

MIDNIGHT RUNNER

By Sergio Snyder

Self-centered workaholic Steve gets lost during his usual midnight-run through the woods. Confused he finds himself trapped in an old barn with his son and a stranger boy and faces his biggest fear.

EXT. WOODS - MIDNIGHT

MUSIC PLAYS LOUD AS IF COMING THROUGH STEVE HEADPHONES INTO HIS EARS. WE SEE STEVE'S VIEW AS HE RUNS THROUGH THE WOODS. IT'S A DARK AND COLD NIGHT. THE MOON LIGHTS HIS PATH AND WE SEE STEAM COMING OUT OF HIS MOUTH IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA. CAMERA VIEW CHANGES, WE NOW SEE STEVE AND WE HEAR THE MUSIC ONLY COMING THROUGH THE HEADPHONES. STEVE STOPS FOR A MOMENT AND LOOKS AROUND, HE BREATHES HEAVILY. CONTINUES HIS RUN. CAMERA VIEW CHANGES TO STEVE'S VIEW, THE MUSIC IS LOUD AGAIN AS IF COMING INTO HIS HEARS. WE HEAR STEVE'S APP UPDATE HIS PROGRESS.

VOICE OVER

Distance - twenty kilometers. Time - one hour forty-one minutes. Pace - five zero seven per kilometer.

CAMERA VIEW CHANGES, WE SEE STEVE RUNNING IN BETWEEN TWO TREES. AS HE DOES HIS JACKET GETS CAUGHT WITH A BRANCH AND HE GETS PULLED BACK. HE STOPS AND PULL THE BRANCH AWAY, HIS JACKET IS RIPPED. HE THEN LOOKS AT HIS WATCH AND THEN LOOKS AROUND. CONTINUES TO RUN. CAMERA VIEW CHANGES TO STEVE'S VIEW - WE HEAR AGAIN THE MUSIC LOUD. IT'S GETTING DARKER AND HARDER TO SEE. THE MUSIC STOPS SUDDENLY. CAMERA VIEW CHANGES, WE SEE STEVE LOOKING AT HIS ARMBAND AND TAPS HIS PHONE. TAKES THE ARMBAND OFF, TAKES THE PHONE OUT AND WE SEE IS SWITCHED OFF.

STEVE
Shit!

HE LOOKS AROUND. TRIES TO START THE PHONE. HE LOOKS AT HIS WATCH IT'S MIDNIGHT. HE CONTINUES TO RUN. WE SEE HIM RUN THROUGH VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WOODS. HE STOPS AND LOOKS AROUND AND CONTINUES. HE RUNS MORE AND THEN STOPS AND LOOKS AT HIS PHONE, TRIES TO TURN IT ON WITHOUT SUCCESS. HE LOOKS WORRIED HE IS NOW LOST. HE LOOKS ACROSS TO THE DISTANCE AND SEE A BARN. HE RUNS TOWARDS IT. HE ARRIVES AND LOOKS AROUND. IT'S AN OLD BARN AND LOOKS ABANDONED. HE TRIES TO SEE THROUGH THE WINDOWS BUT IT'S DARK. WALKS AROUND TO THE DOOR. THE DOOR IS LOCKED WITH A PADLOCK THAT LOOKS LIKE IT HAS BEEN THERE FOR YEARS AND IT'S RUSTY. HE PULLS IT AND IT OPENS. OPENS THE DOOR SLOWLY.

INT. THE BARN - DARK

HE WALKS TRYING TO SEE BUT IT'S DARK.

STEVE
Hello?

HE TAKES HIS PHONE TO SEE IF IT WOULD START BUT IT DOESN'T.

STEVE
God dam you!

THE DOOR SHUTS BEHIND HIM. THE BARN IS IN DARKNESS.

STEVE
Fuck!

HE FEELS HIS WAY TOWARDS THE DOOR. AS HE GETS CLOSE HE FEELS A LIGHT SWITCH AND TURNS IT ON. HE GOES TO THE DOOR AND TRIES TO OPEN IT BUT IT'S LOCKED. HE BANGS ON THE DOOR.

STEVE
Hello? Is there anyone out there? Hello?

HE BANGS THE DOOR SEVERAL TIMES. HE HEARS A NOISE BEHIND HIM AND TURNS AROUND.

STEVE
Who's there?

HE LOOKS AROUND AND THERE IS MOVEMENT IN THE CORNER.

STEVE
I said who is there?
MICHAEL (OS)
(with a soft voice)
Please don't hurt me...
STEVE
Who are you?

FROM BEHIND SOME WOODEN BOXES WE SEE MICHAEL COME OUT. HE IS A TEN YEAR-OLD BOY, HIS FACE IS DIRTY AND HIS CLOTHS ARE OLD. HE LOOKS FRIGHTEN.

MICHAEL
Please don't hurt me...
STEVE
I'm not... who are you?
MICHAEL
Michael.
STEVE
What are you doing here this late?
MICHAEL
Please don't hurt me...
STEVE
I told you I am not going to hurt you.

STEVE LOOKS AT HIM AND COMES CLOSER, AS HE DOES MICHAEL MOVES AWAY. THEN THERE IS A NOISE FROM BEHIND THE BOXES.

STEVE

Is there someone else here?

MICHAEL LOOKS TOWARDS THE BOXES. SLOWLY WE SEE JOSH COME OUT. JOSH IS STEVE'S TEN YEAR-OLD SON. HE LOOKS FRIGHTEN AND HIS CLOTHES ARE WET. STEVE LOOKS AT HIM.

STEVE

Josh? Is that you? What are you doing here? I don't understand? What's going on?

(he looks at Michael)

Who are you? Why are you here with Josh? What's going on!

MICHAEL

Please don't hurt me!

JOSH

Please dad, don't hurt him!

STEVE

I don't understand? What's going on Josh? Why are you here and who is he?

JOSH

He's my friend.

STEVE

But why are you here? Aren't you meant to be at your school trip? Why are you wet?

(Silence)

Answer me Josh. What's going on!

MICHAEL

Please don't hurt me...

STEVE

(Raises his voice)

I am not going to hurt you God dam it!

MICHAEL GETS BEHIND JOSH FRIGHTEN. JOSH LOOKS AT STEVE.

JOSH

I love you dad...

STEVE LOOKS CONFUSED TOWARDS THE TWO BOYS.

JOSH

I miss you dad...

STEVE

I don't understand, why are you wet? And why are you here? Josh?

JOSH

Please hold me dad... I'm cold.

JOSH EXTENDS HIS ARMS. STEVE LOOKS AT HIM CONFUSED. SLOWLY JOSH WALKS TOWARDS STEVE AND HUGS HIM. STEVE SLOWLY PUTS HIS HANDS ON HIS HEAD AND STOKES IT. MICHAEL LOOKS AT JOSH AND STEVE.

STEVE
(looking at Michael)
Who are you?

JOSH
He's my friend.

STEVE
(looks at Josh)
Why are you not at your school trip?

JOSH
Hold me please... I'm cold.

STEVE GOES ON HIS KNEES AND HOLDS JOSH. HIS EXPRESSION IS OF CONFUSION AND DISTRESS. STEVE LOOKS ACROSS TO MICHAEL WHO LOOKS AT HIM. JOSH RESTS HIS HEAD ON STEVE'S SHOULDER

JOSH
This feels nice. I remember now what it feels like. It's so soft, so warm. You see Michael; I told you he is nice..

JOSH IS SHIVERING. STEVE HOLDS HIM HARD TRYING TO STOP HIM SHIVERING. JOSH STARTS TO SHIVER FASTER AND MORE FURIOUS AS IF HAVING A FIT, STEVE TRIES TO STOP HIM BY HOLDING HIM TIGHT.

STEVE
Josh stop!

JOSH
(Shivering)
I love you dad..

STEVE
Stop please! stop it now!

JOSH
(Shivering)
It's so warm dad..

STEVE
(Shaking Josh as if trying to get him to react)
Stop it Josh! Just stop!

WE SEE MICHAEL STANDING BEHIND STEVE.

MICHAEL
Please don't hurt him..

BACK OUT.

EXT. THE BARN - DAYLIGHT.

WE SEE A POLICE CAR PARKED OUTSIDE THE BARN. THE DOOR IS CLOSED WITH THE PADLOCK. STEVE'S WIFE AND A POLICEMAN ARE STANDING OUTSIDE.

MEL
Yes this is where he is.

POLICEMAN
Are you sure?

MEL

Yes, this is where the phone is being tracked.

POLICEMAN

But the door is locked from the outside; he can't be in there.

ANOTHER POLICEMAN COMES FROM THE SIDE OF THE BARD.

POLICEMAN 2

There is nothing around but I looked through the window and I saw something.

POLICEMAN

What is it?

POLICEMAN 2

I'm not sure, it was dark but it could be like a body...

POLICEMAN

OK, let's open it.

THEY CUT THE PADLOCK AND OPEN THE DOOR. WE HEAR THE MUSIC THROUGH STEVE'S HEADPHONES PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND.

INT. THE BARN - DARK

THE POLICEMAN TURNS THE LIGHT ON. THEIR FACES FILL WITH HORROR AS THEY SEE A BLOODSHED IN THE BARN AND IN ONE CORNER STEVE'S BODY COVERED IN BLOOD, HE IS HOLDING HIS PHONE AND HAS HIS EARPHONES ON. THE WALLS ARE SCRATCH AND COVERED IN BLOOD AS IF STEVE TRIED TO ESCAPE. THE POLICEMEN WALK AROUND, LOOKING AT THE SCENE.

MEL

Oh my god!

POLICEMAN 2

What the hell happened here?

POLICEMAN

Looks like he was trying to escape.

POLICEMAN 2

From what?

SUDDENLY STEVE'S PHONE RINGS, SLOWLY THE POLICEMAN TAKES IT AND LOOKS AT MEL. SHE TAKES IS AND ANSWER IT.

MEL

Yes? No it's his wife. Yes?

SHE GOES DOWN TO HER KNEES HOLDING HER MOUTH AND CRIES. THE POLICEMAN GOES TO HER.

POLICEMAN

Are you ok?

MEL

My son drown...

BLACK OUT.