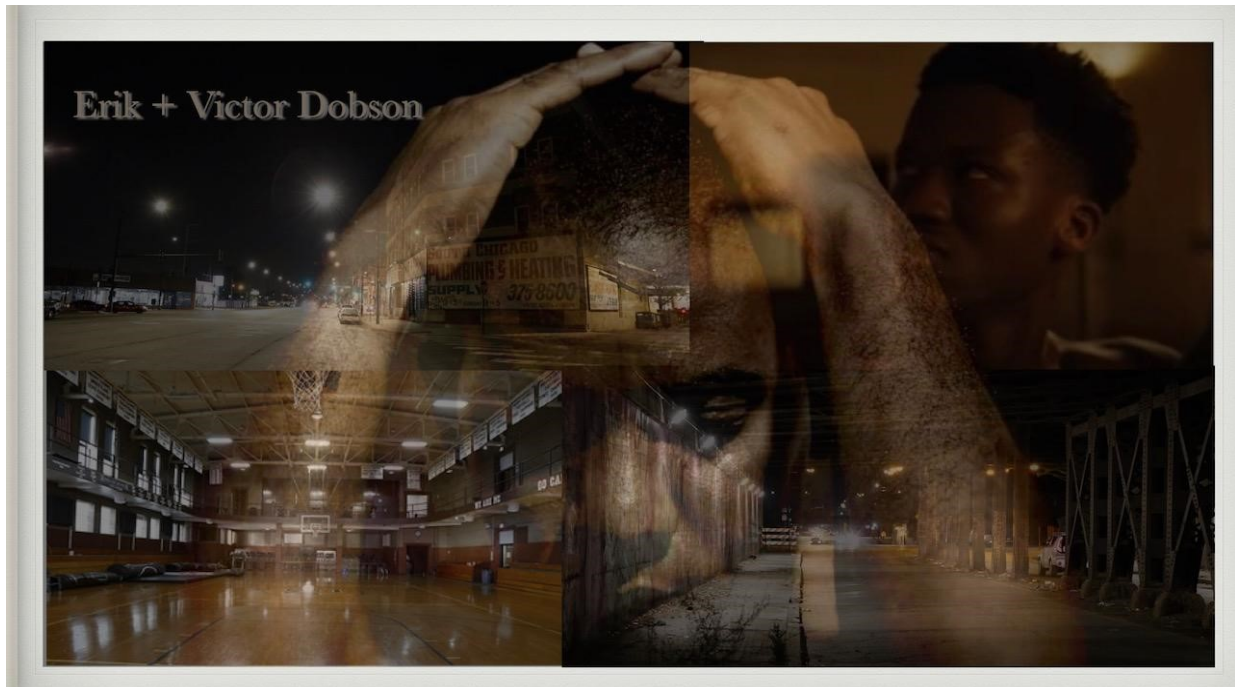


IN THE PAINT

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5 LB. TEST PRODUCTIONS in  
association with MetalCutsMegan Films  
Chicago, IL.

INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS.

\*

DURING THE 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR IN CHICAGO, 29 FORMER AND CURRENT STUDENTS AT HARPER HIGH SCHOOL ON THE CITY'S SOUTH SIDE WERE SHOT.

\*  
\*  
\*

8 WERE KILLED...

\*

FADE UP

CHICAGO 2014

\*

1

EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL BASKETBALL COURT CHICAGO- PRESENT DAY

1

A cracked, spit stained, faded blue slab of concrete is overtaken by a rolling bead of fresh, sky blue paint followed by a squeegee. A game is in progress on an adjacent court. The squeegee guides the paint along a taped border separating a basketball key from the rest of a faded green floor. Play HEATS UP on the adjacent court. It's now a push and shove. A WHISTLE. AN ALARM. An orphaned ball rolls toward us.

LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM (O.S.)

Line up. All inmates line up.

As the ball is about to roll onto the fresh paint and fill the screen, a black, worn shoe stops it cold. A hand palms it OS as CHILLY MCGEE, 20's, product of the street, first one in a fight but will give the shirt off his back, approaches.

CHILLY

Lil' help?

\*

The suns glare silhouettes a DISHEVELED MAN in a guards uniform. He looks at Chilly and eyes a basket 30 feet away.

CHILLY (CONT'D)

Day off laundry gig say you don't.

DISHEVELED MAN (O.S.)

...and if I do?

CHILLY

Sa' big what if.

TRIPP MAKEPEACE, 20, sucking a lollipop, a hard knock past with a could have been/done anything personality, approaches.

TRIPP

Then Chilly n' I here'll put a real shine on them shoes a' yours.

\*

The Man looks to A PAINTER walking off with a 10 gallon bucket and squeegee. He glances down at his craftsmanship, eyes a basket in the distance, takes a moment and shoots. We follow the ball against a brilliant blue sky as it falls toward the basket, losing it in the blinding sun's glare.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

2 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM CHICAGO - LATE FALL 2011 2 \*

A basketball emerges from the glare, falling into focus where it gathers real time speed heading for its target. A 3 point swish! ERIK DOBSON #11, 18, saunters away from the baseline.

JT LORD #32, THOMAS LOMAX #22, NATE RIOS #4, JONATHAN "BIRD" BIRDMAN #8 and 8-10 JUNIOR VARSITY TRYOUTS warm up. \*

A SIDE DOOR OPENS. 5 THUGS saunter in. It's clear they are gang affiliated. WICK TUCKER, 18, leader, rolls past Erik. \*

WICK  
That chicken-shit brother a' yours  
about?

ERIK  
Haven't seen him.

WICK  
Don't mind if we settle in n' wait  
then. \*

Wick and the others ascend the bleachers and get comfortable. \*

ERIK  
Coach James don't allow spectators. \*

WICK  
Ain't my mutha' fuckin' coach.

BIRD  
(approaching) \*  
Tryouts are closed Wick. \*

WICK  
We ain't tryin' out superstar. \*

THOMAS  
(stepping up) \*  
You good Bird? \*

WICK  
(standing fast) \*  
Step yo' good n' fed black ass back  
out on the court n' mind ya' damn  
business fat boy!

Nate and JT, alarmed, head over. The Thugs react as well. \*

THOMAS  
The fuck you say?? \*

Nate is already halfway up the bleachers. A SCUFFLE. JT isn't far behind. It's a push and shove about to be a brawl. \*

Coach enters and races over, dropping a clipboard.

COACH JAMES  
(ascending the bleachers)  
Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey!

\*

Coach blows his WHISTLE.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Knock it off! Erik, Bird, JT,  
Thomas, Nate, back on the court!

The team responds. WORDS are exchanged as they separate.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Hey, enough! Nate close your mouth!

Coach sizes up Wick as top dog. They share a look/moment.

\*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Here for tryouts gentlemen?

Wick eyes him defiantly then sits. The others do the same.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
I'll take that as a, no.

Coach blows his WHISTLE.

\*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Alright two lines, layup drill!  
Let's go!

\*

\*

\*

The team and tryouts form two lines and begin the drill.

\*

Coach steps off the bleachers looking back. He reaches the floor and grabs a lever, locks eyes with Wick then smirks.

\*

\*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Hands n' feet inside the ride kids.

Coach pulls on the lever and the bleachers begin to retract.

\*

Wick eyes him tiredly before exiting. The others follow.  
Coach watches them head toward the door then steps away.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
JT, little help?

\*

JT moves to the bleachers and works the lever.

\*

WICK  
Tell that donkey mule brother a'  
yours I'll be clockin' fo' his ass.

Wick grabs a stray ball, eyes Coach and hits a three pointer.  
Erik locks eyes with him before he and the others exit.

\*

\*

COACH CALVIN JAMES, 30's, ex-NBA player turned high school  
basketball coach/history teacher heads to center court.

\*

\*

There's a limp in his step and a dim sparkle in his eye. He wears old high-tops, golf shorts, T-shirt and a paint-speckled Milwaukee Bucks cap. He juggles a bag of sunflower seeds and clipboard. He blows his WHISTLE.

COACH JAMES  
Bring it in!

Play stops. Everyone heads too center court.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Okay. Welcome to final cut tryouts gentlemen. Last years graduating class left me with six players. Six. I'm looking to pull two maybe four players from JV to smooth out the edges. So show me what you got. JT, Bird, Thomas, Nate, Erik go skins. Tryouts pair up man to man. The rest, have a seat on my bench.

TRYOUT #2  
All right if we take out?

Erik quickly pop steals the ball from TRYOUT #2.

ERIK  
This ain't no after-school YMCA pick up ball.

Erik tosses the ball to Coach.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
We jump for it.

Erik takes off his shirt and throws it off court.

Coach agrees with a nod and blows his whistle.

Everyone pairs up as a few head off court to the bench.

Erik and Tryout #2 set. Coach tosses it up. Tryout #2 wins.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Gonna take more than first dibs.

Tryout #2 smiles wide and breaks away from Erik.

After a few plays it's clear Tryout#2 is in charge. He drives the lane and scores, sending Erik to the floor. WHISTLE.

COACH JAMES  
You call that defense?

ERIK  
Was tryin' to draw the foul.

COACH JAMES

Save the drawing for art class.  
Shooting one.

BIRD

May land you a spot on the pine E.

Erik shrugs it off and sets up along the key. Tryout #2 hits the free throw, smiles and sets up on defense guarding Erik as Erik tries to get away from him. \*  
\*  
\*

COACH JAMES

If you're not planted do yourself a favor n' get the hell out of the way!

ERIK

Better tuck that smile away.

TRYOUT #2

Yeah? N' why's that?

ERIK

Cuz' I never forget a face.

Tryout #2 steals Nate's in-bound pass to JT, drives the lane again and scores sending Erik to the floor. Defensive foul.

WHISTLE. Coach tosses his clipboard aside in surrender.

COACH JAMES

Shooting one...again. Erik. (waving him over) \*  
\*

Tryout #2 sets up at the foul line. Erik nears Coach.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

You seen Victor?

ERIK

(turning back to the game)  
Ain't my brothers keeper. \*

COACH JAMES

(aside)  
Guess I'll take that as a no too. \*

Tryout #2 hits a free throw, transitions to defense guarding Erik. Erik gives him a shove. Tryout #2 returns the favor. \*  
\*

TRYOUT #2

Hell's the matter with you?!

THEY SCUFFLE. Coach WHISTLES and moves in to break it up.

3 EXT. CHICAGO SIDE STREET - LATER 3

Erik, walking home after practice, answers his RINGING CELL.

VOICE (V.O.)  
Call from COOK COUNTY DEPT OF  
CORRECTIONS from "Victor" To accept  
charges press one. Decline press 2.

4 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL PRISONER PHONE BANK - CONTINUOUS 4

VICTOR DOBSON, 17, Erik's younger brother is on the phone.  
Other INMATES crowd the phone bank.

VICTOR  
E...

ERIK  
Where the hell are you man?

VICTOR  
Lock up.

ERIK  
What? What the hell for?

VICTOR  
Rollin' in black, eyeballin' the  
wrong Jack, take your pick.

ERIK  
You all right?

VICTOR  
I'm good.

ERIK  
You're in prison!

VICTOR  
County jail. Big difference.

ERIK  
The fuck happened?

VICTOR  
Zigged when I shoulda zagged bro.

ERIK  
Same ole' same ole', unreal...

VICTOR  
What?

ERIK

You call out' the blue cuz you in  
jail, I ask why n' all you got is  
zig zag this n' rollin' n' that?

VICTOR

You worried bout' me.

ERIK

Please.

VICTOR

Yeah.

ERIK

Wick n' his crew clockin' for you.

VICTOR

No shit?

ERIK

I get the rush lil' bro but you  
gotta leave that shit alone.

VICTOR

S'all good.

ERIK

Cops n' thugs as kids is one thing.  
Thug on thug's another

VICTOR

Nothin' I can't square. \*

ERIK

So when you get out?

VICTOR

Soon as I post up. \*

ERIK

How much?

VICTOR

My boys got my back.

Erik walks in silence. Victor looks out a window. A fence  
separates INMATES on the basketball court from PEDESTRIANS.

VICTOR (V.O.)

Hey E. \*

ERIK

Yeah.



VICTOR

Ever realize...nothin' but a damn  
chain link fence separatin' one  
life from the next.

\*  
\*

Erik stops to listen.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

It's funny cuz you can see right  
through that fence. Like water. N'  
if you get up there close enough,  
reach out right through and touch  
that life there on the other side.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ERIK

Yeah.

VICTOR

Ain't nothin' but a damn chain link  
fence...

\*

Erik tears up a bit. Victor looks about before he unscrews  
the voice cap on the phone. He finds a fold of cash inside,  
replaces it with a bag of dope and screws the cap back on.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Still there, man?

ERIK

Yeah. I'm here.

VICTOR

N' keep Grandpop out the loop.

\*

ERIK

Yeah.

\*

VICTOR

Can't handle that grimace a' his  
right now. Look, gotta dip so see  
you when I do. Victory gone.

\*  
\*  
\*

Victor hangs up and nods to AN INMATE who steps up unscrewing  
the voice cap. OFFICER ROE notices but looks the other way.

Erik continues on. He notices 3 ADOLESCENTS on a stairwell  
PLAYING COPS/ROBBERS. A 4th shoots basketball at a homemade  
rim behind a fence. The kid has great form and nails a shot.

ERIK

Stay your course pee wee.

The kid shows a look of stern confidence and continues  
playing.

\*

5 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL COACH JAMES OFFICE - LATER

5

Coach is at a disheveled filing cabinet. A KNOCK.

COACH JAMES

Come.

L'DORA LOMAX, 30's, dedicated Guidance Counselor enters.

\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Coach James.

COACH JAMES

Ms. Lomax. What can I do for you?

L'Dora steps up behind him. Coach glances back at her.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Any word yet?

L'DORA LOMAX

No. Old school rules. Notification  
by snail mail only.

\*

\*

COACH JAMES

That's gotta be a college thing.

L'DORA LOMAX

For admissions letters but a job?

\*

COACH JAMES

Bastards...Making my baby wait.

\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Don't make plans for Friday night.

COACH JAMES

Is that advice coming from you or  
the school's guidance counselor?

L'DORA LOMAX

(closing in on him)

The counselor is off the clock.

COACH JAMES

Look, counselor, if I don't file  
this crap now it'll never get done.

She grabs the files shoves them in and shuts the drawer.

L'DORA LOMAX

Now...where were we?

COACH JAMES

Something bout' old school rules.

She kisses him softly then deeply. He returns the favor by picking her up and putting her ass down on a desk. She closes the door with a playful kick of her foot and a LAUGH.

6 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM CHICAGO - FOLLOWING MORNING 6

Erik CARICATURES his SCIENCE TEACHER. It's good. A BELL.

7 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 7

Erik bursts into an empty hall that quickly fills with STUDENTS. He rounds a corner and bumps into JT and Bird who refuse to let him pass. JT bear hugs him. \*

BIRD \*

Ohhhh ladies and gentlefolk, if it  
ain't the DePaul Blue Demons future  
bench rider extraordinaire! \*

ERIK \*

(breaking free)  
Out the way, JT! \*

JT

Runnin' away from that math test  
ain't gonna' save your ass, E!

ERIK \*

(running off)  
Nothin' wrong with a head start. \*

JT turns and bearhugs Bird off the ground. \*

JT \*

Bird, bird, bird is the word, I say  
bird, bird, bird... \*

8 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL STAIRWELL CHICAGO -CONTINUOUS 8

Erik races by Nate who's flirting with NINA CHARMS, 16. \*

NATE

There for me on that math test  
right E? \*

ERIK

What's two plus two?

NATE

Four!

ERIK

And two times two?

NATE

...Four again!

ERIK

There you go lil' Nate!

NINA

You so smart.

At the bottom of the stairwell Erik high-fives Thomas in passing. Thomas wears a t-shirt saying "Big T" \*  
\*

ERIK

Sir Thomas! \*

THOMAS \*

Squire E. \*

Erik rounds a corner. TWO TEENAGE GIRLS FIGHT amidst a CROWD \*  
as SECURITY OFFICERS intervene. Erik quickly changes \*  
direction and heads down another hall.

9 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL OUTSIDE COACHS OFFICE-MOMENTS LATER 9

Erik runs up as Coach posts final roster outside his office. \*

COACH JAMES

Relax Dobson, you're still my go-to \*  
guy. \*

ERIK

Just waitin' on someone Coach. \*

COACH JAMES

The tryout who was all up in your grill yesterday?

(Turning and leaving)

If you're not planted do yourself a favor...

COACH JAMES/ERIK

(Erik scans the list)

And get the hell outta the way...

Erik sees Victors name. He steps back relieved. A BELL.

10 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL COACH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 10

Coach closes the door and is violently pinned on his desk. \*

COACH JAMES

What the...!?

Hand cuffs grab his wrists. A pistol is slammed on the desk \*  
next to his panicked face. \*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
What the hell is that?

VOICE (O.S.)  
It was in your desk, you tell me!

COACH JAMES  
...A starters pistol?

A badge is shoved in Coach's face.

VOICE (O.S.)  
You're in a lot a' trouble shit f'  
brains.

COACH JAMES  
Find that in a box of Cracker Jax?

CASE RYAN, 40, caucasian, Coach's best friend, in a Cook  
County Jail guards uniform, pulls Coach up and uncuffs him.

CASE RYAN  
Finally got the tin bro!

COACH JAMES  
You scared the living-

CASE RYAN  
-shit outta ya', taught us that for  
Special Operations Response Teams.

COACH JAMES  
Wonderful. What do you want?

CASE RYAN  
Was on my way to work, stopped by  
to say hi. How's the team looking?

COACH JAMES  
Just posted final roster.

CASE RYAN  
Going all the way this year?

Coach sits at his desk and shrugs. Case grabs his paint  
speckled hat off the desk, inspects it for a beat, then  
tosses it aside wiping fresh paint from his fingers.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D)  
Aww shit...Still moonlighting I  
see.

COACH JAMES  
(tossing him tissues)  
You want a second job? Could always  
use a good ladder man.

CASE RYAN \*  
Was gonna ask you the same thing.

COACH JAMES  
Doing what exactly?

Case strikes a pose in his uniform. Coach shakes his head. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
Go part time for the summer, you're \*  
off work then, it'll be fun. \*

COACH JAMES  
Fun.

CASE RYAN \*  
Yeah, it fits between boredom and \*  
exhaustion. \*

LOUD SLAM AGAINST LOCKERS. Case steps to the door alarmed and \*  
looks out the glass pane. \*

11 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 11

TWO GUARDS take a knife off a THUG and haul him away.

CASE RYAN \*  
How're these animals treating you?

Coach drops him a cautionary look.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
Cook County Jail's a zoo but you \*  
guys got more security than we do.

COACH JAMES \*  
Sign of the times, Case. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
And you're gonna keep coachin'. \*  
You're ex-NBA man! And you teach \*  
history which is humorous. Spread \*  
your wings a little.

COACH JAMES  
By being a part-time guard at the  
Cook County Jail?

CASE RYAN \*  
And...there's the Correction \*  
Officers Basketball League...

COACH JAMES  
I thought you stopped by to say hi?

CASE RYAN \*  
I did. I am. How the hell are you?

Case offers a handshake. BELL. Coach accepts and strongarms his shorter, more out of shape brother to the door. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Fine slop paint all summer but give us some pointers man, a few plays. We suck. Please, I'm begging you.

COACH JAMES

I'll think about it.

CASE RYAN \*

Yes!

COACH JAMES

I said I'll think about it. I can't go around coaching a bunch of zoo-keepers posing as cops.

CASE RYAN \*

Why not?

COACH JAMES \*

(letting him go)

What would MY animals think?

Coach pushes Case out the door and heads back to his desk. \*

12 INT. HARPER HIGH HALL OUTSIDE COACH'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS 12

Case walks off among STUDENTS getting odd looks. A BELL. \*

13 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASS - CONTINUOUS 13

MS. DOLAN

So what's the author trying to say?

NATE

That the bad boys get the females.

MS. DOLAN

Okay, how so Nate?

NATE

Well clearly he was a playah'.

NINA \*

Really? S.E. Hinton was a player?

NATE

A starter for sure.

NINA

Susan Eloise Hinton is a she dumb ass.

Ms. Dolan confirms it with a nod. Nate tries to recover. \*

MS. DOLAN

Okay class, settle. Your essays for the August Wilson Monologue Competition on How To Stop Gun Violence were good. There is one I'd like to point out today and if it's okay, Erik, would you mind reading yours to the class? \*

Erik looks up. Nate LAUGHS. Ms. Dolan kicks his chair.

An INTERCOM SQUELCHES to life. Everyone freezes.

INTERCOM VOICE (O.S.)

Attention. Attention. The following announcement. Funeral services for senior Deshaun Watson will be on Sunday, 10am at Harvest Baptist Church. Representatives for Stop Gun Violence Now will be on hand accepting donations. That is all.

14 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 14

Case passes a make shift memorial for DESHAUN WATSON at a locker as A GIRL is comforted by TWO FRIENDS. A SEASONED TEACHER in a classroom doorway eyes Case with contempt. Case exits the building. \*

15 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL COACH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 15

Coach looks out his window and sighs. A KNOCK. \*

COACH JAMES

Come.

L'Dora enters, arms crossed, an opened letter tucked away and out of sight. \*

L'DORA LOMAX

...so damn sick n' tired of this..

Coach approaches her as she paces and escalates.

COACH JAMES

Hey...it's alright. \*

L'DORA LOMAX

It's not alright! How is ANOTHER student shot dead alright?!? \*

Coach backs down. L'Dora realizes it's not his fault.



L'DORA LOMAX (CONT'D)  
It's not alright...but...it's gonna  
be.

\*

L'Dora holds up the letter and bursts into happy tears.

COACH JAMES  
Is that...?

\*

\*

L'Dora nods and smiles wide still crying.

\*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Old school rules?

L'DORA LOMAX  
I made the top three!

She hugs Coach hard.

L'DORA LOMAX (CONT'D)  
And I'm terrified.

\*

COACH JAMES  
I thought this was what you wanted?

L'DORA LOMAX  
It is. I think. I don't know.

COACH JAMES  
What?

\*

L'DORA LOMAX  
Thomas...

COACH JAMES  
You're little brother Thomas is not  
a kid anymore.

\*

L'DORA LOMAX  
And he's not looking at any  
basketball scholarships. I can't  
leave him here.

\*

\*

COACH JAMES  
He'll land on his feet.

L'DORA LOMAX  
N' what about you?

COACH JAMES  
What about me?

L'DORA LOMAX  
If I get this and I take this  
job...where are we gonna land?

Coach is sideswiped by her question.

16

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK WESTSIDE CHICAGO - LATER

16

Erik nears a liquor store across the street where TEENS mill about. Victor sees him and crosses the street undetected.

VICTOR  
(jumping on him)  
Give it up boy!

ERIK  
(shaking him off)  
Fuck off me man!

A copy of The Outsiders by S.E Hinton falls from Erik's bag. Victor pick it up handing it back but eyes it first. \*

VICTOR  
The Outsiders. Who's the blonde surfer lookin' white boy? \*

ERIK  
Ponyboy Curtis. How much was bond? \*

VICTOR  
Ten G's. Ten percent to walk. Corporation's got my back. I'm the best earner they got. Make that bitch up in a day. \*

Erik looks across the street and locks eyes with Wick.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
Yo drop back n' chill for five E.

ERIK  
I'm good.

VICTOR  
The fuck you got goin' on besides?

ERIK  
Missed tryouts man.

VICTOR  
Now why would Harper High's star player need to be tryin' out?

ERIK  
To make the damn team. \*

VICTOR  
So...I make the damn team or not?

ERIK  
Barely.

VICTOR  
Yeah! By the skin a' my pouch yo!

ERIK

Jus' sayin'. Shoulda' been there.

VICTOR

Woulda, coulda, shoulda my ass,  
shit...Come on E, back yourself n'  
corner up. Come n' meet my boys. \*

ERIK

Pass man.

VICTOR

Look at chu'. Suitn' yo' self! I  
offer up intro to make life a bit  
easy n' you say no, no, no, gotta  
go! (crossing back over) Stay gold  
Pony Boy! Stay Gold!

17

INT. RAY DOBSONS HOUSE CHICAGO - LATER

17

Erik enters, drops his bag and heads for his bedroom. RAY  
DOBSON, Erik/Victors grandfather tucking in the shirt of a  
security guard uniform enters from the kitchen.

RAY DOBSON

No hello? \*

ERIK

Hey Gran'pop.

RAY DOBSON

How was school?

ERIK

Good.

RAY DOBSON

And practice?

ERIK

Starts tomorrow. \*

RAY DOBSON

Headin' out for work. There's  
leftovers in the fridge. You're  
brother about?

Erik shrugs and steps past Ray into the kitchen.

RAY DOBSON (CONT'D)

He didn't come home last night.

ERIK

(grabbing a drink)  
I just saw'm. He straight.

RAY DOBSON

Well, what did he have to say? \*

ERIK

Maybe you should ask him that. \*

Erik moves past Ray and heads for his bedroom. \*

18 INT. ERIKS HOUSE ERIK/VICTORS BEDROOM- MOMENTS LATER 18 \*

Erik enters and plops down on his bed. Basketball posters and memorabilia litter the room. After a few beats he rolls over and eyes Victors bed across the room. There's nobody there. \*

ERIK

(in a daze now, aside) \*

Who was Dominique Wilkins... \*

Victor, at age 8, now sits on his bed in PJ's reading from a HUGE BASKETBALL TRIVIA BOOK. Erik lies on his bed, age, 10. \*

VICTOR

During his 11 year NBA career who was an All-Star each season, MVP in 1981 and a five time member of the All-NBA First Team? \*

Erik as before at 18. \*

ERIK

Who is Julius Erving. \*

After a few beats he rolls over facing the wall and curls up. \*

19 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM CHICAGO - FOLLOWING DAY 19

Bird, and Erik enter to change for practice as Victor removes something from a paper bag at a locker and locks it up.

VICTOR

Birdman n' Easy, sup kids?

ERIK

Stickin' around for practice?

VICTOR

Nah, gotta bounce.

BIRD

Ain't that Nate's Locker?

Victor and Bird share a look.

VICTOR

Maybe I will stick around. School some a' you fools.

Victor takes out his #2 jersey and puts it on still eyeballing Bird as Nate, Thomas and JT enter.

JT  
She don't put out cuz' you got no whip.

THOMAS  
Who fails Drivers Ed three times?

NATE  
Twice. Dude failed me last time cuz' I dissed his lame ass ride.

Coach enters with a clipboard.

COACH JAMES  
All right settle.

Erik slams his locker door. Coach notices Victor's presence.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Listen up...we're taking only three new players off JV squad so...

\*  
\*

NATE  
An eight man team?

\*  
\*

COACH JAMES  
Six plus three is nine Nate.

\*  
\*

THOMAS  
Come again?

COACH JAMES  
That's right Thomas. Call it my mad little experiment.

JT  
What about that God of round ball who kept makin' Erik his bitch?

\*  
\*  
\*

COACH JAMES  
Showboat and a brawler. Besides, DePaul Prep just scooped him up. Next question.

\*  
\*

BIRD  
What if some of us get injured?

\*

COACH JAMES  
We're not playing a what-if Bird we're playing what-is. As a team we can't afford to take on a lot of new blood.

\*

THOMAS  
(high fiving Nate)  
Especially blood that don't run as  
deep.

JT  
What if Lil Nate gets hit by a bus?

NATE  
Bus yo' momma be drivin'.

COACH JAMES  
Listen, forget about the what-if.  
I'll pull more from the JV squad if  
I have too. See you on the floor in  
five. Victor, my office in five.

VICTOR  
Sure thing Coach.

20 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL COACH JAMES'S OFFICE -MOMENTS LATER 20

Ms. Dolan hands Coach Erik's class essay.

MS. DOLAN  
I thought you'd like to see what  
one of your players had to say on  
the subject. It's really quite  
good.

COACH JAMES  
Thanks for bringing it by Kathleen.

MS. DOLAN  
It needs work but it could make for  
an excellent admissions essay.

Coach glances up at her a bit confused.

MS. DOLAN (CONT'D)  
For college?

COACH JAMES  
Erik's gotta keep making his  
baseline jump shot for that.

MS. DOLAN  
"You can make anything by writing."

Coach looks to her again, confused.

COACH JAMES  
Kanye?

MS. DOLAN  
(exiting)  
C.S. Lewis.

Coach eyes the essay for a beat and tosses it aside. A KNOCK.

COACH JAMES

Come.

Victor enters.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

Victor sits at the desk across from Coach. Pause.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Had tryouts the other day.

\*

VICTOR

Figured it was optional.

Coach eyes his for a beat. A KNOCK.

\*

COACH JAMES

Come.

L'Dora enters.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Ms. Lomax, thank you for coming.

L'DORA LOMAX

Of course. Hello Victor.

Victor nods. An awkward silence fills the room.

L'DORA LOMAX (CONT'D)

As the schools guidance counselor  
Victor it's my job to ask if you're  
on any...prescription medications.

\*

VICTOR

Medication? For what?

L'DORA LOMAX

We're concerned.

COACH JAMES

The results from your urine test  
were positive...for heroin.

VICTOR

Smack?!

L'DORA LOMAX

For opiates, hold on.

\*

VICTOR

Get the...

L'DORA LOMAX

Hold on...

COACH JAMES

You're positive for opiates.

VICTOR

It's a couple pills for my knee. \*

L'DORA LOMAX

And with or without a prescription  
it can become a problem.

VICTOR

I don't HAVE a damn problem!

COACH JAMES \*

Without a prescription it's a HUGE  
problem! \*

L'DORA LOMAX \*

Everyone needs to just slow down. \*

COACH JAMES

IF you have a problem then we  
should get out in front of it.

VICTOR

And I already told you, I don't! \*

L'Dora and Coach retreat from their inquiry.

COACH JAMES

As your Coach and without a valid  
prescription I have no choice. It's  
zero tolerance. I'm benching you  
first two games. \*

VICTOR \*

What?! \*

COACH JAMES \*

You heard me. \*

Victor smiles lightly to himself, stands, removes his jersey  
and tosses it nonchalantly in a nearby trashcan. \*

VICTOR

Calvin James. 1995 draft. Goes late  
in the third round to the Milwaukee  
Bucks. Promising point guard from  
the middle of nowhere. Second year  
into what's lookin' like a  
promising career, Calvin James from  
the middle of nowhere disappears  
and goes...nowhere. \*

(MORE)



VICTOR (CONT'D)

Thinkin' back then, seein' how  
monsta' crack already spread her  
wings, musta' been the bottle. I  
got that right Calvin Crack Jimmy  
Corn n' I don't give a fuck?  
Fuckin' hypocrite.

Victor exits slamming the door leaving the room in silence. \*

21

INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM CHICAGO - MOMENTS LATER

21

NATE

Check it. I call this one fool left  
standing by his self.

Nate fancy dribbles by JT but is met in the key by Thomas.

NATE (CONT'D)

The hell you doin'?

THOMAS

Shuttin' down the fool.

Nate shoots but gets rejected hard by Thomas.

JT

Ohhh!

Bird grabs the ball and challenges Nate, top of the key.

BIRD

Time for the real thing Lil Nate.

NATE

Can't let you fly up in my cage  
Bird.

BIRD

N' why not lil' man?

NATE

Paint ain't dry just yet.

Bird makes a few moves, burns by Nate, and slams it.

Coach enters and WHISTLES.

COACH JAMES

Okay, before first team practice  
and without further adieux, Team  
Captain honors...go to Dobson.

NATE

Which one?

Victor enters eyeing Coach, spits and exits out a side door. \*

Everyone stands in silence for a beat before Erik exits too.

COACH JAMES  
Alright, shuttle runs, let's go.

The others start up the drill. Coach gets lost in thought.

Erik re-enters and approaches. Coach walks up to him. \*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
You all right?

ERIK  
He ain't comin' back.

Coach stops as Erik walks off to join the others. Coach looks about with uncertainty and doubt and perhaps a hint of fear.

22 EXT. WALGREENS CHICAGO - NIGHT 22

Victor enters the store.

ERIK (V.O.)  
Even without Victor comin' back  
after suspension and without that  
show boatin' tryout we had all the  
team we needed. \*

23 INT. WALGREENS BATHROOM STALL - MOMENTS LATER 23

INTERCOM ELEVATOR MUSIC. Victor proceeds to lube up and shove condoms full of dope up his rectum.

ERIK (V.O.)  
Taking on too much new blood  
would've cramped our style. We  
practiced hard, scrimmaged nearby  
teams in what Coach called his, pre-  
season way of getting to know their  
weaknesses. Also ran the JV squad  
right into the ground. \*

At the sink and mirror, Victor freshens up and exits.

24 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - GAME TIME 24

During play, Erik, in motion, hits a 3 pointer. CROWD CHEERS.

25 INT. WALGREENS SALES FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER 25

Victor, with a smile, eats a candy bar while shoving  
merchandise in his pockets in plain view of AN EMPLOYEE who  
proceeds to call the police. \*

ERIK (V.O.)

We started the season strong, won big and just never looked back.

\*

26 INT. SCHOOL BUS - EARLY EVENING 26

Coach, the team and JV PLAYERS ride home in celebration.

ERIK (V.O.)

It was an easy slide through Regionals.

TWO POLICE OFFICERS approach Victor as the Employee points him out. He offers one a bite of his candy. They arrest him.

\*

\*

ERIK (V.O.)

We won three rounds of Sectionals, and only had State Semis to settle to make it all the way to States.

27 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - GAME TIME 27

Erik foul shoots underhanded. It's awkward but he scores.

\*

COACH JAMES

Erik! What did I tell you about shooting free throws underhanded?!?

\*

\*

\*

Erik pretends like he can't hear/understand what Coach is saying as he back-peddles on defense.

\*

\*

28 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 5 DORM - NEXT DAY 28

Victor, in CCDOC jumpsuit, empties toiletries on a cot, tucks the zip lock bag in his waist and walks towards a bathroom.

ERIK (V.O.)

We were close to bringing something home to Harper that had never been done before. A Division 4 High School State Basketball Championship with a hanging rafter banner to prove it.

\*

\*

\*

29 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 5 BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER 29

Victor on a toilet in an open stall room. He removes the zip lock bag to collect the passed drugs. Officer Roe enters. Victor gives him a look and nod. Officer Roe nods and exits.

30 EXT. UNITED CENTER CHICAGO PARKING LOT - EVENING 30

L'Dora leads a blindfolded Coach between cars. He bumps one.

COACH JAMES  
Ah! Shit! That's twice!

\*

L'DORA LOMAX  
Is it my fault you can't walk a  
straight line?

\*

\*

COACH JAMES  
Blindfolded, yes!

Coach removes the blindfold and looks up. The United Center.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Circus in town?

L'DORA LOMAX  
Milwaukee Bucks. Are you mad?

COACH JAMES  
Mad? No, why would I be mad?

\*

L'DORA LOMAX  
Your old team.

COACH JAMES  
Yeah. Real old.

L'DORA LOMAX  
And I thought it was about time.

COACH JAMES  
About time...

L'DORA LOMAX  
To move past it. Past whatever  
happened. Be here. With me. Now.

COACH JAMES  
I appreciate what you're trying to  
do.

L'DORA LOMAX  
Trying to do?

\*

COACH JAMES  
I really do.

L'DORA LOMAX  
Calvin, please...

COACH JAMES  
But this, this isn't it.

\*

L'DORA LOMAX  
Come to Portland with me. I want  
this, you and me, now, to be an us.

COACH JAMES  
Us? What about us?

L'DORA LOMAX  
Excuse me??

COACH JAMES  
You don't even know if you got the  
job yet!

L'DORA LOMAX  
What is your problem?!

COACH JAMES  
When's the last time you saw  
Victor?

L'DORA LOMAX  
Dobson? Victor Dobson made a  
choice. You did your job and I  
support what happened.

COACH JAMES  
What happened is he dropped out! I  
fed him to the god damn streets!

L'DORA LOMAX  
That was his call! Not yours! He  
knew the rules!

COACH JAMES  
Everyone KNOWS the rules! Their  
written on signs and walls and  
contracts, everywhere you look!  
What he didn't know, YET, were the  
consequences of that choice. The  
flip side of that coin doesn't  
happen until the coin drops. Now  
he's gotta live with that.

Coach leans against a car and takes a moment.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
He's wrong you know. I fell that  
way for a while but he's wrong. I  
was no superstar so there was no  
headline, no scandalous cover  
story. Sweeping it under the rug  
was easy. A second string point  
guard from the middle of nowhere  
disappears and no one notices.

With a look, L'Dora tells him that she's listening.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
We were out after last game of a  
losing season. Crowd of locals  
seemed okay at first.

(MORE)

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Fight brakes out. A gun went off. I caught it in the leg. End of story.

\*  
\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Do you love me?

Coach looks up as if to speak a truth but chooses to protect himself and stays quiet.

\*

L'DORA LOMAX (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a no.

\*  
\*

L'Dora walks off.

\*

31

INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY GYM - FOLLOWING AFTERNOON

31

Coach enters and trips over a book bag. He blows his WHISTLE.

COACH JAMES

Huddle up. Before we get down to business n' aside from the fact you gods of round ball are on the most insane winning streak in the history of Harper High...new rule.

NATE

No more laps?

COACH JAMES

Start running, Nathaniel.

NATE

What?!

COACH JAMES

I'll tell you when to stop.

Nate lumbers off. The others VOICE their approval.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Anyone care to join him?

Silence. Coach collects book bags off the floor.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Seeing how high you guys put homework on the to-do list I find it...ironic to be tripping over book bags strewn across my floor everyday. And being this the ninth time, no wait, tenth time actually, yes, being this the tenth time I've brought it up, I'm holding them hostage...indefinitely.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

NATE

But I got me an English test tomorrow.

COACH JAMES

You "have" an English test tomorrow Nate. Right now you "got" laps.

THOMAS

So what's the ransom, Coach? \*

COACH JAMES

Not sure. Any ideas, Captain?

Erik just shrugs and looks off uninterested.

BIRD

'Bout we bring home one of those?

Coach looks up to an old GIRLS VOLLEYBALL championship banner from 1967 and smiles. \*

COACH JAMES

I got a better idea.

Coach blows his WHISTLE.

32

INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM CHICAGO -LATER

32

Erik at the foul line. Coach with an open book and a book bag at his feet. Erik shoots and misses. Coach looks to the book.

COACH JAMES

September 17th, 1862.

ERIK

Battle of Gettysburg?

Coach lets out a WRONG ANSWER/BUZZER SOUND.

COACH JAMES

The rule was, make a foul shot, not underhand, get a book back. But you couldn't hit one if the Bulls season was on the line. So now answer questions for my test next week, get the books back. Simple.

ERIK

Fine. Can I move?

COACH JAMES

Can you what?

ERIK

Move. I think better when I move.

COACH JAMES

Who are you, the Sundance Kid?

Coach tosses Erik a ball. Erik passes to Nate who sets him up. Erik hits a 3 point baseline jumper and walks past Coach.

ERIK

September 17th, 1862, Battle of Antietam.

COACH JAMES

Bloodiest day in American history.

Coach smirks, nods and tosses Erik a book.

33 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYM STATE SEMI FINALS CHICAGO -NIGHT 33

BAND, CHEERLEADERS, CROWD, Banner: You go Hawks! Flyin' By! Scoring High! Banner: Get BENJT! Bird, Erik, Nate, JT, Thomas

Scoreboard/Home:57 Away:60 with 34 seconds remaining.

Erik hits a shot and calls time out. The CROWD SWELLS.

Scoreboard/Home:59 Away:60 with 30 seconds remaining.

COACH JAMES

Watch #9! #9! He's been running that hole on you guys all night!

ERIK

Ya'll know who that is?

JT

Same sponge who mopped the floor with you at try-outs.

Erik looks up from the huddle. #9 smiles back from his.

COACH JAMES

If #9 drives again Thomas swing in to help. Nate, JT keep your guys back peddling, stay in their faces. Bird, hang back for a rebound pass and everyone tight on D! Let's go!

HORN. Erik drops a hand in to lead the cheer.

ALL

Flyin' by, scoring high, go Hawks!

Victor, one rung down from Wick amidst a GROUP, stands in support of his brother/old team.

VICTOR

Fuck YEAH!!

\*  
\*



Case, in the stands a few rows back, keeps a suspicious eye on them. He hones in on Wick, the obvious leader. \*

Wick senses his glare and turns eyeing Case right back before giving him a maniacal smirk. \*

Case drops his attention back on the game. \*

The teams ready. WHISTLE. St. Xavier takes out.

COACH JAMES  
Watch your back! Swing trap!

#9 drives and scores sending Erik to the floor. WHISTLE.

REFEREE  
Defensive foul! Shooting one!

Scoreboard/Home:59 Away:62 with 19 seconds remaining.

COACH JAMES  
Come on Erik get planted for that!

#9 misses a foul shot. Bird gets the rebound to Nate.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Game clock! Game clock! 4:2 split!

They run 4:2 Split and score. CROWD SWELLS. Victor jumps up.

VICTOR  
YEAH!!! YO GO E!

Wick eyes Victor scornfully. Victor tries to ignore him.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
(aside)  
Double up press E...

COACH JAMES  
Double up press, double up press!

Nate, JT, and Bird run a double-team press. Erik steals the in-bound pass, hits a lay-up. #9 fouls him hard. WHISTLE.

REFEREE  
Defensive foul! Shooting one-n-one!

Coach removes his hat and looks up to the scoreboard.

Scoreboard/ Home:61 Away:62 with 2 seconds remaining.

Victor turns and gives Wick a look of...hope.

Players line the key with Bird closest to Erik.

BIRD  
How ya' doin' E?

ERIK

A lot better if I could move.

The Referee blows his WHISTLE and hands Erik the ball.

ERIK (CONT'D)

He's still smilin'?

Bird looks down the line. #9 is smiling wide.

BIRD

How about sports trivia to move  
your mind?

ERIK

Ready when you are.

BIRD

What NBA star foul shot underhand?

Erik bounces the ball, eyes #9 and shoots underhand.

COACH JAMES

No, no, no, no, no!

It's a SWISH. THE CROWD GOES WILD.

VICTOR

Oh slam!

Bird looks to Coach and shrugs. Erik high fives Bird.

ERIK

Rick Barry!

Victor gives Wick a final look and moves toward the floor.

Case checks in with the obvious energy mounting in the room. \*

Coach is dumbfounded. He looks up to the scoreboard.

Scoreboard; Home:62 Away:62 with 2 seconds remaining.

BIRD

Nice shot E but let's keep it real.

REFEREE

Who do you think you are, Rick  
Barry?

ERIK

I'm the Sundance Kid.

REFEREE

Whatever you say. Shooting one!

The Referee BLOWS HIS WHISTLE and hands Erik the ball.

Victor makes it to the gym floor amidst an EXCITED CROWD.

BIRD  
You square?

Erik nods.

VICTOR  
LET'S GO E! YOU GOT THIS!

Coach smiles lightly in Victor's direction and takes a knee.

Case leaves the stands and exits in a restrained hurry. \*

BIRD  
What NBA star on the 1986 Celtics  
was nicknamed Grateful Red?

Erik dribbles and drum rolls his fingers on the ball.

With a smile, he shoots underhanded and walks off.

ERIK  
(aside)  
...Bill Walton \*

The ball bounces off the rim for an eternity....Score!

The CROWD and VICTOR go ABSOLUTELY WILD!

St. Xavier inbound, shoots a Hail Mary and misses. BUZZER.

The CROWD FLOODS ONTO THE FLOOR as the teams try to exit.

COACH JAMES  
Nice shot. Pull that underhanded  
crap again and I'll dis-own you.

Wick and a FEW THUGS appear. Coach locks eyes with Victor  
before he smirks, winks and punches Wick. A MELEE ERUPTS.

Coach restrains Erik as he moves in to help Victor.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
No, no, no, no, no.

ERIK  
Let...GO OF ME!

Erik breaks free and turns with a defiant look. Coach is  
taken aback as Thomas and Nate usher him off. Coach senses  
something and looks into the stands where he sees L'Dora  
watching him. They lock eyes. She smiles at him lightly. A  
MAN IN A TWEED JACKET helps her exit the mounting CHAOS. \*

CUT TO:

34 INT. CHICAGO DINER- NEXT MORNING 34

Coach sits across from Case. A WAITRESS refills their cups. \*

COACH JAMES \*

...because I could see it in her eyes. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Come on man, shit's embarrassing. \*

COACH JAMES \*

She SMILED at me Case! \*

NEARBY PATRONS go silent. Case tries to recover. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Okay, we're okay here. (aside) You sound like you're in high school. \*

COACH JAMES \*

I am in high school! \*

CASE RYAN \*

Seriously? \*

COACH JAMES \*

Well... \*

CASE RYAN \*

Look...You have a decision to make. \*

COACH JAMES \*

Any chance you can make it for me? \*

CASE RYAN \*

I give up... \*

COACH JAMES \*

What?? \*

CASE RYAN \*

You're pathetic. \*

COACH JAMES \*

I know. I know. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Do you love her? \*

Coach weighs his answer but is unable to verbalize it. Case takes out some cash for the bill \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Jesus, don't hurt yourself bro. \*

Only you can answer that. And sometimes what we think is the right answer, turns out it's not.

COACH JAMES  
You sound like a depressing fortune  
cookie. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Now there's the spirit.

COACH JAMES  
Can I borrow a quarter?

CASE RYAN \*

You're not. \*

COACH JAMES \*

I am. \*

CASE RYAN \*

No. You're not. \*

COACH JAMES  
Heads I grow a pair and try to make  
things right with L'D, tails I stay  
cold and distant but continue to  
enjoy your company of course. \*

CASE RYAN \*

You're an asshole. One shouldn't  
leave one's fate to a coin toss. \*

COACH JAMES \*

(pointing at him)  
Fortune cookie! \*

CASE RYAN \*

Bite me. \*

COACH JAMES  
Fair enough. I still need that  
quarter though. I'm a little short. \*

CASE RYAN \*

(exiting the booth)  
That's not funny. \*

COACH JAMES  
It's a little funny.

CASE RYAN \*

You're not funny.

COACH JAMES  
I'm a little funny.

CASE RYAN \*

(exiting the diner)  
Pay your damn bill cheap ass! \*

A WAITRESS approaches with suspicion, cornering Coach. \*

COACH JAMES  
Hi...Great coffee!

\*  
\*

35 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM PEP RALLY - EVENING 35 \*

MARCHING BAND, CHEERLEADERS. HAWKS MASCOT. ELECTRONIC  
SCROEBOARD: 8 DAYS UNTIL STATE FINALS! Banners: You go Hawks!  
Good Luck at States! Get **BENJT!** (Bird,Erik,Nate,JT,Thomas)

The team stands across from a hallway waiting for Coach. \*

Erik notices Ray Dobson, his grandfather enter. \*

ERIK  
Gran'pop!

Ray continues on amidst all the NOISE not hearing Erik. Erik  
watches him head down the hall toward Coach's office. \*

36 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL COACH JAMES OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 36

Coach fumbles with a tie in a mirror. He gives up and exits.

37 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL HALL OUTSIDE COACH OFFICE -CONTINUOUS37

Ray surprises Coach who's still fumbling with his necktie.

RAY DOBSON  
Coach James.

COACH JAMES  
(dropping his clipboard)  
Jesus H...

RAY DOBSON  
Let's not bring him into it, at  
least not yet.

Ray pick up the clipboard and hands it to Coach.

COACH JAMES  
Thanks. Can I help you? \*

RAY DOBSON  
Erik's grand dad.

They shake hands.

COACH JAMES  
Eriks...

RAY DOBSON  
And Victors. Ray Dobson.

COACH JAMES

Yes, of course. Coach...Coach  
Calvin James.

\*  
\*

Coach freezes up. Ray steps up to closer him.

\*

RAY DOBSON

Gotta remember the rabbit circles  
the hole before jumping back in.

COACH JAMES

What?

\*  
\*

Ray reaches up and begins tying Coach's tie properly.

\*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh. Thanks.

\*

Ray eyes him. Coach feels the awkwardness of the situation.

RAY DOBSON

Wonderin' what I'm doin' here?

COACH JAMES

Here for the Pep rally?

\*

Ray gives him a cautionary look.

\*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

The thought crossed my mind.

RAY DOBSON

(finishing his tie)

I'm not here to cast aspersions or  
place blame or tell another man how  
to do his job.

COACH JAMES

Good to know. So what is your job?

RAY DOBSON

Aside from being the only father  
figure to two boys about to be men  
with one lost like a rudderless  
ship at sea, been head security at  
Wintrust Arena last twenty years.

COACH JAMES

Home of the DePaul Blue Demons.

RAY DOBSON

Get you tickets to a game.

COACH JAMES

I think I got all the game I can  
handle right now.

RAY DOBSON \*  
 I know you do so my job here \*  
 tonight is to say thank you. \*

COACH JAMES \*  
 Thank me? For what? \*

RAY DOBSON \*  
 For being here. For being Coach. \*  
 And I can tell you give a damn. \*

COACH JAMES \*  
 Thank you. \*

RAY DOBSON \*  
 You're welcome. \*

COACH JAMES \*  
 So Wintrust Arena, DePaul Blue \*  
 Demons, you must know coach Leitao. \*

RAY DOBSON \*  
 Well enough to know his interest in \*  
 Erik is all about basketball n' \*  
 nothin' more. \*

COACH JAMES \*  
 It's a free ride to a great school. \*  
 He's a really strong player. \*

RAY DOBSON \*  
 So was Victor. But Erik knows right \*  
 from wrong. Victor? He's man enough \*  
 now. Age wise anyway. Made whatever \*  
 choices he did. My words only carry \*  
 so far. You got a finely oiled \*  
 machine out on that floor \*  
 coach. 'Nother step or two n' you on \*  
 your way.

Ray walks off but turns back to Coach.

RAY DOBSON (CONT'D) \*  
 And that father figure role to my \*  
 grandboys I'm supposed to be so \*  
 good at? You're on that payroll too \*  
 Coach. Whether you want the job or \*  
 not. But you already knew that. \*

SHOT BUZZER as Ray walks off. Coach touches at his tie. \*

38 INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM CHICAGO SOUTH SIDE- LATER THAT NIGHT 38  
 HOUSE PARTY. The HAWKS MASCOT enters and fires up the crowd. \*



39

INT. HOUSE BATHROOM CHICAGO -CONTINUOUS

39

Thomas TATTOOS a Hawk on Nate's arm with a pin and ink.

THOMAS  
Some kinda wonderful goin' on out  
there.

NATE  
Suppose this the next best thing-Ah-  
damn it Thomas!

THOMAS  
Then stop your squirmin'!

JT  
Numbness or pain boys. Numbness or  
pain.

Erik eyes his tattoo in a mirror. Victor, ZIP, 17 and A THUG  
enter. Victor shows the wear and tear of the streets.

VICTOR  
(heading for the toilet)  
Five stray cats in a bathroom n'  
not a single hot kitty about, sup'  
boys?

NATE  
(with a nod to Victor)  
Ice cold 40 numb me out bout' now.

VICTOR  
(handing Nate a 40oz)  
Tilt it back small fry.

BIRD  
Save it. Ya'll contracted.

Bird grabs the 40 and hands it back to Victor. Victor, peeing  
now, indicates he's a little busy to take it back. Bird sets  
it on the sink with a challenging look for Victor.

NATE  
I don't remember signin' shit-Ouch!

THOMAS  
Hold still.

VICTOR  
Contracted. This ain't no NBA.

BIRD  
No man. It's not. Not yet anyway.  
Zero tolerance. Play clean or walk.

VICTOR

That's right! Zero T! Play clean or  
walk! Big game comin' up!

\*  
\*

Victor zips up and steps up close up in Birds grill.

\*

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Ya'll stay fresh.

\*  
\*

Victor, Zip and the Thug exit. After a beat Erik follows.

40

INT. CHICAGO HOUSE HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM- CONTINUOUS

40

ERIK

Vic.

Victor signals his boys to walk on as Erik approaches.

VICTOR

Miss me?

ERIK

Fuck you.

They embrace. Erik has a hard time letting go.

VICTOR

You good?

ERIK

Yeah. You?

Victor removes a wad of cash and peels off a few hundreds.

VICTOR

Could be worse. Here. Now go out n'  
get yo' self some real paint. At'  
bird's droppin' wrong side a'  
Roosevlet. Nothin' but Four Corner  
Hustlers n' Vice Lords about up'n  
there. Home made prison yard  
scratch's gonna get you shot E.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Victor pokes at Eriks tattoo. Erik takes the money and  
notices the razor wire tattoo on Victors arm.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(tapping at it lightly)

Nothin' but a chain link fence bro.

\*

Victor smirks, puts his hands up as he backs up and exits.

41

EXT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSE CHICAGO- NEXT MORNING

41

RADIO. A sign; Hawks Painting Co. We do a First Place job!

Nate pulls a bandage off his tattoo and blows on it. Coach, wearing his paint speckled Milwaukee Bucks cap, notices the others tattoos as well but doesn't react. \*

Everyone is working. Thomas steps up to get more paint. \*

THOMAS  
Gettin' paid cash today right? \*

COACH JAMES  
Tax free Thomas. Got lucky with the weather. Let's hope it holds. \*

THOMAS  
I'll paint in a damn blizzard if there's tax free cash about.

COACH JAMES  
So...How's your sister? \*

THOMAS  
Moved out. Lives in Hyde Park now. \*

COACH JAMES  
The Rogers Park of the south side. \*

THOMAS  
No longer a pain in my overgrown ass. \*

Coach goes back to painting. After a beat he sets his brush aside and heads for the rear of the house in thought. He takes out his cell and pulls up L'Doras number, pacing. \*

42 EXT. HOUSE REAR CHICAGO - MOMENTS LATER 42

Coach rounds the corner contemplating a call and looks up. \*

COACH JAMES  
(aside)  
...holy shit. \*

Erik, up on a ladder, is finishing a hand painted portrait of Victor. It's not a bad rendition. \*

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
(aside walking off)  
So much for savin' it for art class. \*

Coach dials L'Doras number but it goes right to voicemail. \*

43 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE L'DORAS APARTMENT - LATER 43 \*

Coach knocks on the door. L'Dora answers it.

COACH JAMES

Hey.

L'DORA LOMAX

How'd you know where I...?

COACH JAMES

Thomas. I forced it outta him. Can we talk?

L'DORA LOMAX

About what?

COACH JAMES

I tried calling but it kept going right to voicemail.

\*  
\*  
\*

L'DORA LOMAX

N' what does that tell you?

\*  
\*

COACH JAMES

You were right. About me being a jackass.

\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Hard to mss.

\*  
\*

COACH JAMES

That guy you were with at the game?

\*  
\*

L'DORA LOMAX

What about him?

COACH JAMES

Is it serious?

\*  
\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Do I look like I'm fooling around?

\*  
\*

COACH JAMES

No but he looks like he's trying to convince himself and others why it's imperative he pursue yet another Ph.D.

\*  
\*  
\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Furthering ones education is hardly something to mock.

\*

COACH JAMES

So...

\*

L'DORA LOMAX

So.

COACH JAMES

Are you going to...invite me in?

\*

L'DORA LOMAX

Is it imperative I ask what for?

COACH JAMES

I was hoping maybe we could...

Coach moves closer as L'D closes the door in his face.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Maybe not...

44 INT. RAY DOBSONS HOUSE - EARLY EVENING 44

Ray and Erik eat at a table set for three. A KNOCK. Ray and Erik look at each other. Ray looks to Victors chair. A SECOND KNOCK. Ray's eyes light up as he heads to the door.

Opening the door, Rays expression goes from hope to dread.

45 EXT. CHICAGO ALLEY - CONTINUOUS 45

VICTOR (V.O.)

And it's funny cuz you can see  
right through that fence. Like  
water. Get close enough n' you can  
reach right through and touch that  
life there on the other side...

POLICE and EMTS mill about.

A sheet grabs a passing breeze and floats against a sunset sky before collapsing over Victors BLOODY BULLET RIDDEN body.

46 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NEXT MORNING 5 DAYS TO STATES 46

Intercom announcement. Coach enters the darkened gym, finds a ball and proceeds to throw it off the wall above the bleachers where Wick and OTHERS gather. REACTIONS. Wick doesn't flinch. He continues until all but a defiant Wick have scattered and left. On one last hard throw Wick pop up and catches the ball. Coach eyes him defiantly. Wick smirks and takes a shot. The ball bounces off the rim with a thud and rolls off into the darkness. Coach eyes him and exits.

INTERCOM VOICE (O.S.)

Attention. Attention. The following announcement. Wake and visitation service for Victor Dobson will be Tuesday from 6 to 9pm at Moody's Funeral Home, 208 S. Elm Street in Lawndale. That is all.

- 47 INT. ERIK AND VICTORS BEDROOM RAY DOBSONS HOUSE - NIGHT 47  
 Erik thrashes about in his sleep. IMAGES of Victor cloud his mind. He awakens in a cold sweat looking about the room. He glances over to Victors empty, made bed. \*
- 48 INT. ERIK AND VICTORS BEDROOM - LATER 48\*  
 Erik sleeps curled up atop Victors bed. Ray is in the doorway watching. He enters, covers Erik with a blanket and exits.
- 49 INT. MOODYS FUNERAL HOME SIDE ROOM CHICAGO -2 DAYS TO STATES 49  
 Erik enters and is comforted by his team and OTHERS. Coach waits for an opening then steps up with Victors team jersey. \*  
 COACH JAMES  
 Victors. Thought it might...  
 Erik takes the jersey and discards it without a thought. \*  
 ERIK  
 We playin' semi-finals without you.  
 COACH JAMES  
 What?--  
 ERIK  
 (exiting past Coach) \*  
 -You heard me. We're goin' it alone.
- 50 INT. MOODYS FUNERAL HOME CHICAGO WEST SIDE HALL - CONTINUOUS 50  
 Coach appears as Erik exits out a door. Coach follows. \*
- 51 EXT. MOODYS FUNERAL HOME CHICAGO PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS 51  
 Coach catches up with Erik with Victors jersey in tow.  
 COACH JAMES  
 Erik...  
 Erik ignores him. Coach tries to keep up.  
 COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
 Erik... \*  
 Erik stops. Coach steps up to him searching for words. \*  
 ERIK  
 (continuing on)  
 S'what I thought...

COACH JAME  
Fine example you're setting  
Captain.

\*  
\*  
\*

ERIK  
(turning back to him)  
Captain? I just drop my hand in  
first to start the cheer. Don't  
give a fuck bout' you or your damn  
game so stay the fuck away from me!

\*  
\*  
\*

COACH JAMES  
So that's it?

ERIK  
THIS is it! When people need you,  
you ain't there! You're supposed to  
be OUR Captain! Victor's too! And  
now...we're hangin' your mother  
fuckin ass out to dry.

\*

Coach weighs what he said.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
What're you gonna do now? Throw me  
off the team for being right?

COACH JAMES  
Your brother made a choice.

Erik slams Coach against a van and cocks his arm. Coach will  
allow him to strike. Erik punches the van, and storms off.

\*  
\*

Bird and JT run up. Coach hands the jersey to Bird and exits.

BIRD  
E...

JT grabs Bird as he tries to follow Erik.

JT  
Let him go man, leave him be.

52 INT. JT'S FORD PINTO CAR CHICAGO STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

52

JT drives. Nate and Thomas in back. Nate opens a bottle.

\*

NATE  
I wanna make a toast.

THOMAS  
(taking the bottle)  
To Victory, our fallen brother. And  
in the game.

Thomas takes a sip and eyes the label.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
Champs? Who drinks this crap?

NATE  
The ladies like a man with taste.

THOMAS  
You need all the taste you can get.

NATE  
Let me ride the gun, JT? \*

JT  
E's got the gun soon as we get him. \*

Nate starts to climb up front but JT pushes him back. \*

JT (CONT'D)  
Sit on your boy will you, Thomas?

Thomas slams Nate back in his seat with one arm. \*

NATE  
So let me drive then.

JT  
You wanna' drive?

NATE  
Now what I just say?

JT  
Then you don't drink.

Nate reconsiders his options and sits back.

JT (CONT'D)  
S'what I thought. Drivers Ed drop  
out.

53 EXT. CHICAGO SIDE STREET - MOMENTS LATER 53 \*

JT pulls over. Erik exits his house and gets in the front  
seat. The car drives off. \*

Ray watches from a window concerned and turns out the light. \*

54 INT/EXT. PINTO STOP LIGHT CTA BENCH CHICAGO -MOMENTS LATER 54 \*

Erik stares at A FEMALE JUNKIE sitting on a CTA bench. She  
looks at the track marks on her arm and smiles at Erik. \*

FEMALE JUNKIE  
What chu' starin' at bitch?

The Pinto pulls away. JT looks over at Erik.



JT

Yo E, if you ain't up for this...

ERIK

Jus' drive, man...

After a beat Erik grabs the bottle from Nate and takes a sip. \*

NATE/THOMAS

To Victory!

55 EXT. HOUSE DRIVEWAY AND FRONT YARD CHICAGO - ESTABLISHING 55

The Pinto finds a spot among many ill parked cars.

56 INT. HOUSE CHICAGO -CONTINUOUS 56

The boys make their way through THE CROWD.

A DJ spins RAP MUSIC.

ZIP, 19, one of Victor's crew steps up to the DJ mic. \*

ZIP

Yo! Hold up! Hold up...A moment of  
silence for Victor Dobson. Give it  
up ya'll. To Victory!! \*

He raises a beer.

CROWD

To Victory!!! \*

The room falls SILENT. Erik slips out. MUSIC CONTINUES. \*

57 EXT. HOUSE BACKYARD BASKETBALL HOOP CHICAGO -MOMENTS LATER 57

Erik sips a beer, shoots and misses. Bird pops out of the shadows and gets the rebound boxing Erik out.

BIRD

Shit'll slow you down, man.

ERIK

The fuck you doin' here?

Bird pulls Victor's jersey out and tosses it to Erik.

BIRD

You know I got your back E.

Erik tosses the jersey aside, grabs the ball and dribbles angrily about for a few beats.

BIRD (CONT'D)

Time's up, man...Shoot.

Erik pours beer on the jersey, drops the ball and exits. Bird picks up the jersey.

58 INT. HOUSE DANCE FLOOR CHICAGO - LATER 58

Erik drunkenly navigates the CROWD smoking a blunt. TWO THUGS eye him and notice his tattoo. Thug #1 drops a gang sign. Erik gives him the finger and bumps into Tripp Makepeace 18, from Page 1, dancing with 3 GIRLS and sucking a lollipop.

TRIPP

Get in line if you wanna' dirty  
dance n' grind baby.

\*

Erik continues on. The TWO THUGS follow him.

59 EXT. HOUSE FRONT STAIRS CHICAGO -MOMENTS LATER 59

Nate, Thomas, JT and OTHERS hang out on the stairs. Erik stumbles out the door with a fresh beer.

NATE

Ain't that right, E?

ERIK

...fuck it.

The two Thugs exit the house and walk right up on Erik.

THUG #1

What up, fool?

ERIK

I know you?

THUG #2

Do now punk ass bitch!

JT

Yo, we're comin' from his brothers  
wake man. How bout' a lil' space.

THUG #1

(grabbing at Eriks arm)  
You representin' Vato nation with  
that weak ass flyin' bird shit.

ERIK

(Pulling his arm away)  
Vato what?

\*

THUG #2

The fuck you say?!

NATE

Man, there's ladies present!

\*

Thomas steps up to Thug #2. Thug #1 steps up to Erik.

THUG #1

So step on up bitch.

ERIK

That's the second time tonight  
someone's done called me a bitch.

Bird exits the house and feels the tension.

THUG #1

Third time's a charm...bitch.

Erik eyes Bird then quickly smashes his beer bottle over Thug #1's head sending him down.

Thomas grapples with Thug#2 but Erik steps in punching, pistons firing until Thug#2 falls. Erik looks to Bird.

ERIK

Slow my ass down? Shit...

\*

Erik pushes his way through a GATHERING CROWD SINGING. Thomas rounds up the boys and slips way out of the MOUNTING CHAOS.

60

CUT TO: 60\*

60

INT. JT'S FORD PINTO CAR CHICAGO STREET - LATER

60\*

RADIO. Bird drives. JT at shotgun. Erik, Thomas and Nate in back. All but Bird share a bottle.

Erik catches Bird glancing at him in the rearview mirror and takes a huge sip off the bottle.

ERIK

Numbness or pain boys. Numbness or pain.

Bird tosses Victor's jersey to Erik. Erik eyes him in the rearview then puts it on.

Erik hands the bottle up front to JT. It upends and spills on Bird. The car comes to a SCREECHING HALT.

BIRD

Son of a...Damn it E!

JT

Crash my car, you gonna pay for it.

BIRD

Go back to sleep JT! Drunken fool!  
Think better when you move, huh E?

ERIK

The fuck you say?!

Erik lunges at Bird. They scrap. The others break it up.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Just cuz you a sober son of a damn  
preacher man don't mean you better  
than any a' us.

BIRD

Never said I was E.

ERIK

So what is it? What the fuck you  
wanna say t'this drunk ass ship a'  
fools? I know it's somethin'. JT  
knows. Hell, Thomas n' Lil' Nate  
know! I know cuz I see that look on  
your face like you disgusted and  
dirty and don't know how to get  
clean. So say it. Should a' watched  
the fuck out for my brother.

BIRD

E...

ERIK

And Coach? Fuck him! Victor'd still  
be alive if that mutha fucka...

BIRD

Wasn't his fault E.

ERIK

Oh no? Then whose fault was it?

A car rolls up from behind with lights off. Bird sees it in the sideview and senses what's about to happen. He looks to Erik in the rearview but it's too late. Erik turns. Thug #1 hangs out a window with an automatic rifle. Erik ducks just as he begins FIRING. GUNFIRE peppers the Pinto.

61

EXT. PINTO CHICAGO STREET - CONTINUOUS

61

THUG #1

Batter down punk ass, stupid ass,  
dumb ass bitch!

Thug#1 spits in bitter satisfaction as the car race off.

62 INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM CHICAGO -LATER 62

Erik is rushed in by 2 EMT'S. DR. MASON, a man who wishes he'd gone pre-law, and NURSE ANNE, converge on them.

DOCTOR MASON  
What do we got?

EMT #1  
Multiple gun shot wounds. BP 90  
over 65 and falling.

They move through a set of doors.

63 INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL TRIAGE ROOM -CONTINUOUS 63

DOCTOR MASON  
On my count, one, two, three.

They beam Erik onto a table and begin WORK on him. A BEEP in the hall GROWS LOUDER. Erik rolls his head toward the door.

ERIK  
Times up man, shoot.

DOCTOR MASON  
What did he say?

TWO MORE EMT'S and A NURSE enter with Bird in V-FIB.

EMT #3  
We brought him back twice in route.

DOCTOR MASON  
Third times a charm. Set for 360.

Nurse Anne pulls a divider separating Erik and Bird. A DEFIBRILLATOR reaches its CHARGE.

ERIK  
Shoot the ball, Bird.

DOCTOR MASON  
Clear!

Dr. Mason DE-FIBS Bird. THUMP. A RHYTHM. Now FLAT LINE.

DOCTOR MASON (CONT'D)  
Again! 360!

THE DEFIBRILLATOR reaches its CHARGE.

ERIK  
Shoot it!

DOCTOR MASON  
Clear!

ERIK

Shoot!!!

Dr. Mason DE-FIBS Bird again with a THUMP.

64 INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM CHICAGO - LATER 64

Coach pushes through a set of doors with a THUMP that turns to a HIGH PITCH RINGING in his ears as he slows, turning and looking around confused, searching. Nurse Anne approaches.

NURSE ANNE

Can I help you, sir?

COACH JAMES

They brought in a car full of kids.

NURSE ANNE

Are you family?

COACH JAMES

I'm their coach. Where's the doctor?

NURSE ANNE

The doctors are busy but if you-

COACH JAMES

-I need to speak to a doctor!

NURSE ANNE

Sir, I need you to-

COACH JAMES

-NOW!..please...

\*

As Nurse Anne steps away, L'Dora enters fast and sees Coach's face/eyes. She approaches him cautiously, not knowing.

65 INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE WAITING ROOM-LATER 65

Through a set of doors Ray Dobson approaches Dr. Mason. INDISCERNABLE DIALOGUE. Ray turns, sees Coach, drops a scornful look and walks off. Dr. Mason approaches.

DOCTOR MASON

Try not to take it personally. You coming down here with all this... Half the shot up, drugged up, fucked up kids we get, parents are nowhere to be found.

COACH JAMES

...but I'm...

DOCTOR MASON

Three were DOA. The one who just passed, Birdman, leaves Dobson. Erik Dobson.

Coach is already up and heading down the hall.

66 INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT ROOM B - LATER 66

Coach stands at Eriks bed. In an adjoining room over his shoulder we see a sheet drawn back showing Thomas's body. L'Dora WAILS and MOANS and collapses into Ray.

Coach turns his head toward the sound. There's nothing he can do. He turns and sees Victors jersey on a chair and picks it up. He removes and places his whistle into Erik's unconscious hand and exits. Ray silhouetted in the window watches him go.

67 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM CHICAGO - LATER 67

Coach sips from a bottle. IMAGINARY WHISTLE. He removes jerseys from lockers. With four in tow he pulls out Eriks #11. He pulls them in close and slides slowly to the floor.

68 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM CHICAGO - LATER 68

A rising sun illuminates the key and banners: You Go Hawks! Our Heroes! Good luck at States! / Get BENJT! An empty bottle lies nearby as Coach drives and shoots like a man possessed.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Tragedy struck late last night for the William Harper High School Varsity basketball team who were set to play Mt Carmel on Sunday in the state semi-finals round of the Illinois High School Basketball State Championship Tournament.

ERIK (V.O.)

I ain't my brothers keeper.

NEWSCASTER

Police have confirmed that four of their five starting players were gunned down in a drive-by style shooting and that a fifth remains in critical condition.

ERIK (V.O.)

We're playin' states without you.

NEWSCASTER

Police are unsure of a motive and say the gunmen are still at large.

(MORE)

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

Anyone with any information is  
asked to come forward immediately.

Coach tweaks his knee and collapses. The ball roll off  
slowly. He reaches for it as it rolls into the shadows.

COACH JAMES

NO!!!

FADE TO BLACK

18 months later...

VOICE (V.O.)

Line up. All inmates line up.

FADE UP:

69

EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL YARD BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

69

FROM PAGE 1 still following the ball in the blinding sun  
until it emerges against a brilliant blue sky and finds its  
target. Coach Calvin James now in a guard uniform nods in  
mild satisfaction and walks off with a slight limp.

CHILLY

Say there Timer, not bad! Not so  
bad a'tall. Say we go double or  
nothin there Too Tall...Yo!

Tripp catches up to Chilly as they head inside.

CHILLY (CONT'D)

Typical lazy ass baseline jumper.

TRIPP

Lucky ass shot is what it was.

70

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION FIVE POD GROUND TIER -EVENING 70

Calvin sits by a few NEUTRON INMATES(non-gang affiliated). We  
notice his scuffed shoes now glisten as he ties the laces.

Tripp, Chilly, THEO BANKS, 22 and INMATES sit at a widescreen  
tv waiting for a movie. Chilly makes eye contact with Calvin.

Calvin gestures to his newly shined shoes with a thumbs up.

CHILLY

(aside, waving back)  
Like to shove them shoes right up  
your fat, too tall, bloated...

Wick Dobbs, now a full on GANGSTER, steps in front of Tripp.



WICK

You up in my seat, nigga'.

TRIPP

Ain't that a bit cliché', man?

WICK

(kicking a chair over)  
Che' what muthafucka? You in my  
damn seat!

Chilly stands. No one backs down. Calvin is set to pounce.

WICK (CONT'D)

What chu' gonna do mother-fuckin'  
string bean!? Huh?

Case, now a seasoned guard, takes Wick by the arm. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Let's go Wick. Saved you a seat up  
front right next to mine.

Wick shrugs him off. Case locks Wicks arm behind him. \*

WICK

The fuck you...

CASE RYAN \*

Ain't gonna break itself, your  
call.

Case and Calvin lock eyes. Wick eases up. Case shoves him. \*

WICK

(walking off)  
...punk ass bitch.

CASE RYAN \*

You good Chilly?

CHILLY

(sitting)  
Yeah.

CASE RYAN \*

(as he exits)  
Outstanding. Tripp, Theo.

Tripp and Theo acknowledge him slightly.

CHILLY

You straight?

TRIPP

Yeah. We good.

THEO

Twice in two days. Boys got you locked.

TRIPP

He all bark n' no bite. Sides, I'm a lovah' not a fightah!

\*

CHILLY

Louder man, I don't think the ankle grabbers in the back heard you.

THEO

What's that boys itch anyway?

TRIPP

Too many to list.

71 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL TRIPP AND GOOSE CELL-FOLLOWING MORNING 71

GODZILLA by EMINEM plays. Tripp is asleep. GOOSE MCCOY, a tall lumbering Okee teases his Billy Idol hair in a mirror. TATTOO of a MATADOR with raised ESTOC SWORDS covers his back.

72 INT./EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CHILLY AND TINY'S CELL- CONTINUOUS72

Chilly looks out a window. A Corrections bus pulls up.

CHILLY

Yo Tripp, our ride is here, man!

Chilly turns his attention to a chess game in progress. TINY, a massive gentle giant sits eyeing the board carefully.

CHILLY (CONT'D)

Take your time, Biggie. Remember what I told you, every move counts.

Tiny makes a move.

TINY

Checkmate.

Chilly scans the board and concedes.

CHILLY

...damn. Yo Tripp!

GOOSE

Get up man. Chilly's calling you.

TRIPP

Tell him I stepped out.

73

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CELL TIER - CONTINUOUS

73

A chewed up night stick bounces noisily down the tier with a Bulldog in pursuit waking sleeping inmates in cells nearby.

Case appears at the cell door with RUFUS, a BULLDOG. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
Open on twenty one!

BELL. The cell door OPENS. Case and Rufus enter. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
What do you know, Goose?

GOOSE  
That I'm done tryin to wake his ass  
up. And there's no better rise n'  
shine than a little Marshal  
Mathers.

CASE RYAN \*  
I heard that.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
Let's go Day Tripper you and Chilly  
are working receiving. Up n' at em.

TRIPP  
Can't you get somebody else?

CASE RYAN \*  
I can but I need my top guys down  
there when that Magic Bus arrives.  
See you on the Bull Ramp in ten.

TRIPP  
Make it twenty.

CASE RYAN \*  
Make it five or I'll sic Rufus on  
you. Ain't that right Roofy?

Rufus wags his tail. Case exits with him. \*

74

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CELL BLOCK TIER - CONTINUOUS

74

Case and Rufus wander off down the tier. Rufus slows a bit  
and Case reacts by yanking a tad hard on his leash. \*

Rufus lets out a WHIMPER and follows at a safe distance. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
(singing Godzilla)  
" My whole squads in here, walking  
around the party a cross between a  
zombie apocalypse and big Bobby..."

75 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUBTERRANEAN RECEIVING AREA - LATER 75

Calvin and Case scan a list in the stagnant dimly lit place. \*

Tripp, Chilly and TRACE, a frightening looking individual, sweep out Bullpen 4, a post body scan holding cell.

Rufus laps water off the floor from a leak above.

A BELL. Flashing yellow lights. Rufus begins BARKING.

Two massive doors on rusted tracks slide open. TWO GUARDS with shotguns, separated by 12 NEW INMATES, enter.

Case signs off on them and the two guards exit. \*

BELL. We scan the inmates faces over the flashing yellow lights. The massive doors begin to close and SLAM SHUT.

CASE RYAN \*

Welcome to Cook County Department of Corrections gentlemen. My name is Officer Ryan. That is Officer James. With a short leash on Rufus, Officer Van Leer. First, body scan and quick mental health evaluation. Then mug shots and gang tattoo documentation. A short stay in Bullpen 4 to get booking numbers then bond court next door. If you pay the amount set by the judge, you get a court date and we part ways. If you can't post bond you'll remain in the custody of Cook County Jail until your case is resolved in court. Questions, comments, concerns? \*

No one speaks. Trace scans the new inmates for weakness. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Okay I need a single file line for body scan. Step up, shoes off. \*

Calvin moves along a far wall scanning the list.

Case moves to the body scan console, looks to Trace who motions to an INMATE, 3rd in line. Case nods. \*

INMATES proceed through the scanner, do a quick mental health evaluation, yes/no answers and move to Bullpen 4 where booking numbers are written on their arms.

As the 3rd inmate in line steps into the scan area, Case turns the scanner off for a beat and waves him through. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Next.

Calvin looks up from a list. He checks it again while scanning inmates in Bullpen 4. He moves through the CROWD.

Case looks up sensing alarm. Rufus BARKS. \*

Calvin moves through the crowd causing MORE COMMOTION. He finds what he's looking for and stops. Van Leer brushes past causing him to drop his coffee mug. It SHATTERS.

Officer Van Leer panics and starts BLOWING A WHISTLE.

Officer Roe slams a button on a wall that SOUNDS AN ALARM.

Calvin raises his hands to his ears, backs up and stumbles off toward a door that seems a million miles away.

MORE GUARDS enter to try to contain the MOUNTING CHAOS.

The room is spiraling OUT OF CONTROL. Inmates pound on the massive metal doors, looking for a way out.

Calvin reaches the door and pounds on it. The door opens and MORE GUARDS push in past Calvin as he exits.

Case hits the button on the wall. THE ALARM stops. \*

An unsteady hand reaches for a piece of Coach's coffee mug.

Case steps in and grabs the inmate by the wrist. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

I don't think that's a good idea.

Case takes the piece of mug from his hand and helps the inmate to his feet. \*

The inmate is a tired and worn **ERIK DOBSON!!!!!!!!!!** \*

Trace recognizes Erik from the streets. He scowls and spits on the floor. \*

76

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS LOCKER ROOM - LATER

76

Case enters with pieces of the broken mug. Calvin slams his locker shut and sits lacing up his sneakers. \*

CASE RYAN \*

You left without saying goodbye to Roofy. You know how he hates that.

Calvin pulls hard on a lace and it breaks.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Ah, the silent treatment. I haven't seen you pull that since I asked Kayla Dee to prom before you could.

CALVIN JAMES

She shot you down.

CASE RYAN

You didn't talk to me for a week. \*

CALVIN JAMES

What do you want Javon?

CASE RYAN

It's a coffee mug. I got one that says Eat, Drink and Remarry. It's all yours. God bless the son of a bitch that came up with that one. \*

Case sets the pieces of mug on the bench and exits. Calvin picks a piece up and studies it. He places two pieces together and reads. William Harper High School Basketball. \*

77

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARD'S LOCKER ROOM -FOLLOWING MORNING 77

CAPTAIN TAGET, a formidable presence, looms over OFFICER VAN LEER, a less aggressive type who searches his locker and bag. Calvin tries to mind his own business at an adjacent locker.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Well where the hell is it Van Leer?

VAN LEER

I, I, I thought it was...

CAPTAIN TAGET

How do you expect to qualify on the range with no weapon?

Calvin slips his gun in holster onto the bench next to Van Leer unnoticed. He drops a smile and nod to Taget.

CAPTAIN TAGET (CONT'D)

Can I help you, James?

CALVIN JAMES

(motioning to the bench)

Couldn't help over hear so I...

Van Leer looks down and sees Calvin's gun. He takes it with a look to Calvin of, thanks for saving my ass.

CAPTAIN TAGET

You already qualify James?

Calvin pats at an empty holster tucked under his arm.

CALVIN JAMES

Last week. Perfect score.

CAPTAIN TAGET  
Listen up! Everyone who needs to  
qualify today, on range in five!

Captain Taget eyes the two of them for a beat and exits.

VAN LEER  
Who's freakin' gun is this?

CALVIN JAMES  
Mine. And yours?

VAN LEER  
At home.

CALVIN JAMES  
It better be or we're in deep shit.

VAN LEER  
Thanks. I owe you one.

CALVIN JAMES  
Despite some of the leadership in  
here Van Leer, we're still a team.

Van Leer nods. Calvin pats him on the back and exits.

78 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 78

Calvin waits for the room to clear. VOICES fade. He retrieves  
a vial of pills from his locker, pops one and exits.

79 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CELLBLOCK TRACE'S CELL - NIGHT 79

Trace steps from the shadows and makes a TRIBAL GANG CALL.

80 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CELLBLOCK WICK'S CELL -CONTINUOUS 80

Wick RETURNS THE CALL and slips back into the shadows.

CUT TO:

81 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL YARD BASKETBALL COURT -DAY 81

A GAME of 5-on-5 is in progress. Calvin watches from a far.

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE (V.O.)  
One minute to line up. One minute.

Erik passes for a give-and-go, burns by Trace and scores.

TRACE  
Run yo' shit again n' see what  
happens.

Trace checks the ball. Erik passes and moves but Trace slams into him sending him to the ground.

TRACE (CONT'D)  
Defensive foul punk.

Trace looks off to Wick. Erik gets up. Trace checks the ball.

TRACE (CONT'D)  
Didn't know stool pigeons c' fly.

Erik hits Trace in the face with the ball. A BRAWL ERUPTS. Erik takes a punch and goes down. He looks up dazed as Trace's face changes to Tryout #2 smiling. Erik stands to fight.

Wick moves through THE CROWD with a shiv and target in sight.

Officer Van Leer and OFFICER PHILLIPS rush in. Van Leer takes a punch and goes down. He looks up dazed at Officer Phillips who's in dire trouble. He WHISTLES to a tower above.

A GUARD FIRES 3 SHOTS into the air. INMATES SCATTER and drop to the ground. Wick discards his shiv.

Calvin unlocks a side door and slips inside undetected.

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE (V.O.)  
Line up! All inmates line up!

82	INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 9 SEGRAGATION HALL - LATER	82
	Case escorts a disheveled Erik down the hall.	*
	CASE RYAN You're here not 24 hours and already got 24 in isolation. A new cellblock record.	*
	Case notices Erik's track marks on his arm.	*
	CASE RYAN (CONT'D) Gettin' thirsty yet?	*
	Erik gives him a look that says he is.	
	Case notices the Hawk tattoo on Erik's arm.	*
	CASE RYAN (CONT'D) So...where you from?	*
	Erik doesn't answer. They stop at a cell.	
	CASE RYAN (CONT'D) Good a place as any. Open on nine!	*
	Door opens. Case shoves Erik in.	*



## CASE RYAN (CONT'D)

Close on nine!

\*

Door closes. Case walks off.

\*

83 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL OUTSIDE ERIKS CELL - NEXT NIGHT 83

WHERE IS MY MIND by The Pixies. A small bag is pulled by fishing line into Eriks cell. A GUARD looks the other way. Erik grabs at it ravenously.

84 INT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 84

Calvin washes down a pill with a beer. He swallows another.

85 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ERIK'S CELL -CONTINUOUS 85

Erik smokes heroin off a sheet of tinfoil with a pen tube, exhales into a towel and melts into the wall.

86 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CAFETERIA - FOLLOWING MORNING 86

AN INMATE walks away from A GUARD and while passing Erik shakes his head "no". Erik upends his tray and storms off.

87 INT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT BEDROOM BED - CONTINUOUS 87

An ALARM CLOCK sounds. Calvin SHATTERS it with a closed fist. He watches and stares at the blood running down his hand.

88 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CELL BLOCK TIER - NIGHT 88

Erik paces. A SCARED INMATE exits a cell and walks off.

Money appears at the cell bars. A GUARD takes it in passing.

INMATE (O.C.)

Bring your pretty self on in here.

Erik weighs his options then storms off frustrated.

89 INT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT -CONTINUOUS 89

Calvin lets drops of blood fall on his good hand. He has blood on both now. He springs out of bed. We follow him room to room furiously collecting empty bottles and cans in a box.

90 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ERIK'S CELL - CONTINUOUS 90

Erik paces, out of options and feeling withdrawal symptoms.

91 EXT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT REAR BASKETBALL HOOP- CONTINUOUS 91

Crossing to a dumpster, a beer can falls from the overflowing box. Calvin picks it up, shoots at the hoop and misses. He tries another and misses. He begins to throw bottles as they SHATTER violently one by one off the backboard and rim.

92 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ERIK'S CELL - LATER 92

Erik trashes his cell. INMATES BEGIN TO YELL and ARGUE

A S.O.R.T TEAM gathers outside the cell. They rush in and restrains Erik. Tears fill his eyes as there is comfort in the restraint like that of a hug. YELLING/ARGUING CONTINUES. \*

93 EXT. ERIKS HOUSE BASKETBALL HOOP CHICAGO- NIGHT 10 YEARS AGO 93\*

10 years ago. A MAN AND WOMAN ARGUE inside. Erik 10 and Victor 8, exit and begin shooting. Victor can barely hit the rim. AN IMAGINARY GAME nearing a climactic finish echoes and fills Erik's mind as he dribbles around.

ERIK

Bulls down by one with ten, nine, eight...

Things ESCALATE inside. Victor begins shaking.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Seven, Six, Five...

Something SHATTERS inside. Victor is now crying.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Four, Three, Two, One...

Erik shoots the ball-A GUN SHOT. Erik looks to the house. Silence. Now SCREAMING. Erik looks to Victor who is a mess.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Come on Victory. Member how I showed you?

Erik grabs the ball and guides Victor to the foul line. He takes his eyes off the house/SCREAMING and helps Victor.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Most important thing? Concentrate. Everything outside this world, your world, right here goes quiet. It's jus' you n' the ball. Okay?

Victor nods, readies then shoots underhanded. Swish! \*

ERIK (CONT'D)  
 (Handing Victor the ball) \*  
 There you go! Nice shot Victor!

Victor preps to shoot again and everything SLOWS DOWN. Even  
 the SCREAMING from inside is quelled. Victor shoots the ball. \*

94 EXT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT REAR BASKETBALL HOOP- AS BEFORE 94 \*

93 Calvin sits up against the basketball post among the 93  
 shattered glass. A tear fills his eye. The translucent \*  
 silhouettes of Erik and Victor as children in their backyard \*  
 that terrible night appear and are on the court with him. \*

Coach watches Victors second shot in SLOW MOTION as it \*  
 bounces off the rim and falls off into the darkness. Another \*  
 tear fills his eye. \*

95 EXT. ERIKS HOUSE REAR AND FRONT CHICAGO - NIGHT AS BEFORE 95 \*

As we pull up and away we see a quiet south side of Chicago \*  
 as TWO COP CARS race up to the front of house LIGHTS BLARING. \*

96 INT. CALVIN'S APARTMENT CHICAGO - LATER THAT NIGHT 96

Calvin glues his mug. A basketball game is on TV. The mug \*  
 reads: HARPER HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY BASKETBALL. GO HAWKS! \*  
 Calvin studies the mug closely and drifts off in thought. \*

97 INT. BREWER HOUSE GROUP HOME FOR BOYS FOYER - 20 YEARS AGO 97 \*

CALVIN JAMES, 12, stands in the foyer with garbage bags full \*  
 of personal effects and clothing. MS. GRAVES, 30's a DCFS \*  
 worker and VICKY CROCKET, 40's group home supervisor confer. \*

MS. GRAVES \*  
 The father was killed in a drunk \*  
 driving accident and...(referring \*  
 to a clipboard) the mother died \*  
 from an overdose two weeks ago. No \*  
 known living or willing relatives. \*  
 ( referring to a clipboard) Calvin, \*  
 say hello to Ms? \*

VICKY CROCKET \*  
 Mrs. Crocket. But call me Vicky \*  
 okay? Welcome to Brewer House \*  
 Calvin. \*

While keeping a scared eye to the floor, Calvin manages to \*  
 look up and nod. He notices A YOUNG CASE RYAN, 17 peering at \*  
 him from the banisters above on the second floor. \*

98 INT. BREWER HOUSE GROUP HOME SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM- LATER 98 \*

Calvin unpacks and settle in. Case enters fast and shuts the door listening through it out into the hall. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*

What the... \*

Case puts a quick finger to his lips \*

CASE RYAN \*

Ssshhh. \*

Case turns with a devious smile. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

(removing a pocket knife) \*

You know what blood brothers are? \*

Calvin shakes his head, frightened. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Oh hey little man,, it's all good, \*

I come in peace. Honest. Cross my \*

heart and hope to DIE! \*

Case playingly lunges at him with the knife like a mad man. \*

Calvin SCREAMS holding out a hand to stop him, terrorized. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

Now you're getting it. Here, I'll \*

go first but we gotta move fast \*

before staff shows for bed check. \*

Case slices his palm then hands the knife to Calvin. \*

Calvin reluctantly takes it. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*

It's just for fun, right? \*

CASE RYAN \*

Maybe fun for now. But brothers for \*

life. \*

Calvin takes a moment realizing the next years will be tough. \*

Needing all the support he can get, he takes a breath, holds \*

out his hand and makes a cut. Case cuffs it with his own and \*

they share a moment. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

For life...I'm Case. Case Ryan. \*

Case winks and eases the moment a bit. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*

Calvin. Calvin James. \*

99 INT. CALVINS APARTMENT- AS BEFORE 99 \*

Calvin gently sets the Harper High mug aside. The game continues on the TV in the background. \*

100 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL YARD AND BASKETBALL COURT -DAY 100

Tripp, Chilly, Theo and 7 INMATES play 5-on-5.

Erik and A CREW are gathered on one side of the court. Wick, Trace, and OTHERS gather on the opposite side.

Gang signs are thrown, looks and WORDS are exchanged. The gangs spill out onto the court. The game continues as best it can but we're an inch away from absolute mayhem.

Calvin appears out of nowhere and intercepts a pass. He turns and **faces Erik for the first time-BOOM!!!!!!!** \*

CALVIN JAMES  
Too many players on the floor  
fellas. Let's go. Move it along.

Erik can't believe his eyes. Calvin turns away from him and locks eyes with Wick before snap passing the ball to Chilly.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
That's a pass. What's this around  
the back crap? Give it here.

Chilly lazily lobs him the ball.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
No. Explode! Firing pistons! Boom!

Calvin snap passes to Chilly. Chilly snap passes it back.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
Better.

Erik composes himself. He and his CREW turn and walk off.

Calvin watches Erik go then looks down at Theo's sneakers.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
What's your name?

THEO  
Theo.

CALVIN JAMES  
Lace up Theo. You expect to stay  
with your man if you got no feet?

Theo drops to lace up.

Wick and Erik lock eyes one last time. Calvin takes notice.

CHILLY

So is it true? You used to be NBA?

CALVIN JAMES

Another lifetime ago.

Chilly looks Calvin up and down. Tripp approaches.

CHILLY

Musta been one hell of a ride.

CALVIN JAMES

It got me here didn't it? All right  
you four, and Theo. Give me a  
nickel formation defense.

No one responds. Erik looks back one more time.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

2-3 stack? Triangle?

Erik spits on the court before exiting.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

Would anyone care to learn?

THEO

(standing back up)  
I would.

CALVIN JAMES

Good. Anyone else?

A few reluctant hands go up.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. Line up!

An imaginary WHISTLE sounds.

101 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CAFETERIA TABLE - MORNING

101

Calvin enters and sits behind Erik and his CREW. They're back  
to back. INMATES AND GUARDS stare at this anomaly.

Calvin notices Tiny sitting alone playing chess. Tiny makes a  
move in White.

Erik's CREW exits in silent protest. Erik hold his ground.

ERIK

Tryin' to get me killed? Fuck's the  
matta' wit'chu?

CALVIN JAMES

Don't be so dramatic.

ERIK

Fuck off.

\*

CALVIN JAMES

Mind if I finish my eggs first?

They both drop culinary focus on their respective meals.

ERIK

The hell you doin' here anyway?

CALVIN JAMES

Workin' and trying to stomach these  
impeccably cooked eggs. Salt?

Erik tosses the salt over his shoulder and it bounces around  
the table top before Calvin can grab it.

Tiny makes a move in Black.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

What's your excuse?

Erik looks him in the eye, blaming him. He stands to leave.  
Calvin grabs his arm. TWO ALERT GUARDS reposition themselves.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

(Seeing track marks)

Nice artwork.

Erik rips his arm away. The guards close in ready to pounce.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

Sit...or I let them do their job.

Erik sits. Calvin gives a nod. The guards back down.

Tiny makes a move in White.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

You got lucky. Most of the addicts  
in here manage to keep it going.

ERIK

The consequences outweighed the  
options. Looks like the addicts on  
the outside keepin' it goin too.

Calvin adjusts himself to this insult.

Erik eyes a tier above. Calvin looks up too. Captain Taget  
approaches Case and A GUARD. INDISCERNIBLE DIALOGUE.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Ain't no zero tolerance contract up  
in this bitch. God damn free for  
all. Right up under y' nose n' you  
don't even see it.

Calvin looks at Erik. Erik looks him in the eye. Nystagmus (involuntary movement) and dilated pupils.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
With them dancin' all day eye  
balls, how could you?

Erik picks up his tray and walks off. Calvin scans the room taking in the faces and their suffering.

Tiny makes a move in Black.

Calvin takes his tray and walks off.

102 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ERIKS CELL - LATER THAT NIGHT 102 \*

Erik tosses and turns in troubled sleep. \*

103 INT. BREWER HOUSE GROUP HOME FOR BOYS CHICAGO - 10 YEARS AGO 103 \*

Erik, 10 and Victor, 8 stand in the foyer with garbage bags full of personal effects. Ms. Graves, 40's the DCFS worker and Vicky Crocket, now 50's, group home Supervisor confer. \*

MS. GRAVES \*

Their grandfather on the mothers side, a Ray Dobson is currently serving state prison time of which he will be eligible for parole in...(referring to a clipboard) four years. \*

VICKY CROCKET \*

Well as you may know, his background could prevent him from formally adopting... \*

MS. GRAVES \*

(referring to clipboard again) Erik. Erik and Victor Dobson. \*

Vicky checks in with the two boys with a warm smile. \*

Erik smiles lightly then notices a YOUNG WICK TUCKER, 9, peering down at them from the banisters on the second floor. \*

MS. GRAVES (CONT'D) \*

I'm well aware of the disqualifying parameters which may prevent Ray Dobson from formally adopting his grandsons upon his release. His infraction was a non-violent, isolated incident, he's expressed a genuine interest and will be ready to accept these boys soon after his release. \*



VICKY CROCKET \*  
 (kneeling and smiling) \*  
 Welcome to Brewer House Victor, \*  
 Erik. I'm Mrs. Crocket but please \*  
 call me Vicky. \*

104 INT. BREWER HOUSE STAIRS TO SECOND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER 104 \*

Erik and Victor almost reach the top when A YOUNG WICK TUCKER \*  
 steps up arms folded, blocking their way. \*

WICK \*  
 Gotta pay the toll first to pass! \*

Erik looks to Victor. Victor starts to search his pockets but \*  
 Erik stops him with a gentle slap on the arm. \*

WICK (CONT'D) \*  
 At least he got the right idea. \*

Vicky appears at the bottom of the stairs in passing. \*

VICKY CROCKET \*  
 I swear to god Wick if you try and \*  
 extort one more dime outta one more \*  
 boy in this house... \*

Wick reluctantly steps aside with a snarl letting Erik and \*  
 Victor pass. \*

INTERCUTTING:

105 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 5 RECREATION ROOM- DAY 105

MUSIC. INMATES play cards, mill about etc. Calvin, in a side  
 office, makes eye contact with Wick. Tiny plays chess alone.

Tripp watches A MUTED DEPAUL vs UIC GAME on TV. Calvin  
 watches on a TV in the guards office while doing paperwork.

106 INT. WINTRUST ARENA MCCORMICK CENTER HALFTIME - CONTINUOUS 106

Announcer ZACH ZAIDMAN and Commentator DAVE CORZINE.

ZACH ZAIDMAN \*  
 Today's a big day. One lucky winner \*  
 and four friends get to scrimmage \*  
 the DePaul Blue Demons in a pre- \*  
 game show sponsored by Stop The Gun \*  
 Violence Now and The Mayors office. \*

Erik enters, eyes Calvin and sits by Tripp. \*

Wick makes a PIGEON SOUND. He and Erik lock eyes.

ERIK  
Who's playin'?

TRIPP  
DePaul n' UIC.

ERIK  
No sound?

TRIPP  
Easy listening music took the vote.

Erik looks off uninterested.

TRIPP (CONT'D)  
You the crazy ass thought he'd go  
square with Wick n' Co. Shit. Man's  
gotta be lackin' topside to go toe-  
to-toe with that kind a' element.

Wick speaks in Trace's ear. Trace eyes Erik and walks off.

ERIK  
I can hold my own.

TRIPP  
I'll bet. Question is for how long?

Erik gets up and walks off. Trace shadows him from a distance

DAVE CORZINE  
The contest rules are quite simple.  
Whichever high school age student  
comes up with the best idea on how  
to stop or at least curb the gun  
violence in Chicago or any city for  
that matter, wins. They can have a  
varsity team from their school  
represent or choose their own team  
of friends or family to go up  
against the DePaul Blue Demons.

Calvin drops his attention to the tv.

ZACH ZAIDMAN  
And who judges the contest entries?

DAVE CORZINE  
The panel is made up of The Mayor,  
DePaul's Dean Of Students, the  
founder of Keepers Of The Light  
Brigade and wow, DePaul's own  
starting point guard Tyrel Haywood.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

ZACH ZAIDMAN

The judging takes place next week  
so anyone still hoping for a chance  
to scrimmage the Blue Demons, get  
those idea essays in fast!

\*  
\*  
\*

An image of Tyrel Haywood comes on the TV. He is Tryout #2.  
Coach does a double take.

CALVIN JAMES

...holy shit.

Erik bumps into Trace who's stepped in his path.

\*

TRACE

Watch where the fuck you walkin' G!

Trace shoves Erik into a table where Tiny plays chess. The  
board and pieces scatter to the floor. Silence. Calvin stands  
cautiously knowing what's coming next. Tiny stands.

\*

TINY

Checkmate, bitch.

Tiny upturns the table. Erik tackles Trace. The room erupts  
in a MELEE. Calvin and GUARDS jumps in to break it up.

Wick heads for Erik. Calvin gets to him first and restrains  
him on a table.

\*

Calvin and Erik lock eyes. Calvin cautions him with a look.

Officers Van Leer and Phillips enter and restrain Trace.

THREE GUARDS on him Tiny crawls about gathering chess pieces.

\*

Case and a S.O.R.T UNIT enter the MELEE.

\*

107

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CAPTAIN TAGETS OFFICE - LATER

107

Captain Taget is at his desk. Calvin stands at attention.

CAPTAIN TAGET

You were senior officer in the rec  
room and it's your John Hancock on  
the report so I'd like your input.

CALVIN JAMES

I'm afraid I don't follow, sir.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Demerits are a joke, solitary's  
wait list is a mile long and taking  
away petty privileges don't mean  
fuckin' squat! You follow me now?

A KNOCK.

CAPTAIN TAGET (CONT'D)

Come!

A THREE MAN COUNTY CREW enters with tarps, paint, rollers.

CAPTAIN TAGET (CONT'D)

Well I'll be. My request for a fresh coat went in (looking at his wristwatch) six months ago.

The Foreman of the crew gives Taget a tired look as they begin to tarp furniture. One painter begins taping a window.

Calvin looks out the window. Something catches his eye. He moves to the window and sees a huge, aging and decrepit supply garage sitting oddly out of place off in the distance.

CALVIN JAMES

Sir, can I make a suggestion?

108

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

108

Wick, Tiny, Tripp and Erik sit on benches shackled to a wall. Case and Officer Phillips keep an eye on them. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Find all your chess pieces Tiny?

Tiny nods and looks off.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

How about you Wick? You gonna surprise me someday and not be in thick of something like this?

WICK

Doubtful.

CASE RYAN \*

At a' boy.

Case looks to Erik and Tripp. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

It's Tripp right?

TRIPP

That's right.

CASE RYAN \*

I like that. Tripp. And Dobson. The new guy whose already broken every misconduct rule in the book.

Erik eyes Case. Calvin enters and closes the door. \*

CALVIN JAMES  
Phillips, escort Wick and Tiny down  
to laundry.

OFFICER PHILLIPS  
You got it.

CALVIN JAMES  
Fair enough Tiny?

Tiny nods. Officer Phillips unshackles them from the wall.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
Tell Tito they're on pre-wash  
sorting until I say otherwise.

OFFICER PHILLIPS  
Got it.

Wick lunges out and sucker punches Erik in the face. Calvin  
and Officer Phillips subdue and cuff him.

Case steps up and sucker punches Wick in the face. The look \*  
on Coach's face is one of disgust but not surprise.

CALVIN JAMES  
Phillips, Detour this one down to  
isolation. Front of the line.

Officer Phillips escorts Wick out of the room.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D) \*  
Javon, take Tiny down to laundry.

Case shrugs at this lesser rank command and exits with Tiny. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
Les' go biggie.

CALVIN JAMES  
You all right?

Erik touches at his mouth, a quick check, and nods.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
Got a special project for you two.

TRIPP  
Anything but nasty ass laundry.

Erik looks off and shakes his head. Calvin smiles lightly.

109 INT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT - NIGHT

109

Calvin rips through the drawers of his desk looking for \*  
something. The area is a mess. He finds Eriks old essay. "How \*  
To Outshoot Gun Violence With A Three Point Baseline Jumper" \*

ERIK (V.O.)  
Basketball. It's not the worst way  
to do this life. Especially if your  
options are limited... \*

110 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - NEXT DAY 110  
Case, Erik, and Tripp gaze up at the huge barn. \*

TRIPP  
Gotta paint this big ass barn  
ourselves?

CASE RYAN \*

Top to bottom.  
Erik eyes the garage, spits on the ground and walks off.

111 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - LATER 111  
Erik and Tripp climb ladders with paint cans and brushes.

ERIK  
And how much is your bond?

TRIPP  
(stopping his ascent)  
About as high as I am right now  
shit, 150 grand. \*

ERIK  
Only 15 grand to walk.

TRIPP  
God damn debtors prison.

CASE RYAN \*

(from below)  
Another rung and you're there Trip.

TRIPP  
Forget it man, this is cruel AND  
unusual!

Erik descends his ladder and hands his paint brush to Case  
before heading into the supply garage. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Uh...hello?

112 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER 112  
While rummaging, Erik finds a broom stick amidst the junk.

CALVIN JAMES(O.S.)  
Should do the trick.

Erik turns and tosses it to Calvin. Case enters handing Calvin Erik's brush. Calvin screws it on the broomstick. \*

CASE RYAN  
The only way Tripp's getting back on that ladder is at gun point. \*

CALVIN JAMES  
You packin'?

Case lifts an eyebrow and exits. \*

Calvin shadows Erik as he searches for another. Calvin comes across something and stops. It's a rusted out, metal chain backboard, net and rim. \*

Calvin turns to Erik, looks back at the rim confused, but then finds a moment of peace and clarity. He smiles.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
This place. All this rusted out, forgotten history. Reminds me of a nightmare I keep having. Everything starts spinning around faster and faster until it all gets sucked into this swirling, bottomless, black hole and I wake up screaming.

Calvin looks to the ceiling not sure what to say next.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)  
How high would you say that is?

Erik looks to Calvin then up at the ceiling himself.

ERIK  
Thirty feet.

CALVIN JAMES  
I bet it's closer to thirty five.

Erik looks to Calvin then up again. He moves until he's by Coach's side. Both looking up together now. Case enters. \*

CASE RYAN  
Find what you were looking for? \*

CALVIN JAMES  
Maybe. Go tell Van Leer we're gonna need his truck.

CASE RYAN  
(looking up too)  
Should I bother to ask what for? \*

CALVIN JAMES

Later. And take Tripp with you?

CASE RYAN

Done.

Case exits. Calvin and Erik side-by-side still looking up.

CALVIN JAMES

Remember our away games at Peyton?

ERIK

What of em'?

CALVIN JAMES

Low ceiling where baseline jumpers would go to die. But we adapted.

ERIK

Didn't have a choice.

CALVIN JAMES

Exactly. And we beat'em every time.

Erik walks off.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

What happened in the rec room?

ERIK

That's why we're here isn't it?

CALVIN JAMES

Maybe. Maybe not.

ERIK

Don't know what the fuck you takin' about. Better still, don't care.

CALVIN JAMES

What do you care about?

ERIK

That I'm stuck down here in this big ass haunted barn with you which is punishment enough so mind your damn business! I just wanted to get the hell outta there.

CALVIN JAMES

With Tiny on my ass, oh yeah.

Calvin tosses Erik the stick. Erik goes back to rummaging, climbing up and over a maze of junk. Coach tries to follow.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

Where the hell are you...?



ERIK

Come on.

Erik finds open space on the other side, hops down and brushes off. Calvin hops down next to him and does the same.

CALVIN JAMES

How about that Tyrel Haywood.

ERIK

What about him?

CALVIN JAMES

He plays for DePaul now!

ERIK

Good for him.

CALVIN JAMES

He's the same guy I cut back-

ERIK

-Yeah, I know who he is.

CALVIN JAMES

Didn't see that one comin'. Like tossing away a winning lottery ticket.

ERIK

He done all right for himself.

CALVIN JAMES

And you?

Erik throws a punch but Calvin blocks it and restrains him.

ERIK

Need to mind your damn business.

CALVIN JAMES

Turning the rec room into a circus and causing a riot IS my business.

ERIK

I AIN'T so back the fuck off!

Calvin pushes him away. Erik rights himself then spits on the floor in satisfaction and walks off.

113 INT./EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL PARKING LOT COACHS TRUCK- LATER 113

A pulls into the lot in the rearview. Calvin watches Taget exit. Officer Roe approaches and hands him an envelope. Taget bats it away, roughs him up, get in his car and drives off.

114

EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL PRISONER BUS PORT - EARLY MORNING

114

Captain Taget oversees the loading of prisoners onto buses to outlying courthouses. Calvin shadows him.

CALVIN JAMES

Well, the supply garage may take a bit longer than expected.

CAPTAIN TAGET

How long's it take to paint a damn garage?

CALVIN JAMES

The inside could use some work sir.

CAPTAIN TAGET

It's a garage. It's supposed to be an eyesore.(into radio) Still waiting on those numbers Roe.

CALVIN JAMES

Yes but the structural integrity, sir. It could be dangerous.

OFFICER ROE (O.S.)

There's \$7200 from last week and \$14,800 combined over the last...

Taget quickly lowers the volume on the radio.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Sorry, what were we talking about?

CALVIN JAMES

Integrity sir.

CAPTAIN TAGET

(into radio) Go with those numbers again on this mornings bus to court headcount sergeant. Do you copy?

OFFICER ROE (O.S.)

Copy sir. 18 to Felony Court, 37 to Misdemeanor. Buses 1 and 5 depart for Skokie and Maywood at 0700.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Copy that.

Taget eyes Calvin trying to size him up.

CAPTAIN TAGET (CONT'D)

Officer Case Ryan told me you were a basketball coach at one time.

\*

CALVIN JAMES

At one time, yes.

CAPTAIN TAGET  
College ball?

CALVIN JAMES  
No sir. High school.

CAPTAIN TAGET  
I see. Round ball was never really  
my "thing". Too much back n' forth,  
someone winning by a single point  
after all that god damn effort?  
Aggravating.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES  
It can be, yes sir.

\*  
\*

CAPTAIN TAGET  
Right? Right? So I thought why not  
start each team with 100 points,  
first on back to zero wins!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES  
Create a sense of urgency.

\*  
\*

CAPTAIN TAGET  
Exactly! So go ahead and drop  
attention on my garage. Hell,  
safety first around here. And pull  
in a few more inmates if you need  
the hands.

\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES  
Thank you sir, will do.

Calvin walks off but not before looking back oddly at Taget.

115

INT. COOK COUNGTY JAIL GUARDS LOCKER ROOM -LATER

115

At a locker, Case shoves condoms full of dope from his  
pockets into a small gym bag when Calvin enters unexpectedly.

\*

CALVIN JAMES  
I been looking all over for you.

CASE RYAN  
(locking up the locker)  
Hey. What's up?

\*

The padlock falls to the floor. Pause. They both look at it.  
Calvin picks it up and studies it before handing it back.

CALVIN JAMES  
So...what do you know about  
structural engineering?

CASE RYAN

I built a tree fort once as a kid.  
Remember the one you burned down?

\*

Both exiting the locker room.

CALVIN JAMES

Me? You were the pyro, not me! Tell  
Van Leer to meet at the supply  
garage tomorrow first thing and to  
bring his blow torch.

\*

Calvin heads off down a hall.

CASE RYAN

Can I ask what for?

\*

CALVIN JAMES

Nope.

CASE RYAN

We goin' medieval on some poor  
bastard?

\*

CALVIN JAMES

Nope.

116 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 5 ERIK'S CELL - NIGHT 116

Erik is asleep. He begins to stir in a dream.

117 INT. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - 3 YEARS AGO 117

Bird (dead) rolls his head to one side and opens his eyes.

BIRD

What if?

118 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL BASKETBALL YARD - NIGHT 118

Erik stands with his back to the fence. A BALL HITS IT IN  
SLOW MOTION. Erik turns. Victor stands cyanotic on the court.

VICTOR

What if?

Erik awakens in horror as VICTOR and BIRDS VOICES ECHO.

119 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - MORNING 119

Van Leer blow torches chain link fence. Tripp and Goose toss  
it in his truck amidst other junk. Case approaches.

\*

CASE RYAN \*  
How's it coming?

OFFICER VANLEER  
That's the last of it.

CASE RYAN \*  
What do you know, Goose?

GOOSE  
That it's early on a Sunday, n' my  
ass should still be in bed.

Van Leer extinguishes the blow torch and sets it aside.

CASE RYAN \*  
Tell me about it.

GOOSE  
Where we taking this crap anyway?

CASE RYAN \*  
No clue. We're putting it in  
storage as far as I know.

Van Leer gets in the truck. Tripp and Goose hop in the bed.

GOOSE  
Isn't that what it's doing here?

CASE RYAN \*  
Just a lil' spring cleaning Goose.

GOOSE  
But it's November!

The truck drives off as Case waves confused himself. \*

120 EXT. OFFICER JAVON'S HOUSE DRIVEWAY - LATER THAT DAY 120

Case stands reading a letter while Calvin paces with a ball. \*

JAVON JAME \*  
You're kidding me right?

Calvin shakes his head.

CASE RYAN \*  
So this contest thing is for real?

Calvin nods.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
And you mailed this in for one of \*  
these guys?

Calvin nods again and resumes pacing. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
But you can't write. At all! \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
I didn't write it, Dobson did. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
The kid from Harper, your old team? \*

Calvin nods again still pacing. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
And he won?? \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
Yup. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
This is nuts. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
Yup. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
And they get to play DePaul? \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
It's more like a scrimmage, really. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
Of course what was I thinking. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
So are you in or not? \*

CASE RYAN \*  
Am I in? Am I in what? \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
I can't pull this off alone, Case. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
You're can't be serious. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
You read the essay this kid wrote. \*  
Listen to what I'm saying for a god \*  
damn change and do the right thing. \*

Calvin turns and walks off with the ball, done playing games.

CASE RYAN \*  
Okay. Okay...Old school rules. \*

Calvin turns and perks up a little.

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*

You forget how this works? Put it  
in from there and I'm in! Come on,  
let's go, shoot the damn ball  
already before I change my mind.

Calvin gives his brother his game face, prepares and takes a  
shot from 35 feet out. We follow the ball...Swish! \*

121 INT. CALVIN JAMES APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT 121 \*

Calvin takes an old cardboard box out of his closet and sets  
it down on the bed like it's a newborn. He sits and pauses  
before rifling through it. \*

122 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISON 5 ERIKS CELL - MORNING 122

Erik enters and finds the Hawks team photo, his essay and a  
DePaul envelope and winning contest letter on his cot. \*

123 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL TRIPP AND GOOSE'S CELL -LATER 123

Case enters looking over his shoulder as Tripp paces. \*

CASE RYAN \*

All right Tripp here's the deal. We  
need three, maybe four more guys.

TRIPP

So this thing is for real? We're  
playin' the Blue Demons?

CASE RYAN \*

It's more like a scrimmage really.

TRIPP

Good enough f' me.

CASE RYAN \*

Listen they have to be straight. No  
hard-timers, no attitudes, no  
animals. We need team players.

TRIPP

No problem...Wait, what about Erik?

CASE RYAN \*

I don't know. You're in the yard  
today a short time so shop wisely.

TRIPP

I'll have your bad boys by line up.

CASE RYAN

Also team meeting tonight. Four  
guys Tripp. And like yourself,  
nothing but gentlemen.

\*

TRIPP

Nothin' but.

Goose, freshly showered, rounds the corner as if he'd been  
standing there listening the whole time.

CASE RYAN

What do you know Goose?

\*

GOOSE

About as much as the next guy. What  
was all that about a team meeting?

Goose eyes them both back and forth having the upper hand.

124

EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL EXERCISE YARD - MOMENTS LATER

124

Tripp watches Chilly and Theo dominate a game of 2 on 2.

TRIPP

Chilly n' Theo. Like two trigger  
happy, red-neck hunters on Old  
MacDonald's farm. Nothing but game.

Theo burns a man. Aly-Oops to Chilly for a slam dunk.

TRIPP (CONT'D)

Chilly! You and your boy take five.

Chilly looks to Tripp. TWO INMATES sub in as they exit.

LOUDSPREAKER SYSTEM (O.S)

Three minutes to line up.

THEO

Got my money, Triple Play?

TRIPP

That the best you can do Theo?

THEO

Figured it was worth a shot.

TRIPP

Sorry to pull you off your game but  
I'm here on business, ya'll.

CHILLY

If it's shinin' shoes keep walkin'.



TRIPP

No, man. Just hear me out. How'd you two kings of yard ball like to go up against the best?

THEO

How we gonna up n' play ourselves?

Chilly and Theo share a quick hand shake.

LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM (V.O.)

Two minutes to line up.

TRIPP

I have a proposition.

THEO

Gettin' on your knees again Trip n' Fall?

Tripp rushes Theo. They scuffle. A BASKETBALL BEING DRIBBLED. Tripp and Theo glance up as they fight. They stop for a beat.

Erik stops dribbling and rolls the ball toward them. It bounces off their feet. Chilly picks it up and tosses it to Erik as he approaches Tripp and Theo.

ERIK

If you're gonna fight...

Erik separates them with a shove and sets for jump ball.

ERIK (CONT'D)

At least have something to fight for.

Tripp and Theo understand and set. Erik tosses it up. Theo wins the jump ball and tips it to Chilly.

\*

CHILLY

What gives, man?

ERIK

We're gonna scrimmage DePaul.

Tripp fist pumps to himself as Chilly smirks and walks off.

CHILLY

Really? Good luck w' dat.

ERIK

Pre-game. On the floor. In the paint.

LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM (V.O.)

One minute to line up. One minute.

Chilly stops, looks to the loudspeaker then turns and snap passes the ball back to Erik.

CHILLY

You got one minute. Best a' five.

Erik takes out. They play 1 on 1. Erik wins 3-2 with a three point baseline jump shot.

ERIK

We need three more players.

TRIPP

Uh, two actually.

Erik glances to Tripp. Tripp holds up two fingers with a nod.

CHILLY

N' you want Theo n' I for what?

ERIK

A game at Wintrust Arena against DePaul.

TRIPP

It's a scrimmage actually.

CHILLY

So you said.

ERIK

So there it is.

Chilly snap passes the ball to Erik.

CHILLY

So why come to us, man?

ERIK

Thought we'd show up with the best.

Erik snap passes the ball back to Chilly hard.

VOICE (V.O.)

Line up! All inmates line up!

Chilly looks to the loudspeaker then at Erik and smiles. Erik smiles back. They shake hands before heading inside.

CHILLY

Can't wait to hear the jail break plan on this one.

THEO

Dead ass.

CHILLY

Who ya'll got for player number  
five?

\*  
\*

125 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL TRIPP AND GOOSSES CELL - MOMENTS LATER 125 \*

Tiny works a makeshift tattoo gun on Goose's back while AN  
INMATE stands guard at the cell door. A DEPAULS BLUE DEMON  
logo now sits tattooed and impaled on Goose's Matador sword.

\*  
\*  
\*

Tripp, Erik, Chilly and Theo appear at the cell door  
realizing their number five is Goose.

\*  
\*

TINY

Figured you a Celtics fan for sure.

\*

Goose gives them a thumbs up and a big smile.

\*

CHILLY

We're dead meat. (walking off)  
Deeeead meat!

\*  
\*  
\*

126 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS OFFICE - LATER 126

Calvin sit as Officer Roe paces nervously.

CALVIN JAMES

We're talking you, Captain Taget  
and whoever else might be involved  
doing some really hard time Roe!

\*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE

I think I'm gonna be sick.

CALVIN JAMES

All you gotta do is what's right.  
And I'll go so far as to say that  
Taget somehow forced you into it.

\*  
\*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE

There was an incident a few years  
back. A lot of people got hurt. A  
few guards too. Taget said if I  
played along, he'd keep my name out  
of the report to the AJA. So I did.

\*  
\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES

Now's your chance to make things  
right.

\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

It's a handful of minimum security  
inmates put on a bus to court one  
morning, that's it.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
So these inmates don't have court.

\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES  
Right. We bring in a few others we trust, tweak some paperwork...

\*  
\*  
\*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
To Wintrust Arena for a game?

\*  
\*

CALVIN JAMES  
It's a scrimmage actually. And we're back at the courthouse on the four o'clock bus and back here in time for dinner and a movie.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Roe steps away wringing his hands in deep thought and then;

\*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
What do I gotta do?

\*

127 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS OFFICE - EVENING

127 \*

Calvin, Case, Officer Roe, Erik, Tripp, Goose, Chilly and Theo close out the team meeting.

\*

CALVIN JAMES  
So that's it. Any questions?

CHILLY  
Who's all in on this besides us?

CASE RYAN  
Officer Van Leer, a few guards.

\*

GOOSE  
How we supposed to get out of here?

CASE RYAN  
We're working on it. Roe?

\*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
Anyone ever been bused out of here in the morning for a court date?

A few hands go up.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE (CONT'D)  
Okay so on the day of the game all five of you "have" court.

THEO  
And we make a pit stop at Wintrust.

CALVIN JAMES

That's the idea. For now, routine as usual but we spend all the time we can in the supply garage.

GOOSE

Supply garage again? What the hell for?

Calvin smiles lightly.

128 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - FOLLOWING MORNING 128

A makeshift basketball court. A practice is underway with the team and some of Eriks OLD CREW in scrimmage. \*

Goose earns a rebound and slams it with authority.

CALVIN JAMES

Wow. It's Goose, right?

GOOSE

Yes, sir.

CALVIN JAMES

What are you in for, Goose? \*

GOOSE

Tipping a MiniCooper with my bare hands. Driver ran over my foot. \*

Goose intercepts a pass and takes it in for an lay-up. \*

CALVIN JAMES

Your foot's healed nicely.

Calvin blows a WHISTLE.

129 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL BUILDING AND WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS 129

GUARDS escort Wick and INMATES across the grounds. A FAINT WHISTLE. Wick looks to the garage but continues on unfazed. \*

130 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ERIK'S CELL - LATER 130

Erik charcoal sketches on an 8"x11" piece of paper. He finishes, tapes it on the wall and steps out of frame.

The sketch is a CHAIN LINK FENCE with Darkness on one side and the Light on the other.

131 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL YARD ARMED GUARD TOWER- FOLLOWING DAY 131

Calvin sips a coffee watching the yard below. A Guard with a rifle walks by. Officer Roe approaches.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
Everything where it should be?

CALVIN JAMES  
All set.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
Bus-to-Court Transportation forms?

CALVIN JAMES  
Filled out in triplicate.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
Transportation from the Maywood  
court house to Wintrust Arena?

\*

CALVIN JAMES  
Van Leers truck.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
Time frame?

CALVIN JAMES  
Bus drops off at eight for nine  
o'clock court. Scrimmage at 11:30.  
Out of there by one at the latest.  
Plenty of time to get to Maywood  
for the 4 o'clock bus back here in  
time for dinner.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
Dinner AND a movie.

CALVIN JAMES  
What's playing?

CORRECTIONS OFFICER ROE  
(walking away)  
White Men Can't Jump.

CALVIN JAMES  
One of my favorites.

132 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL FENCED SOLITARY AREA - LATER

132

Wick wanders along the fence. Officer Phillips approaches.

OFFICER PHILLIPS  
Times up, lets go, back inside.

Wick turns to leave.

133 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - CONTINUOUS 133

Van Leers truck pulls up. He exits, pulls a bag of balls from the cab setting off his HORN.

Wick looks over his shoulder as he heads inside. \*

A ball bounces off. Van Leer goes after it with a cardboard box and bag of balls in tow. \*

VAN LEER

Damn it.

Wick watches as the ball roll and hit the garage. Van Leers grabs it and opens the door revealing Erik and OTHERS and a basketball hoop/court before the door closes. \*

Wick stops and does a double take, confused. \*

OFFICER PHILLIPS

Let's go Wick, back inside, move. \*

Wick continues on looking over his shoulder as he goes. \*

134 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL SUPPLY GARAGE - LATER 134 \*

The last practice is over. Guards exit as Van Leer enters with the box Calvin removed from his closet. \*

CALVIN JAMES

All right, huddle up.

Everyone gathers around. Pause.

CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

I know it's been one big pipe dream from day one and out there in the real world things like this don't ordinarily happen. But in here we don't live by ordinary. We live and breathe by a different code. When something out of the ordinary presents itself, we grab onto it without hesitation. We grab on and hold tight because we don't have the luxury of taking it for granted and letting go like they do out there on the other side of the fence. So gentlemen in less than 24 hours something out of the ordinary is going to happen. And we're not going to let it get away. And it's going to be as real as anything you could possibly imagine. And when the day is done you'll be back here for however long and for whatever reason. \*

(MORE)

## CALVIN JAMES (CONT'D)

But what I ask of you now is to  
 dream on it tonight. Dream on  
 tomorrow. Wake up, live it and  
 remember how it felt. Remember how  
 it felt and tell yourself I can  
 feel this way again. I can feel  
 this good again. And by God go back  
 out into that ordinary world one  
 day and feel good about it. Feel  
 good about yourselves. Because in  
 my book...you're already there.

\*  
 \*  
 \*

Erik starts to CLAP. The others JOIN IN. IT BUILDS!

Calvin pulls out a jersey and tosses it to Erik. Hawks jersey  
 #8, Bird's. Erik tosses it to Tripp.

ERIK

You just earned your wings.

TRIPP

Go Hawks.

Erik pulls #22 out, Thomas's and tosses it to Goose.

ERIK

Don't tread lightly in that.

GOOSE

Not a chance.

Erik pulls #4, Nate's and tosses it to Chilly.

ERIK

Back up Goose in that if need be.

CHILLY

I'm on it.

Erik pulls #32, JT's and tosses it to Theo.

ERIK

Always the clown.

THEO

Always.

Erik pulls out his jersey, #11, and looks to Calvin.

Calvin nods and smiles lightly.

Erik pulls out Victors #2 jersey and tosses it to Calvin.

Erik puts his hand out. Tripp puts his in followed by Chilly,  
 Theo, Goose, Calvin and Case. All hands in the middle.

\*

ALL

Hawks, Hawks, Hawks, Hawks, Hawks!



135 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CAPTAIN TAGETS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 135  
Captain Taget is at his desk cleaning a weapon. A KNOCK.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Come.

Officer Phillips enters with Wick.

CAPTAIN TAGET (CONT'D)

That inmate is facing aggravated battery charges on a corrections officer and should be in isolation.

OFFICER PHILLIPS

Yes sir but he has information he says we might be interested in.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Is that a fact?

Wick smirks. Officer Phillips closes the door.

136 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL OUTSIDE CAPTAIN TAGETS OFFICE - LATER 136  
S.O.R.T GUARDS and CAPTAIN TAGET exit in formation.

137 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 5 CELLBLOCK -MOMENTS LATER 137  
They ascend a stairway. INMATES YELLING. It BUILDS.

138 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL DIVISION 5 CELLS -MOMENTS LATER 138  
GUARDS RUSH INTO Tripp, Goose, Chilly, Theo and Erik's three cells and restrain them.

139 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS OFFICE - LATER 139  
Calvin shoves EVERYTHING OFF the desk. Case catches the Harper High mug before it hits the floor. Long Pause. \*

CASE RYAN \*

You know, the worst thing a leader can do is show fear. \*

CALVIN JAMES

What?? \*

CASE RYAN \*

Heard it on the History Channel. You know how to lead, Cal. Leading is not your problem.

Case hands him the coffee mug. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D) \*  
 Fear of failure. Its a god damn  
 beast. Keeps us from doing the one  
 thing that HAS to happen...Follow  
 through.

CALVIN JAMES \*  
 Follow through...

CASE RYAN \*  
 All the way.

CALVIN JAMES \*  
 No fear...

CASE RYAN \*  
 None whatsoever. Well maybe a  
 little.

CALVIN JAMES \*  
 You're more full of shit than I am.

Calvin opens a locker and begins changing. Case too. \*

CASE RYAN \*  
 So what secret play you gonna pull  
 out your ass this time bro?

CALVIN JAMES \*  
 I'll let you know as soon as I do.

CASE RYAN \*  
 We might be unemployed soon.

CALVIN JAMES \*  
 What happened to the pep talk?

CASE RYAN \*  
 Might even wind up in here but  
 without the cool uniforms. \*

CALVIN JAMES \*  
 One basket at a time lil' brother.  
 One basket at a time.

140 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ISOLATION CELLS - CONTINUOUS 140

Erik sit in a cell adjacent to Wicks. Wick paces. \*

WICK \*  
 (stopping at the door) \*  
 Hey! Where'n the fuck are my damn \*  
 pills!? Hey! You hear me!? Hey! \*

ERIK \*  
 Wick. \*

WICK

Mind your damn business!

Erik concedes. Wick resumes pacing. \*

WICK (CONT'D)

Pills ain't f'gettin' high. Bet yo' ass wish'n they was though huh droopy? \*

ERIK

I'm off that shit man.

WICK

Whateva' you say. Keep my ass from seizn' is all. \*

ERIK

From what? \*

WICK

Member' grammar school superstar? Course you do. Your bro was in my class. Them pills I take now, same pills got me tagged a freak back in muthafuckin' 5th grade. Once that cat was outtha' bag, shoot...They muthafuckin' loss cuz I wuz n' still am th'best muthafuckin' player on the floor. \*

ERIK

Best three point shot I ever saw.

WICK

Ever will see muthafucka! It was your brother. Victorious Dobson. He made it stick. Names like Epilepsy Leper, Shakes The Clown. Muthafucka was spose' to have my back not stick a knife in it. Think I'm bad or hard now? Back then I jus' wanted to play ball. Fit in. But Victor wouldn't let it go. \*

ERIK

I don't know what to say, man.

WICK

Shit kids say n' do to one another...frightens me. \*

ERIK

N' now?

WICK

I'm still the same damn kid. Scared of m' own damn shadow n' angry as fuck f'not knowing why.

ERIK

You gotta move through that shadow Wick. Not over it. Not under it. Not around it. Right the fuck through it.

WICK

(wiping away a tear)  
I think you jus' may be my new go-to guy Dobson...shoot.

Erik smiles lightly.

WICK (CONT'D)

N' f'my own piece a' mind, n'jus' so y'know, I didn't kill your brother. Was the Shadows that got him...

\*  
\*  
\*

Wick steps back from the light and into the shadows.

\*

WICK (CONT'D)

...jus' so you know.

141 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL CAPTAIN TAGETS OFFICE -MOMENTS LATER 141

Captain Taget exits his office and locks the door. He turns.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Officer James.

COACH JAMES

Coach, actually.

Coach steps into the light. Captain Taget brandishes an assault rifle. Coach is eating sunflower seeds.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

What's with the heavy artillery?

CAPTAIN TAGET

We're in the middle of an escape attempt, James. It's procedure.

COACH JAMES

No one tried to escape, Taget.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Talked to Officer Roe. He was in quite a panic. Something about blackmail and a basketball game?

COACH JAMES

It's a scrimmage actually.

CAPTAIN TAGET

You're in a heap of trouble. Your brother too.

COACH JAMES

Leave him out of this.

CAPTAIN TAGET

You know I can't do that.

COACH JAMES

It was my idea. I talked him into it. You know how big brothers are.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Sorry. No can do.

COACH JAMES

I think you can.

Captain Taget takes a few steps towards Coach.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

And if you choose to bring charges against us or any of my team you'll soon find yourself in even deeper shit than we are.

CAPTAIN TAGET

Are you threatening me?

COACH JAMES

No. I'm just letting you know the situation.

Captain Taget re-adjusts his grip on his rifle.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

I know all about your little in-house narcotics ring Captain.

CAPTAIN TAGET

I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

COACH JAMES

I have video of your crack guards in action, including yourself.

CAPTAIN TAGET

That was your first mistake.

He aims the rifle at Coach and unlocks the safety.

CAPTAIN TAGET (CONT'D)  
What's to keep me from dropping you  
right here? \*

Case appears from the shadows, weapon drawn. \*

CASE RYAN  
A 9mm round to the head. Your call. \*

Case grabs Captain Tagets rifle and tosses it to Coach while  
keeping his sidearm trained on him. \*

CAPTAIN TAGET  
What the fuck are you doing? \*

CASE RYAN  
Shut up! \*

CAPTAIN TAGET  
You should be pointing that at... \*

Case puts the gun to Tagets forehead as if to shoot. \*

CASE RYAN  
I said, SHUT THE FUCK UP!! \*

Everyone freezes. \*

CALVIN JAMES  
Case... \*

CASE RYAN  
...I got this bro. \*

Captain Taget doesn't back down. He steps closer to Case. \*

CASE RYAN (CONT'D)  
I'd think twice if... \*

Captain Taget backhands Case across the face. Coach waits for  
the gun shot. \*

CAPTAIN TAGET  
You outta' your fuckin' mind, son?? \*

Case recovers and backhands Taget. Taget, dumbfounded,  
recovers. Case retracts his weapon and cocks the hammer back. \*

CASE RYAN  
I guess maybe I am. \*

CAPTAIN TAGET  
What the hell is this? \*

COACH JAMES  
The way I look at it you can work  
with or against us.  
(MORE)

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

It can be a win-win or lose-lose  
and I've always thought winning was  
a lot more fun.

CAPTAIN TAGET

What the hell do you want? \*

COACH JAMES

You're going to bond my team out  
tonight with your dirty drug money.  
We got somewhere to be tomorrow.

CAPTAIN TAGET

And what was...discussed here?

COACH JAMES

Close up shop and give some of the  
guys in here a chance at something  
more than your greed. Give my guys  
the shot they deserve. Do that and  
you have my word.

CAPTAIN TAGET

I see you're a man of principle.

COACH JAMES

No. I'm just tired of losing.

Coach turns away touching at the whistle around his neck.

CAPTAIN TAGET

One more thing, Officer James. Good  
luck...You're gonna need it.

Coach ejects a round from the gun, pulls the clip and hands  
it to Taget before punching him, sending him to the floor.

COACH JAMES

That's COACH JAMES you asshole.

142

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

142

Van Leer paces. Case sticks his head in the door. \*

CASE RYAN \*

Meet at the supply garage in ten.

OFFICER VANLEER

Wait, what happened with Taget? \*

CASE RYAN \*

Make it five or I'll sick Rufus on  
you.

Case smiles then races off down the hall. \*

143

EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL BUS PORT - LATER 6AM

143

INMATES board a bus. The team stands by Officer Van Leer. \*

COACH JAMES

(pacing) \*

Where the hell is Phillips with  
those bond receipts? \*

CASE RYAN \*

Relax, he's working on it. \*

Coach notices Case tending to his bruised cheek. \*

COACH JAMES

What's going on Case? \*

CASE RYAN \*

With what? \*

COACH JAMES

Tell me you're not involved. \*

CASE RYAN \*

With what, with Taget? \*

COACH JAMES

Come on man. \*

CASE RYAN \*

I swear to god!

COACH JAMES

Take it back! It's a fucking lie!

CASE RYAN \*

Calvin, wait... \*

COACH JAMES

I've never, NEVER, known you to not  
hit a man who had it coming! \*

CASE RYAN \*

Cal, I can explain that. I can-

Coach steps up to Case in a fury. \*

COACH JAMES

-No! It's my turn to explain a few  
things to you! Thanks to your dirty  
god damn drug money these five guys  
are bonding out. In about five  
minutes I'm going to give em' the  
option to walk right the fuck out  
of here and past that fence because  
it's the right thing to do. As free  
men, they have that choice. What I  
don't have is confirmation. \*

(MORE)



COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

So what you need to do right  
fucking now is go inside and verify  
that for me! NOW! You hear me?  
Brother?

\*  
\*

CASE RYAN

Cal...

\*

COACH JAMES

DO YOU FUCKING HEAR ME?!

Case is speechless. After a beat he surrenders and leaves.

\*

144 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL BOND OFFICE COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER 144

Case, hurriedly approaching Officer Phillips.

\*

CASE RYAN

Phillips I need immediate  
confirmation and bond receipts on  
the following...

\*

\*

OFFICER PHILLIPS

I know, I know, I'm working on it.

CASE RYAN

Dobson, Erik. Makepeace, Tripp.  
McGee, Chilly. Banks, Theodore.  
McCoy, Goose.

\*

\*

Case paces nervously. He notices the sun coming up over the  
horizon. It begins to brighten the room. It draws him toward  
a window where he stops, taking it all in. He notices the sun  
glimmering off his lapel badge in his reflection. After a  
beat he backs up confused and frightened. He looks off to the  
sun again before a clarity comes over him. He slowly removes  
his badge and places it on the counter before walking off.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

Phillips springs up from behind the counter receipts in hand.

\*

OFFICER PHILLIPS

I got em', I got em', I...

\*

\*

He looks around not seeing Case and exits with he receipts.

\*

145 EXT. COOK COUNTY INMATE TRANSPORT BUS AREA - MOMENTS LATER 145

The doors to the transport bus close shut. The bus pulls  
away. The team looks to Coach and one another confused.

\*

\*

Coach grabs the receipts from an approaching Phillips.

\*

COACH JAMES

Thanks brother.

\*

\*

OFFICER PHILLIPS \*  
 (heading inside but \*  
 turning with a smile) \*  
 Anytime Coach. \*

COACH JAMES \*  
 (turning, facing his team) \*  
 These five bond receipts say every \*  
 one of you can walk through and \*  
 past that chain link fence. Right \*  
 here, right now. No looking back. \*  
 Showing up for your next court date \*  
 listed on these receipts is on you. \*  
 But for now you are no longer in \*  
 the custody of the Cook County Jail \*  
 so whatever decision you make is \*  
 fine by me. But you make it now.

Everyone waits for the others to decide. \*

ERIK \*  
 Can I make a suggestion? \*

146 INT. CHICAGO SOUTH SIDE FREE CLINIC HALLWAY - LATER 146 \*  
 Tripp stands by a wall. A DOCTOR passes by him.

TRIPP  
 Yo D.

The Doctor stops and turns. It's Tripp's brother DARRYL. The  
 look on his face tells us they're close.

DARRYL  
 Tripp?

Tripp nods. A long overdue brotherly embrace ensues.

147 EXT. CHICAGO BREWER HOUSE CHILDRENS GROUP HOME - LATER 147

Theo and Vicky Crocket, supervisor, sit on the front steps. \*  
 CHILDREN, all wards of the state, play about. \*

VICKY CROCKET \*  
 Sounds like you still got some \*  
 changes to make, Theo. \*

Theo looks to a BOY standing alone, scared. His eyes tear up. \*

VICKY CROCKET (CONT'D) \*  
 Only you gonna know when you're \*  
 tired of being tired son... \*

Vicky pats him on the leg and walks down the steps \*  
 approaching Erik. \*

VICKY CROCKET (CONT'D) \*  
 I was sorry to hear about your \*  
 brother Victor. He was always one \*  
 of my favorites. \*

She smiles lightly and puts a hand to his face. \*

ERIK \*  
 Mine too. \*

VICKY CROCKET \*  
 You seem...good. \*

Erik nods in confirmation as Vicky smiles again and turns. \*

Coach stands by the truck waiting for her approach. \*

VICKY CROCKET (CONT'D) \*  
 (walking toward him) \*  
 Should I even bother to ask Calvin? \*

Calvin drops his line of sight to the ground for a beat as a \*  
 smile overtakes him and then looks right at her with a look \*  
 like he's never felt better. \*

VICKY CROCKET (CONT'D) \*  
 That's what I thought, come here! \*

They embrace! \*

148 INT./EXT. VANLEER'S TRUCK CHICAGO PLAYGROUND - LATER 148

Chilly looks to A WOMAN w/ a TODDLER GIRL on a swing.

CHILLY \*  
 That's her. That's my little girl. \*

The woman pulls AN INFANT from an unseen stroller. The boy \*  
 looks at Chilly and smiles. The resemblance is there. \*

Chilly can't believe his eyes.

COACH JAMES \*  
 Something to shoot for. \*

Chilly nods, hiding a tear or two.

The woman turns and looks as the truck DRIVES OFF.

149 INT. VAN LEERS TRUCK FAST FOOD DRIVE THRU - LATER 149

Coach leans out the window and talks into a speaker.

COACH JAMES \*  
 That's six Deep South combos. \*

GOOSE

Seven.

COACH JAMES

Seven Deep South combos...

150 INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL GUARDS LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS 150

Javon closes his locker and begins to exit the room in street clothes. He stops at a window. Early morning sunlight. A moment of clarity. \*

CASE RYAN \*

This darkness? It's got to give... \*

With a relaxed smile he places something down and exits. \*

His badge is left on the sill bathing in the morning light. \*

151 EXT. MOUNT CARMEL CEMETARY VICTOR'S HEADSTONE - LATER 151

Erik and Coach stand in silence. Erik lets the sun beat down upon his face.

ERIK

Thank you.

COACH JAMES

For what?

ERIK

...helpin' light up the darkness. \*

Erik finally breaks down sobbing. Coach is there for him. \*

COACH JAMES

It's had it's time son...It's had it's time. \*

We follow Van Leers truck as it passes the HEADSTONES of Bird, Nate, JT and Thomas. A HAWK RISES UP and FLYS OFF. \*

152 INT. HARPER HIGHSCHOOL HALL OUTSIDE L'DORAS OFFICE -LATER 152

Coach peers in seeing L'Dora at her desk. He pulls away with a gasp and hesitates. A PASSING TEACHER recognizes him.

PASSING TEACHER

Coach James! Good to have you back.

COACH JAMES

I'm uh...not really back.

PASSING TEACHER

Go Hawks!

COACH JAMES

...go Hawks...

Coach slides the letter under her door and creeps off.

CUT TO:

153 EXT. WINTRUST ARENA PARKING LOT - ESTABLISHING 153  
VENDORS CALL OUT goods. SPECTATORS mill about.

154 INT. HARPER HIGH SCHOOL L'DORAS OFFICE DOOR - LATER 154  
L'Dora, at her desk, unfolds the note and reads. \*

COACH JAMES (V.O.)

L'Dora, it's been a long time and I just want to say that you were right. About a lot of things. I have a problem. A few actually. And I lied about the night that ended my career. A fight didn't break out at a bar. I never held a gun before, decided I was man enough to get one and accidentally shot myself in the leg ten minutes after it was out of the box. End of story. But things are looking up now and I want to make it up to you. I left two tickets at will-call for today's DePaul game. I know it's short notice but trust me, you're gonna want to be there early for pre-game. It should be one hell of a show. Calvin.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

L'DORA LOMAX

P.S. No, they're NOT playing the Milwaukee Bucks today. Ha ha ha.

\*

155 INT./EXT. VAN LEERS TRUCK WINTRUST ARENA GATE -CONTINUOUS 155  
Coach pulls up to a GUARD and stops. A nervous tension fills the truck. Erik looks about hoping to see someone else. \*

COACH JAMES

Easy guys. We're almost in.

GUARD

Your business here today, sir?

COACH JAMES

(handing him paperwork)  
We're here to scrimmage DePaul. We won the contest. We're the uh...

GUARD

Can I see some identification?

COACH JAMES

Sure. Is there a problem...officer?

GUARD

Not if everyone's got proper ID.

The team freezes up. Coach slowly hands him his ID.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Everyone's identification, please.

A pair of shiny black shoes approaches.

MAN IN UNIFORM (O.C.)

I'll take it from here officer.

GUARD

I was checking for proper identi-

MAN IN UNIFORM (O.C.)

-I said I'll take it from here.

GUARD

Yes, sir.

The Guard hands Coach's paperwork to the man and exits.

MAN IN UNIFORM (O.C.)

Coach James.

COACH JAMES

(looking up)

Ray Dobson.

Coach and Ray shake hands. Erik exits the truck and hugs Ray.

ERIK

I knew you'd be here!

RAY

Get goin' son. No use drawin'  
attention to a situation already  
chalk full of it.

Erik wipes away a tear and gets back in the truck.

RAY (CONT'D)

(handing paperwork back)

Been waitin' a long time for this  
game, Coach.

COACH JAMES

Me too, Ray. Me too.

\*

RAY

Had a feelin' you were gonna say  
that.

Ray smiles, raises the gate and waves them through.

156 INT. WINTRUST ARENA SERVICE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 156

Coach and the team walk down a long service hallway. \*

COACH JAMES

Imagine all the talent that's  
walked this hall.

Tripp stops at a door that reads CHEERLEADER LOCKER ROOM.

TRIPP

I'm imagining all the talent on the  
other side of this door.

157 INT. WINTRUST ARENA HALLWAY OUTSIDE LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS 157

A TALL MAN with a gym bag stops at the DePaul locker room  
door. He's Tryout #2, TYREL HAYWOOD, 20, now a Blue Demon.

ERIK

You with the Blue Demons, man?

He waves a key pass card. Erik realizes he's Tryout #2 from  
Harper High who schooled him over a year ago at tryouts.

TYREL HAYWOOD

You must be one of the winners.

ERIK

Not yet.

TYREL HAYWOOD

I meant the contest.

ERIK

I know. And like I said...not yet.

TYREL HAYWOOD

A winning attitude around here for  
a change.

ERIK

Better tuck that smile away.

TYREL HAYWOOD

Yeah? And why's that?

ERIK

Because I never forget a face.

Tyrel exits the hall with an odd look and smile.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Shit gives you away every time!

Erik moves past Coach and into the locker room.

158

INT. WINTRUST ARENA VISITING TEAM LOCKER ROOM - LATER

158

Coach and the team, in Hawks jerseys, gather at a chalkboard.  
A CONCIERGE sticks his head in the door. THE CROWD RISES.

CONCIERGE  
They're ready for you guys.

COACH JAMES  
Thanks.

The Concierge exits. Coach paces in silent contemplation. He stops and removes a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
I want to read part of something to  
you guys so please, bare with me. \*  
It's what got us here. Basketball.  
It's not the worst way to do this  
life especially if your options are \*  
limited. Balance, communication,  
and harmony are your targets.  
Motivation, dedication, teamwork  
and skill, your weapons. If we take  
that with us off the court, outside \*  
the game, we can't miss. That's how  
to roll and survive both inside and  
outside the paint. Only difference  
out there is there isn't always a  
ball in play. So pretend like there  
is. Just like when you were a kid.  
That imaginary shot clock chasing  
that game ending buzzer and every  
kid trying to make that game  
winning shot. We need to find that  
kid again. Find that dream and keep  
taking that shot. I felt and saw  
miracles when that kid was around  
but without him, kids dying before  
their time. Basketball? It's not a  
bad way to do this life.

The CROWD SWELLS as the Blue Demons ENTER AND TAKE THE FLOOR.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
Let's roll.

Everyone moves to leave.



ERIK

Hey, Coach.

**Erik tosses Coach the whistle he left him at the hospital.** \*

ERIK (CONT'D)

Thought you might be needin' that.

Coach gives his whistle a kind, long look and puts it on.

COACH JAMES

Like you wouldn't believe.

TRIPP

So let that thing fly already!

Coach looks to his players then BLOWS HIS WHISTLE hard.

Everyone EXPLODES in celebration and exits out of the room and down the hall. Erik and Coach stop in the doorway.

COACH JAMES

You okay?

ERIK

Yeah. No. I don't know.

COACH JAMES

Just like old times, huh?

Erik looks down the hall. A SWELLING CROWD. He can barely contain the overwhelming joy and relief.

ERIK

We all gotta take our shot, right?

COACH JAMES

Damn right, son. Damn right.

The CROWD CHANTS HAWKS. Erik takes a deep breath and exhales. He looks down the hall. A certain peace has washed over him.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

(hiding a tear)

Picked a fine time to go soft, huh?

ERIK

Better here than out on the floor.

COACH JAMES

Yeah. Maybe you're right.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

Come on Sundance. We can both cry on the way out maybe go over a few plays.

ERIK

Good idea, Coach.

COACH JAMES

You think?

ERIK

Oh yeah.

COACH JAMES

And why's that?

ERIK

Because I think better when I move.

COACH JAMES

That's funny...so do I.

Coach and Erik start walking down the hall toward the light. The joy on their faces is irreplaceable like kids chasing impossible dreams of long ago about to be realized.

The CROWD SWELLS CHEERING Hawks Hawks Hawks.

Coach and Erik enter the arena. They stop and take it all in. The gleam of the newly polished floor. Immaculate.

Erik walks on court and heads to the key. Coach reluctantly follows. Erik stands in the paint and turns as Coach nears.

ERIK

(smiling wide)

Back in the paint.

COACH JAMES

Feels good huh? Come on.

Coach and Erik head to the bench as a LASER SHOW begins.

AN ANNOUNCER introduces the days events.

Coach and Erik head to mid-court meeting 3 REFS and 2 Blue Demons. They go over the rules of the scrimmage and depart.

159

INT. WINTRUST ARENA VISITORS BENCH - MOMENTS LATER

159

With everyone gathered around, Coach takes a knee.

COACH JAMES

Okay five transitions on offense  
three on D. And watch my signals.

Erik has something to say.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

What? What is it?

ERIK

We all came here to make something happen. We all got dealt this hand, moved with it and here we are. But out on that floor, in the paint, this time, this game, it's not about us. It never was. Everything I do, everything we do as a team is for my brother Victor and four guys I knew and all the guys who still have a chance to look down at the hand they've been dealt and make the right call. It's about turning a what if into a what is. Turning a dream to reality. And ain't nothin' gonna change that. Ever.

Erik puts his hand out. Everyone drops a hand in.

EVERYONE

Flyin' by, scorin' high GO HAWKS!

The teams take the floor. Erik and Tyrel set for tip off. HORN. Erik doesn't jump, reads the angle and intercepts it.

Erik sets a give and go with Tripp and hits a three pointer.

After a few transitions it's clear The Hawks are outmatched.

Taking the ball up court, Erik slows as a FAN calls out.

FAN

Hey #11! What if you loose?!

Erik lets this sink in and morphs into the player he could have been. He moves with skill and poise. His team follows suit laying it all out on the line with nothing to lose.

Surprise and disbelief on the faces of the Blue Demons, coaching staff and CROWD. Something amazing is unfolding.

DEPAUL PLAYER #1

This ain't no high school team.

TYREL HAYWOOD

Shit. Haven't seen street ball like this since back in the day.

DEPAUL PLAYER #1

Prison yard rules?

TYREL HAYWOOD

Old school rules baby...

Play resumes. The Hawks go toe-to-toe with DePaul and hold their own. Every shot Erik takes goes in.

Driving the lane, Erik is fouled by Tyrel. He sets at the foul line. He readies to shoot underhand and looks to Coach. Coach gives him a look like a proud Father might to his son. Erik smiles at him and confidently shoots the ball normally. Swish! Erik back peddles on defense, glowing.

160

EXT. WINTRUST ARENA CHICAGO OUTSIDE GATE 3 - LATER

160

The same NEWSCASTER from the night of the Hawks team tragedy reports as A CROWD, some Hawks fans, gathers around her.

## NEWSCASTER

Good afternoon. I'm Nancy McGee with Chanel 7 News here at Wintrust Arena where the DePaul Blue Demons are about to take on UIC. But the big story today Brad was the pre-game scrimmage where five Stop The Gun Violence essay contest winners calling themselves the Hawks weren't taking no for an answer. And it's just been confirmed that this team who were thought to be from William Harper High School were all current detainees at the Cook County Jail less than twenty four hours ago. Wow...And What started out as a friendly, charity sponsored, slice of entertainment quickly turned into an all out, do or die, battle. After being denied access to the DePaul players and with a limited response from their coaching staff, todays incredible win by this mystery team, regardless of who they were, was all too real. I'm sure by the end of what's turned out to be quite a day for these five young men who beat DePaul in a pre-game scrimmage, that the real story will eventually come out. I'm Nancy McGee with Chanel 7 News live at Wintrust Arena.

161

INT. WINTRUST ARENA PARKING LOT VAN LEERS TRUCK- CONTINUOUS 161 \*

Coach and his team get in the truck. \*

L'DORA (O.C.) \*

Calvin. \*

Coach, halfway in the truck, looks up. His jaw drops. \*

\*

COACH JAMES

Hey.

L'DORA

(standing across the hood)  
Hey yourself.

COACH JAMES

You came.

L'DORA

I came. And that was...amazing!

COACH JAMES

Thanks.

L'DORA

How are you?

COACH JAMES

...Exhausted.

L'DORA

It suits you.

COACH JAMES

How are you?

L'Dora moves around the truck toward him. **She's 8 month pregnant.** Coach takes it in and accepts it with a smile.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)

...congratulations.

L'DORA

Thanks. One more month to go! Can't come soon enough.

COACH JAMES

It...really suits you.

L'Dora pauses then steps up and kisses him on the cheek.

L'DORA

Thank you. Take care of yourself  
Calvin James.

COACH JAMES

You too.

She smiles and heads off. Coach watches her go.

162

INT. VAN LEERS TRUCK CHICAGO - MOMENTS LATER

162

Coach and his team ride in silence. A look of contained euphoria surrounds and envelops their entire being.

163 EXT. COOK COUNTY JAIL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING STAIRS-LATER 163

Erik sits on the top rung lacing his shoes. A property bag with personal effects sits nearby. Coach walks up and sits.

COACH JAMES  
 Sorry to drag you back here.  
 Usually people bond out, head for  
 the door n' don't look back.

ERIK  
 The circumstances were...unique.

COACH JAMES  
 They were weren't they? When's your  
 next court date?

ERIK  
 Couple a weeks.

COACH JAMES  
 Good idea to show up. And if you  
 can't be on time...

ERIK/COACH JAMES  
 Be early, right.

COACH JAMES  
 Gonna tell me what Depaul's coach  
 Leitao said to you after the game?

ERIK  
 You mean scrimmage.

COACH JAMES  
 Wise ass.

ERIK  
 He said he's never seen such an  
 unorthodox yet effective baseline  
 jump shot and...he remembered me.

COACH JAMES  
 And..?

ERIK  
 And I got a full ride starting in  
 the Fall. Fine Arts Major.

Coach lets this sink in for a beat.

COACH JAMES  
 (aside)  
 Son of a...

\*  
 \*  
 \*

ERIK  
 Can I borrow \$120 for the GED test?

COACH JAMES  
Absa-fuckin'-lutely.

Coach and Erik share a moment before heading down the stairs.

COACH JAMES (CONT'D)  
You did good today, you know that?

ERIK  
Thanks, Coach. You too.

Reaching the sidewalk.

ERIK (CONT'D)  
Don't be a stranger, huh?

COACH JAMES  
Looks like someone beat me to it. \*

Coach motions across the street. Erik follows his line of sight to Ray waiting at a car. Erik smiles and turns.

Coach is already walking off. Erik crosses the street.

FADE TO BLACK: