

APOCALYPSE NIGERIA

"CITY OF SILENCE"

Written by

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FADE IN:

TV IMAGES -- NIGERIA IS ON FIRE! Various images are cut together showing footage of mayhem, tragedy, and people running helter-skelter through the teeming city streets, escaping from an INFECTED POPULACE!

Hoads of them are on a rampage, killing and maiming with an insatiable appetite for violence! Various NEWS-PEOPLE and VOICE-OVERS issue conflicting warnings and reports.

ON ONE CHANNEL --

REPORTER

...Officials from the Ministry of Health don't know yet how this infection is being transmitted.

Footage of SOLDIERS and MOBILE POLICE in riot gear firing on the rampaging citizens.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER CHANNEL --

ANNOUNCER

-- government officials said they are treating this as both a national health hazard and a military concern --

CUT TO:

A TELEVANGELIST speaks to the camera...

TELEVANGELIST

...the End Times are upon us! I say it is a plague upon the country as a whole because we have turned away from God!

CUT TO:

An impromptu press conference outside a HOSPITAL swarming with patients as reporters bombard a DOCTOR with questions --

REPORTER

Are they living or are they dead?

DOCTOR

That's a stupid thing to ask! What do you mean if they are living or dead?

CUT TO:

Another press conference, this time with a GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL --

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

There's no cause for alarm. They are simply political dissidents trying to undermine the current administration!

REPORTER

Have you seen what's going on? You call beating another person to death, raping their corpse while eating their flesh the work of a political dissident?

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

Next question!

CUT TO:

ANOTHER CHANNEL -- where a POLITICIAN and his family are about to get into a waiting car in a motorcade surrounded by armed SECURITY GUARDS and throngs of Reporters.

POLITICIAN

...I just spoke to the President and he assured me that the situation should take no more than a few days to control. Thank you.

He's quickly ushered into the car, which speeds off leaving the reporters to grumble and hurl insults at the fleeing motorcade.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER CHANNEL -- where a bewildered REPORTER argues with someone off camera --

REPORTER

What do you mean? I'm going to read it! Yes, I am -- I AM!

(faces camera)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the latest news coming from our correspondents across the nation...

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

a deadly virus seems to have spread from the rural areas to the major cities... the first cases were reported about one week ago... it appears to be highly contagious and the victims display symptoms of uncontrollable rage leading to the acts of depravity and carnage we've seen and heard on the news... it is an epidemic that has spread nationwide... so far, the federal government has issued no official statement concerning containment measures except for the military action taken against the infected masses... the whereabouts of the president and his staff are also in question and a mass exodus to flee the infected areas is underway... For those who can't leave you are advised to stay inside your homes, lock your doors, and stay tuned... God help us all!

FADE TO:

INT. JONAH'S APARTMENT - PRE-DAWN

JONAH AJALA, 25, stands in the middle of a messy little apartment shrouded in darkness. He holds his mobile phone to his ear while staring at the TV in front of him, frantically flipping through channels via remote but only getting static.

Jonah takes the phone off his ear and checks the display -- NO SIGNAL.

JONAH

Come on...

He tries again. The display picture shows Jonah and a YOUNG WOMAN with their arms wrapped around each other. Still no luck. No signal.

JONAH (CONT'D)

Dammit!

Jonah tosses the phone. He sits on the couch, sighs, holding his head in his hands. His feet bounce nervously on the floor.

JONAH (V.O.)

It all started with the blood. No one could figure out where it came from. The virus spread so fast that it was all over before anyone could react...

CUT TO:

INT. JONAH'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jonah stuffs clothes and various items into a bag -- small radio, flashlight, candles, box of matchsticks...

JONAH (V.O.)

Ever since the city fell, I've been trying to reach my girlfriend Evelyn. I haven't heard from her since last week. She's supposed to be at the state university taking her final exams. That's where I'm going, no matter what they're saying on the news...

He moves to the kitchen area and grabs a set of KNIVES, stuffing them in the bag.

JONAH (V.O.)

I just hope she's still alive.

Jonah finds his phone. He taps on it to bring up his display picture. He pauses, glancing at the photograph. He stares at their happy, smiling faces for a brief moment.

Jonah then walks to the one window in the apartment to look outside...

I/E. JONAH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The curtains slowly pull back as Jonah peers outside. There's absolute silence outside. No sounds of traffic, not even birds chirping, revealing --

The devastated street outside the apartment building.

Still-smoldering crashed cars have veered into the sides of buildings, trash is strewn everywhere, and what appears to be hundreds of pools of DRIED BLOOD glisten beneath the early morning sky.

JONAH (V.O.)

The Ministry of Health thinks the virus might have been a biological weapon. The President hasn't yet made any announcement. Typical. But almost every city is effectively under martial law. All you hear are screams and gunshots.

Jonah takes one last look at his humble apartment, zipping up a worn jacket, his bag slung over his shoulder. After a beat, he heads out the door, not even bothering to close it behind him.

EXT. JONAH'S APARTMENT - PRE-DAWN

Jonah approaches his jalopy of a car and gets in.

JONAH (V.O.)

Everything has gone to hell thanks to the "ojuju". That's what people have been calling the infected... I know I can choose to stay, but all I care about now is finding Evelyn.

He turns on the engine and the car sputters to life. It slowly makes its way down the street.

EXT. CITY STREETS - PRE-DAWN

Jonah winds his way through the destroyed street, veering around crashed cars and running parallel to an overturned city bus that is covered in bloodstains. The entire street is blocked on both sides. The only way is forward.

I/E. JONAH'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jonah narrows his eyes, searching warily around him for signs of movement.

A SHADOW passes directly before us, racing across the litter-strewn pavement like an animal!

Jonah surges forward, moving further down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHECKPOINT - PRE-DAWN

Jonah pulls up to a haphazardly created checkpoint in the middle of the intersection, created from pieces of stray wood, metal, and other scavenged materials.

I/E. JONAH'S CAR - SAME

Jonah pulls up just short of the blockade, coming to a stop. He looks left and right. It looks completely deserted. He grabs a knife from the bag and exits the vehicle. He slowly approaches the blockade when --

GUNSHOTS RING OUT!

Jonah dives for the pavement, hiding behind his car.

JONAH

Shit! I'm not one of them! I'm normal! Don't shoot me... I'm not infected!

A moment later, a lone SOLDIER, no more than eighteen or nineteen years old, rises from behind the shoddily built shelter, pointing a semiautomatic rifle out into the street with slightly shaking hands.

SOLDIER

Who goes there?!?

Jonah slowly pokes his head up. The soldier cocks his weapon threateningly.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Drop the knife and come out with your hands up!

Jonah drops the knife and comes out of his crouching position, holding his hands up before him plaintively.

JONAH

Please, I don't want any trouble... I just want to pass.

The young soldier eyes him cautiously.

SOLDIER

What are you doing out here? Haven't you been listening to the news? You know it's not safe outside.

JONAH

The TV stations have stopped broadcasting... even radio. And there's no cell reception.

(beat)

Aren't you young to be a soldier?

SOLDIER

No... they needed more troops on-ground so they called up many of us from military school to help contain the spread of infection.

(pause)

The things I've seen and done, you wouldn't believe it...

The soldier's expression softens slightly. He lowers the rifle, but just barely. Jonah approaches the blockade, lowering his arms.

JONAH

Look, we need to get out of here. We can go together. Those... things, they're still out here.

SOLDIER

You think I don't know that!? I'm the only one who didn't abandon my post! Everybody else just left. They left me all alone!

JONAH

Hey, easy, easy. It's going to be okay. We can help each other.

The soldier shakes his head somberly.

SOLDIER

No! There's nothing anybody can do! It's all over!

JONAH

I just want to leave the city. I have to find my girlfriend.

The soldier barks out a humorless laugh.

SOLDIER

Leave the city? You'll never make it. Those things, the *ojuju*, will tear you apart before you reach anywhere. I've seen them in action... the people that couldn't run, they got them.

(MORE)

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Just like they'll get you. Just like they'll get me. We are doomed!

JONAH

Look, if you don't want to leave, then let me through.

The soldier aims his gun squarely at Jonah's chest.

SOLDIER

How do I know you are not infected?

JONAH

Because I'm not trying to kill you and eat your brain!

The soldier wavers.

SOLDIER

It doesn't matter. I have a duty to uphold. I can't risk letting the infection spread. I have to keep it contained. Zero tolerance policy!

Jonah takes a couple of tentative steps closer. The soldier reacts quickly, edging forward, bettering his aim.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Don't move or I'll shoot!

JONAH

Listen, we can help each other! What's your name? My name is Jonah.

The soldier hesitates, caught off guard.

SOLDIER

Lukman. Lance Corporal Lukman Waziri.

JONAH

Lukman, okay. I could use your help in finding my girlfriend. You have a gun and who knows how long you'll last out here by yourself. We stand a better chance if we stick together. What do you say?

Almost in response, a faint SCUFFLING sound pierces the early morning air from somewhere nearby. Both men look around, desperately searching for the source of the sudden noise.

SOLDIER

It's too late...

The SCUFFLING sound returns, this time closer. Lukman looks over Jonah's shoulder, gripping the rifle tightly. His face loses all color and his eyes widen --

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 My god, they're here!

Jonah stands frozen. He looks out of the corner of his eyes before slowly turning around. Time seems to stand still. They hear a SCREECHING sound --

A hideous looking INFECTED MAN appears on top of an overturned car.

Its pale, putrid skin shows under tattered and bloody clothing. Its wild, roving eyes, bright red from burst blood vessels, scope the area before it hungrily settles on Jonah and Lukman.

It lets loose a terrible SCREAM, revealing rows of needle-sharp teeth wet with spittle. The infected scuttles across the car on all fours, preparing to leap at the two of them.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 Move!

He shoves Jonah aside, sending him toppling to the pavement. Jonah watches in abject horror as the infected SOARS through the air, landing directly on top Lukman with sickeningly sharp accuracy.

Lukman barely has time to utter a gasp of surprise before the infected's teeth pierce his throat, ripping his jugular out within seconds. His rifle drops some ways away.

Jonah lets out an inhuman, deep, guttural SCREAM of terror!

The young soldier crumples to the ground, dead before his head even hit the pavement. The *ojuju* begins frantically feeding upon the poor dead soldier, blood splashing in all directions.

Jonah scrambles across the ground, scrabbling on his knees and elbows, trying to keep low, so he can reach his car while the sounds of bones CRACKING and intestines BURSTING fill the air as the infected feeds in the background.

The infected notices Jonah trying to make an escape. It lifts its head from Lukman's exposed chest cavity, bits of viscera and marrow dripping from its jaws.

Abandoning its kill, the infected SCREECHES angrily and runs across the street towards Jonah.

Jonah spots Lukman's rifle and scrambles for it. He wildly pulls the trigger on the rifle, sending a burst of fire into the air above him, going wide.

JONAH

Shit!

He tries to aim the rifle but the infected is already too close! Jonah shivers in fear, gasping for breath as the infected's face comes within INCHES of his own!

Jonah stares up into its blood-red eyes. Their SCREAMS mingle together as the infected extends its jaws in preparation to bite down.

With a strength he didn't think he could muster, Jonah thrusts the muzzle of the rifle in front of him against the infected's chin, and pulls the trigger.

The rifle fires off several rounds in rapid succession -- BLOWING the infected's skull apart! The creature's lifeless body crumbles to the pavement.

Jonah frantically searches his arms and body, making sure there isn't any of the infected's blood on him. He gently touches his face and neck. He's clean.

He slowly ambles past the infected corpse, holding the rifle listlessly down at his side, eyes roving back and forth in search of more infected that could have been drawn out of hiding by the scuffle.

Jonah kneels down next to the mutilated corpse of Lukman, who's eyes are fixed in a permanent stare of horror and surprise.

JONAH (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHECKPOINT - DAY

The street begins to get a bit brighter with the first rays of daylight. Once again the street has become eerily silent.

Jonah secures the rifle and a pack of ammunition he picks up off the ground in his car, among other supplies he finds lying around. He gets in.

I/E. JONAH'S CAR - DAY

Jonah takes one last glance at the carnage around him.

He starts the engine and heads off, passing through the dilapidated checkpoint Lance Corporal Lukman and his comrades had erected in the middle of the street.

JONAH (V.O.)

One good thing is that when the
ojuju kills you, you remain dead.
There's no coming back. I just hope
I don't run into any more of them.
Hold on, Evelyn. I'm on my way...

Plumes of smoke from burning and gutted buildings form storm-like clouds above as the beat up car heads on, into an unknown future.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: TO BE CONTINUED...