

A DUCK TO WATER

FADE IN:

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DAY

The bright midday sun burns down on a dried out river. With the water long gone, the riverbed is now cracked and dusty.

The surrounding area has been completely devastated by a never-ending heat. Dry, dying bushes wallow over the yellow sun-burned grass.

A BOY (12) moves quickly across the barren terrain, keeping himself low to the scorched turf. He wears a T-shirt emblazoned with an image of Donald Duck flipping the bird and the slogan 'Duck off!'

He heads for a razor wire-topped chain link fence that surrounds a JUNK YARD.

A SIGN reads: 'WARNING - TRESPASSERS WILL BE SHOT'.

Sweat beads down his face as he crouches by the fence, takes out some WIRE CUTTERS and clips through it, cutting two lines from the ground up to create a large flap.

A SECOND BOY (11), pale and freckle-faced arrives beside him. He wears a cap to protect his head from the sun.

Freckles helps Duck to lift the flap up and uses a SNAP HOOK to clip it to the fence as another TWO FRIENDS arrive.

The first is a DIRTY-FACED KID (11) riding a MONGOOSE MOUNTAIN BIKE. The bike pulls a SMALL TRAILER behind it, and sitting on the trailer, enjoying the ride, is a SKINNY KID WITH A MESSY AFRO (11).

They quickly join Duck and Freckles by the fence.

Duck uses hand signals to give out instructions to Freckles, Mongoose and Afro.

The kids start to crawl through the fence into--

THE JUNKYARD

WRECKED CARS and PILES OF SCRAP are littered around the dump. A dilapidated-looking large STEEL SHACK stands in the middle of the rubble.

The kids gather beside a TRASHED NISSAN ALTIMA.

Duck glances over the hood, across the yard, and sees a GUARD (40s), overweight and disheveled, scoped AR-15 rifle slung over his shoulder.

He watches the Guard disappear behind a large pile of scrap, flashes more hand signals and the kids split up.

Freckles runs for the shack, kicking up dust behind him.

INT. SHACK - DAY

The inside of the building is the polar opposite of the exterior - modern and clean. Wood paneled walls. Wooden floorboards. Computer desk and La-Z-Boy chair.

Freckles enters and takes in the odd surroundings. He sees a REFRIGERATOR in the corner.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Duck keeps a watch on the yard, eyes darting everywhere. Suddenly, and unexpectedly, the Guard reappears and starts heading back towards the shack. Duck panics.

INT. SHACK - DAY

Freckles opens the fridge - It's completely empty aside from a sandwich and a small glass of water. He looks longingly at the water. Licks his dry, cracked lips.

A sudden BURST OF STATIC makes him jump out of his skin.

He looks around and sees a WALKIE TALKIE on the desk.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Duck pulls a slingshot from his pocket. He sees the Guard is almost at the shack. He picks up a rock, fumbles trying to get it into the slingshot pouch and drops it.

He looks over to the shack again - It's too late. The Guard is already at the doorway.

INT. STEEL SHACK - DAY

The Guard enters the empty shack - no sign of Freckles. He walks over to the desk and retrieves the walkie talkie he'd left behind.

INT. REFRIGERATOR - DAY

Freckles sits hunched up in the fridge, his knees pressed up against his face. He holds his breath, terrified of making a sound.

He moves slightly and his foot catches the now empty glass. It makes the slightest of SCRAPES and Freckles freezes.

After a long nervous moment, the refrigerator door swings open to reveal the smiling face of Afro.

He offers Freckles his hand and helps him back out into--

THE SHACK

Freckles points to the empty fridge and shrugs. Afro motions for Freckles to follow him.

He starts crawling low, both hands hovering out over the floor and wall as if feeling for something. Freckles understands and starts doing the same.

After a few moments, Afro stops - he's found something. He waves Freckles over and points to an area of the wood paneled wall.

He blows a deep breath out against it and it clouds in the cold air.

Afro starts running his hands over the wall, trying to find some kind of handle. He looks up and sees a coat hanger.

He grabs the hanger, pulls down on it and - CLICK - a door in the wall opens inwards to reveal a small refrigerated room, filled with a dozen FIVE-GALLON WATER BOTTLES.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Duck sees Freckles appear in the doorway giving him a triumphant thumbs-up.

He speedily moves along the fence line of the yard until he can see Mongoose, who is crouched behind a RUSTED TRACTOR.

Duck fires off another quick hand signal. Mongoose nods in understanding and dashes into the area behind the shack.

He removes a MATCHBOOK from his pocket, strikes a match, holds it to the matchbook and sets the whole thing alight.

Mongoose tosses the burning matchbook into the yellow grass. The fire quickly catches and starts to spread rapidly through the dry turf.

THE GUARD

Uses a handkerchief to wipe the sweat from his brow as he patrols the yard under the baking sun.

He sees smoke rising from the fire in the distance and sets off running as fast as his pudgy body will allow.

INT. SHACK - DAY

The Guard lumbers into the seemingly empty shack, panting for breath and pouring sweat.

He throws down his rifle, grabs a FIRE EXTINGUISHER and dashes back outside.

A moment later, the refrigerator door swings open and Freckles rolls out.

He rushes over to the secret door in the wall and pulls on the coat hanger.

The door swings open and a shivering Afro walks out, struggling to carry one of the large water bottles.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

The Guard arrives at the fire, looking like he's about to have a heart attack.

He sets down the extinguisher, gulps in a few large breaths, pulls the safety pin and starts to spray the brush fire with a jet of white CO2.

DUCK

Runs towards the shack, passing Afro and Freckles who roll their water bottles across the dirt floor, heading back towards the fence.

He arrives at the shack as Mongoose stumbles out of the doorway, both arms wrapped around one of the five-gallon bottles, struggling to hold it.

THE GUARD

Is winning his battle with the blaze, the fire now under control and almost out.

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DAY

Freckles and Afro load their water bottles onto the trailer, then look back anxiously towards the fence.

INT. SHACK - DAY

Duck pulls the secret door closed, hefts up a water bottle and rushes towards the exit.

He slows when he sees the Guard's RIFLE on the floor.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

The fire is now almost completely out. The Guard walks around the patch of smoking earth, giving a few last sprays from the extinguisher to make sure.

He breathes a big sigh of relief. Takes out his handkerchief and wipes his sweat-covered brow again.

After a quick assessment of the area, and happy the blaze is defeated, he picks up the extinguisher and heads back towards the shack.

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DAY

Mongoose dumps his bottle onto the trailer then climbs onto his bike, ready for a quick getaway.

He looks back over his shoulder, waiting for Duck.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

The guard rounds the rusted tractor and immediately sees Duck in the distance, rolling his water bottle towards the fence.

He drops the fire extinguisher and runs to the shack.

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DAY

Freckles and Afro take the bottle from Duck as he rolls it though the fence flap and load it up.

Duck quickly joins them and all three boys start pushing the trailer to help Mongoose get the bike going.

INT/EXT. SHACK - DAY

The Guard bundles into the shack, grabs his rifle, lurches back into the doorway and raises the rifle to his shoulder.

AR-15 SCOPE P.O.V.

The telescopic sight hones in on the boys pushing the trailer away.

The cross hair moves up a little and settles on the middle of Mongoose's back as he peddles the bike.

THE GUARD'S FINGER

Curled around the trigger... And pulls it -- CLICK!

THE GUARD

Lowers the rifle, confused.

He pulls the magazine out and checks it - completely empty.

The Guard ROARS in anger and furiously throws his rifle to the ground.

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DAY

Mongoose cycles ahead of the running boys as they make their successful escape.

Duck reaches into his pocket, pulls out a handful of bullets and throws them into the dried grass.

The boys LAUGH triumphantly.

FADE OUT.