

Gangsta

"Another Day in Watts"

an original TV pilot by
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GANGSTA

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. ESTABLISHING SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES - EVENING

Graffiti notifies the passerby of the gang's territory.

RAP MUSIC plays.

Mom and Pop liquor and grocery stores intermingle with fast food joints, empty lots, abandoned buildings, boarded up windows and cracked glass. The streets are littered.

A young African American boy, 13, LEMONT NATHAN (LIL'L) stands in front of a pawn shop, transfixed by the TV as he watches a beautiful mustang run into frame. Slight, but muscular, he's used to defending himself on the streets. His face is filled with dreams, sadness, wishfulness.

MR. HO, the store owner, comes to the front of the shop and raps on the window. He raps on the window and motions Lemont away.

Lemont's face hardens with his street mask as he gives the Asian his mad dog look.

Mr. Ho waves his fist at the boy and Lemont continues to glare.

SIRENS serenade the streets. Lemont looks around.

A group of kids, wearing gang attire, hang out around an old Mercury convertible that has clearly seen better days.

Lemont quickly walks in the other direction.

Down the street, an elderly woman rocks on her porch, watching the neighborhood.

A police car drives by on patrol.

INT. NATHAN APARTMENT - EVENING

Lemont undoes the multiple locks on the door and enters.

LI'L L

Moms!

RAWSHAN NATHAN, 8, slim like his brother, runs to the older boy and hugs him. There's admiration in his eyes.

RAWSHAWN

You bangin?

From the oversized and well worn chair, his usual place, the voice of NORM JENKINS (late 30s) booms out as he cheers for his team on the TV football game. Empty beer bottles and a bag of spicy pork rinds litter the side of his chair. Norm is EDNA NATHAN's common law husband.

Edna Nathan (mid 30s), a haggard looking, once attractive woman, steps out from the small kitchen. She wipes her hands on a worn apron.

EDNA

Lemont? Where you been?

NORM (O.S.)

Shut the fuck up, Niggas. I can't hear my fuckin game.

Norm ups the SOUND OF THE GAME coming from the small TV set atop the non working floor model.

LI'L L

Fuck your fuckin game!

NORM

Shut yer mouth boy or I'll shut it for you.

He ups the sound again.

LI'L L

Why don't you --

EDNA

Lemont!

Norm looks around the torn tufts of the chair and stares Lemont down. Greasy dreadlocks drip down the side of Norm's face. Norm's stubbled face is scarred and pock marked making him look all the meaner.

Lemont matches with his mad dog stare.

NORM

Woman, get that shit faced nigga outa my sight.

EDNA

Normie --

Norm rises from the chair to his full height of six feet, two hundred and thirty pounds. He takes two steps over to Edna.

NORM

Don't give me lip, Bitch. Both ya
get the fuck outa my sight.

RAWSHAWN

You shut up to my mama.

Rawshawn, barely coming up to Norm's waist, runs up to his
step father. He begins beating on the man's leg to no avail.

Norm, laughing, catches the boy's hands in his and roughly
tosses him away.

Lemont catches his brother before he falls.

Rawshawn then cowers behind his brother as Norm turns and
gives his own mad dog stare.

Edna starts to walk between them in an effort to shield her
sons.

Norm grabs Edna's upper arm and clamps down hard.

EDNA

Ow!

NORM

I can't fuckin' believe you're still
here, Bitch.

Li'L pulls a small pistol from his waist band.

LI'L L

Leave Mama alone! I want you outa
my fuckin house.

Norm turns to glare.

NORM

You think you're a fuckin big shot
nigga with a gun?

She tries to move away and Norm yanks her back closer to
him, almost like a shield. Her eyes plead with her son to
stop this.

LI'L L

You ain't gonna fuck her up again.

Norm moves his hand to the back of her neck, pinching ever
so slightly.

NORM

Tell'm, Bitch. You do what I say.

LI'L L

This ain't your house. You sittin' all day wit yer thumb up yer asshole drinkin and messin with Mama. Get the fuck out or I'm gonna mess with you.

NORM

Bitch!

EDNA

Lemont, let it go honey. Go out with your friends.

Li'L looks from his mother to Norm and back to his mother. He slowly lowers the pistol.

LI'L L

By Blood, this ain't over, Mutherfucker.

NORM

You the man, nigga. Go back to your gang bangin shit-ass friends.

EDNA

Go to Aunt Clarice. I'll be all right.

LI'L L

Yeah, Moms. Whatever you say.

He flips the bird to Norm. His little brother still clings to Lemont's leg.

RAWSHAWN

Take me with, Le. I wanna bang with youse.

LI'L L

Not now, little man. You needs to take care of mama.

EXT. 108 & WILMINGTON - NIGHT

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An abandoned warehouse, this is the kickback center for Li'l L's set.

Totally at ease and totally sure of himself, Li'l L swaggers toward his homies who sit on top of the parked car at the corner.

There is BB (BEN WHITE) an old gangster (OG) -17. Towering over the others, he's scarred from knife and gunshot wounds. He's spent more than a third of his life in jail. His body s covered with tattoos glorifying his gang set.

He has a hardness to him that he wears like a shield.

Wearing a red plaid shirt, big baggy pants, and a red bandanna, he smokes a joint and reclines on the hood with some of his crew.

EZ (EZEKIEL) -14 - is BB's rotund lieutenant. His easy going attitude masks his brutality. He wears the same uniform.

HAMMER (JAMIL), 12 - is smaller than most of them. He's Lil'L's roll dog (best friend); and BOOMER (ALI) is a pudgy 13 year old who speaks with a stutter and loves his boom box.

RAP MUSIC plays as BB passes a joint around.

BB

Yo, nigga, wassup?

Li'L sides up to the car and positions himself in a slouch against the vehicle. He takes a 40 oz Old English 800 beer from Ez and chugs it.

LI'L L

Same ol, same ol.

EZ

Dude, you gotta smoke that pussy shit.

Li'L L takes another swig from the bottle.

LI'L L

Muthafucker. I'm gonna do it.

HAMMER

Beef with mines, den the beef is mines.

Li'L gives his roll dog (best friend) a high five.

LI'L L

You roll with me?

Hammer nods.

BB

Be easy, homez. We gotta take care of dat shit later. We got war. Dem crabs hit on Juke t'day. Can't let e'm get away with dat. Ez, round the soldiers up, man. We bout to get down.

EZ

Dem niggas try'na fade Blood.

LI'L L
Nah, Blood. Dem lames ain't strong
enf for that. You feel me, Blood?

BB
I feel ya.

EXT. NATHAN APARTMENT. -LATER THAT NIGHT

Norm exits the apartment still in an angry mood. He gets into his car - an old Chevy - and turns right toward the beckoning liquor store lights.

A blue faded Cadillac cruises the streets, lights off, following behind him.

At the corner of Jefferson and Vermont, the Caddy pulls up beside Norm, who is about to make a turn. Three masked figures sit in the car. One leans out of the passenger window.

MASKED BOY
Hey! Nigga!

Norm turns to see a gun, wrapped in a blue bandanna. Before he can duck, it fires rapidly.

TAT! TAT! TAT! TAT! TAT!

His car window shatters as the door and Norm are repeatedly hit. He slumps in the driver's seat. Blood spurts from Norm's dreadlocks down his face. His head falls forward on the HORN as the car rolls into the curb and stops. The HORN continues to blow.

FADE OUT:

END TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. TASHA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON NEXT DAY

ROBERT PEPERTON (30s) Italian dark, muscular and lean, stands in front of a full length mirror putting the finishing touches on his police uniform.

Still lounging on the mussed bed is African American TASHA HARDY (20s.) She is discreetly covered by the sheet. Her fragile looks fool everyone especially the perps.

ROBERT

Get dressed.

He tosses her uniform shirt onto the bed.

TASHA

So? You afraid of the big bad detective?

ROBERT

I'm outta here. You coming?

Languorously, she stretches.

TASHA

See ya, Officer Bobby.

He SLAMS the door as he leaves.

Her smile fades to a sad weariness. She gets up and crosses the room, catching her face in the mirror. Though in her twenties, her hard life is beginning to show. A few faint wrinkles suggest themselves near her eyes.

Sighing, she shakes her head.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Shit...Shit...

She crosses to the bathroom, lonely, heavy hearted.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Girl, what the hell you doing?

EXT. JEFFERSON & VERMONT - THAT NIGHT

Houses and walls are covered with graffiti.

Yellow tape cordons off the crime scene.

A coroner's van blocks the street as some officers push back the looky loos. Others question possible witnesses. Still others shine flashlights into dark. A k-9 unit works the area.

Dog handlers guide the canines through the area to shift out evidence.

Numbered yellow plastic cones mark where spent shell casings lie. DETECTIVES LEO O'HALLAN (late 30s) and JOEL GOLDSTEIN (late 20s) bend down searching the ground for evidence. O'Hallan is a red haired beefed up Irishman, looking good enough for the cover of GQ. A 3D (detective third grade), he resents having to babysit the college grad newbie.

Goldstein, intense and slender, is eager to prove himself as the newest member of the gang unit. Instead of a yarmulke, he wears an LAPD baseball cap covering his dark curly hair.

LEO

That hat's not gonna stay on long
when you're running.

JOEL

Had no problems in vice.

LEO

In vice, you just played detective.
This is where the real shit happens.
We're up against buffed up, drugged
up kids, better armed than the Green
Berets.

Joel's phone RINGS. Reluctantly, he reaches for it. He glances at the read out.

JOEL

Goldstein. Yeah. Sammy, I'm at
work. No. Later, boy.

He hangs up and sees Leo staring at him.

LEO

Rule one. KEEP your personal shit
at home.

JOEL

I know, but -

LEO

No buts. I told you. Stay focused
or you'll never survive.

JOEL

Yeah, Sir.

He watches an evidence tech, wearing rubber gloves, as he picks up a powder burned blue bandanna and places it in a paper evidence bag.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Someone was either sloppy or it was planted.

LEO

(shrugs)

Doesn't mean shit.

JOEL

You're saying it was random.

LEO

The shit spreads like tooth decay when you don't take care of it. As far as I'm concerned, these fuckers are doing the community a service when they kill each other.

Joel shoots him a look.

JOEL

What about the little ones?

Leo shrugs.

LEO

The damn mushrooms? One less future banger. You getting this?

Leo strolls around to the driver's side of the car.

INT.GANG UNIT CAR - NICKERSON GARDENS - SAME TIME -NIGHT

DETECTIVE JESSE MARTINS (late 30s) a gangly African American sits in the driver's seat. Next to him is newly promoted DETECTIVE VERONICA PEPERTON (late 20s). Blonde, attractive smart, she's Robert's wife. Not someone you would expect working gangs.

Flood lights illuminate the nearly deserted housing courtyard. A beat up sofa sits off to one side with four African American young adults lounging, listening to music and smoking. Red bandannas are clearly seen sticking from the pants pockets.

VERONICA

Quiet tonight.

JESSE

(directs her attention)

See that apartment.

He points to one in the far west corner.

Veronica nods as the curtain falls from the window.

VERONICA

Yeah.

JESSE

Little girl named Denize lives there.
Wants to be a dancer.

VERONICA

You're the one.

JESSE

Yeah. I capped her brother last
month. Had no choice, he was packing.

VERONICA

So that's it. Operation Shoelace is
about guilt?

JESSE

No...I...

The four boys get up. They walk, arms linked in comradery.
Jesse motions in their direction as he starts the car.

EXT. JEFFERSON & VERMONT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Wrapping up the crime scene and finishing the field reports,
Leo glances up from his paper work to watch Joel carefully.
Leo then looks over to the crowd and sees AMBER MADOT, 13,
Ez's baby mama. He nods toward her. The well developed
teen glares at him.

Joel sits on the curb talking with Li'l L.

A tearful Edna is being interviewed nearby by another officer.

Li'L wears a Penn State hoodie over his red shirt. Rawshawn
sits next to his older brother, leaning his head against
him.

LI'L L

You new huh?

JOEL

First day. My partner --.

LI'L L

(sorts)

JOEL

You don't like him?

LI'L L
 He's a cop. You're a cop. But you're --
 You a Jew, huh?

JOEL
 How'd you guess?

The boy motions to his notebook with the name Goldstein on it.

LI'L L
 My auntie worked for folks a few
 years back. Always wore hats.

JOEL
 I see. You have a problem with my
 being Jewish?

LI'L L
 Naw. Cool by you, it's cool by me.
 My auntie said they always treated
 her better than anyone else.

JOEL
 Uh, thanks. I guess. So, you going
 to Penn State when you're out of
 high school?

LI'L L
 Yeah. I'm thinkin about it.

JOEL
 Really? What state is it in?

LI'L L
 (shrugs)
 Who the fuck cares?

Joel is taken a back. He's still not used to the attitude of the kids on the streets here.

JOEL
 Too bad about your father.

LI'L L
 Mutherfucking asshole weren't no
 daddy.

JOEL
 Right. He was your stepfather.

LI'L L
 Mutherfuckin piece of shit more like
 it.

JOEL
 Did he have problems with anyone?

Li'L gives Joel a long look. Not seeing his brother's look, Rawshawn volunteers with bravado.

RAWSHAWN

The mutherfucker watched TV and sucked up all the juice. Moms be fooled by him, but he ain't gonna hurt no one no more.

JOEL

He slap her around?

Li'l L shrugs. He puts his arm around Rawshawn, hugging him close as if trying to tell him to be quiet, but the boy doesn't get the message.

JOEL (CONT'D)

So who do you think did this?

RAWSHAWN

It be dem crabs. We's at war, ya know. We flatlined them just the other day.

JOEL

Really? Tell me about that.

Joel flips open his notebook.

Li'L squeezes his brother's hand.

RAWSHAWN

Ow! Le...

Hammer strolls over.

HAMMER

Wassup, Blood?

LI'L L

(shrugs)

Dis here Detective Goldstein.

HAMMER

Oh, yeah, right. I holla at ya later, Blood.

LI'L L

(to Rawshawn)

Go on now with 'im, boy.

RAWSHAWN

But --

A look from his older brother silences the boy.

Rawshawn sighs and slips off the curb, following Hammer.

Joel waits until the boys are out of ear shot.

JOEL
You hang with the Bloods?

LI'L L
(brightens)
Yeah, it's my set. We're family.
We gots the love, man.

JOEL
I see.

A shadow falls across and Joel looks up to see Leo standing over him.

LEO
Lemont, tell me what went down.

LI'L L
Nuthin. Just like I told him.

LEO
Just get me the word on the street.
(motions to Joel)
We're not having tea, Goldstein.
Let's go. I don't want to tell you
twice.

INT. GANG UNIT CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Leo drives.

JOEL
It would appear that --

LEO
Appearances don't mean shit.

JOEL
I still think --

LEO
Don't. I do the thinking here.

INT. SOUTHEAST DIVISION - NEXT DAY

The center for the gang task force and gang drug control. Plastic partitions divide the room into cubicles. Posters against drugs and domestic violence line the walls. At the door, a board tells who's in and who's out and what they're investigating.

OFFICER GERALDINE DIAZ, 30s, Hispanic, pleasingly plump and good natured, studies the computer in front of her. It's running the Cal Gang program that lists tattoos and nicknames for all the gang members in the area.

She turns to her partner, PAUL ALVEREZ, 40s. Paul's desk is decorated with dog pictures and it's pretty evident that he's in charge of the K-9 group. In the corner, is a small picture of a Yogi master and a large box of Girl Scout Peanut Butter cookies.

Paul picks up a cookie and munches it absentmindedly while he reads his paperwork.

GERALDINE

You hear of a Sir Speedy?

PAUL

(looks up)

Yeah. Rollin' 30's. His dad used to work for the copy firm. Some of the monikers these kids use...

(shakes his head)

Her phone rings. She glances at the read out and frowns.

GERALDINE

Diaz.

(blanches. whispers)

You know I'm at work. ...No. I can't talk now.

She flips her phone closed with a tense finality. She glances at a picture of herself and a girlfriend on her desk.

PAUL

Everything okay.

GERALDINE

Yeah. Fine.

Leo and Joel come in and check the boards.

LEO

Get it through your head. Most of this shit is random. Tit for tat and no one knows who plays next.

JOEL

I still think it's friendly fire. None of the neighbors want to talk.

LEO

Of course they don't. They don't care. That's why the blind eye.

JOEL

No one liked the guy. Don't you think...?

LEO

Random hits. They'll shoot each other over the wrong undies. Stupid little shits. A wrong look or a gang sign and --

JOEL

No, seriously. I think we ought to talk to the family more.

LEO

Seriously, Goldstein, everything goes by the book. You hear me?

Joel Goldstein shrugs.

Leo turns and gives Geraldine the eye.

LEO (CONT'D)

Looking good today, Geri.

GERALDINE

Don't give me your macho shit, Leo.

She stands and hurries toward the ladies room. Everyone looks toward Leo.

LEO

What? What'd I say?

Paul just shakes his head as Veronica, coming out of the Captain's office, hurries up to Robert and Tasha, just walking in. She pulls Robert aside.

VERONICA

Just where were you? You missed roll?

ROBERT

What? You're my boss now?

VERONICA

No, I am not your supervisor, but I am your wife.

He turns away.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Robert, I received that promotion fair and square.

ROBERT
Yeah, on my collar.

He walks away; Veronica's mouth is open.

Geraldine exits the ladies room and brushes past them.

GERALDINE
Cut it out, you, two. We have enough
fighting on the street.

INT. GOBBLES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

JAMES HUBERT, 10, AKA GOBBLES, enters with his book bag slung over his shoulder. He wears the gangsta uniform - but in blue. The black Dickies pants are hung so low on his skinny hips that a hard wind would expose him. The blue folded bandanna hangs from a rear pocket. He's a child pretending to be a man.

The house is silent until he hears LAUGHTER coming from his mother's room. He walks over and hears WHISPERING and then the door opens. Gobbles meets the eyes of a STRANGER. Well over six feet, the man has missing teeth and foul breath that makes the boy take a step backwards.

STRANGER
Hey deer li'l man, wassup?

He reaches his hand to lock with Gobbles. The boy is hesitant, but meets him halfway.

GOBBLES
Nuthin'.

As the stranger takes Gobbles's hand, he takes a big sniff, and wipes his nose with the other hand before patting Gobbles on the head.

Gobbles takes a deep breath, trying to hide the fury inside.

STRANGER
Lock the do'.

He heads out the way Gobbles entered. The boy watches.

A few moments later, Gobbles's mother, EUNICE, barges out of the room. She's higher than high. Judging by the veins in her neck, he realizes that silence is best.

He heads toward his room. She follows.

INT. GOBBLES'S ROOM -

There's a torn mattress on the floor and a make shift desk of cinder blocks and wood.

He tries to close the door, but she won't let him.

EUNICE

Who went in my room? Where's my money?

GOBBLES

Don't know Mama.

Convinced he has stolen her money, Eunice continues SCREAMING. She BANGS drawers in his room, ransacking everything.

Gobbles makes sure to keep a good distance from her.

EUNICE

This place is a fuckin' mess. That's why I can't find anything. Why don't y'all clean this mess up?

She leaves and SLAMS the door.

She returns to the rest of the house. The more she searches, the harder she fumes. The boy listens to her TEAR through the house.

Gobbles lies on his mattress and cries.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. LIQUOR STORE - 11 PM - LATER THAT NIGHT

MIGHT-T (TREY) DEMONT, 13, makes a quick stop at the liquor store to cop some 40's. He's dressed in blue sweats accompanied by blue Puma's with bright blue laces. His wife beater shirt reveals his physique. Tattoos on his neck make a firm statement of his reputation. He walks with confidence.

Once inside the store, he strolls over to the beers and picks up the Old English.

The store's entrance BELL rings. His eyes make contact with the five boys entering the store, dressed alike in orange caps and red Dickies pants. Might-t hands the clerk a twenty.

Making eye contact with the two in front, Might-t turns to the clerk at the counter ringing up his purchase. He can feel the cold electricity as one by one the gang brushes up against him. His heart rushes as he turns to the side.

Secretly, he feels his waist only to realize that he's not carrying. He shifts to one side, fearing these fools are going to fade him on sight. He's been caught slippin'. He recognizes one from a previous shoot out.

MIGHT-T

(to himself)

Shit! Revenge is a mothafucka!

CLERK

Eleven dollars is your change. Would you like a plastic bag to go with that?

Looking back at the clerk, Might-t tries signaling his danger.

MIGHT-T

Nah man, I'm good. Just hurry up!

He accepts his change and steals one more peek at the group before fleeing toward the exit.

As he nears the door, he is showered with bullets.

POP! POP! POP!

Dropping his beers instantly, he throws a bottle at them and then takes off down the street.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

He runs without looking behind.

Half a block away, people are standing on their porches, self engulfed in their own worlds.

He spots an alley and darts down.

More shots. His right ear is grazed. Blood spurts down his face. He's running out of steam. He pants.

He spots a semi-cracked garage door with a humongous X hovering on it. He lies down and maneuvers himself under.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lying on the dust ridden floor, he tries catching his breath.

Suddenly, silhouettes of the enemy are visible in the short distance, separating him from the entrance. He's not able to determine the number of soldiers after him.

BOOMER

We know you're here, slob. You don't wanna come out and play, Cuzz?

HAMMER

Look!

He points at a puddle of blood from Might-T's wound.

EZ

Yeah, we got'im.

Ez and Hammer slide under the garage door.

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Might-T is dragged by the forearm to the center of the garage.

Two others have joined the group. Some of the boys have pistols; other have knives.

MIGHT-T

Don't kill me.

EZ

Shut the fuck up, slob!

He whacks Might-T across the face.

Li'l L calls from the outside.

LI'L L

Police!

Letting Might-T go, they scramble back under the door.

EXT. DECKER PARK -CRIPS "HEADQUARTERS" -LATER THAT NIGHT

EDWARD LARKS (aka MO-NE),17, an OG, sits high on a bench, smoking a joint, holding a war council meeting with Gobbles, heavy set DAUDE ARAGEN (aka BIG -D)13, slender and fast LAWRENCE DAYSON (aka SPEEDY) 11, and JERIMIAH JONES (aka RIGGER) 14. Rigger wears an eye patch from a previous encounter with the enemy. All wear colors.

Might-T hurries toward them.

MO-NE

You fine, Cuz?

GOBBLES

Muthafuckers 'most smoked you, T. Jist likes they did yer cuz.

Might-T blanches.

MIGHT-T

Be-bop?

SPEEDY

Fool weren't strapped.
(waves his gun)
Got him making a phone call.

MIGHT-T

When?

SPEEDY

Jist a couple hours 'go.

MO-NE

Wes being blamed for the drive by yesterday. We's got war.

MIGHT-T

Shit! Dis is revenge.

MO-NE

You got it, Cuz. Niggas iz gonna bleed on this. Dem slobs ain't gonna know what hit 'em.

INT. SOUTHEAST DIVISION - AFTERNOON NEXT DAY

Geraldine hangs up the phone and looks toward Joel sitting at his desk.

Tasha and Robert sit at their respective desks doing paperwork.

GERALDINE
Body on Nickerson compound. You up for it?

Joel nods and stands as Leo does, too.

LEO
Retaliation here we go.

ROBERT
Aw, doesn't this shit ever stop?

GERALDINE
Welcome to the bright side of your day.

ROBERT
You need help detective?

Joel glances at Leo who gives him a brief nod.

JOEL
Sure. Why not?

Tasha glances at her partner who shrugs.

TASHA
You go. I'm up to my eyeballs in this shit.

ROBERT
Fine. I will go.

Joel's nearly out the door as Geraldine hurries toward Robert.

GERALDINE
Better be careful with that one, Bob.
(motions to Tasha)
What with the fun and games her ex is pulling her through, she's a hater.

He meets Geraldine's eyes, wondering what she really knows.

ROBERT
Yeah, thanks for the tip.

EXT. NICKERSON GARDENS - A SHORT TIME LATER - AFTERNOON

Leo and Joel walk gingerly around the dead African American boy. He's been beaten to a pulp. He doesn't wear any colors. His white tee shirt is red from the blood.

Leo speaks to the first responding officer there.

LEO
You call for the techs?

The officer, TED MICHAELS, nods.

JOEL
Any ID?

The officer shakes his head as Leo bends down to gingerly examine the body and motions Joel with him.

Leo bends down and carefully studies a 2 x 4 lying nearby. Without disrupting the crime scene, he studies the body.

LEO
(to officer)
You know him, Michaels?

MICHAELS
It's the Knowles boy. He was talking of getting out.

JOEL
He got out all right. What do they say, Do or die?

Michaels nods.

INT. SOUTHEAST DIVISION - INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Leo paces outside the interview room as Joel stares through the one way glass.

Gobbles, wearing his colors, sits inside looking around the room and acting like there's no problem. He stands and walks to the window, making faces.

JOEL
Young.

LEO
All these little buggers are. They learn gang banging at their father's knees. Got brothers and uncles, too. Great role models.

JOEL
But --

LEO
Little shit probably has two or three guns already. Look at those baggy shorts. Perfect for concealment.

JOEL
You sure we have --

LEO
No, Gladstone -

JOEL
It's Goldstein.

LEO
Whatever -- I brought him in for a
tea party. Even if he's not the
shooter, he'll know something.

JOEL
What about their loyalty --

LEO
Loyalty, shit. Those buggers would
sell their mother if they thought it
would do them some good.

JOEL
What if it's someone else?

LEO
Doesn't matter. These fuckers kill
their own. Just like hamsters eating
their young.

JOEL
The manual states and statistics
back it up that the perp is often --

LEO
This isn't the Westside, Junior.
It's tit for tat but they don't care
who they get as long as it's on the
other side.

He opens the door to the interview room and glances back at
Joel.

LEO (CONT'D)
You coming, Mr. Socialwork.

Joel's jaw is tight as he glares and then follows Leo in.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM AT POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Gobbles sits at the rickety metal desk trying to look brave
as Leo ferments. Joel stays by the door, observing and
remaining silent. Suddenly, Leo pulls the boy up by his
collar and throws him back into the chair. Joel cringes.

LEO

Listen, you fuckin' gang bangin punk,
all you motherfuckas do is terrorize
innocent people and fight over colors.
Y're all a bunch of punks who hide
behind rags. I want to know who did
the drive by on Jefferson and Vermont.

GOBBLES

Don't know --

LEO

You know. Your crew did it. It's
probably on the street by now.

GOBBLES

You don't know shit, mothafu-

Immediately, Leo grabs the blue bandanna tucked in Gobbles waistband. Leo twists it around his hands and acts like he's going to tear it. Gobbles is horrified, but trying not to let it show.

Joel steps forward, wanting to stop this, but receives a nasty look from the senior officer.

LEO

You think you're one tough little
Nigger.

Leo's face is so close to Gobbles that the boy can feel showers coming from the detective's mouth with every word spoken.

LEO (CONT'D)

Who's the shooter, James? Where is
he?

Gobbles shrugs, trying to give his best mad-dog stare.

GOBBLES

Don't know nuthin, man --

Leo produces a file of papers.

LEO

We got plenty on you, Mr. Hubert.
Enough to send you to CYA.

GOBBLES

Been there. Done that. Camps don't
bother me.

(frightened, but trying
not to show it)
Leave it be.

JOEL

How many times you been there?

Gobbles shrugs.

Leo glares at Joel, silently warning him to shut up.

LEO

Or what? You'll flatten me? Do you know what happens when you threaten an officer?

Gobbles shrinks back in his chair

GOBBLES

I ain't no buster.

Leo laughs.

LEO

We're going to bust your chops if you don't tell us what you know.

INT. TREY DEMONT'S HOME - SAME DAY - AFTERNOON

Trey (Might-T) enters the small house he shares with his mother and brother. There are crucifixes on the walls and pictures of Jesus everywhere.

BERTHA DEMONT, Trey's mother, plump and friendly, busily irons a stack of clothes for take out.

BERTHA

What you wearing, Trey?

MIGHT-T

Nuthin, Mama.

BERTHA

Nothing is right, boy. Go change out of those clothes into something righteous. Why you boys have to wear --

MIGHT-T

Oh, Moms...

He glances out the window, making sure that none of the enemy are around.

BERTHA

You know I hates you hanging around with those fellas.

MIGHT-T
They're my friends. We's family.

BERTHA
No. We - your brother Terrell and
me - we your family. Go on now, get
changed into something dignified
like. We gots to go -- Ain't one
funeral, it's another.

Might-T leans over and kisses his mother's brow.

MIGHT-T
Whatever you say, Mama.

BERTHA
Amen.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM AT POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Joel is once again watching from outside the glass as Leo
keeps pounding away at the kid. Veronica stands near,
observing.

VERONICA
You can't let your emotions get the
better of you.

JOEL
I still say there's something we're
missing here on this drive by. The
neighbors must know something.

VERONICA
They're scared.

JOEL
Why's he called Gobbles? He doesn't
look like he eats that much.

VERONICA
(grins)
He gobbles up books.

JOEL
Really?

Joel's phone rings.

VERONICA
Aren't you going to answer?

Joel sighs, glances at Leo inside, and flips it open.

Leo turns his way. It's almost as if he knows, even through the glass, that Joel is taking a personal call.

JOEL
Goldstein. Yeah.. Yeah. This is
Sammy's father. Right. A school
meeting? Fine. Tomorrow at noon.

He clicks the phone closed.

VERONICA
Everything okay.

JOEL
Just hunky dory.

Geraldine hurries up.

GERALDINE
You and Leo need to get to McDade's.

JOEL
The funeral home?

GERALDINE
(nods)
Best place for an attack.

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT 3

FADE IN:

EXT. NICKERSON GARDENS - A SHORT TIME LATER

Li'l L, Hammer, BB and Boomer sit on the torn sofa, listening to music and exchanging drags on their toke. Rawshawn hangs at the side of the sofa, trying to join in.

EZ comes in carrying a bundle. A head pops up - it's a little boy.

EZ
Wez got a new Blood.

The others turn toward him, curious. EZ holds up the baby.

EZ (CONT'D)
My little man. Gonna make him a big
time gangbang soon.

LI'L L
Yeah, cute. Minds me of Rawshawn.

EZ
Naw. This little man's all mine.

Amber runs up to them, clearly upset and angry.

AMBER
There you is. You ought t'have told
me you takin him.

The baby starts crying when he sees his mother.

EZ
Bitch, shut up. He be mine.

She tries to grab for the baby.

AMBER
He be hungry.

The baby scrunches his face.

HAMMER
Wew, Mama! That boy is strong.

AMBER
He needs changin'.

EZ
Yeah, right.

He thrusts the child toward her.

EZ (CONT'D)
You take care of my little Blood.

AMBER
He ain't no Blood. Not yet.

EZ
Bitch! --

BB puts a hand on EZ's shoulder. EZ looks at him and shrugs.

BB
We's got a lick. Good place.

EZ
(to Amber)
Go on now. Jist you member. I'm
the daddy.

Amber departs comforting the crying child as BB turns to Hammer.

Rawshawn runs up and hugs the leg of his big brother. Lil'L pats the boy on the head.

BB
Youse gonna do it, Hammer?

HAMMER
(inhales)
Sure if my roll-dog works it too.

He passes the toke to Lil'L. They clap hands mid air and hook pinkies.

LI'L L
You be pussy shit, dog.

HAMMER
You need to chill your ass out.

RAWSHAWN
I'll do it.

BB
You little snot nose, dog. You ain't
got the balls, Little Man.

RAWSHAWN
I do. I want to be like Lemont.

BB turns to Lil'L.

LI'L L

Naw, you don't. It gonna cost ya.

RAWSHAWN

Don't care. I'm a man. I'm gonna be a soldier. Gonna put work in. Sides, Mama needs the money. I'm gonna take care of her, just like you did, L.

He stands straight and puffs out his chest.

Lemont glares at his brother. Hammer shrugs.

HAMMER

We's got the reconnoiter into enemy territory. Dey got the funeral t'day.

EZ

Dem slobs is gonna out the window.

BB

By, Blood, we all gots to work this one.

RAWSHAWN

So can I go?

Li'l L stares his brother down.

LI'L L

Naw, you not going anywhere, little man. You gonna stay and take care of moms.

RAWSHAWN

Aw --

LI'L L

Go on. Get down or I'll flat you meself.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The Angeles Funeral Home is crowded with people. The front row has Be Bop (Arnold)'s weeping MOTHER. Might-T, wearing his colors, sits next to her, patting her hand. Behind him are Gobbles, Daude, Speedy and Mo-Ne - also proud in their colors.

BE-BOP aka Arnold Demont is laid out in his open coffin. A blue bandanna is in his hands.

The fellas get up to file past the coffin, paying respects. Tears are in their eyes.

Leo and Joel sit in a car across the street, watching the parade of people as they file in.

JOEL

You really think there's going to be something here.

LEO

These little buggers never disappoint. If they think the other side is weak, they'll attack.

JOEL

But --

A car careens the corner. Two boys, wearing Blood colors, hang out the window, guns aimed.

LEO

Here we go.

Leo puts on the siren, but despite the warning, the Bloods still fire into the funeral home crowd.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

Might-T stands in front of his cousin's coffin and looks down at the still figure.

MIGHT-T

Gonna get dem mutherfuckers, Be.

He leans down and gives a light kiss on the dead boy's brow.

The bullets rain in as the patrons dive for cover.

Mo-Ne and the other Crips grab for their weapons as they storm out of the building.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

The Crips run out to see the Blood car being trailed by Leo and Joel's car and hear sirens as other cars join in the chase.

There is a chase through the area until one car swoops in front and the Blood car broadsides it.

EXT. STREETS. A FEW MINUTES LATER

An irritated Leo pounds on the steering wheel in frustration.

LEO

I wanted that collar.

JOEL

Isn't it just important that we got them?

Leo glares at Joel. He does a U Turn and heads back to the station.

EXT. SOUTH EAST DIVISION - THAT EVENING

Geraldine parks her car and gathers her purse as another car pulls directly behind her, blocking her in. Geraldine looks up and curses to herself. She grabs her purse and gets out of her car and marches up to the window of the Chevy.

An attractive Black girl, ANNA MARIE, leans out. She reaches out to Geraldine, trying to stroke her arm.

ANNA MARIE

So, Geri, honey --

GERALDINE

I said I'm not interested.

She pulls away.

ANNA MARIE

Not what you indicated last night.

GERALDINE

Look. I can't deal with this right now.

ANNA MARIE

Ah, still in your cage.

She looks around and smiles.

ANNA MARIE (CONT'D)

I can take a hint.

She starts the car up.

ANNA MARIE (CONT'D)

I'll call you later. Maybe we'll do lunch.

GERALDINE

I'm not interested.

ANNA MARIE

You always play hard to get?

Geri sees Paul parking his car and waves to him. Paul waves back and as he leaves his car starts to come over.

Anna Marie sees Paul approaching with OTHELLO, a German Shepherd police dog.

ANNA MARIE
We're not done yet.

Her tires squeal rubber.

Paul reaches Geri. He reaches out to touch her, not paying attention to his surroundings.

PAUL
Something the matter?

GERALDINE
(shakes head)
Just family matters. Come on. We've got that drive by on Holmes.

There is a quick shadow and a flash of steel as a young boy runs up and then away.

Suddenly the dog BARKS and then WHINES. Paul turns toward the dog.

PAUL
What is it, Boy?

The dog WHINES again and falls to the ground as Paul glances quickly around and sees blood on the dog. He looks up to see the youngster running from the scene.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Shit!

Paul overtakes the boy in two long steps and has him collared. He throws the boy toward Geraldine who cuffs him.

PAUL (CONT'D)
What'd you do that for?

BOY
It's just a dog, Man. 'Sides gotta prove m'self.

PAUL
He happens to be my dog. You've proven you're stupid. Take him in.

He bends down to examine the dog, stroking it.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It's okay, Fella.

INT. NATHAN APARTMENT - SAME TIME - EVENING

A dull eyed Edna sits on the broken sofa staring at Joel. Rawshawn sits next to her looking angelic. Black crepe drapes the picture of Jesus and Norm's easy chair.

JOEL

I know this is hard for you, but can you think of any enemies he might have had.

RAWSHAWN

Moms. You don't have t' --

Edna smiles at him, pats his knee.

EDNA

Hush, boy. It be okay.
(to Joel)
Naw, Norm was a good man.

JOEL

According to the neighbors --

EDNA

(uptight)
They don't know nuthin upon nuthin.
He were a good man. He work hard --

RAWSHAWN

Moms!

JOEL

You don't have to protect him now.

Edna begins crying and Rawshawn grabs a tissue for her.

RAWSHAWN

You gonna leave my mamma alone. You hear, man? It were..

He glances around the room, searching for an answer. Sees a picture of Lemont in his grammar school graduation gown and pauses. Joel's eyes follow --

RAWSHAWN (CONT'D)

It were dem blue buzzards.

JOEL

Maybe, but --

The devil replaces the angel as Rawshawn quickly moves from the sofa and kicks Joel in the leg.

RAWSHAWN

I saz as you gonna leave my mama
alone.

EDNA

Rawshawn! We don't treat no people
like that.

Joel grabs his injured leg.

RAWSHAWN

Why not, Mama? He not people. He
be po-lice.

JOEL

Is your other son home? I'd like to
talk with Lemont.

RAWSHAWN

(proudly)
He be out working with his set.

JOEL

Working? He's only 13. What type
of work is he doing?

RAWSHAWN

Ya know. Working.

Joel's phone indicates a text.

PHONE INSERT

211 in progress. Crenshaw Heights mall.

Joel glances up at the boy.

JOEL

Working, huh.

INT. CRENSHAW HEIGHTS MALL -SAME TIME

Lil'L holds his .9 mm to the head of the CLERK as Hammer
scoops the watches and rings from the tray into a pillow
case.

THREE PETRIFIED CUSTOMERS - two women and a man - watch
horrified as a second CLERK edges toward the floor pedal,
darting glances at Lil'L as he does so.

LI'L L

Dag, hurry your ass up.

HAMMER

Be cool, Blood. Be cool.

Seeing that his partner is nearly done, Lil'L pushes the Clerk roughly forward so that the young man falls face forward. The gang bangers prepare to split when the ALARM RINGS out.

The male customer rushes forward and tackles Lil'L.

Hammer kicks the customer in the head, but then splits with the loot.

The gangster and the customer struggle as Lil'L throws vicious punches, but can't seem to break away.

Tasha kicks down the door of the store. She's followed by Robert. Both have guns drawn.

Cursing to himself, Lil'L throws his hands up.

INT. SOUTH EAST DIVISION POLICE STATION - LATER THAT NIGHT

A handcuffed Lil'L is roughly guided by Tasha toward the holding cells.

He sees Daude, a Crip, being led by Joel to another of the interview rooms.

Daude flashes his gang sign, a mark of one upmanship that Lil'L can't ignore.

Lil'L does a mad dog stare at his enemy.

DAUDE

Mutherfucker.

Daude attempts to reach out for Lil'L, but Tasha has him firmly in place.

Still guiding Daude, Joel stares after Lil'L.

JOEL

Lemont.

Lil'L ignores the detective. Finally he turns in Joel's direction. Tasha pauses with Lil'L.

JOEL (CONT'D)

How you doing, Lemont?

LI'L L

Bugger.

JOEL

Don't worry. We're going to find out who killed your step dad.

LI'L L

You do that.

INT. SOUTH EAST DIVISION - LOCKER ROOM - SHIFT END NIGHT

Leo is in the locker room, changing, when his cell phone, sitting on the bench, buzzes.

Leo glances at it. It reads St. Mary's. He ignores it.

Paul comes in and starts preparing for home, too.

PAUL

Aren't you going to answer it?

LEO

Don't take personal calls on duty.

PAUL

Don't be such a stick. You're on the way out.

Leo shrugs and puts the now silent phone in his jacket pocket.

LEO

Gotta be a stick to survive this world.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - REDONDO BEACH - NIGHT

Tasha and two of her friends are drinking at the bar and laughing.

She glances at her watch.

TASHA

Gotta get home or Eduardo be callin' me an unfit mama.

FRIEND

Girl, he wouldn't.

TASHA

You'd better believe it.

She picks up her purse.

FRIEND

You gonna be okay.

TASHA

What? You think I had too much.

FRIEND

Naw, just that - maybe we oughta walk with you.

TASHA

No way, Jose.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - REDONDO BEACH - NIGHT

Tasha steps out of the bar and without looking starts down the street to her car.

A TALL MAN in a hoodie steps out of the doorway shadows and walks a few steps behind her.

TALL MAN

Hey, sweet pie, you want some action.

Tasha glances behind her for a moment and ignoring him, continues to walk.

TALL MAN (CONT'D)

You answer when I talk, you hear?

He grabs her arm and pulls her to him, attempting to kiss her.

TASHA

I'm a cop. You don't want to do this.

TALL MAN

Oh, believe me, sweet meat, I want to.

INT. PEPERTON APARTMENT, REDONDO BEACH - AN HOUR LATER -

Veronica, in jeans and a tee shirt, sits at their dining table, paying bills. On the other side of the table are half burned candles and a dinner setting. Robert walks in.

VERONICA

Have a good time? You could have called.

ROBERT

Yeah, I love the paperwork. Best thing in the world especially those 211's with perps attached.

VERONICA

Tasha with you?

ROBERT

Course. She's my partner. Oh, don't tell me.

(shakes his head)

VERONICA

Tell you what?

ROBERT

You're jealous, that's what? For Christ sake, Veronica...

VERONICA

Well, you do spend an inordinate amount of time with her.

ROBERT

And you don't with Jesse.

She turns back to the task at hand.

VERONICA

Nevermind.

Outside comes the sound of RAPID GUNFIRE. Both grab their guns as they dive for the floor.

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. PEPERTON HOME, REDONDO BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Both Veronica and Robert run outside, guns drawn.

The street looks deserted. They turn their attention to the exterior structure and see the mail box, peppered with holes.

The couple look at each other. Someone's trying to warn them off, but who?

Robert's beeper goes off.

INT. CEDAR SINAI HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Robert stands by Tasha's bedside. Her head is bandaged.

TASHA
I want out of here.

Robert reaches out to touch her.

ROBERT
We'll get those guys. It's going to be okay.

TASHA
You are not to say anything. You hear?

ROBERT
But --?

TASHA
Promise me.

ROBERT
You're not --

TASHA
Promise me.

INT. SOUTH EAST DIVISION - NEXT DAY

Veronica's at her desk filing a report about the incident the night before as Leo slams the door behind him.

LEO
Bitch!

VERONICA
What is it now, Leo?

LEO
Don't ever talk to me about women
again?

Paul looks up from his desk. He grabs for a cookie.

PAUL
Try meditating.

LEO
Women are whores. Shoot me if I
ever talk about marriage again.

GERALDINE
I'd like to shoot you now.

Leo glares at her and storms into the locker room as Jesse comes in with the posters for his Operation Shoestrings fundraiser.

Joel rushes over to help him.

JOEL
This is going to be great.

PAUL
Don't be fooled, Joel. He's just as
bad as the rest of us. Just a guilty
conscious.

JESSE
Tons of kids out there. Just
prisoners in their own homes. Gotta
get them out of the community.

JOEL
Will it do any good?

JESSE
Gotta hope. It's one thing these
kids don't have.

Robert comes in without Tasha.

VERONICA
Sick day?

ROBERT
Uh - Car trouble.

VERONICA
Thought she just bought that Toyota.

Robert shrugs.

ROBERT
She'll be back tomorrow.

INT. SOUTH EAST DIVISION EXTERIOR INTERVIEW ROOM - AN HOUR
LATER - DAY

Joel watches from the outside as Lil'L sits at the table,
fidgeting with his thumbs.

He glances down the hall, but there is no sign of Leo. Joel
shrugs and opens the door.

Just then Leo appears.

LEO
Goldstein! Fine. Go on alone.
Let's see what mess you can make.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joel enters carrying a stack of papers.

JOEL
Lemont.

LI'L L
Name's Li'l L.

JOEL
Maybe on the streets, but your mother
named you Lemont.

LI'L L
(shrugs)
Who cares.

JOEL
She does, no doubt. So, who was
with you at the mall.

LI'L L
Did it myself.

JOEL
Interesting. Witnesses disagree
with you. Where's the heist?

LI'L L
I ain't no buster. Wez live by the
code. Do or die.

JOEL
That's funny. One of your homees
said the same thing - before he
talked.

Li'L L gives a mad dog stare.

LI'L L
Who?

JOEL
Doesn't matter.

LI'L L
Tell me who and I'll flatten 'em.

JOEL
Word has it that you're a real bad
dude. Seems you Bloods kill as many
of your own as the Crips do. You're
not going to last long that way.
You're wounded soldiers in a battle
that can't be won. You're killing
kids your own age because they wear
the wrong color.

Li'L L shrugs.

LI'L L
Do or Die. Wez gotta protects
ourselves.

Joel leans back in his chair.

JOEL
Speaking of protecting, tell me more
about your mother.

LI'L L
What's my moms gots to do with dis?

JOEL
She says you're a good son. Are
you?

LI'L L
(flushes slightly)
Course I am.

Joel's chair falls forward. He catches it before it bangs
to the ground.

JOEL
I was, too. My dad beat my mom
something fierce.

LI'L L
For real?

JOEL

(sighs)

For real. It was hard not wanting
to fight him back.

LI'L L

Dawg. So's whatja do?

Joel rubs his hands together thoughtfully.

JOEL

Nothing. Sometimes I wish I had.

LI'L L

So whyja tellin me this stuff?

JOEL

(shrugs)

Just thought it would interest you.
I mean with your step father dying
in that drive by and all.

LI'L L

Dem slobs did it. Ask yer partner.
(motions toward the
mirror)
He knows it.

JOEL

Yeah? Just know that while it's not
okay to kill --

Li'L L stands abruptly.

LI'L L

Shut the fuck up, Man. I ain't going
down for someone else's shit.

Two uniforms rush into the room.

JOEL

It's okay, fellas.

(to Li'L L)

I think you have enough to worry
about right now.

INT. DEMONT HOME - THAT NIGHT

The house is dark. Might- T stares out the window. Bertha
comes in from a shift at the hospital and flips on the lights.
She wears scrubs.

BERTHA

Boy, what you doing in the dark like this? Don't you know it draws Satan to you?

MIGHT-T

Oh, Moms.

He grabs his jacket.

BERTHA

Where's you going this late?

MIGHT-T

Just out.

BERTHA

I don't want you --

MIGHT-T

I kin take care of meself.

BERTHA

No guns, please.

MIGHT-T

Moms--

BERTHA

(sighs)

Just you be careful, you hear?

CUT TO:

INT. DECKER PARK -CRIPS "HEADQUARTERS" - A FEW HOURS LATER -- NIGHT

Might- T shares a joint with Gobbles as they lean on pillows, listening to rap.

MIGHT-T

Cuz, you ever think of where's it all going?

GOBBLES

Naw. It is just is. Wez the kings.

MIGHT-T

This be the third funeral this month.

GOBBLES

(inhales)

We front line soldiers. We warriors. Gots t'feat those slobs. Looks what I got.

Gobbles produces a shiny 9 mm.

GOBBLES (CONT'D)

I bet they won't fuck wit me no mo!

Might-T takes out the gun from the younger boy's hand and spins the barrel.

MIGHT-T

Thez homees. Thez ...

He quickly wipes a tear from his eyes so that Gobbles won't see. He spins the gun again, more rapidly this time as he meditates on the rotation.

MIGHT-T (CONT'D)

I'm tired of motherfuckas dying. Iz gots to get those slobs ... afore theys gets me.

GOBBLES

Man, wez gonna ride dem fools. Dem niggas gonna feel the heat.

Might-T spins the revolver again and points it at his head. It CLICKS.

Gobbles just stares at Might -T who grins.

GOBBLES (CONT'D)

How chu do that?

MIGHT-T

Look at cho punk ass now, all scared and shit. What chu banging, Cuz?

GOBBLES

(inhales)

Yo, if you thinking about killing yaself, than I'm a do it, too.

MIGHT-T

Yeah, you be my roll -dog, homee. You be with me, but we ain't ready yet.

INT. AMBER MADOT'S HOME - BEDROOM - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Amber coos to her baby, walking him in the narrow pathway between his crib and her mattress. EZ lays on the bed watching Amber picking the child up.

AMBER

Don't want you to be bangin.

EZ

Dag, Amber, you is fierce.

AMBER

I mean it, Z. Look what happened to Ogg. My baby needs his daddy. Youse different when youse not bangin'.

She reaches the infant over to him.

EZ

Don't go telling me shit, Bitch. Sides, ain't nuthin else for me and the boys t'do.

AMBER

I knows 'bout the drive by --

EZ

Go on then. Snitch yer ass out.

AMBER

This ain't no free life.

FADE OUT:

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. AMBER MADOT'S HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The baby has started crying because of the tension. Ez stands now, his gun drawn.

EZ

Will you just shut the fuck up? I didn't do nuthin and you ain't gonna say nuthin to nobody.

AMBER

You drove. Z...it could have been...Iz don't want this life no more. Youse bangin and Iz gonna leave.

EZ

Bitch! You try it and you'll be flat.

His knife comes out as he holds to her face.

EZ (CONT'D)

You be good Bitch or little man's gonna have an ugly mama.

INT. SOUTHEAST POLICE STATION - NEXT DAY

A small bruise over Amber's eye is visible as she steps into the station lobby. She carries the baby.

AMBER

Detective Goldstein, please.

At the sound of his name, Joel looks up from his paperwork. He stands and hurries over to Amber.

JOEL

I'm Goldstein.

AMBER

Gots to tell you sumthing but I needs sumthin in return.

He escorts her back to his desk and pulls out the chair for her. She thanks him with a smile.

The baby squirms in her arms as Joel waits for her to continue.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I gets your killer but Iz need monies.

JOEL

How much?

One of the secretaries, JAMILLA BRAXTON, a local girl wanders by and takes a bit long doing her filing at the cabinet near Joel's desk.

AMBER

Nuf for a bus ticket and rent. Jist first and last. I knows how to work. I knows...

Joel holds his hand up.

JOEL

Let me get it approved. You want protection?

AMBER

Naw, I kin handle myself. I'm gettin out.

INT. PATROL CAR - AFTERNOON

Leo drives as Joel sits shotgun.

JOEL

I still can't believe it. I really think she's telling the truth. What happened to the loyalty they're supposed to have?

LEO

You mean the girl ratting on her boyfriend?

(laughs)

They do it all the time. If it's good for them, they'd sell their mother. This do or die loyalty is horse shit.

JOEL

It's only her word against what? We have no real evidence.

*

LEO

She'll get us a confession, Mr. Social Work, and the little bugger will do time.

JOEL

And what if she can't.

LEO

Motherfucker walks.

JOEL
Guess I was right about the family.

LEO
(snorts)
Yeah. Guess you were.

INT. HOLDING CELL - SOUTHEAST DIVISION - LATER THAT SHIFT
Lil'l L sits on the bench, staring into space. Joel leans against the grating.

LI'L L
Bitch cop hurt me.

JOEL
And what about the people at the store you hurt? The Clerk's going to need stitches.

Lil'l L shrugs.

LI'L L
Man's gotta work.

Joel glances at the stack of arrest reports at his side.

JOEL
You do a lot of work for your set?

Lil'l L shrugs. There is a long pause.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Must have been hard seeing your mother being abused all the time.

There's no answer from the boy.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I know it was for me. I remember planning all the ways he was going to die a painful death.

LI'L L
Yeah? What ways?

JOEL
Well -- most of them had me in superhero costuming. He was a lot bigger than me. He beat me up plenty, too.

LI'L L
Yeah, well, ain't that way with us.

JOEL

That's how come the hospital records show you with a broken jaw and broken arm on two separate occasions. And Rawshawn...

LI'L L

You leave my brother out of this! Told ya. Dem slobs did this.

JOEL

Maybe, but in that case this is a war you're not going to win, Lemont. You hit them, they hit you. It never ends. Not until you're out or in a grave.

LI'L L

Then I be in the grave. No matter. Not much to this life anyways. Just bangin' and women.

Joel gives a slight laugh.

JOEL

At thirteen you talk about women as if you're an old hand. I hadn't even started dating then.

LI'L L

Well, you sees that be the difference. Iz be a man.

JOEL

Yeah, I guess you have to grow up a lot quicker when you live on the streets.

LI'L L

The women, they like me. Wet my dick plenty.

JOEL

Really? Maybe you can give me some tips.

There is a long silence before Joel speaks again.

JOEL (CONT'D)

You say the Crips did the drive by that killed your step father?

LI'L L

Crap, man, how many more times I gotta tells you that. Ya found their blues. Jist becuz I be glad he gone, don't mean I had anything t'do with it.

JOEL

No. You're right. It doesn't mean that, but we do have unexplained evidence...

Li'l L's head jerks up.

LI'L L

What evidence? You got nuthin.

Joel waves the package of papers in his hand.

Li'l L reaches for them. Joel pulls them back.

JOEL

Ezekiel Joseph drove the car and ...

LI'L L

No way.

JOEL

Got it right here. Found the car. Left his fingerprints...

LI'L L

So he drove. Doesn't mean --

JOEL

Lemont, I understand where you're coming from man. You felt helpless to protect her.

For a moment Li'l L's mask crumbles, but then slides over his face again and he becomes as assured as before.

LI'L L

No man, I... You gots it wrong.

JOEL

I understand. My father -- He -- I just understand. I want to help you.

Lil'L stares at Joel a moment. There are tears in his eyes as his mask crumbles.

LI'L L
Yeah. You help me to prison. Ain't gonna happen.

JOEL
Lemont --
(reaches out to touch the boy)
I know.

INT. KICKBACK CENTER FOR THE BLOODS - SAME TIME - EVENING

BB sprawls on the old sofa, smoking a joint, his arm around one of the GIRLS and he hands her the roach. Rap music plays as Ez and Hammer chug Old English.

There is a scuffle at the door and Boomer pushes Rawshawn in.

BB
Hey, hey, little man, whaz you about?

BOOMER
Caught him sneaking around the cars.

RAWSHAWN
Was not sneaking.
(shrugs Boomer away)
I wanna bang, Blood.

EZ
Naw. You too little to work.

RAWSHAWN
I kin do it.

BB
Bangin' ain't no part time thang.
It's full time. It's a career.
It's bein down when ain't nobody else and being caught and not tellin.
Killin and not caring. Dying without fear. It's love for your set and hate for your enemy. You hear what I'm saying?

RAWSHAWN
Yeah. Yeah. I hear what you say.
(strides over to BB)
No one fucks wit me. I'm a crazy motherfucker and I will kill ya.

BB looks to the others. He laughs. Then he ruffles the boy's hair.

BB
Wanna take Li'l L's place, huh?
Okay, you go on a run with Z. If
you be down ...

RAWSHAWN
I be down. I got the love.

EXT. THE STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON

EZ, BB, Hammer and Rawshawn sit in a car, watching the street.

A girl exits the little market. It's Amber. A sack of groceries hides the fact that the baby is cuddled in a carry all in front of her.

EZ
There she is! Cunt!

BB hits the gas. The car speeds toward Amber.

She looks up for a brief second - a deer caught in the headlights.

The car slams into her, sending her flying.

BB
No one gonna blow on my boys.

People SCREAM.

They drive past the body sprawled on the street and EZ now notices the small bloody bundle on Amber's chest.

EZ
Wait! My little man!

SIRENS are heard in the distance.

HAMMER
Wez gotta go.

There are tears in EZ eyes as the car drives quickly away.

EXT. 108TH & VERMONT - SAME TIME - EVENING

Store fronts are starting to pull their metal fronts down as Jesse and Veronica patrol through the neighborhood.

A YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN wearing red sneakers runs passed them. He's carrying a paper bag clutched in his hand.

Their radio crackles.

DISPATCH
211. 10811 Vermont.

The detectives look at each other and without a word, get out of the car. Veronica has her gun drawn.

VERONICA
Police! Stop!

The boy continues running, but turns to fire off a shot.

It misses. She runs after him with Jesse behind her. He fires off a shot. It nicks the boy.

He turns and fires again as he's climbing a fence.

Veronica's hit! She falls.

Jesse returns the fire, hitting the boy, who crashes to the ground.

Trying to keep an eye on the perp, Jesse runs to his partner.

JESSE
(on radio)
Officer down! Vermont and 108th.
Officer down.

INT. PATROL CAR - NICKERSON GARDENS -SAME TIME

Robert and with Tasha. The pair patrol as their radio crackles. Robert drives.

DISPATCH
Officer down! 108th and Vermont.

Robert's face goes white. He knows that's his wife's area. He glances briefly at Tasha and then does an exaggerated U Turn while she puts the siren lights on.

EXT. JEFFERSON & VERMONT - SAME TIME

Jesse holds his fallen partner. Blood is pooling on the sidewalk.

Veronica's eyes are closing.

JESSE
Stay with me, V. Stay with me.

VERONICA
The perp?

JESSE
Got him.

Tears in his eyes as he rocks her.

In the distance, SIRENS can be heard.

FADE OUT:

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

EXT. NICKERSON GARDENS - NIGHT

The boys are hanging out by their sofa. They watch suspiciously as Tasha approaches them.

EZ

What you want, Officer? We ain't done shit.

TASHA

It's not what you've done. It's what you're going to do.

BB

Yeah and what that be?

TASHA

You're going to find the fucker who raped me so I can kill him, myself.

INT. SOUTH EAST DIVISION - KENNELS -SAME TIME - EVENING

Paul walks through the door and four dogs BARK voraciously.

He strides over to the one lone cage toward the back and leans down.

Othello lies on his paws and gives Paul the sad eyes. He WHIMPERS slightly.

Paul bends down.

PAUL

You'll be okay, boy.

The dog scoots over on his stomach toward Paul's outreached hands.

Paul pets Othello.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Yeah. I won't let them hurt you.

EXT. ST. MARY'S ALZHEIMER'S HOME - EARLY EVENING

A white Camray sits parked in front.

Leo O'Hallan sits in the driver's seat, watching the entrance.

Two nurses come out wheeling patients.

