

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

BATSON adjusts his microphone and introduces himself.

BATSON

Testing, one two three testing.

We're good.

(He says in a gravelly
voice.)

Batson tugs at his beard and prepares himself.

BATSON (CONT'D)

I'm Batson Sludge. I'm a singer and musician. I'm sitting on my gaudy yellow couch in my recording studio. My scratchy voice coming out of the speakers, like a man walking away from death row, envelops me. I am ready to tell my story. Warning, I tend to ramble.

He tugs nervously at his beard and smiles as the volume decreases.

Main title and music come up.

Credits roll.

FADE IN:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson is sitting on the couch in his recording studio. He begins to tell his history.

BATSON

I'm making this film to set the record straight about my past. The odds that I would end up owning my own recording studio and being a successful artist was like me winning the lottery. Not a safe bet. I worked super hard to get here. I was born in 1965, but my story began in 1962. What a year. Antimatter was discovered, the first James Bond movie premiered, and the Cuban Missile Crisis began. The Beatles signed their first music contract in 1962. These were all awesome events.

(MORE)

BATSON (CONT'D)

The most important event for me was the marriage of my parents. They would only stay married three years, but they managed to make me during that time.

FADE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - DAYTIME

His parents run out the front door of a church, as people throw rice. The church explodes as they enter their car. The car is decorated for a wedding. Batson sings about the event.

BATSON

I've been told their marriage was so doomed to fail, the church exploded. The explosion was an attempt by the universe to stop it from happening. It's easy to imagine the steeple being propelled high into the sky as flames chase them out of the front doors. I wrote a song about the wedding. Here's part of it. *The church didn't explode, at least I don't think it did. Their marriage did explode, about that I will not kid.*
vo

FADE TO:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson continues telling his history.

BATSON

There are tons of rumors about me. Some people think I live in a mental hospital and travel with an army of psychiatrists. Others claim I think I'm one of the Beatles.

FADE TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN - N.C.-DAY

The North Carolina welcome sign and small towns are seen as if traveling in a bus down a highway.

BATSON

I was raised in a small town in North Carolina. I wish I could say like in a John Cougar Mellencamp song. But I can't. I was never encouraged to be anything. I couldn't be the president, and we never had a pink house. I wasn't allowed to listen to rock music as a child. When I became an adult, I made up for the silent years. I lived in an abusive home. Living in an abusive home is like living in a powder keg. No fun. It caused me to retreat into a safer world. It caused me to think large thoughts. Was I real? I couldn't be certain. When I grew to be a man, would I be normal? Would I find acceptance and love? vo

FADE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A moving van arrives. Batson's mother and stepfather unload the van. Three-year-old Batson explores the new yard and gets lost in some kudzu. A firetruck arrives, and the firemen rescue him.

SEEN FROM ABOVE AS IF FROM A HELICOPTER.

FADE TO:

INT. ROLLS ROYCE FACTORY - DAY

Batson explains how he felt as a child with a song. A new Rolls Royce Shadow makes its way down an assembly line. A finished Rolls Royce drives off the line. The Rolls Royce Shadow rolls off the assembly line and dissolves. The debris from the dissolved car becomes a shadow of three-year-old Batson. Three-year-old Batson is shown as a shadow without a body to cast a shadow.

BATSON

When I was three, I didn't feel real. I felt like a shadow. When I grew older, I felt that way still. I was born in 1965, the same as the Rolls Royce Shadow.

(MORE)

BATSON (CONT'D)

When I turned twenty-five, I still felt like a shadow. The Rolls Royce Shadow cost \$20k in 1965. I didn't make that much until I was forty-five. The car was named the Shadow and I felt the same, I was a shadow. vo

EXT. CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

Three year old Batson is staring at the sky. The stars begin to go out, the sun extinguishes and disappears.

BATSON

Even as a small child, I never felt right. Was I real, I couldn't be certain. I often wondered if I was real. Was I a complete person? I considered if I could be a dream someone else was dreaming. When they wake up, Oh no, the world I would be leaving. Sometimes I would switch, you see; I'm the dreamer, and the world only existed for me. v.o.

FADE TO BLACK.

OUTER SPACE

Planet Earth fades away as cover version of *Space Trucker* plays.

FADE IN.

INT. BATSON'S - CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

The stepfather is rough housing young Batson. He is on his knees. He tosses Batson over his shoulder. Batson returns and is punched in the nose. His nose fractures.

BATSON

I was a nervous child, yes, it's true. It didn't help that I was afraid of my mom's second husband too. She remarried when I was two. There was constant tension between us two. He would play games with me that were abusive. He would get on his knees and tell me to hit his nose. His nose was too elusive.

(MORE)

BATSON (CONT'D)

I would try to hit him, but he would knock me back or toss me over his shoulder when I tried to attack. v.o.

STEPFATHER

Hit me in my nose. I'm making a man out of you. Hit me in the nose. You can't stay under your mom's gown forever.

BATSON

I can't. You will hurt me.

BATSON (CONT'D)

My nose was never properly repaired. Two surgeries in my thirties were required. v.o.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - MORNING

Eight-year-old Batson fights people and wins.

BATSON

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Batson fights a boy and wins.

Say you give, say you give, or I'll break your arm.

INT. COAT CLOSET - DAY

Batson fights a boy and wins.

BATSON

Stay down. I don't want to hurt you.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Batson kicks a boy in the face with a roundhouse kick.

BATSON

That'll teach you to stop picking on smaller boys.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson sits on the couch and continues telling his story.

