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WORK SAMPLE
Genre: Action/Thriller

THE GAME: CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE:

MICHAEL STANLEIGH is a detective with major crimes in San Francisco, CA. Due to rising social unrest, however, instead of getting to work a few serious cases, he ends up working many cases of "petty crime." After a long day spent dealing with break-ins and street fights, he ends up at a local bar with his best friend, JARED TANNER, also a cop. When he expresses to JARED that he's been stressed out, JARED introduces him to THE COLISEUM, a brand new TV show.

CHAPTER TWO:

MICHAEL goes home and watches a few episodes of The Coliseum. In it, men and women fight to the death in a high tech urban arena. He witnesses a very exciting "cat and mouse" chase that results in two deaths. MICHAEL is fascinated, but disturbed by what he sees. He calls JARED to ask what is up with the show. JARED laughs off MICHAEL's concerns and explains that it's all fake, with high-tech CGI. He thinks they must have "great writers," because the characters all have such realistic and elaborate backstories.

CHAPTER THREE:

MICHAEL, still having a bad feeling about things, decides to stop watching The Coliseum. But the next day, he's out working, and he comes across a crowd of people on the street all watching a scene from the show that's being projected onto a giant screen. Then, when he's inside someone's house trying to get a statement about a crime, they're also playing the show. He realizes just how much cultural significance it has. He also recognizes one of the faces on the screen: a man he put in prison while he was working major crimes. How could the CGI-generated characters include two people he knows should be in prison?

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CHAPTER FOUR:

MICHAEL goes to speak with his boss, Police Chief LOUISA PERRY, about his concerns regarding the show. Why has he seen multiple convicts on the show? And is the police department concerned about the rise of this incredibly violent show alongside an increase in crime? Chief Perry waves off MICHAEL's concerns and says to stop worrying about some popular TV show. But MICHAEL goes home and starts watching again, this time as an investigator, and he sees another man he recognizes from major crimes. He also tries to do some research on the show's writers and producers, and can't find anything.

CHAPTER FIVE:

MICHAEL, having found out that the two men he recognized were both sent to the same maximum security prison out in the desert, applies to go undercover there. In his application, he doesn't mention anything about the show, or the prisoners he's curious about. Instead, he claims to be investigating an assassin-for-hire ring that he believes is being run out of that prison. CHIEF PERRY says that she is glad he's dropped the weird TV show issue, and signs off.

CHAPTER SIX:

MICHAEL starts off as an undercover prisoner at Desert Cholla Maximum Security Prison, and starts getting the lay of the land. He makes friends with his cellmate, NATHAN RECTOR, who is friendly and informative. The guards and inmates all love watching The Coliseum, which is on constantly in the rec room. Strangely, he can't find either of the men he thought were supposed to be there. He notices some other things have changed about the prison since he last visited to speak with an inmate - there is a ton more workout equipment, and men spend a lot more time out in the yard exercising. Men also get surprise early releases way more frequently than they should, given the nature of their crimes. He sees one of the early-released men on an episode of The Coliseum, and that seals it for him: something very fishy is going on.

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CHAPTER SEVEN:

MICHAEL meets with LOUISA to give her an update on his undercover work. He confesses to her that the hitman ring was a ruse and he's actually investigating what he believes is a connection between this prison and The Coliseum. LOUISA acts shocked, as if she'd never even considered that they could be related, and also dismissive, insisting that MICHAEL has been in prison too long and is just projecting things, and that he should drop the issue. Later, in his cell, he speaks with NATHAN about it, and finds that NATHAN shares some of his suspicions about the early releases and the TV show, but the prisoners have figured out that anyone who speaks up about this disappears.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

MICHAEL is woken up in the middle of the night and told that he is moving to a new cell as he is being manhandled out of bed. He protests and even tries to explain that he is actually an undercover cop and needs to call his CHIEF PERRY, his handler, but no one listens. He is thrown into a solitary cell, where he finds exercise equipment, practice weapons, maps of an urban area he doesn't recognize, and a folder of papers. Most of the papers are boilerplate, explaining that he has earned "early release under special conditions" pending his success in a competition. But there's a note at the end that's just for him, explaining that unfortunately, he's been asking too many questions. It's in LOUISA's handwriting.

CHAPTER NINE:

MICHAEL realizes he's being sent into The Coliseum, and he does everything he can to prepare. He studies the maps of the arena, practices with the weapons provided, and works out. He isn't fed very much during this period of his captivity. Finally, some guards come and open the door. They give him a change of clothes and he recognizes the plain street-clothes that the contestants on The Coliseum wear. When he's changed, they blindfold and shackle him and drive him somewhere.

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CHAPTER TEN:

MICHAEL finds himself dropped off in a tiny alleyway. He peers out and sees a street full of burned-out cars and broken glass, lined by busted-up buildings. One of the buildings is a grocery store. He's desperately hungry and realizes his first priority needs to be finding some food. But there's a man armed with a massive gun standing outside the store, and MICHAEL has no weapons. MICHAEL decides to climb up a fire escape in the alleyway to try and get a better view. He is able to sneak around on top of some buildings and cross the street after throwing a beer bottle to distract the guard. He makes it to the roof of the store and climbs inside, stealing a few packages of ramen noodles and a bottle of water. Someone inside the store catches him, and he has to fight his way back out.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

MICHAEL finds a rat-infested abandoned apartment and manages to cook and eat some of the noodles. By this time, it's getting dark. He decides to use the cover of night to explore a bit. He ends up in a sort of courtyard that he recognizes from watching The Coliseum on TV, and he finds a tree that he knows is hiding a camera. He runs up to the camera and starts speaking, explaining that the contestants are not virtually generated but are real people. That he knows many of them have committed terrible crimes, but they have a right to safety within prison and to serve out their sentences rather than being subjected to a cruel battle royale. He hopes he can incite the viewers to understand what's really going on, and rise up against the show. Suddenly, however, the courtyard is flooded with light, and a dozen contestants descend on him.

CHAPTER TWELVE:

MICHAEL has to fight his way out of the courtyard, climbing the tree, wrestling a knife away from one of his attackers, and engaging in an extended fight scene. From up in the tree, he sees a police car out on the street that doesn't look too damaged. He knows cop cars are

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supposed to be impossible to hotwire, but since he is a cop, he knows where the parts are hidden. He makes it out to the cop car and gets away, also finding a gun in a secret compartment that he is aware of. He drives out to the edge of the arena, where it's mostly desert. On the car radio, he hears that there is a bounty on his head - whoever kills him gets instant release.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

After trying to get the radio to send any signals and failing, MICHAEL realizes he needs to ditch the cop car, which everyone knows he's driving. He takes the gun and heads for an adobe house, where he posts up and hides. There are some cans of beans in the pantry, and he makes himself something to eat. He sleeps fitfully through the night, then when the sun rises, starts watching out the window. A man approaches the house and MICHAEL shoots at him, but he raises his hands in surrender and starts shouting something. MICHAEL realizes it's his old cellmate, NATHAN, and lets him in. NATHAN tells MICHAEL that the inmates saw him on TV talking into the camera - they shut off the feed after a few seconds, but it was clear to everyone what was going on. NATHAN made such a fuss about it that he got sent into the arena, too. He wants to help MICHAEL escape and expose the show for what it truly is.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

They hear a helicopter overhead. It seems that some of the other contestants "found" a helicopter, which the show's producers provided to ensure that they were able to find and kill MICHAEL. NATHAN and MICHAEL watch out the window as it lands in the dust, and armed men pour out to take the adobe house. An extended firefight ensues as they fight inside and out of the house. NATHAN dies, but MICHAEL survives.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

MICHAEL realizes that there's no way a bunch of convicts living in maximum security prison knew how to fly and land a helicopter, and deduces that one of them must be with the show. He stabs one of the

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men and demands to know who was flying the helicopter, then goes and finds that guy bleeding out in the kitchen. He patches up the pilot, then drags him out to the helicopter and demands at gunpoint that he be flown out of the arena and taken to wherever the show is being run out of. The pilot flies him to a patch of desert beyond the arena and lands near a few very fancy looking trailers.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN:

MICHAEL, still holding the pilot at gunpoint, busts into one of the trailers. He finds LOUISA Perry and some Hollywood-types sitting around one of the tables trying to figure out how to address this issue. They try to subdue him and talk him down, but he's been trained in hostage negotiation and he doesn't fall for any of their tricks. He demands an explanation and learns that this is a way for the police department to make a ton of money, and to reduce the prison population. MICHAEL sees the main microphone for the radio they use to communicate with contestants, and tells them that there's a trailer full of "High Value Targets" out at the edge of the arena, and that whoever kills someone inside gets their freedom as well as a million dollars.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

MICHAEL is still holding the police chief and producers at gunpoint. They are terrified and do not want a mob of convicts coming to murder them. Tensions are very high inside the trailer as they plead with MICHAEL to let them take the helicopter and go, promising him anything and everything. Meanwhile the pilot is in bad shape. MICHAEL avails himself of the nice food and water in the trailer and takes a handful of documents that prove what's going on. As they hear the contestants approach, MICHAEL finally makes a deal with them: he will let them all live if they release everyone from The Coliseum and into an appropriate prison with adequate food, mental health services, etc. and they broadcast themselves, live, explaining the truth about the show, and surrender themselves to whatever prosecution they are in for.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

MICHAEL goes outside and calms the mob, explaining what's going on. Many of the men and women are still out for blood, but MICHAEL convinces them that it's better for everyone if they stand down and

allow the people inside the trailer to broadcast their confession. MICHAEL also distributes a bunch of food from the trailer to the contestants. They set up for the broadcast, and soon, all viewers of The Coliseum are treated to an image of their police chief and the show's producers telling them exactly what's been going on. Soon, news vans and ambulances are descending on the area. Contestants who are injured or starving get treated, and some of them give interviews.

CHAPTER NINETEEN:

Flash forward six months MICHAEL STANLEIGH, now the police chief, visits LOUISA in prison. They talk about how he was promoted to Police Chief and has been making significant progress in cutting down crime in the area. It turns out that a lot of the unrest was being manufactured so they could get more people onto the show, and to increase viewership of the show. Also, since MICHAEL has had experience being imprisoned and exploited, he understands the needs of the community better. He talks to LOUISA about whether she's being treated well in prison, and she sheepishly says that she is, and she's grateful for the oversight and reforms MICHAEL has implemented, especially the hospital wing named after NATHAN.