

Mimmi Ahonen & Kasimir Koski

1994 San Marino Grand Prix

AYRTON

SID

COMMENTARY

The libretto is drawn entirely from existing sources, including interviews, documentaries, literature, and live footage.

COMMENTARY

Yes, so it's, umm, twelve years since Formula One has had to come to terms with a driver fatality but that doesn't make it any easier to come to terms with the death yesterday of the very popular Austrian Roland Ratzenberger. I think on the face of it, it's sort of business as usual, but, of course, you don't have to go very far beneath the skin to realize it's put a massive dampener on the weekend. Formula One of course is a very professional operation, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the circuit or any other safety standard around, and it's only appropriate that the meeting carries on, and indeed Ratzenberger would have wanted that himself, umm, but I think it's just, it's important that it does happen, it does go on, it's one of these situations in which either people pack up and go home, or they just refocus, commit themselves to what they're doing, and get on with it, and that's what's happening.

SID

For twelve years –

God has had his hand over Formula One for a long time.

This weekend, he took it away.

AYRTON

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,

nor things present, nor things to come,

nor height, nor depth,

nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God.

SID

Grand Prix racing is dangerous enough

without the swirling emotion which gathered strength here
yesterday afternoon.

AYRTON

I have God in the car with me.

SID

Ayrton, you are the fastest man in the world,

you don't have to prove anything to anybody.

Why won't you quit?

And I'll quit too.

And we go fishing.

AYRTON

There are certain things over which we have no control.

I can't leave, I have to go on.

SID

At what point the pleasure turns into pain, I do not know.

Two hundred miles an hour must be absolute torture.

AYRTON

If you no longer go for a gap that exists,

you're no longer a racing driver.

Because we are competing,

we are competing to win.

And the main motivation for all of us is to compete for victory.

I have been waiting for it for so long, to start this new life.

I have been waiting for it impatiently.

I'm like a child waiting for his first chance to play with a new toy.

I'm always looking for a different world to get into.

But always seek to excel in the greater gifts.

And now I will point out to you

a way of life which transcends all others.

COMMENTARY

And you hear the engine revs rise as Senna, followed by Schumacher, there is Berger, we're on lap six now, and the San Marino Grand Prix is go again and as before Schumacher is the chief rival to Ayrton Senna who comes down to the Rivazza, Berger third, Damon Hill is fourth, Frentzen in the black Sauber is fifth, Mika Häkkinen sixth, Larini seventh, and Karl Wendlinger in the second black Sauber is in eighth position, what's really interesting here is that Schumacher is very much keeping up with Senna, now from the morning warmup time, he was two seconds slower than Senna and that raised speculation as to whether he was actually going to make just one stop and therefore race with a much heavier fuel load, if he was going to do that, it really, that would slow him down far more, but he is really not losing much to Senna at all, I would say basically he's right with him, well, what we are right with, Michael Schumacher now and Senna, my goodness!, I just saw it plunge off to the right and Senna has joined Pedro Lamy and JJ Lehto in a shattered motorcar, you can see the debris on the right, what on Earth happened there, I don't know, whether it was a sudden loss of downforce for some reason, but Senna is still in the car

SID

The right front wheel had shot up after impact.
The violence of the wheel's impact pushed
his head back against the headrest.
A piece of suspension had partially penetrated his helmet
and made a big indent in his forehead
and a jagged piece of the upright assembly
had penetrated the helmet visor just above his right eye.
Any of the three injuries would probably have killed him,
the combination of them all made it certain.

I saw it on the screen immediately.
Waited for him to throw off his gloves,
undo the steering wheel
and leap from the cockpit.
I said, c'mon, c'mon,
move, move,
get out of the car, boy!

His head canted to one side,
as if checking his mirror.

Blood seeped from the car like oil.
It carried on as the medics lifted him out of the car,
staining the track red.
And as they lay him on the ground,
he sighed.
I felt his soul departed at that moment.

I cut off the chin strap,
lifted the helmet off, gently.

Blood poured out.

The forehead was a mess.

Blood and brain matter
seeped from his nose.

He looked serene.

I did what I had to.

And he was still alive.

No physical injury to the rest of his body.

His extremely high level of fitness
meant he had momentarily survived.

I knew every part of his body.