

BOOK CART COMING

(C)

FADE IN:

The SOUND of a slow leak: drip...drip...drip...

CLOSE on a game of hangman etched in the concrete wall. The character is drawn in, so are the blanks: E T E R N I T Y

The SOUND of footsteps draw near, getting louder. They stop.

DOGOMATIC VOICE (O.S.)
That's it, Jones. That's home.

Three more steps are taken followed by the slam of iron bars.

INT. CELL

We see JONES (28), holding bed sheets, a pillow, and a roll of toilet paper in his new uniform.

SOUND: drip...drip...drip...

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK ONE

The cell is old, but clean. One toilet. One bed. One sink.

On his bed, he blows spit bubbles to the sound of the leak.

He hears a faint squeaking from outside his cell. He turns his head. It stops.

He blows another spit bubble. There it is again. Squeaking.

Jones goes to the bars to get an angle. The sound stops. After a few moments it starts back up again, getting closer.

Finally, the sound comes to his cell. It's a book cart with a rickety wheel; OLD MAN PORTER at the helm. Since Jones' cell is at the end of the block, Porter turns the cart around.

PORTER
They call me Old Man Porter. Here's the books, what's your order?

JONES
God, you're an angel.

PORTER
Well, which? God or an angel?

JONES
A god, then. A savior.
So, what do you have?

PORTER
What do you want?

JONES
Anything's better than a leaking
faucet. It's Chinese water torture
for the ears. What I'd do for a
wrench.

PORTER
What about freedom? What would you
do for freedom?

JONES
What I'd do for a Playboy. You got
one?

PORTER
Nope. I've got Hemingway, Poe,
Tolstoy...

JONES
Classics, huh. You have Anne Rice?

PORTER
Nope.

JONES
Grisham?

PORTER
Nope.

JONES
Stephen King?

PORTER
Nope.

JONES
(suspicious)
You don't have Stephen?

PORTER
I said nope. What you see is what
you get.
(nice)
Come on, kid. Ain't got all day.

JONES
Hell, I don't care. Just give me a
stack.

PORTER
Only one book per week.

JONES
Then give me the biggest one you've got.

PORTER
Well, let's see here...

DOGMATIC VOICE (O.S.)
(angry)
This not social hour, Porter!

PORTER
Yes, sir.

Porter jumps to action and heads back.

Jones grips the bars.

JONES
(desperate)
Give me anything.

PORTER (O.S.)
Sorry, have to go.

In the silence: drip...drip...drip...

Jones goes the sink aggressively. He lodges a plug of toilet paper into the faucet. The dripping stops.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK TWO

Jones holds his hand out. A pile of shredded toilet paper is on top. He softly blows the tiny shreds.

The paper floats down to the floor like snow flurries.

On the floor a small figure crafted from toilet paper. Paper snow landing on top and around it.

He hears a noise from outside his cell. It's the squeak. He goes to the bars.

PORTER (CONT'D)
You look like you could use a book or something.

JONES

Anything. Just give me anything.

Porter looks back and forth between his cart and Jones a few times before he picks the right one.

PORTER

This one. This is the one. That ought to keep ya all week.

Jones takes it like he's found an oasis.

JONES

It's real. I can't believe I have something to pacify my neurotic thoughts. Thanks.

PORTER

Yep, anytime. I'm going to leave you two together.

Jones straightens the folds in his bed. And takes to his bed as if seducing a young bride.

He gets comfortable and looks at the cover.

JONES

Ulysses, huh.

He smiles and forges to page one completely enraptured.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK THREE

SOUND: drip...drip...drip...

Jones is asleep. The book is open only a quarter through.

His eyes crack open miserably. He goes to the sink, takes out the wet plug, replaces it with a dry one, routinely.

He sits back down and gives the book another go. It's not long before he fades back out.

LATER

Jones is still asleep. The squeak comes followed by Old Man Porter.

PORTER

It was that good, huh.

Jones is startled awake.

JONES
What the hell, man. What is this?

PORTER
James Joyce. I thought you could read.

JONES
This is purgatory in disguise. I read the same paragraph three times to not understand it once.

PORTER
You should give it another try.

JONES
I want another book.

Suddenly, we see a dark side to Porter.

PORTER
Well, you can't have one.

JONES
What are you talking about, old man.

PORTER
I really think you need to read that book. You could learn something, you know.

Porter leaves.

JONES
What the fuck! Give me another book, Porter!

Jones throws the book angrily in his cell.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK FOUR

Jones is a little further in the book, almost halfway.

Here comes the cart. Jones flips to the last page.

PORTER
Well?

JONES
(reading)
Shh.

JONES (CONT'D)
(finishes)
Whew. Now that's a classic.

PORTER
You liked it that much, heh.

JONES
It was really something. That Buck Mulligan...

PORTER
Yeah, I tell you, the first time I read it...brings back good memories.

JONES
Yeah. Good memories.

Porter detects cynicism.

PORTER
Who died.

JONES
What?

PORTER
In the book, dumb shit.

JONES
Oh...

PORTER
You little liar. You...

JONES
I tried, okay.

PORTER
Had you been honest, I probably would have given you a new book, since I felt so guilty.

JONES
I really am sorry.

PORTER
Once a liar, always a liar.

Porter takes his cart away.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK FIVE

The squeaky wheel is back. Jones disregards Porter and continues to read -- he's near the three-quarter mark.

