

Grass

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FADE IN:

1

INT. BODY SHOP - NIGHT

1

A decrepit body shop. VEENO, 25, sits tied to a chair, hair matted with dried blood.

Four GOONS in hoodies and masks shock Veeno with jumper cables attached to an idling car. JACKY JAX, a dwarf with gold vampire fronts, sits in the front seat. He giggles and honks the horn.

Veeno screams, entire body seized by violent spasms.

In the opposite corner NICKY RAY, 24, stands with a gun to his head, watching. A tear rolls down his cheek.

NICKY

(V.O.)

In this game, everyone loses.

A Goon applies the cables to Veeno's ears. Sparks fly as he twists his head, trying to get away. He screams.

A Goon squirms, imitating Veeno.

JACKY JAX

What's that, the electric boogaloo?

NICKY

(V.O.)

Every stage in life has it's troubles and no man is content with himself.

Veeno slumped in chair, body twitches.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(V.O)

When you don't have money, the problem is food. When you have money, it's sex. When you have both, you're fucked!

2

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

2

NICKY'S DAD, 36, and YOUNG NICKY, 12, are on their knees pulling weeds in a small garden.

Young Nicky wipes his face with his shirt. He squints, looking out across the street.

Three teenage THUGS stand around a beat up car. The stereo blasts WEST COAST HIP HOP. The thugs pass a joint back and forth, blowing smoke in each other's faces and laughing.

NICKY

(V.O.)

I remember my dad telling me-

NICKY'S DAD

Nicky, one of these days you're gonna see the value of hard work. Look at those punks over there.

Nicky's dad points to the thugs. They are laughing and shoving each other around.

NICKY'S DAD (CONT'D)

They're going nowhere. Just hanging out on the curb, smoking that weed. Laughing it up. They won't be laughing when they're sat up in San Quentin.

Nicky gets up and throws down his gardening gloves. He walks to the gate.

NICKY'S DAD (CONT'D)

Nicky! Not all money is green...

Nicky slams the gate behind him.

NICKY'S DAD (CONT'D)

...like grass

Nicky's dad crushes the grass in his hands.

3 INT. BUS TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

3

NICKY cuts through bums and travelers, making his way to a storage locker. He opens it.

Nicky's jaw drops. He looks over his shoulder. Everyone goes about their business.

OUTSIDE

Nicky runs out of the station and pauses when he notices a black car parked across the street. DETECTIVE HARRIS, 45, black, ruthless, stares at him. They make eye contact.

Detective Harris holds up a brick of weed and grins at Nicky. Nicky bites his lips and balls his fist.

4 INT. NICKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

4

Nicky Ray weighs cocaine and scoops it into bags. Veeno enters with a bag of groceries.

VEENO

Yo Nick, they where outta patron so
I had to get...

He stops at the door and does a double take at the suitcases full of cocaine stacked against the kitchen cabinets.

VEENO (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

NICKY

This is all we got.

VEENO

I thought we didn't sell -

NICKY

Harris jacked all our shit. We
gotta move this while we can.

VEENO

No one's on that white girl no
more.

NICKY

What the fuck am I gonna do? You
think I like messing around with
this shit? We'll just sell this,
and be done with it.

VEENO

I don't know man, weed's one thing,
but fucking with dirty cops and
coke?

NICKY

What're we gonna do? This is it.
This is what we got. Gonna have to
sell your soul, Veeno. Get your
hands dirty.

5 INT. G'S DINER - EVENING

5

Nicky and Veeno on edge, sit and eat burgers.

Nicky sees Detective Harris walking past the diner window.

NICKY

Ghost!

VEENO

Ghost! What, Ghost?

Nicky motions towards the bathroom.

Veeno splits. Detective Harris watches him disappear around the corner.

Detective Harris sits down across from Nicky, his badge drops down hangs from his chest. He picks up Veeno's burger and takes a bite.

Nicky eyes the glock dangling from Harris's belt.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

Where's your boyfriend?

NICKY

I ain't got a boyfriend.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

Who was that punk I saw running to the bathroom?

NICKY

Don't worry about that.

Detective Harris laughs.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

Nicholas Martin Raye. You're a bad liar, boy.

Detective Harris stares into Nicky's eyes, sizing him up.

DETECTIVE HARRIS (CONT'D)

You don't have to say a goddamn word. I can read you like the Old Testament.

Detective Harris takes a big bite of Veeno's burger. Juice runs down his chin.

NICKY

I've never seen a pig stuff his face like that. It's disgusting. You're a greedy motherfucker.

DETECTIVE HARRIS
Come on, Nicky. You killed my partner. The least you can offer me is a cheeseburger.

Nicky seems caught off guard.

NICKY
I didn't kill your partner.

DETECTIVE HARRIS
I got CCTV. What've you got?

A dollop off ketchup falls out of Nicky's burger, splashing on the table.

DETECTIVE HARRIS (CONT'D)
You know he had a kid? Dwayne. 6 years old. He wakes up crying in the middle of the night, "Where's daddy? Where's daddy?"

Nicky sighs, looking over his shoulder.

NICKY
Your partner was a fucking junkie who robbed people.

DETECTIVE HARRIS
Junkie or not. He had a wife and kids. You know my plan. It's no secret I'm gonna fuck your shit up every which way but loose. Enjoy your burger motherfucker.

Detective Harris throws his dirty napkin at Nicky and walks out of the diner.

NICKY
(V.O)
Every path has it's puddle.

6 INT. VACANT LOT - DAY

6

HELEN'S DAUGHTERS, an attractive all-female rap group stand across from Nicky and Veno. QUEEN, 27, the senior member and leader, emerges from behind the crowd.

QUEEN
Look ya'll the weed man's trying to act all hard an' shit. Sellin' that white girl.

Helen's Daughters giggle.

NICKY

It's just short term while I get my
shit straight. You'll make your
money back and then some.

QUEEN

Nicky! Let me give you piece of
advice Never try to swindle a
colored woman!

Queen starts freestyling about being swindled. The rest of
Helen's Daughters join in. Nicky and Veeno stand together,
dejected.

7 INT. NICKY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 7

Nicky and Veeno drive off while Helen's Daughters continue
freestyling.

VEENO

What are we doing Nicky?

NICKY

Looks like we selling that white
girl.

8 INT. BODY SHOP - NIGHT 8

Nicky and Veeno stand in the center of the room, toe to toe
with Jackie Jax. They stare each other down.

Jacky Jax crouches over their duffel bag. He unzips it, sees
the cocaine.

Five Goons emerge from the dark shadows, Jacky Jax looks up
to the head Goon who gives a gesture of discontent.

JACKY JAX

Dude! We don't sell that white girl
no more. It's about that bomb
homey.

Jacky Jax looks back at the head Goon again as he makes
another gesture of discontent.

JACKY JAX (CONT'D)

Besides, everybody knows you're the
weed man.

NICKY

I'm just having a little supply problem. It's temporary. I just need to make some quick cash, you know?

JACKY JAX

You got jacked.

The head Goon nudges Jacky Jax with aggression, encourages him to continue speaking.

JACKY JAX (CONT'D)

That means one of two things happened. Either you ain't protecting our investment or you got a cop on your trail.

The Goons fold their arms and shake their heads in a "no" gesture.

JACKY JAX (CONT'D)

You got some big ass balls coming in here trying to waste our time with this coke bullshit.

The Goons draws their weapons and crowd in on Nicky and Veeno.

A Goon kicks Nicky to the ground. Jacky Jax pistol whips Veeno, he drops, out cold.

Veeno sits tied to a chair in the center of the room while Nicky squirms in the corner with a gun to his head.

Jacky Jax sits in a beat up old car next to Veeno. He sits on two phone books so he can reach the wheel.

One Goon runs jumper cables off the battery and over to Veeno. The other starts to strip Veeno. He rips of Veeno's shirt, exposing a pair of taped down breasts.

JACKY JAX (CONT'D)

Oh snap! She's a broad!

The Goons taunt Veeno, poking and harassing her.

JACKY JAX (CONT'D)

You got twenty four hours or else she's fried eggs, straight up.

Veeno screams from the electrocution.

VEENO

Ghost!

Nicky struggles to free himself, but a Goon has a death grip on him. He stops struggling.

VEENO (CONT'D)

Ghost!

9 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

9

A lawn mower starts up. Nicky Ray mows a lawn, bags the grass and collects money.

Nicky stands on the doorstep with the owner.

NICKY

Just a five dollar donation.

The old man shoots a friendly smile.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

I never thought a hard days work could mean so much. Grass is simple. Life can be simple. An inch of green, is the truest form of simplicity.

10 INT. NICKY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

10

Nicky pours freshly mowed grass into pillow cases and throws them into a dryer.

NICKY

(V.O.)

All I could think of was my dad telling to work hard. He told me not to fuck with drugs and thugs.

Nicky sprays the grass with a bottle labeled HEMP OIL.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

But our objectives in life can change by the moment.

Nicky holds a box. He pulls out a gun and badge and stuffs it into one of the zip lock bags of weed. He tapes the bag up and stuffs it into a duffel bag.

Nicky wears a fresh white tee, a platinum chain, clean jeans and some all white sneakers. He stands ready for battle.

NICKY (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

It is in that moment, you have a chance to make things right!

11 INT. DINER - NIGHT

11

Nicky sits at his favorite table. Detective Harris strolls in, but this time with a little urgency. He sits at the table.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

This better not be bullshit.

NICKY

I didn't kill your partner.

Detective Harris grins.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Heard of the Goons?

DETECTIVE HARRIS

Yeah, the masks wearing loonies no one can ever find.

NICKY

They killed your partner because the dope he took from Veeno was theirs.

Detective Harris bangs the table and pushes away, he jumps up.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

That's bullshit!

NICKY

Yeah I had every reason in the world to take out your boy.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

Oh really! Enlighten me.

NICKY

Your boy, Detective Carter, always made it a point to shake down Veeno. He went overboard and tried to rape her but got interrupted.

DETECTIVE HARRIS
Who the fuck is Veenoo?

NICKY
Veenoo is my girl that dressed like
a man to protect her from dirty
cops. Like your partner.

Detective Harris gulps.

NICKY (CONT'D)
Look. I know the police can't find
these guys. But I know where they
are. I can give them to you, put
you where you belong. Prime time!

DETECTIVE HARRIS
How do I know your not scheming?

NICKY
I would rather deal with shady cops
than be in a bad way with the
Goons. Those torturing bastards
don't deserve to be in this game!
Yo Shaft! I'm outta time, do you
want the biggest bust of your life
or what?

Detective Harris stands dubiously engaged.

12 INT. BODY SHOP - LATER

12

Veenoo clings to life as she slumps half naked in the chair,
soaked in blood.

Nicky hands his duffel bag to Jacky Jax. He pulls out a brick
of dope and smells it.

JACKY JAX
Got damn! Strong like a skunk.

Nicky rushes over to Veenoo and carries her out. The Goons and
Jacky Jax watch them leave.

13 INT. UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

13

In a nearby car, Detective Harris and his STRIKE TEAM sit and
wait. He sees Nicky carrying Veenoo. Nicky turns and nods the
okay to him. They lock and load.

DETECTIVE HARRIS
Radios off fellas. I want nothing
but dirt naps!

14 EXT. MARE ISLAND FREE LAND - MORNING

14

Nicky pulls over on the side of an empty road. Veenoo is slumped in her seat. He checks her vitals, kisses her and pulls her to his chest.

Nicky tunes into the radio. They drive off.

RADIO PERSONALITY

(O.S.)

Topping our morning news. A sting led by veteran narcotics detective Raymond Harris has turned up the biggest marijuana bust in the city's history. It ended in blood shed that killed all six members of the notorious and elusive gang, the Goons. They were also responsible for multiple homicides and torture of their enemies. This also brought closure to the precinct because they also recovered hard core evidence linking the Goons to the death of long time veteran narcotics Detective Emmanuel Carter who was also the partner and close friend of Detective Harris. Our hearts go out to the family and department for his valiant efforts to keep our streets drug free.

LATER

Nicky wakes up from a nap. Veenoo lies draped across his chest. Veenoo's eyes open. She groans and holds her head.

VEENOO

Nicky!

Veenoo becomes more conscious.

Nicky emotions carries him into joyful laughter. He cleans Veenoo's face with a rag. He kisses her, she kisses back. They hold each other.

NICKY

(V.O)

It is the true nature of mankind to learn from mistakes, not by example. My dad had many quotes. I think I'll take Veeno by to meet him.

FADE OUT