

KILLER INSTINCT

EXT. BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI - NIGHT (EST.)

Post Katrina casinos dot the coastline.

INT. CASINO CONVENTION CENTER

An empty boxing ring sits in the middle of the packed arena.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

TERRENCE JACKSON, 23, a strong, muscular middleweight shadow-boxes in front of a mirror in the cramped room. He's a dead ringer for a prime Sugar Ray Leonard with his sleek build and boyish good looks.

His punches are blinding fast. Sweat flies off his body with each combination. His light blue trunks read: "Silk" across the front waistband.

RONNIE (30's, white), Terrence's trainer, looks on. His warm-up suit matches Terrence's trunks.

RONNIE
(puts on punch mitts)
Right here.

Terrence faces him gloves up, in position.

RONNIE (CONT' D)
Jab, right, left hook.

Terrence pops the mitts which echo in the room.

RONNIE (CONT' D)
Double jab, straight right!

Terrence reels off the punches.

RONNIE (CONT' D)
Again!

TERRENCE
I'm good, Ronnie. I'm good.

RONNIE
Again!

Terrence nails the mitts. Even louder.

RONNIE (CONT' D)
All right. Stay loose.

Terrence resumes shadow-boxing in the mirror.

RONNIE
We're the best in the world and
tonight we're gonna prove it!

TERRENCE
Yeah.

RONNIE
(imitates ring announcer)
And the NEW!!!

TERRENCE
Yeah! Yeah!

RONNIE
Remember what we talked about, what
we worked on.

Terrence nods.

A MAN enters.

MAN
I'm with the network. You're up.
Time to go.

RONNIE
(back to Terrence)
What we worked on!

TERRENCE
(puts robe on)
He starts fast. Give him angles
and combinations. Step off, never
straight back. Box him and get
you a heart transplant.

Smiles.

RONNIE
Here we go!

HALLWAY

They enter the hallway that leads to the arena but it's
jammed with people who wear identical shirts which read:
"BENTON PAYNE - WORLD CHAMP," with a picture of Payne in the
center.

These THUGS surround Terrence and Ronnie.

THUG 1
You won't last a round. Not a
round!

THUG 2
Payne gonna kick your pretty boy
ass, punk bitch!

THUG 3
(chants)
Who's the champ?

ALL THUGS
Benton Payne!

THUG 3
Who's gonna knock you out?

ALL THUGS
Benton Payne!

Terrence and Ronnie don't respond. They slowly work their way through the mob as the taunts continue.

CONVENTION CENTER

It's LOUD. Electricity of a big fight in the air. They make the short walk to the

RING

Terrence climbs between the ropes and waves. Some CHEER. Some BOO.

RONNIE
(screams)
Don't get in a war! Box, box, box!

TERRENCE
Ronnie.

RONNIE
Yeah?

TERRENCE
You worry too much.

Ronnie shakes his head, amazed at his fighter's coolness.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
Where's Vanessa sittin'?

Ronnie points.

In the CROWD, a pretty young woman (VANESSA, 20's) on the second row smiles nervously at Terrence, but the moment is interrupted by...

OTHER END OF CONVENTION CENTER

The champ, BENTON PAYNE struts to the ring. He's short, muscular, bald-headed and menacing. He wears three championship belts. One on his waist, the other two on his massive shoulders. His entourage parts the crowd.

RING

Payne enters, points at Terrence and slams his gloves together.

RINGSIDE

Two ANNOUNCERS sit in front of microphones and TV monitors.

CHUCK

Welcome, folks to what should be a great fight. Chuck Jeffries here with my partner, former world champ, the M and M man, Marvin Moore. Marv, quite a contrast in styles we have tonight.

RING

Both fighters warm up as they are introduced.

MARVIN (O. S.)

That's right Chuck. Benton Payne is all business. Middleweight champion for seven years now! Forty-three wins, just two losses early in his career and forty big knockouts. He's a banger no doubt about it. He is thirty-eight years old but so far age hasn't been a factor.

CHUCK (O. S.)

Not a factor when you knock everybody out in one round!

MARVIN (O. S.)
 That's right. That's what I used
 to do. Get 'em early, go home and
 stay young!

The fighters meet in the center of the ring for instructions. Payne stares at Terrence, who looks down at the canvas. They return to their corners.

CHUCK (O. S.)
 As with all Benton Payne fights,
 folks, don't blink.

MARVIN (O. S.)
 But tonight could be different.
 Terrence Jackson is undefeated in
 twenty-two fights, but only seven
 knockouts. All the speed and
 reflexes in the world, though. Can
 he keep Payne off of him? What's
 gonna happen when he gets hit? Is
 this another Clay-Liston? That's
 what we all wanna find out.

RING

Payne starts fast, lands punches. Terrence is tentative but quick enough to avoid the hardest shots. Payne follows him around, tries for an early knockout.

Terrence finally punches and lands, his confidence rises.

BELL SOUNDS.

Terrence returns to his corner, sits. Ronnie climbs in the ring.

RONNIE
 How ya feel?

TERRENCE
 Good. He's strong but he's already
 blowin'.

RONNIE
 (gives water)
 Keep boxin'. Don't stand and
 trade.

Ronnie puts the mouthpiece back in and spreads Vaseline on Terrence's face.

BELL for round two SOUNDS.

Terrence moves well, stops only long enough to pop Payne with punches. Payne's eye swells. He breaths harder.

4. Fourth round. Terrence takes charge. Payne's shots are weaker, less frequent. Terrence is more active.

6. Sixth round. All Terrence. Payne is exhausted. On the ropes. Barely hangs in there. Fight almost over.

Terrence lands six unanswered. Payne can't fight back any more.

TERRENCE
(glances at ref)
Stop the fight, man!

The ref does nothing.

Terrence nails Payne with another hard shot to force a stoppage. Payne is basically knocked out, only the ropes hold him up.

Terrence extends his left to Payne's chin, measures for a right.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
(to ref)
Come on. Stop it.

Nothing.

Terrence uncorks a huge right. Payne's hands are down at chest level, his eyes glassy.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
(to ref)
You want me to kill him?

Again, nothing. Payne's eyes clear just a bit.

Terrence turns to throw another punch but the still-wobbly Payne creams him with a haymaker of a right!

Terrence falls face first to the canvas, out cold!

Payne, exhausted, raises his arms.

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
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