

Lady Krylon

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Graffiti:

The application of a medium to a surface.

EXT. ELEVATED Q TRAIN. SOMEWHERE ABOVE QUEENS. LATE NIGHT.

[Train Chugging]

CLOSE ON a powerful train trucking down the rails...

A YOUNG MAN (early 20s) rides atop the elevated Q moving at full speed, trying to maintain hold in the fierce wind.

STRAPPED tightly to his face, a set of 'Burning Man' ventless air goggles.

WHOOOOSH!!

The YOUNG MAN ducks as the Q train whips past a steel column -
- it misses smashing the side of his face by inches...

We see him lean forward... steady his balance... and slide something square-shaped from his Jackson Pollock-inspired Pheos knapsack -

SNAP! SNAP!!

The latches on a light blue Inspector Gadget lunchbox pop open -

It's LOADED with spray paint cans.

THE YOUNG MAN rolls two cans into his grasp:

Smurfette blue -- Federal Safety Red

THEN . . .

The YOUNG MAN straps a safety harness around his waist,
secures a set of hooks to the top of the train car, LEANS
BACKWARDS . . .

And starts to 'bomb' the side of the train as it's moving!

He switches to his specialized interchangeable nozzle and
starts to SPRAY with both hands at the same time!

The jolt of the propellant under pressure -

PRESSING the caps on both cans like a double-fisted
gunslinger in the 'ol West -

The YOUNG MAN increases the butane, creating a higher
pressure.

The spray is *thicker* -

Faster -

INT. Q TRAIN - SAME

COMMUTERS ride along in blissful ignorance, reading their tablets, holding on to the handrails... completely unaware of the spectacle taking place outside.

EXT. ELEVATED Q TRAIN PLATFORM - SAME

The crowded platform on the 'EL.'

Stranded travelers PRESS in, waiting for the train.

Among the scattered pedestrians, a blonde girl (20s).

This is **SARAH** -- Upper East Side elegance with a rebellious streak.

She wears that Cherries In The Snow lipstick by Revlon and has blue-black hair and white skin.

Sarah's eyes scan the platform -- nervous looks. People watching warily in the dark.

She clutches her purse more tightly.

[Train Klaxon]

Sarah covers her ears.

The approaching Q TRAIN scrapes along the worn tracks, slowly crawling forward.

THE Q TRAIN ARRIVES AT THE STATION.

The cars stop. The doors SNAP open.

SUBWAY RIDERS pour out - late night crowd, not too heavy.

Riders start to push forward.

The YOUNG MAN HOPS off the train car in baggy army-green Chinos, landing with a THUD.

Doors close with a HISS -

An anxious beat -- CLOSE ON the awaiting crowd lifting their heads from their social media feeds...

GASPS.

WE HEAR A GROUP OF LINES FROM AWESTRUCK COMMUTERS STANDING ON THE PLATFORM: "Fuuuuck..." - "Did he do that while it was moving??" - "I've never seen anything like this..."



The YOUNG MAN has turned the train car into a comic book panel.

The graffiti has a puddle-like texture.

Dreamlike.

EVERYONE'S EYES move to the YOUNG MAN as he flips open his Inspector Gadget lunchbox with a flare for the dramatic.

He approaches the idling steel train car... a few deft touches...

He SPRAYS 'Spraekwon' down the right side.

Steps back.

EVERYONE just continues to stare.

A beat.

Another beat.

AND THEN THEY START TO APPLAUD.

Flash! Flash!!

We finally get a good look at this YOUNG MAN as he slides his "Burning Man" goggles off his eyes.

African-American.

He has very short hair. Slender and tall, but childlike.

Sarah watches his every move.

"Entranced." She can't look away.

A little boy RECOGNIZES the YOUNG MAN, amazed.

Runs up to him and tugs on his Chinos.

The YOUNG MAN crouches to address the little boy.

The boy looks at him wide-eyed.

The YOUNG MAN looks into the boy's staring eyes.

SMILES.

He stands.

AWESTRUCK KID
Where'd you learn to do that?

YOUNG MAN
Can control community college.

The YOUNG MAN moves across the platform.

Where -

A TRANSIT COP is waiting!

The YOUNG MAN lurches to a stop, turns back to the awestruck kid.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
Sorry little man, I gotta bounce!

The transit cop lunges, grabbing his arm... swinging him around, he loses his grip...

The YOUNG MAN doesn't hesitate.

Manages to break free... hops the turnstyle just as a GNARLY RAT takes its chances crossing the 'live' third rail -

We move away from the chaos to -

SARAH

Trying to get a better view.

Intrigued...

ZZZZZZZZ!!!

Suddenly, light floods the YOUNG MAN'S face -- the voltage from the third rail momentarily illuminates the subway tunnel with a yellow-orange glow.

A cosmic spark.

The YOUNG MAN sends Sarah the slightest of smiles -- one of those frozen moments.

Sarah waves, then is GUIDED OUT by her group of hysterical friends.

FRIEND #1

Oh my god. Sarah, do you know him?

SARAH

(nodding)

We take classes together.

FRIEND #2

He's so cute! What's his name??

The Q train ROARS away.

Sarah stands on the platform, looking back.

SARAH

Jalen.

CUT TO:

INT. JAMAICA, QUEENS. 111TH AVE. APT. 11. DAY.

Sunlight filters through the curtains...

CAMERA PANS to pick up **JALEN** lying asleep on the bed fully clothed.

A cell phone BEEPS.

He stirs and opens his eyes -

EXT. 111TH AVE. DAY.

Jalen steps out of his apartment building, SQUEEZES through an unhinged fence, and steps into bustling Coney Island street traffic.

Around him, shady apartment buildings with loud-mouthed boys standing outside of them.

The SOUNDS of squeaky metal wheels. Off Jalen's look...

A HEROIN USER approaches. Her wobbly shopping cart piled high with cardboard cartons, blankets and bottles. She looks ragged -- an oversized straw hat and toeless tennis shoes.

The haggard woman shuffles nearer.

HAGGARD WOMAN

Jalen, run to the store for me...

JALEN

I can't right now. I'm late for class.

A WINDOW suddenly opens from the second floor above. We see the **LANDLADY** (60s, Hispanic, hair still in rollers.)

She leans out the window.

Jalen looks up -

JALEN (CONT'D)

Morning Mrs. Landlord!

LANDLADY

Morning my ass! Stop painting that shit all over the hallway walls!!

Jalen goes to cross the street.

LANDLADY (CONT'D)

I sent you a Venmo request, boy.

JALEN

For what?

LANDLADY

Rent! Read the memo...

Jalen pulls his cell phone -- swipes down on the notification -- A VENMO post headed "RENT DUE" and a memo beneath saying "INSERT PATIENCE EMOJI THAT I DON'T FUCKING HAVE HERE!"

The window SLAMS shut.

Jalen shakes his head, pockets his phone.

JALEN

Ratchet.

He crosses the street and heads down a flight of stairs under a dilapidated sign.

"SUBWAY."

EXT. MANHATTAN. EAST 68TH ST. HUNTER COLLEGE. DAY.

A modern complex of three towers interconnected by skywalks.

STUDENTS mill around outside.

ANGLE ON Jalen - he twirls, bounces and flips his skateboard covered in spray paint and graffiti from edge to edge.

He skids to a stop...

... AND sets off towards the school entrance.

He strolls past Sarah -- nursing a latte and chatting with her best friend **MAVIS** (early 20s, jeans and bright red dreadlocks).

Sarah gives him a sly smile.

MAVIS

Oh my god. What is with you and these street art dudes? Are you trying to drive your father insane?

Both girls are huddled over their cell phones. A paperless 'Evite' on Tiktok to an event called: **"The Battle."**

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Speaking of, is Daddy Warbucks letting you go to this tonight?

Sarah rolls her eyes to the sky.

SARAH

Whatever.

MAVIS

Fuck, this is going to be so badass! I can't believe I have to babysit my psychotic nephew.

SARAH

I know! You should come after.

MAVIS

Who's Jalen going against, anyway?

Sarah scrolls downwards -- TWO THUMBNAIL pictures beneath the banner: **Tonight's Competitors.**

Mavis sidles up next to her for a better look.

The first pic is of Jalen. Sarah smiles. Mavis nudges her playfully.

THEN -

Sarah scrolls to the next competitor -- ENLARGING the thumbnail picture of an ASIAN MALE (early 20s) with gun metal eyes and a sinister look.

MAVIS (CONT'D)
Creepy. He looks like a demented
Edward Scissorhands.

Both girls lean CLOSER.

CLOSE ON SEAN'S IMAGE: He's sporting a 'mafia-style' Fedora. There's a big hole in the hat and some of his hair sticks out from it --

Both girls head towards the front entrance.

INT. HUNTER COLLEGE. CLASSROOM. AFTERNOON.

BORED STUDENTS watch the black and white movie on Art History.

ANGLE ON JALEN'S hand drawing TWO PROFILED HEADS, face to face, MAN and WOMAN.

The man's face is a self-portrait.... the woman's face resembles Sarah's...

He's sketching in charcoal, very calm...focused.

White tee-shirt. Same baggy Chinos.

MOVE THROUGH HIS SKETCH BOOK...an EVIL GRINNING MARVIN THE MARTIAN...a 40 OZ. LIQUOR BOTTLE being passed between a grinning HEATHCLIFFE AND THE FUNKY BUNCH...an EVIL HOODED YODA smoking a cigarette in a trenchcoat...a GREEN ROCK MONSTER in headphones...DATA FROM THE GOONIES kicking the shit out of the CAST OF STRANGER THINGS...

He FLIPS the sketchbook closed, discreetly SLIDES out another book.

He glances down to the large hardcover book laying open on the desk beneath:

WORLD PIECEBOOK 2

Private blackbook drawings of urban hooligans redefining the letterform.

He starts to flip through the pages -- enjoying himself.

His fingers stop on a page showing a jaw-dropping marvel-inspired "window down-panel piece."

The banner at the top of the page reads:

SKEME: Aka '3 Yard King.'

The caption beneath:

So Hard It Shines...So Sick It Drips...

Jalen smiles to himself.

SLAMS the piecebook shut.

His eyes dart up from the front cover to check on -

SARAH.

She's seated with her friends just a few chairs away.

Jalen smiles kindly at her.

Sarah stares back with a confident smirk.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN -

CLOSE ON: *Cherry In The Snow Lipstick*

CAMERA ZOOMS CLOSER -

EXTREME C/U: *Sulfur-blue eyes*

SLOW DISSOLVE:

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP. DAY.

CLOSE ON weathered HANDS enveloping the plastic sleeve around "The Origin of the Green Lantern."

Hands and voice belong to a man in his 70s.

This is **STAN**.

Small-time barber look about him. His tee-shirt says "Georgia Tech '83" and has a colorful Yellowjacket near the sleeve.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL -- The Comic Shop.

It's almost like we're in a vault.

Daylight might penetrate the windows if there weren't so many Marvel and Manga posters taped to them.

On the walls -- toys, games, figurines, merchandise and everything else a comic geek could ask for.

A GLIMPSE into the back of the shop reveals a maze of 'secret rooms' -

After a moment, a door creaks open.

Jalen enters from the back in an employee's shirt with a clipboard.

He walks one of the two slim aisles...

Past a colorful sofa...

Under a velvet rope... and HOPS up onto the counter with a quizzical look.

STAN

What's on your mind, son?

He can FEEL the young man's curiosity.

JALEN

How come when you look in the
mirror, right and left are
reversed, but up and down aren't?

Stan smiles, placing the first edition on the counter glass.

STAN

How's the fellowship going?

Jalen shrugs.

STAN (CONT'D)

Finally a way to get some of you
talented knuckleheads in school.
Which one of those wacky characters
are you going to draw tonight?

Jalen shrugs again.

JALEN

Whatever phrase or color hits me
when I'm up there.

STAN

You know, just saying something
like that would make most people
nervous.

JALEN

How come?

Stan looks at Jalen with a quiet intensity.

STAN

What are you thinking about right now?

JALEN

(shrugging again)

Tina Turner.

Stan chuckles, grabs a rag beneath the register and starts to wipe down the showcase glass.

STAN

Maybe if you win, they'll make up one of those names for you, like all those smart-aleck tabloids do.

JALEN

I already got names, Stan.

STAN

Oh yeah?

Jalen nods.

JALEN

I give myself a new one every week.

STAN

What'd you call yourself last week?

JALEN

SPRAEKWON.

STAN

(smiling)

I have a feelin' you're starting to like the attention.

Jalen doesn't respond to this.

Stan notices.

STAN (CONT'D)

What are you calling yourself tonight?

Jalen flashes a cocky leer.

JALEN
NOZZLECHEF.

Stan laughs.

STAN
You think you're going to win?

Jalen nods, but stays quiet.

STAN (CONT'D)
God help us show-offs...

A moment of silence as Jalen stuffs both hands in his pockets, drawing in a little -

And then he asks:

JALEN
Are you gonna come?

A LONG PAUSE.

Stan's EYES stay on Jalen the entire time.

After a short silence, the shop owner WINKS and says:

STAN
Wouldn't miss it for the world.

JALEN
Dope.

Jalen HOPS off the glass. Stan watches him return to his work with a sense of importance.

STAN
Who are you going up against,
anyway?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINATOWN. EXTERIOR. NIGHT.

WE PASS over smoking outdoor butcher shops and approach a run-down apartment complex.

ANGLE ON copper-green dumpsters covered with grease and pigeon shit.

The underside of the city.

CRAMPED TIGHT like the City of God.

We steadicam our way in front of a tenement house door that's COVERED in graffiti.

Camera PUSHES INSIDE to reveal -

A DISGUSTINGLY POOR AND DINGY interior full of Japanese Manga comics, empty malt liquor bottles, Krylon spray cans, AND -- a larger than life mural of **OZAMA TEZUKA** -- "God of Manga" -- painted across the water-stained wall.

The EYES in the image seem to follow the viewers as we move past sections divided inside the apartment with SOUNDS OF PASSION coming from behind.

A FEW OLD GUYS dump piles of cash onto a table in the corner.

Sounds of POTS and PANS FLYING about -

CUT TO:

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON a fatigued young man, dressed in black, bent over and breathing heavily...

This is **SEAN** (Asian-American, 20s).

Rough. Unwelcoming.

It looks like he shaves with a hunting knife. His mane of jet black hair sticks to his forehead with perspiration.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL

Sean, dragging his dying grandmother (**NAI NAI**) down the hallway.

SEAN
(in Chinese, subtitled)
Come on, Grandma. Just a little further.

MS. PARK, (Sean's mother, track marks up her arm) pokes her head out. She's seen this all before and doesn't appear to be the caregiving type.

MS. PARK
Hey, stop all the noise!

SEAN
I'll be home late tonight.

MS. PARK
What for?!

Somewhere there is a police siren.

SEAN
That contest. I told you about it.
They invited me.

A FLASH of life behind the mother's bloodshot eyes.

MS. PARK
For money, 'eh? You'll win?

Sean lets his head SMACK against the wall, breathing heavily.

SEAN
I'll try.

MS. PARK
Try my ass! If you don't win
they're going to throw us out on
the street!

She SPITS.

MS. PARK (CONT'D)
Then we'll all be saying goodbye!

With a whoosh she SLAMS the door.

Sean continues to pull his grandma on down the hall...

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS.

... and manages to get her into the bedroom and onto the bed.

On the bed, Sean has his hand atop his ailing grandmother's stomach; foreheads touching; breathing quiet.

Her eyes open softly. She puts a hand to her grandson's cheek.

NAI NAI
(in Chinese, subtitled)
It's so cold outside.

Sean drapes a blanket over her.

NAI NAI (CONT'D)
(in Chinese, subtitled)
*Make sure you cover your head. Cold
travels through the head.*

His grandmother's head drops on his shoulder softly. Sean holds her close.

SEAN

I will.

He lays her back on the bed, removes her slippers, and gently kisses her.

A loud CREAK. Sean turns -- his younger sister **MIRIAM**, eleven-years old, is standing in the doorway in a cute pair of Vans Checkerboard sneakers.

Absolutely adorable, with an eye-popping turquoise side-parted mohawk and a set of curious dark brown eyes.

A 'Cra Z Art' narrow paint brush dangles from her left hand.

The little girl's eyes fall on her ailing grandmother.

MIRIAM

Sean, the lights in my room went out again.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. SEAN'S STUDIO. LATER.

Dark.

Dingy.

Most of the wall area is bare and stark white except for a number of black-and-white sketches...

What dominates this room is a drawing board tilted up, with a straight chair, and a table littered with tubes of paint and brushes, a few ceramic pots, Krylon cans, beer bottles, and a full glass ashtray...

ANGLE on Sean drawing a strange-looking character (eerie humanoid features, bat-like wings).

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FRICK MANSION. EVENING.

An air of excitement!!

A line of PATRONS extends from the make-shift box office to the next street over.

The marquee above the sidewalk reads: **"THE BATTLE."**

INT. THE FRICK MANSION. EVENING.

A SURREALIST EXPLOSION in the Gilded Age mansion on Fifth.

Distinguished Old Master paintings... European sculptures... decorative arts...

A giant panel by the Dutch master Rembrandt, an authentic Whistler, Vermeer's 'Girl with a Pearl Earring...'

Guests taking it all in...sculptures, murals, lights - wall to wall socialites toasting Negroni's...docents, curators...

This is an EVENT.

There are around thirty eye-popping 'street' pieces hung for the show.

ART STUDENTS (dressed in their 'bests'), wander through the galleries laconic and unaffected... others intrigued.

ROMAN TISCH, worth a cool 45 million, and his wife **MITZY** wave from across the room to Jalen.

ADRIANNA CAMPBELL is among the many art critics present... faces we've seen... (Jerry Saltz, Carolina Miranda, Sebastian Smee...)

Jalen is surrounded by VOICES discussing Banksy, Basquiat...

ANDREW BOLTON (British), VIP Curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, swoops over with Sean in tow.

BOLTON
Jalen! Look who I found!

A BEAMING Bolton motions Sean closer. Jalen and Sean hold a brief stare -- nods of competition between them.

An awkward beat as they all stand there, Bolton between Jalen and Sean.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
Nothing like those pre-fight jitters, 'eh mates?

Everyone chuckles a little.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
I assume you two know each other, running in the same circles, yes?

Sean nods. Jalen does too, his eyes roaming.

JALEN
Yeah, we went to the same high
school.

BOLTON
That's right! Two Erasmus grads.

A clearly antisocial Sean pulls his cell phone and starts to scroll.

The crowd is getting thicker as more and more guests pour in.

And then -

Jalen spots Sarah across the room.

SHE LOOKS LIKE A DIFFERENT WOMAN.

Gone is the street chic attire. She's dressed like a debutante, with a glamorous Audrey Hepburn scarf and large sunglasses.

Sarah sees him looking.

Jalen smiles -- she can't quite hide her smile back at him.

Jalen watches her work the crowded room. Tender, amusing -
He can't take his eyes off of her.

Bolton's excited VOICE brings his attention back.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
I can't wait to see what you
gentlemen have in store for us
tonight. I'm sure it will be
nothing short of brilliant!

A short beat as Bolton's eyes SCAN the crowd of guests.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
Ooh! Follow me. There's someone I'd
like you two to meet.

Jalen keeps his eyes on Sarah as they walk into the next gallery, where -- **EDMUND STANHOPE** (70s, erudite, pompous) is holding court, sipping champagne, loving the attention.

The arrogant art buyer turns in his bar stool, acknowledging Jalen and Sean's presence.

He slaps his glass down on the bar with a THUD.

STANHOPE
Quite a great deal at stake
tonight, wouldn't you say boys?

He suppresses a belch.

STANHOPE (CONT'D)
Nervous?

Neither 'writer' responds, prompting Stanhope to lean in closer, beckoning them within earshot.

Then he lowers his voice and asks discreetly:

STANHOPE (CONT'D)
Tell me, which one of you is going
to make me my next ten million?

CLOSE ON BOTH 'WRITERS' GLARING AT EACH OTHER

CUT TO:

INT. THE OVAL ROOM. STAGE. NIGHT.

Onstage are two 10'x12' EASELS holding blank canvases.

BEHIND THEM -- one after another of Jalen and Sean's famous pieces on easels and against walls...

Bolton is standing between the easels like a stoic magician's assistant.

THE NOISE OF THE CROWD DIMS

Bolton turns and addresses the audience.

BOLTON
Graffiti, still illegal in most
places, has ironically become
accepted in galleries and museums.

Bolton gestures to the PIECES on display behind him.

BOLTON (CONT'D)
Once considered a delinquent act,
spray-painted murals have become
modern-day cultural currency,
bringing attention to blips on the
map and the makers behind the
Krylon cans.

Bolton makes eye contact with the competitors in the wings.

Jalen looks to Sarah.

She's seated at a small table to his left next to her father,
JEFFREY EDMUNDS (70s, #23 on Forbes Top 100).

Sarah inches forward -

BOLTON (CONT'D)

This evening's contest provides us with an opportunity to judge the age-old argument of which borough tags best -- Brooklyn or Queens, The Bronx or Manhattan. StreetWorld Magazine has been joined by various collegiate institutions across the city as co-sponsors for this event. Tonight's winner will not only be invited to next weekend's prestigious 'Wall Therapy', but will also receive a \$40,000 grant towards tuition at their respective institutions.

Bolton gives a sign and a LARGE DIGITAL COUNTDOWN CLOCK is rolled between the easels.

TIMER: 20:00

BOLTON (CONT'D)

After twenty minutes, one artist will prove himself to be the best.

A nerve-wracking tension shifts across the room.

You can practically smell the adrenaline.

ANGLE ON SARAH

Sitting with her feet together -

Her knees together -

Prim, as if waiting for an opera to start.

She starts to rock in her chair slightly -- excited, nervous.

BOLTON (CONT'D)

May the mightiest 'writer' prevail!

Jalen and Sean take to the stage.

The clock starts -

Both competitors approach their respective easels.

{Cannisters *Shaking*}

Sean pulls 'ecto-plasm' green and goes to work, waving his hand across the canvas.

His movements are *wild... furious... angry...*

His CREW OF MISFITS seated in the back go wild -- hands in the air, yelling.

Bolton gestures for silence, glancing around them.

A TENSE BEAT -- All eyes on Jalen.

Sarah STIFFENS in her seat.

Jalen takes a few steps back, eyes searching the easel -

FLASHBACK

We're in the comic shop. Jalen is seated atop the showcase glass, next to the register. Stan looks at him with a quiet intensity and asks, 'What are you thinking about now?'... to which Jalen responds, 'Tina Turner.'

BACK TO JALEN

He puts on a BOWLER HAT.

A LONG BEAT . . .

And then Jalen starts to spray ribbons of brilliant color.

He steps sideways...

Crouches...

Reaches...

The colors start to BLEED together. Every one of his movements illicit emotion. The difference in their methods is striking.

Jalen's style is freer.

He grabs a different spray cannister and goes back to work.

We CLOSE IN on Jalen's EYEBALLS -- as if the spray paint leaves an after image in his mind.

QUICK CUTS:

- Jalen tagging - an innate flair for the dramatic... lines, symbols, precise dabs...

- Sean tagging - always with uncontrolled fierceness...
swirls, colors, drips...

The audience is RAPT.

BACK OF HEADS tilting, angling for a better view...

STUDENTS LIVE-STREAMING...

GUESTS MURMURING...

HANDS reaching for cell phones and recording...

Sarah watches intently.

On stage, Sean finishes but Jalen continues to paint, eyes determinedly fixed to the canvas.

He sprays -- The audience GASPS.

Sean GLARES out at them.

Stanhope, seated at Bolton's table, head lolling towards his empty Negroni, leans over and whispers:

STANHOPE

This kid's going to be the next
Basquiat.

Murmurs of assent.

What we're witnessing is a surreal magic - AND, it's obvious that the audience feels lucky to experience it.

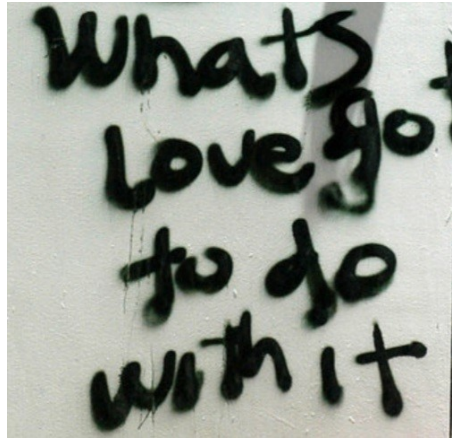
ONSTAGE: Jalen works his show with SUPERIOR SKILL and SHOWMANSHIP.

He flashes a smile when called for -- *finishes*, TOSSES the spent Krylon canister and steps back.

He's drawn a moving 'protest' piece:

THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON JALEN'S CANVAS: A *smartly-dressed billionaire partying on his penthouse balcony, staring down through binoculars over a project playground dotted with gravestones. The snobby male partygoer has a comic bubble over his head which reads: 'All You Need Is Love...' Staring back up at him is a small boy wearing tattered clothes. The boy is holding up a sign that Jalen has tagged in childlike black characters -*

The sign reads:



Tina Turner's iconic song line.

APPLAUSE fills the ballroom.

A grand GESTURE from Jalen -- he tags his nickname down the side.

NOZZLECHEF

Bolton steps on stage and gestures to Jalen - THE AUDIENCE ERUPTS.

Jalen removes his BOWLER HAT and THROWS it high in the air!

It sails back down and Sarah catches it.

LAUGHTER.

A STANDING OVATION.

Bolton, clapping his hands, utterly amazed.

The standing ovation turns Sean's attention... jealousy growing behind his eyes.

Jalen takes his time.

Confident.

MILKING IT.

SCREAMING and THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

Jalen BOWS, hops off the stage and walks down the aisle.

He flashes a sly grin. The crowd follows Jalen and Sean through an open door and into...

INT. THE FRICK MANSION. GARDEN COURT HALLWAY. EVENING.

... the Garden Court hallway.

Jalen receives the usual "congratulations" and "you're fucking awesome's" from his peers... but there's also a different sort here, art critics, wealthy financiers, Tiffany necklaces.

WE HEAR A GROUP OF LINES FROM ART CRITICS MAKING THE ROUNDS:
 "His observations. They're astonishing..." - "So twisted. Genius!..." - "This young man is going to set the world on fire."

There's adoration. Glasses clinking.

Bolton, with open arms of celebration, fights his way through the crowd towards Jalen.

EILEEN STEWART (the Gallery owner, waifish, high forehead) works the room, moving from curator to buyer.

WE SEE Jalen's 'Tina Turner' piece being ROLLED and PLACED at the feet of **FAISAL NAYEF** (tall, Saudi royalty).

Stewart PULLS Jalen from Bolton's grasp -- turns, and walks him directly in front of the Saudi prince.

NAYEF

I'll buy it for \$1,500.

As he extends his hand to seal the deal, he adds:

NAYEF (CONT'D)

Good deal.

JALEN

(nodding)

For you. That'll be priceless some day.

Laughter, but not from Nayef.

Jalen slips past Stewart with a nod. He lifts his head -- in his periphery, he sees Stan (same blue jeans, Georgia Tech tee) approaching the exit.

JALEN (CONT'D)

(waving)

Stan! Stan!!

Stan stops and turns -- GAZES over the crowd, and spots Jalen amidst the throngs of adoration.

He's being MOBBED.

Jalen enthusiastically waves him over.

A beat as Stan nods, as if to say: "Good job, kid."

And then he leaves.

CLOSE on Sarah standing in the middle of a crowd.

She surveys the confusion -- spots Jalen from across the room in deep conversation with Bolton.

Jalen turns, sees Sarah, grins and winks. The smile on Sarah's face returns the gesture.

Jalen courteously brushes aside some congratulatory remarks, EYES ON SARAH the entire time.

Sarah comes over. She stares at him.

Jalen turns to her. Smiles with a glint in his eye.

And then Sarah grabs Jalen's face, looks into his eyes and says:

SARAH
I hate high heels. I feel like
they're a plot against women to
intentionally slow us down.

Jalen laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)
My name's Sarah.

JALEN
I know.

SARAH
Wanna get outta here?

Jalen nods. He leaves the popping flashbulbs with Sarah.

They head for the exit together.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

The two come out into the brisk night air, start for the corner.

SARAH
So...

JALEN

So...

SARAH

I've met you before, you know? On the Q line.

Jalen nods.

A few beats as they walk The Ave. in silence.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Pretty good job in there.

JALEN

Thanks.

Jalen pops a piece of Fruit Stripe in his mouth, offering one to Sarah.

She accepts.

SARAH

(chewing)

Can I ask you something?

JALEN

Sure.

SARAH

Do you have butterflies right now?

Jalen nods.

Sarah stops. Jalen continues on for a beat... senses he's alone, turns back to her...

Sarah smirks, takes him by the arm and they continue on.

JALEN

I like you.

SARAH

Let's go 'bomb' a train.

JALEN

(stunned)

What?

Sarah shrugs.

SARAH

I've never tried it before. What, you don't think I can do it?

Jalen SNAPS his head across the street.

JALEN
Nonsense, I think you'll be a
natural. C'mon. Time to give the
transit system a face lift.

They sprint across the street then move under the El...
racing up the stairs... two at a time... the doors are about
to shut...

Jalen flings himself into the narrowing gap!

Sarah follows!!

Train pulling away.

Tail lights moving down the tracks into the night....

EXT. QUEENS. ELEVATED 'EL' PLATORM. LATE NIGHT.

The sound of muffled wind.

Jalen and Sarah step quietly onto a desolate platform.

JALEN
Where'd you go to high school?

SARAH
Dalton.

Jalen whistles like a construction worker.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Whatever. What about you?

JALEN
Erasmus.

Sarah takes in her surroundings -- on the light poles,
message boards, shop windows, wrapped along trash cans, - a
small girl's face on a pasted poster looks out.

The face is always visible, despite the layers of old rock
concert posters and advertisements.

SARAH
Jalen, who is that?

JALEN
Isabelle. She fell between the gap
when her mother was tagging one of
these trains.

Sarah's eyebrows RAISE. She edges closer to one of the young girl's pictures.

SARAH

They won't paint over her face.

Jalen pulls his phone -- checks the elevated 'El' schedule.

JALEN

We got less than ten minutes.

RATS scatter in fear.

SARAH

Tell me something, I'm nervous.

Her voice ECHOES.

JALEN

European 'writers' like Zebster - Bates. They know the EXACT time the train is going to arrive. Down to the second. They even wipe the Krylon cans for fingerprints just in case they get raided.

They continue deeper, coming to a single train car sitting idle on the tracks.

JALEN (CONT'D)

Walls are easy. They're like sheets of paper. But trains are like books...

His EYES take in the rusted steel panel -

JALEN (CONT'D)

...and they seem so big when you first step up to them.

The Inspector Gadget lunchbox comes out -

SNAP!

Sarah shines her cell phone light on the weathered train door as Jalen grabs hold of his signature black Krylon cannister...

He ROLLS the aerosol can in his fingers.

SARAH

What's your favorite color?

JALEN
Traffic light green.

After a quiet beat Jalen smirks and asks:

JALEN (CONT'D)
What's yours?

SARAH
Smurfette blue.

Jalen stands now, surveying his future canvas. He takes one of the Krylon cans, stands in front of the steel train door for a few moments.

JALEN
(framing his hands)
The bottom of the piece, I say,
about here.

In a crouch, Jalen grabs the 'smurfette' blue cannister.

[Shaking]

JALEN (CONT'D)
Just focus on the metal in front of
you like it's a comic book panel.

He SQUEEZES the cap until it POPS off -- hands the aerosol can to Sarah and winks.

JALEN (CONT'D)
That way, when it takes off, it's
just like flipping through the
pages.

Sarah takes the cannister.

She looks around. All dark and quiet.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Let's go. Get that name up!

Sarah raises the Krylon can and holds it six inches from the steel -

AND THEN she presses the top -

TSSSSS-

[Paint Spraying]

Jalen starts to laugh - *Sarah's fucking up royally.*

JALEN (CONT'D)
 Make sure you get your colors
 right. You don't want to put pink
 dots on a stop sign.

LAUGHTER.

Sarah's rushing, spraying at the speed of light... just
 thrilled to be holding an aerosol can..

The paint is thick. Blotchy. Uneven. And starts to *run*.

JALEN (CONT'D)
 The paint can't drip, and if it
 does, we call the drips tears.

Sarah giggles, she's having a blast.

JALEN (CONT'D)
 Drip too badly and they call you a
 crier.

Sarah starts to laugh, hands the aerosol can to Jalen.

SARAH
 Show me.

Jalen takes the Krylon cannister and gets into his crouch.

JALEN
 I like to give my letters biceps
 and big breasts...and my "O's"
 usually turn into safes cracked
 open with big-faced bills spilling
 out. It's kinda like word porn.
 Letters become candy canes, or they
 bubble up like popcorn.

TSSSS! He demonstrates.

JALEN (CONT'D)
 Or you could give 'em razor-sharp
 arrow edges that stab into one
 another.

His EYES focus.

JALEN (CONT'D)
 I feel like big letters, 'cause I'm
 gonna have them riding a wave.

TSSSSS-

JALEN (CONT'D)
Then you outline...fill in...

WHOOOSH!

JALEN (CONT'D)
Color...red, orange, yellow, if you
want it to stand out. Maybe a
little lime green.

He laughs.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Kool-Aid flavors.

Sarah is mesmerized, for the second time this evening.

Jalen's still in his zone -- the paint covers and sinks into
the subway door panel like tattoo ink.

JALEN (CONT'D)
3d... then you fade...maybe put a
trim over it...

He goes up on his tippy toes -

JALEN (CONT'D)
If you want a background, you put
your skyline or whatever. Little
stupid shit here and there.

In mere seconds, Jalen has tagged a Punky Brewster-type teen
with pink lipstick, hiding behind a STOP SIGN, with her hands
wrapped around a handgun.

He SPRAYS a MAGICAL MIST with the swipe of the wrist to
finish off the gleaming chrome affect...

*The drawing looks like it could be on the cover of a graphic
novel.*

Sarah is at a loss for words -- Jalen's skills are OFF THE
CHARTS.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Now the message. What do you want
it to say?

Sarah's still speechless -- Jalen picks up on her overwhelmed
facial ingredients.

JALEN (CONT'D)
(crouching down)
How about-

TSSSSS-

He stands and steps back, giving Sarah room to see.

CLOSE ON the octagonal red STOP sign: Above the word STOP, Jalen has tagged:

Never

Beneath, he's tagged:

Peaking

NEVER STOP PEAKING

JALEN (CONT'D)
Play on words. Whaddya' think?

SARAH
I love it.

Jalen hands the cannister back to her.

JALEN
All that's left is the signature.

SARAH
What should I call myself?

Jalen shrugs, checks his watch.

JALEN
You better hurry up.

SARAH
I don't know!

Jalen raises the aerosol can, turns back to the piece and sprays 'SEXTRA TERRESTRIAL' at the bottom.

Sarah LOVES it.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I can't believe I just bombed my first train!

JALEN
Yup. You're one of us now. Only the graffiti fiends 'bomb' at this hour of the night...

CUT TO:

INT. SEAN'S STUDIO. LATE NIGHT.

Sean paces.

AGITATED.

He PLUNGES a pallet knife and cuts deeply into an easel.

He SLASHES . . .

. . . again and again, ripping the canvas to shreds . . .

INT. L TRAIN. LATE NIGHT.

Jalen and Sarah sit quietly, swaying gently with the train's movements.

EXT. JALEN'S APARTMENT. STAIRWELL. LATE NIGHT.

Jalen lingers at the top of the stairs to his apartment.

Sarah is standing one step below.

Jalen looks like he's going to KISS her, but doesn't.

Instead, he SHRUGS and turns to go inside.

Sarah looks after him like she doesn't want the night to end.

Jalen puts his key in the lock.

Turns.

JALEN
Did you have fun tonight?

Sarah nods.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Good. Me too.

An awkward beat.

JALEN (CONT'D)
The Sextra Terrestrial. I liked
that.

And then he enters, closes the door and LOCKS it.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE JALEN'S APARTMENT. LATE NIGHT.

A light rain. Sarah looks up at the building: 1111 E. 111th.
She's nervous, but makes a decision.

INT. JALEN'S APARMENT. LATE NIGHT.

Jalen sits on the bed, his head in his hands, his feet on the floor. He sits, not moving...

FAINT FOOTSTEPS... high heels on metal stairs...

Jalen sits... the FOOTSTEPS grow louder.

Jalen sits.... the FOOTSTEPS are even louder as they reach the top of the stairwell.

Jalen shifts.... the FOOTSTEPS approach his door... A KNOCK.

Jalen crosses the room and opens the door.

Sarah stares back at him. Her wet hair clinging to her face.

He takes her in.

She's so beautiful.

INT. JALEN'S APARMENT. MORNING.

Sarah looks towards the room, then back to Jalen with a mixture of awe and curiosity.

His STUDIO -- they move slowly towards the door.

Jalen lets Sarah precede him, flicks a light switch on the nearest wall.

INT. JALEN'S STUDIO. MORNING.

A bare bulb lights the room.

The oblong studio is full of the smell of paint and paint thinner -- the type of smell that sticks to your skin.

There are LOTS of toys around. Strange, handmade toys... neon skateboard wheels... popular cartoon action figures (Marvin the Martian, Dennis the Menace).

A tin full of crayons -- the original Crayola 64-pack with that built-in sharpener!

Papermate Pink Pearl erasers -

Kid stuff.

Over the doorframe Jalen has painted faces of little angels crying.

There are drawings and papers strewn everywhere in the painting-area, which also serves as the living room-area.

There are books all over the floor and leaning on the wall, including:

Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant's iconic book *Subway Art*.

Oil-stick crayons. HUNDREDS of them. Many are mashed on the floor.

Windows plastered with stencils.

Jalen hangs back as Sarah takes it all in.

She stands expressionless.

SARAH

My God.

She turns to him.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It's like I'm in a pediatrician's office at the Louvre.

Jalen laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You live by yourself?

JALEN

Nah, this is my cousin Wynton's place. He started letting me crash here last summer. I'd kick him as much rent as I could.

SARAH

(looking around)

It's nice.

JALEN

Thanks.

SARAH

Is your cousin coming home soon?

A brief silence. Sarah turns and sees Jalen shake his head.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Work?

JALEN
Rikers.

SARAH
Oh.

Jalen stands there smiling. His eyes come alive, taking Sarah in.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What about your parents?

An awkward pause.

Sarah nods, but doesn't push -- continues to walk the studio.

To her left -

Scores of mason jars alive with paint, charcoal, brushes;
stained rags, spray cans on the floor... a dilapidated wooden
stool... a large lithograph of The Chrysler Building...

A faded SELF-PORTRAIT of a frightened JALEN at 11.

And other sketches and tags, against the walls... taped to
the windows...

SARAH (CONT'D)
Who taught you how to do this?

JALEN
No one.

Sarah turns to Jalen.

SARAH
You just started going out and
spraying things when you were
young?

He shakes his head.

JALEN
I wasn't ready for that yet. I
perfected my penmanship in the back
staircase of my apartment building
in Gun Hill.

Sarah continues to look around, listening.

JALEN (CONT'D)
I just wanted to master my
signature.

Jalen's EYES drift, thinking back.

JALEN (CONT'D)
I kept practicing. All day. All
night. I started cuttin' school and
just working on the wall in that
staircase. I knew I was getting
better because the respect on the
street started to come.

That confident smirk.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Extra nods at the barber
shop...pretty girls glancing at me
at basement parties. Then I got
into Manga.

Sarah is hanging on Jalen's EVERY word.

SARAH
(eyebrows raised)
Well??

JALEN
What?

SARAH
Then what happened?

A LONG BEAT -- after which Jalen says:

JALEN
I started to spread like the flu.

Sarah sends a flirtatious grin Jalen's way, continues looking
around.

Jalen walks up next to her, gestures towards a sketch, 'in
the making,' of a sexy, cartoon-like girl with an ambiguous
facial expression...

The character he's working on -- **LADY KRYLON.**

CLOSE on the easel: 5'x7' canvas. An edgy fantasy realism...
doll-like, yet devilish in appearance... alluring...
exuberant, BOLD colors...

Full of pinks, purples, and glitz.

JALEN (CONT'D)
I'm not finished with it.

SARAH
What are you going to call her?

JALEN
Lady Krylon.

She leans CLOSER - the character is still taking shape --
but, *the detail and originality of the piece is exquisite.*

JALEN (CONT'D)
I'm just trying out new colors. I
draw her every time I'm on the
phone.

SARAH
I see.

Jalen turns back to **LADY KRYLON**, trying to give the
'character in the making' his attention.

Sarah continues to STARE, gazing in awe at the canvas.

Silence for a few beats, and then Sarah says:

SARAH (CONT'D)
Fuckin' dope.

She FINALLY steps back, when her foot SLIPS.

She looks down. To her right, tossed haphazardly on the
floor.

A magazine:

CLOSE ON cover: BASQUIAT: NEW ART, NEW MONEY - September 19,
1997.

Beneath, a headlining show with Jean-Michael Basquiat and
Keith Haring at the Sidney Janis Gallery.

Sarah bends, starts to leaf through. We see clippings --
"*...volcanic talent. Undisciplined. Raw...*"

Jalen moves towards the window.

JALEN
He never read. He would just pick
up a comic, or mythology book and
look for words that attacked him.
(beat)
(MORE)

JALEN (CONT'D)
Everything he did was an attack on
racism.

Sarah's EYES focus on one of Jean-Michel's paintings:

Basquiat's Crowns: 1982, Acrylic, ink on paper -

Kings with black crowns covered in tar and feathers -- words
childishly scrawled backwards or scratched out.

She leans CLOSER.

SARAH
What do all the little S's stand
for?

JALEN
Suzanne. They did a lot of drugs
together.

Jalen is pensive.

JALEN (CONT'D)
When he started to become famous,
he became furious because people
were writing about his "ghetto"
childhood. Labeling him as a
graffiti artist. Primitive.

SARAH
How come that bothered him so much?

JALEN
Because they don't invent
childhoods for white artists.

INT. HUNTER COLLEGE. ART CLASS. DAY.

The lights go on, the VIDEO ends and the projector is shut
off.

There are a dozen STUDENTS, heads buried in their phones, a
few Bohemians, and Sarah.

She's STARING at a blank canvas in front of her, clearly
frustrated.

Directly next to her, a stuck-up KNOW-IT-ALL GIRL is
explaining her indecipherable sketch to THE PROFESSOR.

KNOW-IT-ALL GIRL
The dripping cubes at the top
represent Earth's ice sheets.
(MORE)

KNOW-IT-ALL GIRL (CONT'D)
It's my response to climate
change... something that's very
close to my heart.

PROFESSOR
Isn't this a moving piece, class?
Very high-level.

The PROFESSOR approaches Sarah, sees that she's struggling
and pats her on the shoulder.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Don't force it, Sarah. It'll come.

The know-it-all girl glances over at Sarah and smirks.

EXT. HUNTER COLLEGE. COURTYARD. LATE MORNING.

Jalen is sitting atop his flipped-over skateboard on the side
of the field.

He's watching girl's soccer.

Sarah runs up to him.

SARAH
Hey!

JALEN
Hey. I got something for you.

Jalen leans over, unclasps his lunchbox and pulls out a
Parisian street crepe from Lady M Confections.

Sarah accepts the delicacy in her hand like a churchgoer at
communion.

She BITES into it... Jalen watches...

He's enamored with her every move.

Sarah flashes a thin-lipped pout. She has a smudge of sweet
cream stuck beneath her cheekbone like a freckle.

SARAH
Does it turn you on to watch me
eat?

Jalen's lips spread into a thin smile.

He flips his skateboard ala Marty Mcfly and angles it to 68th
street.

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP. STOCK ROOM. DAY.

The room is low and large.

Parallel beams run across the ceiling.

Jalen sits perched on a small wooden library ladder flipping through a box of comics.

To his left, nestled behind several cans of paint thinner --
A stack of sketchbooks.

Jalen pulls a sketchbook from the pile and starts to rummage through it.

His eyes WIDEN.

He studies another sketch, glances back at the cover of the sketchbook.

There is a Manga-like figure drawn, standing on powerful legs, one arm raised, the other arm holding a medieval-looking weapon.

Stan emerges from the darkness.

JALEN

Stan, are these yours?

STAN

Those were my father's.

Jalen studies the character on the page.

He leans closer... glances at the character's face: a hectic array of dark, heavy charcoal.

JALEN

Damn, he was good.

STAN

Yeah, he was.

(beat)

And then he got drafted.

Jalen steps down, moves towards the back of the room, approaches the corner and pulls the tarp off of something small and rectangular-shaped.

Underneath is a METAL LOCKER.

Jalen bends down, fingering the rusted padlock.

STAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't touch that.

JALEN
What is this thing?

Stan sidles up from behind with a frown on his face.

STAN
Something my father brought home
from the war. It's called a foot
locker.

The two stand there for a moment.

JALEN
What's in it?

CLOSE ON Stan... he gives Jalen a look.

STAN
An autographed pair of game-worn
Air Jordan 1s.

JALEN
What! Are you kidding me?

STAN
Of course I am. C'mon, let's head
back upstairs.

He turns to leave.

Jalen's still STARING at the foot locker.

STAN (CONT'D)
Jalen.

Jalen finally stands.

Stan waits at the bottom of the steps.

JALEN
Hey, Stan.

STAN
Yeah?

Jalen TURNS -- flashes that confident smile.

JALEN
Did I mention I met a girl?

SMASH CUT TO:

'BOMBING' MONTAGE'

MUSIC kicks in as Jalen takes Sarah with him around the city.

- BRONX: 238th Street Bridge. Sarah, sitting closely, watching Jalen tagging the large steel girder in the middle of the span. CLOSE ON PHRASE: **"ALL WE ARE SPRAYING IS GIVE WORLD PIECE A CHANCE."**

- MANHATTAN: A large sign painted in gold, block lettering above the glass reads: Magnolia's Bakery. Jalen watches Sarah devour the bakery's signature cup of 'banana cream pie.'

- BRONX: The 'Unoffical Wall of Fame.' Jalen, holding Sarah's hand, guides her as she SPRAYS on the epic South Bronx block. *(And it's still there if anyone wants to look.)* CLOSE ON PHRASE: **"YOU HAVE NO WRITE TO REMAIN SILENT."**

- QUEENS: Leli's Bakery & Pastry Shop. Jalen sketches Sarah as she daintily eats a powder-drizzled Linzer Torte.

- MANHATTAN. Marquee Dance Club. Sarah and Jalen dancing together. Close. Sweaty. EDM music oscillating... all the twenty year-old boys want to buy Sarah a drink.

- BROOKLYN BRIDGE. Sarah is filming. Jalen, (BEATS headphones on, Krylon cans in hand) is dangling upside-down from the lower span of the iconic Brooklyn Bridge, the dark water of the Hudson WAITING BELOW.

CUT TO:

EXT. POOL DECK ON LONG ISLAND. EVENING.

A vivid landscape with a burnt orange sky...

Speed.

But not cars.

Wheels.

Little wheels.

Skateboards.

Sarah is sitting on a cot on the pool deck, unwrapping a mouth-watering Chocolate Eclair and nodding her head to the WU-TANG MUSIC that's blasting from towering speakers.

A LINE OF SKATERS stand beside her.

Gazing in awe at -



ANGLE ON Jalen, hopping up onto the ledge and grabbing a beer from an open cooler.

JALEN
(mumbling to himself)
So sick it drips... So hard it
shines...

INT. SUBWAY. NIGHT.

Jalen and Sarah stand next to one another, waiting for the subway back to the city.

Sarah's eating a candy bar.

SARAH
Okay. Blue cartoon characters. Two
at a time. Go.

Jalen doesn't miss a beat.

JALEN
Papa Smurf. Skeletor.

SARAH
Sonic the Hedgehog. Neytiri.

JALEN
Cookie Monster. Dr. Manhattan.

SARAH
The Aladdin Genie. Goofy.

JALEN
Mystique. Gonzo.

SARAH
Ooohhh! Okay...Rainbow Bright. Dory
from Finding Nemo.

JALEN
Sub-Zero. The Tick.

Sarah's out -

SARAH
Keep going.

JALEN
Sullivan from Monster's Inc.
Sapient from Hellboy. Pluto.
Huckleberry Hound. Osmosis Jones.

SARAH
Jesus.

JALEN
The Beast from X-Men. Stitch from
Lilo and Stich...

Sarah looks at him playfully.

SARAH
Are you done?

Jalen nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Good. Can we go home now? I think
my sugar high is wearing off.

Jalen clears his throat. Takes a bite of her candy bar.

JALEN
Just gotta make one more stop.

EXT. CEMETERY. NIGHT.

Rain RIPS down -

A mossy HEADSTONE takes shape. Here, a grave marker... there,
a mausoleum... and no lights.

Jalen and Sarah stand over a grave. Jalen's eyes are INTENSE
as he steps closer to the tombstone which reads:

WINSTON WALKER (1954-2008)

The trees, bristling with the wind, murmur softly.

*FLASHBACK/QUICK CUTS - Jalen's childhood is worn with sounds:
chairs against walls; "You fuckin' comic freak!";*

the snake-belly side of a belt, the soft thud of a ten-year old being shoved against a wall; "All you do is sketch! Sketch!! SKETCH!!!"; tears that mix with Honey Smacks cereal; "Draw me, Picasso. Draw your drug addict mother!"; a hand the size of a catcher's mitt slapping; the fresh SLAP of a cheek; "Shhh," whisper. "I don't wanna go inside yet." "Why not?" "Because the lights are still on."; a lighter being pressed to skin beneath an earlobe...

The shot changes from the WOUNDED FACE of the little boy and MORPHS INTO -- Jalen who still has the burn scar beneath his right earlobe.

Unexpectedly, Sarah tears up.

Jalen bends and spray paints a 'question mark' on the gravestone -- grabs Sarah and they scurry away through a maze of narrow, spooky pathways.

Rain begins to make the paint run down the gravestone.

INT. JALEN'S APARMENT. LATE NIGHT.

Jalen and Sarah lay next to one another in bed.

Jalen is mindlessly doodling on the headboard with a Sharpie.

JALEN

Spain is different. Pichi and Avo.
It's less Marvel. It's all ancient
gods, demigods and muses.

SARAH

Who did you want to be like?

JALEN

Crash and Mist. Those were the
Bronx mentors. I met them at the
Nuart Festival in Norway when I was
fourteen.

SARAH

Your parents let you go to Norway
when you were in middle school?

JALEN

Not exactly.

Sarah gives Jalen a sweet, long kiss.

SARAH

Did you have your own little crew?

JALEN
Of course.

SARAH
What did you call yourselves?

JALEN
The throw-up committee.

Sarah laughs.

JALEN (CONT'D)
We used to ride around the East Village. Me and this girl who called herself 'Purple Bitch.' MF Doom blastin.' Titties out in her Dad's convertible...

Sarah's eyes WIDEN at his last comment.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Titties out means top down on the convertible.

Sarah sits up, defiant.

SARAH
I know.

JALEN
You thought she was taggin' with her titties out, didn't you?

SARAH
NO!!!

Jalen, breathing Fruit Stripe gum on her, smiling now.

JALEN
Yeah, ya' did.

SARAH
Whatever! What else did you get into?

JALEN
Light-skinned girls and Italian ices.

Sarah gets up and pulls on her underwear, not looking at him, and leaves the room.

Jalen watches her go...

INT. HUNTER COLLEGE. ART CLASS. DAY.

PAN ACROSS the classroom filled with unimpressive collegiate art: dumb drawings of fighting superhero-types, still-life apples, sunsets over the ocean, etc...

Sarah enters late and drops her sketchbook on her desk.

PROFESSOR
(perusing)
Some very interesting pieces here,
class.

The professor picks up Sarah's sketchbook and leafs through it.

We see several sketches, including a spray painted drawing of a Jessica Rabbit-inspired character strolling down the street, hand-in-hand with a Chino-wearing Bugs Bunny.

Sarah has written her name across Jessica Rabbit's chest... *but, with a redefined letterform.*

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
I see someone's found their
inspiration.

Sarah smiles. The professor shows this page to the class.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
And what do we think about this?

KNOW-IT-ALL GIRL
It doesn't speak to me.

PROFESSOR
Tell us why.

KNOW-IT-ALL GIRL
I think it's tacky and loud.

PROFESSOR
Really? I love the idea of using
spray paint.

KNOW-IT-ALL GIRL
Whatever.
(turning to Sarah)
Where'd you learn to do that,
playing three card monte with your
new boyfriend?

Scattered chuckles.

A HIPPY-ISH MALE STUDENT speaks up from the back.

HIPPY-ISH BOY
I dig it. It's inspired.

A long pause as the professor and the class STARE at the sketch.

PROFESSOR
I think it's remarkable, Sarah...
(another long pause)
...Keep it up.

Sarah smiles, sends the know-it-all girl a dirty look.

EXT. CHINATOWN. SECOND STREET. LATE NIGHT.

CLOSE ON Sean: Tilted Fedora with Krylon cans in his GRASP -- looking more demonic than ever.

He moves through the debris... drifting out of sight through broken storefront windows.

Slipping past a ring of police cars.

He vanishes in the dark... he has climbed onto a ledge...

Sewage water Oozes from the surrounding streets.

Sean looks off down the street.

He checks both ways then vaults over -- he lands softly on the pavement.

He waits, then motions to the OTHERS -- meet **SLOP, CHARLIE, and BONE.**

THREE HOODS.

They are extremely big and wear flashy, but tasteless clothes.

One by one they follow -

A moment more. Slop expertly cuts through the shadows to take up position against the El pillar as scout.

Senses something -- a police cruiser coming, roof lights FLASHING.

SEAN pulls back into the shadows.

They all pull back.

INT. SEAN'S STUDIO. NIGHT.

All is quiet.

The SHRILL tinny ringing of an old-fashioned wall phone breaks the SILENCE.

BRRRRRING! BRRRRRING!!

CLOSE on Sean: Wearing a vintage "BLONDIE: ONE WAY OR ANOTHER" tee-shirt, sitting cross-legged in a charcoal pentagram in front of a 5'x7' canvas.

He's SPRAYING -- curved, razor-sharp chrome spikes along a shoulder.

The phone continues to RING.

Sean turns.

Stacked unevenly on the floor in the corner, a large stack of similar looking white envelopes: **Eviction notices.**

BRRRRRING!!

Sean CLOSES his eyes, starts to hum softly to himself. The call eventually goes to voicemail.

FEMALE VOICE

Good evening, Mr. Lo. This is the Bursar's office at Adelphi. This is a courtesy call to remind you that if bills remain unpaid for more than one term, the college reserves the right to forward a student's account to a collection agency...

Sean OPENS his eyes, places the aerosol can down.

Continues to hum LOUDER.

The song is familiar...

The competition that he lost. The one that would have covered his next term at Adelphi.

SEAN

(mumbling)

*'One way, or another,
I'm gonna find ya',
I'm gonna getcha, getcha,
getcha, getcha,'*

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP. DAY.

CUSTOMERS milling about.

Jalen sits perched on a small wooden library ladder between the stacks.

He's sketching LADY KRYLON in his light blue 'XL' mixed media sketchbook -- STARING at the picture as if trying to melt it with his CONCENTRATION.

Stan approaches from behind.

STAN

You know, if you think about it
hard enough, you can make those
images come to life.

Jalen SNAPS back to reality -- closes the sketchbook.

JALEN

Hey Stan, what's your favorite
movie?

STAN

Apocalypse Now.

Jalen pulls his cell phone.

He types 'Apocalypse Now' into the query field -- EXPANDS on one of the images.

STAN (CONT'D)

What's yours?

JALEN

(putting phone away)
The Dark Knight.

STAN

That was a good one, too.

A beat -- Jalen's antsy. His leg starts to shake like a waiting patient in the ER.

Stan NOTICES.

STAN (CONT'D)

Big competition tomorrow.

JALEN

I really want to win it.

Stan nods, glancing at the hand-painted flyer taped to the cover of Jalen's sketchbook announcing "WALL THERAPY" tomorrow at 2pm.

The contestants are listed below.

Stan raises an eyebrow.

STAN
Stepping up in weight classes, huh?

JALEN
Yeah, some big names are coming out.

STAN
I see. Including you.
(beat)
Do you know what you're going to draw?

JALEN
Not yet.

STAN
Good.

Stan heads towards the back.

STAN (CONT'D)
Then all those other big-time
'writers' don't stand a chance.

A short silence.

Jalen lifts his head.

He looks as if he wants to say something...

And then he hears:

STAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tell your girlfriend to save a seat
for me.

Jalen breaks into a wide GRIN, looking down.

CLOSE ON ADVERTISEMENT: "Wall Therapy...witness the CREME of the CRIME!"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WEST 4TH STREET. THE CAGE. DAY.

MUSIC. TURNTABLES.

A large banner tied to the rungs of the surrounding metal fence reads:

"WALL THERAPY"...presented by StreetWorld.

The West 4th street courts have been sectioned off into FOUR CIRCULAR ARENAS -- each with a blank 6'x8' canvas in the center.

The Cage is JAMMED with people -- SPECTATORS, OFFICIALS, and of course, 'WRITERS' from all over the world.

The legends came out to play -- CRASH, FUTURA, LADY PINK, ZEPHYR, LEE, ETHER, KATSU, BANOS, BANKSY (*just kidding...*)

EXT. THE CAGE. LATER.

The various 'writers' are being announced as they make their way to their respective rings.

Just then, over the LOUDSPEAKER, Jalen's name is announced...

ANGLE ON: Jalen, skating towards RING #4.

On the sidelines, Sarah watches, silently rooting.

TIME CUT:

EXT. THE CAGE. LATER.

The bleachers are FILLING UP -- Sarah descends, nudging her way to the front of a crowd.

Towering in the middle of The Cage, a chart tracks the eliminations down to the finals -- Jalen's name is the victor in several matches.

A small seed of pride blossoms within.

CLOSE ON THE ELIMINATION BOARD: Jalen's name is already up there as one of the final competitors -- then the name of his opponent appears...

GAWK

TIME CUT:

EXT. THE BLEACHERS. LATER.

Jalen is seated with Sarah and Stan (sporting the third G'-Tech shirt we've seen so far this film).

An anxious Sarah, obsessively scraping a rainbow shave ice, leans into Jalen and whispers:

SARAH
Who is this guy?

JALEN
He calls himself GAWK.

FLASH on a Hispanic male (early 20s) seated in the first row, getting his Air Jordan's shoe shined.

He's sporting a BRIGHT PINK MOHAWK.

The ENTIRE LEFT SIDE of Gawk's FACE has a tattoo that makes his profile look like a machine represented by pistons and gears.

His tee-shirt says "Haagen-Das EFX" -- an ode to the once famous 90's rap duo.

SARAH
Is he good?

JALEN
Have you ever seen The Dark Knight?

Sarah nods.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Yeah well, Christopher Nolan himself hired GAWK to paint the mural of Batman that covers the ceiling in the director's bedroom.

She moves toward Jalen.

SARAH
Seriously?

JALEN
He's most known for his Dank Top character. You'll probably see it today. Traditional Newsboy hat and striped suit that doesn't fit. The last one he painted sold for \$74,000 at auction.

SARAH
So, I guess he's pretty good.

JALEN
(nodding)
I'm better.

Stan smiles confidently. Pats Jalen on the back as he rises -

JALEN (CONT'D)
Watch. We're both gonna use aerosol
cans...

Jalen's EYES fall on GAWK making his way down the bleachers.

JALEN (CONT'D)
But he's going to spray. He's going
to mist...

Jalen tightens his backpack -- starts to make his way down.
Halfway down the steps Sarah calls out:

SARAH
(yelling over crowd)
What are you going to do?

Jalen turns, looks up, and finds those NERVOUS EYES in the
sunlight.

JALEN
I'm gonna paint.
(glances at Stan, winks)
Call this my ode to Kubrick.

Sarah crosses her fingers TIGHTLY, signaling "good luck."

GAWK meets Jalen at the bottom of the bleachers -- sends a
COCKY leer his way.

GAWK
Been a ghost, homeboy. What you
been up to?

JALEN
Oh, you know...makin' my way on
fire escapes.

GAWK smirks.

BOTH 'writers' head towards THE CENTER RING -- Krylon
cannisters in their GRASP...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAGE. ARENA 1. LATER.

THE FINAL ROUND

EXCITED CHATTER... EDM music oscillating... the EMCEE at the microphone...

Jalen, Inspector Gadget lunchbox in his clutches, enters the ARENA and approaches the blank canvas.

He's wearing a red Mexican *charro* hat.

EMCEE (O.S.)

*... with a style heavily influenced
by early anime such as Speed Racer
and Shadow Warriors, let's give a
five borough welcome to our other
finalist, a newcomer, Mr. Jalen
Walker from Hunter College!*

LOUD APPLAUSE.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

*Ain't nuthin' to it but to do
it...let's see what y'all got!!*

THE TIMER STARTS:

Both 'writers' go to work.

SPRAY-OFF MONTAGE:

- Jalen, checking the wind -- popping in a piece of Fruit Stripe.

- GAWK, cutting away the negative space on his stencil by hand, leaving stencil 'islands.'

- Jalen, SNATCHING the "burnt-orange" cannister from the lunchbox and getting into his crouch.

- TSSSSS!!

- GAWK, spraying: low to medium pressure.

- Jalen stepping sideways in sweeping motions, dusting color across a large area.

- GAWK sweeping from one side to the other, past the edge of the paper.

- GAWK sprays with vibrant color, adding different gradations.

He finishes. Removes the stencil, leaving the positive of the cutout -- he's tagged his signature Dank Top character riding a monstrous BLOOD RED TIDAL WAVE over N.Y.C.

CLAPS. APPLAUSE.

TIMER: 1:19... 1:18...

Jalen's still SPRAYING -- *he's in a zone.*

Forgetting the audience... entranced.... possessed...

His eyes "REPLAY" images of all the great comic characters that he grew up tracing in his sketchbook.

Ghostly texture.... Controlled clouds...

Aerosol can DROP -- Jalen walks back and stares at the piece.

A smoky haze... that burnt-orange setting sun... trees of the tropical forest, bordering a yellow stream...

Jalen has brought Saigon, Vietnam to N.Y.C. -- painting the opening scene of Stanley Kubrick's Apocalypse Now.

The style has the same consistency of an Adobe Illustrator.

It's that good.

A stunning remake of the iconic one-sheet -- *but, not quite...*

Someone from the AUDIENCE calls out:

AUDIENCE MEMBER
All that's missing is the chopper!

CLOSE on Jalen's face, looking into the bleachers and giving Sarah a subtle nod.

STEADICAM -- SARAH'S DELICATE HAND unzipping Jalen's backpack, moving a large object around inside.

Sarah bends, placing both hands beneath the object.

TILT UP from the backpack to Sarah climbing to the top step of the bleachers, holding a SYMA S107 Helicopter Drone!

EVERY EYE IN THE CAGE watches Sarah release the drone. It sails over the crowd, EXPLODING into view as it glides past the sun-burnt sky of Jalen's Apocalypse Now mural.

A carbon-copy of Kubrick's badass opening scene.

EMCEE
HOLY SHIT! THAT SHIT IS CRAZY!!

The audience breaks into a MASSIVE STANDING OVATION. Everyone watches Jalen step forward and tag this one -

SPRAYZILLA

SCREAMS. LAUGHTER.

Across the ring, GAWK bows, doffing his pink mohawk in Jalen's direction -- *And then, he ROLLS his spent Krylon cannister across the blacktop...*

It STOPS right at Jalen's feet. A silent signal in the 'writers' world -- *admitting defeat.*

Jalen looks out, sees Stan sitting next to Sarah and reacts. He blinks, takes a bow, smiling warmly towards them.

CLOSE on Stan giving Sarah a jab in the ribs and rising. He cups his hands around his mouth.

STAN
 Way to go, Jalen!!

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE THE CAGE. EARLY EVENING.

The madness SPILLS out onto West 4th Street. The crowd edges and begins to split -- suddenly Jalen appears with Sarah at his side.

He's still wearing his Mexican *Charro* hat. CROWDS of autograph SEEKERS compete for his attention. Amidst the chaos, Sarah pulls him close. Looks him in the eye -

SARAH
 I'll tell you one thing.

JALEN
 What's that?

SARAH
 You wear that hat.

She pulls him closer and they KISS.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE JALEN'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

Sean stalking Sarah and Jalen as they ascend the steps.

Watching...

INT. JALEN'S APARMENT. EVENING.

Sarah and Jalen enter. Jalen, *still* in his Mexican Charro hat, remains near the doorway.

Sarah removes her scarf... kicks off her boots, moving across the room -- she delicately unbuttons her blouse and let's it fall to the floor. She bends... begins to unzip her leather skirt, turning to Jalen as she does... and then she disappears into his bedroom...

EXT. CHINATOWN. SUBWAY. EVENING.

The clatter of a train breaks in...

In the BG - weathered, tiled mosaics spelling out "CANAL/BOWERY ST" -- Sean is tagging a weird looking Manga-like character atop an idling train car with disturbing vigor.

INT. JALEN'S APARMENT. MORNING.

Jalen and Sarah lay in bed together. Her reading glasses reflect a series of colorful web pages, all covering Jalen's big win at "WALL THERAPY."

Sarah CLICKS on ArtCrimes.com -- reads from the homepage...

SARAH

...a visual rebel with a style heavily influenced by Dais, SAMO, and Tracy 168. At 22, Jalen still shuns the commercial art world, preferring to operate on a canvas of subway cars, street signs, and dumpsters...

Jalen's eyes almost roll out of his head. Sarah flips the laptop closed, cuddles up to him.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That was so exciting yesterday! The tournament director said he's never seen the crowd react like that.

Jalen turns from her embrace, rises.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

JALEN

I want to show you something.

INT. JALEN'S STUDIO. MORNING.

A pale glow from the window shines down in Jalen's studio -- balled up sketches lie scattered about.

The (5'x 7') charcoal sketch of **LADY KRYLON** is almost complete.

Jalen has added a couple more muscles, electricity, water...

Sarah has entered and is fascinated. All she can say is:

SARAH

Whoa.

Sarah approaches tentatively, like a first-timer in front of the Mona Lisa.

She exhales audibly, shaking her head in wonder.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hey, Jalen...

JALEN

Yeah?

SARAH

What do you think's going to happen next?

SMASH CUT TO:

JALEN WALKER MEDIA MONTAGE

90's Hip Hop music kicks in as we follow the ERUPTION of Jalen's fame on the graffiti scene.

- A JOURNALIST from the New Yorker, sits with an iPad interviewing Jalen..."Tell me Jalen, how would you describe your style?" - "Vicious."

- Jalen, in jeans and a black 'PIECE FOR ALL MANKIND' tee-shirt, standing in front of the iconic 'writers' bench' -- (149th and Grand Concourse) -- MARTHA COOPER, 'StreetWorld' photographer, focuses her camera. FLASH!!

- Jalen, crouched in front of a bench, SPRAYING -- colorful swirls of 'highlighter' yellow descend. CLOSE ON the STREETWORLD COVER resting next to his lunchbox: WE CATCH A GLIMPSE of the heading: **"JALEN WALKER... Is this the next Basquiat?"**

INT. JALEN'S APARTMENT. DAY.

The front door opens.

Sarah steps aside, and an IMPOSING MAN in his 60s steps in, looks the place up and down.

The man enters the studio and stares down at a concrete slab sitting in the middle of the room.

ON IT: A comical street scene from The Jetsons titled 'HIS BOY ELROY.'

Jalen has appeared.

The man picks up a pen and paper from Jalen's desk, scribbles on it and hands it back to Jalen.

Jalen considers this, fixes the man with a steady gaze.

The man smiles at Jalen and heads for the door.

ART BUYER

Someone will be over in one hour to pick up the piece. I prefer you to be present. Good day.

The man whisks out of the apartment, leaving Jalen dumbfounded, staring at the paper in his hand.

SARAH

Well, that was pretty fuckin' cool.

She LOOKS at the check.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Jesus.

SILENCE for a beat.

The RINGING of Sarah's cell phone shatters it.

She answers.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hi...uh huh...really? Oh my god!...okay, I'll let him know...yup, sounds good. I love you, too...okay, bye.

She disconnects.

JALEN

Who was that?

SARAH

My father. The New Yorker wants to do an article on you.

JALEN

Really?

He stares at her, unsure.

SARAH

Oh, come on! This will be good for you. My father set up a small dinner party. They want to interview you at his apartment and then follow you around New York City.

CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S FATHER'S PENTHOUSE. EVENING.

Socialites balancing dinner plates in a spectacular 12-room duplex.

A suite of entertaining rooms... a grand corner living room... a large formal dining room... AND an impressive library, lined from floor-to-ceiling with books and paintings, spanning over 40' along Fifth Ave.

Upper. East. Side. Money.

The elevator opens.

Sarah steps out dressed in a dark, tight pullover and skirt.

Jalen follows wearing his scuffed, faded Chinos and a white tee-shirt.

He's sprayed a Rubix Cube on the front -- its colors dripping into a pool of paint at the bottom.

WE HEAR A PHONE CONVERSATION WITHIN EARSHOT: "He's here! Just drop by...you've got to see his work...Yes. The Pierre...I look forward to it...See you soon."

Sarah's father, enthralled his guests with Upper East Side gossip, crosses the sprawling room to greet them.

MR. EDMUNDS

There's my girl.

(to Jalen)

Jeffrey Edmunds.

Jalen just nods.

SARAH
Daddy, allow me to introduce you to
Jalen Walker.

MR. EDMUNDS
Such a pleasure.

He motions grandly to the surrounding opulence.

MR. EDMUNDS (CONT'D)
Welcome to my humble abode.

INT. PENTHOUSE LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

Guests from the dinner party have left for the night.

Sarah and her father watch proudly as **A JOURNALIST** from the New Yorker sits with an iPad, interviewing Jalen.

JALEN
How come we didn't do this
interview in Brooklyn?

JOURNALIST
Oh, I just figured...

An awkward pause.

JOURNALIST (CONT'D)
Maybe for the follow-up. How's that
sound?

Jalen smiles sarcastically.

JALEN
Sure.

His eyes fall on the iconic lacquered "Chinese Red" soles of the journalist's Louboutin shoes.

JALEN (CONT'D)
You might wanna downgrade to some
Reeboks, though...
(laughs to himself)
Dudes still piss in the hallways
where I live.

Sarah shifts, embarrassed.

The journalist adjusts herself in her seat.

JOURNALIST

Tell me about your parents, Jalen.
Are they-

JALEN

(interrupting)
My father's dead, and my mother's
in an insane asylum.

Jalen is uncomfortable...HIS VOICE MECHANICAL.

JOURNALIST

So, it's just you? That has to be
tough.

Jalen feigns a smile.

JALEN

I'm just grateful that the rise of
the genre allows me to live off my
art.

JOURNALIST

Street artists challenge tradition.
Do you consider yourself a rebel?
Does it get your adrenaline going
to hop turnstyles and elude transit
cops?

Jalen eyes the journalist, tilting his head sideways like a
confused canine.

And then he says:

JALEN

You should give more importance to
the artwork than the artist.

The journalist lifts her head, taken aback at Jalen's tone.

She notices Jalen nodding his head to the Charlie Parker
soundtrack wafting through a set of bookshelf speakers, and
tries to lighten the mood.

JOURNALIST

Ahh. Charlie Parker. One of the
best. You like him?

JALEN

As a metaphor.

JOURNALIST

Care to expand?

Sarah cringes, slightly -- *Jalen's in a mood.*

JALEN

Sure. Charlie Parker, as great as he was, couldn't even walk through the front door of the hotels and clubs that he was playing in.

For the first time in the film, Jalen seems agitated. Sarah approaches, placing a calming hand on top of his.

JALEN (CONT'D)

He had to enter through backdoors and kitchens. So, in my eyes, he's a metaphor.

NOW Jalen motions to the opulence surrounding him...

JALEN (CONT'D)

A metaphor for my place in this starchy white art world.

Mr. Edmunds regards Jalen with disdain. The journalist speaks up, desperate to save the interview.

JOURNALIST

I was only referring to-

JALEN

(interrupting)

He entered through the back door. Just like me. Broke into your world in a way that's never been done before.

Everyone watches Jalen raise two fingers to the sky. An authentic BRITISH BUTLER whisks over with a decanter of port, removing its stopper.

Jalen swipes the decanter out of the butler's grasp, sending it crashing to the floor.

GLASS SHATTERS!

The journalist turns to Mr. Edmunds, unsure how to respond.

Behind Jalen, Sarah approaches cautiously.

SARAH

(behind him; easy)

Jalen, Jalen...

JALEN
I'm not some rebel kid looking to
break windows and get chased by
cops! I'm a writer!

Jalen swings around, smiles at the STUNNED onlookers.

JALEN (CONT'D)
I'm All-City! My name's on every
train. Don't fuckin' forget it.

Then he grabs the journalist's camera and throws it CRASHING
into the wall.

MR. EDMUNDS
Sarah, get this jerk out of my
apartment!

EXT. PENTHOUSE. BALCONY. NIGHT.

Jalen walks to the edge of the balcony and looks out over
N.Y.C.

Hears someone behind him - Sarah.

Sarah places her hands on the rail, looking out into the
night with him.

JALEN
I'm sorry.

SARAH
Don't be. I shouldn't have pushed
this.

She takes his hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You're uncomfortable.

Jalen shakes his head.

JALEN
I'm afraid, Sarah.

SARAH
What are you so afraid of?

Jalen looks deeply into Sarah's eyes.

JALEN
I'm afraid I'll be a flash in a
pan.

INT. CHINATOWN. BAR. NIGHT.

Cigar-smoke dark.

Sean is seated by himself on the corner stool, leaning over his drink.

The slight, seasoned BARTENDER is hunched over the bar top, watching a prize fight on the television.

SEAN
(in Chinese, subtitled)
Another one.

BARTENDER
No.

Sean SLAPS the empty rocks glass on the bar top. Then, he says calmly:

SEAN
(in Chinese, subtitled)
Another one.

BARTENDER
(turning away from him)
I told you I don't want you in here.

Sean SWIPES the rocks glass, sending it crashing to the floor. The bartender bends behind the bar and comes up with an aluminum baseball bat...

CUT TO:

INT. SEAN'S STUDIO. EVENING.

Sean, eyes closed, is seated in the dark - HUMMING, insanely.

THE CAMERA TRAVELS PAST a stack of envelopes with the Adelphi University seal stamped at the top.

One envelope has been teared open. On the single white sheet of paper poking out -

"...cancellation of your class schedule at Adelphi University. You will still be responsible for your balance in full. Adelphi University may withhold transcripts, grades, and other services..."

A loud THUMP from somewhere in the house.

Sean turns.

His little sister Miriam is behind him.

The little girl just stands there, staring at Sean with tears pooling in her eyes.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

The lights are out. Sean enters the hallway.

He moves quietly past his mother's door to his grandmother's bedroom.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. GRANDMOTHER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The grandmother is lying on her back on the floor.

Sean moves to her, lays his head on her chest.

SEAN
(in Chinese, subtitled)
Grandma?

SILENCE.

He reaches to his grandmother with his hand, gently taking her in his arms.

SEAN (CONT'D)
(in Chinese, subtitled)
Grandma!

We stay on Sean's grief-stricken face over the grandmother's body as he lays her with her for a moment.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. HALLWAY. EVENING.

Sean stumbles down the corridor to his mother's bedroom...

INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM. EVENING.

Room is dim; littered with glassine bags, and hundreds of miniature vials with tiny colored plastic tops. On the wall, some graffiti...

ANGLE ON Sean's mother.

She's out of it. She's in another world, looking at Sean as if she's lost what little mind she has left.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Darkness.

Shattered light fixtures hang above -

Sean has his head SUBMERGED in a sink full of water.

He BURSTS FREE, YELLING PRIMALLY -- collapses to the hard tile floor, SOBBING.

A small trash can FIRE burns to his left, providing light.

Inside, we see Jalen's picture on the StreetWorld cover -- the magazine HISSING and SNAPPING as the fire crawls over it.

The headline catches Sean's eye.

"JALEN WALKER... Is this the next Basquiat?"

Sean's cries become a PRIMAL HOWL and we dissolve to...

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

The shop is closed.

Stan, listening to Creedence on a cassette player with cheap headphones, sweeps the floors between the aisles.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

A LINE of four CHROME SUZUKI GSXR 750s pull up across the street.

On them are Sean, Bone, Slop, and Charlie.

They study the comic store.

No lights visible within.

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

Stan, headphones BLARING, walks into the back of the store and enters the bathroom.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

The hoods alight holding cans of KEROSENE.

They cross the street.

Sean HURLS a garbage can through the comic shop's storefront window.

CRASH!

He clambers through the shattered glass, followed by the others.

He points. Everyone tip toes stealthily. They POUR the fluids over the place.

Sean has already lit a match. Bone lights a fuse and THROWS it -

It SLIDES towards the back -

BLAM!

The Molotov cocktail explodes.

The comic shop's windows BLOW OUT!

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

Neighbors hear the commotion and peek out.

Sean, Slop, Bone and Charlie come flying through the battered storefront window.

They land on the sidewalk.

The bikers REV their engines and take off -

EXT. BRONX. THE 'WRITERS' BENCH. NIGHT.

Jalen hangs with a couple 'writers' at the 149th Street and Grand Concourse station.

An OBESE HISPANIC KID (late teens) wobbling shakily atop a motorized scooter, skids to a stop near the curb.

CHUBBY KID

Yo, Jalen!

Jalen raises his head.

JALEN

What?

CUBBY KID

The comic store's on fire, dude.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

A curtain of rain is beating down.

Jalen rounds the bend in the road and comes into view of the comic store.

He FREEZES.

SIRENS BLARING.... CAR DOORS OPENING.... BOOTS RUNNING ON PAVEMENT...

The COMIC SHOP is UP IN FLAMES -- gold and green awning in SMOLDERING PIECES.

Realization sweeps over Jalen like a nightmare.

AND THEN -

A stretcher rolls past.

The small rotating WHEELS hit a snag in the street -

The draped white sheet falls partially to the side -

Jalen eyes Stan's corpse, the skin on the side of his face burnt beyond recognition.

A beat.

Jalen's eyes fill with water.

His cries turn to sobs, tears running freely.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND COMIC SHOP. NIGHT.

Sirens in the distance. Jalen, racked with grief, runs across the alley to the partially opened back door.

He glances towards the street, watching onlookers crowd and point -- SWINGS the metal door open, sneaks inside...

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP/BACK ROOM. NIGHT.

...and shuffles along the back wall, looking out towards the large window bordering the street.

His eyes fall on the FLASHING red lights of fire trucks and emergency vehicles in action out front.

A short silence as Jalen, back PRESSED flat against the wall, quietly makes his way towards a staircase -

INT. STAIRCASE. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON Jalen's sneakers descending quickly down the wooden steps...

INT. STOCK ROOM. NIGHT.

Through small windows the THUNDERSTORM batters the burnt building's facade.

Jalen pauses at the bottom step, sadness rising like a wave within him.

He swallows hard and stumbles through the darkened area... past wooden magazine racks, paint cans, rags...

He stops.

A MOMENT of stillness. Jalen, in shadow, takes a second, letting his eyes adjust. His gaze moves to the far wall -

INSERT:

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH OF JALEN AND STAN MAKING SILLY FACES IN THE STOCK ROOM

He remains where he is, lost in thought, a brooding shadow in the near darkness of the basement.

Suddenly -

Jalen looks up. In the middle of the room -- THE METAL FOOT LOCKER.

It's lying on its side, knocked over from the blast.

And the spring lock holding the lid shut is busted open...

Jalen walks over and gently slides the spring lock up.

The locker opens revealing an OAK BOX.

Taped to the back is a typed correspondence. It's sitting next to a POLAROID PHOTOGRAPH showing a wavy-haired MIDDLE-AGED SOLDIER sitting beside an ELDERLY JAPANESE MAN.

The Japanese man is mixing a large cauldron of red paint.

On the broad white strip beneath the photo is handwritten:

"TEZUKA AND ME"

Jalen's gaze shifts to the letter.

CLOSE ON correspondence: **ARMY REGULATION 630-10**. We see a couple lines from the heading -- "...absence without leave, desertion..."

Jalen's gaze returns to the oak box. He STARES at it -- about 18 inches long, wrapped in an old cloth.

A small, brass-colored skeleton key sits beside it, atop what can only be described as a rolled piece of *parchment paper*.

Jalen unwinds the cord around the handscroll, begins to unfurl the outer cover.

The almond-tinged scroll shows a beautifully illuminated etching of what might be a magician.

The etching incorporates three lines of text -- *all written in Japanese*.

Jalen immediately pulls his cell phone, opens Google's 'Scan & Translate' app, and lets the screen hover over the first line of letters...

WE HEAR a 'Siri' type voice deliver a direct translation, complete with pronunciation.

JALEN'S PHONE

The image will only come alive once completed.

Jalen's eyebrows FURROW. He scans the second line...

JALEN'S PHONE (CONT'D)

Manifestations will take on their own identities.

JALEN

What the-

Third line...

JALEN'S PHONE

To kill, saturate with invisible pearl.

Jalen pockets his phone, pushes the scroll aside and steps back.

He bends down, considering. Uncertain.

His hand nears the box.

JALEN

Fuck it.

He takes the key, inserts it into the lock, and TURNS IT -- the oak box starts to shake furiously before POPPING OPEN with an engaging sound.

Inside: Two ancient-looking spray paint cannisters.

Jalen removes a single can from the box, his eye catching A SET OF JAPANESE CHARACTERS stamped across the back.

He ROLLS the strange-looking cannister in his palm.

Design-wise, intricate: A curved, extended nozzle... a mixture of silver and black inlaid carvings... golden electrum paneling...

The cannister looks as if it were made by a bladesmith for a Japanese Samurai.

A unique work of art in chrome -- the mounted grip on the bottom reminiscent of a sword guard. On the handle, a curved symbol that Jalen doesn't recognize.

Thunder CLAPS.

Jalen quiets -- replaces the cannister, closes the box and readies to exit. At the staircase he TURNS and looks back at the antique oak box sitting inside the locker.

A LONG BEAT . . .

And then Jalen takes the mysterious spray cans with him.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

The storm has abated.

Jalen emerges from the burnt building and continues down the street.

Several yards away, HIDING behind a dumpster... Sean WAITS.

Then follows at a distance.

Jalen walks down the Ave... Sean is SHADOWING him... Jalen crosses the street... Sean picks up the pace and tries but is HELD UP for a second by a passing UBER...

He reaches the other side. Jalen is gone, but Sean sees him disappear down an alley.

Sean slips down the alley -- a cloud of pipe smoke wafting around him.

WATCHING.

SEAN
What are you up to?

EXT. NEARBY ALLEYWAY. MINUTES LATER.

THE TIP OF A MATCH is scraped across the bricks and flares to life.

Jalen tosses the match into a nearby trash can, setting the refuse ablaze -- AND, lighting his make-shift workstation with an orange glow.

Inhale. Exhale -- a sudden image flashes in Jalen's mind.

FLASHBACK - *a moment of gaze between Jalen and Stan across the comic shop floor.*

Jalen steadies his breath.

He looks around. All is quiet.

JALEN
Okay, Stan. This one's for you...

He grabs one of the cannisters.

The color panel beneath the actuator is reminiscent of one of those Bic '4 color ink-in-one' ball pens.

The one that allowed you to choose between blue, green, red, and black.

Only this cannister has sixteen different color buttons wrapped around its guard.

Jalen's index finger hovers over 'bumblebee' yellow.

He rises. Raises the can and holds it to the wall.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Let's start with that Yellowjacket
you like so much.

He PRESSES his finger down -- the yellow paint starts to cover the bricks in a fine mist.

Jalen starts to work the rectangular wall.

Squatting... reaching... short streaks... thin lines...

Behind him, a NOISE.

Jalen turns to the dumpster.

Nothing.

He turns back to the alley wall -

TSSSSS-

More selectively now he works with the 'onyx' black -

Irregular lines. *Antennae.*

He starts to spray WIDE -- extending several feet in long, arcing movements.

A fine mist. His eyes are alert, exploring, oblivious to everything around him -

Jalen stops SPRAYING.

CLOSE ON the spray paint: A SHIMMERING SUBSTANCE -- *like there's something lurking beneath...*

Jalen gazes into the piece. The colors start to GLISTEN, GLOW, PULSATE -

Jalen studies it for some time.

Sensing something. His eyes filled with wonder.

It's almost as if a magnet is pulling him towards the piece...

He stares deeper -

DEEPER into the paint, until -

The Yellowjacket lifts its head, ROLLS its eyeballs and starts to CRAWL OUT OF THE WALL!!

Jalen backs away -

SPEECHLESS.

INSERT:

THE MAGICAL KRYLON CANNISTER DROPPING TO THE PAVEMENT

CLANG!!

CLOSE ON Jalen's eyes. He rolls them to one side, then turns his head.

Is anyone else seeing this??



A powerful GUST -- AND THEN THE IMAGE BEGINS TO MOVE!!

BUZZZZZ!!

WINGS starts to FLAP -

A HEAD LIFTS -

THE YELLOWJACKET is ready to take flight!

A flash of Jalen in the basement of the comic shop, scanning his phone over the final line of text on the scroll...

JALEN'S PHONE
To kill, saturate with invisible
pearl.

Jalen's eyes SNAP open.

He ROLLS the cannister in his palm, frantically SEARCHING for the 'invisible pearl.'

THE YELLOWJACKET IS HOVERING RIGHT ABOVE HIM!!

JALEN
(awestruck)
The fuck? This is some Pan's
Labyrinth type shit!

He glances at the indicator on the spray nozzle -- flicks the power switch and turns to face the manifested image.

He PRESSES the indicator button -

An incredibly powerful STREAM OF ENERGY emits -

Carbonized particles start to RISE -

Jalen circles the Yellowjacket, prodding it with the stream of INVISIBLE PEARL -

He saturates the image in wide strokes and the Yellowjacket dissolves into a POOL OF BUBBLING PAINT.

CLOSE ON Jalen's face:

FROZEN -- he's in shock.

CUT TO:

INT. JALEN'S APARMENT. NIGHT.

Sarah enters, but has to PUSH against **LADY KRYLON** easels stacked against the door.

The room is FILLED with THEM.

SARAH
Jalen?!

Sarah surveys the confusion -- spots Jalen sitting on the windowsill, bathed in shadow.

She runs to him.

INT. JALEN'S APARTMENT. LATER.

Jalen is seated on his bed, pensive.

On the other side of the room, Sarah looks at a FRAMED PICTURE of Jalen and Stan taken in a diner.

She moves towards Jalen.

As Sarah sits beside him, she says gravely:

SARAH
I only met him a couple times, but
he always seemed so proud of you.

In Jalen's eye:

A single tear.

JALEN
I'm going to miss him.

Sarah looks at him.

TENSE.

SARAH

Do they know how it happened?

Jalen shrugs.

He rises and moves towards the bureau.

JALEN

Hey, Sarah?

SARAH

Yeah?

JALEN

Something else happened tonight...

INT. JALEN'S STUDIO. LATER.

BLACK

[SHAKING]

Soft whispering -

JALEN'S VOICE

Who's your favorite comic book character?

SARAH'S VOICE

I don't know. I like the girls from 'Curb Stomp.'

[SHAKING STOPS]

JALEN'S VOICE

What about your sister?

SARAH'S VOICE

She likes Dora the Explorer.

[SHAKING RESUMES]

TSSSSS -

FADE UP ON Jalen's sketchpad to reveal a painting of a mischievous Dora the Explorer-lookalike wearing a bright orange shirt, and thick purple leg warmers past her knees -

At first it looks like a regular doodle, but a wonderous image takes shape:

And it's struggling to climb off the blank page...



BACK TO SARAH IN LIVE ACTION

She gazes into Jalen's eyes.

FASCINATED. She starts laughing as she looks over his shoulder.

SARAH
This is the coolest magic trick
I've ever seen!! Is it a hologram?

TSSSSS - '*Invisible Pearl*' -- Dora dissolves. Sarah looks on, jaw dropped.

JALEN
Nope.

SARAH
But, how the hell? Jalen!

JALEN
I found it in this military locker
that Stan kept hidden in the stock
room.

Jalen stands, moves towards the bureau.

JALEN (CONT'D)
There's two of 'em.

Jalen opens the top drawer. Removes the oak box.

A short silence -- AND THEN WE SEE JALEN'S FACE DROP.

SARAH
Jalen? What's the matter?

CLOSE ON Jalen staring into the ANCIENT OAK BOX.

He notices something and hesitates.

JALEN
(opening oak box)
Oh, shit...

INSERT:

The padded compartment that held the second spray can is vacant.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. LATE NIGHT.

CLOSE ON a sneaker stepping into the POOL OF BUBBLING BLACK AND YELLOW PAINT.

THE CAMERA TILTS DOWNWARDS and ZOOMS IN just as a hand is opening -- *the hand is grasping the other MAGICAL SPRAY CAN.*

CLOSER -- THE SPRAY CAN begins to SHIMMER... to vibrate with its own magic and inner life.

A bolt of lightning EXPLODES across the distant cityscape -- CAMERA LIFTS AND MOVES INTO THE DARK PUPIL -- *gun metal eyes.*

PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

Sean, grinning maniacally.

BLACK SCREEN

INT. STAN'S COMIC SHOP. STOCK ROOM. LATE NIGHT.

The sound of muffled wind. A dark silhouette crosses CAMERA --

CLOSE ON Sean's hands removing the scroll from the locker.

INT. CHINATOWN. SUBWAY DEPOT. LATER THAT NIGHT.

THE SUBWAY TRAIN SITS IDLE OVER THE CAMERA. Oil pan, frame rails, double differentials and gas tanks --

PULL WIDE to reveal a GRAFFITI COVERED TRAIN CAR -- *we recognize one of Sean's tags.*

FLASH ON Sean SPRAYING lines, symbols, precise dabs. He steps back and STARES at the spray can in his palm.

SEAN
Well...

A strange, gurgling NOISE -- THEN SEAN'S eyes go WIDE.

INT. SEAN'S STUDIO. LATE NIGHT.

Lightning CRACKLES outside. The room is FILLED with moving boxes covered in duct tape.

Sean is SPRAYING on a 5'x7' canvas.

DING!

Cell phone notification:

Sean pulls his mobile... looks down at the screen... SWIPES down...

ART NERD: *"Jalen Walker...New Art, New Money..."*

Sean brings the screen CLOSER -- starts HUMMING.

SEAN
(reading article)
Graffiti prodigy...best in the
city...

A patch of light falls on the magical spray can...

SEAN (CONT'D)
Wait until they see what I spray
next.

EXT. QUEENS. CEMETERY. DAY.

Jalen and Sarah stand over a grave.

Jalen steps closer to the tombstone which reads:

STAN OLSEN (1961-2022)

Sarah bends and places her hand on Jalen's shoulder. Both of his eyes fill with tears.

EXT. CHINATOWN. CEMETERY. EVENING.

Storm clouds are gathering.

Sean, standing alone, tosses two roses (one black/one red) between neighboring gravestones and walks off.

INT/EXT. UNMARKED CAR. EVENING.

One ACS worker at the wheel, one in the passenger seat.

Sean's little sister Miriam is in the back seat.

She's looking out the window without expression.

The sedan exits and approaches a four-story, slate grey structure. The sign outside reads:

JCCA - FOSTER HOME

INT. SEAN'S STUDIO. NIGHT.

Windows all shut. Newly placed incense burns.

Sean sits directly in front of his easel, Bone and Charlie in chairs around him.

Slop enters. He looks at Bone -- head buried in a carton of noodles, sloppily guiding them into his mouth with his fingers.

SLOP

Ahh...my good friend Chin Tu Fat!

Charlies starts to laugh. Sean silences Charlie with a GLANCE, places the MAGICAL KRYLON CAN on the floor and stares at it.

He eyes his men, peering at them intently.

SEAN

What do you think of the theory
that Jalen is the best graffiti
artist in the city?

The hoods look at each other and all SHAKE their heads.

Sean stares at them, unsmiling. He presents THE MAGICAL KRYLON CAN to them very seriously.

The others inch closer, staring at the strange lettering.

Sean stands, crouches in front of the blank canvas, and PRESSES the RED color tab.

A small red circle appears -- BLOOD red.

Bone and Charlie exchange a glance. Sean continues to stare.

EXPECTANT.

The circle spreads rapidly, covering the entire page.

EVERYONE in the circle is transfixed.

Charlie and Bone exchange another glance. A gust of wind throws open a window with a CRASH!

Charlie and Slop jump.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Problem?

Both SHAKE their heads in fear.

Rain starts to pour in. The hum of the ELECTRICITY and GENERATORS FALL SILENT. EVERYONE in the circle exchanges frightened glances.

CLOSE ON Sean's thumb PUSHING DOWN on the 'black onyx' color button -

AND THEN HE STARTS TO TAG OJIN

TSSSSS -

TIME CUT:

INT. SEAN'S STUDIO. LATE NIGHT.

Sean, breathing frantically, steps back with *his finger hovering over the 'invisible pearl' color button in anticipation* -

The hoods are all standing --mouths open. Eyebrows RAISED. In front of them, a FIGURE appears to be coming out of the easel.

OJIN is manifesting.

The image uncoils onto the floor, spiraling around the legs of the wooden easel -- its form, suffused in red like it's stepping into a garish Italian horror movie.

It rights itself, taking shape -- this is something straight out of Guillermo del Toro's sadistic mind.

A sickle-limbed aberration. The creature stands over seven feet tall with a set of large eyes that never seem to close -

It has four arms -- the lower pair being slightly shorter than the upper pair, and four hands tipped with scalpel-like fingerblades.

Its powerful chest pumps rhythmically in and out... 2-foot long horns grotesquely protrude from its spine... a set of bat-like wings lie folded against its back...

ALL EYES MOVE TO SEAN AS HE STEPS BEHIND OJIN AND CONTINUES TO SPRAY ON THE NOW BLANK CANVAS.

Suddenly a HORDE OF CICADAS come buzzing through the easel, swarming! The hoods swat at them -- their faces register confusion, fear.

BLACK SMOKE surrounds them -- OJIN licks its lips like a reptile.

FWAPPP!!!! **OJIN'S** long tongue flicks out, trapping a couple of cicadas and pulling them back into its mouth.

Their chitinous shells CRUNCH noisily in its shiny jaws.

Slop goes WHITE. **OJIN** observes them, unmoved. It jerks towards the hoods in disembodied steps.

The hoods scream, running for cover behind a couch. Despite the PRESSING danger, they peer over the tattered couch, AND-

WATCH as **OJIN** rises several inches off the ground!! Sean immediately SATURATES the humanoid-animal in a WIDE arc of 'invisible pearl.'

OJIN wafts smokily away -- AND THEN IT DISSOLVES INTO A POOL OF BLACK PAINT ON THE FLOOR

SHOCK CUT from Slop and Charlie to --

EXT. CHINATOWN STREETS. NIGHT.

Ruined buildings, a SMALL CARAVAN OF SUZUKI GSXR 750s comes into view...

SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

- Sean, with Slop, Bone, and Charlie as lookouts -- tagging a OJIN ALL ACROSS N.Y.C.

- A furious BANK MANAGER in an almost empty vault -- standing in a puddle of black paint on the marble floor.

- Sean showing off his lavish new apartment to his crew. An epic 100" flat-screen TV on the ceiling above the bed... a life-sized Pinky and the Brain statue wearing a tee-shirt reading: "TAKE OVER THE WORLD!"

- Sean, generously dispensing stacks of cash from his penthouse balcony. He pitches the bills with a grand gesture... \$100 bills flying about... crowds of PEOPLE chasing them...

- A quick shot of Sean yelling desperately, struggling to fully saturate a towering **OJIN** with the 'invisible pearl.'

ANGLE ON a cracked flat screen television -- the famous red and white CNN logo comes into FRAME.

PANIC GRIPS NEW YORK CITY

Crawling across the news ticker at the bottom:

WHO IS THIS MYSTERIOUS VANDAL?

-- AN ANCHORWOMAN on the evening news.

ANCHORWOMAN

... four more buildings, including the iconic Chrysler Building, were completely demolished last night. There are still no clues as to who, or what, is doing this...

EXT. STREET. EVENING.

Sarah walks briskly with a WIDE smile on her face. She's on a Facetime call with Mavis.

MAVIS

This weekend?

Mavis' camera rotates -- she's in the tub smoking a joint.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Wait, where are you guys going?

SARAH

Some place in Connecticut. Danbury or something...

MAVIS

Sarah!

SARAH

I know! It's just for the weekend, but it's the first time we're going away together, so I'm excited.

MAVIS

When are you leaving?

SARAH

I'm meeting him at The Cosmic. We're going to leave right after.

Mavis smiles eagerly.

MAVIS
I'm so jealous! You're so in love!

Sarah blushes.

MAVIS (CONT'D)
Bye, Boo.

SARAH
Bye, gangster.

Sarah disconnects with a spring in her step, crosses the street. Up ahead, the entrance to the Cosmic Diner...

INT. HUNTER COLLEGE DORMS. EVENING.

Mavis finishes off her joint, floating on the warm, bubbly water of the tub -- the faintest trace of satisfaction on her face.

She rises, wraps herself in a Hunter College robe and approaches the vanity.

She stares at herself in the mirror, running her fingers through her wet hair.

MAVIS
Mirror, mirror on the wall...

She tugs at the bags forming under her eyes.

MAVIS (CONT'D)
...what the hell happened?

Suddenly -

A PAIR OF GLOVED HANDS EMERGE FROM THE SHADOWS

The razor-sharp steel edge of a PICK AXE drops down in front of Mavis' throat.

Sean appears behind her laughing coldly.

SEAN
Hi. We had social studies class together.

His VOICE is cold and full of sibilance.

Mavis nods slowly.

Sean ROLLS the PICK AXE over Mavis' throat -- pulls her head back roughly.

A sharp GASP.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Where's Sarah?

EXT. 68TH STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

Sean exits the dorms into a brisk night.

Charlie's waiting for him.

INT. MAVIS' DORM ROOM. EVENING.

Mavis is on the ground, trussed like a chicken with a scrunchie in her mouth.

Her ankles and feet bound with thick rope...

EXT. 68TH STREET. EVENING.

Sean flips up his collar, looking like a true gangster -- hops onto the back of Charlie's Suzuki.

SEAN
Charlie Chan, does your crazy uncle
still work at Erasmus?

Charlie nods.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Give me your cell phone.

CHARLIE
(handing it over)
What for?

SEAN
(opening Instagram)
You're a ladies man, Charlie
Chan...

Sean opens Charlie's Instagram page -- ON SCREEN:

982	4,223	612
Posts	Followers	Following

Sean's wheels are turning. He hands the phone back to Charlie.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Type up an EVITE.

Charlie turns the bike on. RPMs climb -

CHARLIE
What do you want it to say?

SEAN
Rematch. Erasmus. Midnight.

Charlie grins.

CHARLIE
(nodding, typing)
How many people should I send this
to?

SEAN
All of them.

INT. 888 8TH AVE. THE COSMIC DINER. EVENING.

The Cosmic Diner is a no-frills 24-hour diner serving a HUGE menu of American grub, also the regular hang out for most Hunter College art students.

Sarah sits by herself in one of the bench seats in the corner.

The table is covered with dessert dishes -- peanut butter pie, banana pudding, cupcakes...

The JINGLE-JANGLE of the front door chime -- Sarah looks up, eyes bright with anticipation -

AND THEN HER JAW DROPS OPEN

She lurches, out of her seat -- HER FACE FROZEN IN HORROR

Sean and his crew of thugs ENTER ALL HOLDING PICK AXES.

Sean saunters over, motions for her to sit, and slides next to her. Bone sits on the other side of her, Charlie and Slop sit across.

As Sarah, terrified, slides away in the booth, Sean signals to his GOONS and they EXIT.

A TENSE BEAT -- Sarah looks at him strangely.

SEAN
When I first saw you, do you know
what I said?

Sean puts on his best Joker face -- *Jack*, not Heath, Joaquin, Jared, or whoever else...

SEAN (CONT'D)
That woman has style!

Sarah smiles nervously. Sean, excitedly HUMMING away, tries the peanut butter pie.

He grabs hold of Sarah's hand... Sarah moves it away...

SEAN (CONT'D)
God you're beautiful.

SARAH
Jalen's going to-

SEAN
Blah...blah...blah...Jalen, Jalen,
Jalen...

Sean cracks a smile, Sarah cringes -- and then Sean's smile becomes an uncontrolled HYSTERICAL LAUGH.

Sarah is weirded out. Nearby DINERS are glancing over.

SARAH
What do you want??

Sean gently forces Sarah to look at him. There's a tremor in his voice, but it's aggressive just the same.

SEAN
A little you and me time.

Sarah looks at him. Cold.

SARAH
You're insane.

Sean laughs. Suddenly, he SWINGS the Pick Axe -- Sarah SHRIEKS!

Sound of the axe CUTTING THROUGH the diner wall... Sean's on his feet... he grabs hold of Sarah... pulls her chair back roughly...

SARAH (CONT'D)
Please! You're scaring me!

Sarah YELPS -- CUSTOMERS cower at their tables.

They leave.

EXT. F.D.R. DRIVE. NIGHT.

A PITCH BLACK HIGHWAY along the East River.

Suddenly three LIGHT SPOTS crest the rise -- a clearer view reveals Sean and his crew on MOTORCYCLES.

Sarah sits behind Charlie with a GAG in her mouth, looking terrified.

The pack of Suzuki's tear through the wind, approaching Chinatown.

INT. THE COSMIC DINER. MINUTES LATER...

The diner is practically empty.

Jalen enters. He looks around.

BONE (O.S.)
Hey there...

Jalen's eyes move to Bone, sitting alone in a corner booth with his Air Jordan's kicked up on the Formica table.

BONE (CONT'D)
Looking for someone?

Jalen approaches.

JALEN
Where is she?

Jalen stops. Bone means business. He lowers his head -- calmly and casually takes out his pick axe.

Bone fishes his lighter from his pants pocket. In a suave move, he SWINGS his legs off the table, FLIPS open the lighter and STRIKES it.

But it doesn't light.

BONE
Fuck.

He frantically tries until it finally catches.

MANAGER (O.S.)
Hey! Put that out!!

BONE
When I'm finished.

Bone lights his cigarette, STARING at Jalen with the flame in the middle. And then he turns, striding towards the exit.

BONE (CONT'D)
Follow me.

EXT. CHINATOWN STREETS. NIGHT.

Jalen walks down A PITCH BLACK CHINATOWN AVENUE without street lamps, appearing DARK and DANGEROUS.

Sean has led his group of men here. There's no sign of Sarah.

JALEN
You've made a serious mistake.

SEAN
Not as serious as yours.

Sean reaches under his jacket, comes out with one of the MAGICAL SPRAY CANS.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Cool cans, huh? What'd you draw with yours?

No response. Jalen shows no signs of fear.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Well, I drew a big, black manhole...

The hoods surround Jalen.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I really can't wait until you see what crawled out of it.

JALEN
Those cans should be buried.

SEAN
Buried?

Sean laughs.

SEAN (CONT'D)
They should be mass produced! Just think of all the possibilities!! I can bring back Manson! I can draw John Dillinger and have him rob every bank on Fifth Ave. What are they going to do? Arrest a pool of spray paint?

JALEN
All you're naming is gangsters.

SEAN
What else would you want to create?

Sean approaches, closing the distance.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I guess you're wondering what all this is about.

Sean pulls his cell.

ON SCREEN: An *IMAGE* of Sarah bound, blindfolded, and gagged -- Jalen swallows down his terror.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I was thinking about killing her and then just drawing her, but I figure the real thing is still better.

JALEN
We don't have to do this.

SEAN
Sure we do. Be at Erasmus by midnight. And bring your spray can.

Sean and the hoods turn around to leave.

SEAN (CONT'D)
And Jalen, don't try to back out. If you do, I'm going to kill her. Just like I did your sweet little boss at the comic shop.

INT. JALEN'S STUDIO. 11:32 PM.

Jalen enters in a panic, approaches the far wall and SLIDES a Wile E. Coyote poster to the side REVEALING A WALL SAFE.

He reaches inside... opens a secret panel in the back...

From it he extracts the MAGICAL SPRAY CAN.

SMASH CUT TO:

FRENZIED MONTAGE

- In a FOOD COURT, somewhere, EVERYONE is looking at their CELLPHONES. A MAN looks down and sees the EVITE. He gets up, so do the OTHERS.

- In some alley, a dozen TEENAGE STREET PUNKS toss their spent KRYLON CANS, grab their CELL PHONES and RUN.

- Outside a restaurant, another dozen WOMEN pile out excitedly typing the 'Erasmus' address into their Waze app. NUMEROUS FEET storm through the frame.

- MORE EXCITED FEET running towards Flatbush Ave.

INT. 911 FLATBUSH AVE. ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. MIDNIGHT.

A long marble corridor.

The camera PUSHES IN and through to the end -

We stop in the gymnasium.

INT. ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. GYM. NIGHT.

TILT DOWN from navy blue athletic banners hanging from the rafters to the upturned faces of delighted attendees.

Standing room only.

OVER 300 people, chatting, drinking, laughing.

Music is being played through an old-fashioned "Radio Raheem" type BOOM BOX.

Onstage are two ENORMOUS 18'x24' blank canvases.

FLASH ON Charlie, backstage, finishing roping Sarah to a large marble column, out of the crowd's view.

Sarah looks stricken.

Her clothes are torn, but she is unharmed -- The CAMERA WHIP-PANS to Jalen ascending the stage steps from the wings to a STANDING OVATION.

He's carrying his lunchbox.

INT. ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. STAIRWELL. SAME.

The stairwell in school that connects the gym with the main building.

Bone descends the stairs, past the maintenance room. Stops in front of the double doors leading to the courtyard.

He makes sure that both doors are closed and DEADBOLTS them SHUT.

WE STAY on Bone, who locks the two doors on either side of the stage.

The curtains placed there prevent anyone from seeing his actions...

INT. ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. GYM. NIGHT.

ONSTAGE: The PURPLE VELVET CURTAINS part.

The WHOLE PLACE goes SILENT with just the faces of the crowd.

Enter Sean followed by Charlie and Slop.

Sean wears a red and gold tuxedo -- his face radiates with wicked hunger.

He bows to Jalen, hands clasped in front of him.

Charlie steps to the mic to greet the visitors. The Brooklyn high school ERUPTS -- with EVERYONE from CHINATOWN hollering "CHARLIE CHAN!... CHARLIE CHAN!!

Charlie bows at the applause. He's clearly a fan favorite.

CHARLIE

Welcome my dear 'bombers' and B-Boys, crooks and vandals...
skaters, shakers, rebels,
degenerates, drop-outs and Krylon
shakers...

The crowd SCREAMS!!

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Tell me, who here likes to be
scared?

The mood in the room shifts -- a restlessness falls over the crowd of students.

Charlies laughs. The students follow his laugh, unsure.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I take that as a *yes*.

Charlie paces the stage -- enjoying the attention.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Now, I know it's from like a
century ago, but who here saw that
movie *The Ring*?

SEVERAL hands rise...*"Me! -- "I saw it twice!"...*

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You remember? That crazy chick was
crawling out of the screen! That
shit was crazy, right?

DRUNK STUDENT
(calling out)
Dude, not to be a dick, but are you
almost done? Let's get this shit,
whatever it is, going already...

CHEERS. YELPS.

DRUNK STUDENT (CONT'D)
There's a midnight screening of
Avatar at The Angelica tonight.

LOUDER CHEERS. The drunk kid RAISES both hands...

DRUNK STUDENT (CONT'D)
And it's in 3-d bitches!!

SCREAMS FROM THE CROWD! Charlie motions for them to settle.

CHARLIE
Fair enough. Let's not stand on
ceremony.

He nods towards Sean who lets out an evil smile.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
But mark my words. After tonight,
you'll never want to put on 3-d
glasses again.

INSERT:
THE MICROPHONE DROPPING TO THE STAGE

SCREEEEEECH!!

TIME CUT:

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE APPEARS:

"LADY KRYLON VS. OJIN"

THE COUNTDOWN CLOCK REACHES 00:00 . . .

Both 'writers' step back from their murals AT THE EXACT SAME TIME.

SEAN

Good luck.

Instantly the IMAGES begin to materialize.

OJIN emerges first. Sean's creation has grown LARGER, more MUSCULAR, ITS features MORE DEFINED.

IT IS A HEAD TALLER THAN EVERYONE ELSE PRESENT

Huge black-veined wings... glowing burnt-red eyes... skin stretched tightly across its face and its enormous, hands.

STEEL NAILS protrude from its major joints.

The crowd is stunned and becomes silent. They look ready to run, but *are thirsty for more...*

As OJIN'S muscles maximize, two steel nails from his neck are FORCED OUT, and SHOOT OFF from his body -

One of the nails goes through a HUGE COLUMN just inches above the Avatar-loving drunk student's head!

The crowd starts to dodge in panic. Audience members start to run for their lives. Pushing... shoving...

Students frantically pounding on locked doors, TRAPPED.

FLASH ON Jalen across stage. He glances at his mural -

Waiting...

...

...

...

AND THEN THE 'SATIN-BALLET' PINK SPRAY PAINT STARTS TO SHIMMER -- AND **LADY KRYLON STEPS OUT!**



SHE'S straight from classic Sunday morning cartoons.

Childish. Rude. Inappropriate. Playful. Rebellious -- sporting a badass pair of Nizza Pink-N-White Platform Adidas low-top sneakers.

EVERY FACE in the audience now turns to the stage.

Herds of curious students start to file back in.

They're ENAMORED -- and despite the impending danger, *this is going to be too good to miss!*

An arrogant Sean scoffs at Jalen across the stage.

SEAN (CONT'D)
You can't be serious! This isn't
going to last two minutes!!

Jalen sends Sean one of his signature shrugs -- *cool as shit.*

JALEN
We'll see...

He winks at LADY KRYLON.

She winks back.

JALEN (CONT'D)
...that's one badass chick.

The camera SWINGS to OJIN -

It looks at LADY KRYLON -- EYES FLARING WITH ANGER.

FLASH ON Jalen in a crouch, tagging a jagged-white lightning bolt...

BOOOM! A BOLT OF WHITE LIGHTNING flashes from under LADY KRYLON'S FINGERNAILS, knocking OJIN on its ass.

OJIN jumps to its feet, enraged. It spirals upwards, floating effortlessly over the crowd.

Jalen looks up and sees --

-- OJIN, attached to the wall like a tarantula, framed against a MAGNIFICENT PANORAMA OF THE NEW YORK SKYLINE.

Beneath it, the CROWD. STARING up in terror.

FLASH ON Sean spraying a medieval-looking scythe -- its tip projecting a GLOWING RED BEAM. -- OJIN swoops down, directing THE SCYTHE with closing motions of his hand.

WHOOOSH!

The scythe TWIRLS and PENETRATES the flesh above LADY KRYLON'S heart!

ANGLE ON Jalen's MAGICAL SPRAY CAN, sitting on the marble floor... pulsing gently.

He SNATCHES IT and starts tagging.

LADY KRYLON takes out a huge and LONG OBJECT, sliding off a cloth to reveal -

A GIANT DJ TURNTABLE!

The records on the turntables are very bizarre - they're not made of vinyl, *they're made of steel.*

The steel emits a cold glare.

Bone tightens his eyebrows, looks at Charlie and Slop.

LADY KRYON leaps over and STARTS TO DJ!

The sound is extraordinary. A heavy bass beat over a light snare.

The records are razor-rimmed.

The high pitched scratch sounds are like circular buzz saws, able to pierce through human, or in this case, monster skin.

WHOOOSH!! POWER WAVE RECORDS travel through the air with deadly intent.

The crowd goes ABSOLUTELY MAD!! Some students DUCK from the fragmented steel record pieces.

A RAZOR-RIMMED STEEL RECORD flies straight at OJIN.

OJIN makes a mystic gesture of his own and blocks it -- but then he's pummeled by dozens MORE! One FIERCELY SHARP STEEL RECORD hits his head and busts it OPEN!

Another SLICES into OJIN'S side... OJIN is ambushed from all over.

It roars in anguish like an injured animal... groping blindly in the air... green-yellow blood splattering...

It suddenly pushes itself up, extends its massive arms and ROARS!

FLASH ON Jalen tagging -- *all we see are SPIKES...*

LADY KRYLON takes out a SPIKED IRON RING, slides it over her delicate, manicured fingers -- AND, comes crashing across the stage at OJIN!

She flies up into the air and strikes down with a punch so full of thunderous force that it alters the air current.

PLUMES OF DUST DESCEND.

BOOOM! She POUNDS. THE ENTIRE AUDITORIUM STARTS TO REVERBERATE!

OJIN YELPS in pain.

Harder and harder -- SOUNDS OF BONES CRUNCHING.

FLASH ON Sean tagging fiercely.

OJIN parries, sculpting a SHIELD OF RED ARMOR out of the air.

It RISES and attacks... LADY KRYON defends... more hardcore fighting ensues...

Everyone's in hiding like the aftermath of a war. Some students run madly away.

The battle is becoming extremely fierce!

SCREAMS of shock and terror. THE CRASHING GROAN of structures collapsing!

FLASH ON Bone and Slop being CRUSHED TO DEATH by a STAINED GLASS WINDOW.

Suddenly, OJIN'S eyes swivel and fix on Sarah.

Sarah freezes, staring back. Starts to backpedal -- she's frightened, but shows us her mettle.

SARAH
Stay the FUCK away from me!!

OJIN zooms over in front of her!

CLOSE ON SARAH: She can FEEL OJIN'S breath upon her neck.

OJIN sends out a reptilian-like tongue, which flattens against Sarah's face, then slides off leaving a slimy goo.

For a second it looks like it's going to crush her. And then it grabs her and FLIES UP, resting on the platform nestled thirty feet off the floor!

It lands, with one hand it holds up Sarah by her neck and hangs her over the balcony.

Sarah's dangling in mid-air. She's terrified but knows not to struggle.

FLASH ON Jalen looking up -

JALEN
Hold on!

Above him, a HUGE STONE PILLAR begins to creak and slip sideways towards him --

He steps to the left.

The STATUE crashes down where he once stood, breaking apart.

AND THEN -

OJIN LETS GO OF SARAH!

WHOOOSH! Sarah drops straight down -

In MID AIR - right before she hits the ground, a PAIR OF HANDS appear and catch her.

It's Jalen.

JALEN (CONT'D)
I got you.

He grabs Sarah and places her safely on the ground... *but not before he's HIT BY OJIN'S powerful claw!*

A pulverizing blow -- Jalen YELPS in pain, severely injured. All the VEINS and ARTERIES in his body are crushed.

He's bleeding profusely from every orifice.

OJIN leaps down from the balcony -- its scythe held in mid-air.

IT LETS THE SCYTHE FLY in LADY KRYLON'S direction. LADY KRYLON dodges! -- WE SEE -- the scythe SLICING through Charlie's chest.

FLASH ON Sean SPRAYING a mean-looking BOW and ARROW.

THE WEAPON suddenly appears in OJIN'S hand.

OJIN withdraws a SINGLE ARROW -- the arrow SHOOTS and blows apart into MINIATURE, NEEDLE-LIKE DAGGERS...

DAGGER'S POV:
TWIRLING LIKE A NINJA STAR... TOWARDS...

Sean.

The blade hits -- CUTTING right through Sean's clavicle.

Sean is BEHEADED!

He topples to the gymnasium floor, landing at Sarah's feet -- *The eater of his own evil seeds.*

Sarah watches helpless and amazed.

Students scream and run around in fear.

OJIN'S MAD EYES rotate and land on -

LADY KRYLON -- SHE CHARGES TOWARDS OJIN!!

A SHARPENED, SHINY METAL TIP on the edge of her ADIDAS LOW-TOP EMERGES!

Like a machine gun, the kick SWEEPS sideways at EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH, sending debris FLYING!.

"KA-BOOM"!

THE STEEL TIP PENETRATES

The kick is too powerful.

OJIN is sent FLYING backwards.

A hair-raising, inhumane SQUEAL.

'Onyx' black paint SPLATTERS onto banners and bleachers!

OJIN is gone.

A moment of silence.

Sarah hobbles to Jalen's side. She's distraught... eyes red... hair a mess...

The two of them gaze at each other.

Jalen manages a thin smile, but BLOOD drips down from his nostrils. He's trembling.

Sarah strokes his chest, her hand shaking.

JALEN'S EYES look down at the MAGICAL SPRAY CAN lying on the floor between them.

He picks it up, holding it in his hand, and passes it to Sarah.

Jalen motions to LADY KRYLON -- the manifestation is leaning against what's left of the stage, checking for OJIN BLOOD beneath her curved, pink fingernails.

JALEN (CONT'D)
You can't let her leave.

He places Sarah's finger on the *'invisible pearl.'*

She sits up, blood caked to a LARGE GASH on her forehead.

She stands, GROANING as she pushes a chunk of drywall off her ankle. She takes a steadying breath, stepping over debris blocks and rubble as she approaches LADY KRYLON...

The manifestation regards her with curiosity.

Sarah SATURATES in wide strokes.

THE IMAGE dissolves into a POOL OF BUBBLING PINK PAINT.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. 1:23 AM.

SIRENS YELPING... LIGHTS FLASHING... PARAMEDICS just arriving on the scene.

OFFICERS are escorting panicked students to the side streets.

Sarah stands on the 50 yard line of the Erasmus football field, in the middle of the pouring rain not knowing what to do.

Where to run -

SARAH
Somebody help us!!

Jalen is on his back at her feet, lying motionless like a corpse.

Sarah leans over him.

No words. No touching.

She stares at Jalen intently.

They hold each other's stare for a moment too long -

JALEN
Bet you smile first.

They continue to STARE -- there is a mixture of sadness and fear in Sarah's eyes.

She breaks first, wrapping her arms around Jalen's neck and peppering his face with nervous, grateful kisses.

She holds Jalen in her arms, raises him off the pavement.

Jalen pries her off and looks her in the eye.

SARAH
Jalen...

He reaches for her. It seems like he could die at any second.

He attempts to talk, but only manages punctured asthmatic sounds.

Sarah looks in his eyes. That last spark of competitiveness -

Jalen HAS FLASHBACKS -

- *As a little boy fighting with his father.*
- *The Linzer Torte inside Sarah's hand at Leli's Bakery.*
- *Sean's ferocious look.*
- *Stan cheering for him at "WALL THERAPY."*

CAMERA closes in on Jalen's face. His pupils dilate.

JALEN
They say that all great artists die
before they turn twenty-seven...

He drinks in Sarah's grace, her glow.

JALEN (CONT'D)
Told you. Flash in a pan.

CAMERA dollies back.

The moon is FULL.

AND THEN JALEN WALKER DIES.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. LATE NIGHT.

NEWS CHOPPERS circle the wreckage. Sand and debris CLOUDS
cover the courtyard.

EXT. ELEVATED Q TRAIN PLATFORM. LATE NIGHT.

The elevated subway platform from the opening of the film.

Sarah, MAGICAL SPRAY CAN in hand, turns slowly towards an
idle train car sitting on the tracks.

EXT. STREET/OUTSIDE ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. LATE NIGHT.

EMTs attend injured students. OFFICERS escort onlookers to
the side streets.

An Erasmus TRUANT OFFICER approaches a POLICEWOMAN with a
'what the fuck?' look on his face.

TRUANT OFFICER
Did you hear what some of those
kids are saying happened in there?

The policewoman shakes her head.

A beat. She motions to a GROUP OF SKATEPUNKS GRINDING their
skateboards along the rails of the subway platform stairs
across the street...

POLICEWOMAN
If it was up to me, we'd go down
there with riot sticks and lock 'em
all up.

EXT. ELEVATED Q TRAIN PLATFORM. LATE NIGHT.

Sarah lowers the MAGICAL SPRAY CANNISTER and STARES at the train door.

It's COVERED in spray paint, but we don't get a clear view of what she's tagged.

INSERT CUT: JALEN, ON STAGE AT THE FRICK MANSION, TOSSING HIS HAT INTO THE AIR IN FRONT OF THE EYES OF THE ASTONISHED CROWD

Sarah edges closer. The paint starts to MORPH and SHIMMER -

INSERT CUT: JALEN FLASHING THAT CONFIDENT SMILE IN HIS STUDIO

SARAH (V.O.)
Jalen once told me that after a truly significant artist dies, although temporarily forgotten, it is only a question of time before that artist is rediscovered...

Sarah tucks the spray can into her purse -- turns and heads for the staircase leading to the street.

In soft BG we see a pair of dark brown eyes, hidden beneath a red Mexican Charro hat, slowly ROLL TOWARDS THE CAMERA.

CLOSE ON Sarah's lips curling into the tightest of smiles.

We leave with the look on her face.

INSERT CUT: Jalen's landlady lugging the wooden headboard covered with Jalen's doodles out of the now vacant unit.

INSERT CUT: Jalen's landlady selling the headboard to a wide-eyed APPRAISER at Sotheby's. The appraiser is holding a jeweler's loupe above Jalen's signature.

CLOSE on the Sotheby's check placed on the showcase glass:

1,200,000.00

SARAH (V.O.)
That recognition, sought out or not, would come after death.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN.

FADE UP ON.

INT. CHINATOWN. JCCA FOSTER HOME. EARLY MORNING.

TWO ACS EMPLOYEES STANDING WITH THEIR MOUTHS AGOG in an empty white padded room.

A busted metal padlock lies at their feet next to a paint set of children's watercolors.

Both workers. Standing alongside each other, gazing in awe at-
The ceiling of the padded cell.

SARAH (V.O.)

Whether adequately appreciated in
his lifetime or not, Jalen knew
that one day he would be superseded
in the public eye, at least, by
some newer and younger figure...

SLOW TILT UP TO A BREATHTAKING FRESCO OF GRANDIOSE MANGA
CHARACTERS, DEMI-GODS, SUPER-VILLAINS AND FEMALE HEROES.

The fresco blankets the entire ceiling.

The extraordinary clarity of the work is mind-boggling --
reminiscent of the Renaissance.

INT. ERASMUS HIGH SCHOOL. GYM. EARLY MORNING.

All quiet like a dead city.

LIGHTS FLICKER over an auditorium that looks like something
out of a war movie - the aftermath of a battlefield.

The sounds of a child's LABORED BREATHING.

ZOOM IN on a pair of children's sneakers -- Vans Kids
Checkerboards, stepping briskly over rubble and broken
wood...

THE CAMERA CRANES UP REVEALING MIRIAM'S FACE

Sean's little sister looks over her shoulder. She can see the
cops and firemen just outside, looking around with puzzled
expressions at the large POOLS OF PAINT.

TILT DOWN...

Her small hands are wrapped around the MAGICAL KRYLON CAN.

The little girl races across the courtyard in the darkness -

END.