

INNER CITY GAMER

Written by

Robert Salone

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Secondlookrocks@yahoo.com

FADE IN

MONTAGE OF VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES.

MONOLOGUE OF GAMERS TALKING ABOUT WHY THEY LIKE GRAPHIC BLOOD AND GORE RATED M FOR MATURE VIDEO GAMES

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. MALL VIDEO ARCADE - DAY

The arcade walls covered with posters of the latest video game offerings. Teens walking around aimlessly, looking for the right game to test their skills.

Standing in front of a large flat screen television. TEENS watch, as two GAMER'S wage an epic battle... On the screen, avatar killing machines eliminating the human threat.

INT. BASEMENT OF A HOME - DAY

The fluorescent lights dimmed in the finished room. We see five TEENAGE BOYS wearing headsets. Watching the battle play out in front of them on three strategically placed televisions.

Energy drinks, and empty bags of potato chips lay scattered on the floor. A cell phone ringing. No one moves to answer it.

The group working together. One UNIT. Each gamer carrying out his assigned duty. The goal: WIN THE GAME...

A KEY target DESTROYED... GAME OVER. High fives all around. On the screen, the cities and scores of the losing teams:
Japan - 75,000, Austria - 125,000, Miami - 132,000.

Playing: Marvin Gaye's - Inner City Blues..

EXT. MONTAGE CITY OF PITTSBURGH -- DAY

Aerial views of Pittsburgh Skyline

FORT PITT TUNNEL - GOING INTO THE CITY.

INT/EXT. MINIVAN - DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

We see an attractive black woman (40) driving a mini-van. Her three sons (ages 8-12) sitting in the backseat. Electronic pacifiers keeping them quiet... Under control.

Exiting the tunnel. She looks into the rearview mirror. Smiling. Merging into the right lane. Taking in the view of the city.

We follow the car driving along a busy highway. Disappearing into the city.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTAGE HILL DISTRICT - DAY - SAME

We see row after row of run down INNER CITY apartment buildings. Store front churches. Liquor stores, people going about their daily routines on the street.

EXT. SHOP & SAVE MARKET - DAY - SAME

A new supermarket, with its modern facade, and large neon lettering seems out of place.

Standing at the entrance. Telling animated stories. A group of black teens. Jeans riding low around their hips, exposing colored underwear.

Pulling into the parking lot. The mini-van.

Exiting the store. a light skinned man (17) wearing a PIRATE'S cap, and a dark colored hoodie. The group starting to leave the parking lot. Walking south on CENTRE STREET. Passing a nearby POLICE STATION.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF POLICE STATION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Getting out of a silver dodge charger. A middle aged white man (55) with RED HAIR, wearing sun glasses - **DETECTIVE WATTS**. Watching the group with intense curiosity as they cross the street. Headed up the hill towards a row of tenement houses. Disappearing into an alley.

Starting to cross the street. Thinking better of it. He heads into the station.

CUT TO:

2B

ESTABLISHING SHOT DEE WINTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING.

2B

Two story BRICK BUILDING. Security bars around the first floor windows. The grass in the front yard, overgrown.

INT. DEE WINTERS BEDROOM -- EVENING

The small room is cluttered with clothes. Hair and nail products scattered over a small dresser.

Leaning against the closet door. **DEE WINTERS**, a black woman (40), struggling to put on the second of her work shoes.

DEE

Ahhh...

Walking across the room. Looking in the mirror. Pulling at her POLYESTER UNIFORM... Unhappy with the way it looks.

DEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Sitting upright in front of a flat screen television, we see a meek looking black boy (15), **THOMAS WINTERS**. His fingers moving rapidly over the buttons of the GAME CONTROLLER. He is consumed with the events unfolding on the screen.

DEE (O.S.)

THOMAS. Baby... I don't know if I told you... but I've gotta work late tonight.

Oblivious to his mother. Continuing to play the game. Adjusting his glasses with the controller.

DEE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Throwing clothes off the bed. DEE grabs the end of the flat sheet. Shaking it several times in the air. Watching it fall unevenly across the bed.

Repeating the effort... (frustrated), she leaves the bed the way it is.

DEE'S LIVING - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, inching closer to the television.

DEE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Picking up her purse. DEE swings the large RED bag over her shoulder. Walking through the door. Hitting the light switch.

HALLWAY NEAR DEE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Halfway down the hall, reaching into her purse. Pulling out a small lighter, continuing to dig, she finds the pack of **NEWPORT LIGHTS**.

DEE CONT'D (O.S.)

THOMAS...

DEE'S LIVING-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS

Ma'am.

Pausing the game.

HALLWAY NEAR DEE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DEE, pointing the pack of cigarettes at him.

DEE

I'm working late tonight -- so I need for you to be in bed before ten o'clock. It's a school night -- and LORD knows you have a hard enough time getting out of bed in the morning.

Walking past a row of hanging coats, picking up her leather jacket, she heads towards the kitchen, tugging at her uniform.

DEE (CONT'D)

If you need me, I've got my cell.

DEE'S LIVING-ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, lip syncing his mother's next words.

THOMAS

But don't call me unless it's an emergency.

DEE (O.S)

But don't call me unless it's an emergency.

THOMAS

I know...

INSERT. - TELEVISION SCENE - SAME

A DARK INDUSTRIAL ALLEYWAY.

We hear FOOTSTEPS pounding hard against the pavement. Coming into view, a black man (Avatar figure - 25), wearing a RED HOODIE being chased by a DARK figure.

DEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DEE, looking into the refrigerator.

DEE
THOMAS!

DEE'S LIVINGROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, continuing to watch the chase unfold before him. His arms reaching out towards the television.

DEE O.S
Have you seen my... Never mind.

THOMAS, maneuvering the controller as if his life depended on it...

THOMAS
Come on... Come on!

INSERT. - TELEVISION SCENE - SAME

THE MAN IN THE RED HOODIE breathing hard. His pace slowing. Looking back, the DARK figure closing.

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS
(excited) Got ya!

INSERT - TELEVISION SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

We hear the BONE CRUSHING sounds of a blunt object repeatedly hitting the man.

AS THE CAMERA CRANES DOWN.

Held down by the DARK figure, we see THE MAN IN THE RED HOODIE, his face bloodied and bruised.

Kneeling over him... An athletic looking black man (avatar - 25), **MARCUS**. Bringing the gun down hard several times on the man's face.

THE MAN IN THE RED HOODIE, in the fetal position. His left eye swollen shut. Blood flowing from a long cut along his cheek.

MARCUS, gun held high, stops the onslaught.

MARCUS

Next time Motherfucker -- I want all my "GD" money... you feel me?

THE MAN IN THE RED HOODIE

Yes -- All the money. (coughing), I can get it...

Considering the man's offer for a beat. MARCUS, pulling the trigger. Blood exploding from THE MAN'S head... covering MARCUS. Standing Un-fazed... Spitting on the man's body.

MARCUS

Bitch ass motherfucker.

We hear RAP MUSIC playing from the television. Then: An ANIMATED VOICE.

ANIMATED VOICE FROM THE TV

Initiation complete... Proceed to GANGSTER LEVEL.

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, leaping to his feet. Doing a victory dance in front of the television.

DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - CONTINUOUS

DEE, leaning against the door, keys in hand, ready to leave.

DEE

A hum...

DEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Looking at his mother. THOMAS stops.

DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - CONTINUOUS

DEE

(annoyed)

Boy -- you're gitting on my last nerve prancing around here like some kinda of super chicken -- Now listen... there's food in the frig, Pookie's stopping by later to check on things, bed by ten, you got that?

THOMAS (O.S.)

Working late. Frig. Pookie. Ten o'clock. Got it.

Shaking her head, stepping through the door. Locking it behind her.

DEE'S LIVINGROOM -- CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, watching the door close. Sits down. Pushing his glasses up onto his nose.

Hitting the "A" button on the controller. We hear--

(ANIMATED VOICE FROM THE TV)
TIME TO SMOKE NIGGA".

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - NIGHT - LATER

CAMERA PANNING THROUGH A DARK KITCHEN.

We hear the constant hum of the refrigerator. The only light coming from the STOVE CLOCK, which reads: 1:30 AM.

THE CAMERA COMING TO REST AT THE KITCHEN DOOR.

We hear the sound of a KEY finding its way into the dead-bolt. A gray haired black woman (65) wearing a blue nightgown entering the apartment. Carefully closing the door behind her.

POOKIE
(speaking softly) THOMAS.

POOKIE, searching for the light switch along the counter. Her hand finding an electrical outlet with extension cords spread out in every direction. Failing to find the switch. She moves cautiously through the darkness, inching her way into the livingroom.

POOKIE (CONT'D)
(louder) THOMAS?

LIVING ROOM -- SAME

We hear GUN SHOTS coming from the television. The light from the television casting shadows across the room.
POOKIE, stumbling.

THOMAS, lying on a PULL OUT COUCH. Video controller in hand.

POOKIE
(Jamaican accent) My God boy --
what ya doing? You got school in da
morning.

(annoyed) THOMAS, pausing the game.

POOKIE (CONT'D)
How 'bout ya turning on a light so
a body can see?

Reaching over. The small light illuminating the room.

POOKIE, standing directly in front of the television.

THOMAS
Hey my game.

POOKIE
Dim games what's gonna ruin ya
mind. Tell me -- what ya git after
you play all dim games --
I'll tell ya -- nothing...

THOMAS, remaining silent.

Resting a hand on her hip (appearing tired).

POOKIE (CONT'D)

So, am I calling DEE -- or ya gonna do us both a favor and git to bed this minute?

THOMAS

Can I save my game?

POOKIE, pulling out her cell phone begins dialing.

POOKIE

Hard headed child, ya're making this thing harder than it has to be, for Christ sake.

Hitting the power button on the television. THOMAS watching the screen go black.

THOMAS

You coulda at least let me save my game... Now I gotta run that block all over again.

POOKIE, putting away the cell phone.

POOKIE

Yeah, Yeah, you can run dim blocks all you want when you get home from school tomorra -- but for now...

Walking towards the kitchen. Pointing to the light.

KITCHEN DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Keys in hand, POOKIE stepping into the hallway. The dead-bolt locking behind her.

INT. DEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, staring at the TV, contemplating whether to turn the game on again. Reaching over, turning off the light.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL QUAD AREA - MORNING - DAY

The day is overcast. Students wearing light jackets, listening to MP3 players, waiting for the first bell.

THOMAS, sitting on a bench... Huddled together, a few yards away. Three WHITE BOYS, and a GIRL with RED hair(15) - **CINDY JOHNSON**.

IN SLOW MOTION - MOS

The teens glancing over at THOMAS. **ERIC**, a tall BLONDE haired boy (15) giving animated commands to the group.

Taking a final look towards THOMAS. Breaking the huddle. **ERIC**, walking towards the bench. The group following, surrounding THOMAS.

SOUND AND FILM SPEED RETURN

Standing next to **ERIC**, a dark haired skinny kid (16) with Acne - **MIKEY SOLOMON**.

ERIC
Hey MIKEY, we should play a game?

MIKEY
Yeah, a game...

ERIC
How 'bout a game of... I SPY.

MIKEY
(Snickering)yeah, I SPY. I love that game.

Crowding in closer to THOMAS.

ERIC
What about you boy, you like games?

THOMAS, attempting to stand. Two boys pushing him back.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Hey MIKEY, I spy something BLACK and HAIRY, swinging from a tree.

MIKEY
I know, I know -- you spy one of those AFRICAN MONKEYS.

MIKEY, making Monkey sounds. Scratching under his arms. (Kids laughing) Breaking into a harmonious chant.

KIDS
(chanting) Monkey, monkey, monkey!

ERIC
What kind of Monkey is you boy?

KIDS
(Chanting becoming louder) Monkey,
monkey, monkey!

Scanning the playground for help.

Spotting a **JANITOR** at the entrance of the school.
THOMAS, getting to his feet, pointing.

THOMAS
(Yelling) Hey KT!

The group looking.

Seizing the opportunity. THOMAS starting to run towards
CINDY. Knocking her to the ground. Falling on top of her.

CINDY
Get off me... Get off of me monkey.

Trying to get to his feet.

ERIC
Yeah! Get off of her monkey boy.

EXT. REAR OF SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Seeing the commotion, the **JANITOR**, a black man (60) heading
towards the group (his pace is quick, but not urgent).
Pulling one of the boys away. Taking THOMAS and ERIC by the
arm.

CINDY getting up, wiping the dirt from her clothes.

CINDY
You're gonna be sorry monkey boy.
You're gonna be sorry you ever
touched me! I'll fuckin' send your
ass to jail...

The JANITOR, turning his attention to ERIC.

JANITOR
Who started this?

Both boys look at each other--

JANITOR (CONT'D)
All right then.

Pulling both boys by the arm, the JANITOR walking towards the School. The group looking on.

INT. WAITING AREA OUTSIDE PRINCIPAL OFFICE - LATER

THOMAS, sitting at a small table. Drawing in a notebook. Watching a school aide grade papers in the reception area.

Over the PA system.

PA SYSTEM (V.O.)

The busses for tomorrow's football game will depart at 3:30pm outside the library entrance. Please have your passes ready to show the driver. Thank you.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE RECEPTION DESK AREA - DAY - SAME

We see ERIC walking with an older white man (65), **ERIC'S FATHER**, and a petit looking white woman (30), **PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S ASSISTANT**.

The group looking cheerful.

ERIC's FATHER, shaking hands with the ASSISTANT, pats ERIC on the shoulder, as if to say: "he's really a great kid".

ERIC, shooting THOMAS a smirky grin before walking out the door with his Father.

The ASSISTANT, heading off towards PRINCIPAL DAVIS's office.

8B **INT. WAITING AREA OUTSIDE PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE - SAME 8B**

THOMAS, returning to his notebook.

9 **INT. PRINCIPAL'S DAVIS'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 9

We see a heavy set white man (55) sitting behind a wooden desk, **PRINCIPAL DAVIS**. Running his hands over head, appearing tired.

INT. DOOR OUTSIDE PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The ASSISTANT waiting.

9B **INT. PRINCIPAL'S DAVIS'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 9B

PRINCIPAL DAVIS, motioning for her to come in. Opening the door, not stepping in...

 PRINCIPAL DAVIS
 Has THOMAS'S mother arrived?

 ASSISTANT
 No sir, not yet.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - 20 MINUTES LATER

FROM BEHIND DEE WALKING.

We hear footsteps ECHOING through the hallway. A RED purse swung over her shoulder. DEE, walking with purpose towards the office.

INT. DOORS TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pushing the doors open. Seeing THOMAS... Giving him a stern look.

11A **INT. SCHOOL RECEPTION DESK AREA - SAME** 11A

The ASSISTANT, talking to a woman at the reception desk. Seeing DEE. Walking up behind her.

 ASSISTANT
 You must be...

DEE, ignoring the introduction... walking over to THOMAS.

 DEE
 (Underneath her breath) You wanna
 tell me what this is all about?

THOMAS, looking at his mother, not saying a word...

The ASSISTANT, stepping forward.

 ASSISTANT
 MS. WINTERS, I'm...

Turning around, DEE adjusting the purse on her shoulder.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
I believe PRINCIPAL DAVIS is ready
to see you.

The ASSISTANT, starting to walk towards PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S
office, DEE following closely behind.

INT. PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The ASSISTANT tapping once... letting herself in.

ASSISTANT
MS. WINTERS for you...

INT. PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DEE, entering the office. Walking towards PRINCIPAL DAVIS.
Standing behind his desk. Reaching to shake DEE's hand.

DEE, ignoring the gesture.

INT. PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The ASSISTANT, rolling her eyes. Closing the door.
Shaking her head, as she walks away.

INT. PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DEE, her head titled to one side, eyebrow raised. Pushing her
purse behind her back. Standing in front of PRINCIPAL DAVIS.
Giving him a look that says: "What the FUCK am I doing here"?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - EVENING

Cheap blinds cover two large windows in the sparsely
furnished apartment. THOMAS, stretched out on the bed,
pretending to read.

DEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DEE, standing over a sink of DIRTY DISHES, cigarette
smoldering in the ashtray next to her.

DEE
So you just let them boys beat all
over you?

THOMAS (O.S.)
There was a lot of um.

Taking a drag of her cigarette.

DEE
What you shoulda done was grab
one of those CRACKERS, and choke
the shit out of um... That's what
you shoulda done.

Squirting dish soap.

DEE (CONT'D)
And where were your good for
nothing friends -- when all this
was going on?

DEE, glancing at the stove clock: 5:17pm.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

THOMAS, ignoring the question. Closing the book. Grabbing the
controller.

DEE O.S
Oh yeah -- and I noticed they
didn't bother doing anything to
that little WHITE GIRL. And what
about that boy who started it?
What happened to him?

RAP music playing from the TV.

DEE O.S (CONT'D)
THOMAS!

THOMAS
Ma'am

DEE O.S
Turn that TV off!

Lowering the volume.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN - SAME

The TV screen flashing: Select "A" for STREET, "B" for HOOD.
Pressing the "B" button.

We see MARCUS, and two other men (avatar figures) shooting dice on the floor of a small bedroom.

Kneeling next to MARCUS, A black man (avatar - 22) wearing a Seattle SUPERSONICS HAT. Shaking a pair of dice, ready to roll.

The dice bouncing off the baseboard of the wall, landing on a piece of CARDBOARD.

MARCUS
Seven and out Motherfucker.

MARCUS, picking up the money. The men throwing more money onto the piece of cardboard.

MARCUS, a JOINT in one hand, shaking the dice with the other.

MAN PLAYING DICE
Quit stalling Motherfucker, monies
in... roll the "GD" dice.

We see the DICE hit the wall, coming to rest at end of the cardboard.

MARCUS
Seven, Motherfucker!

MAN PLAYING DICE
Yeah! NIGGA -- that's what I'm
talking 'bout.

MARCUS, taking a toke of the joint... Picking up the money.

DOOR OF THE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Two men entering the room. Holding a HISPANIC MAN (avatar - 25). One of the men wearing a RED SHIRT (avatar - 22). The other, a BLACK BANDANNA (avatar - 22).

The HISPANIC MAN gagged. Blindfolded. His face bruised. The MAN IN THE RED SHIRT, holding a gun to his head.

Seeing the men at the door. MARCUS, motions for the two men playing dice to leave. Both men giving MARCUS PROPS. Leaving the room.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS
(Laughing to himself) My niggas.

Motioning to the man in the RED SHIRT.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Tie this motherfucker up.

The **MAN IN THE RED SHIRT**, throwing the HISPANIC man onto the bed, tying him up.

The **MAN WITH THE BLACK BANDANNA**, moving towards a large dresser. Sitting. Pulling out a 9mm from behind his back. Pulling back the slide. Looking ready for action.

MARCUS, removing the HISPANIC MAN'S blindfold. Sitting in a chair beside the bed.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Yo, Essay --

The HISPANIC MAN, scanning the room. His eyes coming to focus on MARCUS.

MARCUS, looking hard at the man for a beat. Scratching behind his right ear lost in thought. Then: reaching under the bed, pulling out a BASEBALL BAT. He begins tapping it in the palm of his hand.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I'm pretty sure you know how this goes Homes --

Starting to walk around the bed. Taking practice swings. Laughing.

The HISPANIC MAN, pulling hard at the ropes.

The **MAN IN THE RED SHIRT**, moving past MARCUS. Taking a position at the window. Lifting the shade enough to see the street.

MARCUS, motioning to the **MAN WITH THE BLACK BANDANNA**, who quickly leaves the room.

MARCUS, continuing to circle the bed. Twirling the bat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
You see -- I'm gonna ask you a few questions -- and you're gonna give me a few answers. Simple shit right?

INT. DOOR OF THE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The MAN WITH THE BLACK BANDANNA, returning to the room carrying a small RED container marked: GASOLINE.

Walking past MARCUS, placing the container on the floor. Joining the MAN IN THE RED SHIRT at the window.

INT. BACK TO THE BED - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS

Now this is how we play the game.
You tell the truth -- you walk
outta here like we never met.
Lie --

The bat pointing at the HISPANIC MAN'S head. His eyes following MARCUS.

EXT. ON THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

We see an SUV, slowly driving past the house.

BACK TO THE BED - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS, grabbing the back of the HISPANIC MAN'S neck.

MARCUS

(In a very calculated low voice)
Now -- I need you.

HISPANIC MAN

(Grunting)

MARCUS

To tell me.

MARCUS tightening his grip.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Where the FUCK they keeping the
METH?

INT. - ROOM WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

The two men looking on.

INT. BED - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS
(whispering) Nobody ever need know
you said a word.

MARCUS, releasing his grip on the HISPANIC MAN'S neck,
ripping the gag from his mouth.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
So what's it gonna be?

(Long Beat) Letting the question sink in.

EXT. ON THE STREET - SAME

The SUV making a U-turn. Heading back towards the house.

INT. BED - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS
The Meth motherfucker!

HISPANIC MAN
(weeping) I -- I just sell. I don't
know where they keep it (coughing).
You gotta believe me. I'm telling
the truth.

MARCUS
Oh, no doubt. (gripping the bat
tighter with both hands). But
that's not the FUCKING answer I'm
looking for, you LITTLE piece of
SHIT!

MARCUS, hitting The HISPANIC MAN hard in the chest (his
intensity growing), tossing the bat from his left hand to his
right, catching it in mid-air.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I asked you a fucking question.

HISPANIC MAN
(unintelligible) I --

MARCUS, continuing to land blows to the man's chest. His
body, twisting and turning, held by the ropes. Coughing up
blood. THOMAS'S score increasing with each blow.

INT. WINDOW - SAME

The men looking on with excitement.

MAN IN THE RED SHIRT

Damn G...

The MAN WITH THE BLACK BANDANNA, looking out the window. The SUV. Its headlights off, coming to a stop in front of the house.

MAN WITH THE BLACK BANDANNA

We got company...

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

MARCUS

I'm sorry to hear that...

MARCUS, tossing the bat onto the bed. Picking up the gasoline. Pouring it over the HISPANIC MAN.

THE HISPANIC MAN, struggling to free himself. Watching the gasoline being poured over his body.

HISPANIC MAN

No! No! -- I can get it.
(coughing)I can get it for you.

INT. WINDOW - SAME

The two men stand with guns drawn. We see The MAN IN THE RED SHIRT rushing towards the door. A SHOTGUN resting on the other side.

INT. BED - SAME

The gasoline container empty. MARCUS pulling a lighter from his pocket. Watching the flame come to life.

Standing over the HISPANIC MAN. MARCUS, looking into the flame for a beat. Savoring the moment. Tossing the lighter onto the bed. The flames engulfing the HISPANIC MAN.

HISPANIC MAN

(Agonizing screams)

INT. DOOR OF THE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

We see THE MAN IN THE RED SHIRT tossing the SHOTGUN to MARCUS.

BACK TO LIVING ROOM - SAME

Gunshots ECHO from the TV. THOMAS, firing shot after shot in rapid succession.

15-0

INSERT. TV SCREEN - SAME

15-0

We see two rival gang members getting out of the SUV. Blood exploding from their bodies as they hit the ground. THOMAS, reloading -- Firing at gang members coming towards the house.

The video game readout flashing: BONUS - BONUS - BONUS. RIVAL GANG MEMBERS KILLED 20,000 points. Gun shots continuing to ring out from the television.

BACK TO DEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The clock on the stove reads 5:32 PM. DEE, taking a final drag of her cigarette. Walking into the Living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM. SAME

Seeing THOMAS.

DEE

I said, turn that thing off!
Turn it off now!

Startled, THOMAS stopping the game. Looking at his mother.

DEE (CONT'D)

I know you heard me say turn that thing off the first time. I thought you were in here doing your homework.

THOMAS

I finished reading. I was gonna do the rest tomorrow.

DEE

Tomorrow?

THOMAS

Yes ma'am

DEE

See -- This is what I'm talking about. Tomorrow... How you going to make anything of yourself -- when all you do is sit around here worrying about how many points you can get on that damn game.

Quickly looking at her watch.

DEE (CONT'D)

And what part of turn it off didn't you understand?

THOMAS, grabbing the remote. The TV screen going black.

DEE (CONT'D)

Boy...

Pointing to the TV.

DEE (CONT'D)

You think this is some kinda GAME! Is that it? Well you can just turn that game off until I tell you different. You hear me.

THOMAS, pushing his glasses up onto his nose.

DEE (CONT'D)

You just don't get it --

DEE, pretending to chock him. Heading towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Turning, looking back towards the livingroom.

DEE

And while you're at it -- get off that couch, and come lock this door... and that TV -- It "BET" not come on again tonight. Read a book. Do some math...

We see the door slamming closed behind her.

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - SAME

THOMAS, staring at the blank television as if his world had just ended.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The room is dark. Lit only by a slightly open window shade, and the night light from the bathroom.

We see the glow of the power button from the video console. THOMAS sleeping... Sprawled out on the PULL OUT COUCH.

SHOT OF THE TELEVISION.

We hear intermittent bursts of STATIC NOISE coming from the television. The screen beginning to flicker on and off. The television coming to life... We see horizontal BLACK LINES racing up from the bottom of the screen, then reversing direction. The screen transitioning to a mass of WHITE SNOW. Going black...

Slowly coming into focus on the screen. The MARCUS THE MANIAC game menu.

THE CAMERA BEGINS A SLOW 360 AROUND THE TELEVISION.

Appearing on the screen, wearing a white tee shirt and jeans. MARCUS THE MANIAC. Sitting on a bar stool holding a large machine gun.

MARCUS

You need to wake the Fuck up.

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM

THOMAS, stirring under the covers.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS

It's time to put in some work "T".

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

THOMAS, nodding in his sleep. Pulling the worn blanket over his shoulders.

INSERT. - TELEVISION SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS

You need to stop acting like a little BITCH -- and take care of your business.

MARCUS, lighting a cigarette.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

It's like your mother said -- what you shoulda done -- was choke the shit out of those CRACKERS.

Placing his right foot on the bar stool.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What you did -- was a fucking disgrace.

Taking another drag.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Motherfucker's gotta know. They step up -- disrespect a nigga... (pulling the slide back on the machine gun). They gotta pay...

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM

THOMAS, continuing to stir under the covers.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN -- CONTINUOUS

MARCUS

You gotta decide. It's your choice. You're either in the GAME or --

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARCUS, clinching his fists tight together.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN -- CONTINUOUS

MARCUS

When your boys don't got your back,
Then you don't got RESPECT. Not
from them -- Not from your hood,
Not for yourself.

The question is... What are you
going to do about it?

Stay a little BITCH or FUCK um up!
It's your choice.

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We see THOMAS, NODDING in agreement

THOMAS

(in a low whisper) Fuck um up.

INSERT. - TELEVISION SCREEN -- CONTINUOUS

MARCUS

You know what needs to be done...
We'll call it -- YOUR INITIATION.
The only question is... Are you
ready to step up (fading echo).
Ready to step up -- Ready to step
up -- Step up...

MARCUS'S image fading out.

BACK TO DEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The TV screen going black. THOMAS, lifting his head (still
half asleep). Adjusting the pillow, falling back to sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS IN THE PARK - DAY

A row of finely detailed cars parked along the courts.
Playing over a car radio, we hear Party up by DMX.

We see a mix of people EATING, DRINKING, and SMOKING blunts.
Watching 3 on 3 basketball games.

EXT. PATH LEADING TO THE COURTS - SAME

THOMAS, dribbling towards the courts.

FROM THE COURT (O.S.)
All day baby!

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - CONTINUOUS

Standing near one of the courts. KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER, talking with two girls. THOMAS, stopping his dribble at the far end of the court. Watching the group --

We hear a loud clang from one of the chain link nets.

THOMAS, dribbling towards KT.
Each bounce of the ball, reverberating as the ball hits the ground. Right hand dribble - **BOOM!** Crossover to his Left hand - **BOOM!**

SHOT. BASKETBALL PLAYER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Player pounding his chest.

PLAYER
You can't hang with this. Not this.

The PLAYER, running down the court pointing to waiting players.

PLAYER (CONT'D)
You next?

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

THOMAS, now standing in front of KT. The basketball held tight in his hands.

RONNIE, combing his hair with an AFRO PICK, looking on.

KT
(a Chocolate Tootsie Roll in his mouth) Yo "T".

Staring at KT for two beats.

KT (CONT'D)
(Laughing) So what up?

THOMAS
Thought we was Boys?

KT
Ya wez boys, true that...

Placing his arm around RONNIE and SCOOTER.

KT (CONT'D)
(still laughing) But It's ain't
like we getting married or
anything...

THOMAS
No... I kinda don't know.

KT
(Sensing THOMAS'S attitude) Okay --
I get it... you're all pissed 'bout
that white boy thang.

RONNIE and SCOOTER (laughing loud).

RONNIE
I heard some little white girl
kicked your ass.

THOMAS
Like you'd know.

KT
Look at "T" trying to be all HARD.
(smirking)...

SCOOTER
(grinning) Yesterday, he was a like
a momma's boy, yo.

A small crowd gathering.

THOMAS
I ain't no Momma's boy.

(O.S.) We hear another loud clang.

RONNIE
Be acting like a little bitch yo...

THOMAS
I guess it's all funny to you?

THOMAS, stepping into KT'S face.

KT
Whoa "T". You need to step off with
that attitude.

The basketball hitting KT HARD in the face, (O.S)
simultaneously, we hear the CLANGING of the basketball net.

KT, falling back.

THOMAS, quickly charging, knocking him to the ground.
THOMAS'S glasses falling away...

THOMAS, pulling at KT's Jersey. Tightening it around his
neck.

RONNIE AND SCOOTER looking on (Stunned).

KT (CONT'D)
(Coughing)

RONNIE and SCOOTER pulling at THOMAS. KT landing a punch to
THOMAS'S ribs. Un-fazed. Pulling KT'S shirt tighter.

GANG LEADER
Break it up!

THOMAS, finding himself being lifted into the air by a tall
muscular black man (45). TATTOOS on his arms and neck.

THOMAS, still scrapping. KT on the ground (coughing).

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)
I said break it up!

THOMAS, breathing hard.

Voices coming from the crowd.

SOMEONE IN THE CROWD (O.S.)
Little NIGGAR Fucked KT's shit up.

KT, sitting up, holding his nose, pushing RONNIE away.

KT
Get off me.

KT, getting to his feet, starting towards THOMAS.

The GANG LEADER pushing him back.

GANG LEADER
(Grabbing KT by the shoulder)
Listen little man, this shit's
over!

(MORE)

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)

You wanna continue this? Cause we can... I'll take you both over to the CENTER -- we can finish it there. Otherwise, shake hands.

Both boys hesitating for a beat. Reluctant to shake.
KT shaking THOMAS'S hand. Whispering into THOMAS'S ear.

KT

Trying to kill somebody "T"?

THOMAS, ignoring the question. Walking over to the fence, picking up his basketball. The GANG LEADER WALKING OVER.

GANG LEADER

You know -- you look really familiar. RADAR... You're Radar's boy...

THOMAS, bouncing the basketball a few times.

At the other end of the court, SCOOTER and RONNIE, watch KT going into his SHOW BUSINESS talking about the fight.

The GANG LEADER Looking reminiscent.

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)

(laughing to himself)

You know, me and your dad use work things out the same way when we was coming up, when we had a beef.

THOMAS

Yeah, well -- KT thinks I was trying to kill him.

GANG LEADER

I wouldn't worry about that. Sometimes you have to work things out before you can become real friends. Besides -- your boy knows you'll come correct now. I don't think you'll have any problems...

THOMAS

I don't know.

GANG LEADER

Trust me little man. You don't just get respect from people around here by letting walk all over you. You know what I'm saying?

THOMAS, nodding his head. Shaking the GANG LEADER'S hand. Looking towards the other end of the court at KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER. Dribbling the basketball. Leaving.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

MONTAGE.

EXT. LIBRARY ENTRANCE TO SCHOOL - DAY

A brisk chill in the air. Busses dropping off students. Teachers walking together as they enter the building.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. TROTTMAN'S CLASSROOM - DAY (SAME)

THOMAS, seated in the last row. MIKEY and ERIC seated at the front of the class.

MR. TROTTMAN (65), a heavysset white man wearing a shoe "lift" on his right foot. Walking towards the door. We see it about to close...

When: Reaching in, holding it open, the ASSISTANT. Behind her, holding a small notebook, a beautiful Bi-Racial girl with long Black hair (15) - **MICA NORTH**.

INT. CLASSROOM DOOR - SAME

The ASSISTANT, stepping into the classroom followed closely by MICA.

The ASSISTANT, handing MR. TROTTMAN a folder, a 3X5 card attached to the front.

ASSISTANT

MR. TROTTMAN. I'd like to introduce MICA NORTH. The new student we spoke about earlier.

MICA, stepping out from behind the ASSISTANT.

MR. TROTTMAN, doing a double take. The look not lost on the ASSISTANT.

MR. TROTTMAN
Yes -- well, welcome -- MICA.

Students talking.

MR. TROTTMAN, shooting the students a look of disapproval.
Returning his attention to MICA.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
MR. TROTTMAN, English Lit
(condescendingly), but I guess you
know that.

MR. TROTTMAN, looking around the classroom, pointing to an
empty chair at the back of the classroom.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
I believe there's a seat back
there.

Notebook in hand, MICA walking nervously towards the back of
the classroom.

Students watch, as she makes her way down the aisle. Taking a
seat next to THOMAS.

MR. TROTTMAN, looking at the 3X5 card. The look on his face
saying what he, and the students dare not say aloud. Father
Black-Mother White...

THE ASSISTANT, completing her task. Shooting MR. TROTTMAN a
look of disgust, leaving the classroom.

MR. TROTTMAN, addressing the class.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
Well, as you can see, we have a new
student, MICA NORTH.

Dropping the folder on his desk, moving towards the
chalkboard.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
Now, Bigger Thomas, in the novel
"NATIVE SON" by Richard Wright had
several shortcomings -- who can...

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF THE CLASSROOM - SAME

We see THOMAS, leaning forward in his chair, his attention
fully focused on ERIC and MIKEY.

MR. TROTTMAN (O.S)
 And this is why we see
 Bigger Thomas as...

For a brief moment we see ERIC and THOMAS making eye contact.
 ERIC, quickly looking away.

SHOT OF CLASSROOM CLOCK.

THOMAS, watching the clock.

The secondhand moving in slow motion - 11:59am and twenty seconds.

Briefly, we see MR. TROTTMAN, a copy of the book in his hand, reading from the chalkboard:

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
Bigger's lawyer makes the case that there's no escape from this destiny for his client or any other Black American, since they are all the necessary product of the society that formed them.

THOMAS, continuing to watch the clock.

The secondhand moving past the 9 (forty five seconds) 46, 47, the secondhand moving towards the 10.

THOMAS, silently mouthing the seconds -- 58, 59...

The second hand on the 12. School bell ringing. MR. TROTTMAN placing the copy of NATIVE SON on his desk.

Students exiting the classroom.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
 (speaking to himself)
 So quick to leave -- so slow to learn...

ERIC and MIKEY exit the room.

THOMAS, grabbing his backpack, the aisle in front of him blocked by students waiting to leave. Quickly moving towards the open row behind him. Almost running into MICA.

MICA
 Whoa...

MICA, picking up her notepad.

THOMAS
Oh, sorry...

MICA
I can let you out this way.

THOMAS
Ah, no I'm good.

MICA
You sure, cause it looks like
you're in quite the hurry.

THOMAS, looking at the door. Realizing the opportunity lost.

THOMAS
No, just meeting some friends.

MICA
(Smiling) Okay, well I'm MICA.

Extending her hand, THOMAS ignoring it.

MICA (CONT'D)
(looking like she'd just been
dissed) Okay?

THOMAS
(seeing how pretty she is) Ah,
THOMAS.

MICA
(smiling) Nice to meet you.

They stare at each other for a beat in silence.

THOMAS, turning, starting up the row of chairs. Exiting the
classroom.

INT. DOORWAY OUTSIDE OF MR. TROTTMAN'S CLASS - SAME

THOMAS, quickly moving down the hallway disappearing into the
sea of students.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOORS TO QUAD AREA - DAY (SAME)

Pushing open the doors. Scanning the quad. No sign of MIKEY
or ERIC. Turning around. We see the doors closing behind him.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER, walking towards THOMAS.

THOMAS, sliding the backpack from his shoulder to his hand, catching it by the cross strap.

The group continuing towards him.

We see KT, a slight grin on his face, reaching into his back pocket.

THOMAS. Stopping. Looking at the lockers on his left, then to his right. Gripping the strap tighter.

Watching KT reaching behind him. KT, pulling the object from his pocket. We see a Chocolate Tootsie roll pop. KT, throwing his hands high in the air. Embracing THOMAS like a brother.

KT
What's up "T"?

RONNIE and SCOOTER looking on. RONNIE combing his hair.

THOMAS, relaxing his grip on the backpack.

KT (CONT'D)
Yo. We're headed over to RONNIE'S after school. Nigga just got Killer Kraze II. Shit is off the hook.

THOMAS
And...

KT
So you need to come on over.

THOMAS, looking at RONNIE and SCOOTER, suspicious of their intentions.

THOMAS
I don't know -- my moms got me on lock down.

SCOOTER
So what you're saying is -- you're afraid of losing your title.

KT
He's got a point... You do hold the title.

THOMAS, turning to KT.

THOMAS
So, you, me... We cool?

KT, giving THOMAS props.

KT
Yeah "T". We cool... I understand about the other day. Shoulda been there for you -- no doubt. But sometimes -- a motherfucker's gotta step up for himself -- you know.

THOMAS, considering KT'S words for a beat.

THOMAS
Yeah, I get it.

RONNIE looking on.

RONNIE
So, you down for some Killer Kraze or WHAT?

CUT TO:

INT. RONNIE'S LIVINGROOM - DAY - AFTER SCHOOL.

KT, RONNIE, SCOOTER and THOMAS, sitting in front of a large flat screen television playing KILLER KRAZE II. The points racking up as they commit crimes in the hood.

INSERT. TELEVISION.

Avatar people running through the street, being chase by machine gun firing thugs in a car. The car running over a family unable to get out of the way. Blood squirting out from the front bumper. Two people trying to run away are shot in the back of the head. A grandmother carrying groceries is shot in the chest, and used as a shield by rival gang members.

We see two gang members jump out of the car. Firing machine guns as they enter an apartment building. Shooting down the door. A man and his girlfriend in bed together. Before they can move. They are blown away.

Two prostitutes run into the room with guns blazing. THOMAS'S avatar taking them out with shots to the head.

Then: we see blood splatter over the entire screen. A police sniper killing SCOOTER'S avatar through the window.

Winner: flashing on the screen. T

BACK TO THE LIVINGROOM.

SCOOTER
That's bullshit.

THOMAS, standing up, dropping the controller to the floor (as if it were a microphone).

THOMAS
I want to thank everyone for participating, and doing the best they could, really.

Kissing the back of each hand.

CUT TO:

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - NIGHT

DEE, unlocking the door, stepping in. Dropping her purse onto the Kitchen table. Taking off her leather jacket, placing it on the back of the kitchen chair. Tugging at her uniform. Taking a seat in the chair next to her jacket.

DEE, searching her purse for a cigarette.

DEE
Am I glad this day is over.

Finding the pack of NEWPORT LIGHTS. A single cigarette remaining.

DEE (CONT'D)
(to herself)I coulda sworn...

Crumbling the empty pack. Getting up. We see her opening one of the kitchen cabinets. Reaching in. Pulling out a new pack of NEWPORT LIGHTS. Dropping the empty pack on the counter.

DEE (CONT'D)
How was school?

THOMAS (O.S.)
All right...

DEE
Just all right?

THOMAS
Yeah.

DEE, lighting the cigarette.

DEE

Your teachers say anything to you --
or that Principal... what's his
name is?

THOMAS (O.S.)

No.

INT. DEE'S LIVING-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, looking bored. Begins walking aimlessly around the
unmade bed. Sitting down (something on his mind). Falling
back on the bed, looking up at the ceiling.

(Long Beat)

THOMAS

Mama, am I like my Dad?

DEE, walking into the Living Room. Looking as though she'd
been catch off guard by the question.

DEE O.S

What was that?

THOMAS

Am I like my Dad?

DEE, standing by the television.

DEE

I should hope not. I was kinda
hoping you'd turn out a whole lot
better than that.

Taking a drag of her cigarette.

THOMAS

But, am I like him?

DEE

(Nervous laughter) Well there's no
doubt you're the spitting image --
The problem with your daddy -- he
could never just walk away from
trouble when he had the chance.
And when you look for trouble --
Most times...

THOMAS

You ever see him?

DEE

Well -- that's complicated... and why all the questions about your daddy all of a sudden?

DEE, putting out her cigarette, taking a seat next to him.

DEE (CONT'D)

Let me tell you something. Life is full of choices-- Your daddy made some bad ones. But you -- You've got your whole life ahead of you.

THOMAS, looking at the blank TV screen.

DEE (CONT'D)

That's why I push you to get a good education. To get your diploma.

Placing her hand on his shoulder.

DEE (CONT'D)

That's something, nobody can take away from you.

THOMAS

I get that... but you ever see him?
-- Does he ask about me?

(long beat) DEE looking at the ceiling, then at THOMAS.

DEE

Some things are just better left the way they are... Like I said, it's complicated.

Hugging THOMAS.

DEE (CONT'D)

I just need for you to trust me...
Your momma's doing the best she can.

They sit in silence for two beats.

THOMAS, getting up. Walking towards the kitchen.

DEE, watching as he walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Tables set up in the gym, which serves as the lunchroom. Aides standing at their appointed positions like prison guards, ensuring the inmates behave.

MICA, sitting with a group of black girls.

INT. CAFETERIA MICA'S TABLE - SAME**BLACK GIRL 1**

So your dad's like some kinda of secret agent?

MICA

No, he use to fly helicopters in the Marines -- but he had an accident. So I'm staying with my Aunt.

BLACK GIRL 1

I got an Uncle in the Marines. He's like always on tour someplace. We never see him.

BLACK GIRL 2

The furthest I've ever been is Alabama... And that was to see my Grandmamma.

BLACK GIRL 1

You and your daddy been a lot of places?

MICA

Not really, Germany, California, Boston. Never anyplace long.

BLACK GIRL 1

So, you got like a boyfriend in every port, right?

MICA

(Smiling) No. My dad can be a little strict when it comes to boys.

BLACK GIRL 2

Well watch out for these dogs around here.

BLACK GIRL 1
Yeah, most of um got flea's... or
worst yet -- BABY MOMMAS.

MICA
Baby Mommas...

BLACK GIRL 2
(Laughing) Yeah girl... BABY-MOMMA-
DRAMA.

BLACK GIRL 1
I'm telling you. You don't wanna
get mixed up with any these
trifling niggas...

Gathering their trays.

BLACK GIRL 2
Don't worry GIRL, we got your back.
This ain't no "MEAN GIRLS" type
thang... We'll make sure you meet
all the "right" people... starting
with us.

Laughing.

Lunch bell ringing. Finishing their drinks. Walking towards
the trash containers.

INT. OTHER END OF THE CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Seated around a small table. THOMAS, KT, RONNIE, and SCOOTER.

RONNIE
I'm telling you yo, I took over the
whole block in less than 7 minutes.
I was smoking fools.

SCOOTER
Game is off the hook.

Getting up from the table. KT, and crew head towards the
trash containers. KT standing behind BLACK GIRL 1. Eyeing her
booty. Doing his best MORRIS DAY impersonation.

KT
Damn girl, how'd you get all THAT
into those jeans?

(Snickering)

BLACK GIRL 1
(rolling her eyes) See...

BLACK GIRL 1. Giving KT a TALK TO THE HAND gesture. She and the other girls start to exit the lunchroom.

KT
I'll be seeing YOU later.

BLACK GIRL 1. Looking back at KT.

BLACK GIRL 1 (O.S.)
Whatever...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

KT, RONNIE, THOMAS and SCOOTER standing together.

RONNIE
That new Girl... finer than a motherfucker. I can't WAIT to tap that ass.

SCOOTER
Motherfucker, you ain't tapping shit...

