

**I SEE RED**

a screenplay

by

George Murphy

*esse est percepi.*

WENDY

Carolina Dominguez

HER

Anabela Ribero

MOTHER

Bàrbara Bruno

THE MOUTH

Silvestre Correia and George Murphy

*Darkness.*

*Slow fade into a disembodied pair of RED lips. Undulating, as if labouring to breathe.*

*THE MOUTH begins -*

**THE MOUTH**

Here. Look here. Look! Look and see. See her, and gaze upon her ruin. The child of man. Girl, a woman (*pause*) not quite. A different kind. Different. Look upon her and you will see. Do you see? Do you? (*pause*) No. Of course you don't. You never did. You never did see things for what they really were. But you remember, don't you? (*pause*) Memory! (*pause*) Think. Or, at least, use your imagination. Use it and imagine her tears, her (*pause*) cries that went unheard if not ignored, and yet still she cries. And imagine, again, her (*pause*. *THE MOUTH oscillates, breathes heavily*) delusion (*apathetic laugh*) when, eventually, she saw RED, and things began to fall into place. Strange sensations. The taste of pennies. Raw meat. Maybe pork, masticating, undulating across her tongue (*THE MOUTH pants and smacks its lips with unlovely enthusiasm*) beyond all reasonable doubt she might be insane. But despair has its own calms and in the coldness of night - it was cold, wasn't it? - the girl

would dance for pennies, just as the other, so cold that not even the fire, not the hottest of hellfire could warm her heart, nor her bones. Bones to be whittled and hung against strange dark cuts of meat! You will look. You look! Look! Look look look (*THE MOUTH repeats 'look' until the sound becomes alien to the ear*). . . Look and see her dance and cry and hear her. . . (*pause. Staggered breathing. Whimper*) and the other, look to her, child of Mars, or such is to be thought, the interloper, (*pause*) the pursuer. Or has her ruin come to pass? AH! (*aggressively*) AH! No memory, no matter, time will tell and you will tell because you will look and see how she deranges the girl (*THE MOUTH pants*) in her . . life, where she parades her flesh, just as the split hog in a butcher's window, all for a fistful of pennies and the pleasure . . desire, to be the object of desire, AH! That's it, that was all she ever wanted, to be desired, to be - (*THE MOUTH halts as if interrupted. Heavy breathes, almost on the cusp of orgasm. Baby squeals*) RED! RED! The colour of desire and signs that spell danger, RED! Oh, even in the blackest of night, through veils of shadow she still saw (*brief pause*) RED and she cowered as she does now, she sees it now, she smells it on the air, she tastes it on her tongue. RED, oh sweet - (*pause, as if interrupted THE MOUTH smiles and holds the grin*) you will see, you will look, and just as the girl, daughter of man, just as you, child of men, will see it. Look. Behold. RED, and (*gasp. Pause*) nihil nihil nihil desperandum (*pause, soft breaths*) peace, the charms wound up.

*THE MOUTH* disappears.

CUT TO:

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

'I SEE RED'

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM

*On a stool, looking into a vanity mirror sits WENDY. Her hair is rough. Her face is powdered red white. She is putting on her make-up, which is scattered red before her on the vanity.*

*She addresses her speech toward somebody in her reflection - we don't know who. We cannot see.*

*WENDY is brushing a pallet with blush. She applies her make-up thick, messy. She is calm. Her manner is calm, she is comfortable. She has done this a thousand times before -*

**WENDY**

My nerves are bad tonight . . . Something's up. I don't know what but . . . I didn't sleep well, you know? . . . And they say no sleep can do these things to you, and it's not just nerves either. Mood swings, bad memory. Memory loss . . . I read<sup>1</sup> it in a pamphlet, somewhere dingy, I don't remember where I was but . . . I wouldn't say I'm deprived? Sleep deprivation, that's what they called it . . . You see, to be deprived you have to be *without* necessity. It is, to be without, and it got me thinking - or it's just made me think now - that I'm not deprived (*she smiles, half heartedly*) I'm not deprived, I've got everything I need in life. Gotten everything I want out of life . . .

*She stops with her make-up for a brief moment. Tilts her head, mumbles to herself, disagrees with herself -*

**WENDY**

Besides, I'm not going to dwell. Not tonight. (*she burps*) Pardon. I'm bad enough already. I'm shaking like a leaf, I can barely put my face

---

<sup>1</sup> Immediately after WENDY says 'read', CUT TO: THE MOUTH, clenching its teeth for several frames.

on. Maybe I'll have a cigarette? . . . I should smoke, shouldn't I? It'll calm me down.

*WENDY continues to ramble on the curative effects of tobacco as she (in this order):*

1. *Pauses with her make-up.*
2. *Fumbles a cigarette.*
3. *Lights it.*
4. *Takes a drag.*
5. *Coughs.*

*Cigarettes disgust her.*

**WENDY**

Eugh. God. (*little cough*)

*She takes another half-hearted drag and puts the cigarette into the ashtray, then continues to put on her make-up -*

**WENDY**

I hate the way it hits the back of my throat . . . Maybe it's the brand. I should find something a little weaker (*she clears her throat*). Maybe I should have a little drink, instead. Dutch courage and all that - oh! Speaking of, (*she puts down her make-up*) that reminds me: I saw a man with one arm this morning . . . A very small man he was, just going about in the street. He wore this mackintosh with the sleeves rolled up so everybody walking could see his stump . . . But I didn't look. I took one look at his shoes though (*she winces*) . . . moccasins . . . With no socks, either . . . You can always judge somebody by the shoes they wear. Just look at HER, for instance . . .

*WENDY'S manner changes. She speaks slower -*

**WENDY**

. . I saw HER again. The other day . . Watching me. Again in that . . same coat and those red<sup>2</sup> pumps. Just standing there. Watching me. It almost frightened me, almost (*long pause, then whisper*) she mocks me (*long pause, then elated*) but!

*WENDY perks up with a deep breath. She picks up her make-up again and continues to apply it.*

#### **WENDY**

We mustn't dwell. Not on HER. I'm not going to dwell on HER, I'm not going to think about HER, I won't even say HER name . . Besides (*WENDY leans into the mirror with her make-up*) as if her pain were my fault. (*Softly, as if imitating her gentle mother*) *não percas a cabeça . . não a percas.* (*WENDY smiles warmly*) You know, when I was a girl, back home, I used to get frightened in the dark and mother would come in and sit by the bedside and sing very softly:

*(sung)*

*Ó Rosa arredonda a saia,  
olha a rosa que ela tem.*

*(pause)*

And I would sleep, and forget. Every time . . (*she snorts*) She'll be dead soon . . with a little patience. But, (*she picks up a tube of lipstick*) as they say, the show -

*WENDY pauses briefly. Quietly alarmed. She notices the lipstick is RED.  
Her breathing becomes ever-so noticeable here.  
She puts the lipstick back, finds another - pink - and lashes it on.*

---

<sup>2</sup> Immediately after WENDY says 'RED', CUT TO: THE MOUTH, panting, for several frames.

*Her make-up done, she puts on a pink vinyl coat and stops to admire herself in the mirror.*

*WENDY turns from the table - still sat.*

**WENDY**

Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. A BLACK STAGE

*Darkness.*

*Music.*

*The stage is totally bare and black - as if a void.*

*Slowly, WENDY shambles on. She appears in an almost trance like state as she performs an aborted dance towards centre stage.*

*Her movements are steady and autonomous. She moves as if an animatronic, condemned, just as Sisyphus.*

*With a sultry grace, WENDY begins to remove her coat.*

*She continues with this dance - a strange burlesque - until she sees something. WENDY hesitates -*

CUT TO:

INT. AN AUDITORIUM

*HER watches from the audience. Her face obscured by distance.*

CUT TO<sup>3</sup>:

INT. A BLACK STAGE

*WENDY, shaken, continues her dance. She is less mechanical now. Her movements are more organic.*

*She does not break eye-contact with HER.*

*WENDY's sultry guise begins to break. She is pained.*

CUT TO<sup>4</sup>:

INT. AN AUDITORIUM

---

<sup>3</sup> For a single frame - before the cut - CUT TO: THE MOUTH.

<sup>4</sup> For a single frame - before the cut - CUT TO: MOTHER.

*HER watches on, same as before.*

CUT TO<sup>5</sup>:

INT. A BLACK STAGE

*WENDY is anguished. But she dances on.*

CUT TO:

INT. AN AUDITORIUM

*HER watches on, same as before.*

CUT TO:

INT. A BLACK STAGE

*WENDY dances on, same as before.*

*Subsequently, CUT TO: back-and-forth shots of WENDY dancing and HER watching, interspersed by a brief CUT TO: MOTHER and THE MOUTH. Repeat with each cut faster than the former, a crescendo.*

UNITL -

CUT TO:

INT. A BLACK STAGE

*WENDY squeaks and turns to run off stage.*

*Music intensifies.*

CUT TO:

INT. A WHITE PLACE

*MOTHER sits.*

*Music is loud, offensive to the ears. Clanging and overlapped.*

UNTIL -

*Music stops.*

*MOTHER breathes. This is all we hear.*

CUT TO:

INT. A BLACK STAGE

---

<sup>5</sup> For a single frame - before the cut - CUT TO: MOTHER.

*WENDY staggers or slips or falls.*

CUT TO:

INT. A WHITE PLACE

*Two single, brief shots of MOTHER.*

*MOTHER's breaths turn to a primal gargle.*

*THEN - single frame shot of THE MOUTH, bearing teeth.*

*Silence.*

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM

*WENDY, shaken, paces about the room. She tussles her hair in agitation. Her makeup is messed up. She whines and breathes heavily. This is all we hear UNTIL -*

*Music. Quiet.*

*WENDY is frightened. She pauses briefly and looks to the WINDOW.*

*Silence.*

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE

*Standing placidly beyond the glass, HER looks up into the window from the ground below.*

*THEN - single frame shot of MOTHER, with meat in her mouth.*

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM

*WENDY releases a very quiet, almost faulted cry.*

*She is being pursued.*

*She backs away ever so slightly.*

**WENDY**

*(stagge**red**, quiet) No . . not . . .*

*Footsteps.*



WENDY turns and freezes<sup>6</sup>. HER is coming.

WENDY holds her face in her hands. Between her fingers we see her eyes, bright and wet with fear. Her makeup has run. Footsteps gain on her.

She lowers her hands slightly and closes her eyes.

#### WENDY

*(Speaking, quiet)*

Ó Rosa arredonda a saia,  
olha a rosa que ela tem.

All becomes still and quiet.

After some pause, WENDY - her eyes still closed - SLOWLY manages a half-baked smile. She feels comfort in her mother's song.

As she regains her faculties her manner becomes more relaxed. Her hands lower fully and her eyes steadily open halfway UNTIL -

WENDY's breath is forced out of her. She can't quite manage to scream. As if paralysed by fear. She manages a soft whimper.

HER stands before her.

Music.

THEN HER begins -

As HER speaks, intersperse the shot with brief, erratic CUTS TO:

1. THE MOUTH, grinning.
2. MOTHER, retching.
3. MOTHER, retching.
4. MOTHER, with meat in her mouth.
5. MOTHER, leering inwards - this shot is only to be seen at the end of HER's speech.

#### HER

Squeezed . . from a single labouring orifice  
slithered forth without love and without  
exaltation into nihil unto nihil six-two-five-  
to-seven-four-zero which by happy circumstance  
fell upon the contorted wreckage and blistered  
brightly booming beatitude unto Bacchae and  
bastard alike in bolts as defined by Helmholtz  
whose chromaticity is constituted by chroma and  
wavelength unforgotten was the colour and

---

<sup>6</sup> As WENDY hears the footsteps, CUT TO: THE MOUTH.

agonising was its consequence when MOTHER stooped so lowly into the white place and white mixed with red and red and red ruptured the glass and cracks shot outwards out and into the beyond the landscape beyond the land of barren dust and white bones and dust such as it were would be the remnant for we are but meat going from meat to mould and mould to dust and dust back into the postulations of liminality and the broader notions of revival and rebirth of organic matter symbiotic or otherwise to recompose or reconvene a physiognomy pale white a slightly sad shade of pink but all the same all the same each enactment same as the last and just as it ever was that the dance of the seven veils was performed as if in a dream but a dreamer is one who lives to see the next dawn and another dawn shall break day after day after day in dynamic dispositions of despair stagnant despondency they yes they too devolve to mould and from mould to dust and from dust into . nothing . . . nihil . . just . . . nothing.

As HER slowly finishes, WENDY begins very slowly to scream.

She screams.

As she screams, CUT TO: THE MOUTH, briefly then back to WENDY.

She screams and screams and screams.

END.