

Straylight Run
“Hands In The Sky (Big Shot)”
Label: Victory Records
Production: Production 920
Director: John Taggart
Treatment: Dana Fabbro
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The Atmosphere

In the netherland between twilight and darkness and the threshold between hope and fear, Straylight Run takes us on an unforgettable journey in a true “performance-narrative”. In desaturated colors, the clip is framed against the backdrop of a city teeming with those who’ve given up and given in to the machine of a city which churns up lives in its working gears.

But high above it all, on an industrial rooftop setting, Straylight Run’s performance is amplified by piercing graphics to deliver a video with guts and grace that says one thing loud and clear—Straylight Run *is here to stay*.

The Video

To open, we’ll blend recent film and stock footage in to a haunting, somber montage to parallel the track’s emotion. There’ll be shots of office workers, spaced-out and soulless. Armies of people doing a forced march to the office to live a life that’s already drained them. Endless traffic—bridge, tunnel and choking midtown congestion. We’ll further jar this reality out of whack with some time-lapse sequencing, showing things alternately in slow warp and hyper-evolution.

As an option, we can insert one of two carefully chosen digital stills—maybe a mother with her small child in tow fights the crowd for breathing room. A homeless man ravages what’s left of his garbage-can dinner.

For the briefest of moments, these stills will animate those few souls who are still fighting the machine. Fighting the march to conformity. They haven’t given up. Then, we pan back and up the front of an impossibly high building. Concrete, glass, we soar up the front of this monolith until suddenly we’re roof-level to reveal Straylight Run jamming. They’re on the upper-half of a split-level, industrial, gritty roof. Before them, huge cold-steel girdered water towers rise up. And we get it—like those few precious others we’ve seen in the stills, Straylight Run hasn’t given in. Far from it.

The video will be filmed from dusk/twilight to middle of the night darkness. We’ll use spotlights and focused lighting to frame the band and the lighting FX will sharpen the edge of lyrics like “I wonder when they’ll come get me...It never ends, never ends, never ends. As we segue from footage to the band, the camera will capture Straylight Run from a variety of angles and trajectories.

The effect through the lens will be urgent, barely-tethered-emotion-about-to-explode. Shots will cut to and away abruptly, soar and pan and come at the audience from high, low, far and close. In the midst of this, the camera will still compose frames that are cinematically rich and dynamic. Desaturation will allow the other colors we introduce to really pop off the screen, letting the rich contrast of layered dark tones to find some compelling nuance and depth of tone.

In addition, we'll layer in some degradation FX—gate weave, microscratches and flicker to create a slow-burning undertow of dis-ease, off-kilter edgy semi-panic. All of it—the band playing their guts out, shots of the displaced and forgotten is driven by the track on a beautiful collision course. And the collision of emotions and FX's all meet when John yells “Big shot screaming...”.

Boom. In perfect edit to the rhythmic marching FX we cue back to the band, together, unified, unrelenting on the roof--the backdrop of the city all around them, captured in a panorama and every angle at once. Each frame will still retain a signature, cinematic flow—so no matter how high-energy things get, their always framed with a real beauty, no matter how rugged it feels.

From here to the end, we'll continue to punctuate the performance with footage and highlight it with key performances. Some of the distinct graphics could include news headlines screaming about the war, shots of violence breaking out on the streets. Without turning this in to a PSA, we can definitely cue the lyrics to some relevant images brought to life by the band's performance.

As we build the intensity we bring everything to a rain-stormed crescendo. Never missing a beat, Straylight Run will jam right through all the rain, thunder and lightning FX we can throw at them. We'll also fill the sky with flare trails—they'll provide a really sharp and distinct contrast to the overall hue and tone, setting apart the band that much more. With the final lyrics, we'll move one last time from the band, up and off the roof and in to the final, black sky of night. A few stars, the fading lyric. Rawness. The End.

Casting/Location

This clip won't be overpopulated with talent. The camera will always take its cue from the band as its guide on this darkly guided voyage. At location, we can create some performance vignettes for each band member—simple moments where they're each jamming against a cool backdrop. We have some really useable true-life props at our disposal—huge, water towers with latticework steel girders. Access to the “gear-box” of a nine story-building elevator.

Against these backdrops we'll single out John, Michelle, Will and Shaun for a few key performance moments. But we'll keep the same raw intensity as the rest of the clip—it won't feel staged but redemptive and gut wrenching honest. The performances can underscore out theme of “one against the machine” and that theme will come forefront and be all the more powerful when we focus back on Straylight Run as a unified band.

