

THEO SC1

15.

EXT. METCALF PARK - DAY

This neighborhood of Milwaukee would not look out of place in any overpopulated metropolis of the Third World:

Pothole-ridden streets lined with PAWN SHOPS, LIQUOR STORES and storefront CHURCHES. VACANT LOTS where barefoot CHILDREN play. Hundreds of BICYCLES AND MOPEDS zooming up and down the street in a chaos of noise and pollution.

This is the RED ZONE. It's so different from Stanford Mills that it feels like another country. Hell, another planet.

A VIDEO SCREEN shows a SOLDIER SALUTING, an oil field in the background. A TEXT FLASHES: "JOIN THE GASKO SECURITY FORCES. KEEPING THE PEACE AT HOME AND ABROAD". It's a recruitment ad for a corporate army.

THEO, a tough-looking 17 year old, walks past the screen and along the MAKESHIFT STALLS where skewers of suspicious-looking meat are grilled and jerry-rigged appliances are sold: portable water purifiers, solar-powered camping stoves, hand-cranked radios...

Theo's followed by a MORBIDLY OBESE MAN (40s), panting and using a crutch to keep up.

start →

OBESE MAN

What's a punk like you doing with something like that?

THEO

Got my ways. You interested or not?

OBESE MAN

Let me see it.

Theo stops behind the stall of a KNIFE SHARPENER, spinning an upturned bicycle to sharpen a blade. The boy looks around, making sure he's not being watched, takes off his BACKPACK, unzips it and reveals...

A CARTON OF CIGARETTES. He unseals one of the packs and hands the man a CIGARETTE.

THEO

100% pure unadulterated tobacco.
No sawdust in these babies.

The obese man rolls the cigarette between his fingers and smells it. He seems pleased.

1/7

OBESE MAN

How much?

THEO

50 dollars a pack. 400 for the whole carton.

OBESE MAN

A bit rich for my blood.

THEO

Dude, you know how much these things go for in the green zones?

Suddenly, Theo spots THREE GUYS approaching, scanning the crowd -- and let's just say they don't look friendly. One of them, a muscular, heavily tattooed SAMOAN, spots Theo! Shit!

Theo rushes to put his merchandise back in the bag, as the three guys approach --

OBESE MAN

Ok, fine, 350.

And suddenly, Theo SHOVES the Obese Man towards them! And as they crash, THEO BREAKS INTO A RUN! Another guy, military looking, with a CREW CUT, motions to the other two:

~~CREW CUT~~

~~Goddammit! Get him!~~

Theo runs for his life, pushing bystanders, dodging merchants -- his pursuers are right behind him!

He CRASHES through one of the flimsy stalls. But he doesn't stop. He jumps over one of the red hot grills and keeps running, the soles of his sneakers sizzling with the heat --

Still they CLOSE IN on him. He needs to think of something...

And suddenly Theo takes a sharp turn and runs straight into traffic! Is he out of his mind? MOPEDS zoom by, honking furiously, missing him by an inch!

Theo runs between lanes, against traffic, forcing the mopeds to dodge him -- the three guys following from the sidewalk, trying to get to him without being run over --

Now Theo sees an opening and runs to the opposite side of the street. He's almost hit a couple of times but manages to reach the sidewalk --

2/7

~~END~~

THEO sc 2

43.

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The lobby makes the outside of the building look good. Concrete floors, the guts of the building out for everyone to see. The ELEVATOR SHAFTS are just two black, gaping holes.

Inside, a PUNK sits on a DIRT BIKE. The bike starts with a VROOOM and Ben sits behind the driver.

BEN

Eighteenth.

The Driver nods and guns the bike towards a STAIRCASE...

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

The bike drives up the stairs, carrying its passenger floor after floor, until...

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - 18TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The bike bursts out of a staircase and comes to a stop.

Ben gets off the bike and peels off another bill. The driver takes it and roars back down the stairs.

Ben is left alone in the dark hallway, the only light source being the moon that seeps in through the holes in the walls.

He approaches an UNMARKED DOOR and knocks...

...then waits, until...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yeah?

BEN

It's me.

The sound of numerous locks. Then, the door opens, revealing... THEO. Very much alive.

He turns back, leaves the door open, trying not to face Ben.

THEO

Hey, Aaron.

That name again. Who's Aaron?

BEN

Theo.

START →

3/7

Ben enters and closes the door behind him.

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - THEO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the apartment is modest, but someone's done his best to make it livable.

THEO
(brusque)
What are you doing here?

BEN
Getting the usual warm and fuzzy
welcome, I gue-- What's that?

Ben's noticed something on Theo's face: is that a bruise?

BEN (CONT'D)
What happened?

THEO
Nothing.

Ben grabs Theo's shoulder and spins him around: there's definitely a bruise on his cheek, and a cut on his lip.

BEN
What do you mean "nothing"?

THEO
It's just the training. I've...
started training.

BEN
You mean for the cage.

THEO
Yeah.

Ben takes a beat to process it.

BEN
That's insane.

THEO
That's not what Terrence says.

BEN
Terrence?

4/7

THEO
Terrence, he's... "the guy" around here. He says we'll make a shitload of money together.

BEN
He'll make a shitload of money. You'll end up soiling your underwear in some street corner.

Suddenly, the LIGHTS in the apartment DIM AND FLICKER. Without missing a beat, Theo reaches for a LAMP on the table. The lamp has a handle, and Theo starts cranking it while he speaks... This is not unusual.

THEO
What do you want me to do? Join one of the corporate armies? Get blown to pieces in some gas field in Siberia?

By the time the lights die out in a full-blown BLACK-OUT, the HAND-CRANKED LAMP has enough power to light up the room, however faintly.

~~THEO (CONT'D)
(re: the black-out)
I bet you miss these.~~

S/S/7

Ben ignores the comment. He's still concerned about Theo.

BEN
I bring you cigarettes, Theo. Real ones. There's good money there.

THEO
And what do you think got me in trouble with Terrence in the first place, Aaron?

BEN
It's Ben.

Beat.

THEO
Sure. I'll call you Ben. As long as you don't forget Aaron.

BEN
I don't.

Ben produces a folded piece of paper. He hands it out to Theo, who unfolds it by the glow of the lamp:

It's a PRINT-OUT from the FACE-RECOGNITION SOFTWARE. It shows the GIRL being escorted out of the minivan.

Theo's mouth suddenly goes dry. He finds it hard to speak when he says...

THEO
Is that... is that her?

BEN
Seventy-three percent chance.
Never even got close to forty
before.

The printout shakes in Theo's hand.

THEO
So you found her?

BEN
I may have.

THEO
Where is she?

BEN
If it is Elena--

THEO
Where. Is. She?

Ben points at the print-out.

BEN
That's a group of girls being
escorted to Arcadia. New girls.

THEO
(afraid)
That's a...

BEN
It's an Executive Club.

THEO
Sure, keep telling yourself that.

BEN
Theo--

THEO
Can you get in there?

6/7

BEN
Not at my level, I--

THEO
You can't--?

BEN
Not till I get a promotion...

THEO
You fucking Suits.

BEN
...not till I get to the fortieth
floor. Access is restricted to
senior execs.

Theo sits on a mangy couch, deflated.

THEO
Tell me you got a plan.

Ben produces the SMALL VIAL WITH CHAD'S BLOOD.

THEO (CONT'D)
What's that?

BEN
Opportunity.
(beat)
A position is about to open up on
the fortieth.

Theo stands up and faces Ben.

THEO
You better get that promotion then.
For your sake and the sake of that
dumb piece of ass you ma--

BEN
(shutting him up)
Careful.

Theo smiles.

THEO
See, Ben? You're already
forgetting.

Theo was testing him and Ben took the bait.

END

7/7