Porter looks in somewhat interested.

Jones gives attitude and turns away.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK SIX

Porter pulls into view.

Jones sits on his bed with the book beside him. He has a confident grimace of achievement on his face.

JONES

Well, old man. You got any questions for me.

PORTER

No. I can see in your eyes you've got an understanding. Pick your book. Any book.

JONES

Since you don't have Playboy, why don't you pick something for me.

PORTER

In that case...

Porter pulls out Hemingway.

PORTER (CONT'D)

This will make the week fly. And if you get done early, it's always good for another read or so.

They exchange books. Porter leaves.

JONES

Hey, Porter! Thanks.

PORTER (O.S.)

Anytime.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK SEVEN

The cart comes, but at a different cadence. Jones goes to the bars suspiciously.

It's a different guy. A younger guy, MO.

JONES
Where's Porter?

MO
The land of immortality.

JONES
Aw, shit.

MO
You're Jones?

JONES
Yeah.
(solemn beat)
Was it natural?

MO
I don't know, but this my job now.
I hear you were an explosives guy
for Del Ray.

JONES
It's not something I like to talk
about.

MO
You going to give me that book?

JONES
Oh, yeah. Sorry. I'm just a little
surprised about Porter.

As soon as Jones hands over the book, Mo pulls Jones into the bars and held in submission.

Mo looks to see if a guard is watching. It's clear.

MO
Quiet or I'll break your fucking
arm. You know Jamakus?

JONES
Yeah, big guy with halitosis. Like
you.

MO
You work for him now.

JONES
What if I refuse?

MO
Then I'll kill you right now.

JONES
So I have a choice is what you're
saying.

Mo slams Jones' head into the bars. Jones falls, bleeds.

Mo looks again for the guards, then gets a book from the cart
and gives it to Jones. Jones looks dizzy.

MO
From Jamakus.

JONES
Oh, *War and Peace*. I'm enchanted.
Thank Jamakus for me.

Mo pulls a makeshift blade out.

MO
After you open it, *don't* open it.
Do you understand?

JONES
Well, not really, but okay, brains.

MO
I'm gonna cut you up. You wait.

Mo leaves. Jones lays down.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK EIGHT

The paper plug in the faucet is completely saturated:
drip...drip...drip...

Jones wakes up rubbing his head. He looks at *War and Peace*
and considers the situation.

JONES
(to self)
After you open it...

He cracks the cover. The guts of the book are cut out and a
small package is in the hollow.

JONES (CONT'D)
Don't open it.

Jones smells it. His eyes light up.

JONES (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: WEEK NINE

Jones hears the book cart coming. It's not slow like Old Man Porter, it's not fast like Mo, it's right between, stalking eerily closer.

Jones gets a safe distance away from the bars.

It's Jamakus. A large monster like man with an ominous presence. He's unusually soft spoken.

JAMAKUS

They tell me you're smart.

JONES

Not so smart if I'm here.

JAMAKUS

Well, smarter than most here.

Jamakus looks for guards.

JONES

You want your package?

JAMAKUS

It's for you. So is this.

Jamakus holds a book through the bars.

Jones crosses his arms.

Jamakus lays the book on the bed.

JAMAKUS (CONT'D)

Do you know what's in that book?

JONES

My guess would be words. But I think you have your own idea of what books are for.

JAMAKUS

It's freedom.

Jones looks puzzled. He goes for the book cautiously and opens it.

JONES
A detonator.

JAMAKUS
That's right.

Jones tears up the hidden package. He puts the detonator and the explosives together to activate them. He walks up to the bars bravely holding the bomb in his fist.

JONES
What makes you think I won't kill
us both right now?

The sound of the leaking faucet continues.

DOGMATIC VOICE (O.S.)
You menacing gorilla. Get your ass
moving before I get down there and
bust you up!

Jamakus does nothing.

JAMAKUS
There's a car waiting outside this
wall. You can come with me, or you
can go your own way.

JONES
You want my help?

Jamakus nods.

JONES (CONT'D)
Did you kill Old Man Porter?

DOGMATIC VOICE (O.S.)
You wanna monkey around you big
monkey fuck! Well, here I come!

JAMAKUS
I didn't kill him personally. But I
gave the order. Stubborn fool
wouldn't cooperate.

JONES
Thanks for your honesty. But I
can't help. You don't need me. You
just need a small hole in a wall
somewhere, stick it in, and stand
back.

Jones puts the bomb in the book and gives it back to Jamakus.

JONES (CONT'D)
It's ready to go.

DOGMATIC VOICE (O.S.)
You're going straight to the
infirmary, you monster idiot!

Jamakus puts the book amongst the others on the cart and starts to leave.

JAMAKUS
Coming, sir.
(re: leak to Jones)
You should get that leak fixed.

Jones steps back quickly from Jamakus.

Jamakus sees something is wrong.

JAMAKUS (CONT'D)
No!

Jamakus scrambles for the book, but they all look alike.

Jones pries up his mattress and blankets himself with it.

BOOM! The SOUND of white noise rings while papers from the books fall like snow from the sky. The lights flicker.

Jones is still behind his mattress. After a moment, he surfaces. Bruised from the explosion.

He rises to he knees at the sink.

He sees the water...drip...drip...drip...but we hear nothing.

As the papers continue to fall, Jones is blanketed under them. He sees the cover of *Ulysses*, picks it up, and smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.