

(Name of Project)
by
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by
(Current Writer, date)

Name
Address
Phone

REDEMPTION'S GAME

FADE IN:

INT. OCTAGON - NIGHT

RAVEL, 26 year old prize bull of a fighter, smashes his foot into his OPPONENT'S mauled face. The bone crushing blow staggering the man backwards into the ropes.

He starts to fall until--

Ravel hammers the Opponent's gut with his fists, like a jackhammer. Punches being the only thing keeping the abused fighter standing as his legs bend like reeds in the wind. His back against the chain link fence.

The BELL sounds signifying the end of the round.

Ravel breaks off the onslaught and struts to his corner, a Cheshire smile from ear to ear.

His Opponent crawls, hands and knees, to his.

The arena CROWD ROARS with approval for the brutal display.

RAVEL'S CORNER

JOE, 70-year-old weathered manager, fidgets restlessly in Ravel's corner. He wipes the sweat off of Ravel's head.

JOE

Why don't you let him fall already?

RAVEL

If he can't take it he shouldn't be here.

JOE

He's taking it alright. It's just not his choice.

He glances at the Opponents corner.

OPPONENT'S CORNER

Elvis, 44, an overweight, sleazy promoter with more gold in his teeth than Mr.T wears around his neck, looms over the fighter's head.

ELVIS

If you ever want to fight again
you get back in there.

The Opponent speaks through swollen and bloody lips.

OPPONENT

I can't. He's too strong.

Blood flecks spray Elvis' Italian-silk shirt.

ELVIS

You just go back out there and
fight.

Elvis covers his own mouth with a handkerchief. And notices the red speckles of blood on his shirt. He gags and steps away from his fighter and wipes at his chest trying to brush away the irritant.

OPPONENT

He's too strong.

ELVIS

Hit him in the balls if you have
to. Just get back out there and
finish this round.

OCTAGON

The BELL sounds.

Ravel bounds to his feet, a feral look in his eyes and the taste of blood in his mouth.

His Opponent doesn't move.

OPPONENT'S CORNER

Elvis, covering his mouth with the handkerchief with one hand, shoves his fighter back into the center of the ring with his other.

He briskly scrubs his now contaminated hands on a towel to get off any stray sweat.

OCTAGON

The Opponent promptly walks into a blazing round house kick that rattles his skull.

He starts to fall until--

Ravel's other foot slams into his rib cage. Back and forth. Right leg, left leg. Lifting him with each kick and forcing him to remain standing.

JOE

Let him fall!

Ravel wraps his arms around his Opponent's head and holds him up as he thrusts wicked knee shots into the other fighter's ribs.

Pain explodes in the Opponent's chest as his ribs snap. His breathing comes labored. His legs are jello.

RAVEL

Come on you limp piece of--

The Opponent manages a feeble swing that connects with Ravel's jaw.

Ravel's eyes ignite.

RAVEL (CONT'D)

Is that all you got?

The Opponent wobbles as Ravel punishes him with an uppercut that sends him into the ropes. He bounces between the ropes and Ravel's ruthless jabs.

JOE

Ref! He can't take anymore. Stop the fight.

The REFEREE glances at Elvis. Elvis glares back at him and almost imperceptibly shakes his head no, clearly plying some sort of control over the Ref and forcing the match to continue.

Ravel pursues his Opponent and fires foot and fist into him repeatedly, like he's exercising on a heavy bag rather than hitting a person.

Cross. Roundhouse kick. Hook. Hook. Jab.

Ravel shoots a back kick into his Opponent's midsection with so much force that it drives him into the fence and he collapses.

RAVEL

Pathetic.

His body flops with a wet, fleshy THUD onto the mat.

Elvis rushes over and tries will his fighter to his feet.

Hesitantly the Referee starts to check to see if the fighter is out.

Elvis glares at him again and hesitates, but he manages to continue.

The Ref signals that the fight is over and the BELL rings.

The Opponent has yet to get up as Ravel prowls the ring in victory. His arms raised as he glories in the adulation of the audience.

RINGSIDE

PARAMEDICS rush to ringside, lift the inert Opponent onto a stretcher and carry him off into the bowels of the arena.

OCTAGON

Joe climbs into the ring and Ravel snatches his water bottle out of Joe's hand.

Elvis slithers up next to Joe and whispers in his ear.

Joe grabs Ravel excitedly.

JOE

You're fightin' the Champ next!

RAVEL
Bring him on. I'm ready.

Ravel tilts his head at the ceiling and screams.
Cameras flash, strobing the monstrous image. Foam
sprays from Ravel's mouth.

JOE
C'mon let's get back to the
locker room.

RAVEL
Not yet.

Ravel prances around the ring as cameras flash. He sees
an attractive young LADY in the audience.

RAVEL (CONT'D)
You're looking at the next
champion baby.

He pounds his chest with his fist.

RAVEL (CONT'D)
Come get some.

Joe leaves the ring with his head down in embarrassment
and shame. Ravel remains glorying in the limelight as
the crowd pours forth its adulation.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Fluorescent lights flicker as heavy footsteps of the
departing crowd echo metallicly throughout the empty
hallway.

Joe approaches the open door of Ravel's locker room
carrying a bucket full of ice.

Elvis exits the room as he nears.

Joe freezes in his tracks as Elvis trots past him, a
smile on his face.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

White walls and a linoleum floor give the room a sterile, antiseptic air that is almost enough to dull the pain of the many fighters whose essences still permeate the arena.

Ravel sits on a stainless steel table with his hands still taped, staring off into space.

JOE

What was he doing here?

RAVEL

Nothing.

JOE

Nothing?

RAVEL

Yeah, nothing.

Joe mechanically starts cutting the tape off of Ravel's hands.

JOE

You should have let him fall.

RAVEL

I should have beat him longer.

JOE

You nearly killed him tonight.

RAVEL

Hell, ain't my problem.

JOE

Don't use that kind of language.

Ravel rolls his eyes at Joe. His disdain for the old man clearly displayed.

JOE (CONT'D)

This place is Holy.

RAVEL
This game ain't about that.

JOE
Yes, it is.

EXT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

A worn facade of red brick turned brown and a small sign that reads "GYM" are the only things that identify it from the numerous other windowless cells.

Elvis trots his enormous mass through the narrow door, his girth forcing him to nearly turn sideways.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Ravel spars with a PARTNER in a dilapidated ring in the center of the floor. Other FIGHTERS sparsely populate the worn gym, working out on heavy bags and speed bags.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

Joe sits in his office reading a recap of last night's fight in the newspaper. The paper headlines, "Fighter in Coma After Brutal Match"

Elvis slides into Joe's office and closes the door behind him.

JOE
You don't belong here.

ELVIS
I've been thinking.

JOE
I doubt that.

Elvis leans towards Joe conspiratorially. Joe leans away, as far as his chair allows, not liking the stench.

ELVIS
Your boy will take the title, no doubt, right?

JOE
Time for you to go now.

ELVIS
The thing is... I think he's
going to lose.

JOE
He's gonna mop the floor with
that phony you've got wearing the
belt.

ELVIS
No, I think that Ravel is going
to lose, in the third round.

JOE
If you don't leave right now--

ELVIS
If he lost, in the third round, I
bet he'd win three months later
in a re-match. I think that would
probably even draw a multi-
dollar purse. Not to mention the
pay-per-view percentages.

JOE
Good bye.

ELVIS
Don't you finally want to have a
Champ?

Joe's glare is answer enough.

ELVIS (CONT'D)
Your school is outdated and
you're virtually dead you old
fool. This is your last shot. I
can make it a sure thing.

JOE
Get out.

ELVIS
Suit yourself.

Elvis grins maliciously and strolls out of Joe's office.

INT. JOE'S GYM

Ravel's gaze tracks Elvis' departure. Their eyes lock briefly.

ELVIS
Anyone who wants a real career
can come sign with me. Today
only, I'm taking anyone from this
gym who wants a future.

Elvis strides gleefully towards the door. Joe bolts onto the main floor, chasing him out and slamming the door.

RAVEL
What was that about?

Joe just looks at Ravel.

RAVEL (CONT'D)
How much?

JOE
I told him to get lost.

RAVEL
What'd you do that for? I could
be the Champ.

JOE
You still can. Without buying it.

RAVEL
Not if you blew the deal.

JOE
You've got to be kidding.

RAVEL

In all these years you never
had... you don't know how to play
the game anymore, do you?

Joe turns his back on Ravel in disgust and starts for
his office. The entire gym is silent. All eyes are on
the two.

RAVEL (CONT'D)

I want the title.

JOE

And you'll get it. The right way.

RAVEL

You and your damned convictions
are the only reason I don't have
it already.

Joe spins on his heels and strides to ringside, fire in
his eyes and a growl in his throat.

JOE

Watch... your... mouth.

RAVEL

Spare me the lecture old man.

JOE

If you don't want to do it the
right way then I want you gone.

RAVEL

Right. You're fired then.

Ravel climbs out of the ring and makes for the door.

JOE

Go on. He'll eat you up and spit
you out.

RAVEL

You blew it. I was your last
shot. He's made champions,
something you could never do.

JOE
He's never made a fighter.

RAVEL
Go to hell.

JOE
Been there.

Ravel slams out of the Gym. The other fighters, eyes glued to the scene, slowly, one-by-one, start to follow Ravel's lead and wander out.

JOE (CONT'D)
You wanna go, fine. I only wanna train real men. Get out! The lot of ya.

Joe storms into his office, slamming the door. All of the fighters leave except one.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE

Joe sits at his desk, resting his head in his hands.

He hears the beat of a heavy bag being worked. He gets up, furious and stomps back into the gym.

INT. JOE'S GYM

Joe enters the main floor and sees ANDREW, a good looking 20 year old kid, pounding the canvas.

JOE
(to himself)
I should've known.
(yells)
I told you all to leave I don't wanna train any more fighters.
None of you.

ANDREW
That's okay.

He kicks the bag.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
I think I'll stay anyway.

JOE

Andrew, listen to me. I'm no good anymore. Go sign up with someone else. Think about your future.

Andrew hits the bag again.

ANDREW

I need someone who's been there. Experienced it.

JOE

You got talent kid, you don't need me. I'm done with this game.

Joe stops the heavy bag from swinging while Andrew hits it.

ANDREW

You're not driving me away. Plus, it looks like you could use all the customers you can get.

JOE

Not interested anymore. I can't deal with the garbage that's infested this world.

ANDREW

You going to let that lot take your heart with them? I thought you had more in you than that.

Andrew throws a combination of hooks and jabs.

JOE

You don't know what you're talking about.

ANDREW

It's in your blood. I've watched all your fights, seen the look in your eyes.

Hook. Hook. Elbow.

JOE
That was before.

ANDREW
You were the best around. You
can't just throw it all away. And
I want to be here, in this place,
with you.

JOE
Fine, whatever.

Andrew smiles.

ANDREW
Thanks.

Andrew switches to kicking.

Roundhouse Kick.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Besides, I know where you can get
a real fighter. The best I've
ever seen.

He alternates legs.

JOE
Who might that be?

ANDREW
I'll show you.

Roundhouse Kick.

JOE
Where?

EXT. BAD PART OF TOWN - NIGHT

Andrew and Joe make their way down the corroded
sidewalk. HOOKERS and PIMPS line the streets, while
DRUG DEALERS ply their wares.

JOE
I'm not sure this is such a good
idea.

ANDREW
It's fine, trust me.

JOE
You come here a lot?

ANDREW
Nearly every night.

They turn down an alley and walk past a few HOMELESS people.

Towards the end of the alley stands a pair of large GOONS. They obscure a doorway that a few casually dressed BUSINESSMEN pass through.

Joe and Andrew approach the door.

The Goons pat them down and then move aside and let them pass. Joe slips Andrew a nervous sideways glance, but goes in anyway.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Andrew leads Joe through a thronging mass of wildly cheering SPECTATORS to a good vantage point.

From this spot Joe is able to see a barren concrete pit. Dried blood stains the cold gray walls and floor of the circular recess.

In that pit, two FIGHTERS currently battle; one wears red trunks and one wears gold.

INT. PIT

The GOLD FIGHTER executes a backfist that knocks a tooth out of the RED FIGHTERS mouth.

He follows with a leg sweep that sends the Red Fighter to the concrete.

An attempted stomp to the head that is caught by Red who rolls with the captured limb bringing the Gold Fighter to the ground, hard.

WAREHOUSE

Joe looks at Andrew who is watching the fight intently, almost studying it.

JOE
What are the rules?

ANDREW
Win.

JOE
This is what you wanted me to see?

ANDREW
He's fighting next.

PIT

The Red fighter punches his opponent in the back of the head, bouncing his face off of the floor with a hollow THUD that can be heard above the din of the crowd.

The fight is over.

WAREHOUSE

BOOKIES start to pay off bets and take wagers on the next bout.

JOE
We shouldn't be here.

ANDREW
It's fine.

Andrew flags down a Bookie.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Fifty on Michael.

JOE
You shouldn't be betting on this kind of thing.

BOOKIE
Fitty on Mike. 'ere ya go.

The Bookie hands Andrew a ticket in exchange for \$50.

The two previous opponents have cleared the pit and mopping has begun inside.

ANDREW
You wanna place a bet?

JOE
No.

ANDREW
I'm tellin' you. Michael's going to win.

JOE
Really, that's okay.

ANDREW
Suit yourself.

The Bookie wanders off.

PIT

A WELL MUSCLED MAN strides into the pit, his footsteps echoing. Muscle ripples beneath his plain white T-shirt.

The ground practically rattles with his approach and a hush swallows the crowd.

WAREHOUSE

Joe glances at Andrew again. Andrew is once more intent on watching the pit.

JOE
That's him right?

ANDREW
Nope. That is.

JOE

It's like a bad cliché.

Andrew points to the other side of the pit. A battle scarred, 45 year old man, MICHAEL, rests.

ANDREW

I know. Watch, it gets better.

Michael kneels on the concrete and bows his clean shaven head. He wears a pair of well used blue jeans and no shirt. Old scars form barely perceptible patterns on his body. His eyes contain an animalistic ferocity that is held back only by sheer power of will.

PIT

Michael stands and faces his opponent. Michael is about 4 inches shorter and 60 pounds lighter than his opponent.

He puts his hand out to shake. The Well muscled Man leans forwards and--

smacks Michael in the face with a CRACK that turns him 180 degrees.

Michael's focus shifts to rage as the tiger is unleashed.

The two circle each other.

Michael throws a roundhouse kick at the legs, testing his opponent's reactions.

The Well Muscled Man rushes towards him and whips him into the wall of the pit. The SMACK of flesh hitting concrete resounds in Joe's ears.

Michael rebounds and blasts a roundhouse kick into the man's knee. It buckles.

He follows his kick with an elbow to the head and connects with trembling shock that ripples through the man's enormous body and knocks him over.

He yanks Michael's feet out from under him.

Michael hits the ground hard, but is back on his feet instantly and pounces, firing a flurry of punches, like a machine gun, that stun his opponent.

The Crowd ROARS in approval.

The opponent covers his head with the two sides of beef he calls arms. Michael's punches no longer penetrate through the wall of flesh.

He hesitates in his attack until--

The Man's meat cleaver hands come down on his collar bone with crushing force, driving him to his knees.

While on his knees, Michael smashes his elbow into his opponent's weakened leg.

ANDREW

Look at the way he adapts. It's like reflex the way he shifts his attacks.

The big man goes down.

Michael waits for him to struggle back to his feet before he attacks again.

JOE

He's got honor at least.

He thrusts a lightning fast sidekick into his opponents face, bursting the man's nose and causing his eyes to roll back in his skull.

The Well Muscled Man goes over backwards, out cold.

The Crowd goes wild.

Michael simply turns around, kneels, bows his head, then gets up and exits the arena.

WAREHOUSE

Andrew turns to Joe with a childlike delight in his eyes.

Joe is awestruck.

ANDREW
Well?

JOE
I've never seen anything like it.

ANDREW
I told you. He's incredible!

JOE
He's something.

ANDREW
You want to meet him? Come on.

JOE
I--

ANDREW
Come on.

Andrew makes his way through the Crowd.

Joe hesitantly follows.

They make their way to a door with a LARGE GUARD blocking it.

Andrew slips the Large Guard some money and he lets them through.

INT. LOCKER AREA - NIGHT

They find themselves in an unfinished hallway. Plaster crumbles off of the walls and pot holes mar the concrete floor.

They wander down the hall past a few rooms until they come across Michael's.

INT. MICHAEL'S LOCKER ROOM

Michael's room is devoid of all furnishings. A sterile grey tone on the walls.

He sits cross-legged on the barren floor taking off his hand wraps with great care.

Andrew steps inside. Joe stays just outside, peering cautiously in.

ANDREW
Hey. Great fight. You really
kicked his butt.

Michael looks at Andrew, silent.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
I just wanted to congratulate you
and introduce you to my friend.

Andrew turns around to find Joe still outside the door. Michael sits silently. He cocks his head and examines Joe, his eyes assessing every inch of the man.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
He's a professional Mixed Martial
Arts trainer and manager.

Michael says nothing. His face reveals nothing.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Joe Fontain.

Andrew turns to motion for Joe to come in, but Joe is gone.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Well, looks like it's time to go.
It was nice meeting you.

Andrew scurries out.

He spots Joe's back as he makes for the exit.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Hey, Joe. Wait up.

Andrew jogs to catch up as Joe continues in his path through the exit.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Joe struggles to get through the thronging masses, people press in on every side as he gets jostled back and forth. Andrew catches up.

He puts his hand on Joe's shoulder and stops him.

ANDREW
What's wrong?

JOE
There's no way he could go
legitimate. This is crazy.

ANDREW
He seemed alright to me.

JOE
Promise me you'll never come back
here.

ANDREW
Why?

JOE
This place is... just promise.

ANDREW
I promise.

Joe nods, satisfied.

JOE
Let's go.

Michael slowly enters the Crowd from the locker area
and watches curiously as Joe and Andrew leave.

EXT. GRACE KITCHEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

One block away from Joe's gym sits a beacon in the
industrial darkness. A low budget, but clean, corner
restaurant, GRACE KITCHEN.

INT. GRACE KITCHEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joe and Andrew occupy an old-diner style booth in the
restaraunt. GRACE, 33, attractive in a confident way,
and well experienced owner of the place, wanders over
to their table.

ANDREW

Hey gorgeous.

Grace slides into the booth next to Andrew, her hips pressing against his and her arm around him flirtatiously, while messing up his hair like a big sister would do to her kid brother.

GRACE

What are you two hooligans up too?

ANDREW

Just trying to figure things out.

JOE

Ravel left.

GRACE

Good riddance.

ANDREW

He took everyone else with him.

GRACE

You'll find more fighters.

ANDREW

That's what I keep tellin' him. I even introduced him to one.

GRACE

Well?

JOE

He's untrained. Too brutal.

GRACE

Isn't that what you do? Train fighters.

JOE

I couldn't take another Ravel. I need a fighter with honor... integrity.

ANDREW

He has honor. You said so yourself.

(to Grace)

You should see him. He moves like a cat. Not as sexy as you, but it's something to see.

JOE

He's a pit fighter. He could never handle the discipline.

GRACE

How do you know?

JOE

I just know it wouldn't work.

GRACE

You're the expert.

(beat)

Want some coffee?

JOE

Yeah, sure.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Joe is the only person in the gym that was once filled with fighters training.

He stands in front of a worn heavy bag and delivers spinning backfist after spinning backfist. Tears of frustration fight at the corners of his eyes.

He twirls like a ballerina, his movements are smooth and graceful, more like the movements of a teenager than those of an old man.

Michael cautiously enters through the front door.

Joe stops and stares. He wipes his eyes with the back of his hand.

Michael approaches slowly.

He stops in front of Joe and cocks his head, looking quizzically at the elder man.

JOE

What?

Michael shrugs, still staring at Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)

What do you want?

Michael starts to prowl through the gym.

He pushes a heavy bag as he passes, the squeaky chain creaks as the bag sways back and forth.

He runs his fingers along the ropes of the ring tracing each scar of the rubberized covering.

JOE (CONT'D)

(irritated)

What do you want?

Michael turns and looks at Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)

DO YOU HEAR ME? I'm talking to you.

Anger plays across Michael's face as he strides towards Joe.

He lifts Joe by the shirt, carrying him backwards and puts him up against the wall. Then, in Joe's face, Michael opens his mouth wide, wide enough that Joe can see that Michael's tongue has been removed.

JOE (CONT'D)

Uh...

Michael drops Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)

What happened?

Michael just looks at him.

JOE (CONT'D)

Right.

Joe lets out a breath and runs his hand through his remaining hair.

JOE (CONT'D)
So you're here because...

Michael gestures with his hand at the ring in the center of Joe's gym.

JOE (CONT'D)
You wanna fight professionally?

Michael nods that he does.

JOE (CONT'D)
Why should I waste my time?

Michael walks over to the heavy bag. He sets himself and delivers a side kick that knocks the bag free of it's moorings.

It hits the floor with a thump.

JOE (CONT'D)
So you've got power. I'm tired of training guys with just power.

Michael pounds on his chest with his fist, directly above his heart.

JOE (CONT'D)
Quit pit fighting.

Michael takes a step back and slowly shakes his head no.

JOE (CONT'D)
You wanna be a professional then quit that underground circuit. There's no two ways about it.

Michael looks pained as he shakes his head no again.

JOE (CONT'D)
You can't fight for me if you insist on fighting there. I won't tolerate it.

The two stare at each other for a brief period without a word passing, volumes pass through their eyes. Michael's head drops, he slowly raises it back up and he looks deep into Joe's eyes. They lock for a second and Michael leaves.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Joe pushes his way through the CHEERING MASSES.

Some unfortunate FIGHTER is getting thrown around like a rag doll in the pit below.

Joe heads for the door that leads to the locker room area. The Large Guard, from the night before, stands in front of the door.

Joe passes the Guard a ten dollar bill.

The Guard looks at it and puts it in his pocket, but doesn't move.

Joe pulls out his wallet. In it he only has two twenty dollar bills.

He pulls both out and passes them to the Guard.

The Guard steps aside, allowing Joe through.

INT. LOCKER AREA - NIGHT

Joe, stepping cautiously on the corroded floor around numerous pot holes, heads straight for Michael's room.

INT. MICHAEL'S LOCKER ROOM

He enters the room and finds that it is empty. He looks around lost, half expecting Michael to pop out of the wall.

Michael enters from the hallway. He is fixing his shorts.

Joe jumps, startled by Michael's sudden appearance.

Michael is surprised to see Joe too, then his surprise turns to apathy as he waves Joe away like he was shooing a fly.

JOE

Look. I've been thinking... I don't really know your situation here.

Michael stares at him.

JOE (CONT'D)

In fact, I don't really know you. I just think...

Michael starts to wrap his hands in prep for a fight. Joe mechanically starts to wrap them for him.

JOE (CONT'D)

If you still want to fight professionally--

Michael gets up and walks out of the room.

Joe pursues him.

INT. LOCKER AREA

Michael leans on the wall just outside of his locker room. Joe emerges and looks at him.

JOE

I'm sorry about before. I need a good fighter. One who can take the title. You think you can do that?

Michael turns away.

JOE (CONT'D)

I... I'm asking you to reconsider. Let me train you. Together I think we can do it. But, it'll take work.

A small smile crosses Michael's face.

He turns back to Joe.

He pats Joe's chest, he pats his own and then he takes Joe's hand and shakes it sealing the deal.

Michael's expression changes as his look of joy turns serious.

He motions for Joe to follow him as he walks off further down the hall.

INT. MAHONEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

MR. MAHONEY, 55, overtly-typical wiseguy type, sits behind a large desk counting money. He wears a pin striped suit and a bowlers hat, a flashback to days gone by.

Michael gestures towards Mahoney who puffs like a peacock when he sees Joe.

MR. MAHONEY

You're Joe Fontain.

JOE

That's right.

MR. MAHONEY

They called you the Real Deal
when you fought over seas, didn't
they? You know, when I was a kid
I wanted to be you?

(beat)

Looks like I succeeded, huh?

Joe stares at him, eyes narrowed in contained anger.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?

JOE

I want to make Michael a
professional fighter.

MR. MAHONEY

You know it broke my heart when
you lost that title bout. Then to
find out--

JOE

I have the utmost confidence that
Michael--

MR. MAHONEY
Real Deal, Ha. You don't know
what you're talkin' about.

JOE
I--

MR. MAHONEY
This is my boy. I own him.

JOE
I just thought--

MR. MAHONEY
You don't come in my house and
take my fighters. You washed up
old fool. He has a crowd that
comes just to see him.

JOE
But he can be so much--

MR. MAHONEY
The hell he can. He's not goin'
anywhere unless I say so. He owes
me too much. I'm the only reason
he's still alive.

JOE
I can pay--

MR. MAHONEY
Listen, old man. You know how
much he owes? More than a tongue.
And more than a thrown title
fight could earn.

JOE
Give me a year.

MR. MAHONEY
A year!? What do I get out of it?

JOE
We'll give you a cut--

MR. MAHONEY

A cut? I want it all. Purse, royalties, all of it. Or Michael stays here until he makes enough to settle his debt, and that could be a very, very long time.

JOE

I can make him Champion in a year. That prize money could pay off--

MR. MAHONEY

(to Michael)

You've got a lot you owe me boy. Between pit fighting and professional fighting you might be able to pay me back in 20 years.

JOE

He can't fight in the pit if he's going professional.

MR. MAHONEY

The hell he can't.

JOE

It's illegal.

MR. MAHONEY

Who do you think runs this town?

(to Michael)

You're a fool to risk everything on this sorry excuse. If I let you go and you don't win, I'll put you in the pit until you're dead. Him too.

(to Joe)

I want all of the money. Every cent.

JOE

That's not possible. There are expenses--

MR. MAHONEY

You'll have to work around that,
won't you?

JOE

But--

MR. MAHONEY

Take it or...

Mahoney shrugs indifferently.

Joe looks at Michael. Their eyes meet. Michael's eyes
plead with Joe to accept.

JOE

Fine.

Mahoney laughs out loud.

MR. MAHONEY

You're both freakin' crazy. I
give you a year. I get all the
money he makes in that year. If
at the end of the year he's not
Champ, then he's mine again. In
the pits.

JOE

I promise--

MR. MAHONEY

I don't want your worthless word.
I want what's owed me. If I don't
get it you'll be in the pit
fighting with him.

(to Michael)

You got that. One year.

Michael nods agreement.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

Get outta here before I change my
mind.

JOE

Thank--

Michael grabs Joe and yanks him out of the office.

EXT. BAD PART OF TOWN - NIGHT

Michael and Joe emerge from the warehouse and Michael immediately wraps his arms around the old man, lifting him off the ground in a monstrous bear hug.

Michael lets out a yell of joy that is just bizarre enough to cause the BUMS to dig deeper into their cardboard box homes.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Andrew and Michael spar in the ring in the center of the gym. Joe studies Michael.

Michael grabs Andrew, head butts him and sweeps his legs causing him to SLAM down onto the ring floor. Then pounces on him and punches the back of his head.

JOE

Stop. You can't do that.

Michael looks confused.

JOE (CONT'D)

You can't hit in the back of the head in professional fighting, it's illegal. So is head butting like that.

Andrew climbs back to his feet rubbing his forehead.

JOE (CONT'D)

Again.

The two combatants dance around the ring. Andrew launches a side kick at Michael's head.

He deftly sidesteps and punches Andrew's leg as it is in the air. He follows his punch with a kick to Andrew's spine that send him lurching into the ropes.

A red welt already forming on his back.

JOE (CONT'D)

Whoa. Wait.

(beat)

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

You can't hit a guy in the back
like that, you'll paralyze him.
Professionals aren't out to kill
each other.

Michael puts his head down in a mixture of frustration
and shame.

Andrew massages his lower back. He has a nasty mark
across it and is clearly in pain. He approaches
Michael.

ANDREW

Hey man, it's okay. Come on.
Let's do it again.

The two start sparring again.

MONTAGE: TRAINING

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael strikes a heavy bag that practically folds in
half with every strike.

INT. GRACE KITCHEN RESTARAUNT - DAY

Joe, Michael and Andrew sit in their booth as Grace
pours coffee for Joe. Joe sketches a figure and circles
the vital points. He makes a punching combination
motion while Michael and Andrew nod along.

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Andrew and Michael spar. Michael elbows Andrew in the
back of the head.

JOE

You can't do that!

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael, Andrew and Joe scarf down Chinese food while
watching a tape of Ravel fighting.

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Michael does sit-ups on the floor while Joe drops a
medicine ball on his stomach.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Andrew and Michael stroll down the street as a PRETTY PROSTITUTE walks by. Andrew turns to follow her, but Michael grabs him by the scruff of the neck and turns him back around.

ANDREW

What?

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael and Andrew spar. Michael doesn't do anything illegal.

JOE

Where'd you learn how to fight?
Kindergarten?

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

Ravel fights an unknown OPPONENT. He is clearly dominating the match. He hits him with a double back kick.

RAVEL

Come get some.

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Andrew holds hand targets while Michael punches and kicks them.

JOE

Those aren't punches. Where's the
power?

Michael punches the target right off of Andrew's hand.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

Ravel executes a cross that knocks his Opponent out.

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Michael and Andrew spar. Michael's arms are wrapped around Andrew's head as he delivers knee shots to Andrew's ribs.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

Ravel holds his hands over his head as flashbulbs POP, strobing him in his glory.

END MONTAGE: TRAINING

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Andrew and Michael are in the ring. Joe stands at ringside.

JOE

Okay. That's enough. Get cleaned up.

Joe wanders off into his office.

Andrew and Michael remove their mouth pieces and start to take off their gloves.

ANDREW

Hey, I'm going to go to the pit and watch some fights tonight. You wanna to come?

Michael shakes his head no. He points at Andrew and shakes his head indicating that Andrew shouldn't go either.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

There's no harm in it. Come on, I'll bet you've never been just a spectator.

Michael shakes his head no again.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Michael, wearing a baseball cap and doing his best to blend in, creeps through the crowd.

Next to him Andrew struts around like he owns the place.

In the pit, the GOLD FIGHTER and a GREEN FIGHTER prepare for battle.

ANDREW
What do you think? Gold?

Michael shrugs his shoulders.

Andrew flags a BOOKIE over.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
I'd like five hundred on the Gold
fighter.

Andrew pulls out his money to hand to the Bookie.
Michael nonchalantly pushes Andrew's hand down.

BOOKIE
Five hundred on Gold.

The Bookie looks at Andrew. Andrew looks at Michael.

BOOKIE (CONT'D)
You bettin' or what?

ANDREW
I don't... maybe the next one.

The Bookie looks at Michael.

Michael tries his best to blend into the surrounding
faces by staring at his feet, but the Bookie peers at
him with a suspicion of recognition.

BOOKIE
How 'bout you pal. Any wager?

Michael shakes his head no without making eye contact.

BOOKIE (CONT'D)
I seen you here before 'aven't I?

Michael shakes his head no.

The Bookie leans in for a closer look, but Andrew steps
between them.

ANDREW
The fights starting.

INT. PIT

The Gold fighter opens by delivering a wicked combination of kicks.

Side Kick. Back Kick. Back Kick.

Sending his opponent into the wall.

WAREHOUSE

Andrew is ecstatic. He slaps Michael on the back.

ANDREW

Did you see that?

Michael barely glances at the pit.

PIT

The Green fighter was playing possum and, as his opponent moves in for the kill, he quickly delivers a chop to the throat.

The Gold fighter, choking after the blow, gets his face thrust into the Green fighters knee, repeatedly. His nose explodes and his eye instantly swells to the size of an orange.

WAREHOUSE

Andrew winces in sympathetic pain.

ANDREW

That has to hurt. Come on Gold!
Hit'em where it counts!

Michael motions that he is going to leave.

Andrew puts up a finger.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

One sec.

PIT

The Gold fighter takes an upper cut to the jaw that sends him sprawling across the floor.

The fight is over.

WAREHOUSE

Andrew looks around for Michael but finds he's no where in sight.

He starts for the door.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Andrew emerges from the warehouse. At the end of the alley, just within earshot, he sees Michael and Mr. Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY

It's been a month. Where's my money?

Michael shrinks in his skin.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

I need to see some damn return here or I'm gonna pay Fontain a little visit.

Michael puts up his hands and motions for Mahoney to give him some time.

Andrew starts to wander over towards the two.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

You ain't even had a fight yet. What are you waitin' for. A damned invitation.

Michael's head drops.

Andrew arrives.

ANDREW

Everything okay?

MR. MAHONEY

Everything's fine. Isn't it Mikey?

Michael nods yes.

Mahoney leans forwards and whispers in Michael's ear.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

You start giving me some money or I'll use pretty boy here as collateral. Got that? I'll put him in the pit. He'll be done in no time.

Mahoney pats Michael's face a few times then walks into the warehouse passing Andrew.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

What are you lookin' at?

INT. OCTAGON - NIGHT

A capacity CROWD fills the arena. They are all anticipating the title fight between Ravel and THE CHAMPION.

Mahoney has ringside seats.

First on the ticket is Michael fighting MANUEL, a fighter just past his prime but still a threat.

The ANNOUNCER enters the ring.

ANNOUNCER

In this corner. Weighing in at 200 pounds, with a record of 17 wins, all by knockout. Manuel, Manny, Rodrigez.

The Announcer spins in Michael's direction.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And in this corner. Weighing in at 190 pounds. A newcomer to the Octagon, Michael Vrice.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe rubs Michael's arms vigorously, bringing blood to the muscles.

JOE

Just go out there and do what you do best.

Michael nods. The REFEREE signals that the fighters should come to the center of the ring.

JOE (CONT'D)

This is your night. Go get'em.

OCTAGON

Michael goes to the center. The two fighters touch gloves and head back to their corners.

The bell rings.

Manny bounds out of his corner into the ring. Michael turns his back and kneels, bowing his head.

Manny gestures at Michael and shrugs, playing to the crowd that erupts in laughter.

Michael rises and moves into the ring.

Manny bounces around, slipping in a jab and a kick here and there.

Michael blocks. Slips. Blocks. Constantly closing in on Manny.

Michael pursues him like a tiger waiting to spring, but he never does.

Manny always bounces around, playing to the audience. He punches and kicks Michael a few times, laughs, and dances around some more.

The bell sounds ending the round.

The fighters return to their corners.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe rushes to Michael's side.

JOE

What are you doing out there?
He's making you look like a fool.
We can throw in the towel anytime-

-

Michael shakes his head no.

JOE (CONT'D)

Alright. Then go out there and
show him who's boss.

Michael nods in agreement.

The bell rings.

OCTAGON

Michael marches out towards Manny and puts his hand
out.

Manuel looks at him and shrugs again. The crowd laughs.
Rather than shaking hands, Manny delivers a jab to
Michael's face.

Michael shifts, in his eyes burns a fire, the intensity
of which surprises Manny. The smile on his face is
replaced by uncertainty.

He throws a jab that Michael slips.

Michael replies with a hook that knocks his opponent
into the fence.

Michael opens up on Manny's lead leg. He blasts
roundhouse kick after roundhouse kick into the inside
and outside of his thigh until the leg buckles.

Michael turns his attention to Manny's head. He rains
down fist after fist, bouncing him on the ropes with
every hit.

Manny's hands drop. The only things keeping him
standing are the ropes. Michael continues his
onslaught.

The Referee tries to stop the fight. He signals for the
bell.

DING DING DING.

Michael continues.

Michael's POV. Flashes of the pit. Manny. The pit.

Joe rushes into the ring and steps between Michael and
Manny.

Michael's POV. The pit. Joe.

Michael stops millimeters from hitting Joe.

Joe pushes him to the corner and out of the ring.

The crowd is silent as Manny topples, like a giant pillar, onto his bloody face.

Mahoney grins satisfactorily.

ANNOUNCER

And the winner, due to
disqualification. Manuel
Rodriguez.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Joe takes the tape off of Michael's hands.

Mahoney enters the room.

MR. MAHONEY

You got my money.

Joe walks over to the door, snatches a check made out to Michael Vrice for \$5000.

Joe grabs a pen and thrusts the two items at Michael.

Michael signs the check over to Mahoney and sets it down.

Mahoney picks up the check reading it.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

You sure got a long way to go.
This won't get you anywhere.

Mahoney chuckles and shakes his head.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

This won't even cover how much I
lost tonight.

(to Michael)

Next time I bet on you boy, you'd
better win, cause your just
diggin' yourself deeper and
deeper.

Mahoney chuckles as he leaves.

He passes Andrew in the door, who looks at him quizzically.

ANDREW

Ready to go?

Joe stares at Michael.

INT. OCTAGON - NIGHT

Ravel takes it to the CHAMP.

He blasts his foot into the Champ's gut causing him to double over.

He elbows him in the head almost knocking him off of his feet.

The bell sounds.

A scantily clad RING GIRL prances around carrying a sign that reads "Round 3".

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Elvis waddles his mass into Michael's locker room as Joe packs up their things.

He glares at Elvis, contempt oozing out of every pore.

ELVIS

Looks like your new boy can fight.

Joe slams a few more things into his bag.

JOE

Shouldn't you be ringside?

ELVIS

I already know what's going to happen.

INT. OCTAGON

The Champ connects with a hook that knocks Ravel's mouthpiece into the Audience.

Ravel's head bounces off of the floor. The Referee checks on him.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Elvis and Joe stare at each other.

ELVIS
You should give it up already.

REFEREE (V.O.)
Winner!

ELVIS
You're the last of your kind.

REFEREE (V.O.)
And still Champion.

ELVIS
A dying breed.

DING DING DING.

ELVIS (CONT'D)
I guess that's it.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Andrew and Michael spar in the ring. Joe is nowhere to be found.

The two combatants go at it half-heartedly. Michael's punches come sluggishly and his defense is non-existent.

Andrew too easily connects with a jab and then a kick to the leg.

Michael stops fighting. Andrew follows suit.

ANDREW
You okay?

Michael motions to the empty gym.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Don't worry about it. He'll get
over it.

Michael rests his hands on the ropes and drops his
head.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Trust me. He just needs some time
to think things through.

Michael isn't convinced.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
All right, let's go.

Michael looks at Andrew curiously.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
You coming or what?

INT. GRACE'S KITCHEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joe sits at a table, alone. The restaurant is
relatively empty except for an OLD TIMER who sits at
the counter sipping on a luke-warm coffee. Grace brings
over a pot.

GRACE
Hey Joe.

JOE
Hey Gracie.

GRACE
Need a warm up?

JOE
Yeah, sure.

Grace slides into the seat across from Joe and sets her
pot of coffee on the table.

GRACE
Why so glum?

JOE

My new fighter's givin' me fits.
Sometimes I think he's just like
Ravel.

GRACE

No one's that bad.

JOE

He's got no control.

GRACE

Ravel had control. He just chose
to hurt people.

Joe shrugs glumly.

Michael and Andrew enter the restaurant and head
towards Joe. Grace spots them approaching.

GRACE (CONT'D)

This one might be different.

She gets up and hugs Andrew.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Hey Andy, it's been a while.

ANDREW

Hey gorgeous, you're looking
stunning, as usual.

GRACE

Who's your friend?

ANDREW

This is Michael. Michael meet
Grace.

GRACE

It's nice to meet you.

Michael nods.

ANDREW

So, when are you gonna let me
take you out of this place?

GRACE

Anytime you want.

Grace winks at him and walks away.

Michael and Andrew slide into seats across from Joe.

ANDREW

I knew you'd be here.

JOE

No place else.

ANDREW

Grace soothes the soul, doesn't
she.

JOE

What can I do for you boys?

ANDREW

Come back. We need you to train
us. Michael needs you.

Joe looks into Michael's pleading eyes.

JOE

I can't. I'm sorry. I thought
that it'd be different this time.
But, it's the same all over
again.

Michael makes a guttural sound in shocked protest.

JOE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's me. Fighting used to
be about honor. The pain, the
bruises, all of it was for a
reason. We were men of integrity.
But now it's money. It's all
money.

ANDREW

Not all of it.

JOE

No? The struggle between two men in that ring used to mean something. Now it's just a show. They don't care who wins. They just want to see two people beat the crap out of each other. It's all about fame and fortune, not the talent. Hell, it's not even a sport anymore, it's... entertainment.

Michael makes another sound in protest and pounds on his heart.

JOE (CONT'D)

Yeah, you've got heart, but fighting just isn't about heart anymore. It doesn't mean anything.

ANDREW

It does to us. It means everything. His battle is for more than glory or fame and you know it. You give up now and you're betraying him, yourself and everything you stand for. Honor. Where's the honor in quitting when it starts to get hard?

JOE

You don't understand--

ANDREW

I understand all right. I thought you were something... I idolized you. But you're no hero right? Just a burnt out old man.

Joe drops his head in shame then slowly raises his eyes to Andrew.

JOE

You want it all. Fine. I'll give everything I've got, but I expect no less from you two. Now it gets hard, I'm going to make you wish you quit.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Andrew and Michael spar in the ring, hard. They are almost equally matched. Sweat pours off of each fighter and welts mar their bodies as they land blow after blow.

Michael strikes Andrew.

Andrew returns the blow and adds another.

Michael counters, and on it goes.

Grace comes in carrying a bag of food.

GRACE

I thought you boys might be hungry.

They stop sparring.

ANDREW

Marry me.

GRACE

Where's my ring?

Andrew motions to the ring he's standing in.

ANDREW

Will this do?

GRACE

Not on your life.

She smiles at him.

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Andrew and Michael work on take-downs.

ANDREW
I'm going to go watch some fights
tonight, interested?

Michael stops and stares at him.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
What?

Michael shakes his head no.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
It's just for fun. I haven't been
in weeks.

Michael grabs Andrew's shoulders. Their eyes lock.
Michael shakes his head no again.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
All right, fine. I guess I'm too
tired anyway.

Michael stares at him a little longer, his gaze
penetrating.

Michael throws him to the floor and put him in a
submission hold.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Ow! I give, really. I won't go.

He taps out.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Andrew stands amongst a roaring CROWD as two FIGHTERS
beat the snot out of each other in the pit below.

Mahoney watches Andrew from a distance.

The Crowd goes wild as the BLUE FIGHTER loses.

Andrew's face shows only displeasure as he glances down
at the ticket in his hand. It reads "\$500 on Blue."

Andrew tears it up and drops it on the ground.

A BOOKIE makes his way through the crowd.

Andrew flags him down.

ANDREW

One thousand dollars on the Red
fighter, in the next match.

The Bookie hands him a ticket and moves on.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Joe holds a heavy bag while Michael works his
roundhouse kick deep into the target.

Andrew slips into the gym.

He creeps up next to Joe and whispers in his ear.

Joe lets go of the bag.

JOE

Keep working that kick. We'll be
in my office.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

Andrew enters the office, followed by Joe.

JOE

How much?

ANDREW

Huh?

JOE

How much?

ANDREW

Ten Thousand.

JOE

Ten!

ANDREW

I was winning. Then I started
betting bigger and bigger. They
kept offering me more and more
credit.

JOE
And you lost.

Andrew drops his head in shame.

JOE
I thought they only took cash up
front.

ANDREW
They'll let you bet on credit if
you bet big enough.

JOE
You promised me you'd never go
back there.

ANDREW
I know, I know.

JOE
I don't have that kind of money
just laying around.

ANDREW
I don't have anywhere else to go.
Please.

JOE
When do you need it by?

ANDREW
Tonight.

JOE
Tonight!? There's no way--

ANDREW
Please, Joe. I'm begging you.

JOE
I can't get it that quick.

ANDREW

I have to give it to them tonight
or...

JOE

Stay away from them until I can
get the money. I'm not making any
promises, but I'll try.

ANDREW

Thank You.

JOE

I mean it. Stay away from that
place.

Andrew nods and leaves.

Joe slumps.

INT. JOE'S GYM

Michael has stopped kicking the bag. He stands
listening to the silence.

INT. OCTAGON - NIGHT

Michael blasts his foot into the side of his OPPONENT'S
head.

The Opponent stumbles and Michael takes him down.

The bell sounds, ending the round.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe towels off Michael's head.

JOE

Good good. Now, when he comes in
on you...

Michael looks past Joe into the front row of the crowd,
where Mahoney sits smiling.

Mahoney watches Andrew, who holds a bucket of water on
the other side of Michael for him to spit in.

Grace sits a few seats away in the front row.

GRACE
Get him Michael!

O CATGON

The bell sounds the start of the next round.

Both fighters shoot out of their corners.

Michael delivers a vicious spinning back kick that almost takes his Opponent's head clean off.

The Opponent recovers slowly and moves in.

Michael steps into him and delivers an elbow that virtually separates his Opponent's jaw from the rest of his body.

The Opponent falls.

Michael pounces and puts him in an arm bar submission. He quickly taps out.

The Ref signals the bell.

DING DING DING.

Joe and Andrew rush into the ring.

Andrew grabs Michael by the scruff of the neck and head butts him with affection.

Joe tosses a towel on Michael's head and rubs it cheerfully.

INT. LOCKER ROOM AREA - NIGHT

Elvis lurks in the hallway just beyond Michael's locker room.

Mahoney comes out of the room and walks past Elvis staring at the \$20,000 dollar check in his hand.

Elvis, holding his handkerchief to his mouth, stares at Mahoney as he passes.

Mahoney sees Elvis' stare and stops to return the stare.

MR. MAHONEY
You ever seen a man hit so hard
he wets himself?

Elvis immediately lowers his eyes and stares at his now shuffling feet.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
Nut job.

Mahoney dismisses him and moves on.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael holds targets for Andrew as Joe reads the paper.

Andrew thrusts his foot into the target moving Michael with every shot.

JOE
Looks like Ravel finally got the
title. Too bad he didn't earn it.

Michael and Andrew stop their workout and look at Joe.

Mahoney strolls into the gym.

Michael sees him and shuffles nervously. Joe catches Michael's change and looks to the door.

Mahoney strolls around the gym. He fingers the trophies and looks at framed newspaper clippings.

JOE (CONT'D)
What do you want?

MR. MAHONEY
How long has it been?

JOE
We still have three months.

MR. MAHONEY
How long has it been since you've
won anything?

Joe glares angrily.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
Isn't that why you wanted to
train Michael? To finally win a
title?

JOE
I don't care about a title.

MR. MAHONEY
I see.

JOE
Why are you here?

MR. MAHONEY
I'm just checking on my property.
Michael's head drops. Andrew swallows hard.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
A good businessman always keeps
track of his money.

JOE
You'll get your money.

MR. MAHONEY
Of that, I am confident. Even if
I have to beat it out of you
losers myself.

Michael starts towards Mahoney angrily. Joe stops him
from advancing.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
(To Michael)
I own you. Try it sometime and
see what happens. Your life is
mine, remember?

JOE
Not when he wins the title.

MR. MAHONEY
Right. Sure. If he wins.

JOE

I think you need to leave.

MR. MAHONEY

Sure sure, I'll be seeing you,
soon.

Mahoney leaves. Michael is angry, Andrew is pale, and Joe is pissed.

EXT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Andrew exits the gym and in front of him sits a large, dark sedan. Mahoney's BODYGUARD stands outside the vehicle. He opens the back door as Andrew draws nearer.

Andrew slowly climbs in the back seat.

INT. SEDAN

Mahoney sits staring at Andrew as he climbs inside. The car door slams shut and the Bodyguard gets into the driver seat. The car slowly rolls away from the curb.

MR. MAHONEY

You didn't bring me my money.

ANDREW

I'm working on it. I swear.

Mahoney waves off his excuses.

MR. MAHONEY

A deal has been reached.

ANDREW

What deal?

MR. MAHONEY

You will fight in the pit.
Tonight. A car will pick you up
at seven.

ANDREW

No way. I'm not fighting for you.

Mahoney looks at him silently for a moment.

MR. MAHONEY

After the fight, your debt will
be paid by an anonymous
benefactor.

ANDREW

I'll get you your money.

MR. MAHONEY

Do you really believe that you
have any say in what happens to
you now?

INT. PIT - NIGHT

Andrew stands shirtless in the pit. He glistens with a nervous sweat. The THROINGING CROWD surrounds the rim of the pit yelling and betting, looking at him like he's a lamb brought to the slaughter.

Andrew sees Mahoney in the audience, then he notices a fat, sleazy man making his way towards Mahoney--

Elvis.

The two of them shake hands and Mahoney gestures towards Andrew.

Elvis hands Mahoney a roll of money.

In the entrance to the pit a shadowy figure strides towards Andrew. His muscular form obscured in shadow until--

Ravel, shirtless and wearing fighting shorts steps into the pit.

Andrew panics, his eyes searching for an escape, but the entrances have been closed.

Ravel snorts like a bull. He flexes and struts, all the while staring at Andrew.

No way out.

Andrew starts to circle Ravel in the pit, keeping his distance.

His reflexes slowly take over and he begins to move more comfortably. He is light on his feet, like a cat, as opposed to Ravel's heavy methodical stalking.

Ravel rushes Andrew who blasts a sidekick into his gut taking the steam out the rush.

Ravel swings at Andrew who deftly avoids the blows causing him to connect with the wall.

Ravel's knuckles start to bleed and there is a smear of red added to the existing collection on the concrete wall.

Andrew follows with some wicked combinations of punches and kicks that knock Ravel around.

Ravel punches, but Andrew blocks.

Ravel kicks and Andrew dodges.

Andrew is good, real good.

It's clear that he is the better fighter and Ravel's frustration is palatable.

He executes a beautiful punching combination that blows through Ravel's defense and stuns him.

Andrew slams his foot into Ravel's knee causing it to buckle.

He follows with a cross to Ravel's head that drops the beast to all fours.

The Crowd ROARS.

Andrew looks up at Mahoney and Elvis. They are not happy.

Andrew returns his gaze to the pit just in time to see Ravel, head down and charging him like a bull after a red cape.

He catches Andrew and throws him across the pit and into the far concrete wall. Andrew's head THUMPS.

Darkness explodes behind his eyes.

Ravel, with an animalistic ferocity, scoops Andrew up and body slams him on the cold, hard floor. His head THUMPS again.

Ravel finishes with a brutal stomp to his skull, bouncing it off of the concrete with sickening force.

The fight is over.

Ravel raises his hands in victory. The Crowd roars its approval. Mahoney and Elvis smile. Andrew lays unconscious.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A heart monitor beats off a faint, but steady, pulse.

Andrew lies in bed, hoses and tubes protrude from every orifice. His face is a bloody pulp. Joe sits in a chair by his side. He prays.

Michael enters the room. The sight of Andrew takes him aback. He is afraid to approach.

Silence.

Joe looks up, tears stain the corners of his eyes.

JOE

He was pit fighting. His brain is swollen. I told him to stay away from that place.

Michael's head drops. He looks up, tears of rage fill his eyes. He slams his fist into a wall.

JOE (CONT'D)

Why didn't you stop him? All he ever wanted was to be you.

Michael looks lost. He searches desperately for an escape. He can't find the way out as Joe's words assault him.

JOE (CONT'D)

It's your fault he's like this. You could've done something. Anything.

Michael struggles to find an exit from the room, from Joe.

Finally, he finds the door and runs out.

Joe drops his head on Andrew's chest as tears roll down his cheek.

JOE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

EXT. MAHONEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mahoney's Bodyguard stands in front of Mahoney's door as Michael approaches. The Bodyguard nervously shifts into a slightly more balanced stance as Michael draws near.

Michael stops in front of the Bodyguard and stares.

BODYGUARD

You can't go in.

Michael, fast as lightning, punches the Bodyguard across the face shattering his jaw and shoves him out of the way.

Michael kicks the door in and bursts through.

INT. MAHONEY'S OFFICE

Mahoney sits behind a wooden desk counting money as the door comes loose of its hinges and Michael storms into the room.

MR. MAHONEY

So you've decided to come back
and after all.

Michael strides towards Mahoney. Froth licks at the corners of his mouth.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

Or not.

Mahoney kicks his desk at Michael, slowing his advance.

With the desk out of the way Michael sees the shotgun that Mahoney has pointed at him.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
He owed me money. Like you. So he
had to fight for it. Like you.

Michael throws the desk out of his way.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
I'm not the one who hurt him like
that. He hurt himself.

The barely recovered Bodyguard flings himself into the
room and wraps his arms around Michael.

Michael struggles to get free, but the Bodyguard won't
release his bear hug.

Mahoney cracks him across the face with the butt of the
shotgun.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)
Get him out of here. And teach
him a lesson while you're at it.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The Bodyguard, and a few OTHERS, throw a beaten and
bloody Michael out of the warehouse door and into the
alley.

Michael picks himself up and stumbles off.

INT. GRACE'S KITCHEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Michael sits in a booth by himself. His head hangs and
a small stream of blood runs down his forehead. He
grabs a napkin and wipes the blood away.

Grace strolls over to his table.

GRACE
What happened to you?

Michael won't look at her.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Let me see that scrape.

Grace picks up a napkin and licks a corner of it. She grabs Michael's face gently and tries to turn it. He resists.

GRACE (CONT'D)
You here by yourself?

Michael turns his head and looks at her. Tears well in the corners of his eyes.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Andy?

Michael lets the tears fall. Grace drops the napkin.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Joe sits in the empty room, his arms laced over the ropes of the ring, staring into space.

Michael and Grace enter the gym hesitantly. Michael has his hand wrapped in a bandage and bruises on his face.

JOE
He's still in a coma.

Michael stands still. Grace runs over to Joe and wraps her arms around him.

JOE (CONT'D)
Even if he lives he may not be able to function by himself.

A tear falls from Michael's cheek.

JOE (CONT'D)
Last night... I...

Joe breaks down and sobs.

Michael puts his arm around the old man's shoulders and gently places his forehead against Joe's.

INT. OCTAGON - NIGHT

Michael fights a BLACK FIGHTER.

The Black Fighter knocks Michael around, bouncing him off of the fence.

Connecting with a Kick, Punch, Kick combination.

Michael is clearly not focused on the fight. Instead he glances at Mahoney in the audience every chance he gets.

The bell sounds and the fighters go to their corners.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe performs his duty mechanically, in a dazed state. No words pass between the two men.

He wipes Michael off with a towel and pours water down his throat.

The bell rings.

OCTAGON

Again the Black Fighter takes it to Michael.

Michael moves like a zombie taking shot after shot, not retaliating.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Grace approaches ringside, tears stain her cheeks. She takes Joe's hands and looks deep into his eyes. Joe's legs give out. He barely lands in his chair.

OCTAGON

Michael sees Joe get the message and his reaction.

He screams in pain and rage. He focuses on Mahoney in the audience and heads in his direction.

The Black Fighter steps between Michael and Mahoney and delivers a jab to Michael's face.

He responds with an uppercut that sends his opponent into the fence again.

Michael unleashes a maelstrom of an attack, all the while keeping eye contact with Mahoney.

The Black Fighter is trapped between the blows and the chain link. He can't respond as Michael takes out all of his pain and anger.

The Black Fighter's hands drop. He is virtually unconscious as Michael continues the assault.

Mahoney gets up and leaves the arena.

Michael watches him go and delivers one last blow that knocks his opponent over as Mahoney exits.

Joe picks up their things and drifts back to the locker room. His entire body is limp, all the strength sucked out of it.

Michael climbs out of the ring and follows in a daze.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Michael, Joe and Grace stand amongst mourning FAMILY and FRIENDS as a PASTOR throws dirt on a coffin.

PASTOR

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.

The crowd of MOURNERS starts to break up as people leave.

Elvis and Ravel, having just arrived, make their way towards the coffin.

ELVIS

It's too bad. I'll bet he would have made an excellent fighter.

JOE

You're not welcome here.

ELVIS

We've just come to pay our respects to a fallen comrade.

Michael notices that Ravel's hand is scraped and scabbed over on the knuckles.

JOE

He was no friend of yours.

RAVEL

He put up a good fight.

Joe's eyes snap to Ravel.

Elvis glares at Ravel.

Michael balls his hands into fists so hard his knuckles turn white.

He steps menacingly forwards, but Joe intercepts him.

JOE
Not here. Not now.

Ravel grins at Michael.

RAVEL
Anytime. Anyplace.

Ravel smacks Michael on the side of the head.

He laughs as he turns and struts away.

Elvis pulls out his handkerchief and covers his mouth as he turns and leaves.

Joe touches the coffin.

JOE
They won't get away with this. I swear.

EXT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Joe exits out of the door to his gym. Three THUGS approach from the other direction.

They stop and stare as he passes.

THUG 1
Hey, that's Joe Fontain.

THUG 2
No way. That's an old waste of life.

THUG 1
I'm tellin' you, it's him.

THUG 3
Hey, buddy. You Joe Fontain.

JOE
Not anymore.

THUG 1
See I told you it was him.

THUG 2
Yep. You were right. Hey Joe.

Joe turns around to look at the three.

THUG 2 (CONT'D)
Elvis sends his regards.

Thug 2 throws a wild punch at Joe's face. Joe moves and the punch misses by less than an inch.

JOE
Wait wait wait. Was that supposed to be a punch?

The other two Thugs circle Joe, cutting off his escape.

Thug 2 tries to kick Joe in the head. Joe sees it coming and sidesteps so that the kick passes him by.

He smashes his fist into Thug 2's face.

JOE (CONT'D)
You're not listening. And who taught you how to fight. That kick was pathetic.

THUG 1
Make it easy on yourself old man.

Thug 2 recovers and rushes Joe from behind.

Without even looking, Joe executes a back kick that sends his assailant sprawling backwards.

Thug 3 decides it's his turn and he grabs Joe in a bear hug from behind. Joe slams his head up square into the nose of Thug 3.

JOE

Where's your defense? That's most
of your problem right there, no
defense.

He kicks Thug 3's legs out from under him.

Joe elbows Thug 1 in the chin as he raises his bottle
for another drink.

Joe blasts Thug 2 in the groin with a kick that hits
hard enough to lift the attacker off of the ground.

The three Thugs decide enough is enough and they make
their exit.

Joe breathes deeply and clutches his chest. He stumbles
back into his gym.

INT. GRACE'S KITCHEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Grace, alone, wipes off the table where Andrew, Joe,
and Michael always sat.

She breaks down in tears and collapses in a seat at the
table.

She buries her head in her arms.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joe lays in his chair. His upper half sprawled across
his desk.

Michael enters hesitantly and spots the unconscious
Joe.

He rushes to his side and immediately checks to see if
he's breathing. He is.

Michael starts to pick Joe up when a book falls from
Joe's lap onto the floor.

Michael gently returns Joe to his seat and picks up the
book.

He opens it and inside are newspaper clippings.

The first page is a photo of a young Joe with his arms
upraised. The caption reads, "Joe "The Real Deal"
Fontain".

The next page is a headline of a newspaper that reads,
"Title Fight Over in Round One"

The next page headlines, "Mob Suspected in Fixing
Fight."

The next page reads, "Joe Fontain Accused of Taking
Payoffs."

The next page, "The Real Deal a Real Fraud."

Joe stirs groggily, Michael closes the book and
replaces it on Joe's lap.

Confused and angry, Michael leaves the office.

INT. JOE'S GYM

Michael works on a heavy bag. His hand wraps are red
with blood as it seeps through the cloth by the
knuckles.

Every punch leaves a smear on the bag.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Joe holds hand targets for Michael as he works on his
elbow techniques.

He sinks an elbow deep into the target.

JOE

We're running out of time.

Joe's whole body turns with the force of the blow as
Michael elbows again.

JOE (CONT'D)

You're lined up for next week.

Michael switches to the other elbow.

JOE (CONT'D)

You win this one and you'll be--

He sinks it deep into the target.

JOE (CONT'D)

-in line for the title.

Michael executes a spinning elbow strike.

JOE (CONT'D)
And I know just the way we can
get that son of a--

Michael stops striking the target and stares at Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)
What?

Michael shakes his head and turns away.

JOE (CONT'D)
What's the problem?

Michael points at Joe's office.

JOE (CONT'D)
Yeah I slept here last night. So
what?

Michael shakes his head no again.

JOE (CONT'D)
What then!?

Michael takes off his gloves, dropping them to the
floor and storms into Joe's office.

He returns moments later with the scrapbook in hand. He
thrusts it at Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)
This is the past. It doesn't
matter now.

Michael opens the book to the page that reads, "The
Real Deal a Real Fraud."

Michael slams his finger on the page.

JOE (CONT'D)
In all my life, I have never, I
never wanted to...

Michael flips the page to, "Mob Suspected in Fixing
Fight."

He slams his finger on the page again.

JOE (CONT'D)

I can't--

Michael flips to, "Title Fight Over in Round One."

Joe takes a deep breath and sighs. His shoulders slump.

JOE (CONT'D)

I wasn't ready.

Michael flips to, "Joe Fontain Accused of Taking Payoffs"

Joe looks at him, at the betrayal in his eyes.

JOE (CONT'D)

I was good, too good, too young.
I flew up the ranks. But I wasn't
smart. Not enough experience... I
was in debt deep, to the wrong
people. They owned me, a lot like
you.

Joe breaks down. He meets Michael's eyes.

JOE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I took the money and I've
been paying for it ever since. It
ruined me. I started over, this
time training fighters. Never
again. It never happened again,
and never will. I should've told
you. I'm sorry.

Michael closes the book.

INT. GRACE KITCHEN RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

Joe sits at his usual table, across from him sits a MAN IN A SUIT. The Man in a Suit slides a business card to Joe. He then gets up and leaves the restaurant.

Grace wanders over and refills Joe's coffee.

GRACE

What was that about?

JOE
Doing the right thing.

GRACE
Be careful Joe.

JOE
God will protect me. And if he
chooses to bring me home then
I'll go with joy.

GRACE
I hope you know what your doing.

JOE
I putting my trust in the only
one who can control anything. And
trying to follow His commands. I
know what I'm doing.

GRACE
I'll pray for you.

INT. OCTAGON - NIGHT

Michael blasts his foot into his OPPONENT'S skull.

He elbows him in the temple.

The Opponent retaliates with a body shot to Michael's
ribs and ets him in a head lock.

Michael slips out and sends a back kick into his
Opponent's midsection.

The round ends.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe hands Michael his water bottle.

JOE
That's it. You're doing great.
Just keep sticking him with those
kicks. Your legs are longer than
his.

Michael stares past Joe at Mahoney in the audience.

Mahoney's Bodyguard sits on his right and Elvis sits on his left.

JOE (CONT'D)
Are you paying attention to me?

Joe grabs Michael's face and turns it to look at him.

JOE (CONT'D)
You need to focus on this fight.
Right here. Right now.

The bell rings.

OCTAGON

Michael gets up and glances at Mahoney and Elvis again.

JOE
Fight!

Michael turns around in time to get caught by a spinning back kick.

Michael's world reels.

JOE (CONT'D)
Snap out of it!

The Opponent connects with a cross.

Michael stumbles.

The Opponent delivers a vicious combination. Cross. Cross. Hook. That sends Michael to the mat. He gets wrapped up as his opponent gets him in a submission hold.

JOE (CONT'D)
Get up! What are you doing? Get up!

Behind Joe, Mahoney and Elvis stand so they can get a better view.

A look of excitement plays across Elvis' face.
Mahoney... smug.

Michael sees Grace a few seats away. She mouths the words, "Get up."

Michael determinedly climbs to his feet with his opponent attached then he slams him to the mat, hard.

Michael escapes from his opponent's grasp.

Michael moves in on his opponent.

He connects with a hook.

Another. And a third.

He executes a combination so fast his Opponent can't react. Side kick. Back kick. Round house.

He tears into the man's side.

Weakly the Opponent tries to fight back.

He connects with pathetic jabs that are only effective in stalling the inevitable.

Michael relentlessly pursues.

He blasts his Opponent's knee.

He follows with a spinning back kick.

Michael's fists send tremors through his Opponent's rib cage.

He finishes the fight with a wicked crescent kick that spins the other fighter a full 360 degrees.

DING DING DING.

Michael turns and scans the Crowd, eyes landing on Elvis and Mahoney.

Elvis stands in shock, slackjawed.

Mahoney sits frowning, thoughtful.

The Bodyguard applauds with the rest of the Crowd.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Michael plunges his hands into a bucket of ice.

JOE
That's it. Only one left.

ELVIS (O.S.)
Too bad you've only got a few
weeks left in your contract.

Elvis slithers into the room.

JOE
What do you know about it?

ELVIS
Everything.

JOE
That's okay. We don't need to
wait. We can beat Ravel tomorrow
if we have too.

ELVIS
Unfortunately Ravel needs time to
train. To prepare. That'll take
at least three months.

JOE
You son of a--

ELVIS
But, I'm prepared to make you an
offer.

JOE
Yeah sure, no deals.

ELVIS
I'm prepared to buy out Michael's
contract with Mahoney. If he
agrees to lose to Ravel in the
title fight.

(to Michael)
You'll be free. No more pit
fighting. And you, Fontain, will
be out of this profession for
good.

JOE
Mahoney agreed to this.

ELVIS
He just wants his money.

JOE
(to Michael)
Maybe you should consider it.

Michael shakes his head no.

JOE (CONT'D)
Think for a minute. If you don't
take it there's no way to get
out.

Michael shakes his head no again.

JOE (CONT'D)
There's no other way, dammit. We
can't get the title fight in
time.

ELVIS
I've got the fight contract right
here. Three months from today you
could have no more obligations.
To anyone.

Michael shakes his head no again.

JOE
Sign the contract Michael. Don't
worry about the rest. At least
guarantee yourself a future.

Michael steps away from the two. He looks confused,
shakes his head no again and leaves the room.

JOE (CONT'D)
Give it to me.

Elvis hands him the contract and he signs it.

JOE (CONT'D)
Now get out of here.

ELVIS

Gladly.

Elvis practically tap dances his way out of the room.

Joe collapses in a chair.

INT. MAHONEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mahoney gloats behind his desk as Joe hangs his head in the chair across from him.

JOE

Please, just three months. I'll do anything.

MR. MAHONEY

Our contract was for one year.

JOE

There has to be some way.

MR. MAHONEY

You failed, Fontain. Now you have to pay.

JOE

It's not over yet.

MR. MAHONEY

You have nothing left to offer.

JOE

Not quite.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael sits in a corner staring off into space.

Joe walks in and looks at him.

JOE

Why aren't you working?

Michael glances disdainfully at him.

JOE (CONT'D)
You've got a title bout in three months. I signed the fight contract.

Michael dismisses him with a wave.

JOE (CONT'D)
If you're not ready Ravel will tear you apart.

Michael chuckles.

JOE (CONT'D)
I bought us the three months we need from Mahoney. We got an extension.

Michael's head snaps to look at Joe. He's not laughing anymore.

JOE (CONT'D)
Until the title fight.

Michael looks confused.

JOE (CONT'D)
I gave him the gym. He wants to go professional with his fighters now. He likes the notoriety I guess.

Michael shakes his head no, upset.

JOE (CONT'D)
I don't care about this anymore. I'm through with it. Once you're free I want nothing to do with it. I'm out.

Michael starts to laugh again, this time with glee.

INT. JOE'S GYM - NIGHT

Michael glistens with sweat as he unloads on a heavy bag.

The bag buckles with every hit.

He moves effortlessly around the bag, circling it.

He kicks, his leg like a piston, repeatedly pounds the bag in the exact same spot.

Joe watches with admiration of Michael's machine like precision.

Elvis bursts into the gym.

JOE

What took you so long?

ELVIS

We had a deal.

JOE

No. We have a fight contract. The rest is your word against mine in an illegal transaction.

ELVIS

There's no title fight unless I get Michael.

JOE

How do you plan to enforce that? I can have your licence if you back out of the fight and like you told me, Mahoney only cares about his money... and his reputation.

ELVIS

You can't do this.

JOE

I already did.

ELVIS

We had a deal.

JOE

You think you're the only one who knows how to play the game?

Elvis steps menacingly towards Joe.

Michael quickly steps in the way. All the color drains from Elvis' face and he backpedals.

He pulls out his Handkerchief and covers his mouth.

ELVIS

Ravel's going to make you pay.
You'll regret this.

Elvis runs out of the gym.

Michael turns to Joe and smiles.

INT. MAHONEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Elvis sits in a chair across from Mahoney, sweating profusely. He holds his handkerchief to his mouth.

MR. MAHONEY

Who do you think you are? You don't come in here tellin' me what to do.

ELVIS

I'll bring you down--

MR. MAHONEY

You don't know who you're messin' with Pilsbury. I can make you disappear so fast--

ELVIS

Anything happens to me and some very interesting information gets released to the public, not to mention the authorities.

MR. MAHONEY

You got nothin' on me.

ELVIS

There's illegal fights, gambling, not to mention accessory to murder--

Mahoney rises from his desk menacingly.

MR. MAHONEY

You have no idea what you're
doing.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael, covered in sweat, drives his leg into a wooden beam that supports the gym.

Every strike reverberates through the entire room.

Dust and plaster fall from the ceiling.

He switches to his elbow with the same effect.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joe sits across from the Man In The Suit. Joe passes some paperwork across the desk to him.

INT. ELVIS' GYM - DAY

Ravel punches a heavy bag.

He blasts his fists into the target over and over again.

The bag starts to tear where Ravel strikes.

EXT. BAD PART OF TOWN - DAY

Michael jogs past HOOKERS and PIMPS. He runs through an open air street market where VENDORS accost him as he passes their stands. He simply smiles at them and waves as he passes.

INT. ELVIS' GYM - DAY

Ravel jumps rope in the center of a ring. He is lightening quick. The rope is a blur.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael does one handed push-ups in the center of the ring.

Mahoney and his Bodyguard stroll into the gym.

Michael stops and stares, still in his one handed push-up position.

MR. MAHONEY

You sure you don't want to come back and fight for me? I have a gym now.

Michael stares, frozen in place, not even a muscle twitches.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

I know. You've got a shot here. I don't blame you really. But, you're not gonna win.

Michael is a statue. His eyes burn holes through Mahoney.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

In fact, you're gonna take a dive. In the third round.

Michael doesn't react.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

You listenin'? If you don't... Something bad is gonna happen to that old man.

Mahoney's Bodyguard pulls back his jacket so that Michael can see a gun.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

He's gonna be breathin' through some brand new holes in his chest.

Michael's eyes narrow in contained rage.

Mahoney approaches the ring. He stands just on the other side of the ropes.

MR. MAHONEY (CONT'D)

Life just isn't fair sometimes is it? I still own you. Don't ever forget that.

Mahoney walks out of the gym with his Bodyguard in tow.

Michael stares at their backs as they leave. He thrusts himself into the air with one hand and as he comes back down he slams it on the ring with enough force to shake the ropes.

INT. ELVIS' GYM - DAY

Ravel spars with a PARTNER.

He clearly dominates his Partner and is taking advantage of him as he blasts his foot into his Partner's head.

The sparring Partner retaliates with a jab that splits Ravel's lip.

Ravel tastes the blood.

He clobbers his Partner with a combination of punches that leave him stunned.

Ravel then slams his foot into his Partners rib cage.

Again.

And again.

Ravel finishes with a hook that knocks his Partner out cold.

Elvis storms up to ringside.

ELVIS

Dammit, Ravel. That's the fifth sparring partner this week.

RAVEL

So what?

ELVIS

Nobody's gonna help train you anymore.

RAVEL

I don't need any help. It's in the bag, remember?

ELVIS

You still need to put on a good show.

RAVEL

I'll dance circles around that freak.

ELVIS

You better or I'll take that belt away.

RAVEL

Try me.

Ravel grabs the ropes and looks at Elvis intimidatingly. Elvis backs away and covers his mouth with his handkerchief.

INT. JOE'S GYM - DAY

Michael and Joe are in the ring, wearing sparring gear.

Michael towers over Joe, but is getting chased around the ring by the old man.

JOE

If you don't start fighting I'm going to take you're head off.

Michael sheepishly dodges a hook by the older man.

JOE (CONT'D)

Just hitting targets isn't good enough. You've got to fight a person.

Michael dodges another hook.

JOE (CONT'D)

You have to use your Opponent's power against him.

Joe snaps a side kick into Michael's gut doubling him over.

He follows with an elbow to the head.

Michael shakes it off, but is surprised by the strength of it.

He starts to take this more seriously as Joe moves in again.

Michael jabs, but Joe slips it and delivers two body shots then moves back out of Michael's range.

JOE (CONT'D)

Use their force to add to your own.

Michael pursues.

Joe throws a back kick and Michael sidesteps.

Michael follows with a cross to Joe's head.

Joe rolls with the hit and immediately turns his momentum into a spinning back fist that connects with Michael's jaw.

The power of it nearly knocks Michael off his feet and Joe spins it into a submission.

JOE (CONT'D)

Like that.

Michael smiles.

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

PEOPLE pour into every entrance of the arena. The mass of humanity clogging every inch of door as the fight to get in. The Man in the Suit makes his way into the arena.

INT. MICHAEL'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Joe wraps Michael's hands in preparation for the fight.

JOE

This is it. Everything rides on you now.

Michael can't meet Joe's eyes.

JOE (CONT'D)
You could take Ravel in your
sleep. Just do what you do best.

INT. RAVEL'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Elvis paces while Ravel wraps his own hands.

ELVIS
Are you ready?

RAVEL
Does it matter?

ELVIS
Every time you step into that
ring it's my ass too.

RAVEL
You fight him then.

ELVIS
You know what I mean.

RAVEL
Don't give me any of that. You
wouldn't have a real fighter
anywhere near you if it wasn't
for me.

ELVIS
You wouldn't have that title if
it wasn't for me. Don't forget
that, boy.

RAVEL
Don't you talk to me like that. I
would've won this without you.

ELVIS
I own you and I'll talk to you
anyway I please.

Ravel punches the wall next to Elvis' head.

RAVEL

You don't own me. And don't try
to play gangster with me. That's
how people get hurt.

Elvis pulls out his handkerchief and wipes his mouth.

ELVIS

You're nothing without me. I made
you.

RAVEL

No one made me but me, dough boy.

Ravel pokes Elvis in the stomach.

Elvis leaves.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

A capacity CROWD fills the arena. Lights sparkle and
cameras flash as the ANNOUNCER enters the ring.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen. Tonight's
fight is scheduled for 3 rounds.
The winner of which will walk
away with the World Heavyweight
Championship.

The Crowd roars with anticipation.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

In this corner, weighing in at
190 pounds, with a record of 9
wins by knockout and 1
disqualification for brutality is
the challenger, MMMICHAEL
VRRRICE!

ARENA MAIN FLOOR

Michael and Joe emerge from the locker room area and
walk down an aisle towards the ring.

The Crowd goes wild at the sight of the two. FANS reach
out to touch Michael.

Everyone is on their feet. Everyone except for Mahoney, sitting in the front row just behind Michael's corner.

Mahoney's Bodyguard reaches out and pats Michael on the back as he passes.

Grace stands in worried anticipation, a few seats from Mahoney.

Joe and Michael climb into the ring and go to their corner.

OCTAGON

The Announcer waits for them to settle. Then he takes a deep breath as the lights dim.

Spotlights roam the audience.

ANNOUNCER

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen,
weighing in at 225 pounds with a
record of 18 wins by knockout and
only 1 loss, please help me
welcome your champion, RRRRAVEL!

Hard rock music blares.

On a large video screen, clips flash of Ravel knocking out each of his previous opponents.

ARENA MAIN FLOOR

Entering from the locker room area, Ravel prances into the arena.

Fireworks erupt on the sides of him as Laser lights play across the crowd.

Ravel makes his way towards the ring.

Fans nearly hurdle the barricades as they try to touch him. SECURITY OFFICERS rush out to hold them back.

Elvis magically appears at ringside just in time to part the ropes so that Ravel can step into the ring without dirtying his gloves.

OCTAGON

Ravel bounces up and down. The electricity in the arena is palatable.

Michael turns his back on Ravel and kneels in his corner.

The Crowd erupts in cheers of adulation for Michael as he does this.

Ravel looks slightly stunned at the audience reaction.

He leaps onto the ropes and raises his belt.

The audience erupts into cheers for him.

A satisfied grin plays across Ravel's lips.

The REFEREE enters the ring as the Announcer exits.

He motions for the two fighters to approach.

Ravel bounds to the Ref.

Michael calmly walks to the center of the ring.

REFEREE

You both know the rules. When I
tell you to break you break. I
want a clean fight.

The Ref glances in Elvis' direction.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Touch gloves and go back to your
corners.

Michael puts out his hand and Ravel pops him on the side of the head.

Anger flashes across Michael's face, but he quickly represses it.

The two fighters return to their corners.

INT. MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe leans into Michael's space so that he can hear over the Roar of the crowd.

JOE

All right. Take it to him.

The bell sounds.

Ravel sprints across the ring and is on top of Michael before he can even leave his corner.

Ravel bounces him off of the ropes with a series of jabs and hooks.

Michael covers his head under the barrage until he finds an opening.

He throws an uppercut that sends Ravel backwards.

The crowd roars.

Michael moves out of his corner and circles Ravel.

Ravel's movements are heavy and strong while Michael is smooth and on the balls of his feet like a cat.

Michael shoots a side kick into Ravel's gut.

He immediately follows with a back kick in the same spot.

Ravel doubles over for a split second, just enough time for Michael to land a crescent kick on his ear.

Ravel stumbles.

Michael gives chase.

As the two close again, Michael opens up with a flurry of punches.

He jabs and hooks Ravel's head, rattling his brain.

He works body shots into Ravel's ribs taking his breath away.

He grabs Ravel's head and curls it in his arms while he throws knee after knee into Ravel's rib cage.

RAVEL

(coughs)

Is that all you got?

Ravel can do nothing but cover and try to absorb the onslaught.

The two combatants reach the ropes and the Ref breaks them up.

Ravel is shaken, but quickly comes back to focus.

RAVEL (CONT'D)
Come on. I'll tear you apart.

The two attack like angry cats.

Ravel kicks and connects.

Michael elbows and connects.

Ravel punches and is blocked.

Michael counters with a combination of jabs that open Ravel's lip.

Ravel tastes the blood and releases a series of kicks that take the wind out of Michael.

RAVEL (CONT'D)
That's right, boy.

Ravel attacks Michael's leg, blasting it with kick after kick until it buckles.

Michael slams his fist through Ravel's defenses and knocks him back.

Michael follows with another punch that rocks Ravel.

His legs wobble.

Michael executes a jumping crescent kick that sends Ravel heels over head into the mat.

Michael looks slightly panicked and he goes to his corner.

The Ref runs to Ravel to check on him.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe talks through the fence.

JOE

You're doing great. Keep it up.
He can't take your power.

OCTAGON

Ravel climbs back to his feet.

RAVEL

I'm good.

The Ref checks Ravel's hands.

RAVEL (CONT'D)

I said I'm good.

He shoves the Ref away.

The Ref signals to continue.

Michael prowls back out to face Ravel.

Ravel swings and Michael slips it.

Ravel kicks and Michael smacks it down.

JOE

What are you doing? Hit him.

Ravel shoots for a takedown.

Michael grabs Ravel's head and throws a knee.

Ravel blocks it and head butts Michael in the face as
he stands up.

JOE (CONT'D)

Illegal hit.

The Ref doesn't call it.

RAVEL

Take that.

Michael steps back.

Ravel pursues with a kick to Michael's head.

He follows with a combination of punches that send Michael spinning.

RAVEL (CONT'D)

Come get some.

Michael rolls out of his spin into a back kick that connects squarely with Ravel's jaw. He recoils, stunned.

The bell rings.

Both fighters return to their corners.

RAVEL'S CORNER

Elvis waddles up to ring side. His handkerchief firmly in place over his mouth.

He hands Ravel his water bottle.

Ravel smacks it out of Elvis' hand.

ELVIS

He's kicking your butt.

RAVEL

Screw you.

ELVIS

I thought you were the tough guy.

RAVEL

You wanna find out?

Elvis steps back.

ELVIS

I told you you were nothing without me.

RAVEL

I'm still the Champ.

ELVIS

Sure thing... Champ.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Michael drinks from his water bottle.

JOE

You've got him. He can't take
much more of that punishment.
This is it.

Michael glances at Mahoney.

He has been waiting for such an opportunity and he discretely uncovers the gun he is wearing so that Michael can see it.

Michael puts down his water.

The bell rings.

OCTAGON

Ravel climbs to his feet.

Michael stands and creeps towards the center of the ring.

Ravel throws a punch that "miraculously" breaks through Michael's defense and connects with his skull.

He follows with an upper cut that knocks Michael onto his heels.

RAVEL

Want some more?

JOE

Block and counter. Block and
counter.

Ravel throws a roundhouse kick that Michael blocks.

Michael kicks Ravel in the supporting leg, knocking him to the ground.

Then stands waiting for him to get up.

Michael looks at Mahoney.

Ravel stands and throws a combination of jabs that all meet with Michael's face.

Michael backs up to the fence as Ravel pursues.

Ravel works Michael's body with a series of punches and kicks.

Michael is trapped on the fence so he grabs Ravel and holds him, falling into a guard position on the ground.

RAVEL

You can't win. And I'm gonna make
you pay every minute.

Michael looks at Mahoney again.

Joe notices and looks at Mahoney.

JOE

Don't worry about him.
Concentrate on the fight.

Ravel blasts his knee into Michael's stomach like a wrecking ball.

He executes the knee again and again pounding Michael on the mat.

Ravel lets out an animalistic howl.

The Ref moves over to check and see if Michael can continue.

Michael looks at Mahoney as Joe helps him up.

Mahoney holds up three fingers.

Joe turns around, sees this and begins to get suspicious.

The Ref moves off as Michael raises his hands. He breaks free of Ravel and stands again.

Ravel stalks Michael around the ring.

Michael moves and hits.

Moves and hits.

Ravel can't catch him.

Michael connects with a jab and follows with a spinning crescent kick that knocks the mouth piece out of Ravel's mouth. He whips his head back around an inch from Michael's face.

The bell rings.

The fighters lock nose to nose staring into each others eyes.

The Ref splits them up and shoves them to their corners.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Joe sets Michael's stool on the ring and he plops down.

JOE
You're blowing it. He's not that good.

Michael won't make eye contact.

JOE (CONT'D)
Look at me.

Joe lifts Michael's eyes to his.

JOE (CONT'D)
What's going on?

Michael's eyes involuntarily twitch in Mahoney's direction.

RAVEL'S CORNER

Elvis keeps his distance, but is still within range to harass Ravel.

ELVIS
He's letting you hit him. You wouldn't be able to touch him if I hadn't made that deal with Mahoney.

Ravel won't look at Elvis.

ELVIS (CONT'D)
Some Champ you are.

Ravel stands up and hurls his stool at Elvis who barely dodges.

The bell rings.

OCTAGON

Ravel and Michael approach each other. They stare. Each of them sizing the other up, but both knowing the necessary outcome.

Ravel throws the first punch. Michael lets it connect.

Ravel continues to pound on Michael without having any resistance.

Michael throws a weak punch that Ravel easily slaps down.

RINGSIDE

Joe looks at Michael getting pummeled and looks at Mahoney in the audience.

JOE
(to Michael)
Fight!

Joe moves in Mahoney's direction.

OCTAGON

Michael takes a shot in the gut that doubles him over.

Ravel connects with an elbow to Michael's head.

Michael stumbles.

RINGSIDE

Joe reaches over the barricade separating the floor from the audience.

He latches onto Mahoney and pulls him to him.

Mahoney's bodyguard tries to grab Joe and get him off.

JOE
Why!?

Mahoney flashes his gun.

MR. MAHONEY

For you. If he wins, you don't.

OCTAGON

Michael catches an upper cut to the jaw and he falls over backwards onto the mat.

He lays with his eyes open watching Joe struggle with Mahoney.

Ravel pounces on him and tries to get him in a submission.

RINGSIDE

The Bodyguard breaks Joe free of Mahoney and throws him back from the barricade.

OCTAGON

Ravel works at different submissions, but can't lock any in. Michael's attention is fixated on Joe.

RINGSIDE

Joe points a gun at Mahoney.

Grace jumps to her feet in alarm.

GRACE

Joe!

Mahoney checks his holster. It's empty.

The Bodyguard pulls his pistol, but Mahoney gently pushes the gun back down.

Joe turns to the ring.

His eyes meet Michael's.

Joe lifts the gun to his head.

Michael tosses Ravel off like a rag doll and springs to his feet in panic, adrenaline pulses through his veins as he rushes towards where Joe stands.

RINGSIDE

Grace climbs over the divider to ringside.

ARENA

The audience stands in shock at the scene ringside.

Elvis is speechless.

Mahoney, stunned.

SECURITY surges in.

OCTAGON

Ravel delivers a blow to Michael's head from behind.

Michael spins and tears into Ravel with unbridled ferocity. He practically foams at the mouth.

He unloads a barrage of punches that drive Ravel to the fence.

Ravel tries to fight back, but his strikes are turned away by Michael's lightening fast blocks.

ARENA MAIN FLOOR

Security rushes to ringside establishing a secured perimeter as People in the crowd start to leave in a panic.

Grace stares at Joe, compassion in her eyes.

GRACE

Joe...

Joe focuses solely on Michael.

OCTAGON

Michael blasts Ravel's legs until they fold and he is on his knees.

He slams his foot into Ravel's head.

Ravel falls. Michael pounds on him.

Ravel slowly climbs back to his feet under the onslaught.

Ravel catches Michael with a head butt to his nose.

Michael's world spins.

Ravel follows up with a hook that staggers Michael.

He throws another hook, but Michael rolls with the impact, spinning into a backfist that almost separates Ravel's head from his shoulders he immediately locks it into an armbar that snaps Ravel's arm.

Ravel slams onto the mat, unconscious before he even hits. Michael lands on top of him

The Ref stops the fight.

OCTAGON

Michael rushes to ringside and climbs down towards Joe.

He slowly peels Joe's fingers from the gun and he drops his forehead to Joe's in a gentle head butt.

ARENA

Mahoney and his Bodyguard slowly make their way through the evacuating crowd towards an exit.

A hand reaches out and grabs Mahoney's shoulder. He spins to see who has accosted him.

The Man in the Suit stands flashing a badge and a group of five ROUGH POLICEMEN stand behind him.

MAN IN THE SUIT

You're under arrest.

RINGSIDE

The color drains from Elvis' face as he sees Mahoney and his Bodyguard hauled off. He turns to run out of the arena only to find himself facing two LARGE POLICEMEN.

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Grace, Joe and Michael walk together through the cemetery. Michael, carrying the Championship belt on his shoulder and his gloves on top of that. They stroll past headstones until they come across Andrew's.

Michael drops his gloves on Andrew's grave.

Michael takes the belt off of his shoulder and lays it on the headstone.

He kneels before it like he always did in the ring before a fight. Joe puts his hand on michael's shoulder as he rises and they all walk off.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END