

DARK LION

THE COMPLETE LIMITED SERIES

EPISODES 1-5

Based on the novel by Alan Hayward

Dark Lion and all original characters created by Alan Hayward

Screenplay by Alan Hayward

2026

EPISODE 1: -->> "Call of the dark continent"

EPISODE 2: -->> "The sands of pain"

EPISODE 3: -->> "The fury and the dark"

EPISODE 4: -->> "The Lion in The Fox's den"

EPISODE 5: -->> "Destiny and the dark"

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DARK LION - EPISODE 1**"Call of the dark continent"**

FADE IN:

EXT. SAVANNAH GRASSLANDS - NIGHT

A dark, majestic full moon. Ominous clouds drift by.

A commanding adult African man with a raspy voice -

LIONEL (V.O.)
 It was always there. The dark.
 Clawing behind my eyeballs. Gnawing
 at my soul. Calling.

EXT. SAVANNAH GRASSLANDS - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

LOW ANGLE ON: The waving grass - Only darkness beyond.

LIONEL (V.O.)
 Yet he was always there. My light.
 My balance. My brother.

DISSOLVING FROM THE DARKNESS: Right in front of us, hidden in the grass. A king of stealth. A beast. A mythical BLACK LION with a majestic black mane opens its gleaming green eyes.

A THUNDEROUS GROWL ECHOES!

EXT. INDUSTRIAL TRUCKING YARD - NIGHT

LOW ANGLE, CLOSE ON, FOLLOWING: Big, black biker boots run fast and furious over the gravel, splashing through a moonlit puddle of rainwater. Off the heels of the boots bounce the tails of a LONG, BILLOWING BLACK COAT.

CUT TO:

HIGHER ANGLE, CLOSE ON THE SHOULDERS, FOLLOWING: The Running Man moves fast in and out of moonlit shadow. He wears a long, flowing black coat that licks at the screen. Some kind of black fur rests on the shoulders - Majestic, like a lion's mane. His head is barely visible, but appears to be covered in a METAL COWL with a hint of cat ears.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: The lower torso and utility belt of the shadowy Running Man. Black gloved hands dig into the coat by his belt and he grabs a METAL CANNISTER in each hand - Still running like hell.

CUT TO:

EXTREME WIDE REVEAL, MOVING UP AND AWAY, HIGHER INTO THE AIR: The dark Running Man is SEEN ONLY FROM BEHIND as he darts towards a cluster of cars and trucks inside the massive industrial trucking yard. All we see is the Running Man and his billowing black coat down below - Adamantly sprinting forward - FASTER AND FASTER.

There is a car between him and a huddle of AFRICAN GANGSTERS, having a discussion, doing some kind of deal. His arms extend and the metal canisters are tossed over the car towards the Gangsters.

HIGH ANGLE, SLOW MOTION: The Running Man LEAPS at the car - Like a giant BLACK LION - Arms and legs extended in mid-air. First his hands plant on the roof of the car. The majestic coat billows like a cape. The legs come in towards the hands. He is now mid-MONKEY VAULT - A parkour-style jump vault.

CLOSE ON: The thrown metal canisters hit the ground.

The Gangsters all turn around and look up.

BANG! BANG! The FLASH-BANG-SMOKE GRENADES explode.

REVERSE ANGLE, AT THE CAR: Through the smoke and the dark, the Running Man resolves as he VAULTS over the car roof - His dark figure resembling a dark lion.

We can never see his true form in detail. He is a ninja in a coat, a dreadful ghost, a fast-moving shadow.

The dark Running Man lands in the middle of the disoriented Gangsters and all hell breaks loose in a -

CLOSE-UP FIGHT MONTAGE: Close on the dark Running Man's body, in the midst of things as he beats left and right on the Gangsters.

BODIES BASH, BONES BREAK and SCREAMS and PLEAS OF MERCY ECHO in many African languages.

SWISH! SWOOSH! - Goes the coat as he moves around the smoke.

GUNSHOTS ECHO! - Bullets SPARK against the vehicles.

SHURIKEN FLIES and Gangsters drop to the ground.

A dark, gloved hand and forearm with GAUNTLETS grabs and BASHES a Gangster's head - A CAR WINDOW SMASHES.

Like lightning, it is all over. Limp bodies are scattered all around the ghostly Running Man's feet as the smoke clears.

HE ELUDES US - We only see CLOSE GLIMPSES OF HIM.

SWOOSH! - Goes the coat as he turns - WIPING THE SCREEN.

HIGHER ANGLE, CLOSE ON THE SHOULDERS, FOLLOWING: The dark Running Man in the billowing black coat, staying behind him as he hastens towards a SHIPPING CONTAINER TRUCK nearby.

CLOSE ON: His gloved hand sticks a small, round MAGNETIC-DEVICE onto the padlock. A little green light flickers and -

BOOM! - The lock blows.

His MASSIVE ARMS rip open the container doors.

The dark Running Man steps away and OUT OF FRAME as the doors creek open to reveal -

MOVING IN: A container filled with ELEPHANT TUSKS and even worse - FRIGHTED AFRICAN CHILDREN in raggedy clothes with tearing eyes.

CUT TO:

DAY - DRIFTING over the Southern African bushveld, over mine heaps towards the high rises of a vast city metro. Golden afternoon sunlight reflects off the towers - A city of gold.

WHOOSH! - A squadron of POLICE HELICOPTERS tears through the sky overhead. Rotors slice through the smoggy air, leaving their own wake of billowing black smoke. The metal birds disappear against the towers.

SUPERIMPOSE: EGOLI, SOUTH AFRICA.

The world knows the city as Johannesburg, but the indigenous people call it by a different name: EGOLI - PLACE OF GOLD.

A classy, AFRICAN LADY NEWS REPORTER tells us that -

KELETSO (V.O.)

The protest became official today
as Egoli's metro police officers
took to the streets.

EXT. EGOLI CITY STREETS, DOWN TOWN - DAY

A sea of blue flows through the inner city streets. UNIFORMED COPS are marching and protesting. Banners bounce and chants echo as an adamant mob pushes forward.

The well-groomed and smartly dressed KELETSO holds her microphone for a PATROLMAN -

PATROLMAN

The system is corrupt! The management counterproductive. We have not received a salary in three months. No one takes responsibility. *Aikona!* This is our last resort!

He turns and rejoins the march.

Keletso turns back towards THABO, her buff colleague and faithful gum-chewing cameraman -

KELETSO

The South African Police Union welcomes the suspension of Gauteng provincial commissioner, Goodman Kibera. The union now calls for an investigation into the force's funds, as similar incidents are occurring in the Department of Corrections and Traffic. The question remains: Are South Africans facing a nationwide police strike in the near future?

EXT. BUSHVELD, GRASSLANDS - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: THE BUSHVELD, SOUTH AFRICA. 10 YEARS AGO.

LOW ANGLE, CLOSE ON, FOLLOWING: Tiny hiker boots run and side-step with urgency as they navigate an obstacle course of waiving dry grass and rocks.

REVEAL: MIA MODISE [MOH-DEE-SEH], AGE 13, a sweet-faced little African girl with braids and a scout uniform, running through the grass, jumping over rocks as the beads in her hair rattle-tattle along.

The agile little khaki ninja slows down, looks over her shoulder and enthusiastically indicates with her hands -

MIA
Lionel! Lionel, come look!

LIONEL LEONARD, AGE 13, is a handsome little African scout in his own right. He huffs and puffs as he tries to keep up with his love interest while the scorching sun beats down.

He hits the brakes for a moment to look over his shoulder -

LIONEL
Come on, Leon!

EXT. BUSHVELD, ROCK GORGE - MOMENTS LATER

Lionel and Mia peep over the edge of a jagged gorge that tears deep into the earth.

LEON LEONARD, AGE 13, drops to his knees next to them, gasping for air as he guzzles water from a canteen.

LEON
Hot!

Leon is Lionel's twin brother - An AFRICAN ALBINO. His body is white as marble and he has blue eyes, but his handsome, distinctly African features protrude just like his one-minute younger brother's.

The alabaster scout's head and neck are draped by a white scarf under a wide-brimmed hat. A colorful long-sleeved dashiki shirt and cheeky orange zinc sunblock on the nose and lips protect his delicate body from the blistering sun.

Lionel gives his brother a welcoming pat on the back.

Three little scouts now peer down the jagged gorge with rusted ironlike red-and-brown teeth. On a ledge further down, they see Mia's discovery - A FURRY, WEARY BLACK CUB.

On squinted inspection from above, it appears not to be a housecat but also not a panther.

LIONEL
What is it, Mia?

MIA
It's a black cat.

LIONEL
That's one scary-ass looking cat!

MIA
He's hurt. Go get him for me.

TITUS (O.S.)
I got the rope.

LEE-ROY TITUS, AGE 14, is a husky scout-uniformed Brown (Cape Colored) kid with a camo cap worn backward and a pair of tortoiseshell glasses.

LIONEL & LEON
(Unison, in Sesotho)
Of course you do.

Leon holds out some canteen water for Titus who accepts.

DOWN THE GORGE: The weary black cub looks up with sad eyes.

LIONEL
What if it bites?

LEON
It's a baby. Like you...

LIONEL
These rocks are tricky...

TITUS
No worries. This is the Bushveld
Igneous Complex, with ore deposits.
Solid... as a rock.

LIONEL & LEON
(Unison)
Thanks for the science lesson,
Titus.

TITUS
Geography lesson, thank you very
much Ebony and Ivory.

Titus takes a bow of the camo cap and tauntingly dangles the bundle of climber's rope.

MINUTES LATER - Leon, Titus and Mia built a make-shift pulley around a tree trunk and are lowering Lionel down the gorge.

LIONEL
Look what you're making me do!

LEON
Sissy Boy!

LIONEL
 (In Sesotho)
Says the watered down copy of me!

LEON
 (In Sesotho)
Yeah, right here, hot chocolate!

Leon flips his brother the finger and pulls a face.

MIA
 Lionel Leonard! Bring my cat!

Lionel further descends as he looks up very displeased.

Madam Mia frowns annoyed with arms in her side.

Lionel lands, kneels by the cub and curiously inspects it -

LIONEL
 (To the black cub)
 What are you?

The cute little black cub licks his finger.

There is an instant connection and Lionel smiles.

CLOSE ON: Around Lionel's neck sways a leather thong with a GREENISH-YELLOWISH OVAL GEMSTONE with a WHITE STREAK through the centre. A stone that resembles a CAT'S EYE.

The cub is drawn to it and tries to play with the stone, gaffing the reflective gem with its little paw.

Lionel smiles, presents a canteen from his belt and serves the black cub water in his palm.

TITUS
 So?!

LEON
 What is it?

LIONEL
 Thirsty!

MIA
 Hurry up, Lionel.

LIONEL
 (To the black cub)
 Lets go. I've got biltong...

He presents *biltong* [cured meat | jerkey] from his short's pocket and teases the hungry little cub.

EXT. BUSHVELD, UNDER TREE - LATER, DUSK

As the sun becomes a low-hanging ball of fiery gold that day, the children sit in the shade of a marula tree, resting comfortably against their backpacks.

Titus fiddles with the climber's rope, tying a neat bundle for the next mission.

Mia curiously pets and inspects the little black cub in her lap. She picks it up and shows off the cub's silhouette against the low-hanging sun -

MIA

It looks like a lion.

TITUS

Shouldn't we be worried where its mother is?

LIONEL

You don't get black lions.

TITUS

You get white ones. It's a rare color mutation.

LEON

Like me!

Leon pushes his chest out with arms in his sides like a superhero. Lionel elbows his brother. Leon wrestles him in a headlock to return the favor.

TITUS

Like Leon. I've seen one at the Kruger Park.

LEON

They got albino park rangers!?

Titus gets stuck, then clicks that Leon is messing with him. He ponders the bizarre concept -

TITUS

White lions...

MIA
Is there anything you don't know?

Titus shrugs coyly -

TITUS
I don't know?

Lionel smiles, amused by his overly wise-for-his-age friend.

TITUS (CONT'D)
Wait. A melanistic jaguar!
(Scratching his head)
But they're from South America..?

MIA
Whatever he is, he's precious.

She stares into the eyes of the black cub -

MIA (CONT'D)
My Dark Lion.

BIG BULLY (O.S.)
Where did you losers find the fur ball?

THREE BULLIES, AGE 14, in scout uniforms stand behind them, looking down with arms folded. The BIG and the FAT AFRICAN BOYS are quite staunch and intimidating, but the skinny WHITE KID behind them is only along for the ride.

BIG BULLY (CONT'D)
Give it here!

Big Bully grabs the black cub from Mia.

MIA
No, he's mine! Lionel got him for me!

MOVING IN, RAPIDLY ONTO: Lionel's face and eyes.

A sudden INNER FURY, unbecoming of a young boy, consumes Lionel and enrages his eyes. Like lightning, he darts with all his might he pushes Big Bully backwards -

LIONEL
You leave her alone!

Big Bully stumbles and falls back with the cub on his chest.

BIG BULLY
Gross! It pee'd on me!

The cub jumps off Big Bully.

Mia picks it up and laughs loudly from her stomach.

LEON
You should listen to my brother...

FAT BULLY
Get them!

White Bully shows some gusto and grabs Lionel from behind.

Titus hesitates, afraid to join in.

Big Bully is up from the mat and punches Lionel in the gut, so hard he drops to his knees, gasping for air.

LEON
Let's not fight...

Leon makes a last attempt at peace, looking like a young alabaster Mandela in his colorful dashiki with hands raised.

BIG BULLY
Shut up, freak!

BAM! - Leon clocks him with a marble-white fist that sends him staggering back and flat on his ass from where he came -

LEON
You want some of this!? Light Mike!
(In Sesotho)
The Light Lion!

Those shiny marble dukes roll like riverboat wheels as he shows them around, accompanied by some real fancy boxing steps. As Leon moves his hands around, the sun emits a flicker from his right wrist -

CLOSE ON: A THICK LEATHER BRACELET around his right WRIST, encrusted with GEMSTONES - YELLOWISH & GREENISH with WHITE STREAKS through the centre - The same type of gemstone the black cub spotted around Lionel's neck earlier that day.

Titus musters all his courage and shoulder charges Fat Bully, knocking him down in the dirt.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hey!

Lionel sits on his knees in the dirt, gasping for breath.

SCOUT OFFICER, JACQUELINE "JAX" BARNARD, AGE 18, a nerdy white girl with bushy brown hair and big glasses, run towards the children -

JAX
Hold it right there you brats!

All three Bullies run away.

MIA
Jax! Look. Lionel got me a kitty.
May I please keep him?

She affectionately sway the black cub from side to side.

Titus elbows Mia in the ribs to shut her up.

Jax squints her big, magnified brown eyes through the thick Coke-bottle-bottom lenses -

JAX
No, sweetie. It's a wild cat. Put it down before you catch the tick fever.

TITUS
Lyme disea...

JAX
Oh, spare me, smart-ass!

MIA
But Jax...

JAX
Get back to camp you lot. We're having a big *braai* [barbecue] for dinner.

Big boy Titus is suddenly intrigued by "big barbecue" and rubs his belly.

Jax gives chase after the Bullies, who keep on running to the tented camp in the distance.

Leon kneels by his twin brother Lionel -

LEON
You okay?

LIONEL
Leave me alone.

Leon rises and folds his arms -

LEON
Fine. But, I'm telling the cops at home you fight like a little bitch.

Titus giggles and smirks at Mia.

Lionel picks up on that from the corner of his eye, not impressed as he suffers the embarrassment before Mia.

Mia crawls over the grass toward Lionel where he sits alone holding his ribs, breathing slowly. With appreciation, she gently places the little black cub in his arms -

MIA
Thank you.

She kisses Lionel on the cheek and rises to join Leon and Titus.

They look down at Lionel, holding the black cub. Its eyes glisten as a STREAK OF SUNLIGHT breaks over its young face.

CUT TO BLACK:

Radiant light cleaves the darkness, cutting out a YIN-YANG SYMBOL with Light and Dark Lion heads intertwined - Their eyes gleaming like green gemstones.

SUPERIMPOSE: DARK LION

OPENING CREDITS MONTAGE: Voices of NEWS CASTERS in multiple SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGES, police activity and headlines depict: Egoli is a city in the grip of corruption, violence and organized crime.

NEWS PAPER HEADLINES:

Organized crime on the rise in City of Gold!

Police fail. Citizen outcry!

High level crime Syndicate: Fact or myth?

Inspector Commander Leonard: "Closing in"

Top cop foils major drug deal!

Political figures assassination targets!

What is "The Syndicate?"

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD, STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: LEONARD is the name on the mailbox.

Hard rain pours, and the wind howls as the gleaming crescent moon scrapes the thunderclouds that move rapidly across the sky of suburban Egoli.

EXT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

The family home's backyard is dark and eerie, yet the raindrops play a soothing symphony in the swimming pool.

BANG! - Lightning flashes blue and white and reflects off the water, revealing the silhouette of a SINISTER, DARK MAN in a LONG, BROWN TRENCH COAT and LOW DERBY HAT with piercing eyes.

His GLASS CUTTER creeks a hole into the patio door.

His gloved hand protrudes through the glass and he unlocks the patio door.

