

CREED III

Screenplay By

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Story By

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FADE IN:

1 **EXT. BEVERLY HILLS STREETS - NIGHT (2002)** 1

...on the pristine streets of Beverly Hills. Private. Manicured. Silent. Until... headlights arrive. A TBD MUSCLE CAR prowling the streets... finally taking a turn and...

2 **EXT. CREED MANSION - NIGHT (2002)** 2

The car pulls up on the street outside Creed Mansion. The DRIVER kills the engine. Lowers the music. We can't see his face behind the glass but we can see:

He's looking up ominously, covetously, at...

3 **I/E. CREED MANSION - (2002)** 3

...where MARY-ANNE (50) stirs at the sound of the car. She knows it. Alighting with suspicion, she walks down a HALLWAY lined with family photographs -- APOLLO. ADONIS. Her two BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN. Finally, she arrives upon...

A BEDROOM DOOR. She silently creeps it open and...

4 **I/E. CREED MANSION - ADONIS'S BEDROOM - (2002)** 4

Light falls through the room illuminating a kitted out bedroom. VIDEO GAMES by the TV. A closet full of JORDANS. SPORTS MEDALS, DODGERS' GEAR, COMICS all over. Not a bad looking life.

A VINTAGE "RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE" TICKET sits on a desk and beneath it, the light from the hall finally lands upon...

YOUNG ADONIS CREED (15) -- asleep in his bed.

Mary-Anne considers him a moment, before closing the door, leaving Adonis asleep. But as soon as she's gone...

Adonis's eyes dart awake. He listens to her footsteps padding off down the hall and once the coast is all clear...

Adonis gets out of bed, revealing he's already dressed. Takes the ticket off the desk, starts to open the window and...

A5 **OMITTED** A5

5 **OMITTED** 5

6 **INT. TBD MUSCLE CAR - NIGHT (2002) (NOT MOVING)** 6

Through the window, we see:

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Young Adonis hurrying silently to the waiting MUSCLE CAR.
Young Adonis jumps in and...

We finally now meet the driver. His name's DAMIAN (DAME)
ANDERSON. A handsome, 18 year-old kid with the swagger of a
fighter. He and Adonis pound fists in the parked car.

DAMIAN

Was 'bout to roll without you.
(cranking the new stereo)
Whatchu think?

YOUNG ADONIS

Yeah, it's nice. But they find out how
you paid for it, they'll send your ass
back to jail.

DAMIAN

We couldn't all get the mansion.
C'mon. Let's roll.

Off Adonis, excited as Damian roars on the engine and...

7 **I/E. TBD MUSCLE CAR - NIGHT / MOVING (2002)**

7

Damian drives from Bel Air to South LA. Adonis takes in the
surroundings. Mansions give way to track houses. Poverty. The
dual lives Adonis lives is strikingly clear as...

8 **EXT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING) - (2002)**

8

(NOTE: THIS FOLLOWING SEQUENCE IS A ONER)

Damian's car pulls up to a large FORMER ICE SKATING RINK in
South LA and the boys hop out. The parking lot's jumping.
MUSIC plays. There's a LINE OUT THE MAIN DOOR where GUESTS
wait to pass through a METAL DETECTOR.

Young Adonis grabs DAME'S GYM BAG from the backseat and with
a nod from Young Dame, they bypass the main entrance and...

Approach a SIDE DOOR which OPENS UP for the boys and Young
Adonis follows Dame into...

9 **INT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - NIGHT (2002) - CONTINUOUS**

9

A bustling MULTI-USE VENUE. Young Adonis follows in Dame who
daps up THE SECURITY GUARD as they enter THE FIRST ROOM
where...

LOCAL BOXING ELDERS count MONEY, taking BETS...all nodding at
Dame, who's clearly a favorite son here.

(CONTINUED)

BOXING ELDERS

Damian! Young gun. There he is. See you ready to work.

He nods with respect to them all. Puts his arm around Adonis.

DAMIAN

Appreciate you. Look out for him too. My little bro, Donnie's next.

Young Adonis beams at this praise, awing at his friend's prowess as they pass through this chaotic subculture into...

A HALLWAY where a BARBER trims up a FIGHTER right before he goes out. Dame calls out to a BARBER.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

You got me next?

The Barber waves back. Adonis clocks it all with excitement as they now pass through into...

A GALLEY KITCHEN / SNACK BAR where CUSTOMERS eat. The sounds of VENUE beginning to bleed in as...

The boys bank a right, where a GIRL crosses their path. In unison, they turn to check her out and the camera catches...

The front door the boys passed where GUESTS enter through the METAL DETECTORS and SECURITY GUARDS and...

The boys now bank left passing BALLROOM TABLES and SEATS where MANY PEOPLE eat, clearing plates as we finally see...

THE MAIN ROOM where a GOLDEN GLOVES BOXING NIGHT underway. On one side is a STAGE with badges, sponsored signage. Benches, a few tables, and rowed seating where...

A FULL HOUSE OF FIGHT FANS cheer on TWO WELTER WEIGHT FIGHTERS duking it out in THE RING.

Adonis is in heaven but...

In the crowd, we spot YOUNG LIL' DUKE who is clocking the boys. Not happy with what he's seen. He beelines for Adonis just as...

A PHOTOGRAPHER rolls up on them, memorializing the moment.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(to Dame)

You're up next.

(CONTINUED)

He snaps a PHOTO of the two boys just as Duke arrives.

LIL' DUKE
Yo, your mom know you here?

DAMAIN
(before D can respond)
Chill out. Donnie here's a big boy. He
don't need a hall pass from her.

LIL' DUKE
Look like I was talking to you?

They stand off for a beat. Dame ends it with a laugh and
heads out. Donnie follows. With a last word from Duke.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)
Watch yourself, son.

Adonis nods and departs. Duke lingering with concern as...

10

INT. STORAGE CLOSET, G. GLOVE VENUE - MOMENTS LATER (2002)

10

In an storage closet repurposed as a locker room, Young
Adonis unpacks Dame's bag as Dame gets a clean up from the
BARBER.

DAME
Who we got tonight?

From out of the bag, Adonis pulls out a NOTEBOOK. Inside, a
handwritten SCOUTING REPORT. Adonis knows it by heart.

ADONIS
Richard Norvelle. Lefty. Volume
fighter. Said he's gon be the first
cat to knock you out.
(they both laugh)
He's got a good jab but he over
reaches. Tore his labrum playing
football last year so - make him miss.
The Right hand will be open.

Damian nods, *yeah I do*. Adonis knows what to do. He goes back
into the bag where among the GLOVES and GEAR he spots:

A HANDGUN. Adonis regards it a beat, then moves onto his
target. AN ENVELOPE FULL OF CASH. Adonis places the money in
a SPIT BUCKET and...

11 INT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - MOMENTS LATER (2002) 11

As Dame enters the ring, we follow Adonis and THE BUCKET, walking through the ringside seats. He approaches A BOOKIE in the center of the action and...

With a handshake and a whisper, Adonis deftly slips him the money. This is not missed by Duke, watching warily from afar as Adonis takes his place in Dame's corner as the fight's about to start and...

12 INT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - MOMENTS LATER 12

The bout is now underway. Damian wears out HIS OPPONENT with a combination of power and skill that's astounding for his age. He's vicious. The only good comp is Tyson and...

Putting on a real show, Dame steals a look at Adonis as if saying -- "*watch this*" -- and then...

BOOM! He unleashes a STRAIGHT RIGHT that knocks his opponent clean out and the crowd all goes nuts. Nobody more than...

Adonis, whooping it up for Dame, proud of his brother and...

DAMIAN (PRE-LAP)
Straight right. Boom! That's the punch. *Clean. Simple. Perfect.*

13 I/E. TBD MUSCLE CAR - HOURS LATER (2002) 13

Still amped up from his win, Damian and Adonis drive home, speeding past A POLICE CRUISER ON THE STREET.

At the wheel, Dame waves the MONEY he's just won in his hand.

DAMIAN
First thing I do, when I win me that belt, I'm gonna get me a big ass chain. Flooded with diamonds. Feel me?... I'mma get you one too.

He hands Adonis some bills from his stack. Adonis is touched.

YOUNG ADONIS
Actually, I gotchu something. It belonged to my pops. It's original.

From his bag, he hands Damian the VINTAGE TICKET from the real "Rumble in the Jungle". Dame's moved. Throws his arm around Adonis, like a chivalrous big brother...

(CONTINUED)

DAMIAN

I'mma get there one day. Know where we gotta train? Up in Big Bear, up north. I been reading about it. All the great fighters go. It's high up. No distractions just...

(off Adonis's look)

You'll be with me. Don't worry. Someone's gotta carry my bag.

Young Adonis laughs. Beaming. A last moment of calm before Dame pulls up to a LIQUOR STORE and Adonis' face goes dark, spotting A DRUNK MAN (40's) loitering outside.

YOUNG ADONIS

You see who that was?

Dame does and he's not in the mood for this shit, because Adonis is hot, already getting out of the car as...

DAMIAN

Come on Adonis. Yo! -- *Damn!*

EXT. CRENSHAW LIQUOR STORE - MOMENTS LATER (2002)

Adonis is moving quick on a mission. Rolling up on the Drunk.

ADONIS

You remember me, homie?

The Drunk frightens with recognition at the sight of Adonis. But before he can even respond... BOOM!

Adonis is already swinging, punching the Drunk in the face with incredible anger, continuing with a flurry of blows that drops the man to the ground where the beating continues as...

FROM INSIDE THE LIQUOR STORE, three of the drunk's FRIENDS see the attack and rush to his aide, converging over...

Adonis, still blind with rage, continuing to pummel the Drunk as the men pull him off, ready to stomp his ass out until...

DAMIAN

Yo! Step back. Let him go.

They all turn to see Damian, emerging from the car, flashing THE GUN FROM HIS BAG. And now everyone freezes. A long heated beat. Adonis still seeing red when...

WHOOOP! WHOOOP! Sirens flash. Police pulling fast down the street. Adonis and Dame share a look. Only one thing to do...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

RUN! Adonis takes off, sprinting down an alley way from the cops, but turns back in horror to see...

TWO COPS rushing in wrestling Damian to the ground. He looks up from the pavement as they slap on the cuffs and sees...

Adonis backing away -- helpless and afraid -- guilt and fear in his eyes -- taking off into the shadows, leaving his friend in the past, running for his young life as we...

MATCH CUT TO:

15 **OMITTED**

15

16 **EXT. CAPE TOWN STADIUM - NIGHT**

16

17 YEARS LATER: ADONIS CREED (32) -- now the HEAVY WEIGHT CHAMP -- fighting for his life in the ring against recently released ex-con, RICKY CONLAN.

It's already ROUND 3 in the PACKED OUTDOOR STADIUM, "CREED ATHLETICS" BRANDING ALL OVER, and to everybody in the SOLD OUT CROWD's surprise, Adonis is taking a beating.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

Conlan's looking dominant. Just like when they last met, he's still punishing the Champ.

Conlan fires at Adonis who ducks out of frame.

Adonis takes some damage, then throws a 1-2 combo of his own.

Conlan DUCKS the hook. Fires into Adonis's side.

He continues his assault until WHAM! Adonis head is turned with a huge right cross.

The CROWD reacts. Conlan doesn't let up, launching a combo.

Adonis gets distance, before jabbing his way back in.

Adonis jabs... Conlan evades and makes him pay, nailing Adonis' ribs. Adonis counters, but misses.

Conlan rises, and fires - missing as Adonis ducks.

Adonis rises and lets a combination fly into Conlan's ribs.

He finishes with a sharp left hook to Conlan, who responds with a combination of his own.

(CONTINUED)

CONLAN

You ain't changed! You got nothin'!
(alt)
Same old Creed.. Nothin' new!

JESSICA MCCASKILL

Conlan's really found a home for that
right hand

TODD GRISHAM

Yeah he really can't miss. Creed's
gotta find an answer for it.

Wham! A jab lands on Adonis's face.

JESSICA MCCASKILL (V.O.)

Creed suffered his only defeat when
these two fighters first met, but if
he doesn't do some thing fast, he
looks headed here for another.

On Duke, ringside...

DUKE

Switch it up!

BAM! BAM! BAM! Conlan works Adonis with a barrage of big
blows. The same combo on repeat. Two to the body. One to the
head. Two to the body. One to the head. A lot landing clean.

Adonis evades, but as he takes and slips huge blows, he takes
inventory of the pattern.

"DING!"

Adonis ducks a sweeping blow from Conlan as the round ends.

CONLAN

Yeah boy. I'm still a problem!

Cause Adonis hardly throws in return. He just covers up.
Making his corner enraged. DUKE and STITCH screaming out.

LIL' DUKE

Use that jab! Keep him back.

But Adonis just takes it. Absorbing blow after blow like a
glutton for punishment until the BELL finally RINGS, pausing
the carnage for now.

CONLAN

Next round's gonna hurt.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

The fighter's head back to their corners. BIANCA cheers for Adonis from ringside as Conlan takes a seat, feeling good, like he's got this in the bag but...

17 **EXT. CREED'S CORNER, CAPETOWN STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 3** 17

Duke and STITCH are surprised to see that Adonis is smiling.

LIL' DUKE

Whatchu smiling for, man? You gettin' beat worse than the last time. I miss something, this funny?

ADONIS

Yeah man. Bait and trap. Check mate.

LIL' DUKE

(beat, now catching up)
Check mate...?

'Cause they all know what this means. Adonis just cracked the Matrix and is enjoying this moment with the delight of a kid.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)

Sure you wanna do that? You ain't no spring chicken.

ADONIS

I ain't afraid of a lil' contact.
Stitch, get that ice ready.

And now Duke's smiling too as - DING! DING! - there's the bell and Adonis is on his feet, throwing a look to BIANCA who knows exactly what's up and signs to him with a smile.

BIANCA (SIGNING)

Put him on his ass.

Adonis can't hold back his smile as he looks to Conlan...

JESSICA MCCASKILL (V.O.)

This is dangerous now. Creed's gonna have to be careful.

18 **EXT. CAPETOWN STADIUM - RING - ROUND 4**

18

Both fighters rise to their feet. Adonis moves in, but, this time we get the sense Adonis has an ace up his sleeve.

Conlan fires shots and Adonis expertly slips and parries. He baits Conlan into his signature combination...

(CONTINUED)

Adonis smirks as he narrowly slips a punch and counters with a sharp blow of his own, sending Conlan backwards, wincing.

CONLAN TRAINER

Keep your guard up! Don't get sloppy!

Adonis is laying a trap. Taking one to give two. So the next time Conlan throws the COMBO, connecting with Creed's face...

Adonis takes it on purpose. Sliding his face off the glove. His eyes opening now, a little smirk on his mouth 'cause he sees what he's been waiting for...

Conlan's left flank exposed and then... BAM! Adonis shifts his weight to the left, ripping a hook to Conlan's open body that breaks Ricky's ribs loudly and...

Conlan covers his pain. HIS CORNER yelling out loud...

CONLAN TRAINER (CONT'D)

Guard! Get up top!

And Conlan can only react, covering his face with his gloves, anticipating the head shot from Adonis but...

That punch never comes. Instead, Adonis is shifting now to the right, where Conlan's just exposed his left kidney and...

BOOM! Adonis delivers a huge body right that drops Conlan down to a knee, before crashing straight to the mat and...

The ref gives a TEN-COUNT and just like that, it's all done. Adonis, raising his hands as the whole place explodes.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

That's it folks. It's over. What a chess move from Creed! For the first time in twenty years, there's an undisputed, heavyweight champion of the world! Adonis Creed!

And it's bedlam as Adonis raises his belt. Bianca beside him. In the flash of the cameras. On the top of the world and...

INT. MEDIA ROOM, CAPE TOWN STADIUM - HOURS LATER

...the cameras still flash as Adonis, dressed now like he's on the cover of GQ, sits at the podium for the post match PRESS CONFERENCE. The questions coming already.

CLAUDIA TREJO jumps in first as OTHERS follow her in a fury.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA TREJO

How's it feel matching your father?

REPORTER 1

What was different this fight than when you fought Conlan last time?

REPORTERS (O.S.)

Who're you going to fight next?

Adonis lets all these pass. Bianca, at his side like a Queen. Duke, watching close by. But despite this stage, this victory, the CREED PROMOTIONS backdrop behind him, Adonis is nervous. Clears his throat.

ADONIS

Sorry, Claudia, guys, give me a sec. I've got something I want to say.

(beat, then signing)

By the way, Amara, if you're watching, go to bed. It's late.

(waits as people laugh)

I feel incredibly lucky to be able to stand here today. For the past seven years, I've got to live out my dreams and I'm grateful, because I didn't do it alone. All these people beside me...

(Duke, Bianca)

...supported me the whole way. Bianca the love of my life; from never missing a fight to patching me up when I'm all beat up... Duke, you made sacrifices of your own to help me fulfill my wildest dreams. Even my mom - who rather I did anything but put on the gloves...

(takes a beat, welling up)

And to Rock, this is built on your shoulders. You took me into your home. There isn't a world where I'm standing here without you. And my dad...

(this is hard)

I didn't get to know you. And you never saw me fight or build on this legacy you started, but I hope you'd be proud. And you would have really loved your granddaughter. She's got a lot of you in her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADONIS (CONT'D)

All of these people here helped me grow, had my back every step of the way and I want to make sure I'm around to do the exact same for them and the next gen of fighters out there.

(beat)

Most people in this sport don't get to choose how it ends. I know that more than anyone and that's why tonight, I'm officially announcing my retirement from Professional Boxing. This was my last fight.

And the room just explodes. Everyone shouting at once. Everyone in disbelief. Off Adonis and Bianca, in the blinding flash of the cameras, we CUT TO:

20 EXT. LOS ANGELES - ESTABLISHING (THREE YEARS LATER) 20

Among various shots of Los Angeles, we see a PAINTED MURAL of ADONIS and APOLLO on a wall. Two hometown champs, leading us to...

21-28 OMITTED 21-28

A29 EXT. ADONIS & BIANCA'S MANSION - DAY (ESTABLISHING) A29

A sweeping Bel Air estate. Luxury cars in the drive and...

B29 EXT. ADONIS & BIANCA'S MANSION - BACKYARD - DAY B29

Adonis is taking a midday nap on the couch by the pool in his breathtaking backyard. This is what retirement looks like.

Stirring awake, he opens his eyes to reveal: a blurry LA in the distance. Jaw-dropping views of the Getty, then...

The vista is blocked when AMARA (now 6) steps into frame. She is wearing her swimsuit, along with a TIARA and FAKE PEARLS.

She looks at her father, expectantly. Adonis is hesitant.

AMARA (SIGNING)
C'mon, Daddy. You promised.

Adonis takes in his daughter, surrenders immediately and...

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Amara smiles ear to ear when Adonis emerges from the house, now dressed in a FULL GREEN FROG COSTUME and...

WE BEGIN A MONTAGE.

Over the next several hours, Adonis gives Amara the playdate / yes-day of her dreams.

- They sit on TINY CHAIRS by the pool, having a a TEA PARTY, playing DOLLS with a PRINCESS CASTLE.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Would you like more tea, princess?

AMARA (SIGNING)
Yes, please. Thank you, kind sir.

- Adonis serves Amara tea -- a sad frog in his costume.

- They drift side by side on FLOATIES in the pool, both with SUNGLASSES on.

- Amara points at the water, telling Adonis to get in. She's excited.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
No way! I got in the suit. I'm not gonna get in the water.

AMARA
You promised.... Frog's need to swim.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
You're lucky your mom's gotta work.

With a last look at Amara, he jumps in the pool, still wearing his costume. Amara loves it and...

- Finally, Adonis and Amara eat ICE CREAM SUNDAES, laying side by side in the grass, upside down from each other (mirroring Adonis and Bianca in Creed 1.)

AMARA (SIGNING)
Can we do this tomorrow?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Anytime.

Adonis and Amara smile, having the time of their lives and...

Adonis, still flecked in paint, enters a NEW-AGEY HOME STUDIO where Bianca's at work, INCENSE BURNING on the keyboard.

All around, there is evidence of her LABEL -- FERN ROCK RECORDS -- and artwork and designs for her upcoming event.

She is adding some keys to a song (*we'll hear later*) when...

ADONIS

Got you working late tonight, huh?
That's the new track for Kehlani?

BIANCA

Yeah -- had a couple ideas.

She turns to find her husband, covered in paint stains on his clothes.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Looks like you two had a good day.
Thanks for holding it down. You get
her to bed?

ADONIS

Girl was wiped. Not sure how? She had
like six scoops of ice creams.

BIANCA

Looks like you had a few too?

She's referring to paint on his shirt, making fun.

ADONIS

Nah, we were painting. You saw.

BIANCA

Mmmhmm. You oughta take that off.
It'll stain.

ADONIS

Now I see what you're doing. Trying to
get me naked. A'ight.

And he's removing his shirt. And she's laughing now 'cause--

BIANCA

Nah, nah -- come on. Don't! Adonis,
I'm working. Come on.

ADONIS

Yeah, I've been working hard too.
What, you don't like this dad bod?
I'll get back in shape, quit
promoting.

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA

Don't you go and change nothing. I like you just like you are... Come over here with that dad bod.

And they're laughing...then kissing. Passionate and in love. Still a big fire here. Moving down to the floor as WE CUT TO:

E29 INT. CITY BUS - DAY (MOVING) E29

A city bus slowing to a stop and we follow the SILHOUETTE OF LARGE MAN moving down the aisle toward the door where...

29 EXT. LEIMERT PARK - DAY 29

His WEATHERED SHOES step off the bus and onto the sidewalk of a desolate block. Not quite tumbleweeds rolling, but that's the feeling as...

Around the man's ankle we see an ELECTRONIC TRACKING MONITOR. Booming up we discover it is locked to the leg of...

A POWERFULLY BUILT BLACK MAN (36). In his hand, a small weathered NOTEBOOK AND PEN.

The bus pulls away, leaving him alone on the street staring at a vaguely familiar, though NOW VACANT STOREFRONT.

He crosses to MAGAZINE STAND where A HISPANIC MOTHER shops with her CHILD, who's covetously eyeing the candy.

The man sidles up to the stand, and while the SHOPKEEPER's distracted, he deftly palms a CANDY and slips it to the kid, winking to keep it hush hush. As the kid lights up with joy --

SHOPKEEPER

Can I help you with something?

MAN

Yeah, let me get that.

The man points to a MAGAZINE ON THE RACK: Adonis, in a power-suit on the cover of FORBES. The shopkeeper delivers it.

MAN (CONT'D)

(nods to the storefront)

Wasn't that his gym over there?

SHOPKEEPER

Moved to a bigger spot, round the corner. Couple years now at least. Can I get you anything else?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

MAN

Nah, keep the change.

The man lays down his cash, a last look at CEO Adonis as...

A30 INT. DELPHI GYM - ADONIS' OFFICE - DAY

A30

Adonis tries to focus on his work, but is distracted by memorabilia from his boxing career. Meanwhile in the gym...

30 INT. DELPHI GYM - DAY

30

BAM! A PUNCH FLIES IN A RING, SLAMMING A BOXER'S FACE in the gym where FELIX CHAVEZ, an impressive, all business MEXICAN fighter in CREED ATHLETICS GEAR, wears out a SPARRING PARTNER. Sharp, efficient blows until the weary PARTNER taps out.

ANOTHER SPARRING PARTNER reluctantly climbs in for his turn to be punished and...

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Felix is now beating PARTNER TWO to a pulp as in his corner, Lil' Duke coaches alongside Felix's mother, a cerebral "fight mom" named LAURA (40s).

LIL' DUKE

Take away distance! Cut off the ring.
Cut it off!

LAURA

Stick and move. Stick and move.
Muévete. Muévete.

They all instruct as Felix lands a flurry of punches until the bell finally rings, sparing partner two more pain. The guy's been through hell.

FELIX

You ok? Good shit man. Good work.

Partner Two nods he's all right, but can't get himself off his stool. We've seen the last of him in this gym.

Pulling back, we reveal that a CAMERA CREW for "SHOWTIME: ALL ACCESS" is filming for a Pre-Fight package. Felix climbs out from the ropes, immediately whispering to his mother.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Think we need a new batch.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

Duke's trying. It's hard. You've
chewed through most of LA.

FELIX

You want me to pull back? Think
Drago's taking it easy? He's not gonna
be able to handle these moves.

He starts dancing with Laura, absolutely dripping with sweat.

LAURA

What're you doing? Watch out?!

FELIX

Come on! I learned 'em from you.

Laura can't help laugh, dancing with her son. Inside the
ring, he's a killer. But outside the ropes, still her boy.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Wanna get in on this, Champ? Know you
miss wearing these gloves.

Reveal Adonis, in an IMPECCABLY TAILORED SUIT, seated at a
CAMERA SET-UP, getting mic'd up for an interview.

ADONIS

Mess up this suit? I don't think so.
Trying to get you guys paid.
(to the SOUND GUY)
This good? We all set?

INT. DELPHI GYM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Adonis, Duke, Laura, and Felix (CHAMPIONSHIP BELT on his
shoulder) sit for an ON CAMERA INTERVIEW with the PRODUCER,
mid question...

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER

Felix, what're you out to prove in
this title defense against Drago?

FELIX

We're building a legacy. Same as these
two here built. Lotta people I want to
provide for.

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER

Your whole career you've dealt with
doubts about your size as a
Heavyweight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER (CONT'D)

Your promoter, Adonis Creed, fought Drago - and even he was a larger fighter than you. Yet here you sit with a belt strapped around your shoulder... Is beating Drago a way to finally shut the doubters up?

FELIX

(this pokes a wound)

Man, that's the same story every fight I've ever had. I don't care about size, I got heart! I didn't get here by accident!

(to his mother)

Pinche...

LAURA

(cools him off)

Mijo.

(back to the reporter)

People have lost a lot betting against my son.

The next question goes to Duke and Adonis.

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER

How does Creed Athletic's fit into all that?

LIL' DUKE

(Give him some more... MBJ to build off it)

I handle the fighters. Adonis handles the business, but we do it together. We're partners.

ADONIS

These fighters trust us with their futures and we don't take lightly.

(re: Felix and Laura)

These two are family. We love em. And we wanna help all our fighters build more than careers.

LAURA

I've known since Felix was young that he was a Champion. But no one else believed before Adonis and Duke.

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER

(now back to Adonis)

What was it you saw in him? Talent? Physicality?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER (CONT'D)
 (alt Question)
*How does it feel being on the other
 side of the ropes? You miss it?*

Adonis takes a long beat to consider.

ADONIS
 It takes more than that to be a
 champion. You gotta know it in here.
 Before anyone else.

32 **EXT. DELPHI GYM - AFTERNOON**

32

The interview wrapped, Adonis exits the gym on the phone.

ADONIS
 I understand exactly what they're
 asking. Drago may have the bigger
 name, but Felix has the belt. His
 split's got to be bigger. I don't care
 if they don't like it. Tell Drago to
 call me. Then tell his dad to call
 me, I don't care. Let me call you
 back.

Adonis hangs up the phone -- spotting a man, leaning casually
 on the hood of his car. The same man from the MAGAZINE STAND.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
 Hey my man you lost? Can I help you?

MAN
 Let me get an autograph.

ADONIS
 I ain't signing any auto--

Adonis turns, spotting a man, leaning casually on the hood of
 his car. The same man from the MAGAZINE STAND.

MAN
 Yo homie, you don't remember me? You
 come a long way from bumming rides
 from your moms but...

ADONIS
 ...Dame?
 (holy shit)
 You almost had me.

DAMIAN
 Just got back to the hood. Stop by the
 old gym but...

(CONTINUED)

Adonis, still floored. A wave of memories pounding.

ADONIS

Yeah we just moved in a couple of years ago. / Yeah we upgraded a couple of years ago.

DAMIAN

It's been a minute. For sure.

That's an understatement. A few lifetimes have passed since these two men last met. An awkward silence returns.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

...I didn't want to take up any of your time. Just wanted to let you know what's good. That I'm here. You ever wanna hang out catch up, grab some chow, whatever. Just let me know.

ADONIS

Where you headed now?

DAMIAN

Shit, back to the crib. If I ain't back by six then -- BOOM -- this whole block'll blow up.

Adonis clocks Damian's leg. The ANKLE MONITOR.

ADONIS

Got time to get something to eat?

DAMIAN

Say it again?

ADONIS

Got time to get some grub.

The two old friends share a laugh then...

33-34

OMITTED

33-34

A35

INT. LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT

A35

Just like years ago, Adonis and Dame enter through the backstage corridors of an establishment. Only this time, Adonis is the VIP leading the way...

They pass through a kitchen door, emerging into a restaurant, passing tables and BAR COOKS and a LINE at the door...

(CONTINUED)

HOSTESS

Good to see you man.

ADONIS

Good seeing you. Tony!

Damian clocks Adonis' stature as they're seated at a prime TABLE, bypassing the other still waiting guests and...

HOSTESS

Champ, I got you right here. You guys enjoy.

35

INT. LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT - LATER

35

Adonis and Damian, mirror images of each other, sit across a table waiting for their food to arrive.

DAMIAN

Surprised you still come down here and eat with the common folk.

ADONIS

When I can. / Try to. There's a lot of things I use to do, that I just can't do anymore.

DAMIAN

Busy living that high life?

ADONIS

Yeah, something like that.

ADONIS (ALT)

Yeah man, it is what it is. /
(O.S) Part of the job.

Adonis is self conscious and relieved when the WAITRESS arrives with their food. Before they dig in...

Adonis slides the SALT SHAKER and HOT SAUCE to Dame. Dame's amused he remembered, starts shoveling the food down.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

(playful)

Damn. Easy, easy.

DAMIAN

Know how long it's been since I had this shit?

Dame laughs. Adonis regards him, emotional.

ADONIS

(genuine)

How long?

(CONTINUED)

DAME

Eighteen years.

ADONIS

Shit. You been down this whole time?

DAMIAN

(nods)

Had some years get tacked on. Just got out last week.

ADONIS

Congratulations. (OS) Welcome home/back.

DAMIAN

I wrote you a few/couple times. Guess you never got get 'em.

ADONIS

Really? Nah, bro. I didn't. Where'd you send 'em?

DAMIAN

Mama Creed's.

(pointed silence)

She still up in Bel Air?

ADONIS

Yeah, man. She's getting up there but she's around.

DAMIAN

(changing the subject)

You know I seen every one of your fights in the pen. See you made it to Africa, huh?

ADONIS

You saw that?

DAMIAN

Saw that. Made me proud. See you remembered some of those moves that I taught you, too.

ADONIS

What I remember you knocking my ass out.

DAMIAN

But I always helped you back up.

(CONTINUED)

Adonis nods, remembering. Sees Dame's notebook on the table.

ADONIS

Yeah you did. Whatcha doing for work?
/ You got work?

DAMIAN

I got some plans. Keep my nose clean.
Keep the PO off my back.

ADONIS

Anything I can do to help, just ask.

Dame slows for a moment. Adonis misunderstands...

Adonis reaches into his suit pocket and pulls out a thick wad of HUNDREDS before Dame can even finish his thought.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

What am I talking about. You just came home. I got to get you right. Whatever you need. Aight.

DAMIAN

I appreciate it bro, I'm good. I situated.

Adonis extends him the cash but Dame won't take the bait.

ADONIS

I didn't mean it like that. Respect.
So what's your plan?

DAMIAN

Same program I was on the last time
you seen/saw me.

(beat)

I want to be champ.

Adonis is taken aback.

ADONIS

You still trying/wanna to box?

DAMIAN

I know I've been away a long time, but
I kept myself fit. Got some moves you
ain't seen yet.

ADONIS

You looking decent. Solid.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIAN

Donnie I'm ready. I'm not joking, bruh. Still got gas in the tank. And gotta get me that chain... can't be Diamond Dame looking bummy!

The guys laughs, but Adonis can feel his desperation so...

ADONIS

Diamond Dame. That's right. All right. Come by the gym, get you set up with Duke. See what happens from there.

DAMIAN

For real? I appreciate it, bro. Thank you. Yo, this steak's hitting/banging too.

Dame returns to his plate. Adonis eyes his old friend and...

INT. CREED MANSION - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Still in his feelings, Adonis enters Creed Mansion to find Mary-Anne braiding Amara's hair in front of the TV while Bianca pours more wine. They are giggling hysterically.

ADONIS

What's so funny?

BIANCA

Just trying to convince your mom to come stay with us so she can do my hair too.

MARY-ANNE

Careful what you wish for.

Adonis gives his mom a hug and kiss.

ADONIS

How you feeling today?

MARY-ANNE

Fine. Better if my son showed up on time for dinner.

ADONIS

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I ran into a fighter I hadn't seen in a minute.

MARY-ANNE

Oh yeah?

(CONTINUED)

She cuts an inquisitive look at Adonis, then returns to Amara, finishing her hair with a flourish.

MARY-ANNE (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
There. Look at that.
 (then privately to Amara)
Who's the real the champ in this family?

AMARA (SIGNING)
You are.

MARY-ANNE
No. You. -- Go see for yourself.

Amara runs out with a smile to get check out her hair, leaving Adonis with Bianca and Mary-Anne.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
Gonna have your hands full with that one.

BIANCA
Think we already do.

They laugh. Mary-Anne eyes the wine, then Adonis - to pour.

ADONIS
You sure you should be drinking, Ms. Lady?

MARY-ANNE
Excuse me, I'm not gonna have another stroke tonight, Adonis... Gonna have one tomorrow night.

ADONIS
I'm just saying.

BIANCA
You had us worried the other day.

MARY-ANNE
I'm fine. No need to worry about me. What about you? Something's on your mind?
 (as he shifts)
I know your face. You got something on your mind.

Bianca picks up Mary-Anne's curiosity...

BIANCA
Who'd you run into tonight?

ADONIS
(trapped)
This guy Damian Anderson.

MARY-ANNE
Where did he come from?

Bianca clocks the moment between Adonis and his mother.

BIANCA
Who is he?

ADONIS
(a long beat)
Just an old fighter.

Off Mary-Anne's look...

INT. DELPHI GYM - A FEW DAYS LATER

Dame's gearing up in the ring. All around him, YOUNG FIGHTERS train, throwing condescending looks at the old fighter.

DUKE (O.S.)
Think you mighta checked with me?

ON DUKE AND ADONIS at GIFT SHOP watching Dame get warmed up.

DUKE (CONT'D)
This ain't no charity, Donnie. Homie's older than you.

ADONIS
I'm just giving him a break. Ain't that what we do anyway?

DUKE
No. This ain't no damn YMCA.

As Duke clocks Dame.

ADONIS
Look around. You see anybody else lining up to get in the ring with Felix? All I'm saying is, let him spar. That's it. We got a fight coming up and zero bodies... Absolutely no one wants to get in the ring with Felix.

(CONTINUED)

Off Duke's skepticism...

DUKE,
I know what you're doin' Donnie. You
don't owe this dude shit. But you
wanna spar? Let's do this.

Dukes leaves to talk to Felix. Adonis chews on that. He goes
over to tell Damian the news.

Felix runs drills with female boxer, Laura watches. Duke
enters...

DUKE
Felix, so Adonis brought someone in
for you to spar with.

FELIZ
It's about time.

Adonis goes over to Damian...

ADONIS
Hey, hey, we good.

DAMIAN
Lotta young cats in here.

ADONIS
Young man's game. Come on, Duke's
going to take care of you. Champs
gotta start somewhere.

Dame gets into the ring. He is surprised to see Felix climb
in the ring. Lil' Duke at his side. Dame stares at the golden
boy. Not exactly what he'd asked...

DUKE
Felix. Meet Damian. Gonna be sparring
with you.
(to Dame)
You still know how to do that?

Off Dame, biting his tongue for now as... DING DING!

Felix bounces around on the opposite side of the ring, sizing
up Damian who's struggling to get his headgear to stay put.

Duke and Laura are coaching as Adonis looks on.

FELIX
Go ahead and take your time.
(clocks the ANKLE MONITOR)
Where you from?

DAMIAN
Crenshaw.

Felix clocks Damian's ANKLE MONITOR.

FELIX
That cute. How long did you do?

DAMIAN
A minute. You ready?

FELIX
Hell yeah. / That's dope, Crenshaw.

They close in on each other and the session begins. Damian lets go a quick combination, about half-speed.

DUKE
Give him a good look now, Dame. We just warming up.

Damian sends a jab Felix's way but he slips it and lands a STIFF one-two on Damian. Oohs and Ahhs from the gym.

LAURA
Don't let up. Keep pressing.

Damian starts to grasp the role he's been given: Human punching bag. Not pleased, he throws a quick look to Adonis who consoles him to stick with it so --

Dame swallows his pride and lets Felix proceed to wail the shit out of him. Dame takes the blows like a man accustomed to pain as --

A39

INT. PLAY SPACE, AMARA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A39

Amara's facing a battle of her own. She's DRAWING at a table (*in a school for the deaf*) when a BIGGER BOY, on some dare, snatches her picture and rips it in half.

He's only laughing for a second because -- BAM! -- Amara punches him in the face, continues pummeling him on the ground as other DEAF CHILDREN scatter and a TEACHER rushes in, having to pull her away and--

39

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, AMARA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER

39

Amara sits in a classroom, awaiting her punishment while...

Adonis and Bianca meet with her DEAF TEACHER in an observation room. They can see their daughter through a two-way mirror.

TEACHER (SIGNING)

...it sounds like he had ripped her picture in class, and Amara lost her temper again. I spoke to the other family. You're welcome to call them if you like.

The teacher hands the parents Amara's ART WORK: The now-ripped painting that Amara worked on with Adonis. It's got Adonis' blood boiling.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

Wait why's this kid picking on her?

Bianca reaches a hand out to Adonis -- *be cool.*

ADONIS (CONT'D)

(speaking to Bianca)

Nah, I'm just asking.

BIANCA (SIGNING)

Sign.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

I'm sorry.

TEACHER (SIGNING)

I don't think it was intentional. He was probably trying to get some attention --

ADONIS (SIGNING)

So why's my daughter in trouble and not him? She can't protect herself?

Aware a nerve has been touched, Bianca steps in to diffuse.

BIANCA (SIGNING)

Obviously we're concerned about Amara, but we understand fighting isn't the way to handle things.

Adonis look says -- *we are?*

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER (SIGNING)

Look, we love Amara. She's an exceptional child and academically, she's thriving, she just... fights. All the time. And we want her to know there are other solutions.

Bianca throws a look at Adonis, biting his tongue until...

INT. HALLWAY, AMARA'S SCHOOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Adonis, still real hot, is hustling out of the building. Amara believes she's in trouble. Bianca's at their side.

BIANCA (SIGNING)

Remember what we talked about? When you start getting worked up, just slow down and take a breath. Check in with yourself.

AMARA (SIGNING)

I was trying! I'm sorry!

ADONIS (SIGNING)

Don't apologize. I would've done the same thing. You have a right to fight back.

Amara brightens a little.

Off Bianca's displeasure...

BIANCA (PRE-LAP)

That's your advice? You wanna teach her to fight?

INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA'S NEW BEL AIR MANSION - NIGHT

Bianca and Adonis, in a heated discussion, arrange a dinner that their chef has prepared. A pretty incongruous sight.

ADONIS

I thought she wouldn't have to at a deaf school like that but now--

BIANCA

C'mon, Adonis. Kids are kids. What'd you expect?

ADONIS

Then she should know how to defend herself --

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA

No one is telling her not to but --

ADONIS

-- and if we get pissed at her now and let people walk over her, she's just gonna grow up being scared --

BIANCA

Where is *that* coming from?

Adonis waves her off but Bianca holds him. Diffusing this.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

All I'm saying, Adonis, is we should be teaching her how to assess her emotions --

ADONIS

(joking)

Here we go. Therapy talk.

(sarcastically)

Let's breathe. Talk about how we're feeling. Open up our chakras.

She laughs, busting his balls.

BIANCA

You're making fun of how I deal? You used to punch people to get your shit out! You want me to cancel my appointment with Wendy and just go to the gym?

(fucking with him)

You need a hobby.

They laugh and find a welcome interruption when a HOUSEKEEPER arrives in the room.

HOUSEKEEPER (SIGNING)

The table looks lovely. Can I help you with anything else?

BIANCA (SIGNING)

No, thank you, Erica. We're great. Have a good night.

The housekeeper departs and Bianca returns to Adonis, picking up where she left off.

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Baby, I know you wanna protect her but she needs to understand *why* she's fighting, not just how to do it. Cause the solution to every problem isn't a punch in the face.

ADONIS

Yeah, well... sometimes it is.

That laugh breaks the tension, then -- DING! -- the doorbell rings. The lights flash.

BIANCA

Tell me his name again?

ADONIS

My boy Dame. I told you.

BIANCA

Actually, baby, you didn't tell me that much. Just, you hadn't spoken in awhile.

ADONIS

Well, he was in jail.

BIANCA

Oh, they don't got phones in jail?

That hits Adonis.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It happens. He's here now.

Then Bianca opens the door, revealing Damian in the threshold - his face, in awe of the opulence.

ADONIS

Guess you found it all right?

DAMIAN

Just asked where the black family lives.

(a beat. He laughs)

I'm kidding. It's tight. Nice to meet you, Bianca. You got a beautiful home.

BIANCA

Nice to meet you too, Damian. Come on in!

(CONTINUED)

Damian does, with a smile, taking in all their wealth and accomplishments. Photos of Bianca and HER ARTISTS. Adonis with PRESIDENTS and CELEBS.

Upstairs, he spies Amara peeking through the SEE-THROUGH FLOORS. Bianca signs up from below...

BIANCA (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Dinner time.

Amara comes running. Dame watches this all with amazement.

DAMIAN
Y'all got see-through floors too?!
Hard to keep those things clean,
right?

ADONIS
Haha ohhh you got jokes.

DAMIAN
You know I do. Man, that food's
smelling good, Ms. Bianca.

Then he passes Amara, shooting her a big smile as she and Bianca laugh. No one talks to Adonis like this...

As she and Amara head in, Adonis sidebars with Dame.

ADONIS
Did your P.O. get in touch? Get that
shit sorted out?

DAMIAN
Yeah. Hollered at me last week. Thanks
for getting me right.

ADONIS
Don't sweat it. No thing.

Adonis placing a helping hand on his shoulder as...

EXT. POOLSIDE, ADONIS AND BIANCA'S HOME - NIGHT

Adonis, Bianca, and Dame sit poolside catching up over drinks while their HOUSEKEEPER clears the plates.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Thank you. That was great.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIAN

Dawg. I still can't get over this.
This square got himself a whole
mansion. Married a genuine rock star.
All those gold records yours?

BIANCA

Mmmhmm. Artists I produced.

DAMIAN

Ah, you produce too? That's what's up.
I love that song you did with Gunna.
When do I get to see it live?

BIANCA

(modest)

I don't really do that anymore.

ADONIS

She's being humble. She's launching
her own label, actually.

DAMIAN

Word? Whatchu call it?

BIANCA

Fern Rock... After I stopped
performing, still wanted to work with
artists I love so now I just take out
the middle men. It's been cool.

Damian's genuinely impressed by her grace and humility.

DAMIAN

Wow ok. That's impressive. Still...
hard to give up that one thing that's
yours.

BIANCA

Yeah, you know, it takes work. Lotta
therapy.

(they laugh, then)

So how'd you guys meet anyway? I never
get to meet any of his old friends.

DAMIAN

Donnie didn't tell you already? Man,
we go way back. We were like brothers.
Shared a room for two years at The
Jeff, before your boy went and got
Hollywood...

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA

Oh, the Jeff. What's that?

DAMIAN

The Jeff was the Group home.
(to Adonis, casually)
Bruh, remember them bedbugs in that
mug?

ADONIS

I try not to.

DAMIAN

Man. I can't forget 'em.

Bianca clocks the moment, Adonis silence. Dame does too.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

(to Bianca)

He didn't tell you about that?

BIANCA

Naw, yeah -- I remember. That was
before Mary Anne. Right?

An awkward silence. It hangs for a beat... Bianca can sense
it. Checks her watch.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I gotta get Amara to bed. You two keep
catching up.

(to Adonis)

You should invite him to the label
party!

(to Dame)

Kehlani will be there.

DAMIAN

That's very kind of you. Thanks. Great
to meet you.

BIANCA

You too.

Bianca goes with a smile. As soon as the two men are alone...

DAMIAN

You didn't tell her about the Jeff,
huh?

ADONIS

Why would I?

(CONTINUED)

A heavy moment. Adonis breaks it in a hurry.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
Come on, let's get a drink. I wanna show you something.

43 **INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA MANSION - MAN CAVE - MOMENTS LATER** 43

Adonis flips on the lights in his PRIVATE GYM / MAN CAVE. The space, a natural flex. Boxing gear. Adonis' BELTS. Virtual Golf. Full bar of top shelf. Damian regards it, mind blown.

DAMIAN
Man this is crazyyy...

Dame picks up a bottle from the bar. HENNESSY UMBRELLA BRAND PRODUCTS.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
This stuff's legit.

ADONIS
Take it.

Dame pours himself a drink, discovering a photo of Adonis in his 2nd fight against Drago. Shakes his head.

DAMIAN
Can't believe you really hung 'em up. To wear a monkey suit.

ADONIS
What- you think I got soft?

And before Damian can react, Adonis TACKLES him and they begin to grapple like wrestlers - an old boyhood routine.

DAMIAN
Ooo, oh okay that's how we playin it?

ADONIS
That's how we playin!

They disengage and the two men square up for a good old fashioned SLAPBOX FIGHT. As they "Slap" at each other, they talk; both men feeling each other out as they move.

DAMIAN
You really moved back to the boonies... You used to love coming back to the hood. Now you all domesticated...
(MORE)

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

(poking fun)

I bet you golf now, too, huh?

ADONIS

I don't golf.

DAMIAN

You got a mansion in Bel Air but don't golf?

(alt)

You got a virtual golf room. Is that your butler's?

Damian laughs and then WHAP! -- Adonis catches him on the face. Everything stops on a dime.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Oh. Ok. I see. The champ's still got a little pepper in him.

Damian puts up his hands, conceding with grace.

ADONIS

Yo, I might have left boxing. But it didn't leave me.

DAMIAN

That's what *I'm* saying. Look I know you got a ship you tryna run, but I ain't come back here to be a punching bag for some chump.

ADONIS

Yo don't sleep on Felix. He earned his the hard way.

DAMIAN

I did 18 years the hard way.

(that hangs)

Maybe I didn't make myself clear: I want a title shot.

ADONIS

Bro, Felix has the belt.

DAMIAN

So line him up. If he as good as you say he is, what he got to lose?

That ask is a bomb drop. Adonis searches for a response.

(CONTINUED)

ADONIS

It don't work like that, bruh. I can't just snap my fingers and make you a contender.

DAMIAN

Ain't that what happened to you?

A low blow. A long beat. Damian tries to walk that back.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Look I respect you, you know, but my clock's ticking Adonis. It's now or never for me.

ADONIS

Man... I don't know what to say. I wanna help you, I do. But that's just not possible.

DAMIAN

(cooling it down)

You don't know what it's like being in that box all these years. They took away my *name*, Adonis. And they gave me a fucking *number*.

(beat)

I was the best. And I never even got a chance to prove it.

(then)

If Apollo Creed can give a shot to an underdog, why can't you?

Adonis considers, hating to let down a friend and...

INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

A few hours later, Adonis brushes his teeth. His mind is elsewhere. Bianca, in the bath, watches him in the mirror.

BIANCA

You ok?... You never told me about the group home.

ADONIS

Nothing to tell...

BIANCA

How old were you?

ADONIS

I don't know. Around Amara's age?

(CONTINUED)

Adonis shrugs. Falls silent. Bianca knows she's hit a nerve.

BIANCA
Sorry. You don't wanna talk, it's ok.

ADONIS
Nah, it's not that. It's just -- Dame just asked for a fight against Felix.

BIANCA
(stunned)
For real? He's serious?

ADONIS
Yeah. I declined. I can't just give him a shot. People work their whole lives for that chance--

BIANCA
So why does it look like you're still thinking about it?

Off that question, hanging there...

45 **EXT. SOUTH LA STREET - A FEW DAYS LATER (ESTABLISHING)** 45

TBD establishing shots of L.A. moves us into...

46 **INT. ADONIS AND DUKE'S OFFICE - DELPHI GYM - DAY** 46

Adonis sits at his desk, in his suit. His mind somewhere else. His eyes drift to the gym where we INTERCUT WITH:

47 **INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME** 47

Dame, slogging through another sparring round with Felix. Duke coaching from ringside when...

DUKE
Close the distance. Head-body!

BOOM! Felix lands a stiff hook on Dame. Unnecessarily stiff. It jolts him awake. Damian looks over to Duke, expecting him to call the punch out but... Duke doesn't say shit.

Now Damian's lit. Even hotter when he sees the gym hooting and hollering. Onlookers, now, standing at attention.

Dame settles into a different fight stance... Beckoning.

When Felix closes in, Dame lets go a hook of his own that lights Felix up... He smirks.

FELIX

...there we go Crenshaw!
Show me something, now...

DUKE

Work the jab! Work the jab, come on!

Felix, takes the coaching. Moves in on a Dame, but when the jab is thrown... Damian knows it's coming.

And he's had enough, so...

He slips and COUNTERS Felix's jab and lands a powerful blow of his own, hitting Felix right in an odd position. He staggers back, arm tingling.

FELIX

(shaking his arm)
The hell was that bro! You got a death wish, homie?

Now it's a fight. The other fighters bound into the ring to separate the Felix.

Damian waves him off. Unfazed by the fire in Felix's eye.

DAMIAN

You not built like that, lil man. Walk it off.

FELIX

Yeah, keep talking...

Then...

ADONIS (O.C.)

Aye!

Commotion comes to a stop - When Adonis speaks, the gym listens. Adonis, watching from the office, descends the stairs. He goes for Damian who's stepping out of the ring, already taking off his gear.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

What the hell's going on?

DAMIAN

Just me doing my job.

ADONIS

C'mon man, use your head. Leave that shit outside.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIAN
(pointed)
Bro, I told you what I want.

ADONIS
And I told you, it takes time...get
some air. Walk off. I'll see you later
tonight.

Dame grabs his bag and exits the gym. He passes Duke who is
already beelining for Adonis.

DUKE
This was a mistake.

ADONIS
Calm down, it's all right --

DUKE
No it ain't no *calm down!* You let him
come in with that chip on his
shoulder. That's how people get hurt.
(beat)
When people show you who they are,
Adonis, believe it.

Adonis considers that for a beat as...

48-54 **OMITTED** 48-54

55 **I/E. CITY BUS - MOVING - DUSK (LATER)** 55

Dame's still running hot as he rides home alone. Life
slipping past out the window. He watches it go, with some
dark thoughts in his eyes as...

56 **INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME** 56

Duke's making his rounds. Closing down the gym for the night.
(INSERT: DUKE'S PHONE SCREEN - "ADT" APP) Sees the light on
in the office, peeks his head in the door to find Adonis'
still working.

DUKE
I'm headed out. You handle shit with
your boy?

ADONIS
I'll holla at him at B's party
later... I'm on it, aight?
(before Duke heads out)
You seen Amara around? Gotta get her
to my mom's.

DUKE

Caught her messin' around with the
heavy bag. Put her on clean up duty.

(a last thought)

I know your hearts in the right place,
man, just watch out.

Then Duke heads out the door. Adonis rises from his desk,
looking out the window to see...

Amara, in the gym down below, studying something on AN IPAD.
Adonis clocks her as we begin to...

INTERCUT WITH:

57

EXT. TRANSITIONAL HOUSE - NIGHT

57

Damian -- in a hard part of town - a world he's never escaped
-- scaling the steps of a grim TRANSITIONAL HOUSE as...

58

INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME

58

Adonis approaches Amara in the near vacant gym.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

What you up to, rascal?

She furtively shuts off the screen, putting the iPad away.

AMARA (SIGNING)

Just about to start cleaning.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

That's not what Uncle Duke said.

She looks away, a little chastened.

AMARA (SIGNING)

*I don't want to get in trouble. Mom
doesn't want me to fight.*

Adonis looks around, conspiratorially.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

*How 'bout it's our little secret. Want
me to show you some more?*

She smiles. She does, while...

59

INT. DAMIAN'S ROOM, TRANSITIONAL HOUSE - SAME

59

Dame enters his room, setting down his bag on his cot and we
pan over the small room.

(CONTINUED)

It's a far cry from Bel Air. His small, tattered dresser is crowded with his clippings: AMATEUR CHAMP. GOLDEN GLOVES. A BRIGHT FUTURE TO WATCH.

We pan past them to find still more personal totems. The notebook. Even THE PHOTO of the boys from Damian's fight long ago. Two young studs on the rise and...

INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME

Adonis stands with Amara at the heavy bag. Teaching. He punches it. Lets it rattle. Amara watches.

ADONIS (SIGNING, CONT'D)
That's called a straight right.

He hits the bag again.

AMARA (SIGNING)
That's how you knocked out Wheeler?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
(surprised)
Who taught you that?

AMARA (SIGNING)
You.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
You watched that fight?

AMARA (SIGNING)
I've watched all your fights.

Adonis studies at his daughter, intrigued.

AMARA (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Show me something else.

Adonis nods, ok. Resumes hitting the bag like a teacher. He takes Amara's hand and puts it on the column that the bag's bolted to and begins wailing on the bag with one hand.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Most people think it's about violence but it's not. It's timing and focus and...

AMARA (SIGNING)
Control?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
...yeah. Here, you try.

(CONTINUED)

Adonis steps back and holds the bag for his daughter, like so many people have done for him. Amara hits it. Again.

AMARA

Is that how you do it? Like that?

ADONIS (SIGNING, CONT'D)

Yep. You got it. It's in you. You don't need to be scared. Let's see that straight right. Clean. Simple.

(Amara nails the bag)

Perfect.

She punches the bag, squealing with joy. Like she's found her calling. Adonis watches, overcome with emotion as we end sequence on...

61

INT. DAMIAN'S ROOM, TRANSITIONAL HOUSE - SAME

61

Damian. In his room. Like a cell. Doing pull ups on a bar like a man paying penance. Like a shark who can never stop moving as a MUSIC CUE TAKES US INTO:

62

INT. RECORD PARTY EVENT - NIGHT

62

A LAVISH, CELEBRITY FILLED EVENT FOR BIANCA'S MUSIC LABEL EVENT. ATHLETES, MUSICIANS, AND ACTORS all posing and dancing.

Damian stands with Adonis near the bar.

DAMIAN

She put on this whole show? That's fire.

Adonis nods.

ADONIS

Yo, grab a drink, I'll be back.

Damian watches with envy as Adonis goes to greet none other than VIKTOR DRAGO.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

They told me You never miss a party. Looks like you put on a few pounds.

VIKTOR

Tough talk from a suit.

They square up for a beat - cameras flash, but it's all fun and games. Drago puts an arm around Adonis as they pose for a photo Op.

(CONTINUED)

ADONIS

Hold up, lemme grab Felix--

Adonis gestures and Felix (attending with Laura & Duke) joins them for a picture. Adonis, ever the promoter, hypes up the fight.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

You see that! Fireworks coming,
November 25th! Get ya tickets!

Dame watching across the room - a glint of envy in his eye. Bianca clocks Dame's reaction as she heads to the stage and--

BIANCA (O.S.)

(over P.A.)

Good evening y'all!

ON STAGE: Bianca looking regal, addresses the party from the mic.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I'm so glad everyone could make it.
We're so proud of the work our artists
have done this year - we know you're
all gonna love it. As a little treat -
we gonna kick this thing off with one
of my favorites.

Grammy-nominated Artist "KEHLANI" enters the stage to thunderous applause. She graciously takes the mic from Bianca who exits stage left, keeping nearby as...

Kehlani begins a stunning performance of the song we recognize as the track Bianca was working on in Sc. D29. The audience is enthralled but...

Stage left, Bianca watches wistfully. Singing to herself the song she worked on. It's a bittersweet moment, seen by...

Adonis and Damian, separately in the audience. Each interpreting it in their own way.

Kehlani's performance continues as we...

JUMP CUT TO:

Bianca makes the rounds, glad-handing her high profile guests, finally arriving at...

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA

Damian! You made it! Thanks for coming.

DAMIAN

This is one helluva party, Ms. Bianca.

BIANCA

Hope you're having fun. You seen Adonis around?

DAMIAN

Yeah, he's over there doing his Don King, promoter thing.

Across the party, Adonis works the room, Felix in tow.

BIANCA

I'm surprised he even came. He hates these things.

DAMIAN

What's it like having somebody else sing your song?

BIANCA

(graciously of Kehlani)
If it's got to be anyone...

Dame laughs.

DAMIAN

Come on. You miss it, I bet.

BIANCA

Sometimes, I do. Yeah. But I still get to make music. I'm grateful.

He gives her a look - *really*?

DAMIAN

(re: Adonis)
You think he misses fighting?

BIANCA

Donnie? Not that he's ever told me.

DAMIAN

Would he?

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA
(good point)
Actually- Something I did want to ask
you.

DAMIAN
If you wanna know how old Donnie was
when he stopped wetting the bed-

Damian drags an invisible zipper across his mouth.

BIANCA
I can ask Mary-Anne about that...

DAMIAN
...oh you wanna know how I got locked
up?
(off her non-answer)
It's cool. Got in a fight. Had a gun
and some priors... same old story...
Donnie was there. He can tell you -
things just got out of hand.
(off Bianca's surprise)
Not saying the dude didn't have it
coming, but... You seen what happens
when Donnie goes off.

BIANCA
Who was it?

DAMIAN
His name's Leon. But you should ask
Donnie about him. It ain't really my
place.
(knows he's got her)
Like you said, takes "work" to look at
the past. I had twenty years to do
mine. He'll find his time soon.

As Bianca wonders what that means, we spy...

Adonis, uneasy, clocking their conversation from across the
room. The tension building just as...

BANG! Suddenly, a scuffle in the CROWD turns everyone's head.
People pushing and shoving. Drago caught up in the mix. It's
violent and chaotic. Adonis can't make out what's happening
but...

SECURITY is now rushing through, pulling him away from the
SCRUM. Doing the same for Bianca. Off the shock on their
faces...

(CONTINUED)

ESPN REPORTER (PRE-LAP)
*Breaking News out of Los Angeles.
Heavyweight Boxer VIKTOR DRAGO was
assaulted tonight leaving a star
studded event in what appeared to be
an attempted robbery.*

We PULL BACK to reveal the television in...

64 **OMITTED** 64

65 **INT. ADONIS & BIANCA MANSION - MAN CAVE - MORNING** 65

...where Adonis, juggling THREE PHONES AT ONCE, trying to put
out a PR fire, watches CELLPHONE FOOTAGE OF THE ATTACK on TV.

ESPN REPORTER (V.O.)
*Drago's currently at Cedars-Sinai
having suffered a concussion, as well
as multiple fractures to his right arm
and hand.*

ADONIS
They got a specialist looking at him
to see, but they're saying he's out at
least three months--

Into this chaos, Bianca enters, still shaken.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
(hand over the phone)
You ok? This is crazy.

Before Bianca can speak, a MUGSHOT FILLS the screen.

ESPN REPORTER (V.O.)
*No arrests have been made but police
at the scene took this man, GEORGE
REMBLE into custody --*

Adonis and Bianca view A HARD-LOOKING MAN in his 40's. Adonis
doesn't know him. But know's shit just got complicated and...

ADONIS (PRE-LAP)
Look... these things happen. We just
got a find another fighter.

66 **EXT. CHAVEZ FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON** 66

Adonis's car sits parked out front of the Chavez's LA home.

67

INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON

67

Adonis sits with Felix and Laura in their well appointed home. Duke's here as well, politely keeping his distance but the air's very hot.

LAURA

It's not about just finding another fighter.

ADONIS

I hear you. I do. I understand your frustration --

LAURA

So what are you gonna do? I know he wants to fight Drago, but we can't wait six months till he's cleared. Felix is in fight shape right now.

ADONIS

Only two or three real contenders besides Drago... Ortiz. Sporino. But he's still rehabbing...

LAURA

So who else, then?

ADONIS

Well... I got one idea.

Duke's knows where he's headed. Already shaking his head.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

It's a big swing but if we hit...

FELIX

Who you mean?

DUKE

He wants you to fight Dame.

FELIX

What?? He's not even a real fighter.

ADONIS

Looked like a real fighter when you sparred. People talk.

LAURA

Champ, he's older than you.

(CONTINUED)

ADONIS

I know Dame. He's gonna fight tooth and nail.

(sees Duke's head hanging)

Look, I know it's out of the box but... you know how many people tuned in when my pops gave Rocky a shot? People still talking now.

Laura can see Duke's disapproval.

LAURA

You don't like it?

DUKE

This ain't that. Dame ain't boxing, he's fighting the world. He's tryna hurt people. It'd be a circus.

ADONIS

You mean a show? Gotta play the hand we got dealt.

DUKE

Damian's reckless, Donnie. Think about him. (Felix) If this gets ugly, you ain't the one with skin in the game.

FELIX

Woah, now... I ain't scared of this fool.

LAURA

My son will go toe to toe with anybody. But will anyone come?

ADONIS

Oh, they'll come out. I promise. They love an underdog story.

(looks to Felix)

I know it's not perfect, but it was me, I would do it.

Felix confers a beat with his mom. Finally turns to Adonis.

FELIX

(nods, ok, but --)

Tell your boy this ain't sparring. I'm on his ass when he steps in that ring.

ADONIS

Just go out, do your job.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (2)

67

Felix and Adonis shake hands. But Duke biting his tongue as --

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)
 Good evening ladies and gentleman and
 welcome to the Crypto.com Arena for
 tonight's main event.

68 **I/E. BACKSTAGE - CRYPTO.COM ARENA - WEEKS LATER - NIGHT**

68

Titanic posters hang down the facade. CHAVEZ VS. ANDERSON.
 Their three story pictures announcing it's FIGHT NIGHT.

At the arena's grand entrance; a RED CARPET is flowing.
 STARLETS and CELEBRITIES strut past the cameras where...

We land on Adonis, stepping out of a CADILLAC LYRIQ, with
 Bianca and Amara by his side, strolling inside like royalty.
 He gives a warm welcome to SAUL "CANELO" ALVAREZ and his
 lovely WIFE. The crowd going apeshit as...

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)
 The stars are arriving for a much
 hyped, and very unique heavyweight
 title match brought to you by HBO and
 Creed Athletics between the virtually
 unknown challenger, Damian Anderson
 and the reigning WBC Heavyweight
 Champion, Felix Chavez.

69 **INT. CHAVEZ' TEAM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT**

69

The mood's focused and serious as Felix's hands are taped.
 Adonis and Duke looking on as Laura prays over Felix...

70 **INT. DAMIAN'S TEAM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT**

70

Suited up for his fight, Damian watches in silence as a
 CORRECTIONS OFFICER unlocks the ANKLE MONITOR from his leg.

Adonis arrives in the door in his suit. A CEO not a fighter.
 Sees the end of this surreal scene.

ADONIS
 Let you outta those chains, huh?
 (then)
 You ready?

DAMIAN
 Born ready. Gotta thank you for this.

ADONIS
 You don't gotta do nothing. Just put
 on tonight. Aight?

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

DAMIAN
I will. Thank you.

71 **INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - NIGHT**

71

CROWDS file to their seats while at ringside Adonis, Bianca, and Amara wait expectantly as the house lights go down.

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)
And here come the fighters.

Felix emerges from the tunnel with his BELT on his waist, a MEXICAN FLAG on his shoulders, his mother and Duke at his side. No explosions. No lasers. Just a focused fighter making his way through the crowds to...

THE RING, where he enters the ring, standing proud in the spotlight, spotting Adonis in the stands who shoots him back steel then...

MAURO RANALLO (V.O.)
And now here comes the challenger. A former golden glove champ who's making his professional debut here tonight at the tender age of 36. Quite an improbable story.

Damian emerges from the tunnel with no music. No pomp. No team at his side. Just the cold stare of a killer. He walks alone to the ring and then climbs through the ropes and the fighters meet in the ring.

MAURO RANALLO (V.O.)
Damian's giving away three inches in height. Ten pounds in weight. Eleven inches in reach and he's twelve years older than Felix. This has the makings of either the greatest Cinderella story in boxing history or, more likely, a foolishly avoidable massacre.

72-74 **OMITTED**

72-74

75 **INT. RING, CRYPTO.COM ARENA - NIGHT**

75

The tension is thick. Damian's prowling the ring, like a tiger in a cage. The REFEREE brings them together.

CRYPTO.COM REFEREE (PRE-LAP)
Need a clean fight tonight. Obey my commands. Protect yourselves at all times.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

75

CONTINUED:

75

CRYPTO.COM REFEREE (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

No low blows, no rabbit punches, No sucker punches. Got it? (The fighters nod) Touch 'em up. Back to your corners.

The boxers hit gloves. Felix prays in his corner as Damian waits in his - both champing at the bit as -- DING DING! There's the bell and...

A76

INT. CREED MANSION - NIGHT

A76 *

Mary-Anne watches the Felix / Dame fight in her living room. She looks tired. She swallows TWO PILLS with a sip of water, but sets the glass down unsteadily, nearly knocking it over.

The sound brings her HOME NURSE in from the other room.

HOME NURSE

Here you go, Mrs. Creed. Can I get you anything else before I go?

MARY-ANNE

Thanks, Loretta. I'm fine.

HOME NURSE

See you in the morning.

The Nurse goes. Mary-Anne takes her pills. Returns her eyes to the screen.

76

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - RING - NIGHT

76

(Please note - Production will distribute all fight boards, fight viz and materials once approved.)

As the fighters meet for round one, Adonis watches ringside with Bianca and Amara (like Kobe and Gianna) teaching his daughter the ropes of the sport.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

Dame needs to start strong. Felix will try and intimidate him. He needs to show he's not scared.

Amara studies like a scholar as we enter...

ROUND ONE

It begins with a bang. Felix starts quick and angry pushing Damian back, establishing control with a jab.

(CONTINUED)

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)

And Chavez comes out like a raging bull, right on top of Anderson, who holds that guard tightly.

Damian takes some hard shots from Felix but still taunts him.

DAMIAN

That's all you got?

Felix continues to press, but Damian crabs up to break Felix's rhythm.

Adonis teaches Amara again.

ADONIS (SIGNING)

*See how he's catching those punches?
That's old. It's called Crab Style.*

ALT:

AMARA (SIGNING)

Why does he look like he's hugging himself?

ADONIS (SIGNING)

That's old school. It's called Crab Style.

The fight is reflected in Amara's eyes.

Now Damian starts to show his power. He whips underneath a feral hook and pivots to Felix's broadside -- Felix goes for a follow-up hook but time slows just enough to see:

Dame fire a QUICK right hand into the soft meat of Felix's inner-bicep...

MAURO RANALLO (V.O.)

Oh! And an awkward punch to the throwing arm!

Felix's arm drops to his side, as he shakes off the sting.

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)

Chavez, you see is shaking that Rolex, probably trying to get the sensation back in his arm.

Damian sees he's hurt him and continues to work the arm.

DAMIAN

Where the power go?

(CONTINUED)

Felix clinches Damian and they start shit talking into each other's ears.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
(unimpressed)
You ain't got nothin' I ain't seen
yet, boy. You soft.

FELIX
You ain't seen nothing yet!

Felix pivots and fires off FOUR RAPID PUNCHES.

Damian wraps up Felix and rotates him away from the ref to land a dirty knee. Dame fires off a body shot.

Felix looks to the ref to see if he saw the dirty tactic.

He didn't and the Ref continues the match.

Felix fires off two strong punches at the end of the round. The BELL RINGS and Damian fires back TWO SHOTS of his own.

DAMIAN
(unimpressed)
Gonna be a loooong night.

Both fighters walk back to their corners. The fight is on.

MAURO RANALLO (V.O.)
A hard shot from Anderson ends the
round and sends both fighters to their
corners with some chatter.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - RING - AFTER ROUND 1 - NIGHT

ON FELIX'S CORNER as Laura coaches him up.

LAURA
Stick to the game plan! He thinks he's
got you mapped out because of
sparring. You're better than he is, go
prove it! How's the arm?

FELIX
It's nothin. This fool ain't got shit.

ON ADONIS, BIANCA RINGSIDE...

BIANCA
Your boy can punch.

ON DAME'S CORNER as A TRAINER attends to him.

(CONTINUED)

TRAINER

You gotta keep your distance, man...

DAMIAN

I don't pay you to talk.

Dame's eyes watch Felix's body closely from across the ring, *scanning*. He clocks Felix shaking his arm again and...

Both fighters rise to their feet for...

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - RING - NIGHT

ROUND TWO

Felix stands. He rolls the painful arm. Damian stares him down.

Both fighters come out hot.

Felix delivers two jabs. Dame reels from the blows.

Dame is able to slow Felix's pace by targeting the same bicep as last round with punishing precision.

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)

My oh my and a MENACING flurry from
Dame landing on that arm again!

Felix pops Damian with a solid left hook.

Damian punches Felix's left arm.

Dame, who throws a sharp right HOOK - only this hook has an elbow following right behind (the angle obscuring the ref's vision of the blow). Felix is cut.

Adonis winces, reacting to the blow.

The Crowd reacts. The Ref steps into intervene, separating the fighters as...

Laura rushes to the edge of the ring. Bianca gives a concerned look to Amara. Adonis' rises. Duke yells out!

LIL' DUKE

Ref, come on!

Damian watches coolly as the Ref checks on Felix's cut.

REF

You okay? Can you continue?

(CONTINUED)

FELIX

Yeah, yeah. Let me go.

The Ref now moves to Dame, informing him --

REF

That's a point! I see it again, and you're gone.

The Ref signals that he is removing ONE POINT from Dame.

The fight resumes. Dame rushes to the center of the ring.

Dame punches Felix's bicep again but this time...

Felix rolls his shoulder away from Dame, steps on Dame's foot and...

WHAM! Felix lands a massive hook to Dame's jaw, dislodging Damian's tooth. (*BOLT CAMERA*)

It was a powerful blow, but Felix watches astonished as Dame shakes it off like it's just a welcome wake up call.

ADONIS

Keep your hands up, Champ!

Damian reacts to Adonis, encouraging Felix as -- DING DING! -- the round ends. Both fighters stalk off to their corners as --

MAURO RANALLO (V.O.)

Wow! A big hook to end the round, but Dame swallowed it like it's nothing. And the ref's gonna have to take a look at Chavez's eye where he caught that elbow. He's gonna need to evaluate if the corner can't stop the bleeding.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - RING - AFTER ROUND 2 - NIGHT

IN FELIX'S CORNER, Laura checks on her son.

LAURA

Mijo...

FELIX

I'm fine! Ima put his ass down.

IN DAME'S CORNER, Dame sits down on his stool. A TRAINER removes his mouthpiece and squirts water into his mouth. He spits into a bucket and we see a TOOTH ping off the bucket.

(CONTINUED)

The trainer waits for a reaction from Dame but he just keeps his eyes trained on his Felix, studying his opponent.

He then finds Adonis in the crowd, approaching Felix's corner.

IN FELIX'S CORNER, Adonis arrives to check on Dame. Both his cut face and his arm.

ADONIS
How bad is it?

FELIX
It's fine.

ADONIS
How 'bout your arm?

They all look to Felix's bicep which is beginning to swell. It does not look good.

As Felix's corner works on his injuries, Felix clocks...

IN DAME'S CORNER: Dame looks back, frighteningly unfazed despite having just taken Felix's best shot.

Felix and Dame stare each other down. At last, they stand.

INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA - RING - NIGHT

ROUND THREE

The two boxers rush to the center of the ring.

Damian fires off a left -- a right -- a left.

Felix pivots out. Damian turns to face him.

Felix tries a couple right jabs, but can hardly lift his arm and tries switching to southpaw.

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)
Chavez digging deep into his bag of tricks here trying to find something Anderson hasn't seen...

MAURO RANALLO (V.O.)
That's right. As many recall, Dame started his career at Delphi as a sparring partner for Chavez and you have to wonder if being Chavez's body bag has anything to do with what we're witnessing in the ring...

(CONTINUED)

Evading Felix's southpaw, Damian counters with a right to the head and a left to the body. Felix crumples a bit and...

When he tries to attack, Dame blocks a punch, throwing a right of his own that lands, sending Felix into the corner and...

Dame throws five punches, starting with the right.

Duke screams out from the corner.

DUKE

Get the hell out of there man!!

Felix takes blow after blow in the face until finally they clench.

The Ref breaks them up and then --

Boom! Dame throws a furious punch that opens a huge cut under Felix's eye and --

BLOOD SPRAYS FROM THE WOUND, SPLATTERING THE WHITE SHIRT OF THE REF AND --

BLOOD SPRAYS THE ANNOUNCERS TABLE.

Bianca reacts to the gore, turning Amara away from violence, shielding her with her body as...

In the ring, the two fighter clench. Damian shoves Felix off and clocks his opponent's condition.

Damian sees what shape Felix is in. He looks as if to say, "Do I really have to?"

Felix is in very bad shape, but he is a warrior and is going to go out like one. *Have it your way.*

Damian throws a couple of punches. Felix can barely defend himself.

Damian continues to chop down Felix until eventually --

WHAM! Dame connects with a brutal blow to Felix's face that spins the fighter around.

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)

This is starting to get ugly.

Felix is bleeding and broken, but he's not quitting yet. *He's still got one bullet left and...*

(CONTINUED)

Felix makes his last stand, swinging for the fences with a huge right uppercut, intended to take Dame's head off but...

Damian fades Felix's attack and the punch sails past, catching only air, leaving Felix off balance and...

Dame rears back with his right and -- POW! -- punches right into the camera -- connecting flush with Felix face and...

That's it. Felix violently face plants onto the canvas. His lights are out and blood pours from his mouth and...

The rest happens in an instant. The entire crowd gasps.

81-85 OMITTED 81-85

86 INT. RING, CRYPTO.COM ARENA - SAME 86

Adonis jumps to his feet. So does Laura, terrified. Bianca covers Amara's eyes. Laura's almost into the ring because...

AL BERNSTEIN (V.O.)
Oh no! You do not want to see that.
Chavez is down and it looks like he
might be hurt bad.

The ref sends Dame to his corner, calling for a doctor, kneeling to take Felix's mouthpiece out.

LAURA
Mijo!!

Like a lit match in a forest, sound roars back to the arena. 20,000 people praying they didn't just witness manslaughter.

87 OMITTED 87

88 INT. RING, CRYPTO.COM ARENA - SAME 88

It's pandemonium now. Laura and Adonis flood the ring. Paramedics right behind them. The crowd all on their feet as the Ref waves off the fight as...

Adonis kneels over Felix. (The image is eerily similar to the notorious shot of Apollo in Balboa's arms.)

The PARAMEDICS pushing through as JIMMY LENNON JR. takes the mic, announcing over the horrific, chaotic moment...

JIMMY LENNON JR.
And the winner by knockout and the new
WBC HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION. "DIAMOND"
DAMIAN ANDERSON!

88

CONTINUED:

88

As TV CAMERAS and Press surround Damian, he looks through the sea of faces and locks eyes with...

Adonis on the far side of the ring, cradling Felix in his arms. Adonis is totally gutted, watching Dame across the ring. There's twenty feet between the two men, but feels as wide as a canyon as the chaos keeps rising and --

79

INT. CREED MANSION - NIGHT

79 *

The fight is over. Mary-Anne is troubled and weary. She steadies herself a moment, before opening a DRAWER where a BOX OF LETTERS is hidden. *

She regards it, ominously, but finally picks up the box. *

89

I/E. BACKSTAGE, CRYPTO.COM ARENA - NIGHT

89

AN AMBULANCE IN THE DOCK. Felix is loaded onboard as Adonis and Duke trail behind, shielding photographers from the carnage while Laura climbs in with her son.

ADONIS

Laura...

SLAM! -- the doors shut unceremoniously before him, denying the relief of any kind words. Adonis forced to watch as the ambulance speeds off, leaving him with Duke in the hallway.

A long heavy silence. Adonis, just wracked with guilt. He turns to Duke for support, who simply puts up his hands.

LIL' DUKE

I told you.... your mom was right from the jump.

Duke turns and walks off. Stopping a beat later to add.

DUKE

I don't want to see you around the gym for a while.

Off of Adonis, alone. Wanting someone to absolve him and...

90

INT. CREED MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT

90 *

Adonis arrives, searching for support. He's been up all night, still wearing his bloody suit. *

ADONIS *

Hey ma. *

(CONTINUED)

He discovers her in the kitchen. A SHOE BOX open before her.
She looks very run down.

MARY-ANNE
How's Felix?

ADONIS
Still at the hospital. Stable. Figured
I'd get outta there and give em some
space.

MARY-ANNE
Maybe smart.

Adonis sits. Contemplative.

ADONIS
What is going on?

Then sees the contents of the box.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
What's all this?

HANDWRITTEN LETTERS. Dozens and dozens. All addressed to
ADONIS. On old PRISON STATIONARY.

MARY-ANNE
This is what I hoped you'd never see.
They're from Damian.

He flips through the letters. One after another. Dating back
twenty years. It's an absolute gut-punch.

ADONIS
You kept these from me?

MARY-ANNE
To help you move on, yes I did.

Adonis searches for words that don't betray the sinking
feeling in his stomach. Nothing but adrenaline as--

ADONIS
Mom, how could you-- ?

MARY-ANNE
I was trying to protect you...

ADONIS
Protect me from what? *Damian was my
friend.*

(CONTINUED)

MARY-ANNE

Not when I met you. Not when you were in the facility where you were caged like an animal. Did you think that I was going to let you go back to that?

ADONIS

(softer)

Ma, you don't know what me and him went through together.

MARY-ANNE

Maybe not. But I know who that man was you two beat up. I read your files, Adonis.

ADONIS

You know that? You know---

(beat)

Then you know Damian's had my back back before you even knew who I was. Damian treated me more like family than your two kids ever did in this house. That's family!

MARY-ANNE

You hit hard, Donnie. And you can't see.

She places a PHOTO down on the counter.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

There may have been a time where Damian had your back. But that's not what he's doing now.

Mary-Anne exits leaving Adonis to find the PHOTO: DAMIAN - a grown man in jail. Squatted with a group of fellow inmates.

The face of one of the men, whom we slowly recognize as -- THE TATTOOED MAN arrested for assaulting VIKTOR DRAGO. Hold on Adonis as realization cascades over him and...

91 **EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT - SAME**

91

Adonis's car burns rubber through the cold LA night as...

92 **INT. ADONIS' CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)**

92

Adonis has a death grip on the steering wheel. Steaming.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

He SLAMS to a stop at a red light. Still fuming. His phone RINGING -- it's *Bianca*. One of many missed calls. He considers answering, instead... something catches his eye.

A BILLBOARD OF HIMSELF. The same image from the FORBES COVER. His eyes burn with self-loathing so...

When the red light turns green, Adonis DENIES the call and FLOORS IT. Turning the wheel hard. Peeling out towards...

93 **EXT. DOCKWEILER STATE BEACH - NIGHT**

93

A bonfire burning in the sand. Damian's VICTORY PARTY celebrating around it. Dame's holding his belt, drinking straight from a bottle when...

Dame looks out to see a lone figure approaching from the darkness of the parking lot. Adonis. Full of steam, charging forward in his still bloody suit. The image is striking.

He approaches the group and a member of Dame's entourage steps up to impede, but as soon as his hand touches Adonis - WHAM! Adonis floors him with a hook.

ANOTHER ENTOURAGE MEMBER immediately pulls a gun. Dame steps up to deescalate.

DAMIAN

Yo, be cool. Gimme that.
(Dame takes away the gun)
Donnie wassup? What's goin on?

ADONIS

Dame, bruh. Tell me this shit ain't true.
(he reveals the photo)
You *played* me.

Damian does the math. Then, the slightest shift in posture--

DAMIAN

Guess you did get them letters?

ADONIS

You used me.

The air thickens. No one intervenes - this is Damian's room.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

I vouched for you, bruh. I put bread up.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIAN

Hold up-- You put the gloves on *my* hands? Man you must be punchy, cuz if memory serves, you used to carry my gloves.

A "jab" in return. It lands...

ADONIS

Duke was right from the jump. Get your shit out the gym. You and me? We through.

DAMIAN

What, you think I need you...?

(beat)

I needed you when I was locked up. I needed you when I came home. But now I'm the champ and I don't need you for nothing. Who's alone, *now*?

Adonis is cut. He begins to head off.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Yeah that's right. Run away. That's one thing you're still good at it.

Adonis stops on a dime. In a FLASH, his suit jacket is off and his fists are up. FIRE in his eyes. He's squaring up.

The CROWD laughs at the sight. Damian's hands are by his side. He's got Adonis right where he wants him.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Oh you mad now? Take yo best shot, *Little Donnie*.

The sound of that name lacerates Adonis, stunning him.

He clenches his fists...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

What? You mad now? Try half your life in a cell, watching someone else live your life.

(beat)

You turned your back on me, homie. You didn't answer one call the whole time.

He taps the BELT.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

This title? This is just the beginning. Brother, I'm coming after it all.

ADONIS

I ain't your brother.

DAMIAN

(mocking)

You'll always be my baby brother.

ADONIS

And you'll always be a number.

BANG! -- Dame CRACKS Adonis across the eye with the gun, dropping Adonis to the sand, just in mind-blowing pain.

Damian bends down above him, whispering in his ear...

DAMIAN

Help *yourself* up for once. See how it feels.

Then Damian walks off and rejoins his party, leaving Adonis, bleeding on his knees as the fires burn in the night and...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Aloha.

INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA'S NEW BEL AIR HOME - MORNING

Adonis enters. Nobody greets him at the door. He is in quite a state. He searches the house for Bianca and...

Adonis now enters from the opposite entrance by the car (not showing this. Adonis simply enters)

He's surprised to discover her in her studio with Amara. Through the windowed door, Adonis sees this touching scene --

Amara's at the end of a meltdown, but Bianca meets her at her level. Stays present, reminding Amara to breathe. It works.

Finally, she settles down and Adonis watches as Bianca begins to sing to their daughter.

Amara gently holds her hands on her mother's throat, feeling the vibrations of her voice. It's beautiful.

Adonis wants to reach out. To open up and confide. He looks desperate for help...

(CONTINUED)

But when Bianca looks up from the booth -- the window is vacant. Adonis is gone. Bianca returns to Amara and...

INT. MAN CAVE, ADONIS AND BIANCA'S HOME - LATER

While Amara sleeps in the studio, Bianca enters the man cave to find Adonis rolling a ball on the POOL TABLE.

BIANCA

Where you been? I was calling all night.

Adonis is silent. His back to her. Still rolling the ball.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

You're not gonna ask why she was so upset?

ADONIS

Felix...

BIANCA

No. It actually had nothing to do with that. You might be surprised by this but not everything is about you and boxing, Adonis.

ADONIS

Is this really what you wanna do tonight?

BIANCA

Excuse me?
(then)

Amara got sent home for fighting again. Knocked a kids tooth out. You would know if you came home--

He finally turns, full of guilt. And then she sees his eye.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Jesus! Baby, what happened?

ADONIS

It's nothing, I'm fine.

BIANCA

C'mon. Let me just take a --

ADONIS

I said drop this shit!

He swings his body away. Even if unintentional, it's a little bit scary. They both freeze for a beat.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

I can't do this tonight.

BIANCA

Ok, then when? When she gets in another fight? Gets suspended?

ADONIS

That's my fault too?

BIANCA

I'm not the one who told her to punch anyone.

ADONIS

She's fighter. It's in her. You can't deny that from her.

BIANCA

What are you trying to say?... Baby, I've been trying to give you your space but it just feels like your keeping something inside and... is it me? Is it us? Is it...Leon or whoever?

ADONIS

Where the hell you hear that?

BIANCA

...Dame.

Adonis is now seeing red. Blood beginning to boil.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I know you're hurting, Adonis. You can talk, babe. I'm here--

Finally, his rage boils over. Bianca's taken aback.

ADONIS

Whatchu want me to say?! He was the dad at the Jeff.

BIANCA

Adonis I just want you to talk--

ADONIS

I'm not tryna talk about shit!

(CONTINUED)

BAM! -- In a sharp bang of violence, Adonis slams a ball on the table like a gavel. They both freeze.

The moment hangs like a guillotine. And it only gets worse when they discover AMARA, awake in the studio, having seen the whole thing. Bianca runs to shield her from more.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
*Everything is ok. It's ok. Let's get
you back to bed.*

She picks her up in her arms and turns back to Adonis.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
You know I love you - I do - but you
gotta deal this, D -- cause *she* can't
see us like this.

Bianca heads out of the room, leaving Adonis alone. Parked there in shame.

TMZ INTERVIEWER (PRE-LAP)
Adonis Creed...word on the street,
that you two got beef.

*
*
*

INT./ EXT. ADONIS CAR - DAY

*

Still angered, Adonis drives through LA. DAME'S INTERVIEW can be heard in V.O. on the way.

*
*

DAME (V.O.)
Yeah, word on the street, bro,
ain't no secret, alright? Look no
breaking news here. Me and Donnie
got a past. Yeah, true. Look Baby
Creed, all you gotta do is man up.
Show people who you really are.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

On the street, Adonis looks up and sees --

*

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

*

Adonis' BILLBOARD ON SUNSET. A prince of the city.

*

INT./ EXT. ADONIS CAR - DAY

*

Adonis can't even look at. Drives on. Shaken as Dame's V.O. continues.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TMZ INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 You still fight for Creed
 Athletics?

DAME (V.O.)
 Creed Athletics? Nah bro. Look, I
 got my own camp. I don't need that
 fraud anymore.

Adonis drives on, still fuming as --

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - SAME

Adonis car pulls into frame on a tough block. We don't reveal
 where we are but --

TMZ INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 So who is the real Adonis Creed?

INT./ EXT. ADONIS CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Finally, the VISUALS catch up to the AUDIO. Adonis is parked
 outside this undisclosed location. We reveal he's watching
 DAME'S TMZ INTERVIEW ON HIS PHONE.

DAME
 Baby Creed? He's a coward. He's a
 fake who's ain't fit for a crown.
 I'm the new King of LA and I'm
 gonna use this here reign to let
 everyone know that Lil Donnie
 Creed's just a lil scared bitch.
 You want me to stop, come and find
 me. I don't run. I don't hide. It's
 frontline all the way.

Adonis, had enough, finally shuts off the phone and looks up
 at the building where he's parked with great emotion.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - SAME

Adonis gets out of the car and crosses to the building. He
 comes to a stop by the wall of...

WIDE SHOT REVEALS: THE LIQUOR STORE from his youth.

Adonis, lost in the thought, remembers:

SMASH CUT TO:

INSERT FLASHBACKS: LEON BEATING YOUNG ADONIS AND DAME. *

CUT BACK TO: *

EXT. LIQUOR STORE -- AS BEFORE *

Adonis staring off, lost in the thought, remembering: *

SMASH CUT TO: *

INSERT FLASHBACK: THE FIGHT AT THE LIQUOR STORE YEARS AGO. *

Young Adonis is getting his ass kicked. Young Dame arrives. With a GUN. *

YOUNG DAME
Hey get off him. What you gonna do playboy? *

But the COPS arrive too. Flashing RED and BLUE as we... *

CUT BACK TO: *

EXT. LIQUOR STORE -- AS BEFORE *

Adonis staring off, lost in the past. Only finally snapping out when he's phone rings. He answers. *

ADONIS
Sorry ma. I was -- *

BIANCA
(cuts him off)
--hey baby, it's me. *

She can't say the rest. Adonis already knows. A body blow. *

BIANCA (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
I think you need to get home. Mary-Anne had another stroke. I think you need to say goodbye. *

Her words carry over as -- *

INT. CREED MANSION - NIGHT

Adonis enters. Amara and Bianca are there. She hugs him.

BIANCA
You ready to see her?

Off Adonis' shock. His world crashing around him. He looks down to see Bianca's taken his hand and...

100

INT. MARY-ANNE'S ROOM, CREED MANSION - A SHORT WHILE LATER 100

Adonis, Bianca, and Amara sit at Mary-Anne's bedside. Weak and sedated; her face pale and slack, almost unrecognizable.

She takes Bianca's hand.

MARY-ANNE
Keep him out of trouble.

BIANCA
I will.

Bianca wipes away tears as Mary-Anne's hand now finds Amara's. She manages a smile, signing her a last time.

MARY-ANNE (SIGNING)
Who's the real champ?

AMARA (SIGNING)
You are.

MARY-ANNE
No. You.

Amara and Mary-Anne share a last tearful look, then Bianca escorts Amara out of the room, leaving Adonis alone.

Adonis goes cold, his legs nearly give out. He manages to pull himself to her bedside but not before tears begin to stream down his cheeks. He holds his breath, balls his fists and he kneels down beside her.

ADONIS
I'm so sorry, mom. I didn't mean it, I just...

MARY-ANNE
Shhh. Shhh, it's ok.

Mary-Anne opens her eye just enough to make out his face. Barely lucid, she speaks to Adonis with a whisper --

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
I don't think I've ever seen you cry.

ADONIS
(Between held breath)
How you doing? Tell me what can I do?
What do you need me to do?

(CONTINUED)

With tremendous effort, Mary-Anne takes his hand.

MARY-ANNE

First day I met you. You were huffin'
and puffin'. Just a tiny little thing.
Mad at the *whole world*. Like you
wanted to go around and take everybody
on, one-on-one.

(laughing weakly)

Guess things don't much change. You
don't remember that day, do you?

ADONIS

The doctors said--

MARY-ANNE

I remember like it was yesterday. All
those boys... all those faces in those
cages... and then **you**...

Mary-Anne takes a deep breath.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

I still remember... God. Your face.
Had all that anger in you... just like
your father...

Adonis gets choked up at the mention.

As the sedatives wear on, Mary-Anne speaks to Adonis as if he
himself were Apollo.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

I was so angry when you left me,
Apollo. How could you leave me alone?

ADONIS

I'm here. I'm right here, momma.

Mary-Anne smiles. A true, deep smile, with her whole face.

MARY-ANNE

Adonis... that's his name. His face--
he saved me. He saved me, Apollo, and
helped me forgive you. You don't have
to be angry anymore.

Mary-Anne shuts her eyes. For the final time. Adonis holds
his mother's hand and cries as a MUSIC CUES takes us to...

102

EXT. LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL CEMETERY - A WEEK LATER

102

Establishing shots of the cemetery. Mary-Anne's funeral is over. Fresh dirt hits the grave above the two tombstones of:

MARY-ANNE and APOLLO CREED

The loss is enormous.

103

INT. CHAPEL - LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL CEMETERY - DAY

103

Adonis sits in the empty church, his mind being visited by images from the funeral:

Bianca and Amara grieving, pallbearers, and Adonis standing graveside.

Their images are interrupted when footsteps approaching behind him. He wipes his eyes to find -- Lil' Duke. A long beat.

ADONIS

Surprised you still here.

LIL' DUKE

Come on, man. Where else would I be?
Just cause you not in the ring, don't
mean I'm not in your corner.

But Duke can see that he's hurting. Alone.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)

You know. Mary Anne was my family too.
If her and my pops were here, they'd
say we need each other now more than
ever... We all we got left, Donnie.

He puts a firm hand on Adonis's shoulder.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)

I know you think you gotta be perfect
to keep the people you love in your
life, Adonis. But that's not true.

(beat)

Family don't run from mistakes. We
don't judge flaws. We love people for
who they are. But it's up to you to
trust people with the real you.

ADONIS

What if it's too late to do that?

(CONTINUED)

LIL' DUKE

It's never too late, Adonis. Your family will be here. You're the one that's gotta stop running. Cause I'll tell you right now, that's the last thing she'd have wanted.

Off of Adonis, cut right to the bone and...

INT. MARY-ANNE'S BATHROOM / CLOSETS, CREED MANSION - NIGHT *

Bianca is seated on the side of the tub. Adonis enters. Takes a seat beside her. A beat. *

ADONIS *

I'm sorry. *

BIANCA *

...I know....It's okay. *

ADONIS *

No, it's not. *

(beat) *

I should have been honest with you from the start. It's just when Dame came back, all the shit came back too. Just didn't know how to deal with it. And you're good at that. It comes so easy for you-- *

BIANCA *

--It doesn't come easy for me. I got a lot of stuff that I'm still trying to figure out. *

(beat) *

I don't always know how to talk about it either, D. And, Mary-Anne was the closest thing that I had to a mother in a really long time. And, now she's gone. Hasn't been easy for me to have Amara and not have my family at all. And, when I stopped performing, it was really hard to accept that my dreams didn't turn out the way that I imagined that they would. And, that still hurts me... a lot. But, I just made a choice to try to move on and be happy about what I do have... But, it's not easy. *

Adonis braces himself. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADONIS

Leon was the dad in the group home that I lived in with Dame. I'm not saying me and Dame were angels, but no kid deserves to get beat on like that. Understand? I was Amara's age.

(beat)

I'm the reason why Dame went down. I saw Leon at the Liquor Store that night.

(beat)

I don't know, I just... snapped.

(beat)

Hit him... his boys jumped on me, till Dame pulled a gun. Next thing I know, the cops pulled up. We tried to run. Dame got caught. I got away. I ran.

BIANCA

You were a kid, Adonis -- of course you ran. Anybody would have. And, he had a gun. That's not on you.

ADONIS

But when he went down, I wasn't there. I never called. Never wrote. Somehow, it was easier just to forget. Pretend it never happened, move on. Maybe this is karma coming back around.

BIANCA

Adonis -- you were a kid. You were scared. But everything you have, you have earned. That doesn't mean you're responsible for the way Dame has been acting. You are a good person, Adonis. Look at what you've done with your life? We're not defined by one mistake.

ADONIS

I don't know.

BIANCA

(Adonis lowers into her hands)

You've got to find a way to forgive yourself, so that you can begin to believe that you deserve the life you have earned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Adonis faces Bianca.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Because you do.

ADONIS

I want to. But he's not going away. He's going to be over our shoulder, and I'm so tired of running.

BIANCA

So maybe you need to talk to him. Ask him to forgive you.

ADONIS

We're past that point now. (looks at her, pointed) There's only one way that Dame's going to listen.

Bianca understands what he is saying.

BIANCA

If that's what you need to do... alright.

STEPHEN A. SMITH (PRELAP)

I was sorry to hear about your mother, Adonis. My condolences.

INT. STEPHEN A. SMITH STUDIO - DAY

Adonis is in the studio with STEPHEN A. SMITH filming a live broadcast of his show.

ADONIS

One thing I got from my mom, she'd do anything to protect her family.

STEPHEN A. SMITH

Amen brotha. She was a great woman.

ADONIS

I've had a lot of powerful women in my life that've helped me realize that I walked with away unfinished business.

STEPHEN A. SMITH

You gotta be talking about Dame? Is this why you came out of retirement?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Those words ring out in --

INT. LOS ANGELES PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A sprawling, LA Penthouse where Dame, shirtless, is doing PULLS UP on the stairs while A LADY FRIEND watches TV.

STEPHEN A. SMITH (ON TV)
You know I believe you were the best pound for pound fighter, 3 years ago, but... I know it's been a minute since you been out of these streets.

Dame stops his workout and watches the show.

STEPHEN A. SMITH (ON TV) (CONT'D)
They saying, "you didn't fight Conlan in his prime." They saying, "Dame's the next king of boxing." Last time I talked to Dame, he was saying you did him dirty. He's been telling anyone who'll listen that you ain't a real man. That you ran on out on your boy.

ADONIS (ON TV)
I did some things I regret...

Dame's really watching now as we INTERCUT WITH:

INT. STEPHEN A. SMITH STUDIO - DAY

Adonis and Stephen in the studio.

ADONIS
...if I could change it, do it over again, I would. But life's not that simple.

STEPHEN A. SMITH
You think that's how Dame feels?

As Adonis considers, Stephen gets a message in his earwig.

STEPHEN A. SMITH (CONT'D)
Oh yeah? Nah, for sure. Put him on.

And suddenly, a new voice interjects.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAME (ON THE LINE)
 Why you crying? You need a tissue,
 huh? You want a hug? I'm just
 telling people who you really are.
 You walk away from family.

*
*
*
*
*

Dame has called in on the phone from his apartment.

*

ADONIS
 Not here. This ain't the way to
 handle this.

*
*
*

DAME (ON THE LINE)
 Oh we live, homie. It's the way I
 wanna handle this.

*
*
*

STEPHEN A. SMITH
 That's supposed to be your brother,
 right? But my sources say it's on
 site between you two.

*
*
*
*

DAME (ON THE LINE)
 Lil' Donnie ain't gonna do nothing.
 He's a coward. A fraud. Your wife
 know that? Delphi. Adonis
 Athletics, whatever. All that
 suspended until I say.

*
*
*
*
*
*

ADONIS
 (realizing)
 Oh, you lost it, huh?
 (beat)
 Alright. Let's do it. One fight.

*
*
*
*
*

DAME
 You and me.

*
*

ADONIS
 I need that. Run it.

*
*

Adonis and Dame stare at each other through the screen.

*

STEPHEN A. SMITH (V.O.)
 Whoa! You heard it here first! This is
 some biblical stuff. We got brother
 vs. brother settling beef in the old
 ways for the whole world to see. This
 is gonna be the Battle of LA. Princes
 turned Kings. Family turned rivals.
 This is gonna be the Battle of LA. Two
 men but one crown. Let's do this!

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*
*

EXT. BIG BEAR - ESTABLISHING

Establishing shot of Big Bear.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

Adonis walks into his new gym.

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY

Dame walks into his new gym.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

Adonis shadow boxes in the mirror - his "toughest" opponent

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO FIGHTS AS:

IN A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS, WE SEE HANDS BEING WRAPPED, THEN WE HEAR DUKE'S VOICE...

NOTE: DUKE'S "SPEECH" BELOW SHOULD BE SHOT IN ITS ENTIRETY IN THE HANGER. ADDITIONALLY, THE INDIVIDUAL LINES SHOULD BE SHOT AGAIN IN THE SCENES WHERE THEY EXIST.

NEW BEATS ARE "BOLD" / EXISTING FOOTAGE IS IN "ITALICS"

DUKE

You see that man in the mirror?
Remember him? Get reacquainted. He
been gone for a minute. But that's
who we working with this camp.

(then)

Now this fight's gonna be personal.
It's gonna come down to who wants
it more. And that means endurance.
Focus. And control. And he thinks
you ain't got em. But, he don't
know how hard you grind for what
you got. So, lets show him how
heavy the crown really is.

(then)

But you wanna win, you need to get
back that vision and focus. You
gotta block everything out and be
in the moment, right now. Not the
past. Not the future. Right now.

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUKE (CONT'D)

It ain't gonna be easy, cause the man you're facing is your most dangerous opponent. He's somewhere right now tellin' his boys he taught you how to fight. He's seen all your fights, knows all your moves, thinks he knows how you are. So look in the mirror. Cause to win, you need to know that man better than does.

(then)

Dame's a fighter who's willing to do anything, so you gotta be ready for everything.

(then)

Lastly, this fight's gonna be about control. You win the battle of emotions, you win the fight. You lose control, you lose it all.

INT. HANGER - DAY

Duke lays out his strategy in the Hanger.

DUKE

Now this fight's gonna be personal. It's gonna come down to who wants it more. And that means endurance. Focus. And control. And he thinks you ain't got em. But, he don't know how hard you grind for what you got. So, lets show him how heavy the crown really is.

While Duke speaks, Adonis enters and exits frame. Reveal, he's doing SIT-UPS. Boog, Stitch, and Ann, prepping in BG.

INT. HANGER - DAY

Adonis does push ups. Duke continues to coach.

DUKE

Dame wanna prove something to the world. Let him try. He don't know how hard you work. He don't know what you sacrificed. So lets show him what it take to be a real champion.

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY *

TBD BADASS WORKOUT INTRO MOMENT FOR DAME. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS WORKS THE SPEED BAG. He's SUPER RUSTY. *

DUKE
You wanna win, you need to get back
that vision and focus. You gotta
block everything out and be in the
moment, right now. Not the past.
Not the future. Right now. *

Adonis can't get the rhythm. Meanwhile -- *

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY *

- DAME WORKS THE SPEED BAG. HE FUCKING KILLS IT. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS DOES MITT WITH WORK BOOG -- HE'S RUSTY *

Boog begins with Taunts - a new obstacle for Adonis. *

BOOG
(taunting)
What's wrong with you man? What's
wrong with this man? *

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY *

- DAME DOES HEAVY BAG WORK IN THE GYM. HE'S LETHAL. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS DOES MITT WORK WITH ANN. SUPER RUSTY. *

ANN
(mocking)
Who slips like this? Nobody. *

EXT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS PUNCHES HIS HAND IN RICE. STRUGGLES. (IN THE HANGER) *

CONTINUED:

DUKE
Focus, Donnie. Push through it.

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY

- DAME DOES BODY PAD WORK IN THE GYM. HE'S BRUTAL.

EXT. HANGER - DAY

- DUKE PLACES THE LAST TIRE ON A STACK FOR ADONIS TO PUNCH.
(COULD BE IN THE HANGER OR TBD L.A. LOCATION.)

DUKE
Don't knock 'em over. Push through.
Let's go.

Adonis tries to punch through the stack with a straight right
but can not.

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY

Come in on Dame Press Conference - existing footage.

- DAME BENCH PRESSES IN VENICE.

INT. HANGER - DAY

Adonis enters the ring preparing to spar. Duke is there. We
don't reveal his SPARRING PARTNER YET.

DUKE
This fight's gonna be about
control. You win the battle of
emotions, you win the fight. You
lose control, you lose it all.
(alt)
Way we figured it - Dame taught you
how to punch. He's seen all ya
fights. You walking in there with a
man who not only knows all your
moves. He knows where the bodies
are buried. (alt) You gotta be
prepared to go digging. Luckily,
we found somebody with experience
in that department.

NOW REVEAL, VIKTOR DRAGO in the other corner, ready to spar.
(WARDROBE NOTE: Adonis, clothed. Drago, shirtless.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADONIS
That hand all good? *

DRAGO
Good enough to beat you. *

They touch gloves. Ready to rumble and -- *

INT. HANGER - DAY "DRAGO 1" *

ADONIS SPARS WITH DRAGO. (He's fighting out of control) *

Note: MINIMAL SFX MAKE-UP NEEDED, JUST WIPEABLE BLOOD *

Drago rushes Adonis immediately. *

Adonis throws a jab. Drago parries. Drago tucks under and sends Adonis to the corner. Continues to deliver BODY BLOWS. *

Drago never lets up the pressure. Adonis lack of self-control leaves himself exposed. Drago counters and throws Adonis across the ring. *

Adonis looks to Duke, like "what the fuck?" *

DUKE
Control. Like I said, Dame ain't gonna hold back either. *

Adonis shakes his head. Fights again with Drago. Gets wailed ON AND KNOCKED DOWN. Meanwhile -- *

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY *

- DAME SPARS IN HIS GYM. HE FUCKING DESTROYS PEOPLE. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

Duke coaches Adonis as he spars in the ring, but we don't see his sparring partner yet. *

DUKE
Dame's a fighter who's willing to do anything, so you gotta be ready for everything. That's why he's here. *

Reveal, TERENCE CRAWFORD as ALONZO "ZO" DAVIS - Adonis's partner. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Adonis and Crawford/"ZO" spar. Adonis can't keep up with him. *

DUKE (CONT'D) *
REMEMBER, FOCUS! PLAN TO BE *
UNCOMFORTABLE! *

Zo is being a gnat. Like Lomachenko. It's clear Adonis can't *
keep up with him due to his speed and muscle memory. *

Zo tags him with two quick jabs. Adonis tries to return with *
his own Jab. *

Zo anticipates all of Adonis moves. With the speed of light, *
he pivots to his right and hits him with a combo. *

Adonis continues to chase Zo into the center of the rings. Zo *
picks up his speed and begins to pick his punches. *

Adonis returns with a flurry of jabs. Zo keeps walking him *
down into the ropes while dodging all of Adonis punches. *
Adonis is on his heels learning backwards. *

Zo beats him to the punch and sends him into the ropes. *
Adonis Hits him with a left hook and pivots. *

Zo is making him look silly and having fun with Adonis. *
Jabbing him with footwork like Ali. *

*EXT. VENICE BEACH - (EXISTING) **

*Dame works out at muscle beach. **

EXT. LA STREETS - DAY *

- ADONIS RUNS LA STREETS (1ST L.A. LOCATION TBD) *

*INT. HANGER - DAY **

*- ADONIS IN THE SAUNA SUIT IN RING. SWEAT POURS OUT. **

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY *

- Dame does weighted BURPEES *

*EXT. HANGER - DAY **

*- ADONIS TRIES TO PULL PLANE. CAN'T. **

EXT. BEACH - DAY *

- DAME RUNS ON THE BEACH WITH THE PARACHUTE. NO PROBLEM. *

INT. DAME'S GYM - DAY *

- DAMIAN DOES "TYSON" STYLE SLIP DRILLS WITH THE DOUBLE END BAG, LOOKING FEROCIOUS. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

Adonis, Drago, and Zo are doing SIT UPS in PROFILE. All rising and falling in unison until -- *

Drago and Zo continue pumping like pistons. But Adonis stays down, unable to continue the cadence. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

Shadow boxing part 2. Camera is over Adonis shoulder as he shadow boxes in the mirror. His reflection is OUT OF FOCUS. *

DUKE *

Dame's seen all your fights, knows
all your moves, thinks he knows how
you are. So look in the mirror.
Cause to win, you need to know that
man there better than does. *

But Adonis can't see him right now. *

INT. HANGER - DAY "DRAGO 2" *

- ADONIS SPARS WITH DRAGO - PART TWO. *

We see Adonis' face. He has blood in his mouth. (NOTE FOR M/U: NO SWOLLEN PIECES, JUST BLOOD.) *

Adonis is struggling, getting beat. *

Drago doesn't seem threatened and is picking his punches. Drago hits him with three powerful body shots. *

Adonis is dazed and beaten down. He's not punching down. *

Adonis is struggling against Drago. Blood in his mouth, against the ropes taking heavy body shots - not firing back. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Drago looks to Duke. "*Has he had enough?*" Duke shakes his head. Drago continues, but reluctantly. With remorse.

After a big shot to Adonis' chin --

DRAGO

(pissed)

What the hell happened to you?? Man up! Fight back! Lucky your old man's not here to see this.

(alt.)

C'MON! I KNOW YOU GOT MORE THAN THAT!

(alt.)

C'mon man! I remember when you had heart.

Drago shoves Adonis. Ready to abandon the slaughter.

ADONIS

I ain't hear no bell!

Reluctantly, Drago returns. Adonis peppers him with "little brother shots". An annoyed Drago unleashes a combo.

Adonis snaps, throws a wild hook that misses badly and leaves him exposed for a giant BODY SHOT (just like the one Dame eventually lands in the fight.) It drops Adonis to a knee.

DUKE

(to the others)

No one help him.

(to Adonis)

Get up, Donny. Come on.

HE CAN NOT GET UP.

LOW POINT FOR ALL WORKOUTS

IN THE RING, ADONIS IS STILL DOWN FROM WHEN HE WAS HIT IN THE STOMACH. HE CAN'T BREATHE.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Breathe Adonis. Find it.

Adonis searches for resolve, sparking this memory --

EXT. TREE-LINED STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young Adonis runs on a tree-lined street.

INT. HANGER - DAY *

- BACK IN THE RING. Adonis is still down, until -- something *
changes in his eyes. *

Adonis starts to rise. BIG HERO MOMENT. MUSIC TEMPO PICKS UP. *

Duke sees his face -- *

DUKE *

*Last time I saw that look, was on *
Apollo. **

Adonis fully rises. Calls out to Drago, who's about to leave. *

ADONIS *

Where you going? We ain't done. My *
daughter hits harder than that. *

(alt.) *

Where are you going? I ain't *
finished. I'm just getting started. *

Surprised, Drago turns back. Sees it's on. Duke's pumped as *
Adonis and Drago walk each other down and -- *

ADONIS BEGINS TO MASTER HIS WORKOUTS *

ALL UPTEMPO NOW *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS IN RING, IN CORNER. HE RESUMES MITT WORK WITH ANN *

ADONIS *

*Come on. Let's go. **

EXT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS PUNCHES HIS HAND IN RICE. NOW HE'S BREAKING THROUGH *

EXT. VENICE BEACH (EXISTING) *

*Dame works out at muscle beach. **

EXT. WOODS - DAY *

- AT THE TREE, ADONIS PICK HIMSELF / RESUMES PUNCHING TREE *
(EXISTING) *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

Adonis does *EXTREME* PUSH UPS. They are hard AF. *

EXT. BEACH - DUSK *

- DAME SHADOW BOXES ON BEACH. *

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY *

- ADONIS SHADOW BOXES ON ROAD. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

CRAWFORD/"ZO", SPARRING BEAT 2. Once again, Adonis spars with Crawford/"ZO", but this time -- he has focus and vision. *

IN ADONIS VISION... *

Adonis uses his pattern recognition to anticipate Zo's counter. He baits him. Allowing himself to get hit once. *

Zo Attempts to go into the same combination that he hit Adonis with before but this time -- *

Adonis ducks, invades, and slips Zo, getting into a position where ADONIS can go for the kill. He cocks a precise RIGHT HAND -- *

But instead of knocking him out, Adonis stops the punch inches from Crawford's face. They smirk at each other. *That's control. Adonis is back.* *

EXT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS SUCCESSFULLY PULLS THE PLANE. *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

Adonis works the speed bag. This time, ADONIS VISION RETURNS. He's in time with the bag. (ALI SHOT.) *

EXT. HANGER - DAY *

- ADONIS PUNCHES THE TIRES. This time, he punches straight through them with a STRAIGHT RIGHT. Duke cheers. *

INT. HANGAR - DAY *

Adonis does a simple, rhythmic mitt combo with Ann - one two, *
one two, one two. *

EXT. BEACH - DUSK *

- DAME FLIPS THE TIRE ON THE BEACH *

EXT. WOODS - EXISTING *

Adonis sits in the woods. Lady Bug moment. *

EXT. BEACH - DUSK *

- DAME SITS TIRED ON BEACH *

INT. HANGER - DAY "DRAGO 3" *

ADONIS' face is bloodied and broken but he steps up to Drago *
for more. Adonis is becoming ferocious! The look in his eyes *
reminds us of the Conlan fight. Drago notices he is now *
fighting a new Adonis. *

DRAGO *

You sure you want more? *

ADONIS *

You got any? My daughter hits *
harder than that. *

Adonis is ready Drago smiles and they go back into it. Now *
sharing a balanced sparring round. And this time, it's DRAGO *
who loses control. Adonis lands a punch. *

EXT. LA STREETS - DAY *

Adonis runs in LA. *

EXT. 6TH STREET BRIDGE - LA - DAY *

- ADONIS NOW RUNS ON THE 6TH STREET BRIDGE IN LA. (DAY) *

(He runs left to right.) *

EXT. LA BRIDGE - NIGHT *

- DAME RUNS ON AN LA BRIDGE. (Night) (He runs right to left.) *

(It should feel like they are running toward each other.) *

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY *

- ADONIS' RUN HAS NOW REACHED THE HILLS (EXISTING FOOTAGE - WHICH NOW PLAYS AS HOLLYWOOD HILLS.) GETTING AWAY FROM CAR. *

DUKE *

There you go. There you go. *

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS ROAD - DUSK *

- ADONIS' RUN IS NOW ACTUALLY IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS (NEW FOOTAGE.) DUKE'S FOLLOW CAR MUST STOP, UNABLE TO MAKE IT THROUGH AN OBSTACLE IN THE ROAD (LIKE ROCKY 4.) DUKE GETS OUT OF HIS CAR, CHEERING AS ADONIS CONTINUES UP and -- *

INT. HANGER - DAY *

SHADOW BOXING 3. Same shot as before. Adonis shadow boxes in the mirror, camera over his shoulder. Only this time -- *

His reflection is crystal clear. Adonis meets his own eyes as he boxes and -- *

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY *

- AS DAME CLIMBS THE ROPES AT VENICE BEACH, REACHING THE TOP *

INT. HANGAR - END OF DAY *

Drago breaths deeply, eyes closed, in the ice bath after a very long day. He reads a MAGAZINE casually, like he could stay here forever. He drinks A SLURPY. *

Adonis walks up in a towel, shakes his head. WTF. Adonis gets in his own tub. Very slowly. Drago, laughs, what a wimp, and continues drinking his slurpy. *

ALT. *

Drago breaths deeply, eyes closed, in the ice bath after a very long day. He reads a MAGAZINE casually, like he could stay here forever. He drinks A SLURPY. Adonis arrives. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADONIS

Scoot over.

Adonis motions like he's going to get into Drago's bath. Drago jumps, what the... until Adonis dies laughing and gets into the other ice bath. Off Drago, shook.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS ROAD - DUSK

- ADONIS' MONTAGE ENDS WITH HIS RUN WHERE HE SUMMITS THE HOLLYWOOD HILL ROAD.

Adonis stands at the top, shadow boxing by the Hollywood, looking out over all of LA. Ready.

151

EXT. MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT - DAY LATER

151

... where Adonis' car pulls into the SECURE CAR ENTRANCE of a bleak municipal facility.

We recognize where we are. The building comes into view. Where we met YOUNG ADONIS way back in CREED I.

THE YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.

A152

INT. YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

A152

Adonis, Bianca and Amara stand in a SECURE ENTRY SPACE.

AMARA (SIGNING)

This is really where Grandma came and got you?

ADONIS (SIGNING)

This is it.

The door slides open and Adonis, Bianca, and Amara enter a hallway where...

B152

INT. YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - HALL - THAT MOMENT

B152

A DOZEN 10-YEAR-OLD BOYS, mostly black and latino, wearing essentially prison jumpsuits, are marched down a hall by a CORRECTIONS OFFICER.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

All right. Keep it moving. Hurry up. Don't drag ass.

Adonis watches, remembering and...

152

INT. YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CELL BLOCK - LATER

152

Adonis, Bianca, and Amara, now in the cell block, taking it all in. Amara is stunned.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
*I wanted to show this place to you
both because it is a part of me and I
don't wanna hide from that anymore.*

Amara tries to comprehend as some one of THE BOYS double takes at Adonis, recognizing the champ. Adonis nods back.

AMARA (SIGNING)
(taking stock of the place)
Was it scary? Were you afraid?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
*Yes. I was lonely. I was mad. I had to
fight all the time, but you don't. You
have a choice. Your mother is right.*

BIANCA (SIGNING)
*Yeah, but knowing when to fight is
just as important as knowing when to
walk away. Understand?*

Adonis is now aware of a commotion building up behind the gates where the boys were led off. Word's starting to spread about who's here in their midst.

AMARA (SIGNING)
(to Adonis)
So why are you fighting again now?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
*'Cause Dame's a part of my life that I
can't walk away from again. Time to
stop running and face it.*

Amara considers, her attention tunes to the swell of excitement erupting behind the gates with the boys.

AMARA (SIGNING)
What are they saying?

Adonis's heavy with pride as we now hear their chants.

ADONIS
Your name.

Their name shouted out like a war-cry from the boys in the hall. Again and again.

(CONTINUED)

BOYS
CREED! CREED! CREED! CREED!

Amara turns to Adonis. His eyes well with pride as their name rings out loudly and...

CHRIS MANNIX (PRE-LAP)
Good evening ladies and gentleman and welcome to Los Angeles for what no doubt will be a night few boxing fans will soon forget.

A153-X153 OMITTED

A153-X153

153

EXT. DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT

153

-- soaring over East L.A. Traffic choking the free ways as thousands of headlights peel off toward...

The historic OUTDOOR BASEBALL STADIUM where the floods lights illuminate an infield converted into a BOXING ARENA.

Thousands of roaring FANS pack the field and the stands. The scale is just staggering as we land on:

TODD GRISHAM and CHRIS MANNIX broadcasting ringside.

CHRIS MANNIX
I'm *Chris Mannix* here alongside *Todd Grisham* for one of the most anticipated heavyweight bouts in years. A meeting of two hometown heroes meeting in the ring to settle old scores.

TODD GRISHAM
One hundred percent, Jim. Adonis Creed, stepping out of retirement to take on his childhood friend and the new, and very controversial Champion, "Diamond" Dame Anderson.

CHRIS MANNIX
You're referring of course to the now infamous beating he delivered to Felix Chavez, which left many in the boxing world critical of Dame's aggressive, contentious style. Not since Ali vs. Foreman have two fighters brought this much animosity into the ring. It feels like trial by combat. Let's hope nobody gets hurt.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

That hope feels pretty fragile as...

154 **INT. CREED'S LOCKER ROOM - DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 154

Adonis is getting taped up. Just like the old days. All black tape. All black shorts. Stripping it all back to basics.

DUKE

You know what it takes. Show 'em who you are, tonight. Remind everybody who you are, *tonight*. Be you--

The ritual is interrupted when...

He sees two visitors silently enter the room - Laura and Felix, who's now recovered. A long moment of silence, then...

LAURA

You are still a champion. Believe it.

Adonis nods, grateful for their support while...

155 **INT. DAME'S LOCKER ROOM - DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 155

And it's the same routine here. Dame is warming up with A SPARRING PARTNER. His concentration, still frightening as...

156 **EXT. DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 156

The arena lights go dark. The crowd quiets to a hush as a single spotlight illuminates the center of the ring where...

The mic descends and DAVID DIAMANTE steps forward to meet it.

DAVID DIAMANTE

Ladies and Gentleman. Welcome to the main event for the Heavyweight Championship of the World!

An ASL INTERPRETER interprets live.

157 **INT. STADIUM TUNNELS - SAME** 157

The ROAR OF THE CROWD is heard in the tunnels where Adonis, Duke and team make their way from the locker room toward...

158 **EXT. FIELD, DODGER STADIUM - SAME** 158

...where they get their first view of the packed stadium. The infield blanketed with fans and dead in the center...

THE RING bathed in light. Awaiting its fighters. Both holy and intimidating. Adonis views it from the tunnel.

(CONTINUED)

DUKE
Just like riding a bike.

Adonis does not look convinced as Diamante continues.

DAVID DIAMANTE
In the red corner. Weighing 210
pounds. From Crenshaw, California. A
former Golden Gloves winner and the
current WBC Heavyweight Champ --
"Diamond" Damian Anderson.

Adonis grits his teeth as the crowd roars and Damian heads
toward the ring, COMPLETELY ALONE - nothing but a HOTEL TOWEL
draped over his head and shoulders a la TYSON...

He circles the ring like a Great White Shark, keeping his
eyes glued into Adonis - a predator circling his prey.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)
That is the face of a man with one
thing on his mind. Vengeance.

Damian climbs into the ring, summiting his stage. A moment
he's waited twenty years to arrive. He steels himself as...

DAVID DIAMANTE
And in the blue corner, the
challenger. Fighting out of the Delphi
Gym in Los Angeles, California.
Weighing in at 212 pounds, with a
record of 28 victories and only one
loss. With 25 KOs. The former Light
Heavyweight Champion of the World and
Former RING, IBC, WBO, WBC Undisputed
Heavyweight Champion of the World,
Adonis Creed.

The crowd roars again as from out of the darkness a SINGLE
SPOTLIGHT ILLUMINATES...

Adonis and team, flanked by Bianca and Amara, emerge from the
tunnel, heading through the crowd.

Amara's eye full of grit, ready to fight Dame herself as...

Adonis finally reaches the ring, bending to give her a kiss
before he climbs in through the ropes where...

He sheds off his robe revealing new shorts. CREED on the
front. MARY-ANNE on the back.

Laura and a recovering Felix cheer them on from ringside.

(CONTINUED)

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

The former champ has clearly put in his time in the gym. Creed looks to be in great shape.

Adonis looks cut from black marble. The two fighters finally meet in the center as the Ref runs through the rules.

REF

We've already been over the instructions. I expect a tough and clean fight. Protect yourself at all times. Ok. Touch 'em up.

Adonis reaches out to touch gloves -- Damian does not.

DAMIAN

You're on your own, lil' Donnie. Ain't no one coming to save you.

ADONIS

I'm right here.

With a last look of fury, the fighters head to their corners.

IN CREED'S CORNER -- Adonis tries to contain his emotions.

LIL' DUKE

Remember your plan. He's trying to get in your head. Don't let him. He's only got a chance if you're shook. Remember who's in control.

ADONIS

Yeah. I got it. Don't worry.

LIL' DUKE

Just cause you two got a past, don't mean you can take it easy in there. We not pulling punches. We here to win.

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - ROUND 1 - NIGHT

DING! DING! ROUND ONE bell rings. Both fighters circle.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

And we're off. And the question for Creed is can he shake off the rust? Three years away and the way Dame attacks could be a rude reawakening.

The round starts slow. Both fighters feeling each other out.

(CONTINUED)

Tentative, curious. Taking in data with every step.

ON BIANCA and AMARA RINGSIDE. She takes Amara's hand.

BIANCA

You got this, D. You belong here!

ON LAURA and FELIX RINGSIDE. Laura steels herself. Confident.

LAURA

Remind them where you come from...

Felix, however... head on a swivel. He reads the crowd's anticipation. He knows this is going to fight.

The crowd eggs the fighters on.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)

One thing noticeable here is Creed's not backing up. When Dame gets in close to the body, he's not just hanging on. Creed seems to be making it clear he's here to fight.

DUKE

Pump that jab!

Damian cracks Adonis.

Damian rapid fire body shots.

Damian swings, Adonis ducks, then...

...follows up with two crosses right then...

...left

The crowd is on their feet. This is what they paid to see.

The bell rings.

The men head back to their corners.

DAMIAN

Didn't teach you that, huh? Eleven more rounds to go.

ADONIS

Bring it, homie. I'm here.

DAMIAN

Nah, you ain't built like that. Get the casket.

(CONTINUED)

Adonis takes a deep breath, he's back.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)

After a brutal first round here in LA.
You've gotta wonder if Creed's
regretting his decisions to get back
in the ring. Retirement sure sounds a
lot nicer.

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 1 - NIGHT

IN CREED'S CORNER -- Adonis sits down on the stool.

ADONIS

That round seem long to you?

LIL' DUKE

Way to hang. Wear him out. If he sees
you're not scared, he's gonna start
fighting dirty. Keep your head, let
him make mistakes, and just wait for
your windows. You can take the
punishment.

ADONIS

Easy for you to say.

LIL' DUKE

You don't owe this dude shit. You are
here cause you earned it. Go prove it.

IN DAMIAN'S CORNER

DAME

I'm on his ass. He gon' get this work.

TRAINER

Guy don't want to fight you. He's
scared. Keep your foot on his neck.

(alt)

He lost it. Ain't tough enough.

(alt)

He can't run all day. Put him down.
Let's go home early.

CLACK CLACK. And they're up, heading into...

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

I admire Creed's heart but he's got to
watch out. As we've seen with Dame, it
only takes one.

161

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT

161

ROUND TWO

Dame starts shot out of a cannon. Adonis right there to meet him but...

DAMIAN

Don't run... where you going? Ain't no one coming to save you.

They exchange. Adonis NAILS him with a right, waking Damian.

DUKE

That's it. Walk him down! Make him work.

He settles into his old tricks - pivots, clenches...

Fires pinpoint shots to Adonis's targeted areas.

ADONIS

That cheap shit is all you got? Can't beat me head up?

DUKE

Ref! Watch the elbows!

Adonis rolls with the blows. Both fighters scanning...

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

Dame's into him again and Creed's not throwing back. He's gone quiet with his left and he needs it now.

Damian, winded...

DAMIAN

You gonna fight me or what?

Adonis baits... Dame takes it. Throws a wild right. Adonis pivots and shoves him into the ropes, freeing Damian for...

DING DING!

The ref spares Dame -- saved by the bell.

CHRIS MANNIX

Ooh and saved by the bell, as that could have gotten ugly for the champ - a wide open power shot would have given Damian his pound of flesh...

162

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 2 - NIGHT

162

ON DAMIAN'S CORNER as he shoves the water bottle away.

TRAINER

He got old. He got soft. Bring him
into your world. Make him remember.
Make him pay.

ON ADONIS'S CORNER, Duke coaching in his ear.

ADONIS

Is the nose broke?

DUKE

Not yet. You're boxing. He's fighting.
You gotta start fighting. I need you
to let go of that fear. Let go of that
guilt. Let go of what was and walk
into what is. Go in there with
purpose. Be ferocious.

Adonis, seeing stars, looks across the ring to Damian's corner. Both fighters staring each other down, as...

In POV - each fighter sees the briefest flash of their opponents YOUNGER SELVES, battle-worn and feral. Ready to settle the score once and for all.

163

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT

163

AND WE'RE INTO ROUND 3

...but this is not like other matches we've seen. As Adonis and Damian approach, a dark void creeps in, filling the stadium.

The noise of the crowd falls into a muffled drone until...

The stadium vanishes all together and Damian and Adonis are dark silhouettes in a black, surreal void.

But, their fight carries on as if no change has occurred. They engage and...

Damian drives Adonis back. As he does...

THE CAMERA LEADS Adonis as he is driven back and...

THE CAMERA slips through JAIL BARS as...

BANG! Adonis hits the bars, which have taken the place of the ropes in the ring and...

(CONTINUED)

Damian works Adonis' body, communicating with punches -- *'You don't know what the fuck I had to go through'*.

Damian's POV as he punches Adonis.

Adonis' POV Damian punching into cam.

IN THE CROWD, Amara squeezes her mother's hand, worried about her father in the ring and...

WIDE SHOT -- angle over Amara, Bianca, and the front row seats as -- DING! DING! The bell rings and...

The two men break and heads for their corners.

The Dodger Stadium crowd is on their feet for....

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT

THEN WE'RE INTO ROUND FIVE

THE CAMERA ZOOMS into the ring as the men clash, still in the void.

They clinch.

Adonis punches, speaking with his fists -- *'You ain't gotta forgive me'*.

They face off.

Adonis grabs Damian and spins him into...

...an OLD MATTRESS secured with belts to the turnbuckle.

Adonis begins pounding Damian.

Vicious head and body shots. Damian just covers up.

Damian's almost cowering because...

Adonis keeps leveling punishing blows.

THE CROWD'S on their feet. There's no void outside the ring.

Back in the corner, Adonis is still delivering blows as...

The angle of his blows tilt lower. This beating is...

...reminiscent of the beatings Leon delivered.

With each blow, Damian sinks lower and lower until...

(CONTINUED)

Adonis loads up a...

...huge upper cut. THE CAMERA tilts up with the punch...

...skyward. Where from out of the darkness of the sky, COLORED LIGHTS APPEAR, flashing and pulsating. They are...

The Orange lights of the liquor store. The Red, blue lights of a police car. The continue flashing as...

THE CAMERA returns to earth and lands in the center of the ring where it's now...

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT

ROUND EIGHT

...and those lights are still flashing as Adonis rushes forward in the ring toward THE CAMERA which...

WHIP PANS around, landing on Dame, also driving forward.

THE CAMERA pans with Dame as Adonis enters frame and...

They crack each other in the face back and forth.

They're even exchanging blows in the clinch.

THE CAMERA moves in as Dame's upper cut that separates them.

THE CAMERA continues to push through them, turning back to find...

Dame and Adonis still swapping blows.

The clinch, punch, and talk in each other's ear.

They swing around until finally...

DING! DING! The bells rings and...

The two men go to their corners.

Adonis enters frame.

He is back in his corner. The two men have said all there is to say. Adonis takes a deep breath and...

THE CAMERA moves closer to him as a result. MATCH CUT TO:

Damian, who also inhaled deeply and now...

(CONTINUED)

He exhales powerfully. THE CAMERA goes back as a result and...

As it does, we see the black void around the ring is fading, revealing the stadium and the crowd and the world as before.

The sounds of crowd swells. We are back to normal as...

166 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 8 - NIGHT** 166

IN DAME'S CORNER, his trainers attend to him as...

IN ADONIS' CORNER -- Adonis is spent. Nose broken. Eyes swollen. Looks like he's been through a war.

REF
Championship round, fellas.

LIL' DUKE
You still with us?

ADONIS
Yeah. I'm here.

LIL' DUKE
Good. Cause you gotta be present, right now. He thinks he's fighting who you were. Go show him who you are.

But Adonis' hardly hears him. His eyes locked in on Damian. Not with anger. Or hate. But now with understanding and...

IN DAMIAN'S CORNER -- Dame's staring back. Like they'd spoke in those rounds. So when the BELL rings and they rise for...

167 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT** 167

ROUND ELEVEN

The bell rings for the start of round 11.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)
Both these fighters look tired. It's been ten brutal rounds and they have taken their toll.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)
I've got it five rounds to five. Now it's about who can finish and what they've got left in the tank.

The two men meet in the center of the ring.

The two men face off as the cam pushes in.

They engage.

The two men punch each other simultaneously.

Adonis into South West corner.

Damian leaps in to attack.

Damian shoves Adonis to the middle of the ropes.

Adonis cracks Damian.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)

Holy smokes! Creed pushed back the
champ. We haven't seen that before.

Adonis pivots and continues firing on Damian.

Damian crabs up.

Adonis examines Damian's crab defense.

Adonis vision.

Damian working the crab defense.

Damian throws a left, Adonis ducks.

Damian uncorks a right body shot.

Damian's right lands on Adonis' solar plexus. He goes to the
mat..

...with the punch to Adonis' back. The impact causes the
sweat to leap.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)

A devastating right hand and Creed's
hurt! A dangerous moment now.

Ref intervenes after Adonis drops to one knee.

Damian crosses to a neutral corner.

Damian paces in the corner.

DAMIAN

Get up Donnie,. It ain't over. Get up!

Adonis stands to his feet, feet in place. They look at each
other from across the ring

(CONTINUED)

REF

Are you ok? Can you continue?

ADONIS

Yeah.

The fight resumes.

They're back at it. Adonis tries to end it here. But the bell rings.

The two men break.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)

An incredible end here in the eleventh! Creed goes down and Anderson goes into the twelfth with the lead and the fight in his hands.

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 11 - NIGHT

Wide shot of the ring, then...

IN ADONIS' CORNER -- Duke looms above.

DUKE

It's broken now. But you still pretty.

Adonis manages a laugh but he's wiped and waits in silence for Duke to pick him up with some gems, but he says nothing.

LIL' DUKE

(off Adonis' look)

What?

ADONIS

I don't know. Don't you got a pep talk or something?

LIL' DUKE

Whatchu want me to say, I ain't said? You know what you gotta do. This is your fight, not mine.

Adonis nods and looks to Bianca and Amara in the seat. Amara signs to him.

AMARA (SIGNING)

You got this.

Adonis stirs and gets off of his stool as the Ref walks by.

(CONTINUED)

REF
Championship round, men!

LIL' DUKE
(in his ear)
By the way, you're down on points.
(this is news to Adonis)
Don't leave it to the judges.

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING

INTO ROUND TWELVE

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)
Dame's leading on points. If he can
just play it safe, he'll hold onto the
title.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)
I don't think that's in the cards.
From the look on these fighter's
faces, this is not about safe. I hope
folks at home used the bathroom, cause
there's no getting up now.

Adonis springs to his feet and rushes to the center ring.

Both fighters meet with respect.

ADONIS
Me and you. One round. Let's run it.

Adonis comes out firing.

Damian returns fire driving Adonis back to...

...the North ropes.

Damian works the body as he drives Adonis against the ropes.

Boom! Adonis rocks Damian.

Adonis slips out.

They engage.

Adonis cracks Damian.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
You want a shot, bruh, I'm here.
One round. You and me. You belong
here. Come prove it.

(CONTINUED)

LIL' DUKE
(yells from his corner)
Stay the hell out of there, D! What
the hell are you doing?

DAMIAN
One round. You and me?

ADONIS
You want my spot, come and take it.

Damian returns a right body shot to Adonis.

And a Left followed by...

...a Powerful right the drives Adonis back.

Angle on the ring's canvas.

Adonis slides to a stop into frame.

Cam quickly booms up to a...

...close up on Adonis' determined gaze.

Damian registers surprise at the slide to a stop by Adonis.

He shakes it off, then exits frame on the attack.

Adonis blocks a couple of blows.

Adonis fires off a punch.

Damian clinches before Adonis can fire off another.

In the clinch, Damian talks into Adonis' ear.

Adonis shoves off Damian.

Damian punches Adonis.

They clinch.

Damian shoves off Adonis.

Adonis throws two punches to...

...send Damian into the North ropes.

Damian blocks Adonis' punches.

Damian crabs up.

(CONTINUED)

Angle over Damian, Adonis reacts.

Adonis tries to punch around Damian's crab defense.

LIL' DUKE
Keep pushing. Fight through!

ADONIS
That the best that you got? Come on. I said fight.

CHRIS MANNIX (V.O.)
How are these guys still standing?

Adonis' POV. He sees a pattern he can exploit.

Adonis' vision. *You gotta go through him.*

Adonis times a powerful right.

Adonis' right corkscrews through Damian's crab.

Adonis rears back another right.

Adonis delivers an overhand right.

Damian falls toward the cam as it drops with him.

Damian slams to a stop. As he hits the invisible canvas (plexi).

The cam continues to pull back, revealing Adonis standing over Dame.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)
There it is! And he's down!

Dame tries to get up, but his legs are not there. He crashes back to the canvas and the Ref waves it over and...

Adonis remains on his feet. The last man standing again.

EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - POST FIGHT

With Damian still on the ground, the Ref raises Creed's hand as the ring floods with people. Absolute pandemonium.

TODD GRISHAM (V.O.)
...Creed's the only one standing and once again, he's the champ. I do not believe what I've seen!

(CONTINUED)

Duke, Bianca, and Amara drape over him. Electric with victory. A moment of tremendous vindication. He's supported by family, as through the mayhem he spies...

Damian's still on a knee. Still unable to stand. Only rubberneckers around him. Adonis considers and then...

Through the chaos, Dame looks up to see Adonis watching. Adonis could extend him a hand but this time, instead...

He allows Damian the pride to get up on his own and then...

The two fighters face each other, standing tall. There's no hug and no words, but it feels like respect before...

Adonis' pulled back into his family. Finding Duke for a hug.

LIL' DUKE

Think your mom'd be proud.

The mention of Mary-Anne brings Adonis to tears and...

Damian watches from afar as Adonis embraces his family and...

A171

INT. CREED'S LOCKER ROOM, DODGER STADIUM - LATER

A171

The celebration is wrapping up. Champagne bottles are empty. Adonis (now in street clothes, with the belt) emerges into the main room to find...

His team waiting to say congrats and goodbye. He goes first to Felix and Laura. Daps up Felix. Gives Laura a hug. They depart, leaving...

Adonis and Duke. A long beat.

DUKE

I'm proud of you, kid. I know your folks would be too.

ADONIS

Your pops too.

Duke appreciates that. The men hug. Then Duke heads out as well and finally it's just Adonis's family. Bianca and Amara.

BIANCA

Ready to go? You all set?

But Adonis lingers a beat. Looking at Amara, considering...

ADONIS

Gimme a sec?

(CONTINUED)

A171 CONTINUED:

Bianca understands what he must do. Squeezes his hand, gives him strength, then...

Adonis approaches the locker room. DAME'S CREW waits at the door. (*FRANK, YAYA, ETC.*)

It could be a stand-off, but the men part, with respect, allowing Adonis to enter --

172

INT. DAMIAN'S LOCKER ROOM, DODGER STADIUM - SAME

172 *

-- where Adonis enters to see Dame AUTOGRAPHING A GLOVE for a YOUNG FAN. Adonis waits, deferential, until --

The FAN exits. Now it's just Adonis and Dame. A long beat.

DAMIAN

Look like you learned a few moves without me, huh?

A long beat. Adonis takes his time. Finally...

ADONIS

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I wasn't there all those years. That's on me.

DAMIAN

We were kids.... it ain't on you, bro. None of it. Never was.
(beat)
I'm sorry, too.

Adonis extends his hand and Dame daps him up. Like old times.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Alright, go ahead then man. Family, everybody waiting on you. Champ.

Adonis rises to leave. Stops. Turns. Dame's risen as well.

ADONIS

Dame...

A beat. They finally hug. Forgiveness. Absolution.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

You know where to find me, you need me.

DAMIAN

I know.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED:

A last look between them, then Adonis finally goes, passing Dame's crew who head inside to support him and -- *

173 OMITTED

173 *

174 **INT. DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

174

Adonis steps out of the tunnel and back onto the dark field, which is now empty save for...

A few STAFF MEMBERS folding chairs, cleaning up. Only them and... someone in the ring.

Adonis clocks who it is and he wells with emotion as he approaches Bianca, standing at the ropes looking up at...

Amara, a small figure in the center of the ring, in the middle of the vast stadium, shadowboxing like her dad.

The image is iconic. And Adonis is overcome.

Bianca takes his hand as together they watch their daughter -- centerstage -- owning the ring like the Creed that she is.

Like her dad and Grandfather, Amara's fighter, with a crushing right hand that she unleashes with fury as OUR THEME SONG BEGINS and we --

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END