

P O P H E A D S

FADE IN:

EXT. HORDEN CITY - NIGHT

Smog fills the air between the industrial chimneys and the black clouds in the sky.

Horden City is a dump. It's dark, it's filthy, it's downright ugly. Everything a city wants, it hasn't. Police sirens lead the ambience as the complimenting sound of downpour bonds with them.

TITLE CARD:

"Horden City - 2114"

EXT. ZEPHYR APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The heavy rain hits against the many windows of the huge, yet grubby, apartment complex.

TITLE CARD:

"Zephyr Apartment Complex - Zone 175"

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The walls are cracked and the frame that surrounds the grimy door of apartment number 333 is crooked.

The door suddenly opens revealing AQUA, 17, cute and petite, wearing a mini skirt and tank top. She looks faint, but smiles.

AQUA

Come on in.

INT. APARTMENT 333 - NIGHT

Aqua guides an indistinguishable character to a circle of teens in the centre of a largely spaced room. They join the circle and sit together.

ENRIQUE, 17, Hispanic, light-headed, wearing leather pants and jacket, stares across at Aqua. He notices the indistinguishable character sitting close to Aqua. He's a little bemused.

ENRIQUE

(beat)

Aqua? There are two of you.

Aqua and her exact look-alike, turn to Enrique with a cute smile.

AQUA/AQUA

We're just friends.

They giggle simultaneously and, like a mirror image, move exactly the same. Enrique is further dazed.

Opposite Enrique is MARQ, 19, tall, well-built, strong facial features, wearing jeans and a tight shirt that shows off his biceps and build. He turns to Aqua and Aqua.

MARQ

Stop fuckin' 'round Aqua.

Aqua's startled by Marq's voice. She reaches into her pocket and brings out a small device. She switches something on it and her twin slowly flickers off. She was a hologram.

Marq chews on something gently. He leans his head back slightly and sighs as if relaxed. Next to him sits PASQUALE, 14, baby-faced, wearing casual shorts and t-shirt. He seems to be the only one who doesn't look woozy.

Pasquale holds some sort of apparatus. His fingers grip onto a small wooden bar. A thin rod points out from the top of the bar. Fixed at the end of it is a small metal basin. The bottom of the basin is black as if burnt repeatedly.

Marq notices him just staring at it.

MARQ

What the fuck you doin'?

Pasquale turns to Marq and shrugs his shoulders.

PASQUALE

What the fuck AM I doin', Marq?

Marq places, what seems to be, popcorn in the small metal basin of the apparatus. Pasquale stares at it.

PASQUALE

(beat)

What's that?

MARQ

It's like popcorn. You heat it up, it pops, you eat, you enjoy.

Pasquale hesitantly looks to Marq.

PASQUALE

Popco?

Marq gives him a smile and a wink.

MARQ

Popco it is little brother.
Christmas come early.

Pasquale turns back to the Popco. He's very uncertain.

MARQ

(beat)

Hey.

Marq grabs Pasquale's attention literally. His hand grips his little brother's shoulder.

MARQ

(beat)

Don't worry. It's safe. It's good.

UNIQUE (O.S)

It blinds you from the truth.

UNIQUE, 18, gorgeous, perfect, wearing a revealing top and skin-tight pants, sits adjacent to Pasquale. He looks to her.

UNIQUE

It takes away the pain. It brings back color and imagination.

Marq flicks his lighter and begins to burn the bottom of the metal basin. Pasquale watches with doubt.

MARQ

Once it pops, take it and chew
on it slowly. Slowly, okay?

Pasquale keeps his eyes on it but nods.

The Popco pops, Pasquale jumps a little with fright. He takes it and puts it in his mouth immediately. He slowly begins to chew on it. Marq keeps his eyes on him and so does Unique.

MARQ

Savour the taste.

Pasquale's face twists with detestation. He goes to spit it out but Marq grabs his brother's jaw and closes it aggressively.

MARQ

Don't be a fuckin' pussy
Pasquale. Chew it and eat it.
Fuckin' tastes just like
popcorn, like mom used to make
it, huh?