The ALARM WARNING LIGHT FLASHES.

The Dark Man enters swiftly, always in the shadows as if they belong to him and obey his command. His face is never visible. His mouth is covered by a red-and-brown-checkered SCARF.

He enters the alarm code successfully.

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Dark Man creeps down the hallway, soundless yet swift on the parquet floor. Always in the shadows, always in darkness, like a disease, half his face hidden by that scarf, those evil eyes peering from under the derby.

He draws a SICKLE-SHAPED BLADE from his waist, serrated on the one side, sharp on the other. It now appears he wears a TACTICAL VEST under the coat, holstering many KNIVES, SHURIKEN and BLADED WEAPONRY - A dark and evil assassin.

He opens a door with a sign - *LEON The Great White Hype*

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, LEON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BANG! - Lightning strikes again. Leon is curled up under the covers as only his outline is revealed in the flash.

The Dark Man raises the blade and thrusts mercilessly into his back, hard through the comforter. He retracts to find no blood on the blade. He rips the covers off the bed.

A stuffed doll and pillows form the shape of a person on the bed, mocking his every fiber.

He turns instantly and slips back out the door.

BANG! - Lightning flashes and behind the door, the flash reveals LEON, AGE 18, soaking wet with his alabaster skin lit up by the flash. Leon is dressed well, sporting his favorite colorful dashiki shirt, skinny jeans, and cowboy boots. This is the outfit of an eccentric someone who has just snuck back in after sneaking out for a party.

The Dark Man slowly opens another bedroom door with a sign that reads - *I Don't Like Cricket, I Love It!*

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, LIONEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

LIONEL, AGE 18, is asleep.

The Dark Man creeps closer and closer, casting his evil shadow over the bed.

BANG! - Lightning crashes and illuminates the poster of cricket hero Jonty Rhodes above the bed. Jonty's eyes are powerful but playful as if to say to the Dark Man - *"I caught you. Cheers. Jonty."*

The Dark Man again raises his blade, the sickle shadow spilling over Lionel's young face.

CLICK! - A pistol hammer.

INSPECTOR LEONARD (O.S.)
Drop it!

INSPECTOR LEONARD, Lionel and Leon's father, has a 9MM NICKLE-PLATED SMITH & WESSON against the intruder's head.

The broad shouldered veteran detective has a commanding presence and his burly physique far overshadows the not-so-menacing robe and Oskava sheepskin slippers.

Lionel awakes abruptly, rises and crawls back in bed with eyes widened.

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)
It's all right son. I've got him.
(To the Dark Man)
You should not have come here.

The Dark Man slowly lowers his blade.

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)
I said: Drop it!

The Dark Man pivots.

BANG! - A 9mm round goes off, just missing the Dark Man's hatted head, almost grazing Lionel's head before the bullet digs into Jonty.

Superfast, the Dark Man moves and pulls the gun past his head, with Inspector Leonard now close to his body, twisting and hitting him hard in the gut. He slices his enemy's arm with the sickle-shaped blade and finishes off with a stab in the chest.

He drops to the floor by the door. The Dark Man in the long brown coat now casts a tall, dark shadow over Inspector Leonard.

He steps on Inspector Leonard's hand as he goes for his gun -

DARK MAN
Usually I would not do this myself,
Inspector. But for you I shall make
an exception.

He presents his blade, gleaming purple and crimson with blood as the lightning flashes through the window once more.

LIONEL (O.S.)
Me too...

Lionel whacks him with a CRICKET BAT, sending the Dark Man crashing through the doorway.

In the shadows, the Dark Man rises, pulls away the scarf and spits what sounds like RATTLING TEETH.

Lionel kneels -

LIONEL (CONT'D)
Papa...

The Dark Man presents a SHINY SOMETHING IN HIS HAND.

SWOOSH! - A KNIFE flies down the hall.

Inspector Leonard pushes Lionel away.

The airborne blade ZINGS through between them and pegs into the bookshelf.

Inspector Leonard regains his gun.

The Dark Man retreats down the hall.

BANG! BANG! - Shots into the wall.

BANG! - One shot clips the Dark Man's leg.

He disappears into darkness.

INSPECTOR LEONARD

(In agony)

Quickly, son. Call Jax !

Lionel grabs a cellphone off his bedside table.

No signal - JAMMED.

From the darkness down the hall we hear -

DARK MAN (O.S.)

You made one very serious mistake,
Inspector Leonard.

BANG! - Inspector Leonard fires another round down the hall.

INSPECTOR LEONARD

Get out of my house!

DARK MAN (O.S.)

Did you really think I would not be
prepared?

He appears from the shadows, slowly walking down the hall, back towards them. He stretches his arms out, dragging his gloved fingers across the walls.

Inspector Leonard takes fine aim.

DARK MAN (CONT'D)

Or that I would be alone?

Now Inspector Leonard hesitates.

THUGS burst into the hall, holding MRS. ZANDILE LEONARD and Leon with blades to their throats.

INSPECTOR LEONARD

Zandi! No!

MRS. LEONARD

Tau! Lionel! Are you all right?

The Dark Man kneels and looks Lionel in the eye.

Lionel now knows who this Dark Man is. His father often spoke of him, of his underworld legend, of his myth.

LIONEL

(Whispers)

Phoko [Fox]...

THE FOX coyly removes the gun from Inspector Leonard's hand and blindly hands it over his shoulder to one of his Thugs behind him.

LEON

Dad, what do they want?

THE FOX

Daddy...

He presents the bloody blade and tauntingly inspects it -

THE FOX (CONT'D)

Is not coming to play...

BAM! - He knocks out Inspector Leonard with a whipping backhand.

MRS. LEONARD'S SCREAM ECHO!

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

The Leonard's are zip-tied down to the kitchen table chairs. The Fox towers over them where they are seated in a row like the Last Supper.

INSPECTOR LEONARD

Let my boys go. This does not concern them.

The Fox punches Inspector Leonard through the face and on the bleeding shoulder wound.

He growls in agony.

Mrs. Leonard and Leon mumbles in fear through their duct-taped mouths.

THE FOX

Oh, but it does concern them,
Inspector. For their lives depend
on your cooperation.

He crouches by Lionel and removes the duct tape -

THE FOX (CONT'D)

Do you fear me, boy?

LIONEL

Yes.

THE FOX

Do you love your family? Your
father?

Lionel nods - "Yes"

THE FOX (CONT'D)

I too have a father. He is also a
fool, like yours. Tell me, boy. Do
you fear death?

Lionel tries his best to keep his composure -

LIONEL

Yes.

THE FOX

As you should.

He sticks the tape back on Lionel's mouth and turns his back.

The Thugs move past him.

One slips The Fox something, but we don't know what it is.

The Thugs move in behind the Leonards.

INSPECTOR LEONARD

I'll give you everything I have on
The Syndicate.

THE FOX

Everything?

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Yes, everything!

THE FOX
Good.

Inspector Leonard seems slightly relieved.

THE FOX (CONT'D)
And Inspector...

A Thug grabs Inspector Leonard and puts him in a choke hold, covering his mouth, holding him up to see.

The Fox whips around -

THE FOX (CONT'D)
There will be no lies!

BANG! - He fires a shot from the REVOLVER in his hand.

Leon's blue eyes begin to fade to grey.

Blood accumulates on his chest and the dashiki shirt soaks.

Tears stream down Mrs. Leonard's face.

Lionel places his head on his twin's shoulder, trying to nudge his head up as Leon's life fades. The dark skin of Lionel against the light skin of his brother Leon forms an intertwined unity of mutual sorrow as the untimely death descends on them both.

EXT. TOKYO, JAPAN, INNER CITY - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: TOKYO, JAPAN. 3 YEARS LATER

LIONEL, AGE 21, and a troop of JAPANESE PARKOUR ARTISTS run through the cold, wet city streets in search of adrenaline.

PARKOUR MONTAGE: Radical jumps and climbs over rooftops, stairs, walls and rails.

The troop comes to a stop at the gaping split between two levels of a car park. They may look like Japanese punks with their colorful hairstyles, tattoos, and jewelry in unusual places, but here are few athletes in the world with the agility of that of the *YORU NO AKUMA* - THE NIGHT DEVILS.

The death-defying Oriental action stars' leader is HARUTO, a fly guy with sleeve tatoos and spiky orange hair.

His shredded athletic physique is something to marvel at, even in the loose-fitting fitness apparel.

Haruto and gang members RIKO and REO, yellow- and blue-haired tattooed Devils are all a foot shorter than Lionel's strong and muscular African build.

HARUTO

(In his best English)

The moment of the truth. You make this jump and you are in. You will be *Yoru no akuma* - The Night Devil. Like us!

Riko and Reo slam-bam a high five.

LIONEL

Have you done it?

RIKO

He's too short!

Riko laughs as he playfully slaps Haruto upside the head.

Reo joins in the fun and sneaks in a low five.

Lionel stretches his neck over the gap to inspect what appears to be an impossible jump.

HARUTO

No. I'm not crazy. But you are. Anyone who lean into the turn like you, must be insane.

REO

He's from Africa, bra! I've seen the Lion King. It's a crazy place!

The yellow- and blue-haired Devils share another laugh.

Lionel ponders, and mumbles inside his mouth -

LIONEL

Right...

HARUTO

You make the jump, I'll give you my Honda Fireblade.

Lionel is certainly intrigued as he smells opportunity -

LIONEL

I've always wanted one of those.

RIKO

Alright! He's going for it.

Riko and Reo are quick to pull out their GoPro action cameras. They begin setting up to capture the jump.

LIONEL

The Fireblade certainly is fast.
But, we Africans like to appreciate life as we move through it.

REO

You're not afraid, are you Lionel?

LIONEL

Keep the Fireblade. It's so very Japanese

HARUTO

What's the bet?

LIONEL

I make this, your broad wheel café racer is coming with me. And you're paying for the boat to Egoli.

RIKO & REO

(Unison)

Oh, shi...

CUT TO:

Lionel runs flat out at the massive gap between the parking levels. He jumps and displays astounding agility, soaring through the air like an African eagle as he passes the crescent moon hanging over the gaping split. It's touch and go. Will he make it, or meat-bomb the street?

EXT. TOKYO STREET - LATER, NIGHT

VROOM! SPLASH! - A Honda Fireblade and two Kawasaki Ninja's rip through the puddles of leftover rainwater.

Their call is answered by the powerful ROAR of a black broad wheel café racer, ridden like a renegade steed by a strong, out-of-town Black man.

INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - NIGHT

An overweight UNIFORMED COP, CONSTABLE AYAMA, runs and crashes through the swinging doors, desperately clutching a fumbled piece of paper and a telephone handset.

Sweat beads off his forehead and makes his heavy, double-bar glasses slide down his nose as his breath eludes him. But he pushes forward to bring this obviously urgent information to a superior officer.

INT. POLICE STATION, BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

The digits on the screen of the old government-issued computer play off the green gloom of the anti-reflective coating on the reading glasses of Inspector Leonard.

The strong man with a face and presence that demands the respect of a seasoned policeman in his late forties seems ever troubled.

He leans back, the phone held to his ear, his heart heavy with frustration -

INSPECTOR LEONARD

All we need is one more shot,
Commissioner. We are so close.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS, COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COMMISSIONER NKWALI

Inspector Leonard. Your unit have conducted an endless vendetta against this *Moriti Mokhatlo* - This so-called Syndicate that leaves you empty handed at every turn. I understand the personal nature of the situation, but my office demands results.

COMMISSIONER NKWALI seats his big, fat body at the big, fat desk of his big, fat office.

INT. POLICE STATION, BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

COMMISSIONER NKWALI (V.O.)

I cannot allow you to continue burning the little resources we have.

Inspector Leonard grows more and more frustrated. He slowly draws his custom 9mm Smith & Wesson and scrapes the barrel against the old metal desk.

COMMISSIONER NKWALLI (V.O.)
The force is under staffed and
under funded as it is.

He slams the gun under his palm, banging metal against metal -

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Yes Commissioner. I understand.

As he hangs up, Constable Ayama crashes into the bullpen, raising the heads of the OFFICERS working on their cases -

CONSTABLE AYAMA
Inspector!

INSPECTOR LEONARD
I'm busy, Constable.

CONSTABLE AYAMA
The snitch called in. Its them
Inspector! We're sure this time.

LIEUTENANT JACQUELINE "JAX" BARNARD, AGE 27, has grown up to be a strong, commanding and attractive woman with that bushy brown hair tied back. She traded the Coke-bottle bottom glasses for contact lenses and the scout uniform for a cool, brown vintage leather jacket

Jax kicks her roller chair back and slides into the conversation -

JAX
Visual confirmation?

CONSTABLE AYAMA
Yes, Lieutenant Barnard. Sergeant Foster deployed surveillance. The deal is going down now!

Inspector Leonard rises, holsters his gun and grabs his shield off his desk -

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Jax, round up the big boys and get me Judge Khumalu.

Jax nods and rushes out with her cellphone in hand.

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)
Ayama! I'll need a full debrief.

INT. POLICE STATION, ARMORY - MINUTES LATER

Jax and Inspector Leonard raid the armory, strapping on bulletproof vests and loading up shotguns with round after round of big business twenty-gauge ammunition.

Jax grabs a radio communication set and a couple of flashlights.

They hastily move past the armory's keeper, CONSTABLE VUZI, who appears to be fresh out of the academy by the looks of the blueness of his uniform.

CONSTABLE VUZI
Inspector, you have to sign for these.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Vuzi, when will they teach you young cowboys never to argue with a loaded gun?

INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The three officers hurry down the hallway and Constable Ayama hands Jax a set of keys -

CONSTABLE AYAMA
Your wheels, Lieutenant. Foster is on channel one.

JAX
Do we have a plan, boss?

INSPECTOR LEONARD
I want The Fox.

He cocks the twenty-gauge Mossberg Maverick 88 shotgun -

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)
This ends tonight!

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: CRACK! - A crowbar busts open a SANDF military crate, splintering the fresh pinewood, stacked with a recently sealed consignment of NEW GENERATION PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES - Porous and pink, almost like a kitchen sponge.

REVEAL: Unsavory GANGSTERS are conducting an arms exchange.

The buyers move in closer.

A GANGSTER from the selling side takes the back of his shot gun and smashes open another crate, revealing a stack of old military R5 ASSAULT RIFLES.

An obese African man, cigar toting gangster boss, SONTONGA, in a fancy rent-a-tent suit with waistcoat and overcoat, steps in and picks up an old R5 rifle with disgust -

SONTONGA

This... Is not satisfactory.

He spits a tiny piece of stray tobacco from his heavy lips.

From the shadows a familiar DARK FIGURE approaches -

THE FOX

You will take delivery as agreed,
Mr. Sontonga. The Syndicate does
not offer a return policy.

Sontonga is aggravated, yet hesitant, puffing his cigar. He attempts to stare down The Fox through the haze of cigar smoke, but even this obese man has no effect.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT, SWAT BASE CAMP - NIGHT

Hidden within the narrow roads, the COPS are busy setting up a command station with comms and monitors. SWAT COPS are strapping on their tactical assault gear and loading up their weapons.

A double-cab pickup truck arrives with tires digging into the gravel as the 4x4 comes to a screeching halt. Inspector Leonard and Jax exit immediately, slamming the doors.

Inspector Leonard hastens over to the cluster of SWAT, tightening the Velcro on his vest, securing his earpiece, meaning in his stride.

Jax follows hot on his heels with a couple of twenty-gauge Maverick 88s and a string of matching shells.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Foster! Where's my eye ball?

A big, burly, Black man, a mean son of a bitch with tattooed fore arms the size of rugby balls - SWAT leader SERGEANT FOSTER, whips a heavy old TV monitor around with ease and bangs it down on the metal table -

FOSTER
Right here, Inspector. My man is in position on the east side roof.
We've got fibre optics. Makhazi!
Hamba lo cable!

SWAT member, MAKHAZI, plugs a video cable into the monitor.

ON MONITOR SCREEN: From a highly elevated position, we see The Fox and the Gangsters conducting their arms deal.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

THE FOX
Are we going to have a problem, Mr. Sontonga?

SONTONGA
You insist that your merchandise is sufficient? Perhaps a demonstration is in order.

THE FOX
You are my guest...

From his coat pocket, Sontonga slips a BULLET into the R5, punches in the bolt carrier forward and takes aim at The Fox.

By metallic cacophony, all the Gangsters' guns are drawn into a tense, no-win Mexican stand off.

The fearless Fox's gleaming eyes scan the situation. He slowly pulls back his coat, just ever so slightly, his tailor-gloved fingers trickling like a cowboy, ready to draw.

The gut-wrenching tension grows more and more unbearable as the gangsters on both sides become more and more uncertain of how to proceed or what will happen next - Then -

With lightning speed of the draw, the Fox sends two TROWING KNIVES the way of the smoky Sontonga.

SWOOSH! - Into the shoulder of his trigger arm.

SWOOSH! - Into his trigger hand - Resulting in a yank of the arm and a pull of the finger.

Sontonga involuntary spits out his cigar and shoots his comrade in the head.

Before the body or spat-out cigar hits the floor, The Fox has a familiar sickle-shaped blade against Sontonga's throat, squeezing out the last puff of cigar smoke from his lungs.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT, SWAT BASE CAMP - CONTINUOUS

JAX
Gun shots, Inspector!

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Gear up! We breach on my command!

SWAT prepares for breech.

Inspector Leonard and Jax jump back into the pickup truck. He places a hand on her shoulder -

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)
Jax, my wife just started speaking
to me again. Try not to get
yourself shot... again.

Jax ignites the engine and turns to Inspector Leonard -

JAX
That goes double for you, boss. I'm
more afraid Mrs. Leonard than a
bullet.

She hits the lights and pulls away with screeching tires.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

THE FOX

Chinese medicine has long shown us, Mr. Sontonga, that one can manipulate the human body by introducing strategically placed needles, or in this case, something a bit more drastic. With a few more bullets and enough of these...

He twists the blood-splattered knife stuck in Sontonga's shoulder, forcing him to grind his teeth and growl to stop from screaming in agony.

THE FOX (CONT'D)

I will make you shoot your entire crew. Like my puppet.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

The ROOF COP peeps through the sky light, aiming a FIBRE OPTICS CAMERA below.

Sweat runs into his eye and he clinches, shifting slightly.

A flock of PIGEONS spending the night, scurry about.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SONTONGA

What do you want?

THE FOX

What do I want? It humors me that you should ask. You just gave me enough explosives to sink a mine shaft in the middle of this stinking city, but it's not the gold I'm after.

SONTONGA

Perhaps the merchandise is in order? The gun did fire...

The Fox twists the knife once more.

Sontonga bites down hard again, but The Fox muffles his mouth to shut him up as he listens intently - SCURRYING PIGEONS.

THE FOX
We are not alone.

The gangsters on both sides slightly lower their weapons and start looking around, scanning the exits.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

ROOF COP
(Over the comms)
Sergeant, they've made me. I'm out.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT, SWAT BASE CAMP - CONTINUOUS

FOSTER
(Over the comms)
Don't you dare move!

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Roof Cop gets up and runs across the corrugated iron roof.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Following the thumping footsteps, all the gangsters break loose in a combined effort and send a hail of bullets at the roof, breaking the skylight into a million pieces of shattered glass and pigeon feathers.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Roof Cop runs for dear life as the bullets rip through the corrugated iron roof, sparking violently in the darkness of night, barely missing his feet as he keeps one step ahead of certain death.

ROOF COP
(Over the comms)
Foster! Get me the hell out of here!

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! - The roller shutter door EXPLODES, taking out the closest Gangsters.

The pickup truck crashes through the smoky inferno as Jax hits the incline at speed.

Foster and his SWAT team breaches.

Gangsters of both sides take cover behind parked vehicles and stacks of crates, uniting against the Cops.

A massive FIRE FIGHT erupts.

Jax throws a handbrake turn, using the pickup truck as cover. Inspector Leonard and Jax jump out and return shotgun fire.

Foster charges Gangsters like a mad man, shooting for the bad wound and breaking jaws with the buttstock of his rifle.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
(Over the comms)
Damn it, Foster! Leave me some live ones!

The Fox moves swiftly and ghostlike as he jumps off a pile of crates, flying through the air.

He eliminates TWO COPS with TROWING KNIFES and decommissions more with KUNAI and SHURIKEN.

SHOOSH! - Goes the long trench coat as he moves between structures and speeding bullets without fear and kills without remorse, proving to be a dreadful enemy with undefeatable hand-to-hand combat and assassination techniques.

Inspector Leonard and Jax tear off and start moving between crates and machinery, taking on Gangsters by hand, beating them into submission and cuffing them to structures.

Jax pushes a Gangster up against a crate -

JAX
I'm out of cuffs, Inspector!

Inspector Leonard knocks out a Gangster -

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Break his legs then! Leave me The Fox!

A leg-breaking CRACK and a SCREAM echoes.

Foster and SWAT surrounds the remaining Gangsters.

JAX

He could be anywhere. The man is a ghost.

INSPECTOR LEONARD

Take the north side. Watch your back.

Jax nods and takes off in the opposite direction.

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)

(Over the comms)

Foster, find him.

FOSTER (V.O.)

(Over the comms)

I think he got out, Inspector.

- BETWEEN CRATES

Inspector Leonard moves slowly with his eyes pealed.

JAX (V.O.)

(Over the comms)

Inspector, anything yet?

From darkness, a gloved hand comes from behind and places a sickle-shaped blade against Inspector Leonard's throat -

THE FOX

Drop it.

Inspector Leonard drops his Maverick, unholsters his Smith & Wesson, and kicks them both away as if expecting the request.

THE FOX (CONT'D)

Now tell her...

INSPECTOR LEONARD

(Over the comms)

Nothing, Lieutenant.

The Fox leans forward, next to Inspector Leonard's ear, revealing his scarf-covered face ever so slightly in a streak of moonlight from above -

THE FOX

We meet again, Inspector. How long has it been? Three years?

INSPECTOR LEONARD

Too long, coward.

The Fox utters a slight crackle of laughter -

THE FOX
Tell me Inspector: How is the family?

INSPECTOR LEONARD
How's the leg?

THE FOX
Unbreakable.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
You should have killed me when you had the chance.

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASH BACK)

CLOSE ON: Inspector Leonard's Cellphone: "17 missed calls. Jax Barnard"

MOVING IN, CLOSE ON: Mrs. Leonard's Cellphone: Whats App Message: From Jacqueline: "Mama Z, tell Inspector call urgent. Why no one answer?"

BAM! The back door smashes open and Jax bursts into the kitchen - Just after Leon was shot. Her Beretta 9mm is already drawn. She shoots and kills Thug 1 with a double tap.

Inspector Leonard busts towards the side, knocking over Mrs. Leonard and himself, still zip-tied to their chairs.

Lionel lifts his head from his dead twin's chest. He flips and twists his chair off its legs and hits the floor.

The Fox and Thug 2 return fire over the Leonards. Jax takes cover, then she returns fire relentlessly. Thug 2 drops dead just as The Fox escapes.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Fox puts just enough pressure on the blade against Inspector Leonard's neck to cause a small, radial laceration in the skin. The blood slowly creeps down the gleaming blade.

THE FOX
For years, you have been my most feared enemy...

INSPECTOR LEONARD
Glad I could make an impression.
Now what?

The Fox pulls Inspector Leonard closer to him -

THE FOX
I have plans for you, Inspector.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
I'm married...

THE FOX
I have great respect for my
enemies. One should always learn
from them.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
You respect only death and
destruction. You're an anarchist.
And those kinds of people are
unreasonable people. You'll soon
make the acquaintance of the
business end of my boot.

THE FOX
The revolution is coming. Your
position has always offered you
arrogance instead of safety. I
remember a similar situation...

INSPECTOR LEONARD
You come into my house, take my son
from me. I'm going to tear you
apart piece by piece.

THE FOX
Do not aggravate me, Inspector. I
hold all the --

BAM! - The enraged Inspector Leonard headbutts backward,
hitting The Fox in the face and breaking free in the process.

He grabs The Fox and sends them both crashing into a wall of
crates. He beats The Fox like a boxer against the ropes.

The Fox blocks fast and furious, but accurate, then
retaliates with astounding skill and separates them.

Inspector Leonard is no match for the superfast hand-to-hand
combat skills of The Fox - Punches like missiles.

Inspector Leonard offers a last charge, but The Fox sends a flying FIXED BLADE KNIFE into each leg, right above the knee, forcing Inspector Leonard to drop.

- MAIN FLOOR

Foster and SWAT round up all the Gangsters still breathing and tend to the wounded Cops.

Jax runs onto the main floor -

JAX

Where's the Inspector? I can't find him. Nothing on comms.

Foster looks up from the floor, where he is tending to a wounded SWAT team member, the big man's face growing bleak.

Jax is momentarily confused, and then suddenly swings around with her weapon drawn.

The Fox is standing in the middle of the massive warehouse floor with his arm around the neck of Inspector Leonard.

The blood has soaked his pants crimson from the knife wounds. He can barely stand.

JAX (CONT'D)

Let him go!

SWAT aim laser scoped rifles at The Fox, lighting him up.

JAX (CONT'D)

Inspector! Are you all right?

The Fox applies pressure to the blade -

THE FOX

He'll live, Lieutenant. If, I walk out of here.

Jax cocks the hammer on her 9mm Beretta and fine aims -

JAX

Make one move and I'll paint the wall with you. Let him go! You are out of options!

THE FOX

Am I, Lieutenant.

INSPECTOR LEONARD
 (Mumbles in pain)
 Shoot him, Jax. Shoot the son of a
 bitch.

The Fox reveals a small REMOTE DETONATOR in his hand -

THE FOX
 Will you ever learn?

He presses the button and holds it down.

SWAT scan the room and finds FLICKERING RED LIGHTS. There are WIRED EXPLOSIVES all around the warehouse floor.

FOSTER
 (To himself, in isiXhosa)
This is bad...

THE FOX
 I drop this, Lieutenant, and the
 coroner collects you with a tooth
 pick.

FOSTER
 (Whispers over the comms)
 He's gonna blow it anyway.

JAX
 (Whispers over the comms)
 Stand down, Sergeant.

The Fox moves backwards, dragging Inspector Leonard, uttering his evil, taunting laugh that sends chills down your spine.

Jax furiously re-aims her pistol several times, but cannot find a sweet spot -

JAX (CONT'D)
 (Whispers over the comms)
 Prepare to take cover.
 (Yelling across the room)
 It's going to be all right,
 Inspector!

THE FOX
 Keep telling him that.

The Fox and his hostage disappears behind a wall of crates.

JAX
 Get down!

Everyone dives for cover.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! - A series of explosions send splinters of pinewood and packaging material flying through the warehouse once the shockwave had ripped a vacuum to suck it all in.

From the turmoil, Jax crawls at first and then slowly gets to her feet, her ears buzzing and her body disorientated.

JAX (CONT'D)
Foster!

Foster stumbles to the centre floor and rips a wooden stake out of his bleeding upper arm as if only a splinter.

FOSTER
Here, Lieutenant!

The SWAT Sergeant spits blood on the floor in disgust.

JAX
Find them! He couldn't have gone far!

FOSTER
Move it, ladies! Find Inspector Leonard!

The SWAT team scatters and exits in all directions.

EXT. WAREHOUSE YARD, CONTAINER STORAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jax and Foster scurry through the massive steel containers and earth-moving vehicles parked in the industrial warehouse yard.

Monstrous shadows are around every bend, lurking in the moonlight.

They enter a clearing. In the dark distance, Jax spots a man with blood-soaked hair, his mouth duct-taped. He is tied to OIL DRUMS, fitted inside the RIPPER of a BULLDOZER EXCAVATOR.

Foster shines a flashlight onto the man and spots the POLICE SHIELD on his belt gleaming gold and blue. It is Inspector Leonard! His pants are soaked in blood from above the knees.

JAX
Inspector!

Jax rushes out.

Foster grabs Jax and stops her dead in her tracks -

FOSTER
Lieutenant, wait!

THE FOX (V.O.)
(Over the comms)
Listen to the Sergeant..

Foster shines the flashlight from side to side, revealing an explosive with flickering red light stuck to an oil drum.

FOSTER
Look...

JAX
God, no...

- ON THE FOX

The Fox looks down from a pile of shipping containers, his coat billowing in the icy night breeze. Vapor streams out from under the scarf covering his mouth and nose like a hissing dragon. His evil eyes gleam as he speaks -

THE FOX
I have a reputation to uphold.

- ON JAX AND FOSTER

THE FOX (V.O.)
(Over the comms)
You and Leonard have cost me dearly
in the past, but tonight I shall be
repaid in full.

Jax's knees start to buckle under emotion and her gun drops to the ground -

JAX
Please don't...

THE FOX
Good night, Jacqueline.

JAX
No!

She runs forward, but is flooded by an ORANGE HUE.

Deafening sound and heat engulfs and forces her backwards.

Foster grabs Jax in a grip of mercy as they stumble to ground and can only stare helplessly at the FIRE BALL inside the ripper of the Bulldozer.

The Fox triumphs on top of the pile of shipping containers.

SWOOSH! - Goes the long coat as he jumps into a dark abyss.

SOUND OVER: POLICE SIRENS are soft at first, becoming louder.

The fire burns bright orange, yellow and brown and we -

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

CLOSE ON: Orange, yellow and brown SCOTCH.

REVEAL: LIONEL, AGE 21, in a BLACK SUIT AND TIE, clutching the tumbler with both hands. The sadness is evident in his eyes as he struggle with emotions. Lionel drinks.

At the end of the bar, THREE BIKER HOODLUMS harass an attractive YOUNG BLOND LADY corporate suit on her pop-in lunch coffee, at the wrong place, touching up her red lips.

When she makes it abundantly clear she's not interested, the LEADER OF THE PACK'S bruised ego lashes out and he grabs her by the hair. Before she can even scream for help, his scruffy sidekick pulls a BUTTERFLY KNIFE. It all but freezes her and the BARTENDER.

LIONEL
(Looking into his glass)
Three of you? And a knife. For one
girl?

The Hoodlums turn around, flabbergasted by the audacity of this lone stranger, who is still looking into his glass.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
You should try flowers.

KNIFE MAN with the sleeveless leathers à la Sons of Anarchy marches over and shoves his puny pig sticker right in Lionel's face -

KNIFE MAN
I don't know what you think is in
that glass, but I...

BOOM! - Lionel slams Knife Man's head against the bar.

He slides off the counter, done and dusted.

Lionel indicates to the Bartender - "One more"

The other two hoodlums charge from across the room. The main man with a POOL CUE, and his bearded, overweight sidekick, is confident with only a pair of FISTS.

CUE MAN swings. Lionel catches the cue and hits it back into his face.

SMASH! - A tumbler glass explodes on Cue Man's head.

FIST MAN charges full throttle. Lionel pushes himself up by pressing both hands on Cue Man's shoulders, landing on the bar stool like a cat.

He jumps and lands with both shins on Fist Man's shoulders, locking his head, driving him down to the floor.

Lionel rises quickly and strikes Cue Man down. He whips around and locks eyes with the Young Lady.

MOVING IN: On EYES ENRAGED like a caged beast.

She stares at him in awe and puts her hands over her mouth.

Knife Man has awoken from his barcounter coma and grabs Lionel from behind.

Cue Man and Fist Man are up and punches Lionel in the gut.

Lionel pushes backwards into the counter, still held by Knife Man. He pushes up and DOUBLE KICKS Cue Man and Fist Man in their chops.

They both fly over a table and smash into the furniture.

A mean backward headbutt and Lionel escapes Knife Man's grip.

He grabs Knife Man around the neck and the two wrestle in circles, smashing around the room.

CLICK! - A Pistol Hammer

CLOSE ON: 9mm BERETTA aimed at Knife Man's head.

MOVING OVER: The gun's barrel, the handler's skinny arm, covered in sleek, black cloth to find Jax's serious face at the other end, suited and tied in a black lady pantsuit.

Jax shoves the gun up against Knife Man's cheek -

JAX
Shots? It's on me.

LIONEL
Jax?

His jaw drops and he lets go of Knife Man.

BAM! - Jax pistol whips him, down like a sack of potatoes -

JAX
Lionel...

LIONEL
Leave me alone, Sergeant.

Jax raises a brow and indicates to the Hoodlums on the floor -

JAX
It's Lieutenant now. Friends of
yours?

LIONEL
I can handle myself. Don't need
your help.

Jax holsters her gun and tap her fingers ever so gently on the police shield on her belt to calm down the frozen Bartender.

JAX
We all need help every now and
then. I know this.

The Hoodlums are on the floor in agony.

The Young Lady unapologetically tip-toes over them, stepping on Knife Man's groin, leaving him curled up on the floor.

She unexpectedly grabs Lionel's face and plants a big, fat kiss on the mouth -

YOUNG LADY
Thank you! Really, thanks.

She slips out of the bar.

Jax raises her brows, teasing Lionel.

Lionel indicates to the shaken Bartender to serve a fresh Scotch.

He quickly pours a shot in a new tumbler.

The Hoodlums begin to rise.

JAX
Get out before I change my mind.

The bruised biker boys scurry out the door with their tails between their legs.

BARTENDER
On the house.

He serves Lionel's due Scotch and presents the bottle to Jax -

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Officer, Lady?

Jax indicates - "Not yet"

JAX
Your father would be very disappointed in you.

LIONEL
He wouldn't be, Jax. He's dead.

He takes a big swig of Scotch.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
First Leon, now father.

JAX
At least you knew a dad, a brother.
I wasn't that lucky growing up.
Your father, Mama Zandi - You're the only family I've ever known.

LIONEL
It's never going to end.

JAX
It has ended. It's over, Lionel.
The bad guys won. And you're mother's not doing so well.

LIONEL
My old man wanted to take on the mob all by himself.
(MORE)

LIONEL (CONT'D)
 Our house was a prison of death
 threats and police protection. What
 would you have done?

JAX
 Probably the same.

Jax indicates to the Bartender - "Now's the time"

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The rain pours at Inspector Leonard's funeral. Droplets
 bounce off the many purple Jacaranda tree blossoms in the old
 city graveyard. Water trickle over grave stones -

LEON LEONARD Beloved son & brother

TAU LEONARD Beloved husband & father

Mrs. Leonard sobs by the open grave while Jax holds her,
 offering little comfort.

Commissioner Nkwali hands Mrs. Leonard a folded SOUTH AFRICAN
 FLAG and a once golden, now half BURNT POLICE SHIELD.

Lionel is alone, drenched by rain and emotion. He flinches,
 swallows hard as the POLICE BRIGADE fires the THREE GUN
 SALUTE.

- LATER

The summer rain subsided to a beautiful spectacle of purple
 and black clouds, purple blossoms, and black mourners
 illuminated by Egoli's golden rays of moist sunshine.

Attendees offer their condolences to the Leonard family.

MIA, AGE 21, now an elegantly dressed and styled young woman
 with long, flowing black hair, comes over to Lionel -

MIA
 I'm so sorry.

She hugs Lionel and looks at him with confused affection -

MIA (CONT'D)
 Leon... Now your father...

Lionel is speechless and drops his head.

MIA (CONT'D)
I'm so afraid. Where were you all
this time?

LIONEL
It's a long story. How's law
school?

MIA
Tough, a bit lonely. You were
supposed to come with me.

LIONEL
Some times life takes a different
path. Life isn't always fair, Mia.

MIA
We all get to choose our own path.
That's all that matters, Lionel.

She kisses him on the cheek, then rubs away the classy smudge
of burgundy lipstick on his sleek cocoa skin -

MIA (CONT'D)
Coffee, later?

Lionel nods - "Yes"

MIA (CONT'D)
I have to go.

Mia turns and walks away, leaving Lionel alone.

A plump African man, in his 60's, makes his way from the
assemblage by Mrs. Leonard over to Lionel. GOVERNMENT
MINISTER MASANA hands his umbrella off to one of his two
sizable BODYGUARDS and takes footing before Lionel -

MINISTER MASANA
Lionel Leonard, I presume. My
deepest condolences.

LIONEL
Thank you, Minister Masana.

MINISTER MASANA
You know who I am?

The important man finds it quite curious.

LIONEL
My father often spoke of you.

Masana looks to his left and right as if to engage in playful banter in hopes to lighten the mood -

MINISTER MASANA

Only good things, I trust. Your father was a good man. A fine detective. The best.

Lionel gazes into the distance, then eye-locks Masana -

LIONEL

My father didn't trust you, Mr. Minister. Your office made life difficult for his unit. Every time he came close to the man behind the curtain, you swept the rug out from under him. And now he's dead.

Masana takes expected offense and puckers up his lardy lips -

MINISTER MASANA

You speak of things you know nothing about, boy.

Jax steps up and joins in the conversation -

JAX

Forgive Lionel, Mr. Minister. The past few days have been hard on him.

MINISTER MASANA

I understand, Lieutenant.

(To Lionel))

Give my regards to your mother.

Lionel and Minister Masana share a look as he leaves with his entourage of bodyguards.

JAX

That's the Minister of National Intelligence! My commander.

LIONEL

Save it, Jax. You know that my father long suspected he's corrupt. Raids you execute on The Syndicate leaves you empty-handed. You said it yourself: Intelligence leaks from the inside.

JAX

Even if it's true. We can't prove it.

LIONEL

Look around! This city is paralyzed by corruption. My father stood for justice. He fought for change. And both Leon and my father died for nothing.

JAX

He was my mentor. And I had to watch him die.

Lionel stares at Jax, and she realizes that she is no different from him in this painful scenario.

JAX (CONT'D)

Forgive me. I too believe that the good people of Egoli deserves a city free from organized crime. Your father was just a man.

Lionel looks off to the sun-kissed high rises of Egoli in the distance -

LIONEL

To take down The Syndicate, being just a man, will never be enough.

On the rolling hilltop past the jacarandas, a middle-aged WHITE MAN in a smart suit and designer coat locks Lionel's gaze.

People cross Lionel's line of sight, then the man is gone.

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - DAY

By the big old kitchen table, Lionel has coffee and rusks with his mother. The airy, farm-style kitchen is stacked with many tins of baked goods, jam jars, and pickled fruits in true South African home-style.

MRS. LEONARD

I miss them so much.

LIONEL

Me too, Mama.

MRS. LEONARD

What happened to you, son? You were going to U.E., become a successful lawyer, but then you just disappeared. Where were you all this time?

LIONEL

Europe. The East. I bounced around.

INSERT CUT: Lionel runs and jumps over the city obstacles of Tokyo with Harutu and the Parkour troop following him.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

I had to clear my head. Get away from it all.

MRS. LEONARD

Three years is a long time for a mother not to see her son. Her only living child.

(Emotion overcomes)

You were not the only one affected.

LIONEL

I'm sorry, Mama. I think they were waiting for him at that warehouse.

MRS. LEONARD

Your father did what he believed was necessary. After Leon, he couldn't let go. The Syndicate - These monsters are tearing our city apart. Our lives...

LIONEL

It was never a fight he could win as a cop. The NIS used him. I wish I'd stayed. See him one last time. I guess, I was afraid.

Lionel's mother takes his hands in hers -

MRS. LEONARD

We are all afraid, but resenting the powers that be won't bring them back. Are you still having nightmares like you use to? About the...

LIONEL

The black lion..? Yes... all the time.

MRS. LEONARD

Remember it's just an internal manifestation of your grief and anger. That's what Doctor Lekota said.

LIONEL

I'm not so sure...

MRS. LEONARD

Lionel, you are all I have left. Let go of your anger or you'll live to see it consume you, like it did your father.

INT. LEONARD RESIDENCE, LIONEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lionel enters.

On the walls are pictures of him riding dirt motocross and posing with his high school cricket team.

On the shelf are trophies for Ninjutsu and gymnastics next to framed photographs of him competing in said arts.

He picks up a photo of him, Leon, Titus and Mia as children at the scout camp.

He picks up a photo him and Mia at their high school senior formal dance, touching the glass and Mia's face.

- LATER

Lionel is asleep on his bed.

DREAM MONTAGE:

Lionel's mind is a carnival, a cacophony of arguing voices and news casters ranting about organized crime.

SOUND: A ferocious Lion roars underneath it all, trying to break free where it's trapped inside Lionel's mind.

NEWS PAPER HEADLINES:

Local brass family targeted!

Organized crime run rampant in Egoli!

Inspector's son assassinated, survived by twin brother!

Top cop burnt alive!

SOUND: The black lion roars in his subconscious and claws at the back of Lionel's eyeballs.

INTERCUT IMAGE, ALIGNED WITH LIONEL'S FACE WHERE HE DREAMS:

The black lion roars louder and louder as it appears and disappears, trying to break the chains of Lionel's mind.

CLOSE ON: Lionel's eyes tear open - Gleaming like a lion's.

SOUND OVER: CELLPHONE RINGS - Ripping us back to the room.

Lionel rises quickly, soaked in sweat. He grabs his phone -

LIONEL

Hello?

MR. JAMES (V.O.)

Am I speaking with Lionel Leonard?

LIONEL

Yes.

MR. JAMES (V.O.)

Son of the late Tau Leonard?

LIONEL

Who is this?

MR. JAMES (V.O.)

Special executor to your father's will. The Richmond, Suit 77. Hans Strijdom Boulevard. Come alone.

LIONEL

Wait, I don't...

SOUND OVER: Hang up tone.

EXT. EGOLI INNER CITY STREET - DAY

VROOM! - Lionel tears through traffic, zig-zagging like man possessed on his BLACK CAFE RACER MOTORCYCLE - The one Harutu had graciously shipped to Egoli.

He hits the brakes in front of a massive SKY SCRAPER.

EXT. RICHMOND BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Lionel climbs the grand steps of the posh building.

A raggedy, young African HOMELESS MAN sits there.

HOMELESS MAN
Spare change, boss?

LIONEL
Sorry, brother. No change.

INT. RICHMOND BUILDING, ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Lionel rides the elevator.

INT. RICHMOND BUILDING, HIGH LEVEL FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lionel exits the elevator.

Polished glass doors read - *Milton James & Associates*

INT. MR. JAMES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The LEGAL SECRETARY, MRS. LE ROUX, is a silver-haired Afrikaner lady of stature, close to retirement age. She escorts Lionel inside an empty office, smiling politely as she closes the door behind him.

The corner office is majestic with a panoramic view of the city of Egoli. The design reflects the immense WEALTH and sophistication of the owner. The office is filled with books, leather chairs, and works of art.

An array of wall-mounted flatscreen TVs display world news and stock market shares. A giant mahogany desk with state-of-the-art computer and intercom system is the focus of the room.

Lionel wanders around, appreciating antique furniture, ornaments and statues of Eastern warriors.

On the walls are collections of WEAPONS from many martial arts disciplines, including a set of crisscrossed JAPANESE NAGINATA SPEARS.

In the bookshelves Lionel finds titles such as *The Criminal Mind*, *Crime & Punishment* and *The Art of War*.

MR. JAMES (O.S.)
 Your father once told me this place
 might be your cup of tea.

- says the same distinguished caller from earlier.

Lionel turns to find the mystery man -

LIONEL
 Mr. James?

MR. JAMES, a well-groomed white gentleman with rimless glasses, dressed in a charcoal designer suit with waist coat and deep purple tie, smiles politely -

MR. JAMES
 Milton James the 3rd. Attorney at
 law.

Mr. James offers a warm, firm handshake which Lionel accepts.

LIONEL
 What am I doing here?

MR. JAMES
 It is an honor to finally meet you.
 Your father always spoke very
 highly of you.

LIONEL
 The funeral...

INSERT CUT: Mr. James locks eyes with Lionel at the funeral.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
 How did you know my father?

MR. JAMES
 Attorney at law, amongst other.
 Your father upheld the law. Our
 paths were somewhat intertwined.

He removes his glasses and puts them down on the desk, then straightens out his waistcoat and tie -

MR. JAMES (CONT'D)
 It is my understanding that you
 recently returned from Europe and
 the far East, yes?

Lionel nods - "Yes"

MR. JAMES (CONT'D)
 Your father entrusted me with a
 special task in the unfortunate
 event of an untimely departure.

He removes the two ancient crisscrossed Japanese naganata
 warrior spears from the wall, spears with big curving blades
 one can butcher a cow with -

MR. JAMES (CONT'D)
 He mentioned that you are a fellow
 martial artist. Ninjutsu?

Lionel puts his hands inside his black leather biker jacket
 pockets. He's not really here looking for trouble. Not with
 naganatas -

LIONEL
 Not any more. The Sensei said I'm
 short tempered.

Mr. James swirls the spears and tugs them under his arms with
 the razor-sharp, gleaming curving tips pointed at Lionel -

MR. JAMES
 Are you?

LIONEL
 The word "reckless" was noted.

Mr. James is quite amused and swirls the spears back out from
 under his arms -

MR. JAMES
 Sounds fierce.

Lionel swirls his index finger just like the spears and
 implies that Mr. James should quit wasting his time -

LIONEL
 What's the message?

MR. JAMES
 Only if you pass the test!

Mr. James tosses Lionel a spear, and as he catches it, Mr.
 James attacks.

ZIP! ZAP! ZIP! - One, two, three. Lionel pivots, ducks, and
 deflects to defend himself successfully.

A flamboyant sparring ensues. It sounds like a chopper is taking flight inside the very large office.

Mr. James is fast and skilled and manages to flick Lionel's spear out of his hand. The naginata somersaults in the air.

WHIP! WHAP! WHIP! - But before it can fall to the floor, it is caught. Both spears swirl again, and Mr. James pushes Lionel up against the desk with the deadly fanning cutting him off from any escape.

The curving spear blades cross against Lionel's throat like giant garden scissors.

MR. JAMES (CONT'D)
So much fire, yet so much to learn.

LIONEL
I'll bet I didn't pass that test?

Lionel attempts to keep things light, considering a quick snip from Mr. James's gardening tool would take his head clean off.

Mr. James obliges the lightness but keeps Lionel under lock and scissor -

MR. JAMES
No test. This was just for fun.

Lionel gently pushes the spear blades open and away -

LIONEL
Fun?

MR. JAMES
Maybe just a little...

LIONEL
You are a strange man, Mr. James.

MR. JAMES
You know what they say, Mr.
Leonard: Only the dead have seen...

LIONEL
...the end of war.

MR. JAMES
(Impressed)
Plato.

LIONEL
I didn't hear no bell.

- adds Lionel with a pair of obnoxiously large eyes that leave Mr. James amused yet somewhat confused as to the sudden arrogance.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
Rocky...

Lionel taps Mr. James in ribs with a small pocket blade attached to his motorcycle keys.

Mr. James laughs loudly and swirls the naganatas back for a holster under his arms. He stands them up against the wall and places his hand on Lionel's shoulder -

MR. JAMES
Come, young Mr. Leonard. I have something important to share with you.

They take a seat by the desk. Lionel remains sceptical.

MR. JAMES (CONT'D)
My professional interest in the law stretches much further than that of a prosecutor. The law as we know it has boundaries, chains that bind us. I am part of an elite society of influential gentlemen that assists our nation's armed forces in upholding the law. Getting done what is needed. We were the men behind the Scorpions and the Falcons. Military strategy. Weapons development. We aid and fund cutthroat initiatives that tackle the very heart of organized crime in Egoli.

LIONEL
You backed my father's unit...

MR. JAMES
Yes.

LIONEL
And you pressured him. My father is dead because of men like you!

MR. JAMES

On the contrary, Mr. Leonard.
Determined souls need very little
encouragement.

LIONEL

What do you want from me?

Mr. James presents a laptop and places it before Lionel.

MR. JAMES

I am merely a messenger. The
question is: What did your father
want for you?

He hands Lionel a sealed DVD, places a polite hand on his shoulder, and then leaves the room. Lionel cuts the seal with his key chain blade and slots in the DVD.

The video boots up, and on the screen appears Inspector Leonard, seated in his study at their family home.

ON LAP TOP SCREEN -

INSPECTOR LEONARD

Lionel, my son. If you're watching this, then I have failed my country and our family. Please forgive me for what I'm about to ask of you but know that I have no other choice. *Moriti Mokhatlo* - The Shadow Syndicate is as real and far-reaching as I feared. I was at last able to unmask the man behind the curtain. Our own minister of intelligence.

INSERT CUT: Minister Masana greets Lionel at the funeral.

Lionel slams his fist on the desk -

LIONEL

No!

INSPECTOR LEONARD

This man is ambitious beyond reason. *amaPhoko* is his lead enforcer. My unit confiscated millions in cash from their drug and arms trade, but the force is so corrupt, I never turned it into evidence.

(MORE)

INSPECTOR LEONARD (CONT'D)

The Fox has eyes everywhere. The money and sensitive dossiers, implicating high-ranking government officials, are kept in a private lockbox at ITB in Sandton. Nobody knows, not even Jax, for her protection, for your mother's. *Your touch. Your foresight.* Only you can access it. Forgive me, son, for charging you with this responsibility. When the time is right, I trust you'll know what to do. Whatever your decision, whatever path you choose, know that I'll always be proud of you. You are a Leonard. You are a Lion-Heart.

He extends his arm and stops the recording - SNOW.

Lionel toys with his emotions - Then -

A LIGHTBULB MOMENT - It is all clear to him now.

Decisively he hits the laptop - The DVD pops out.

He grabs the spinning disc, rises and hasten to the door. He crushes the disc and without looking, tosses it aside.

CLOSE ON: The broken DVD hits the trash can.

CLOSE ON: The door swings shut.

EXT. RICHMOND BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Lionel walks down the steps with meaning. The black café racer is still parked out front. He tosses his keys to the Homeless Man -

LIONEL
Unleaded...

The Homeless Man can only smile.

Lionel walks down the road as the amazed Homeless Man inspects his fancy new motorcycle.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL RAILWAY YARD - DAY

Lionel walks on the tracks, typing a text message -

ON CELLPHONE SCREEN: SEND TO - "Mama"

He removes battery and sim, crushes it and tosses everything. He tightens his BIKER JACKET, starts chasing a moving train and jumps into an open car.

INT. TRAIN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Lionel sits on the floor, resting against pallets of wrapped boxes. He's eyes close and we -

MOVE IN ON: The GREEN & YELLOW OVAL GEMSTONE with a WHITE STREAK through the centre - Resembling a CAT'S EYE - Hanging off the leather thong around Lionel's neck.

CUT TO:

-- REPEAT AS IN THE BEGINNING --

EXT. INDUSTRIAL TRUCKING YARD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

BANG! BANG! The FLASH-BANG-SMOKE GRENADES explode.

REVERSE ANGLE, AT THE CAR: Through the smoke and the dark, the dark Running Man resolves as he VAULTS over the car roof.

BOOM! - The container lock blows.

His MASSIVE DARK ARMS rip open the container doors.

MOVING IN: On the FRIGHTED AFRICAN CHILDREN in raggedy clothes with tearing eyes, whose gaze locks onto the -

REVERSE ANGLE, MOVING IN ON: The GREEN & YELLOW OVAL GEMSTONE with a WHITE STREAK through the centre - Resembling a CAT'S EYE - Set center-chest inside the TORSO ARMOR of the dark Running Man -

The African dark avenger we will come to know as DARK LION.

CUT TO BLACK:

ROLL CREDITS

END OF EPISODE 1