

Deepstare

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INT. POLICE STATION - DAY (AT CELLS)

SERIES OF SHOTS - INTERIOR OF POLICE STATION AT HOLDING CELLS

- A) Corridors.
- B) Cell doors.
- C) Hanging keys.
- D) Fluorescent lights.

AUDIO:

Ambient noise, including the faint murmur of human voices, impossible to decipher.

SUPERIMPOSE: DEEPSTARE

Last image is a cell door with the number 3 displayed. Viewed from outside.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CELL - DAY

CHRISTOPHER JACKSON (approx. 30yo) sits alone in a POLICE CELL, staring at the door directly ahead of him as if lost in a trance. He is dishevelled. His hands are covered in blood. Some blood is on his clothes and face.

The cell is stark with bare white tiles on all four walls. The only feature is the BENCH where Jackson sits attached to the wall opposite the locked DOOR. We hear little except muffled sounds beyond the cell.

Jackson stares at the cell door as it slowly blurs, losing coherency.

We cut to Jackson, pulling slowly away from him.

A voice cries out, from outside the cell. Jackson snaps to attention, his trance evaporating.

Jackson sees the door clearly as his eyes regain focus.

The sound of an officer's voice rings out from the corridor beyond the locked door, calming down the other voices.

OFFICER (OS)  
Shut up you lot.

The sounds die away outside the cell.

Jackson, now fully alert, looks down at his hands. He sees the blood. He stares for a moment then looks up at the door.

Jackson sees the door begin to blur, losing focus.

As he loses himself in the trance we pull away from Jackson slowly...

ABRUPT CUT TO:

TITLE CARD:

PRINCIPLE DISCOVERY OF THE EFFECT

INT. FLAT - DAY

Jackson is standing in his LIVING ROOM. It is sparse, a couch and a few chairs, no TV. A large bookcase lines one wall.

The curtains are only partly open leaving the room in semi darkness.

Jackson is holding a book open, staring at the open page. It looks odd. He is staring not reading.

PSYCHIATRIST (VO)  
What happened?

JACKSON (VO)  
The longer I stared at the word the more meaningless it became.

We see the page Jackson is staring at, a wall of words.

PSYCHIATRIST (VO)  
What word?

FLASHBACK:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A PSYCHIATRIST sits behind a desk. He is in late middle age and wearing a white lab coat. He looks relaxed, slightly detached. A NAMEPLATE on the desk says "Dr James Campbell".

Jackson sits on the other side of the desk, like a job interview.

The PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE is modern, stark and clinical as if

part of a hospital.

Behind the psychiatrist is a floor to ceiling window with translucent curtains that allow strong light but obscure the outside.

On a wall to Jackson's left is a bookcase crammed with books and a few plants. On the right is a long couch.

JACKSON

What?

PSYCHIATRIST

What word did you stare at?

END FLASHBACK

FLAT - LOOKING AT BOOK

We cut to a close up of the word UP within a passage of text in the book Jackson is holding.

JACKSON (VO)

Up.

The word UP is sharp with the rest of the words difficult to discern.

JACKSON (VO) CONT.

The more I stared the more the word lost meaning. I mean, after a while it didn't seem like a word at all. The letters just became shapes really.

Once I lost the meaning of the word by staring I found it hard to retrieve. The more I stared the further away the definition slipped.

It took a lot of effort to stop the effect. To pull away.

Jackson looks up from the page, his eyes unfocused.

Slowly he looks around and comes to, taking in the room.

FLASHBACK:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

JACKSON

I wanted to know if it worked with other things.

PSYCHIATRIST  
Worked? What do you mean?

JACKSON  
Losing myself. Losing the meaning  
when you stare. I wanted to see if  
it only worked with words. So I  
tried the bookcase.

END FLASHBACK

LIVING ROOM - AT BOOKCASE

Jackson is standing about ten feet from his bookcase. It has hundreds of books of all colours and writing. A wall of book spines in no apparent order.

Jackson focuses on one.

PSYCHIATRIST (VO)  
Did it work?

JACKSON (VO)  
Not at first. I kept seeing books  
I'd read and it made me think of  
their contents.

Jackson looks at different books, the wording on the spines sharp and clear, some of them placed horizontally and easy to read. He jumps between them, the titles and author's names obvious and readable.

Jackson moves back a few feet, away from the bookcase.

JACKSON (VO)  
I moved back to make it harder to  
read the individual words and I  
found a book I wasn't familiar  
with. I kept staring but nothing  
worked.

Jackson stares for a while then seems to give up and walks to the bookcase and picks up the target book.

JACKSON (VO)  
It didn't work at all until I  
picked the book itself up.

Jackson holds the book, staring at the cover. He sees an illustration, the title of the book in large letters and the name of the author.

He looks hard at the volume, concentration on his face.

AUDIO:

As Jackson begins to lose focus, the ambient background sounds become more sharp and jarring, rising in volume.

The book slowly loses coherence as he stares at the cover.

