

JESSE KEETER CINEMATICS SAMPLE

HANDSOME DARK 1 - COMPANIONABLE TOUGH TALK

SETTING: Space western, a planet at the edge of civilization. ROOK and DOC are exterminators sent to take care of bugs (think Starship Troopers) that threaten fledgeling settlements. ROOK is in his 20's, new to the job, eager to "do the right thing". DOC is in his early 40's, a synth addict, beaten down by life and struggling to get through the day. But he's a capable doctor with a kind heart.

EXT. SUNRISE - ROOFTOP OVERLOOKING ARTIST CITY

End of watch, Rook sits in a beat up lawn chair lost in thought. A ladder scrapes against the shingles.

ROOK
Doc?

DOC
Of course.

Doc climbs onto the roof, eyes thick with sleep, wearing a wrinkled uniform from yesterday's patrol.

DOC (CONT'D)
You awake?

ROOK
Yup.

DOC
Well, I'm here now.

ROOK
Didn't you shower any? Or'd you sleep in that uniform?

DOC
You better knock it off.

ROOK
Knock what?

DOC
Pesterin' me about this shit like M. Grey. She does it in front of you, puts it in your head like its expected. Well, it aint.

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

She gets away with it cuz she saved my life a few too many times, so she can pretty much say whatever she wants. But not you. You're new, and it's me who should be pestering you. So cram that shit and leave me alone.

ROOK

(sincere)

How you feelin' now that you got a little rest?

DOC

You're a pain, aint ya?

ROOK

Better?

DOC

A little.

(beat)

What I got don't pass easy. I pretty much got it till I don't. Y'all can make me eat and drink a lot of water, but until I get better, I aint better. Skin feels too tight, too hot, and too wet. My god damn eyes are gonna burst out my face and my teeth hurt. My teeth. So am I better? Fuck you.

Doc looks around the rooftop and the small "camp" Rook made.

DOC (CONT'D)

Got any of that coffee left?

HANDSOME DARK 2 - EMERGENCY SITUATION BANTER

CAP (captain) is in her late 30's, and a good and honorable leader. M. Grey is in her early 30's, a bit of a fire cracker, though plenty confident and tough as nails. Doc and Rook are the same as the previous scene.

EXT. NIGHT - ARTIST CITY

Cap and M. Grey hurry down the street, carrying a MAN between them. MAN is covered in blood, still bleeding from a nasty wound in his thigh. All three of them are covered in the bug goop of a recent, near fatal, battle. M. Grey keeps her shotgun ready.

Doc stumbles into view, out of breath. He's just fallen off a roof and still recovering.

CAP
Where have you been?

DOC
I... up there...

He turns to point at the rooftops, but there's no time to explain, and he gives up.

DOC (CONT'D)
I don't know where we are. How far
to base?

CAP
Come on now. Follow me.

She and M. Grey haven't stopped, they turn a corner. Doc jogs to catch up.

M. GREY
What'd you shit yourself?

DOC
I think a little, yeah.

M. GREY
Good gravy. Come on, you
degenerate. Maybe you can keep this
townie from dying.

INT. EXTERMINATOR BASE - CONTINUOUS

An old western house converted into a field office. The MAN is propped up on an operating table in a medical cubicle that's been set up in the kitchen. A deep wound in his leg, still bleeding.

Doc works fast, preps a side cart with the necessities. He cuts open the man's bloody pants, pours antiseptic over the wound, then sets about with the needle and wire.

CAP
What are you doing?

DOC
This may need some staples, but I
gotta narrow the gap first. We're
lucky it missed the bone. Knicked a
couple arteries though.

DOC stitches with expert hands. The man screams.

CAP
No, man. Give him something. He's
lyin' here in pain.

DOC
I don't have any.

This is the conversation Doc doesn't wanna have right now. He picks up a soldering iron and clicks it to life, keeping focused on the task at hand.

CAP
What did you say?

DOC
I dont have anything to give him.

Doc prepares to cauterize the wound, but Cap grabs his wrist. She pulls him into a "private" conference a few feet outside the cubicle, then yanks the curtain closed. Doc doesn't wanna speak, but Cap stares him down.

DOC (CONT'D)
I... I left all the good stuff in
the Anvil.

Cap is furious but she waits for him to go on.

DOC (CONT'D)
I needed to clean up, I knew if I,
if we had the dope here. If, if it
was in reach, I.. wouldn't be able
to... I wouldn't stay...

CAP
You're a damn fool, doc. This mans
in pain might could kill him. And
that's on you now.

DOC
I got under it. Was afraid I
wouldn't get out from it otherwise.
I want to be clean. Wan't sure I
could. I... I'm sorry.

CAP
You keep this man alive. You don't
have no choice now.

DOC
Yes ma'am.

CAP

(to the room)

Rook. M. Grey. There's gotta be some kind of doctor around here. Midwife or veterinarian or somethin. Find 'em, fast, and see if they got any dope.

M. GREY AND ROOK

Gaga.

They take off. Doc opens the curtain back up. MAN is pale and bloody, shaking with fear and shock.

MAN

Am I... am I gonna die?

DOC

You better not.

Doc scoops up the soldering iron and gets back to work.

MURDOC 1 - BEGRUDGING LOVERS

SETTING: War torn city, Industrial Occult Noir. Murdoc, late 30's, a detective and con man. Ezekiel, late 30's, Murdoc's ex-lover, sent to find him. When they were younger, Murdoc betrayed Ezekiel and they've never quite resolved their issues, despite years of on-again/off-again behavior.

INT. NIGHT - COLD INN - MURDOC'S ROOM

EZEKIEL sits in a chair by the window. MURDOC stands nearby, looking over the city. No electricity in the room, only moonlight.

EZEKIEL

You've been to the quarantine.
You've seen firsthand what they're doing to people like you-

MURDOC

People like us.

EZEKIEL

They'll hang you, Murdoc, when they find you've betrayed them. You're a sheep in wolves clothing. Shouldn't you be terrified? They might be on their way, right now, ready to break down this door, and you'd never know for looking at you.

MURDOC
You get used to it.
(beat)
I should apologize.

EZEKIEL
If only you knew where to begin.

Ezekiel moves to stand behind Murdoc. A moment of danger, but it passes. His hand slithers up under Murdoc's tunic, presses into his chest. MURDOC settles back into him, an old habit.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I hate you.

MURDOC
I know.

EZEKIEL
This isn't a choice, you understand?

MURDOC
I do.

EZEKIEL
I'm helpless to it. I see you and I want to rip the world apart.
(kisses Murdoc's neck)
I'm here because she sent me.

MURDOC
Okay.

EZEKIEL
I'm here, inside this room, because she sent me. I need you to understand that. I want nothing to do with you.

Ezekiel's teeth close on muscle, sucking flesh.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)
I try to forget you.

He unbuckles Murdoc's belt.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)
I try to forget that I hate you.

MURDOC 2 - INTERROGATION SCENE

SETTING: Murdoc needs to solve a murder, and he's close. He suspects Sokolov (50's, doctor, tall and strong) a friend and colleague, who's been "assisting" with the forensics. Unfortunately, Murdoc was arrested before he could prove anything. Sokolov now prepares to interrogate Murdoc. Grimes is Murdoc's partner, forced to watch the interrogation. She doesn't want to believe Murdoc is guilty.

INT. NIGHT - HOSPITAL BASEMENT - SOKOLOV'S PRIVATE STUDY

Bookshelves, a prominent display of human organs preserved in oil, bleached bones, and antique surgical equipment.

SOKOLOV prepares for surgery. MURDOC is bound to a stainless-steel operating table, leather straps at his wrists, ankles, torso, and forehead, the only thing he can move is his mouth. Despite this, his tone is casual.

MURDOC

Have you made any progress with our investigation, doctor?"

SOKOLOV

The very reason I wished to catch up.

MURDOC

When last we spoke you had me sign over the evidence.

GRIMES

My personal equipment is far more reliable... as you can see.

Grimes, nearby, is cuffed, at wrist and ankle, to a metal chair.

GRIMES (CONT'D)

Doctor, please, if you've found something to prove Murdoc is innocent-

SOKOLOV

Murdoc isn't to blame for the murders. But we both know he's far from innocent.

Sokolov snaps a latex glove at his wrist.

SOKOLOV (CONT'D)

I'd mentioned in my report that some of the victim's organs were missing. The adrenal and pineal glands. Are you familiar?"

GRIMES

Adrenaline.

SOKOLOV

Yes, Lieutenant. Ancient civilizations would feed raw adrenal glands to their warriors before a battle. The effects are said to be quite extraordinary. With enough adrenaline the body can endure great hardships and on rare occasions, cheat death.

MURDOC

Fascinating. The other gland, though...?

SOKOLOV

Pineal.

(taps his skull)

Deep within the folds of the brain. At the border where the hemispheres meet, there's a tiny gland said to be the seat of one's soul. For centuries the black market offered a variety of substances derived from a pineal gland, substances far more powerful than their synthetic competitors. Do try to lay still.

Sokolov tightens the STRAP over Murdoc's forehead.

SOKOLOV (CONT'D)

(to Grimes)

I take it you don't agree with the Major's assessment. Despite everything you've seen, you trust this man?

Grimes stays silent. Sokolov turns over a cloth on the side table to reveal a saw, a metal tourniquet, and two large hypodermic needles filled with an inky black fluid. Sokolov scoops one up and smiles. Slight pressure and a squirt from the tip of the needle.

SOKOLOV (CONT'D)

Soon we'll have the facts. At that time, belief will matter very little. The interrogation begins now.

Sokolov sticks the needle in Murdoc's arm. A dribble of ink leaks out when he removes the needle. Murdoc groans and reels. Whatever it is comes on quick.

GRIMES

You're hurting him.

SOKOLOV

No more than necessary.

(beat)

We discovered this medicine on accident, you know? We'd been treating a young woman, an Everbent, who was allergic to the very Ever anchored to her being. An interesting dilemma. As she matured, and her abilities grew more and more unstable, her body began to reject those parts of her where it nested.

(he taps his temple, then his chest)

We kept her alive as long as we could. Spared no expense. In the end, there was nothing we could do. Her body tore itself apart. Using her blood, her bone marrow, several of her organs, I was able to isolate the genetic defect which sought out each of those nests and severed them. What you're seeing here is the result of years of research.

Murdoc's arm spasms. He thrashes against his binds. He screams as black liquid sputters out the injection point.

GRIMES

You're killing him!

SOKOLOV

Likely not. Please try and relax, Lieutenant. I wouldn't want you to get upset.

Murdoc's arm reacts to the serum. A bruise puckers around his wrist. The skin ruptures, droplets of it hitting the floor.

It isn't just pain, though, the serum effects his ability to discern reality.

SOKOLOV (CONT'D)
Murdoc? Can you hear me?

The scene bends into an unpleasant acid trip. Sokolov's voice sounds far away. Movement trails. Colors invert.

SOKOLOV (CONT'D)
I'm going to ask you some questions now.

MURDOC
I can see it...

Murdoc vomits, filling his throat until he's choking. Without missing a beat the doctor plunges a finger into his mouth to clear it, then wipes his hand on Murdoc's tunic.

SOKOLOV
Fascinating. Now Murdoc?

MURDOC
(dazed)
Yeth... nahs inthurgen.

As Sokolov speaks, the hallucinations bend to his will. Murdoc is under his control now.

SOKOLOV
Never mind that. You're latching onto recent memories to anchor your consciousness. This can be stressful. I suggest letting go. You have no present brain. You're a collection of a collection of memories, inherent and invented. You need only define yourself to break free from this void. Now... tell me who you really are.