

Your Money Or Your Life

FADE IN:

1 INT. KARATE DOJO -- DAY

1

TOP SHOT OF MARTIAL ARTIST DOING A POWERFUL, EXCITING FORM.

This is CHASE, in his early 20s, very strong and athletic. His shirt is off, and the belt around his waist is brown.

Slowly, the CAMERA CRANES DOWN TO NORMAL PERSPECTIVE.

At one side are his SENSEI, and Chase's Girlfriend, ERIN.

The dojo is filled with martial arts students, and they are watching Chase perform his kata.

He is very skilled, impressively muscular, and the students looking on are enthralled. Chase's skill is one very visible sign of the perfection they are all struggling to achieve.

REACTION SHOT OF Erin and Sensei. They are swelling with pride.

ON CHASE

Chase goes through a flamboyant self defense sequence with two partners, ending with Chase finishing them off with a beautiful technique and a loud KIAI!

Chase sparring with a partner, and he is overpowering. His grace and skill are unmatched.

Chase finishes his kata and the Sensei and Erin are the first to burst into LOUD APPLAUSE when the performance is done.

Chase bows to his instructor, and receives his BLACK BELT.

Chase hugs and kisses Erin, then heads for the shower.

2 EXT. CITY STREET -- LATER

2

Chase, Erin, and several other students are crossing the street on the way to a restaurant for Chase's celebration dinner. When they are in the middle of the street, Chase spots a pay phone at the mouth of an alley. He heads for it, miming to the others that he has to make a phone call.

The others go ahead, and Chase arrives at the phone. He drops his workout bag, which clearly says "Karate" on the side, and fishes in his pocket for a quarter. He finds one and slips it into the pay phone slot, starting to dial when...

MUGGER (O.S.)
Your money or your life.

(CONTINUED)

Chase smiles and turns around, fully expecting one of his dojo pals to be standing there.

CHASE
Yeah, real funny...

Instead, the MUGGER is standing there, a gun pointing at Chase's belly.

The Mugger isn't very big, but he does have a menacing look about him, greatly enhanced by the gun. He uses the gun to move Chase deeper into the alley.

MUGGER
Hand your wallet over! Now!

Chase looks at the Mugger for a moment, then slowly turns and looks at the street.

No one there.

Fighting, with all the training that Chase has, is the easy choice. In fact, it's almost an imperative.

Chase moves, and his training and experience take over.

The Mugger has no chance. Chase KICKS the gun out of the Mugger's hand, then SPINS and SWEEPS the Mugger to the ground.

The Mugger is on the ground, whimpering, Chase standing over him. Then, the Mugger speaks...

MUGGER (CONT'D)
C'mon, man! I ain't got all day!

TIGHT ON CHASE as he looks down at the Mugger, wondering why the hell the Mugger would say such a thing.

Suddenly, we are back in REALITY, and the Mugger is still standing in front of Chase, the gun at his belly.

The Mugger is not nervous, though there is an undercurrent of drug induced anxiety there. He's done this a lot, and no one has ever given him any trouble. Show them the gun, and they do whatever he says.

Chase is still standing, frozen, in front of the Mugger.

MUGGER (CONT'D)
Yo, jerk off!

As soon as he is called a name, Chase attacks the Mugger, doing it in a flamboyant and very violent style.

The Mugger this time is down and out.

(CONTINUED)

The PRESS appears in the form of 5 REPORTERS, who take flash pictures as Chase stands over the prone Mugger (SLOW MOTION?).

A FEMALE REPORTER kneels down to check the Mugger. Shock is on her face and she YELLS

REPORTER
Oh my God! Somebody call an
ambulance!

TIGHT ON CHASE'S FACE

We PULL BACK QUICKLY to a TWO SHOT of Chase and the Mugger as the Mugger SLAMS Chase in the face with the gun.

Blood springs to Chase's forehead!

He immediately puts his hand up at his forehead. He takes it away and it is covered with BLOOD!

The blood forces Chase to come face to face with the reality of the situation.

MUGGER
Give me your wallet or you. ..are
going to...die. I don't care!

He lifts up the pistol to Chase's forehead and prepares to pull the trigger. He doesn't want to shoot anyone, but he will.

MUGGER (CONT'D)
I'll take the money off your cold,
dead ass!

With the gun at his forehead, Chase is galvanized into action. He jumps and spins into a beautiful, powerful kick...

That misses.

He missed!

The Mugger deliberately and carefully brings the gun back around to Chase's forehead.

TIGHT ON THE GUN AS HE PULLS THE TRIGGER (SLOW MOTION).

The SHOT is very LOUD!

ANGLE ON WALL AS BLOOD SPLATTERS AGAINST IT

EMPTY SHOT OF THE CONCRETE ALLEY FLOOR..

Chase's head ENTERS THE SHOT and hits the ground in SLOW MOTION, dead, his head bouncing off the concrete.

3 EXT. CEMETARY -- AFTERNOON 3

Erin, Chase's girlfriend, is in the cemetery, tears flowing down her cheeks.

4 INT. KARATE DOJO -- DAY 4

The students are in the dojo, black armbands on their GIs as they meditate.

5 EXT. CITY STREET -- CONTINUOUS 5

The Mugger has the gun still pointed at his head.

MUGGER

Say goodbye to life, moron!

Chase makes up his mind, and holds up his hand in surrender.

CHASE

No! Wait! Here's my wallet!

He reaches into his back pocket and pulls out his wallet.

MUGGER

Your watch too.

CHASE

Whatever you want.

Chase strips off his watch and hands it over. The Mugger takes both and backs away, the gun still pointing at Chase.

Finally, he turns around and takes off, leaving Chase standing alone in the alley.

After a moment of watching the Mugger leave, Chase looks at the restaurant where his friends went, then walks in the completely opposite direction, leaving his bag at the phone booth.

6 INT. CHASE APARTMENT -- DAY 6

DEPRESSION MONTAGE

Chase at home, depressed.

He's not shaven, he's not washed. His hair is disheveled.

His place is a mess.

7 EXT. CHASE APARTMENT -- LATER 7

Erin walks up with Chase's workout bag. She knocks on the door, noticing Chase's Harley parked next to the door.

No answer.

(CONTINUED)

She knocks again.

Still no answer. She looks in the window, but can't see anything.

ERIN

Chase? Are you in there? You haven't called me for days. You haven't been to class. What's going on?

She waits a BEAT, but there is no response.

ERIN (CONT'D)

I brought your bag. I'll leave it right here. Call me!

She looks at the door, then the window, then leaves.

We HOLD on the door.

After a moment, the door opens and Chase steps out, squinting against the light.

He looks like hell.

He makes sure that Erin is gone, then grabs the bag. He looks at it for a moment, then CHUCKS it into the trash can next to the front door.

He SLAMS the door closed.

8 INT. CHASE APARTMENT -- NIGHT

8

Chase is standing in front of mirror, looking at himself.

He does not like what he sees.

MUGGER (V.O.)

Your money or your life.

In the background, we can see pictures of martial arts heroes (Bruce Lee, Chuck Norris, Jean Claude Van Damme, etc.).

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

Hand your wallet over! Now!

He looks at them, then turns and TEARS down the nearest poster.

TIGHT ON CHASE'S REFLECTION

He's holding one of the many Karate trophies he has won over the course of his martial arts career.

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

Your money or your life.

(CONTINUED)

This particular trophy has a little man on the top, throwing a side kick.

The TROPHY FLIES into the MIRROR, SHATTERING IT into a thousand shards.

9 EXT. CHASE APARTMENT -- MORNING

9

Chase comes out of his apartment and heads for his trash can with a garbage bag. He sticks it into the can, a little surprised that his Karate bag isn't there. He shrugs and turns back to his apartment door.

SENSEI (O.S.)
Looking for this?

Chase turns around to see his Sensei standing there, holding his Karate bag.

CHASE
Not really. Look, I can't talk right now...

SENSEI
I can tell. You have your power tie on.

Chase smiles a little at his appearance, then shakes his head.

CHASE
Yeah...I..I..I don't know...

SENSEI
Let's take a walk, OK?

For a moment, Chase doesn't move. He doesn't want to keep on like this, but he also doesn't want to tell his Sensei what happened.

10 EXT. RIVER LOOKOUT -- MOMENTS LATER

10

LONG SHOT of the Sensei and Chase walking along a lookout, the river far in the background. It is a beautiful setting. We can't hear what is going on, but by Chase's body language, we can tell that he is confessing to his Sensei.

He's baring his soul, expecting to be chastised by the instructor of martial arts he so looks up to.

The Sensei and Chase sit down on an outcropping of rock to talk.

Chase is frustrated, and thinks his instructor doesn't understand.

(CONTINUED)

CHASE

I've dreamed about this for so long,
what I would do when someone attacked.
Then, it happened and I just handed
it over. Stood there. Why didn't I
use my training?

SENSEI

Didn't you?

REACTION SHOT ON CHASE

He's confused by the way this conversation is going.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

Your training helped you make the
right choice.

CHASE

I made the coward's choice. I didn't
fight.

The Sensei smiles a warm, caring smile and holds out his
hand in a tightly clenched fist, his muscles straining, his
arm shaking.

SENSEI

If my hand were always closed like
this, what would it be?

Chase looks at his hand, considering the question.

CHASE

Deformed.

He opens his hand now, and holds it out to Chase.

SENSEI

And wouldn't it be deformed if it
were always open like this?

Chase nods.

The Sensei holds up his clenched fist again.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

We don't always fight...

He opens up his hand.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

Nor do we always surrender. As black
belts, we turn the other cheek if
possible. If someone wants our
wallet, we give him our watch too.
If it were me...

(CONTINUED)

The Sensei pauses for dramatic effect. Chase stares at him-- what would he do?

SENSEI (CONT'D)
I'd hand over my shirt and pants too.

REACTION ON CHASE

He smiles, picturing his Sensei in his mind.

SENSEI (CONT'D)
A wallet or a watch or any **thing** is not worth hurting another human being, or putting your own life in jeopardy.

Chase is beginning to understand, but he is still clinging to his depression, his guilt.

CHASE
What about my honor?

The Sensei looks closely at Chase, his face serious.

SENSEI
There is no honor in fighting. There **is** honor in making the right decision. You did. Now, you have to teach what you have learned.

Chase looks into his Sensei's eyes, and it looks like a weight has been lifted off his shoulders.

A slight smile slowly makes its way onto his face.

CHASE
It's as simple as that?

SENSEI
I am proud to be your teacher.

The Sensei bows to Chase.

Chase bows back.

11 INT. DOJO -- DAY

11

Chase is standing in front of a small class of young adults and children. They are standing at attention in front of him.

He pulls his hands up in the traditional Karate salute.

CHASE
I come to you with only Karate, empty hands. I do not wish to fight.

(CONTINUED)

The children mimic his movement, and Chase smiles.

Fade out