We see Jackson's eyes lose focus as if in a trance.

The book becomes a vague blur.

OUT OF BODY POV:

We see Jackson from above, staring at the book, as if looking at himself from the outside.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson comes to and seems to snap out of it. His eyes regain focus on the book in his hand.

Jackson now sees the book in sharp focus as he continues to stare at the book.

FLASHBACK:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

PSYCHIATRIST  
What happened then?

JACKSON  
I wanted to see if I could apply it elsewhere after I lost the book.

PSYCHIATRIST  
So what did you do?

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD:

AN EXPLORATION OF ASCENSION

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jackson is sitting on a BENCH in a PARK. Mid afternoon, bright sunlight.

He is watching a group of CHILDREN and MOTHERS playing in a PLAYPARK some distance away. We can just hear the squeals and shouts of the kids.

He looks ahead at a group of TREES in the distance. We hear them rustle in the breeze.

As Jackson stares at the trees they begin to lose coherence. Initially easy to discern individual trees, they gradually blend into a diffuse mass of green.

AUDIO:

The sounds of the children playing drift away. The sound of the trees rustling becomes more diffuse.

Jackson stares ahead as the sounds die away.

Jackson becomes more distant to us as we pull away.

OUT OF BODY POV:

We briefly see Jackson sitting on the bench from above.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson's eyes lose focus as he drifts further. The trees are lost in a blur.

OUT OF BODY POV:

We see Jackson from an even greater distance now.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson's eyes are unfocused as if in a trance.

FLASHBACK:

INT. FLAT - DAY (LOOKING AT BOOK)

Jackson is looking at the book. The book is completely blurred as before.

END FLASHBACK

PARK - AT BENCH

Jackson's eyes are completely unfocused while sitting on the bench.

AUDIO:

As before, when Jackson starts to focus, intrusive audio rises in volume. This is jarring and uncomfortable.

A) Trees rustling.

B) Light wind.

C) Ambient noise.

FADE TO:

OCEANIC HALLUCINATION

We seem to be floating in an oceanic void. There is no explicit audio. The children, the trees and the park are gone.

The impression is of rising up through an ocean from the dark depths below to the lighter region above towards the surface.

We float for some time, a definite sense of rising towards light.

END OCEANIC HALLUCINATION

EXT. PARK - EVENING

We see Jackson's eyes slowly gain focus. He comes to, as if shaking himself from a trance. He is sitting on the bench.

It is darker. Jackson turns his head to look at the playpark. The children and their mothers are gone.

Jackson looks ahead and can just see the trees in the dim light as before, a faint sound of them rustling in the light wind.

Jackson looks around as he rises from the bench. He looks confused and slightly disorientated.

After looking around he looks back at the ground immediately before him.

FADE OUT:

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Jackson enters a large SUPERMARKET. He walks into an area at one end with tall shelving, the aisles packed with goods.

He walks through the aisles for some time, turning left and right.

Eventually he stops at a junction and looks down a long corridor of shelving running almost the entire length of the supermarket.

At the very end in the distance he sees more shelving against the back wall with products difficult to discern.

He stands, staring.

FLASHBACK:

INT. FLAT - DAY

Jackson is standing staring in his dimly lit flat. We see he is looking at the bookcase as before.

The bookcase remains in sharp focus.

END FLASHBACK

SUPERMARKET - LONG AISLE

The shelving at the far end of the aisle begins to dissolve as Jackson loses focus.

Jackson's eyes lose focus. He stares as if in a trance.

AUDIO:

We hear the sounds of the supermarket grow in volume, uncomfortably sharp as Jackson drifts away.

A) Distant sound of the tills bleeping.

B) Air conditioning.

C) Murmur of voices.

OUT OF BODY POV:

Jackson is standing stationary looking down the long aisle.

Jackson begins walking, turning down a side aisle.

END OUT OF BODY POV

All of the shelves are beginning to blur but discernible so he can navigate.

He turns another corner, now parallel with his original direction so he is once again facing the full length of the supermarket to the back wall.

At the very end the shelves on the back wall contain white packaged goods that seem to be toiletries.

Along one side is a set of glass-fronted counters instead of shelves. These are bakers, cooked meats counters, butchers. Staff work behind them, many of them in white overalls.

Jackson continues to walk in a daze. He slowly edges along, aiming for the back wall.

OUT OF BODY POV:

We follow Jackson walking along the long aisle as he aims for the back wall.

A SECURITY GUARD appears, walking towards him. Just as he is reaching Jackson another figure in a white coat walks from the butcher counter towards Jackson.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson sees the security guard as a dark shape. He stops walking.

The white-coated butcher appears at the edge of his vision, blurred.

SECURITY GUARD  
(Muffled)  
Are you OK, sir?

Jackson's eyes slowly regain focus as he looks directly at the security guard. He then turns to the BUTCHER as he walks forward to join the security guard.

FLASHBACK:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson and the psychiatrist are in the office. The psychiatrist is standing, wearing a white lab coat similar to the butcher.

END FLASHBACK

SUPERMARKET - AT COUNTERS WITH GUARD AND BUTCHER

Jackson's eyes sharply focus, looking at the butcher, now standing next to the security guard.

Jackson takes a step back. The security guard steps forward.

SECURITY GUARD  
(Concerned)  
Are you all right?

Jackson takes a few steps away from the men and turns. He walks briskly down the nearest aisle and makes for the exit.

The security guard and the butcher silently watch him leave.

FADE OUT:

TITLE CARD:

NAVIGATION THROUGH THE SUPERIOR PLANE

AUDIO:

Doorbell rings.

INT. FLAT - DAY

LIVING ROOM

Jackson is standing in the living room, staring once again at the bookcase. The room is dimly lit, the curtains closed. Discarded dishes litter the coffee table. The room is untidy and in mild disarray.

The doorbell RINGS a second time.

Jackson's unfocused eyes gain focus as he hears the doorbell.

FLAT - HALL

He walks to the HALL and opens the FRONT DOOR.

A SOCIAL WORKER is standing at the door. She is middle aged, wearing a coat that obscures her uniform.

She motions to Jackson she wants to enter. It is apparent they know each other and have done this before.

SOCIAL WORKER  
(Moving past Jackson)  
Christopher, why are the curtains  
shut?

The social worker walks into the living room. Jackson follows her, watching, saying nothing.

The social worker walks over to the window and wrenches a CURTAIN to one side, flooding the room with light.

SOCIAL WORKER  
You need to focus more on your  
routine, Christopher. It is easy to  
let things slip.

She pulls the other curtain aside

SOCIAL WORKER (CONT.)  
You remember what we discussed  
before. Dr Campbell's advice.

Jackson watches as she looks around the room. She walks over to the coffee table and picks up some discarded cups and dishes.

She walks into the kitchen with the dishes.

SOCIAL WORKER  
You need to keep on top of things,  
Christopher.

Jackson remains in the living room, watching her through the doorway to the kitchen as she puts the dishes beside the sink. She takes off her coat and drapes it over a chair revealing a dark uniform and turns to reach for the cord to open the blinds. Light floods in to the dark kitchen.

We can see the kitchen is a mess too, dishes piled in the sink.

Jackson's eyes begin to lose focus.

AUDIO:

The sound of the social worker talking loudly becomes sharp and jarring drowning out ambient noise.

OUT OF BODY POV:

We see Jackson from a high angle as he stares at the woman.

SOCIAL WORKER  
This place is a mess. You've really  
let things slip. You need to keep  
on top of your routine.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson's eyes lose focus as he stares at the social worker through the doorway.

The social worker, with her back to Jackson while running water in the sink, begins to blur.

The social worker starts washing the dishes as the AUDIO fades in time with Jackson losing focus. The woman gradually becomes distant and diffuse.

FLAT - KITCHEN

Jackson moves forward into the kitchen, the social worker's dialogue distant and muffled. She is a dark blur as he approaches.

SOCIAL WORKER  
(Muffled)  
How many days has it been since you  
did your dishes, Christopher?

As he moves closer the dark shape moves. The shape struggles.

The struggle continues for some time. It is not entirely clear what is happening. Her dark, blurred form is silhouetted against the harsh light entering through the kitchen window.

AUDIO:

The muffled sounds rise in volume.

We see a sharp flash of light. Jackson is holding something shiny in his hand.

The dark blurred form of the social worker slumps to the floor and remains motionless.

OUT OF BODY POV:

We see Jackson standing above the silent form of the social worker lying on the kitchen floor, a long knife in his hands. Blood slowly seeps from the body, spreading across the floor.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson looks down and notices the knife in his hand. He drops the knife as he takes a step back.

Jackson's eyes sharply focus on the prone form of the dead social worker.

He looks down at his hands, covered in blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jackson is walking hurriedly along the street, dressed as before. We can see the blood on his hands, some on his clothes and face.

OUT OF BODY POV:

PEDESTRIANS avoid him as he walks along, stopping to stare.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson sees only dim shapes:

A) People walking towards him and swerving out of his way.

B) The pavement outline as he walks forward.

C) Traffic driving past.

Jackson continues to walk along the road as if aimless.

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

Jackson walks into the PARK. He sees it as a green, blurred mass.

Other people continue to avoid him as he walks aimlessly.

OUT OF BODY POV:

At the very edge of the frame we see two uniformed POLICE OFFICERS approach him as he walks along a PATH in the park.

END OUT OF BODY POV

Jackson sees the two dark blurred figures approach. They spread slightly as they approach, one on each side. In the background blue lights are flashing.

Jackson is stopped by the police officers.

AUDIO:

All sounds are heavily dampened and muffled.

A) Ambient sounds of the park.

B) Traffic.

C) Voices - the police officers saying something.

OUT OF BODY POV:

From above we see Jackson stopped by the police officers.

END