

River Phoenix at 46

TERI ELLEN CROSS DAVIS

directs now, of course, keen blue eye trained to frame an actor's indecision between blinks of vision, the quizzical arch of an eyebrow flirting with doubt. When he shops, he wears a baby bjorn bearing a round head spilling a stream of bushy brown curls. An older child is pushing the grocery cart, half-full, his skin tinged with melanin. Phoenix's gray is barely visible, a streak that hides to itself. It's his laugh lines that give it away... blinking lights of a life well-heeled. Phoenix knows the bliss of a quick escape, jump cut that ends up drifting to the editing floor. He survived the days of vomiting on the Whisky a Go Go's bathroom door. He slipped inside the beaded curtain of thirty, growing his teen handsome to a mature man's gaze, a lustful linger of a look that promises more. Maybe in this story Joaquin's dark star stays in the light. Maybe the shadows we see in him don't remind us of his brother's stereotypical fight, the one he lost before an even 24. Maybe this is just a glimpse through the veil of all Hallow's eve where Phoenix burns through his solo, speedball free.

