

AFTRS



3 0055 00043 0668

THIS DOCUMENT IS PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

The Saviour

By Peter Templeman

A twenty minute film

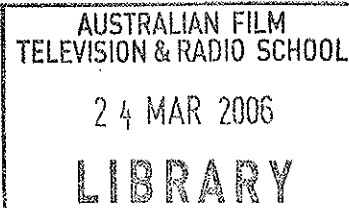
Draft 2

3/03/04

Producer: Stuart Parkyn
Email: stuartp@aftrs.edu.au
Tel: 02 9805 6528

Peter Templeman
Email: petert@aftrs.edu.au
Tel: 0414 645 907; 02 9805 6508

© Peter Templeman Jan 2004



1. EXT FRONT PORCH - DAY

OVER BLACK: 'KNOCK KNOCK' on a lead-light front door.
A Beat.

PAUL O/S

No one home?

MALCOLM O/S

They're home.

PAUSE.

You'll be fine.

CUT TO

2. INT HOUSE-ENTRANCE/FRONT PORCH - DAY

'KNOCK KNOCK' as the silhouette of a fist bangs on stained glass from the outside. The sound resonates down a long hallway, back from where we float forward, toward an amber lead-light front door and the silhouettes of two men standing on the other side. As we approach the door a muffled voice becomes clearer.

MALCOLM

..No, I thought you did well.
Just.. Try and.. Here, take this.

The door opens to PAUL (19) as he's handed a BIBLE from the man behind him. He looks us straight in the eye with a careful smile painted on.. frozen.. until the guy behind leans in..

MALCOLM

Good morning.

MALCOLM's older (27) but similarly dressed in a black suit and stiff grin. We are a small VIETNAMESE WOMAN. She examines her visitors: Paul with a satchel slung around his shoulder and the bible cradled in both hands; Malcolm behind him holds a briefcase and a couple of pamphlets.

MALCOLM

Beautiful day isn't it.

The Little lady stares at them both for a moment.

LITTLE LADY

Me no speak Engleis.

As she's shutting the door in their faces Malcolm extends a pamphlet.

MALCOLM

Can we leave this -

The door's shut. Their silhouettes shuffle off the veranda, allowing the sun's rays through the stained glass. Ethereal music from a slightly out-of-tune church-organ follows the refracted light as it morphs into TITLE: *The Saviour*.

3. EXT SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

From up high, the two men patrol the suburban street together. Picture-perfect rows of houses and manicured gardens flank their path as they enter new front yards and lives.

O/S the muffled sound of a hand-drill is interrupted by 'KNOCK KNOCK' on a hardwood front door. . .

4. INT/EXT FRONT PORCHES/ENTRANCES - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

From inside, the door opens to the two smiling Bible-blokes.

MALCOLM

Good morning, I'm Malcolm and this is my good friend Paul. Sounds like you're doing some renovating?

Regarding them with blank expression is a GUY IN OVERALLS with dust-glasses pulled up over his forehead. One hand holds an electric drill; the other slams the door shut.

CUT TO:

A front door opening to a YOUNG MUM with BABY in her arms.

MALCOLM

Good morning. (REGARDING BABY)
What a gorgeous little creation..

The door SLAMS.

CUT TO:

A DUDE -

with long hair and haze of pot-smoke lingering about his head. O/S one of the men 'cough'. Dude SLAMS his front door.

ANOTHER YOUNG MUM -

slams her door.

MALCOLM smiling -

on the front porch with Paul behind him - SLAM!

PAUL - in front this time, looking nervous as he's about to speak but SLAM!

CUT TO:

MALCOLM

It's like a bedtime story. .

Malcolm handing his bible to a four year old KID.

Mum'll read it for you, Little Man.

MUM arrives in the doorway to receive Malcolm's porcelain grin...

SLAM! on CUT TO BLACK.

5. EXT STREET - DAY - LATER

Two pairs of shiny black shoes walk off the front lawn and onto the pavement. The shoes behind attempt to follow the pair in front, almost to the step, marching the footpath like soldiers. Malcolm looks determinedly peaceful as he leads the way. Behind him, Paul has the desperate conscientiousness of someone slightly out of their depth. He suddenly spots something familiar up ahead, then watches Malcolm closely.

