

STREET RIDER

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Based on an original story by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREETS, PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT

RAINDROPS sparkle on the windows of pristine SKYSCRAPERS...

A HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE leisurely glides a DRIVER and TWO TOURISTS past the grand facade of INDEPENDENCE HALL...

FORMALLY-CLAD MEN and WOMEN pour into the majestic ACADEMY OF MUSIC while a BACH CONCERTO drifts into the streets...

WHITE STRING LIGHTS illuminate the trees of RITTENHOUSE SQUARE while below, a FATHER plays an impromptu game of "tag" with his TWO YOUNG SONS...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS, NORTH PHILLY - NIGHT

A VERY DIFFERENT part of the city...

FOG rises above wet, broken sidewalks. GLASS shards litter pot-holed streets. STRIPPED CARS rot like skeletons from long-abandoned archeological digs. An elevated TRAIN knives through a factory's choking, sickly mist. It's late September. And still sticky-hot in North Philadelphia.

A GREYHOUND BUS rolls to a stop at a street light. Inside, we see DARKENED SILHOUETTES. The CAMERA moves up to the windows and stops on one of the them.

The silhouette looks out the bus window, right at...a YOUNG BOY. Thin. Partially hidden in the shadows. A LONG BEAT passes as the silhouette's attention remains locked on the boy. Then...

The bus pulls away. The CAMERA drifts into... THE BOY. He's "Q" (Quentin), 13. Q stands under the rusted aluminum awning of a boarded-up flower shop... hands stuffed deep in his pockets. His right hand fumbles with dozens of narrow GLASS VIALS...his left hand rests on a wad of BILLS. A SCUFFED 32 protrudes from a back pocket.

Q watches as a PRIUS slowly drives up the trash-strewn street, passes him, then cautiously u-turns at the corner. The Prius pulls to the curb in front of Q. A fogged window opens. A WHITE BOY pokes his head out. College age...

WHITE BOY
Whadda ya got kid?

Q
Nuthin.

WHITE BOY
Whaddaya doing out?

Q
Waiting for my bus to school.

WHITE BOY
Why don't you stop fucking with me?

Q
Ain't fucking with you, cop.

WHITE BOY
Ain't no cop...

The White Boy unfurls a crisp \$100 dollar bill.

WHITE BOY (CONT'D)
Five boulders and I'm gone.

Q
Fuck you.

WHITE BOY
(pleading)
Come on kid. Nobody else is out.
Please..?

A BEAT. Q nervously approaches the car. TEXTBOOKS and FAST FOOD WRAPPERS line the Prius' back seat. A ragged VILLANOVA T-shirt drapes the white boy's skinny frame.

Q
You know if you is a cop, this
shit's entrapment, right?

WHITE BOY
Ain't no cop. Five boulders, come
on...

Q snatches the \$100.00 bill. Grabs the vials from his pocket. Goes to drop them into the white boy's palm. Stops.

Q
How much that school cost a year?

WHITE BOY
What?

Q
Forty G? Fifty?

WHITE BOY
Come on kid, give it here.

Q drops THREE VIALS in the white boy's hand. The boy just stares incredulously as Q moves back to the flower shop.

WHITE BOY (CONT'D)
When the price go up?

Q
Right now. You don't like it, go buy on the Main Line.

WHITE BOY
FUCK YOU!

The white boy rockets the Prius away from the curb and down the street.

Q wraps the \$100.00 bill in his bankroll. Then, he pulls two twenties off it and stuffs them in a different pocket.

EXT. PHILBROOKE DAIRY - LATER

Q pushes a battered BMX BIKE through a hole in a chain-link fence.

EXT. PHILBROOKE DAIRY - MOMENTS LATER

Closed for years, the Philbrooke Dairy is just another stone and brick ghost in a neighborhood choked with them. What it does have, however, is "THE BOTTLE".

"The Bottle" is a paint-flaked water tower in the shape of a 1940's milk bottle. Over eighty feet tall, "The Bottle" holds sentry high above this crumbling neighborhood. What it also holds right now, is Q.

EXT. PHILBROOKE DAIRY, "THE BOTTLE" - CONTINUOUS

Q's battered PRO KEDS dangle off a two foot wide ledge. Down below and a block away, Q hears a COUPLE scream at each other. Two blocks away, the ELEVATED TRAIN roars by.

Q presses his head back against the bottle's rough concrete until the invading sounds go away...

EXT. NORTH PHILLY STREETS - DAWN

As the neighborhood begins to stir, Q zips his BMX down the center of a pothole-marred street. He stretches his arms out to the side... Looks up to the awakening sky when...

VOICE (O.S.)
WATCH IT ASSHOLE!

Q slams on his brakes. A PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER truck sits in the intersection in front of him. A BURLY DRIVER leans out the window.

BURLY DRIVER
What's your problem kid? Wake up!

Q grabs the handlebars. Glares at the burly drive. Mutters "fuck you" under his breath... and is gone.

EXT. NORTH PHILLY STREET, ANT AND Q'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Q carries his bike up the steps of a dilapidated ROW HOUSE. The house number is spray painted across a battered steel door. Just as he reaches for the door, it flies open. Two other DEALER BOYS, MO and TIC TAC, both a couple of years older than Q, exit.

MO
Yo, what up Lil Ant?

They push past Q as he ENTERS.

INT. ANT & Q'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The place is almost devoid of furniture. A COUCH sits in the living room in front of a 50' PLASMA. A large TABLE and TWO CHAIRS sit in the dining room. That's pretty much it...

Q leans his bike against the living room wall. He moves into the dining room, digs the vials from his pocket, and deposits them with the others unsold from the night before. As he digs into the cash pocket, Q's brother ANTHONY (ANT), 18, ENTERS. Ant's sinewy muscles ripple under a t-shirt and boxers. He carries two folded COFFEE FILTERS. Each loaded with a soap-like substance. ROCK COCAINE...

ANT
Yo Q. Just missed Mo and Tic-tac.

Q
I seen 'em.

ANT
How'd you do?

Q pulls the money from his pocket. Ant sees. Impressed. Then, Q pulls the money from his other pocket. Drops \$40.00 in front of Ant.

ANT (CONT'D)
What's this?

Q
House money. We need light bulbs.

We can see in Ant's eyes...he's really impressed now.

ANT
I'll go the store. Anything else?

Q
Tastykakes?

ANT
Done.

Ant sits down at the table. Places the TWO ROCKS in front of him. Q continues to stare at his big brother.

ANT (CONT'D)
(not looking up)
You wanna cut?

Q
Really?

ANT
Sit.

Q plops into the chair opposite Ant. Ant slides a RAZOR and a chunk of rock across the table. Q scoops the razor up.

ANT (CONT'D)
I got boulders but I'm short on
dimes. You know the size?

Q shoots him a "no shit" look.

ANT (CONT'D)
Okay wise ass...proceed.

Q places the razor on top of the rock. Starts to move the razor towards himself...

ANT (CONT'D)
Stop.

Ant reaches across and repositions his brother's hand.

ANT (CONT'D)
45 degrees, away from you. Don't shave. Just set the size and press. Blade'll do the rest.

Q presses. A perfect dime size piece falls from the larger rock.

ANT (CONT'D)
Good. Give me fifty.

Q
Cool.

Q goes right back to work. Ant stands, crosses into the living room and returns.

ANT
You wanna taste?

Q looks up from his work. Ant unzips a LEATHER SATCHEL, about the size of an eyeglass case. He pulls out a GLASS PIPE and a LIGHTER.

Q
What?

ANT
I said, you want a taste?

Q
Serious?

ANT
Yeah, why not?

Q stares at his brother for a BEAT.

Q
Fuck you.

A small but proud smile comes to Ant's face.

ANT
Why?

Q
Ain't never gonna be no bitch...

ANT
(continuing, emphatic)
...to anyone or anything.

Q goes back to cutting the rock. Test passed....

Q
(not looking up)
Ain't never gonna be no bitch, Ant.

ANT
I know.
(smiles)
I'd kill you first.

INT. Q'S BEDROOM - DUSK

The 38 sits on the paint-flaked windowsill as Q blinks himself awake.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Q pees into the rancid bowl. Then, he hears a CRASH. Glass breaking.

Q
Ant?

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The door to Ant's bedroom is slightly ajar. Q creeps to the door. Looks inside...

Ant sits on the far side of the bed, his back to Q. He's leaned over, as if he's picking something off of the floor.

Q
Ant?

Ant spins around, his eyes wild.

ANT
What!? Why ain't you sleeping!?

Q
I heard something.

Ant turns away again.

ANT
Yeah, well... I dropped a coffee cup. Go get the broom, will ya?

Q
Okay.

Q looks up. The late-afternoon sun cuts through a THICK, WHITE SMOKE hanging in the air.

ANT
There's a bean pie in the kitchen.
Eat.

Q
Thanks. (beat) Ant, you OK?

ANT
Just get the broom, Q!

Q
Okay Ant.

Q pulls the door shut and disappears quietly down the hall.

EXT. CITY STREETS, NORTH PHILLY - NIGHT

A large, GAP TOOTHED WOMAN stands in front of Q... This is SHERONDA (22). She waits...

SHERONDA
What? Aint got all night.

Q
Don't you got a kid, Sheronda?

SHERONDA
Oh, now you fucked up, little Ant.
I'll buy from that nigga three
blocks away!

Q
That's tic Tac. He's Ant's too.
One six blocks down is Mo. I hear
there's base heads moving shit down
on Girard. You could hoof your ass
a mile down there.

Sheronda grabs Q by the collar.

SHERONDA
You a funny man!? You Eddie
fucking Murphy now?

Q doesn't answer.

SHERONDA (CONT'D)
I'll go right to Ant, Q... we was
in youth group.
(MORE)

SHERONDA (CONT'D)
Tell him you won't sell to a sista
from the neighborhood. See how he
likes his money going elsewhere!

Q stares into Sheronda's fat face. A BEAT passes. Then, Q's eyes glaze over. Who gives a fuck, right?

Q
One or two, Sheronda?

SHERONDA
I already said two, bitch!

EXT. NORTH PHILLY STREETS - LATER

Q pedals his BMX with such force that it seems like he's trying to lift it right off the ground and fly it away...

EXT. PHILBROOKE DAIRY, "THE BOTTLE" - LATER

The sun is a pinpoint on the horizon. The sky has turned purple with streaks of orange.

Q presses his head back into the milk bottle's concrete. All sound is gone. No horns. No stray dogs. No breaking glass. No chattering crack heads. Nothing but silence. Until...

Q hears a sound. CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP... He leans up and looks. Nothing... He leans his head back. Then... CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP.

Q strains his eyes to see.

A HORSE runs through the intermittent glow of street lamps. It's huge. Black. Ratty, but muscular.

Q
(sotto)
What the fuck..?

INT. NORTH PHILLY STREETS, ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Q sits on his bike in an alley. He watches the horse through the narrow passage between two abandoned brownstones. Out on the street, the horse gallops past...left to right, then right to left, then left to right, again. Again. Then...

The horse stops. Turns and stares at Q. It's like the horse's eyes are boring a hole right into him.

Q
What you want?

The horse takes off running...then stops. Comes back to the passage between the brownstones, and watches. He takes off again; stops, then comes back. Again...

Q smiles.

Q (CONT'D)
Okay...

Q takes off on his bike down the alley. From the street, we hear the sound of the horse's hooves as it runs parallel to Q.

Q's bike rockets out into the side street. A split second later, thirty feet away, the horse does the same. Q skids to a stop. The horse does the same.

Q looks down the street with a smile.

Q (CONT'D)
Alright motherfucker...

Q turns the bike and rockets back down the alley. The horse does the same on the street!

Q pedals with everything he has, slides out into lower side street and sees...the horse is already there waiting...

He chuckles.

Q (CONT'D)
Where you come from?

Q rests his bike against a telephone pole. Loosens his shirt so he can get to his gun. Slowly starts to move towards the horse.

The horse rears back, then bangs it's front hooves on the cobblestones. Q stops.

Q (CONT'D)
Chill! Ain't gonna hurt ya!

Q moves again. This time...the horse doesn't. Q continues to move closer... The horse's eyes seem to calm as Q gets within touching distance...

Q (CONT'D)
Don't hurt me.

Q slowly moves his hand to the horse's nose. The horse twitches, then lowers his snout to meet Q's hand. Sniffs. Q strokes the matted hair between the horse's eyes...

Q (CONT'D)
(looking around)
How the hell you get here?

Q grabs the horses bridle. Reaches down to a broken rope. Just then... the horse tears away from Q, races across the street and slams into a WOODEN FENCE. The horse rips his front hooves into the base of the fence.

Q (CONT'D)
What are you doing!?

Q crosses to the horse and sees... behind the fence are TUFTS of HIGH GRASS. Q reaches under the fence and pulls out a CLUMP.

Q (CONT'D)
This what you want?

The horse eats the grass right from Q's hand. Q reaches down and snatches out some more. The horse goes right back to eating.

Q (CONT'D)
You gotta be worth something...