

THE UNDERDOG

By Christopher Stewart

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EXT. FRANK'S PIT - DAY

A rundown boxing gym. Tin roof. Crumbling brick exterior.

INT. FRANK'S PIT - OFFICE - DAY

Dimly lit. Dust-covered trophies and photos of fighters line the walls.

FRANK BRUNO (65) is seated at his desk. Engaged in a heated phone call.

FRANK

(into phone)

I know the fight's in three days!
I'm asking that we postpone it so
my guy's hand can heal!

(beat)

What'd ya mean you can't make it
happen?! Your boy's the champ! He's
got all the sway!

(beat)

Where am I gonna find a replacement
on such short notice?!

We hear a KNOCK. Frank looks up.

JOE PLAMP (31) stands in the doorway. Short, scrawny frame. Unremarkable features. An everyman in every way.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I'll call you back.

Frank SLAMS the phone onto the receiver. Scowls at Joe.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you?!

JOE

I'm sorry to disturb you, sir. The
name's Joe Plamp. I was hoping for
a few minutes of your time.

FRANK

You and your hope can piss off!
I've got bigger fish to fry!

JOE

I'm aware of your conundrum. It's
why I'm here. I have a proposal
that can benefit us both.

FRANK
I somehow doubt that.

JOE
Please, sir. Just hear me out.

Joe seats himself across from Frank.

JOE (CONT'D)
You need a fighter. Someone who can bring home the one championship that's eluded your legendary career. I am that fighter.

FRANK
I take shits bigger than you. You wouldn't last one round against a beast like Atlas Knox.

JOE
I know I don't look like much, but boxing's been in my blood for three generations. I know what it takes to win. All I need is a shot.

FRANK
How many fights do you have under your belt?

JOE
This would be my first.

Frank erupts with incredulous laughter.

FRANK
You can't be serious.

JOE
Don't I look serious?

FRANK
You look like a bus driver with an active cocaine habit.

Frank holds up a picture of ATLAS KNOX. An imposing boxer with three championship belts hanging on his chiseled frame.

FRANK
This, on the other hand, is what a champion looks like. Atlas Knox. Thirty wins. All by knockout.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

One guy actually lost control of his bowels as he laid drooling on the mat. You literally have no chance of beating this man.

JOE

With any other trainer, I'd agree. That's why I came to you. To beat the best, I need the best. The one-and-only Frank Bruno.

The compliment works. Frank's demeanor softens.

FRANK

You're living in the past. Look around you. My best days are behind me. And now you want me to wager what's left of my reputation on an inexperienced runt like you?

We hear HEROIC MUSIC. Joe leans forward. Looks intently at Frank. Filled with earnest.

JOE

I just lost my job. My wife is expecting our first kid any day now. I have to win this fight to keep a roof over our heads. It's all or nothing for me. And by the looks of this place, you need this just as much as I do.

Frank looks around. Humbly nods in agreement.

JOE

I know this seems impossible. The deck is stacked against us. But with your expertise and my heart, we can pull off a miracle for the ages. David defeated Goliath with a sling. I'll do it with an uppercut.

Joe stands. Holds his hand out.

JOE

What do you say?

Frank smiles. Inspired. Sold on the crazy idea.

FRANK

Screw it. Let's do this.

Frank stands. Shakes Joe's hand.

JOE
Let's be champions.

The HEROIC MUSIC gives way to the sounds of a CHEERING CROWD.

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

The marquee reads: MAIN EVENT -- ATLAS KNOX VS. "AVERAGE" JOE PLAMP -- SOLD OUT!

We hear a BELL RING, followed by the commentary of two play-by-play announcers, JIM ROLLINS and DOUG LAWLER:

JIM (V.O.)
Oh my God!

DOUG (V.O.)
Did that really just happen?!

JIM (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, in all my years of covering the sport of boxing, I've never seen a fight --

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ARENA - BOXING RING - NIGHT

Joe is prone on the mat. Unconscious. Sporadically breathing. Blood oozes from his gruesomely shattered jaw.

JIM (V.O.)
-- end on the very first punch! In a shocking-yet-totally predictable outcome, Atlas Knox has knocked out Joe Plamp!

DOUG (V.O.)
"Knocked out"?! He looks dead! What compelled the Boxing Commission to even sign off on this fight?!

JIM (V.O.)
Like all of us, they must have been inspired by this kid's motivation.

DOUG (V.O.)
Speak for yourself. I love a good underdog story but physics still exist! Motivation doesn't stop a fist from caving your face in!

Joe involuntarily coughs. Multiple broken teeth dribble out of his mouth.

JIM (V.O.)

For those of you wondering why the medical team isn't tending to Joe, they are currently doing CPR on his trainer, the legendary Frank Bruno, who appeared to have a heart attack moments after the knockout.

DOUG (V.O.)

If you think about it, one punch dropped two guys.

JIM (V.O.)

Indeed it did, Doug. I...oh my...

Joe's body starts convulsing.

DOUG (V.O.)

That's troubling.

JIM (V.O.)

We all knew this was a possibility. And yes, it appears that Joe Plamp is losing control of his bowels.

DOUG (V.O.)

Smells like pot roast, Jim.

JIM (V.O.)

What an acrimonious end to this once-hopeful tale. We were so sure that this underdog would pull off the upset, save his family from becoming homeless and inspire others to pursue their dreams.

DOUG (V.O.)

That would've been the perfect Hollywood ending.

JIM

(downtrodden)

It would've been. But alas, it wasn't meant to be. What a shame.

(beat, then cheerful)

Anyways! That concludes tonight's coverage! Until next time!

THE END