

BOBBY KNUX

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. OSAKA STREET - NIGHT

Rain falls against gaudy neon lights, eye-catching billboards all vie for attention.

Crowds blanketed by umbrellas float through a maze of buildings with restaurants, street food stalls, and bars.

Rain settles, crowds at a crossing lower umbrellas revealing

ROB WALKER (40s) A giant of a man, mixed ethnicity, athletic, big boned, five o'clock shadow, hair slicked back, his boxing moniker, Bobby Knuckles, aka BOBBY KNUX.

Rob, in full boxing attire, robe, boxing trunks, gloves, rolls his shoulders, shakes his legs and arms.

On Rob's right, SONNY (50s), Japanese, stocky, hair thin, unafraid to be honest, Rob's trainer, rubs Rob's shoulders.

Behind Sonny and Rob, TADAO (50s), waits, Japanese, Rob's second cornerman, small, quiet, reliable.

Tadao grips two buckets, in them a plethora of gauze, latex gloves, water bottles, sponges, tape.

Rob bounces, stretches his neck. Lights change green.

Rob gestures for a YOUNG COUPLE to go first, they nod in thanks, he, Sonny and Tadao follow the couple into the crowd.

INT. OSAKA - BOXING RING - NIGHT

SMACK! CROWD OOOHH's. Leather crashes into Rob's body.

Rob's punished by his Japanese opponent, SATO, (30s) prison athletic, formidable in close.

Sato muscles Rob into a corner, blood drips from Sato's nose.

Body hook, body hook, hard uppercut. Rob feigns injury, stumbles, almost goes down. Shouts from Rob's corner.

SONNY

Move!

Rob's getting the shit knocked out of him, pretends to fight back. Crowd rises, Sato leaps toward Rob with a Gisele hook.

BAM! CROWD ROARS.

Rob shells up against the ropes, forms a cross shape guard in front of his body, gloves close to his face, defensively sound but no effective offense. They clash heads. Bell RINGS.

Rob heads for his corner, blood runs from a cut above his eye, Sonny jumps into the ring, puts down the stool.

Rob sits, Tadao wipes blood from his face, Sonny removes Rob's mouthpiece.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You okay?

ROB

Yep.

Tadao sticks swabs up Rob's nose to stop the bleeding, cleans everything out. Rob stares across the ring at his opponent.

Sonny pours water into Rob's mouth. Rob swishes it around, spits it out.

REFEREE approaches.

REFEREE

Seconds out.

SONNY

You feel like fighting or what? Jab and move. Don't stand there in front of him, keep him off you, jab and move.

Rob nods. Bell RINGS.

A battle toe to toe. THUD! Rob NAILS Sato with a savage left, Sato's legs wiggle, Rob pounds him with a stiff left to the body and a right across the kisser.

CROWD ROARS.

Sato stumbles backwards, Rob chases him, throws his arms around Sato. The referee breaks them apart, Sato composes himself, remounts his attack.

Sato connects: once, twice, three times. Rob doesn't go down.

Sato surprises Rob with a flurry of punches, finishes the combination with a stiff right cross. BAM!

SILENCE.

Rob falls, THWACK! Face bounces off the canvas.

A ROAR from the crowd. The ref flies in, waves his hands.

Bell RINGS, the end of the fight.

Rob rises, spits his mouthpiece out, stumbles to his corner.

INT. OSAKA - ARENA STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Overly packed. Rob rests on a table, his right hand in a bucket of ice. Still in his robe, his head hangs low.

Tadao fixes up his face, cleans up the blood. A gaggle of PHOTOGRAPHERS snap shots of the wounded.

Sonny paces back and forth through the small room.

SONNY

What were they watching? UD Sato, fuck! Sorry. I'm sorry. They gave him the fight because this is his home turf. How else could this have happened? Fuck!

A REPORTER leans over to Tadao.

REPORTER

What happened?

TADAO

Must've been really hurt. He didn't answer Sonny when he tried to tell him something in the corner.

SONNY

Robbed. Fuck! This was the fight. This was our shot. They robbed us. Hey! Everybody out! Fighter and trainers only! Get out of here!

Reporters and photographers leave.

ROB

Manager walked out on me tonight.

SONNY

You don't need him. Look, you get to the top, you control the division. Control the division, you control the money. You. Not him.

The atmosphere somber, like a funeral.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Listen to me Bobby, cause I'm not
going to be around forever.

TADAO
Bobby, you got a call.

INT. OSAKA - ARENA CONCOURSE - NIGHT

Rob on a payphone. His eye starting to blacken.

VOICE (O.S.)
Would you like to see the body?

ROB
No.

VOICE (O.S.)
I will send you a copy of the will,
Your father didn't have much, but
what he did have I understand he's
left everything to your daughter.

Rob spots his reflection, gazes at it. Cheek puffy and
bruised, lips fat, a nick above his eyebrow.

ROB
I'll sort it.

A MALE FIGURE approaches Rob, he drops a toiletry bag on top
of the pay phone, leaves down the concourse.

Rob checks the bag, it's filled with cash.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Empty, save for a back table. On one side, DAIJIRO YONEKURA
(40s), boxing promoter, his associate SAITO (40s), JBC
administration team.

Yonekura in sunglasses, gold around his wrist and neck, hides
tattoos under his shirt sleeves, Yakuza alert.

Behind them two SCARY BRUISERS in nice suits, share bottles
of beer and cups of sake.

These guys are middle men, moving between the boxing world,
and the organized crime world.

On the other side, a BOXING OFFICIAL (40s), smaller, balding
sits across from them. Tense. Like someone could get hurt.

SAITO

We don't want to rob anyone of a round. But, as you know, many rounds are close.

Saito's eyes shoot questions, official's eyes trade answers.

Yonekura slides over a box, official opens it.

SAITO (CONT'D)

No obligation, no strings, you're conscience is clear, regardless of who wins.

YONEKURA

You live in Tennoji ward, yes?

Official attempts a nod.

That's his cue, official rises, a deep bow, slinks to the door, turns, another deep bow, deeper this time, he's gone.

Saito hands Yonekura a tablet, he taps play, on the screen, highlights from Rob's recent fight with Sato.

SAITO

Name's Rob Walker.

YONEKURA

Bobby Knuckles, resilient son of a bitch.

SAITO

Check out this last frame, before he drops.

They watch as Sato finishes his combination with a stiff right cross. Rob falls, THWACK! Face bounces off the canvas.

YONEKURA

He dropped his rear hand on purpose.

SAITO

Word on the street, he's got a daughter hidden somewhere in the city, he's got debt, and he just lost his manager.

INT. TOKYO - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Small, empty. MASARU UCHIDA (40s) boxing manager. Mixed ethnicity, well dressed, a way with words, don't let the movie star looks fool you.

Masaru APPLAUDS as Rob approaches, Rob slumps into a chair, winces in pain.

Rob stares at the wall, a plethora of pictures depict Masaru's career. On the wall his title belts too.

His eyes settle on a large dynamic photograph of Masaru, another FIGHTER about to exchange blows.

MASARU

I hear you want to talk?

ROB

Like the photo, who landed first?

MASARU

That's a secret. Saw you fight in Osaka, got some good hands. Pity you lost, I had some money on you.

Staff serve Rob a whiskey shot. He downs it.

Masaru pumps a cigarette into his mouth, lights it.

MASARU (CONT'D)

Heard about your Pops. Sorry for your loss.

Masaru notices the stitches.

MASARU (CONT'D)

That from a punch or butt.

ROB

Butt.

MASARU

Like being kissed by a rock.

ROB

Do you miss it?

MASARU

No, I got it all out of my system. It gave me something when I had nothing, but I lost a lot too. Takes more than it gives.

ROB

I'm missing something that can take me to the next level. I think that's you.

MASARU

I gotta lot of guys on my roster, spreading myself too thin may not benefit either of us. Where's your current manager?

ROB

In the wind.

MASARU

If you're asking me to guarantee you a specific number of fights, preparation and training costs will have to come out of your fight purses.

ROB

Of course.

MASARU

Which I collect, then pay to you.

ROB

Agreed.

MASARU

Good news, your stock is up. There's a chance to renegotiate soon...

ROB

How long?

MASARU

Licensing rights, options to terminate. I won't lie, its getting harder.

ROB

Can I be there?

Rob eyes Masaru. Food arrives.

MASARU

Your reputation precedes you. You lift spirits, gift masculine capital, you're a great foil.

ROB

For the compensation clause I want
to be present.

MASARU

Let's be smart. Relax, heal. Enjoy
life. I'll be in touch. Hungry?

ROB

No thanks.

Masaru thinks on it. Masaru wheels himself out from behind
the table, Rob's eyes widen, Masaru is WHEELCHAIR BOUND, Rob
bites his tongue, Masaru sees this.

MASARU

Give me until the end of the week,
I'll get back to you with an
answer.

ROB

Appreciate it. So who landed first?

MASARU

I did.

EXT. TOKYO - APARTMENT - NIGHT

Light turns on, keys, a pager, Rob strolls past a toiletry
bag on a table. Fridge opens, empty.

Rob reaches into the toiletry bag, pulls out three stacks of
cash. Rob moves through the

LIVING ROOM

Dilapidated, a complete mess, clothes strewn about on tatami
mats, a shelf perching boxing trophies, medals.

A PHOTOGRAPH. A younger Rob, arm and arm with his FATHER. Rob
wears the Asian Amateur Boxing Championship belt around his
waist. Better days.

Rob turns, notices the voicemail light blinking on his old
answering machine.

He hits play.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

Papa? I had a dream about you last
night...

Rob freezes. Stares at the machine. Reaches to rewind,
—then doesn't.

He opens a bottle of whiskey. The machine continues to blink.
He passes a room. Toys on the floor. He continues, enters his

BEDROOM

He peels off his sweatshirt, throws it on the bed, kneels,
reaches under the bed. Pulls out an old shoebox, opens it.

Almost full of cash. He sticks the three stacks of cash in
the box, slides the shoebox back under the bed.

Rob looks up to the nightstand, a photograph. His daughter
ELIAH (8), a sweet little kid, mixed ethnicity in a nation
proudly mono-ethnic. He returns to the

LIVING ROOM

Rob searches for his reading glasses, finds them, puts them
on, writes Eliah's birthday card, wraps a waterproof camera.

Rob pours a glass of whiskey, moves to his COMPUTER, injects
a CD. Screen fills with scenes from a life that's no more.

Rob watches Eliah (2), play with toys on the floor with SAYA
TAKEUCHI (30s), long black hair, timeless beauty with a no
nonsense attitude. Rob's ex, Eliah's mother.

ELIAH

Papa!

Rob watches Eliah (4) throw a Frisbee on a beach. Eliah looks
up in Rob's direction as she throws.

ELIAH (CONT'D)

Catch!

Rob takes a gulp of his whiskey, attempts a squeeze of his
blue stress ball, hands still hurt.

ELIAH (CONT'D)

Hi, Papa...

ROB (O.S)

Hey, Eliah. How was your day?

Rob watches the screen cut to Eliah (5), she runs in circles
holding a soccer ball.

ELIAH
I scored a goal!

ROB
That's great.

The screen image JUMPS to Eliah (6).

ELIAH
I want pizza!

ROB
How old are you, love?

Eliah holds up five fingers in her left, her right index finger in her left palm.

ROB (CONT'D)
Six. Wow. What a big girl. I love you, Eliah.

ELIAH
Love you, Papa.

Rob leans back beside the computer, scoops some ice from his cup, holds it over his eye, takes another gulp of whiskey.

INT. RAMEN SHOP - DAY

A traditional noodle restaurant with a long bench on one side, few tables on the other.

The MANAGER (50s), large with gray features, smallpox scars, thinning hair. Noise from a DISHWASHER, pots CLATTER.

Rob clears plates and cups, wipes tables.

MANAGER
Bobby! Garbage!

ROB
The tables...

MANAGER
Mop out the toilets as well.

Bobby doesn't take that well. Manager clocks it, approaches.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
You want to give me a hard time?
I'll walk down to the police box,
report you as an overstayer, have
you deported. Pick up fifty
thousand yen for the trouble.

Manager returns to the kitchen, throws orders together,
plates onto the metal counter for the WAITRESS to pick up.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
You want trouble?

ROB
No sir.

MANAGER
Hurry up.

Customers stare at Rob's black eye, bruises and fat lip.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Rob paces outside. The PRINCIPAL opens the school gate,
closes it behind him, approaches Rob.

ROB
Could you give this to Eliah?

Rob hands the principal a wrapped gift. Principal retreats.

PRINCIPAL
It was her birthday, yes?

ROB
Yes.

PRINCIPAL
If I handed it to her without the
consent of your ex-wife, I could be
in trouble with the police. I'm
very sorry.

ROB
I told you we're never married.

PRINCIPAL
Besides...

ROB
Besides what?

PRINCIPAL
Elijah's moved schools.

ROB
Where?

PRINCIPAL
I'm not sure, all I can say is she
no longer attends school here.

INT. BOXING GYM - DAY

Concrete floors. Small, heavy bags, a single ring. Sound
system plays MUSIC.

Grungy, fight posters grace walls. A hive of activity.

SONNY
Double up on the jab, two, three,
four. Left, right, punch right.
Jab... And again! Off the line for
that shovel hook, then the cross!

Rob in headgear and large 16oz gloves fires out a jab against
his sparring partner.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Jab, jab... There you go! There you
go! Come on, move! Counterpunch.
Keep the feet and the head busy.
Slip, low, high. That's your combo.
Slip, low, high.

Tadao leans in to Sonny.

TADAO
We can still have a fight.

BEEPING signals the rounds end. Rob, crouches in the corner
of the ring.

SONNY
With who?

ROB
Inoue Naoki.

SONNY
Who's that?

ROB
Guy from Saitama?

SONNY
Isn't he in Thailand?

ROB
Takashi Tamura, remember him? He
knocked him out.

Masaru rolls in.

TADAO
Rob knocked out Takashi Tamura.

ROB
Took his soul. Inoue just got off
the couch.

MASARU
Can't make weight. Might be a bit
over, though.

SONNY
How over?

ROB
Maybe 205, maybe more.

SONNY
Heavyweight? You're a light 205er.

TADAO
This guy just got off the couch.
Rob's in shape. Roadwork,
everything. Weight won't be a
problem. Inoue, he's done nothing.

ROB
We don't fight, we don't get paid.

SONNY
I'm not doing this. 215 is big.

TADAO
He knocked out Takashi Tamura.

SONNY
So what? He's a heavyweight. He
just got off the couch. He's got
ten to twenty pounds on you.

Rob's pager VIBRATES.

ROB
I'll fuckin' fight him. He's fat.
Look. This is my comeback, right?

SONNY

That's what I want, but we gotta be smart.

MASARU

If you get a shot, I recommend you take it. I can help set that up.

TADAO

He knocked out Takashi Tamura.

Rob glances at Tadao.

ROB

Tell him. I can do it, right?

MASARU

He can do anything.

Rob's pager VIBRATES again.

ROB

A minute?

SONNY

Forty five seconds and we go again.

Rob rips off his gloves, grabs his pager, rushes to a phone.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Busy streets. Ambulances amble by, lights and sirens BLARE.

Saya paces, appearance older from Rob's home movies, stained by years in hostess clubs and illegal gambling dens.

Behind Saya, a POLICE OFFICER stands guard in front of a community police box, his hands rest atop a long octagonal riot stick. Clear visual deterrent.

SAYA

Where the fuck have you been?

ROB

Why didn't you tell me you changed schools?

SAYA

Doesn't matter. What matters is what you owe.

Rob hands Saya an envelope of cash the size of a brick. The Police Officer eyes the exchange.

ROB
Could've easily won that last one.

She eyes him, looks bored. Lights a cigarette.

SAYA
Really, shame, live by the sword,
die by the sword...

ROB
Not anymore.

SAYA
You'll do what you have to do, for
me and for your daughter.

ROB
When can I see her?

Rob stares at her. The Police Officer studies both of them.

SAYA
Who do you think he'll arrest? Then
where will you be? We're family. We
stick together. I miss you.

ROB
So, what do you want me to do?

SAYA
I said, I miss you.

ROB
I'm done with handouts and phone
booth conversations. I'm doing
everything I can. That's more than
you.

SAYA
I do everything for her, okay?

ROB
Where is that getting her? I'll
tell you where, a one way ticket to
this fucking place, just like me.

Saya stares at him, a conversation she does not want. The
Police Officer leans in.

SAYA
Fucken hindsight.

POLICE OFFICER
Everything ok?

SAYA
Yes, thank you.

Police Officer waits, returns to the police box, his eyes remain on the pair.

Saya flicks her hair over her shoulders, waits until the officer is out of earshot.

SAYA (CONT'D)
You would've been a great
fighter...You could've been a
champion.

Silence between them. Saya throws another cigarette into her mouth, lights up, exhales on Rob.

ROB
I'm not doing this for you. Doesn't
matter what you say. Wanna know
why?

SAYA
Surprise me.

ROB
I'm going to continue to fight.

Saya waits for Rob to shut up. Her face, a mask.

SAYA
What's that's going to achieve?
You're washed up.

ROB
Maybe this time I'll win. Surely
didn't win with you.

SMACK! A hard slap on Rob's face. Saya seethes. Rob recovers. Looks up at her. Very intense.

SAYA
Go fuck yourself. You've got ten
days.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Rob rubs his knuckles, watches Masaru rest in his wheelchair in the disabled section of the train carriage.

Masaru's fingers tap away text messages on his phone keypad.

ROB
I'm healed, camps good, I'm ready..

Masaru continues to type.

MASARU
Legal stipulation says you must
comply with work conditions in the
ring.

ROB
Ok.

Masaru looks up from his phone.

MASARU
I got you a shot.

ROB
You what?

MASARU
Some people, they're putting a lot
of money on you.

ROB
Great, tell them to bet the house.

MASARU
To lose in the ninth.

ROB
No. No dives.

MASARU
The expectation is to see you fall.

Masaru hands Rob a business card. On it reads: Takahashi
Apartment Rental Services.

MASARU (CONT'D)
You need to re-up your tenancy
agreement, you can trust them.
They're waiting for your call.

INT. PRIVATE INVESTIGATION FIRM - DAY

Clinical light, formal. CONSULTANT (30s), sits in front of
Rob on one side of a long table, devoid of empathy, looks
more like a salesman than an investigator.

CONSULTANT

Address verification is big right now. That, and surveillance cases.

ROB

What does that involve?

CONSULTANT

Infidelity, child custody, corporate embezzlement and fraud.

ROB

Child custody, that's my problem.

CONSULTANT

Do you have a subject?

ROB

Ah, yeah, was hoping you could help me find them.

CONSULTANT

When a subject is evasive, it's a cat and mouse game.

ROB

What are we looking at?

CONSULTANT

That depends on what you are looking for, case scenario, amount of work, time required, locations.

ROB

Can I get a quote?

CONSULTANT

We can provide a quote on the application once we have discussed and assessed your requirements.

ROB

Can you give me a ballpark figure?

Consultant slides over a piece of paper with a number on it, Rob takes the paper, reads it, eyes widen.

CONSULTANT

We always aim to work within people's budgets to get them the results they need. We ensure clients fully understand what they'll be paying before we start the investigation.

INT. BOXING RING - NIGHT

BELL sounds. Crowd stands, SCREAMS, some can't watch.

NAOKI INOUE (30s), 240lbs, looks like a truck, flat nose, short-hair, square jaw, backs Rob up against the ropes.

Inoue hits Rob with everything he's got, pounds hard right after hard right...BAM! BAM! BAM!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Ohhhh! Vicious body shots from
Inoue in the ninth! Walker's
clearly down on points here.

Rob covers up with his gloves.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Walker's in trouble again!

Sonny on his feet ringside, leans on the ring apron, screams through the ropes.

SONNY
Punch your way out of it. Punch out
of it!

Rob fires back at Inoue, blood from his mouth, under his eye.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Walker trading his way back!

Inoue steps back...Rob slips off the ropes, raises his hands over his head, letting Inoue know he survived.

Rob fires a left hook.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Look at that! Walker hurts Inoue
with a body shot!

Right uppercut.

Rob stops, watches Inoue stumble backwards, crash down to the canvas. This is not the plan.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Big uppercut by Bobby Knuckles!
First time in 10 fights Inoue Naoki
has been down!

Masaru gasps, nervous look washes over his face.

Inoue rises to his feet.

REFEREE

Four...

Referee gives him the standing eight-count.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Six... Seven... Eight.

Rob walks in, prepares to unleash a huge left hook, holds back. Inoue backpedals, fires out a right uppercut.

Sonny raises his hands over his head, white corner jacket stained with Rob's blood.

Crowd CHEERS.

ANNOUNCER

The referee's gonna stop it!...

TEN SECONDS TO GO.

Bobby unleashes a blow to the side of Inoue's head, his mouthpiece flies into the second row.

Inoue sags against the ropes. The crowd leaps to their feet.

Inoue's bloody teeth snarl at Bobby, he waves him to come ahead and fight toe to toe.

Bobby obliges with an effective burst of rights and lefts.

Blood sprays over the ropes onto ringside photographers.

Bobby with a body, body head combination, BAM! BAM! BAM!
Inoue hits the canvas. The referee counts.

REFEREE

8...

Masaru watches from a distance.

MASARU

Get the fuck up.

REFEREE

9...10

Inoue on the canvas, motionless. The arena EXPLODES.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

And he is..... out!

Referee waves off the fight, the BELL RINGS.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

AIDA TAKAHASHI (30s) timeless look, melancholic unwavering gaze, sits on the toilet, suit pants wrinkled.

She glances at her watch, practices breathing exercises. Toilet FLUSHES, she moves out of the cubicle to the sink.

Faucet gushes water. Aida shakes out a couple aspirin. Cups her hand under water, knocks pills back, eyes her reflection.

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY

A clock TICKS. A small space, things thrown together. Décor dates to the 80's. A drinking bird rocks back and forth.

Rob sits opposite Aida.

ROB

I understand my agreement is...

Aida checks documents. Clock TICKS.

AIDA

Coming to an end? Looks that way.

ROB

Is it possible to renew? I'd prefer something short term.

AIDA

Shouldn't be a problem. There'll be the renewal fee if you choose to remain in your current apartment.

ROB

Renewal fee?

AIDA

Very common here. Did you negotiate with to have the lease renewal fee removed before you signed?

ROB

I don't recall, it was my old manager who...

AIDA

Once you sign a contract stating a lease renewal fee is required, you're legally bound by it. Would you still like to?

ROB
Do I have a choice?

AIDA
You could find another place we
have some nice ...

ROB
I'm happy where I am.

AIDA
We're going to need some details
from you. Do you have your
passport?

ROB
Sorry, my manager has those
materials.

AIDA
Oh. I'll need you to come back with
a few documents, here's a list I've
prepared in English for you.

Aida lays out a number of documents on the table in front of
Rob. It's a small tome, Rob's mouth agape.

AIDA (CONT'D)
What is you do may I ask?

ROB
I'm a writer.

AIDA
Wow, what do you write?

ROB
Children's books.

AIDA
So, what brought you to Tokyo?

ROB
The trees.

AIDA
Well, the city is...

Aida flicks her hair over her shoulders.

ROB
I was misinformed.

A large KNOCK at the door which doesn't stop a MAN from barging right in.

MAN (O.S)
Not interrupting am I?

