

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH

S.M JONES

smjones940@gmail.com

1. INT. TRAIN CARRIDGE - DAY

Quiet. Shabby.

Faded, dusty patterned seats.

Graffiti damaged walls.

CUT TO:

JOHN "SLUGGER" MORGAN

Hard Looking. Granite faced. Leather skinned.

Sits alone in the corner of the carriage.

Gazes out the window.

CUT TO:

2. COUNTRYSIDE FIELDS

A Patchwork of green.

A smokey haze from a industrial city spoils the horizon.

CUT TO:

3. A YOUNG BOY

Sat next to his mother.

Stares at Slugger Morgan from across the carriage.

4. SLUGGER MORGAN

looks back at him, they hold each others gaze.

Slugger forces through a smile.

5. THE BOY

Becomes spooked. Intimidated.

The gaze breaks.

He clutches at his mothers arm for comfort.

6. SLUGGER MORGAN

Sighs silently.

Goes back to looking out the window.

CUT TO:

7. THE TRAIN

Slows as it approaches the station.

CUT TO:

8. INT. STATION - DAY

The train grinds to a Holt at the platform.

The doors slide open.

The last person to get off is--

9. SLUGGER

He steps off the train. Holds a duffle bag over his shoulder.

Takes a match from his breast pocket.

Wedges the match in the side of his mouth.

Heads to the exit.

CUT TO:

10. EXT. NORTHERN CITY - NIGHT

We follow SLUGGER.

He walks through the cobbled stone streets.

Down the litter trimmed canals.

The city is dark, abandoned looking.

CUT TO:

11. INDUSTRIAL STREET

Iron gates and fences border concrete yards.

Smokestacks line the dark sky.

Tonne bags of hardcore, girders, broken down cars fill the yards.

12. SLUGGER MORGAN

Matchstick still in mouth.

Walks down the industrial street.

CUT TO:

13. TRUDY'S BURGER VAN

Slugger takes a seat on one of the tall chair at the counter.
Food fries.

14. TRUDY

Almost as hard faced as Slugger. Covered in grease.
Places a steaming Styrofoam cup in front of Slugger.

TRUDY
Pound, love.

Slugger slaps down a two pound coin on the counter.

SLUGGER
Keep the change.

He turns to look at the a group of RAUCOUS MEN across the street.

Some suited, some in work-wear and some dressed casually.

Middle aged, around thirty of them.

Slugger keeps his eye on the men as they enter an abandoned looking factory.

He sips his hot drink.

CUT TO:

15. INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

A large open Floor. Empty. Dark.

The men from outside stand in a circle in the center of the factory floor.

LANCE DOUGLAS

Thin. Grey haired. Grey suited.

A similar age to Slugger but seems more energetic for his age.

Stands in the center on the circle.

Behind him stands a man that towers over Lance.

No shirt on. Well built. Boxer type.

LANCE

Come on, I'm looking around here, I thought you were all business men-- business-types! so who ready to make some money.

Shouting voices chime in from all directions.

VOICE

I've got two-hundred on your man lance.

LANCE

Here we go, who else we got?-- It's an undefeated champ right here.

VOICE

I'll give you fifty.

LANCE

Fifty huh? Hey Sharif, you said the big spenders were coming out tonight-- So where are they?

SHARIF

A lot younger than lance. Dark suited. Slick haired. Cigarette in hand.

Also stands in the circle.

Also has a big bloke stood behind him.

An opponent for lances fighter.

Sharif steps to the middle of the circle.

SHARIF

Like you said friend there business men, they ain't gonna waste their hard earned money on another one of Lance's tin cans.

He laughs, so does the crowd.

SHARIF

So what have we got fellas?

VOICE

There hundred right here Sharif.

SHARIF

Your a smart man Jimmy, I always knew that...

VOICE
Five-hundred, I got five-hundred
right here.

Sharif rubs his hands together.

SHARIF
Now there a language I understand!

LANCE

walks back to his fighter.

Stands behind him. Rubs his shoulders. Talks into his ear.

LANCE
You don't listen to that cocksure
bastard, you've got this, kid.
Alright-- easy work.

SHARIF
Okay let's do this. Remember gents,
keep it clean, punches only. No
heads, no kicks, no low blows. The
fight goes on until one of you
can't continue. No count outs.
(to Lance)
We ready over there?

LANCE
We sure are.
(to his fighter)
Show em' what you got kid, go give
him a bloody good pasting.

Lance pats his fighter on the back

The fighters enter the center of the ring, they stare into
one another's eyes.

circling at the same time.

Both in fight stance.

The crowd is rowdy, excited.

The fight starts--

Sharif's fighter begins to JAB.

It's a stiff jab that lands every time.

Lance's fighter mimics his opponent.

His jabs are less effective. Easily slipped by Sharif's
fighter.

CUT TO:

16. SLUGGER MORGAN

Lingers in the shadows. Leans against concrete pillar.

Puts a cigarette in his mouth and sparks it with a match.

Watches on curiously.

CUT TO:

LANCE

Looks nervous.

His fighter is being pummeled just a few feet away from him.

LANCE

Come on kid, keep that guard up.
Keep the head moving.

SMACK. Sharif's fighter lands a sickening right hand.

Lances fighter stumbles back.

He's hurt, badly.

The crowd roar. Violence was promised, it's being delivered.

Sharif man jumps on his wounded opponent, landing a scrappy combination of heavy punches.

Lance's man falls to the ground.

The crowd go wild.

LANCE

Get up kid, your not out this yet,
you gotta get up.

CUT TO:

17. SLUGGER MORGAN.

Continues to watch from a distance.

Still smokes.

The performance of lance's fighter makes him smile wryly.

CUT TO:

LANCE'S FIGHTER

Picks himself up slowly.

Still dazed, he can barley raise his hands to protect himself.

They clinch. Pull at each other.

Lances fighter holds onto his opponent for dear life.

Sharif man pushes him back.

SMACK. A huge overhand right decks Lance's fighter again.

Flat on his back, stretched out.

This time he is not getting back up

CUT TO:

18. SLUGGER

Chucks his cigarette to the floor.

Turns to leave.

CUT TO:

19. INT. BACKSTREET CAFE - NIGHT

It's quiet.

Just a couple of late night drinkers and late shift workers at the tables.

LANCE ENTERS.

He looks tired, not his usual energetic self.

A waitress stands at the counter. She is WENDY.

LANCE

Evening Wendy, you got a meal there for me?

Wendy places a tray on the counter.

It holds a plate.

The plate holds an all day breakfast.

WENDY

Don't know what you'd do without me lance, there'd be nothing left of you. You need yourself a good women.

LANCE

A good women? Now there an oxymoron if I ever heard one. The only good women who wants anything to do with me is you, and sadly your taken.

He smiles.

Wendy give him a playful whip with the tea towel she holds.

WENDY

Give over you. Toast love?

LANCE

Sure, why not.

WENDY

Two rounds?

LANCE

Any more than two makes me nauseous.

WENDY

I'll bring it over.

LANCE

Thanks, Wendy.

He turns to go to his table, sees--

20. SLUGGER

Sitting at his table. Looking up at him.

Lance pauses for a second.

He doesn't look happy.

Walks to the table.

Slams down his tray.

Sits opposite Slugger.

LANCE

Now there a face I didn't think I'd see again until I got to hell. Mind you-- the day I've had, I might already be there.

SLUGGER

It's good to see you lance.

Slugger extends him arm across the table.

Leaves his hand out for lance to shake.

Lance looks at it.

He extends his arm... But grabs the pepper. Ignoring Slugger gesture.

Lance start seasoning his meal.

Slugger pulls his arm back to his side.

LANCE

So you just got out the slammer?

SLUGGER

No. Been out five years.

Wendy places a side plate of toast down next to lance.

LANCE

Thanks Wendy.

(to slugger)

Five years? So what brings you back round here.

SLUGGER

I want in.

LANCE

You want in what?

SLUGGER

The fights.

Lance looks at him in disbelief. Laughs.

LANCE

Jesus slugger, prison really gave you a sense of humor huh? You were many things but I never had you down as a joker.

SLUGGER

I'm not joking. And I'm not slugger no more either. It's just John now.

LANCE

Yeah, well you are to me. You were back then and you still are now. Somethings you don't get to choose. -- I'm not interested.

SLUGGER

Come on lance. I saw your man back there tonight, you really think you gonna make money with bums like that, lambs to the slaughter and you know it.

LANCE

Your too old Slugger. A busted flush. These young kids nowadays-- you won't be able to keep up.

SLUGGER

I won't need to. You know as well as I do I could put a horse to sleep if I hit it hard enough. And the last thing you loose is your power. These young lads now are soft, the way I see it, it's easy money.

Lance drop his cutlery down on the plate.

LANCE

(angry)

So that's it. Money. Think you can stroll back into town without a pot to piss in and old lance here gotta cough up the dough, just so you can take a beating-- embarrass us both? If you think I just gonna sit here and forget what you did, well your sadly mistaken my friend, sadly mistaken.

SLUGGER

I'm not asking you to forget, i messed up I know that, you think what happened to that kid doesn't haunt me every day of my damn life-- I did my time, still doing my time, it doesn't stop when you get out prison. Not until the day I die and I'll still be paying for it after that.

Lance shakes his head.

SLUGGER

And I ain't here for your money.

Sluggger takes a brown envelope from his inner jacket pocket and places it on the table by lance.

SLUGGER

Four grand in there, you add one more and we split the winnings, fifty-fifty, straight down the middle, we can renegotiate for next fight.

Lance takes a peak in the unsealed envelope.

Sighs.

SLUGGER

Come on lance, you need this as much as I do. How about we put our differences aside for now and make some money.

Beat.

Lance stares a Slugger.

Then peaks in the envelope.

Takes the envelope.

LANCE

Can't guarantee I can find you
someone in your age group. But if
you really want to fight. I'll get
you a fight.

SLUGGER

I don't care who it is. Just put
them in front of me and I'll do the
rest.

LANCE

I'll keep hold of this until
tomorrow.

Slugger takes a slice of toast from slugger side plate and
begins to eat it.

LANCE

You know when I order two rounds
it's because I want eat them, both.

SLUGGER

Well it's there for the taking.

LANCE

The toast or the money?

SLUGGER

Both.

LANCE

The old soap factory, same place we
were at tonight. Be there tomorrow,
10pm, lest see what you've still
got. Slugger.

FADE TO:

21. INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

It's the same setting as the night before.

Lance and Sharif stand in middle of the rowdy spectators.

SHARIF'S FIGHTER is same one from the night before.

Still fresh. Like he didn't fight last night.

SHARIF

So where your man Lance. I've been hearing a lot of talk but I don't see no fighter.

LANCE

He's right here.

Slugger step into the middle of the circle.

Sharif looks him up and down.

Burst out laughing.

SHARIF

You gotta taking the piss Lance. This old timer, I thought you'd brought your twin brother along to watch the show.

(to slugger)

You sure your up to this old man.

SLUGGER

(nod's to Sharif's fighter)

You should be asking him that.

Slugger put his cigarette in his mouth.

Takes off his coat.

Wears tight white tank top.

Muscle and vain bugle. Like his skin been stretched over them as tight as possible.

SHARIF

What did I tell you fellas, were gonna be making some easy money tonight. You can all owe me with a drink in let's say...

(looks at watch)

About ninety seconds, or for however long it takes this old geezers to have a heart attack.

The crowd laugh. They jeer.

Slugger takes a last puff on his cigarette, then passes it Lance.

Lance looks at the cigarette.

Goes to throw it away.

Slugger grabs his arm.

SLUGGER

I gonna be needing that just now.

Lance keeps hold of the smoke.

Slugger walk to center ring. Rolling his shoulders.

SHARIF

Let's do it.

(to his fighter)

You go easy on him now. Let's at least make a fight of this.

His fighter smiles.

The men take their fight stance.

The crowds thirst for violence returns. They roar.

The fight begins--

Sharif fighter throws his jab.

Slugger slips the punches with head movement that looks effortless.

Then throws his own jab. A cast iron jab.

It hit's his opponent square in the face.

Whipping his head back.

We it comes forward again blood flies out his nostrils.

Sharif fighter's face light up.

Eyes of shock. Like a deer caught in the headlights.

He's in a fight. A real fight.

Before the shock can pace.

SMACK. Slugger lands a bone crunching right hand.

Right on the jaw.

His opponent is out cold before he hit's the floor.

He drops like a plank.

Slugger stands over him.

Silence.

CUT TO:

FACES IN THE CROWD

Wide eyed.

Slack jawed.

All eyes on slugger.

CUT TO:

22. SLUGGER.

Walks back Lance.

Lances expression is the same as the rest.

His disbelieving eyes follow slugger.

Slugger takes cigarette from lance.

Takes a puff.

They look down at the floored fighter.

He's still out cold.

LANCE

Well shit me, slugger. Shit me.

CUT TO:

23. INT. BUS TOP DECK - NIGHT

Lance sits with his back against the window.

One leg stretched out on the double seat.

He counts the winnings.

A big smile on his face.

Slugger sit on the seat behind him.

Stoic. Stares straight ahead.

LANCE

Well you weren't lying were you.
That right hands still a kicker.
Like a mule.

SLUGGER

How about you put that away, your
drawing attention.

Lance passes a wad of notes to slugger.

Who slips them into his coat pocket.

LANCE
Your half.

He passes some more notes to slugger.

LANCE
And little extra for the early
finish. There's plenty more of that
coming after what I've seen
tonight.
Back to the big time slugger-- the
big bucks.

SLUGGER
Well don't get carried away.

Slugger pushes the stop button on the hand rail.

SLUGGER
This is my stop.

He stands up.

Heads down the aisle.

Lance sits up.

LANCE
Hey, wait a minute.

CUT TO:

24. CITY STREET - CONT

The bus pulls up the stop.

The doors open. Slugger steps off.

The door closes. Then open again.

Lance jumps off.

He paces after slugger.

LANCE
Hey slugger, wait.

Slugger stops.

LANCE
I thought we could go get a beer.
Celebrate.

SLUGGER
Not for me.

Slugger starts walking again.

Lance follows.

LANCE

Were you staying anyway?

SLUGGER

A travel lodge for tonight. Going to see someone about a room tomorrow, something a bit more permanent.

LANCE

What about the fight?

SLUGGER

What fight?

LANCE

The fight tomorrow, we need to plan, there could big money on the line here slugger.

SLUGGER

There is no fight tomorrow, i need a couple days to sort a few things out.

LANCE

A couple days-- what do you mean a couple days? The way you handled that guy tonight we could be making thirty-k a week.

Slugger stops.

Looks lance in the eye.

SLUGGER

I said theres no fights. Not for a couple days. You seem to be awful friendly now for a guy who hated my guts a few hours ago. I can see the pound notes in your eyes. You haven't changes a bit.

Slugger walks off.

Lance doesn't follow.

He shouts--

LANCE

Yeah, well your in it for the same reason, you stupid prick! And you need me too! Apartment 5, Elmore High Street. You be there in two days!

CUT TO:

25. INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Basic furniture.

Cheap wallpaper.

Single bed.

A WOMEN'S VOICE can be heard from outside the closed door.

WOMEN'S VOICE (OS)

I don't mind shoes on in the house
if there clean, but work boots or
dirty training shoes have to be of
at the door.

The door opens.