

SHADOW MAN
(London Calling Plus 2014)

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'SHADOW MAN'

FADE IN:

1 EXT. STREET. TWILIGHT

1

A faded street of terraced houses with people going about their business. A white van approaches from the far end of the street, as it passes by the neighbours rush into their houses. **Two kids** playing 'it', chase each other into the middle of the street before veering off to the pavement on the other side of the street.

The kids run towards a woman, **Tracey** pushing her father **Trevor** an elderly man in a wheelchair. Avoiding the kids, she crosses the road and we follow. Trevor throws the blanket across his knees on the ground. Annoyed, Tracey picks it up, stopping the van. She looks at the driver, finishes her task and continues to push the wheelchair to the left hand side of the road.

The van parks behind her as Tracey exits frame. A young African man **Nikwei** approaches from the corner of the frame and we turn with him into his front garden. He enters the house and we drift to the window on the right and peep through. We see the silhouette of two men **Okokobioko** and **Joe** inside the house.

2 INT. OKOKOBIOKO KITCHEN. TWILIGHT

2

Through a mirror are **three African men** in a makeshift kitchen. They speak in African languages we don't understand.

Two of the men **Nikwei** (pronounced Knee-qway) a lanky nineteen-year-old and **Joe**, a disillusioned fifty-something are seated on various items, a sack of rice, a suitcase, boxes of plantain around a 'table' of stacked pallets. The third man, **Okokobioko** (pronounced Oh-Koh-Koh-bee-Oh-Koh really fast), a good looking man of twenty-two puts the finishing touches to three plates of food. As we pan from the mirror into the room, their language transforms into English.

Okokobioko passes a plate to Nikwei, who sniffs the food, pulls a disgusted face and passes the plate to Joe. Okokobioko gives another bowl of food to Nikwei. Joe stares at the food, flabberghasted.

JOE

Where's the meat?

OKOKOBIOKO

(Sitting down with his bowl) There's no meat.

JOE

It looks like vomit.

OKOKOBIOKO

It's risotto.

JOE

(To Okokobioko) You are taking this British-ness thing too far!

OKOKOBIOKO

It's from Italy. Try it!

JOE

(Kisses his teeth). The ruin of a nation, begins in the homes of it's people.

The two younger men laugh at him.

JOE

The landlord wants twenty more pounds a week. Laugh about that!

NIKWEI

What?!

Joe pushes his bowl of risotto away and walks to a cardboard box in the corner of the room. Okokobioko and Nikwei exchange a look.

NIKWEI

I can't afford that.

JOE

You'll have to give up your spot and live in the shed with the Bosnians.

NIKWEI

What am I going to do?

OKOKOBIOKO

(Eating) I can lend you some money.

Joe returns to the table with a plastic container. Joe opens the container, takes a piece of oxtail covered in thick sauce, and bites into it with great satisfaction. An envious Nikwei watches Joe suck noisily on the oxtail bone. Nikwei looks from the oxtail to the risotto.

JOE

(To Nikwei) Help yourself.

Nikwei pushes his bowl away and grabs an oxtail from Joe's container and bites into it hungrily. Okokobioko kisses his teeth, stands up and leaves the room. His faded cowboy boots jingles as he walks.

JOE

(Eating) Look at us! Forced to cook and clean like women.

NIKWEI

(rolling his eyes) When do you ever do the cleaning Joe?

Nikwei reaches for another oxtail but Joe slaps his hand away.

NIKWEI

(Laughing) Come on, don't be like that.

As the camera peeps through the garden window of the room, the men's language transforms from English to an African language.

3 **INT. TOILET. NIGHT**

3

Okokobioko sits on a toilet. Annoyed, he mumbles to himself as he does a number 2. Laughter drifts up from the floor below. There is an inescapable picture of Jesus bedecked in lambs stuck on a wall.

Suddenly there is a bang from downstairs followed by the sound of splintering pallets and Nikwei screaming at the top of his lungs. Startled, Okokobioko leaps up, is about to flush the toilet but thinks better of it and stops. There are muffled sounds, skirmishes and things smashing.

JOE (V.O.)

(Shouting) Run for your

Joe's voice is suddenly cut off. Okokobioko pulls his trousers up and turns off the light. He tries to open the window. The lock is stuck. He listens, opens the toilet door a crack, and peeps out into a dimly lit hallway. An **IMMIGRATION OFFICER** appears at the top of the stairs and walks into a room at the far end of the hallway. There are thudding noises from below.

4 **INT. OKOKOBIOKO HALLWAY. NIGHT**

4

Okokobioko takes tentative steps into the hallway, the light bulb flickers uncertainly above his head. Okokobioko tiptoes in an effort to subdue his jingling spurs and dives into a room just as the immigration officer returns, he flicks the light switch and floods the hallway with light .

5 **INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT**

5

Okokobioko trips into the small room packed with bedding, clothes and suitcases. He feverishly scans the room for a good place to hide.

In the corner of the room, is a table with a white cowboy hat on it. Okokobioko runs to the table, and dives under it just as the immigration officer opens the bedroom door.

The officer steps into the room casting a long shadow across the floor. The officer flicks the light switch. There is no light. He switches on his torch. The underside of the desk is obscured from the officer's view by a chair. Heart pounding loudly in his chest, Okokobioko watches the officer searching the room. He kicks bedding and clothes out of his way with his thick black boots.

Okokobioko holds his breath as the officer approaches the table. Okokobioko crosses himself and mutters a prayer.

The faint sound of cowbells.

Just as the officer bends down to move the chair that would reveal Okokobioko, someone runs along the hallway towards the toilet. The officer rushes out of the room in hot pursuit. The sound of two pairs of feet run past the bedroom door and down the stairs.

ALBERT (O.S.)

Ss. Ss.

Okokobioko looks through a gap in front of the chair and the table leg. Okokobioko's POV: A shadowy figure **Albert** approaches the table.

ALBERT

(Whispers) Okokobioko.

Okokobioko snatches a handful of clothes and throws it over the chair at Albert.

ALBERT

Do I look like a demon? Get up child.

Silence. Okokobioko keeps to his hiding place.

Albert stands over him. Exposed, Okokobioko slumps backwards in a mock faint.

ALBERT

Stop that nonsense. Only when you have crossed the river, can you say the crocodile has a lump in his snout.

OKOKOBIOKO

(opens his eyes) Uncle Albert?

ALBERT

The family is counting on you. Get up!

Okokobioko stands up.

ALBERT

Don't stand there like a pillar of salt, shut the door.

Okokobioko runs to the bedroom door and closes it. Albert picks up the cowboy hat from the table and gives it to Okokobioko.

ALBERT

The one who climbs a good tree is the one who is helped.

OKOKOBIOKO

I know that.

ALBERT

Then act as if it is impossible to fail.

Albert walks to the window. Okokobioko follows and opens the window as quietly as he can. He looks out of the window. It is a long way down. He hesitates.

ALBERT

We have sacrificed everything to get you here. The rest is up to you.

The sound of footsteps coming up the stairs.

Shaking, Okokobioko pulls on the hat and puts his leg through the gap in the window. Half sitting on the ledge, Okokobioko bends his head and body through the open gap and propels himself out of the window.

6 **INT OKOKOBIOKO HALLWAY NIGHT**

6

The immigration officer arrives at the top of the stairs and sees that the bedroom door is now closed. He creeps quietly to the door and reaches for the door handle.

5A **INT BEDROOM NIGHT**

5A

The immigration officer forcefully pushes the bedroom door open. His POV of the empty room.

7 **EXT BEDROOM WINDOW FROM GARDEN NIGHT** 7

The immigration officer walks to the open window, peers out and shines his torch down into the garden.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER

We've lost one.

The officer inside the bedroom withdraws his torch and moves away from the window. **IMMIGRATION OFFICER 2** enters the garden from the kitchen and walks towards the back of the garden.

8 **EXT OKOKOBIOKO GARDEN-SHED NIGHT** 8

Immigration Officer 2 rushes across the garden towards a small shed at the bottom of the garden. He knocks on the shed door.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER 2

Open the door! Come out.

The shed door opens slowly, and a **BOSNIAN MAN** comes out with his hands in the air, followed by another and more men. Okokobioko watches this from the bushes as the torch from the first officer narrowly misses him. He moves out of harms way and climbs a pipe at the back of the house.

The faint sound of cowbells.

9 **EXT STUNT ROOFTOP & PIPE NIGHT** 9

The faint sound of cowbells.

Okokobioko hangs onto a pipe as still as possible.

Shaking with strain, Okokobioko shimmies slowly up the pipe. He reaches the guttering, grabs it and swings himself onto the roof. He scrambles along the roof to the front of the house.

Below him Okokobioko watches his friends and others bundled into a waiting van.

An immigration officer knocks on the door of the next house. Swaying with vertigo, Okokobioko crawls to a chimney to catch his breath.

The faint sound of cowbells in the wind.

Okokobioko scurries towards the rooftop of the next house as quickly and quietly as he can. Making his way towards the end house, his hat slips from his head, and stretching to grasp the hat, tumbles into the darkness below. A large bush breaks his fall and he lands with a thud onto the ground.

10 **INT TRACEY'S KITCHEN NIGHT** 10

Close-up of Tracey's dripping tap.

Tracey turns on the tap, it continues its slow dripping. She bangs it and the water flows from the tap. She fills a glass of water and drinks. She puts the glass down by the sink.

Tracey enjoys the quietness in the house. She walks over to the cooker area, opens a drawer, removes a cigarette from a pack. She looks for her lighter. Not finding it, she lights the cooker and uses a kebab stick to light her cigarette. She unlocks the back door, steps outside to smoke her cigarette.

The sound of a police helicopter in the distance.

11 **EXT TRACEY'S GARDEN NIGHT** 11

Okokobioko opens his eyes and is relieved not to be dead. He sits up slowly and takes in his surroundings. The walled garden is overgrown with bushes and brambles. He sees his hat caught in some bushes. He rolls onto his knees and crawls to the hat. He picks up his hat and puts it on his head and stands up. He turns to see a light from the house, the silhouette of a woman and the glowing tip of a cigarette. He walks towards her.

12 **EXT TRACEY'S GARDEN NIGHT** 12

Tracey, blowing out smoke from a deep drag of her cigarette, notices movement in the darkness and squints to see better. Tracey's POV: A tall figure in a hat rushing towards her. Tracey tosses her half finished cigarette and runs into the house.

Okokobioko reaches the back door and peers inside. Unable to see inside, he moves to the window. Okokobioko follows the passing helicopter with his eyes and walks to the window. His POV: Tracey stands to one side of the window holding the carving knife in her hand.

TRACEY

Psra ra pssra ra raa sra!

OKOKOBIOKO

Good evening. Please, I don't mean you any harm. (Pause) Can I pass through your house to the station?

Tracey cranes her neck to see outside.

TRACEY

I've called the cops! They're on their way
right now! Go away! Move!

Her POV: Okokobioko outside the window pleads with her in a language we don't understand.

OKOKOBIOKO

Me Pa wo chew. Me timi a fa wo fie?
Me pe se me ko fie

Okokobioko presses his face into the window.

The sound of the police helicopter passing over the house.

TRACEY

The POLICE are on their way right now!

Okokobioko reacts to the word 'police' and steps back.

OOS Trevor bangs his cane repeatedly to summon Tracey.

Tracey's POV: Okokobioko wobbles and sways dramatically and starts to sink downwards in a faint.

TREVOR (O.S.)

Tracey! Tracey!

Tracey spins around to attend to Trevor,

TRACEY

Dad! Go back to sleep.

Behind her Okokobioko collapses out of shot. Tracey turns back to the window and Okokobioko is nowhere to be seen. She moves cautiously towards the window.

TRACEY

Hello? (Pause). Hello. (Looking out of the
window) Are you alright?

Silence.

The silence is broken by the slow dripping of the tap.

The faint sound of cowbells.

Okokobioko lies motionless on the ground. Close-up on Okokobioko as he opens an eye, he quickly shuts it again as Tracey unbolts the back door. She opens the door, takes a deep breathe and steps outside with a large saucepan and carving knife in her hands. She throws water from the pan onto Okokobioko.

Close-up of the water hitting Okokobioko's face. He splutters, sits up and wipes water from his eyes.

Tracey holds the saucepan and knife in defence.

Okokobioko pulls out his mobile phone from his shirt pocket. It is wet. He quickly dries it on his thigh. He presses the phone, it lights up.

TRACEY

How did you get in my
Garden?

Long pause. Okokobioko doesn't understand. He shivers.

TRACEY

Why are you here?

OKOKOBIOKO

Yes?

TRACEY

What? What do you want?

OKOKOBIOKO

Yes?

TRACEY

Do you speak English?

OKOKOBIOKO

Yes.

Pause.

TRACEY

Are you a turnip?

OKOKOBIOKO

Yes.

Okokobioko presses his phone until he finds what he is looking for. He points to himself then to the phone.

OKOKOBIOKO

Yes.

He offers her the phone. She steps back. Okokobioko holds his phone up for her to see. His teeth begin to chatter.

Tracey, with the carving knife and pan in each hand, steps forward for a better view of the phone. Her POV: Close up image of Okokobioko and his family, uncle Albert, his mum and younger siblings. Silence.

TRACEY

Your family?

Okokobioko nods.

Silence.

Tracey waves him towards the door with her saucepan.

15

INT TRACEY'S KITCHEN NIGHT

15

Okokobioko enters the kitchen closely followed by Tracey. She looks down in surprise at the jingling spurs. She closes the back door. Okokobioko takes off his hat as Tracey walks past him towards the inner kitchen door. She puts the saucepan and knife down on the work top. Okokobioko hovers by the back door. She points the way out through the dining room.

Okokobioko stays where he is. He looks around the beautifully fitted kitchen, the dripping tap and finally ends the glass by the sink.

Uncomfortable, Tracey looks at the knife on the work top and folds her arms across her chest. There is an awkward silence.

The sound of the police helicopter in the distance, Okokobioko follows the sound with his eyes.

Silence.

Okokobioko points to the tap and mimes drinking. Tracey reluctantly walks to the sink and turns the tap. It continues to drip. She bangs it and the water starts to flow. She fills a glass and hands it to him. Okokobioko smiles at her as he takes the glass. Tracey does not respond. She returns to the safety of the dining room door. She watches him drink the water.

OOS Trevor bangs his walking stick.

Okokobioko finishes his drink and walks to the sink. He puts the glass in the sink and examines the dripping tap.

TREVOR (O.S.)

Tracey. Tracey!

TRACEY

Hang / on dad.

TREVOR (O.S.)

Toilet! Toilet now!

Tracey exits through the dining room door.

Okokobioko rests his hat on the work-top. He searches the kitchen. He opens a drawer and looks inside. He opens cupboards. He pulls out an open pack of rice with an elastic band around it. He takes the elastic band and turning on the tap, bangs on it to make the water flow. He opens the cupboard door under the sink and lowers himself to the floor.

16 **INT TRACEY'S HALLWAY/FRONT DOOR NIGHT** 16

Through a gap in the dining room door, we see Tracey escorting Trevor into the living room.

17 **INT TRACEY'S KITCHEN NIGHT** 17

Okokobioko closes the cupboard under the sink and grabbing his hat walks towards the dining room.

ALBERT (O.S.)

Ss. Ss!

Okokobioko turns to see Albert.

ALBERT

What are you doing?

OKOKOBIOKO

I'm going.

ALBERT

One pole cannot build a house.

OKOKOBIOKO

I know that.

ALBERT

Look at all this. She wasn't wearing a ring.

OKOKOBIOKO

She's old enough to be my mother!

ALBERT

(Kisses his teeth) If you find no fish, you have to eat bread.

OKOKOBIOKO

I don't want to eat.

ALBERT

A man without a woman is like a barn
without goats.

Okokobioko rolls his eyes, puts on his hat and continues out of the dining room door.

18

INT TRACEY'S HALLWAY/FRONT DOOR NIGHT

18

Okokobioko walks towards the front door. The doorbell rings as he reaches the front door.

Okokobioko panics as he looks through the spy hole and sees the immigration officer waiting outside. The officer rings the bell again. Okokobioko moves away from the door.

The door bell rings again. Tracey enters the hallway. Okokobioko removes his hat as she walks past him. She opens the front door. Okokobioko watches her with bated breath as she listens to the immigration officer.

TRACEY

OK. (Long pause) No. Thank you.

The officer gives Tracey a card before she closes the door. Okokobioko extends his hand. They shake hands. Tracey holds onto his hand a little too long. Close-up on Okokobioko's face. Tracey lets go of his hand.

Silence. The silence is broken by the whistling kettle.

TRACEY

You. (Mimes drinking) tea?

Okokobioko nods. Tracey exits towards the kitchen. Okokobioko follows her

19

INT TRACEY'S KITCHEN/ DINING ROOM NIGHT

19

Tracey enters the dining room and switches on the light. She pushes some of her stuff to make a space on the table and gestures to Okokobioko to sit down. She continues to the kitchen.

Tracey enters the kitchen , turns on the light and sees immediately that the tap has stopped dripping. She walks over to the sink, and turns on the tap. Close-up on her surprised face at the instant flow of water. Tracey fills an old style metal kettle with water and turns on the heat.

Okokobioko's POV from the dining room as Tracey makes tea.

Albert sidles up to Okokobioko at the table.

ALBERT

Isn't this cosy?

Okokobioko gives him a disapproving look. Tracey's POV as Okokobioko alone, sits down at the table and rests his hat on the back of the chair.

TRACEY

(Raising the bowl) I've got some dinner left over.

Albert winks at Okokobioko.

Tracey turns her attention to pot on the cooker. She removes a bowl from a cupboard and spoons food from the pot into the bowl. We don't see the contents of the bowl.

ALBERT

(Whispers to Okokobioko) Isn't that what a good wife would do?

Tracey enters the dining room and passes the bowl to Okokobioko. He is surprised and delighted.

Close-up on the bowl of food.

OKOKOBIOKO

Risotto!

TRACEY

You know risotto?

OKOKOBIOKO

Risotto. Yes.

A hungry Okokobioko tucks into the risotto with his hands before Tracey has had a chance to give him a fork. Tracey chuckles as she puts the fork on the table. Okokobioko's POV: Tracey's face is transformed as she laughs.

Tracey sits down.

TRACEY

(Points to herself) Tracey. (She points to Okokobioko) You?

OKOKOBIOKO

Okokobioko

TRACEY

Oko nkoo too ko too?

Laughing, Okokobioko splutters at her bad pronunciation and spits out risotto. They both laugh. Tracey glances nervously in the direction of the living room.

TRACEY

Shh.

OKOKOBIOKO

Shh.

He reaches over and wipes some risotto off her face. She giggles in surprise. Behind Tracey a smiling Albert walks towards the garden door and fades away. Okokobioko eats his risotto. Through the dining room window Tracey and Okokobioko ease into each other's company.

FX: Faint sound of cowbells dies away.

20

EXT STREET NIGHT

20

The immigration officer bangs the door shut, strides to the front of the unmarked van and jumps in. The van crammed with immigrants drives away from us.

Silence.

A recycling bin outside a house suddenly opens and a head pops out. An immigrant clammers out of the bin and runs into the house.

The camera pans to another bin popping open. A second immigrant climbs out and sprints past the camera. Another bin opens and a third immigrant jumps out and runs into the camera blocking our view.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END