KT. High fiving SCOOTER. THOMAS only looking on. The group starting down the hall.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL - DAY (AFTER SCHOOL)

We see a line of cars. Among them a white ford focus being driven by a sharply dress older black woman (50) - **MICA'S AUNT LISS.**

MICA. Standing in a line of students pulling her hair back into a ponytail. She watches the ford focus pull up. Getting in.

INT/EXT. AUNT LISS'S CAR -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

AUNT LISS
Well hello.

MICA
(Excitedly)Hey.

Pulling away from the school.

AUNT LISS

So how was your day? A little different I bet.

MICA

A little, but everyone's nice. How's daddy?

AUNT LISS

You know your father -- nothing is ever quite good enough. He's driving everyone at the VA crazy. But, things seem to be going well.

MICA

Maybe we can stop by tomorrow?

AUNT LISS

I think we might be able to arrange that.

MICA

Did they say anything about the infection?

AUNT LISS patting MICA's knee.

AUNT LISS

The Doctor's haven't completed all their testing. But, I'm not too worried -- Got my secret weapon working for us round the clock.

MICA

The MAN upstairs.

AUNT LISS

Yes Lord...

CUT TO:

INT. ENGLISH LIT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

MR. TROTTMAN, walking towards the back of the classroom, handing out copies of an assignment.

MR. TROTTMAN

You'll find several quotes from Hunter S. Thompson's book "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas".

THOMAS, looking over the handout.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
You should choose a work partner.

Handing MICA the last copy. Walking towards the front of the classroom.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
This assignment is due Thursday.

Students sighing.

THOMAS, slouching in his chair, looking at the assignment.

MICA
(Softly) You mind working with me?

Sitting up.

THOMAS
(Quietly) I don't know nothing about this stuff.

MICA
(Smiling confidently) Trust me, I've read this book a thousand times.

MR. TROTTMAN (O.S.)
MS. NORTH, you have a question you'd like to share with the class?

MICA
Ah, no sir.

MR. TROTTMAN
I suggest you get started.

Students moving about the classroom.

INT. AUNT LISS'S KITCHEN - DAY

We see a very well kept New England style kitchen with bright sunlight. An untouched cup of tea sitting on the kitchen table.

Aunt LISS, on the phone. listening to the Doctor from the VA... Hanging up. Clearly upset by the conversation. Tears rolling down her face.

SHOT OF EMPTY SCHOOL HALLWAY.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY -- LATER

MR. TROTTMAN sitting at his desk. Looking at the clock.

MR. TROTTMAN
You've got about 2 minutes.

Students returning to their desks.

THOMAS
Wow!

MICA
Wow?

THOMAS
Yeah, you make this stuff seem --

MICA
I'll let you in on a little secret.
I've pretty much taken this before.

THOMAS
What?

MICA
In Boston.

THOMAS
Is that where you're from?

MICA
No. Actually I'm from Texas. My
dad's in the Marines, or was.

THOMAS
Nice.

MICA
Not really --

Moving his chair back.

MICA (CONT'D)
Maybe we should plan on meeting
tomorrow, work on the assignment.

THOMAS
Sure.

(School bell ringing)

MICA
(Laughing to herself)

THOMAS
What?

MICA
You.

THOMAS
Me?

MICA
Yeah -- every time the bell rings
you've got someplace you have to
be.

THOMAS
Yeah, well...

MICA
So lunch tomorrow?

THOMAS
Yeah, that works...

Students leaving the classroom.

MICA
You might want to go on line, check
out some themes...

THOMAS
Yeah, okay...

INT. THOMAS'S LOCKER -- DAY

Students walking the hallway behind THOMAS. Dropping his
backpack to the floor.

Working the combination to his locker. Taking out a pair of
black gloves and a skateboard. Dropping the skateboard to the
floor. Placing the gloves in his pants pocket.

Students clearing the hallway.

Looking down an empty hallway. Reaching into his locker,
pulling out a black hoodie. Pulling it over his head... we
hear the METALLIC sound of something hitting the locker.

THOMAS, quickly grabbing at the pocket of the hoodie.

Standing behind him, pushing a trash cart, we see the
JANITOR...

Both stand frozen for a beat. The JANITOR looking at THOMAS with great curiosity.

Slowly letting go of the object. Bending down, picking up the skateboard. The JANITOR looking --

JANITOR

I wouldn't keep my cell phone in my jacket if I were you - they tend to get broken that a'way.

THOMAS

(looking relieved) Yes sir.

The JANITOR, continuing to push the trash cart down the hall.

THOMAS, closing the locker. Walking down the hallway in the opposite direction.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - (SAME)

THOMAS, dropping the skateboard to the ground. Reaching into the hoodie, taking out the metallic object, placing it into his back pocket.

Reaching into his pants pocket, pulling out his cell phone. 4:30pm. Scrolling through the functions, enabling airplane mode. He turns off the phone. Stepping onto the skateboard. We see him skate away.

EXT. OVERLOOK A BASEBALL FIELD - DUSK

The even sky is partly cloudy. The sun touching the clouds creating colors of yellow, orange and red hues.

THOMAS, sitting atop a grassy mound. Watching ERIC, and a group of baseball players crowding around a man at the center of the diamond. Players jump up and down, chanting something he can't make out.

Picking up the skateboard. Walking past a small group of trees, and onto a bike path. Heading north.

EXT. BEHIND AN OLD GARAGE - DUSK (LATER)

THOMAS. Standing behind an old garage. His physical appearance somehow changed. Appearing emboldened, confident...

Taking the black gloves from his pocket, pulling them tight. Waiting... Kicking at the small rocks at his feet.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DUSK - SAME

ERIC - POV. Watching a rock skipping across the alley.

Suddenly: THOMAS'S Skateboard hitting ERIC in the face, knocking him to the ground. Blood dripping from his forehead.

We see THOMAS bringing the full force of the SKATEBOARD down on him again. The skateboard tumbling away. THOMAS quickly on top of him, unleashing blow after blow to ERIC'S face.

ERIC
(frightened) Help me!!!

THOMAS
Shut the FUCK up!!!

ERIC trying desperately to deflect the punches. THOMAS'S full weight resting on ERIC'S chest. THOMAS holding the next punch suspended in the air. ERIC looking up. Recognizing his attacker...

Grabbing ERIC by the jersey. Pulling him close.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
How bout a game of I SPY
motherfucker?

ERIC, struggling to force THOMAS from his chest.

THOMAS, (adrenaline pumping), landing a hard punch to the side of ERIC'S head. Pulling his jersey again.

THOMAS, looking up at the sky, as if he were talking to someone.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Hey MIKEY, you wanna play a game?

Looking back at ERIC. His face inches away.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
How about you daddy's boy. You
wanna play I SPY?

Looking up at the sky again.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Yeah -- I like that game!

Returning his focus to ERIC.

ERIC
(whimpering)

Reaching into his back pocket, THOMAS pulling out the knife. Placing it across ERIC'S throat.

ERIC'S eyes wide open. THOMAS, feeding off the FEAR in ERIC'S eyes.

THOMAS
You like how we play in the REAL
JUNGLE?

ERIC, Unable to speak.

THOMAS, for the first time... Feeling what it's like, to have someone fear him.

THOMAS, taking the knife away. Placing it in his pocket. Standing. Looking down on ERIC. Spitting on the ground next to him.

Retrieving his skateboard. Giving ERIC a "Don't Fuck with me" look, turning, starting to walk down the alley.

MEDIUM SHOT OF ERIC STILL SITTING IN THE ALLEY. THE CAMERA PULLING BACK TO INCLUDE THOMAS WALKING AWAY. THE CAMERA CONTINUING TO CRANE UP TO INCLUDE A SHOT OF THE SURROUNDING GARAGES. THE CAMERA CRANING UP TO A WIDE ANGLE SHOT OF THE CITY.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

We see the stove clock: 7:15pm. THOMAS, at the Kitchen table searching the internet. A copy of Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas next to his computer. The apartment, dark, with the exception of the kitchen light. *

THOMAS, walking over to the refrigerator. Taking out a soda. Heading into the livingroom. *

KITCHEN DOOR -- SAME

DEE, stepping into the kitchen, carrying two bags of groceries. *

MARCUS (O.S.)
Hey Mama.

DEE

Hey Baby. Looks like somebody's
been studying.

Sitting the bags, and her purse on the counter.

THOMAS, coming into the kitchen. *

THOMAS

I can move this stuff.

DEE

Don't worry about it, I'm about to
take a shower, and watch my shows.

DEE, starting to put away groceries. Stopping long enough to
take a cigarette. Leaning against the sink. *

DEE, watching THOMAS take his computer into the living room. *

DEE (CONT'D)

Since you seem to be making an
effort towards your studies, I
guess we can give you a little
REPRIEVE on your punishment when
you finish your homework.

INT. DEE'S LIVING-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

97 THOMAS, turning on the light. Dropping the computer on the 97
bed.

THOMAS

Thank you momma. *

DEE (O.S.)

But don't be trying to take
advantage of your momma's moment of
weakness. *

THOMAS, plopping himself on the bed. Placing the computer on
his lap. We see the computer screen searching... "Themes and
cliff notes" - Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas - Hunter S.
Thompson. *

CAMERA PULLING BACK FROM THE COMPUTER SCREEN. MOVING THROUGH
THE LIVINGROOM. THROUGH THE WINDOW -- *

SHOT OF HILL DISTRICT - NIGHT *

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEE'S BEDROOM - 6:20 AM - DAY

We see DEE sleeping... the television still on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (SAME)

A Master P song starts to play from THOMAS'S cell phone. Reaching over turning it off. THOMAS, wiping his eyes, stares at the blank TV.

CUT TO:

SHOT. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM DOOR - CONTINUOUS

We hear water running from the shower.

SHOT OF THOMAS'S CELL PHONE LYING ON THE SINK.

Music playing from the cell phone, THOMAS singing along.

MARCUS (O.S)

"Bring your lifestyle to me I'll
make it better"
How long will I live?
"Eternal life and forever"
And will I be, the G that I was?
"I'll make your life better than
you can imagine or even dreamed of.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, brushing his teeth.

INT. DOOR OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM - SAME

THOMAS, exiting the bathroom with his cell phone, and a towel wrapped around his waist.

THOMAS

Murder was the case that they gave
me...

INT. DEE'S LIVING-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Opening a small dresser by the sofa bed. Pulling out a pair of jeans, a tee-shirt, and a black hoodie. Reaching underneath the couch, grabbing a pair of sneakers.

Continuing to sing.

THOMAS

No more Indo gin and juice
I'm on my way to Chino rolling on
the Grey Goose.

Putting on the hoodie. Placing the Hunter S. Thompson book into his backpack. Starting for the kitchen.

As he passes DEE's bedroom. We hear a weather anchor.

WEATHER ANCHOR (O.S)

55 degrees and mostly cloudy with a
30 percent chance of rain.

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - SAME

Backpack on his shoulder. Taking a final survey of the kitchen. Opening the door.

Continuing to sing again.

THOMAS

Murder was the case that they gave
me.

We see the door closing behind him.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY - SAME

CINDY, and two girlfriends walking down the street. It's a walk they've taken every week since elementary school. CINDY carrying a black and white striped bag that matches her zebra styled leggings. Each of the other girls wearing a similar type. Looking like true "PLASTICS".

A short distance behind them, on the opposite side of the street. THOMAS. Watching as the group passes a Fire Station.

INT. FIRE STATION - DAY (SAME)

We see two large open doors of the FIRE STATION. Two Firemen inspecting hoses. An old man and his dog walking by the entrance.

One of the FIREMEN (30), looking across the street to see a young black man dressed in a black hoodie walking past the station --

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE FIRE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pulling the black hoodie over his head. THOMAS walks past the FIRE STATION. Looking at the two Firemen inside.

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF THE SEVEN ELEVEN.**EXT. PARKING LOT OF SEVEN ELEVEN -- DAY -- SAME**

We see CINDY, her girlfriends walking across the lot. Entering the SEVEN ELEVEN.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET FROM SEVEN ELEVEN - DAY (SAME)

Standing in front of a small office building. THOMAS lighting up a cigarette. Starting to pace. Taking a couple drags. Dropping the cigarette. Watching -- waiting...

Walking quickly across the street. Standing in an alley adjacent to the SEVEN ELEVEN.

EXT. ALLEY ALONG SIDE THE SEVEN ELEVEN -- CONTINUOUS

Dropping his backpack to the ground. Lighting another cigarette. He takes several long drags. Looking around. No cars, no one walking by. The street empty.

Reaching into his backpack. Pulling out a slightly inflated RED BALLOON.

EXT. FRONT OF SEVEN-ELEVEN - DAY (SAME)**CINDY AND THE TWO GIRLS EXITING THE SEVEN ELEVEN.**

CINDY, stuffing chips, and lipstick into her bag.

EXT. ALLEY ALONG SIDE THE SEVEN ELEVEN -- CONTINUOUS

We see THOMAS squeezing the contents of the red balloon over and over in his hand. Seeing the girls walking past.

Cell phone ringing.

Each girl reaching for her cell phone (laughing).

Cell phone ringing.

The two girls watch as CINDY points to her cell phone.

CINDY

Hello.

EXT. ALLEY ALONG SIDE THE SEVEN ELEVEN -- CONTINUOUS

We see the red balloon hitting CINDY, bursting open. The contents completely soaking her clothes. The cigarette landing at her feet.

SHOT - IN SLOW MOTION - SOLEMN MUSIC OVERLAY

CINDY'S cell phone hitting the ground. PULLING BACK. We see her clothes ABLAZE.

CINDY (NO SOUND)

Agonizing screams--

The two girls frozen. Watching in horror.

GIRL 1 (NO SOUND)

(Screaming) Oh my God! Oh my God!!!

GIRL 2, pushing CINDY to the ground. Covering her with a jacket.

The two girls screaming for help. Bystanders rushing over.

INT. FIRE STATION

We see the EMS RESCUE team running to their vehicles. Leaving the FIRE STATION -- lights flashing.

EXT. ALLEY ALONG SIDE SEVEN ELEVEN - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS. Picking up the backpack. Pulling the black hoodie over his head. Turning. Walking slowly down the alley.

EXT. STREET NEAR SEVEN ELEVEN - DAY (SAME)

We see CINDY lying unconscious. The two girls on their knees crying.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THOMAS'S LOCKER - DAY - LATER

THOMAS, standing in front of his locker. The black hoodie now replaced by a green Seattle Supersonics tee-shirt.

Taking several books out of his backpack (including Fear and Loathing).

Staring deep into his locker. THOMAS suddenly aware of the chorus of voices slowly getting louder inside his head. Indistinguishable voices growing louder.

MANY VOICES (V.O.)

Monkey, Monkey, Monkey
 What you needed to do is choke one
 of those "Crackers"
 Time to smoke a Niggar
 Bring your Lifestyle to me...
 You got to Step up Son...

BAM!!!

We hear the loud crash from THOMAS'S locker being slammed shut. Standing along the row of lockers, KT, RONNIE, and SCOOTER (laughing hysterically).

RONNIE

Damn!!! Scared the Fuck out that nigga.

SCOOTER

I don't know "G", I think he peed himself.

KT, putting his arm around THOMAS.

KT

Man, don't listen to them -- no, no, wait... (starting to laugh) for real though, that shit was FUNNY.

THOMAS looking tired. Nervous.

SCOOTER, sensing THOMAS'S nervousness. Patting him on the shoulder.

THOMAS, offering a half hearted grin.

School bell ringing.

SCOOTER

You all right "T"?

THOMAS, turning, looking at the group.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LUNCH ROOM - DAY - SAME

MICA, entering the lunch room with several girls from the yearbook club. They look eager to have her join.

THOMAS, walking up behind the group. MICA excusing herself.

MICA

Hey.

THOMAS

Hey.

MICA

So how did it go?

THOMAS

What?

MICA

Your research... on line?

THOMAS

Good.

MICA

Are you Alright?

THOMAS

Sure.

MICA, pointing over to the long line of students waiting to be served.

MICA

You wanna get something -- or just get started -- cause I've got a lot done.

THOMAS

Uh, sure.

118 Taking a seat at a nearby table. Pulling out her laptop. 118

INT. LUNCH ROOM TABLE - CONTINUOUS

MICA

So you understand the symbolism of what Hunter S. Thompson was trying to say about the counter culture, and chasing the American Dream?

Looking at her a little perplexed.

THOMAS

To tell you the truth, all I got was, some crazy white dudes were taking a lot of drugs, and tripping on their way to Vegas.

MICA

Yeah, well that's kinda the plot... But, what's important, is the symbolism of Raoul Duke taking the trip to Las Vegas.

Showing him her notes.

MICA (CONT'D)

Since Vegas is a town with no rules, it fits into his counter culture, no rules view of the world. So everything he does make sense to him.

THOMAS

Where'd you get all that from?

MICA, taking a moment -- considering how to rephrase the statement.

MICA

Okay, In other words -- in Raoul's world -- everything he does makes sense -- and it's the larger Society that's weird -- because they don't see things from his point of view. And Society, with its rules and regulations, looks downs on the drugs and counter culture lifestyle Raoul embraces, seeing it as weird and unacceptable behavior.

THOMAS, making the connection and smiling.

THOMAS

It's kinda like living in the Hood.
To people living here -- everything
makes sense. We understand it.
But, to the outside world "Society"
(making a quotations gesture with
his hands). They looks down on what
goes on here -- because they see
the way we live as, I don't know --
as weird and unacceptable --

MICA, thinking a moment. Digesting explanation.

MICA

OK then...

They both begin to laugh at their communications
breakthrough...

CUT TO:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

A half carafe of morning coffee still sitting on the burner
atop a stained laminated counter. Teachers, sitting around
tables having lunch.

Two teachers (their eyes closed) sit on a worn couch.. A
television mounted to the wall (muted). Showing images of
police and EMS vehicles.

The banner at the bottom of the television screen reads:
BREAKING NEWS - GIRL SET ON FIRE NEAR SEVEN ELEVEN.
No one in the room noticing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- DAY - SAME

Two black and white Police cars facing each other, lights
flashing, parked outside the school. A silver dodge charger
pulling up behind them.

Getting out. **DETECTIVE WATTS.**

Walking towards the school, removing his sun glasses --

INT. SCHOOL RECEPTION DESK AREA - DAY - SAME

DETECTIVE WATTS, approaching the desk, (the office reminding him of how much he hated high school). The ASSISTANT, and Two uniformed officers coming over to greet him.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

INT. OUTSIDE OF HOSPITAL ROOM ICU - SAME

We see CINDY lying in a bed unconscious, gauze wrapped around her face and arms. A suction tube in her mouth. We hear the sound of rhythmic monitors beeping.

A Doctor and Nurse bedside. The Nurse shaking a small bottle, inserting the needle into the bottle, and then into the IV tube connected to CINDY'S arm. The Doctor reviewing her charts. The Nurse documenting the injection, and time administered.

They share a brief confirming look. The doctor placing CINDY'S chart at the foot of her bed. They turn to leave the room. The camera moving to a CLOSE UP of CINDY's bandaged body.

CUT TO:

EXT. ERIC'S FRONT YARD - DUSK

Short hedges surround the yard on both sides. The grass, well maintained. ERIC and MIKEY playing catch.

MIKEY. Catching the ball. Walking towards ERIC.

MIKEY

What's up with you? You've been acting all weird lately.

ERIC

I'm fine.

Tossing the ball to ERIC.

MIKEY

You hear about CINDY?

ERIC
Haven't seen her.

MIKEY
Well yeah! That's cause she's the
girl on the news what got all burnt
up.

BLONDE HAired BOY
No way!

MIKEY
Yep. My mom said, her mother's all
tore up about it...

Both boys head to towards the house.
ERIC, pulling MIKEY'S arm as he's about to open the door.

ERIC
(looking dead serious) Hey, you
know that black kid we roughed up --
You know... monkey boy?

MIKEY
Yeah, what about him. Monkey boy
(laughing).

ERIC
Well, he pulled a fucking knife on
me.

MIKEY, laughing out loud.

MIKEY
You kicked his ass right?

ERIC
Shut up.

MIKEY
If you didn't kick his ass?

ERIC
Don't matter. We just gotta find a
way to get um back, hurt um.
Who knows -- he mightta even been
the one, did that to CINDY. You
know revenge and all...

ERIC, throwing the ball into his glove.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Thing is, we gotta make him pay.
It's like my dad says...
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)
 If an animal attacks you, you gotta
 let um know who's boss.

ERIC putting his hands on MIKEY'S shoulder.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 I'm telling you, monkey boy belongs
 in a cage. We just have to figure
 out how to put him there.

MIKEY, setting in silence. ERIC starting up the stairs.
 Entering the house.

INT. AUNT LISS'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

AUNT LISS, dressed in a robe and pajamas. Sending emails on
 her IPAD, updating everyone on her brother's condition.

Cell phone ringing.

AUNT LISS
 Hello. Yes, this is she.

Hand over her mouth, looking visibly weakened by the
 conversation.

AUNT LISS (CONT'D)
 Thank you... and -- tomorrow.
 I understand, that won't be a
 problem, thank you... goodbye.

MICA, hearing the phone, stepping into the room.

MICA
 AUNT LISS...

MICA, walking over, putting her arms around AUNT LISS.

AUNT LISS
 The Infection's back...

EXT. SCHOOL QUAD AREA - DAY (7:45AM)

The day is overcast. Students are wearing Hoodie's and light
 jackets. The quad is buzzing with news about CINDY.

Standing around a small bench, KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER.

THOMAS, entering the quad wearing a GRAY jacket, dropping his
 backpack to the ground.

SCOOTER

Yo, it's like all over the news.
Girl from school got set on fire.

SCOOTER, starting to mimic the wicked witch of the west.

SCOOTER (CONT'D)

What a world... What a world.

RONNIE

Yo, I can't even BEGIN to know what
that musta felt like. Snap.

THE CAMERA DOING A 360 SHOT AROUND THE GROUP COMING TO FOCUS
ON THOMAS.

THOMAS, looking frazzled by the news.

THOMAS

They don't know who did it though,
right?

RONNIE

Naw, but I'm telling you.
A white girl getting all burnt up
like that. You know the po-po's
gonna be all over this one.

KT

True that -- They gonna make an
example out this motherfucker.

RONNIE

No doubt.

SCOOTER

Thing is -- you know they got
camera's all over the place. It's
just a matter of time before...
BAM!
Motherfucker's in County, headed
for death row.

RONNIE

I bet she musta said something
stupid to somebody -- you know,
like -- "do you know who I am"?

The group laughing.

THOMAS, picking up his backpack.

THOMAS
I gotta run...

SCOOTER, looking at him. School bell ringing.
THOMAS disappearing into the hallway.

SCOOTER
What's up with him?

CUT TO:

INT. MR. TROTTMAN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

MR. TROTTMAN, handing out graded papers.

MR. TROTTMAN
I must say, I was impressed by
everyone's work.

Reaching the back of the classroom, handing the assignment to
MICA.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)
Nice work.

THOMAS, sitting up, trying to see their grade. MICA keeping
the paper from him.

THOMAS
What did we get?

MICA
I'll tell you after school, when
you walk me home.

THOMAS, not sure how to respond.

THOMAS
How 'bout you tell me now --

MICA, placing the paper in her backpack.

MICA
No, you might renege...

MR. TROTTMAN
A question for the class MS. NORTH?

MICA
No Sir.

THOMAS
(whispering) Okay - you win.

INT. FRONT OF CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

MR. TROTTMAN, standing in front of the chalkboard.

MR. TROTTMAN

I hope you find our next literary work as compelling as I do.

On his desk copies of "The Prince" by Niccolò Machiavelli. Handing the first student in each row copies to pass back.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)

You'll have until Monday...

Students moaning...

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)

You'll have until Monday -- to answer this question. Is it better to be **FEARED** or **RESPECTED** by your enemies? You'll be expected to take a position on the question, supporting the argument one way or the other. You'll then present your work to the class. Any questions? Good...

A student handing MICA a copy of the book.

MR. TROTTMAN (CONT'D)

I suggest using the next 35 minutes to get started.

EXT. SCHOOL QUAD AREA - DAY - AFTER SCHOOL

THOMAS, standing with his backpack. Skateboard in hand. MICA coming towards him.

MICA

I see you're a man of many talents...

THOMAS

I guess...

They begin to walk.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'm not even sure where you live.

MICA

Not far, by the park.

THOMAS

Cool...

Reaching into her backpack.

MICA

I guess I owe you something.

Handing THOMAS the assignment.

THOMAS

An "A" -- An "A" really.

THOMAS, holding the paper up to the sky.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Yes!

Walking.

EXT. PARK - DAY (SAME)

THOMAS, listening to MICA.

MICA

So the long and the short of it is,
my dad has to take medication to
lower his Blood pressure, and
that's not easy for my dad. He
doesn't like pills.

Waiting for a car to pass, they continue across the street.

MICA (CONT'D)

My dad doesn't believe in crutches,
and to him, pills, stuff like that,
they're crutches.

THOMAS

When does he come home?

They keep pushing things back... But soon.

Standing in front of AUNT LISS'S house.

MICA

Well, thank you.

THOMAS

For what?

MICA

Listening... I think we make a pretty good team.

THOMAS

Yeah, looks like.

Looking at his skateboard.

MICA

So did you wipe out or something?

THOMAS, (caught off guard) seeing the dried blood on the skateboard.

THOMAS

Yeah, you know, happens...

Turning, walking away slowly towards the park. Grinning. Trying hard not to look back.

EXT. ALLEY DUMPSTER - DAY - 10 MINUTES LATER

THOMAS, dragging the skateboard on the ground, throwing it into the dumpster. Taking a deep breath. Continuing down the alley.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF MIKEY'S HOUSE - EVENING

A dented up pick up truck, resting on four cinder blocks sits in the driveway. Two wheels and the hood are missing.

MIKEY, sitting on the porch of a two story house in need of repair, and a new paint job. MIKEY and ERIC in their baseball uniforms. ERIC, pacing.

ERIC

I need your help MIKEY.
I can't do this without you.

You gotta go to the cops -- tell um you saw monkey boy pulled a knife on me.

MIKEY

I don't know... What if they start asking me all kinds of questions. You know -- (standing), like what was I wearing?

ERIC, taking a seat next to him.

ERIC
You don't have to know... I know.

MIKEY
Lying to the cops?

ERIC
It' not lying. He pulled a "GD"
knife on your best friend. And who
knows, he mightta even been the one
who lit CINDY on fire, and you'd be
the one letting him get away with
it?

MIKEY
Why don't you just tell um
yourself.

ERIC
(Exhaling in frustration) I'm gonna
tell um I was afraid to.

Standing up again.

ERIC (CONT'D)
But, if you were tell um, You know,
get the ball started.

MIKEY, nodding his head.

Long silent pause between them.

MIKEY
(Slowly nodding) Yeah -- Yeah, I
guess.

CUT TO:

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

THOMAS, sitting on the edge of the bed, arms folder, rocking
back and forth. Nervously looking around the room.

Grabbing the game controller. The console starting to warm
up. Clicking the TV remote. The television coming to life --
local NEWS.

THOMAS, about to switch the input to video mode.

Cell phone ringing.

THOMAS
Hey Momma...

DEE
It's Mom...

THOMAS
Momma -- caller Id...

DEE (O.C.)
Laughing at her own miscue. Boy,
don't be starting with me -- I just
wanted to let you know, I stopped
over POOKIE's for a minute. I
should be home soon.

THOMAS, looking at the television, seeing the "BREAKING NEWS"
banner scrolling across the screen.

"POLICE SEARCHING FOR BURN VICTIM SUSPECT"

Staring at the TV. Unable to speak -- THOMAS, pushing his
glasses up onto his nose.

DEE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
THOMAS -- did you hear me?

His voice weak...

THOMAS
Yes ma'am. Uh, I was just studying.
You know -- Ah eating, eating some
Ice Cream.

DEE
I was just checking on ya.

THOMAS
Okay mama bye!

THOMAS, quickly hanging up, turning up the sound.

TV ANCHOR

A violent crime taking place in the
Hill District around 7:30 this
morning -- where a young girl was
apparently set on fire. We go live
to Debra Lewis...

We see Debra Lewis, a black woman of (30) giving her report
from the alley along side the seven eleven. The area blocked
off with yellow police tape reading: DO NOT CROSS POLICE
LINE.

DEBRA LEWIS

Authorities have few leads as to who committed this heinous crime -- Police are asking for your help tonight... If you, or anyone has any information -- you are asked to call the Pittsburgh Police at the number on your screen.
Back to you --

THOMAS -- pacing back and forth. Slowly walking into the bathroom, closing the door --

CUT TO:

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - NIGHT (LATER)

DEE, stumbling a bit as she walks through the door. Finding the light switch. Getting her bearing. She turns the light off. Heading down the hallway towards her bedroom. Closing the door.

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (SAME)

THOMAS, laying face down on the bed. Sleeping... We see the amber glow of the console power button.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN - NIGHT (SAME)

We hear LAUGHTER coming from the television. The screen showing a man in a black hoodie standing in the same spot THOMAS stood near the seven eleven. The man throwing a RED balloon towards a girl... We see the image of CINDY on fire screaming.

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS's moving violently under the covers.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN - NIGHT (SAME)

The image of the CINDY starting to fade. We hear a hand CLAP, followed by another, and another.. Slowly building into rhythmic applause. Pulling back the black hoodie we see - MARCUS...

MARCUS

My NIGGA -- That was some INITIATION...

Reaching into the pocket of the black hoodie, pulling out a cigarette. A lighter. Taking in a deep drag, exhaling.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You know white folks don't take to kindly to nigga's setting they women on fire...

Between you and me (pausing a beat)
That SHIT was total O.G!

THOMAS, assuming the fetal position facing the TV.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Now, first things first. Get rid of that little high yellow ho you been hanging with. Bitches Fuck up a nigga's focus.

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS, paralyzed by the suggestion. Shaking his head no...

MARCUS (O.S.)

It's your choice. Go to jail
fucking around with her, or --

THOMAS waking. His body covered in perspiration. The television screen blank. Looking towards his mother's bedroom. The ceiling, and gripping his forehead with both hands.

INT. PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE - DAY

PRINCIPAL DAVIS, leaning against the front of his desk. DETECTIVE WATTS, sitting in a chair in front of him, looking uncomfortable (flashing back to days spent in the principals office).

DETECTIVE WATTS

Unfortunately, we weren't able to capture any surveillance from the store or surrounding building -- disappointing.

Looking at each other acknowledging the obvious.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
What we have is a couple of Firemen saying they saw a black kid in his teens wearing a black hoodie, along with an older man walking a dog, around the time the incident took place.

Flipping open his notepad

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
And, other witnesses saying they saw something.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS
We have tons of black students that wear black hoodie's. And, if you don't mind my saying--

DETECTIVE WATTS
Yeah, Yeah, I get all that.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS walking around his desk, taking a seat.
DETECTIVE WATTS repositioning himself.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
How 'bout students that might be willing to talk to us?

PRINCIPAL DAVIS laughing.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS
No -- and even if they wanted too... You know how things work around here.

DETECTIVE WATTS, getting up to leave.

DETECTIVE WATTS
Well then... I guess that's all for now. I'll be in touch. Getting up to leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUNCH ROOM AREA - DAY (SAME)

The room buzzing with students talking about CINDY.

THOMAS and MICA sitting at a table at the far end of the room. MICA taking out her notepad, starting to write.

THOMAS

You must be tired -- worrying about you dad and all...

She stops writing.

MICA

I'm fine. It's my aunt I'm worried about. It's her only brother. It's tough on her. How about you.

THOMAS

Me? Fine. You know, just working out a few things.

MICA

Can I help?

Picking up the book in front of him.

THOMAS

You already have...

MICA

Let me ask you something. What do you want to be?

THOMAS, taken aback by the question.

THOMAS

You mean when I grow up?

MICA

No silly, feared or respected. In class, you raised your hand for respected.

THOMAS

So did you.

MICA

I know, but what does it mean to you -- you know, being respected.

THOMAS

You know like when people know who you are without you having to tell um -- that they know you'll fu... That they'll pay, if they step out of line.

MICA

That sounds a lot like being feared

THOMAS, sitting back.

THOMAS

So what do you call being respected?

MICA

It's where your accomplishments, and the things you do for yourself and others matters. It's like having character.

THOMAS

Character?

MICA

Yeah -- people respect you for doing the right thing. Not because they're afraid of you.

THOMAS

Yeah, but those same people might stab you in the back, if they think you're weak.

MICA

But it's also about being treated the way you want people to treat you.

THOMAS, shaking his head.

THOMAS

That might work where you come from, but that DO UN TO OTHERS stuff -- ain't working here.

MICA

(jokingly) Maybe it can, starting with you.

THOMAS, giving her a quizzical look.

Dropping her head to the table. Laughing (as if getting through to him was a hopeless endeavor).

MICA (CONT'D)

Okay, (shaking her head) we'll say respected.

CUT TO:

SHOT OF PITTSBURGH SKYLINE - DUSK

ESTABLISHING SHOT - OUTSIDE PITTSBURGH POLICE STATION.**INT. POLICE STATION FRONT DESK - DUSK**

A white DUTY OFFICER (45) sits behind a pane of bullet proof glass.

MIKEY, stepping into the waiting area. Watching several officers pass by. Fugitives posters adorn the walls. Walking up to the glass.

DUTY OFFICER
Can I help you?

MIKEY
Ah, I want to report a crime.

DUTY OFFICER
Are you the victim?

MIKEY
Me, no... It's my friend. He was
attached by a black guy with a
knife, I saw it.

DUTY OFFICER
And your friend, where is he?

MIKEY
He doesn't know I'm here. I saw him
attached with a knife by a black
kid from school.

The Officer writing.

DUTY OFFICER
Your name?

MIKEY, seeing his image on the monitor behind the officer.
Rubbing his hands together over and over.

MIKEY
MIKEY. MIKEY MILLS.

DUTY OFFICER
Well MIKEY -- Have a seat over
there. Pointing. I'll have an
office come and take your
statement.

MIKEY, taking a seat next to two older black women.

A tall black police officer (45), holding a small clipboard stepping through the security door.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
MIKEY MILLS...

MIKEY, starting to stand up.

OFFICER FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
MIKEY MILLS.

Stepping over to a small desk.

OFFICER FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
First things first. What's your
name and your age?

MIKEY
MIKEY MILLS, 16.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
And MIKEY, tell me what happened --
exactly. Starting with who and
when.

MIKEY
Well, this Bla... This kid from
school pulled a knife on my friend
ERIC.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
You were there -- were you or your
friend injured?

MIKEY
Yes. I mean no. I mean I was there,
but I wasn't injured.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
And your friend's name?

MIKEY
ERIC KELLY.

The officer clicking his pen.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
And do you know the alleged
assailant?

MIKEY
Yes... THOMAS..

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Last name

MIKEY

I don't know. He goes to my school.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Yes, I got that. Can you describe what THOMAS looks like? What color clothes he was wearing, and around what time this take place?

MIKEY, wiping his hand over his mouth, trying to remember what ERIC had told him.

MIKEY

Um, a black hoodie... Yeah, he was wearing a black hoodie. It was around six?

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Six or around six?

FORWARD:

OFFICER FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I think we have what we need at this point. And we'll be in touch with MR. KELLY'S parents to confirm whether they want to pursue charges.

MIKEY

His parents?

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Yes, based upon the victim's age, his parents must to be notified.

The officer standing.

OFFICER FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I'm curious? Why didn't he report the attack himself?

MIKEY, standing, ready to leave.

MIKEY

Scare, I guess...

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL DAVIS'S OFFICE - DAY - MORNING

Sitting in front of PRINCIPAL DAVIS. DETECTIVE WATTS.

DETECTIVE WATTS

I got a call last night from one of the precincts. Kid walks in off the street says his friend was attacked by a black kid with a knife.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

One of our students. This student have a name?

DETECTIVE WATTS

THOMAS. No last name -- thought you might be able to help me out.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

And the name of the kid reporting it.

DETECTIVE WATTS

One MIKEY MILLS... Officer's spoke to his parents last night. Friends with a kid named ERIC KELLY.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS sitting up.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

Few days ago, few kids got into a skirmish. THOMAS WINTERS, ERIC KELLY.

DETECTIVE WATTS

Any other kids involved?

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

Not sure, easy enough to find out. But THOMAS, I can't see him pulling a knife on anybody (chuckling to himself). He's --

DETECTIVE WATTS

Just the same. I think it'd be worth having a talk with ERIC's parents... THOMAS'S too -- Get to the bottom of this.

Getting up to leave.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
Funny thing. MIKEY said THOMAS was wearing a BLACK HOODIE when he attacked ERIC. Same description as the perf matching the girl incident. Interesting coincidence, wouldn't you say.

Walking out the door.

INT. MR. TROTTMAN'S CLASS - DAY - MONDAY

MR. TROTTMAN, closing the door.

THOMAS and MICA taking their seats at the back of the classroom. MIKEY and ERIC noticeably missing.

MR. TROTTMAN, standing in front of his desk.

MR. TROTTMAN
Okay, who'd like to start?

THOMAS, looking at MICA.

THOMAS
You wanna go first?

No, save the best till last.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF MR. TROTTMAN'S CLASS - DAY - LATER

School bell ringing.

Students walking through the door.

THOMAS and MICA, the last to leave. MICA holding a small notebook.

MICA
That was awesome! I think ours was the best...

THOMAS, lifting his backpack around his shoulders.

THOMAS
Yeah, that was fun... sort of like GOOD COP - BAD COP.

MICA

Yeah, and that part about FEAR
creating the foundation for
RESPECT, where'd you come up with
that?

THOMAS

It just came to me.

They stop in the middle of the hallway. Exchanging a look for
a beat.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You seem happy today.

MICA

Yeah, I guess I do. My Father came
home Sunday. He's taking his
medication... so things are better.

Hesitating.

THOMAS

That's good.

MICA

I told him about you.

THOMAS

What?

MICA

Yeah, I want you to meet um.

THOMAS

Your dad?

MICA

He'll be back to his old self soon.
I told him you were helping me.

THOMAS

I think you've got it backwards.

MICA

You need to give yourself more
credit.

Coming up behind them. KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER.

KT

Well looky looky here.

THOMAS and MICA, standing together looking at the group.

A long silence between them.

THOMAS, looking at KT for a beat. Then turning to MICA.
Her eyes asking him to stay with her.

THOMAS

Hey, I'm gonna have to caught up
with you later, okay?

MICA

Okay... But think about what I
said.

The group watching her leave. KT turning to THOMAS.

KT

(in a feminine voice) Okay, but
think about what I said.

CUT TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOT: DEE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

We see a black & white police car pulling up in front.
Stepping out of the car, DETECTIVE WATTS and OFFICE FRANKLIN.

DETECTIVE WATTS

Talk about your fixer upper...

INT. DEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

DEE, sitting on the side of the bed painting her nails.

Knocking...(O.S)

DEE

THOMAS!

THOMAS (O.S.)

Bathroom...

DEE, getting up. Trying not to smudge her nails.

DEE

Who could this be?

Looking through the door port. Opening the door.

DEE (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

DETECTIVE WATTS
MS. WINTERS... I'm DETECTIVE WATTS,
Pittsburgh Police.

Handing her his card.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
And this is OFFICE FRANKLIN.

(O.C) Toilet flushing. THOMAS, stepping out of the bathroom.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
May we come in, we'd like to speak
with you regarding a reported
incident, possibly involving your
son.

Stepping in.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
Is THOMAS home?

THOMAS, walking into the kitchen. Standing next to the
kitchen table.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
MS. WINTERS, we have a plaintive,
ERIC KELLY, and an eye witness
alleging your son pulled a knife on
him a few nights ago.

Flipping open his note pad.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
This, in retaliation to a skirmish
that took place at school.

DEE
What are you saying?

OFFICER FRANKLIN
Ma'am, we'd like to ask your son a
few questions -- here his side of
the story.

DEE
I don't know what this is about,
but, I'm going to have to ask you
to leave.

DETECTIVE WATTS
Actually, MS. WINTERS, It's a bit
more serious than that, see --

THOMAS, sliding into a chair behind his mother.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
 We've learned the girl your son had
 the run in with at school -- turns
 out -- she's the young girl that
 was set on fire the other day... So
 we kinda insist that your son come
 with us --

DETECTIVE WATTS, stepping towards THOMAS.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)
 You have the right to remain
 silent.

THOMAS, looking at his mother as only a child can.

THOMAS
 Momma...

OFFICER FRANKLIN, stepping in towards DEE. Pushing her hands
 away.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
 Momma!

DEE
 You can't take my boy. Let go of my
 boy! --

DETECTIVE WATTS, handcuffing THOMAS. Leading him out the
 door.

DEE, pulling away from OFFICER FRANKLIN. Rushing down the
 hallway towards her bedroom.

DEE (CONT'D)
 (crying) You're trying to take boy!
 You can't my boy. You hear me -- Oh
 my God!

INT/EXT POLICE CAR BACK SEAT - NIGHT (LATER)

Driving. Radio chatter. THOMAS leaning against the door,
 handcuffed behind his back... Looking out the window. CITY
 LIGHTS streaming against the window in a kaleidoscope of
 colors.

DETECTIVE WATTS, looking uncomfortable in the front seat.
 Turning to look at THOMAS. Thinking to himself. Another black
 teen arrested, another statistic, another day on the force.
 Exhaling. Sitting back. Looking towards the city.

EXT. BRIDGE CROSSING INTO PITTSBURGH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We see the POLICE CAR crossing the bridge, continuing into the CITY.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

THOMAS, sitting alone at a small desk occupying one of the two chairs in the room. The room dimly lit.

INT. MIRRORED WINDOW TO INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

DETECTIVE WATTS, looking over a report. OFFICE FRANKLIN holding a cup of coffee.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
Mother's out there -- Better get started before she lawyer's up.

Looking at the report again.

OFFICER FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Doesn't look the type.

DETECTIVE WATTS
They never do, until they are.

INT. POLICE WAITING AREA - NIGHT - SAME

DEE, pacing back and forth. Looking at the large clock at the at the center of the room.

OFFICER FRANKLIN, pushing the door open with his shoulder. DEE, walking towards him.

DEE
When do I get to see my son?

OFFICER FRANKLIN
Well that depends on your son --

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT - SAME

DETECTIVE WATTS entering. Walking behind THOMAS. Looking at a manila folder . THOMAS sitting with his hands interwoven. They exchange a look.

DETECTIVE WATTS

It must be hard getting bullied all the time --

Taking a seat in the chair in front of THOMAS.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)

Use to happen to me when I was about your age. Made me mad -- I remember all I wanted to do was get even.

Leaning forward into THOMAS'S face.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)

Is that what happened here?
A little pay back?

Can't say I blame ya -- an eye for an eye. (sitting back) So here comes the fun part, you get to tell me your side of the story.

THOMAS, sitting back.

THOMAS

Tell you my side of what?

DETECTIVE WATTS

This is serious son. We got an eye witness says you pulled a knife. That's a felony -- five to ten easy. And the little red head. Well she's sitting in a hospital bed waiting to testify. So if I were you --

THOMAS, shaking his heading, pushing his glasses up onto his nose.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)

OKAY, let's start with your whereabouts, last Tuesday after school, and we'll see where it goes from there.

THOMAS

Left school. Went home, did some studying.

DETECTIVE WATTS, standing up quickly. Slamming both hands down on the desk.

DETECTIVE WATTS

(becoming excited) Look Son! Let me spell this out for you. We know you pulled a knife on ERIC, you wanted revenge, CINDY was next on the list. So speak up now, and maybe you'll only do 3 years plus.

THOMAS, sitting silent.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)

Okay, have it your way. We'll just let you sit here and think about it for a while.

DETECTIVE WATTS, picking up the file, walking out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE WAITING AREA - NIGHT - SAME

DEE, lighting a cigarette.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

You can't smoke in...

DEE, taking a drag, exhaling, smoke filling the room.

DEE

You're saying my son. My son! Set some girl on fire.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

A young BLACK MALE fitting your son's description was reported --

DEE

Half the BLACK BOYS in that school fit my son's description.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

At this point, He's just a PERSON OF INTEREST.

Entering the room, DETECTIVE WATTS. Looking at DEE smoking.
OFFICER FRANKLIN giving him a look of don't bother...

DETECTIVE WATTS

Seems you're son's been watching a
lot of television. The long and the
short of it is. We're keeping him
here. And my advice to you. Talk to
him.

DEE, stepping into DETECTIVE WATTS'S face.

DEE

My boy didn't do what you're
saying. You're just trying to cover
your asses.

DETECTIVE WATTS

Ma'am put out the cigarette before
I have to arrest you.

OFFICER FRANKLIN raising an eyebrow.

DEE, putting out the cigarette.

INT. POLICE HOLDING CELL - NIGHT (LATER)

THOMAS. Sitting with his head down, his hands in his pockets
looking at the wall. Detainees giving him the once over.

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (LATER)

A Rum and Coke on the table. POOKIE, in her nightgown
watching DEE.

POOKIE

You let me know what ya need honey.
Whatever you need.

DEE

What was that boy thinking?
I don't have money for a Lawyer...

DEE, taking out her cell phone, looking at it for a beat.
She scrolls through several numbers. Stopping at an 888
number.

POOKIE, getting up to leave.

DEE (CONT'D)

Thanks POOKIE.

DEE, watching the door close behind POOKIE. Looking at the number on her cell phone again --

INT. DEE'S BEDROOM - DAY - EARLY MORNING

DEE, in her underwear (looking as if she hadn't slept all night). Sitting on the side of the bed. On the phone. Listening to the man on the other end.

DEE

Yes, I see. (nodding her head).
Arrangements... I -- I don't know.
We never...

DEE beginning to rock back and forth. Tears flowing.

DEE (CONT'D)

Yes, that might be best. Thank you.

Hanging up. Wiping away the tears. Taking a deep breath. Standing. Looking around the cluttered room. Starting to pick up pieces of clothing. Starting to fold them.

INT. POLICE STATION - VISITING ROOM - DAY - MORNING

DEE, dressed in jeans and a blue sweater. Sitting at a small table next to several other mothers waiting to see their sons and husbands. The room is eerily quiet.

We hear the sound of a BUZZER as the security door opens. Stepping through, being held by a young officer is THOMAS. Taking a seat at the table.

DEE, looking at her son. Wanting to reach out and hold him. They sit quietly for a beat.

DEE

So how you holding up? I mean --

THOMAS

I'm Alright. I guess.

DEE, starting to fidget. Rubbing her index and forefinger together (as if she were about to light a cigarette).

DEE

Did you sleep.

THOMAS

Not much.

DEE

Well, couple things. (taking a deep breath) Uh, I spoke to a guy at the URBAN LEAGUE through church. He's agreed to handle things for us.

THOMAS, sitting up in the chair.

DEE (CONT'D)

And, (DEE looking away at the ceiling) your father died in prison last night. Stabbed to death in fight.

DEE, relived to have gotten it out.

DEE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

THOMAS, taking a deep breath. Rubbing his hands together.

THOMAS

Yeah, well. Not like I ever really knew him.

The police office coming back to the table.

DEE

Yeah -- well. I know you asked about him the other day. And --

Getting her composure back.

DEE (CONT'D)

That guy from the urban league. he should be contacting you either later today or tomorrow morning.

Looking hard at THOMAS for a beat. Wanting to reach out to hold his hand.

DEE (CONT'D)

THOMAS, listen to the man. Do what he says.

THOMAS. Standing. The officer taking him by the arm. Escorting him away.

INT. POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY - LATER

THOMAS, sitting at a small rectangular table. An untouched DIET COKE sitting on the table in front of him.

We see a tall well dressed black man (45) COUNSELOR WRIGHT, standing next to THOMAS. Closing his brief case. DETECTIVE WATTS, leaning against the door. Closing the folder in front of him.

DETECTIVE WATTS
Well -- that's it then... You're
free to go until the hearing.

THOMAS, not saying a word, following COUNSELOR WRIGHT through the door.

Standing at the door, watching them leave. OFFICE FRANKLIN. Stepping into the doorway. DETECTIVE WATTS walking past him.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
No luck with the FINGER PRINTS?

Continue to walk down the hallway.

DETECTIVE WATTS
Never touched the can.

INT. POLICE WAITING AREA - DAY - SAME

DEE, giving THOMAS a big hug. Looking at The man standing behind THOMAS.

ATTORNEY WRIGHT
Hello MS. WINTER'S my name is
NORMAN WRIGHT, Pittsburgh URBAN
LEAGUE.

DEE, reaching over, shaking his hand.

DEE
I can't thank you enough for
getting my son out of this place.

NORMAN WRIGHT
I apologize for not speaking with
you before now, But if you have a
moment.

Motioning to DEE to step towards the corner of the room.

NORMAN WRIGHT (CONT'D)
MS. WINTER'S, you seem to have a
nice son. But I won't lie to you.
These are very serious charges.

DEE, looking over at THOMAS.

DEE

My son didn't this. It's just not something he would do. He's never --

NORMAN WRIGHT

The good news is -- most of the evidence appears to be circumstantial. That said, THOMAS will most likely have to appear before a JUDGE.

DEE, weighing his words.

NORMAN WRIGHT (CONT'D)

So far, no eye witnesses have come forward related to the girl. But that still leaves the eye witness account of THOMAS, pulling the knife on ERIC.

DEE

So there's going to be a trial... when?

NORMAN WRIGHT

It's a hearing to determine if there's enough evidence for a trial. Couple days -- The urban league can attend the hearing, and we'll go from there.

DEE

We don't have a lot of money.

NORMAN WRIGHT

The urban league has resources.

DEE

And the eye witness?

NORMAN WRIGHT

We'll have to wait for disclosure. But remember, it's up to the prosecution to prove their case.

They'll probably get a search warrant for your son's locker, and possibly your home.

Just so you're prepared for that. Otherwise, He's free to go in your custody.

DEE, taking a long hard questioning look at NORMAN WRIGHT.

DEE

What if we lose the hearing?

NORMAN WRIGHT

We'll worrying about that when...
and if the time comes.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING SEVEN ELEVEN PARKING LOT - DAY

DETECTIVE WATTS. Standing in front of the silver dodge. Surveying the crime scene. Buildings. Looking at a building directly across the street. The second floor apartment. A figure shutting the curtain.

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (LATER)

A large pot of boiling water sits on the stove. DEE, preparing Spaghetti. A half finished cigarette dangling from her mouth.

Cell phone ringing.

DEE

Hello. Yes. 2pm Friday.
We'll be there.
Yes, that's not a problem.
He'll be there.

Looking at her phone. Sighing. She hangs up.

INT. DEE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (SAME)

THOMAS, on his knees, organizing something in his night stand.

DEE, walking into the livingroom.

DEE

That was the man from the URBAN
LEAGUE. The hearing's Friday at
2pm. He said you should wear a
suit. He wants to meet with us
Thursday to go over your testimony
and --

THOMAS, getting up.

DEE (CONT'D)
How you feel?

THOMAS
I don't know.

DEE
Well, you'll be fine.

THOMAS, Sitting down hard on the bed. DEE, turning. Going back into the kitchen.

THOMAS, turning on the television. Picking up the controller.

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN - SAME

DEE, hearing the television. Pausing. Looking up at the ceiling as if she were praying. Taking a drag of her cigarette. Watching the smoke rise towards the ceiling.

INT. DEE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (SAME)

THOMAS, sitting on the floor, legs crossed.

INSERT. TV SCREEN

The MARCUS THE MANIAC menu appearing.

THOMAS pressing the "A" button to begin a NEW GAME.

The menu flickering, remaining on the screen.

INT. DEE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (SAME)

THOMAS, continuing to hit the "A" button. The GAME not responding. THOMAS, turning the power to the game console off and on again. The menu on the TV screen appearing again.

Pressing "A" for new game "B" for resume play.

THOMAS, pressing the "A" button again. The menu not responding.

Looking at the "B" button for a beat. Pressing the "B" button, again and again. The game not responding.

Pushing his glasses up, onto his nose. Taking a deep breath, exhaling in frustration. Turning off the television.

DEE, coming into the livingroom.

DEE
I'm going to bed. You should too.
Get some rest.

THOMAS, Looking at the blank TV Screen.

DEE, coming over, giving him a kiss on the forehead.

DEE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about you father.

DEE, going to her bedroom.

THOMAS, reaching over, turning out the light.

INT. DEE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN.

The screen emitting a thin horizontal white line across the screen. The line transforming into a SINE WAVE configuration.

The Sine wave morphing into MARCUS.

MARCUS
Did you think this SHIT was going
to be easy. You think anyone can do
this -- You don't get to be
CHAMPION unless you finish the
game. And you've got a loose end
"T".

INT. DEE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (SAME)

THOMAS, tossing and turning in the bed.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN.

MARCUS
One little white boy to END the
game... Kill that motherfucker and
win the game T.

INT. DEE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (SAME)

THOMAS
(whispering in his sleep)
Murder was the case that they gave
me.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN.

The Screen going blank.

INT. POLICE STATION KITCHEN - DAY - MORNING

DETECTIVE WATTS, dressed in jeans, a white shirt, and dark sports jacket, taking a sip of black coffee. His face cringing. Dumping the coffee in the trash.

Entering, a smart looking brunette (45), tight fitting pants suit - Court appointed Counsel Woman, LISA LINCOLN.

LISA LINCOLN
DETECTIVE.

DETECTIVE WATTS, startled, caught throwing away the coffee. Quickly rubbing his hands together, starting to shake... thinking better of it.

DETECTIVE WATTS
Yes, and you are?

LISA LINCOLN
Attorney LISA LINCOLN, a word with you regarding the KELLY hearing.

DETECTIVE WATTS, undressing her with his eyes.

The Counselor stepping back.

LISA LINCOLN (CONT'D)
I represent MIKEY MILLS and ERIC KELLY. We've uncovered some interesting information --

DETECTIVE WATTS
I wish I could say the same.

Handing him a folder.

The look on DETECTIVE WATTS face is one of "you got to be kidding me"

DETECTIVE WATTS (POV) LOOKING AT THE FILE.

FILE:

Subject: THOMAS WINTERS Age 9

SCHOOL INCIDENT: Actor allegedly **POKED** fellow student with a sword during an in class Halloween party.

Subject: THOMAS WINTERS AGE 11

BIRTHDAY PARTY FIGHT: Actor repeatedly **PUNCHED** fellow party

attendee in the face, resulting in the attendee receiving a Black eye, bloody nose, requiring Hospital visit.

Subject: THOMAS WINTERS AGE 12

NEIGHBORHOOD THIEF: Actor is alleged to have **STOLEN CASH**, SNEAKERS and other valuables from neighbors while visiting their homes. No charges were filed.

Subject: THOMAS WINTERS AGE 12

ACCIDENTAL ASSAULT: Actor cut a victims arm requiring emergency surgery when the other boy allegely took his jacket.

Subject: THOMAS WINTERS AGE 13

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY: Actor and several accomplices were alleged to have used **EXPLOSIVES** to destroy mailboxes, and other property. Actor released to his mother's custody due to lack of evidence.

DETECTIVE WATTS (CONT'D)

Is this admissible?

MS. LINCOLN, reaching out for the file.

CUT TO:

INT. LUNCHROOM TABLE - DAY

KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER sitting, talking at a small table.

THOMAS, walking over, looking exhausted. Dropping his backpack to the floor, taking a seat next to KT. SCOOTER continuing to eat lunch.

RONNIE

What, no lunchtime study hall with your new girlfriend?

THOMAS, ignoring the comment.

At the other end of the lunchroom, MIKEY and ERIC. The two huddle together. ERIC leaning over, whispering into MIKEY'S ear. MIKEY looking towards THOMAS.

THOMAS

Hey, I gotta run.

Grabbing his backpack about to leave. KT quickly pulling him back.

KT
 (whispering) "T" word is, you got
 something to do with that white
 girl being set on fire.

THOMAS, stepping away from KT, caught off guard.

KT (CONT'D)
 (in a very stern voice) Yo "T" have
 a seat.

THOMAS, looking at the group, once again taking a seat at the
 table.

KT, leaning into the middle of the table, the others
 following suit.

KT (CONT'D)
 Look, we know you got some shit
 going on. (looking at the others)
 we're here to help.

RONNIE
 Yeah, "T" we ain't stupid.
 You gotta trust us Yo.

KT
 We boyz "T". If this is about those
 white boys --

THOMAS, turning his neck a bit trying to relieve the stress.

THOMAS
 I don't want to get you involved.

KT
 We're already involved.

THOMAS
 (relieved to be telling his story).
 I wanted to get back at ERIC for
 what he did to me, so I pulled a
 knife on him, beat him up.

SCOOTER
 And you didn't think he was going
 to say something.

THOMAS
 He never said anything. It was his
 boy, MIKEY.

RONNIE
That kid with all the acne?

THOMAS
Yeah, but he's lying. He never saw anything.

KT, seating back, looking around the lunchroom. The others leaning back for a beat. Leaning in again.

RONNIE
So why you all weirded out?

THOMAS
I got a hearing tomorrow, MIKEY's testifying...

SCOOTER
Man, that's assault with a deadly weapon. They'll look to try your ass as an adult.

THOMAS, moving nervously in his chair.

KT
They tried to get my cousin like that -- witnesses and shit.

Moving closer to KT.

KT (CONT'D)
If the witness doesn't show up. They gotta drop the charges.

THOMAS
So...

SCOOTER
We just have to hold this motherfucker...

KT
I wanna be there.

RONNIE
Motherfucker. you can't be there. Po po's probably got yo ass under surveillance right now.

KT
RONNIE'S right. Let people see you. Alibi your Shit (laughing).

THOMAS

THOMAS, (serious tone) No, I need to be there. He was going to lie on me.

KT

"T", we got this. The less you know, the better.

Stepping up to the table behind them. PRINCIPAL DAVIS.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

MR. WINTERS. I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to come with me.

THOMAS. Grabbing his bookbag, following PRINCIPAL DAVIS out of the lunchroom. Everyone watching them walk the length of the lunchroom.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL RECEPTION AREA - DAY

PRINCIPAL DAVIS, leaning over the reception desk signing some papers. Turning to THOMAS. Handing him a copy.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS

I'm afraid, giving recent developments. We have no choice but to send you, and the others involved in your situation home until further notice. Your mother has been notified, and the contents of your locker removed. We'll have them her to pick up during school hours. I'm sorry.

Turning.

PRINCIPAL DAVIS (CONT'D)

If you'll follow me.

Walking him to the door. Opening it. Watching THOMAS leave.

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF PITTSBURGH COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (SAME)

DEE, sitting in the first row behind THOMAS and COUNSELOR WRIGHT. The BAILIFF standing at the center of the room.

Entering the chamber, ERIC KELLY followed by his MOTHER and FATHER. DETECTIVE WATTS, OFFICER FRANKLIN, seated across the aisle.

ERIC wearing a blue suit with a clip on tie, falling midway on his stomach. His family taking a seat in the first row next to DETECTIVE WATTS.

2:58pm. The BAILIFF looking at his watch. Heading towards the Judges Chambers.

Entering the COURTROOM from a side entrance, COUNSEL WOMEN LINCOLN. By the look on face, something is wrong. Walking quickly over to the BAILIFF. Whispering in his ear.

The BAILIFF, disappearing through the chamber door.

COUNSEL WOMEN LINCOLN walking over to DETECTIVE WATTS. Leaning over the railing, whispering to him.

They two walking quickly towards the back of the courtroom and out the door.

DEE, leaning over the rail towards COUNSELOR WRIGHT.

DEE

What's going on?

COUNSELOR WRIGHT

Not sure.

INT. OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM - DAY (SAME)

DETECTIVE WATTS

What's going on COUNSELOR?

LISA LINCOLN

I just got the call. MIKEY MILLS PARENTS can't find him. Been missing since this morning.

DETECTIVE WATTS

You think the kid got cold feet?

LISA LINCOLN

I'm not sure. But without his testimony to collaborate ERIC's account. We don't have a whole lot here.

DETECTIVE WATTS

What about the file?

LISA LINCOLN

(A) It's only admissible if we have the hearing. And (B), we need MIKEY'S testimony, and the JUDGE still might not allow it due to the defendant's age. It only hints at a pattern of behavior. That's all we got without MIKEY.

DETECTIVE WATTS, looking as if he'd just been scolded by his mother.

The COUNSEL WOMAN, going back into the courtroom.
DETECTIVE WATTS following.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (SAME)

The COUNSEL WOMAN taking her seat.

The BAILIFF, standing in front of the Bench.

BAILIFF

All raise for the Honorable JUDGE MASON.

JUDGE MASON, a heavysset Black Man (60) with a greying beard. Taking a seat in the large leather chair.

A female STENOGRAPHER (23), reading the case.

STENOGRAPHER

Case 55667 B, KELLY vs. WINTERS

JUDGE MASON

COUNSELOR, how does the defendant plead?

NORMAN WRIGHT

We would like to enter a plead of NOT GUILTY, your Honor.

JUDGE MASON

COUNSELOR LINCOLN, are you ready to call your first WITNESS.

COUNSEL WOMAN LINCOLN, standing.

LISA LINCOLN
Your Honor, may I approach the
BENCH?

Both COUNSELORS approaching the Bench.

LISA LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Your Honor, I would like to request
a continuance. my witness -- I was
informed minutes ago, is either
missing or unavailable at this
time. His account is key to our
case.

JUDGE MASON, sitting back, considering her request for a
beat. Leaning forward.

JUDGE MASON
MS. LINCOLN. Do we have the alleged
weapon used in this attack, entered
into evidence.

LISA LINCOLN
Not at this time your Honor, the
Police have yet to find such
evidence.

NORMAN WRIGHT
Your Honor, I'd like to make a
motion that this Hearing be
dismissed, and all charges be
dropped against my client

JUDGE MASON, considering the request.

JUDGE MASON
Ms. LINCOLN?

Looking back at the Kelly family.

LISA LINCOLN
No objection your Honor.

The COUNSELORS walking back to their respective tables.

JUDGE MASON
In the case of KELLY vs. WINTERS
case 55667 B. The case is
dismissed.

Pounding his gavel.
The STENOGRAPHER reading the next case file.

THOMAS, looking unsure as to what just happened.

DEE, raising to her feet. Reaching over the railing and shaking the COUNSELOR'S hand. Giving THOMAS a hug.

COUNSEL WOMAN LINCOLN huddled with ERIC'S mother and father.

THOMAS, DEE and COUNSELOR WRIGHT walking out of the courtroom. DEE'S hand resting on THOMAS'S shoulder. THOMAS staring at ERIC.

INT. OUTSIDE HALLWAY OF COURTROOM - DAY (SAME)

DETECTIVE WATTS on his cell phone.

DETECTIVE WATTS

I need a favor. Yeah. Send a unit to the MILLS residence. See if you can find out what happened to MIKEY MILLS. Talk to his parents, see if he's made it home.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Kid, mightta just got cold feet.

DETECTIVE WATTS

There was no reason for that kid to get cold feet. Something's happened and I want to know what it is and how this kid's connected?

OFFICER FRANKLIN

What if the Kids was lying all along... You ever think of that? When I took his story, he was all over the place.

DETECTIVE WATTS

If that's the case, I'll nail his ass to the wall.

OFFICER FRANKLIN, walking away.

INT. DEE'S KITCHEN DOOR - DAY - LATER

DEE and THOMAS walking through the door. DEE wasting no time taking out a cigarette, dropping her purse on the table. THOMAS, behind her, taking off the clip on. Giving his mother a hug.

DEE, taking out her cell phone.

DEE
I gotta call POOKIE. Maybe we
should celebrate. Me and you.

The phone beginning to ring.

DEE (CONT'D)
Hey POOKIE. DEE. No hearing. They
released him.

Tapping his mother on the shoulder.

DEE (CONT'D)
POOKIE, hold on...

THOMAS
Momma, KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER
wanted me to come over today.
But we had the hearing, I didn't
think I was going to be around, you
know.... Can I go over there.

DEE
POOKIE, let me call you back.

Hanging up. Taking a drag of her cigarette. Seeing the look
on THOMAS'S face.

DEE (CONT'D)
You don't want to celebrate with
you mother?

THOMAS
I won't be gone long.

Shaking her head in disbelief.

DEE
If you'd rather play games with
your friends then celebrate with
your mom.

THOMAS
Mom... you know if ain't like that.

DEE
Okay... But I want you back here by
8pm. No later, and keep your cell
on.

THOMAS, headed for the livingroom. Starting to change.

THOMAS
Thanks momma.

EXT. BACK OF DEE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

THOMAS, wearing a red sweat suit, looking like a jogger. Walking around to the side of the building. Taking out his cell phone. Placing the phone in airplane mode. Turning it off. Leaving it near the windowsill... Hidden. Walking towards the front of the building, and heading up the street.

SHOT. FRONT OF A BOARDED UP OLD CHURCH - EVENING**EXT. REAR OF CHURCH - EVENING**

Looking both ways down the alley. Removing a two by four blocking the door. Using his shoulder to push open the door. Stepping in.

INT. CHURCH - SAME

Pushing the door back into place. Picking up a brick from the floor. Hitting a wooden beam three times.

(O.S) We hear two muddled thumps.

THOMAS, taking a small lighter from his pocket. The flame casting shadows about the room. Moving through the small hallway, finding the stairs leading to the basement.

Continuing down the stairs. The lighter getting hot. Letting the flame go out. Suddenly, a bright light in his face.

Standing behind the flashlight. SCOOTER.

SCOOTER

Follow me.

THOMAS, following the narrow beam of light. Walking past several rooms. Coming to a large door: DRESSING ROOM. SCOOTER knocking twice. The door opening.

INT. CHURCH DRESSING ROOM - SAME

KT, and RONNIE holding flashlights. THOMAS'S face in shadow. RONNIE, handing a heavy duty flashlight to THOMAS.

Sitting on a small stool, tied up and gagged - MIKEY MILLS.

KT, lighting a small oil lamp resting on a table. MIKEY'S eyes filling with fear upon seeing THOMAS.

THOMAS, walking slowly around MIKEY. Shinning the flashlight in his face.

THOMAS
I don't know how you did it.
But you saved me.

KT and THOMAS giving each other props.

KT
Kinda reminds me of that time in
the 7th grade.

RONNIE laughing.

KT (CONT'D)
And now this motherfucker, gonna
lie on my boy.

KT, hitting MIKEY upside the head.

RONNIE
What you wanna do "T"
how we handling this?

THOMAS
I got this... I can finish the game
myself.

RONNIE
What? What game?

SCOOTER
What are you talking 'bout? This
dude's seen our faces.

THOMAS
(in a very determined voice) And
that's why I need for you guys to
leave! ...
I'll meet you at KT'S.

No one saying a word. MIKEY whimpering.

KT
Alright "T" it's your show.

SCOOTER grabbing the lamp from the table, almost knocking over container of lamp oil.

THOMAS
Leave the lamp. Burn your clothes.
You know where.

SCOOTER, placing the lamp on the table.

The GROUP looking back at THOMAS, closing the large door behind them.

THOMAS, shining the flashlight in MIKEY'S eyes again.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
MIKEY, you're a loose end.

THOMAS, kicking the stool over.

Looking down on MIKEY for a beat. Taking the heavy duty flash light. Hitting him hard to the face. (feeling the power coming over him like before) hitting him again and again.

THOMAS, walking over to the table. Picking up the lamp. Leaning down. MIKEY's face inches away. MIKEY's face bloodied. His left eye swelling.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
(low intense voice) This is the end
of the game MIKEY.

THOMAS, removing the gage. MIKEY crying.

MIKEY
I won't tell! I wont' say a word.
Promise.

Hitting him hard in the face with the flash light.

THOMAS
I'm gonna ask you a question MIKEY.
You tell me the truth. You walk out
of here -- turn me in if you want --
But I gotta know. So don't lie to
me.

MIKEY shaking his head (fearful).

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Did you see me pull the knife on
ERIC?

Realizing at that moment... telling truth would result in the same outcome as lying.

MIKEY
(coughing) ERIC... ERIC asked me to
do it. He said, if an animal bites
the hand. I didn't want to do it.

THOMAS, patting MIKEY on the head.

THOMAS
 (in a calculated low voice) Thanks
 MIKEY -- Thanks for telling the
 TRUTH for ONCE in your "GD" LIFE!

THOMAS becoming excited... Starting to stomp MIKEY over, and over. Finally stopping (exhausted). MIKEY, lying limp on the floor. THOMAS, putting the gag back his mouth.

Picking up the lamp oil. Pouring it over MIKEY's body. Turning off the flashlight. Putting it in his back pocket.

MIKEY trying to break free of the ropes.

THOMAS Taking the lamp. Continuing to pour the lamp oil as he moves towards the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
 GAME OVER MIKEY...

Standing at the door of the CHURCH. Pouring the last of the lamp oil out.

Pulling the wooden door closed. Replacing the two by four.

We see THOMAS taking out one of DEE'S NEWPORT LIGHTS. Opening a book of matches. Watching the flame come alive...

Lighting the cigarette, patiently taking several drags (seemly not in a hurry).

Placing the filter of the cigarette into the match book. Closing the cover. Taking a last drag. The TOBACCO burning bright. THOMAS savoring the moment.

Placing the matchbook on a small pool of oil at the door. Picking up the lamp. Starting down the alley towards KT'S.

EXT. ALLEY WAY - EVENING - FEW MINUTES LATER.

We see THOMAS taking off the RED SWEAT SUIT near a barrel used to burn garbage. Underneath, a grey tee-shirt and Sweats. Throwing the RED sweat suit into the barrel. Followed by the lamp. The flames begin to build.

INT. KT'S LIVINGROOM - EVENING - LATER

THOMAS, RONNIE, and SCOOTER all sitting in front of a flat screen television playing KILLER KRAZE II.

(O.C.) We hear a toilet flush, followed by running water. THOMAS, coming down the stairs. Picking up the his controller, and joining the game.

Coming into the room from the kitchen, KT'S Mother. A very slender black woman (45) with a drink in her hand.

KT'S MOM

You boys hungry? I got some left over chicken.

They all look around. Shaking their heads.

RONNIE

No. We're good. Thanks

SCOOTER

I'll take a piece.

THOMAS, getting up. I have to be going anyway.

SCOOTER (CONT'D)

I got you by 4,000 points.

THOMAS

I guess you win then...

SCOOTER

Yeah, that's right. I win!

THOMAS, nodding to KT, RONNIE and SCOOTER. Following KT'S mom towards the door.

CUT TO:

DEE'S KITCHEN - EVENING (LATER) 7:40PM

DEE, sitting at the table. Bills spread over every inch. On the radio: FIRE by the Ohio Players. The kitchen door opening. THOMAS stepping in, cell phone in hand.

THOMAS

(smiling) 7:40pm

DEE

How was your game.

THOMAS

SCOOTER beat me.

DEE
SCOOTER. I thought you said he
never beats you.

THOMAS
Yeah, well.

DEE
You hungry? There's leftovers.

THOMAS
Works for me.

DEE, doing a double take at THOMAS'S clothes, (and just as fast letting the thought go).

DEE
I'll heat it up for you.

THOMAS, continuing to walk into the livingroom.

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - SAME

THOMAS, walking past the television. Grabbing the controller, hitting the power button. The console power light illuminating.

Ejecting the MARCUS THE MANIAC game. Carefully placing it back into the case. Returning it to the little dresser, placing the game on the left side of the drawer.

Taking out a new game cassette. Placing it in the open console tray. Hitting close.

THOMAS, Taking a seat on the floor, sitting upright, his legs crossed in front of the television.

INSERT. TELEVISION SCREEN.

The welcome menu on the video game appearing on the screen.

WELCOME "HIGHWAY SNIPER" SET UP MENU.

DEE O.S
THOMAS, I think you've had enough
video games for today. Turn that TV
off, come and eat.

THOMAS turning the TV off. The screen going black. Heading towards the kitchen.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT - LATER

We see the flashing lights of FIRE TRUCKS and POLICE CARS cutting through the darkness. The CHURCH ablaze. FIREMEN extinguishing the flames.

Two firemen stand holding a nozzle pointed at the church

FIREMEN I

Another abandon building. They're burning this whole neighborhood down. One build at a time.

Looking around at the neighborhood.

FIREMEN II

Yeah. You think people would want to make it better, or leave.

CAMERA PULLING BACK TO SHOW THE ENTIRE FIRE SCENE.

CUT TO:

INT. DEE'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT (LATER) - MOS

DEE and THOMAS sitting in the kitchen talking about the hearing (O.S).

THE CAMERA PANS PAST THE TELEVISION, MOVING TOWARDS THOMAS'S BED. COMING TO STOP AT THE OPEN DRAWER OF THE LITTLE DRESSER.

MOVING TO A CLOSE UP OF THE VIDEO GAMES INSIDE.

WE SEE THE VIDEO GAMES SEPARATED INTO TWO SECTION WITHIN THE DRAWER:

GAMES WON.

PIRATE WARS
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING
PYROMANIAC'S REVENGE
MORTAL KOMBAT
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSAULT
IT TAKES A THIEF
MARCUS THE MANIAC

GAMES TO BE WIN.

HIGHWAY SNIPER
PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSIN
NUCLEAR SABOTAGE

SOMBER MUSIC PLAYING ON SCREEN.

TWO YEARS LATER: DC INNER BELT PARKWAY

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O)

All units -- All units, shots fired on the Inner Belt Parkway near exits 114. Vehicles hits, multiple accidents. Undetermined number of casualties -- POLICE OFFICERS down. All units (fading) All units respond. Suspect is considered armed and dangerous.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END