

CHIMERA DARK

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHIMERA CITY - NIGHT

Witching hour. Ghetto-like apartment tenements slumber in the moon shadow of futuristic skyscrapers towering into the night sky like giant slivers of stained glass.

Primal SHOUTS and raucous SCREAMS fill the air, coming from --

PARTYGOERS - all with BLUE GLOWING bracelet-style CUFFS attached to one wrist - high on more than life - jamming out to a thrumming TECHNO BEAT in the street.

It's as if someone left the asylum door open and the escapees are running wild. Except these madmen and women seem to have all been blessed by the genetic gods of psychedelic cyberpunk.

The mass of gyrating, sweat-soaked flesh suddenly parts like the Red Sea as a black LUXURY SPORTS CAR rumbles to a halt before a graffiti soaked apartment building marked: "Echo 9."

Suicide door of the slick beast slides open and out steps --

DAVID NIX (35), a wraith-like, coarse husk of a man wrapped in a refined package - tailored black suit and all. His tinted Aviators catch the reflection of --

A neon pink-haired WOMAN with dilated eyes and fuck me boots slithers up to David.

She glances at his YELLOW GLOWING CUFF, licks her pink-glossed lips, sizing up the newcomer like a predator on the sexual prowl.

PINK

You looking to peak, cowboy?

Silence from David. He regards her indifferently, his Aviator-clad eyes glancing down to her tight mini-skirt. Pink smiles seductively, running her hand over David's chest.

PINK

You came to the right place.

DAVID

I don't think so.

David turns and heads for Echo 9's front door.

PINK

Your loss!

David pushes through the front door without breaking stride and passes into --

INT. ECHO 9 BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bright fluorescents overhead. Institutional-like. Behind closed apartment doors the sounds of kinky sex permeate out into the hall - whips cracking, chains clanging - like some kind of perverted symphony of debauchery.

David stops before a door marked: "319." Without hesitation he KICKS IN the door revealing --

INT. EDDIE'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Dive is an understatement. Black lights. Looks like Jackson Pollock hit the walls with a bucket of glow-in-the-dark paint in the middle of a bad acid trip.

A steam punk DOMINATRIX sporting goggles and a leather bustier stands over a half-naked MAN lying on a thin mattress. Meet --

EDDIE (26), dope-fiend street urchin covered in cheap street tats. Eddie never met a lie he didn't like.

EDDIE

What the...?

Eddie's glazed eyes suddenly fill with dread as David enters and sizes up the joint, his eyes finally settling on the stunned Dominatrix.

EDDIE

Shit.

DAVID

Eddie, Eddie, Eddie...

DOMINATRIX

This is a private party, asshole.

David's eyes locked on the Dom as he presses his hand to his wrist cuff. It's glow shifts from yellow to RED.

"Oh shit" moment for the Dominatrix as she frantically presses a button on her BLUE GLOWING bracelet.

DOMINATRIX

He's an Agent!

Dominatrix backs up against the wall, still pressing the button on her cuff, as Eddie rises from the mattress.

A HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE of a heavy-set WOMAN in her early 50's shoots from David's cuff and hovers in the room before him - the name beneath the I.D. image reading --

DAVID

Margaret Slade. Age: Fifty-three.
Address: 2187 Nightlong Court,
Apartment 6G.

David eyes the flawlessly lean piece of flesh before him.

DAVID

You're lucky there's no law against
icon misrepresentation.

DOMINATRIX

Please! I didn't do anything wrong.

David eyes a BRAIN IMPULSE IMAGE floating under Margaret's I.D. photo. It's lit up like the 4th of July with a spider web of pulsing electrical current.

DAVID

Like hell you haven't. You're
peaking hard Margaret.

DOMINATRIX

It's my first time, I swear!

EDDIE

Come on, Nix. Cut her some slack,
man.

Ignoring Eddie, cold gaze still on the Dom --

DAVID

You need to find new friends,
Margaret. Understand?

She does, nodding her head. David presses his hand to his cuff once more, the red glow softening back to yellow.

DAVID

Now get out of here.

Dominatrix presses her cuff button again. Her icon's image freezes, slowly PIXELATES from sight as David regards Eddie.

DAVID

What am I going to do with you,
Eddie?

EDDIE

I was going to stop by today --

DAVID

I keep you out of the cage. Give you enough credits to buy this peak pad. And this is how you re-pay me?

EDDIE

Nix --

DAVID

This is a give and take relationship, Eddie. But all you do is take.

EDDIE

Look, I got busy with some things and --

DAVID

Oh, Eddie the peak junkie got too busy to check in with the one man keeping his sorry ass from a twenty stretch in Andreas.

Eddie searches for words but seems to realize he's fighting a losing battle.

DAVID

What's that? You got something to say? Another excuse maybe? No? Alright. Your free ride just ended.

EDDIE

No, please, Nix! I got something for ya! Something big.

DAVID

I'm listening.

EDDIE

A contact. She's a Sec-Two. Big time clocker.

DAVID

You been holding out on me, Eddie?

EDDIE

These things take time, man. You know this. I've been in here working for you. It's all good, Nix. I can set a meet-up with her next week if --

DAVID

Now.

EDDIE

That ain't how it works.

DAVID

For your sake, you better make it work.

David turns and disappears out the door. Eddie shakes his head, grudgingly follows.

INT. LUXURY SPORTS CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

David behind the wheel. Eddie lounging shotgun, checking out the sleek car's interior digs.

EDDIE

The AVC is treating you well, g. That's good. Real good. They got any openings in the neural narcotics division? Maybe you could put in a good word for me.

Silence from David. Not amused.

EDDIE

Cause I could use myself a sweet ass pussy magnet like this. Put it to good use... How much this set them back? 200? Two-fifty? No... Three hundred c's?

David isn't biting.

EDDIE

Shit, dog. You must be their numero uno now. How long you been beatin' the streets for narco anyways?

DAVID

Five years.

EDDIE

And here you are rolling like a king. Sign me up.

Through the tinted windows we pass by a digital street sign reading "Alpha Block."

Towering apartment buildings with neon "for rent" signs flash in scattered apartment windows, crammed in together with low-end shops and bars all catering to every form of vice under the sun. It's like a sexual deviant's wet dream.

Digital billboards and holographic advertisements demand our attention everywhere we look, peddling every material asset imaginable - clothes - jewelry - cars - real estate.

It's as if this whole city has been put up for sale and everything in it.

Eddie eyes a billboard with a hot blonde on it selling virtual breast implants for the low price of eighty-thousand credits.

EDDIE

We're all just their slaves. In here and out there. Ten years and it's all turned into this shithole of greed. Didn't take the man long did it?

DAVID

You seem to have adjusted just fine.

EDDIE

Adapt or die, Nix. That's the name of the game.

David scoffs.

EDDIE

Laugh all you want, golden boy. But you and me ain't so different. We're both just hustlers scratching to get ahead. You do what you do to survive. I do the same.

DAVID

I do what I do to make this world a better place. You do what you do to keep it in the gutter.

EDDIE

Whatever, g. None of this matters anyway once you slip through the veil, right?

DAVID

This lead better not be bullshit.

EDDIE

Have I ever let you down, Nix?

David turns down a street towards a giant GLASS DOME - it's skin covered in thousands of luxury advertisements running in an endless loop.

Flashing NEON SIGN announces the dome as: "SECTOR TWO HUB."

EDDIE

You land this whale, I want some trickle-down.

David zooms up to the dome, throws the car into park.

DAVID

If she's as big as you say then we'll talk. If not, you got a date with the cage.

David slips out of the car. Eddie follows.

INT. SECTOR TWO HUB - NIGHT

A melting pot of nationalities all packed into a miniature version of Rodeo Drive filled with shops selling luxury real estate, cars, boats, jewelry and handbags.

The Sector One window shoppers - wearing glowing blue wrist cuffs - stand in stark contrast to the flawlessly beautiful Sector Two citizens with their yellow glowing cuff.

These Sec-Two's are the real buyers here. The rest are just dreamers.

HOLOGRAPHIC PICTHMEN beckon the perusing masses into their respective shops. It's like a futuristic Grand Central Station of high-end commerce - every inch of it dedicated to the almighty dollar.

David follows Eddie towards a shop with 3-D BLUEPRINTS of luxury real estate properties floating outside. A sign above the door reads: "INFINITY PLUS PROPERTIES."

David follows Eddie inside --

INT. INFINITY PLUS PROPERTIES - CONTINUOUS

Floating 3-D blueprints and holographic virtual tours selling the sizzle of upscale Sector Two living.

Three sleek desks in the corner. Eddie beelines towards one of the desks where an attractive woman in a black mini-dress finishes up with a prospective client. Meet --

SHAY (27), unsettling confidence with a flash of danger swimming in those street-smart eyes. There's more than beauty wrapped in this tightly toned package.

Shay's eyes settle on Eddie with a spark of repressed fury - quickly throttled - when she sees the man accompanying him.

She's a woman that seems to know first impressions mean everything. And she knows an opportunity when she sees it.

EDDIE

There she is!

Eddie leans in for a kiss and a hug. Shay obliges with a smile, avoiding the disapproving glances of the two other vapid-eyed house-slingers whispering to one another in the corner. Eddie is obviously not their typical clientele.

SHAY

To what do I owe the pleasure?

Eddie slaps his hand on David's shoulder.

EDDIE

This is the guy I was telling you about. You know, the one interested in that property up on Skyline?

Shay's disarming eyes size David up as he offers his hand.

DAVID

John Mason.

SHAY

Ashley Ryan. Delighted to meet you, Mr. Mason.

Shay shakes David's hand as Eddie beams.

SHAY

You have good taste. Skyline Drive is home to some of my most discerning clients.

DAVID

I'm as discerning as they come.

SHAY

As I'm sure you are aware, for a property such as Skyline we require a credit evaluation.

DAVID

Of course.

Shay grabs a HANDHELD SCANNER off her desk.

SHAY

May I?

David exposes his glowing yellow cuff. Shay runs the scanner over it. A holographic dossier of David's alias accompanied by his I.D. photo hangs in the air between them.

Shay quickly flips through the credit and background file, expertly taking in the information.

SHAY

You're certainly a man of means, Mr. Mason. Are you looking to purchase today?

DAVID

I suppose that depends on if you can deliver what I'm looking for.

A knowing smile from Shay.

SHAY

I can deliver.

DAVID

Then what are we waiting for?

Shay closes out David's alias file.

SHAY

Follow me.

INT. SECTOR TWO HUB - MOMENTS LATER

Shay leads David and Eddie towards a large checkpoint that reads: "Sector Two Entry."

Shay slides her glowing blue wrist cuff into a scanner. An automated voice announces --

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

Sector Two work-permit entry allowed. Please proceed.

Shay steps forward through a SHIMMERING TRANSLUCENT BARRIER as David slips his cuff into the scanner and the same automated voice announces --

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Sector Two membership confirmed.
Please proceed.

David steps through the barrier as Eddie slips his cuff into the scanner.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Sector Two membership unconfirmed.
Please deposit 500,000 credits into
your Infinity account to gain
membership.

Eddie ignores the voice, tries stepping through the barrier. A sudden jolt propels him back.

EDDIE
Come on! Just once I want to see
high-roller heaven.

David regards Eddie from the other side of the barrier.

DAVID
Sorry, Eddie. You know you gotta
pay to play.

David turns and follows Shay towards the exit.

INT. SMART LIMO - NIGHT

David sits across from Shay as the driverless car navigates up a spotless, LED backlit street and up a hill.

Outside - gleaming, trendy townhouses give way to ultra-modernistic glass homes sitting in a suburban - almost bucolic - landscape of green vegetation.

It's like the Hollywood Hills on steroids.

On a translucent panel inside the car, an advertisement touting Infinity Technologies and its masterpiece of virtual reality - Chimera City.

David glances out towards the towering, multi-colored stained glass skyscrapers looming ever closer as the car winds its way up the hills. They're a sight to behold.

DAVID

Don't suppose you have any property available there do you?

SHAY

Sector Three is by invitation only. No offense, Mr. Mason, but even a man with your impressive financial portfolio doesn't come close to meeting the minimum requirements.

DAVID

None taken.

The limo pulls through a GATED FENCE surrounding a spectacular hyper-contemporary home overlooking the sprawling expanse of Sections One and Two below.

From up here, the galaxy of lights below gives us the feeling we're on a planet unto ourselves.

SHAY

Ready to see the sights?

DAVID

More than you know.

INT. SKYLINE HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beyond vogue. Appears to be something out of an Architectural Digest spread. It oozes wealth, bleeds power.

David gazes out the floor to ceiling windows at the billion-dollar view below.

DAVID

Impressive.

Shay joins him at the window.

SHAY

I think it's safe to drop the act now, Mr. Mason.

DAVID

I have to ask... Are you narco?

Shay finds the question almost amusing.

SHAY

I was preparing to ask you the same. You aren't as rough around the edges as my normal clientele.

DAVID

Looks can be deceiving. Especially in here.

SHAY

Like I said, let's drop the bullshit. My time is money. And if you're not buying, go waste someone else's time.

David raises an eyebrow. To the point. He's impressed.

DAVID

On the outside, I run a business supplying other... desirables. I'm looking to extend my success to Chimera. From what I hear business is booming in here.

SHAY

You could say that.

DAVID

I'm looking for quantity.

SHAY

If you want quantity, you can go to any peak-slinger and find what you're looking for. But if you want quality *and* quantity, then you came to the right place.

Shay walks to the wet bar, pours two glasses of expensive vodka, hands one to David.

DAVID

(regarding his drink)

Sometimes I wonder, why even bother?

SHAY

Because when you drink it the interface will trigger a tiny electrical jolt in your brain, altering its levels of neurotransmitters. You may not be actually working your way to a nasty drunk, but you'll feel like it. And in the morning, no hangovers. That's why we bother, Mr. Mason. The illusion is too real to ignore.

DAVID
You sound like a true Infinity
pitchman.

Shay slams her drink, pours herself another.

SHAY
I was a computer engineer in
another life. Magna cum laude at
Cal Tech. Class of 2031. Go
Beavers.

DAVID
What went wrong?

Shay downs her second drink, levels a no bullshit stare at
David.

SHAY
There is a new product called rev.
High end. Same technology as peak
but much more potent. Instead of an
8 hour high you rock the Kasbah for
a full twenty-four... Delays the
inevitable much more efficiently.

DAVID
And what is the inevitable?

SHAY
That sooner or later reality
catches up to us all... Word is
some high roller rev-dens have
already been set up. Some of these
revvers have been riding the wave
nonstop for weeks. It's here. It's
big. And it's only getting bigger.
So if you want the inside track,
this is it.

DAVID
This rev... Is it a Black Hand
production as well?

SHAY
The Black Hand has its fingerprints
on everything that turns a dollar
in here. Are you interested or not?

DAVID
Not much for foreplay are you?

Cold stare from Shay, patience wearing dangerously thin.
Sensing her tipping point --

DAVID

Alright. Brass tacks. How much for
10,000 units?

Shay's turn to raise an eyebrow - impressed.

SHAY

That type of order could take a few
days.

DAVID

How much?

SHAY

Five million credits. Street value
is fifteen. If you have the network
you can easily triple your
investment in a month.

DAVID

I'd need to test the product first.

SHAY

That can be arranged.

DAVID

Do you have any on hand?

SHAY

Like I said, it can be arranged.

DAVID

Then we have a deal.

David slams the rest of his drink, holds out his hand. Shay
shakes it, her eyes suddenly brimming with shock as she
catches David's cuff turn from yellow to red.

SHAY

No.

Shay's holographic image shoots from David's cuff. He scans
it quickly as Shay retreats, frantically pressing a button on
her cuff to no avail.

DAVID

Shay Warren. Age, 27. At least you
didn't lie about that. Address,
1487 Crest Hill Drive.

SHAY

No!

David closes out the holograph.

DAVID

Drink up, Ms. Warren. It's going to be the last good feeling you're going to have for quite some time.

SHAY

No, no, NO!

DAVID

See you soon.

David presses a button on his cuff. His satisfied face freezes and slowly pixelates away with the rest of his "body" as Shay screams out in rage.

INT. AGENCY OF VIRTUAL CRIME - DAY

LINE OF AGENTS sit motionless in sleek chairs, eyes covered in reflective WRAPAROUND GLASSES - aka V-EYES - with tiny slivers of blue electrical current firing sporadically over their surface.

On the wall behind them in bold letters: "AGENCY OF VIRTUAL CRIME." Beneath the Agency's seal: "NEURAL NARCOTICS DIVISION."

David's V-Eyes clear, revealing his eyes. He presses a button on the side of the glasses. Voice from his wrist cuff asks --

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

Release reality tether?

DAVID

Affirmative.

The GLOWING YELLOW CUFF on David's wrist goes dark. He jumps from the chair and as we pull out we now take in the rest of the Division --

Massive operation. A hive of frenzied activity. Agents working leads at their work hubs. Agents with their reflective V-Eyes juiced into Chimera line every wall.

In the center of the chaos overseeing the operation from an elevated workstation we meet CAPTAIN RAKER (50).

DAVID

(to Raker)

I've got a code red.

Raker swivels to several Agents huddled nearby in a workstation cluster marked: "UNIT 9."