

**STRIFE**

"Pilot"

by

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Registered, WGAw

TEASER

INT. GYMNASIUM, MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL, LOS ANGELES - DAY

DIRK GOODMAN leans on the edge of the bleachers, watching and listening; he holds an unlit cigarette. Stubble plus a black suit with no tie puts him on the rugged side of handsome.

MARIA CANTONELLI speaks from behind a podium. A CROWD OF SUPPORTERS hang on her every word, soaking in her warm smile and capable tone.

MARIA

I was born just down the street  
from here, and I received my  
diploma right here in this  
gymnasium. Go Barristers!

Cheers and applause go up from the crowd.

GRAHAM TAYLOR stands next to Dirk. Once tougher but still charming, he's an older reflection of Dirk.

DIRK

She's good, boss. I want her.

GRAHAM

Then go get her.

Graham hardly pays attention; he's fixated on a line of CHEERLEADERS milling nearby.

GRAHAM

You know, I need to get out of the  
office more often.

Dirk follows Graham's eyes.

DIRK

Come on.

GRAHAM

Oh, and you wouldn't? You've gone  
soft on me, Dirk.

MARIA (O.S.)

And I'm sure many of you have eaten  
at my husband's restaurant. We  
appreciate the business!

Dirk spots a couple men sitting opposite them in the bleachers: KEN DUKE, tall and blonde with a square jaw and blue eyes, and his accomplice, the shorter but very slick TATSUO GODO.

DIRK  
They're here.

GRAHAM  
No surprise.

DIRK  
Always one step behind us.

GRAHAM  
Or one step ahead... I need to hit the john.

Graham exits the gym while Dirk focuses on Maria.

MARIA  
And so I am announcing my candidacy for Congress here in the 33rd District of California!

The crowd erupts, and Maria's husband VINCENT, a pleasant rube, kisses her on the cheek.

Dirk claps and watches people surround Maria.

Tatsuo walks over to him.

TATSUO  
She's impressive.

DIRK  
She has potential.

TATSUO  
She could go all the way to the White House.

DIRK  
You think? I'm skeptical.

TATSUO  
I didn't smell your stink on her yet.

DIRK  
I could smell yours from all the way over here. How'd you get off your leash? Where's Duke?

TATSUO  
Business, I guess.

Dirk realizes something's wrong, and he backs away.

TATSUO  
No hug?

Dirk turns and exits the gym.

INT. HALLWAY, MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Dirk sprints around a corner, and what he sees ahead stops him completely.

DIRK  
No, no, no...

Down the hall, Graham lies on the floor, battered and beaten, blood dripping from his mouth. DEVIL HORNS sprout from his forehead.

Ken leans over him, ANGEL WINGS CURLED around him.

KEN  
Oh, Dirk. You missed all the fun.

GRAHAM  
(sputtering)  
Dirk...

Ken reaches into Graham's chest...

DIRK  
No!

And Ken pulls out Graham's STILL-BEATING HEART.

Dirk drops to his knees as Ken crushes the heart in his hand.

A ROAR fills the hallway as a FIERY PORTAL opens up beneath Graham in the floor.

Graham's body distorts and twists as his soul is sucked from his body down into HELL.

The portal closes.

Ken puts the dead heart back into the cavity of Graham's chest. Ken's hand GLOWS, healing the wound. The blood fades, and the devil horns disappear.

KEN  
Heart attack. How tragic.

DIRK  
You're an animal.

KEN  
No more than you. We each see an opportunity, we take it. This is no game, Dirk. This war determines the fate of humanity.

He smiles.

KEN (CONT'D)  
Score one for the man upstairs.

Tatsuo steps out of a door behind Ken and leans on a locker. Two more Abercrombie models, twins XANDER and ZACH, join him.

DIRK  
You'll pay for that.

Dirk's fists GLOW WITH FIRE. DEVIL HORNS BURN through his forehead, and tendrils of BLACK SMOKE gather around him.

Ken stands tall and EXTENDS HIS ANGEL WINGS. Tatsuo, Xander and Zach also UNFURL THEIR WINGS and stand behind him. The four angels practically glow, beautiful and magnificent.

KEN  
Like you're any match for me.

Dirk weighs the odds against Ken and his accomplices.

DIRK  
Not all of you.

The fire fades from his hands, but he uses a fingertip to light up a cigarette.

DIRK  
This isn't over.

He walks away.

KEN  
No. We're just getting started.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER