

INITIATION

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DALE

I don't want your piece of shit
car. Now get out!

Simon gets out.

Dale leads Simon to the back of the van, searches him and
takes his cell phone, then opens the double back door.

There are already five other guys in there, huddled at the
far end.

Dale holds his gun up to them.

DALE (CONT'D)

Stay the fuck back.

Then he turns to Simon.

DALE (CONT'D)

Get in.

Simon gives Dale a look that says "no way".

Dale PISTOL WHIPS Simon and KICKS him in the stomach. Simon
keels over and the two assailants SHOVE him into the van and
CLOSE the door behind him.

12 **EXT. WOODED BACK ROAD - DAY**

12

The van and SUV take off. The entire operation has taken less
than two minutes.

13 **INT. VAN - DAY**

13

Simon rises up still in pain. He tries to un-hatch the back
door but it is locked from the outside. Giving up, he turns
and looks at the other men in the van. They are:

WAYNE (late 20s) - he's got enough tattoos and scars that
it'd be fair to assume he's some sort of gang member or ex-
con. And you'd be right.

ERIC (late 20s) - a squirrely thin guy who looks like he
should be providing IT support but still makes it to the gym
a couple times a week.

ROB (late 20s) - clean cut and dressed a bit nicer than the
rest. Seems like he's trying to sit in a dignified way,
ridiculously.

SEAN (late 30s) - a kind, timid, mild-mannered man, incredibly scared.

DENNY (late 20s) - the most athletic of the group. Also the quietest.

Sean whimpers in pain to the side.

A tense beat between them. Then:

SIMON
What's going on?

ERIC
None of us know.

WAYNE
These mother fuckers are dead.
That's what I know.

Simon glances around the interior of the van, trying to get any clue he can.

SIMON
How long have you been in here?

ERIC
I was the first. That was a long time ago.

SIMON
How long?

ERIC
What time is it now?

SIMON
Around three.

ERIC
I was headed to work. That was nine hours ago.

Simon looks towards the front. The van is built such that a wall separates them from the driver section.

He lowers his voice.

SIMON
You're just sitting here?

ERIC
I'd rather sit here than get shot.

Simon balances himself and kicks the back door as hard as he can.

Denny chimes in.

DENNY
I wouldn't do that.

SIMON
Why?

DENNY
Because you're going to get us all killed.

SIMON
They obviously want us alive or else they would've just shot you all already.

ROB
Thanks for the update.

He looks around at the group.

SIMON
Have you tried rushing at them when they open the door?

WAYNE
No.

Wayne says no almost as a question. Excited at Simon's spirit for escape.

SIMON
Why not?

WAYNE
Because it's me and four females in here.

ERIC
Just because they haven't used their guns doesn't mean they won't.

Simon looks at Wayne.

SIMON
You and me then.

Rob pipes in from his spot brooding in the corner.

ROB
Plenty of hostage situations are resolved without the hostages dying.

SIMON
I've got seventeen dollars in my checking account.

He glances from Rob to Wayne and Eric.

ERIC
I've got a couple grand saved up, but it's not like I'm rich.

Wayne doesn't say anything.

SIMON
So, it's not about money.
(to Wayne)
Any reason someone would have it out for you?

WAYNE
Plenty of fools have it out for me. But none of them are smart enough to do it like this. And if they were, they'd a killed my ass by now. Not left me in the back of a van with a bunch of strangers... I'm with you, let's hit em' on the next stop.

SIMON
Next stop...

Simon's heard enough, he turns and kicks the back door with his heel again. This time harder and repeatedly. Denny looks as if he wants to take action against Simon, but he doesn't.

The van comes to an abrupt STOP, causing the men to tumble around like rag dolls.

The back door opens before they have a chance to recover and rush it. What little they can see suggests they've pulled off road and into the woods along a dirt path.

Dale and Marok stand there, guns in hand.

DALE
(to Denny)
You. Come here.

Denny is reluctant.

DENNY
Me?

DALE
Out.

DENNY
It wasn't me! I was just sitting
here!

MAROK
Then you can blame them.

Marok cocks his gun.

Denny slowly makes his way to Dale and Marok. Marok roughly
pulls him out of the van.

They SLAM the back door closed.

The men exchange looks. They can hear Denny, Dale and Marok
moving besides the van.

DENNY (O.S.)
No-

BAM!

The men hear Denny's body hit the ground.

Sean CRIES out in shock.

The others simply stay silent. The back door opens.

Dale and Marok again.

MAROK
This is what you need to
understand. We are smarter than
you. We are stronger than you. We
are better than you. There is
nothing, absolutely nothing, you
can think of or try that will
change what will happen tonight. So
stop.

They SLAM the door shut again.

A few moments later the van continues on. Sean crawls to the
corner and VOMITS.

The others are so shell-shocked they barely react.

SIMON
 (To Sean)
 How about you?

Sean, miserable to the side, looks up.

SEAN
 I teach kids. Elementary school.

Silence.

ERIC
 (to Simon)
 And you?

Simon falls back to sit. A delay, then:

SIMON
 I'm between jobs.

ERIC
 What do your parents do?

SIMON
 My mother's dead. My father's a
 retired Marine.

ERIC
 Wish he was here.

Simon doesn't respond:

16

INT. CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

16

Simon sits next to an older man who is SIMON'S FATHER.

SIMON'S FATHER
 You're sure?

SIMON
 Yes.

SIMON'S FATHER
 You can't do it for me, or for your
 grandfather. It has to be for you
 or it won't mean anything.

SIMON
 I know.

17

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

17

A number of RECRUITS stand in front of a large tree log. One of them is Simon.

They are across from **STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (40s)**.

Staff Sergeant Raynor does not suffer fools. Nor does he enjoy causing men pain. He simply does what needs to be done.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
 Recruits! Today is not going to be fun. Tomorrow is not going to be fun. If you are somehow able to complete your training and gain entry into my Marine Corps, most of the days of the remainder of your lives will not be fun. But that's why we are who we are. That's what separates us. We have the strength to do what other men cannot. We do. I'm not sure if YOU do.

He looks over the faces of the men.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 Our activities out here will not end soon. There will be the bare minimum of down time. If you injure yourself, do not act like a big hard sumbitch, because you surely are not one. Inform me immediately. Is that understood?

RECRUITS
 Yes, Staff Sergeant!

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
 Good. Let's get going. Hoo-ah.

RECRUITS
 Hoo-ah!

Staff Sergeant Raynor gestures towards the log in front of the recruits.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
 When I say "lift" you will, as a group, raise the log in front of you to chest level. When I say "press" you will raise it above your heads.

(MORE)

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 When I say "march" you will perform
 a circular march, twenty paces to
 the left, then turning ninety
 degrees and repeating until you
 return to your starting point. Is
that understood?

RECRUITS
 Yes, Staff Sergeant!

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
 Lift!

Simon and the others bend down and raise the mammoth log.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 Press!

With difficulty the men manage to get the log above their
 heads. Various men GRUNT and CURSE in doing so.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 March!

The men slowly move to the left with the log. RECRUIT 2491
 behind Simon mumbles under his breath.

RECRUIT 2491
 Last time I checked Marines didn't
 spend a lot of time carrying logs.

Simon simply grimaces and keeps moving.

END FLASHBACK:

18

INT. VAN - NIGHT

18

The men sit in silence in the van.

ERIC
 (to Wayne)
 Are you in a gang or something?

Wayne simply glares at Eric.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 I'm asking because I'm wondering if
 you've ever heard of anything like
 this.

WAYNE

Kidnapping a bunch of complete strangers for no reason? No, I've never heard of anything like this.

Silence again.

SEAN

They're going to cut us up and eat us, aren't they? I read an article about cannibalism in America. It said-

SIMON

Quiet.

Sean shuts up.

SEAN

They'll probably kill us either way.

ERIC

If they were doing this just to murder us why take such a long time to do it?

WAYNE

They want to take us someplace where they can enjoy it.

This strikes a dark chord with the group.

LATER

All the men have stopped talking and sit in silent anger.

The van abruptly STOPS.

The back doors open.

Standing there are Dale, Marok and... Denny. Denny is holding a handgun too now.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

...the fuck?

DALE

Out of my van, ladies.

The men slowly file out of the van. They're in the middle of nowhere, the end of a dirt road deep in the woods.

MAROK

Line up next to each other.

They do.

Denny addresses the men, now speaking with a confidence he didn't have before. He winks.

DENNY

I missed you guys too.

Denny chuckles.

MAROK

In case you didn't believe me earlier, we are in control of this situation. You are not. The best chance for you to get through this is to simply follow instructions.

And then, out of nowhere... Simon runs for it.

Dale is closest to him and raises his gun.

DALE

Stop!

DENNY

Don't.

Dale lowers his gun.

DALE

Shit.

Marok takes off after Simon.

Dale steps closer to the group and puts his gun to Wayne's head.

DALE (CONT'D)

Next one tries that gets shot in the fuckin' head.

19

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

19

Simon sprints through the woods. He doesn't dare look back.

The steps of Marok can be heard coming behind him.

Up ahead in the distance he can see a clearing. Several cars, including his own, are parked there.

He moves in that direction.

20 **EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - NIGHT**

20

Simon emerges from the trees into the clearing.

His car is RIGHT there... so close...

BAM!

Simon is clothes-lined by **PLEBE GREEN** (20s), a fit young man who could just as easily have been one of the recruits from Simon's Marine class.

Simon hits the dirt hard.

They wrestle on the ground, Simon manages to push Plebe Green off. He rises...

WHAP!

...Only to get BASHED in the head with a large branch.

Simon drops, comatose, revealing Marok.

Marok drops the branch.

PLEBE GREEN
Who's this?

MAROK
He's part of the ceremony. What are you doing out here?

PLEBE GREEN
Just having a smoke.

MAROK
Break time's over.

He gestures to Simon.

MAROK (CONT'D)
Help me get him inside.

21 **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

21

Simon comes in and out of consciousness as Marok and Plebe Green carry him.

22 **INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

22

Plebe Green and Marok carry him inside.

From what little he can see when his eyes blink open between moments of unconsciousness, it looks fairly normal, like an average person's house.

23 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

23

Simon enters a bare room with brick walls and a concrete floor.

Simon is practically thrown into a cage, where Wayne, Sean, Rob and Eric already reside.

The door is locked behind him.

The basement itself is almost totally bare.

Marok and Plebe Green head upstairs and close the door behind them.

Simon is shaken out of his stupor by Wayne.

WAYNE

You get your ass kicked?

Simon doesn't respond, winces in pain as he stands up.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

How far'd you get?

SIMON

Not far enough.

Simon looks to the other men.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I saw my car, there was a few of them.

ROB

Where?

SIMON

They're close.

WAYNE

Could you find them again?

SIMON

Where are we in relation to the van?

WAYNE

They blindfolded us.

SIMON

Do you remember the direction you walked?

WAYNE

Maybe.

SIMON

If I can get to where the van was I can find our cars.

WAYNE

I've got a gun in my glove compartment.

SIMON

What kind of car?

WAYNE

Black pick up.

SIMON

What do you remember about the walk over here?

WAYNE

Straight line more or less, west from the van. I'd say two hundred yards or so if I had to.

They are shut up by the sound of the door to the basement opening.

Denny enters with Marok.

Marok focuses on Simon.

MAROK

(to Simon)

I hope you learned something.

SIMON

I did, you swing like a girl.

Marok laughs.

MAROK

You're going to have a fun night..

The captives are confused. Denny gestures to everyone.

DENNY

Wallets. IDs. Watches.

The men are reluctant to comply.

MAROK

That was not a yes or no question.
Give them up.

The men finally acquiesce.

ERIC

Who are you guys? Seriously? Some
sort of cult?

DENNY

Who we are is not for you to know.

SIMON

You're nothing but a bunch of crazy
people with a house and a van.
We're real impressed.

DENNY

You're not important enough to
deserve impressing. The only reason
you're not face down in a ditch
right now is that I didn't feel
like expending the effort to catch
another one of you.

Marok meets Simon's gaze. He almost smiles.

MAROK

You want to know who we are? In
ancient Rome they used to flood the
colosseum and reenact famous naval
battles. Hundreds would die in the
performance.

He takes a step closer.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Most people, even today, are either
dying, or watching the show...
We're the ones who decide who goes
on the boat.

Denny collects the wallets and other personal items.

DENNY

Don't worry, we'll be back soon.

He exits with Marok.

Wayne looks at Simon.

WAYNE

They know who we are now. Even if we could escape, they'd have a much better chance to track us down.

Simon looks around the barren room.

SEAN

I'm telling you, they're gonna fucking eat us.

WAYNE

If you don't shut up I'm gonna fucking eat you.

Sean does shut up now.

ROB

They held those Americans in Iran hostage for 444 days. They all made it home.

ERIC

You weren't listening. These guys aren't some group of terrorists.

ROB

What are you suggesting?

ERIC

Skull & Bones. Illuminati.

WAYNE

The shot-callers in the back room smoking cigars.

ROB

Smoke and mirrors, I don't believe these punks are connected to anyone with real power.

Simon notices a spot of dried blood on the floor.

SIMON

Nah, these are probably just the guys that do their dirty work.

24 **INT. HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT**

24

Marok sits behind an ornate desk in a well-appointed office. Dale and Denny stand across from him.

MAROK

Let's pair the runner with Plebe Gold.

DALE

Serves the son of a bitch right.

Dale grins.

25 **INT. HOUSE - CEREMONY ROOM - NIGHT**

25

Five men are lined up side by side.

They are blindfolded.

A long table is set up in front of them. On it is a dossier, marked Plebe Green, Plebe Gold, etc. All different colors for each man.

Marok and Dale stand in front of the men.

MAROK

Very few men have stood where you stand today. Few are chosen, and even fewer pass the test. You have a chance to do both tonight. After this last challenge - if you succeed - you will have crossed the final threshold. Remember that every one of us has gone through what we're asking you to go through.

He looks over the men.

MAROK (CONT'D)

We don't want simply the biggest man or the strongest man. Because a big man or a strong man can fail. But a man of will can never truly be defeated.

26 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

26

The men look edgy, desperate.

ROB
Maybe I can bribe them.

SEAN
That's a good idea.

WAYNE
They don't care about money.

SIMON
How do you know?

Wayne pulls out a wad of bills from one pocket and some loose change from the other.

WAYNE
There's a big difference between someone who's hard and someone who's just plain crazy.

27

INT. HOUSE - CEREMONY ROOM - NIGHT

27

Marok lights a cigarette.

MAROK
Trust. Trust is a critical part of what we do. You must trust your fellow member as you trust yourself.

He steps forward to **PLEBE GOLD** - who looks like he could probably pick Marok up and eat him, so muscular and powerful is his frame.

MAROK (CONT'D)
Plebe Gold. Do you trust me?

PLEBE GOLD
Yes, sir.

MAROK
Hold out your hand.

Plebe Gold does.

28

MAROK (CONT'D)
Do not make a sound.

28

Marok extinguishes the cigarette in Plebe Gold's hand, he winces in pain but doesn't cry out.

Marok holds court in front of the recruits.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Remove your blindfolds.

The men do. In front of each of them is a small black notebook laying on top of a manila folder. The books have an emblem engraved as well as a COLOR, respectively of the five Plebes.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Before each of you, you will find your Member's Code. This book defines what it means to be a brother in this organization. On the back page, you will find your funded membership benefit card, which will become active as of the end of your initiation, if you pass your final test.

The men flip through the notebook, see the BLACK card on the back.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Now, open the folder in front of you.

All the men flip open the folders on the table in front of them. In it are photos of the captives (a variety of photos, the kind you might find on Facebook) along with copies of their driver licenses.

The sound of someone screaming is heard.

ROB (O.S.)

Guard!

The cry is barely audible in the room.

Marok smolders.

He turns to Dale and gestures for him to go.

IN THE BACK

Two Plebes, PLEBE SILVER and PLEBE ORANGE, watch.

PLEBE ORANGE

I thought there'd be masks and robes.

PLEBE SILVER

You don't get your diploma on final exam day, we gotta get initiated first.

PLEBE ORANGE
Whatever that means.

PLEBE SILVER
Whatever it is, it'll be worth it.

28

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

28

Dale descends the steps and approaches the men.

DALE
This isn't a Holiday Inn. We're not
taking room service requests.

Everyone looks to Rob, but he's reluctant to speak.

Simon nudges him.

SIMON
(whispers)
Tell him.

Rob doesn't.

DALE
Sometime this week.

SIMON
We can make you a deal.

DALE
No, you can't.

Dale turns to leave.

ROB
Five million dollars.

Dale stops.

DALE
And why should I believe you have
that kind of money?

ROB
You took our IDs. You know my name.
Anyone with a computer and access
to the internet would know I have
access to that kind of money. I can
have that amount in cash here in a
few hours.

DALE

And what is five millions dollars worth to someone like you? A human life?

ROB

I just want to go home. No one will come looking for you. You have my word.

DALE

Five million. You know, I think five million each makes sense.

ROB

That's too much.

DALE

Oh well.

ROB

I... What about ten million? For all of us. That's the best I can do.

DALE

Nah. You guys sit tight. And don't fucking yell again.

Dale heads off.

ROB

Ten million cash and only I have to leave.

The others react to this with dirty looks.

Dale turns back.

DALE

You'll leave these poor bastards to die, and never tell anyone? For the rest of your life?

ROB

Yes.

DALE

You'll live another fifty years, knowing you let all these innocent men die just to save yourself?

ROB

...yes.

DALE
I like you, Rob. You make me
remember why I do this.

Dale heads upstairs.

ROB
(in disbelief, to himself)
No...

The others don't say anything to Rob. They don't need to. He won't even look at them.

29 **INT. HOUSE - CEREMONY ROOM**

29

The plebes look confused, shocked, and speechless.

MAROK
You do this voluntarily or not at
all. Any man who does not wish to
proceed, step back immediately.

No one steps back.

MAROK (CONT'D)
Let's begin.

30 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

30

Marok, Dale and Denny lead the recruits into the basement. The various recruits show particular interest in the man they are paired against, noticeably Plebe Gold stares down Simon.

Simon meets his gaze.

Plebe Gold gives him a gruff "nod", like they're two inmates sizing each other up.

Denny takes Dale aside.

DENNY
(re: the captives)
They look terrified.

DALE
The rich kid offered me ten million
bucks. They're scared shitless.

DENNY
We're responsible for running this
properly - let's get them ready.

Dale heads over to...

THE CAGE

DALE

Listen up. You're in the middle of
fucking nowhere, as I'm sure this
Kenyan-runner-asshole...

He gestures to Simon.

DALE (CONT'D)

...can tell you. There's a reason
we haven't lit your cars on fire.

Dale points to Denny, who picks up a burlap sack from the
corner and removes a number of car keys, JINGLES them.

DALE (CONT'D)

Each of you will be fighting one of
them. Win your fight, win your
freedom. Lose, you die. It's very
simple.

WAYNE

No way.

DALE

Believe it.

SEAN

What?

DALE

Am I speaking fucking Chinese? The
fight will continue until someone
is dead. If it's *not* you, you can
walk out that door.

Wayne scoffs.

DALE (CONT'D)

Yes?

WAYNE

You couldn't take the chance we'd
rat you out to the cops.

DALE

Who says that some of our members
aren't cops?

Silence from the men.

DALE (CONT'D)

The home you're in belongs to an influential man. Not just rich, but powerful and respected. The kind of guy where, if it's his word against yours, he wins.

No one wants to argue against being let go.

DALE (CONT'D)

Rob is first.

SIMON

What if we say no?

DALE

Then it'll be a short fight.

Rob looks terrified.

Denny waves to him and takes the burlap sack upstairs.

ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE ROOM

The plebes stand, silent. Only one of them, PLEBE GREEN, seems antsy.

PLEBE GREEN

Why am I going first?

Plebe Gold gives him a look of disdain.

PLEBE GOLD

You got this, man up.

Marok steps into the center of the room.

MAROK

Plebe Green, on me. Form a circle around us.

Plebe Green steps forward, hesitant. The other Plebes encircle him and Marok.

Marok leans close to the visibly nervous Plebe Green.

MAROK (CONT'D)

(whispers)

This is how you're supposed to feel. Throw the first punch and it'll go away. Understand?

PLEBE GREEN
 (insincere)
 Yes, sir.

Marok looks over to the cage. He gestures to Dale to open it.

Dale steps over, gun in hand, and opens the cage door.

He drags Rob out and practically throws him into the center of the room.

Rob cowers on his knees, essentially having a full-blown nervous breakdown.

ROB
 No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Plebe Green looks from the nearly-shitting-himself Rob to Marok.

Marok rolls his eyes.

DALE
 (genuine)
 Die like a man at least. There's some honor in that.

Marok looks from one to the other then raises a fist and lowers it.

MAROK
 Fight!

IN THE CAGE

Something flashes across Simon's eyes.

31

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

31

All the marine recruits stand in pairs opposite each other.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
 Full speed. Execute!

The men grapple. The goal is to take the other man to the ground with maximum aggression.

Simon is paired up with a tough-looking recruit, only identifiable by his number 1318.

Simon and **RECRUIT 1318** wrestle. RECRUIT 1318 takes Simon down HARD.

His face SMACKS against the ground, dirt getting in his mouth.

Staff Sergeant Raynor looms above him, looks down at him.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

Recover.

Simon gets up.

END FLASHBACK:

32

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

32

Simon looks into the "fight pit" at Rob. Rob is on one knee, slow to get up, pleading with Plebe Green.

ROB

Please, I don't want to do this.

Plebe Green approaches slowly, still nervous.

DENNY

Hit him!

Plebe Green has to crouch to even attempt a punch but Rob instinctively reels back when he sees Plebe Green cock his fist. Rob awkwardly rolls to stand up.

Rob runs around Plebe Green and heads for the exit door, where all the other Plebes, along with Dale, Denny & Marok are standing.

He runs in to them and they push him down on the ground.

Rob looks up at them all.

ROB

Please, stop this. I'm begging you!

Rob tries grabbing them in his pleading but they just nudge him off.

Plebe Green approaches close behind Rob. Rob's fight or flight mechanism reacts. He jumps and turns at Plebe Green, swinging his arms like a wild ape. Plebe Green almost trips while back peddling.

Rob falls on top of Plebe Green and they both hit the floor. Rob digs his nails into Plebe Green's cheek and scratches downward.

Green tries pushing Rob off to no avail, then pulls Rob's head in to a head butt. Rob's head ricochets back with stars in his eyes. Rob falls backwards.

Plebe Green throws a couple punches in Rob's stomach then rises. Then he kicks Rob's in the stomach a few times, and once in the face which puts Rob seemingly out of commission.

AGAINST THE WALL

The plebes start cheering.

Denny and Dale lean, watching.

DALE

This is a joke.

DENNY

Obviously you didn't sell them on their out.

DALE

Don't start, this isn't on me. The first one's always the worst. They don't believe it's real yet.

IN THE RING

Rob finally just cowers in the fetal position, shielding his body with his arms.

Plebe Green looks from him to Marok, who stands ringside.

MAROK

Every opponent is different. Your job is the same.

IN THE CAGE

Wayne shakes his head.

Sean turns away, he can't bear to watch.

IN THE RING

Plebe Green finally just KICKS Rob in the chest, knocking him down.

He goes to mount Rob but he flees before Plebe Green can snag him.

Looking around the room, seeing nothing but ANGRY FACES of the other Plebes, SHOUTING and CHEERING for Plebe Green. Rob finally turns to face his opponent like he means it.

He SCREAMS and rushes Plebe Green, tackling him to the ground.

The other Plebes HOOT and HOLLER.

Plebe Green simply HEAD BUTTS Rob again, dazing him, and reverses their positions.

He mounts Rob and BATTERS him.

It only takes a couple strong punches before Rob is out.

Plebe Green rises.

The other Plebes CHEER his victory.

But Marok steps in and wags a finger. Not so fast.

MAROK (CONT'D)

(to all the Plebes)

Were you asked to incapacitate a man?

PLEBES

No, sir!

MAROK

You were asked to fight a man to the death, correct?

PLEBES

Yes, sir!

Marok nods to Plebe Green.

MAROK

Do your job.

He steps back out of the circle.

Plebe Green looks down at Rob, whose eyes are flickering open.

He steps close to him, reluctant.

He looks back at the others, as if to say, "Look at what I'm dealing with here".

Plebe Green BEATS Rob's face in. Again and again and again.

Finally, with Rob barely looking human, Plebe Green rises. Rob's blood marks his fists.

Marok steps in and check's Rob's pulse. He stands and lifts Plebe Green's arm.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Winner!

The other Plebes rush in and congratulate Plebe Green, who can only look down at the dead Rob with remorse.

IN THE CAGE

Simon and the others look on, grim.

IN THE RING

MAROK (CONT'D)

To the ceremony room!

The other Plebes cheer and push a dazed Plebe Green out the door, Marok, Dale and Denny follow.

33

INT. HOUSE - CEREMONY ROOM - NIGHT

33

The other Plebes are gathered in the back of the room, with Plebe Green alone up front besides Marok.

Dale and Denny lean against the wall, watching.

Marok holds a leather-bound book and a knife.

MAROK

You have crossed over. Noah Grant,
I offer you membership. Do you
accept?

NOAH/PLEBE GREEN

I do.

Marok opens the book and hands Noah the knife.

Noah cuts open his hand down the middle and presses his blood onto the blank page.

MAROK

Welcome.

CHEERS echo from the other Plebes in the back.

34

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

34

The captives listen hopelessly to the sounds of cheering from upstairs.

Two Plebes enter, the captives stiffen.

But they're only there to drag Rob's dead body away.

SIMON
Initiation rites. Gangs do stuff
like this.

WAYNE
Not like this.

Sean looks over, he has been crying.

SEAN
I don't want to do this.

WAYNE
I'm taking one of them with me.

ERIC
I haven't thrown a punch since high
school. I was on the wrestling
team, but I lost most of my
matches.

WAYNE
You just have to want it more than
the other guy.

Simon looks ahead, lost in memories.

35

INT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

35

Simon and Recruit 1318 stand across from each other. They're completely soaked in sweat, exhausted, dirty and generally look like they've had the shit kicked out of them.

Staff Sergeant Raynor's demeanor, on the other hand, is exactly the same.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Full speed. Execute!

Simon and Recruit 1318 go at it again, but it looks more like a long hug than a fight. Simon ties up Recruit 1318's hands like a woozy boxer.

Staff Sergeant Raynor sees and approaches.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
Recruit, are you conserving energy
during my drill?

SIMON
No, sir.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Step out, recruit.

SIMON
Yes, sir.

Simon disengages from Recruit 1318.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
On me.

Staff Sergeant Raynor walks Simon to the side as the rest of the men continue the drill.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
Twenty.

SIMON
Yes, sir.

Simon drops and struggles through pushups.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
This is Day One, recruit.

Simon doesn't respond. His pushup looks like it's happening in slow motion.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
The Marine Corps is not for everyone. There's a reason it's called the few and the proud. Do you want to be here?

Simon can barely croak out a response.

SIMON
Yes, sir.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Can't hear you, recruit.

Simon can barely move, he's in the "down" position of his pushup and not going "up".

SIMON
Yes, I want to be here, sir, but...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
But what!? Are you taking a god-damn nap right now?
(MORE)

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 Are you a child? Do you think next
 I'm gonna bend over and wipe your
 ass?

Simon is delirious from fatigue.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 You want your mama? She ain't here.
 I'm your mama now.

Simon can't help but crack a tiny smile at the absurdity of
 the remark.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 Is this all a big fucking joke to
 you!?

SIMON
 No, sir.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
 I know your father.

Simon stops attempting to do pushups and just looks at Staff
 Sergeant Raynor.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
 What would he think if he saw you
 right now?

Off Simon's wounded gaze.

END FLASHBACK:

36 **EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

36

A few of the plebes carry Rob's dead body as a unit. They are
 far in the woods. In mid-conversation:

PLEBE GREEN
 -At first. But I don't know in the
 heat of the moment, you guys all
 yelling...It just kind of took me
 over.

37 **INT. HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT**

37

Denny, Dale and Marok sit around the office. Denny reviews
 security camera footage from a variety of perspectives
 outside and around the house on a laptop.

DALE

I was scared there for a second;
Green looked like he was going to
eat it.

MAROK

Respect the process, his name is
Noah.

DALE

I thought Noah was going to get
beat by a rich kid who may or may
not have shit himself.

MAROK

And he didn't. When push came, he
shoved.

DENNY

(to Dale)

Let's not lie to each other, you
didn't exactly blow away the
competition yourself.

DALE

The guy they gave me was six-five.
He was a fucking Goliath. He looked
like me if I ate another me.

DENNY

You kicked him in the balls.

DALE

David used a slingshot against
Goliath. Resourcefulness isn't a
bad thing.

DENNY

David didn't kick Goliath in the
balls.

DALE

Your guy probably started shaving
that week.

DENNY

Nah, he just looked young.

DALE

He was crying for his mommy.

Dale chuckles. Smacks Denny on the arm, looking for someone
to laugh with him.

DALE (CONT'D)
 (re-enacting)
 Remember? "Mom! I love you!"

Marok and Denny darken.

Denny grabs Dale's head with one hand and taps Dale on the forehead with the other, like he's checking to hear a sound.

DALE (CONT'D)
 What are you doing?

DENNY
 Trying to see if it's hollow.
 Because you're such an idiot I
 can't believe there's a brain in
 there.

Dale shakes him off.

DALE
 Fuck off.

DENNY
 You don't deserve to be here.

DALE
 Hey!

MAROK
 Enough. Let's get the next fight
 started.

The two head for the door.

DALE
 Oh, so I'm the asshole?

38

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

38

The men return with **PLEBE SILVER** (20s), a lithe, intense little man, stepping into the ring.

PLEBE ORANGE
 You can take him.

Plebe Silver glances over at Sean, who's a nervous wreck.

PLEBE SILVER
 I don't know, he might cry at me.

Dale, armed (as always when interacting with the men in the cage) steps over and opens it, Denny behind him as back up.

DALE
Let's go, girly.

The others immediately look to Sean, who seems to be near having a panic attack at the idea. He's hyper-ventilating.

Sean won't move.

DENNY
We're on a schedule.

Dale looks again to Sean.

DALE
I'm not asking you, ya big jellyfish. Move.

Simon steps in front of him.

SIMON
He's not ready. Let me go first.

Dale smirks.

DALE
The order does not change. He's coming out, now.

Sean can't bear to move. Dale raises his gun.

DALE (CONT'D)
Or I'm just killing you. Your choice.

Sean finally steps out.

Dale closes the cage.

He and Denny drag Sean into the ring.

The other Plebes crack jokes and LAUGH in the background.

Plebe Silver looks across at Sean, almost disappointed at what he's got to deal with.

Marok steps into the middle of the ring. He again raises his fist and lowers it quickly.

MAROK
Fight!

Marok steps out. Sean drops to his knees and looks down. He shakes his head to and fro.

SEAN
I won't do it. I won't do it.

SIMON
Get up!

Plebe Silver approaches.

PLEBE SILVER
At least stand up.

Sean looks into his eyes, paralyzed with fear.

PLEBE SILVER (CONT'D)
Fine.

Plebe Silver meets his look. Not fazed. Just focused. He KICKS Sean in the face. Sean falls back in to a fetal position and weeps loudly.

Plebe Silver kneels next to him and throws a few punches to Sean's face, knocking him out.

Simon and Wayne turn away.

Plebe Silver doesn't hesitate and reaches for Sean's neck. The crack is echoed throughout the room.

IN THE CAGE

No one says anything. What could you say?

IN THE RING

Marok steps in to check Sean's pulse.

He stands and raises Plebe Silver's arm.

MAROK
Winner!

IN THE CAGE

The captives just stare at the ground, despondent.

Marok closes another bloody page in the book, Plebe Silver's hand is cut as in the earlier initiation.

The other Plebes CHEER and lead Plebe Silver out of the room with back-slaps and affirmations.

One particular plebe, **PLEBE RED**, lingers.

PLEBE RED
Hey, can I talk to you?

MAROK
We talked about this, no special treatment.

PLEBE RED
I just wanted to talk to you for a second.

Marok steps to the end of the room and closes the door.

MAROK
What is it?

Plebe Red doesn't respond immediately.

PLEBE RED
This is just a lot to take in.

Marok doesn't know how to respond.

PLEBE RED (CONT'D)
This is why you wanted me to start taking boxing classes, isn't it?

MAROK
I made sure you were prepared and you are. Lets talk more later, if they think I'm stacking anything in your favor it'll come down on me.

PLEBE RED
Okay, I'm sorry.

Plebe Red still seems nervous.

MAROK
Don't second guess yourself, you know what this is worth. Just don't forget the kind of opportunities that are coming to you.

PLEBE RED
I know, I mean I don't know but I can imagine. It's not that... I just want to know how you live with it.

Marok stiffens.

MAROK

What kind of question is that?

PLEBE RED

When I think about doing it, I'm not scared. I mean, I'm not scared of the fight. I know I can fight. I think about tonight when I go to sleep. And the next night. And a night ten years from now.

MAROK

Did I not make clear to you the seriousness of this commitment? This is a conversation you have the day I tell you about joining, not the day you-

PLEBE RED

I know.

MAROK

What did I say? I said you have to be willing to die and kill to be a part of this. And you said you understood.

PLEBE RED

It's different when the guy is on his knees crying in front of you.

MAROK

No. It's not.

PLEBE RED

Just answer me one question.

Marok glances at the door, as if expecting someone to come through any second.

MAROK

One. Then so help me, I'll throw you out of here myself.

PLEBE RED

Do you still think about the guy - the one you-

MAROK

The one I killed.

PLEBE RED

Yeah.

Marok stares at Plebe Red.

MAROK

Yes.

Plebe Red doesn't say anything.

MAROK (CONT'D)

A couple months ago, I go out. See this girl. The type of girl where you feel like you don't even deserve to look at her. Somehow, I take her home. And I'm looking up at her as we're doing it and thinking it's not fair how lucky I am to be here, with her. Afterwards, she lays on my arm, smiling at me, like there's some funny secret between us and the whole thing is so god-damned wonderful I just want to puke. I lay back and stare at the ceiling. And *that*. *That's* when I think of him.

Plebe Red needs a moment to process this.

PLEBE RED

So you regret it.

MAROK

I don't regret it. That's the point. It's that important.

PLEBE RED

Why?

MAROK

You're my brother. My blood. But I trust any one of these guys in this book-

He lifts the book up.

MAROK (CONT'D)

-more than I trust you. Because it happens to them too. You and I are brothers because we came out of the same womb. Me and them are brothers because we're the same - the way only something like that can make us. It's part of me now, like it's part of them and we'll always protect each other.

(MORE)

MAROK (CONT'D)

Once you're like that with another person you'll understand there's no going back.

Off Marok's determined gaze:

40

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

40

The captives sit around the cage, all except Simon, who stands.

ERIC

I wonder who's going to be next.

A LONG silence before...

ERIC (CONT'D)

I tried to kill myself once.

Wayne glances over.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Almost sorta funny now, with this...

Simon doesn't turn around.

Eric looks at Wayne, just glad someone's listening.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I took pills. They say usually men do something more intense, like shoot themselves or jump off a cliff or whatever. But I took pills. I wasn't sure if I had enough left, so I tried to mix it with some vodka, thought maybe that'd help. I woke up the next day with a stomach ache and a migraine.

He almost laughs, a grim snort.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I couldn't even kill myself right.

Simon turns around.

SIMON

Enough of that. I'm not dying here.

ERIC

You think they'd really let you go if you win?

SIMON
Wasn't what I meant.

Simon looks at Wayne.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I'm gonna need your help.

41 **INT. HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT**

41

Dale shoots darts at the wall. Marok looks over paperwork at his desk. Denny is still watching the security footage, He notices Eric on it.

Dale tries to show Denny a photo of a pretty girl on his cellphone.

DALE
I'm telling you, she wants me.

DENNY
Your own mother doesn't want you.

Denny's phone BEEPS.

He takes a final dart from Dale's other hand and throws it. Bullseye.

DALE
Do that again.

Denny smiles and heads for the door with Marok.

DALE (CONT'D)
One time in a hundred I beat you in darts all the time! Son of a bitch.

Dale exits.

42 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

42

Marok, Dale and Denny, along with all the Plebes, descend.

The Plebes form their circle, with Marok in the middle.

Dale steps over to the cage.

DALE
Eric Wims. Come on down.

Dale unlocks the cage door-

And hears a LOUD CLANKING against the back wall as a handful of coins ricochets against the back wall.

Dale glances that direction.

Simon SLAMS the cage door forward and INTO Dale's face.

He sprints out of the cage like a bat out of hell and makes for the steps.

Denny is there to block him.

He lunges at Simon...

...but Simon counters his punch with the smoothness of a trained fighter and twists his arm back, grips the back of his head and SMASHES it against the wall.

...The others are already running for him, but Simon's out the door before they can reach him.

IN THE CORNER

Marok kneels, looking at what made the noise...

Loose change.

He looks over at Wayne, who holds a quarter up between his fingers.

He smirks at Marok, palms the coin and flips him the bird.

43 **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

43

Simon runs.

DENNY (O.S.)

You're outnumbered and unarmed! How long you think you're gonna last?

Simon just keeps running.

44 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

44

Staff Sergeant Raynor stands in the center of the clearing. Around him the recruits jog in a loose circle.

He paces.

Checks his watch.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

Sprint!

The men - clearly running on fumes - do their best to sprint.

Recruit 2491 manages to keep pace with the pack, but grumbles under his breath.

RECRUIT 2491

I'm going back to working at the gas station, this is fucking bullshit.

He looks at the others jogging besides him.

RECRUIT 2491 (CONT'D)

You guys on steroids or something? Jesus. I don't care if they do make your balls shrink, get me some of that stuff.

Simon is noticeably lagging more than the others.

Staff Sergeant Raynor falls in line and jogs besides him.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

Did I order you to limp along like a wounded gazelle, recruit?

SIMON

No...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

No, what?

SIMON

Staff Sergeant.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

Now you put the words together, recruit. My daughter is two years old and she can handle that concept.

SIMON

No, Staff Sergeant.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

(lowering his voice to a whisper)

You've been behind in every drill. Run, Simon.

Simon swallows and RUNS, GRUNTING in pain.

END FLASHBACK:

45 **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT** 45

Simon swallows and RUNS.

46 **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT** 46

The Plebes, Dale, Marok and Denny are all rushing through the woods in a loose assemblage.

Marok jogs beside Denny.

DENNY
We've lost sight of him.

DALE
Fucker can run.

MAROK
I don't know which one of you is worse.

DENNY
Me? He's the one who let him out the cage.

DALE
Yeah, like you were a big help, you did a great job getting out of his way, fucking hotshot-

MAROK
Shut up! Fan out and find him.

Dale and Denny step up and organize the men, shouting directions and two man teams.

DENNY
Red and blue, head that way!

DALE
Orange and silver, follow me!

47 **EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - NIGHT** 47

Simon reaches the clearing where the cars are parked.

Sees the black pickup.

He doesn't hesitate. Grabs a rock off the ground and REARS BACK as he reaches the window.

48

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

48

Plebe Red and **PLEBE ORANGE**, now separate from the pack, look out for Simon.

PLEBE ORANGE
We shouldn't have to do this.

PLEBE RED
Keep it down.

PLEBE ORANGE
This is ridiculous.

PLEBE RED
It's all part of it.

PLEBE ORANGE
Fuck that, we're already supposed to fight a man to death tonight, we shouldn't have to worry about this too, this is not part of it.

PLEBE RED
He's just one guy.

They hear the CRACKING of a car window in the distance.

PLEBE RED (CONT'D)
Over there.

They hurry that way.

49

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - NIGHT

49

Plebe Red and Plebe Orange enter the clearing cautiously. There's no sign of Simon.

They creep through the maze of parked cars, ducking around every corner.

PLEBE ORANGE
(stage whisper)
You see anything?

PLEBE RED
(stage whisper)
Shut up. He'll hear us.

Still nothing.

Plebe Orange turns a corner and HALTS.

There's a gun to his head. Simon leans close to his ear.

SIMON
You should have listened to your
friend.

Plebe Red steps into view. Sees them.

Simon points the gun at Plebe Red.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Stop right there.

Plebe Orange takes the opportunity to swing his head back
INTO Simon, dazing him.

Simon tries to recover but Plebe Orange grapples with him for
control of the gun.

Plebe Red rushes forward and TACKLES Simon to the ground.

In the struggle the gun GOES OFF.

Simon disentangles and tries to stand but Plebe Orange grabs
his leg and PULLS.

Plebe Red rolls over, bleeding from his shoulder.

Simon loses his balance and falls, the gun SMACKS against the
ground and comes loose from his grasp.

Plebe Orange snags it and COLDCOCKS Simon with the butt of
the gun.

PLEBE ORANGE
I should shoot you.

DALE (O.S.)
But you won't.

Plebe Orange looks up. Dale and a couple other Plebes have
arrived.

Dale steps closer and sees the injury to Plebe Red.

DALE (CONT'D)
Shit.

He makes a call.

INTERCUT WITH:

50

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

50

Marok, running with several other Plebes, answers.

MAROK

Almost there.

DALE

We got him.

MAROK

Thank Christ.

DALE

It's not all good news. He had a gun.

MAROK

Where did he get a gun?

DALE

Must have been in one of the cars.
He shot your brother.

Marok simply hangs up.

51

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

51

Simon is dragged in at gun point, Plebe Red and Orange follow behind. Marok approaches Plebe Red. Plebe Red stops and acknowledges him.

MAROK

Shit.

PLEBE RED

I'm sorry.

MAROK

Shit!

Marok turns away as Simon is thrown against the floor.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Hold him.

Dale and Denny lift Simon up and hold his arms.

Marok winds up and GUT PUNCHES Simon, who doubles over.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Lift his head up.

Denny pulls Simon's hair, forcing his head up. Marok puts his hands around Simon's neck - tightens his fists. Simon's eyes widen and he tries to squirm free but he is held back well by the others. Simon is choking to death.

DALE

Marok?

Marok stares at Simon with murderous eyes. Finally Marok lays off. Simon inhales deeply.

MAROK

Remember my face. It's the last thing you'll see before you die.

52 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT** 52

Simon is thrown into the cell, looking beat-to-hell.

53 **INT. HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT** 53

Dale, Marok, Denny and Plebe Orange are gathered around Plebe Red.

Plebe Orange wraps gauze around Plebe Red's wound.

DENNY

(to Plebe Orange)

Is there an exit wound?

PLEBE ORANGE

Yes. In and out.

(to Plebe Red)

You got lucky.

He pats Plebe Red on the other shoulder.

PLEBE ORANGE (CONT'D)

We gotta get you to a hospital though.

Denny looks at Marok.

His expression turns grim.

MAROK

Guys, step outside for a minute,
okay?

Plebe Red looks up.

PLEBE RED

What's going on?

PLEBE ORANGE

Whose car am I taking him to the
hospital in?

MAROK

Just step out for two minutes.

Marok leans close to Plebe Red.

MAROK (CONT'D)

Don't leave yet.

He hugs Plebe Red.

MAROK (CONT'D)

It's okay.

Plebe Red and Plebe Orange exit, nervous.

Marok spins on Denny.

MAROK (CONT'D)

If you're going to say something
then say it.

DENNY

It was already questionable
bringing your brother into the
fold.

MAROK

He's never gotten special
treatment.

DENNY

Then you'll agree we can't start
now. We're accountable for this
group.

DALE

He got shot, what the fuck are you
talking about? He's not gonna stay
and fight.

Marok and Denny are silent.

DALE (CONT'D)
He's not seriously going to...

DENNY
The rules are the rules. No exceptions. No rescheduling.

MAROK
He's right. The fight goes on. Just give me a couple minutes alone to talk to him.

54

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

54

Plebe Red and Plebe Orange sit in the hallway beside the door to the office.

Neither one speaks.

They just stare at the door, unable to hear what's going on inside.

PLEBE ORANGE
They're going to make you fight.

PLEBE RED
No way.

PLEBE ORANGE
Then what's taking so long?

PLEBE RED
They can't.

PLEBE ORANGE
Who knows you're here?

PLEBE RED
No one.

Silence.

PLEBE RED (CONT'D)
Why?

The door opens. Marok looks at his brother. His look says it all.

PLEBE RED (CONT'D)
Shit.

55

INT. HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

55

Marok and Plebe Red walk in.

MAROK
How you feeling?

PLEBE RED
Kinda like I just got fucking shot.

MAROK
Do you think you can fight?

PLEBE RED
Are you kidding? Screw that! I'll wait till' next year.

MAROK
It's not that simple actually, everybody is given one attempt at the final challenge... it's an unfair situation, I know.

PLEBE RED
I can't fight.

MAROK
That guy you're against is nothing, I doubt he's ever been in a real fight. I have some pain pills they'll help you...

PLEBE RED
Are you listening? I'm not doing it! If that means I can't get initiated then so be it!

MAROK
Here's the thing, you swore by the code to accept your final challenge.

PLEBE RED
So what!?

MAROK
So it means you have to go through with it.

PLEBE RED
And if I don't? You gonna kill me?

MAROK

This is how it works, the rules are not suggestions, that's how it's always been... If you don't do this I can't protect you.

Plebe Red is panicky now.

PLEBE RED

So, so... So, you just let me leave, you can say you don't know where I went.

MAROK

I can't do that.

PLEBE RED

This is insane! I can barely lift my arm, there's no way I can fight!

Marok opens a drawer in the desk and pulls a pill bottle out.

PLEBE RED (CONT'D)

Look at me. I'm your brother. Your actual brother, does that not mean anything to you?

MAROK

This is bigger than you and me. You need to accept that this is happening and focus on getting yourself through it. I'm sorry.

Marok hands Plebe Red the bottle of pills.

56

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

56

The Plebes and recruiters descend. Plebe Red wears a shirt that covers his bandaging.

He takes his position in the center of the fight circle.

IN THE CAGE

Simon smiles.

SIMON

They really are crazy.

He nudges Wayne.

SIMON (CONT'D)

That's the one I shot.

WAYNE
Which shoulder.

SIMON
Left.

WAYNE
Good.

Dale approaches the cage.

DALE
(to Eric)
Let's go, twiggy.

Eric, hanging back, looks up as if to say, "Who, me?".

He looks from Dale to Simon and Wayne.

WAYNE
Bury that motherfucker.

Eric reluctantly exits the cage.

IN THE RING

Eric steps in. Marok officiates as before.

MAROK
Fight!

Plebe Red approaches, clearly favoring his right arm.

Eric raises his fists, with the awkward stance of someone who has never fought before.

Plebe Red takes a swing with his right, but when he does his left hand sags, leaving him vulnerable to a counter-punch.

IN THE CAGE

Simon focuses on that shoulder.

SIMON
Left shoulder, Eric!

IN THE RING

Eric dodges the blows, but misses the opening to counter.

Plebe Red becomes more aggressive, getting closer and throwing multiple punches.

Eric takes a nasty shot on the chin and reels, but keeps his feet.

He manages to get a punch in...

...right to Plebe Red's injured shoulder.

Plebe Red grimaces and GROANS in pain. He tags Eric with a right hook that probably dislocates his jaw.

Eric doesn't back down, he takes it and keeps coming.

Plebe Red swings with his right again, Eric CATCHES his fist and then with his other hand repeatedly punches the injured shoulder.

IN THE CAGE

With real hope of a victory for the first time, Simon and Wayne come alive.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Keep going!

WAYNE

Beat his ass into the ground!

IN THE RING

Eric pounds on Plebe Red.

BESIDE THE RING

Marok tenses, he looks like he might spring into action any moment.

Denny notices. He puts a calming hand on Marok.

Marok looks at him.

DENNY

You step in, you destroy the whole process.

IN THE RING

Finally, Plebe Red kicks Eric hard in the shin.

Wincing, Eric stops punching for a moment.

It's enough. Plebe Red lurches forward, trying to bring Eric to the ground...

...but Eric sidesteps and manages to take Plebe Red down with an awkward trip/tackle. It's not pretty, but it works.

Eric takes both hands and RIPS open Plebe Red's shirt.

The bandaging on his injured shoulder is exposed now.

IN THE CAGE

Simon can't help but allow himself a tiny bit of hope.

IN THE RING

Plebe Red fumes. He reverses positions on Eric and tries to get him in a chokehold, but Eric, thin as he is, wriggles away.

Now they're back to square one. Face-off. But Plebe Red's shirt hangs off him in two pieces.

He rushes forward, hands up, favoring his injured shoulder.

Eric feints towards the opposite side, drawing Plebe Red's guard that way.

Then he reaches in, quick, and RIPS open the bandage, exposing the bare wound.

He pays for it....

BAM!

Plebe Red hits him with an uppercut that likely costs Eric a tooth.

Eric falls to his knees.

Plebe Red SWINGS...

...Eric dips his head and drives FORWARD, taking Plebe Red to the ground.

Plebe Red doesn't allow him to stay on top of him, but as he tries to rise Eric PUNCHES his injured, now bare, shoulder wound.

Plebe Red SCREAMS.

Eric swoops in like a shark sniffing blood.

He PUNCHES again and again. The wound is bleeding anew.

Plebe Red retreats, holding his injured shoulder. His arm is sagging badly.

Eric presses his advantage while he can.

BESIDES THE RING

Marok is sweating. Dale and Denny notice.

IN THE RING

Eric has a much easier time avoiding Plebe Red's punches now that he's clearly fighting with just one hand.

And he's starting to nail some punches of his own.

Plebe Red's feet wobble.

Eric KICKS them out from under him.

Plebe Red drops.

Eric STOMPS on his face.

IN THE CAGE

We don't see the stomps, but Simon and Wayne do.

More encouraged with each STOMP.

BESIDE THE RING

Marok can't take it anymore. He lunges towards the ring.

MAROK

No!

Dale and Denny have to hold him back. They can barely do it.

MAROK (CONT'D)

NO!

IN THE RING

Blood on his shoe, Eric stands over Plebe Red, victorious.

IN THE CAGE

Simon and Wayne are as stunned as everyone else.

IN THE RING

Eric looks towards the others. As if to say, "Now what?"

BESIDES THE RING

Marok has tears streaming down his face. He enters.

IN THE RING

Eric steps away as much as possible. Doesn't matter. Marok goes straight to his brother.

He cradles his bloody face in his arms.

MAROK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I should have never let you do this.

He looks up and sees Simon.

IN THE CAGE

Simon meets his gaze. The look Marok gives him is unmistakable. If looks could kill...

BESIDES THE RING

Dale and Denny watch the Plebes grow noticeably concerned over their leader's lack of composure.

IN THE RING

Dale and Denny step in.

DENNY

Winner. You're free to go.

Eric looks back as in disbelief but neither Denny or Dale make a move for him. He's so surprised he doesn't move right away.

IN THE CAGE

Simon and Wayne look at Eric.

WAYNE

Get the fuck out of here!

IN THE RING

Eric bolts for the steps.

Denny, still shaken-up by Marok's brother's death, gives Dale a look.

DALE

I'll make sure he gets to his car safe.

Is he being serious or is it a loaded statement? Dale's expression could be taken either way.

He follows Eric up the steps.

DENNY
 (to Plebes)
 Go up. We'll set up for the next
 one.

The Plebes looked confused as well but follow instructions.

IN THE CAGE

Simon looks towards the door Eric has just walked out of.

SIMON
 There's no way.

IN THE RING

Denny puts a comforting hand on Marok's shoulder.

DENNY
 Let me help you take him up.

Marok barely acknowledges Denny's presence. Slowly he rises and they gently lift up Plebe Red and take him up.

IN THE CAGE

Simon watches the scene, sees Marok's very real emotion as he carries his brother.

57

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

57

Simon and the other recruits are running down a path, each man carries a fellow recruit over his shoulder.

Staff Sergeant Raynor stands ahead on the path, shrouded in smoke from the POV of the recruits.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (V.O.)
 Tear gas will not kill you but it
 will feel like death warmed over.

The recruits move ahead, the smoke looming in front of them.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (V.O.)
 You will feel pain of an intensity
 you've never known, and it won't
 stop. You won't be able to see
 shit.

(MORE)

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You'll cough your damn lungs out
but be careful when you breath
because it'll feel like you're
inhaling hellfire.

They move into the smoke and sure enough, the COUGHING begins quickly.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (V.O.)
But no matter how terrible you're
gonna feel, remember that you CAN
move through it.

The recruits slow to a crawl, devastated by the smoke,
awkwardly moving forward.

Many drop their fellow recruits.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (V.O.)
You don't feel pain. You don't feel
fatigue. You don't believe in it.

Simon winces in pain, drops HIS recruit.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (V.O.)
Think about why I am making you do
this. Think about what this man on
your shoulder represents to you.
This is who we are.

Simon claws his way forward through the smoke.

He CRIES. Saliva bunches up in his mouth and he drools like a mangy dog.

He makes it out through the tear gas.

Staff Sergeant Raynor is waiting for him.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Where is your fallen comrade,
recruit?

SIMON
I... He... Can't...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Answer me!

SIMON
He's...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
It's not "Some Men Left Behind",
recruit. Go back and get him.

Simon just struggles to catch his breath.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
Now!

Simon doesn't move. Staff Sergeant Raynor turns him around
and KICKS him in the ass, pushing him forward.

Simon just trips and falls on his face.

END FLASHBACK:

58 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

58

Simon and Wayne sit in the cage, the basement empty now.

WAYNE
Maybe he made it.

SIMON
You really think that?

WAYNE
No. At least they let him walk out
here on his own two feet. I didn't
think he had all that fight in him.

SIMON
I don't think he thought he had all
that fight in him.

59 **INT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - REC ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)** 59

WEBCAM

The following is a webcam exchange, seen entirely through the
video each participant would see.

Simon's face fills up the frame, what little we can make out
behind him looks like some sort of recreation center.

THE OTHER PARTICIPANT

Is RYAN, who we can clearly see is relaxing in a comfortable,
middle-upper class house.

RYAN
Tear gas? Jesus.

SIMON

Yeah.

RYAN

Is that legal?

SIMON

They do it to every class.

RYAN

How much longer you got?

SIMON

I don't want to think about it. I thought I was in shape, I'm dying out there.

RYAN

I told you those cigarettes would catch up with you. You'll make it though. It's in your blood.

SIMON

I don't know. I really don't.

RYAN

Don't break, man. I see your parents around the neighborhood, they're proud as shit.

Simon scoffs.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'm telling you. You quit this - you're gonna regret it for the rest of your life. You'll do it, I know you will.

Simon coughs, still messed up from the tear gas drill. He doesn't appear so confident.

END FLASHBACK:

60

INT. HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

60

Denny and Marok lay Plebe Red's body on the desk.

Marok leans his head against his brother's chest, still wiping tears from his eyes.

DENNY

We can't keep him up here.

Marok looks up at Denny, eyes ablaze with anger.

DENNY (CONT'D)
We can move him later.

61

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

61

Silence in the cage.

SIMON
Have you ever killed anyone?

Wayne takes a moment before responding.

WAYNE
Once I got jumped by this guy.
There was this little park I cut
through to get home. Not very well
lit. It was late, no one around.
Guy had a knife. We were beefing
with some crew at the time, don't
even remember what about now. I got
the knife off him before he could
cut me. Pushed him down. I'm
looking in his eyes and I see this
look. Only time I ever seen that
look before was on my little
brother's face when our daddy used
to come at him. And then all I
could see staring up at me was him.
About to catch a beating from our
dad.

SIMON
What'd you do?

WAYNE
Let the guy go. I was as surprised
as he was. He ran off. Never saw
him again.

Silence.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
So, no. I haven't.

SIMON
Me neither.

Quiet.

SIMON (CONT'D)

How long have you been with...
whatever crew you're with.

WAYNE

Years. Less than ten, more than
seven. Gets fuzzy. Where I grew up,
even if you're not with them, it
feels like you are.

SIMON

My grandfather flew with the
Tuskegee Airmen. My dad fought in
Vietnam. I've been an honorary
Marine since the day I was born.

WAYNE

But you're not a Marine?

SIMON

No.

WAYNE

So what do you do? Back in the
world.

SIMON

I'm an assistant manager at a
grocery store.

Simon scoffs at himself, Wayne chuckles. For a moment the
tension is broken.

62

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

62

Simon and the other recruits wear night gear and stand at
attention before Staff Sergeant Raynor, who wears a pair of
night vision goggles. The recruits noticeably do not have
this, nor any weaponry.

The men look beaten down and miserable.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

This will be your first night-time
op. You will be responsible for
locating a position on a map and
finding some intel that is hidden
at that position. Once you recover
the intel, you will have to leave
the map behind and retrace your
steps to this position we are
standing in right now.

He gestures into the woods.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

You are disarmed and have lost your night vision capability. Stealth is your primary concern so you do not get your ass killed. Therefore you will be completing this task with no lights of any kind. Anyone who illuminates their flashlight will fail the course.

He looks over their weary faces.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

You have not slept within the last 72 hours. You have barely eaten. I do not care. I do not care because your enemy will not care. He will find you if you pass out underneath a bush or are too god-damned stupid to navigate properly and wander into his position. If you do either of these things, you will fail the course.

Staff Sergeant Raynor gestures to night vision goggles he wears.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

I will be monitoring your progress. First man to make it back earns a half hour break and one-

He takes a candy bar out of his pocket.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

Genuine chocolate bar.

He nods.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

Ho-ah.

RECRUITS

Ho-ah, Staff Sergeant!

Simon tries to check his map in the moonlight. He can barely see a thing.

He looks into the woods. No recognizable geographical features to help him go by.

He looks behind him. No sign of anyone else.

He leans against a tree, huffs in frustration.

His eyes close. He's so bone-tired it's practically a reflex.

After a moment he comes awake with a start.

Folds the map up and keeps moving.

64

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 64

Simon walks through the woods.

Something stirs underneath a big log up ahead.

He squints to make it out in the darkness, but it could be anything from this distance.

He approaches and gradually it's clear: one of his fellow recruits has hidden himself under some logs and gone to sleep.

Simon glances around, doesn't see anyone else.

He kneels down and shakes the man awake.

It's Recruit 2491, the guy with the big mouth.

SIMON
(whispering)
Wake up.

Recruit 2491 speaks like a man still dreaming.

RECRUIT 2491
Go away.

SIMON
You can't sleep.

Recruit 2491 glances around.

RECRUIT 2491
You're gonna draw attention to me.
Get out of here.

NOT FAR AWAY

Staff Sergeant Raynor is crouched behind a fallen tree, observing calmly. Seems like he's been there this whole time.

SIMON AND RECRUIT 2491

Simon tries to pull Recruit 2491 up, but he resists.

RECRUIT 2491 (CONT'D)

Let me be.

SIMON

I can't do that.

RECRUIT 2491

It's not a team mission.

SIMON

We're Marines. It's always a team mission.

Simon offers his hand.

RECRUIT 2491

We're not Marines yet.

SIMON

Well you definitely won't be if Staff Sergeant finds you taking a nap.

Recruit 2491 takes Simon's hand.

RECRUIT 2491

Next time I sleep, I'm going to dream about killing you.

SIMON

You're welcome.

Simon helps him up.

They head off.

NOT FAR AWAY

Staff Sergeant Raynor watches them go. A hint of a smile plays across his face.

Simon is alone now. He consults his map again in the moonlight.

SIMON
 (to himself)
 Marking...

Simon carefully studies the trees.

Finds one that has had a big diagonal line scratched into the base with a knife.

Digs with his hands besides it.

Nothing.

So he keeps digging, going around the tree.

Finally unearths a package, the "intel". It's a rubber-banded package wrapped in some cut-up tarp.

Looks back the way he came.

66 **INT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)** 66

Simon emerges from the woods to the original spot where the mission briefing took place.

Staff Sergeant Raynor is waiting for him.

Simon looks around.

SIMON
 Where are the others?

Staff Sergeant Raynor doesn't respond.

Instead, he just tosses Simon the candy bar.

END FLASHBACK:

67 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT** 67

The Plebes and recruiters have returned.

Plebe Orange is next to fight. He eyeballs Wayne.

Dale heads for the cage.

WAYNE
 (to Simon)
 I guess it's showtime.

Wayne gets up.

SIMON
Hey, I never got your name.

WAYNE
I'm Wayne.

SIMON
Simon.

Simon puts a hand out to shake with Wayne. They lock eyes as they shake.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Make them pay for it.

WAYNE
You too.

He looks over at Plebe Orange.

Dale opens the cage door.

Wayne exits without hesitation.

He heads into the ring.

Marok officiates, still noticeably upset but keeping his composure.

MAROK
Fight!

He scampers out.

Wayne doesn't waste time. He moves straight ahead.

And he and Plebe Orange **go at it**.

It's not like any of the fights we've seen until this point. These are two strong, capable fighters going toe to toe.

Powerful body blows rattle heads and pound bodies like sides of meat.

It's nasty and it's non-stop.

After a few minutes of this, both men are exhausted and bloodied.

Wayne gathers his breath and charges forward, TACKLING Plebe Orange like an NFL linebacker.

Plebe Orange falls.

Wayne tries to gouge his eyes out.

BESIDES THE RING

Marok, Dale and Denny stand, real concern showing on their faces.

IN THE CAGE

Simon watches with bated breath.

SIMON

Do it.

IN THE RING

Plebe Orange SCREAMS and snags one of Wayne's hands at the wrist.

He TWISTS furiously, using his other hand as leverage.

An audible CRACK echoes sickly across the room.

Wayne falls to the side, holding his limp wrist in pain.

Plebe Orange rises and drop-kicks Wayne in the face.

Wayne topples to the side.

Plebe Orange looms above him.

Wozy, Wayne tries to get up.

Plebe Orange takes his other hand, almost as if he's helping him up.

But as Wayne rises Plebe Orange pulls him forward by his hand and PUNCHES with his other hand, the opposing momentums intensifying the impact.

His fist CRUSHES Wayne's face.

Wayne collapses.

Plebe Orange lays down besides him, pulls his head up into his arms.

PLEBE ORANGE

Goodbye.

He TWISTS and snaps Wayne's neck.

BESIDES THE RING

Marok glares at Simon, satisfied.

IN THE CAGE

Two plebes drag Wayne's dead body away.

One of them is Plebe Gold. He GRINS at Simon like a shark seeing a minnow.

Simon can't bear to look.

Marok steps right in front of him. Behind him the plebes exit.

MAROK
Enjoying the show?

Simon doesn't respond.

MAROK (CONT'D)
That was my brother you got killed tonight.

SIMON
I shot your brother to defend myself.

MAROK
Lot of good it did you. We saved the best for last. Your match? He's the toughest we got.

SIMON
Yeah? And then what? You all lay down and massage each other?

MAROK
I'm glad you're having fun. You'll beg me to kill you before this is over.

68

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 68

Simon and all the other recruits are gathered at the original spot where the mission briefing took place.

Staff Sergeant Raynor collects the "intel" packages from them.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Congratulations on a successful mission. You all know what's coming next. Pace yourselves.
(MORE)

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

There's only one rule. Don't stop moving. Any man who can not complete the march will fail out of my Marine corps.

(gestures behind him)

You'll find your packs down by the main path back there.

Staff Sergeant Raynor indicates Simon.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)

Recruit 4210 was first back and has earned himself a reprieve. Recruit 4210, walk to the road we took in and another Staff Sergeant will meet you. You'll join us on the march after your break.

Simon looks at the other recruits. Sees nothing but jealousy (not malicious, just yearning) and fatigue in their eyes.

He looks back to Staff Sergeant Raynor.

SIMON

If it's alright, I'd like to stay.

Staff Sergeant Raynor arches an eyebrow.

69

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

69

The men march, wearing full rucksacks and gear, about a hundred pounds on their backs, tired beyond anything they've ever experienced in their lives.

Simon keeps with the middle of the pack.

Recruit 2491, marching beside him mumbles:

RECRUIT 2491

You're an idiot.

He laughs, as much as he's able.

SIMON

(good-natured)

Go fuck yourself.

Recruit 2491 pats Simon on the shoulder, smiles.

RECRUIT 2491
(making a masturbation
gesture)
I don't think I have the energy!

They exchange a weary chuckle.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (O.S.)
Why is it that every other man in
this company is ahead of you,
recruit?

Simon glances back.

Recruit 1318, Simon's sparring partner from earlier, is lagging behind the pack, badly. Staff Sergeant Raynor walks besides him.

RECRUIT 1318
I can't-

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Then quit! Do not sully my Marine
corps with that word, recruit.

RECRUIT 1318
I just need a minute to rest-

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
There will come a time when you're
in the field and your fellow
soldiers' lives will depend on you.
When that time comes, you might be
tired. You might be hungry. You
might want to take a shit and nap
and fuck Suzie Q. Are you going to
tell them you just needed a minute?

RECRUIT 1318
No...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
We are one mile into a twenty mile
march. There is no rest coming for
you anytime soon. I suggest you
start marching.

Staff Sergeant Raynor drops behind and observes.

Simon glances back again, sees Recruit 1318 try to muster up energy and march.

But in doing so, he falls, the weight of the pack throwing him off balance.

Simon jogs back and helps Recruit 1318 up. He walks besides him.

SIMON
Stay with me.

They walk together.

Behind them, Staff Sergeant Raynor's watchful eye sees all.

70 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT** 70
 (FLASHBACK)

Simon and the other recruits march. The path seems never ending. It's dark. No one speaks.

There's a mournful quality to the whole thing, like these men are walking to their own funeral.

END FLASHBACK:

71 **INT. HOUSE - CEREMONY ROOM - NIGHT** 71

Plebe Orange's blood marks the book.

Denny, Dale and Marok oversee as usual.

The other Plebes exit, CHEER Plebe Orange.

72 **INT. HOUSE - OFFICE** 72

Marok is seated at the desk when Plebe Gold enters.

PLEBE GOLD
You wanted to see me?

MAROK
What happened earlier. That can't happen again. Especially with the guy you're fighting.

PLEBE GOLD
It won't.

MAROK
He's trained. He'll know what he's doing.

PLEBE GOLD
So do I. It won't be a problem.

MAROK

Hey! I don't give a shit how tough you think you are, listen to me. You underestimate him and it'll be your body we drag into the woods. Do you understand?

PLEBE GOLD

Yes, sir.

MAROK

Good.

73 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

73

The Plebes gather. Plebe Gold lurks.

He removes his shirt. This guy could bench press a Hyundai.

He looks at Simon in the cage and gives him a wink.

Simon doesn't acknowledge him.

74 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT**
(FLASHBACK)

74

The men continue.

Staff Sergeant Raynor walks alongside, talking to ALL the men.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

Every single one of you is physically capable of doing this. Every. Single. One. But before we finish tonight I know some of you will quit. Happens every time. Just ask yourself, is that person you?

END FLASHBACK:

75 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

75

Dale opens the cage. Simon heads into the ring.

Marok steps over to Plebe Gold.

MAROK

Ready?

PLEBE GOLD
Hit me in the face.

Marok PUNCHES Plebe Gold in the face.

PLEBE GOLD (CONT'D)
Ahh!

Plebe Gold grins.

76 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - DAY (FLASHBACK)** 76

Back to Simon and Recruit 1318 grappling each other to the ground.

Simon takes Recruit 1318 down.

END FLASHBACK:

77 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT** 77

Simon does the SAME move to Plebe Gold as he approaches.

He tries to pin him down but Plebe Gold, with his strength, rises and PICKS Simon up.

He SLAMS him to the ground.

78 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)** 78

The men trudge on. Some occasionally stumble, eyes closing, woozy, dream-like.

Staff Sergeant Raynor continues alongside.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Think of all you've suffered. All the pain and sweat and mud. Another fifteen miles and it will all be over.

END FLASHBACK:

79 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT** 79

Simon rolls out of the way before Plebe Gold can slam his elbow down into his face.

He scrambles to his feet.

The men face-off.

Plebe Gold feints with his left and connects with a vicious RIGHT HOOK.

It staggers Simon, who takes the brunt of his meaty paw with his face.

Plebe Gold presses his momentary advantage and scores another direct hit, popping Simon in the nose with a JAB.

Simon struggles to keep his feet.

Plebe Gold drives him into the ground with a brutal right-left combo.

Fresh blood decorates Simon's face.

As Plebe Gold swings in for the kill shot Simon somehow manages to avoid it.

He scoots forward, low, and wraps his arms around Plebe Gold's legs, trying to bring him to the ground.

Plebe Gold manages to wriggle free.

Simon stands, huffing and puffing. Bleeding from his nose and lip.

The other plebes SHOUT and JEER, thirsty for more blood.

Plebe Gold doesn't even seem winded.

He advances once more.

Simon waits.

Plebe Gold throws out a punch Simon swats it aside with his forearm, then wraps it around Plebe Gold's arm and pivots so he's directly against Plebe Gold's side.

Putting his entire body into it, he twists.

Plebe Gold's arm contorts at an awkward angle.

Simon drives his fist into Plebe Gold's face as hard as he can.

Plebe Gold nearly falls.

Simon kicks him in the chest, finishing the job.

Plebe Gold hits the dirt.

Simon rolls down and gets Plebe Gold into an arm-bar.

Without hesitation, he BREAKS Plebe Gold's arm.

The SNAP is loud enough to quiet the crowd.

Plebe Gold SCREAMS.

Simon uses the distraction to maneuver so he's got Plebe Gold in a headlock.

Plebe Gold struggles as Simon tries to choke him to death.

Finally Plebe Gold rears up and rips Simon off with his one good arm.

Again the men face each other - only now Plebe Gold only has one usable arm.

Simon charges forward and Plebe Gold tries to put his hands up to block, but with only one good one it's only a matter of moments before Simon gets in a number of POTENT hits.

Weakened, Plebe Gold tries to fight back but his punches are getting sloppy.

Simon kicks his legs out from under him.

Then he stands above him and looks directly at Marok.

With his eyes locked on Marok, he drives his foot down. Twists it with relish.

Plebe Gold lies dead on the floor.

No one knows what to do.

Silence.

SIMON

(to Marok)

You seem to have a lot of rules.
Let's see how much you believe in
them.

Simon turns towards the steps out of the basement.

Marok stands in his path, taking the gun from Dale and raising it up.

Simon stops.

MAROK
(to Plebes)
Take his body out with the others.

The Plebes hurriedly carry Plebe Gold's body out of the room.
The door is shut closed.

SIMON
I want my car keys.

DALE
Doesn't work that way. We'll escort
you to your car.

SIMON
I'm not moving until I get my car
keys. And I'm walking out of here
on my own. If you're letting me go
it doesn't make any difference.

Neither Marok nor Dale wavers.

SIMON (CONT'D)
He didn't walk out of here, did he?

DALE
Oh, he walked out. He just didn't
get to walk too far.

Marok drops the gun and returns it to Dale.

MAROK
We're not shooting him.

DALE
We're not?

MAROK
No.

Marok pulls out the initiation knife.

SIMON
Do I get a knife too?

DENNY
Let it go, lets not complicate
this.

MAROK
It's already complicated.

DENNY
You don't want to do this.

MAROK

Quiet.

Marok pulls out the initiation knife.

MAROK (CONT'D)

You killed my brother. My only brother. I'm going to make you feel his death a dozen times and die on the same floor he did. I'm going to make you scream for forgiveness. Then, once you're so weak you can't scream, I'll cut out your tongue and watch you choke on it.

Marok advances.

Simon avoids a thrust of the knife.

As opposed to every other fight so far, no one makes a sound during this exchange.

80 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT** 80
 (FLASHBACK)

Simon continues along. He TRIPS on a rock.

Slumps to an awkward seat on the ground.

END FLASHBACK:

81 **INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT** 81

Marok manages to STAB Simon in the side.

Simon DECKS him, making him lose his grip on the knife.

He stands there with the blade embedded in his side.

Looks down at it.

82 **EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT** 82
 (FLASHBACK)

Staff Sergeant Raynor circles back to Simon after he trips.

Simon tries to stand.

SIMON

I think I broke something.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Remove your pack.

Simon does. It SLAMS into the ground like it weighs a ton, which it does.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
And your boot.

Simon slowly does.

Staff Sergeant Raynor takes Simon's foot in his hands and adjusts it to and fro.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
Does this hurt?

SIMON
I don't know.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
That means no. This?

SIMON
No.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
And this?

Simon winces and CRIES OUT.

SIMON
Yes!

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
It's not broken. It'll hurt worse than holy hell, but legally, you can complete the march.

Simon looks up in despair. He puts his boot on.

Staff Sergeant Raynor helps him get his pack on his back.

Doing so nearly knocks him over once the full weight hits him.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
It's not a race. Just need to finish. Don't stop walking.

END FLASHBACK:

Marok CLOCKS Simon, knocking him down.

SIMON

Says the man who brought a knife to
a fistfight.

Marok straddles him.

MAROK

We're having a fistfight now.

He PUNCHES Simon.

MAROK (CONT'D)

How's it going for you?

And AGAIN.

MAROK (CONT'D)

I'd say not great.

He raises Simon's limp face with one hand gripping his hair
and gives a final PUNCH.

Simon is catatonic on the floor.

86

EXT. MARINE TRAINING GROUNDS - WOODED PATH - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

86

Simon keeps marching.

Behind him on the path, Recruit 1318 unloads his pack and
watches with shame. He's quit.

Simon continues.

But his steps slowly decline in speed.

It's pitiful to watch. He struggles to put one foot in front
of the other.

He leans forward, willing his body to continue, trying to use
the weight of the pack to his advantage.

But it just makes him fall.

He sprawls out on the ground.

Does not get up.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (O.S.)

Look at me.

Simon rolls over awkwardly, the pack impeding him.

Staff Sergeant Raynor stands above him. He might as well be one hundred feet tall.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
You need to stand up.

Simon labors to speak.

SIMON
I... I...

Staff Sergeant Raynor offers Simon his hand, but Simon doesn't take it.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
What do you want to do? Who do you want to be?

Simon doesn't answer.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR (CONT'D)
Think about your father. Think about his father. Your name means something out here.

SIMON
No more.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Not an acceptable answer.

SIMON
No...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
You're THIS close to finishing this out. You want to tell me after it all you're really just a piece of shit? A guy who can't push through when it matters most, to survive?

SIMON
Can't...

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR
Then I don't want you in my Corps, getting my men killed. You get to do one of two things right now. Stand up and keep walking or say "I quit".

SIMON

It's...

Simon looks ahead, some of the other recruits, including Recruit 2491 are glancing back, sympathetic, but only for a moment, too exhausted to risk stopping and having to regain momentum.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

Do you quit?

INTERCUT WITH:

87

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

87

Simon laid out on the floor, Marok above him.

Simon laid out on the ground, Staff Sergeant Raynor above him.

STAFF SERGEANT RAYNOR

Do. You. QUIT? Say it! SAY IT!

SIMON

I quit!

Simon lets his head sag, defeated.

When he looks up Marok is there.

He's in the basement.

Dale looks down at him, almost with pity.

The faces of his fellow recruits look down on him in pity in the forest.

END INTERCUT:

88

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

88

Marok clenches a fist.

MAROK

The end.

SIMON

No!

Simon finds a seemingly impossible reserve of energy and pushes upward.

His arms SURGE, gripping Marok's shirt with both hands and pile-driving him backwards, while at the same time lifting himself off the ground.

Marok winds up on the floor, with Simon standing above him. It's a feat of strength that looked nearly impossible.

Simon's advantage allows him to retrieve the knife a few feet back.

He stands, wild-eyed, covered in blood and ROARS.

He looks like the god-damn devil.

A new emotion crosses Marok's face.

Fear.

Dale raises the gun and cocks it.

DALE

Marok?

MAROK

Put it down!

Dale lowers the gun, nervous.

MAROK (CONT'D)

(looking at Simon)

I got him.

Marok advances again. As he does, Simon starts side stepping towards Dale's direction, small enough steps that it isn't noticeable.

Simon imperceptibly eyes Dale and the gun at his side. He swings the knife at Marok but misses and Marok gets a straight punch to Simon's nose.

Simon takes the punch and lurches off balance TOWARDS Dale.

He recovers and straightens up, now only five feet away from Dale.

Another weak attempt with the knife and another connected round house punch from a tiring Marok, but this time, staging a knock out punch, Simon back tracks as if falling to the ground.

But what he's really doing is getting close enough to Dale to STAB him in the gut.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Whatever you think you've done here, I'd reconsider. Even if you walk out that door, it's not over for you.

Simon turns to the door and disappears behind it.

93 **EXT. FOREST - MORNING** 93

Simon quickly moves along through the trees. He hears the Plebes in the distance and manages quietly.

He finds his car.

94 **INT. SIMON'S CAR - MORNING** 94

Simon sinks in to the driver seat of his car. He sets the gun pointed down in the crack between the driver seat and middle console. He leaves his right palm resting over it.

He starts the car and pulls out. His eyes focused and alert as he drives through the forest.

95 **EXT. SIMON'S CAR - MORNING** 95

And now that US MARINES bumper sticker on Simon's car looks a whole lot bigger.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

96 **INT. SECURITY ROOM - MORNING** 96

Monitors show footage, from an angle that looks like a security camera, of Simon killing Marok and Dale.

VOICE #2 (O.S.)

What a disaster.

VOICE #1

We could have intervened.

VOICE #2 (O.S.)

If they can't get the job done they don't deserve our protection.

VOICE #1 (O.S.)

And him?

