

B U I L D A S H I P

An Original Short

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Looking out over Bushwick in Brooklyn, New York. PAN to look through a window on Lucas and Celia.

CELIA (23) lays head at the end of the bed. Long black hair like shinning video tape, hangs over.

LUCAS (V.O.)
It was the winter of that renter's strike
in Brooklyn. When three unemployables
became part-time revolutionaries.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CU: Celia lighting a cigarette from a Zippo.

LUCAS (V.O.)
And the woman who ruined everything.

LUCAS (25) and Celia lay in bed. Smoking cigarettes.

Lucas is gaunt, his body like a mattress leaning against a telephone pole.

Celia is a Spanish fly. Far too beautiful to be in this apartment with this man. She speaks with a slight accent.

All that is illuminated is the orange glow on their faces from the bright cherry during drags.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Celia, how much do you love me?

CELIA
Ah, I love you...like the feeling of
spotting a fine automobile.

LUCAS
If I was in a horrible accident and was
burned over my entire body...

CELIA
Why would you say that right now...as we
lay here pleased with our night?

LUCAS
I don't know. It's just a question people
in love ask each other.

(beat)
Anyway, the question is.
(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)
 Would you still love me if I was a burnt
 disgusting, unrecognizable abomination
 with no arms and legs and just a retching
 screaming hole for a mouth?

Grossed out face, she thinks about it.

CELIA
 No, I'm sorry. I would stop loving you.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE: "BUILD A SHIP"

FADE IN:

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The radiator HISSES and PINGS. The radio is on.

Celia readies herself to leave the house. She's in a hurry.

Lucas sits shirtless on the computer, Craig's List. Posts an ad for a furniture sale.

She peers over his shoulder.

CELIA
 Looking for a new job?

LUCAS
 I'm tossing cargo, baby. The bookshelf
 alone will keep us in smokes for a few
 weeks.

CELIA
 So you're not looking at all?

Celia walks to the front door.

LUCAS
 I can't waste my precious youth. There's
 a better way.

Celia comes back.

CELIA
 Devote your body to science?

She drops a bill envelope on his desk. Rent bill.

Lucas ignores her. She slings a big purse over her shoulder, about to leave.

LUCAS

Hey.

She turns. He holds out his arm. She walks back and takes his hand.

CELIA

I've got to go to work.

He tries to unbutton her pants.

LUCAS

Why do you even show up. It's my first day off. You've been working there for free.

CELIA

They'll pay me when I am licensed. I have to go, I will see you tonight.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Three men sit atop their Brooklyn roof. They've build a small bonfire in a fire-ring. A can of gas nearby.

They are Lucas,

RAPHAEL (23), wild-eyed Puerto-Rican with a baby's smile and

THEO (24), good looking, dark Italian kid. He looks as though it'd be difficult to give him a hug.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Everyone I know is broke.

RAPHAEL

What day is it?

THEO

The twenty-ninth.

RAPHAEL

Rent's due.

An overall sigh of "fuck me" resonates.

LUCAS (V.O.)

But we've all got our little scams.

MUSIC STARTS:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Raphael and Lucas hang at the bar.

Across the room, on a couch, with her full pint, sits JANET (22), young, pretty, hipster. Obviously in the wrong bar.

Raphael talks to Lucas orders drinks, while he tries to catch her eye.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Raphael falls in love easily. But only
with them sweet rich girls.

Janet finds Raphael. And instantly they're connected at the eyes.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They love him back, maybe because it
drives their parents crazy.

Raphael orders a whiskey on the rocks. Keeps up with whatever Lucas is saying and toasts to the young stranger across the room.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And this cheap love is very profitable.

She smiles and toasts back.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Lucas reaches for a cigarette from Raphael. He lites it off the fire and stands.

LUCAS
I don't have rent. Do you? You?

RAPHAEL
I think I can get my share together.

THEO
Yeah, if you ask real nice.
(to Lucas)
And I can't believe you quit your job.
You had a desk job.

LUCAS
I'll never work hard enough to live
happy. The economics make a man sick.
Twelve hours a day. No clock. I never saw
Celia. It was like all I did was work,
sleep and regret.

RAPHAEL
Don't forget complain.

THEO
If you really need the money, come with
me tomorrow. I'm working Wall Street
again. You can probably scrape rent.

Lucas considers this.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Theo's different. He's a thief. Takes
from the rich and gives to himself. My
favorite was laptops from men's rooms.

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM STALL - DAY

A BUSINESS SUIT (20's) sits to take a mean shit. Lays his
case on the ground next to his feet.

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY

Theo fixes his hair in a suit, right outside the stall.

LUCAS (V.O.)
He'd wait til they were mid-ceremony
then--

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM STALL - DAY

A hand reaches in and snags the case. The Suit panics.
Can't stand now.

Theo strolls out the door like he's the boss's son.

LUCAS (V.O.)
I mean what are they gonna do but finish
their business?

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Theo pulls a new pack of cigarettes from his pocket.
Packs them.

THEO
(to Lucas)
You gotta come down to our place, check
out the D-V-D players I got out the back
of that Arab discount store.

LUCAS
You got any movies?

THEO
Nah, I guess they were on a different
truck.

Lights his cigarette off a whole book of matches. Throws the book at the fire.

LUCAS
Christ Theo man! Stealing from the
working stiff.

Theo looks at him like "what do you want from me?"

LUCAS (CONT'D)
They're hit with the same whip.

THEO
Hey, they've got more than *me*.

RAPHAEL
(to Theo)
No, he's right man. Come on, let's go
home and sell our shit on the net.

LUCAS
Nothing I wouldn't throw in the river.

Lucas walks to the edge of the roof. Twinkling Babylonian skyline of New York City in the distance.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Look around man. They don't want us here.
They already took Manhattan. They're
coming for Brooklyn next.

THEO
Who the fuck is "they?"

LUCAS
Fuck, I donno. The fucking lords of the
fucking land. There's nowhere to live on
slave's wages in Rome. They cut the
apartments up, turn one apartment into
three.

THEO
Rent weighing on you bro? They've been
doing that for years.

RAPHAEL
Yeah. You can't sustain this idealism
bro. You still got a woman to think
about. Remember your woman, five-two,
hundred and fifteen reasons to have cash
in your pocket.

THEO
Where *is* your woman this evening?

Lucas walks down the roof access stairs.

LUCAS
Fuck you both.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD DELI - NIGHT

Celia, huge purse on her shoulder, browses the shelves.
Makes fake eyes at the COUNTER GUY (30's).

Then looks lovingly at the beer freezer.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Celia, she's my responsibility. Not to
say she couldn't take care of herself.
She swipes too. Little things.

CUT TO:

Celia flirts with the Counter Guy. Smiling, touching her
hair. Slipping off her shoe and putting it back on.

He sees her slip Reeses Pieces candy into her bag and
ignores it.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Celia and Lucas sit on the bed. They share a sandwich on
two paper towels.

Celia pulls the candy bag from behind her back, gives
them to Lucas. He's so happy.

LUCAS (V.O.)
And we were in love. That's all it was.

FADE OUT:

LUCAS (V.O) (CONT'D)
The way it went down was real simple.

INT. HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Celia walks in the apartment building. She's tired and
sad.

TRACK with her as she passes light blue eviction notice
after notice.

INT. BAR - DAY

Lucas and Raphael drink.

LUCAS
How many people do we know in the building?

RAPHAEL
Allofem.

LUCAS
What if we all don't pay. We strike. Take em to court. They average ninety days to get a ruling. If we lose that's still winter. That's winter! But if *nobody* fucking pays, I mean not a dime, then the landlord can't pay the bank and the man forecloses on the man.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
We get squatter's rights. Six months. People can get back on their feet. Pay off some shit. Get perspective. That or we win and he lowers rent to a livable level. No shit.

RAPHAEL
No shit.

LUCAS
No shit. Celia's taking the broker's exam. All the rules are in the prep book.

INT. HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Celia reaches her door. A notice hangs there too. She grabs the eviction notice off the door.

INT. BAR - DAY

RAPHAEL
What about him forcing us out? Coming in, putting our shit in the street.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Lucas runs up the stairs. Holds an empty pillowcase.

CUT TO:

Raphael runs down the stairs. Holds a pillow case full of...

THEO (V.O.)
Door knobs.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Lucas and Raphael stare at Theo. They do so until Theo explains himself.

THEO
You switch keys and doorknobs. The
landlord don't know which key is for
which lock.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Celia puts her bag down. PUSH IN on the radiator. PINGS.
HISS. Slowly, it stops HISSING and PINGING. She shivers.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The three men sit around the bonfire. But there are more
people around them now.

LUCAS (V.O.)
It's amazing how many people just need
something to believe in.

Their Neighbors huddle in blankets. They pass the pillow
case around the fire. Talk and laugh.

They each pull a door knob/key set out of the bag and
pass it on.

Lucas stands. He's wearing a CBGB's t-shirt under his
jacket.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
(nervous, quiet)
We-we're here because.

Lucas can't be heard. He looks to Theo and Raphael.

THEO
Everybody! Hey, Shut up! We gotta tell
you something.

LUCAS
We're here. Up on this roof, around this
fire we built because it's too fucking
cold down there.

Theo and Raphael walk among the crowd with their hands in
their pockets.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Our slumlord has decided to not repair
the suddenly broken furnace before we
bring him to court. This is a scare
tactic and it's illegal.
(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)

But the pressure is on us. He doesn't live here. We do. And we need to support each other. Most of us have a little extra money this month.

NEIGHBOR GIRL

(throws up arms)

Oww!

LUCAS

Fuck yes! Now, I recommend spending some of that money on space heaters and blankets. Share with your neighbors. Ask for help when you need it. Be-because that's the only way we can win this, you know? I don't know.

(silence)

Um, when I was a kid, there was a punk club on Bowery. Everybody in the neighborhood wanted in. We'd only heard about it. We wasn't allowed in. But fuck that, I wanted in. So one night, I walked in and pretended to be lost. The owner let me in to use the bathroom. Called the cops or whoever, I ran off before they got there. A perfect day for an eight-year-old. A year ago the landlord of that legendary club raised the rent under no regulation. They couldn't pay and a couple months ago, it closed down forever. I'm sure it's in the process of becoming a Starbucks or some shit as soulless. Makes me sad. This progress. When my parents were my age they could pay rent in the West Village on a week's tips. No shit. I'm tired of being nostalgic. I want my fucking city back. I want a city I wasn't even born early enough to remember. And that kind of want don't come with doing what they tell you to do. Which is the real reason we're all here. We are sick of doing whatever they fucking tell us we gotta do. The M-T-A cooks its books, we pay more to ride the subway. They even conduct warrantless searches before you're allowed on. We allow it. One-hundred percent tax on cigarettes and they don't even let us smoke in bars? Not even a little bitching. Rudy Giuliani got rid of rent control in ninety-seven while living in Gracie Mansion rent fucking free. How old were you ten years ago? Old enough to do anything about it? Probably not. A better question is, *would* you have done anything? See, apathy is inherited. Those who come after us will pay for shit we don't do now.

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Our parents let Manhattan go to the
yuppies before we had a say, but
Brooklyn, Brooklyn is ours to lose.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucas sits awake in bed. Types into his computer. The
bookshelf and most of the books are gone.

Faint FOOTSTEPS are heard outside the door.

Celia enters. Goes straight to the bathroom. SOUNDS of
peeing.

LUCAS (V.O.)
I can always tell when you've been
drinking. You were doing so well.

Lucas submits a posting for a:

"Queen Sized Bed - \$50." and a

"Laptop Computer - \$200."

CELIA
Muñeco?

Lucas doesn't say anything. Celia finishes peeing.
Exits bathroom.

LUCAS
Where were you tonight? We had a meeting.

CELIA
Why'd you have to quit your job?

LUCAS
I told you why. Just lay down, you're
drunk.

CELIA
No. I'm not. Lucas, you can't quit your
job. You have to go back.

LUCAS
I can't go back. I don't want to. What's
the matter with you?

CELIA
We can't even afford to eat. Where is
the bookshelf?

LUCAS
I sold it. You're being ridiculous.

CELIA

No, I'm not. You can't sell everything we own, Lucas for cigarettes!

LUCAS

We're going to be fine. As soon as you're hired the money'll come in. Remember? I'm taking care of the rent.

CELIA

Lets stop. Get jobs. I'll waitress. I don't care.

LUCAS

I thought you wanted to be a broker.

CELIA

I changed my mind.

LUCAS

How'd you do on the exam?

She climbs on him. He hugs her.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

You'll get it next time.

CELIA

You've got to promise me. Promise, you won't sell our bed.

LUCAS

I promise.

They kiss sweetly. A lover's pact.

CELIA

Are you disappointed in me?

LUCAS

No.

CELIA

Do you love me?

LUCAS

Ah, I love you...like a new mother loves her silence.

He holds her.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And maybe by now Celia had already stopped loving me.

EXT. STREET IN BUSHWICK - NIGHT

Raphael and Lucas walk up to their building holding six packs.

3 doors slam on a Lincoln Towne Car. 2 big Thugs and one smaller man, CARMINE walk across the street.

Carmines (40's) chews a toothpick.

RAPHAEL

You're in the wrong neighborhood.

CARMINE

You have a big mouth. And big mouths are unattractive on little men.

RAPHAEL

You saying you're attracted to me, Palooka?

CARMINE

Hey! Stupid child! You signed a lease. A binding contract--

LUCAS

We're taking a stand against all the landlords. And when we're heard--

CARMINE

(interrupts with laughs)

Where are we?

(to his boys)

Did we drive to far and end up in Canada?

RAPHAEL

What's your point you rambling old bastard? This isn't your fight. You're a hired man.

CARMINE

Do you have a job? Something you're good at?

RAPHAEL

(simultaneously with above.)

Why don't you go home? See your family.

CARMINE

I want you to know something about my employer, your landlord. He doesn't ask 'how.' He doesn't care how I do my job. So if you want to keep running your mouth to someone you just met, you better be completely sure that man doesn't know too much about you... too much about your girlfriend.

(MORE)

CARMINE (CONT'D)

Things like where she sleeps, where she goes when she leaves her apartment. You'd better be completely, one-hundred percent pos-i-tive, that this man doesn't take anything personally. Or, if he does, that he isn't as good at his job as I am.

(beat)

This political stand you're hell bent on making. You may want to sit, before I put you down.

INT. THEO & RAPHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

These two got the place. Electronics, furniture. Especially the coffee table upon which sits a mirror and a gram of coke.

Celia breaks it up with a Blockbuster card. Does a line.

THEO

I told you bro. They give the rest of us guineas a bad name. What I told Raph the other day when his punk ass moved out.

LUCAS

(takes his turn with the coke)

You moved out?

RAPHAEL

I moved in with Janet. You know, for a while.

LUCAS

You can't abandon the resistance bro.

RAPHAEL

I'm not abandoning shit. I'm cold. All her utilities are current.

THEO

(takes his turn, violent snort)

I can't get this.

Hands the straw to Celia. Puts a little on his gums.

THEO (CONT'D)

I think I'm getting a cold. I'm gonna get a hook on some ceramic heaters. Raphael won't hear me.

RAPHAEL

Those are dangerous! They could start a fire with all this old wiring.

Theo cracks a beer and sets it down for Celia. Lucas doesn't like this.

THEO
You want one?

LUCAS
Not tonight. It is cold as hell in here. I think it's warmer in our place upstairs. Come on baby, you wanna go to bed?

THEO
Just like my man. You just did my coke. You gotta hang out.

LUCAS
I'm not feeling it. I've got to think. Come on Baby, finish that one upstairs.

CELIA
No, I'm gonna hang out for a while. You don't have to stay if you don't want to.

Lucas gets up. Looks at Raphael. Leaves.

CELIA (CONT'D)
Do you have any cards?

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Lucas wakes up. Alone. Rolls over.

Knock on the door. Lucas opens it. It's Raphael.

RAPHAEL
Rise and fucking shine! We've gotta put on our game face for the D-H-C-R today. Get somebody pissed off about the heat. Everybody needs something to believe in. Even lost causes.

LUCAS
Celia didn't come home last night.

RAPHAEL
She's probably just passed out on the couch upstairs.

LUCAS
You don't know?

RAPHAEL
Nope. I left a little after you. Went back to Janet's. It was lame after you left. Did all the coke.

(MORE)

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)
Played guitar, played cards. You know.
Dude, where's your clothes?

LUCAS
(he doesn't care)
I don't know.

Raphael turns him around.

RAPHAEL
Bro! We gotta make our moves! The city:
She's the only girl we need to worry
about right now. And she needs taking
care of.
(Lucas mumbles)
What'd you say?

LUCAS
Our girl's really high-maintenance.

RAPHAEL
Yeah well, you love her anyway.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucas sits in the window and smokes. Celia enters.

CELIA
Stop smoking and close that window. It's
freezing.

Lucas throws the cigarette out. Shuts the window. Walks
across the room. All that's left is their bed.

LUCAS
Where've you been?

CELIA
I'm not sleeping here. It's too cold. I
will freeze.

LUCAS
I can borrow blankets from somewhere.
Build you a fire upstairs.

CELIA
I want my own blankets. We had good
blankets. I'm staying with a friend
tonight.

She starts to shove clothes into a bag.

LUCAS
We're doing a demonstration tomorrow.
Going to city hall. I'd like it if you
came.

Celia doesn't say shit.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
I know you're busy with everything. But
you've never even come...You would've
been so proud of me these past few weeks.

CELIA
I'm not in your army Lucas. I never
wanted to be.

She opens the door to leave. He blocks the door.

LUCAS
You don't have to be anything. You're my
girl, you're supposed to believe in me.

Celia stands silent. She can't look at him but doesn't
know what to do.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Don't go. I can keep you warm.

He can see that she's scared. He lets the door open.
She leaves. Starts down the stairs.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Where are you going, Celia? You don't
have any girl friends in 7-1-8.

Follows her down the stairs. Out of the building.

EXT. STREET IN BUSHWICK - NIGHT

LUCAS
I paid for both of us when you wanted to
do the real estate thing. I supported you
when you wanted to quit drinking. I even
quit my job to help you.

Turns around and walks back.

CELIA
No. Not for me. For you! You quit
because you were miserable making money
and living our happy little life
together. With little joys like heat and
wine. You wanted something bigger.
Something meaningful. Well now you have
it. This is big Lucas. You're finally as
crooked as your friends. Who are too good
to you for going along with this stupid,
stunt. And now you're all working twice
as hard, just to keep the heat on and
stay in a building no one wants you in.

(MORE)

CELIA (CONT'D)
I mean, is this what you meant by living
free in New York? I think the rest of us
are fine paying what we have to pay.

She turns to walk away.

LUCAS
(stunned)
I've paid for our entire relationship.

She turns around, slowly walks back to him and kisses him
on the cheek.

CELIA
Thank you.

She walks off.

INT. PARK SLOPE BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lucas knocks on the door. Janet answers.

LUCAS
Is Raphael around?

JANET
He hasn't come home yet. You're Lucas
right?

LUCAS
(edge of tears)
Really? Uh damn. I mean.

JANET
Is there anything I can do?

LUCAS
(crying)
I just need a place to chill, regroup,
focus on the next step.

JANET
Hey. Seriously, I think he'll be home
soon. Um.

EXT. STREET IN PARK SLOPE - NIGHT

Raphael exits a Chinese take-out place. Picks from his
Styrofoam dinner.

Notices the Black Lincoln trailing slowly behind him.

Slows down at the entrance to a building. Thinks better
of it, walks on by, rounds a corner.

The car catches up. Carmine rolls down his window.

RAPHAEL

You ladies gonna sit there all night or
you gonna ask me to dance?

The car pulls ahead of him, stops. Doors open.

INT. PARK SLOPE BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lucas and Janet sit against the wall.

JANET

Raph always talks about you. How excited
he is about your ideas. He thinks you're
a genius.

LUCAS

I'm an idiot. We're all idiots for
thinking people stay together for any but
the reasons of animals.

JANET

No, he told me about what you did.
Quitting your job, trying to set up a
movement, get people excited about
something. It was a good idea. But I'm
mean, how long can anyone be idealistic
in this city?

Lucas stares at her.

LUCAS

What do you mean was?

EXT. STREET IN PARK SLOPE - NIGHT

Raphael walks backwards, still eating.

CARMINE

As you get older you learn that everyone
would rather be safe than be happy.

RAPHAEL

You're walking the wrong guy backwards.
I don't even live there any--

CARMINE

(shakes his hand)
Eh, eh. We're not here to persuade you.
I'm not even on the clock.

They are about to charge.

RAPHAEL

Well, listen.

(beat)

I'm not buying any cookies either.

Raphael tosses his Chinese food at Carmine. And runs like hell.

They catch up with him and beat him into the sidewalk. Then grab him and drag him screaming and crying into the car.

LUCAS (V.O.)

He never said what really happened that night. But if someone was to tell the story of how I got the shit kicked out of me, I'd want to be crackin' jokes.

INT. PARK SLOPE BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lucas stares at Janet, confused.

JANET

(nervous)

You, you know the strike you guys tried. You two were brave to hold out til the end.

LUCAS

Who two?

JANET

You and your girlfriend. How is she by the way?

Lucas turns to her and grabs her arms something ferocious.

LUCAS

What the fuck are you talking about?!

Janet jerks away. Stands up.

JANET

Get off me! You need a nap. Raph told me a couple nights ago. Your neighbors making deals with the landlord. They don't break their lease if they agree to make payments on the rent they owe.

LUCAS

Payments? Now they're in debt too? Ah GOD DAMNIT! Tell, tell Raphael that he's already forgiven for not telling me sooner.

Walks down the stairs.

JANET
What are you going to do now?

LUCAS
(looking up)
Gonna do what good Captains do. Tell our
boy that New York is a city on fire.
That we are slaves if we are not Caesar.

Exits building.

JANET
(confused)
So, I'll tell him you came by.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucas lays on the ground. The bed is gone. Breath
chimney's from his mouth.

He listens to a basketball game on the radio and cuts
slices of cheese off a big hand sized hunk.

That radio and that knife are his last possessions.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Celia walks back up the stairs. Cautiously, quietly.
Knocks on a door. Waits.

Theo answers. Looks congested and tired. Stereo blasting.

She steps inside.

CELIA
I remembered that song I couldn't think
of last night. What are you sick?

Door shuts.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucas hears stomping on the stairs. Checks the peephole.

POV THROUGH PEEPHOLE: BUILDING HALLWAY

Carmine and his Thugs trudge up the stairs. They're
imposing, thick fuckers. Smelly looks on their faces.

LUCAS (V.O.)
They'd been watching, and they knew I was
alone. I wasn't worried.

Lucas wide-eyed. Obviously worried. Turns off the radio.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They'd have to try every fucking key in the world to get to mine.

CARMINE
We know you're in there, Lucas. You don't want us coming in. What would the neighbors think?

Lucas sits against the door. Swallows.

LUCAS
(cracks)
You...
(breathes, yelling)
You know you guys should really get organized--

CARMINE
Shut up, you fucking bum! No commie talk. This bull-shit con is going to end tonight.

LUCAS
I have no doubt it will. But you see unfortunately I'm holding a steak knife. And I have no doubt that when you break down this door, your boss's property, you'll come in and hurt me to make your point. But you see, I have nothing to lose anymore and I swear to God, the first one in this door I'm taking with me. The rest of you may beat me to death. But I'll make that my last move.
(pause)
Now you all better organize and decide who's coming in first.

POV THROUGH PEEPHOLE: BUILD HALLWAY

The 3 men back away from the door. Consider. They whisper to each other.

Lucas watches. Eats a small piece of cheese off his knife.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I figure we all work for somebody we secretly hate and these men look like fathers.

They turn around and pull out guns. Thug #1 lifts his leg. CRACK! Kicks in the door.

Dark inside. Looks around.

Lucas is out on the fire escape, climbing up.

Carmine aims. ZOOM to Lucas's legs climbing up a ladder to the roof. He runs to the window. Reaches out, can't grab him fast enough.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Tries to hoist his old body out the window.

CARMINE
I'm too pretty for this shit.

Looks up. Just as Lucas pours the can of gas over his head and all over the fire escape. Like a thick piss.

INT. THEO & RAPHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Theo is up, acting the fool. Celia laughs from her perch on the couch.

Behind him, gasoline splatters on the window. Unnoticed.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Lucas pats his pockets.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Can never find a lighter when you need one.

He pulls the upside-down gas can across the roof, spilling everywhere.

INT. LUCAS & CELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Thugs pull Carmine back inside.

CARMINE
Little bastard poured gas on me. Get this kid before he burns the building down.

The Thugs run upstairs to the roof access.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Lucas grabs a burnt up matchbook from the fire ring with one little match remaining.

INT. STAIRWELL, ROOF ACCESS - NIGHT

Lucas dumps gas down the stairs as the Thugs run up. They pull their guns.

Lucas is standing across the roof, in a puddle of gas. Holds a single burning match above his head.

They aim at him. They think about it...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN BUSHWICK - NIGHT

The Thugs quickly get into their car. Carmine wipes himself with a towel. They drive.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Lucas watch them go. He runs down the stairs.

EXT. THEO'S FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

The neighborhood in Bushwick. Below, Lucas runs out of the building into the darkness.

PAN to look in on Theo and Celia, closed window.

LUCAS (V.O.)

I think there are only two ways off this fucking island. Defeat is one. And this is a story of that worse kind of defeat.

INT. THEO & RAPHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Celia's hair fanned across Theo's chest and neck. Her left cheek rests on a sheet over his stomach.

CELIA (O.S.)

I can hear your stomach.

THEO

You warmer now?

She gives a slight smile.

CELIA

Like a baby bird.

Celia rolls off of him, taking the sheet with her. Reaches for her still-cold beer.

THEO
I need a sucking figerette.

Theo reaches for his pack of smokes.

CELIA
Don't smoke it inside please. I can't
stand to breathe it anymore.

THEO
(stands, smiling)
I can't believe you quit. You are the
reason men start.

He slips on a long robe. She watches him, smiling,
accepting the complement, then looks to her beer and
drops her smile.

He opens the window to the fire escape. Climbs out.
Steps onto wetness.

EXT. THEO'S FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Theo, cigarette between his lips, brings a Zippo up to
his mouth.

From the fire escape above him, a drip, caught in the
streetlight, drops down.

The bars on the fire escape railing wave and sway in the
fume.

INT. THEO & RAPHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CELIA
What's that smell?

CUT TO BLACK:

SOUND: Lighter. FLICK, FLICK.

THE END