Pasquale's eyes water. He gulps down hard. Marq lets go of his jaw.

UNIQUE

It'll hit you in a second.

MARQ

Like a brick fuckin' wall.

Pasquale closes his eyes. He drops the apparatus on the floor and relaxes.

Marq looks to Unique grinning. She winks with a smile in return.

UNIQUE

Where'd you get this shit from
anyway?

Loud and aggressive shouting is heard coming from a neighbouring apartment. Marq and Unique look toward the commotion.

MARQ

From them.

Unique turns to him as the yelling dies down.

UNIQUE

Next door?

Marq looks back to Unique.

MARQ

Yeah. They asked and I said yes. They said I could have a discount 'cause we're neighbours. Pretty fuckin' good deal if you ask me.

UNIQUE

(beat)

Did'ya see they upped the fine on Popco possession? Just last month.

Marq grabs the apparatus from the floor and starts to heat up another one.

MARQ

(beat)

Yeah I saw it. Don't matter anyhow... cops won't and barely find the shit anywhere anyway. They'd never find us here... they wouldn't bother.

The Popco pops. He takes it and chews on it. He moans with a smile and passes the apparatus onto Unique. She takes it.

UNIQUE

I guess you're right.

MARQ

(mouth-full)

Fuckin' rights I'm fuckin' right.

Enrique shimmies over to Aqua who's fiddling on with her small device. He sits next to her looking closely at her chest.

AQUA

(beat)

What'd you say if I said they weren't real?

ENRIQUE

(beat)

I'd say I'm not surprised.

She looks to him with a teasing smile.

Pasquale's eyes flicker open. He turns slowly to Marq next him. Marq sees him and smiles.

MARQ

Good shit, huh? More?

Pasquale's lips tremble.

PASQUALE

I feel funny.

Marq laughs.

MARQ

That's just the beginning.

Marq leans over and takes the apparatus lying near the feet of Unique, whose eyes are now shut. He places a Popco piece into the basin and lights up.

Pasquale watches it.

PASQUALE

I dunno...

MARQ

Don't worry. Same as before.
Don't spit the fucker out,
'kay?

Pasquale isn't with it at all. His eyes are bobbing around as if in a fish tank. His lips still tremble.

The Popco pops. Pasquale hesitates.

Marq takes the Popco and puts it in Pasquale's mouth.

MARQ

Just get the second out of the
way and you'll be fuckin'
flyin'.

Pasquale chews and chews. His eyes close and he relaxes.

Marq notices Unique staring at him.

UNIQUE

He's fourteen.

MARQ
It's for his own good.

Marq puts down the apparatus.

MARQ
He's been given a pretty shitty
fuckin' life. I have what I
have... he has what I have. The
little fucker's family.

Unique shows Marq a little admiration with a nod and a grin.

Pasquale suddenly begins to spasm. Foam starts to pour out of
his mouth and blood from his nose oozes out.

Marq is stunned.

MARQ
(shouting)
Pasquale!

Everyone takes notice. Marq grabs hold of him. Unique stands
to her feet in shock.

UNIQUE
He's O.D'ing!

Tears are building up in Marq's eyes as he lays Pasquale on
the ground.

MARQ
Fuck... fuck.

Enrique and Aqua stand to their feet.

ENRIQUE
What do we do?!

AQUA
I'll call an ambulance!

Marq immediately turns to Aqua.

MARQ
(raised voice)
No! Don't call anyone! Don't
you fuckin' call anyone!

AQUA
He's dying Marq!

Marq glances over to Pasquale. His spasms stop.

Marq looks back to Aqua.

MARQ
He's gonna be fine! Fuck you,
fuck you, he's gonna be fuckin'
fine!

He looks back at Pasquale. He's motionless.

UNIQUE
Marq! What's happening'?!

Marq runs and picks up Pasquale in his arms. He runs with him toward the front door. Unique burst into tears.

UNIQUE
Where you goin'?! Marq!

Marq struggles but opens to the door quickly. He runs out into the corridor and disappears around the corner.

Unique, Enrique and Aqua stand almost paralysed with shock.

A door bursting open is heard followed by a lot of chaotic yelling and screaming.

EXT. ZEPHYR APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The downpour is immense as before. The apartments look grimy and dreary, again, as before.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The place is a dump. Dirty, used cutlery is everywhere.

RENZO, 33, rugged, handsomely slicked back hair, wearing torn jeans and a leather jacket, sits at a small metallic breakfast table against the far wall.

He sits opposite BAXLEY, 27, long greasy hair, wearing torn pants and a t-shirt. He's smoking. Behind Baxley is a similarly sized man. JAXON, 26, tied back greasy hair, wearing similar torn clothes to Baxley, looks down toward Renzo.

Baxley takes a drag from his smoke.

BAXLEY

(beat)

Tell me again, how'd you get my number?

RENZO

I live upstairs. I saw what you were bringin' in. I thought it'd be pretty bad fuckin' manners to just knock. So I got your number from the book downstairs.

Baxley seems surprised. He takes another drag with the new expression.

BAXLEY

There's a book of everyone's number right here, downstairs?

RENZO

Yup.

BAXLEY

Well fuck, that's news to me.

Renzo watches as Baxley takes in a few more drags. Jaxon keeps his stare. Renzo notices him.

BAXLEY

Oh, don't worry about him. He just doesn't trust you.

Baxley smiles. Renzo laughs.

RENZO

Am I a fuckin' pig now? I didn't think they were recruiting popheads.

Baxley laughs with Renzo. Jaxon doesn't do anything.

The laughter quickly dies down.

BAXLEY

(beat)

How much?

RENZO

How much?

BAXLEY

Yeah, how much pop?

Baxley continues to smoke. Jaxon relieves himself from behind Baxley and wanders slowly around closer to Renzo. They keep their eyes on each other for a moment.

BAXLEY

Hmm?

Renzo turns back to Baxley.

RENZO

I err, have two hundred green in my pocket. How much would that get me?

Baxley smiles.

BAXLEY

Oh, enough for a good night.

Renzo smiles, though he seems a little tense. Jaxon stands behind him.

Baxley turns around and grabs a suitcase from the ground. He places it on the breakfast table.

BAXLEY

You got the money?

Renzo sharply gets up.

RENZO

Yeah. Sure.

Renzo reaches into his back pocket. He inadvertently reveals a fancy looking pulse gun tucked behind his pants. Jaxon notices and pulls his gun on Renzo.

JAXON

(shouting)

He's carryin'!

Baxley stands up knocking his chair backwards. He pulls his gun out on Renzo.

JAXON
(shouting)
He's a cop!

Renzo puts his hands up.

RENZO
(shouting)
I'm no cop! I'm no fuckin' cop!

BAXLEY
(shouting)
You a cop!?

RENZO
I'm no fuckin' cop for fuck
sake!? The gun's for
protection!

Jaxon takes the gun out of Renzo's pants. Keeping his gun pointed, Jaxon walks over to Baxley and hands him the gun.

Baxley studies it.

BAXLEY
That's a fuckin' mighty fancy
gun for a pophead like you
ain't it?

RENZO
(beat)
I stole it. I stole the fucker.

BAXLEY
You stole it? Where from? The
downtown fuckin' police
precinct?

RENZO
I'm not a cop. I just want my
fuckin' pop and that's it.

Jaxon steps forward with intent.

JAXON
Pop for the cop? Well here's
your fuckin' pop!

He points the gun at Renzo's face. Baxley grabs Jaxon back.

BAXLEY

Don't fuckin' think that shit
Jaxon. We don't want dead cops
brains smeared against the
fuckin' walls. Anyone hears
anythin' in this shit dump,
they call the fuckin' cops...
then we're fucked.

Baxley looks to Renzo.

BAXLEY

An undercover cop, he might
even have backup.

JAXON

You got backup you fuck?!

