

Power

by

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INT. GYM - DAY

In a small gym, DERIK, big and strong, lies on the leg-press machine.

We see a set of legs pushing the heavy weight upward.

FRANK, another juicehead, is spotting him.

FRANK

Come on, Derik! Hold it! Hold it!  
Breathe! Don't let go!

Close up of Derik's face, red and strained, veins popping.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE TO:

INT. DERIK'S ROOM - BEFORE DAWN

Derik stirs awake and looks down.

DERIK

Ah, shit.

He throws off his blanket to reveal he's pissed the bed.

He pulls his wheelchair over and lifts himself into the seat.

INSERT: We pan over photos on the wall: Derik on the football field. Derik and his parents on graduation day.

He begins peeling the sheets off of his bed - an effort in itself.

INSERT: We pan over several trophies and medals: Home Run King, Running Back of the Year, Slam Dunk champion.

Derik bundles the sheet and leaves his room.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - BEFORE DAWN

A quaint laundry room with side-by-side machines. Shelves to the right house various bottles and accoutrement.

Derik loads his sheets into the washing machine.

He looks around for detergent and spots it - on a high shelf.

He goes to it and reaches up, but can't grab it.

He adjusts himself, locks his wheels, and lifts himself with one arm while reaching with the other.

DANNY, lanky and tall, appears at the doorway.

DANNY

Hey.

Derik almost falls. He turns to face Danny.

DERIK

Shit! Why are you awake?

DANNY

I heard you moving around. What're you up to?

DERIK

Nothing, Jesus! You're like fucking mom, bro!

Derik slams the machine door shut and presses the button.

He tries to get around Danny, who stands in place.

DERIK

I'm going to the gym. Move.

DANNY

Is that a good idea?

DERIK

How else am I supposed to train?

DANNY

What? I thought you told the doctor you weren't doing that competition?

DERIK

How do - did you talk to my fucking doctor?

DANNY

Oh, come on. Wait. It's not a big deal.

Derik, the workouts are too

DERIK

Dude, that's my fucking  
privacy, bro! That's my 3.  
HIPPA shit!

much. And I'm worried about  
you!

Who cares, Danny! Mind your  
own fucking business!

Derik smashes into Danny's shin with his chair. Danny YIPS as  
he's knocked back. Derik goes around him.

INT. DERIK'S BATHROOM - BEFORE DAWN

A large mess throughout: towels in piles, countertop messy,  
toiletries askew.

Derik is undressed in his wheelchair, beside the tub.

He crosses his legs and lifts them, then himself, over the  
edge of the bathtub onto his seat.

He grabs the showerhead and turns on the water.

INT. KITCHENETTE - MORNING

Danny is facing away cooking breakfast while EVE unboxes  
decorations. EVE is tall, with curly hair and a slender  
frame. She is very bubbly, and her voice is child-like.

Derik comes through in a rush.

EVE

Mornin', gorgeous! Where ya goin'?

DERIK

The gym. Bye, Evey.

EVE

Wait, wait! Are you excited for my  
party later?

Derik stops and turns back.

Eve holds up a banner reading "10-Year Reunion!"

DERIK

(groans) I don't have time for this.

DANNY

(without turning around)  
Don't be an asshole.

EVE

(to Anthony)

It's fine, babe, he's not being-

DERIK

Really, bro?! ME the asshole? Tell Eve how you were spying on me! Have fun with that one! Dick.

Derik spins around and leaves. He slams the door behind him.

Eve spins to face Danny. Danny shrugs and sighs.

INT. GYM - DAY

Derik is on his back, strapped to a bench, a jacket over his wheelchair to hide it (poorly.)

He performs dumbbell flys with 40kg weights.

FRANK

Yeah, come on! Let's do it!

As Derik clanks the dumbbells together furiously, Frank cheers him on.

Derik finishes his set and lets his arms fall to the sides. He shakes the tension out of his left arm.

Frank looks down at him.

FRANK

Derik, bro. I gotta tell you, bro, no homo: you're looking jacked. You ready for next Saturday?

DERIK

Yeah... yeah! I'm always ready, man.

FRANK

You sure? (beat) I can tell when you're not right, man. Talk to me.

DERIK

(scoffs) It's my fucking brother, man. He's up my fucking ass about all the exercise and shit. Just cause my doctor said some shit about my... I

don't know my heart, I guess. He said my condition means I'm gonna get CHD... or CBD... He basically said it wasn't strong enough.

FRANK

But that's bullshit, bro! Has he seen your fucking pythons?

DERIK

That's what I told him! I feel fucking great. But my brother says I need to stop. But... I don't know. I can't.

FRANK

Bro, that's some serious shit. You know what I do when I gotta deal with something like that? (beat) I add 10 pounds and rep 'til I burn out. I'll get weights.

Frank gets up and walks away.

A MAN approaches.

MAN

Hey, you gonna be done anytime soon?

DERIK

Yeah, yeah, I'm almost done.

Frank comes back with the weights.

MAN

(getting more aggressive)

You sure? Cause I've been here for twenty minutes and you haven't moved. I mean, it's a public gym, just share like a normal fucking person. Maybe somebody should teach you that shit.

Derik undoes his strap and sits up. He throws the jacket off his wheelchair and pulls it closer.

DERIK

Bro, do you wanna go right now?

MAN

Woah, hey man. I'm sorry, I didn't realize.

DERIK

Realize what? (George gets in his wheelchair) That I'm in a wheelchair? Does that change something? You wanted to fight? Let's fucking go. Don't pussy out.

Derik attacks the man's shins with his chair.

MAN

Hey, man, back off!

The man pushes Derik but Derik hits him again, knocking the man over.

Derik repeats and repeats, then tries to run him over, but ends up throwing himself out of his chair.

The man tries to get back up, but Derik wrestles him down.

Several people rush in to break it up.

Frank pulls Derik off and puts him in his wheelchair. Derik pushes off.

DERIK

Get off me, man! I'm fucking fine.

Derik rotates his left arm and strains his face.

DERIK

I'm... fine. I'm...

DONNIE

Derik, bro, you're getting white.  
Derik? Derik!

Derik collapses out of his chair.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE UP:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Danny drives the car silently. Eve sits in the passenger seat. Their eyes are red from crying.

In the backseat is Derik, in a hospital gown, fresh clothes next to him. He looks out the window.

DERIK

I know what you're gonna say, but -

DANNY

Oh, do you? You're a mind reader now? You're an idiot. The doctors tell you to do one thing, ONE thing. And instead, you give yourself a fucking heart attack.

DERIK

I'm an idiot?

DANNY

You gave yourself a fucking heart attack!

DERIK

I FUCKING KNOW I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL.

DANNY

Well, is it worth a heart attack?!

EVE

Stop it!

Silence falls over the car.

EVE

Danny - you can't tell Derik what to do. He's going to do what he wants to do, and that's that. (to Derik) And Derik... your brother loves you. I swear, it's true. He just doesn't understand why it's so important. And neither do I, to be honest.

Eve turns around and looks out the window.



GEORGE

Maybe I am an idiot. I was never good in school. I always got bad grades... I couldn't pay attention anyway. But I was good at sports. I was really good. I got a scholarship and everything. I was going to class... before my accident. And... I don't know. (beat) I can't run anymore. I can't jump anymore. But I can lift. So I do that, cause it makes me feel good. I do it as much as I can, because when I don't, I feel bad. I feel like shit. Actually, I always feel like shit. And lifting just makes me feel less shitty for a bit. I swear I don't do this just to make your life harder. But when I wake up in the morning covered in piss like a fucking baby, or someone talks down to me for being a cripple, life feels pretty fucking hard to me. And I used to be an athlete. There are pictures of me, trophies with my name on them, all over that school. I used to be a fucking champion. And now... I'm still a champion, bro. Nobody can fucking stop me. Not you, not him. (points up) If I give up, what am I? (beat) So yeah. It's worth it.

Derik looks out the window as the car continues in silence.

INT. KITCHENETTE - MORNING

Danny is cooking, as Derik rolls through the kitchen.

DANNY

Hey, you want breakfast?

Derik stops and turns around.

DERIK

Nah, I can't eat right now; game day, baby.

Derik turns around to leave.

DANNY

Derik, wait. I've been meaning to say:  
I'm sorry. I mean, I'm not sorry for  
thinking you should stop. It is the  
right thing to do.

DERIK

OK, thanks for that.

Derik backs up.

DANNY

No seriously, I'm sorry for not  
understanding. I get why it's  
important for you. And if you need to  
keep going - I won't try to stop you.

DERIK

Thanks, bro. I'll see you later.

Derik turns, opens the door, and leaves.

INT. COMPETITION BACKSTAGE - DAY

Derik sits backstage at the event. Breathing deep and  
stretching his arms. He looks around nervously.

There are 6-7 other para-athletes present, of varying types.

SFX: Weights CRASH on-stage (off-screen.)

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

One more time for Ricky Gomez,  
everybody!

SFX: Applause.

RICKY GOMEZ appears backstage and rolls toward Derik.

STAGEHAND

Derik, you're next!

Ricky pats Derik on the shoulder as he rolls by.

RICKY

You got this, new guy.

Derik exhales sharply and rolls toward the stage.

He appears via a wing of the tiny stage and moves to his position.

He looks around the auditorium nervously - small, with one set of bleachers and maybe 15-30 guests in attendance.

Assistants help Derik get into place and lock his chair. He nods hurriedly, adrenaline high.

He reaches to the powder and rubs it into his hands. Eyes wide as a deer, he looks around at the faces of the audience.

At the left end of the bleachers, two people take their seats - Danny and Eve. Danny smiles at Derik.

Derik smiles back.

Derik wraps his hands around the bar and removes it from the rack.

He breathes in repeatedly to hyperventilate, then thrusts upward.

His veins burst, his face turns tomato red. He holds the bar high over his head and looks out at the crowd.

FADE TO WHITE.