

INNER VOICE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

On the vanity there's a bottle of cognac, a glass and a pile of rolled blunts.

Staring in the mirror wearing gray sweats, boots and a lot of jewelry is EFFORTLESS, twenty-three.

His slim athletic frame is covered with tattoos. The long different color dreadlocks drape perfectly on his shoulder and chest.

A stern look of confidence resides on his face, smiling at his reflection.

EFFORTLESS
I grinded my ass off for this
moment, baby. Tonight is my night.

DENZEL (O.S.)
This nigga funny.

Effortless looks around confused.

DENZEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't be confused like you don't
know what's going on, nigga.

EFFORTLESS
(Laughs)
I'm buggin'. Stage fright is
fuckin' with me. I just need to
relax.

Effortless goes in his pocket and pulls out a lighter before picking up one of the blunts.

Placing the blunt in his mouth, he lights it, taking a hard pull.

Holding the smoke for a few minutes, he slowly releases.

Nodding his head satisfied, he takes another pull, and then takes a seat prepared to pour a glass of liquor.

DENZEL (O.S.)
I'll be god damn. Virgin lungs is a
heavy smoker now. Wait a minute...or
is that a fat ass blunt stuffed
with tobacco?
(Laughs)
This nigga really trying to live up
to a image he doesn't live. I love
this shit.

Effortless takes another pull, and then places the blunt down, using his finger to dig in his ear, looking around confused.

EFFORTLESS

I'm hearing shit. There's no fuckin' way I should be---

DENZEL (O.S.)

Living the good life off your best friend you fucked over. I agree.

EFFORTLESS

I didn't fuck you over. What happened to you doesn't have shit to do with me.

DENZEL (O.S.)

(Laughs)

The root of all evil really has you believing the shit you're rapping about. That number one song you're performing tonight is my favorite, let me tell you. I damn near believed the bars were real.

EFFORTLESS

They are real.

DENZEL (O.S.)

And you're still roaming around untouched?

(Laughs)

Give me a fucking break.

Effortless picks up the bottle and takes a nice swallow.

EFFORTLESS

Niggas be jealous even in death. You would think a motherfucker would be proud of your success.

DENZEL (O.S.)

You would also think a motherfucker was your boy, and wouldn't fuck you over.

EFFORTLESS

You fucked yourself over.

DENZEL (O.S.)

I fucked myself over?

EFFORTLESS

You goddamn right you fucked yourself over.

DENZEL (O.S.)
How do you figure that?

EFFORTLESS
You weren't on your shit. What does
any of that have to do with me?

DENZEL (O.S.)
Dig this nigga.

EFFORTLESS
(Takes a sip)
Nah nigga, dig you. On my night,
your bitch ass comes outta nowhere
to bitch about some shit that has
nothing to do with me. And on top
of that---

There's a knock at the door.

EFFORTLESS (CONT'D)
What?!

CHLOE
Damn. I was just checking to see if
you're good.

Effortless picks up the blunt and takes a pull.

EFFORTLESS
(Sighs)
I'm sorry baby, come in.

The door comes open and in walks CHLOE. A short beautiful
brown skin woman with a golden tan and a luscious body.

She walks over to Effortless and they embrace in a hug,
followed by a kiss as he grabs her ass.

CHLOE
Are you okay?

EFFORTLESS
Yeah...yeah, I'm good. Just trying to
motivate myself.

CHLOE
Do you need a little help from me?

She smiles, reaching between his legs with seduction.

He winces, getting into it, but then he stops her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Are you sure you're alright?

EFFORTLESS

It's all good. Look, I need to finish this drink so I'll be ready when I get out there. We can get it poppin' after I kill it on stage.

CHLOE

Okay.

She gives him a sleazy kiss, while moaning.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Make sure you lay down the way I like it.

EFFORTLESS

Just have that throat open for daycare.

She sticks three of her fingers down her throat with ease, and then removes them.

CHOLE

Daycare stays open twenty-four hours for you. See you after the show.

Walking away, she adds some seduction to her steps, leaving the room.

Effortless looks on smiling, taking a hit from the blunt.

DENZEL (O.S.)

That's a nice piece of ass.

EFFORTLESS

I know this.

DENZEL (CONT'D)

Shit, I wish I was alive to have a go at it.

EFFORTLESS

(Scoffs)

You wouldn't have a chance even if I set it up so we could run her.

DENZEL (CONT'D)

Yeah, you might be right. On some real shit, man to man. I'm proud of you. Have a good show out there.

EFFORTLESS

(Takes a pull)

Thank you. That's all a nigga want.

DENZEL (O.S.)
 Fa sho. Oh, one more thing. Can I
 get a shout-out? I mean, if I
 didn't get caught up in the
 bullshit, it was gonna be me and
 you tonight, right?

Effortless takes one last pull from the blunt and then puts it out, followed by a big swallow from the bottle.

EFFORTLESS
 I'll think about it. Tonight is all
 about me nigga, Effortless. Because
 I do this shit with no effort.

Before leaving the room, he sprays some water on his body to add a glistening effect as if he just finished working out.

Satisfied with the way he looks, he fixes his jewelry, and then leaves the room.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

The arena is sold out with screaming fans chanting "E" waiting for him to come on stage.

The lights go out and the lights from the fans' phones come on, while they continue chanting his name.

EFFORTLESS (O.S.)
 Y'all muthafuckers ready to blow
 this bitch down?

The crowd grows louder.

EFFORTLESS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 That shit sounds weak. I said "Are
 you muthafuckers ready to blow this
 bitch down?!"

The screams and chants continue getting louder.

EFFORTLESS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 That's what I like to fuckin' hear.
 Since y'all got love for me being
 one of the realist niggas on the
 mic, tell me how I do it.

The crowd starts chanting "Effortless" and that's when a spotlight shines on stage showing Effortless ready to perform.

EFFORTLESS (CONT'D)
That's why y'all my muthafuckin'
people! Drop my beat!

The beat comes on and the crowd remains with the same hype energy.

DENZEL (O.S.)
Last chance to make shit right?

Removing the mic from his mouth, Effortless begins walking back and forth getting into the groove of the beat.

EFFORTLESS
Fuck you, nigga.

DENZEL (CONT'D)
Bet that.

Effortless lifts the mic to his mouth prepared to rap, but he has no idea he's not about to rap the lyrics to his song.

Instead, Denzel is about to make him confess the truth, but in Effortless mind, he's going to believe he's rapping his song.

EFFORTLESS
Yo, I like my blunts stuffed fatter
than my bitch ass in her pants,
recently turned twenty-three and my
dead homie girl was my first piece
of ass. Y'all think I'm smoking
loud, when it's actually tobacco
colored to look like gas, that's
why i can inhale and exhale clouds
without missing a syllable. Never
been the one to solve my own
conflicts because when shit gets
real, my feet turn into meals on
wheels, doordashing, avoiding
getting killed. I'm not a killer,
I'm a gum bumping fraud nigga,
using my homie lyrics to make
myself a superstar nigga. Speaking
on my dead nigga, me and his old
bitch which is now my bitch set
that nigga up to get popped, I had
some niggas plug him in the back of
the head in his truck while our
bitch was giving him some sloppy
top. Before the nigga body turned
cold, I stole his catalog, beats
and his hoe, I was a jealous nigga
seeing him on top, while niggas
slept on me like they overdosed off
lean and blow.

(MORE)

EFFORTLESS (CONT'D)

Now that y'all know the truth, do
 you still think I'm a raw real one?
 I just melted y'all domes with my
 flow because my desire to be on top
 went smooth as sharp clippers
 across the dome, and I did it...

He holds his mic towards the crowd expecting them to chant
 "Effortless" but instead, there's complete silence.

He looks around at the DJ, and then taps his mic to make sure
 it's on.

EFFORTLESS (CONT'D)

What the fuck is wrong with y'all?
 I said I did it---

The crowd starts chanting derogatory words, while throwing
 cups and various other things on stage.

He stands looking at them confused, listening to them
 continue the onslaught of negative words.

When they start throwing chairs, that gets him to run off
 stage.

Coming backstage he looks confused seeing Chloe in handcuffs
 trying to break free.

When she sees him, she instantly catches an attitude.

CHLOE

What the fuck is wrong with you?!
 Why would you rap that bullshit out
 there?!

EFFORTLESS

Huh? What the fuck are you talking
 about?

Some officers walk towards him prepared to place him under
 arrest.

OFFICER #1

Eric Reigns, you're under arrest
 for the murder of Denzel Gage. You
 have the right to remain silent.
 Anything you say can and will be
 used against you in the court of
 the law.

EFFORTLESS

Y'all got me fucked up! I'm not
 going---

OFFICER #2

Kill the fake tough guy shit. You already exposed yourself, so shut the fuck up and let's go.

Officer #2 steps behind him and places him in handcuffs.

Chloe is still cursing him out, while being pulled away.

Effortless expression can't be explained as they start walking him off.

EFFORTLESS

This shit can't be real. Wait till I call my fuckin' lawyer. All of you motherfuckers are getting sued and fired.

OFFICER #1

I guess the drugs you rappers take really fuck up your mind. Wait a minute...you don't do none of that shit, poser. I guess you just had a guilty conscience.

EFFORTLESS

Guilty conscious? I don't---

DENZEL (O.S.)

I told you to make the shit right, bitch ass nigga.

EFFORTLESS

YOU! Motherfucker, this is all because of you! What did you make me say?!

The officers look at each other confused, and then continue to escort him out of the building, while he continues yelling, appearing to be talking to himself since no one can hear Denzel's voice.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Effortless is sitting on his bunk writing at his table getting frustrated, balling the paper up, throwing it across the cell.

Taking a deep breath, he starts writing on a new piece of paper.

DENZEL (O.S.)

What's wrong, big dawg? Can't come up with some hot shit on your own?

EFFORTLESS

I don't hear shit you're saying.

DENZEL (O.S.)

Oh, you hear me. Maybe if your bitch ass gave me at least a shout-out, I would've let your ole ho ass continue living your fake ass life. Goddamn, you had a nigga killed, stole his bitch and his lyrics. How much more can you take, shit?

EFFORTLESS

The spotlight. It was always about the spotlight and the money.

DENZEL (O.S.)

And look where that shit got you. What are you doing, trying to write a comeback album?

(Laughs)

This nigga trying to be the number rapper behind bars.

EFFORTLESS

Shut the fuck up! It'll always be about me, and I'll always be number one.

DENZEL (O.S.)

I don't know. Some of the opps you blamed my death on will be locked up with you. And you know what they do to fake niggas behind bars.

EFFORTLESS

I ain't worried about shit.

DENZEL (O.S.)

Nigga, you cry like a bitch when you crack your knuckles. The niggas who thought you were real turned they back on you. And we both know goddamn well you don't have no hands, so now what?

Effortless begins banging the base of his hands against his head.

EFFORTLESS

Shut up. Just shut the fuck up. I took your life, your bitch and your style. You're irrelevant nigga, so shut the fuck up.

DENZEL (O.S.)

(Laughs)

You couldn't make me shut the fuck up in real life, so what makes you think you can do the shit now?

EFFORTLESS

I wasn't scared of you when you were alive, and I'm sure as fuck not scared of you while you're dead. So, just shut the fuck up.

DENZEL (O.S.)

Since you had my ass killed, you must've been scared of something.

EFFORTLESS

Shut up! Fuck this. I know how to shut you up.

Denzel begins saying various things to rile Effortless up.

Fed up with hearing Denzel's voice, Effortless picks up both of the pencils lining them up with his ear holes.

As Denzel keeps talking, Effortless takes a deep breath before slamming the pencils into his ears, releasing a loud scream as he falls to the floor.

Effortless lies motionless with blood coming from his ears.

DENZEL (O.S.)

This is the only thing your bitch ass could do Effortlessly.

Moving over to the desk where we see some blood spotted on the paper he was writing on, we see...

INSERT PAPER

He was starting a song titled "The Real E" and the first line starts off saying "I wanna apologize to my man "D." It should've been me and you at the top, but I got greedy and thinking about you made me expose myself to the people who thought "Effortless" was the real me. I hope you can hear my song from heaven, OG.

FADE TO BLACK:

"Why pretend to be something you're not, knowing eventually pressure does bust pipes?"

~Bernard Mersier~