

Release

By

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EXT. OUTSIDE AN INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

An inner city man aggressively runs into view. He opens the front door of the apartment building and runs up the stairs. There is some yelling, followed by two gun shots about two seconds apart.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

SUPER

Seven years earlier.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Two men dressed in black clothes search a bedroom looking for something valuable. TERRANCE searches drawers and looks behind a dresser. SONNY looks under the bed. They find nothing.

TERRANCE

I'll try the living room, you try
the basement.

Sonny gets up and leaves the room, heading for the basement. Terrance enters the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Terrance rips through the couch seat cushions, ripping into the back and looking inside. He opens the drawers of a hutch and then the bottom cabinet. He pulls out everything in it.

Terrance locates a small jewelry box in the back of the cabinet. He opens the box up slightly, exposing a glimmer of jewelry. Gold, Silver, Platinum pieces of jewelry. Terrance smiles.

At that moment Terrance notices sirens flashing through the living room windows. He freaks, stuffing the jewelry box into his backpack.

He starts to run toward the basement to warn Sonny. He stops short, noticing the cops getting out of their cars and running up to the house. He looks at the basement door, but turns toward the back door, opens it, and rushes out the back and into the darkness, leaving Sonny behind.

BASEMENT

Sonny comes to the bottom of the stairs and yells up to Terrance.

SONNY
There ain't shit down here
Terrance.

No answer.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Terrance?

Sonny, puzzled, runs back up the stairs. He hears and sees the sirens, screaming and flashing throughout the house. He freaks and darts for the back door.

EXT. HOUSE

Sonny bust through the back door, meeting two cops with guns drawn.

COP 1
Freeze.

Sonny stops and puts his hands up.

COP 1 (CONT'D)
On the ground. Now!

Sonny listens. The cops put his arms behind his back and take a gun from the back of his pants. They cuff him.

SUPER

Seven years later

EXT. PRISON EXIT - DAY

Sonny, a thirty year old white male with a shaved, balding head, tatoos, and a deep introspective face, stands in front of a prison exit. A cab off to the side. He waits, hoping someone will come and pick him up. No one does. He glances at the cab.

EXT. INNER CITY APT. BUILDING. DAYTIME

The same cab pulls up to Sonny's apartment building, a tenement building with a large fire escape above the front door. He gets out of the cab. As the cab pulls away Sonny looks around at his old neighborhood. He walks into the apartment complex.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAYTIME

SONNY'S MOM, an apathetic woman who looks ten years older than she is, worn out, opens the door and there stands Sonny. He smiles slightly. She sighs.

SONNY'S MOM

Well, look who's finally come home.

SONNY

Hi Mom.

She turns around and returns to sitting down on the couch. She lights a cigarette. Prescription drug bottles lie on the coffee table in front of her. Sonny takes notice of the bottles and then sits down on a chair.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I thought you would pick me up today.

Sonny's Mom reaches for one of the bottles, takes out a pill.

SONNY'S MOM

Yeah, well something came up

She pops a pill and chases it down with a gulp of Mt. Dew. Sonny looks around the room.

SONNY

This place hasn't changed.

SONNY'S MOM

Did you think it would fall apart without you around?

She gets up and goes into the kitchen, lighting a cigarette.

Sonny picks up a framed picture from the end table. It is a photo of his mother and his daughter, SELAH. Selah is about seven years old in the picture. They are smiling and have their arms around each other.

Sonny's mom comes back in the room. She takes the photo from him and puts it back on the end table.

She takes a drag of her cigarette and leaves the room again. She walks down the hallway and enters her bedroom, closing the door.

Sonny looks at the picture again without picking it up. He gets up, walks to the hallway and pauses outside a different bedroom.

BEDROOM

Sonny pushes the door open more and enters the room. He looks around at the pictures on the wall. Some pictures are of him and his daughter and some of just his daughter.

He walks over to the dresser and picks up a school picture of his daughter sporting a tom-boyish pony tail. He brings it over to the single bed with colored, pony covered sheets and sits down. He sighs and then slowly rubs his hands across the sheets.

He puts his hand over the bridge of his nose to prevent crying. He leans back, puts his feet up on the bed, and closes his eyes. He sleeps.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sonny stands over a classic street-side memorial holding a single red rose. Eroded stuffed animals, dead flowers, and wilted cards and pictures. He places the rose on the memorial, right below a framed picture of Selah.

About to leave he notices a young girl looking out her window. When Sonny sees her, she closes the curtains.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

NADINE, a woman in her mid-twenties, with long, straight, brown hair and a slender body, walks with her daughter SHAY. Shay is a 7-year old girl with a similar look of her mom, but with her hair pulled back in a pony-tail.

Nadine walks ahead of Shay, trying to hurry to her destination. Shay stops every now and then to pick something off the ground or to look into a window.

Nadine notices that Shay is distracted and not keeping pace. She turns around.

NADINE
Com'on Shay, fuck.

Shay hurries to catch up to her mom; only to fall behind again. Nadine turns into the threshold of a building and opens the door. She notices again that Shay is far behind.

NADINE (CONT'D)
This ain't fuckin' funny Shay. Get
over here now.

Shay hurries again. They enter the building.

INT. WELFARE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine and Shay wait in line to walk through a metal detector. Nadine empties her pockets in a basket and walks through the detector. Shay follows.

Nadine approaches the front desk. The RECEPTIONIST does not look up right away, looking at her computer instead.

NADINE
Excuse me.

The receptionist still does not look up.

NADINE (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Excuse me. I have an appointment.

The receptionist apathetically looks at her.

RECEPTIONIST
Appointment paper.

Nadine is surprised.

NADINE
I wasn't told to bring that paper.

RECEPTIONIST
It says right on the letter to
bring your appointment slip. Did
you not read the letter.

NADINE
Of course I read the letter.

The receptionist turns to type on her keyboard.

RECEPTIONIST

Sure you did. What's your last name?

NADINE

Johnson.

RECEPTIONIST

First?

NADINE

Nadine.

She types a few words. She picks up a clipboard with some papers on it and a pen attached to it by a string.

RECEPTIONIST

Have a seat over there and fill these out.

NADINE

I filled these out the last time I came.

The receptionist sighs.

RECEPTIONIST

You must fill them out every time you come in. Do you want to see a case worker or not?

Nadine grabs the clipboard and she and Shay move over to the overcrowded waiting room. Shay stops to pick up a pen on the ground.

NADINE

Shay, fucking A, get over here.

Nadine goes over to Shay, grabs her by her arm, and yanks her into the waiting room. Nobody seems to notice or care.

Shay begins to cry. Nadine sits down and begins filling out the paper work. Nadine snuffles next to her.

Nadine stops writing and looks at Shay, apologetically.

NADINE (CONT'D)

We'll get some ice cream later.

Shay looks up at her.

SHAY

Promise?

NADINE
Stick a needle in my eye.

Shay chuckles and begins to write on a magazine with her pen.

INT. WELFARE OFFICE WAITING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Nadine and Shay remain in their chairs. The waiting room is less full. Shay sleeps. Nadine stares at the wall.

An African American CASE WORKER comes out of a door and into the waiting room with a clipboard. She puts on her glasses that dangle around her neck and looks at her papers.

CASE WORKER
Nadine Johnson?

Nadine nudges Shay to wake up.

CASE WORKER (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Nadine Johnson?

Shay gets up.

NADINE
Yes, right here.

They collect their stuff and approach the case worker. The case worker doesn't wait for them to get close, but turns around and opens the door, waiting for them to come through.

INT. CASE WORKER'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

The case worker looks at some files. Her desk has pictures of her children and husband. They all seem happy. There is memorabilia strewn throughout her cubby hole office.

Shay notices the pictures. Nadine sits nervously, waiting for the case worker to say something.

CASE WORKER
We are decreasing your benefits
this term.

NADINE
Why?

CASE WORKER

(sighs)

It says here that you have been working at JOE'S Diner.

NADINE

That was last year. It didn't work out.

CASE WORKER

Well, there's nothing I can do. You will have to reapply and state that you no longer have that job.

Nadine rubs her head.

NADINE

So you can't just make a change now? In your computer?

CASE WORKER

It doesn't work that way. You'll have to reapply.

The case worker turns and grabs a manila folder and hands it to Nadine.

CASE WORKER (CONT'D)

Here is a new packet.

Nadine hesitates, but then grabs the packet.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATE EVENING

Nadine watches TV. Shay sleeps with her head on her lap. Nadine shuts the TV off and strokes Shay's hair.

She looks at her cell phone on the end table. She hesitates, but eventually picks it up and dials. A man picks up.

MAN (O.S.)

Hello Nadine.

NADINE

I need some extra help this month.

MAN

I will be over in awhile.

He hangs up the phone. Nadine closes her phone. Her eyes sadden. She looks at Shay again, stroking her hair.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Sonny wakes up suddenly to the sound of his mother calling. She opens the door and stands in the threshold.

SONNY'S MOM

Sonny. Can't you hear me calling
your damn name?

He rubs his eyes.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

Terrance's here for you.

Sonny sits up.

LIVING ROOM

Sonny walks into the living room and Terrance, his best friend for most of his life stands up. Terrance is an African American man with short dreadlocks. He is slim, stylishly dressed in Hip Hop style. He has a persuasive face.

Terrance hands Sonny's mom a bottle of pills. Sonny acts like he didn't see the transaction when he comes into the room.

TERRANCE

What the fuck. If it ain't Slick
Sonny, the shittiest mother fucker
on the south block.

Sonny grins slightly and then walks over and gives Terrance a manly hug. They sit down to talk.

SONNY

It's been a minute. How ya been?

TERRANCE

Shit, same old. Been up, been
down. It's up now though ya know.
Things are rollin' now.

SONNY

Are you still with Tonya?

TERRANCE

Nah, dropped her. Her mom's got
the kids. It's all good.

There is some awkward silence for a couple seconds.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

So, how was the coup? Did you hang
wit' Jerry?

SONNY

Not much. He stayed on the east
wing mostly.

More silence. Terrance becomes more private, making sure
Sonny's mother isn't listening.

TERRANCE

Yo man. I know things are still
fresh, but-

SONNY

No way man.

TERRANCE

You don't even know what I was
going to say.

SONNY

I do, and the answer is no. I'm
going straight this time.

Sonny looks over at a picture of his daughter on top of the
TV. Terrance sees him glance at the picture. Terrance
stands up and walks toward the door. He motions for Sonny to
come outside the apartment door.

Sonny walks to him and they go outside the door.

HALLWAY

TERRANCE

Yo, I get it. You want to be
straight. The shit sucks in the
pen. But we're smarter now. Wiser.
We were just pucks then. Now we're
men. We won't make the same
mistakes again.

SONNY

Nah.

TERRANCE

But your the best. Shit, one
mistake, that's it. But we're too
good to get caught again.

SONNY

We're too good to get caught again?
I thought I was the one that spent
the last seven years of my life
locked up.

TERRANCE

Awh. True. My bad. But we're a
team. We've always been a team. A
crazy ass team team bra.

They both hear an argument rise to a loud level. Suddenly,
the neighbor's door is pushed open. Nadine comes out. Her
face is battered. Sonny and Terrance take notice, but try to
ignore her.

Then Shay, comes out as well. She has a pony tail. Nadine
shuts the door. Shay looks at Sonny.

NADINE

Motherfucker!

Shay continues to look at Sonny. Sonny recognizes her as the
girl from the window.

Nadine grabs her by the arm and they go down the stairs.
Shay keeps looking at Sonny. Sonny stares at her too with
sad eyes.

SONNY

Who was that.

TERRANCE

Some ho. What does it matter?
Sonny, listen. I know you're gonna
need money. And when you do,
holla.

Terrance and Sonny bump fists.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Missed ya bra.

SONNY

Yeah, you too.

Terrance leaves. Sonny goes back inside.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING. MORNING

A sign reads JJ's Paper Supply

INT. OFFICE BUILDING. MORNING

An OFFICE MANAGER dressed in a shirt and tie sits across the desk from Sonny looking at an application and shaking his head no. He sighs.

OFFICE MANAGER
Here's the deal. You have no work
experience.

The manager glances at Sonny's tattoos, especially the one on his neck, which is a prison sign.

OFFICE MANAGER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do
for you.

The manager stands up. Sonny pauses for a couple seconds before he stands up too. Sonny walks out the office door.

CUT TO:

INT. PACKING AND SHIPPING COMPANY WAREHOUSE. LATE MORNING

A WAREHOUSE MANAGER is directing some workers in the warehouse and then motions to Sonny to follow him.

SONNY
The guy at the front desk said that
you might be hiring.

The manager looks Sonny up and down with a quick glance. And then walks a bit. Sonny follows.

WAREHOUSE MANAGER
Times are tough right now. We need
help, but we can't afford it. (To
workers), Be careful, those boxes
are fragile. (To Sonny) Just can't
do it man.

CUT TO:

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT KITCHEN. AFTERNOON

Sonny is sitting on a plastic chair outside the FAST FOOD MANAGER'S office. The manager talks on the phone in his office, while Sonny watches people almost half his age wrapping burgers and putting food in microwaves.

He overhears a customer rudely complain about his burger being soggy.

FAST FOOD MANAGER
(From his office)
Come in.

Sonny gets up and enters the office. He takes a seat in front of the unorganized desk of the manager. The manager, a chubby white man about Sonny's age with a goatee and a messed up comb-over, does some things on his computer for a few seconds, paying little attention to Sonny. He's an asshole. He finally faces Sonny.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
What do you want me to do for you?

