

VERVE

"SAMARITAN"

by

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FADE UP:

The SOUND of RAIN. Heavy, torrential.

We PUSH through it, glimpsing monolithic SHAPES in the gloom. Buildings. But the skyline is unfamiliar. They are buildings of a city we have never seen before.

The CITY OF ACROPOLIS.

Gradually, the SOUND of the RAIN gives way to a voice. The VOICE of an OLD MAN.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Once upon a time there was a city.
A shining city upon a hill. And in
this city lots of people lived in
peace for the city was protected by
a hero...

STREET LEVEL

There is nothing "shiny" about this place. It's cold and dirty. In an alleyway, a group of HOMELESS MEN huddle around a garbage-can fire.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

His name was Samaritan -- and for a
time, all was good --

In b.g., a graffiti covered wall is plastered with a row of posters depicting a strange symbol: A MAN WITH ARMS SPREAD WIDE. Someone has spray-painted the words, "sAmAriTaN LiVEs!" across the bottom.

HANDS enter FRAME and tear the poster off the wall. It's fed into the fire.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Then, another man came to the city.
A man, who was like Samaritan.
Strong, and powerful -- but angry
at the world.

CLOSE SHOT - THE POSTER

It catches fire and begins to blacken and warp.

CUT TO:

NEWS-REEL FOOTAGE

A black and white IMAGE plays in slow-motion. There is no sound. The picture is grainy, hand-held. Two distant FIGURES fight on the rooftop of an old warehouse. Behind them, part of the roof is burning.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
They called him Nemesis. And the
time came when they fought
together.

The flames REAR up and Samaritan and Nemesis are lost from view. The film reaches its end and FLICKERS to WHITE.

OVER WHITE, the NARRATOR continues:

OLD MAN (V.O.)
The fire claimed both their lives.

FADE UP AGAIN:

EXT. SAMARITAN SQUARE - NIGHT

A lonely wind-swept plaza adjoining a small park. At the center of the plaza is a statue of Samaritan. It stands stoically in the rain. A BAG LADY hunkers in the shelter of the statue, trying to keep dry.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
When the flames died down and the
people came out of their homes,
they found no trace of Samaritan's
body. Only ash and ruin.
(beat)
The people despaired.

PUSH IN ONE -- THE GRAVEN FACE OF SAMARITAN, whose features are hidden behind a crude black mask.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
The city began to change. It grew
dangerous, corrupt -- a place
without hope.
(beat)
And in this place, a whisper grew --
that perhaps Samaritan was still
alive. That he was living in
secrecy and that one day...he would
return.

FADE to BLACK.

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT - CAR WHEELS

SCREECHING to a STOP. Several PEOPLE with sacks over their heads are dragged from the vehicle and led off into an old hotel with a faded sign overhead that reads, "THE CHARLESTON."

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A MAN stands at the window, staring out. He is shirtless and muscular. But the first thing we notice is a striking and chilling tattoo that covers his back.

A gruesome illusion of two severed stumps protruding from his shoulder blades, as if a pair of wings had been cut from his back.

This is LUCIUS, a rising star in the criminal underground of Acropolis.

There is a KNOCK at the door behind Lucius. He TURNS to look over his shoulder -- and we see his eyes. They are pale and blue and beautiful.

A MAN named BIG TUNA (one of his underlings) stands framed in the doorway.

BIG TUNA
We found 'em.

LUCIUS
Where--?

BIG TUNA
By the towers.

Lucius SIGHS tiredly and looks back out the window.

LUCIUS
Suppose we need to explain the
rules again.

Big Tuna nods and EXITS. Lucius reaches out with one hand and opens a drawer next to him. Inside the drawer is a rusted old hammer. He takes hold of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ADJOINING SUITE - NIGHT

A large plastic tarp has been spread out in the middle of the room. The THREE HOODED MEN are kneeling in the middle of the tarp, hands bound behind their backs.

Big Tuna and several armed THUGS stand guard. The door opens and Lucius enters the room, still shirtless, carrying the hammer loosely in one hand.

LUCIUS
(gestures at their hoods)
Take 'em off.

Big Tuna and another man, FARSHAD, yank the hoods off their heads REVEALING three TERRIFIED YOUNG MEN, mouths duct-taped shut. Lucius looks down at them.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Y'all probably wondering why you're here. Why you're tied up and why you're sitting on a piece of plastic...

The men stare at Lucius nervously.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I don't know about y'all but if I was sitting on a piece of plastic, talking to a guy with a hammer, I be pretty fuckin' scared right now... How 'bout you, Big T? You be scared?

BIG TUNA
I be scared as a fuckin' Turkey in November.

LAUGHTER from several of Lucius' men. Lucius smiles and turns back to the three captives.

LUCIUS
Y'all here because you have sinned against me.

SOUNDS of PROTEST. The men MOAN through their gags and shake their heads frantically, no.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
S'okay. I get it. We all sinners. But y'all sinned in my dominion, without my consent. Y'all know that word...dominion?

Warming to his subject, Lucius begins to circle the three men.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Comes from the bible. It's like -- absolute authority. The angels had dominion.

(beat)

Different angels had dominion over different things. Even Lucifer has dominion. My dominion extends from eighty-sixth to the towers. And when someone sins in my dominion, without my consent, then that person will suffer my wrath. Or my forgiveness. If I choose to do so...

His rant has led him around to the back of the man in the middle. He glances at the hammer in his hands, and then at the man. As if trying to make up his mind.

Hold a beat.

And another.

And then -- with a sudden and violent motion -- he brings the hammer WHISTLING down on top of the man's skull.

ANGLE

The two remaining captives recoil in terror, and collapse writhing and MOANING on the ground as the SOUND of the hammer sinking into flesh is heard, again and again...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWERS - NIGHT

A rundown apartment complex, set around a courtyard with a dilapidated playground at the center. Nothing more than a swing, a flooded sandbox and a rusted jungle gym...

TALK SHOT HOST (O.S.)

(mid-conversation)

-- assuming you're right, Samaritan is alive and presumably living somewhere in anonymity -- why?

CUT TO:

CLOSE SHOT - TV SCREEN

A talk-show is in progress. A TV HOST interviews a BEARDED MAN with glasses.

TALKSHOW HOST

(through TV)

Why did he fake his own death? Why go into hiding?

GUEST

(through TV)

This was a man of incredible moral character and fortitude. A man who believed in the sanctity of human life -- of all life -- And when he took the life of the person we call Nemesis, even in self-defense, he realized he had lost the moral high-ground. He had become that which he hated most.

TALKSHOW HOST

(through TV)

And that was enough to send him into exile?

GUEST

(through TV)

I believe so, yes.

WIDER...

INT. APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The TV is playing on a crappy little monitor in the corner of the kitchen. There's a water-stain on the ceiling, and the faucet is dripping. The sink is overflowing with dirty dishes.

A young boy, SAM CLEARY (11) sits with his BACK to CAMERA. He's drawing something in a sketchpad. As we TRACK CLOSER, we SEE --

INSERT - DRAWING

-- a picture of Samaritan. He's on the rooftop of a burning building. Standing opposite Samaritan is another MASKED MAN (his rival, NEMESIS).

BACK TO - SAM

He HEARS the SOUND of the front door being unlocked and TURNS to look. We see his face for the first time. Deep, dark brown eyes and a mop of unruly hair.

He leaps up and crosses to the TV. He shuts it off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam's mother, TIFFANY CLEARY, enters carrying a bag of groceries. Tiffany is a skinny, waifish girl with bleach blond hair. It's hard to believe she is anyone's mother, she can't be much older than twenty-five or twenty-six.

She sees Sam in the kitchen and frowns.

TIFFANY

Sam...? What'cha doing up, honey?
It's late.

SAM

Couldn't sleep.

Tiffany carries the bag into the kitchen, stopping to pull her shoes off with a SIGH.

TIFFANY

How was school?

SAM

(shrugs)
Okay.

TIFFANY

Just okay?

Sam shrugs.

SAM

How was work?

TIFFANY

Okay.

Sam smiles.

Tiffany pulls a roll of bills from her shirt and crosses to the freezer. She opens it and takes out a tin can. She puts the bills into the can.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

It pays the bills. And one day,
when there's enough cash in this
can --

(she looks back at Sam)

-- I'm gonna quit that job, and
we're gonna get on a bus and get
the hell outta this city --

SAM

To go where?

TIFFANY

I'll show you.

She takes a seat opposite Sam and pulls a folded piece of
paper out of the tin that she opens for Sam.

INSERT - PHOTO

It's a cutout from a magazine. The headline reads: "THE TEN
BEST SMALL TOWNS IN AMERICA." And below that is a picture of
a cornfield, with several farm houses in the background.

SAM

What's that?

TIFFANY

Serenity.

SAM

Serenity--?

TIFFANY

It's a place. Serenity, Kansas.
Do you like it?

Sam stares at the photo.

SAM

It looks like a postcard.

TIFFANY

(she smiles)

Yeah, I know. And we're going
there one day. Soon as I have
enough money saved up. Would you
like that?

Sam nods slowly, "yes." Tiffany folds the photo up and tucks
it carefully back into the tin.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Come on, get ready for bed.

Sam's smile fades a little as he comes back to the present.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tiffany tucks Sam into bed. As she pulls the sheets up, she notices the wristwatch on his hand (note: the watch is clearly too large for Sam, and oddly, it doesn't work -- the glass face is cracked and the hands are frozen).

TIFFANY

You know -- you can take that off
when you sleep.

SAM

Do I have to?

TIFFANY

No. But you'll be more
comfortable.

SAM

It doesn't bother me.

She smiles.

TIFFANY

Okay. Sleep tight.

Tiffany SHUTS off the light and closes the door behind her.

Sam waits a moment, then reaches under the bed for a flashlight. CLICK! He pulls the sketchpad out from under his bed and flips through it.

INSERT - SKETCHPAD

We glimpse half a dozen different drawings of Samaritan. Sam finds the most recent one and resumes work. The drawing of Samaritan fighting Nemesis.

BACK TO - SAM

His concentration is broken by a metallic CLATTER from outside. He looks to --

THE WINDOW

In the courtyard below, a large MAN in a HOODED SWEATSHIRT is hauling a bag of trash. As he tosses it into a dumpster, something catches the man's eye.

He reaches into the dumpster and pulls out an old rotating TABLE FAN. He examines it for a moment, then tosses it back with a loud...ker-KLANG!

ON SAM, peering down at the man. The hood conceals his face and there is something vaguely mysterious about him.

Sam follows him with his eyes, as he heads into the opposite tower. He disappears from view and Sam looks across at the apartment windows, waiting to see where he will reappear.

For several moments, nothing happens. Then a light comes on the second floor, almost directly opposite Sam's window. Sam opens a drawer and takes out a pair of cheap plastic binoculars. He squints through them.

SAM'S P.O.V.

The man enters his apartment. Sam PANS with him, following him into a bedroom, where he starts to take off his shirt. Sam is about to put away the binoculars when something catches his eye...

As the Man tugs off his sweatshirt, a gruesome scar is revealed. A burn that covers his back.

BACK TO - SAM

Staring, chilled. He lowers the binoculars and looks at the sketch-pad. SAMARITAN, surrounded by flames.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRUCK DEPOT - DAWN

Rain THUNDERS down on a line of garbage trucks. Front-loaders, with massive hydraulic forks for lifting dumpsters and bulky compactors.

A chain-link fence RATTLES open and SANITATION WORKERS file in for the morning shift. As they PASS, we find the HOODED MAN among them. He enters a factory-like DEPOT with the other workers.

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT - TIME CARD

Being punched. We SEE the time on it -- 5:30 AM, and the name -- KAMINSKY, STANLEY, J.

WIDER.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

Kaminsky is slumped on a bench, lacing a pair of boots. Stenciled on the back of his jumper are the words, "DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION."

The locker in front of him is open but it offers little insight. It's spartan. Clean. No clues to his past, no photos, no keepsakes...

An overweight BLACK MAN with a gentle expression, WILLIS, arrives at the locker next to him.

WILLIS
Hi, Stanley.

KAMINSKY
Hi, Willis.

WILLIS
Hear about Sal?

Kaminsky looks up blankly, the name doesn't ring a bell.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Sal Pesko. Works the south-side garage. With Darnell.

KAMINSKY
What about him?

Willis hesitates and looks down at his feet.

WILLIS
He's dead. They found his body. Someone beat him to death with a hammer.

Kaminsky is silent for a moment.

KAMINSKY
Why--?

WILLIS
Cops think maybe it had to do with the neighborhood watch.
(MORE)

WILLIS (CONT'D)
He was trying to clean up the
neighborhood, you know? They said
he called the cops on some drug
dealers --

They are both silent for a long moment. Willis reaches for
his jumpsuit.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
He had a wife and kids...

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT - HEADLIGHTS

The diesel engine RUMBLES to life. A pair of headlights STAB
through the early morning rain.

INT. GARBAGE TRUCK - MORNING

Kaminsky is at the wheel. Willis is next to him in the
passenger seat. They sit motionless, peering out through the
beating windshield wipers.

WILLIS
You know, this place used to be an
ice skating rink.

KAMINSKY
Where--?

WILLIS
The depot. Back when my dad was
growing up. It was a different
city back then --
(as an afterthought)
-- before Samaritan died --

Kaminsky is silent.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD, the line of idling trucks begins to
move. Kaminsky grinds the gears.

EXT. TRUCK DEPOT - MORNING

The truck pulls out of the depot, joining a long line of
vehicles headed for different parts of the city.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE (DREAM SEQUENCE) - NIGHT

Stacks of CHEMICAL DRUMS fill the space. A catwalk above the drums passes a grimy old WINDOW, which suddenly SHATTERS as a FOOT KICKS it in.

A MASKED MAN (NEMESIS) leaps through the window and runs along the catwalk. He dashes past a series of WINDOWS, the last of which IMPLODES as he is tackled by a second MAN.

This is SAMARITAN. Except for the black leather mask he is dressed normally...pants, shirt, jacket. Two soulful white eyes have been hand-drawn on the mask.

They trade blows on the rocking catwalk. The two men are nearly perfectly matched. As they battle, the catwalk rocks and a section BREAKS away. It FALLS, striking --

-- A CHEMICAL DRUM, which EXPLODES. A fire erupts. SAMARITAN is momentarily distracted by the flames, which REAR and BELLOW UP like a living, breathing thing...

When he looks up, Nemesis is at the far side of the catwalk, KICKING open a steel door to the rooftop. The chase resumes.

EXT. ROOFTOP (DREAM SEQUENCE) - NIGHT

Nemesis runs to the edge of the rooftop. The next building is too far to jump. He's about to run to another edge when Samaritan arrives, blocking his way.

SMASH TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MORNING

Sam snaps awake, disoriented. It takes him a second or two to remember where he is, to realize it was all just a dream. Feeling something, he looks down.

The sketchpad is crushed underneath him. He pulls it out, dismayed at its new condition.

SAM
...shit...

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Sunlight streams through a kitchen window. Tiffany stands at the counter, tussled hair, dressed in a bathrobe. She is adding sugar to her coffee.

On the kitchen table, a bowl and box of cereal are set out. She hears light FOOTSTEPS behind her and turns to see --

-- Sam, dressed for school, with his backpack slung over one shoulder.

TIFFANY
Hi baby. You hungry? There's
cereal or -- well, cereal.

SAM
Cereal.

Sam takes a seat and pours himself a bowl of corn flakes.

SAM (CONT'D)
Mom -- who lives across from us?
In the other building?

TIFFANY
I have no idea. Why?

SAM
Just curious.

He goes back to eating. A moment or two passes and then we hear the SOUND of the door buzzer. Sam looks up.

SAM (CONT'D)
That's Mitsu.
(he pushes his bowl away)
I gotta go, mom.

TIFFANY
You didn't finish.

SAM
I'm not hungry.

He grabs his backpack and hurries out. Tiffany gives him a quick kiss on the head as he passes and says:

TIFFANY
Straight home after school, okay?
No hanging out.

SAM
I know...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

MITSU FONG is a tall Asian boy two years older than Sam. He is Sam's escort to school. He looks up impatiently as Sam emerges from the front door of the building.

MITSU

Dude, you're supposed to be downstairs. I don't have time for this.

SAM

Sorry.

MITSU

Just try to keep up. I don't wanna be late.

Mitsu strikes off down the block, and Sam hurries after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - MORNING

A bleak inner-city school. There are gates on the windows, metal detectors at the doors and a cop car parked permanently at the corner.

Kids pour into the building. As they pass, CAMERA FINDS -- Sam and Mitsu. Mitsu hurries to catch up to some friends, leaving Sam alone on the steps.

Clearly wishing he were elsewhere, Sam starts into the building...

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Kids are seated at tables in groups of four or five, eating lunch. All but Sam, who sits alone, drawing in his sketchpad.

Suddenly, a french fry comes sailing out of nowhere, narrowly missing his head. Sam whips around, startled, to see --

-- REZA, a teenager several years older than Sam, sitting at a table with his pals (OMAR and CHRIS). Reza smiles cruelly, dips another french fry in ketchup and lobs it at Sam.

It misses him but SPLATS onto his drawing. Reza and his friends LAUGH and start hi-fiving each other.

VOICE (O.S.)

Reza!

Reza's smile vanishes as he's caught, red-handed, by the hall monitor (MISTER JIMENEZ).

REZA

(innocently)

What?

MISTER JIMENEZ

-- throwing food, again -- third warning!

ON Sam, who can't help enjoying the moment. He watches as Mister Jimenez grabs Reza's arm and marches him off.

REZA

I didn't do it!

MISTER JIMENEZ

Every day I tell you -- every day!

As Reza is dragged away, he turns and shoots an angry look in Sam's direction. Sam's smile vanishes.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - LATER

The class bell RINGS. Students trample for the exit.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - LATER

The hallway is empty. Quiet.

Sam leans slowly out of a classroom and checks to make sure the coast is clear. He pales as he sees Reza and his two pals (OMAR and CHRIS) waiting for him in the hall.

REZA (O.S.)

Hey loser...

Sam shoots a look at the EXIT DOORS at the far end of the hallway. Reza sees the look and grins cruelly.

REZA (CONT'D)

Think you're fast enough? Go for it.

Sam makes a break for it but Reza and his pals are on him in a heartbeat. Sam is thrown to the ground and held, pinned. Reza looms over him.

REZA (CONT'D)
Who's laughing now, freak?! Who's
laughing, huh?

SAM
Let go! Get off me!

Sam flails and struggles as Reza yanks his backpack away and RIPS it open.

REZA
Let's see what we got here --

He upends it over the floor. Books, and pencils and paperclips tumble out.

REZA (CONT'D)
Wow -- absolutely nothing --

CHRIS
(notices something)
Hey, check it out--! The watch!

Reza sees the watch on Sam's hand. He starts to undo it. With sudden panic, Sam renews struggling.

SAM
Don't touch it! Get off!

CHRIS
Shit -- hold him, man!

OMAR
Get his legs!

While Chris and Omar pin him down, Reza tugs the watch off Sam's hand. He staggers back to admire his find.

REZA
What's this, huh? Daddy give you
this for Christmas?

SAM
(furious)
Give it back! GIVE IT BACK!!!

Reza sees the watch is broken.

REZA
Doesn't even work! Piece of junk --

He CHUCKS it down the hallway.

SAM

NO!

Sam struggles helplessly, frustration mounting, building to the verge of tears...

OMAR

Dude--? Check it out, I think he's crying.

CHRIS

Are you fucking crying?

REZA

Jesus -- how old are you?

Disgusted, Reza KICKS Sam in the side. Sam tries to curl up and protect himself as Reza and his pals finally release him and stagger off, LAUGHING...

HOLD ON - Sam, on the floor, clutching his sides. He slowly picks himself up. He straightens his shirt and limps off to retrieve the watch.

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT - COMPACTOR

A load of garbage is crushed with hydraulic force. The lifting arm descends, lowering a battered dumpster to the pavement.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Kaminsky and Willis muscle the dumpster off the forks and maneuver the next one into position. As it rises upwards -- something catches Kaminsky's eye. He reaches into the dumpster and plucks something from the trash. An old radio.

WILLIS

(SHOUTS to be heard)

You find something?

KAMINSKY

...a radio...

WILLIS

Gonna fix it up?

Kaminsky turns it over in his hands, trying to decide.

KAMINSKY
Yeah, I think so.

As he carries it off towards the truck, we TRANSITION TO:

INT. BUS - LATER

Kaminsky rides the bus home from work. He has the radio under his arm. At the front of the bus, an ELDERLY WOMAN with a bag of groceries is being harassed by two JUNKIES.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Stop it! Leave me alone! Don't touch me!

The junkies LAUGH begin snatching items out of her bag.

Kaminsky does nothing. He just stares out the window.

CUT TO - BUS DOORS

HISSING SHUT. The bus pulls away REVEALING -- KAMINSKY. He starts down the block, hands thrust deep into his pockets.

EXT. TOWERS COURTYARD - LATER

Sam sits glumly on a bench in the courtyard. He's drawing in his sketchpad when there is a metallic CLINK behind him. He turns to see -- Kaminsky entering the courtyard.

Sam stares a beat, chilled. Kaminsky stares back.

SAM
(stares nervously)
...hi...

Kaminsky says nothing. Just looks slowly down at the sketchpad in Sam's lap.

INSERT SHOT - SKETCH PAD

Another drawing of Samaritan.

BACK TO - KAMINSKY

He looks at Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's, um -- Samaritan.
(then, self-consciously)
I can draw him better. This is
just practice.

Kaminsky gives a half-nod. He's about to go on his way when Sam notices he is carrying a bulky object under one arm. What appears to be a VINTAGE RADIO.

SAM (CONT'D)
What's that?

KAMINSKY
A radio.

SAM
Looks old. Does it work?

KAMINSKY
No.

SAM
(frowns)
Why are you carrying a broken
radio?

Kaminsky looks down and sees Sam's watch.

KAMINSKY
Why are you wearing a broken watch?

Sam glances sharply down -- and turns his watch around on his wrist, concealing it.

SAM
(softly)
It was a gift.

KAMINSKY
Someone gave you a broken watch?

SAM
No, it -- it's complicated, okay?

Kaminsky shrugs, not really understanding but not wanting to get into it. As he turns to leave, Sam attempts a clumsy change of subject.

SAM (CONT'D)
So, you live in the south tower,
huh?

Kaminsky's eyes narrow.

KAMINSKY
How'd you know that?

Sam feels suddenly foolish. He shrugs lamely...

SAM
I live on the second floor too. In
the North Tower.
(he points)
That one.

Kaminsky turns and looks up at Sam's window. He sees it is directly across from his own. He looks slowly back at Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)
(nervously)
Well. I gotta go.

Sam hurries off. Kaminsky remains behind, eyeing him...

CUT TO:

EXT. AUGGIE'S CLUB - NIGHT

A low-class strip club. There's a BOUNCER at the door, and a neon sign flickering overhead. From inside comes the sound of PUMPING music.

INT. AUGGIE'S CLUB - NIGHT

Dark and smoke-filled. On stage, a young STRIPPER (22) grinds lewdly on a pole. Several SEEDY LOOKING MEN watch from the bar, or from tables.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Music permeates the wall. Several STRIPPERS are in the process of getting changed. There's a school girl uniform, a dominatrix, a fairy complete with silver wings, etc...

Tiffany, at a changing mirror, dresses into street clothes when a BOUNCER leans through the door.

BOUNCER
Yo, Tiff. VIP booth.

TIFFANY
I just got dressed, Tony.

BOUNCER

I'm doin' you a favor, Tiff. You want it, or not?

Tiffany glances at her watch, torn.

TIFFANY

Yeah, yeah I'll take it.

INT. VIP BOOTH - NIGHT

Tiffany straddles a CUSTOMER in the VIP booth. She whispers seductively in his ear as she moves against him:

TIFFANY

What do you want, Mister? Lap dance for sixty? Or something else?

The customer, a well dressed ITALIAN MAFIOSO type, holds up a hundred dollar bill.

MAFIOSO

Close the curtains.

TIFFANY

You're the boss...

EXT. AUGGIE'S CLUB - LATER

The back doors of the club open and Tiffany steps out. She stops to light a cigarette, and stands motionless, letting the rain wash over her.

She is dressed in her street clothes now, a baggy winter jacket and blue jeans. After a moment or two, she collects herself and moves off down the avenue...

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATER

Sam kneels out of sight below his window. He has the binoculars out and is peering at Kaminsky's apartment.

SAM'S P.O.V.

Kaminsky is sitting in the kitchen, with his back to the window, working at something.

He RISES and walks out of the room, LEAVING FRAME -- and we SEE what he was working on. It's the radio. It has been partially disassembled. Bits and pieces of it are scattered over the tabletop.

BACK TO - SAM

He hears the SOUND of the front door being unlocked behind him, and then his mother's FOOTSTEPS entering the apartment.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
Sam...? I'm home, honey.

Sam goes back to his binoculars and tries to find Kaminsky again. But suddenly he has vanished from view.

SAM'S P.O.V.

He PANS to the next room -- and catches his breath sharply as he sees -- KAMINSKY, STARING DIRECTLY BACK AT HIM!

BACK TO - SAM

Flinching into the shadows. He drops the binoculars with a CLATTER.

A beat.

And then Sam nearly has a heart-attack as there is a LOUD KNOCK on the door behind him. He SPINS around, startled as Tiffany opens the door and squints into the darkened room.

SAM
Mom! You're supposed to knock!

TIFFANY
I did knock. Why are the lights off?

SAM
But you opened it right away!
What's the point of knocking if you just open it?

TIFFANY
You're right. I'm sorry. Let's try again.

She closes the door and KNOCKS. Sam rolls his eyes.

TIFFANY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
This is your mother, Tiffany
Cleary. Requesting permission to
enter.

Sam can't help smiling.

SAM
Come in.

Tiffany opens the doors and HITS the lights. Her smile
vanishes as she sees Sam's black eye.

TIFFANY
What's this--? What happened to
your face?

SAM
Nothing.
(he turns quickly away)
I ran into a wall.

TIFFANY
Ran into a wall, my ass.
(she comes over to him,
takes his chin)
I know a shiner when I see one.
Who did this?

SAM
Nobody, mom. Forget it.

TIFFANY
I'm not going to forget it. I want
to help, I want to know who --

SAM
(sharply)
You can't! Okay?
(then, softer)
You'd only make things worse.

Tiffany stares at Sam, pained.

TIFFANY
I just -- don't like seeing you
hurt --

Sam feels instantly bad. He comes over to his mother and
hugs her.

SAM
It's okay. I'm fine, mom. Really.
(a deft change of subject)
What's for dinner?

TIFFANY
I picked up burgers.

SAM
Great. I'll be right out.

He ushers her quickly out the door and CLOSES it again. He turns back to the window -- but Kaminsky is gone. The curtains have been pulled. Sam reacts, frustrated.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER

The sound of the class BELL. The school doors SLAM open and students trample out. After several moments, Sam appears at the top of the steps. Mitsu is waiting for him below.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Sam and Mitsu make their way down the street. They pass a basketball court where TEENAGERS shoot hoops and hang out. Sam looks up at the SOUND of a familiar VOICE.

REZA (O.S.)
Over here -- over here!

NEW ANGLE - REZA AND HIS PALS

Playing three-on-three. Omar scores.

OMAR
Oh, yeah! Feel it!

CHRIS
Man, feel what? Is that all you got!?

OMAR
Nah, there's more...

Sam ducks to the other side of Mitsu, hoping to avoid being seen. Unfortunately, Reza happens to glance up at that moment and sees the maneuver. He nudges Omar.

REZA
Yo, check it -- he got himself an
escort.

CHRIS
A gook escort.

REVERSE ANGLE - SAM & MITSU

Mitsu is oblivious to the danger. As they pass by the court,
Sam hears Reza COUNTING aloud.

REZA
...three...two...one...
(beat)
Get 'em!

On "one," they suddenly ditch the game and take off after
Sam.

SAM
Run!

Mitsu sees them coming and blanches.

MITSU
Oh, SHIT!

Mitsu sprints off down the block. Sam does his best to keep
up, but he's half Mitsu's size. Every one of his strides
equals two of Sam's.

SAM
WAIT FOR ME!

Mitsu dashes between two parked cars and cuts across traffic.
Sam is cutoff by a passing bus. He dodges into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Sam runs down the alley. He risks a look back to see Reza
and his friends gaining on him.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Sam rounds the corner at a sprint. The playground behind his
building comes into view. Reza and his pals are thirty yards
away... Twenty yards... Ten...

NEW ANGLE - SAM

He SLAMS into the gate and fumbles for his keys. He finds the right one, jams it in the lock and TWISTS it open. He dashes through and throws it shut behind him. Only he doesn't quite get it shut in time --

-- because Reza and his pals pile into the other side and force it open. They grab Sam, who begins struggling frantically, swinging his arms.

SAM

Get off me! Let Go!

Reza twists Sam's arm behind his back and forces him to the ground. They YANK his backpack away, and Chris starts rummaging through it as Omar holds Sam down.

CHRIS

Check it out! Mommy made him a sandwich!

REZA

Let me see!

Chris tosses the bagged sandwich to Reza, who unzips it and SPITS a huge wad of phlegm into the bag. Then he mashes it into the ground with his fist, and starts to force-feed it to Sam.

Sam squirms frantically and tries to resist, twisting his head aside and clamping his teeth shut.

REZA (CONT'D)

Hold his head! Hold him!

Omar grabs Sam's head and holds him, pinned. Sam SCREAMS in frustration as Reza starts to shove the sandwich into his mouth, when SUDDENLY --

-- a pair of ENORMOUS HANDS come out of nowhere and grab hold of Reza. He is flung backwards, a distance of nearly twenty feet and SLAMS loudly into the side of the dumpster.

The HANDS grab hold of his two pals next, and they get the same treatment. One of them is flung into the side of the building, the other one into the chain-link fence.

Sam looks up, stunned to see --

KAMINSKY

Standing over him, eyes hidden beneath his baseball cap.

SAM

Struggles to his feet and tries to keep from sobbing. The side of his face is scratched and bleeding from the sidewalk. His shirt is torn and tugged out of place. But his eyes are furious. He and Kaminsky stare a beat.

REZA, CHRIS AND OMAR

Scramble to their feet. Reza is cupping his nose, which has been broken by the impact with the dumpster. It's bleeding over his hands.

REZA (CONT'D)
Shit! Fuck!

He stares at the blood, stunned.

REZA (CONT'D)
You broke my fucking nose!

He looks slowly up at Kaminsky, and -- SNICK! Pulls a switchblade. Everything gets real quiet.

REACTION SHOTS: Sam, Omar, Chris...

OMAR
Do it, man!

CHRIS
Fuck him up.

Reza musters his courage and eases closer. Kaminsky is motionless. And there's something off-putting about that. The utter stillness of the man.

Reza moves closer. And closer. And LUNGES! A flash of steel -- and somehow, suddenly Reza goes flying again. He sprawls painfully to the ground.

He staggers up, livid, eyes blazing. Chris and Omar can't believe their eyes. Reza looks for the knife and sees Kaminsky is holding it.

KAMINSKY
You should go now.

REZA
You -- you're fucking dead! I know where you live!

OMAR
Come on, man.

CHRIS
Let's get outta here...

Reza shoots a final look at Sam, as he allows himself to be pulled away by his friends. Sam turns to Kaminsky with an expression of awe but the old man is already disappearing back into the building.

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - LATER

At the far end of the hallway, a steel access door creaks open. Sam peers through the gap. The hallway in front of him is empty.

Sam slips out and starts down the hall. He passes a row of doors with numbers on them and comes eventually to --
APARTMENT # 203 -- Kaminsky's apartment.

Sam stares at the number, committing it to memory.

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Sam runs a finger down the building directory until he comes to APT # 203. He finds the name next to it. "KAMINSKY, S."

SAM
(to himself)
...Kaminsky...?

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - LATER

The front door opens and Tiffany enters the darkened apartment. She FLIPS on the lights, catching her breath as she sees --

-- Sam, sitting motionless at the kitchen table behind her. His hands are flat on the table surface.

TIFFANY
Sam. You scared me, honey.

SAM
Sorry.

TIFFANY
What's with you and the lights?
Why are you always sitting in the dark?

SAM
It's better for thinking.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tiffany enters the kitchen and sits down opposite Sam at the table. She scrutinizes him.

TIFFANY
What are you thinking about?

SAM
Samaritan.

TIFFANY
What about Samaritan?

SAM
Do you remember when he died?

Tiffany nods slowly, "yes."

TIFFANY
I was a little girl. I was younger than you.

SAM
What do you remember?

TIFFANY
It was on the news, it was everywhere... They kept playing that footage over and over. Of the fire. There was even a parade through the city.

A beat.

SAM
But they never found his body.

TIFFANY
No.

SAM
But they found Nemesis' body.

TIFFANY
Yeah.

SAM
Isn't that weird? That they found one and not the other?

TIFFANY
Well...
(beat)
(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I guess that's why some people
think he's still alive. Sorta like
Elvis. Except they found Elvis
dead on a toilet.

Sam studies his mother's face.

SAM
Do you think Samaritan's alive?

Tiffany hesitates, and then gently shakes her head, "no."

SAM (CONT'D)
How come?

TIFFANY
Because I don't think he would just
go away like that. Disappear on
everyone. Not the way things are
now, the way the city is...
(beat)
Why all the questions about
Samaritan?

Sam is silent for a moment.

SAM
(finally)
I think he's alive. I think he's
using a secret identity.

Tiffany stares at Sam for a long moment. A smile begins to
form at the corners of her lips. She's amused, but trying
not to show it.

TIFFANY
Really? What makes you say that?

SAM
(lowers his voice a notch)
Because I know who he is.

Tiffany leans forward, matching Sam's whisper.

TIFFANY
Who is he?

SAM
Mister Kaminsky.

Tiffany frowns.

TIFFANY
Who is Mister Kaminsky?

Sam raises his hand to point out the window, in the direction of Kaminsky's apartment. Tiffany's head swivels to the window. Then back to Sam.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
He lives in the towers?
(Sam nods, "yes")
Why do you think Mister Kaminsky is
Samaritan?

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kaminsky is in the kitchen, cutting something out of a newspaper. We can't see what it is yet, all we see are his hands and the scissors, which snip out a perfect square.

Kaminsky takes the clipping (whatever it is) and places it into a scrapbook. Suddenly he falters at the SOUND of KNOCKING on his front door. He looks up sharply.

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kaminsky crosses to the door and looks through the peephole.

KAMINSKY'S P.O.V.

A distorted fish-eye view of the hallway outside. Tiffany is standing in front of his door. She waits a moment, then KNOCKS again.

BACK TO - KAMINSKY

He frowns, puzzled. He has no clue who she is.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
...hello...? Mister Kaminsky?

After a moment of indecision, Kaminsky UNLOCKS the door.

ANGLE - OUTSIDE

Tiffany looks up and smiles.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Hi. My name is Tiffany. Tiffany
Cleary -- I'm Sam's mother.

KAMINSKY
Yes...?

TIFFANY

He told me what you did and I just had to come over and say thanks. I don't want to think what would have happened if you weren't there.

She offers her hand. Kaminsky is taken aback. But he takes it.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(by way of explanation)

He's been having a little trouble at school -- these bullies, these little shitheads -- they're like twice his size and for some reason they got it in for him. Anyway --

She sucks in a breath. Smiles.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

-- I don't want to take anymore of your time -- Next stop, fourth floor. I'm gonna tell the Fongs a thing or two. Their kid was supposed to walk Sam home.

Kaminsky has no idea how to respond to this. Tiffany waves goodbye and turns to go. Kaminsky closes the door. And takes another look through the peephole. He stands motionless, in thought.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATER

Sam is in bed. His mother sits next to him. The scene is lit by the dim glow of a cheap superhero alarm clock.

SAM

I can't believe you went over there. What did you say?

TIFFANY

I thanked him for helping you.

SAM

Is that all?

TIFFANY

You mean, did I tell him you think he's Samaritan?

(beat)

No. I thought it would be better to skip that part.

Sam looks at her crossly.

SAM
You don't believe me.

TIFFANY
I believe what you saw -- but there
are lots of people who are plenty
strong. It doesn't make them
Samaritan.

SAM
What about the burn on his back?

TIFFANY
Lots of people have burns too.

Sam rolls his eyes.

SAM
That's a really big coincidence,
mom.

TIFFANY
Not as big as Samaritan living next
door.
(she KISSES his head)
Go to sleep. I'm working late
tonight, so you're on your own for
breakfast. Promise me you won't
leave the courtyard, okay?

SAM
I promise.

Tiffany leaves, closing the door behind her.

Sam rolls on his stomach and peers out the window at
Kaminsky's apartment. The lights are off. He can't see
anything. He SIGHS and slowly closes his eyes...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE (DREAM SEQUENCE) - NIGHT

We're back on the warehouse rooftop again. Samaritan and
Nemesis square off, circling one another.

NEMESIS
Figured we'd cross paths
eventually.

SAMARITAN

It doesn't have to be like this.

NEMESIS

How else can it be?

They come together with explosive force and trade a series of crushing blows. Samaritan is taken aback at Nemesis' strength. They are nearly perfectly matched opponents.

Beneath their feet, the roof HOWLS and GROANS as the fire expands. Suddenly, behind them, a section of roofing DROPS AWAY.

They share a grim look. Samaritan uses the distraction to turn the tables. He delivers a brutal kick to the solar plexus that staggers Nemesis.

The roof goes. It starts to collapse inward, like a sinkhole...

SAMARITAN

Run!

But Nemesis is momentarily stunned, clutching his chest, trying to get the breath back in his lungs. Samaritan hauls him to his feet and they run for the edge of the roof.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MORNING

TIGHT ON - ALARM CLOCK, blaring to life. Sam lurches awake.

EXT. COURTYARD - LATER

Sam is sitting on the rusted jungle-gym, drawing in his sketch pad, when he hears a door SLAM behind him. He looks up to see MITSU, carrying a bag of trash to the dumpster.

Mitsu sees Sam and hesitates. Sam goes back to his drawing.

Mitsu comes over to Sam, who coolly ignores him.

MITSU

Your mom bitched out my mom last night. And my mom bitched me out. So thanks a lot.

SAM

I told her not to. But she never listens to me.

MITSU

What happened anyway? You don't look like you got your ass kicked.

SAM

I didn't. Mister Kaminsky showed up.

MITSU

Who...?

SAM

Mister Kaminsky.

It takes Mitsu a second for the name to register.

MITSU

The old guy? From our building?

Sam nods. Mitsu's eyes narrow.

MITSU (CONT'D)

What did he do?

SAM

He picked up Reza and threw him against the dumpster. I think his nose was broken. There was blood everywhere. Then he beat up the other two guys.

(beat)

They ran away.

MITSU

(doesn't buy it)

...Kaminsky?

Sam nods again. Keeps drawing.

MITSU (CONT'D)

I don't believe you.

Sam shrugs. So don't.

MITSU (CONT'D)

There's no way some old dude could beat up three guys at once.

Sam looks up from his pad.

SAM

There's one way...

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MORNING

Sam opens his closet and takes a comic-book box out. He rummages inside. In b.g., Mitsu looks around at the apartment.

MITSU

So -- what happened to your dad?

SAM

He died when I was young. I don't really remember him.

Mitsu turns to face Sam, who suddenly finds what he's looking for and YANKS a magazine out of the box.

SAM (CONT'D)

Here it is!

INSERT - MAGAZINE

An aged cover of LIFE MAGAZINE. The image on the cover is the now-familiar picture of Samaritan fighting Nemesis, on the rooftop of the burning Drake building.

The headline reads, "DEATH OF A HERO." Sam STABS a finger at the image of Samaritan.

SAM (CONT'D)

Who does that look like?

MITSU

Samaritan.

SAM

(no shit)

Who else?

Mitsu stares at the image for a moment.

MITSU

I give up.

SAM

Kaminsky! It looks like Kaminsky!

MITSU

No, it doesn't.

SAM

Yes, it does! He's the exact same size and shape!

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

And Kaminsky has gotta be at least fifty, which means he's the right age --

MITSU

Lemme get this straight. You think the old guy living across from you is Samaritan? Because he beat up some guys?

Sam shoots him a defiant look.

SAM

And because of the burns.

A beat.

MITSU

What burns?

SAM

Kaminsky has a scar on his back. Like he was in a fire.

MITSU

How do you know?

SAM

I can see his window. It's across from my room.

Mitsu turns and looks at the window. He crosses over. Sam comes alongside him and they both stare out together.

MITSU

I don't know what's weirder -- you, watching some old guy with his shirt off -- or you thinking he's Samaritan.

(he turns to leave)

I gotta go.

Mitsu EXITS. Sam remains at the window, looking out.

SAM

Fine. Don't believe me...

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - MORNING

Kaminsky emerges, dressed in his usual hoody/baseball cap. He has the vintage radio under one arm.

CAMERA PANS to the window of Sam's apartment where we SEE him watching. Once Kaminsky has turned the corner, Sam bolts from view.

CUT TO - DUMPSTER

It's moving. Seemingly on its own. Rolling across the courtyard...

REVERSE ANGLE - REVEALS SAM

He's pushing it...which is a kind of impressive because he's tiny compared to the dumpster, but he's pushing and struggling and throwing his weight into it.

Finally it CLANGS to a stop against the far wall. Directly underneath Kaminsky's window.

CUT TO:

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

ANGLE, looking out through the window of Kaminsky's kitchen. Gradually, Sam's head RISES UP INTO FRAME. He puts his hands against the glass and peers in.

REVERSE ANGLE - OUTSIDE

As Sam peers into the window, the glass suddenly gives away and SWINGS inward. Sam nearly loses his balance and catches himself. He stares a beat as he realizes -- the window is unlocked.

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sam pushes the window open. When it's wide enough, he starts to squeeze through the gap.

He sprawls to the floor inside the apartment. He picks himself up again and looks around, wide-eyed. As if he can't quite believe what he's doing.

SAM'S P.O.V.

The space is clean. Simple. There are no pictures on the walls. No photos, or personal touches. What little furniture there is, is functional and necessary.

Something SMACKS the glass behind Sam, causing him to WHIP AROUND -- but it's just the curtains. He recovers and moves off into the apartment...

CUT TO:

EXT. ACROPOLIS - MORNING

The city of Acropolis stretches out before us. Even in the early light of morning there is something ominous and oppressive about the city. In foreground, an ELEVATED TRAIN suddenly BLASTS BY, rattling our nerves...

STREET LEVEL

Kaminsky makes his way under the tracks. He has the vintage radio tucked under one arm.

A group of THUGS huddled in a doorway eye him as he passes. THUG 1 sees the radio and nudges THUG 2. THUG 3, the only one with any brains, sizes Kaminsky up and shakes his head, "no." He doesn't like it.

THUG 1
Why not? You see that radio?

THUG 3
I said forget it. Not worth it.

Kaminsky moves past, pretending not to have heard.

INT. PAWNSHOP - MORNING

The BELL over the door CHIMES as Kaminsky enters. The shop is small, cluttered, lined with book cases and shelves and stacked boxes. In the back of the store is a caged area where the more valuable items are kept.

Kaminsky waits at the counter, looking around. From an adjoining office, we hear a VOICE:

VOICE (O.S.)
...be right with you...

A moment later, an ELDERLY MAN in a rumpled shirt (ARTHUR) comes out of the back office. He sees Kaminsky and reacts.

ELDERLY MAN
That time of month already?

KAMINSKY

What time...?

ELDERLY MAN

Every month, for the past twenty years, you come into my shop and bring me something. Always the last Sunday.

Kaminsky glances at the radio under his arm and sets it on the counter. The elderly man -- ARTHUR -- reaches into his pocket for a pair of bifocals.

ARTHUR

What do we have this time? A radio, early thirties. Does it work?

Kaminsky nods. Arthur plugs the cord into an outlet next to the counter. He turns it on and the unit lights up. He turns the dial, searching for a station.

We hear several seconds of STATIC and then a NEWSCAST:

COMMENTATOR

(over radio)

-- vigil at Samaritan Square, this Friday, where as many as fifty thousand people are expected to mark the anniversary of the death of the man known around the world as --

CLICK! Kaminsky has reached out and SHUT OFF the radio. Arthur looks up at him.

ARTHUR

Yes, it's a nice piece.

(beat)

I can give you -- fifty bucks.

Kaminsky nods his assent and Arthur picks up the radio and carries it off to the caged area.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And the money--?

KAMINSKY

Keep it with the rest.

Arthur UNLOCKS the cage. He begins to move some items to make room for it. He speaks with his back turned.

ARTHUR

You know, there's safer places to
keep your money. Like a bank. But
I guess you got your reasons --
sure wish you'd share 'em though.

He turns back to see -- Kaminsky is gone. The shop is empty.
With a slight shake of his head, Arthur starts back to work.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Kaminsky makes his way down the street, hands thrust deep in
his pockets. He turns the corner and the towers come in
view.

UNKNOWN P.O.V.

Observing Kaminsky, from inside a parked car.

VOICE (O.S.)

...yo, that's him...

WIDER.

INT. CAR - MORNING

We're inside a vintage '73 Monte Carlo. Reza is in the
passenger seat with a bandage over his nose.

At the wheel is Reza's older brother -- whose face we also
recognize. It's FARSHAD, the twitchy-looking pimp we last
saw in the company of Lucius. Big Tuna LEANS into FRAME from
the back seat.

BIG TUNA

The old guy?

FARSHAD

You sure?

REZA

Yeah, it's him.

Reza catches a look passing between Big Tuna and Farshad. A
look he doesn't like.

REZA (CONT'D)

He's stronger than he looks, okay?

CUT TO:

INT. KAMINSKY'S ROOM - DAY

Sam enters the bedroom. He takes it all in, the neatly made bed, a mirror, a dresser...

He crosses to the dresser and opens a drawer. Inside is a stack of neatly folded shirts. He PULLS open another drawer. Pants.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

The door opens, spilling light over a rack of neatly hung shirts. There's a shelf with several baseball caps and a couple of books. One of the books catches Sam's eye.

A LARGE SCRAPBOOK

Sam extends onto his tip-toes but it's just out of reach. He tries again, straining -- reaching with his fingertips and manages to snag a corner. He PULLS it towards him. It topples -- hits the floor. Papers scatter.

SAM

Shit!

TIGHT SHOT - ON SAM

He drops to his knees to gather them. We SEE they're newspaper clippings. Dozens of them. Sam falters as one of the headlines catches his eye.

"GOOD SAMARITAN SAVES CHILDREN FROM CAR CRASH -- MOTHER CLAIMS HE LIFTED VEHICLE."

Sam reacts. He nudges the article aside to reveal another:

"MYSTERY MAN FIGHTS OFF WOULD-BE ATTACKERS -- SAVES WOMAN -- LEAVES SUSPECTS TIED UP FOR POLICE."

And another:

"MASKED VIGILANTE FOILS ATTEMPTED ROBBERY."

Sam realizes...all the articles are about Samaritan.

SAM (CONT'D)

...holy crap...

INT. COURTYARD - DAY

Kaminsky enters the courtyard and falters as he notices the dumpster under his window. He looks around suspiciously.

INT. KAMINSKY'S ROOM - DAY

Sam is going through the newspaper clippings. The headlines paint a crude picture of the past.

"VIGILANTE STRIKES AGAIN. MEDIA DUBS HIM 'SAMARITAN.'"

"SAMARITAN INSPIRES COPYCAT CRIMINAL -- SAMARITAN NOW HAS A NEMESIS."

"NEMESIS STRIKES AGAIN. HITS ARMORED VAN. WHERE IS 'SAMARITAN?'"

Sam's head SNAPS up as he hears a SOUND outside. A metal CLANG. He leaps up and hurries to the window.

SAM'S P.O.V.

Kaminsky is pushing the dumpster back into place against the far wall.

SAM (O.S.)
...oh, no...

BACK TO - SAM

He bolts back to the clipbook and starts frantically snatching up the scattered newspaper clippings. He shoves them all into the book.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Kaminsky appears at the end of the hall. He starts towards his apartment, fishing for his keys as he goes...

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sam finishes gathering all the clippings. He SLAPS the album shut and runs for the door, SKIDDING to a stop as he HEARS--

-- heavy FOOTFALLS outside. He spins back, mind racing. His eyes going to the window.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Kaminsky unlocks the door and pulls it open, REVEALING -- Nothing. No trace of Sam. Just an empty apartment. He steps in and closes the door.

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kaminsky hangs his coat up and crosses to the bedroom. CAMERA PANS TO -- THE WINDOW, where we see Sam's fingers, gripping the sill.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Sam has dropped the album, which lies on the ground six feet below his dangling legs. Several of the clippings have spilled from the book and are blowing away across the courtyard.

Sam musters his courage and lets go of the ledge. He drops -- six feet -- and lands on the ground below. He scrambles up again, snatching up the album.

INT. KAMINSKY'S ROOM - DAY

Kaminsky enters the bedroom. He's about to toss his cap onto the bed when he falters. He bends down and picks an object off the floor.

As he RISES INTO FRAME, we see what it is -- a single newspaper clipping Sam has somehow overlooked.

The headline reads, "WHO IS SAMARITAN?"

A look of confusion. Kaminsky's head SNAPS up, fixed on the closet. He YANKS open the door.

KAMINSKY'S P.O.V.

The top shelf. The album. It's missing.

BACK TO - KAMINSKY

He spins away, mind-racing. He sees the window and storms over. Looks down IN TIME TO SEE --

KAMINSKY'S P.O.V.

-- Sam, hauling ass across the courtyard, the album under his arm. He disappears into the north tower.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sam bursts into his apartment, SLAMMING the door behind him.

SAM

Mom! MOM!

TIFFANY (O.S.)

I'm in here...

INT. SAM'S ROOM - DAY

Tiffany is folding clothes when Sam races in, breathless, clutching the album.

SAM

Mom, you gotta see this!

TIFFANY

Shoes.

SAM

It's important!

TIFFANY

Shoes! Now! Honestly, how many time do I have to ask?

SAM

Okay, already!

He frantically shucks off his shoes and then slams the album flat on the table next to Tiffany.

TIFFANY

What is that?

SAM

Remember when you said lots of people are strong and lots of people have burns on their backs?

TIFFANY

Yes.

SAM

Do lots of people have this?

He opens the book. Tiffany stares at the collection of newspaper articles and clippings. Sam turns the pages for her.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's full of newspaper stories
about Samaritan! Why would he have
that? Why?!

TIFFANY
Where did you get this?

SAM
It doesn't matter. It's proof,
mom...

TIFFANY
(she looks up at him)
Sam Cleary. Answer me right now.
How did you get this book?

Off Sam's look, we CUT TO:

INT. KAMINSKY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kaminsky is seated on the edge of the bed. He's staring down at the newspaper clipping in his hands with a worried look.

He blinks and comes awake at the sound of KNOCKING.

INT. HALLWAY/APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kaminsky opens the door to see Tiffany and Sam, standing at attention outside. Sam is staring fixedly at the ground, avoiding Kaminsky's eyes.

TIFFANY
Mister Kaminsky. My son has
something to say to you.

She looks to Sam, who grudgingly raises his head.

SAM
I'm sorry I went in your apartment.

TIFFANY
And--?

SAM
I'm sorry I took your book.

TIFFANY

And--?

SAM

It won't happen again.

He holds the album out to Kaminsky, who scowls at him for a beat. Then grabs the album back.

TIFFANY

(to Sam)

Go wait in your room.

Sam turns and walks off down the hall. Tiffany faces Kaminsky.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Please don't be angry with him. It isn't his fault, it's mine. I'm not around much, I work a double shift, and ever since his father died --

(beat)

-- he spends a lot of time alone. It's not an excuse, just a fact.

Kaminsky's expression softens a touch.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

He's not a bad kid. He just -- he gets these ideas in his head and he won't let go of them.

KAMINSKY

What ideas?

TIFFANY

Well, ever since you helped him, he's become convinced that -- that you're -- Samaritan.

A long beat.

KAMINSKY

He thinks I'm Samaritan?

TIFFANY

He's eleven. He's impressionable. He sees things on TV, he reads comics --

(beat)

It won't happen again. I promise.

Kaminsky's expression hardens.

KAMINSKY
See that it doesn't, Miss Cleary.

He closes the door in her face. She stares a beat, a little surprised...but what did she expect?

TIFFANY
Okay then.

She turns and walks off.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATER

Sam lies in bed, staring out the window. He's been crying. Off-screen there is KNOCK at his door. He reacts.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
Sam? Can I come in?

SAM
I want to be alone, mom.

There is a long silence.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
What if I talk through the door?
You don't even have to talk back.
You can just -- tap on your
dresser, okay?

Sam rolls his eyes.

TIFFANY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tap once for yes, and twice for no.
Okay?

Sam reluctantly TAPS once.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I just want to say I know it's been
hard. I know I'm not around much.
(beat)
But I'm doing the best I can. I'm
working double shifts to earn
enough money so we can get out of
this city. So we can go somewhere
better, somewhere with good
schools, where you don't have to
run home every day...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tiffany's head rests against the outside of Sam's door. She talks softly to him as she stares at the ground.

TIFFANY

But I need your help. I know
that's not fair, for a parent to
ask a kid, but I'm asking anyway.
Because I can't do it all alone. I
wish I could. But I can't.

(beat)

You have to promise, Sam, no more
bothering Mister Kaminsky. No more
trouble. Okay?

She holds her breath, waiting. Finally there is a single
TAP. She EXHALES softly. A sound of relief.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(beat)

Are you gonna be okay if I go to
work?

INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sam TAPS again.

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Okay. I'll see you in the morning.
There are leftovers in the fridge.

(beat)

I love you.

Sam listens to her FOOTSTEPS receding down the hall. He
HEARS the front door close. Tiffany is gone. Sam SIGHS and
looks up at the image of Samaritan taped to his wall.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. TOWERS - DAWN

The sun rises behind the apartment complex.

Kaminsky emerges from the south tower and crosses the
courtyard. He sees Sam, hitting bottle caps with a stick,
and stops as they come face to face.

SAM

I'm sorry I told my mom your
secret.

KAMINSKY
Listen, Kid. I'm not Samaritan.

SAM
You don't have to lie.

KAMINSKY
I'm not lying.

SAM
You had a book of newspaper stories
about Samaritan.

KAMINSKY
It wasn't mine. I found it.
(by way of explanation)
I find a lot of things in my line
of work. TVs, radios, books...

Sam frowns.

SAM
What do you do?

KAMINSKY
I drive a dump truck.

SAM
(surprised)
You're a garbage man?

Kaminsky nods slowly.

SAM (CONT'D)
(unconvinced)
What about your back? How come
it's burned?

A long beat.

KAMINSKY
Not that it's any of your business,
but I was in a fire when I was a
kid.

SAM
What kind of fire?

KAMINSKY
What do you mean, what kind? The
burning kind. I was screwing
around with a box of lighter fluid.
That's all it is, a stupid
mistake...

Sam peers at Kaminsky, unsure whether to believe him or not.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Any more questions?

Sam shakes his head solemnly, "no." Then, with an air of disappointment, he drops the stick and walks off in the direction of his building.

Kaminsky watches him go. Then turns to leave.

NEW ANGLE - SAM

He turns and looks back at Kaminsky. Then walks on.

NEW ANGLE - KAMINSKY

He glances back at Sam. Then turns and starts across the street, stepping right into the path of an ONCOMING VEHICLE.

WHAM! Kaminsky's body is struck and sent tumbling down the avenue. The car, a black Monte Carlo (driven by Farshad) PEELS off, tires SCREECHING...

TIGHT SHOT - SAM

He whips around, startled. He sees Kaminsky's crumpled body, motionless in the road. He breaks into a run.

CAMERA PURSUES SAM -- through the playground, into the road, where he comes to a stunned stop.

TEN YARDS AWAY:

Kaminsky lies motionless, face down. A few macabre details etch themselves forever into Sam's mind.

-- Kaminsky's left hand, twisted awkwardly --

-- his baseball cap, knocked loose --

-- his jacket, torn open --

Sam takes a faltering step.

SAM
...ohmygod...ohmygod...

And then it happens:

TIGHT SHOT - KAMINSKY'S HAND

There is a spasm of motion. The fingers of his left hand flex and bend. The hand rotates slowly and plants itself flat on the ground.

Then the right hand does the same. And slowly Kaminsky pushes himself to his feet.

WIDE SHOT - THE STREET

Sam and Kaminsky, in the middle of the avenue. Sam's expression has gone from shock to awe. Kaminsky stares back at him. The silence stretches on and on...

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kaminsky enters and crosses to the kitchen, leaving the door open behind him. CAMERA PANS to...Sam, standing frozen in the entrance. Staring after Kaminsky.

KAMINSKY

If you're coming in, close the door.

Sam snaps out of his daze and steps inside. He shuts the door.

ANGLE ON - KAMINSKY

He is at the freezer, fishing inside for some ice cubes. He drops them into a dishtowel and twists it up, making an ice-pack. He puts the ice-pack to his head.

Sam hasn't moved. He's just standing there, gaping silently.

Kaminsky finally looks up at him.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Nobody can know about this. Do you understand? Nobody?

SAM

Why?

KAMINSKY

Because I said so. Because it's my choice and not yours. And if you can't make that promise, you can leave right now.

Sam quickly nods.

SAM
I won't tell. I promise. Not even
my mom.

Kaminsky stares at him grimly. He doesn't like it much but he knows he has no real choice. He lowers the ice pack for a moment and Sam sees there is blood on it.

SAM (CONT'D)
(frowning)
You're bleeding...?

KAMINSKY
I just got hit by a car, kid.

SAM
(confused)
So...? You still get hurt?

KAMINSKY
Yeah, I still get hurt. Just not
as easy as you.

Sam tries to wrap his mind around it.

SAM
Are you from another planet or
something?

KAMINSKY
No.

SAM
How did you get your powers?

KAMINSKY
I didn't "get" them. Not the way
you mean. I was just -- born like
this. The same way some people are
born faster, or smarter or have a
talent like drawing.

Sam looks a little disappointed.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Any other dumb questions?

SAM
Why do you want everyone to think
you're dead?

Kaminsky hesitates, looking down at Sam.

KAMINSKY

I just wanna be left alone. Can you understand that? I'm not the same person I used to be.

Sam frowns.

SAM

On TV, there was a guy with glasses who wrote a book. He said you went away because you felt guilty --

KAMINSKY

Guilty?

SAM

For killing Nemesis.

TIGHT SHOT - KAMINSKY

He reacts, slowly averting his gaze. Sam waits for him to say something, but Kaminsky is silent.

SAM (CONT'D)

You shouldn't feel guilty. Nemesis was bad. You were just defending yourself.

KAMINSKY

Give it a break kid. You don't know anything about it.

SAM

I know what I see on TV and --

KAMINSKY

It's not like it is in the comics. He wasn't evil. He was just -- angry, bitter -- because he was different and thought the world owed him something.

(suddenly very tired)

Look, kid -- maybe you should go home. I need some time to think.

Stung, Sam slowly backs away...

At the door, he falters and looks to Kaminsky.

SAM

Can I come back sometime?

Kaminsky doesn't respond.

He is lost in thought, staring at the washcloth in his hands, with the spot of blood on it. Sam steps silently out of the room, letting the door swing shut between them.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

Mitsu waits at the bottom of the steps, looking annoyed. He glances at his watch and pushes the DOOR BUZZER. A moment passes and we hear the SOUND of a window being OPENED.

He looks up.

NEW ANGLE

Tiffany leans out of the window above.

TIFFANY

Morning, Mitsu. He's on his way.

MITSU

Hi, Miss Cleary...

TIFFANY

You boys make sure to come straight home, okay? No more trouble after school...

MITSU

Yes, Miss Cleary.

A moment later, Sam arrives, backpack slung over one shoulder. He waves "goodbye" to his mother, who ducks back into the window.

EXT. STREETS - LATER

Mitsu and Sam walk off down the block. As they go, Sam glances over his shoulder several times. At the corner, he stops suddenly.

MITSU

Hey. You coming or what?

SAM

Go ahead without me.

Mitsu hesitates, confused.

MITSU

What about you?

SAM
(waving him off)
Don't worry, just go...

Mitsu shrugs, whatever, and turns away.

Sam lingers, staring down the block in the direction of the towers. After a moment, he turns and starts for the back of the building...

EXT. TOWERS, COURTYARD - DAY

Kaminsky comes out of the building, carrying a heavy bag under one arm. He starts down the avenue.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

CAMERA FOLLOWS KAMINSKY, from behind, as he makes his way down the avenue. He turns the corner.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Kaminsky makes his way through a maze of city streets. He rounds a corner, disappearing briefly from view. A moment passes and Sam appears behind him, backpack slung over his shoulder. He hurries to keep up.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION - DAY

Kaminsky starts up a flight of stairs. Sam lingers a moment or two, then hurries after him.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Sam reaches the top of the stairs and falters. He looks around, confused. Suddenly there is no sign of Kaminsky. As he turns, searching the station for him, we PAN to REVEAL -

-- KAMINSKY, stepping out of the shadows behind Sam.

He startles the hell out of the boy by clamping a hand on his shoulder. Sam WHIPS around with a CRY.

KAMINSKY
What are you're doing, kid?

Sam mumbles something under his breath.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Speak up!

SAM
(louder)
I wanna go with you.

KAMINSKY
Well, you can't. I got things to do.

SAM
I can help. I can carry your bag.

KAMINSKY
Do I look like I need help carrying this bag?
(Sam is silent)
Don't you have school or something?

Sam shakes his head, no.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Why the hell not?

SAM
(covering)
Parent-teacher conference.

KAMINSKY
Good for you. Go home. Play with your pals.

SAM
What pals?

KAMINSKY
Whatever pals you want. You're not coming with me.

Kaminsky turns to go.

NEW ANGLE - KAMINSKY

At the turnstile, fishing for a token. He's about to drop it in when he looks back and sees Sam hasn't moved.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Well, go on! Go!

SAM
I can't.

KAMINSKY
(loudly)
Why not?

SAM
(loudly back)
Because I don't remember the way!

Kaminsky frowns and looks around, trying to decide whether this is his problem or not. He crosses back to Sam.

KAMINSKY
Well, I'm not taking you home. I
got things to do. You got yourself
into this mess. Go ask someone for
directions...

He turns to go.

Sam lingers for a moment, looking around. There's a BEGGAR in the corner, and a SEEDY LOOKING MAN by a payphone, with his hands in his sweatshirt pockets.

NEW ANGLE - KAMINSKY

Back at the turnstile. He's about to put the coin in the slot when glances back and sees Sam making his way over to the SEEDY LOOKING MAN.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
...godammit... HEY! Get over
here!

Sam looks back at him. He hurries over.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Christ, Kid. Don't you have any
sense at all? Don't ask that guy.

SAM
Why not?

KAMINSKY
He's a drug dealer! Can't you
tell?

Sam looks back at the guy, curious. Kaminsky just shakes his head hopelessly. He fishes in his pocket and takes out a second token. As he tosses it to Sam, we --

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The train RUSHES past.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Sam and Kaminsky are in a deserted subway car. Sam is grinning and looking at Kaminsky.

SAM
What's in the bag?

KAMINSKY
A camera.

SAM
What kind of camera?

KAMINSKY
The kind for taking pictures.

SAM
Where are you taking it?

Kaminsky looks down at Sam.

KAMINSKY
To a pawnshop.

SAM
You're going to sell it?

KAMINSKY
Yeah, I'm going to sell it. I found it, I fixed it up, and I'm gonna sell it. You gonna do this the whole way?

SAM
Do what?

KAMINSKY
Ask questions.

Sam sees Kaminsky is annoyed. He shakes his head, "no."

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Good.

Kaminsky turns away. Watches the city flash past.

Sam looks up at him, biting his lip. Wanting to ask something, but not wanting to push it.

Feeling his stare, Kaminsky looks down at him.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

What...?

SAM

Do you have, like, a secret
hideout?

KAMINSKY

What--?

SAM

Like the Batcave?

A beat.

KAMINSKY

Je-zuz-Christ!

Off Kaminsky's look, we CUT TO:

EXT. PAWNSHOP - DAY

Kaminsky and Sam arrive outside the pawnshop. Kaminsky
gestures for the bag, which Sam is now carrying.

KAMINSKY

Gimme the bag.

Sam hands it over.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Wait here, I'll be back.

SAM

Why can't I come in?

KAMINSKY

Because I said so.

He disappears into the shop. Sam squints through the glass
after him.

INT. PAWNSHOP - DAY

Kaminsky makes his way between aisles. At the back of the
shop, Arthur looks up from his work. Kaminsky sets the bag
on the counter.

Arthur puts his glasses on and falters as he sees --

ARTHUR'S P.O.V.

Sam, peering through the windows at the front of the shop.

BACK TO - ARTHUR

He looks from Sam to Kaminsky.

ARTHUR
Cute kid. Is that your boy?

KAMINSKY
No.

Arthur looks baffled. Kaminsky takes the camera out of the bag.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
And he ain't so cute...

CUT TO:

EXT. PAWNSHOP - DAY

Sam looks up expectantly as Kaminsky emerges from the pawnshop.

SAM
That man bought your camera?

KAMINSKY
Yeah.

SAM
For how much?

KAMINSKY
Never mind how much. You hungry?
You wanna hotdog?

Sam nods slowly.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Okay then. I'll get you a hotdog
and take you home. And in return,
you're gonna make me a promise.

Sam's eyes narrow.

SAM
What promise?

KAMINSKY

You're gonna promise not to follow
me anymore.

Long pause as Sam considers this.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOT DOG SHACK - DAY

Sam and Kaminsky, at the counter. A FRY-COOK is working the grill. Kaminsky is eating his food. Sam is sitting there, watching Kaminsky. He glances down at the watch around his wrist, then slowly back at Kaminsky.

KAMINSKY

What's wrong? Aren't you hungry?

SAM

What else can you fix?

KAMINSKY

Fans, radios...lamps. Why?

SAM

What about a watch?

Kaminsky looks down at the watch on Sam's wrist. He shakes his head, slowly. No.

KAMINSKY

Too small. Too many pieces.

Sam nods, with obvious disappointment. He looks down at the watch again. Turns it a little on his wrist.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Your food's getting cold.

SAM

I'm not hungry.

Kaminsky stares a beat.

KAMINSKY

Was that your dad's?

Sam nods.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

What happened to him?

SAM

He died when I was young. My mom
won't talk about it. But I hear
her crying sometimes in her sleep.

Kaminsky sobers a little. He tosses the remainder of his
food into a trash can, and wipes his mouth.

KAMINSKY

Lemme see it.

Sam looks up.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

I'm not making any promises -- but
I'll take a look.

Sam smiles and takes the watch off his wrist. He hands it to
Kaminsky, who puts it in his pocket.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Now, eat your food. I gotta get
back.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

Sam and Kaminsky are walking along together. Sam is
peppering Kaminsky with questions as they go and Kaminsky is
getting progressively more annoyed.

SAM

What's the most number of guys you
ever fought at once?

KAMINSKY

I don't know.

SAM

Could you fight five guys at once
if they all had knives?

KAMINSKY

I don't know.

SAM

You beat up Reza and Omar and
Chris, and Reza had a knife. I bet
you could fight five. Maybe ten.
What's the most you can bench-
press?

KAMINSKY
I don't know.

SAM
You don't know how strong you are?
Well, can you bend metal?

Kaminsky stops abruptly and turns to Sam.

KAMINSKY
Listen, Kid--

VOICE (O.S.)
Wassup, old timer?

Kaminsky is cut off by a VOICE. He looks up to see THREE THUGS loitering in the alley. Low level DRUG RUNNERS with hoodies/bandanas/sneakers, etc...

THUG 1
Going somewhere?

THUG 2
(gesturing)
Come on, come on -- let's have it.
Cash, wallet, watch.

TIGHT SHOT -- KAMINSKY

His hands come out of his pockets... He looks over his shoulder to see two more THUGS coming up behind him.

KAMINSKY
Sam. Stand over there.

He points to one side of the alley. Sam dashes to the wall.

THUG 1
Open your ears, old timer!

THUG 3
I said -- cash, wallet, watch.
Now!

Kaminsky doesn't budge.

Thug 3 gets into his face.

THUG 3 (CONT'D)
You forget your hearing aid,
gramps?

LAUGHTER from his friends. Emboldened by his silence, one of the THUGS thrusts a hand into Kaminsky's coat, groping for a wallet -- but Kaminsky's arm SNAPS up and grabs hold of his fingers. CRUNCH!

The man's smile vanishes as his fingers are crushed in Kaminsky's vice-like grip. He SCREAMS and drop to his knees, with Kaminsky still holding his hand.

THUG 2

Whips out a knife. Kaminsky's arm snaps straight back and grabs hold of his coat -- he goes HURTLING into a wall and -- CRACK! -- Slumps to the ground next to Sam, unconscious.

The remaining THUGS get serious. One of them goes for his gun. Kaminsky grabs his hand. Two shots FIRE into the air. The GUNMAN SCREAMS as Kaminsky twists the gun out of his hand, breaking fingers.

THUG 3

Lunges at Kaminsky with a switchblade. Kaminsky dodges and grabs the man's arm. He RIPS the knife from his grip, flips it -- catches it by the handle, and -- THUNK! Drives it HILT-DEEP into his thigh. He goes down, SCREAMING.

KNIFE-IN-LEG

Shit! My leg -- my fucking leg!

THUGS 4 AND 5

Share a look, scared. This isn't how it was supposed to happen. Thug 4 starts backing away.

THUG 5 spots Sam in the shadows and lunges for him. Sam tries to bolt away but the man catches him by the wrist and drags him out.

THUG 5

I'll cut him! I'll carve him up!

TIGHT SHOT - SAM'S EYES

Wide with terror as a knife is pressed to his throat.

TIGHT SHOT - KAMINSKY

He bends down and grabs the knife protruding from THUG 3's leg. RIPS it out. The man SCREAMS.

Kaminsky turns to THUG 5, who's trying to ease past using Sam as a human shield.

KAMINSKY
(softly)
You're making a mistake.

THUG 5

Looks frantically for help, but his pals are all unconscious or writhing in pain.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
Let him go. Last chance.

Thug 5 decides to get the hell out of there. He drops Sam and makes a run for it.

Kaminsky stares after the man. Then, hearing a WHIMPER behind him, he remembers Sam and turns.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
You okay?

On a sudden impulse, Sam rushes at Kaminsky and hugs him tightly. Kaminsky is taken aback.

He has no idea what to do.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWERS - LATER

Kaminsky and Sam face each other in the courtyard between the two towers. For a moment neither of them speaks.

SAM
When you saw those men, in the alley? Were you scared?

KAMINSKY
Yeah.

SAM
But it didn't stop you. You still fought them.

KAMINSKY
I didn't have a choice.

Sam looks down at his shoes. Bites his lip for a moment. Wanting to say something, but holding back.

SAM

For me it's...different. When I get scared, I can't do anything. I just stand there. Like I'm paralyzed. I hate that...

KAMINSKY

It's normal to be scared.

SAM

There isn't some trick?

KAMINSKY

(doesn't understand)

A trick--?

SAM

Like -- a mental trick, to control it.

KAMINSKY

No. No trick.

Sam reacts, a little disappointed.

Suddenly, they're interrupted by the SOUND of TIFFANY'S VOICE, calling from above:

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Sam? Dinner-time!

Sam reacts, mortified.

SAM

Oh, God...

KAMINSKY

You should go.

Kaminsky turns to leave but Sam calls after him.

SAM

I don't have school tomorrow either.

Kaminsky represses a smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

I was thinking -- maybe you can show me some moves. Like, how to fight better, or flip people backwards, or stuff like that --

KAMINSKY
I have work tomorrow.

SAM
Driving the garbage truck?

KAMINSKY
Driving the garbage truck.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
Sam!? Did you hear me?

SAM
(rolls his eyes)
Hang on...
(he SHOUTS to the window)
Yes, I heard you! I'm coming!

He turns back to Kaminsky.

SAM (CONT'D)
What about this weekend?

Kaminsky hesitates.

KAMINSKY
I don't think your mom would
approve, kid.

SAM
She'd totally approve. It's for my
own protection, isn't it?

KAMINSKY
I'll think about it.

He exits. Sam looks after him, then turns and starts for the
door of his own building.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWERS, ROOFTOP - DAY

A space relegated to AC units and exhaust vents. Kaminsky
and Sam face each other in a clearing between vents.

KAMINSKY
Show me a fist.

Sam tightens his left hand into a ball and holds it up in
front of his nose.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

If you're gonna hit someone, you better be sure. And I'm not just talking about you getting hit back. I'm talking about what happens to you. It changes you. A little bit at first. And then a little bit more. You understand what I'm telling you?

Sam understands.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Still wanna know how to hit someone?

SAM

Yes.

KAMINSKY

Okay, south-paw. Show me what you got. Take a swing at me.

Sam lowers his fist, unsure.

SAM

Really...?

KAMINSKY

Let 'er rip. Hard as you can.

Sam positions his feet (taking a good twenty seconds to do this) and then draws his left hand back like an archer. He SLUGS Kaminsky in the stomach.

ON SAM, reacting, in pain... He turns away, cradling his hand, trying not to show it.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

You okay?

SAM

Yeah, fine...

KAMINSKY

Couple things. If you're gonna hit someone, if you got no other choice, for godssake don't let 'em see it coming. Do it quick. Surprise 'em. It's called a suckerpunch.

SAM

But isn't that...unfair?

KAMINSKY

Yeah.

(beat)

But if the world were fair, you
wouldn't need to know how to hit
people.

Sam sees the logic in this and nods slowly.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Try again. No warning. Hit 'em
hard and put 'em down.

Sam steels himself. He acts "normal." Hands at his side.
Then, with little warning, he suddenly SLUGS Kaminsky in the
stomach. His eyes bug out. He clutches his hand.

SAM

Shit...!

KAMINSKY

Better. Another thing. Plant your
feet, be sure you got your balance.

WIPE TO:

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sam and Tiffany eat dinner. Burgers.

TIFFANY

How was school?

SAM

Great.

TIFFANY

(pleasantly surprised)

Really...?

SAM

Yeah, really great. I learned a
lot. Mom, what do you think of
Mister Kaminsky?

TIFFANY

Kaminsky? Why?

SAM

I was thinking maybe we could
invite him over for dinner.

TIFFANY

For what?

SAM

To say thanks. For helping. We're neighbors, right? Isn't that normal for neighbors?

TIFFANY

I guess. Maybe. But we don't really know him.

SAM

He asked about you.

TIFFANY

You talked to Mister Kaminsky?
About me?

(Sam nods, yes)
...when?

SAM

When I was taking out the trash.

Tiffany hesitates. Looks down at her plate.

TIFFANY

He's a nice man, but -- he's a little old for me.

They resume eating. A moment or two passes in silence.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(without looking up)
Why? What did he say?

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWERS, ROOFTOP - DAY

Sam and Kaminsky are at it again on the roof, training. Sam stops to catch his breath, hands on his knees.

KAMINSKY

You sure your mom's okay with this?
Me teaching you how to fight?

SAM

(nodding)
Yeah, yeah. In fact, she asked if you want to come to dinner tomorrow.

KAMINSKY
Dinner...? What for?

SAM
I dunno. To say thanks, I guess.
For helping me out.

Kaminsky fixes Sam with a look.

KAMINSKY
You put your mom up to this?

SAM
(plays dumb)
Me...? No way...

Kaminsky looks at Sam, then down at the ground. Suddenly he is unsure of himself.

KAMINSKY
Dinner, huh?

SAM
Nothing big. Probably just
burgers. Mom's not, like, the best
cook...

KAMINSKY
What time?

SAM
Five o'clock. She has to work at
night. So we eat early.

Kaminsky hesitates uncertainly.

KAMINSKY
(finally)
Okay. Yeah...

Sam smiles. As they go back to their exercises --

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Lucius is sprawled out on a sofa. Farshad is next to him, cutting up lines of cocaine. Two young PROSTITUTES are sacked out on a bed in the background.

Suddenly the door SLAMS open. Lucius reacts on instinct, snatching a gun off the table and nearly putting a round through... Big Tuna and Cyrus.

LUCIUS

What the fuck, man--!? Ain't you ever heard of knockin'?

BIG TUNA

Sorry, boss -- but we got a problem.

CYRUS

Somebody fucked up Axel and Jamal.

Lucius lowers the gun, stares a beat.

LUCIUS

We got hit? On our turf...?

BIG TUNA

Nah, this wasn't a hit. This was something else.

CYRUS

They was trying to roll some old guy for his wallet -- he fucked 'em up. Put Jamal in the hospital.

BIG TUNA

Jamal brung in five, ten grand a day...

Lucius stands, scratching his head, looking pissed.

LUCIUS

What old guy? What did he look like?

CYRUS

A big guy. Maybe six two. Gray hair. Real tough bastard. Maybe fifty years old. Walking around with a little kid.

ON THE COUCH, the description hits Farshad like a ton of bricks. He comes out of his stupor.

FARSHAD

No way...that's impossible...

Lucius turns to Farshad.

LUCIUS

You know this guy?

FARSHAD

My kid brother, Reza -- he got into
it with some guy in the towers.
Some old man. So I took him out.

Lucius stares a beat, intrigued.

FARSHAD (CONT'D)

Can't be him though...

LUCIUS

(to Cyrus)

Get me a name and an address. I
wanna meet this guy.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - LATER

The BUZZER rings.

SAM (O.S.)

I GOT IT!

Sam bursts out of his bedroom, runs down the short hallway to
the front door.

Tiffany is in the kitchen, putting the finishing touches on a
dinner table. She checks her reflection in a mirror next to
the stove and makes a minute adjustment to her hair.

ANGLE ON - SAM

He opens the door. Kaminsky stands in the hallway with a
bottle of wine.

KAMINSKY

Hey, kid.

Sam smiles and opens the door wide. Kaminsky falters as he
sees Tiffany behind Sam.

TIFFANY

(she gestures nervously)

Won't you please come in?

Kaminsky enters the apartment and looks around. For a moment
nobody says anything. Kaminsky remembers the bottle of wine
under his arm and hands it to Tiffany.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Thank you. That's very nice. I,
um -- hope you're not a vegetarian.

KAMINSKY
No.

TIFFANY
Good. Because I made burgers.

Kaminsky and Sam share a look.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
What?

KAMINSKY
Nothing. I love burgers.

Sam is standing between them, looking back and forth,
watching the scene unfold. There is a lengthy silence.

SAM
So. Why don't we sit down and
relax?

He leads the way into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Sam, Kaminsky and Tiffany are crammed in around the tiny
kitchen table. Kaminsky looks a little awkward. His hands
are in his lap. He raises them to adjust his fork. Lowers
them again.

TIFFANY
So, Mister Kaminsky...what do you
do? I mean, for work?

SAM
(cutting in)
He works for the city.

TIFFANY
That's interesting. What kind of
work?

SAM
The department of --

KAMINSKY
I'm a garbage man.

Tiffany reacts, a little surprised but non-judgemental.

TIFFANY
That sounds difficult. Physical.
A lot of lifting.

KAMINSKY
What about you?

SAM
(very quickly)
She works at a bar. Waitressing.
Right, mom?

ON TIFFANY, she glances self-consciously at Sam, then back at Kaminsky. She forces a smile and nods.

TIFFANY
I'm looking for different work but
the way things are now, with the
economy -- and -- I'm not exactly a
college grad.

KAMINSKY
A job's a job.

TIFFANY
Exactly. It pays the bills. And
one day, when we got enough saved
up -- we're moving out of the city.

KAMINSKY
Where to?

TIFFANY
Serenity, Kansas. It's a town
outside Wichita, it's got zero
unemployment rate and zero crime
rate.

KAMINSKY
Serenity--?

TIFFANY
(she smiles, embarrassed)
It's a funny name, but it kinda
fits. I read an article and it was
voted best small town to live in
America, five years running.

Kaminsky is silent, staring at Tiffany. Something comes over him, a slight look -- something a little wistful.

He blinks and looks down at his plate.

KAMINSKY
Sounds nice.

ON Sam, looking back and forth between them. He's not sure what just happened but he felt it too...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kaminsky stands outside Sam's apartment, hands in his pockets. Tiffany lingers in the door.

TIFFANY
Thanks for -- ya, know, coming over. It was nice. And thanks again, for what you did for Sam.
(beat)
He really looks up to you.

KAMINSKY
He's a good kid.

TIFFANY
Yeah.

AROUND THE CORNER

Sam is listening. He has his ear pressed to the wall.

TIFFANY & KAMINSKY

There's an awkward silence between them. That moment when you're not sure how to say goodbye.

KAMINSKY
Well, I should go --

TIFFANY
(with compulsive honesty)
Mister Kaminsky, I don't work at a bar.

ON SAM, wincing as he hears this. He SLAPS a hand to his forehead. What is she doing?!

Tiffany continues, nervously.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I work at Auggie's. It's a strip club. I'm a dancer. I didn't want to lie about it.

Kaminsky nods slowly.

KAMINSKY
Pay's well?

TIFFANY
(makes a SNORTING sound)
More'n any other job I could get.
You don't think that's...wrong?

KAMINSKY
I'm the wrong guy to ask that. But
I think you're just doing what you
have to, to get by.

Tiffany EXHALES softly.

TIFFANY
Yeah.

KAMINSKY
Thanks for dinner.

Kaminsky turns and walks off down the hall. Tiffany smiles after him.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

Kaminsky exits the towers. It's early out, the streets are eerily still. A few HOMELESS PEOPLE huddle around a garbage-can fire.

One of them looks up. It's FARSHAD. He falls silently in behind Kaminsky.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Farshad is joined by a SECOND MAN and a THIRD MAN.

Kaminsky starts up a flight of stairs to an ELEVATED SUBWAY STATION, passing a graffiti covered wall over which someone has spray-painted the words:

SAmAritAn LiVES!

EXT. PLATFORM - MORNING

A train BLASTS into the station, whipping up debris and newspapers. In b.g, Farshad is joined by another TWO MEN. Five altogether now.

As Kaminsky boards the train, they go on too. Kaminsky gets on a car near the middle. Farshad gets on behind Kaminsky. The remaining two MEN get on one car down.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

The car starts moving. Kaminsky makes his way forward into the next car. Farshad and his men start after him. As the train takes a curve -- they briefly lose sight of Kaminsky.

When the track straightens again, he's gone.

FARSHAD

What the fuck--?

Farshad throws open the door at the end of the car.

INT. TRAIN, NEXT CAR - MORNING

Farshad shoves several PASSENGERS aside as he muscles his way into the next car. He looks for Kaminsky. All he sees are the other THREE MEN heading his way from the front.

They converge with baffled expressions.

THUG 1

So where the hell--?

FARSHAD

He was right in front of me!

ANGLE - BETWEEN CARS

Kaminsky drops INTO FRAME FROM ABOVE. He YANKS opens the door --

-- and hell breaks loose in the cramped confines of the subway car as Kaminsky grabs FARSHAD and SLAMS him into a window, SHATTERING it.

Wind BLASTS into the car. PASSENGERS start SCREAMING. Farshad collapses, clutching his face, HOWLING in pain.

Everyone goes for their guns. Kaminsky grabs THUG 1 and SPINS him around.

THUGS 2 and 3 open FIRE on Kaminsky, hitting THUG 1 instead. The man's body jerks and twitches as he is struck by half a dozen rounds.

INT. CONDUCTOR'S BOOTH - MORNING

The CONDUCTOR reacts to the SOUND of GUNFIRE. He goes for his radio.

CONDUCTOR
(into radio)
I got shots fired! Shots fired on
the L train! Northbound --

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Kaminsky grabs his gun and FIRES BACK, dropping THUGS 2 and 3. THUG 4 gets lucky and strikes Kaminsky in the shoulder with a round.

Kaminsky barely reacts. He grabs THUG 4 by the arm, pivots and sends the man CRASHING out a window.

EXT. ELEVATED TRACKS/STREETS - MORNING

He sails into open space -- and PLUMMETS three stories into the windshield of an oncoming car.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

The car is deserted, all the PASSENGERS having fled. The only people left are Kaminsky, Farshad, and three CORPSES that slide back and forth with the motion of the train.

Kaminsky kneels in front of Farshad, who is slumped against the door, smiling through broken teeth.

FARSHAD
I know who you are...Samaritan...

Kaminsky reacts, grim. He GRABS hold of him in both hands.

KAMINSKY
What do you want from me?

FARSHAD
We're gonna kill you. Gonna hunt
you down and kill you like a dog.

Kaminsky's eyes flare with anger. He HAULS Farshad to his feet. We're not sure what he intends to do -- but the next instant he changes his mind because he sees --

THE NEXT STATION

Two TRANSIT COPS are waiting on the platform, guns drawn.

KAMINSKY

DROPS Farshad, and YANKS the emergency brakes. The wheels lock up and start SCREECHING.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION - MORNING

The train grinds to a halt just short of the platform. Only the first subway car is in the station. The two Transit Cops rush the doors and try to pry them open.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Kaminsky takes off running, down the length of the subway car. Farshad's LAUGHTER echoes behind him:

FARSHAD
Run mother-fucker! It don't
matter! WE'LL FIND YOU!

INT. TRAIN, NEXT CAR - MORNING

Kaminsky DASHES past a number of startled PASSENGERS. He RIPS open the door at the back of the last car.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN RACKS - MORNING

It's a thirty foot drop to the ground below. Kaminsky stares grimly -- looks back --

-- THE POLICE are running towards him. A PASSENGER with a CAMERA spins to grab a shot of Kaminsky. He wheels away, covering his face and LEAPS!

EXT. STREETS - MORNING

Kaminsky IMPACTS the roof of a parked car, CRUSHING it like a tin can. The windshield SHATTERS. Kaminsky rolls off the roof and takes off running down the avenue.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - LATER

At the end of the hall, the bathroom door is open and we SEE Kaminsky, sitting on the edge of the bathtub. His shirt is off and he is working on his shoulder.

INSERT SHOT - SINK

PLINK! A bullet drops into a blood-spattered basin.

Kaminsky tears a piece of fabric and presses it to the wound. With his other hand, he grabs a roll of duct-tape and starts to rip a piece off with his teeth.

INT. KAMINSKY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Kaminsky stands motionless in the middle of his room, lost in thought. On the bed in front of him, lying open, is the book of newspaper clippings.

Kaminsky stares at it for a long moment. Then turns to look around the room, as if struggling with some internal decision. Finally, he reaches out and closes the book.

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - DAY

Rain streams down the concrete facade of the school. The windows are brightly lit.

MR. JIMENEZ (O.S.)
Control the ball! Keep passing,
keep passing --

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Basketball drills are underway. STUDENTS are lined opposite each other in rows, passing the ball back and forth with one hand (or trying to). The gym teacher, JIMENEZ, monitors, pacing the line, SHOUTING instructions.

Among the students being drilled are Reza, Omar and Chris.

MR. JIMENEZ
One hand only! Watch Reza -- very
good, Reza --

The class bell RINGS. Mr. Jimenez glances at his stopwatch.

MR. JIMENEZ (CONT'D)
Okay, that's it, guys. Put the
balls back and get changed.

The gymnasium doors are thrust open and STUDENTS start arriving for the next class. Among them, Sam. He sees Reza and quickly averts his eyes. He hurries for the lockers.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Sam, at his locker. He's trying to get dressed as quickly as he can and make his exit before Reza arrives. He throws in his bookbag, grabs his sneakers and shoves them on without even bothering to lace them. He spins to go --

-- but he's too late. Reza, Chris and Omar arrive.

CHRIS
Hey loser. Happy to see us?

REZA
Where's your Grandpa? Oh, wait --
(mock regret)
He got in an accident, I heard.
Got hit by a car.

Sam smiles inwardly. Which isn't the reaction Reza was hoping for.

REZA (CONT'D)
What's so funny, loser?

Sam wants to say something but knows he shouldn't. He bites his tongue.

SAM
Nothing.

REZA
No, I wanna hear. Share the joke,
retard. What are you smiling at?

SAM
No.

REZA

...no?

Reza gets into Sam's face, trying to intimidate him. Chris and Omar crowd in.

TIGHT ON - SAM

A look of defiance comes over him. His hands tighten into fists.

SAM

(softly)

I'm not scared of you.

Reza's eyes widen in surprise. He looks to Omar and Chris, who burst into LAUGHTER.

OMAR

Dude! He's not scared!

CHRIS

Yeah, man, back off!

REZA

(smiles)

I think you are scared. I think you're so scared you're ready to piss your--

Without warning, Sam lets out an animal CRY and swings his fist as hard as he can into the side of Reza's head. The blow catches him utterly by surprise and sends him CRASHING into the lockers.

He slumps to the ground, stunned.

CHRIS

Holy shit, dude--!

OMAR

Reza?! Are you okay?

Omar and Chris rush to Reza's help. Sam, who is just as stunned at his own actions, forgets himself momentarily and stands frozen. Then he snaps out of it and bolts for the doors.

Reza, red-faced with anger, shoves his friends off.

REZA

Get off -- get him!

Omar and Chris sprint after Sam.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Sam runs through the empty gymnasium for the doors at the far side of the room. Omar and Chris run after him. They grab hold of him.

SAM
(struggling)
Get off me! Get off!

Reza arrives, clutching his ear, glaring furiously at Sam.

REZA
I'm gonna hurt you now.

He GRABS a fistful of Sam's hair and YANKS him close. Sam grimaces as Reza drags him back into the locker room by his hair.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Reza drags Sam up to a bank of lockers. With one hand, he yanks a locker open. With the other, he starts to force Sam's hand into the locker.

SAM
Let go of me! Stop it!

REZA
Hold him!

Sam struggles furiously and tries to retract his arm, but Omar and Chris come to Reza's help. They share a nervous look, unsure what Reza intends.

CHRIS
What are you doing, man?

REZA
I'm gonna break his arm.
(to Sam)
And you're gonna tell everyone you tripped and fell. Or I'm gonna kill you.

OMAR
Dude, seriously...? What if someone...?

REZA
Shut the fuck up!

Sam struggles furiously, on the verge of tears. He tries to pull his hand back out, but Reza forces it into the locker.

INSERT - SAM'S HAND

Clenched tightly in a fist. Reza has him by one arm and with his free hand, he grabs hold the locker door.

SAM
DON'T--! DON'T DO IT!

REZA
LOOK AT ME!

Sam, in tears, looks at Reza.

REZA (CONT'D)
Are you scared now...?

Smiling cruelly, he SLAMS the locker on Sam's hand. Sam's CRY is truncated by the metallic CLANG of the locker, as we CUT TO --

EXT. AUGGIE'S CLUB, DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Tiffany is seated alongside two other girls, who are in the process of getting dressed. A BOUNCER sticks his head into the room.

BOUNCER
Tiff, you got a call. Line two.
Something 'bout your kid --

Tiffany looks up, startled.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM - DAY

Tiffany sits on a bench in the waiting area of a hospital. She is nervously twisting the strap on her leather purse. In b.g, a NURSE types at a computer.

Double doors swing open and a middle-aged DOCTOR enters. Tiffany is on her feet like a shot.

DOCTOR
Miss Cleary?

TIFFANY
Where's Sam? What happened to him?

DOCTOR
He's fine, Miss Cleary, just had an
accident --

He PUSHES open the doors, REVEALING -- Sam, sitting on a
bench in the hallway. His arm is in a sling.

TIFFANY
Oh, my God--!

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - DAY

Tiffany rushes to Sam's side. Sam stares listlessly at the
ground, avoiding eye contact.

TIFFANY
What happened?

DOCTOR
Apparently he slipped in the locker
room. Fractured his wrist. The
school nurse brought him in --

Tiffany fixes Sam with a stare.

TIFFANY
Is that what happened?

Sam is silent for a moment.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Did you slip? Sam?

SAM
Yes.

TIFFANY
Look at me and say that.

Sam looks at her.

SAM
I slipped.

Tiffany is quiet for a moment, looking into her son's eyes.
In b.g., the doctor senses something amiss and frowns.

DOCTOR
Am I missing something?

Tiffany takes Sam's hand and rises.

TIFFANY
I'd like to take my son home now.
Thank you for your help.

DOCTOR
Of course, we just need you to sign
some forms -- the nurse at
reception will help you --

Tiffany, with one arm around Sam, starts off as we --

CUT TO:

INT. KAMINSKY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kaminsky is packing. On the bed behind him is an open duffel bag. Kaminsky takes some shirts from the dresser and packs them into the bag.

There's A KNOCK at the door. Kaminsky looks up.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kaminsky UNLOCKS the door and opens it. He sees Sam standing in the hallway, with his arm in a cast.

KAMINSKY
What happened to you?

SAM
It was Reza. Him and his friends.
I tried to fight back. I hit him
as hard as I could, but...

He looks down, ashamed.

SAM (CONT'D)
...I'm not strong enough.

KAMINSKY
I'm sorry.

Sam sees past Kaminsky. He sees the dresser...drawers open, empty. He frowns and looks up at Kaminsky.

SAM
What are you doing?

Kaminsky is silent for a moment. Sam glimpses something behind him and nudges the door open wider.

SAM'S P.O.V.

The apartment has been emptied out. There are several boxes on the floor, taped and stacked on top of each other.

BACK TO - SAM

As he looks up at Kaminsky, confused.

SAM (CONT'D)
You're going away?

KAMINSKY
I have to.

Sam stares at Kaminsky, hard.

SAM
Why...?

KAMINSKY
They found me, Sam. They'll come for me. It's just a matter of time.

SAM
You could stay. You could fight...

KAMINSKY
I can't.

SAM
Yes, you can! You're the only one who can! You're Samaritan!

KAMINSKY
(sharply)
Don't call me that!

Stung, Sam flinches backwards... But he musters his courage and decides to take a stand.

SAM
You're afraid! You're running away and you're supposed to help people. That's why you're stronger. But you're not doing anything. And bad is winning!

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

(beat)

You're supposed to do something!

Kaminsky is silent for a long moment.

KAMINSKY

I'm not the man you think, Sam.

With a withering look, Sam turns and runs away down the hall. We HOLD ON - KAMINSKY, in the doorway. Staring after him. A doubt in his eyes...

INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sam sits on his bed with the sketchbook open in his lap. With a sudden burst of anger he tears a sketch of Samaritan out of the book and tries to rip it up, but doesn't have much luck with the cast on his arm.

Frustrated, he FLINGS the book away and sinks to the floor, in tears.

EXT. TOWERS - EARLY MORNING

Kaminsky exits, duffel bag slung over his shoulder. He makes his way through the courtyard, stopping at the outer gate to look back, in the direction of Sam's window.

KAMINSKY'S P.O.V.

The light is on in Sam's room but Sam is nowhere to be seen.

BACK TO - KAMINSKY

He lingers a moment, unsure. Then disappears into the night...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sam sits sullenly at the kitchen table, pushing and prodding at a bowl of cereal. Tiffany stands in the doorway, watching him, concerned.

TIFFANY

Aren't you going outside today?

SAM
Maybe later.

TIFFANY
It's sunny out. Maybe you and
Mitsu can --

SAM
Mom, please...

TIFFANY
Okay, okay.

She backs away, leaving Sam alone.

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The front door CREAKS open slowly to REVEAL -- an empty apartment. Kaminsky is gone.

Sam steps into the apartment and stares blankly at a wall. He turns to look into the adjoining bedroom. He frowns at something...

SAM'S P.O.V.

The room is empty except for a single object. It's sitting on the floor in the middle of the room.

BACK TO - SAM

Puzzled, he comes into the room and looks down at it. We see that it's the book of newspaper clippings. Kaminsky has left it behind.

Sam kneels and picks it up. He holds it in his hands for a long moment, staring at it.

CUT TO:

INT. PAWNSHOP - MORNING

The lights are off and the front gate is shuttered and locked. Arthur enters FRAME, and bends down to UNLOCK the gate. He's opening his shop for business.

He HAULS the gate up and steps inside. Hits the lights. He turns and catches his breath sharply as he sees --

-- KAMINSKY standing behind him, outside the glass doors.

ARTHUR

Christ --

He recovers. Starts to open the door for Kaminsky.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Little early for you, isn't it?

KAMINSKY

Yeah. Sorry. I, uh -- I'm here
for my money.

A long beat.

Arthur sees the duffel bag over Kaminsky's shoulder and
senses instantly something is wrong.

ARTHUR

Everything okay?

KAMINSKY

(covering)

I'm moving. My brother...he's got
a job for me up north. Good gig.
Union work.

ARTHUR

(doesn't buy it)

Union work...? Well, it's your
money.

He turns and leads the way to the back of the shop.

NEW ANGLE -- WALL SAFE

Arthur dials a combination. THUNK! He opens a safe and
reaches inside for a thick envelope. He sets it on the
counter in front of Kaminsky.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

There it is.

KAMINSKY

(reaches for it)

Thanks.

ARTHUR

Count it. Make sure it's all
there.

KAMINSKY

I trust you.

Arthur nods slowly and offers his hand.

ARTHUR
Guess this is it then.

They shake hands. Kaminsky tucks the envelope into his jacket and turns to go.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
You know, you been coming here
almost twenty years. And all that
time I been wondering to myself --
why would someone keep their money
at a pawnshop instead of a bank?
(beat)
I guess maybe there's reasons. But
the only one I can think of is they
didn't want to fill out a bunch of
paperwork.

Kaminsky is frozen in the doorway.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Maybe they didn't want to draw
attention.
(beat)
Then this morning I saw the paper --

He takes the newspaper from under his arm and drops it on the counter. Kaminsky turns to look.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER PHOTO

A grainy photograph of Kaminsky, taken inside the subway car. The photo is too blurred to make any conclusions...but clearly Arthur has.

The headline reads: "VIGILANTE TAKES ON SUBWAY GANG!"

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
-- and I remembered back -- twenty
years ago, right about the time
Samaritan died -- and you started
coming to my shop --
(beat)
It was a different neighborhood
back then. A good neighborhood.

He lets his sentence trail off.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I'm just talking aloud. But I sure wish people would stop giving up on this neighborhood -- start fighting for it again.

Kaminsky hesitates for a long moment. Then, without a word, turns away. The bell CHIMES softly as he exits the shop.

Arthur stares after him.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

The silence is broken by a RUMBLING SOUND. DOWN THE AVENUE, comes a convoy of vehicles. Several battered SUV's followed by a black SEDAN with tinted windows.

EXT. TOWERS - DAY

The vehicles pull up outside the Towers. Doors open. A dozen HEAVILY ARMED MEN get out, carrying automatics. One of the men opens the door for --

-- Lucius, who steps out and looks up at the building. Big Tuna climbs out after him, and looks around. Lucius waves his men forward.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

With the book in hand, Sam makes his way down the hall and pushes open a steel access door leading to --

THE STAIRWELL

He starts down.

INTERCUT WITH:

Lucius and his men, one level below, and ascending...

SAM

Stops in his tracks at the sound of half a dozen BOOTS tramping up steps. He glances over the railing. His eyes widen in fear as he sees them coming.

A split second of indecision. Then he dashes UP the stairs for the next landing. He pivots around a turn and throws himself into a corner, where he sinks to the floor, terrified, clutching the book.

ONE LEVEL DOWN:

Lucius and his men arrive at Kaminsky's floor. They file past, chambering weapons, loading clips...

ON SAM, frozen with fear. He holds his breath as they pass below. Finally, after what seems an eternity, he HEARS the STAIRWELL DOOR CLANG shut again.

He bolts to his feet and takes off down the steps, three at a time...

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sam bursts into the apartment, taking Tiffany by surprise.

SAM

Mom! We have to go -- now!

TIFFANY

What's wrong?

SAM

There are men -- with guns! We have to go -- RIGHT NOW!

TIFFANY

What--?!

As if on cue, we HEAR the SOUND of GUNFIRE. It echoes through the towers. Sam and Tiffany whip around, startled.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

They see MEN entering Kaminsky's apartment. Big Tuna, Lucius, Cyrus...

INT. KAMINSKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lucius's men make quick work of searching the place, which is quite clearly deserted. Lucius looks to Cyrus, for an explanation.

CYRUS

He musta known we was coming.

BIG TUNA

Boss. The Kid.

Lucius looks to the window. CAMERA PANS TO follow Big Tuna's arm as he points out the window --

REVERSE ANGLE - LOOKING BACK

Sam & Tiffany stare back. For a moment, Tiffany is too shocked to move. Lucius snaps an order at his men. They turn and hurry back the way they came. We don't know exactly what was said, but the situation is clear...they're coming.

TIFFANY
(in shock)
Oh, my God --

SAM
We have to go -- NOW!

Sam grabs his mother's hand. Starts tugging her to the door.

INT. NORTH TOWER, HALLWAY - DAY

Sam and Tiffany run from the apartment.

TIFFANY
Wait!

She breaks away to POUND on a neighbor's door.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
HELP--! SOMEBODY HELP US!

There's no response. She tries another door. And another.

SAM
MOM! They won't open!

TIFFANY
SOMEBODY--!? SOMEBODY HELP!

SAM
There's no time!

Sam grabs his mother's hand and pulls her away. They run for the end of the hall.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Lucius's men dash from the SOUTH TOWER. From the windows above, a multitude of FACES peer down, curious, wary...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sam and Tiffany tear up the stairs. Sam is leading the way, pulling his mother along by one hand.

SAM
Hurry! This way!

INT. NORTH TOWER, FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

They SLAM through a door and hurry down another long hallway. Tiffany continues to POUND on doors, CALLING aloud.

TIFFANY
Help us! PLEASE? SOMEBODY...?

At the far end of the hall, a DOOR cracks open. A pair of eyes PEER OUT. An ELDERLY KOREAN LADY.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Thank God--!

They rush for the door.

BEHIND THEM, Lucius and his men appear at the end of the hallway. The Elderly Korean Lady sees them and SLAMS the door shut in Tiffany's face.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
No!

SAM
MOM!

Sam grabs his mother's hand and drags her away. They sprint for --

THE ELEVATOR

At the far end of the hallway. Tiffany SLAPS the "call" button. The doors open. They pile in and Tiffany SLAMS her hand down on a button.

DOWN THE HALL, Lucius's MEN break into a run.

THE ELEVATOR doors don't budge. Tiffany SLAPS the button again, frantic. She looks up and SCREAMS as she sees --

-- Big Tuna, levelling a gun as he runs. Mercifully, the doors SHUT between them. We hear the sound of Big Tuna piling into the other side.

Tiffany clutches Sam tightly, her eyes glued to the floor indicator as the elevator rises...

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

The doors open. Sam and Tiffany burst onto the rooftop. At the far side of the roof is an ACCESS DOOR leading to another stairwell.

SAM

That way!

Sam takes off for the door. Tiffany runs after.

NEW ANGLE -- THE DOOR

Halfway there, it starts to open. Sam skids to a stop. Tiffany SCREAMS as -- Lucius steps out, followed by half a dozen men.

She quickly pushes Sam behind her.

TIFFANY

What do you want!? Who are you?

LUCIUS

I'm looking for the old man.

Tiffany reacts, a mix of surprise and fear.

TIFFANY

...Mister Kaminsky...?

LUCIUS

That what he's calling himself?
Kaminsky?

He shares a look with Big Tuna.

TIFFANY

I don't know where he is. He lives
in the towers. That's all I know.

LUCIUS

What about you, little man. Any
ideas?

Sam shakes his head, "no."

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

But you know who he is, don't you?
You know what he is...

Sam shakes his head quickly. But Lucius sees through it. He smiles slowly and reaches into his coat. He takes out the hammer, which he rotates slowly in his hands.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Bring the kid.

TIFFANY
NO!

Big Tuna and another man reach for Sam. Tiffany throws herself at Big Tuna, like a wildcat, clawing madly.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Don't you touch him!

She RAKES his face with her nails. Big Tuna CRIES out, smashes her on the temple with the butt of his gun. She crumples to the ground.

SAM
MOM!

Sam tries to run to her, but HANDS grab hold of him and pull him away.

SAM (CONT'D)
NO! NO!

He struggles in vain. They drag him to Lucius, who kneels down to look Sam in the eye.

CLOSE SHOT - LUCIUS

He raises the hammer, showing it to Sam.

LUCIUS
Know what I'ma do with this?

Sam is too frightened to answer.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I'm gonna ask you some questions.
And if you don't answer me --

He lowers the hammer, resting it gently on Tiffany's skull.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
-- I'm gonna bash your mom's head
in. Understand?

Sam struggles for composure. He nods timidly.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
What's your name?

SAM
(softly)
...Sam Cleary...

LUCIUS
Sam Cleary. I want to know about
your friend. Kaminsky. Where is
he?

SAM
He left.

LUCIUS
Left where?

SAM
He didn't say. He said he knew you
were coming for him -- so he left.

Lucius stares at Sam with unsettling intensity. He glances
at Tiffany, who is still unconscious.

Sam's courage starts to crumble.

SAM (CONT'D)
Please...don't hurt my mom.

For a terrible moment, Lucius purses his lips, contemplating.
Then he smiles.

LUCIUS
I believe you, little man. I do.

He rises and turns to face Big Tuna, who is daubing at his
cheek with a sleeve.

BIG TUNA
Fuckin' crazy bitch...

LUCIUS
Bring the kid. If the old man is
who I think -- he'll come after us.

NEW ANGLE -- Sam, at his mother's side. Big Tuna and another
MAN grab hold of him and start pulling him away. He
struggles furiously.

SAM
No! Mom! MOM!

Lucius reaches into his pocket, takes out a matchbox and
pushes it into Tiffany's hand.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION - LATER

Kaminsky waits on the platform, alone. His duffel-bag is slung over his shoulder. He puts his hand into his pocket and frowns. Feeling something, he pulls it out and looks down.

INSERT - SAM'S WATCH

The glass is broken. The hands are frozen.

BACK TO - KAMINSKY

He stands motionless, in thought. There is a sudden BLAST of wind as a TRAIN hurtles into the station. It rolls to a stop. Doors open.

Kaminsky looks up. Torn.

NEW ANGLE - OPPOSITE PLATFORM

Looking back, from the other side of the train. It begins to move again. It picks up speed. As the last car CLEARS FRAME, we SEE -- the station is empty.

EXT. ROOFTOP - LATER

Tiffany recovers. She blinks away, and sees the matchbook in her hand. She frowns and looks for Sam. Panic sets in.

TIFFANY
Sam...? Sam!?

She runs to the edge of the roof.

TIFFANY'S P.O.V.

The courtyard below is deserted. Empty.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Sam! SAMMMMM!

Her CRY echoes through the towers.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - LATER

Tiffany is slumped on the floor in the middle of the apartment. Her eyes are blank with shock.

Clearly not coping. She is holding the telephone receiver in one hand., listening to a BUSY SIGNAL that plays over and over.

She begins to SOB.

WIDER.

The apartment. Tiffany is alone. THEN, behind her, the door creaks open revealing a SILHOUETTED FIGURE.

Tiffany seems to "sense" a presence and slowly looks up. She catches her breath as she sees Kaminsky in the doorway.

KAMINSKY

What happened?

TIFFANY

(voice breaking)

They -- they took him. They took my son.

KAMINSKY

What--? Who--?

TIFFANY

Men with guns. They said they know who you are. What you are... They left this.

She lifts her hand to Kaminsky. In it -- the matchbook. Kaminsky takes it.

INSERT - MATCH BOOK

The cover of it is stenciled with the faded words: THE CHARLESTON.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

You have to help him. Please.

Kaminsky looks from the card to Tiffany. Her eyes are red and swollen.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I'm begging you. If you really are who they say -- please -- bring him back to me.

(she closes her eyes,
fervently)

I won't tell anyone. I won't tell a soul. Please -- I just want my boy back.

She opens her eyes again. Kaminsky is gone.

The duffel bag lies on the ground.

EXT. DESERTED INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Rain falls in sheets. Kaminsky stands beneath the dim glow of a street lamp, letting the rain pour over him. On the other side of the street is the TRUCK DEPOT, surrounded by chainlink fence and barbed wire.

A vehicle passes. Kaminsky crosses the street and comes to the gated entrance.

Through the chicken-wire fence we can see rows of GARBAGE TRUCKS, sitting in the dark. Kaminsky hesitates, his hand on the steel lock. Then, with a violent and tremendous kick -- he shatters the lock and sends the gate CRASHING open.

EXT. TRUCK DEPOT - NIGHT

TRACKING WITH KAMINSKY, as he moves along a row of trucks. He comes to a stop in front of one. The faded words on the side can barely be read in the dark -- "SANITATION DEPARTMENT."

NEW ANGLE - KAMINSKY

He pulls himself onto the running board, draws back a fist and -- CRASH! Shatters the glass.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Kaminsky reaches under the dash and RIPS away part of the steering column. He feels for some wires, sets to work hot-wiring the truck --

CUT TO - HEADLIGHTS

With a throaty RUMBLE, like the growl of a steel stegosaurus, the engine comes alive. Twin HEADLIGHTS punch through the rain.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sam is slumped on the ground next to a radiator. His hands are bound and tied to a steel pipe. His eyes are red and swollen from crying, and he stares listlessly at the ground.

Outside the room, we HEAR the sound of HEAVY FOOTFALLS approaching. Sam looks up fearfully and pulls his knees in tight.

The door opens and Lucius enters.

He crosses to a table littered with guns, drugs, bricks of cocaine, etc... He collapses into a seat and addresses Sam as he does a line of coke.

LUCIUS

How old are you, little man?

SAM

(timidly)

...eleven...

LUCIUS

Eleven, huh? Shiiiiit...

(he does a line, lets out
a drug induced GASP)

...when I was eleven, I was working
a street corner, selling rock.

He leans back, eyes closed, savoring the moment.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Killed a brother when I was
thirteen just to get his corner.
Killed another brother to get the
next corner.

Sam stares, appalled. Lucius opens his eyes and fixes Sam with a stare.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Fifteen years later look at me,
little man --

(he gestures expansively)

-- I run everything from eighty-
sixth to the Towers. Over thirty
square blocks of this city. Every
pimp, peddler and pusher in a two
mile radius pays me a percentage.

Warming to the subject, Lucius rises and approaches Sam.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Pay attention, little man. This
shit's important for a boy to
know...

He kneels in front of Sam, who stares at him fearfully.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

See, we all 'jus dogs, fightin' for
territory, fightin' for respect...
You want respect from a dog,
there's only one way to get it.

(beat)

You gotta be the meanest hungriest
fuckin' dog around. That's nature.
Pure and simple. And the dog that
kills Samaritan...well, shit...
Ain't nobody gonna mess with that
dog.

Off Sam's look, a reaction of horror, we CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

In the entrance of the lobby, SIX MEN stand watch. One of
them is leaning against a wall, feeding rounds into a .45
auto.

A low RUMBLE causes the chandelier to tremble. All eyes go
to the ceiling as the lights flicker and dim.

THE MAN straightens, tensing. Behind him, a pair of lights
grow brighter and brighter. At the last second, he spins
around, aiming his gun --

-- CRASH! The glass facade IMPLODES as the garbage truck
smashes into the lobby. MEN scatter as it plows through
them, crushing several PEOPLE in the wreckage of what was
once the concierge's desk.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lucius snaps alert as the impact rocks the building. Sam
feels it too and looks up, startled.

Lucius grabs the radio off his belt.

LUCIUS

(into radio)

Everyone. Get down here.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Darkness. Part of the ceiling has collapsed. Sparks from a
ruined junction box have set the lobby on fire. Flames
spread quickly.

Kaminsky climbs out of the truck and circles to a MAN WITH A SHOTGUN, who lies buried under some debris.

The MAN's legs are pinned and he's trying to PUMP the shotgun when Kaminsky comes up to him and takes the weapon from his hands. He swings both barrels back at him.

KAMINSKY
Where's the boy?

SHOTGUN THUG
(points to a hole in the
wall)
The basement -- that way --

Kaminsky steps past, PUMPING the shotgun.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Kaminsky strides down a darkened corridor. Behind him, the fire is spreading.

At the midpoint of the hallway -- two MEN burst in with assault weapons. The corridor is lit by muzzle-fire. Kaminsky doesn't blink. He FIRES back, blasting both men off their feet.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

More THUGS lie in wait. The hallway is starting to fill with smoke. Visibility near zero. Kaminsky appears out of the smoke, advancing with the shotgun.

THUGS open fire. Kaminsky BLASTS back. Another two MEN go down. A THIRD MAN turns and runs.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sam looks up at the SOUND of GUNFIRE. Men SHOUTING. FOOTSTEPS trampling back and forth along the ceiling. He reacts, not the way one might expect... He smiles softly.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Kaminsky stands at the top of a stairwell, peering down into darkness.

AT THE BOTTOM, out of sight, Big Tuna lies in wait with another GUNMAN. They hear the SOUND of KAMINSKY'S FOOTFALLS on the steps. Big Tuna leaps out, strafing the stairwell.

KAMINSKY is struck in the shoulder. He barely reacts, except to level the shotgun and BLAST back, wounding Big Tuna and killing the SECOND MAN.

KAMINSKY
Where is he?

BIG TUNA
...you really think...I'm gonna
help you...?

Kaminsky hauls the big man to his feet.

KAMINSKY
(low, tight)
One way or another.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Packed with GUNMEN, all of them armed to the teeth and aiming down the hallway. They tense at the SOUND of FOOTFALLS.

At the far end of the hall, in darkness, a SILHOUETTED FIGURE appears. The men OPEN FIRE, en masse. Bullet casings fall like rain.

THE SILHOUETTED FIGURE is struck again and again. But he doesn't go down. He doesn't drop.

REACTION SHOTS: The GUNMEN, they stare in shock...

GUNMAN 1
That's impossible!

GUNMAN 2
It's really him...

REVEAL: What nobody can see in the dark...Kaminsky is supporting Big Tuna's body in front of him, using it as a human shield.

REVERSE ANGLE - THE GUNMEN

One of the men decides to get the hell out of there.

GUNMAN 1
Fuck this!

He runs off. Two more MEN like the idea and run after him. The remaining two GUNMEN stand their ground.

Kaminsky drops Big Tuna's body and OPENS FIRE on the two remaining GUNMEN. They go down.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sam is huddled next to the radiator, his mouth, taped shut. Hands tied to a pipe. He listens fearfully to the sound of GUNFIRE in the hallway outside. Getting CLOSER and CLOSER...

Then silence, for several unbearable moments. And finally -- HEAVY FOOTFALLS. They come to a stop outside the door. With a violent CRACK, the door is kicked open. Light spills onto Sam and he reacts with relief as he sees--

KAMINSKY

Looking like hell worn over. He's bleeding from his shoulder and arm. His face blackened from smoke and fire.

He crosses to Sam. Starts to pull the tape from his mouth. Suddenly, without warning, Sam's eyes SNAP open and he SCREAMS at the top of his lungs.

Kaminsky jerks around, JUST AS...Lucius ATTACKS HIM FROM BEHIND WITH THE HAMMER. A glancing blow sends Kaminsky CRASHING backwards, into --

A GLASS COFFEE TABLE that SHATTERS under his weight. Stunned, Kaminsky tries to push himself up again. But Lucius stalks over and swings the hammer at him.

Kaminsky tries to block it with his arm, but it doesn't do much. He is sent reeling again, and SLAMS into a dresser, knocking some cheap hotel art off the wall.

He turns to face Lucius, and catches a third blow from the hammer. This time he is unprepared and takes the full impact on the side of his mouth. He TOPPLES to the floor, semi-conscious.

LUCIUS

Circles to the front of Kaminsky and hauls him to his feet again. Using the hammer like an enormous pair of brass knuckles, Lucius PUNCHES Kaminsky in the face, repeatedly. ONCE, TWICE, THREE brutal blows...

Then he KNEES him in the balls and lets him drop. Kaminsky topples to the ground, face-first.

LUCIUS

(he WHOOPS excitedly)

Goddamn, that was some crazy shit!
But I gotta admit, I was expecting
more... I mean, shit, Samaritan...

(MORE)

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

The Samaritan... And you came in like a fuckin' hurricane. I thought, Lucius, knuckle-up, this one's gonna be a throw-down...

(disappointed)

...but, nah...look at you, all busted up. Jus' a broken down old man...

He kneels by Kaminsky.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Twenty years...? Where the fuck you been? Jus' hiding out in some flea-bag apartment?

(beat)

You know, they got t-shirts and shit wit' your name on it, says "Samaritan Lives!" And this is what everybody hopin' for? S'like a bad joke.

(he prods Kaminsky with the hammer)

So, what the fuck happened? You just got tired and give up one day?

Kaminsky struggles to speak, but he's in too much pain. He spits out a tooth.

Lucius shakes his head, grimly.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Nah, man... You didn't have the sack for it no more. You saw guys like Nemesis comin' up. Guys like me. Guys who don't give a shit about nothing. Hey, dog, I don't blame you. How's a guy like you --

(with sarcastic emphasis)

-- a "good guy," with rules an shit -- supposed to compete with a guy like me? A guy who'll do anything?

TIGHT SHOT - KAMINSKY'S HAND

Reaching for a shard of glass from the shattered coffee table.

Lucius points with the hammer to Sam.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna take this hammer and beat his head in when I'm done wit' you.

(MORE)

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
 You really think Samaritan's
 capable of stopping someone like
 me?

KAMINSKY
 No. But I'm not Samaritan--

-- THUNK! He drives the shard into Lucius's stomach, lifting him bodily off the ground as he rises slowly to his feet.

ON Sam, staring in shock.

Kaminsky and Lucius are nose to nose. Lucius looks down, at the glass sticking out of his abdomen. Then back to Kaminsky, frowning.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
 I'm the bad guy.

Lucius stares, confused. Then, as his life slips away from him, his eyes widen with comprehension and he seems to "see" Kaminsky for who he really is.

LUCIUS
 ...nuh-nuh...Nemesis?

TIGHT SHOT - ON SAM

The name hits him like a freight train.

As if on cue, the flames behind Kaminsky ROAR up, silhouetting him, and for a brief instant the image is eerily reminiscent of Sam's recurring dream. It stirs a final vision --

SAM'S VISION

We're back on the rooftop again. Samaritan and Nemesis struggle together. A muffled EXPLOSION reverberates from somewhere below and the roof begins to collapse.

They run for the edge as FLAMES DEVOUR the ground behind them. They both leap over the edge, but only one of them makes it...only Nemesis.

Samaritan is left hanging by an edge. Below his feet, a raging INFERNO REARS UP, snatching for his ankles...

SAMARITAN
 ...please...?

TIGHT SHOT - NEMESIS

As he stares down at Samaritan, a fleeting glimpse of emotion appears in his eyes, something, a flicker of pity -- a momentary hesitation --

He starts to reach for Samaritan. He grabs hold. But the fire responds, angrily, hungrily -- it BELLOWS -- rocking the building.

SAMARITAN

Slips out of Nemesis' grip. Somehow the mask comes off in Nemesis' hands, REVEALING...a MAN WE HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

A plain-faced man, with curly hair and terrified eyes. Time seems to slow as he falls backwards, arms windmilling in mid-air, his eyes locked on Nemesis... And then he's gone. Consumed by the fire.

NEMESIS

Stands frozen, staring at the mask in his hands. He slowly reaches up and pulls off his own mask, REVEALING -- YOUNG KAMINSKY (20 years earlier). His face contorts with a mix of emotions he has never felt before...shame, confusion, guilt...

Gradually the face of YOUNG KAMINSKY morphs back to --

PRESENT DAY - KAMINSKY

He approaches Sam and kneels to undo the ropes around his hands. They fall away. For a long moment, they stare at each other, all pretenses cast aside.

KAMINSKY

Sam--? You okay?

Sam is speechless for a moment. Staring.

SAM

It, it isn't true -- is it? You just said that to scare him, right?

(Kaminsky is silent)

Right...?

KAMINSKY

Sam...

SAM
(loudly)
It isn't true!

Kaminsky is pained. But before he can muster a response, there is a LOUD RUMBLE and a section of the ceiling behind them suddenly collapses.

A plume of embers and sparks rain from above.

KAMINSKY
Look out!

Kaminsky shields Sam with his body.

The fire behind them ROARS up. LOUD. ANGRY. Kaminsky stares a beat -- grim, hard -- as if they were old adversaries who knew each other.

He PULLS Sam to his feet.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
We have to go!

Kaminsky hurries through the kitchen, ducking and shielding Sam from gouts of flame. He KICKS in a SERVICE DOOR leading to --

A STAIRWELL

He takes the steps, three at a time. Sam runs after him. They reach a landing. Kaminsky throws open another door revealing --

-- a hotel corridor, in flames.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
-- go, go, keep going --

They POUND up the stairs.

EXT. HOTEL ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Kaminsky SHOULDERS open a door and they stagger onto the rooftop. He looks around grimly. The next building is twenty feet away.

There is a muffled explosion from somewhere below and the rooftop ROCKS. Flames BURST from the doorway behind them.

Sam CRIES OUT startled.

Kaminsky wheels around, searching for some other way out but there isn't any. He turns grimly to face the next building.

KAMINSKY

We have to jump, Sam.

Sam stares across the gulf between buildings.

SAM

But -- that's impossible!

KAMINSKY

No, it isn't.

(looks down at him)

You have to trust me, Sam.

ON SAM, looking up at Kaminsky. Unsure.

SIX STORIES BELOW

A CROWD has started to form. A FIRE ENGINE screeches to a stop. FIRE-FIGHTERS jump down and start running hoses to a hydrant.

A WOMAN catches her breath in horror.

WOMAN

(throws up an arm)

Oh, My God--! There's someone on the roof!

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Kaminsky and Daniel -- frozen, staring at each other. Kaminsky is waiting for Daniel's answer.

DANIEL

Why did you do it?

KAMINSKY

There's no time, Sam --

SAM

(sharply)

WHY!?

Kaminsky hesitates. He stares down at the boy.

KAMINSKY

It was a long time ago. I was
angry, bitter -- Do you have any
idea what it's like to be
different? Not to know your place
in the world? Not to fit in?

TIGHT SHOT - SAM

He sees Kaminsky truly for the first time. He sees himself
in Kaminsky.

Kaminsky offers the boy his hand.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Will you trust me?

Sam reaches out and takes Kaminsky's hand. Kaminsky swings
him off his feet and up onto his back.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Now hold on, Sam. Hold on as tight
as you can.

NEW ANGLE --

Kaminsky turns to face the next building. Sam clings to his
back, his arms hooked around Kaminsky's neck.

TIGHT SHOT - ON SAM

He presses his eyes shut.

AT STREET LEVEL

The CROWD has grown. Everyone is staring upwards.

FIRE-FIGHTER

Christ, he's gonna jump--

SECOND FIRE-FIGHTER

That's suicide!

A MAN with a CAMERA steps forward to snap a shot.

BACK TO - KAMINSKY

He takes a deep breath and -- He's off! He sprints for the
edge, legs pumping... Half a dozen powerful strides and he
LEAPS!

TIGHT ON - SAM

At the last second Sam's eyes SNAP OPEN. He catches his breath as they SAIL into thin air. Six stories up.

Far below, PEOPLE SCREAM --

THE NEXT BUILDING

Racing to meet us. A wall of brick -- WHAM! Kaminsky impacts. He SLAMS into the side of the building, falls -- manages to grab part of a fire-escape just below the roofline.

He hangs by one hand. Sam holds fast.

KAMINSKY

Climb up, Sam! Climb over me!

Sam pulls himself over Kaminsky's shoulders and onto the roof.

KAMINSKY

Looks down and sees the FIRE-FIGHTERS dashing by below and running into the building. He SUCKS in a pained breath and starts to pull himself up.

Sam does his best to help pull Kaminsky onto the roof.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Kaminsky collapses next to Sam, exhausted. His breathing is labored and we see he is clutching his side.

SAM

You're hurt!

KAMINSKY

I'm okay -- just, just help me up.

Sam helps pull Kaminsky to his feet.

They stare at each other. Kaminsky hears a WINDOW shattering. He looks down. FIRE-FIGHTERS have smashed their way onto the fire-escape and are running towards them.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

Sam -- I can't stay. If they find me --

Sam nods slowly. He understands.

Kaminsky rises, with some difficulty and starts backing away. He runs for the edge of the roof, towards the next building.

Sam hears a SOUND behind him and looks back to see FIRE-FIGHTERS clambering up a ladder. He looks back at Kaminsky - but he is gone. Just like that.

Sam reacts, stunned.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING

It is very early. The station is almost empty. A few idling busses wait in the loading dock. Tiffany stands next to a suitcase, alongside one of the busses.

Sam is a little distance off.

A door opens and Kaminsky steps out of the terminal with an envelope in his hand, and a folded newspaper under his arm. He crosses to Tiffany and hands her the envelope.

INSERT SHOT - ENVELOPE

There are two train tickets and a stack of bills inside.

BACK TO - TIFFANY

She stares for a moment, at a loss. Then looks up.

TIFFANY

Thank you --
 (she kisses him tenderly)
 -- for everything.

There is a station announcement over the PA system:

PA SYSTEM

All passengers for Wichita, please
 board at gate twenty-one. Wichita.
 Gate twenty-one.

KAMINSKY

You better go.

Tiffany nods and picks up her suitcase. She looks hesitantly down the platform to where Sam is waiting, bag in hand, staring at something in the distance.

TIFFANY

Will you say goodbye to him?

Kaminsky nods and walks over. Tiffany remains behind, watching.

NEW ANGLE - KAMINSKY & SAM

Kaminsky comes alongside the boy, who feels his presence without looking up.

KAMINSKY
Got something for you, Sam.

Kaminsky reaches into his pocket and hands something to the boy. Sam turns it over and we see --

INSERT SHOT - SAM'S WATCH

The glass face has been replaced, the hands are moving again.

BACK TO - SAM

He looks up at Kaminsky, surprised.

SAM
You fixed it?

KAMINSKY
Yeah. But go easy on it, okay?
It's old.

Sam stares solemnly at the watch for a long moment.

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

SAM
I thought we were friends.

KAMINSKY
We are.

SAM
They why aren't you coming with us?

KAMINSKY
I want to, Sam. Believe me. But I
have some things to do here.

Sam stares fixedly at the watch.

SAM
What things?

Kaminsky kneels and tries to find the words to articulate himself. It isn't easy, but he works at it.

KAMINSKY

Remember when you said 'bad is winning'? You're right, bad is winning. Because of me. Because of what I did. For twenty years I've been hiding from that...

(beat)

I can't do it anymore. I'm tired of being the bad guy.

Sam looks slowly up at Kaminsky. He begins to understand.

SAM

You -- you're going to help people?

KAMINSKY

I'm going to try.

Sam's eyes fill with emotion.

SAM

But, how...?

KAMINSKY

I don't know yet. But I had an idea. I was gonna run it by you.

He takes the newspaper from under his arm and hands it to Sam. The boy opens it and his eyes widen. His head snaps up to look at Kaminsky.

INSERT SHOT - FRONT PAGE

A grainy photograph of Kaminsky and Sam, leaping from the rooftop of the hotel. Kaminsky's face is hidden in shadow. A headline FILLS FRAME. A massive font SCREAMS:

"SAMARITAN LIVES! EYE-WITNESSES CLAIM SAMARITAN RESCUED BOY FROM BURNING BUILDING!"

SAM

They think you're--?

Kaminsky brings a finger to his lips, signalling for silence.

KAMINSKY

It got me thinking. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe that's what this city needs.

(MORE)

KAMINSKY (CONT'D)

(beat)

What do you think?

Sam stares at him, his expression full of awe and wonder.

The PA SYSTEM interrupts again:

PA SYSTEM

Last call for Wichita. All
passengers, last call. Bus twenty-
two now departing.

Sam hesitates for a moment, then flings himself at Kaminsky, hugging him tightly. Kaminsky is genuinely moved. He puts his arms around the boy.

KAMINSKY

Same to you, Sam. Same to you.

ON TIFFANY, watching, deeply affected...

EXT. BUS DEPOT - DAY

The bus pulls slowly out of the loading dock.

It is still raining, but the sun has come up, and for a brief instant, the rain has a magical quality. Like drops of molten metal.

The SOUND of the RAIN gives way to the OLD MAN'S voice.
Sam's VOICE.

SAM'S VOICE (V.O.)

We left the city behind and went
far away, to a place called
Serenity -- to a new beginning --

INT. BUS - DAY

Sam and Tiffany are seated in the last row of the bus. Sam is staring out the back window after Kaminsky.

SAM'S VOICE

As for Kaminsky, I never saw him
again. But in my memory, he is
written in stone -- just as I saw
him last --

SAM'S P.O.V.

His last image of Kaminsky is an indelible one: Kaminsky stands alone in the rain, staring after them.

SAM'S VOICE (CONT'D)

A watchful figure. A guardian. A hero.

MUSIC RISES as we...

...ROLL CREDITS.