

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.

MARSHALL

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.

MARSHALL

Money.

CLIFF

For what?

MARSHALL

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.

MARSHALL

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

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

MARSHALL (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?

MARSHALL

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.

MARSHALL

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.

MARSHALL

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.

MARSHALL

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)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

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.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

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?

CLIFF

I don't know.

MARSHALL

Guess how much it meant, Cliff...

CLIFF

I don't know...

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

MARSHALL

**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.**