

FADE IN:

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- EARLY MORNING

MICHAEL DURANT(9) sleeps. He shivers and sweats profusely.

MICHAEL

No. The tree is too high. I don't
want to fall, I don't want to fall--

SOPHIE, the maid, opens the curtains.

SOPHIE

--Michael. Rise and shine, my darling.

Michael pulls the blanket over his head.

EXT. EARLY SPRING OF 1970 IN A POSH SUBURB OF LONDON.

EXT. DURANT MANSION -- DAY

A Victorian estate surrounded by servants' quarters, stables
and a well-groomed garden that leads to a vast meadow.

PAPARAZZO JOE (V.O.)

Boy, it's cold. What are we doing
here?

RETIRING PAPARAZZO (V.O.)

This compound is owned by the Durants.
They are old money, real old, since
about the 1700s.

PAPARAZZO JOE (V.O.)

So how--

RETIRING PAPARAZZO (V.O.)

--They're the tenth generation to
serve as jewelers to the Royal Family.

Michael and his nine months younger brother ZANE(8), are still
in their English schoolboy uniforms. They run onto the lawn
and start playing soccer.

RETIRING PAPARAZZO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Look. These are latest heirs to the
Durant fortune, Michael and Zane.

PAPARAZZO JOE (V.O.)

You know their names?

RETIRING PAPARAZZO (V.O.)

Sure. Lesson number one - know as
much as you can about your subjects.

PAPARAZZO JOE (V.O.)
(anxiously)
I'm ready to shoot.

EXT. DURANT MANSION -- GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

Zane places himself in front of an imaginary goal made out of two dead branches. He goads Michael, gesturing with his hands.

ZANE
Come on, Michael! Try me!

Michael fakes a move, pulling Zane to one side, and scores.

ZANE (CONT'D)
Damn. You know that was dumb luck.

MICHAEL
I don't think so.

Zane angrily kicks the ball into the air. The ball gets stuck 18 feet up in the branches of an old pine tree.

ZANE
Shoot! What now? I want my revenge.

The boys stand there, looking up at the ball.

MICHAEL
Let's get the groundskeeper's ladder!

The boys run behind the garage.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Boys, it's time for lunch!

Zane and Michael lean the ten-foot aluminum pullout ladder onto the trunk of the tree.

ZANE
Do you want to go first?

Michael wants to show no fear.

MICHAEL
Oh, okay, I go.

He climbs up the ladder and steps onto the lowest branch. As Michael glances down, he shudders from fear of heights.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Wow!

ZANE
Don't look down, just keep going.

Zane smiles and quickly removes the ladder from the tree.

MICHAEL
(with a shaky voice)
What's going on down there?

ZANE
Everything's okay! Just look up and
get the ball.

Michael reaches up and tips the ball. The ball falls to the ground. Zane catches it.

ZANE (CONT'D)
Hey, Michael! Catch!

He kicks it back up and hits Michael. Michael's nerves make him slip and he almost falls out of the tree.

MICHAEL
Stop it! I'm not going to get it
again.

On his way back down, Michael discovers the ladder missing and freezes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Where's the ladder, Zane?

Zane points to a branch that extends over the garage.

ZANE
I guess the only way down is to get
out there and jump onto the garage.

MICHAEL
Stop it! Put the ladder up and let
me down.

ZANE
Don't be a baby! It's easy, just
close your eyes and jump!

Michael does not move.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Boys? Lunch is getting cold, get in
here!

Zane takes the ball, and yells back to Michael.

ZANE
If you don't want to stay the night,
you better get down soon.

He runs toward the mansion.

MICHAEL
Zane! Come back here, please! I
don't want to fall!

The wind picks up rustling the leaves.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(desperately)
Hellllp! Somebody hellllp me!

INT. PAPARAZZI'S VAN -- CONTINUOUS

CAMERA CLICKS

PAPARAZZO JOE shoots pictures through a curtained back window.
His mentor, RETIRING PAPARAZZO, looks through his binoculars.

PAPARAZZO JOE
We should help him.

RETIRING PAPARAZZO
Wait! Lesson number two - allow
situations to unfold.

EXT. DURANT MANSION -- CONTINUOUS

SOPHIE, the maid, who is washing windows, hears Michael's
shouts.

The door of the mansion opens and the boys' mother, GRACE,
comes running with Sophie to aid the child.

GRACE
Michael, hold on, we're coming!

Grace and Sophie put the ladder back against the tree. Zane
comes running back to watch the rescue.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Just stay calm.

Sophie climbs up to help the shaken child down to safety.

Grace grabs Michael and looks him in the eye.

GRACE (CONT'D)
How often do I have to tell you boys
to stay out of trouble.

Michael sniffles.

MICHAEL
But Mummy, the ball.

GRACE

I know honey, but what if Sophie hadn't seen you?

Zane watches his Mother and Michael attentively.

As they walk back to the mansion, Grace kisses Michael on the cheek and puts her arm around him.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Actually, it was pretty brave of you to get the ball, but from now on, I want you to stay where it's safe, understood?

Michael nods.

When the maid tries to take Zane's hand, he pulls it away angrily and walks behind them, pouting.

INT. PAPARAZZI'S VAN -- CONTINUOUS

CAMERA CLICKS

PAPARAZZO JOE

Great! I got it all on film.

OLD PAPARAZZO

Throw it in the trash. Lesson number three - children of famous people are off limits.

INT. DURANT MANSION -- KITCHEN TABLE -- DAY

Michael and Zane are finishing their dessert. Their father, FRANK, is heard from the other room.

The door opens, Zane jumps up and runs into Frank's arms.

ZANE

Daddy! Daddy! Did we win?

FRANK

(vaguely)

Almost. Another horse beat us by a nose. But don't worry; next Sunday we'll win it all back.

GRACE

(aggravated)

How much money did you lose?

Frank grabs her harshly by the arm and whispers.

FRANK

How often have I told you not to talk
about money in front of the kids?

Frank sits down as if nothing happened.

FRANK (CONT'D)

So, what's for lunch, Sophie? I
haven't eaten all day.

EXT. DURANT MANSION -- VERANDA -- AFTERNOON

NINE YEARS LATER: ZANE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY.

Frank walks in late in his red fox hunting blazer.

FRANK

Did you save me a piece of cake?

Grace looks up and shakes her head.

Frank puts his arm around Zane's shoulder.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hey, boys! Who wants to go on a
safari?

ZANE

--Are you serious?

Michael looks at his mother.

MICHAEL

But--

Frank slaps an airplane ticket in front of Zane.

FRANK

--We'll leave for Africa on Friday.
Happy birthday, son.

He hands another ticket to Michael.

ZANE

Wow! That's great. I can't believe
we're really going!

Michael frowns.

FRANK

You don't want to go, Michael?

MICHAEL

I thought I was going to polo camp.

FRANK

There are horses in Africa.

Michael's rolls his eyes. Grace leans toward Michael.

GRACE

(whispers)

Darling, you don't have to go. I'll sign you up for polo camp tomorrow. Okay?

Michael smiles.

INT. HUNTING LODGE -- EVENING

TITLE OVER: EAST AFRICA

Frank and his hunting buddies have thrown Zane a wild party for his 18th birthday.

JACK, one of Frank's buddies, enters with a beautiful black girl, SUSIE (19).

SUSIE

Hello.

JACK

Zane, meet Susie, your date for the evening.

ZANE

Wow!

JACK

(whispers)

If you like she'll spend the night with you.

The exotic beauty approaches Zane and sits side-saddle on his lap. Zane is in heaven.

Jack pulls a cigar out of his shirt pocket.

JACK (CONT'D)

Have a cigar.

(gestures the waiter)

Bring our champ a beer! Would you?

INT. HUNTING LODGE -- LATER THAT EVENING

After much alcohol, Frank takes an ornate cowbell from the wall and rings it with his hunting knife.

FRANK

Everybody listen! Everybody listen!

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Lift your glasses to my son, Zane.
May this trip be his initiation to
manhood. Let's give him a cheer.

EVERBODY

Hip hip -- hooray! Hip hip -- hooray!

Everybody toasts.

Frank pulls a long case from under the chair and opens it.
He hands Zane a beautiful custom-made hunting rifle.

FRANK

For your birthday, son.

ZANE

Dad!

FRANK

Had it made just for you, my boy.

EXT. PLAINS OF EAST AFRICA -- EARLY MORNING

Hunting parties arrive in full gear to participate in the
gaming competition.

Native beaters walk through the brush to steer the game toward
the hunting party.

Frank's group waits in anticipation. First shots are fired.

Zane is hung over. His face is pale. He walks behind a bush
and vomits.

FRANK

(smiles)

Rough night, huh?

The other hunters chuckle.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Why don't you go back to bed? You
can join us later.

Relieved, Zane shoulders his rifle and walks back to the lodge.

EXT. HUNTING LODGE -- VERANDA -- EAST AFRICA -- AFTERNOON

The rusted clock shows 2:30 PM.

Zane kicks open the door and takes a deep breath.

EXT. PLAINS OF EAST AFRICA -- CONTINUOUS

Refreshed and excited, he runs in the direction of the gunshots.

A fox appears twenty yards to the side of Zane's trail.

Zane rips the rifle off his shoulder and aims at the fox's path.

ZANE

Come on!

Zane fires. The animal tumbles to the ground.

ZANE (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's it!

He runs to pick up the carcass. Another fox appears. Without hesitation, Zane fires and hits the animal.

ZANE (CONT'D)

What a rifle!

THE GUNSHOTS IN THE DISTANCE ARE BECOMING FAINTER.

Zane hangs the foxes on a branch, and climbs the tree.

Zane looks around the vast, dusty African plain. He takes his rifle to scan the horizon with the telescope. THE SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE ARE NOW BARELY AUDIBLE.

Zane spots a couple of grazing antelope.

ZANE (CONT'D)

You are mine!

As he tries to align them in his crosshairs, Zane is distracted by something in his peripheral vision. He scans back.

A single native woman stands in front of a watering hole washing cloths. Zane stops the crosshairs on the woman's head. He pretends to shoot her with a child-like gesture.

ZANE (CONT'D)

Bam! You're dead.

When he tries to refocus on the antelope, they have disappeared.

ZANE (CONT'D)

(angrily)

Shoot!

Zane refocuses the crosshairs on the native woman.

ZANE (CONT'D)

I should kill you for that!

He looks around for something else to shoot. There is nothing.
IT'S EERILY QUIET.

ZANE (CONT'D)

Damn!

The only thing that moves is the woman at the watering hole.
ZANE BREATHES DEEPER.

ZANE (CONT'D)

I think you deserve a little scare.

THE BREATHING STOPS. Another second and he pulls the trigger.

SHOT OF A RIFLE. Bull's-eye. The bullet hits the woman
directly in the temple. She keels over into the water.

EXT. HUNTING LODGE -- EAST AFRICA -- LATE AFTERNOON

Back from the hunt, Frank and his buddies taking account of
their trophies.

Zane arrives at the lodge. Like a seasoned hunter, he walks
proudly carrying the impressive array of foxes slung over his
shoulder.

ZANE

Hey Daddy!
(lifts up his prey)
What do you say?

FRANK

That's my boy.

The hunters are impressed, patting Zane and Frank on their
shoulders.

EXT. HUNTING LODGE -- EAST AFRICA -- DAY

Zane carries his luggage to the back of the airport bus. He
sees Frank, members of the hunting party, the police and some
tribe members in a heated discussion.

INT. AIRPORT BUS -- EAST AFRICA -- LATER

The bus is relatively empty. Zane and Frank sit across the
aisle from each other.

ZANE

What was that all about?

Frank takes out his notebook and compares his gambling bets
with the odds in the sports section.

FRANK

Nothing. They tried to link a murder
of a native woman to our hunting party.
There was no bullet found and the
woman was half eaten by vultures.

ZANE

Tough luck. I guess.

He leans his head against the window and smiles to himself.

INT. DURANT MANSION -- DINING ROOM -- EVENING

The family and GEENA get up from dinner. Grace's plate has
not been touched.