As if on cue, Malcolm slows his pace. His hand reaches into the pocket of his trousers. A jet of minty breath-spray squirts into his open mouth. He stops across the road from a restored, federation-style cottage nestled behind an immaculate garden and white-picket fence.

PAUL

How long today?

Malcolm quickly pockets the breath-spray.

MALCOLM

I think you should do the next two streets. At least.

Paul looks down the length of the street at the rows of houses.

PAUL

Would you mind if I came with you today? Instead of..

MALCOLM

It's important to understand, Paul, that some particular folk prefer the one-on-one, which is absolutely their right and, in fact, often an advantage: much of our best work's achieved independently my friend.

Paul looks at his feet - he's heard this before, so Malcolm attempts to elaborate.

MALCOLM

And your independence.. itself, can really only be developed independently so.. I can't be with you for your solo work Paul. But once you.. then you can really start to develop your own style.. because... and the fact is.. working alone often brings you closer to God my friend.

Paul looks up - the last bit possibly all he needed to hear. Malcolm takes Paul's hand, and the bible in it, and holds them both to his protégé's chest, resting his other hand on Paul's shoulder.

MALCOLM

I'll phone you in an hour and catch up.

Paul watches him cross the road and enter the front gate of the white picket fence.

6. EXT CARMEL'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY - MOMENT LATER

The front door opens to MALCOLM, alone on the veranda. This time his smile is genuine - warm. The woman in the doorway is CARMEL. She's attractive mid-forties, dressed

in a t-shirt and tracksuit pants.

7. EXT STREET - DAY - CONTINUE

Paul watches Malcolm enter from the other side of the street. He turns and looks at the stretch of houses he's about to tackle alone; the one he's standing in front of - a quaint timber cottage. Paul stares at it, still with his bible held to his chest where Malcolm left it.

CUT TO:

8. EXT CARMEL'S HOUSE-VERGE - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

Paul sits cross-legged on the verge outside Carmel's house. He waits. Opens his bible for a quiet read.

FADE TO BLACK.

9. INT CARMEL'S BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Malcolm's fingers do up his shirt buttons to the tippy-top. He watches Carmel change the sheets on her bed. She's now wearing a baggy t-shirt that hangs almost to her knees and she knows he's gazing at her.

CARMEL

I like your boxers.

They're pink with '*Jesus saves*' on them. Malcolm takes his trousers from over the bed-end and puts them on. Dressed except for his shoes, he sits down on the chair in the corner of the room and watches her clean up... until she takes two rings off the dresser and replaces them onto her left ring finger. Malcolm starts putting ~~his~~ shoes on.

MALCOLM

You know, you don't have to take them off for me.

She realises he means the rings.

CARMEL

I don't do it for you.

She puffs the pillows and straightens the bed covers. Malcolm tries to focus on his laces. Carmel watches him tie the final knot and polish the toe of his shoe with his shirt-cuff. When he looks up, she's standing before him.

She gently touches his face, stroking with her finger. Malcolm takes her other hand. His fingers delicately roll through hers... until they feel the wedding ring. She pulls away and sits over on the bed. Malcolm watches her for a while in silence.

MALCOLM

I want you to leave him.

She didn't see that coming. Silence.

CARMEL

You'd better go.

She walks out, leaving Malcolm sitting stranded in the chair in her empty bedroom.

10. EXT CARMEL'S HOUSE-VERGE - DAY

Paul's leaning back against the picket fence now, in the same spot on the verge, fiddling with a blade of grass. He checks his watch and turns around, looking long and hard at the cottage behind him.

11. INT CARMEL'S HOUSE-ENTRANCE - DAY

Carmel's waiting at the front door, arms folded and staring at the floor as Malcolm carefully approaches.

MALCOLM

Carmel..

CARMEL

I'm married, Malcolm.

But she can't meet his eyes and say it... so he goes for it.

MALCOLM

Leave him.

She looks at him now and pleads.

CARMEL

I'm sorry. Don't come back here again.

Malcolm's reeling - searching her face for more than pity and guilt. He's not going anywhere so Carmel picks up his briefcase and hands it to him; then his bible and pamphlets - she shoves them into his chest and they strike home like a blade of guilt. She opens the front

door. His last chance, searching her eyes for more.

MALCOLM

If you weren't married to him..
Would we -? If you weren't
married?

She hugs him.

CARMEL (Sotto)

I'm sorry. Goodbye.

He stands stiff and silent as she holds him.

12. EXT SUBURBAN STREET - DAY - LATER

From up high we see the two God-soldiers trudging the beat together again. Their rhythm is lost though. Paul stops and waits for Malcolm to catch up. Then he watches as his Mentor lopez along, straight past him.

RHONDA O/S

Must keep you very fit...

13. INT DINING/LOUNGEROOM - DAY

Ample, tanned CLEAVAGE nearly bursting its way out of a tight silken singlet.

RHONDA

..walking miles every day. ~~What
do you do if it's raining?~~

Paul sits at the table, straining to keep his eyeline above the neck of the attractive forty-something woman sitting opposite him. He glances to Malcolm, who's next to him with his eyes glazed over. Paul fidgets and swallows.

RHONDA O/S

Beautiful day today though isn't
it?

Paul's eyes dart back to Rhonda, catching her sly smile.

You must get hot in those dinner
suits.

Paul's certainly sweating now. The silence drags on, still nothing from Malcolm. Paul takes a deep breath and concentrates.

PAUL

Yes. Yes it is a beautiful day.
Do you ever think about how it
all -

RHONDA

Why don't you both come for a
swim out the back?

Paul freezes. He looks desperately to Malcolm; Rhonda turns to him also and makes contact.

RHONDA (To Malcolm)

My husband won't be home until
this evening.

Malcolm's bottom lip quivers. Rhonda and Paul watch, speechless, as he suddenly bursts into tears. The three of them sit around the table in her sunny, open-plan sitting room and Malcolm wails.

14. EXT PARK - DAY - LATER

Malcolm's bible rests on the ground between his foot and the leg of a park bench. He's sitting on the bench with his head in his hands. Paul is standing, clutching his bible and staring out at the park around them. He's almost as devastated as Malcolm.

PAUL

Don't worry, you'll be forgiven.

But he doesn't sound super-confident. He picks up Malcolm's bible and carefully dusts it off.

As soon as you ask, you'll be
forgiven.

Malcolm looks up at him and Paul tries to smile.

I'll ask for you as well.

A small relief. Paul sits down next to him.

The most important thing is that
it doesn't affect your work.

But the guy's clearly ruined. Paul places the bible next to his mentor.

What about her and her husband?

MALCOLM

He doesn't know anything.

PAUL

I mean your work - you've had three months with her. Do you feel she's any closer to God from the work you've done?

MALCOLM

Maybe. In a way.

They're both embarrassed at the thought. Silence.

PAUL

I guess all we can do is pray for them.

MALCOLM

Them?

PAUL

Her and her husband.

MALCOLM

Why are we praying for her husband?

Paul stares at him. Malcolm gets it and hangs his head.

MALCOLM (Cont.)

Sorry.

PAUL

He needs it more than anyone Malcolm.

MALCOLM

- I know.

PAUL

If you'd have told me about this when it started, maybe I could've been visiting the husband, preparing him, while you were sleeping with his wife. Now he's to continue living a lie, without even knowing it.

Malcolm stares at his protégé, momentarily impressed with this sudden assertiveness.

PAUL (Cont.)

His spirit doesn't stand a chance.

Paul hangs his head, but Malcolm hears the words very clearly. He looks out over the park; listens to the birds in the trees singing; sniffs the sweet grassy smell of nature. His fingers reach up and fondle the cross hanging around his neck... and his eyes glisten as revelation dawns.

MALCOLM

You're right.

They're nice words to hear for Paul, especially from his Mentor.

I can't think of anyone who needs saving more than her husband.

A glimpse of the old God-fearing Malcolm and he has Paul's undivided.

MALCOLM(Cont.)

We have to go back there and tell him. We'll tell him everything.

Malcolm picks up the bible on the bench next to him and stands.

I'm not prepared to simply ask for forgiveness Paul. The souls of those two people are my responsibility. We have to put right what I've done.

A proud grin spreads across Paul's face and Malcolm feeds off it.

And if it destroys their marriage then that'll be a shame, but better they find God than live a lie...

Paul grips his bible proudly and stands beside his mentor. Malcolm throws his chest out.

...Then maybe she'll realise where her heart truly belongs..

They both hesitate as the words hang in the air. A long beat as Malcolm back-peddles.

MALCOLM

...With God.

He thrusts his bible into the air, his big smile straining. The zeal is too hard to resist - Paul lunges forward and hugs his Mentor in relief. Malcolm barely feels it though as he stares out over Paul's shoulder, far ahead, to a future with Carmel.

15. EXT STREET/CARMEL'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER

The cottage and white picket fence look even more perfect with the man in the front yard watering his garden. A couple of houses down and across the road Malcolm and Paul stand by a tree watching. Neither of them move, both staring straight ahead at the house. They begin walking toward it.

The man gardening is TONY. He's late forties, greying and wears a collared cotton-shirt, stubby shorts and thongs. He pretends he doesn't notice the two men approaching. They march across the street without checking for traffic, looking straight ahead, like gunslingers in suits.

They arrive at the waist-level fence and Tony smiles. Seems very friendly, which fractures Malcolm's icy grin for a moment. Paul realises his Mentor doesn't seem to be leading the charge, so..

PAUL

Hello.

TONY

Hi.

PAUL

Hope you're keeping within the water restrictions.

TONY

So that's why you're watching me
- Water police eh?

Paul and Tony laugh. Malcolm doesn't.

PAUL

Sir we ah, my Mentor here came and, um, visited your house a while ago. He spoke with your wife. My name's Paul and this is

Malcolm.

Malcolm has his radar all over the guy, watching and assessing his every movement. Paul, however, is getting acquainted with his own newfound confidence.

PAUL (Cont.)

Do you have time for a short chat? Is your wife home?

TONY

She's shopping - shouldn't be too far away.

PAUL

Maybe we'll return when she's home and we can -

MALCOLM

No.

Paul and Tony look at Malcolm.

Are you busy now?

Tony looks them both over, scrutinising as he finishes watering the flowerbed. It seems to take some deciding, but eventually he smiles.

TONY

What the hell, I've finished out here so go on then, come on in for a cuppa.

Paul throws Malcolm a re-assured glance, but Mal's in a zone all his own.

TONY O/S

.. this area was all carpeted, then we got the floors sanded ..

16. INT LOUNGEROOM - DAY

Malcolm holds a cup of tea in his lap, his eyes glued to Tony on the opposite couch.

TONY

.. Took down the fibro wall between here and the dining.

Paul's even more relaxed now as he embraces his growing geniality.

PAUL

Did you do it yourself?

TONY

With Carmel yeah.

MALCOLM

Good with your hands eh?

Paul looks at him. A Beat. Tony sips his tea and Malcolm's eyes stay fixed on him.

TONY

Actually, she's the handy man.
Loves it. Never knew the skills
she had till she stopped working.
She built that coffee table and
our bedside tables.

They look at the coffee table. Deep varnished jarrah. The teacup in Malcolm's lap starts to rattle. He steadies it.

TONY (Cont.)

I swear fella's, Carmel does more
for this house while I'm at work
than if I were to pay to get it
renovated with what I earn.

MALCOLM

Yes, yes, and do you believe that
your marriage is true?

It comes from nowhere and Paul's nervousness returns.

TONY

Sorry?

Paul desperately sips his tea. It's way too hot, but he sips it anyway, silently scolding his lips. Malcolm places his own cup-and-saucer on the coffee table. He puts his bible in his lap and strokes it once before looking Tony square in the eye, like a panther ready to strike.

MALCOLM

Unfortunately, things aren't
always as they seem Tony.

Paul watches his mentor prepare to go for the jugular.

MAL (Cont.)

I know for me, it's taken a broken heart to face the truth. But it's my faith that gives me the strength

MAL (Cont.)

to share this with you Tony. A faith that I pray you will take with you from this experience, and embrace as we have, for it is the only truth. And true love, Tony, is the only love. True love should never be denied, do you agree?

Tony's trying to keep up. He glances out the window.

TONY

Speak of the devil.

Malcolm and Paul turn to see Carmel's car pull into the driveway. Malcolm watches as she gets out and takes two shopping bags off the back seat.

TONY

Yeah, so, true-love...

Paul lunges for his sizzling cup of tea and forces himself to drink. Malcolm watches Tony, gripping his bible tightly as the three of them listen to the car door slam outside. O/S her footsteps up onto the veranda; the doorknob rattles and twists.

Carmel comes in the front door, shuts it and stands at the entrance to the lounge room looking in. The three men stare at her from their chairs. She glances from her husband to Malcolm. Her face turns pale green. Both shopping bags hit the floor and food spills out. She rushes from the room and the men hear her throwing up violently in the bathroom down the hall. The bible-blokes watch Tony but he remains surprisingly calm.

TONY (Calling out)

You OK Carm'?

He smiles proudly at Malcolm and Paul.

Pregnant.

Checks his watch.

Doesn't usually suffer this late
in the day though.

Paul and Malcolm look like they've both been slapped with wet fish. Tony leans forward, resting his forearms on his knees, and lowers his voice.

TONY (Cont.)

I have to tell you two, I doubt I would've been this hospitable a few weeks ago. Don't usually invite folks such as yourself inside the house. But the fact is, this pregnancy's been nothing short of a bloody miracle.

There's a wild twinkle in Tony's eye now as he relishes his tale.

TONY (Cont.)

For years, Doctors have told me I was infertile..

PUSHIN to ECU Malcolm's eyes and we see his impression of Tony's story as it unfolds to the slow swell of an ethereal string score ...

CUT TO GP'S OFFICE:

Three doctors in lab-coats shake their heads at Carmel and Tony, who sit opposite, holding each other desperately.

TONY V/O

Spent thousands on IVF, we tried everything..

Malcolm imagines .. MONTAGE of medicines, needles, strange instruments, and finally, Carmel sitting alone and crying at an empty bassinette..

TONY V/O (Cont.)

..No joy. Now, I don't follow your particular brand of faith fellas..

CUT TO FRONT DOOR opening as Carmel is greeted by Malcolm's friendly smile. She smiles back.

TONY V/O (Cont.)
 .. but the fact is something
 helped one of my tired ole tads
 get to the finish line ..

CUT TO microscopic footage of the one tear-away sperm cell, wriggling like a champion toward mother-egg, as the ethereal strings swell to a climax..

TONY V/O (Cont.)
 .. and I ain't askin' questions.

Final surge of music with two guttural groans in unison that bring us to : Malcolm's sweaty face falling forward to meet Carmel's as he lies over her, panting and gazing into her eyes.

Malcolm's eyes morph from the loving rapture of looking at Carmel to shock, as he's now staring at Tony back in the LOUNGEROOM.

Tony sits back in his chair. Big grin on his face.

TONY
 Bloody miracle. Yep, you boys and
 your God are OK in my book.

Malcolm and Paul stare at him, speechless. Paul fidgets with his tea-cup. He swallows deeply and turns to Malcolm, who he realises needs some help now.

PAUL
 Malcolm here has something to
 tell you Sir.

Malcolm doesn't shift his gaze from the happy bloke on the couch in front of him. He watches Tony's eyes sparkling in their wrinkled sockets; his cracked lips slowly smiling in anticipation of whatever he's about to hear from this man.

Malcolm's hand loosens its grip on the bible in his lap. He lets go of the book completely and leans forward, extending his hand to Tony.

MALCOLM
 Congratulations Sir.

They shake.

TONY
 Thanks Champ.

Tony grins.

TONY (Cont.)

It's a bloody miracle is what it is.

The handshake continues, and slowly, a serene smile spreads across Malcolm's sunburnt face. His other hand delicately slides over the bible in his lap.

14. EXT STREET - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Malcolm caresses the bible against his chest as he glides along the footpath. Paul walks gingerly behind. Malcolm sees his protégé's uncertainty and stops. They face each other. The dreamy look in Malcolm's eye doesn't do much to encourage Paul so Malcolm places a hand on his shoulder and looks him in the eye.

MALCOLM

Stay open to miracles Paul.

The two men look at each other for a while. Malcolm's warm, reassuring smile is infectious.

You never know when he needs a helping hand.

O/S "KNOCK KNOCK"

15. EXT/INT FRONT-PORCH/ENTRANCE/STREET - DAY

RHONDA opens the front door and a wry smile spreads across her face. Malcolm grins back at her.

From out on the street Paul watches as Malcolm enters the house like a naughty schoolboy. The door closes. Paul walks on alone...

The End