

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

- ANGER -

"Four Leather Balls"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DISUSED FREEWAY - DAWN

The shadow of a running man is cast on the concrete of a freeway.

JOHNNY(25), athletic, wearing training outfit, runs as if he would never stop. Panting, his tense and sweaty face grins with anguish.

He runs faster and faster as if he would leave that fear far behind him.

He stops at the edge of a gap.

The part of the disused highway is interrupted and resumes hundred feet farther.

Out of breath and unsteady, Johnny looks down to the waste land fifty feet below.

He looks tiny on this huge piece of concrete, facing the precipice.

INT. HUGO'S GYM - DAWN

Johnny jabs in the air against his own shadow cast on the wall facing him.

Accelerations, waving with his arms about, footwork -- and he stops.

His face still wears anguish.

Squalid Hugo's gym has a single sparring ring and several training bags. Younger fighters stare at Johnny with admiration and appreciation.

Johnny resumes his imaginary fight in front of DELGADO's satisfied eye, his 55 year-old trainer. He's tall, built like a quarterback, with huge hands.

Satisfied eye because he's one-eyed.

EXT. HUGO'S GYM - NIGHT

Johnny steps out of an old building, his training bag on the shoulder.

Around the corner, he walks under a scaffolding.

He paces along and looks up at the tubes, couplers and boards unfold above him.

Oppression can be read on his face as he grimaces.

The end of the steel and wood tunnel appears to be endless, unreachable.

When Johnny reaches the end of the boards, a starless black sky appears, walled in the steel tubes squared structure.

Still looking up, the first raindrops hit his face.

Johnny starts to run as if I was trying to escape this steel jail.

He finally reaches the end of the scaffolding and bumps into a young woman.

LUCIA (early twenties, raven hair and white porcelain face) is bundled up in a flashy pink parka.

They two face. Lucia stares at Johnny with anger.

LUCIA

(with an Italian accent)

I looked for you everywhere.

Johnny hugs her with love. He covers her face with kisses.

Lucia closes her eyes.

A wall of rain now falls on their soaking faces.

Lucia cuddles up on Johnny and clasps him.

LUCIA

Drop it. Don't go.

Johnny frees himself from her hug. Lucia reopens her eyes and coldly stares at him.

JOHNNY  
(harshly)  
Do you still see him?

Lucia is about to speak.

JOHNNY  
I need to be alone. Catch you up  
later.

He turns his back to Lucia and runs away under the rain.

Lucia looks at him, desperate.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Rain has ceased.

Johnny's shadow is cast along a wall where a series of small boxing posters are put up. The posters with the pictures of the two boxers announce the upcoming fight between Johnny Tanas Vs. Achilles Marley.

Under Johnny's picture, a legend says: UNDEFEATED.

Johnny stops in front of the posters. One of them is torn and the word UNDEFEATED has turned to --

DEFEATED

Johnny turns white. He tries furiously to tear down the poster but cannot grip a single piece of paper.

He succeeds finally and tears down the poster he balls up and clasps in his fist.

With anger, he throws it as far as possible.

FLASHBACK - JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A dull one-room apartment with a picture of Cassius Clay pinned above the bed.

Johnny lies on the bed, hands under his head, only wearing boxer shorts.

A cat wanders around the room, jumping from the cupboard to the sink.

From another room, the noise of a shower can be heard with Lucia happily singing in Italian.

The cat jumps on a chair where a purse has been put and jostles it. The purse falls on the floor.

Some of Lucia's stuff has scattered over the floor.

Johnny gets up and starts to pick up her lipstick when he notices a cardboard square sticking up from the purse.

He turns his head to the bathroom.

Lucia keeps singing.

He looks at the cardboard.

A photo-booth strip.

On the first photo, Lucia and a man (FRIDAY) are together, smiling, cheek to cheek. On the three others, they kiss.

Anger clasps Johnny's jaw.

He stands up, turns to the wall, and punches it.

A large breaking down can be seen in the wallpaper.

END OF THE  
FLASHBACK:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

A filthy and seeping locker room. The falling rain enters through a sliding glass door panel.

Wearing a white satin boxing trunk, Johnny is shadow-boxing in front of a spotted mirror. He looks powerful.

Hands wrapped, his fists swing and punch at the air.

His feet move, almost dancing.

Johnny stops, breathes in, and resumes his training.

Wearing her pink parka, Lucia sits on a stool at the other end of the locker room. She stares anxiously at Johnny and tells her beads between her fingers.

Johnny turns his back to her.

He hops when a large hand is put on his shoulder. Delgado's hand.

DELGADO

Save your forces for later.

JOHNNY

Tonight, I have the hunger of a hyena.

DELGADO

(chuckling)

Hunger or anger?

A MAN peeps at the door

MAN

Ten minutes, Johnny! Bishop's KOed again!

He closes the door.

Johnny catches Lucia's reflection. She doesn't look at him anymore. She crosses herself.

Delgado puts his hands on Johnny's shoulders and faces him.

DELGADO

Be cool. Tonight, you'll fight with God by your side.

Johnny sits on a bench, still facing the spotted mirror where Lucia's worried faces stares at him. Delgado kneels before him and slips leather gloves on Johnny's trembling hands.

Once again, Johnny rises his eyes in the mirror.

Lucia lowers her eyes.

It's a continuous coming and going between them. They never stare at the same moment.

As Delgado finish to tie Johnny's gloves and stands up, Johnny and Lucia's eyes meet at last. Intensely.

Lucia lowers her eyes again.

Johnny gets up and faces Delgado.

JOHNNY

(sweet voice)

I've to talk to you.

He takes him by the shoulders and leads him to the locker room door. They step out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Muffled shouts of the overexcited audience resound in the dark and squalid hallway.

Johnny faces Delgado.

JOHNNY

I have to be alone with her.

Delgado grins and nods unwillingly. He takes Johnny in his arms and hugs as if he was going to crush him.

Johnny lets him do, almost chocking, as Delgado whispers to his ear.

DELGADO

You can't go on that way.

(he lets him go and

steps away, shrugging)

One day, you'll have to make up  
your mind. Or God Himself will  
have to do it for you.

Johnny looks at him walking away, discombobulated.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Lucia stands in front of the spotted mirror. She tosses her hair.

The door opens and Johnny steps in. He's about to close the door, when a YOUNG GUY, his face covered with tiny band-aids, pushes the door to come in.

JOHNNY

Beat it.

The young guy insists.

YOUNG GUY

Looking for my keys...

Johnny pushes him back violently.

JOHNNY

Get the fuck out of here!

The young guy gives up and disappears.

Lucia hasn't moved. She keeps staring at her own reflection.

Johnny closes the door and pushes the lock. He steps to Lucia and presses himself on her back. They both face the spotted mirror.

Lucia gazes at him.

Johnny kisses her on the neck, nibbles her ear.

She arches her back and closes her eyes.

JOHNNY

(whispering)

Is it really over with him?

He turns her violently to face him, walls her face in his leather gloves, and kisses her with passion.

She kisses him back with the same ardor. Her beads falls on the floor.

Lucia bites him, scratches his back.

Johnny pins her frantically against the mirror that breaks in pieces on the floor under the shock.

He lifts her skirt. His leather fist runs up her thigh. Lucia moans and kisses Johnny as if she wanted him to stop breathing.

On the ground, the jigsaw of the mirror reflects their fragmented embrace.

Cast on the wall, their two bodies are united in only one shadow.

Lucia's face is walled in the leather gloves. She closes her eyes.

Someone bangs on the door.

DELGADO (V.O.)

Johnny! Showtime!

FADE OUT:

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Come.

LUCIA (V.O.)

No. I'll wait here.

FADE IN:

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

Johnny sits on a stool in the corner of the ring. His face is very tense. Delgado massages his shoulders.

On the opposite corner, ACHILLES MARLEY, his opponent, black middleweight, has the same face. The hatred fight has already begun through their eyes.

The arena is dark, small, and squalid. A very few spectators. All of them stand, overexcited, shouting, sweating, money in hands: bettors.

The REFEREE stands in the middle of highly lighted ring. The floor is spotted with brown dried blood.

Delgado whispers something in Johnny's ears. Johnny nods and wears his mouthguard.

MARLEY'S MANAGER does the same with his protégé.

The bell sounds.

The two boxers springs onto one another with an incredible aggression.

A violent fight.

Like two fighting cocks.

MONTAGE

- Johnny stands firm under Marley's punches
- His legs shoulder-width apart, Johnny jabs, crosses, hooks, uppercuts, blows in the void
- The bettors scream
- Delgado shouts at Johnny
- as Marley rotates his body slightly, Johnny's punch passes harmlessly next to his head
- Anger rises in Johnny's eyes

END OF MONTAGE

The ring sounds.

The referee separates the two sweaty boxers.

Johnny and Marly steps back to their stool.

Johnny's face is covered with blood. His right eyebrow is cut open. Delgado wipes it with a sponge.

Johnny grins.

Marley's face appears to be undamaged.

Johnny takes his mouthguard out and gulps some water.

He scans the arena and spots Lucia. She stands by the back door leading to the locker room.

She disappears into the hallway as soon as she notices that Johnny has seen her.

Johnny's eyes meets Marley's.

Friday's smiling face is superimposed with Marley's, composing a weird visage at the same time smiling and tense.

Black and white.

Love and hate.

Johnny has now two opponents.

Delgado keeps whispering at Johnny's ear.

Johnny's eyes are filled with anger. He keeps staring at Marley.

The black boxer listens to his manager, and turns to Johnny with an ironic smile.

MARLEY

(mouthing)

I fucked your girl.

Anger twisted Johnny's face.

The ring sounds again.

The two boxers stand up and step to the center of the illuminated ring.

Their feet slip on the fresh blood.

They face and hop around the ring, ready to throw their fists.

Marley is quicker. A hook hits Johnny's nose and sends him against the ropes. Blood splatters on his mouth.

The audience explodes.

Money goes from hand to hand.

Groggy, Johnny is held by the ropes. The referee starts to count.

REFEREE

One! Two! Three...

Johnny gets up. He wipes off the blood with his glove and covers his chin and his mouth with his left fist.

Once again, Friday's smiling face is superimposed with Marley's.

As if God's finger has touched him and gave him force, Johnny recovers. His face twisted in anger, he attacks with a series of powerful, straight punches done with the rear hand.

Starting from the guard position, his rear left hand is thrown to Marley's chin.

A powerful cross strikes Marley on his right temple.

An uppercut hits him under his chin.

Dizzy, Marley steps back.

Johnny takes the advantage to counterattack. A combination of several punches in Marley's torso --

MARLEY (V.O.)

She's so good in bed...

-- and two jabs.

Marley's nose explodes.

Blood and sweat splatter.

Johnny keeps punching Marley like he would do on a punching ball.

The blows shake Marley's body and he appears to be dislocated like a marionette with no more strings.

A last hook and Marley is thrown back.

He collapses on the belly on the ring floor.

REFEREE

One! Two! Three! Four --

JOHNNY

(to Marley)

Who fucks who now?!

REFEREE

Five! Six! Seven! Eight! Nine --

Marley is lifeless.

REFEREE

TEN!

The audience explodes.

JOHNNY

(to Marley)

Uh?! Who fucks who now?!

The referee raises Johnny's hand.

However Johnny doesn't enjoy his victory, he keeps staring at Marley on the ground with anger.

Delgado springs to Johnny and hugs him with joy.

They both leave the ring under the audience's acclamation.

Under the ring spotlights, Marley's manager kneels by the inert boxer, rolls him on the back, and takes him in his arms. Marley slowly opens his eyes.

MARLEY

God, it's so dark here...

He closes his eyes.

FADE OUT:

DELGADO (V.O.)

Didn't I tell you, you were  
fighting with God tonight?

FADE IN:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

In Delgado's hand, crumpled dollar bills pile up.

A FAT MAN with tiny glasses finishes to fill his hand with the money won.

As soon as the fat man gets out, Delgado turns triumphant to Johnny.

DELGADO

We did it again, Johnny! You're  
the best!

Johnny's face is still in blood.

His anger has turned to crazed eyes. He turns back to the corner where Lucia sits. Her eyes are reddened.

He smiles at her and steps to her.

JOHNNY

I won again.

He stops in front of her. She stands up and shakes her head.

LUCIA

(weary)

Look at you.

Johnny doesn't know what to say. She hesitates and finally raises her hand to his cheek. She pulls his face to hers and kisses him.

The blood mixed with the sweat stains her white porcelain face.

Outside, a growing murmur runs along the hallway.

Gradually, one word come off --

DEAD

The locker room door opens wide and a flashlight explodes, freezing forever Johnny and Lucia's embrace.

A YOUNG PAPARAZZI has just entered the locker room with his camera.

He is followed quickly by the referee. His face is pallid.

REFEREE

Johnny -- The guy you KOed --  
Marley -- He's -- dead.

Johnny still faces Lucia and smiles.

JOHNNY

Yes. I killed that bastard. This time it's really over between you and him.

LUCIA

Who -- Who the Hell are you talking about?

Lucia frees herself from Johnny's embrace, pushes him back, and hurries to the door.

She bumps into the paparazzi and the referee, and dashes out.

Johnny, still wearing his bloody gloves, runs after her. Delgado tries to grab his arm when he passes him by but Johnny pushes him aside.

The young paparazzi and the referee let him run out.

INT. HALLWAYS - NIGHT

In the maze of the dark hallways, Johnny runs after Lucia. He is ten feet behind her.

JOHNNY

Lucia! Wait!

LUCIA

Lascia mi! I hate you! Leave me alone! It's over! Finita!

JOHNNY

You told you didn't love him anymore! I did it for us! For you!

LUCIA

You're crazy! It's over!

Johnny bumps into Marley's manager who pins him violently on the wall.

Lucia's gone.

## MARLEY'S MANAGER

You had your revenge, haven't  
you?

(a beat)

I'm gonna finish you Johnny.

Johnny pushes him back and runs away to another hallway.

He looks desperately for Lucia.

Out of breath, he stops running. Panting, he leans against  
a wall.

He's lost her.

Johnny doesn't know which way to go.

On his left, an exit.

He steps out.

## EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Johnny finds himself in a closed courtyard, squared like a  
ring.

No other way out.

He is soaked instantly by the pouring rain.

Crying, he advances to the center of the courtyard, and  
falls on his knees. He raises his eyes to the black sky,  
walled in the four walls.

Rain, blood and tears are mixed on his face.

Johnny stays, immobile, and lowers his head. His gloved  
hands cover his face.

The door opens.

The lights from the hallway cast his shadow on one of the  
walls. Johnny doesn't move.

A growing shadow on the ground gets closer and covers him.

JOHNNY  
(whispering with hope)  
Lucia?

Johnny slowly turns his face to the shadow and smiles.

A flashlight explodes in the night.

The young paparazzi has his scoop.

The frame turns to a black and white newspapers picture.

FADE OUT: