

BRICKTOWN HEROES

screenplay by

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Property of SLK Media
Directed by Sam Logan Khalegi

FADE IN:

EXT. SECLUDED LAKE - DAY

An OVERHEAD SHOT of a teenage BOY (13) as he floats on a raft, black shades on, swim trunks, hands behind his head as he stares at the sky.

CLAY (V.O.)

When I was a kid, I used to spend hours floating on the lake behind our house. Just staring up at the clouds, music blasting in my ear, trying to drown out the sound of Mom and Dad fighting.

The CAMERA slowly descends toward Clay's tired face.

CLAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The truth was...most of their fights were about me. Skipping class, my grades, my latest suspension.

(beat)

I was a handful, "just like my old man", so my mother said. I'll never forget the day she blamed me for Dad's heart attack.

The back and forth bickering of CLAY'S PARENTS is barely audible from the nearby house.

CLAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That kind of guilt sticks with a kid, ya know?

(beat)

The way I saw it, I had two choices. I could hold all that anger and bitterness inside until it burned a whole in my soul or I could channel it into something useful.

The inside bickering grows louder and more out of control as Clay turns up the volume on his MP3. As we move away from Clay and his raft and ONTO THE WATER itself --

The small secluded lake behind Clay's house slowly morphs into the smooth sweeping scope of

EXT. THE DETROIT RIVER - NIGHT

The CAMERA MOVES with a quickness as we pass over THE RIVER PRINCESS tugging along the busy riverfront and across the DOWNTOWN SKYLINE -- over GENERAL MOTORS, THE FISHER BUILDING, ONE DETROIT CENTER.

CLAY (V.O.)

By the time I was six, I started training with my father in his dojo. In the old neighborhood, he was considered the best around. A legend in the world of martial arts and Tae Kwon Do. I knew if I were to win back my father's respect, I had to be great too. That meant finding the discipline inside I didn't know I had. By eighteen, I was going one on one with the best in the country.

And as we pass the hustle and bustle of the financial district we then begin a slow and methodical descent into --

A more broken down part of town.

Everything is boarded up and tattooed with GANG SYMBOLS and GRAFFITI. On the outskirts of this busy landscape --

WE SEE what looks like several BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS beaming toward TWO FIGHTERS slugging it out in an old abandoned baseball field.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

A large crowd of fleece shirts and shaved heads cheer on the two brawlers: NOOCHIE (19), Hmong descent, short, all muscle, and BAD RAY (20s), Korean, tall, jailhouse tats, lean and mean.

Bad Ray swats Noochie with a quick one-two punch to the face as he stumbles backward, into a chain-link fence and to the ground. Some BOOS and THUMBS DOWN from the crowd.

SPECTATOR

Get up!

Noochie spits some blood. Bad Ray smiles, throws a HIGH KICK at Noochie who --

Ducks down as --

Ray KICKS THE FENCE behind him. His SHOE gets caught in the metal hole. Still down, Noochie throws THREE HARD UPPER CUTS into Ray's nuts.

Some of the crowd high five each other. Others laugh their ass off. Bad Ray's eyes roll with pain.

Noochie stands, KICKS in the side of Ray's LEFT LEG as he drops to his knees.

As Ray grabs his balls --

Noochie KICKS him in the back. Ray bites the dust.

The crowd ERUPTS.

Noochie circles Ray like a hungry shark as the battered champ gathers himself.

Ray stands, now super pissed. He grits his teeth -- snares and GRUNTS like a wild animal as he

CHARGES NOOCHIE at FULL SPEED

Noochie SPINS out of the way with an awesome ROUNDHOUSE KICK to the back of Ray's head.

POW!

Ray thrown to the grass, face first. He is dizzy, out of it as he attempts to stand. And just as he's able to take his first knee --

Noochie leaps into an impressive DOUBLE ROUNDHOUSE which literally breaks Ray's face open.

Blood sprays. Out cold. Done.

The crowd goes nuts as cash goes hand to hand and the braggarts beat their chests.

A LIMOUSINE

Creeps out of the darkness and into the center mound of this decaying field. Out steps --

JIMMY "THE JUMBO" MAGNUS (20s), six foot two, mulatto, bare knuckle champ. An uglier and meaner Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

Jimmy's right arm is in a sling. Presumably a recent fight injury. Jimmy eyes the hostile crowd. Not one ounce of fear in his cold eyes.

SPECTATOR #4

Jumbo's here, bro.

An expensive Italian leather shoe steps from the back door of the limo, stomps the old clay. A cigar drops and out steps -
-

MICHAEL VANDROSKI (40s), spiked gray hair, diamond earring, flash suit and tie. He offers a warm smile as he struts with confidence toward Noochie.

VANDROSKI

Nice kick. That makes what for you? Eight knock outs and one draw?

Noochie looks confused. He's a bit scared but tries hard to hide his fear.

NOOCHIE

Nine.

VANDROSKI

That's right. Nine. I must've missed that one. Pretty impressive.

Vandroski offers him a cubano.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Cigar?

NOOCHIE

I don't smoke that shit.

VANDROSKI

Right. Gotta keep those lungs clean if you're gonna be champ one day.

(to Jimmy)

Ain't that right, Jimbo?

Jimmy stays quiet. Stares dead at Noochie with cold menace in his eyes.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Don't mind, Jimmy. He's had a bad night. Just like your friend Ray over here.

NOOCHIE

Hell happened to him?

VANDROSKI

What happens to all of us. He went up against the wrong man. A guy about your size. Jimmy didn't even see it coming.

Vandroski steps to Jimmy who looks away in shame. The hate still brewing on his face.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

You see, anyone can be beat. It's not about size. It's about heart. And you got it, kid. You got it big time.

Noochie and Jimmy lock eyes. Jimmy fights the urge to kill him right there and then.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

You see, Jimmy here just lost his head for awhile. Forgot what it was like to be hungry. Like you and your friends.

NOOCHIE

You been watching me, man?

Vandroski struts across the old field like he owns it.

VANDROSKI

Of course. I follow all the greats.

Vandroski points at the onlooking crowd who slowly move closer and closer to the field. Jimmy's stare keeps them from getting too close.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Gotta nice following here. Good crowd. Everybody chanting your name. Sounds good, doesn't it?

NOOCHIE

Yeah, so what?

VANDROSKI

So how would you like that crowd to be twice as big?

Noochie watches the crowd.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Or even five times as big? And about ten times the cash.

NOOCHIE
The hell you talkin' about, man?

VANDROSKI
Come take a ride with me and my
friends and I'll show you.

Noochie is reluctant. He stares back at his boys who are ready to scrap. Vandroski pulls an envelope from his coat pocket.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)
Fifteen hundred. Cash. Just to
take a ride and hear what I gotta
say.

Noochie stares at the cash with lust in his eyes.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Another large CROWD gathers on the top roof of this multi-story downtown parking structure.

The CITY LIGHTS hover over the proceedings while the HEADLIGHTS of several cars keep things lit.

CHALO (20s), a shirtless and brutish latino banger paces the concrete with furious anger as he sikes himself up for the big fight.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Vandroski and Noochie step from the limo and approach a long line of paying customers.

Taking all the cash bets is one of Vandroski's business partners JUAN WILLIS (30s), half latino, half black, flash jewelry and all hustler.

JUAN
Let's go, let's go. We ain't got
time for no last minute shit. You
know the rules. Time is money.
Put your money where your mouth is
or get the hell out.

Vandroski smiles.

VANDROSKI
A lot of our customers have a nasty
habit of switching teams just
minutes before the fight.
(MORE)

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

These people can make life very aggravating.

Vandroski points at Juan at the head of the line as he keeps the cash moving quickly.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Unlike a prize fight, where you bet on your guy's record, our customers bet on word of mouth. Word of mouth can be a very powerful thing if utilized properly.

NOOCHIE

How's that?

Vandroski smiles. He points over at Jimmy in an arm sling.

VANDROSKI

Take a look at Jumbo over there. Now, he was supposed to win tonight. Why? Because he's the best. Because he fought some punk from the projects no one's ever heard of before. Turns out this punk was a fifth degree black belt who'd been studying since he was old enough to crawl. Jimmy lost the same reason most of these guys lose. They underestimate their opponent.

Noochie nods as he slowly comes around.

NOOCHIE

Okay. I think I understand.

VANDROSKI

Good. Come on. The crowd's waiting.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Chalo dances around like a clown, shows off like a pumped up idiot as the crowd eggs him on.

CROWD

CHA-LO! CHA-LO! CHA-LO! CHA-LO!

Vandroski grabs Noochie by the arm as they disappear into the large crowd.

A car moves through the center of the crowd as they split and become two separate lines. Out steps --

Jimmy, arm in the sling. And from the driver's side steps his brother DEMITRI (20s), NFL jersey, ball cap, flash bling and all attitude.

DEMITRI

Yo, yo! Check this out! Wassup!

Demitri holds up an envelope of THREE THOUSAND CASH as the crowd boos him and his loser brother.

DEMITRI (CONT'D)

Yo, I got three k! Three thousand says my boy eats this punk's lunch within three minutes!

CHALO

Yo, isn't one ass beatin' enough for one night?

DEMITRI

Lucky, man. Nothing but luck. And you know you got lucky. Or maybe you ain't got the money.

CHALO

Yeah, I got the money. I got your money. Maybe he forgot. Hit this nigga so hard he got brain damage or something.

Jimmy moves for Chalo. Chalo's boys form a crowd, ready to throw down with Jimmy and his brother.

CHALO'S BOY #2

You better hold it right there, home boy.

Juan moves through the crowd, pushes his way to the center of the action.

JUAN

HEY! Knock this shit off!
Everybody get back!

Chalo and crew back down. Jimmy just smiles back at them.

JUAN (CONT'D)

(to Demitri)

These people came here to see a fight. You fools wanna throw down, take it outside.

(MORE)

JUAN (CONT'D)

Otherwise, place your bet with the house like everyone else.

DEMITRI

I don't want your money, Juan. I want this fool's money.

CHALO

You got a big mouth, home.

Chalo moves for him but he's held back by his co-horts.

CHALO'S GUY #1

Save it, man. Save it for this fool over here.

CHALO'S GUY #2

That's right.

CHALO

Alright. You asked for it, man. Three thousand. I could use the extra money.

Vandroski pushes his way toward the center of the action.

VANDROSKI

How about six thousand?

CHALO

You crazy or something? This fool's arm is busted. Couldn't beat me with two arms. How he gonna beat me with one?

VANDROSKI

No no. Not him.

Vandroski points at Nookie.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Him.

Chalo and his crew laugh. The crowd also laughs.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

You win, you get six grand cash plus your cut of the house. Right here, right now.

CHALO

This gonna be easier than I thought.

VANDROSKI

But I know you boys are still small time. I'll understand if you can't cover that kind of action.

CHALO

Don't need to, vato.

His crew laughs ever harder.

JUAN

You know the rules. Can you cover the six k or what? We ain't got all night, man. Your people are waiting.

Chalo checks with the crowd. They are strangely quiet. All awaiting his answer. He loses his cocky grin.

VANDROSKI

Tell you what. Since you don't have the cash, we'll just take that nice shiny car of yours and call it a day.

Chalo isn't sure. He turns one last time to his tricked out, ice blue Hyundai Genesis. Juan shakes his head.

JUAN

(to himself)
Lord help me.

Juan turns to Chalo.

JUAN (CONT'D)

What's it gonna be, champ? We gonna see a fight tonight or what?

CHALO

Let's do it.

The crowd explodes as they all run for the bet table. Juan and Vandroski share a smile. Noochie is scared to death.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Juan stands at the house table and is flooded with new bets as the line stretches the length of the garage.

MONTAGE OF VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

CUSTOMER #1

A hundred on Chalo.

CUSTOMER #2
Two hundred on Chalo. KO.

CUSTOMER #3
Gimme five hundred on Chalo to win,
baby.

CUSTOMER #4
Chalo...

CUSTOMER #5
Chalo...

CUSTOMER #6
Chalo, all the way.

Noochie watches, arms folded, back rested on the limousine.
Vandroski rubs his shoulders.

VANDROSKI
Come on, champ. Gotta get you
ready.

Noochie shuffles his feet. Can't stand still, nervous and
unsure.

NOOCHIE
I don't know about this.

VANDROSKI
You want out of the hood or not?

NOOCHIE
Yeah, man.

VANDROSKI
You want things in this life, you
gotta take it. You like his car,
right? I saw the way you were
eyeballing it.

NOOCHIE
Yeah, man.

VANDROSKI
Then go get it. Because there's
people in this world who'll take
everything you got if you let them.
They'll take you to the cleaners
and leave you bleeding in the
streets. It's you verses the
world. Remember that.

Noochie paces in a circle, gets pumped up for the fight as Vandroski's words affect him.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

You want this prick's car and his girl, then go take them. Cause he'll sure as shit take everything you got. It's him or you. Him or you.

Noochie's face turns purely vicious.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

It's time to get yours. So go get it.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Chalo has Noochie in a tight headlock and punches him dead in the nose as he falls to the cement.

BLOOD DRIPS from his nose and face.

Chalo raises an arm and smiles for the crowd. The place goes nuts.

But somehow Vandroski is all smiles as he exchanges a brief look with Juan who is equally calm.

Noochie can barely stand but manages to get upright. Nothing but BOOS and profanities from the hostile crowd.

Chalo checks with Jimmy, who uses his bad arm to throw a hand signal to his supposed enemy.

Juan spots this exchange and smiles at Vandroski.

CHALO

(to Noochie)

Come on!!! Come and get it!

Noochie checks with Vandroski.

VANDROSKI

Go after him!

Noochie pumps himself up, starts dancing on his feet, throws a couple KICKS at Chalo who takes both swats to the face.

Noochie then --

DROPS TO THE GROUND

-- and in a complicated SPIN MOVE, uses his legs to TRIP CHALO and knock him down.

With Chalo unable to break free of Noochie's legs --

Noochie PUNCHES HIIM with unrelenting menace, over and over again until Juan pulls him away.

Chalo is done. Juan raises Noochie's hand in the air.

JUAN

Winner!

The crowd all curse and throw beers and other trash at the tired street fighter.

Vandroski applauds, throws a thumbs up to Noochie who barely cracks a smile.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

All of the spectators are gone. Only three cars remain including Vandroski's limo.

Vandroski has his arm around a tired Noochie. A celebratory cigar in boss man's mouth as they head for the limo.

Jimmy leans on the limo's trunk. Juan greets them halfway.

JUAN

(to Noochie)

Congratulations, champ.

NOOCHIE

Yeah, thanks.

JUAN

Cutter's here. In the backseat. He wants to talk.

VANDROSKI

You offer him the new deal?

JUAN

Still not cooperating. He's a stubborn old man. If you ask me, this one's trouble we don't need.

VANDROSKI

It's a good thing I didn't ask you then. Isn't it?

Vandroski lets out an exhausted sigh.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

(to Jimmy)

Hey, Jimmy. Why don't you show
champ here the city.

A couple high price CALL GIRLS step from a flash Audi, ready
to party. Noochie smiles.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Guys go out and have yourselves a
good time tonight. You earned it.

Vandroski slaps his new protege on the back.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Good start, champ. But this is
only the beginning. Remember that.
Now, go on. Get out of here.
Enjoy.

Noochie smiles ear to ear as Vandroski joins Juan in the
limo.

The two girls stare at Noochie, waiting.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Vandroski and Juan sit across from Jimmy and BILL CUTTER
(50s), gray crew cut, hard face and pure muscle. Jimmy
stares him down.

CUTTER

I see you busted your new kid's
cherry tonight. Some fast cash, a
new ride and he's all yours.
Brilliant throwing in the Genesis.
Almost as if you knew that kid
didn't have a car. Even before you
met him.

VANDROSKI

I do my homework, Mister Cutter.
Just like any good businessman.
How do you think I found out you
were the best? Because it's my
job. Because I'm the best at what
I do. We got a lot in common, me
and you.

CUTTER

We don't have shit in common.

VANDROSKI

No need to be so hostile, Mister Cutter. We're all friends here.

CUTTER

Tell me. How much did that cholo take for dropping like a bag of bricks? He just cost his home boys a lot of money. Surprised they didn't rip him to pieces right there.

VANDROSKI

Mister Cutter, are you suggesting that I fix fights? Never.

Jimmy and Juan laugh. Cutter holds up a newspaper headline:
GANG WAR RAGES ON

CUTTER

Couldn't help but notice three of the names under this picture used to work for you.

VANDROSKI

Haven't you heard? Life's hard on these streets. Most of these kids will never make it out of here alive. That's why they come to guys like you and me. We offer them a chance out of this dump. A chance to be great. You and me...we're the same.

CUTTER

Until they get pinched by the cops. Then you cut your losses.

Jimmy makes a tight fist for Cutter.

VANDROSKI

Careful, Mister Cutter. You're making my associates nervous.

CUTTER

Is that a threat?

VANDROSKI

I don't wanna threaten you, Mister Cutter. We need you. Recruiting new fighters is starting to become a hazardous job out here. With your name involved, we can let them come to us.

CUTTER

I train champions. I give these kids a way out and you want me to line them up like lambs to the slaughter.

VANDROSKI

This isn't about making champions. This is about making money. Of which you still owe me quite a bit of.

Cutter looks away, shifts in his seat, angry.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

I'm giving you a way to work it off. And on top of that, make us both a lot of money. Given your current position, I figured you'd jump all over the chance.

Cutter ponders his decision.

CUTTER

You thought wrong.

Vandroski checks with both Jimmy and Juan.

VANDROSKI

Understood. Well then. In case you change your mind, here's a little something to help you think it over.

Vandroski hands him a thick envelope of cash. Cutter stares at it with pure lust in his eyes. He snags it up.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Great. In that case, we'll be in touch.

Cutter hops out. Jimmy watches him like a hawk.

INT. CUTTER TAE KWON DO - NIGHT

Cutter enters the dark dojo, enters a corner office and flips on the light.

CUTTER'S OFFICE

Cutter stares at a family photo of him, his wife DENISE and son CLAY (18) at Clay's graduation.

A photo of him and Clay both wearing MICHIGAN TAEKWONDO windbreakers.

SERIES OF PHOTOS

Clay, age 6, in karate class.

Clay (14) fighting in a tournament.

Clay (18) wins a first place medal and holds it in the air with a giant grin on his face.

Cutter cracks a proud smile as he stares down at the envelope of cash in hand.

He opens a desk drawer and stuffs it inside, locks the drawer with a key.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, TRAINING DOJO - DAY

The entire tae kwon do university team are on their knees and quiet as CLAY CUTTER (20), handsome, lean, stands before his instructor MASTER LEE HENSON (50s), hard as nails, shaved head.

CLAY

I'm here because, if I weren't, I'd probably be dead. I'm here because I owe it to my family. To my father, who...expected so much less...but got more than he could've ever bet on.

Clay looks away, reflects.

CLAY (CONT'D)

When I was a kid, I used to think that greatness was measured by how deep your pockets went. My father taught me that greatness wasn't measured by what other people thought of you. Greatness is a state of mind. It's a choice of how to live your life. My father taught me that greatness starts with discipline. With respect.

Clay refocuses, stares at Master Hensen.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I'm here because I love my mother and father. And for what they put up with.

(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)
 Because I know it was a lot. And I
 owe it to them to be great.

INT. UNIVERSITY GYMNASIUM - TOURNAMENT - DAY

Clay, now in full protective gear, circles his opponent on a large fighting mat. A referee moves with them.

Watching from the bleachers is HAILEY BROCK (19), blonde, girl next door. All eyes are on --

Clay as he dodges a kick and strikes his opponent behind the neck. The winning point.

REFEREE
 Winner!

He raises Clay's hand in the air as he catches eyes with Hailey. She quickly looks away, flips her hair behind her ear and hurries for the exit.

EXT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Clay races out the door, through a crowd of students and stares in all directions.

HAILEY (O.S.)
 You looking for someone?

Clay turns and spots Hailey on a bench. A short stack of books in her hands.

CLAY
 I didn't mean to scare you back there. Just saying hello.

HAILEY
 Scare me? Boy, you really are the cocky one, aren't you?

CLAY
 Yeah, well. Like the man said, "there's no room for fear in the ring. Or in life".

HAILEY
 Christopher Clayton Cutter. Vitamin C. You really are your father's son, aren't you?

CLAY

Vitamin C. Haven't heard that since I was ten.

HAILEY

You don't remember me. I guess it has been awhile. Second grade. Your father's class. I kicked your ass twice, and to this day, your Dad still doesn't let you forget it.

Clay in a state of shock.

CLAY

Hailey Brock.

HAILEY

Very good.

CLAY

Well. Hailey. Being that you've been to my last three matches, you're either looking for a hot date or a rematch.

(smiles)

So which is it?

Hailey blushes, cracks a grin, stares at her feet.

EXT. SIDEWALK - BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

Clay and Hailey chomp a couple loaded hot dogs from a street vendor as the two get reacquainted.

HAILEY

So my Mom thought it was best to move back home after Dad passed. She could be with her sisters and I could be with my cousins. It would all be a nice distraction from reality.

Hailey shakes her head.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Truth was, she didn't do anything for two years but cry on my Aunt's couch and slip further into depression. You see, it's easy to do that when you don't have bills and rent to worry about.

(MORE)

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Didn't take long before her lack of interest in life started taking a toll on everyone.

CLAY

Is that when you moved back?

Hailey shrugs at the thought.

HAILEY

Back home? Don't know if you've noticed or not but the old neighborhood isn't exactly the best cure for depression.

CLAY

Good point.

HAILEY

My Aunt help get my mother through nursing school. Ended up taking a job at a hospital back in Lansing where she grew up. Same place my Grandma worked as a PA for some twenty five years.

Clay nods.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Moved up there during summer break. Finished my senior year there. And...here I am.

CLAY

So everything's okay now?

HAILEY

Yeah, more or less. Still misses my Dad. It's only been three years. Him dying, us moving, changing jobs and starting over. It's been a rough few years.

CLAY

Ya know, you've spent the last two hours talking about your family and nothing about you. It's like you couldn't be less enthused.

Hailey stares at the ground, hides a smile. A sore subject to say the least.

HAILEY

Let's just say I'm in a transitional phase.

CLAY

Like what kind?

HAILEY

Like the kind where I haven't decided what to do with my life. Fair enough?

CLAY

In other words, you don't wanna talk about it.

HAILEY

Let's just say, I've got some serious decisions to make. It's a lot to get into right now. Maybe when I get to know you better.

CLAY

You plan on getting to know me?

Clay and Hailey stop, face each other.

HAILEY

It depends. Are you a nice guy?

Clay cracks a shit eating grin.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clay and Hailey lay in bed, the middle of the night. Clay sound asleep. Hailey opens her eyes, stares up at the ceiling in a stupor. A worried look about her.

HAILEY

Are you awake?

Clay grunts.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

I need to talk to you about something.

Clay rolls over. Gives her a weird look.

CLAY

Oh yeah? About what?

HAILEY

About us. About how we met. About a lot. And I need you to not get upset. I need you to promise me you won't freak.

CLAY

Something tells me I'm not gonna be able to keep that promise.

Hailey notices Clay's phone getting a text.

HAILEY

Expecting a call?

Clay checks his phone. It lights up like a Christmas tree.

CLAY

What the hell. It's Two in the morning.

Clay grabs it, reads a couple texts in quiet. Hailey watches him closely.

Clay's feet hit the carpet with a quickness. He stands, steps into a corner with a sincere sadness about him.

HAILEY

Clay, what is it?

EXT. CEMETERY - DETROIT, MI - DAY

Clay and Hailey side by side at his father's funeral. Up front sits Clay's mother DENISE CUTTER (50s), tired housewife, tears down her face.

Clay puts his arm around his baby sister KRISTI (14), dark curly hair, a young version of her mother.

Two MARINES fold the AMERICAN FLAG as a bugle boy plays TAPS.

Hailey stares across the casket and at a woman on the other side. An older blonde (50s), dark shades, black dress. This mystery woman throws a glance at Denise who returns her stare with utter disgust.

Hailey checks with Clay who is oblivious.

INT. CUTTER HOUSE - DUSK

The friends and family line up at a refreshments table while others mingle and chat.

Denise carries an empty tray toward the kitchen. Clay and Hailey watch her from the couch.

CLAY

I'm gonna go check on her.

HAILEY

Of course. Go ahead.

Clay heads for the kitchen. Hailey once again exchanges a look with the mystery blonde who is now on the back porch having a drink.

INT. KITCHEN - CUTTER HOUSE - DUSK

Denise scrubs down some dirty plates in the sink. Clay quietly steps up behind her.

DENISE

Careful, son. You might give someone a heart attack.

Clay cracks a half-hearted grin.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Sorry. Bad joke I guess.

Denise takes a seat at a breakfast table, pours herself a glass of wine.

CLAY

Couldn't help but notice that stack of unpaid bills in the hallway. Anything I need to know about?

DENISE

Your father loved you. Both you kids. In a lot of ways, he was a great man. But he wasn't perfect. Far from perfect.

CLAY

None of us are.

DENISE

You know, he had a chance to turn things around. Sell the business and get out from under but he was too proud. Not too proud to take out loans from gangsters and criminals though. But what does he do with that?

(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)

He blows it all on football and cards and whatever the hell other horseshit idea he could to save his precious gym.

CLAY

What are you talking about, Mom?

DENISE

I'm talking about it's gone! All of it! Our savings, retirement, everything! He pissed it all away and up and died on us! Your father's left nothing behind but debt!

Clay shuts his eyes, paces the kitchen floor in a tired slump.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Two months ago he got an offer on the gym. Not only did they wanna keep his name on the building, they wanted to keep him on as head instructor. It was a win win. But he turned them down.

Denise laughs.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Can you believe it? We're flat broke and he turns them down.

CLAY

There had to be more to it than that, Mom. Dad had to have his reasons.

DENISE

Yeah. Pride. Pure, pigheaded pride. That pride's gonna bury us all.

Denise slumps in her chair, full of tears. Clay walks to her, hugs her around the neck.

EXT. CUTTER HOUSE - DUSK

Clay and Hailey step outside, hand in hand. They are greeted by Clay's old friend and karate bud TODD RAIMI (20s), tall, thin, a fresh black eye.

RAIMI
How you holding up, champ?

CLAY
Better than you.

Clay reaches for his bruised eye. Raimi ducks away.

CLAY (CONT'D)
What's this all about?

RAIMI
Nothing. Got into a little
something yesterday. Don't worry
about it.

Clay laughs it off.

CLAY
I can see some things never change.

RAIMI
Are you surprised?

CLAY
Not at all.

Raimi checks out Hailey.

RAIMI
Look at you. Can't believe you're
back. You're actually here.

HAILEY
I know, right? Crazy.

RAIMI
It feels just like old times around
here. If only Master Bill could
see us all now.

CLAY
Probably still be shaking his head
in disappointment.

RAIMI
Yeah, probably. Can't say that
about you though. Full ride to
Michigan. Captain of your team.
Four straight tournament wins. Got
life by the ass.

CLAY
Yeah, I thought I did.

RAIMI
Yeah. Sorry. My bad, brother. I was just saying how proud he would've been.

CLAY
I know what you meant.

RAIMI
Hailey, could I borrow him for a sec?

HAILEY
Just bring him back.

RAIMI
I'll try.

Raimi walks Clay toward the side of the house for a second alone.

RAIMI (CONT'D)
Hey, look. I didn't wanna say anything earlier. But I've been hearing some rumors. About your old man.

Clay stops in his tracks.

CLAY
Hell are you talking about?

RAIMI
Like maybe he didn't die of natural causes.

CLAY
Who told you this? You know something?

RAIMI
Look. All I know is he owed some money to some pretty heavy hitters. The kind that don't make house calls if you know what I mean.

CLAY
I know about my father and his debts. It was a heart attack.

RAIMI
Yeah, maybe, maybe not.

CLAY

Well what the hell else could it have been? Someone yell Boo really loud?

RAIMI

Take a ride with me down to the old dojo tonight and I'll show you.

INT. CUTTER TAE KWON DO - NIGHT

Clay and Raimi walk the back room gym where they keep the weights and hanging bags.

Raimi stops at a free weight bench press.

RAIMI

This is where they found him the next morning.

CLAY

Yeah, I know, Todd, my mother told me all about it on the phone in between crying her eyes out.

RAIMI

Yeah, but you didn't hear why he was here at One Thirty in the morning. Or why he was trying to press Two Eighty Five eight months after having open heart surgery.

Clay thinks it all over.

CLAY

I don't know why. I guess he could've been meeting somebody.

RAIMI

Right. But who? And why?

Clay figures it out.

CLAY

What do you know about these people he owed money too?

RAIMI

I don't. I just know he was in over his head. Everyone in town with a pair of eyes and two ears knew he was in trouble.

Clay walks to the weight bench. Stares down at it as if to channel his father's spirit.

CLAY

They said his heart just gave out
and dropped the bar on his chest.
The weight crushed his windpipe.

RAIMI

Or maybe it was someone else.

INT. CUTTER'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Clay finds the lock on his father's desk drawer has been broken into. He runs his fingers over the chipped wood.

Raimi keeps his eyes on the front door.

CLAY

Somebody was looking for something.

Raimi turns to Clay.

RAIMI

You find something?

CLAY

The drawer. Someone broke it
open.

Raimi and Clay share a look.

RAIMI

Come on. I just got an idea.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE (MINI MALL) - NIGHT

Clay and Raimi exit the store. Both carry twenty four packs of beer.

RAIMI

You think we bought enough?

CLAY

I don't know. I guess we'll see.

Raimi laughs. The two are almost to Raimi's Camaro when THREE THUGS appear between the parked cars and block the two friends from going further.

THUG #1

Yo, man. You gotta match?

RAIMI
Nah, man. No match. No lighter.

THUG #2
What else you got?

The three thugs share a laugh.

THUG #3
What's the matter? Never seen
Death Wish?

CLAY
Very funny. You guys wanna step
out of the way?

THUG #1
I gotta better idea. How about you
two bust out those wallets.

THUG #2
And the keys too while you're at
it.

Raimi and Clay share a quick smile.

RAIMI
Sure thing, fellas. At least let
us keep the beers.

THUG #3
Sure, man. It's your lucky night.

Raimi takes two steps forward, sets the case of beer on the asphalt. Clay sets his on top of the first case.

Clay takes a step back, runs and jumps on the stack of beers and springs himself INTO THE AIR with a perfect HIGH KICK to Thug #1's face.

BLOOD spews. Down he goes.

Thugs #2 and #3 charge the two friends.

Raimi KNEES his attacker in the crotch and throws him to the ground while --

Clay blocks the other's PUNCH, twists his arm, and punches him with several hard blows to the small of his back.

And then a swift KICK in the back as the thug falls. He quickly regroups, stands and charges after Clay who ROUNDHOUSE KICKS him in the jaw.

The thug stumbles backward, trips over the two cases of beer and face plants.

Raimi picks him back up and shoves him toward Clay who finishes him with a DOUBLE ROUNDHOUSE.

Out cold. Done. Raimi claps his hands.

RAIMI
Nice going.

CLAY
I think we broke the beer.

All three thugs curl up in pain.

RAIMI
I don't think that's all we broke.

INT. CUTTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Clay and Raimi stand before a hopping mad Denise as they take their ass chewing.

DENISE
A fight! A drunken brawl in a parking lot no less!

CLAY
We weren't drinking.

RAIMI
Not yet.

Hailey minds her business but listens in from the front porch as she waits for Clay.

DENISE
Do you know what would happen to your scholarship if the cops got involved? On top of everything. With all the stress we're dealing with, you're gonna go and get into a fight! You haven't been in a fight since you were thirteen!

CLAY
It was self defense.

DENISE
That's not what I heard. You forget this is a small neighborhood? I hear things.

RAIMI

It won't happen again, Mrs. Cutter.
I'm gonna keep a close eye on him.

DENISE

That's what I'm afraid of. That's
why he's going back to school and
away from here.

CLAY

Don't you think that's for me to
decide?

DENISE

I'm not letting you come back here
so you can turn into a drunken
loser. Crying over your father's
picture with your mother. You got
a chance of having a real life,
away from this place, and you're
not gonna throw it away because of
me.

Denise fights her tears and heads for the laundry room as she
forces herself to stay busy.

LAUNDRY ROOM

Denise angrily unloads the dryer into a large basket. Clay
steps in.

CLAY

We don't have any money! You got
nothing coming in! What the hell
are we gonna do?

DENISE

We aren't gonna do anything. You
are going back to school and I'm
gonna worry about me and Kristi.
I've been taking care of this house
for twenty five years. I think I
can handle the job.

Kristi turns the corner, peeks her head in.

KRISTI

Hey, Mom?

DENISE

What???

Kristi is taken back by her mother's outburst.

KRISTI

Nothing. Never mind. It's not important.

Kristi heads for the stairs. Denise hangs her head low.

CLAY

I can't leave you like this. And I can't leave Kristi. She needs both of us here. Dad would've wanted it that way.

Denise cries and nods in agreement.

EXT. CUTTER HOUSE - STREET CURB - DAY

Hailey loads her suitcase in the back of her car as Clay stuffs his hands in his pockets.

HAILEY

I'm gonna visit my Mom for a bit before heading back. I guess I'll see you in a few days?

CLAY

I'm not coming back.

Hailey isn't exactly shocked by the news.

HAILEY

He's not coming back, you know?

CLAY

Yeah, I know.

HAILEY

So why come back now? After all you've accomplished. You know that's not what he wants.

CLAY

Because they need help.

HAILEY

Your mother can find a job. The house is paid for. As far as your father's dojo, all his debts, that will work itself out. Now you wanna tell me the real reason?

Clay can't look her in the eye.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I heard the rumors too. But you know it's bullshit. Your father had a heart attack. Your mother doesn't need you creeping around playing detective. She needs you to stay on track so you don't end up like your father.

CLAY

Why don't you be quiet about my father, okay? You don't know what you're talking about.

HAILEY

I'm sorry. I should go.

Hailey gives him a hug and a kiss.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

I hope to see you soon.

CLAY

Yeah, me too. Be safe, okay?

HAILEY

You too.

Hailey crawls in, cranks up the engine as Clay steps into the street, waves goodbye.

She drives off. Clay stares back at her with regret.

INT. VANDROSKI'S HOUSE - DAY

Vandroski and Juan stand before a wall mounted FLAT SCREEN and watch Clay and Raimi beat the hell out of their attackers.

Raimi watches from the back of the room. His eyes full of tears and anger.

VANDROSKI

A true badass like his old man.
(to Juan)
You were right.

JUAN

I told you the kid could fight.

Juan pours himself and Vandroski a tall scotch.

VANDROSKI

Todd, when I said I'm watching at all times, what didn't you understand by that?

Raimi stares at the carpet in shame.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

First, you act all nervous at the funeral. Then you bring him back to the dojo to snoop around. Gotta tell you, it doesn't look good on your end.

RAIMI

I didn't say shit. He asked me to take him to the dojo so I took him. Nobody suspects anything, Michael. You're being paranoid.

VANDROSKI

Paranoid is what keeps me in business. It's what keeps me from dealing with the wrong people.

Vandroski slowly moves toward Raimi. A cold, dead stare as Raimi backs up.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

People I can't trust. I get a sniff that something's wrong, I take care of it. Before it becomes a problem.

RAIMI

If I told him anything, the cops would already be here.

VANDROSKI

Good point.

Vandroski hands Raimi his scotch. He quickly chugs it down and sighs in relief.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

That's why I'm giving you a second chance to make things right.

RAIMI

How's that?

VANDROSKI

The kid needs money, right? He's planning on sticking around awhile. Help out with the fam. Get a job.

RAIMI

Looks that way.

VANDROSKI

Good. Because you're gonna tell him how he can make some quick cash.

Vandroski smiles back at Juan.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

The great Bill Cutter's son. On our ticket. We're talking some serious cash flow.

JUAN

He's gonna need convincing.

(to Raimi)

He's a hot shot with the University now, right?

RAIMI

Yeah. Undefeated. Why?

Vandroski and Juan share a smile. Vandroski rewinds the footage and watches the fight again.

VANDROSKI

You let me worry about why. Just set it up.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Clay and Raimi are dressed up, ready for the clubs as they stroll this broken down more seedy part of town.

CLAY

I thought you told me this was the place to be.

Clay and Raimi approach an old AUTO SHOP AND GARAGE. A long line stretches down the street as a bouncer takes a cover charge from paying customers.

RAIMI

Oh, this is the place to be alright. Come on. I'll show you.

Raimi heads for the entrance. Clay follows behind.

Raimi greets the bouncer with a quick nod. The bouncer nods back as Raimi skips the line.

RAIMI (CONT'D)
 (to bouncer)
 What's up, Roach? He's with me.

ROACH
 Oh, no introduction is necessary.
 (to Clay)
 We been waiting on you.

Raimi laughs and pats Clay in the stomach. They head inside.

INT. AUTO SHOP - NIGHT

The crowd is good tonight with young couples and singles ready to mingle dressed up like a night at the club.

A sharp tuxedo serves drinks at a make shift bar for a couple hotties in mini-skirts.

In the center of the old warehouse is none other than Nathan "Noochie" Pang. The hottest ticket since his brutal defeat of Cholo.

CLAY
 Okay. So what the hell is this?

RAIMI
 This? This is your ticket to freedom, my man.

CLAY
 Freedom from what?

RAIMI
 From whatever you want. You see this guy Noochie?

CLAY
 What the hell's a Noochie?

RAIMI
 Nathan Pang. Guy was holding up liquor stores same time last month. Now he's rumored of making over five grand a fight. All because he was in the right place at the right time.

CLAY
I've heard of places like this. I
just never saw one before.

RAIMI
Yeah, well. Here it is, my friend.
Nice view, huh?

Raimi motions toward the hotties at the bar who all turn and
stare back at Clay.

CLAY
Pretty nice is right.

RAIMI
Sure beats waiting tables, doesn't
it? You wanna make a friendly
wager?

CLAY
Depends. Who's this dude fighting
anyways? I don't see the other
guy.

Raimi smiles, pats Clay on the back.

RAIMI
Get yourself a drink. I'll be
right back.

Raimi disappears into the back room. Clay heads for the bar.

CLAY
Yeah, I'll take a beer. A tall
one.

Vandroski greets him from behind.

VANDROSKI
Now there's a familiar face.

Clay turns, faces him.

CLAY
I'm sorry?

VANDROSKI
Your Bill Cutter's kid, Chris.

CLAY
Christopher. Clay, actually.

VANDROSKI

Right. Clay. Clay Cutter. Great name. Very marketable. You come here with your friend Todd?

CLAY

That's right. How do you know Todd?

VANDROSKI

He came stumbling in here, about nine months ago. With that same hungry, desperate look you got on your face right now.

Clay stares out into the crowd. No sign of Raimi.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Just looking for someone to throw him a lifeline. Is that why you're here?

CLAY

I don't know why I'm here.

VANDROSKI

Yeah, right. I thought so. You're a wanderer. Waiting for a sign from God to make it all right again. I get it. I've been there. Most of my life as a matter of fact.

CLAY

Did you ever find it?

VANDROSKI

And then some. You see all this?

Clay scans the room.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

I do this four to five times a week. Not just here. But all over the place. Everywhere and anywhere. I got friends all over the place because I take care of people.

CLAY

So you're a regular philanthropist? Is that it?

VANDROSKI

I like to think so. If you gotta few minutes after the show, I can tell you all about it.

CLAY

If it's all the same, I'd like to find my friend and get going.

Clay stands and once again scans the crowd for Raimi. He spots him shirtless and in boxer trunks as he enters the ring with Noochie.

VANDROSKI

I think he's a little busy right now.

CLAY

What the hell is this?

VANDROSKI

Like I said. After the show, I'll tell you all about it.

Vandroski pats him on the shoulder and walks off. The fight begins as Raimi and Noochie exchange punches and kicks.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - SECOND FLOOR OFFICE - NIGHT

Clay stares out a window and down at a bloodied and bruised Noochie as he sits in a chair with a bag of ice to his face and his feet kicked up. A doctor inspects his eye.

Raimi, Juan and Vandroski all raise their champagne flutes in the air.

VANDROSKI

Gentlemen. To another victory.

RAIMI

Cheers.

They tap glasses and throw down their drinks. Clay turns to them, tired and ready to leave.

VANDROSKI

So what do you think, Cutter?

CLAY

I think this is seriously illegal.

They all share a big laugh.

VANDROSKI

That's one way of looking at it.

CLAY

And what's the other way?

VANDROSKI

Ever notice it's always the people who are doing okay that worry about what's illegal or immoral. Meanwhile everyone else does what they gotta do to survive.

CLAY

With all do respect, you don't look like you're starving, Mister Vandroski.

VANDROSKI

No. Not now. But there was a time. And I don't plan on going back to those times anytime soon. If you know what I mean.

RAIMI

Come on, man. Don't be rude. Just listen to what the man's gotta say.

VANDROSKI

Yeah. Don't be so rude. Have a drink. Hell, have a few. Let's all get loaded. Fuck it.

Juan bursts out laughing.

CLAY

As much as I love the thought of spending the night in county, I'm gonna skip the DUI. Unlike my friend here, I have a lot to lose by even being here. If you gentlemen will excuse me.

Clay heads for the stairs.

VANDROSKI

Before you go. We have something here we thought you'd like to have a look at.

Clay stops in his tracks. He stares dead at Raimi who looks down in shame.

Juan uses a remote to start the video. Clay turns his attention to a wall mounted flat screen.

ON THE TV:

Clay and Raimi beat the hell out of their attackers. All of it caught on a smartphone.

RAIMI

I didn't know they were gonna be there, man. I'm sorry.

CLAY

I got a real hard time believing that.

VANDROSKI

Hey, Todd. Why don't you give us a second with your friend. Maybe take it downstairs for a minute.

Raimi reluctantly heads for the door.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

I hear you're a big star now. A college champion. Just raking in the medals and one step closer to a national title. Good for you.

CLAY

So what?

VANDROSKI

So I'd just imagine if this video got leaked what it would do for your reputation. For that scholarship of yours. Last I checked, your old man wasn't doing so hot before he kicked.

Clay moves for Vandroski.

CLAY

Watch your mouth.

Juan holds out his hand.

JUAN

Easy does it, tough guy. You don't want any of that. Believe me.

VANDROSKI

The way I see it. You got one of two choices. Work for me. Make yourself some money. Or I go ahead and take what's left of your life with a snap of my finger.

JUAN

The choice seems pretty clear to me.

Clay stares at the TV screen. Broken beer bottles and bodies hit the pavement.

CLAY

How much money are we talking about?

Vandroski smiles. Juan laughs.

INT. CUTTER TAE KWON DO - TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Clay and Raimi start their warm up routine with some basic knee bends. Straight up and down.

They switch things up and bend to the left...*ten fast reps...*to the right...*ten fast reps*.

Clay and Raimi on the mat with their legs in a full split as they reach for their toes. *To the right...to the left*.

Clay with his legs suspended between two padded footstools and a twenty five pound plate in his hands.

Raimi lay on his side, one arm on the matt, one behind his head as he bends his knees toward his chest.

A labyrinth of three foot hurdles faced in all different directions are staged in close proximity across the gym floor.

Clay leaps one hurdle after the next with little effort. Raimi follows behind.

CLAY

Come on! Faster! Faster!

Clay, with one foot on the floor, HIGH KICKS the air and pivots in a perfect circle as if to lay down a mob of attackers all at once.

RAIMI

Is your leg broke? Let's go!

Raimi also pivots in a perfect circle as Clay watches.

Clay punches and spin kicks a torso punching bag. He spins with perfect form as he roundhouse kicks a second, much taller torso bag staged to his left.

A perfect hit directly across the bag's face. Clay throws several more high kicks to the torso's face as he switches leg to leg.

RAIMI (CONT'D)

Gimme ten each!

Clay throws one kick after the next with his left leg. The sweat now shoots from his face.

Clay then spins in a perfect circle and KICKS the shorter bag across the face.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

An old manufacturing warehouse with broken out and shattered windows and half the roof missing. The downtown skyline visible in the near distance.

It's the biggest crowd of spectators yet as they continue to pour in from outside.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Clay steps from Vandroski's limo. Juan and Vandroski follow behind.

VANDROSKI

Alright. Remember. Nobody here knows who you are. Just another white boy who plays too many video games and thinks he's Dave Bautista. All the money's going the other way.

Clay catches eyes with Jimmy, his arm still in a sling. The hatred is palpable.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Don't worry about him. Worry about me.

Clay refocuses.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

This guy you're throwing down with is a street brawler. Been fighting in the street his whole life just to survive. He's gonna be taking cheap shots. Kickin' you in the nuts, biting your nose. He may even try to rip your ear off your head. Who knows?

Clay exchanges a worried glance with Raimi who watches from across the lot.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

But one thing for sure we know about him... He's stupid. He's big, stupid and he's gonna try to take you out with one punch. All you gotta do is keep him running in circles until he tires himself out. That's when we explode all over him. Got it?

Clay seems worried by all the gang bangers and fleece shirts pouring in and out of the building.

CLAY

And if I win? How the hell do we make it out here alive?

VANDROSKI

Because they need me. I'm the guy that makes all this happen. They pop one in my head, there goes their chances of cleaning up on the next fight. Don't worry about it. Worry about the fight. Let me worry about the rest.

Vandroski slaps him in the cheek.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Clay moves through the crowd, black tank top, jogging pants and the eye of the tiger.

Most of the crowd BOO and throw beers and other trash at his feet. No hotties or short skirts at this one but a much bigger deal than the auto shop fight.

Across the warehouse and into the middle of the ring walks WILLY "THE BEAST" CHAPEL (30s), black, short, bulked up muscle.

He shows off for the crowd with a couple not so great roundhouse kicks and some animal like grunts.

Raimi runs up to Clay, whispers in his ear.

RAIMI

Remember. This guy's a clown. He's his own worst enemy. He's more interested in entertaining the crowd and flexing his muscles than he is in fighting you. That's our secret weapon.

Let him tire himself out.

(beat)

But whatever you do, don't let him hit you.

CLAY

Why?

RAIMI

Because he'll lay you out with one punch. And watch the kidneys with this guy. Otherwise you're pissing into a bag for the rest of your life.

CLAY

Good to know.

RAIMI

Alright. Go get him.

Clay and Willy move to the center of the filth ridden floor.

Willy beats his chest like an animal and licks his own face with a lizard tongue.

Clay circles him like a shark but looks more like a fish out of water.

VANDROSKI

Come on, Willy! Fight!

Willy kicks some dirt into Clay's face and charges him.

Clay ducks out of the way and TRIPS WILLY with a tricky spin move that sends him face first to the ground.

Clay dances on his toes as Willy stands.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Get up!

Willy, now angry as hell charges Clay like a bull and KNEES HIM in the chest.

Clay goes flying across the room. The air sucked from his lungs as he GASPS like an asthmatic.

RAIMI

Ouch.

A referee hovers over Clay as he still can't catch his breathe.

REFEREE

One...two...three...

WILLY

What's wrong, bitch? Can't catch your breathe?

Clay slowly stands upright. The referee checks on him.

REFEREE

You good, man?

CLAY

Yeah, man. Just getting warmed up.

The referee runs out of the way as Willy once again charges after Clay.

Clay is ready this time as he DODGES RIGHT --

THROWS A KNEE into Willy's stomach but Willy is barely phased as --

He GRABS CLAY'S LEG -

TWISTS IT -

and throws a hard ELBOW into the back of his knee. Down he goes.

RAIMI

Come on, man! Stop letting him get so close!!!

Clay squirms on the floor like a worm. In serious pain. Willy beats his chest for the crowd as he circles Clay, ready for the kill.

Clay watches Willy as he stares into the crowd and --

THROWS DIRT in his face.

Willy stumbles back as

Clay leaps to his feet and starts dancing. As Willy wipes his eyes clean --

Clay runs and leaps into a HIGH KICK as Willy is struck dead in the face.

Willy hits the ground like a sack of bricks.

Clay dances in a circle. Keeps the momentum going.

Willy stands. He struggles to keep up with Clay as the trained fighter makes Willy work for it.

CLAY

What's wrong, bitch? Can't catch
your breathe?

Willy charges him as Clay once again trips him with his leg. Down he goes.

Clay grabs his sore leg in pain. Willy takes advantage and
THROWS A HARD PUNCH

POW! Right between the eyes as

Clay SPEWS BLOOD and drops like a bag of wet cement. Out cold.

The referee holds Willy's arm in the air.

REFEREE

Winner!

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Clay stares at his badly bruised face in an old broken mirror. The restroom is a hell hole with open stalls, no doors and garbage littered about the tile.

In walks Vandroski.

VANDROSKI

Don't let it get you down, kid.
He's a street fighter. It's a
whole new world on this side of the
tracks. One your old man was
fortunate enough to keep you from.
As far as first fights go, you did
real good.

Vandroski peels off a few hundred from a roll of cash. Sets it in the broken sink before Clay.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

He's your cut.

CLAY

What the hell is this?

VANDROSKI

The key to mastering this game is knowing your opponent. I knew you weren't ready for The Beast. So I played my gut. Don't take it personally. It's just business. But don't worry, kid. We'll get him next time.

Vandroski smiles, pats him on the back. He gives Juan a quick wink on their way out the door.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Enjoy your money.

Clay stares down at the money with disgust.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Juan, Jimmy and Vandroski stand by the limo as the other spectators crawl in their tricked out rides.

JUAN

What was that all about?

VANDROSKI

We'll see how Golden Boy handles his first knockout. Then see just how bad he wants to fight.

INT. CUTTER HOUSE - CLAY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clay stares at the wad of cash in his hand and then himself in a bedroom mirror. He angrily swipes his school trophies and pictures of tournament wins off his dresser.

INT. CUTTER TAE KWON DO - NIGHT

Clay goes full beast mode on a tall hanging bag. Combination punches, high kicks, reverse kicks.

Raimi holds up a series of WOOD PLANKS as Clay punches and kicks through all of them.

His face and eyes full of hate.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Willy "The Beast" Chapel beats his chest for the new crowd as his opponent lay in the dirt. Out cold. A couple of corner men drag him from the scene.

Willy smiles for the crowd as he circles the arena.

The large mob splits in two as they make way for --

Clay who heads for the ring.

Willy laughs.

WILLY

You come back for another
asswhoopin?

Clay is stopped by the referee.

REFEREE

You're not on the ticket, home boy.

CLAY

Then I'll just have to kick his ass
for free.

Some nearby spectators hear this and laugh their asses off. The referee notices.

The referee turns to the crowd who are all frantically exchanging last minute cash bets.

REFEREE

I guess they wanna see a fight.
Good luck, man.

The referee steps aside as Clay moves for the center of the floor.

Willy meets him halfway and flexes an arm as he turns to the crowd. Not paying attention --

Clay KICKS HIM ACROSS THE FACE.

The crowd goes nuts.

Willy goes full speed ahead for Clay who DODGES LEFT -- spins with lightning fast proficiency and THROWS A HARD ELBOW to his face.

Willy SPITS BLOOD as

Clay KICKS HIM IN THE BACK.

Willy stumbles to the ground. Before he can stand --

Clay leaps into a DOUBLE ROUNDHOUSE and KNOCKS HIM OUT.

Clay raises his tired arms in the air as the crowd cheer on their new hero.

EXT. DETROIT RIVERFRONT - DAY

Clay runs with a purpose down the twisting sidewalk. Earplugs in and MUSIC BLASTING.

TRAINING AND FIGHT MONTAGE

Clay does pushups with his feet hiked up on a bench.

Clay does pull-ups on a children's playground.

Clay walks the thin ledge that overlooks the river. He spins from foot to foot as he punches and kicks the air. An exhibition of perfect balance and focus.

Clay kicks the stomach and face of an opponent in an old abandoned sandlot. Down he goes.

Clay hides his winnings in a COFFEE CAN. Under the bed it goes.

Raimi holds up a wooden plank. Clay leaps and bounces himself off a brick wall.

BREAKS THE PLANK with his right foot.

Raimi puts him in a choke hold. Clay struggles to break free. He walks the brick wall with his free legs and --

-- flips himself over Raimi's head --

His hands around Raimi's neck as he takes him down.

Clay KNOCKS out an opponent with a KICK TO THE FACE.

Clay hides his THIRD COFFEE CAN under the bed.

Clay back on the thin ridge by the river. He pivots his right foot as he spins in a circle of HIGH KICKS.

With each kick, we INTERCUT WITH

Multiple opponents KICKED IN THE CHEST AND FACE.

INT. VANDROSKI'S HOUSE - POOL DECK - NIGHT

It's a hopping pool party with bikinis, a full bar, DJ and all the barbecue you can eat.

An amateur rapper spits some lyrics as a couple girls put on a show for the boys floating in the pool.

Vandroski, Juan, Jimmy and Clay sit near a homemade fire pit dug into the rear lawn.

A bikini hands Vandroski a scotch and rubs his back.

VANDROSKI

You see? Things could be a lot worse, huh, Cutter?

CLAY

Yeah. If you live long enough to see any real money.

VANDROSKI

Oh, I'm not planning on going anywhere. Not as long as there's money to be made and women to be laid.

(beat)

Ain't that right, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Whatever you say, Mikey.

Clay just shakes his head in disapproval.

VANDROSKI

What's the problem? You won your last seven fights. Made some nice coin and we're only getting started. You should be happy. What's up?

CLAY

I guess I see the future a little differently than you.

VANDROSKI

Oh, really? How do you see it?

CLAY

You're handing these young guys the world. We're talking about guys who got nothing and never gonna have nothing. All the sudden they're cruising around in sixty thousand dollar rides and shooting their mouths off. You never stopped to think that could become a problem?

VANDROSKI

The only way it's a problem, Mister Cutter, is if you don't take the proper precautions. I have.

CLAY

Such as?

VANDROSKI

Such as. Any of these guys get pinched by the cops, they know I got their back. I'm not leaving them hanging in jail like their own families.

(serious)

They trust me with their life. A lot better than some cop making a bullshit deal that lands them right in prison.

CLAY

Okay. But what happens when one of your boys gets busted for murder? We're not talking a couple months in county jail.

VANDROSKI

I take it you heard about Loco Tony and the Suarez Brothers. Grease ball turf war shit. Assholes ended up killing each other. All three of them dead in the street.

JUAN

Three more chalk outlines. Do the cops care? Hell no. To them, that's three less bangers to worry about.

VANDROSKI

You got The Seven Mile Bloods. The Latin Kings. Stupid motherfuckers shooting each other up over a pile of rubble and garbage. What the hell for?

CLAY

Well, for some people, it's all they got. Like you said, it could be all the family they ever had. That loyalty runs deeper than a few dollars.

VANDROSKI

Hey, if you're worried about these gangs coming for me, forget about it. Thanks to me, they got more protection than they could ever dream of. They should all be on their knees thanking me.

JUAN

I know that's right.

CLAY

Protection? You mean cops in your pocket.

VANDROSKI

Let's just say me and the department have an understanding. As long as they're in the ring, they're not on the streets shooting cops or each other.

Clay just cracks a smug grin.

CLAY

Whatever. I'm getting a drink.

Clay heads for the bar.

VANDROSKI

(to Juan)

Cutter sure is asking a lot of questions.

Juan keeps an eye on Clay who shakes hands with Raimi by the poolside.

JUAN

Yeah, I noticed.

Vandroski turns, stares back at the two friends.

VANDROSKI

Almost like someone's been doing
some talking.

JUAN

Raimi?

VANDROSKI

He's had a pretty good run lately
hasn't he?

JUAN

Good run? He's straight up kicking
the shit of people.

VANDROSKI

Little birdie told me he owes Andy
Kovak some serious coin. Super
Bowl debt.

JUAN

Explains why he's taking on all
those extra fights.

VANDROSKI

You know what I think?

JUAN

What?

VANDROSKI

I'm thinking maybe it's time we cut
our losses.

INT. CUTTER HOUSE - NIGHT

Clay enters. His face a black and blue mess. He is careful
and quiet as he shuts the door behind him.

The lights are off. Everyone appears to have gone to bed.
As he heads for the stairs he spots --

Denise passed out on the couch. A bottle of vodka and a
glass on the table before her.

Clay quietly walks to her, picks up the near empty bottle and
takes his own swig.

INT. CUTTER HOUSE - KRISTI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kristi sits up in bed, arms curled around her legs, tears in her eyes as

Clay passes by in the hall.

KRISTI

Clay?

He stops, pokes his head in.

CLAY

Yeah, it's me?

KRISTI

I'm worried about Mom. What are we gonna do?

CLAY

We're gonna do what we have to. Just like Dad always did.

KRISTI

Mom said he got an offer on the dojo. I don't understand. If he had so many problems keeping it going...why keep it?

CLAY

Yeah, well. Maybe Dad knew something we didn't. He was a pretty sharp guy. About a lot of things.

Clay walks to a family portrait on Kristi's desk, picks it up and takes a long look.

CLAY (CONT'D)

One thing we know for sure...he wasn't a quitter.

KRISTI

That's for sure.

CLAY

Dad always told me "once quitters start quitting, they never quit".

Kristi cracks a grin.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Of all the stupid shit he used to say, that's the one that stuck with me.

KRISTI

So why'd he quit on Mom?

Clay doesn't follow. Confused.

CLAY

What're you talking about?

Kristi hands him a smartphone.

KRISTI

I went downstairs to check on Mom and she was holding this.

Clay reads a couple texts.

INSERT PHONE - TEXT

When are you planning on telling them about me?

The sender's name: Sarah Brock

BACK TO SCENE

Clay is shocked. A sick look about him as all the color drops from his face.

KRISTI (CONT'D)

She got a job with Dad about three months ago at the dojo. She was his new secretary. The bitch had the nerve to show her face at the funeral.

Kristi bursts out in tears. Clay is hopping mad.

CLAY

Don't worry. I'll handle this.

EXT. SARA BROCK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clay throws a stone at the upstairs bedroom window. No answer. He tosses another one.

Pop! A little too hard as the LIGHT comes on. Hailey races to the window, half asleep. Her eyes quickly open as she sees an angry Clay on her front lawn.

CLAY

Aren't you gonna ask why I'm here?

HAILEY

I'll be down in a second.

Clay walks to the front lawn and meets Hailey as she exits the front door in nothing but a t shirt.

CLAY

She was fucking my father for three months. Correct me if my math is off but that's two months longer than we've been together.

HAILEY

I wanted to tell you so bad but...

CLAY

But you didn't. I get it.

HAILEY

I watched you. For weeks at school. Trying to work up the nerve to tell you.

CLAY

So why didn't you?

HAILEY

Because you were doing so well. I figured it would just be a distraction you didn't need.

CLAY

So you kept it from me. My girlfriend and my own mother kept it from me.

Clay spins in a frustrated circle, rubs his tired face. Hailey tries hard to keep up with him as he paces the lawn in a nervous fit.

HAILEY

I was gonna tell you. That night when your mother called. But by then it didn't matter anymore. He was already gone.

Hailey cries into her hands. Clay still shakes his head with disgust.

CLAY

How long have you lived here?
Fuckin two blocks from my mother's
house!

(angry)

And she's screwin' my Dad?!

HAILEY

Please. Your father loved you.

Hailey grabs his arm in a desperate plea. He tears it away.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Everything you are. Everything you
wanna be is because of him. He was
a good man. Don't let this change
anything.

CLAY

It changes everything! All those
fights they had when I was a kid!
They weren't about me, they were
about him! I'm crying myself to
sleep every night while he's out
gambling our savings away and
fuckin the help!

Hailey squints. Confused.

HAILEY

What're you saying?

CLAY

I saw it. With my own eyes. One
blonde assistant after the next.
And I kept it from her. Because
that stupid place was all I had.
It was the thing that kept me and
my Dad together. It's what kept me
sane.

Sarah Brock, Hailey's Mom, quietly watches them from the
porch with her robe on.

CLAY (CONT'D)

But she knew. My Mom knew about
all of them and she never said
anything. Both of us just going on
with life with this secret neither
of us had the balls to tell.

Clay stares up at Sarah who backs into the darkness in shame.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I got some news for you. You
weren't special.

DENISE (O.S.)
That's enough, son.

Clay turns, spots his mother at the curb as she walks away
from her car.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Kristi said you'd be here. I'm
sorry you had to find out like
this.

Denise and Sarah stare each other down.

SARAH
I'll leave you alone.

Sarah heads inside.

HAILEY
I'm sorry, Clay.

CLAY
Can I have a minute with my mother
please?

Hailey tries to touch his face. He jerks away.

HAILEY
Right.

Hailey heads for the door.

DENISE
Come on. I'll drive us home.

NT. DENISE'S CAR - NIGHT

Clay rides shotgun, his head leaned against the window.
Denise watches him closely.

DENISE
Awfully quiet.

CLAY
I don't know what to say.

DENISE
I think we've both stayed quiet for
long enough, don't you?

CLAY

What am I supposed to say? Fuck you, Mom?

DENISE

Yeah. Why not? At least it would be the truth for once.

Clay smiles.

DENISE (CONT'D)

I didn't have to tell your sister anything. She figured it all out on her own. Your father was never good at hiding the evidence.

CLAY

Look who's talking.

Clay hands Denise her phone back.

DENISE

How much of this did you read?

CLAY

Enough. I didn't know you knew words like that.

DENISE

I didn't know I did either. I guess living with your father all these years... keeping things balled up inside for the sake of you kids...

(beat)

Guess I finally exploded.

CLAY

It would've been so much easier if we just said something.

DENISE

I got news for you. It wouldn't have made a difference. Your father was gonna do what your father was gonna do. Damn the consequences.

CLAY

I don't remember it always being that way. What happened?

Denise fights her tears. Too tired to cry as she gazes out the window.

DENISE

I happened.

CLAY

I don't understand.

DENISE

I was pretty hard on your father. About the business. How he was gonna turn it into this big empire and make us all rich. For years, I watched him jump from one bad business venture to the next. One football bet to the next. It's like he was never happy with himself. Like he looked at himself like a failure.

CLAY

Why didn't you stop him. Tell him to knock it off.

DENISE

Believe me. I did.

(beat)

If it wasn't about money, it was about everything else. We were both the most hard headed people you'll ever wanna meet. Sometimes when you get people like that together it makes for a rocky marriage.

CLAY

It's not your fault. You shouldn't blame yourself for him running around.

DENISE

I could've been more supportive. I guess in the long run, it wouldn't have changed the outcome any. We still struggled most of your life. He's still gone.

CLAY

You think Dad would've been happier if you stayed quiet about everything? Been more supportive.

DENISE

Honestly, I think he just wanted me to tell him I loved him.

Denise tears up.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Somewhere along the line, I stopped
doing that.

Denise pats Clay on the leg.

DENISE (CONT'D)
It's just us now, kiddo. We're all
we have. And I'm not planning on
making that mistake again. No more
secrets.

Clay looks sick to his stomach. Her words cut him deep. She
grabs his hand. A dead serious look.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Promise me. That you never keep
anything from me. No matter what.

Clay thinks it over.

CLAY
No more secrets.

INT. BANK - DAY

Clay, black and blue from his last fight, sits before a young
black LOAN OFFICER in a corner office. The loan officer
stares at a check with disbelief.

CLAY
That's everything my father still
owes.

The loan officer sits in a state of shock.

LOAN OFFICER
Yes it sure is.

CLAY
Is there a problem?

The loan officer stares at Clay's bruises and bandages, sizes
him up.

LOAN OFFICER
I read somewhere you've become
quite the fighter. A real hot
shot.

CLAY

Yeah? And?

LOAN OFFICER

Oh, no reason. It's just I've been hearing some things around town about underground fight clubs. Kickboxing, mixed martial arts. Whatever they're calling it these days. Just wondered if you knew anything about that. Being that you have a background and all.

CLAY

Can't say that I have. Excuse me.

INT. CUTTER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Over ten COFFEE CANS rest on Denise's dining room table as Clay enters the room and spots them immediately.

CLAY

Uh oh.

Denise watches him from the living room.

DENISE (O.S.)

So much for no more secrets.

Clay turns to her.

CLAY

I'm doing what I have to do.

DENISE

Yeah. Just like your father. He always did what he had to.

CLAY

What's wrong with that?!

DENISE

You've been fighting! You don't think I hear things?!

(beat)

What do you wanna do? Throw away your life for a few thousand dollars? Who are these people?!

CLAY

These people got me by the nuts, Mom! Just like Dad!

(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

He did what he had to do and so am
I! I don't have a choice!

DENISE

What're you talking about?!

CLAY

They got me on video! That fight
at the liquor store! That goes
public, I lose my scholarship!

DENISE

What do you think's gonna happen
when this gets out?

CLAY

These people are dangerous. You
can't just stop because you feel
like it. There's too much money
involved.

Denise spins in a frantic circle.

DENISE

Oh my God. You're going to the
police.

CLAY

I do that, we're all dead. You
understand? You. Me. Kristi.
Dead. Just like...

Clay stops, thinks it over.

DENISE

Just like what?

Clay races to the door. Denise runs after him.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

INT. GYM - DAY

Clay stares through the front window at Raimi as he finishes
on a treadmill and heads for the showers. Clay heads for the
door.

INT. GYM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Raimi switches out shirts at his locker as Clay sneaks up
behind him.

Raimi, turns, spots him.

RAIMI
What's up, buddy? Been trying to
call you all night.

Clay charges him, throws him against the lockers. The room
clears out fast.

CLAY
(to crowd)
Give us a minute.

Clay throws Raimi over a bench as he face plants.

RAIMI
What the fuck are you doing?

CLAY
Get your ass up.

RAIMI
Okay.

Raimi stands and throws a PUNCH at Clay who blocks it,
punches him in the kidney, throws him to the floor.

Raimi leaps to his feet and SIDEKICKS Clay across the mouth.
He grabs him, throws him against the lockers. His forearm
under his throat as Clay gasps for air.

RAIMI (CONT'D)
Welcome home, brother. How's that
feel?

Clay grabs him by the balls and pushes him back. Raimi grabs
them in pain as Clay steps up.

Raimi holds out his hand.

RAIMI (CONT'D)
Stop this shit!

CLAY
What was all that shit at my old
man's funeral? You heard rumors?

Raimi still in pain. He hunches over, hands on his knees.

CLAY (CONT'D)
You knew it was Vandroski and you
didn't have the nuts to tell me.

RAIMI

You asshole, I just saved your life!

CLAY

So why'd you bother telling me in the first place?

RAIMI

You know what would happen if Michael found out I was talking to the cops? Half of them are in his pocket!

CLAY

So you decided to put a target on my back instead. I get it.

RAIMI

I got scared, alright? The cops would all but expect you to look into your Dad's death. If I went to the cops, I'd already be dead.

Clay backs down, walks in an angry circle as Raimi composes himself.

RAIMI (CONT'D)

I think you popped a nut. Are you happy?

CLAY

Which one was it?

RAIMI

Which one was what?

CLAY

Enough playing stupid. Who killed my father?

Raimi is reluctant.

RAIMI

I don't know.

CLAY

You're lying.

RAIMI

I'm telling you, I don't know!

CLAY

It was him. Wasn't it? That's why
the arm.

Raimi turns his back, hands on his head, unable to face
Clay.

Clay grabs him by the arm, faces him forward.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Tell me something!

RAIMI

Alright. It was Jimmy. Jimmy
Magnus. At least that's what I
heard on the street.

CLAY

You gonna play that game again? It
was either him or it wasn't! Which
is it?!

RAIMI

I don't know! But that's what
everybody says! Okay?! He's still
pissed about your old man tossing
him out fifteen years ago!

Clay's anger reaches new heights. He kicks and punches the
row of lockers.

RAIMI (CONT'D)

Sooner or later, everyone's gonna
know what he did to your Dad. And
it's gonna get back to the cops.
Let them handle it. If you don't,
these guys will not only kill you,
but your family too.

Clay walks out.

RAIMI (CONT'D)

Hey! Get back here!

INT. ROLLER SKATING RINK - NIGHT

It's a modest crowd at the closed down skating rink. A
young, latino fighter (20s), all tats, warms up in the
corner with his crew as --

Vandroski and Juan watch from a nearby pool hall. They are greeted by local mobster ANDY KOVAC (50s), flash suit, big hair and gold knuckles. Two of his entourage, both in silk suits, get his back.

KOVAC

Long time, Michael. Guess you forgot to check in. After all, I know how busy you've been lately.

Kovac shakes his hand.

VANDROSKI

We're just here for the fight, Andy. Just a couple of spectators like everyone else.

KOVAC

Stay away from my guys, Mikey.

VANDROSKI

Hey. This is your block. Your streets. We would never. But that doesn't mean a friendly wager between two businessmen should be out of the question.

JUAN

You know we're good for it.

KOVAC

Nobody's talking to you, Wesley.

Juan just smiles and munches some potato chips.

KOVAC (CONT'D)

Speaking of business. Your boy Raimi still owes me Fifty large. Can't help but notice he's lost his last three bouts.

VANDROSKI

Yeah, I know. It's a real shame. And he was doing so well. Don't know what got into him.

KOVAC

I don't know and I don't care. But I'm done fuckin around with your boy. Now where is he?

Kovac and his men head for the men's room. Juan blocks their path.

JUAN
Whoa. Hold on a second.

KOVAC
Out of the way.

VANDROSKI
Alright. You caught me. We didn't
just happen to be in the
neighborhood.

KOVAC
What're you talking about?

VANDROSKI
You see this punk over here?

Vandroski motions to the latino fighter warming up in the
rink.

KOVAC
Yeah, so what?

VANDROSKI
He's in my pocket. I got exactly
two thousand that says he gets KO'd
in the first round. At twenty to
one odds, that's forty large. When
it's over, I'll cover the rest.
You got my word.

Kovac checks with his crew who seem enthused about the idea.

JUAN
If I were you guys, I'd be reaching
in my pockets right about now.

VANDROSKI
From what I hear, the white boy's a
sure thing.

Kovac stares into the rowdy crowd. A fight about to begin.

KOVAC
How long do we have?

JUAN
The fight's in ten minutes. The
last bet closes in five.

KOVAC
(to his guys)
How much we pull tonight?

Guy #1 checks in his suit coat, pulls out an envelope with five k.

KOVAC'S GUY #1
Fifty two hundred.

KOVAC
Alright. Put us down for fifty two hundred.

Juan snags the envelope from Kovac's guy.

SKATING RINK - LATER

Raimi is making mince meat out of the smaller fighter. One hard kick to the jaw after the next.

Raimi throws a combination of punches that throws his opponent to the hard wood floor.

Vandroski winks at Kovac who likes what he sees.

The latino gets booed by his own crew. The hostile crowd throw garbage and drinks at his face.

Raimi dances foot to foot, keeps the momentum going as the angry latino rises with a fury. His eyes and face full of red hot anger.

He throws a lethal combination of hard KICKS and fast PUNCHES which knock Raimi off balance.

LATINO SPECTATOR
Drop his ass!

Kovac gives Vandroski a panicked look.

KOVAC
What the fuck is this?!

The latino blocks Raimi's punch -- throws several hard PUNCHES TO HIS STOMACH as he

DROPS to the floor.

Raimi gives Vandroski the thousand yard stare. He just returns with a smug grin.

He attempts to stand but the latino --

KICKS him in the MOUTH and

sends him to the floor for the last time.

The crowd goes nuts.

KOVAC (CONT'D)

Fuck!

He angrily grabs Vandroski by the shirt but is grabbed from behind by a couple of paid off henchmen.

VANDROSKI

Take it easy now. You know how these latino's get. Too fuckin macho. Sometimes they let the crowd get to them. I'll take care of it.

KOVAC

Your boy's dead! You hear me?!
Dead!

The two gang colored BANGERS drag Kovac and crew towards the back door.

Vandroski smiles and sucks his cigar.

JUAN

I'd hate to be in Raimi's shoes
right about now.

EXT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT

Kovac and his two men are shoved away from the building by a whole crew of gang members.

KOVAC

You know who you're fuckin with?!

All of the bangers pulls nine mils and throw them in Kovac's face.

BANGER #1

Nah, man. Why don't you speak into the mic and tell me.

Kovac slowly backs down.

BANGER #2

Yeah, I thought so. Get ya ass outta here.

Kovac and his two men walk off.

EXT. SKATING RINK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Raimi is extra careful of his surroundings as he walks to his car. His face a bloodied pulp.

Out of the darkness comes a Cadillac -- HEADLIGHTS in Raimi's face.

Out steps Kovac and his two guys.

KOVAC

On top of taking my money, you're gonna steal from me. You think because you're running with Mike Vandroski now that makes you invincible?

RAIMI

The hell are you talking about?

KOVAC

Nah. No more games, tough guy. This is one fight you're not walking away from.

Kovac's guys grab Raimi's arms. Kovac opens a switchblade and taps it on his own face.

KOVAC (CONT'D)

Ever wonder what would happen to an eyeball if you got stuck with one of these?

RAIMI

I can get the money. I just need a couple more fights.

KOVAC

You mean like this one? Nah. I've done all the gambling on you I'm gonna do, junior brown. It's time to collect.

Raimi spits in his face.

Kovac sticks him in the gut with repeated blows. He pulls away as

Raimi drops to his knees. Kovac circles him, still angry as hell. He reaches the blade across Raimi's neck.

We watch Kovac from behind as he SLICES Raimi's throat. His body falls limp to the asphalt.

INT. DINER - LATE NIGHT

Hailey sits in a corner booth with a cup of soda. A sad, broken look on her face. Clay spots her from outside.

She watches as he enters the diner.

HAILEY
Thanks for coming.

Clay has a seat.

CLAY
What is it?

HAILEY
Nice to see you too.

Clay kicks his legs up, gets comfortable. He grabs Hailey's soda and takes a sip.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Your Mom says you've been fighting with Todd.

CLAY
I don't see how that's your business.

Hailey tears up. Her lips and mouth quiver. Clay instantly regretful.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Hey. I'm sorry.

HAILEY
Todd's dead.

Clay sits in shock.

CLAY
What?

HAILEY
Found him face down in a parking lot. Some skating rink near Bricktown.

CLAY
How?

HAILEY
His throat was slit.

Clay stares at the table, Totally zoned out.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

I don't know what you two are into but you need to stop. You need to stop now.

CLAY

They had my father killed. Todd knew about it. Someone must've found out about the fight.

HAILEY

What fight?

CLAY

Me and Todd. At the gym. In the locker room.

HAILEY

I don't understand.

CLAY

I have to go.

Clay rushes for the door. Hailey follows.

EXT. DINER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Clay heads up a sidewalk, away from the diner. Hailey chases after him.

HAILEY

Todd's gone! Your father! If you're Dad didn't die of a heart attack, your mother will!

CLAY

They had them both killed! You think I'm walking away from this, you're crazy!

HAILEY

So what's the plan? You gonna karate kick them all to death?

CLAY

Very funny.

HAILEY

These guys have guns, ya know?

CLAY
Yeah, I noticed.

HAILEY
So what then?

Clay stops.

CLAY
I don't know, alright?!

HAILEY
Don't make me explain all this to
your mother when you're dead
because I don't know where to
begin.

CLAY
Your faith in me is inspiring.

HAILEY
Look. I'm sorry, alright? I just
don't wanna see you hurt.

Clay turns his back on Hailey. Frustrated.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
I may've heard something.
Something Todd's mother told me
to tell you.

CLAY
What?

HAILEY
I'm gonna regret this.

CLAY
Out with it!

HAILEY
If anything ever happened to him,
to go see Jimmy. Who's Jimmy?

Clay's eyes fill with hate.

CLAY
Jimmy Magnus.

Clay thinks it all over.

HAILEY
Who's Jimmy Magnus?

CLAY

You're about to find out. Come on.

INT. VANDROSKI'S GYM AND DOJO - DAY

Jimmy stands behind a tall punching bag as one of his new proteges practices his sidekicks.

The small gym is full of young prospects pulled from the streets. All training, sparring, lifting.

Through the door runs Clay, ready to take the whole place himself. Hailey follows closely behind.

Everyone stops what they're doing and stares. Jimmy smiles back at Clay.

CLAY

I don't know what you think is so funny but I'm gonna have fun wiping that grin off your face.

Jimmy laughs. The whole bursts out in hysterics.

JIMMY

Boy, you must be out of your mind talking to me like that.

CLAY

You care to find out.

JIMMY

I take it you been hearing the rumors about me and your old man.

Jimmy smiles.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Makes sense though. If anybody wanted his ass gone, it was me. Always told him me and him would meet again. The old man never listened.

Clay spits in his face. Jimmy wipes it clean and uses the spit to primp his eyebrows.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I guess you'd like to take a swing at me. Wouldn't you? Go ahead. I won't stop you.

Clay can't find the nerve. Jimmy laughs. Vandroski and Juan step from a back room. They notice the stand off.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

All talk and no action. Just like your old man. Or maybe you're just a little smarter than he was.

Clay pushes him back. Juan quickly intervenes.

JUAN

Knock it off! You two stop before someone gets shot up in here!

CLAY

(to Juan)
It was him, wasn't it?

JUAN

Fuck are you talkin' about?

CLAY

I just got my answer. See you all in prison.

Clay heads for the door.

VANDROSKI

Of course there's still the matter of your little home movie.

Clay stops in his tracks. Slowly turns, faces Vandroski.

CLAY

I don't care about that anymore.

VANDROSKI

Stop and think about what you're doing. I know you're mad. You're super pissed off about your old man. I get it. But it was a heart attack. You go to the cops, they'll tell you the same thing.

CLAY

Oh, yeah? And how about Todd Raimi? Maybe I'll find one who'll listen.

VANDROSKI

Now wait. Let's not get ahead of ourselves here. Let's not talk crazy.

CLAY

What's the matter, Mikey? I thought you had friends in all the right places.

VANDROSKI

Okay, kid. Let me put this a different way. You talk to the cops...and I won't be responsible for what happens to that sister of yours. You see these guys back here?

Clay eyeballs the fighters in the background. Some real nasty go getters.

CLAY

I see them.

VANDROSKI

They love them some young white girls from the suburbs, just like Kristi.

CLAY

You piece of shit.

VANDROSKI

Face it, kid. You don't have a leg to stand on.

CLAY

Really?

VANDROSKI

I own you! The cops don't care! Your father's death was ruled an accident! If it weren't for me, these motherfuckers back here would be in the morgue with a dozen bullets in their chest!

Clay stares back at the motley crew on the weight machines and working bags.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

So, if you're smart, you'll turn around and forget this little incident ever happened!

CLAY

I'm done.

VANDROSKI

Bullshit. You're done when I say you're done.

CLAY

Alright. What's it gonna take for you to let me go? Once and for all.

Vandroski smiles as he ponders this interesting idea.

VANDROSKI

Oh. I think we can figure something out.

(to Jimmy)

Can't we, Jimmy?

JIMMY

(smiles)

Yes, sir.

CLAY

Me and Jimmy. I lose, you get thirty large and you let me and my family go. That's every dime I ever earned from you. Consider it a cash buyout.

Vandroski turns to Jimmy. A gauze wrap around his wrist.

VANDROSKI

The man's still recovering from a sprained arm. Hardly fair.

JIMMY

Bullshit. I'll kill his ass right now.

Jimmy moves for Clay. Juan holds him back.

JUAN

Hold on there, big boy.

VANDROSKI

I gotta better idea. You fight three of my best, at ten thousand a head, that's thirty k. You win all three fights, you keep the cash and me and you are done doin' business.

CLAY

You got it. Call me when your first guy's ready to get knocked out.

Clay grabs Hailey's arm as they head for the door. Vandroski and Jimmy share a shit eating smile.

INT. ABANDONED MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

The biggest crowd yet gather around the empty room. Some RAP and HIP HOP blasts from various RADIOS.

Jimmy rubs down their fighter NICKIE PAX (20s), puerto rican, trim beard and mohawk, all tats.

Vandroski and Juan stare across the room at two of the more quiet spectators. They are BROOKS DAWSON (20s), black, ex marine, sleeveless camo top, and JOHNNY PAYNE (20s), white, tall, black ponytail, full beard.

VANDROSKI

I can't wait to see Cutter's face when I tell him.

JUAN

I don't know. I thought he was smarter than that.

VANDROSKI

Nobody's smarter than me. You know that.

Juan stares him up and down. Unimpressed.

JUAN

Guess I forgot. Sorry.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

Clay paces back and forth. Nervous. Hailey watches him with concern.

HAILEY

I know you don't wanna be here. No matter what anybody says, you did the right thing.

CLAY

Did I? This could've gone a whole different direction.

HAILEY

You're right. It could have.

Clay watches her. A growing smile.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

What?

CLAY

So what're we gonna do when this is all over?

Hailey thinks about it.

HAILEY

You mean...

CLAY

I mean us.

Hailey ponders the thought.

HAILEY

I guess we both have a lot more important things to worry about right now. Don't we?

CLAY

Yeah. We got a full plate. That's for sure.

Hailey grabs his hands, stares into his eyes.

HAILEY

So let's just...postpone things for a while.

CLAY

I know what that means.

HAILEY

You know what I think? I think fate brought us together for a reason. But maybe not for the reasons we think.

CLAY

How's that?

HAILEY

Between my Mom and yours. Things could be a lot worse. Maybe we were just a way to soften the blow.

CLAY

Yeah, I guess you're right.

HAILEY

I don't know. What do you think?

Clay laughs, shakes his head.

CLAY
Here I was thinking I had to let
you down easy.

HAILEY
I guess that makes twice I've beat
you to the punch.

Clay rolls his eyes. A half-hearted laugh.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
I'll leave you to it.

CLAY
Okay.

Hailey turns to leave. She turns back.

HAILEY
Now lay this asshole down!

CLAY
You got it.

INT. ABANDONED MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

Clay enters the busy room. The crowd more than ready for the big fight. Vandroski meets him near the middle of the room.

VANDROSKI
Looking good, champ. Kind of like
a man determined.

CLAY
Enough small talk. Your guy ready
or not?

VANDROSKI
Oh. My guys are more than ready.

Vandroski motions to Nickie and Johnny who move away from the crowd and stand near the center of the room. They both give Clay a nasty stare.

CLAY
What the hell are you talking
about?

VANDROSKI

You said you'd go toe to toe with three of my best. Well here they are.

HAILEY

You know that's not what he meant.

VANDROSKI

I understand if your boyfriend's having cold feet. We can always call the whole thing off if he's not feeling up to it.

Vandroski walks the room, stares at all the eager spectators who came to see a bloodbath.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)

Don't mind these guys. Or all the money they put into this fight. I'm sure they'll understand.

HAILEY

You can't do this.

CLAY

It's already done.

HAILEY

I don't know if you've figured this out yet, but you can't possibly win.

VANDROSKI

Not with an attitude like that, young lady.

CLAY

Shut up and don't talk to her.

VANDROSKI

So rude. I'll give you two a minute to discuss it.

Vandroski turns to his three fighters. Clay and Hailey back away from the crowd for a sec.

HAILEY

You can't possibly be thinking about going through with this.

CLAY

It's crazy, I know. It's also the only way out.

Hailey stares back at the onlooking crowd. A tired sigh.

HAILEY

There's no chance of me talking you out of this, is there?

CLAY

Not really.

HAILEY

Fine. Just remember what I said. Go easy on them. They're just amateurs.

Clay smiles.

CLAY

I'll try.

Hailey backs into the crowd.

VANDROSKI

What's the verdict, Cutter? Are we gonna see a fight tonight or what?

CLAY

Who's first?

Juan smiles, pats Brooks Dawson on the back as he enters the center of the floor.

VANDROSKI

Like you to meet one of our most prize contenders. Brooks Dawson. The human equivalent of a caged pit bull. He's been wanting to take a bite of you for a long time, Cutter. Jimmy handpicked him himself.

Dawson grunts just like a wild dog. Clay is a bit taken back by his sheer animal-like stance.

CLAY

Let's do it.

MINUTES LATER

Clay is getting his ass handed to him by Dawson. He's about twice as strong and twice as fast. It's one street move after the next as Clay takes his beating.

Clay takes several combination punches to the face as he desperately uses both arms to block the constant shots.

HAILEY
Come on, Clay!

Clay is forced into the crowd by the barrage of punches. He's forcefully PUSHED BACK into the ring and

TRIPS to the floor just as --

Dawson takes a HUGE SWING and misses.

Clay uses both legs to trip the wild animal as he face plants.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Just like that! You got him!

As Dawson attempts to grab his throat --

Clay WRAPS BOTH LEGS around his NECK.

Dawson chokes.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Choke his ass!

Dawson punches Clay in the balls as the crowd turns away and unable to watch.

Clay grabs them in pain, attempts to stand but is met with a swift KICK to the mouth as he falls.

Vandroski and Juan clap and laugh.

JUAN
Beautiful!

Dawson grabs Clay by the shirt and picks him up. Grabs the back of his hair and chokes his throat.

HAILEY
Hey! You can't do that!

Hailey tries to charge the floor but is held back by a smiling Jimmy.

Dawson lets go of his throat and KNEES him in the chest. Clay gasps for air as Dawson KICKS in his knee.

Clay drops like wet cement to his knees. Dawson SPIN KICKS him square across the jaw. Down he goes.

VANDROSKI
Just stay down!

Clay hears this, spots Dawson raise his arm for the crowd as he circles him.

Clay leaps to his feet, grabs the back of Dawson's neck with his RIGHT HAND and throws several KNEE KICKS into Dawson's stomach. One after the next as the animal tries to break free of Clay's grasp.

Clay throws his EIGHTH KNEE into Dawson as he finally sucks the wind from his body.

Clay uses the same knee and HIGH KICKS it into DAWSON'S CHIN. Dawson is KNOCKED OUT.

The referee holds Clay's arm in the air.

REFEREE

Winner!

Hailey screams with applause. Vandroski and Juan share a concerned look.

JUAN

Looks like he's in it to win it.

VANDROSKI

Let him have his fun now while he still can.

The two laugh.

MINUTES LATER

Clay goes toe to toe with Johnny Payne as the two exchange several blocked punches and kicks.

The crowd BOOS.

JUAN

Looks like he's met his match.

VANDROSKI

Johnny Payne. Jimmy found him fresh out of the University. Cutter's freshman year, he got kicked off the team for abusing steroids. Let's just say he's had his eye on Cutter for a very long time.

Payne finally connects the first KICK to Clay's face. The direct hit THROWS Clay across the floor. He grabs his head in terrible pain.

PAYNE
How's that feel, Cutter?!

HAILEY
Get up!

Clay slowly stands, plays hurt, and then --

KICKS Payne directly in the nose. Breaks it as BLOOD spews all over the dusty floor.

PAYNE
Motherfucker!

CLAY
How's that feel? Good?

The two circle each other like caged beasts.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Those tears starting to well up in your eyes. That sting shooting up your spine until your head feels like popping off.

PAYNE
The guys were right. You talk too much.

CLAY
Come shut me up then.

Payne SCREAMS like a wildman as he unloads a whole barrage of near lethal punches and kicks that sends a bloody Clay back to his knees.

HAILEY
Oh my God.

As Clay takes a knee and grabs his stomach in pain, his crazed opponent grabs him by the arm and TWISTS IT.

Clay SCREAMS out in agony.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Hey! Stop the fight!

JUAN
What the hell's he doing? He's gonna fuck around and snap his arm.

VANDROSKI

Don't get nervous. We got Cutter just where we want him.

JUAN

Bullshit. He's gonna forfeit the whole damn thing.

Juan rushes the ring. Vandroski grabs him by the shirt, pulls him back.

VANDROSKI

I know exactly what he's doing! He's doing like he was told! Now shut up and watch!

JUAN

I hope you know what you're doing.

Payne TWISTS Clay's arm even further as the two walk in a careful circle.

PAYNE

What's the matter, Cutter? Not gonna show me anymore of your fancy moves?

The crowd BOO Payne and throw him a THUMBS DOWN.

SPECTATOR

Let him fight!

Payne shoves Clay to the ground as he SCREAMS out in pain and holds his near broken arm.

Hailey runs to him.

HAILEY

Are you okay?

CLAY

I think I sprained it.

Hailey struts toward Vandroski, all attitude.

HAILEY

He almost broke his arm!

VANDROSKI

Hey. It's a dirty sport. These things happen.

HAILEY

Your man grabbed him while he was still down. Last I checked, that was still considered illegal contact.

An on scene doctor checks Clay's arm.

DOC

Looks like a sprain.

VANDROSKI

It looks like a sprain or it is a sprain?

DOC

He's lucky your guy didn't break it.

VANDROSKI

What does that mean? Cutter forfeits? What a shame. And you came so far.

HAILEY

No. No way. If anyone forfeits, it's your guy. You know he can't fight with one arm.

VANDROSKI

Well, my little lady, it appears he'll have to. According to our deal, he's still got one more fight to go.

HAILEY

Your guy still has two good arms. You wanna tell me how that's fair?

VANDROSKI

(to Clay)
Your girl drives a hard bargain.

CLAY

Yeah, she's kind of stubborn that way.

Hailey gives him a back off look.

VANDROSKI

So the little lady thinks it isn't fair, huh? Well then. We got ourselves a real predicament.

(MORE)

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)
 (to Jimmy)
 Don't we, Jimmy?

Jimmy moves through the crowd, arm still in a sling.

JIMMY
 Yeah, it looks that way, Mike.

Hailey spots his arm sling.

HAILEY
 Oh, no you don't.

VANDROSKI
 Now wait a second. I said three of
 my best. Jimmy, is in fact, my
 best. No offense to present
 company.

HAILEY
 You can't just switch out fighters
 halfway in.

VANDROSKI
 You're right. Maybe Cutter will
 fair better with Johnny. Or maybe
 Nickie over there.

Hailey stares back at Johnny and Nickie Pax, our mohawked
 brute awaiting his turn. She and Clay share a look.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)
 You still owe me a fight, Cutter.
 How you wanna do it, you decide.

HAILEY
 You don't have to do it this way.

VANDROSKI
 Tell you what, Cutter. How about I
 sweeten the deal? Double or
 nothing. Sixty K. Sixty thousand
 for one more fight. The last round
 of your life.

Hailey and Clay just stare at one another.

VANDROSKI (CONT'D)
 Of course, if you lose, it might
 take you awhile to work it all off.
 We're talking months. I'll
 understand if you say no.

KOVAC

I'll take a piece of that action.

Vandroski, Juan, Clay and Hailey all turn to see Kovac walking out of the darkness and into the light.

KOVAC (CONT'D)

Tell you what, Mikey. I'll kick in the extra thirty k. Cover his end.

Clay and Hailey share a smile.

KOVAC (CONT'D)

If he wins, you owe me thirty gees. And Cutter here keeps his half.

VANDROSKI

And if he loses? I suppose you're gonna wanna borrow my boy for a few fights. That it?

KOVAC

We'll worry about the details after the fight. Are we doing this or what?

Vandroski checks with Juan who is all in.

VANDROSKI

How about it, Cutter? Double or nothing. Are you in or out?

CLAY

I guess I don't have a choice. Do I?

VANDROSKI

No, I guess you don't.

CLAY

Well I guess I'm in.

MINUTES LATER

Clay and Jimmy come face to face. Both men in arm slings and ready to duke it out, hand to hand.

The referee steps out of the way as both Clay and Jimmy circle each other, stare each other down with cold menace in their eyes.

HAILEY

One more and we're home, Clay! One more!

JIMMY

You heard your girl. Come and get me.

Clay looks worried.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Speaking of home. How's the family doing? Real good, I hope.

Clay throws a HARD LEFT KICK but is blocked by Jimmy's huge arm. He simply shoves Clay's leg out of the way as the smaller fighter stumbles to the ground.

The crowd stands him back up and pushes him toward the ring. His arm in serious pain.

Jimmy throws another KICK at Clay who

Ducks down and HIGH KICKS Jimmy's BAD ARM. He grabs it in serious pain as the crowd BOOS the dirty move.

VANDROSKI

Come on, Cutter! You know better than that!

Clay takes advantage of Jimmy's moment of pain and KICKS him in the balls.

The crowd's BOOS are even louder.

Clay attempts a third KICK but Jimmy TWISTS his leg as

Clay SCREAMS out in pain.

Jimmy KICKS Clay in the stomach THREE TIMES as Clay drops to his knees.

The crowd CHEERS Jimmy on.

Jimmy grabs Clay by the shirt and pulls him from his knees. The two men wrap their hands around each others throats.

EXT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

A side door CRASHES OPEN as Jimmy holds Clay suspended in the air and the two

TUMBLE over a RAILING and --

Onto a sloping trolly ramp. Jimmy grabs Clay by the throat, picks him up. Clay THROWS TWO HARD KNEES into his crotch and --

THROWS A HARD ELBOW under Jimmy's chin as he's knocked backward.

Hailey races out the door.

HAILEY
Go after him!

Jimmy touches his bloodied nose. Gives Clay a nasty stare as he THROWS one kick to Clay's chest and then --

a second KICK to CLAY'S FACE. Clay grabs onto a metal railing to keep himself from falling over.

JIMMY
This is it, Cutter. Nite nite time.

Jimmy THROWS a HARD PUNCH toward Clay's head but

Clay DUCKS DOWN and

Jimmy's hand SMASHES the metal railing. His hand broke.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Awwwww!!!

Now both Jimmy's hands don't work.

VANDROSKI
Sonofabitch!

HAILEY
Now's your chance! Go after him!

Clay uses his good hand to spin Jimmy his direction. He PUNCHES him in the face, over and over as Jimmy stumbles back.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Knock his ass out!

Clay gets tired as his next punch is BLOCKED by Jimmy's bad hand. Both men cry out in pain.

Clay steps back. He charges with everything he has and HIGH KICKS Jimmy in the face.

POW!

Jimmy drops like bricks to the sloping ramp.

VANDROSKI
Get up! What the hell are you
doing?

The referee checks with Jimmy. Out cold.

REFEREEEE
He's out!

Clay collapses to the ground. Hailey goes nuts. As does the
surrounding crowd.

Juan gives Vandroski a dirty look and quickly gets lost in
the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. VANDROSKI'S HOUSE - GAME ROOM - NIGHT

Vandroski enters, flips on the light. A flash pool table,
swank leather couch, full bar and large flat screen
television.

Both Juan and Kovac follow behind.

KOVAC
You're being a real good sport,
Mikey. Here I was thinking you had
another trick up your sleeve.

Vandroski steps behind the bar, opens a hidden safe, pulls
out thirty thousand in cash. He sets it on the bar in front
of Kovac who quickly snags it up.

VANDROSKI
Unlike Raimi, I pay my debts.

KOVAC
Yeah. Too bad about him. I heard.
Good news travels fast.

VANDROSKI
Anything else we can help you with,
Andy?

KOVAC
I was just thinking. Me and your
boy Cutter make a real good team.

VANDROSKI
After what you did to his best
friend, good luck with that.

KOVAC
Careful, Mikey. That's how rumors
get started.

Juan stares at the television. Something taped to the
screen.

JUAN
What the hell is that?

VANDROSKI
What is it?

Juan pulls a post it note from the screen.

JUAN
It says Play Me.

KOVAC
What the hell is this, Vandroski?
Another one of your games?

Vandroski grabs the tv remote from the bar and presses play.

ON THE TV

Clay's face appears. A big, cocky grin.

VANDROSKI
What is this?

CLAY
Hello, Michael. If you're watching
this, then that means you and I
have already severed ties. Before I
leave town again, I just wanted to
thank you. My win over Jimmy
tonight would've never been
possible if it weren't for you.

JUAN
What the hell.

VANDROSKI
Fuck is this?

CLAY
You once told me the secret to this
game is knowing your opponent. It
just so happens that I knew
everything there needs to know
about Jimmy Magnus.

(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

When I first heard the rumor going around he had my father killed, I just couldn't believe it. I know they had their differences but...there was always respect. If it weren't for my father throwing Jimmy out on his ass all those years ago, he never would've gotten his act together. He probably would've died on the streets years before ever joining the force.

VANDROSKI

What the hell's he talking about, the force?!

JUAN

I don't know.

CLAY

Oh, yeah. Did I forget to mention that Jimmy was a cop? I know you're probably standing there saying...yeah, right. How could I have missed that one. Well. Just in case you don't believe me, I've prepared a little something for your viewing enjoyment. A sort of...home movie.

Clay's face cuts to a still image of Jimmy with his arm around Bill Cutter at the old dojo.

CLAY (V.O.)

Here's Jimmy and my old man, about sixteen years old.

The still image cuts to another still of Jimmy and Bill at Jimmy's police graduation.

CLAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This one's my favorite. This is Jimmy and Dad at the Academy around eight years later.

Vandroski's face is red with anger.

JUAN

That little fucker.

The still of Jimmy and Bill at the Academy cuts to VIDEO FOOTAGE of OFFICER JIMMY MAGNUS and SPECIAL AGENT NATHAN PANG shaking down an underground fight.

CLAY (V.O.)
Just in case you think those pics
are photoshopped...
(beat)
Here's Officer Magnus and Special
Agent Pang making their latest
arrests.

JUAN
Who is that?

VANDROSKI
Noochie.

CLAY (V.O.)
That's right, assholes. Nathan
Pang, aka Noochie. Turns out him
and Jimmy have been heading up the
task force against you and Juan for
months. From what I hear, they're
getting real close too.

The VIDEO FOOTAGE cuts to another VIDEO CLIP of Jimmy and
Nathan "Noochie" Pang patting down JOHNNY PAYNE during a back
alley brawl.

Noochie unzips a black gym bag. Inspects the contents.

CLAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know you know who that is. On
top of Johnny Payne's involvement
in illegal underground fights, it
seems Officer Magnus found a loaded
gun and half a kilo of coke in his
gym bag. What can I say? I guess
Johnny had a last minute change of
heart. I know how you hate those.

The VIDEO FOOTAGE cuts back to Clay's face.

CLAY
You know what the funniest thing
is, Michael. All your talk about
knowing your opponent. Your
biggest opponent in this world was
riding around in a car, right next
to you for months. And neither you
or your boy Juan suspected a thing.

Juan just watches Vandroski shake with anger.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 What can I say, Michael? I played
 my gut. Don't take it personally.
 It was just business.

Clay smiles.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 So long.

Clay points a remote control at the camera. The video cuts
 to black.

Jimmy and Noochie enter with several armed undercover agents.
 All part of a federal task force.

JIMMY
 What's the matter, Mikey? Awfully
 quiet for once.

VANDROSKI
 I see your arm healed up real nice
 since the fight.

JIMMY
 It's a miracle.
 (to agents)
 You wanna cuff Mister Vandroski,
 please.

Vandroski ducks behind the bar, unwilling to go in. He heads
 for the safe, grabs a hidden gun.

Jimmy's agents aim their guns at Vandroski.

AGENT #1
 Drop it!

VANDROSKI
 (to Juan)
 I told you not to kill him. We
 needed him!

JUAN
 (nasty stare)
 Shut up, ass hole.

Jimmy watches the exchange.

VANDROSKI
 They wouldn't be here if it weren't
 for you and those assholes jumping
 the gun!

INT. CUTTER TAE KWON DO - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Cutter on the weight bench. The crushing weight of almost three hundred pounds becomes too much to handle as

Juan watches Johnny and Nickie push both ends toward Cutter's throat.

END FLASHBACK

INT. VANDROSKI'S HOUSE - GAME ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy and Juan catch eyes. Juan pulls a gun from his pants, holds it to Kovac's head.

JUAN
Back off! All of you!

VANDROSKI
He had the old man killed! I told him not to do it! He got scared! Just like always!

Jimmy and the other agents move in on Juan. Noochie holds his gun on Vandroski.

NOOCHIE
Stand real still, boss man.

JUAN
I'll blow his brains out!

JIMMY
Juan Willis. You're under arrest for the murder of William Cutter.
(to Kovac)
Andrew Kovac. You are under arrest for the murder of Todd Raimi. You have the right to remain silent...

KOVAC
Great. Any other bright ideas?

Juan shoves Kovac into the agents

Aims his gun at Jimmy but is

RIDDLED WITH BULLETS

A SHOT from JUAN'S GUN strikes

Kovac in the back as he falls dead to the carpet.

BEHIND THE BAR

Vandroski holds his hands over his head like a scared child. He looks up to see Jimmy, Noochie and the others aiming at his head.

JIMMY
Hello, Michael.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Clay, arm in a sling, with his other arm around his sister. Denise cries as she stares at her husband's gravestone.

Jimmy and Nathan (Noochie) show to pay their respects. They all share a warm smile as they stand before Bill's grave in a comfortable silence.

Credits:

A SAM LOGAN KHALEGI FILM