

THE NEXT LEVEL

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EXT. SHED - DAY

Two police officers lean against the outside corner of a shed - a warehouse stands about fifty yards away. Bulletproof vests on, pistols at the ready. This is SHAWN (27) and BENSON (29), lifelong friends turned lifelong partners in the line of duty.

BENSON

(calm)

Okay, he's on the second floor.  
Bolt Action Sniper.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A man stands in the cutout of a second story window. He holds a long-barreled sniper, propped between himself and the base of the frame. This is GREG (53).

BENSON (V.O)

The hostage is tied up right next to him. Which means we need to do this carefully.

EXT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

SHAWN

Does that mean (no grenades?)--

BENSON

(over)

No grenades.

SHAWN

(quickly)

Damn!

Shawn slowly lowers a spool of grenades in his hand, back into his bag.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

So what's the plan?

BENSON

(pointing)

I say we make a run for the side entrance over there. I can hoist you up through the louver, where you can--

SHAWN

Take him out.

BENSON  
 Exactly... Which puts me on hostage  
 duty.

Shawn slides a duffel bag Benson's way. He zips it open.  
 Several electricians tools rest inside.

SHAWN  
 Hostage duty usually means bomb  
 duty.

BENSON  
 Okay, but there isn't always a bomb  
 involved...

They both look at each other.

BENSON (CONT'D)  
 I'm taking it for my own reasons,  
 not because you want me to.

Benson zips it back up. A beat.

SHAWN  
 You ready?

BENSON  
 (he looks to Shawn)  
 Yeah.

Shawn inches forward.

BENSON (CONT'D)  
 WAIT!

Benson's now extended arm blocks Shawn bringing him to a  
 halt. Just then, a bullet pierces the ground at the base of  
 Shawn's feet.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

GREG  
 (reloading)  
 SHOW YOURSELVES YOU FILTHY PIGS!  
 MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN!

EXT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

SHAWN  
 (stunned)  
 Nice one!

BENSON  
You should follow my lead.

SHAWN  
Duly noted.

Benson stands in front of Shawn, counting on his fingers like Greg's trigger finger is on some sort of timer. He gives the hand signal to go.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Greg jumps up, as he excitedly spots the duo scurry across his magnified scope. His finger grips the trigger.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BENSON  
(signaling)  
Okay, stop.

Shawn hurriedly stops behind him, almost knocking them both over.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Greg shoots, hitting the ground just inches in front of them.

GREG  
(FUCK!)  
Shit!

He rushes to reload. The hostage squirms behind him.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BENSON  
Okay, go-go. Go now!

They both continue sprinting, one foot after the other until Benson clips a short wire running between two posts. A mechanical contraption fires and Benson collapses.

Shawn whips around, turning back.

SHAWN  
BENSON!

He quickly grabs Benson and drags him to the side of the warehouse.

BENSON  
(panting)  
Oh shit...

SHAWN  
You're bleeding!

BENSON  
...I forgot about the tripwire.

SHAWN  
It's gone through the vest. We need  
to get this thing off you.

Shawn begins to reach around Benson's back.

BENSON  
No, no... Stop. It's okay. This run  
doesn't even count.

Benson snaps his fingers.

SHAWN  
Wh--

EXT. SHED - DAY

Benson and Shawn lean against the outside corner of a shed. Bulletproof vests on, pistols at the ready, set for round two.

BENSON  
(calm)  
Okay, he's on the second floor.  
Bolt Action Sniper. The hostage is  
tied up right next to him. Which  
means we need to do this carefully.

SHAWN  
(slowly)  
Does that mean...

BENSON  
...No grenades? Yeah.

Shawn looks down at the grenades in his hand, puzzled.

BENSON (CONT'D)  
Oh, and uh watch out for tripwires.  
He can get pretty crafty.

SHAWN  
 (dazed)  
 You just got shot.

BENSON  
 I did?

SHAWN  
 You just got shot!

BENSON  
 I did! Oh my God you remember?!

SHAWN  
 (panicked)  
 Yes, I- Why wouldn't I fucking  
 remember?! What the fuck is this!?  
 How are we - How are you--

BENSON  
 This is amazing, do you know how  
 long I've been waiting for this!?

Shawn shakes his head in disbelief.

BENSON (CONT'D)  
 Eight-hundred cycles! Eight-  
 hundred! I thought you were just...  
insanely stupid but it looks like  
 all you needed was an update to  
 your memory!  
 (hysterically)  
 Wait, look around. What do you see?

Shawn slowly drags his head across his surroundings.

SHAWN  
 Uhhhhhh...

He spots a first aid kit, full of bandages and other  
 appliances, floating in the distance. It glows a cartoonish  
 cool blue, illuminating the ground.

BENSON (O.S.)  
 That's a health pack. You collect  
 it if you're injured; it restores  
 you back to your fullest you.

BENSON (CONT'D)  
 (pointing)  
 That over there, by the side of the  
 warehouse.



















