

BLIND MIKE

Written by

Ian D. Richardson

A film inspired by the story of the world's first blind disc jockey,
Grantley Dee of Melbourne, Australia

<http://www.preddonlee.com/index.html>

BLIND MIKE, by Ian Richardson -- opening scenes
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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET, MELBOURNE - EARLY MORNING

CAPTION: "MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, 1962"

A summer morning in a nondescript, rather poor suburb.
WORKERS (mostly male) leave for work by foot and bicycle.

A MILKMAN goes to the front door of a boxlike weatherboard house with a rusting tin roof. He replaces four empty bottles with full ones. The windows are open and Elvis Presley's *All Shook Up* comes from inside.

The milkman goes on his way, singing along with Elvis.

ELVIS PRESLEY & MILKMAN)
A well I bless my soul
What's wrong with me?
I'm itching like a man on a fuzzy
tree
My friends say I'm actin' wild as a
bug
I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm oh, oh, yeah, yeah!

INT. KITCHEN, VAN UDEN HOUSE, MELBOURNE - CONTINUOUS

All Shook Up comes from a small Bakelite valve radio.

MICHEL "MIKE" VAN UDEN, a handsome hyperactive youth in his mid-teens, sits at the table in a school uniform. There is a hint that he is somehow different, but it is not known in what way because he is seen only from behind. He drinks a glass of milk and moves in time to the music.

His mother, ANJA VAN UDEN, puts cheese, cold sausage and bread on a large plate.

ELVIS PRESLEY
My hands are shaky and my knees are
weak
I can't seem to stand on my own two
feet
Who do you thank when you have such
luck?

Mike joins in, imitating Elvis.

ELVIS & MIKE

I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm oh, oh, yeah, yeah!

Mike's father, JOHAN VAN UDEN, enters, wearing a tram conductor's uniform. He nods towards the radio and shouts.

JOHAN

(Dutch accent)
Turn that noise off!

MIKE

(Aussie accent)
No, Papa!

JOHAN

Turn it off, I said!

Anja frowns but does as she is told. Mike is angry.

Anja puts the plate of food in front of Johan.

ANJA

(soft Dutch accent)
Fix this for Michel, Johan.

Johan scowls as he cuts food into small pieces.

JOHAN

(Dutch. Eng. sub-titles)
Isn't it time he learnt to do this himself? It's not that difficult!
Dutch: Wordt het geen dat hy het zelf doet? Zó moeilijk is het ook weer niet!

ANJA

How would you know? (BEAT) And stop speaking in Dutch.

JOHAN

Why do you hate Dutch?

ANJA

In Holland, we speak Dutch. In Australia, we speak English.

Johan scowls and resumes slicing the food -- this time with his eyes firmly closed...

JOHAN

Look! It's not difficult.

His knife slips and Johan cuts a finger.

JOHAN (CONT'D) (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 (Dutch. Eng sub-titles)
 Damn!
 Dutch: Godverdomme!

Johan shoves the plate towards Mike and sucks his finger.

JOHAN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 (to Mike)
 How are your piano tuning studies?

Mike doesn't answer.

JOHAN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 I asked you a question?

MIKE
 (surly)
 You know the answer.

JOHAN
 (angrily)
 You'll end up like the rest.

MIKE
 I wont!

Johan turns to Anja and reverts to Dutch.

JOHAN
 (Dutch. Eng. sub-titles)
 This is your fault!
Dutch: Dit is jouw schuld!

ANJA
 English, Johan! English!

Johan bangs the table with his fist. Mike and Anja flinch.

Johan abruptly leaves the room. Anja calls after him.

ANJA (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 You haven't had your breakfast!

The front door is slammed.

Mike sighs. Anja is upset as she clears up.

MIKE
 I don't care what he says, I'm
 going to do it!

ANJA

Try not to annoy him so much. He's a good man, your father.

MIKE

Huh!

Anja turns the radio back on, but it's now the news.

BRIAN (ON RADIO)

...meanwhile in Canberra, the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, has confirmed that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second is to make another visit to Australia...

MIKE

I've missed Elvis!

ANJA

He'll be on again, Michel.

MIKE

Mike, Mama!

ANJA

Michel is nicer.

MIKE

It's too foreign.

ANJA

You should be proud of your heritage.

MIKE

I get teased.

ANJA

We'll compromise... Michel at home and Mike everywhere else.

