

GIG ECONOMY
(THE SEQUEL TO THE ECONOMY SUCKS)

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FADE IN ON:

EXT. URBAN STREET - DAY

Sun beats down on a bustling hive of humanity. Corporate DRONES rush to work. BEGGARS hold out hands as they pass by.

Dressed in old suits, RICK and SAM (30s) weave through the "flood". Nimble Rick's in the lead. Sam staggers in his wake.

Impatient, Rick glances back at his friend.

RICK

Get a move on. Sam, it's 8:40 AM!

Exhausted, Sam picks up the pace. But shoulder slams into a YOUNG WOMAN carrying drinks.

Coffee and a thermos fly. SPLAT! The woman gasps, darts to the curb to clean up the mess. The coffee's ruined. The thermos: dented but otherwise unharmed.

Dark, thick liquid oozes from the lid. She wipes it clean with a napkin, snarls:

COFFEE GIRL

Watch where you're going, asshole!
They're gonna take this outta my -

SAM

I'm so, so sorry. Here, I'll help.

Sam stumbles towards her. Rick growls, spins him back around.

RICK

Save the good Samaritan role play
for lunchtime. Don't you see? The
light's about to change!

Ahead, a pedestrian SIGN blinks. Initially white, it flashes ominous red. Then:

A MAN in an expensive suit and shades crosses in front of Rick. His black, open umbrella blocks the view of the street.

Rick obediently stops to let the stranger glide on by.

Traffic lights change. Cars REV. Force Sam and Rick to wait.

RICK

Fuck!
(to Sam)

RICK (CONT'D)

A leech moves faster than you.
You're gonna make us *both* late.

SAM

Sorry -

RICK

That's two sorries in one block.
Save the last excuse for our boss!

Sam's weary face sags with guilt. Rick softens his tirade:

RICK

You look drained. What gives? You
tie another on last night?

Sam scratches his neck. Under his collar: small red welts...
perhaps razor burns - or hives?

SAM

Only if you call another late work
night "tying one on."
(dark chuckle)
Though metaphorically, you have a
point. Karen really put me to use.

Rick lays an empathetic hand on Sam's shoulder.

RICK

I feel you, bro. This pace chews
even the best of us to shreds.
That's why you gotta keep yourself
in fighting shape. Listen: there's
a deli on 53rd that sells Iron/B-12
espresso cocktails. They're open
24/7, good for even the latest
shifts. I'll ask Karen to order us
shots this morning.

SAM

Espresso? I can't afford -

RICK

We'll put it on the corporate card.
You know Karen. She's sure to,
uh.. crucify us if we're late. But
otherwise she'll do us right.

Sam nods, grateful. Dirty fingers reach up from the ground. A
hand grabs Sam's leg! He jumps, stares down.

At a disheveled BEGGAR on the sidewalk. Puncture bruises dot
the man's arms and neck.

BEGGAR

Buddy, spare a dime? I ain't eaten since Tuesday.

RICK

Screw you, parasite. There's no such thing as a free lunch. You want to eat, go find work!

BEGGAR

I got no energy left. I used to work, but they tapped me out!

Sam reflexively fishes in his pocket for change...

DING! The pedestrian light flicks back to white. Rick grabs Sam's arm and yanks him forward.

SAM

Ow! Rick, stop. He needs help -

Rick drags his friend across the intersection.

RICK

Don't be such a bleeding heart. That'll kill you *twice* as fast as work. And speak of the "Devil"...

A building looms before them. A monument to corporate elegance, a bold sign graces the door:

"Varney Ruthven Enterprises."

RICK

We've arrived!

INT. CORPORATE ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Red velvet wallpaper. Once mirrored doors painted dull gold. Rick and Sam stand shoulder to shoulder as doors hiss closed.

Rick's eyes slip towards Sam's jacket. A dark stain grows on the sleeve. It wasn't there before.

RICK

Mea culpa for the manhandling. I...

SAM

Didn't want to make us late. I know. Thanks.

RICK

It's just, you know there's an army of guys lined up to take our place. If either of us got laid off -

SAM

We'd end up on the street. Like...

RICK

That guy. Out there.

The two lapse into silence. Floor buttons flare as they rise.

SAM

Just one little mistake, that's all it takes to get laid off. Leaving us with nothing. While they keep... this.

(gestures at the opulence)

Do you think that's really fair?

RICK

Don't be such a hater. Ruthven and those like him earned their wealth!

SAM

Listen: these last few nights, whenever I can stay awake. I've been reading up on economies. Oligarchies, a lot like this. You know, where a few people have money and everyone else's a servant to their needs. Maybe it would help if we unionized? If we don't, the 1% will exploit...

RICK

Enough with that "exploit" and "privilege" bullshit! All we've got to "really" do is stop whining and put in enough time to earn a promotion to the board.

SAM

The Board. You sure?

RICK

Positive, my friend.

(laughs)

0 positive, to be exact.

SAM

"Put in our time". For how long?

RICK
To get to the inner circle? A
decade. Maybe five.

The elevator DINGS. The two step out. Into...

INT. A CORPORATE WINDING HALLWAY

The coworkers stride past half open rooms.

In the kitchen: BANKS OF REFRIGERATORS. Multiple shelves
lined with JARS.

The break room: Rutherford EMPLOYEES sprawl across couches,
passed out.

The label on the last door: EXTRACTION.

Sam and Rick step inside.

INT. EXTRACTION ROOM

A maze of cubicles. Rick and Sam sit down at adjacent desks.

Sam's cube is decorated with kitsch to spare. A stress ball
by the monitor. A HANG IN THERE kitty poster on the wall.

Rick powers up his PC: Excel flashes.

A silky female voice coos nearby.

KAREN
Ah boys, there you are! I was about
to call the temp agency.

KAREN glides towards them. Supernaturally elegant, a black
bag swings at her hip. Her pale face hidden behind shades.

Rick flashes a nervous grin.

RICK
Karen! See? You can count on us.

KAREN
If you want a year end bonus? I've
no doubt.

Karen fishes an IV TUBE from her bag, pushes Rick gently back
in his chair. It rolls a little, on wheels.

KAREN

Relax, handsome. Let's roll up those sleeves, get to work.

Slipping off Rick's jacket, Karen exposes:

Multiple puncture wounds. Given the IV NEEDLE in her hand, there's no question how Rick's bruises came about.

A MAN WITH SHADES and fashion-model features advances on Sam - bag and tube in hand. He yanks off Sam's blazer.

Rick side eyes Sam's cheap TANK TOP underneath.

RICK

Too tired to iron last night?

SAM

Uh, while I was dressing this morning, it occurred to me: why bother with dress shirts at all? This is easier access, right?

RICK

If you wanna flaunt the dress code-

Karen turns her seductive charm on Sam.

KAREN

A man with initiative? I like.

She ties a TOURNIQUET on Rick's arm. Jams the IV needle in.

RICK

Ow!

Blood instantly starts to flow. The ruby liquid drains into a jar - identical to those glimpsed on kitchen shelves.

Karen double-checks Rick's connection.

KAREN

Perfect. We're starting late, so figure on some overtime. See you in four hours, boys.

She turns to go. Rick grabs her arm.

RICK

Karen, can you order two B-12 espressos? Sam here... well, thanks to the double shifts, we both need a boost.

KAREN

(glares)

On our 3rd Quarter budget? HQ
bought you Netflix. That's enough.
If you want to drink, do that on
your dime, after work!

Karen glides off. Her male counterpart does, as well.

Left alone, Sam and Rick drain in silence. Exchange looks.

RICK

Welp, you heard the boss. Let's
start crunching numbers. That year
end bonus won't grow itself.

Sam flips through PC programs idly, hesitates.

SAM

Dunno. Right now, Netflix sounds
good. Or maybe I'll play solitaire.
I'm just not in an Excel mood.

RICK

Suit yourself. I'll multi-task.
That's what you gotta do, if you
get anywhere in life.

SAM

In life? Or is that death?

RICK

Whatever works!

Switching his browser to Incognito, Sam toggles a website:

"Marxist Theory and Vampires. Revolution Come to Life."

SAM

(mutters)

I'll read, thank you very much.
Good thing these bastards suck at
tech.

Oblivious, Rick speed types.

As the IV drains and gurgles, a hopeful grin grows on Sam's
face...

FINAL FADE OUT: