

TITLE: LOOT ON SHOW

FADE IN:

EXT. THE BRITISH MUSEUM - DAY

The front of the British Museum is moderately busy with a few tourists bustling in and out of the building. The view of the building looks imposing and powerful. ZOOM OUT to reveal a group of Ghanaian men protesting near the entrance of the museum. At the front of the crowd are two men, ADJO and KOFI. They are both wearing shirts made of kente cloth and black pants; Adjo has short black hair while Kofi has longer hair and a goatee. All of them look weary, angered and are holding picket signs with slogans; ADJO is also sternly staring down the museum while holding a megaphone.

ADJO
(angered, rhythmically)
The land of Kumasi, a drum came from!

MEN (IN UNISON)
THE LAND OF KUMASI, A DRUM CAME FROM!

KOFI
(loud, rhythmically)
Return the land of Kumasi the drum!

MEN (IN UNISON)
RETURN THE LAND OF KUMASI THE DRUM!

PAN TO a teenage boy, NEVADA MILLER, entering the museum - he passes by the men repeating their chant and meagrely frowns before going through the gate. He has combed blonde hair and is wearing a white T-shirt under a navy jacket with the British Museum logo embroidered on it, jeans and Nike trainers.

CUT TO:

INT. STAFF ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Nevada goes through the staff entrance of the museum and taps a blue card on a machine to pass through a turnstile that lets him in. He glances at the security guard EDWARD, half-asleep in a booth on his left, as he goes through the turnstile.

NEVADA
(grim)

Good morning, Ed.

EDWARD

(sleepy)

Huh? Oh. Morning, Nevada.

INT. STAFF AREA - CONTINUOUS

Nevada exits an elevator and walks through a corridor towards a door at its end. The door reads 'CURATOR'S OFFICE'. Nevada enters the room.

CUT TO:

INT. CURATOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

There are many historical objects on shelves around the office. There is a big window on the left of the door and in front of it is a desk where a suited man, MICHAEL PYRE, is talking to someone on the phone. He has combed brown hair and a slightly pale face. He notices Nevada walk in and momentarily waves him towards a seat.

MICHAEL

(annoyed)

Look, get it sorted, I don't have time for archival work. Okay? -- Cheers, bye.

Michael puts down the phone and looks to Nevada who's patiently sitting on a divan on the right of the desk.

MICHAEL

Nevada, remember to knock next time. Fortunately, that wasn't an important call.

NEVADA

Alright, sorry Michael.

MICHAEL

(miffed)

You know you don't have to call me Michael now, right?

NEVADA

I know, it's a personal choice.

MICHAEL

What's with your attitude this morning? -- Is this about those

protestors again?

NEVADA

(frustrated)

They've been outside for the past 4 days! You told me that you would help them so why are they still here?

MICHAEL

Look, Michael, I know I said I would but I've got a lot going on at the moment. Rather than me responding, they would be better off contacting the museum directly with their qualms instead of disrupting the peace. In the end, stunts like these only happen to seek attention.

NEVADA

I'm not an idiot, Michael, I've heard things about this place's *history*. Attention-seeking or not, what they're saying is probably true. Why do I even bother with you? I'm only here for Mom's sake at this point.

There's a momentary silence between the two. Michael sighs and gets up to sit next to Nevada. He tries to put his hand on Nevada's shoulder but Nevada instinctively moves back.

MICHAEL

(empathetic)

Nevada, I know that it's been difficult adjusting to living in London and you might villainise me for being responsible for moving on such short notice. But your mum has sent you here over the summer so that we can bond and get to know each other which involves a *two-way* understanding. So while I understand the source of your anger, please take to heart that I'm busy and don't normally have time to deal with situations like this. Okay?

Nevada looks up at Michael with fury in his eyes.

NEVADA

(stern)

I'm tired hearing shit like this from

you. Look, I'm just going to get to work. I'd rather do that than have to try and reason with you.

Nevada gets up, straightens his jacket and leaves.

NEVADA (CONT'D)
Bye, Michael.

He slams the door, leaving a miffed but emotionally hurt Michael.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRITISH MUSEUM ENTRANCE - DAY

It's later in the day and the British Museum is now packed with tourists looking to get a free break from the weather outside that's hotter than usual. Nevada is at a kiosk next to museum employee KAREEM, selling guides and maps. Nevada pauses, using a map to fan himself and looks out of a window near him. He notices the group outside leaving the premises and freezes for a moment.

NEVADA
(mumbling)
He doesn't have time but I do.

Nevada puts his map down and taps Kareem to get his attention.

NEVADA
(chipper)
Hey Kareem, you don't mind if I go on lunch break?

KAREEM
(jovial)
And leave me to all these maps to me? -- Kidding! Yeah, you can head out. See ya!

Nevada dashes out of the museum and looks for Adjo and Kofi who are just exiting the courtyard. He sprints towards them.

NEVADA
(panting)
Excuse me, sir! Hold on!

Adjo and Kofi turn around and are taken aback by Nevada running in their direction. Nevada stops in front of them to catch his breath and they notice his British Museum uniform.

KOFI

(amused)

Oh! They *finally* send someone after this long and it is a child! Leave us now, we're done for the day.

ADJO

(curious)

Hold on, Kofi. Let him speak.

NEVADA

(polite)

I want to help you guys, where's the nearest place we can talk?

Adjo and Kofi exchange looks of thought.

EXT. MCDONALDS - DAY - TO ESTABLISH

This McDonalds branch is bustling with customers.

INT. MCDONALDS - CONTINUOUS

Nevada, Adjo and Kofi are sitting at a table and the other Ghanaian men are sitting on the tables next to them eating lunch.

ADJO

We never got your name, son.

NEVADA

Oh, Nevada. Nevada Miller.

KOFI

(fascinated)

Like the state, in America?

NEVADA

Yeah, I was born there before I moved here. My dad used to say that he named me after it so that the two things he's loved the most would share the same name.

ADJO
(touched)
Wow, that is so sweet.

Nevada tenses up slightly - it's a bittersweet memory for him.

NEVADA
And you guys are?--

ADJO
Well, I am Adjo and my friend here is named Kofi. Now, why did you want to meet us?

NEVADA
(confident)
For answers. Explain everything. Who are you guys and what is the drum?

Adjo and Kofi take deep breaths and their smiles morph into stony frowns. Adjo looks directly into Nevada's eyes as he readies himself to talk. As Nevada looks at Adjo's face more closely, he notices the pain in the man's eyes.

ADJO
(serious)
Our group is made up of people from Kumasi, the centre of the Ashanti region of Ghana. The drum we speak of is the Akan Drum which was made in our region. However, it was taken from our land a few hundred years ago when our people were enslaved by the Americans.

KOFI
As part of the transatlantic slave trade, a number of our people were taken to Virginia, in your country. As for the drum, an infamous British collector named Hans Sloane was present and requested to take the drum back to England -- as a collector's item.

ADJO
That is how it is in the museum. It

was not rightfully taken, not even earned as a spoil of war. It was undoubtedly *stolen* to be put on display as some exotic trinket. -- To this day, the drum is still the oldest surviving West African object. So, the way we see it, it is a vital symbol of our country's past and these people have no excuse to keep it.

NEVADA

Why didn't you contact the museum then?

KOFI

(sarcastic)

Ha! Contact them? Give them a phone call or send a kind letter by post? Our country has attempted contact for years and the museum refused to give the drum back. There came a point where they stopped giving a response. Why else do you think we were making such a ruckus this morning?

ADJO

Our country may have given up on this but our people have not. That drum is the oldest surviving piece of Ghanaian history and we cannot stop until it is back where it belongs. So, how can you help us?

Nevada sits back and thinks for a moment. Suddenly, he perks up and looks back at them with devilish joy.

NEVADA

(excited)

I know! I forgot to mention but I have close links to the curator so they've given me a special access card to get into the staff areas and places like that.

Nevada whips out the card he used this morning and shows it to Adjo and Kofi who look upon the card with interest.

NEVADA (CONT'D)

Now, I haven't seen the drum anywhere around the Africa exhibit so it has to be in the archives. So, all I have to take the drum and take it out of the museum to you guys!

ADJO

(skeptical)

Are you suggesting a HEIST? You must be pulling our legs, we came here to get it rightfully, not to end up in British jail!

NEVADA

Look, I know it sounds bad but I'll take full responsibility. And even if I get caught, my da- I mean, the curator can buy me out of it. All you guys have to do is sort out a way to receive the drum.

Adjo and Kofi exchange looks of thought as they consider the proposal.

NEVADA

Come on guys, for the Ashanti?

ADJO

(saddened)

I am sorry, Nevada. Thank you for reaching out to us and your empathy but -- this plan of yours is too risky to work and would end up with either you, us or all of us in deep trouble. We need that drum but it is not worth breaking the law to obtain it.

A defeated Nevada looks at Adjo's eyes, now misty - the man was losing hope.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE MCDONALDS - CONTINUOUS

Nevada leaves the restaurant and heads down the street deep in thought and with determination in his eyes - he's not given up on this cause.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BRITISH MUSEUM - NIGHT - TO ESTABLISH

It is late in the evening and the British Museum has closed for the day. Excluding a few security guards, there doesn't seem to be a soul in sight.

INT. CURATOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Michael is sitting in his office on his laptop looking at e-mails with a dejected look on his face - he's still hurt from his son's words this morning. All of a sudden, his phone starts ringing and he answers the call.

MICHAEL

(weary)

Hello, this is Michael, curator of the British Museum speaking, who is this?

UNKNOWN VOICE (V.O.)

(menacing)

Listen to me very closely, you *tyrant*. I have captured your son Nevada. If you want him back, bring the Akan Drum to the Ghanaian Embassy near Highgate Hill by 9:00. Make it on time or we'll kill him. If you contact the police or anyone else about this, he'll be dead before you arrive.

Michael suddenly wakes up from his dreary state and his face drops in shock.

MICHAEL

(fearful)

Hello, who is this? You want me to just give the drum to you? How do I even know you're not bluffing?

The caller pauses and after a moment, Michael hears Nevada.

NEVADA (V.O.)

(terrified)

PLEASE HELP ME! I was just getting to the Tube station and these guys kidnapped me! Please just get the drum to them! I DON'T WANNA DIE!

As Nevada pleads for help, Michael hears a sound of a gun loading. He gets more panicked.

MICHAEL

(incredibly shook)

My goodness, um, don't worry, I'll be there as soon as I can, you're going to be OK!