BATSON

I stuttered as a child, and kids make fun of me. That caused me to become a fighter, you see. All through the lower grades, I got into fights. I was good at fighting and always the victor. I don't recall any losses, but I can't be sure. So, about this, I will not bicker. Kids started hiring me to fight people for them. I would fight their bullies. I feel bad about some of them. I was hired to fight a boy because he ate paper. I punched him in the nose. On kid's coats and onto my clothes, blood did splatter.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson plays songs and dances.

BATSON (CONT'D)

It's music time.

BATSON (CONT'D)

This song is about the years I lived in a mental institution. I ill get to that part of my life soon. This song was recorded here in this studio.

FADE TO:

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Batson is performing with his band.

BATSON

This song is a personal favorite of mine. It says dance, but you can fill in any word. In my case, don't blame Mama, cause you are crazy.
v.o.

BATSON (CONT'D)

My parents divorced when I was a toddler. Did that make me be crazy?
(MORE)

BATSON (CONT'D)

Probably not, but it didn't help me
any. v.o.

BATSON (CONT'D)

This song is my theme song. This
question plagued me every day of my
life. I now understand that I am
here. My new question is where
exactly is here? In my
introduction, I said people think I
live in a mental institution. I did
for many years. I don't live in one
now. V.O.

BATSON (CONT'D)

Let's get back to my story. v.o.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JR. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Boys and girls walk the halls. Fourteen-year-old Batson is
smaller than the other boys.

INT.GYM - DAY

Fourteen-year-old Batson joins the wrestling team. He is a
good wrestler. Fourteen-year-old Batson practices wrestling.
Fifteen-year-old Batson films the girls' basketball team.
Seventeen-year-old Batson gets hazed at high school, and team
members come to his rescue.

BATSON

I want to join the team.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson continues to tell his story.

BATSON

*When I entered junior high school,
I soon realized my fighting days
were through. The other kids had
grown, and I hadn't. That made me
blue. Life would be even harder in
high school. I was too small to
win.*

(MORE)

BATSON (CONT'D)

The only reason I survived was because I joined the wrestling team and was never pinned. I was still invisible to most girls. Some girls approached me because I wrestled. Wearing homemade jeans and joining the library AV club didn't help my hassles. My father bought me a motorcycle when I was fifteen. The motorcycle changed my life. I felt alive when I rode too fast. I was happiest when I jumped my motorcycle and survived. Twenty feet off a hill, I flew. I didn't mind if I missed the landing. Crashing made me feel alive too.

FADE TO:

EXT. HILLS - DAY

A 15-year-old Batson rides his motorcycle on a dirt path. He jumps off several hills and soars through the air. He misses a landing and crash lands.

INT. CHILDHOOD HOME BEDROOM- DAY

Stepfather punches his wife while she sleeps, because his breakfast is not ready.

STEPFATHER

Where's my breakfast?
(He says menacingly)

CUT TO:

INT. CHILDHOOD HOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stepfather slams his wife's head into a wall and makes a hole in the wall.

STEPFATHER

Don't ask me stupid questions?

BATSON

I saw things a small child should never see. Anyway, the motorcycle changed how I felt about life. V.O.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - EVENING

18-year-old Batson is driving a truck up a mountain road. He has two motorcycles in the bed of his truck. His cousin is with him. They ride trails. Young Batson goes off the mountain trail and is plummeting to certain death. Young Batson crashes into a thorn bush.

BATSON

When I was eighteen, my cousin and I took our motorcycles to a local mountain to ride the trails and scenery to look. We unloaded our bikes and began riding the trail. A wrong path I took. Off the mountain when I came to a curve, I went. I was going too fast. I thought that day would be the last I ever spent. I missed the turn and went over the edge of the mountain. There was no guardrail. I was falling to my death, that was certain. I was about to drink from Heaven's fountain. It was 450 feet to the rocks below. I prepared myself to die. I got ready to go. I wouldn't get to tell my family goodbye.

(shouts)

Then something happens! I was no longer falling. My motorcycle was no longer falling. I was back on the motorcycle on the trail.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson is sitting on the couch continuing to tell his story.

BATSON

What happened that day on the mountain? One minute I'm falling off a mountain, like Hank Williams Junior. The next I'm crashing into a thorn bush. Who intervened? Suddenly, I was back to questioning everything. I was back to was I the dreamer or is the dreamer someone else? Someone or something changed reality.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - EVENING

Twenty-year-old Batson is driving his car into a tree. The tree disappears, and he is back on the road. He drives away.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Batson is on the couch continuing to tell his story.

BATSON

I had experienced similar situations before. The mountain incident caused me to lose my ability to cope with reality.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - EVENING

Batson is spinning down into a dark hole. His body spins as the hole spins. He comes to in the back of the pickup truck. He watches angels zap devils with light swords and make them stay down under the earth's surface. He awakes and is again dropping off the mountain toward the rocks below. Vultures are waiting to devour his body.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Eighteen-year-old Batson is on the couch at a psychiatrist's office. Talking with the psychiatrist. Batson earnestly tells the doctor what he saw. The doctor is concerned.

BATSON

I woke up one morning and couldn't get out of bed. I was too afraid to leave my bedroom. On the mountain. I saw a being from another world. This being saved me from dropping to the rocks below. I levitated along with my motorcycle and was placed back on the trail. I then crashed into a thorn bush. I didn't see him. I saw the effect of him. He must be an angel or an extraterrestrial. Could have been a ghost or phantom of some kind.

DISSOLVE TO: