IRON GARBAGE
FADE IN.

SUPER: 1981

INT. HOTEL - FOYER - NIGHT

BREATH -- cocoons a pair of hands as they rub against each other. Heading towards the mouth of...

MARSHALL REDDING, early 20s, six foot on the dot, athletic, face bruised and busted, but his eyes are filled with a certain wonder, a kid still waiting to find himself.

He stands in front of an elevator, patiently waiting. Duffel bag to his side when...

He hears a scuffle, gazes towards the bag, finds CLIFF, 40s, an aging bellhop, colored, lifting it towards his shoulder.

MARSHALL
Ain’t a need to do that, compadre. We all good from here on.

Cliff’s voice is soft, almost fatherly -- a man whose always got a warm smile on his face.

CLIFF
Sir, ain’t nobody complainin’. Besides, place like here, they expect you to go the extra mile.

Marshall glares around -- the place is upscale, luxurious.

ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

The duo stand inside as Cliff presses the designated floor. Marshall gazes across, finds Cliff’s face lined with sweat and discomfort.

MARSHALL
You okay, brother? Ain’t lookin’ too good, life treatin’ you okay?

CLIFF
All good on my end, sir, I just get a little warm is all sometimes.

Marshall gives him a look, takes off his beanie. Cliff notices, getting uncomfortable by his stare when --

CLIFF (CONT’D)
I uh, recently got off those cancer sticks. That’s what my kid calls ‘em at least, had a last one a few days ago, right in front of the hotel -- management came at me like wolves sayin’ I’m givin’ their company a bad name and all.
MARRIALL
Wanted to axe you, I’m guessin’?

Cliff chuckles.

CLIFF
Without this job, sir, ain’t much
to go off on. Had to practically
beg ‘em to keep me here.

Marshall stares him up and down. Retrieves his wallet, fishes
out a hundred dollars and offers it to him.

MARRIALL
Money.

CLIFF
For what?

MARRIALL
Your kid, it’s my tip, have at it.

Cliff smiles warmly, but then shakes his head.

CLIFF
No, sir, there’s no need.

Marshall glares at him, gently grabs him -- Cliff’s heart
sinking as... Marshall stuffs the money inside his jacket,
pats him, then smiles.

MARRIALL
I don’t need it, you do. You see
this?

Cliff gazes up at Marshall, finds his crooked nose and black
eye.

MARRIALL (CONT’D)
From a fuckin’ week ago, had these
pansies come at me in the bar,
askin’ for a fight. Didn’t want to
touch ‘em in case my promoter got
all pissy, had no choice. Took my
beatin’ and that was that. Good at
it too, all disposable income on my
end at least.

CLIFF
You’re a fighter?

MARRIALL
Cruserweight. Weigh-in tomorrow.
Tenth professional match. Shit’s
chill, right? Undercard Marshall
fuckin’ Redding. Dream come true.
Would take a thousand beatings if
it meant I could play this sport.
CLIFF
I see a lot of folks around you here. My son likes boxin’, so I like to ask ‘em for some advice or a signature. Just a token is all.

M ARSHALL
Oh, yeah?

Cliff’s happy demeanour fades for a moment.

CLIFF
Yeah, they usually say no -- management says I’m not aloud to ask ‘em anymore. Says they complain.

A CLANK -- as the elevator doors whiz open.

M ARSHALL
What’d you say your name was?

CLIFF
Didn’t say my name was anythin’, sir, but it’s Cliff if you’re wonderin’.

Marshall smiles. Shakes his hand.

M ARSHALL
My name ain’t sir, though, it’s Marshall. Start callin’ me that.

CLIFF
Slim chance I’ll see you again, Marshall, probably no point.

Cliff goes to grab the bag but... Marshall stops him, picks the bag up himself and heads off. Waves goodbye.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: 1986

INT. HOTEL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cliff, hair laced with more white than before, paces towards an elevator. Trying to keep his spine straight but...

ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

As soon as he enters. He deflates, grabs him lower back in pain. Takes a deep breath when...
LATER

The doors reopen, Cliff heading towards the reception to see Marshall, 5 years older, face a little more defined, carrying another duffel bag as he argues with the RECEPTIONIST.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Cliff, duffel bag by his side, struggles to keep in his grin at Marshall runs through a newspaper, gazes across.

    MARSHALL
    What’s so damn funny?

    CLIFF
    Just excited, six degrees of separation and all.

    MARSHALL
    Don’t think that’s how that six degree shit works. Have a look at this. Your son still follow boxin’?
    How old is he? Prime opportunity for the sport, check this.

Marshall passes him the same newspaper, conveniently at the sports section as we read...

“Marshall Redding wins WBO and WBA Cruiserweight Belts in Stunning Fashion by UD”

    MARSHALL (CONT’D)
    Real special, right?

Cliff scoffs, amazed.

    CLIFF
    Real life champion in front of me now, seems like. Shit ain’t got worth on little folks like us, that’s more than special. Live comfortably, live large, or run the guns like the ones who are still tryin’ to make it.

    MARSHALL
    Latter case on my end, brother, don’t need that shit.

    CLIFF
    See a lot of folks get bogged down in it all, though, one day, they stop lookin’ like they used to. Face a little droopier, eyes a little more hollow, voice a little more strained.

Marshall’s smile fades.
MARSHALL
That ain’t like me, I got my priorities straight.

Marshall shows Cliff his hand, sees a dime a dozen wedding ring on his finger.

CLIFF
Married?

MARSHALL
Some sweetheart I met by those French restaurants my guys take me to. Baby’s comin’ on the way, gonna be a father, Cliff. You believe that? Fuckin’ Marshall Redding, white boy grew up punching deadweights down the street now holding millions to his name with everything to show for it.

CLIFF
Real special... Just like you said.

They both exchange a glance. Marshall’s face becoming emotionless as his eyes sway away, hiding something.

MARSHALL
You see that newspaper? Skim down it, right where the big parts matter, says I gave the guy a concussion. Fucker wrote I put him in hospital for a week but not that I got married. Not special enough for them, maybe I’m just bein’ fooled. God damn fuckin’ monsters, man...

The doors open as Marshall grabs the duffel bag. Exchanges another look with Cliff, both of them wanting to say something when... Marshall simply reaches inside his jacket, pulls out a pair of tickets, passes them to Cliff.

MARSHALL (CONT’D)
Next fight’s in a few days. Ask your kid how special it is, maybe I’ll ask mine in twenty years too.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: 1992

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Cliff, six years older, posture growing a little more slanted, wrinkles a little more defined -- waits next to an impatient BLONDE, gazing at her watch incessantly as...
The doors finally open and she darts out. Leaving Cliff by himself until...

His eyes light up, finding --

MARSHALL, now 31, standing in front of him, both of them surprised. Marshall slowly enters, almost annoyed.

CLIFF
Look who it is... When’d you pop by here?

MARSHALL
A few days ago, I think... Yeah, yeah, a few days ago. Definitely.

Cliff stares him down.

CLIFF
Heading down?

MARSHALL
Yeah.

CLIFF
Cool, cool.

The doors close as the duo drift down. Watching the floors click away in the silence when...

CLIFF (CONT’D)
How’s family?

MARSHALL
They’re fine. How’s your son?

CLIFF
Yeah, he’s doing good, just finished college, first in the family. Believe that?

Marshall grunts. The silence returns once more...

MARSHALL
Look, Cliff --

CLIFF
No, sir, it’s fine, I know how it is with you folks. Ain’t a bother on my end. No offense taken.

MARSHALL
Do you want tickets? I can get you tickets.

CLIFF
Sir, I don’t want anythin’. Just thought we could catch up is all...
Marshall stares at him, offended, then --

MARSHALL
My family ain’t fine, you remember Kat? My wife? She’s at her parents, has been since a few months back, know why? ‘Cause she said I started scarin’ her. Said people like me get the best out of a lot of folks. That the catchin’ up you want?

CLIFF
That’s not what I meant.

MARSHALL
Then what did you fuckin’ mean?

The doors open but... Neither of them exit. Just facing each other. The doors start to close now, but Marshall intercepts with his hand.

CLIFF
My son still watches your fights. Heavyweight now, with the big guns and all. Just like you said.

MARSHALL
What about the other fighters?

CLIFF
What do you mean?

MARSHALL
Ones who I’m in the ring with, they got a name too? A soul? Or they just another face waitin’ to hit the mat?

CLIFF
I don’t understand.

MARSHALL
I had thirty one good years behind me... That’s what the papers said. (then)
They wrote this life for me, you understand that? And you still keep callin’ me sir.

Marshall quickly exits. Cliff watches him, taking the words in, unsure.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: 1998
INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Cliff, hitting his 60s, struggles to lift luggage from the floor, carrying it to a cart right outside as...

He finally gets the last piece on. Signals another BELLHOP as they haul it away. He heads towards a nearby wall, taking a breather when...

SCOTTIE (O.S.)
Hey’yo, POP!

Cliff gazes across, finds SCOTTIE, early 30s, wearing a hand tailored suit, luggage by his side as he stands at the entrance doors, newspaper in hand. Cliff smiles.

ELEVATOR - LATER

Both of them now stand inside. Watching the floors go up.

CLIFF
Surprised as anybody else, should’ve told me you were comin’, could’ve organized somethin’ instead of seein’ me like this.

SCOTTIE
That’s what makes it a surprise, pa. Been traveling all ‘round Nevada for the company, was bound to stop here, didn’t want you to be disappointed if it wasn’t soon enough.

CLIFF
Got a girl yet? After someone?

SCOTTIE
Haven’t had the time, you?

They both laugh. Dying down as...

SCOTTIE (CONT’D)
Meet anybody else, though?

CLIFF
You know I ain’t meetin’ nobody, Scottie.

SCOTTIE
No, I mean, famous, worth rememberin’, any good stories?

CLIFF
Not that I know.

They both wait until...
SCOTTIE
You remember that boxer that you
met a few times? Marshall Redding?
The one whose match you took us to?
(from Cliff’s face)
Beat his wife’s face in, believe
that? Those the kind of people you
deal with, pa? Ever give you any
chance to breathe? Had ‘em out with
a chance to give, or was he givin’
you signs before he did the deed?

Cliff, awestruck --

CLIFF
He... Beat his wife? Was as gentle
as they come, sure as shit didn’t
see no sign.

SCOTTIE
Nothin’ new, started a few years
before that. Luckily he’s got a
name carved for himself, else would
be seein’ the steel bars and
gavels. Luckily for him, I guess.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: 2002
INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Cliff, late 60s, a man on the verge of retirement, life’s
definitely taken a toll on him. He enters the elevator. Takes
a deep breath as he presses the bottom floor when...

His eyes lead down, find a small purse. He shakes his head,
struggles to lean down as he picks it up. Searches for a
driver license to see it’s some stern WOMAN. He zips it back
up, the doors opening as...

He stops. His eyes leading to Marshall, 40s, the years having
weathered him down. Face bitter. Eyes mute.

They both recognize each other but... Marshall steps inside
nonchalantly with his bag, stops regarding Cliff.

Cliff waits, staring at him when... He decides to exit, about
to step out but can’t. Suddenly gets back into the elevator.
Puts the purse back on the ground as Marshall presses his
floor’s button and the elevator ascends.

Both of them just stand there, watching the doors in front of
them. Time ticking down when...

A CLANK -- knocks their attention towards the roof as...
SCREECH -- the elevator drones to a stop. The lights above them dimming as their eyes roam around, confused.

They both look at each other. Marshall grabs the emergency phone, finds it’s dead.

He takes a deep breath. His hand dropping.

    MARSHALL
    It’s dead.

    CLIFF
    Must be some kind of malfunction or other, old elevator, not sure how long they take to do any maintenance.

    MARSHALL
    Some kind of crazy metaphor to your mind?

    CLIFF
    What’s that?

    MARSHALL
    Dead, malfunction... Fuckin’ drives you up the wall. Give it a few minutes, somebody’ll always come back to save the day, just how places like these work.

Marshall slams the phone back a little too hard. Crouches, then leans against the wall.

    CLIFF
    Been hearin’ you ‘round the news, splattered across every angle.

Marshall smiles slightly, almost zany.

    MARSHALL
    I have these guys who are my PR folks, give me advice on what to say, or make every fuck up of mine hurt a little less. There’s your second chance, but ain’t any other chances after that -- especially not in the ring.

    CLIFF
    Did you like boxin’?

    MARSHALL
    You like carryin’ luggage? Valeting cars? Talkin’ to the scum of this Earth? Makes it that much more sweet, right?
CLIFF
Sweet as love?

MARSHALL
I don’t love anything.

CLIFF
Ain’t got a family to worry about?

Marshall, growing uncomfortable, shifts around.

MARSHALL
Somebody better be fuckin’ tryin’ to get us out of here.

He slams his palm against the doors a few times.

MARSHALL (CONT’D)
Hey! Anybody down there! Get me the fuck out of here!

CLIFF
Your family, Marshall, how they doin’?

MARSHALL
Anybody!

CLIFF
Marshall?

His attention comes back to Cliff as Marshall writhes a little, growing claustrophobic.

MARSHALL
They were all incidental...

Cliff regards this, continues watching him, then --

MARSHALL (CONT’D)
Facts we all know and love. Violence is the blood of this sport, keeps it flowin’, not just that, though. Gets you all riled up, sure as shit for the wrong reasons too, people forget that. You watch my face on TV, what do you see? Some busted up loser tryin’ to make his next pay check? No... No, no, no, all of it, it’s a ruse. Anger ain’t the only thing they see, get a nice job, find a sweet wife, have some kids, make ‘em happy, get an even nicer car, make some friends. Remember that the next day is better than the last? Nu’uh, not how it works. (MORE)
Ingrained into their minds, one day you’d fuckin’ be a good one. That’s what they told me. And it was all wrong again. Had a step by step routine, didn’t help no one in the end. Not bad on my end, not bad on Kat’s or my daughter’s. They too were incidental. Had to give me the same chance and it would’ve lead me on the right path if there was no guidance. I never touched them, man, I never put a finger on her.

The disdain in Marshall’s voices grows.

Won gold at the olympics in 1980. Golden Gloves Nevada two years before that. Twentieth fight of my amateur career, won WBO and WBA belt -- cruiserweight. Five years later, went into heavyweight, won WBO. Five years later. Lost my first match. Year later. Lost my next. Five years after that, come back -- won twice, lost twice. Guess how much it meant?

I don’t know.

Guess how much it meant, Cliff...

I don’t know...

Just as the lights come back on, the doors opening once more but... Both of them pay no attention.

Exactly...

Marshall quickly stands, grabs his bag. Heads out as Cliff just stands there. Taking us to...

THE HOTEL’S ROOFTOP - LATER

A different set of elevator doors open and out comes Cliff. The purse in hand from before as he searches it, finding a cigarette and lighter. He lays the purse down. Lights the cigarette -- inhales deeply.

The wind caressing his face as the smoke is blown to oblivion. His presence a spec amongst the billions on this planet. And he waits... And he waits... And he waits.

FADE OUT.