Mike gives a reluctant shrug. A tooting horn is heard.

ANJA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Your bus -- and you still haven't eaten your breakfast.

MIKE

I'm not hungry, Mama.

Mike gets up to go.

Anja hands him a school bag and sun glasses.

INT. TRAM DEPOT, MELBOURNE - LATER, MORNING

Johan is unhappy as he climbs aboard an empty tram. He pulls the communication cord, ringing the bell twice.

The tram moves off.

INT. SCHOOL BUS, IN MELBOURNE SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING

It is full of noisy TEENAGERS, most of them wearing sun glasses. Several DOGS are in the aisle. RAYLENE, a girl wearing thick glasses, calls to Mike.

RAYLENE

Hey, Mike! Give us a song!

Mike gets up from a front seat and turns to face the rest. He wears his sun glasses and holds an imaginary microphone.

MIKE

My friends, a fab song from my
friend, Elvis. (IMITATES ELVIS)
A well I bless my soul
What's wrong with me?
I'm itching like a man on a fuzzy
tree

Most of the other students join in.

MIKE & STUDENTS

My friends say I'm actin' wild as a
bug
I'm in love
I'm all shook up
Mm mm oh, oh, yeah, yeah!

The BUS DRIVER is distracted and annoyed.

BUS DRIVER

Sit down and shaddup, kid!

GORDON, wearing thick glasses, calls out from a back seat.

GORDON

Yeah. Shaddup, Mike, you bloody
show-off!

Gordon is booed by some of the others.

BUS DRIVER

Sit down, kid, I told you!

Mike shrugs and resumes his seat, as the rest of the students giggle among themselves.

MIKE
 (under his breath)
 A well I bless my soul
 What's wrong with me?
 I'm itching like a man on a fuzzy
 tree

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SCHOOL FOR BLIND - SOON AFTER

Early-teens SCHOOL CHILDREN approach on their way to a neighbouring school, accompanied by a small number of MOTHERS. They chat and mess about as children do.

The bus pulls up. It is marked *School for the Blind*. The students, some with white sticks or guide dogs, disembark and are led into the school grounds by waiting STAFF.

Mike trips and falls over. He is helped up by a TEACHER who hands Mike his sun glasses and white stick.

The passing children stop to gawp through a cyclone wire fence. A BOY mimics the blind children, stumbling about with his hands in front of him, pretending he can't see.

BOY
 Oo, oo... Oo, oo... Look out.

The passing children laugh. The blind pupils are upset.

A MOTHER in the group gives the boy a cuff around the ears.

BOY (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Eeow!

The group goes on its way with the boy nursing his ear.

I/E. TRAM, MELBOURNE - MORNING

The tram rumbles along a street. Johan collects fares.

JOHAN
 Fares please! Fares please!

Johan approaches an ELDERLY COUPLE who proffer their fares. He issues their tickets, smiles briefly and moves on...

JOHAN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Fares please! Fares please!

He comes across a BLIND WOMAN with a guide dog.

 JOHAN (CONT'D) (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Fares please!

The blind woman smiles and holds up her free disability pass. Johan makes a point of checking it. He grunts.

PASSENGERS scowl at his discourtesy.

 BLIND WOMAN
Can you let me know when we reach
Victoria Market, please?

 JOHAN
Mmm...

Johan moves on and pushes his way through the passengers.

 JOHAN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Move down the car, please!

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET, MELBOURNE - DAY

A sunny day. Anja arrives by bicycle at a large house.

She hurries to the front door and lets herself in.

INT. LOUNGEROOM, POSH HOUSE, MELBOURNE - CONTINUOUS

MRS BRIGGS, mid-30s in a tennis outfit, reads a magazine as Anja enters and removes her jacket.

 MRS BRIGGS
G'day, Anja!

 ANJA
Good morning, Mrs Briggs.

Mrs Briggs picks up a tennis racket and balls.

 MRS BRIGGS
I've left your money.

Mrs Briggs goes as Anja puts on a housecoat.

Anja picks up two £1 notes from the sideboard and puts them in her handbag.

I/E. TRAM, MELBOURNE - MORNING

Johan's tram reaches the blind woman's destination.

JOHAN
Victoria Market!

The woman stands. The passengers let her through.

Johan is uncomfortable as the woman and her dog alight,
assisted by a PASSENGER waiting to get on.

He gives the communications cord two dings and the tram pulls
away.

(c) Ian D. Richardson

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