

"Narrative"

BLACK SCREEN

Flowing sounds of a city fade in from nothing.

Then a firearm is chambered, the hammer cocked.

A calm and measured voice.

VINCE (V.O.)
Let me tell you a story.

He clears his throat.

FADE IN:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A gunshot.

VINCE (30's) stumbles backward into a brick wall.

VINCE (V.O.)
At first, you don't really feel any
pain.

He stares in shock at a small red dot on his shirt.

VINCE (V.O.)
Just cold.

It grows, stretching into a large bloody smear.

VINCE (V.O.)
You're in denial. Your brain won't
accept the fact you've just been
shot.

He reaches for the wound, his hands trembling.

VINCE (V.O.)
But the numbness only lasts so
long.

Blood-soaked hands. He collapses.

His mouth moves, searching for words. Nothing comes out.

VINCE (V.O.)
And then you're amazed by how hot
your blood really is.

A THUG (20) shakily lowers a pistol.

He anxiously scans his surroundings.

VINCE (V.O.)
A lung will collapse, making every
breath the new worst pain of your
life.

A pained wheeze. Bright, frothy blood streaks Vince's chin.

He coughs a mist of crimson.

VINCE (V.O.)
But you can thank God here for two
reasons.

The thug tucks his gun away and starts backpedaling.

VINCE (V.O.)
That they hired some piece of shit
new kid for the job...

He turns around. Runs. Disappears.

Vince reaches into a pocket.

VINCE (V.O.)
And for the signal reception.

He flips open a cell phone.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Vince lies on a stretcher. His eyes are distant.

Paramedics work in a frenzy above him.

VINCE (V.O.)
It'll sink in by now. But right
when it's worst, an image will come
to mind, hiding all your pain and
fear.

His eyes are fading.

VINCE (V.O.)
One image to keep you at peace
until you die.

The ambulance speeds off into the night.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Flowers rest beside Vince's bed.

VINCE (V.O.)
But life is never that easy.

A WOMAN stands over him, avoiding his gaze.

She holds a LITTLE GIRL's hand.

VINCE (V.O.)
Eventually that one image will come
to visit.

Vince stares at the woman, his eyes burn with rage.

VINCE (V.O.)
This life is too much, too
dangerous, she says. She hardly
recognizes you after so long.

She hides her face behind her hands, shivering with sobs.

The little girl struggles to hold back her own tears.

VINCE (V.O.)
You lost yourself on those streets
a long time ago.

The woman heads for the door, but the child lingers.

She breaks. Her tears fall freely.

VINCE (V.O.)
But it doesn't matter. Your one
image, what you lived for all this
time?

She approaches Vince.

VINCE (V.O.)
She leaves you.

The woman comes back and takes her by the arm.

They both leave.

VINCE (V.O.)
And takes everything with her.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Vince bites down on the barrel of a gun.

VINCE (V.O.)
They'll tell you a half-inch to the
left and you're a vegetable. A
half-inch to the right and you're
dead.

His finger strokes the trigger.

VINCE (V.O.)
Lucky me. Lucky you.

Bloodshot eyes stare into nothing.

VINCE (V.O.)
Finally you decide to finish that
job. You've had enough. No more
sacrifices.

The pistol shakes in Vince's hand.

VINCE (V.O.)
But then a funny thing happens.

Squeezing the trigger...

VINCE (V.O.)
Something a long time coming.

The hammer pulls back...

VINCE (V.O.)
Something to kill all the pain and
the fear.

His eyes snap open. He releases the trigger.

VINCE (V.O.)
Something to live for, at least for
a little while longer.

His eyes harden as he examines the gun.

VINCE (V.O.)
An image comes to mind...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The world is bathed in a glow of headlights.

Vince sits on the hood of a car, gun in hand.

VINCE

This.

The thug sits against the brick wall, bloodied and bound.

He weeps uncontrollably.

THUG

I'm sorry. Please, don't. Please.

Vince gets off the car. He crouches in front of the man.

A twisted smile widens across his face.

VINCE

For you.

He tosses him a small, shiny object. A police badge.

VINCE

(whisper)

You are going to die. Painfully.

The thug's face drips with horror. A dry heave.

He struggles desperately to free himself.

THUG

No, wait. Wait, please.

Vince stands. The smile remains, fixed upon his face.

He aims the gun.

VINCE

Time to end my story.

The thug screams. A long, hysterical shriek.

Vince closes his eyes. He listens to the scream. Savors it.

VINCE

Ready?

The smile remains.

CUT TO BLACK