RENZO

I ain't got backup 'cause I
ain't no fuckin' cop!

BAXLEY

If he's got backup then we're
already fucked. We'll have to
use him as a hostage.

RENZO

Even if I was a cop and I did
have backup, I'm pretty fuckin'
sure I would've called them up
for backup by now.

Their attention is turned to some furious yelling coming from
next door.

JAXON

What's that?

BAXLEY

Just some kids next door.

Baxley takes a last drag from his cigarette. He throws it on
the floor and steps on it whilst staring toward Renzo.

BAXLEY

(beat)

Check him for wires.

Jaxon walks over to him. He places his pulse gun in the back
of his pants and grabs Renzo. He begins to hand search him.

The door suddenly bursts open in the next room with a loud thud. Baxley and Jaxon turn to face the door leading out of the kitchen.

BAXLEY
(shouting)
Stay the fuck back or I'll
shoot your fuckin' cop!

Renzo grabs the gun from the back of Jaxon's pants before he can. Renzo kicks him forward and points it toward Baxley, who now holds his own gun to the door and Renzo's at Renzo.

Marq suddenly runs in through the kitchen door holding Pasquale in his arms. He looks to Baxley.

MARQ
You gotta help me! He's
O.D'ing!

Marq realizes the situation.

BAXLEY
Get that fuckin' kid outta
here!

Marq runs and lays Pasquale on the breakfast table. He looks to Baxley.

MARQ
He's fuckin' dyin' man! He's my
brother. He's dyin', you gotta
help.

Renzo looks deep into Baxley's eyes.

RENZO
Help the fuckin' kid!

Baxley hesitates. He looks to the kid then back to Renzo. He, again, looks to the kid then to Jaxon.

BAXLEY
Jaxon! Get the fuckin' kit in
here. Now!

Jaxon runs out of the room. Baxley looks back to Renzo. Renzo looks to Baxley.

BAXLEY
(beat)
You a fuckin' pig?

Renzo hesitates.

Jaxon leaps into the kitchen with a small kit bag. He runs to the table where he opens it up.

MARQ
Is my brother gonna be okay?!

Jaxon pulls out a syringe. He pokes it through a small bottle and fills it up with a yellowy liquid.

Ripping off Pasquale's shirt, Jaxon finds the heart hurriedly. He grabs the syringe like a knife and without hesitation, stabs it into the kid's chest.

THUMP!

Pasquale sits up with a deep gasp, eyes wide open. He looks down at the syringe currently wedged in his chest.

MARQ
Pasquale!

Marq grabs his brother's arms and looks at him. Pasquale stares down at Marq.

MARQ
Are you okay?

Marq takes Pasquale in his arms. He turns to Jaxon.

MARQ
Thank you.

He and his brother exit the room. Renzo still has the pulse gun pointed toward Baxley. Baxley has two pulse guns pointed toward Renzo. Jaxon stands in the middle unsure of the situation.

BAXLEY
(beat)
How do we resolve this situation?

RENZO
I'm gonna fuckin' leave, that's how I resolve the situation.

Baxley, sweating pints, shakes his head yet with doubt.

RENZO

I'm no fuckin' cop. But I'm
leavin'. And no one's gonna
stop me.

Renzo steps out from behind the breakfast table. Jaxon moves
closer to Baxley.

RENZO

Throw me my gun, and I'll throw
you yours.

Baxley shakes his head.

BAXLEY

How 'bout I keep your gun and
you keep your life? How's that
sound?

RENZO

(beat)

Sounds pretty fuckin' fair to
me.

Renzo and Baxley keep their guns pointed to one another at all
times. Renzo slowly steps toward the kitchen door.

He reaches it and backs out. The sound of Renzo's running
footsteps is heard. They soon fade away.

Baxley and Jaxon relax. They each take a breath of relief.

INT. CORRIDORS - NIGHT

The grimy door's closed at apartment number 333.

EXT. ZEPHYR APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The rain still pours heavily.

Out from the front doors, Renzo exits the complex. He runs
away from the building without looking back.

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