Kind of is. Rob turns, Private detective JOE HORIUCHI (30s) Fighting to stay clean-cut, sharp, tough features, the GLOW of a WINNER. Bilingual.

JOE
Something for you.

Joe hands Aida a file. She scans the documents, lays it on the table, reaches into her drawer, hands Joe an envelope.

AIDA
Mr. Walker this is Private Investigator Joe Horiuchi, Joe this is Rob Walker.

JOE
Anything else?

ROB
You ah, find people?

JOE
Nobody's perfect.

ROB
Magnum P.I Stuff?

JOE
Corporate stuff, private stuff,
Nice to meet you.

Rob's phone RINGS.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Street full of small eateries. Rob approaches a small red door, an old sign out front reads, Happy Dragon.

He slides INSIDE.

Proceeds downstairs to an empty Chinese themed eatery with a low hanging basement ceiling.

An old wood bar with a YOUNG JAPANESE BARMAID behind it.

At a table, Rob spots Masaru, squashed between two large men, SATOSHI NAKAMURA (30s) and DAI (30s), Yonekura's henchmen.

Both hard looking, flat noses, short-cropped hair, square jaws, clear they both can handle themselves.

Rob approaches, sits, looks straight at Masaru.

ROB

Didn't say we were meeting in a basement.

MASARU

Didn't know.

ROB

Said it was in a restaurant?

MASARU

It is a restaurant.

The restaurant's owner, an older, big bellied Japanese man, TARO, approaches, pours Japanese alcohol into Masaru's glass.

MASARU (CONT'D)

Heard you got popped after the Osaka fight. You can file an appeal, or ask for another test.

ROB

It's complete bullshit. Didn't take anything, never have.

MASARU

I believe you, but I'm not in charge here.

ROB

So lets do both, an appeal and another test.

MASARU

You appeal, ethics panels look deep into if you broke the rules and what disciplinary measures are appropriate. You broke the rules?

ROB

Absolutely not. So until then?

Masaru places a toiletry bag on the table, slides it to Rob.

Rob unzips it.

Masaru places a cigarette into his mouth, lights it.

ROB (CONT'D)
That's it?

MASARU
Promotion and training costs are high. Speaking of training, Sonny took off down south with some of your winnings. We'll find you new trainers once this is all settled.

ROB
Once what is settled?

Rob looks at Satoshi, Dai, they stare back, unwavering gazes.

ROB (CONT'D)
We should leave.

MASARU
Stay. For one drink at least, please.

DAI
He's right, be calm, enjoy some booze.

ROB
I'm not looking for trouble, just meeting my manager. Pretty uneventful. If I'm wrong, and things prove eventful, we gonna be calm?

Dai looks up at Rob.

DAI
What round were you supposed to finish in?

ROB
Ninth. You put it like that. You're responsible for him.

Rob looks to Satoshi, gestures at Dai. Rob turns to Masaru.

SATOSHI
You finished him. Not the plan.

They knock back their drinks.

ROB
That was the plan.

SATOSHI
I beg to differ.

Satoshi laughs.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
I'm joking. Allow me to refill your glasses. Taro has a bottle of thirty-three year old single malt from the Scottish highlands. What do you say?

ROB
Thank you.

SATOSHI
Taro, the thirty-three, and new glasses! You don't want to contaminate the thirty-three with the piss you were drinking.

Taro brings them three glasses, and the old bottle, opens it, pours for the men.

Satoshi lifts up his glass, toasts.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
Cheers!

They mutter toast. Satoshi puts down his glass.

SATOSHI (CONT'D)
He wants his money back.

DAI
I don't like you.

MASARU
Rob.

SATOSHI
Shut up.

ROB
That makes two of us.

SATOSHI
That makes three of us.

ROB
Leave.

SATOSHI
I don't think so.

MASARU

Please.

DAI

We're not going anywhere.

Rob picks up his single malt.

ROB

Well.

He downs the stuff.

ROB (CONT'D)

Good stuff.

He doesn't put the glass down.

ROB (CONT'D)

There's only one thing left to do.

SATOSHI

And that is?

Rob surprises them. He SMASHES his glass into the side of Satoshi's head, glass flies.

Dai JUMPS onto the table, thrusts and swings a KNIFE at Rob.

Rob weaves and fades, avoids Dai's attack, picks up a plate, SMASHES it over Dai's head...

Rob swings at Dai, JABS at his throat, Rob pulls his face onto his elbow. CRACK! Less boxer, more street fighter.

Satoshi rises, face covered in blood. He swings at Rob.

Rob ducks, slams his hand into the side Satoshi's head CRACK!

Pain shoots through his hand, up his arm, it's fractured.

The FIGHTING STOPS...

Steam caused by spilt hot food DISSIPATES...The only one in the room left standing, Rob, clutches his hand.

Masaru wheels himself over.

MASARU

Go.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Rob weaves through a sea of people, the only foreign face. He finds his train, queues for it. Sounds fade to silence.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me.

He glances over his shoulder. A man in a suit, identifying himself as a plain clothed police OFFICER approaches.

Rob turns, sees two UNIFORMED OFFICERS gather in the b.g.

OFFICER

Your hand there, ok?

ROB

This an interrogation?

OFFICER

Now that you ask.

ROB

You got some ID?

The officer pulls out his police identification.

Rob takes a picture of it. Agitation grows across the officer's face. Rob hits the record button on his phone.

OFFICER

You do not need to do that.

ROB

I don't need your consent.

OFFICER

Put the phone away please.

Rob slips the phone in his pocket, leaves the recording on.

The officer watches, it tempers his behavior.

Four more UNIFORMED OFFICERS arrive, now six hover in a large circle around Rob and the plain clothed officer.

Compliance doesn't seem optional.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

May I look through your pockets?

ROB

Do you have a warrant?

OFFICER
Are you carrying a passport?

ROB
No.

OFFICER
You are required by law to do so.
Do you have any ID?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Sterile room, one table, two seats, clinical light. Rob on edge, two OFFICERS across from him.

OFFICER
Article 198.2 of the Code of
Criminal Procedure, requires us to
notify you, you are not required to
make a statement against your will.

ROB
Have I been arrested?

OFFICER
Yes.

ROB
What for?

OFFICER
Knowingly committing a crime.

ROB
I'm not saying anything without a
lawyer.

OFFICER
After informing you of the facts of
the alleged crime you may appoint a
lawyer, you will be given the
chance to provide an explanation.

ROB
There's nothing to explain.

OFFICER
You will be immediately released if
it is believed to be no longer
necessary to detain you.

TAKAHITO MATSUSHIMA (50s) General Affairs Division's
department chief, barges in.

TAKAHITO
What's going on here?

OFFICER
He's being held on suspicion.

TAKAHITO
Of what?

OFFICER
Assault.

TAKAHITO
Release him now.

One officer uncuffs Rob, the other closes his laptop rises from his seat, they both leave.

TAKAHITO (CONT'D)
I apologize for inconvenience Mr. Walker. My officers failed to get a proper description of the suspect, nor did they check footage from security cameras in the vicinity.

ROB
I can go?

Takahito clocks Robs busted hand.

TAKAHITO
We hope to educate our younger officers to prevent a reoccurrence of such an incident. Get that hand looked at.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Rob rests on an examination bed, a DOCTOR examines Rob's hand, rotates it. Rob winces from the pain.

DOCTOR
Clearly swollen, you having trouble moving the fingers?

ROB
A little.

DOCTOR
We'll have to wait for the x-rays but it looks like a boxer's fracture to me.

The Doctor eyes the bruises on Rob's face.

ROB

Yep.

DOCTOR

If the bone is still aligned, then we can immobilize it with a cast or a splint to allow it to heal.

ROB

If it's not aligned?

DOCTOR

It may need to be set and held in place with pins, it'll require surgery.

ROB

I need this hand.

DOCTOR

Healing times between six to 10 weeks.

ROB

Six to...Jesus?!

DOCTOR

Don't worry, the long term prognosis is good, though you might suffer a slight decrease in grip strength.

EXT. RAMEN SHOP - BACK ALLEY - DAY

Robs eye bulge at the quote in the newspaper, he screws the paper up, throws it in a large trash bin, heads back

INSIDE

Rob cleans tables, television on in the b.g.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

Last month the result of a fight in Osaka was nullified after it was confirmed boxing journeyman Robert Walker aka Bobby Knuckles tested positive for two forms of a banned substance...

Patrons watch the news, turn to look at Rob, a few whispers.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)
As well as changing the decision to
a no contest the JBC also imposed a
six month ban on Walker who is the
first non Japanese boxer to suffer
such a disciplinary action.

Rob drops plates, they SMASH, noodle soup everywhere.

MANAGER
Rob!

Manager sits, studies murmurs from patrons, looks out the
window. Rob walks over.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
Rob. We've had some complaints. I'm
letting you go.

ROB
You're firing me?

MANAGER
Reputation goes a long way.

Manager looks up at the T.V.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
I did what I could. If I hear of
anything I'll let you know.

INT. EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - DAY

Rob sits across from an INTERVIEWER (20s), a polished young
man, efficient, sounds like a tape recording.

INTERVIEWER
Well, this looks very good.. Of
course, you understand this is the
worst time of the year to look for
a job.

Rob leans back in his chair, disbelief washes over his face.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Mr. Walker, nobody even thinks
about leaving their job until after
they get their bonus.

ROB
Look, I've got a kid and...

INTERVIEWER

I understand and I'm absolutely sure something will turn up. Have you brought your passport?

INT. INDEPENDENT PANEL - DAY

Small old room, half court room half, empty office space.
Masaru sits across from the panel, no Rob

PANEL HEAD

The panel has convened today to...
disclose it's most recent
discoveries.

Rob bursts in, sits with Masaru, clear he's made an attempt at formal dress.

PANEL HEAD (CONT'D)

Glad you could join us Mr. Walker.

ROB

Sorry, sorry.

PANEL HEAD

As I was saying, the panel has convened today to disclose it's most recent discoveries.

Masaru leans into Rob.

MASARU

Disclosure, that's transparency, that's good.

PANEL MEMBER

Firstly, no second sample was taken on the night of the fight. Mr. Walker agreed to a second sample which has not come back yet.

ROB

That means I'm innocent right?

PANEL MEMBER

Second, the JBC was tardy in notifying Mr. Walker of the banned substance detection, going so far as to notify his former boxing coach before him.

ROB

So that's it.

PANEL HEAD

To conclude, the JBC has been found at fault, however final testing has yet to be determined therefore, disciplinary action against Mr. Walker is still possible.

MASARU

That's not good.

PANEL HEAD

The panel sees it fit to withhold Mr. Walkers license until the outcome of the testing has been finalized.

A wooden hammer SLAMS down on a wooden gavel.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Masaru's CELL RINGS.

MASARU

Here.

Masaru talks on his cell a heated beat. Rob overhears:

MASARU (CONT'D)

You'll get the damn money.

Masaru hangs up, looks uncharacteristically shaken.

He and Rob cross to the entrance. Masaru slips an old man polishing shoes a thousand yen bill.

Rob opens the door for Masaru who wheels himself in.

ROB

Who's here?

MASARU

Don't speak unless spoken to.

INT. RESTAURANT - BACK ROOM - DAY

Leather booths and big, padded chairs. It's empty. Save for a corner table. Yonekura, Saito, share a top-notch cabernet.

Yonekura and Saito see Masaru, react like they've seen a ghost. Yonekura bolts up.

Tense. Like there could be a gunfight.

Masaru and Yonekura converge, grab hands grimly, trading serious questions and answers with their eyes.

Rob watches Saito. He watches Rob.

YONEKURA

Don't know why I'm meeting you. I
don't talk to dead men.

MASARU

I'm not dead yet, you prick.

They shake vigorously, smile big. Everyone relaxes.

Masaru grabs Rob, pulls him into the huddle.

MASARU (CONT'D)

This is Rob Walker, the next
heavyweight champion of the world.

Rob shakes Yonekura's hand, eyes the traditional tattoos peeking out of his sleeve cuff.

MASARU (CONT'D)

Rob, this is Daijiro Yonekura. You
ever need to talk to a promoter,
talk to this man first. He'll have
your back.

Yonekura stares at Rob like he's a bug as they shake.

ROB

Pleased to meet you, sir.

MASARU

This is Goro Saito, works for the
JBC administration team. Think
about him before you decide to
cheat? Goro will rock your world if
you make a bad call.

ROB

Pleased to meet you, sir.

Yonekura takes Masaru's arm.

YONEKURA

Have a seat.

Masaru rolls up to their table between them on either side of the booth, he pumps a cigarette into his mouth, lights up, sucks back, exhales, shoots back a small cup of sake.

MASARU

Rob, a moment please.

He points out the corner table for Rob. Rob crosses, sits, his back to their table.

YONEKURA

Seems like a good kid.

Masaru cracks open a fortune cookie.

SAITO

Bobby Knuckles. He's got potential, just needs good people around him that's all.

MASARU

Why the long face?

Chuckles from Saito.

Rob turns, sees it's a serious pow-wow. Overhears:

SAITO

Heard you had an expensive weekend in Osaka last time we were down there. How'd you screw up so bad?

MASARU

How could I know? Osaka isn't my town. I'm not all knowing.

YONEKURA

You should hop a jet outta here.

MASARU

Why? It's an easy fix.

YONEKURA

How?

MASARU

I've got an investment I'm working to get a return on.

SAITO

What? Or should I say, who?

Masaru tears the paper from the fortune cookie, looks down at the message. The message reads:

GO GET HIM READY.

Masaru glances over his shoulder at Rob.

The two suits shudder, trade looks.

Masaru smiles. The men speak in hushed tones.

Rob watches. Yonekura, Saito and Masaru stare back at him.

Rob snaps his eyes to his table. The men MURMUR.

A WAITER arrives with Rob's steak, exits. Rob looks at his steak. Pushes away the plate.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Joe slides out, down the street, passes a HOMELESS MAN.

Joe pumps the cigarette into his mouth, lights up, puts the pack back in his pocket.

HOMELESS MAN
Got a cigarette?

JOE
Last one.

A FIGURE behind him approaches.

ROB (O.S.)
I need to find someone.

Joe stops, turns.

JOE
Yeah?

ROB
My daughter. She's living with...

JOE
Who?

ROB
My ex-girlfriend.

JOE
She Japanese?

ROB
Yeah.

JOE
Kids are hard to track, man.

ROB
I wouldn't ask if I had somewhere
else to go.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Sun cuts through curtains. Phone RINGS, jolts Rob awake.

In his clothes, face down on the living room floor, he
scrambles to the phone. Rob shuffles to the

KITCHEN

He traps the phone between his shoulder and ear.

ELIAH (O.S.)
Papa?

ROB
Hello darling!

Rob brews coffee, pan on the range, cracks, scrambles an egg.

Rob tips the eggs onto a plate. Throws the pan in the sink.

ELIAH (O.S.)
Are you... gonna go... away?

ROB
No. No, I'm not going away. I love
you very much. I'll be right here.

ELIAH (O.S.)
She's playing cards a lot, I don't
see her. She sleeps all day, she's
gone at night. I want to come and
live with you Papa.

ROB
I'm working on it sunshine. You
still there?

SAYA (O.S.)
Eight days.

She hangs up.

INT. STREET - NIGHT

The NOISE of a bustling Tokyo street, Ambulance sirens BLARE,
care horns HONK, TOUTERS shout welcomes outside restaurants.

Joe enters a

PHONE BOOTH

Door closes, SILENCE. Joes reaches into his trouser pocket, pull a crumpled piece of paper.

Receiver cradled between an ear and shoulder. Joe dials.

ROB (O.S.)

Yeah.

JOE

It's Joe, did some digging for you.

ROB (O.S.)

What'd you find?

JOE

Has your ex been declared custodian by the court?

ROB (O.S.)

No, she just took her, she told me that's how it works.

JOE

Child abduction is a crime, but it's not treated as a crime.

ROB (O.S.)

The fuck?

JOE

I'm meeting a friend now. Can you join us?

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Rob enters, finds Joe and ICHIRO HASEGAWA (50s), launching a bowling ball down the alley.

The CLATTER of pins falling.

HASEGAWA

Yeah, fuck yeah!

Hasegawa, upper police echelon, large, mustached, approaches the pair.

JOE

Meet a friend of mine.

HASEGAWA

One of the last you have.

ROB

Nice to meet you.

HASEGAWA

What happened to your hand?

ROB

Slipped, fell on someone's face.

HASEGAWA

Where's your kid?

ROB

Somewhere in Tokyo.

JOE

Working on that as we speak.

HASEGAWA

Your wife is a Japanese?

ROB

We were never married, but yes.

HASEGAWA

Once your kid's on Japanese soil,
you try to take them anywhere,
anywhere, we treat you as a
kidnapper, unless Japanese courts
have given you custody.

ROB

Shit.

HASEGAWA

Most of the time, we imagine the
Japanese parent is shielding the
child from domestic abuse or a poor
living environment.

ROB

That's what I'm trying to rescue
her from.

HASEGAWA

Can't make that judgment. You're
the criminal in most cases.

ROB

So its a race to kidnap first?

JOE
Winner takes all.

HASEGAWA
The law is the law. You got a
lawyer? You got money?

INT. BOXING GYM - NIGHT

Rob unwraps his hands, winds up his wraps, throws them in his bag, a few others in the gym work out.

In stride Yonekura and Saito.

Everyone clocks them, fake excuses to slink out of the gym.

Rob turns, the gym empty except for the three of them. Saito works a heavy bag, Yonekura stands in Rob's personal space.

YONEKURA
It's tough, our line of work.
Everybody's so serious. Too many
guns, too many computers. What are
you gonna do? Steal from ordinary
people?

ROB
That'd be criminal.

Saito approaches, hands Rob an envelope, Rob opens it, a boxing license. A smile grows across Rob's face.

YONEKURA
So what's left? Banks? Hah.
Banks have no money. It's all
electronic. Only place that still
takes cash is...Bookies.

Rob knows what's coming.

YONEKURA (CONT'D)
I can offer you some help, some
additional financial relief, get
rid of some of that debt...help you
get your daughter back.

Rob half-pays attention to him, half-frets over at Saito smashing a punching bag, clearly he knows what he's doing.

Rob puts the license back in the envelope, hands it back.

ROB
I'm sorry, it's not what I'm
looking to do.

YONEKURA
I understand perfectly. Well, thank
you for your time.

Yonekura extends his right hand. Rob extends his, they shake.
Grip firm, Rob finches.

ROB
When?

YONEKURA
Soon. Interested?

Yonekura, clocks this, locks eyes with Rob.

YONEKURA (CONT'D)
You have lovely hands, do you
moisturize?

ROB
Sorry?

Yonekura's not letting go of Rob's hand.

YONEKURA
I swear by it. I try all sorts of
lotions. My sister, you know, she
uses the aloe vera with the sun
screen built in...

Rob can't get his hand back.

ROB
You'd be willing to pay cash?

YONEKURA
I am. You know, they say cinnamon
is wonderful for your pores.

ROB
If it's cash, I'd be willing to
listen.

Yonekura squeezes, a little.

YONEKURA
That would be lovely.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rob and Aida walk, heady from the wine, a little awkward.

Rob rubs his hand, sneaks a side glance, Aida smiles.

AIDA
Thank you.

ROB
Look, touch this.

Rob bows, pointing to the back of his head.

AIDA
Your head?

Aida reaches to touch Rob's head, he lets out a huge GROWL.

ROB
GRRRRRR.

Aida SHRIEKS. They both laugh

AIDA
You're such a.. Weirdo.

She pushes him.

ROB
No, seriously, seriously. Touch it.

AIDA
OK.

A massive knot on the back of his head.

AIDA (CONT'D)
Oh, my God.

ROB
Do you feel that?

AIDA
Yeah, what is it?

ROB
It's a remnant.

AIDA
A remnant.

ROB
Yeah, from the Māori's. There's only a few of us left since the homo sapiens took over.

AIDA
That would explain the forehead.

ROB
What's that supposed to mean?

AIDA
No, seriously, how did you get it?

ROB
I used to play this game with my cousin. Crack the egg.

AIDA
Hm-hmm.

ROB
He would sit tight like a ball on his bed and I'd would jump up and down trying to open him up. I hit my head on the ceiling and I blacked out.

They both laugh.

ROB (CONT'D)
I was knocked out for 5-10 minutes. I pissed myself.

AIDA
Oh. Great you had family to do that with.

ROB
You had no family?

AIDA
Estranged from mine when I was little.

ROB
Sorry... If you had a choice to live in the past or future and you could be anything you wanted, what would you be?

AIDA
What would you be?

ROB
I always wanted to be a rapper in
the nineties.

AIDA
That's cool. A rapper?

ROB
Yeah.

AIDA
It kind of seemed like hell though,
east coast, west coast and all
that.

ROB
What?

AIDA
Yeah, the nineties would be the
last place I'd want to be.

ROB
No way! So where would you wanna,
and what would you wanna be?

AIDA
You know. Here, now.

ROB
That's boring.

AIDA
Fuck you.

Rob turns, stares at Aida, Aida stops, holds his gaze.

Are they gonna...?

Aida blushes. There's a silence, they turn walk on. They
arrive at a subway entrance.

AIDA (CONT'D)
OK. Well, this is me.

Rob nods, hovers by the entrance, awkward and yet.

ROB
This is you.

AIDA
Thank you very much.

ROB
Thank you very much. We should do
this again.

SILENCE. They loiter on the edge of something more.

Rob hovers, fragile, the sting of uncertainty.

Aida turns, descends into the depths of the Tokyo Metro
subway, doesn't look back, shoots a half wave.

Rob calls out.

ROB (CONT'D)
So, that's a yes?

Aid from inside the depths of the subway entrance.

AIDA (O.S.)
Maybe.

INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - NIGHT

A wall of noise and a cloud of cigarette smoke. A gambling
hall masquerading as a game arcade.

No interaction, the game, uninteresting at first glance.

Rows of men sit in front of machines punching flippers.

Masaru rolls through in his wheelchair, old mobile phone up
to his ear. NOISE from metal balls drowns out Masaru's voice.

He checks his watch, negotiates. He rolls

OUTSIDE

MASARU
You ready?

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Rob on the phone, inaudible. He places a bag down.

A FIGURE approaches, puts down a similar bag. Rob hangs up,
picks up the figure's bag, heads up the street.

Figure picks up Rob's bag, leaves in the opposite direction.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Rob gazes at his reflection in the bathroom mirror.

No Sonny. No Tadao.

His fingers scan his almost healed bruises.

All of tonight's FIGHTERS share the same space, unpacking their sports bags, getting ready for war.

They may look, dress, and drink like they're auditioning for a Japanese version of Jersey Shore, but these guys are the real fucking deal.

One GUY has a face covered in scar tissue, like a brick wall.

MASARU (O.S.)

Rob, a word.

Masaru rolls up behind Rob.

MASARU (CONT'D)

You can't bite, hit each other in the dick, or strike the face when your opponents down, but that's it. Submissions pay top dollar, that's the goal.

ROB

So, no rules. What about K.O's?

MASARU

Them too. Your hand ok?

ROB

Probably not.

MASARU

Hey, here's your reason for violence.

INT. UNDERGROUND RING - NIGHT

Inside, a heavily-muscled FIGHTER with a shaved head, TAIGA (30s), is putting a beating on his OPPONENT.

Taiga's opponent eats a vicious spinning back fist to the chin, falls in a heap, doesn't get up.

PROMOTER (40s), in charge, throws up his hands, Taiga laughs.

