



HARRY DEAN STANTON

SILENCE.

Written by Sway Bennis
Photographed by Michael Tighe



PHOTOGRAPHER: MICHAEL TIGHE AT MICHAELTIGHEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Harry Dean Stanton is a man of few words. As such, he often exists as the ultimate blank slate: Security Guard, Man in Hat, “Bret.” His newest role in *Partly Fiction* explores typically uncharted territory: Stanton himself. *Fiction*, by director Sophie Huber, is a moody and often complex voyage into the inner workings of a shrewd but uncalculated man.

And yet, how I think of Harry Dean Stanton—beneath the cool Taoist veneer—is as the “ignorant son-of-a-bitch” father in *Pretty in Pink*, openly vulnerable in the face of a shrieking Molly Ringwald, trying to forget a wife who abandoned them both. Behind his utterances of *nothing* and *no one* is Aristotle’s *Philia*—a dispassionate virtuous love, maybe, often rooted in mere acceptance, but there nonetheless.

Who are you?

My name is Harry Dean Stanton.

Who are you as a person?

I’m not a person. I have no identity, ultimately. It’s an eastern concept, Taoism and Buddhism.

So, if you say you have no identity—I’m wondering—why make music? Why do acting?
It just is what it is. It’s an expression of consciousness on the planet.

What do you miss?

Nothing.

Is there anyone you miss?

No.

How do you think the world is going to end?

No answer, nobody knows.

Okay...If it did end, where would you want to be?

Doesn’t matter.

What’s the biggest risk you’ve ever taken?

Risk?

Yes.

I don’t know. I can’t remember really a specific one.

How do you start your day?

[Laughs] I get up.

When do you know your day is over?

It’s always different.

How did you know your day was over yesterday?

It got dark.

Do you have any recurring dreams?

Dreams? No.

What was the last dream you had?

The last dream I had? I can’t recall at the moment.

What do you think about war?

It is how it is. There’s no answer to that, it’s just part of the whole big untamable goal of consciousness on the planet.

How do you feel about Woody Guthrie.

He’s a great writer, great singer too. He’s a poet.

What’s your least favorite sound?

Sound? Vacuum cleaner is one of them.

How do you like to waste time?

Do nothing....Waste time. [Laughs] It just is what it is.

Do you watch TV?

Yeah, I watch TV a lot. I watch the Game Show Network, and the History Channel. All the informative channels.

What game shows do you watch?

Hold on—don’t hang up alright?

Okay:

[Long pause] Hello?

Hello?

How much longer do we need dear?

Just a minute or two.

Okay.

Is that okay?

Yeah.

Okay...What do you think you have left to prove?

Nothing.

What do you get out of living in LA?

The moment, there’s only the moment. The moment that’s going on.

If you had to start your career over right now, what would you do?

Probably sing more.

I think that’s good. I think that’s what...[Laughs]

I didn’t give a lot of answers, huh?

No...Do you have anything you want to say?

No, it’s only what is at the moment as we speak. And that’s the end of it all, the moment.

Okay...Do you want to end this by sitting in silence for 30 seconds?

Do you?

I think so.

I might try 30 seconds, yeah.

Okay:

[Both laugh] What was your full name again?

It’s Sway Bennis.

Sway? Sway is your first name?

Yes.

That’s a beautiful name. Sway what?

Bennis.

What is that? German?

It might be...Actually I’m not sure.

Well, that’s your new assignment, find out what your name means.

Okay; I will. What does your name mean?

Stone Town. Stanton means Stone Town in Scottish.

Ah.

Dean is a schoolmaster and Harry is the same as Henry. I think it means housemaster, that’s the farthest I’ve gotten with it.

Do you feel it’s true?

What?

Are you protector of the home?

Not necessarily. Home is everywhere. Home is ethereal.

Sometimes I feel that when you know the meaning of your name you have to live up to it a little bit.

My name?

Well, I feel that way about my name.

No you don’t. It has nothing to do with it anyway. It’s all predestined. It’s all written, my darling.

I guess I do agree that some things are predestined but—

No, everything. It’s all going to happen, no one is in charge.

It’s hard to let go of that control, though.

I know, it’s hard for everyone but you have to surrender. Give up, don’t try, see what happens.

Okay:

[Laughs] Okay, Sway, it was beautiful talking with you!

Yeah, it was great talking to you.

Okay, darling. Remember 30 seconds?

Yes, 30 seconds.

Alright.