

**APEX**

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INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

KEYSHAWN (30s, black), a sweet yet stoic man, rolls an OLD WOMAN (60s) in a wheelchair into a bedroom.

As he helps her into bed, it becomes apparent that the left side of her body is paralyzed. He helps put her oxygen mask on.

He shows the old woman an apparently recent ENGAGEMENT PHOTO of him and a girl on his phone. The old woman ecstatically SMACKS him with her good arm.

The old woman sleeps and he puts her damaged left arm in a more comfortable position.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The man picks up a BABY DOLL off the floor. He tucks it in with a sleeping little girl (6ish, black) who is passed out on an AIR MATTRESS.

The man briefly reads a LETTER before he throws it on a table with a PILE of other opened and unopened letters.

He gazes into the pile like somebody staring at a tsunami wave.

A VOICE (V.O.)  
(Fading in)  
Hey...wake up!

INT. CONTAINMENT ROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT

A hand SLAPS Keyshawn across his partially-masked face.

A VOICE (O.C.)  
Wake up!

Keyshawn looks up at a MAN (30s, black) staring intensely at him.

With surprising agility, Keyshawn PUNCHES the man directly in the face. Keyshawn quickly jumps out of his chair, but a HARNESS WITH CHAINS prevents him from going too far.

Keyshawn puts his hands in the air and looks up toward a catwalk.

KEYSHAWN  
He hit me first--

He sees a few armed guards, a few people wearing lab coats,  
and a few others wearing suits. They're all unconscious.

Keyshawn looks at the man who holds his face.

MAN  
That's fair I guess.

KEYSHAWN  
Who are you?

MAN  
First, what street did we live on  
as kids?

KEYSHAWN  
What?

MAN  
What street?

KEYSHAWN  
Why the fuck you need know?

MAN  
We don't have time for this.  
Street.

KEYSHAWN  
Montgomery.

The man nods.

KEYSHAWN (CONT'D)  
Why?

MAN  
It's me. Kabari.

Keyshawn glares.

KEYSHAWN  
Kabari's been dead a decade.

KABARI  
Keyshawn, I know how this is gonna  
sound, but I've been a black ops  
mercenary for the past ten years.  
I'm not dead.

KEYSHAWN

Okay. I don't care how much y'all are paying me. I ain't sign up for fucking mind games--

KABARI

Keyshawn, we need to get out of here.

Kabari starts toward him. As soon as Kabari crosses a RED SEMI-CIRCLE painted on the floor, Keyshawn's EYES colorfully illuminate. Kabari's eyes REFLECT the same color.

Suddenly, Keyshawn forcefully KICKS his leg in front of him. Kabari's LEGS mirrors the kick which causes him to throw himself on his back.

Both their eyes normalize.

KEYSHAWN

Y'all said I could quit anytime, I'm quitting now. Y'all got me fucked up.

Kabari sits up with his EYES illuminated a different color. Keyshawn's eyes now reflect Kabari's eyes.

Keyshawn forcefully CHOPS himself in the throat.

As Keyshawn recovers, Kabari relocates to the outside of the red semi-circle.

KABARI

You can't just quit. I was their first test subject, and my life's been fucked ever since. Yours is now too.

KEYSHAWN

It says in the fucking contract--

KABARI

I promise you when this place is swarmed, they're not gonna care about your damn contract.

He pulls out a KEY and starts toward Keyshawn.

KABARI (CONT'D)

We need to go now.

KEYSHAWN

I ain't going nowhere with you.

KABARI  
Please tell me you're not really  
this stupid.

KEYSHAWN  
Prove you're Kabari.

KABARI  
We don't have time--

KEYSHAWN  
No, you don't have time. It's gonna  
be clear I didn't do any of this  
shit.

KABARI  
Your forehead scar is how I knew it  
was you.

KEYSHAWN  
How did I get it?

KABARI  
I gave it to you.

KEYSHAWN  
Why?

KABARI  
Keyshawn, we--

KEYSHAWN  
Why?

Keyshawn holds.

KABARI  
I picked a fight with you.

KEYSHAWN  
Why?

KABARI  
I said you were the reason Dad  
left.

A moment.

KABARI (CONT'D)  
It wasn't true, okay?

KEYSHAWN  
It's funny 'cause you ended up  
fucking leaving.

KABARI

I'm trying to save your life--

KEYSHAWN

This trial is setting us up for life and Neurolink is gonna help Granny. You ain't doing shit.

KABARI

What's wrong with Granny?

KEYSHAWN

I can't be at three jobs at once.

KABARI

What happened?

KEYSHAWN

Stroke, years ago. Happened around the same time Jasmine was born.

KABARI

Jasmine?

KEYSHAWN

My daughter.

KABARI

I'm sorry, Keyshawn. You really have no idea how sorry I am. But that's exactly why we gotta move.

Kabari carefully starts toward Keyshawn, and Keyshawn carefully watches him.

Kabari helps Keyshawn remove the mask on his face then he starts to unlock Keyshawn's chains.

KABARI (CONT'D)

I promise we'll figure out how to get them somewhere safe, okay? I know I haven't--

The chains fall loose and Keyshawn immediately PUNCHES Kabari. Like real hard.

KEYSHAWN

Fuck you.

Kabari's eyes fill with rage and they illuminate right around the same time as Keyshawn's eyes.

Kabari and Keyshawn FIGHT. Sometimes it's just classic hand-to-hand and sometimes they use Neurolink combos. Keyshawn has a hard time keeping up at first, but he learns quickly.

Ultimately, Kabari gets the upper hand. He makes Keyshawn choke himself, and Keyshawn begins to pass out.

Kabari releases Keyshawn who coughs and recovers.

KABARI

Your trial today was to kill a death row inmate. I was brought here to contain you if things got out of hand.

KEYSHAWN

What?

KABARI

They're not trying to help you. You have to know that, right?

KEYSHAWN

You ain't never helped us neither.

KABARI

Listen, I know a way to get our Neurolinks disconnected, and we can keep Granny and Jasmine safe.

KEYSHAWN

How?

KABARI

I can explain later. It comes with risks but it's better than being slaves.

Keyshawn feels the weight of making the correct decision.

KEYSHAWN

Okay.

Suddenly, SHOUTS echo through the room as armed guards flood the space. All weapons are pointed toward Keyshawn and Kabari.

A VOICE (O.S.)

Hold your fire.

A WOMAN (40s) wearing a power suit appears.

WOMAN

Agent Kabari Braxton. I must say this is disappointing. I always genuinely liked you.

KABARI

Let him go. This was all me.

WOMAN

Project Apex will proceed as scheduled. We've held up our end of the bargain so we encourage both of you to uphold yours.

KEYSHAWN

Fuck your contract! I quit!

The woman genuinely smiles.

WOMAN

We've scheduled a trial today. We will still have a trial today. Even if it's not how we would've hoped.  
(to the guards)  
Bring them in and don't kill our investments please.

The woman confidently walks away as the guards cautiously approach.

Keyshawn and Kabari look at each other.

Their eyes SPARK as they prepare to stand their ground.

END CREDITS