

NERO  
By  
Prodigy

FADE IN:

EXT. DILAPIDATED CITY STREET - NIGHT

Sneakers blur across the sidewalk overgrown with weeds.

MAN

This isn't working!

NERO (V.O)

If you ran faster we wouldn't be in  
this predicament know would we?

With hot heavy breaths that pierce the cold night like daggers, a MAN (41) runs hard through the abandoned city. His dirty face illuminated by a projected hologram screen of a night vision in front of his view emanated by NERO, his computerized wristband that he raises on his right arm.

SUPER: South on 8th St and 5th Ave, Minnesota - 10:46 PM

MAN

If you weren't always so nosy we  
wouldn't be in this situation!

NERO (V.O.)

You know I can't stand incomplete  
map data. Turn left here.

The man makes a hard right at the street intersection.

SUPER: North on 5th Ave and 8th St, Minnesota - 10:46 PM

NERO (V.O)

No! Not that left! Your other left!  
... Rerouting.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The man does his best to reassemble the remains of a  
barricade on the front door.

NERO (V.O)

Accessing the floor plans.

A hologram map of the city street projects out into the air from the wristband that zooms into the Hyatt hotel, and then zooms again into a blueprint of the building.

Winded, and with hands on knees, the man catches his breath.

MAN

Do you think they saw us?

NERO (V.O)

With the way you run Usian Bolt,  
yes.

MAN

Who's that?

NERO (V.O)

An eight time Olympic gold medalist  
in the one hundred, two-hundred  
and... never mind.

MAN

Good idea.

NERO (V.O)

He was fast. You are not.

The man stands to peer out the corner of a window.

MAN'S POV: A large MOB OF SCALPERS run through the  
intersection and make a bee-line towards the hotel.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

With Nero's flashlight mode to illuminate the pitch black  
hallway, the man shakes each locked door handle in a frenzy.

MAN

Come on. Come on.

NERO (V.O)

Hold still for a moment. Let me  
try.

Steady, he holds Nero next to the key card lock. The red  
light on the door turns green. The man opens the door.

NERO (V.O)

Got any banks you'd like to visit?

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - ROOM 296 - NIGHT

Only the smallest amount of moonlight creeps in through the  
torn curtains to show overturned furniture and refuse  
everywhere.

NERO (V.O)  
Five star.

The man opens the moldy minibar to find a miniature bottle of unopened vodka in the door. Shocked, he opens it.

NERO (V.O)  
I don't think that's a good idea.

MAN  
The world ran out of good ideas  
years ago.

He sniffs the vodka and COUGHS. As he does, sounds of BROKEN GLASS echo from outside the hallway.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The hands of scalpers, many implanted with crude wires attached to cannibalized WRISTBANDS reach in through the nooks and crannies of the barricade and thrash it to pieces.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

In desperation, the man looks outside the torn curtain. In the distance on a far away building the red light of large antenna glows soft and dim.

MAN  
So close, yet so far. Can we jump?

NERO (V.O)  
I wouldn't recommend it. The chances of you breaking a leg are sixty-seven percent. Your ankle, eighty-eight percent.

MAN  
And dead if they find us?

NERO (V.O)  
One-hundred percent.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Five scalpers enter from the stairwell. Dressed in a combination of rags, coats and leather strewn with gadgets and wires, they spread out. All carry PIPES and BATS, a few are even armed with GUNS.

At the center of the group, the SCALPER LEADER (28), a heavily teched up brute of a man, orders his troops forward.

SCALPER LEADER  
Check every room! He's gotta be in  
here somewhere. I want that chip!

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - ROOM 296 - NIGHT

Back against the wall, the man eyeballs the room.

MAN  
(whispering)  
Looks like you win the popularity  
contest tonight.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frustrated, a TIMID SCALPER types away on his wristband to try and unlock the key card reader on a door. The red light repeatedly blinks red. Then green. He kicks the door in.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - ROOM 296 - NIGHT

Silently, the man reaches for a broken CHAIR LEG on a table.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Another scalper opens a door then goes inside to search. Hot and bothered, the leader caresses the tech crudely implanted into his arm.

SCALPER LEADER  
God I'm so hard for that chip!  
Where is that sweet and sexy  
silicon?

Out of the darkness, the most sickened and gnarled snarl of a dog fills the hallway.

SKINNY SCALPER  
What the hell was that?

SCARRED SCALPER  
Oh god no.

SCALPER LEADER  
In here? Not a chance in hell!

Panicked, the timid scalper flees as the skinny one shines an arm mounted flashlight down the hall.

At the end of the hallway, the eyes of a rabid PIT BULL and it's fanged jaw reflect in the light.

SKINNY SCALPER  
Jesus Christ! It is a dog!

SCALPER LEADER  
Run you mooks!

The scalpers retreat over each other and down the staircase as the pit bull gives chase in a full on sprint.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - ROOM 296 - NIGHT

Overcome by relief, the man grabs the vodka and slouches down the wall of the room. He downs the bottle in one swig.

NERO (V.O)  
Never thought I'd be so happy to  
see a dog again.

EXT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - DAY

The sun breaks over the horizon to show a city in ruins and overgrown with wild plants of all kinds.

INT. HYATT PLACE HOTEL - ROOM 296 - DAY

Placed atop a dresser, Nero powers on to life as the man snores, nude and passed out on the remains of the bed.

NERO'S SCREEN: A digital 5:29 AM flashes off and on next to a half empty battery icon that reads 52%. The 5:29 AM changes to 5:30 AM.

BZZZRT! BZZZRT! BZZZRT! Nero's alarm goes off as he vibrates on the dresser.

MAN  
Nero.... Come on man.

Nero continues to buzz and ring.

NERO (V.O)  
Rise and shine sleepy head. Early  
bird gets the worm.

MAN

The birds are all dead. Snooze!

The man chucks a nearby pillow wide at Nero.

NERO (V.O)

Missed!

In the reflection of a broken mirror the man slowly dresses. Still groggy and weary, he looks like he's been running on fumes for weeks, maybe even months.

NERO (V.O)

While you were sleeping I recalculated a safer route to the relay tower. One with a decreased probability of running into more scalpers. Figured after last night you could use a break.

MAN

Thanks buddy.

The man grabs Nero and clicks him onto his wrist.

NERO'S SCREEN: The battery icon begins to flash green as the charge increases from 52% and up.

NERO (V.O)

We're a team after all. I need you and you need me.

EXT. ASIAN MARKET STORE FRONT - DAY

Through tall grass that grows out of the cracks of the sidewalk, the man walks past the ruined entrance of a store.

Slowly he walks backwards to stop in front of it. Intrigued, he looks it up and down with interest.

NERO (V.O)

Apparently, this used to be an Asian market.

INT. ASIAN MARKET - DAY

Thoroughly ransacked and in complete disarray, the small store is littered with overturned shelves, trash, boxes and posters all written in Chinese. In the corner, the man hungrily digs through a large pile.

He shakes a heavy box full of items and tears it open to reveal an assortment of colorful bags, all in Chinese.

He scans a bag in front of Nero.

NERO (V.O)  
Shrimp noodles.

With a throwaway toss, the man grabs another to scan.

NERO (V.O)  
Shrimp chips.

He scans another bag.

NERO (V.O)  
Shrimp candy. It's supposed to be delicious.

Another.

NERO (V.O)  
Shrimp flavored rice cakes.

Another.

NERO (V.O)  
Shrimp jerky.

With a shrug of reluctance, the man opens the bag and pours the shrimp jerky into his mouth, then tries to chew.

He forces down a swallow but gags on the rest. In disgust he spits out the rest in a mash of shrimpy bits.

In the next box below are six packs of soda cans. He cracks one open and begins to down it before he sprays it back out.

NERO (V.O)  
Shrimp---

EXT. OVERGROWN STREETS - DAY

With the sun low in the afternoon sky, the man checks Nero's projected hologram map as he hikes through the street.

HOLOGRAM MAP: The path of a red line snakes through the city streets and alleys towards a marked destination. On the corner of the map reads 11.1 KM.

Ahead of the man, high in the distance is the red light of the building antenna clearly visible against the clouds.



NERO (V.O)

We would have made it to the relay tower by now if you had just taken the freeway like I had planned.

MAN

It's too risky to take the freeway and get ourselves boxed into a wham bam traffic jam.

NERO (V.O)

And to think, you used to be a fun date.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)

Help! Help! Somebody please help me! Anybody!

Startled, the man who ducks into the tall grass for cover.

MAN

(softly)

What the hell was that?

NERO (V.O)

A girl. Young. Approximately ten years of age. Two hundred feet to the northeast. She's in severe distress.

MAN

Scalpers. Christ! What's a girl that young even doing around here?

In a hunched run, the man takes cover behind the corner of a nearby building.

NERO (V.O)

Um, the relay tower is the other way.

MAN

Change of plans.

Like a camera, the man pans Nero out from behind the corner.

NERO (V.O)

Why did I know you'd say that?

He pulls his hand back, a zoomed in holographic recording projects above Nero.

HOLOGRAPHIC RECORDING: Surrounded by six SCALPERS, the scalper leader shoulders a young GIRL (10) towards a makeshift camp in a hollowed out building. A red BOW in her long hair, she kicks, screams and grabs at anything in reach to free herself.

MAN

And you said I was no fun anymore.

INT. HOLLOWED OUT BUILDING - DAY

An empty shell of a store filled with cabinets and shelves. As she's carried to a corner, the young girl fights back.

SCALPER LEADER

Line forms behind me boys!

With a gleeful grin, he tosses her into the corner.

EXT. HOLLOWED OUT BUILDING - DAY

Amid the rubble on the ground, the skinny scalper patrols, his eyes glued onto his crude wristband's You Tube video.

The scalper walks right by the man, partially hidden behind a DUMPSTER. With a sick thud, the man grabs the scalper's head and slams it into the brick wall of the building.

NERO (V.O)

For the record, I think this is a bad idea. We're wasting time. And they have guns. Shooty ones.

MAN

They wouldn't waste the bullet. Remember that trick we pulled back in Rockford? Do you think it would work again here?

NERO (V.O)

Which one?

The man climbs up onto the dumpster to get onto the roof.

MAN

Both.

Nero's screen activates with a bright glow.

INT. HOLLOWED OUT BUILDING - DAY

Back against the wall, surrounded by scalpers, the girl takes the bow out of her hair and nervously unwraps it to unveil a SHANK.

SCALPER LEADER  
(laughing)  
Now isn't that adorable! Why can't  
you mooks be that resourceful?

With a cringe, the timid scalper grabs the wires implanted into his right ear.

TIMID SCALPER  
Frack! Do you guys hear that?

MAN (O.S.)  
Hey low-tech! Come get your kicks  
on this route sixty-six!

The leader turns around to find the man, arms crossed, in a doorway across the building.

SCALPER LEADER  
You! Mooks! Get that chip!

The five scalpers charge the man.

In sudden pain, the leader pulls a bloody shank out of his side. He smiles at the girl. Licks his blood off the weapon.

MAN  
Now Nero! Now!

NERO'S SCREEN: Computer code blazes down the screen as the battery icon flashes red. Charge rapidly drains from 88%.

Their tech gone haywire, all the scalper's stop dead in their tracks. Alarms, music, and videos blast at full volume while sparks fly as the feedback electrocutes them.

The man pounces. With a flurry of sucker punches he drops each scalper as he works his way to the leader.

A hurt scalper rises, tears off his hacked tech and swings at the man with a balled fist.

NERO (V.O)  
Behind you!

The man ducks, pivots, and knocks out the scalper for good.

NERO (V.O)  
Oh this is gonna hurt...

Before he can recover the leader tackles him then lands a series of hard blows, one after another.

His face a mashed up mess, the man grabs a punch with his right hand. The leader grabs Nero, begins to pry him off.

MAN  
... Boom mother fucker...

NERO'S SCREEN: The battery indicator drops from 19% to 9%.

A flashbang of light and sound explodes out from Nero in the leader's face, blinded, thrown back, but with Nero in hand.

The leader hits the floor hard. Nero flies from his grasp.

Slowly, the man grabs his stomach and pulls out the shank.

MAN  
Nero. Did we win? Is she safe?

The scalpers recover also and start to stand back up.

NERO (V.O)  
Unknown. I've lost track of her location. She's a ghost.

MAN  
Good.

SCALPER LEADER  
If you were as smart as your chip,  
you'd best hurry up and die now.

Through pain and spit blood, the man laughs back.

SCALPER LEADER  
I wasn't joking. What's so funny?

MAN  
Nero... Turn up for what.

NERO'S SCREEN: Battery at 5%. The volume bar goes to max.

The loudest most high pitched SHRILL ever fills the room.

TIMID SCALPER  
Ow! That's the sound I heard!

SCALPER LEADER  
(terrified)  
You're insane!

Through the sound, the echos of DOGS BARKING grows louder.

TIMID SCALPER  
Oh God! They're already here! We'll  
all get K-Nine-V!

Suddenly, a pack of WILD RABID DOGS break into the room. The scalpers run in sheer terror as the dogs attack them all.

One of the dogs jumps onto the leader, mauls and bites his arm severely. Within seconds his body falls into spasms.

Another scalper is bitten and falls dead into spasms. The others flee as the dogs give chase. The BARKS and SCREAMS fade quickly.

NERO'S SCREEN: A flicker on and off. Battery at 3%.

NERO (V.O)  
You can come out now. I sensed your  
heat signature through the door.

A cabinet door CREEKS open slowly. The young girl emerges.

YOUNG GIRL  
What about your friend?

NERO (V.O)  
His heat signature I cannot detect.

Full of curiosity, she picks up Nero, snaps him on.

NERO'S SCREEN: The battery icon turns green. 4% and rising.

She holds her wrist up to inspect Nero.

NERO (V.O)  
I'm Nero.

ALICE  
Alice. My name is Alice.

FADE OUT:

THE END