TAIGA
Looks like I'm keeping the money
tonight!

ROB (O.S.)
I'll fight him.

Promoter turns around, looks at Rob, as does Taiga, who smiles down at him from inside the ring.

Promoter looks at Taiga. What do you think? Taiga shrugs. It's his funeral. Promoter turns to Rob.

PROMOTER
You ever fought before?

ROB
A little.

Promoter studies Rob. Sees he's serious. Gives in.

PROMOTER
Sign a waiver?

ROB
All good.

PROMOTER
What's your name?

ROB
Bobby, Robert.

PROMOTER
Get tuned up in here, it's on you.

ROB
No problem.

PROMOTER
Come on in.

Promoter waves Rob into the ring.

Taiga's entourage whispers amongst themselves. Snickering at what lays in wait for Rob.

The fallen opponent is helped out of the ring.

A TRAINER tapes Rob's hands and gives him some MMA gloves.

He slips them on, BUZZER sounds as he moves toward Taiga, who smirks at Rob, circling him.

Time slows down for Rob, he sees an opening in Taiga's defenses, throws a stiff cross.

SMACK!

Rob hits Taiga's chin, knocks him back. Drunken CROWD SHOUTS.

Rob steps in to finish him, Taiga puts his head down, Rob throws his big punch.

Rob's fires a right hook, his small 40z leather glove hits the top of Taiga's head. CRACK!

Rob winces in pain.

Taiga holds on to Rob, Rob throws out his left hand in wild hooks. They miss.

Taiga bobs under, circles, climbs on Rob, takes his back.

Taiga's hands slide under Rob's chin, around his neck, he sinks in a rear naked choke!

Rob's hand fights, it's in deep, his eyes start to roll back in his head. Gotta do something quick or it's lights out.

Unapologetic, unpretentious, pure as it is frightening.

Rob steps back, jumps up, falls backward...

SLAMS Taiga back onto the ground underneath Rob, Taiga releases a huge HHHRUMMPP!

A winded Taiga lets go of the choke hold, Rob spins on top of his opponent, scrambles to get up.

One punch CRACKS Taiga on the chin, hurting him. Again, the two hold on to each other. The crowd grow unhappy.

CROWD

Boo! Go home!

They stand, Rob pulls back, throws a punch. It hurts Taiga.

Taiga hits him back, again Rob holds on.

Angry BOOS from the crowd, so loud Rob doesn't hear.

Taiga crouches down, gets serious. He throws a right. Blocked. A leg kick. Blocked. CROWD ROARS.

Rob snaps his head with a quick rear hand. Again. And again.

Rob DECKS HIM with a hard overhand, sending Taiga to the canvas to the shock of his entourage and the promoter.

Another ROAR from the crowd, this is what they came to see.

Rob grabs the back of Taiga's head, hauls it down, launches knee after knee into his face.

Rob throws Taiga around like a rag doll, strikes him with vicious punches and kicks.

PROMOTER

Cover up!

Rob shoves him against the ropes, blasts away.

Rob pounds away. It's a full-fledged beating.

He crushes Taiga with a vicious left hook, sends him sprawling through the ropes, UNCONSCIOUS.

SILENCE in the crowd.

What the hell just happened here? The entourage rushes to Taiga's aid, but he's out cold.

Promoter stares in disbelief, Rob approaches him.

ROB

You owe me some money.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob pulls out his shoe box, opens it.

Now half full, he puts the nights winnings in, grabs an envelope, fills it with bills.

Stuffs the shoe box back under the bed where it came from.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Rob tosses the envelope on the counter, bills fall out of it.

ROB

What'd you find?

JOE

Your ex's guy, he's older,
nightclub owner, the exotic kind.

ROB

Jesus.

JOE

They live on government aid in public housing.

ROB

Got an address?

JOE

A while back a P.I was hired to track down a client's ex-girlfriend. They got her address, the client used that info to kill her. Privacy laws are stronger now, P.I's can't get access to government and company databases.

ROB

So how do we find them?

INT. CITY OFFICE - DAY

Horiuchi enters, decor a bad hangover from the 80s.

He stops, scans for someone working who looks, shy, easily manipulated, he finds his target, approaches a CLERK.

JOE

Excuse me, my sister received a wrong bill from City Hall.

CLERK

I'm so sorry about the mix up.

JOE

That's fine. I think your files might be wrong. Please check.

CLERK

Absolutely. What's you and your sisters family name?

JOE

Takeuchi.

CLERK

And her given name?

JOE

Saya.

CLERK
Nice name.

JOE
Thank you.

CLERK
And, can I see some identification?

INT. BAR - DAY

Sunlight slashes blinds revealing a place that is wrong during the day.

A BEEFY BARTENDER, takes stock of liquor, cleans. Rob and Joe lean at the bar.

JOE
I have another trick up my sleeve.
I want you to organize a family gathering?

ROB
What?

JOE
Like having a meal with your daughter and the family at a restaurant.

ROB
Saya won't agree to that. I'll try.
That's all?

JOE
That's all. I'll do the rest.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rob waits outside. He looks up, Aida comes out of her apartment in a red dress.

Rob's face drops.

AIDA
What is it?

ROB
You can't wear that.

AIDA
Why not?

ROB
Saya's particular about colors.

AIDA
You're kidding?

ROB
She hates red. Have you got
something else?

Aida stares at him, reluctant to give in.

INT. OHANA HAWAIIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Decor inspired by sunny landscapes of Hawaiian islands and volcanoes. Traditional Hawaiian music plays in the b.g.

Rob and Aida, dressed in blue, sit across from Eliah sandwiched between Saya and KENJI (40s) tanned, hair slicked back, little overweight, but looks like he could take you.

Adults silent. Eliah SLURPS in her soup.

SAYA
Ida, isn't it?

ROB
Aida.

SAYA
How long have you known each other
then?

Aida's about to answer, Rob gets there first.

ROB
A month isn't it?

Rob cues Aida's response with a tap on the thigh.

AIDA
That sounds about right.

SAYA
It's always a rare treat to meet
one of Rob's lady friends.

ROB
Please...

SAYA
Where did you two meet?

ROB
She helped me with my tenancy
contract..

Saya raises an eyebrow...

ROB (CONT'D)
We started talking.

SAYA
That's nice. I'm happy for you.

Rob turns to Eliah.

ROB
Eliah, how's school?

ELIAH
It's okay.

ROB
Just okay?

Saya turns to Eliah.

SAYA
You understand what she's talking
about? 'Cause I haven't got a
fucking a clue.

ROB
You never did.

AIDA
Ah, excuse me.

Aida gets up, heads toward the toilet.

SAYA
Pull your head out of your ass.

KENJI
Let's just try to stay calm.

Rob shoots Kenji a look.

ROB
Stay out of it, you're not a member
of this family.

KENJI
And you think you are?

Aida returns remains standing.

ELIAH
Can I get some ice cream please?

SAYA
Don't interrupt.

ELIAH
But momma, I didn't...

SAYA
I was talking. That's called
interrupting. Wait till I'm
finished, then you can start.

ROB
Stop treating her like an employee.

SAYA
What?!

AIDA
I should be going now.

SAYA
Sit down, you cunt.

Aida stands, shocked.

ROB
Who the hell do you think you are?

Elijah rises to leave the table, Kenji grabs her arm.

ELIAH
Let go.

KENJI
Tell me you're gonna sit down and
shut up and I'll let you go.

ROB
Let go of her.

KENJI
I will when I hear an answer. Tell
me. Are you going to shut up?

Rob gets up, reaches to pull Kenji off. Kenji turns, CRACKS
Rob in the face with a backhand.

KENJI (CONT'D)
Are you going to shut up or what? A
simple yes or no. Tell me what I
want to hear and I'll let go.

Saya grabs him from behind, he turns on her.

His tongue curls behind his cheek and raises his arm like he's going to smack her.

Rob grabs his wrist. Restaurant PATRONS stare. It gets real QUIET real quick.

ROB

Let go of her and sit down.

Kenji releases his grip on Eliah. Rob releases his grip on Kenji. Saya grabs her purse, grabs Eliah.

SAYA

Tick tock Rob. Tick tock.

EXT. OHANA HAWAIIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Undercover, Joe waits outside across the street, watches Saya, Kenji and Eliah rush out, head down the street toward a subway entrance.

Joe shadows them down the stairs into the subway.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JOE SHADOWS SAYA, KENJI AND ELIAH

IN THE SUBWAY - Kenji stops, senses they are being followed.

Joe stops at a kiosk, purchases a newspaper and some gum.

Fears unconfirmed, Kenji ushers Saya and Eliah through the ticket gates. They start down the escalator.

Joe watches them disappear down the escalator, rushes to catch up. People in front of him, he's trapped.

ON THE TRAIN PLATFORM - Saya, Eliah and Kenji wait. Joe pushes through the CROWD, train pulls in.

Saya, Eliah and Kenji slide on board. The departure JINGLE sounds. Doors close, Joe dashes into the train.

IN THE TRAIN - Through the opposite carriage Joe keeps an eye on the trio.

The train pulls into the station, doors open as Saya, Eliah and Kenji exit.

ON THE STREET - Joe flies out of the station, sees Eliah, Saya and Kenji enter a street market, melt in with shoppers.

AT GOVERNMENT HOUSING - A garbage truck rolls up the alley.

Joe follows the family up the stairwell one step at a time, hears the SOUND of a DOOR OPENING.

He peers around, sees a door close, spots the door number.

203.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A cigarette lighter flames-up. Joe sits, watches up at the second floor of the housing complex.

He sweats behind SLAPPING wipers of a beaten old car covered with environmental issue stickers.

Japanese commentators drone on the radio.

INT. GOVERNMENT HOUSING - NIGHT

Kenji peers out the window through curtains, phone in hand.

He dials.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
What is your emergency?

KENJI
I'm at 203 1-10-21. Just saw a guy hanging around outside in an old car. Looks like he has a weapon.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
We'll send someone over there now. If it's safe, sir, we'd like you to stay by your phone.

KENJI
Yeah, I think I'll stay where I am.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Joe overhears the police radio call.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
Suspect now outside. 1-10-21, apartment 203.

JOE

Shit.

Horiuchi tries the ignition. On the third try he skids away.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob nurses his right hand in ice, the other holds ice over a welt on his head. Phone RINGS. Rob picks up.

JOE (O.S.)

Good news, I found her school.

ROB

You're a saint.

JOE

I got burnt, gotta suspend surveillance.

ROB

What happened?

JOE (O.S.)

I think the boyfriend's on to me, if I keep going, I'm breaking the law.

ROB

How long?

JOE (O.S.)

About a week, if they report me, I'll lose my license.

Rob hangs up, calls Eliah. A disconnected number.

Rob slams down the receiver. ONCE. TWICE. On the THIRD it smashes into large pieces.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Rob scribbles a note on a small card, tugs at sellotape, tapes the note to the waterproof camera.

ON THE NOTE:

For the beach this summer. Remember when we played frisbee?

He walks out.

EXT. SCHOOL GATE - NIGHT

He drops the package into a mailbox labeled Lost and Found.

He hesitates, presses his hand to the gate, leaves.

INT. INDEPENDENT PANEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Masaru examines Rob's nervous gait as he paces up and down the corridor. Doors burst open, Rob's lawyer approaches.

ROB

Well? What'd they say?

LAWYER

They believe you fully cooperated with the investigation.

ROB

And?

LAWYER

They concluded their investigation.

ROB

And?! Jesus!

LAWYER

Our understanding is that you have been cleared of any wrong doing.

MASARU

Yes!

LAWYER

Your boxing status will be determined by the JBC, we're expecting them to publicly address it soon.

EXT. SHRINE - DAY

Sprawling complex surrounded by a large single shrine and many smaller sub-shrines.

Crowds under umbrellas buy food from stalls, play cheap, rigged games in the hope to win prizes.

Masaru sits under a canopy of trees shielded from the rain. In the distance Rob finishes his phone call.

Rob approaches, parks up next to Masaru, hands him a coffee.

ROB
I appreciate the help.

MASARU
What? The hearing? Way above my pay grade. The fact you beat that guy with one hand was one for the history books. You have the money?

Rob hands Masaru an envelope of cash.

MASARU (CONT'D)
I think you owe me an explanation.

ROB
As to what?

MASARU
As to why you deemed it a good idea to bet on that fight?

ROB
I owe you?

MASARU
You bet on yourself without paying a percentage to appropriate parties.

Masaru lights a cigarette.

ROB
Could I have one of those?

MASARU
Sure.

Masaru passes Rob a cigarette.

ROB
Getting too old for this.

MASARU
Still too young for Fuchu prison.

Masaru eyeballs Rob, looks for tells, clocks Rob's hand.

MASARU (CONT'D)
Gotta get that looked at.

ROB
I will. The strongest in Korakuen tournament.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)
Can't do anything without
sponsorship from one of the main
gyms.

Masaru rolls his wrist, signals to Rob, make your point.

ROB (CONT'D)
Winning gets me recognized as the
next challenger in the division.

MASARU
I get you what you want, what
assurances do I have you'll come
through for me?

ROB
I'll have the money to Eliah, you
get a cut, we get square.

A smile creeps across Masaru's face.

MASARU
Seventy thirty.

ROB
On the back end.

MASARU
Half now, half later.

ROB
How am I going to come up with...

MASARU
Not my problem.

ROB
Ok, front me the tournament fee.

Masaru retreats, for a moment.

MASARU
Due to a mutual lack of trust I
think we should consider this
arrangement terminated. Wouldn't
you agree?

ROB
I've got people relying on me.

MASARU
You've pissed off some important
people. I wish I could.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S)
We've got attorneys on both sides
of the Pacific working on the case.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ATTORNEY 1. (50s) Female, attractive, all business. Strides
down the hallway, Rob and Joe follows, behind her.

Behind them, ATTORNEY 2. (30s) Male, unkempt, hardworking.

ROB
So, it's encouraged?

ATTORNEY 2.
The continuity principle.

JOE
Often by lawyers.

Attorney 1. eyes Joe.

ATTORNEY 1.
Or they may feel the need to do so.
Come in.

They enter the office, large, views of the city.

ATTORNEY 1. (CONT'D)
Outside of Japan a child born to
Japanese and an international
parent assume the nationality of
both parents, its not the same
here. Under Japanese current law,
the Japanese parent has custody.

JOE
And we do not recognize or
investigate those kinds of cases.

Phone RINGS. Attorney 1. picks up.

ROB
So what happens? What happens to
the kids?

Attorney 1. cups the phone.

ATTORNEY 1.
The New Zealand authorities have
issued an arrest warrant for Kenji.

ROB
That's great.

ATTORNEY 1.
Unfortunately.

Attorney 2. Hands Rob some paper.

ROB
Unfortunately what?

ATTORNEY 2.
We're having trouble getting the
NPA to cooperate with NZ officials.

ROB
Why am I not surprised.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A car pulls up to Rob. Masaru leans out the window of the front passenger seat.

MASARU
Bobby! Jump in.

Rob waits. Masaru holds his phone out.

MASARU (CONT'D)
Someone wants a word.

Rob jumps in the back. Car SCREECHES off.

INT. MOVING VEHICLE - DAY

Rob sits in the back, holds the phone to his ear.

ROB
Hello.

SAYA (O.S.)
You forgotten what'll happen if you
don't pull this off. Five days, do
what he says, or we disappear,
we're gone.

MASARU
Ok, talk soon.

Masaru throws the bag containing money to Rob. Masaru doesn't let go. He stares at Rob in the rear view mirror.

MASARU (CONT'D)
Extra insurance. I want a knockout.

ROB
What about my passport?

MASARU
If I give it to you, you'll run.
Keep those motherfuckers off-
balance first. They deserve to lose
control over this sport.

ROB
And you expect me to deliver that?

MASARU
Imperfect data is a reality, I have
to rely on my own proven strategies
to succeed.

Rob snaps.

He reaches around Masaru's throat with his arms, chokes him
from the backseat.

The vehicle swerves onto the median.

Rob grabs Masaru by the collar, pulls him into the back seat,
slaps Masaru, hard. Again. And again.

ROB
You try to use my daughter as
collateral again, you're done. You
hear me? You're fucken done.

The car SCREECHES to a stop.

DRIVER gets out, rips open the passenger door, pulls Rob out
of the backseat.

MASARU
Don't hurt him!

Driver slams the door shut, Rob watches the car speed off,
leaving him on the side of the road.

The bag with his money flies out the car window.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob lingers under a power pole, hides from sight outside
Saya's apartment.

Saya appears from the housing block, drags Eliah behind her, bags in tow.

Rob steps out, stops Saya in her tracks.

ROB
Heading somewhere?

SAYA
How did you find me?

ROB
I want my daughter.

SAYA
Are you out of your mind?! You walked out on her.

ROB
It was a crappy relationship.

SAYA
I don't give a fuck.

ROB
I want my daughter.

SAYA
Whatever.

ROB
If you can't discuss this rationally.

Rob's attorneys appear flanked by UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS.

Kenji and three of his GOONS exit the housing complex, head towards the argument.

Kenji takes one last drag of his cigarette, tosses it at the foot of the officers.

KENJI
There a problem here?

SAYA
Go fuck yourself!

Eliah breaks ranks, Kenji grabs her, she escapes his grip, runs to Rob, police step forward, Eliah trips, falls.

Rob watches, horrified. BAM!

Eliah hits the concrete, Rob rushes toward Eliah.

Eliah looks up. A terrible-looking gash runs down from her hairline, blood streams into her eye.

ELIAH

Papi!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rob, cradles Eliah, wrapped in his jacket, barrels down the street, nearly knocking over several people with shopping bags, running like hell.

Across streets without stopping for the light, along crowded sidewalks without stopping.

Approaches the emergency entrance to a Hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

He carries her, blood gushing down her face, walking through the double doors, SCREAMING.

Rob stands covered with Eliah's blood, it's on his face, his shirt, his trousers.

ROB

Nurse! Anybody! I NEED HELP!

INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Helpless, he watches as a SURGEON examines Eliah's wound.

SURGEON

That's good, Eliah. That's a brave girl. Now then, how's that? Now we've cleaned it out.

Eliah lies on the exam table, the surgeon bends over her.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

There. That wasn't so bad, was it?

Eliah doesn't say anything.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

Now then, you just wait here. I want to talk to your dad for a minute.

The surgeon crosses to Rob who stands in the doorway.

SURGEON (CONT'D)
She's very lucky, Mr. Walker. One
inch over and it would have caught
the eye. But I'm going to have to
take some stitches.

ROB
How many?

SURGEON
Ten.

SURGEON (CONT'D)
Because of the position of the
wound and your daughter's age, I
don't think there will be much of a
scar. Otherwise I'd call in a
plastic surgeon.

Rob nods.

SURGEON (CONT'D)
Now, I'd advise you to wait
outside. It'll be easy.

ROB
I'm staying with her.

He holds Eliah while the surgeon stitches up her wound.

The surgeon's hand, with the needle and surgical thread moves
into and out with a slow, steady rhythm.

Eliah's hand clutches Rob's tight, the knuckles white.

He winces, but doesn't let go.

ROB (CONT'D)
It's okay. I'm here. Just a little
more to go. Don't worry. I'm here.
I'm here now.

ELIAH
Are you leaving again?

ROB
Not even if I have to fight the
whole city.

Eliah smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Elijah lies in bed, fast asleep, her head swathed in bandages.

Rob, sits in a nearby chair, watches her. Attorneys enter.

ROB

Thank you.

ATTORNEY 1.

You're welcome. We've a few court documents to sign, we can do that later.

ATTORNEY 2.

What's next?

ROB

I gotta go back to work.

EXT. GYM - DAY

Rob changes into his boxing shoes and heads towards a small ring where SEVERAL BOXERS are paired up, working drills.

Sitting outside the ring is Sonny.

A sports bag falls on the floor, Sonny looks over, Rob stands in front of him.

ROB

Thought you took off.

SONNY

I had a stint in hospital. I was attacked. You think I would take off with your money, you're a worse judge of character than I thought.

ROB

Wait, what? By who?

SONNY

Who the hell do you think?

ROB

I'm ready to train.

Rob tosses another open duffle bag on the edge of the ring, right in front of Sonny.

ROB (CONT'D)
That's my training fees for the
rest of the year up front.

Sonny peers into the bag, sighs, hands it back.

SONNY
Go home.

Sonny turns back, Rob grabs his shoulder.

ROB
I'm not leaving until you agree to
train me. Please.

TRAINING MONTAGE

A) EXT. STREET - DAY

Sun rises over the industrial landscape of Tokyo.

B) EXT. RIVER - DAY

Rob runs. Sonny watches from a vantage point along the
adjacent road. Behind him is the car.

SONNY
Keep up the pace!!

Rob moves on, the city outline looms before him.

C) INT. GYM - DAY

Sonny holds the bag as Rob pounds away.

SONNY
A hundred a round.

D) INT. GYM - DAY

Rob wraps his knees. He leaps up from the floor to the 2nd
step leading into the boxing ring.

He does this repetitively, Sonny keeps count.

E) INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob studies old film of boxing.

F) INT. GYM - DAY

Rob hits the bag with his shoulders, no hands, drips sweat.

G) EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rob runs through a deserted Tokyo marketplace. He passes Sonny, who stands beside his car.

H) INT. GYM - DAY

Rob does one arm push ups in the ring. People look on.

I) INT. GYM - DAY

Rob moves in the ring. Jumps rope. Tadao and Sonny watch.

SONNY

Time!

Rob stops, catches his breath.

ROB

When are we going to spar?

SONNY

When you're ready.

J) INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The clock reads 4:15am, out the window... down below Rob departs the building.

Masaru watches from across the street.

END MONTAGE

INT. YONEKURA'S OFFICES - NIGHT

Glimpses of Rob's damaged hand as a SURGEON hovers over him.

ROB (O.S)

Did I bring this on myself? On her?
Thought I could inspire...

Rob. Bandaged. Sedated. Comes up for air.

Sees something on the table: A photograph of Eliah. He fumbles for it, marvels at her face. Remembering.

The Surgeon unwraps the bandages on Rob's hand, surveys the wreckage, the swelling.

YONEKURA

You spat in the face of criminals,
things were going to have to get
worse before they got better.

ROB

Eliah.

YONEKURA

She believes in what you stand for.

Rob looks up at Yonekura.

YONEKURA (CONT'D)

They need a champion, which is why
for now, they'll have to make do
with you being the number one
contender.

Rob looks at Yonekura. Surgeon rises, approaches Yonekura, they move to the corner of the room away from Rob.

SURGEON

I can reposition the bone fragments
into their normal alignment, then
pin it, but he's going to lose some
movement in that hand.

Yonekura nods, turns back to Rob.

YONEKURA

When the doctor's finished you'll
be as good as new. As agreed.

Rob, groggy, eyes flutter, going under.

ROB

Eighth round, I go down.

YONEKURA

And?

ROB

I stay down. Eliah, doesn't know?
She can never know...

Robs eyes close, slips into unconsciousness.

YONEKURA

I don't want there to be any hard
feelings between us, Mr. Walker.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Joe pushes the down button on the elevator, waits.

Elevator bell RINGS. Doors open, empty except for Masaru.

Joe doesn't recognize him, but we do. Masaru smiles, pretends
to look confused.

MASARU

Sorry, I'm supposed to be going
down...

JOE

So am I...

Joe steps into the elevator.

MASARU

Which floor?

JOE

Parking lot, please...

Masaru presses the button, the doors slide shut.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

They ride down in silence. Masaru studies Joe, Joe shoots a
subtle glance at Masaru, Masaru returns a smile.

The lights on the panel descend.

The elevator bell RINGS as they reach the lower level. Masaru
hesitates, Joe waits for him to go out first.

Masaru nods goodnight, wheels himself off into the darkness.
They head in opposite directions.

A HUGE UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

Hidden in shadows. Overhead lights flicker.

Joe moves to his car, reaches into his pocket for his keys.

Masaru steps out of the shadows, no wheelchair.

He's standing.

What the fuck?

Masaru's on Joe in a flash, Masaru grabs Joe, swings him around, Joe loses his balance, Masaru smashes him into a car.

Masaru hurls him against another car, slamming Joe against the car, again and again, beating the resistance out of him.

Joe slumps, Masaru grabs Joe by the throat, rams his head into a car window.

SMASH!!

The glass splinters with blood, the force of the blow shatters Joe's skull.

Masaru stands, breathe heavy, hands covered in blood.

INT. GYM - DAY

Rob, gloves on, throws his left cross against a weathered, horizontal heavy bag.

Sonny stands behind him, watches the impact of each punch.

The end of round bell sounds. Rob sits, breath heavy. In the b.g. Saito sits on the bleachers, hides behind a newspaper.

SONNY

Rest on your feet.

Rob pops up, Yonekura approaches Sonny, Saito moves to the bleaches, sits watches a sparring session.

YONEKURA

He's looking good.

SONNY

We got a ways to go.

YONEKURA

If he could get to 205, we might be
able to put something together
If you're interested, that is.

Sonny walks Yonekura out of earshot of Rob.

SONNY

You talking about Korakuen?

YONEKURA

People will come out to see you in
a corner again. Make a few bucks
for everybody.

SONNY

I'm just getting used to him being
around again.

Rob turns to the gym entrance, Satoshi Nakamura struts
through the door.

That asshole from the restaurant.

He slouches against the wall, shoots a stare across the gym
at Rob. Rob stops, returns Satoshi's gaze, makes a b-line to
him. Sonny holds him back.

Yonekura throws a bunch of photos on the ring, Sonny
recognizes them, though his face doesn't let Yonekura know
that. All boxers, all dead.

YONEKURA

Know these guys?

SONNY

Yeah.

YONEKURA

Shame, a lot of unfortunate events
recently. He's hungry. Let him eat.
Think on it. Let me know by Friday.

Yonekura pats Sonny on the shoulder, walks away. Satoshi
follows Yonekura out.

Saito leaps off the bleaches, slides up into Sonny's face.

SAITO

He goes down in the eighth, he
doesn't get up.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A KNOCK on the door, Eliah opens it. Masaru strolls in,
donuts swing from his hand.

ELIAH

Where's your wheelchair?

MASARU

I'm fixed. It's a miracle.

ELIAH
Where we going?

MASARU
We're going to Disneyland.

ELIAH
Why can't papa come?

MASARU
He has a big fight coming up.

ELIAH
Why are we going so late?

MASARU
Start now, get there early. Early
is best. No crowds.

Masaru pulls out a small handcrafted knife.

MASARU (CONT'D)
Go ahead, take it. It's yours.

ELIAH
You sure?

MASARU
Yeah, it's yours. Take it.

ELIAH
Thanks.

MASARU
Just don't cut yourself.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Joe in a hospital bed, bandaged head, eyes puffy, swollen.

He has an assortment of tubes running into parts of his body.

Rob KNOCKS, enters, sits on the edge of the bed, places a shopping bag on the bed, exchanges nods.

ROB
Excellent work, thank you. Looking
good. Wouldn't be surprised if you
get out of here soon.

JOE
Thanks for visiting.

Rob rises to leaves.

JOE (O.S) (CONT'D)

Wait.

Rob turns.

Joe gestures to an envelope.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dingy, quiet. Aida lays down three cards, face down, arranges them. She shows one, Queen of Hearts, rearranges the cards.

AIDA

Ok, watch the queen.

Rob chooses a card, turns it over. A Jack.

ROB

Who taught you this?

AIDA

My brother. He says everybody knows it's a scam. But they come back, because they think they can outsmart the game.

ROB

What's the alternative?

AIDA

Be smart. Don't play.

Aida shoots him a smile, shuffles again. She flicks her hair over her shoulders, Rob watches.

He chooses, a Jack, again.

ROB

You're hiding the Queen.

AIDA

Look.

Rob flips all the cards over. Finds the Queen.

AIDA (CONT'D)

The only way to win is to not play.

Rob's phone RINGS, Rob picks up.

MASARU (O.S.)
Hey, Bob. Bad time to be calling?
Case you're wondering. Eliah, she's
asleep now, but she's doing fine.

ROB
I want to talk to Eliah.

MASARU (O.S.)
Don't worry about her. She's fine.

ROB
What do you want?

MASARU (O.S.)
I've been thinking it over. You
know, life just...comes down to one
single action.

ROB
What do you want?

MASARU (O.S.)
I want you to win for me, Bob.

ROB
Are you serious?

MASARU (O.S.)
I'm serious as a heart attack, Bob.
Bobby?

ROB
I'm still here.

MASARU (O.S.)
I'm watching you. If you don't
knock that motherfucker out in the
eighth round, I'll kill your
fucking kid.

INT. SAUNA - NIGHT

Thick steam. Rob, nude, does push-ups on the floor. His body
bathed in sweat.

He pushes himself up, collapses. His eyes glazed over from
lack of strength. He rushes to the corner.

Rob retches, loud and miserable. He is bent over a small
bucket, puking his guts out.

Rob moves to the door, gazes at his reflection.

ROB

Come on Rob, it's a fucking fight.

He fills his mouth with water, spits, splashes water on his face, returns to his reflection.

ROB (CONT'D)

Smarten up.

He makes his way to the door, pounds on it. Sonny opens the door, gets on his knees beside Rob.

SONNY

It ain't worth it, Bobby. Get out.

ROB

What time is it?

SONNY

Nine o'clock.

ROB

At night?

SONNY

Yeah. At night.

ROB

How much more do I have to lose?

SONNY

Three more, I figure.

INT. KORAKUEN BOXING HALL - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Unsuspecting windowless building, lacks the amenities of stadiums being built today.

Rob and Sonny stand on the edge of the press conference.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)

Welcome to the strongest in
Korakuen tournament weigh-ins.

Rob and Sonny watch Satoshi, 5'8", 240lbs, shirt, pants off, underwear only.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)

We welcome the combatants of the
final of this tournament in the
famous Korakuen Boxing Hall, Robert
Bobby Knuckles Walker and Satoshi
No Love Nakamura.

Satoshi's weighs-in with Japan Boxing Commission officials.

Satoshi's manager, AKIRA YAMANE, (50s), bald, glasses by his side, yapping at REPORTERS, microphones, cameras. Yonekura lingers in the background.

YAMANE

Satoshi's been sleeping on a concrete floor in an empty apartment, living by himself away from his family.

Sonny whispers into Rob's ear...Rob smiles. Standing behind the scale, a COMMISSIONER shouts,

COMMISSIONER

Satoshi, 13 stone, 13 pounds!

PHOTOGRAPHERS snap shots, reporters shouts questions,

REPORTER

Hey, Rob, what about you?

ROB

I'm not gonna sleep on the floor. I like my bed too much.

Reporters laugh. Satoshi glares at Rob, steps off the scale.

REPORTER

Sonny! How long have you been Rob's trainer for?

SONNY

Feels like my whole life.

The gaggle of reporters laugh. Rob and Sonny laugh.

SATOSHI

Why is he here, this is no place for old men. Want to go back to hospital?

Rob turns to Satoshi like he's gonna hit him.

Photographers yell.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Let's get a picture! Face off!

Rob shakes his head, stands across from Satoshi. Satoshi gets up in Rob's face, glares at Rob tries to intimidate him.

SATOSHI

How's your hand?

ROB

How's your face?

REPORTER

Rob, it's not your first fight overseas, but it's in Satoshi's hometown, you worried about that?

ROB

You can have the whole country behind you, it's only gonna be me and him in the ring, right?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rob sits, the Happy Dragon buzzes with patrons.

Waiters fly around delivering Chinese meals. Masaru seated with two large new MEN.

One remains with Masaru, the other behind Rob. Rob throws Joe's envelope on the table. Masaru opens it: PHOTOGRAPHS of Masaru standing.

MASARU

Ok, you got me.

He glares at the man hovering behind him. The man sits.

ROB

It was you wasn't it? You tainted my supplements.

MASARU

The convincer, the extras, playing you up against a wall. Tell me something, how does someone like you allow yourself to get mixed up in this? You're a smart guy.

Rob stops, betrays a hint of concern. Masaru sees it, smiles.

MASARU (CONT'D)

Don't worry. Nobody else knows about your daughter. Just me...

He smiles again.

MASARU (CONT'D)

This is what I'll do for you. You give me my knockout, nobody knows she exists. I know you cut a deal with Yonekura, so you've got a choice to make here Bob.

ROB

Where is she? Where is my daughter?

MASARU

Where's Eliah? Bobby, where's my knockout?

ROB

If you hurt her...I swear to God I'll kill you!

MASARU

Be nice, Bob.

Their eyes fixed on each other, neither backs down.

Once kindred spirits, now deadly enemies.

Rob glares at Masaru.

MASARU (CONT'D)

The eighth round, you get me my knockout. First time I heard about you, I was told you lose and leave. That's a start...

Masaru glares back at Rob, smiles.

MASARU (CONT'D)

Either that, or Eliah pays the price...

INT. LAWYERS OFFICES - NIGHT

A KNOCK at the door, door opens, Rob pokes his head in.

LAWYER

Mr. Walker, to what do I owe the pleasure?

ROB

I need your help, again.

PRE FIGHT MONTAGE

- A) In his bathrobe, Rob puts on his boxing shoes.
- B) Doctor injects a hypodermic needle filled with Novocain into each of Rob's fists.
- C) Tadao massages Rob's neck.
- D) Rob's hands are bandaged
- E) Sonny laces up Rob's gloves.
- F) Rob, ready to fight, a towel draped around his head, bounces on the balls of his feet.
- G) Rob walks down the corridor from his dressing room, surrounded by Sonny, Tadao,

END MONTAGE

INT. HOLDING AREA - KORAKUEN HALL - NIGHT

Rob smacks his gloves together, white trunks, robe, black trim, Bobby Knuckles spelled right.

Sonny stretches out his back, kicking the nervousness out of his legs, "Bobby Knuckles" on his white corner jacket.

Tadao, the 2nd in the corner, behind them.

They walk down the aisle together, crowd boos, whistles, screams... Tadao follows.

They pass Aida in the crowd behind Rob's corner, she struggles to hide her concern.

Rob shoots her a smile, a wink, she relaxes.

Rob climbs into the ring, Sonny helps him take off his robe... lights go dark, spotlights shine. MUSIC plays.

Rob & Sonny watch Satoshi strut down the aisle, black trunks, no robe, red gloves, handler waving a big Japanese flag.

Crowd cheers, dances, sings along...

Satoshi walks toward the ring, pounds himself hard in the face, jaw, forehead with both gloves...

INT. BOXING RING - NIGHT

HANDLER in the corner walks to the center, holds up the interim title belt. CROWDS reacts.

Ringside, Yonekura sits, surrounded by a bevy of beautiful WOMEN, opposite him, on the other side of the ring, Masaru.

Rob eyes Masaru. Masaru poker faced, returns Rob's look.

Sonny squirts water into Rob's mouth, glances over at Yonekura, a sly smile on his face as a woman WHISPERS to him.

BELL sounds.

Rob and Satoshi move to the middle of the ring. There's no glove touch here.

A chyron reads: WALKER VS NAKAMURA

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
The big challenge for Bobby
Knuckles is to get off to a faster
start than is customary for him.

Satoshi takes it right to Rob, whistling shots hammer his body...BAM! BAM! BAM!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There you go. Bobby, a notoriously
slow starter, Nakamura an ultra-
fast starter.

Rob plants his feet, catches Satoshi with short uppercuts...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And that's the question that hovers
over round one, will Bobby be ready
for the fight.

They stand forehead-to-forehead in the middle of the ring.

Rob taps Satoshi on the side of the head, drops down and drills a left hook into Satoshi's ribs...BAM!...

Satoshi spins, forces Rob onto the ropes, Rob takes a lot of punishment to the body, legs unsteady.

SONNY
Get off the ropes!

Rob throws a right, Satoshi reacts, he pulls the punch, it's his injured hand, uses it as a feint, throws a left.

Satoshi, caught off-guard, steps back, lowers his hands, lets Rob move off the ropes.

Rob moves forward, keeps throwing, legs still unsteady. Satoshi flicks out a jab, keeps his distance.

ANNOUNCER

I think Nakamura's making a big,
big mistake allowing Bobby to
recover.

Rob wakes back up, gets his legs back under him, hits Satoshi with a left to the body, a left uppercut.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

He knows Bobby's a veteran who's
been hurt before, knows what to do
when he's hurt. But he doesn't know
if he's still hurt or not.

Rob steps in to finish him, Satoshi puts his head down, Rob shifts stances, right hand now his rear hand, throws it.

Rob's right glove smashes the top of Satoshi's head.

BONE on BONE. The PAIN in Rob's right hand is EXCRUCIATING.

He holds on to Satoshi, the referee separates them.

BELL announces the end of the round.

The referee sends both fighters back to their corners.

SONNY

What happened?

ROB

It's broken.

SONNY

We gotta stop it then.

ROB

No!

BELL RINGS. Time slows down for Rob.

Rob switches to an orthodox stance, left leads, he throws out his left hand in wild jabs. They miss.

Satoshi answers, lands a left hook to Bobby's chin, follows right behind with a straight.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Nakamura comes back again!

Rob shifts back to southpaw stance, jams Satoshi with his right glove in his face, long guard, Satoshi blinded, Rob follows up with an uppercut...BAM!...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And now Bobby Knux! This isn't
entertainment. This isn't business.
This is fighting!

INT. ROB'S CORNER - BOXING RING - NIGHT

Rob sits, arms rest on ring ropes, takes deep breaths, Tadao works on a gouge under Rob's left eye.

Sonny leans through the ropes, pours water in Rob's bloody mouth, rubs an ice pack on his shoulders.

REFEREE
Seconds out gentlemen.

SONNY
Eighth round Bobby.

Rob locks eyes with Sonny, as if to say, so?

Rob looks over his shoulder, Aida, on her feet staring at Rob, hands clasped, she nods.

Rob glances to his left, Masaru also stands, his eyes stare, expressionless, locked on Rob.

Rob turns to his right, Yonekura holds Rob's look.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Don't let them take it away from
you, Bobby. You hear me?

Rob turns back to Sonny, nods, bends to the bucket, spits.

BELL RINGS.

Rob looks to the CROWD sitting ringside; Sonny puts the mouthpiece in Rob's mouth.

Rob stands, cut, bruised, sees Satoshi across the ring...

Sonny looks up at Rob in the ring.

Rob bounces on his toes, walks toward Satoshi...

Rob and Satoshi toe-to-toe trade punches, neither back down.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
They're trying to hurt each other
with every punch. This is now a
test of will.

Satoshi swings hard, hits Rob with a big right. BAM!...

Rob's hurt, his legs dance about!

ANNONCER (O.S.)
Walker wobbled there by a right
cross from Nakamura! Nakamura, to
the body, the uppercut as he tries
to finish Walker!

Rob hits the canvas, rises, sinks to one knee, the Referee
gives him the eight count.

Rob looks at the referee.

REFEREE
Four...

Rob looks out at Masaru.

MASARU
Get the fuck up.

Rob looks at Sonny.

YONEKURA
Stay the fuck down.

REFEREE
Six... Seven... Eight.

Rob rise, gets to his feet!

The crowd ROARS!

Rob approaches the referee, he signals the fight to continue.

Satoshi throws a stiff jab, Rob bites down on his mouthpiece,
counters with a savage right hook.

Rob chases Satoshi, pounds him with lefts and rights.

More punches. Crowd stands, SCREAMS, some can't watch.

Bell RINGS.

INT. ROB'S CORNER - BOXING RING - NIGHT

Rob falls back into his stool. Rob looks at Sonny, turns, spits. Sonny, huge smile across his face.

SONNY

OK?

ROB

OK.

SONNY

That's my boy. Now, you're not a punching bag, remember? Don't let him abuse you! You hear me?

REFEREE

Seconds out gentlemen.

SONNY

It's your time, Bobby! Don't let them take it away from you! You hear?

Rob looks at Yonekura sitting ringside; eyes Masaru on the other side, discontent, confusion wash over their faces.

Sonny puts the mouthpiece in Rob's mouth.

Bell RINGS.

Satoshi backs Rob up against the ropes, hits him with everything he's got, pounds hard right after hard right...BAM! BAM! BAM!

ANNOUNCER

Vicious body shots from Nakamura!
Walker's in trouble again!

Sonny's on his feet ringside, leans on the ring apron, screams through the ropes.

SONNY

Punch your way out of it. Punch out of it!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Walker trying to trade his way back!

Satoshi steps back...Rob slips off the ropes, raises his hands over his head, letting Satoshi know he survived.

Fires a left hook. Right uppercut.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)
 Bobby hurts Nakamura with a body
 shot! Bobby hurts him again with
 that right to the body! Nakamura is
 wobbling!

Rob rocks Satoshi with another left hook to his liver. BAM!

Satoshi retreats, Rob follows with a huge left uppercut
 through Satoshi's guard right under his chin. BAM!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Big uppercut by Bobby Knuckles!

Satoshi stumbles backwards, CRASHES down to the canvas.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 First time in 19 fights that
 Nakamura has been down!

REFEREE
 Four...

Referee gives him the standing eight-count.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
 Six... Seven... Eight.

Sonny shakes his fist, screams Rob on.

SONNY
 This is it! This is it! This is it!

Rob walks in, unleashes a huge left hook, right uppercut,
 left hook. Satoshi backpedals. Right uppercut.

Satoshi tries to cover up. A left uppercut, Satoshi reels
 across the ring, sprawls out of control, lands with his head
 CRASHING down in Rob's corner!

Sonny raises his hands over his head, white corner jacket
 stained with Rob's blood.

Crowd cheers for Rob.

ANNOUNCER
 Satoshi down for the second time!
 The referee's gonna stop it!...

Sonny looks at the clock... TEN SECONDS TO GO.

Satoshi bounces back up, unleashes a blow to the side of
 Bobby's head, his mouthpiece flies into the second row.

Bobby sags against the ropes. The crowd leaps to their feet.

Bobby's bloody teeth snarl at Satoshi, he waves him to come ahead and fight toe to toe.

Satoshi obliges with an effective burst of rights and lefts. Bobby counters blow for blow.

Blood sprays over the ropes onto ringside photographers.

The BELL RINGS. The arena EXPLODES.

Sonny comes over, separates them, leads Rob back to his corner, embraces him.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)
Attention, please!! Attention!!

Announcer stands in the ring with a microphone.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we've
had the rare privilege to have
witnessed the greatest exhibition
of stamina and guts ever in the
history of sports.

The CROWD ROARS.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen. We have a
split decision!

Satoshi did not expect this. His corner reassures him.

Bobby did not want this, looks at Sonny. Sonny, frozen.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Judge Walters scores it eight-
seven Nakamura. Judge Tadanobu
scores it eight-seven Walker.

Satoshi, rigid. Silence blankets the arena.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Judge Uchida scores it nine-six,
winner and the strongest in
Korakuen, Robert Bobby Knuckles
Walker!

Satoshi climbs out of the ring.

Bobby climbs out of the ring, waves of frantic well wishing fans rumble forward. Bobby experiences adulation by a whole new set of adoring fans.

The fans shove guards aside and hoist Bobby to their shoulders, chanting BOBBY KNUX!

CHANTING IS DEAFENING.

The crowd carries him away. He attempts to lower himself, he gets down, in front of him Yonekura.

YONEKURA

There are some people very unhappy
with you.

ROB

It's not me they should be worried
about.

Police manning the exits, converge to the ring.

Masaru stands ringside, shock and disdain wash over his face.

Bobby turns, pushes past people, rushes to Masaru, SMACK!
Knocks Masaru to the ground.

ROB (CONT'D)

Where's Eliah, Masaru? Where's my
daughter?

The fans shove guards aside and surround Bobby, jump, chant
and scream BOBBY KNUX! Bobby and Masaru separate.

ROB (CONT'D)

Where is she, where's my daughter?!

In the confusion Masaru slips into the crowd, Rob gives
chase, the excited crowd holds him back, Masaru is gone.

ELIAH (O.S.)

Papa?

Rob turns, Eliah flanked by Aida and a POLICE OFFICER.

Eliah runs to Rob, they meet in an embrace.

INT. MASARU'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Masaru opens the head liner, finds a manila envelope, tears
it open, dumps it on the seat.

Inside, plane tickets, cash, passports, travelers' checks, IDs, apartment keys. His getaway kit.

A red light ahead. Light cross traffic. Masaru notes headlights following him.

He stops at the light, takes a pull on a small bottle of vodka. Wipes his lips with a shaky hand.

A black car, windows tinted, pulls into the intersection beside him to make a left.

Too far into the intersection.

Masaru eyes it. Headlights pull up behind him, another black car, windows also tinted.

SCREECHING to a stop at an angle, blocking him. One car on his front left bumper, one on his rear right bumper.

The tinted rear windows on both cars wind down. PISTOL steel pokes out from the windows, glimmers.

Masaru accepts this, braces for what is coming...

Two men in each car open FIRE with Russian PISTOLS.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Muzzle flashes strobe across sunglass covered eyes.

BULLETS PUNCH into Masaru, the car. Passing straight through the car, SHATTERING GLASS. Shattering Masaru.

After forever, the weapons are empty. Gun smoke wafts through the intersection. Masaru, his car, shredded.

Masaru slumps forward, his head hits the HORN.

Car WINDOWS wind up, SCREECH off in different directions.

FOOM!

A small FIRE STARTS under Masaru's car, leaking fuel and fluids. The flames spread, the interior burns.

FINGERS OF FIRE probe out from the bullet holes.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)
Japan Boxing Federation has been
rocked following numerous
allegations of misconduct...

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Elijah lies in bed asleep. Her bandage, smaller. She wakes up, struggles to her feet as, eyes closed, she walks into Rob's bedroom, wakes Rob. Beside Rob, Aida lies asleep.

Elijah turns, walks toward the kitchen.

ANNOUNCER (O.S)
...including power harassment,
pressuring referees...

Rob heaves himself to his feet, eyes closed, in much the same manner as Elijah, stumbles into the living room.

He starts into the kitchen, he meets Elijah coming the other way carrying two plates, a doughnut on each.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)
...and fighters to fix matches and
misuse of grant money...

Elijah loafs into the living room, sets the plates on the dining table, crosses to the television set, turns it on.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)
...On its website late Monday
evening, the JBF apologized...

She returns to the table, sits down, Rob appears carrying two glasses of orange juice. He sits opposite Elijah.

ANNOUNCER (O.S) (CONT'D)
...but did not address its
relationship with organized crime
figures.

Rob changes the channel. Without talking, they eat breakfast, the only sound, a children's cartoon coming from the T.V.

From time to time Rob glances across at the cartoon.

They have become roommates in the best sense of the word.

FADE OUT: