

RUSHED

#25-DE01-W05

Logline: A man lets the world dictate his life,
until he is confronted by the consequences of his actions.

INT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - MORNING

A cereal commercial plays on television:

ADVERT VOICEOVER

Life waits for no man, so neither
should you. That's why each bowl of
Busy-Os is packed with enough
essential nutrients to keep you
going, and going, and going ...all
day long!

We pull out from the TV to see DARIEL, a neatly groomed man
in his mid 30s, as he shovels a bowl of said cereal into his
mouth and watches intensely. He nods along to the messaging.

ADVERT VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

Seize the day, with Busy-Os!

The happy jingle-like music from the advert escapes the
confines of the screen and becomes the underscore to his
life, its upbeat tempo sets the pace of his morning
activities. Dariel lifts the bowl to his lips, drains the
rest of the contents and plants it down triumphantly.

DARIEL

Seize the day!

He carries out the rest of his morning routine, brushes his
teeth, showers, gets dressed etc, with a constant state of
motion. Walking past the TV without turning it off, he leaves
his house.

EXT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dariel shuts the door. His elderly neighbour SANDRA, nearby,
trims the hedges. She looks up from her work.

SANDRA

Oh! Morning Dariel, I don't suppose
I could trouble you to...

DARIEL

Sorry Sandra, no time. Got to seize
the day. Life waits for no man, so
I wish I could stop, I really do,
but...

He taps his watch and feigns pain.

DARIEL (CONT'D)

Work calls!

She nods, a hint of recognition in her eyes, and turns back to her gardening. Dariel is already on his way.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

A spring in his step, Dariel contentedly walks to work, giving friendly waves to passers-by as he goes.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dariel arrives into his office. He high fives one of his colleagues on the way in.

OFFICE EMPLOYEE
Morning Dariel!

Dariel remains in constant motion, grabs files from one desk, plants them on another, signs a get well card, scans documents, takes a swig of water from a cup and discards it, he doesn't stop for a moment.

Like a dancer caught in a trance he flows from one thing to the next and by the time we have completed a full rotation of the office, day has shifted to evening.

OFFICE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
Great work today Dariel!

Dariel high fives the colleague and heads out the door.

INT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Dariel enters the house. The TV plays a news story on growing competition in the workplace. Dariel doesn't turn it off, but instead walks straight past and upstairs.

INT. DARIEL'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Dariel changes into his night clothes and falls into bed. After a few seconds, he tosses and turns, getting gradually more annoyed and restless. Fed up, he shoves a pillow over his face.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dariel eats another bowl of Busy-O's and watches TV.

ADVERT VOICEOVER
 "Getting ahead", the book that will
 have you maximising profitability
 and minimising unproductive
 downtime! Purchase now in all
 good...

The book is already on Dariel's table. The rest of the advert drifts into the background. Dariel is already up and off out the door, leaving his unfinished cereal behind. The upbeat music resumes, matching his pace.

EXT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Sandra looks up at the tree in her garden, hands on her hips. She sees Dariel exiting his house, and walks over to get his attention.

SANDRA
 Morning Dariel, would you mind just
 helping me with..

DARIEL
 Sorry can't chat, need to..

SANDRA
 Yes I know. Seize the day.

He is already gone. As Sandra reaches where Dariel had been, she sighs.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 (To herself)
 Are you sure the day isn't seizing
 you?

EXT. PARK - MORNING

Dariel strides along. His previously bouncy step, slightly laboured and irritable and acknowledgements of others, neutral at best. As he exits the park, he passes an advert poster for a luxury bedspread. It reads: "Can't sleep?"

INT. FURNITURE STORE - DAY

Dariel pays for the new bedspread. He swipes his credit card, hauls the goods over his shoulder and leaves swiftly.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dariel enters the office, the comforter and pillow still comically upon him. His colleague attempts a high five, but is left hanging as Dariel walks past.

OFFICE EMPLOYEE

Uh... no time like the present. I guess?

Dariel swirls around the office in usual fashion, and carries out his tasks. The day shifts to evening and as Dariel barrels past to leave, the comforter and pillow knock his colleague off his chair and he crashes to the floor.

INT. DARIEL'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Dariel unwraps the bedspread, fits it, and hurls himself into bed. Music stops. A few seconds pass. Once again he can't sleep. Dariel screams and shoves the new pillow onto his face.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. DARIEL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Dariel's radio plays from his bedside.

NEWSREADER (V.O.)

..And that concludes the news at 8!

NEWSREADER 2 (V.O.)

Ooh sounds a bit doom and gloom doesn't it Bob! Next up this morning, our feature on 5 reasons why you're being left behind...

Dariel tears the duvet off.

INT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dariel's cereal barely hits the bowl, before the spoon spins and Dariel has left.

EXT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Sandra opens her mouth to speak.

DARIEL
(Emphatically)

No!

Dariel has left.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

Dariel shoves people out of his way as he forges a path towards work. They shout after him indignantly.

As he reaches the exit to the park, Dariel clutches at his chest. The world loses its colour and music stops. Dariel shakes it off, and the world resumes in full force.

The advert poster he'd passed the day before, is now an ad for pills. It reads: "Stressed? There's a pill for that!". As he sees the ad, he leans his walk until his path curves, taking him to...

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Dariel walks through the aisle, grabs a pot of pills, swipes his credit card on the way out, and downs them as he leaves all in one motion.

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

Close up of Dariel's face. He puts his earbuds in, and plays a podcast.

PODCAST READER
It's time to thank today's sponsor,
Look after my dough: We pay
interest... on your interest!

As he walks, billboards overlay in front of his face, reading things like "Is your credit card paid off?" and "If you've got debt, we'll get you".

The podcast cuts short as Dariel picks up his phone.

DARIEL
Hey boss. I was just, uh, taking
initiative and wondering whether I
can pick up a few extra hours?

As he holds his phone, the chest pain violently returns. The screen throbs like a heart beat, draining the colour and life. Dariel tries to shake it off.

DARIEL (CONT'D)
Uh, of course I can work nights!

Throb. He stumbles and tries to push through. THROB.

The world tilts and Dariel hits the floor.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. OUTSIDE - SAME

Dariel's vision fades in and out. Through muffled tones and blurred lens, people rush to his aide.

FADE OUT TO:

INT. BACK OF AN AMBULANCE - SAME

Paramedics busy themselves around him.

FADE OUT TO:

INT. WHITE ROOM - SAME

In the light, we see a Jesus-like silhouette.

VOICE OF GOD (V.O.)
Guard your heart.

FADE OUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The blurred shape in the light resolves into a person. It's not Jesus, it's the doctor. She looks Dariel in the face.

DOCTOR
It's a good thing, we caught this
when we did. The weakening of your
myocardium is directly a result of
work related stress.

Dariel sits in a hospital bed.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
We've kept you in for observation
the last day or so, but given that
you're exhibiting no other symptoms
and your vitals are normal I'm
happy to discharge you.
(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

At your age, this sort of episode should be temporary with plenty of recovery time. However, continued and prolonged stress could risk further injury, and death. So, I'm signing you off two weeks of work for rest.

DARIEL

But I...

DOCTOR.

No excuses.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. MAN'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Dariel is sat in front of his TV, hooked up to a heart monitor.

NEWSCASTER

Now to the latest in the world of tech. Here's how AI, might be just about to replace you.

Dariel's heart monitor beeps. He turns the TV off.

The clock ticks and Dariel sits there in silence. He quickly becomes anxious from not doing anything and his heart rate goes up. The monitor beeps again.

DARIEL

What?? How is it. I'm not even...

It beeps louder.

DARIEL (CONT'D)

Breathe. Slow. Ok.

Dariel focuses on his breathing and the heart rate goes back to normal.

A shadow falls on the window, as someone moves outside. Mindful of his monitor, Dariel gently makes his way over to the window to see Sandra struggling with a pair of secateurs and trying to reach the branches of an overgrown tree.

EXT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Dariel leans out of his doorway.

DARIEL
Do you... do you need a hand
Sandra?

SANDRA
Oh, please!

Dariel takes a second to think about the consequences, then disconnects himself from the heart monitor, and exits his house to join her.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
My husband always used to reach
those branches, I just can't seem
to get them.

Dariel takes her secateurs wordlessly. As he trims the tree, he occasionally looks to Sandra for clarification.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Yes, and that bit there! Oh lovely,
thank you Dariel. You know it's so
important to cut it back. It would
just grow wherever the wind blows
otherwise. Yes. If you can cut that
one at a slight angle, just before
the bud. Pruning is vital to the
health of the tree.

She places a hand on his shoulder and speaks to him directly.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
(Kindly)
It gives space for new things to
grow.

Dariel drops the secateurs, suddenly upset.

DARIEL
How do you do it Sandra? Being
retired? Don't you go crazy
doing... nothing?

Sandra laughs.

SANDRA
Do you call this nothing? There's
always things to do in this garden.
But plants cannot be rushed. My
husband worked himself into an
early grave, I'm not going to make
the same mistake. No. God has
provided me with everything I need,
right here.

Dariel's phone rings.

DARIEL

That'll be my boss wanting an
update. Do you mind if I take this?

She indicates to go ahead.

BOSS (O.S.)

Ah Dariel! All better? Good. I've
approved those hours for you.

Sandra picks up the secateurs from where Dariel dropped them.

SANDRA

It sounds as if you've some pruning
of your own to do.

Dariel considers her words.

DARIEL

(To Boss, hesitant)

If it's alright with you, I was
thinking I might actually like
to... cut my hours?

BOSS (O.S.)

(Panicked)

What is it, another job? A better
offer?

DARIEL

No, no nothing like that.

BOSS (O.S.)

You're such a value to this
company. We'd hate to lose you. How
about this? A five percent pay rise
and a four day working week. No.
Wait. Three and a half? How does
that sound? Uh. Just let me know.
Take as much time as you need!

Before Dariel can get his words out to object, the boss hangs
up. Dariel is stunned and Sandra laughs.

DARIEL

Wow.

SANDRA

How's that for provision? Now..

Sandra reaches into her pocket, and removes a small trinket.
Engrained into it is "Proverbs 4:23". She hands it to Dariel.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
For you.

DARIEL
What is it?

SANDRA
A reminder. Stillness and peace isn't something that just happens to you Dariel. You have to fight for it against a world that would have you otherwise. Consider that verse your battle cry. It's served me well enough, and besides I've pretty much got it written on my heart now.

Dariel looks at her with gratitude in his eyes.

DARIEL
I'm sorry Sandra. For not helping you sooner.

She smiles forgivingly.

SANDRA
So, what are you going to do with all your extra time?

Dariel grins, looks around the garden, then gestures.

DARIEL
Could you... teach me?

SANDRA
It would be my pleasure.

She gives him a hug.

INT. DARIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

The Busy-O's packet, self help book, pill bottle and heart monitor are visibly in the bin. Dariel's TV is off, and through the window we can just about see Sandra teaching him how to tend to the garden outside.

The End.

