you're too young. You can't do it. I told you.

Dalton's eyes well with tears.

ERNIE  
Sorry.

DALTON  
Well 'Sorry' can't bring anyone back! Then what? What? You're gone, too?

ERNIE  
But--

DALTON  
I could have been there with him. I could have saved him. But, 'I couldn't.' 'You're too young.'  
(beat)  
All I wanted was to be with him, okay. Just wanted to be him.

Dalton grabs his scuba gear sitting beside the pool and begins tossing it into the pool.

Ernie rises, walks behind Dalton and hugs him. Dalton fights him at first, then relents, his head coming to rest on the pool's edge.

INT. HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dalton and his mother sit in silence at the table. Dalton pushes his food around. Dalton's mother smiles weakly.

	MOTHER	DALTON
Dalton.		Momma.

Dalton rises from his chair, walks behind his mother's and wraps his arms around her shoulders.

Dalton's mother reaches back, her hands in his hair. She quivers with tears.

MOTHER  
(through tears)  
Just doesn't make any sense.

DALTON  
Not a whole lot does.

EXT. HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Dalton is laying on the brown earth beside the still, blue above ground pool. His arms are crossed over his chest, his eyes fixed above.

Dalton closes his eyes slowly.

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

Without his scuba gear, bubbles erupt through Dalton's teeth as he smiles wide.

FADE OUT.