Sonny is obviously tired.

SONNY
I just want to work.

FAST FOOD MANAGER
Yeah that's obvious, but why would you expect me to hire you? Do you have any special qualities that are above and beyond those fucking bozos out there?

Sonny rubs his head in frustration and sighs.

SONNY
I'm good with people.

The manager chuckles and glances at Sonny's appearance.

FAST FOOD MANAGER
That's funny. And Hulk Hogan's my body double.

He turns to his computer again and types something.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
We just had an asshole quit so I can give you lunch shift on the fryer for minimum. But no interaction with the customers.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE. DAY

SONNY enters the door and stops to get his mail. He has a Burger Boy shirt draped over his shoulder. He carries a Burger Boy bag.

He turns and notices the eight year old girl, Shay, sitting on the bottom step of the staircase, blowing into a broken pinwheel. She has red eyes; obviously been crying. Sonny tries to ignore it.

He walks past her to go up the stairs. She flinches slightly. Sonny notices but keeps walking.

SHAY

Do you work at Burger Boy?

Sonny stops. He hesitates.

SONNY

Not yet.

Shay looks up at him.

SHAY

Where did you get that shirt then?

SONNY

I mean, I just got it. Haven't worked yet.

SHAY

(without hesitation)

What you got?

Sonny looks at the bag and lifts it a bit. Her eyes brighten.

SONNY

Nuggets.

SHAY

I love Nuggets. What sauce did you get? I love honey mustard. It's better than barbecue sauce, don't ya think?

SONNY

No sauce.

SHAY

(disappointed)

Oh.

She turns again to face the ground. Sonny continues to walk up the stairs. He stops. Turns around. Walks down a couple steps back. He extends the bag to her.

Shay looks up. She hesitates. Sonny gestures for her to take it.

SONNY

Here.

She finally grabs it.

SHAY

Thanks.

SONNY

Yeah.

He starts up the stairs again. Shay stands up.

SHAY

Do you know how to fix things?

SONNY

What?

SHAY

Can you fix this?

She holds the broken pinwheel up. He comes down a couple steps and grabs the pinwheel.

SONNY

What happened to it?

Her face saddens and she looks away. Shay pauses and looks back down at her nuggets.

Sonny stands still, holding the pinwheel and looking at her.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I hate when things break.

She looks up. Her eyes agree with him. He turns again and walks around the corner.

INT. SELAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonny lies on the bed trying to spin the pinwheel. It does not spin freely. He takes a pair of scissors and makes a couple small snips on a blade. He puts a small piece of tape on the same blade and straightens the base of the pinwheel attached to the stick.

He blows on the pinwheel again. This time it works. He sets it down on the dresser next to the bed.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Sonny and Terrance shoot hoops at a neighborhood schoolyard. Terrance shoots and misses. Sonny rebounds. Sonny walks over to Terrance.

SONNY
You're still shitty.

TERRANCE
Who are you? You been ballen' in the joint. I got other stuff going on.

SONNY
Yeah, but you're still shitty.

Terrance grabs the ball from Sonny and begins to bounce it. Terrance becomes a bit awkward and avoids eye contact with Sonny.

TERRANCE
I know I didn't visit you as often as I should've.

SONNY
It's aieat man.

Some silence.

TERRANCE
Thanks for not snitching. I owe ya.

Sonny grabs the ball from Terrance. He shoots a shot. It goes in. He turns back to Terrance.

SONNY
By the way, what ever happened to my part of the score?

Terrance looks surprised at the question.

TERRANCE
Ah man. You been in the joint for a minute. You don't expect it to still be here do ya?

SONNY
I guess I was just hoping. I wanna get out of here.
(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)

Somewhere with more grass than concrete. Ya feel me?

TERRANCE

I'm sorry man. But it's gone, but I can get you more. You know that.

SONNY

I know.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny and his mom are watching TV. The TV show is the Maury Povich show in its typical fashion, a dramatic reveal of "who's the father."

There is a knock at the door. Sonny's mom takes a drag of her cigarette. The glow of the TV flashes on her pale skin.

Sonny gets up to answer it. He opens the door and there stands Shay from next door. She looks a bit shaken up, nervous, but keeps it together. She holds a couple orange gerbera daisies.

SHAY

I was wondering if I could put these on your daughter's memorial?

Sonny's mom looks at Shay holding the flowers. She grabs a pill bottle, gets up and goes to her room. Sonny watches her leave, then looks back at Shay.

SONNY

Um...sure.

SHAY

Wanna come with me?

SONNY

Sure, I'm not doing nothing here.

A dramatic fight happens between two men on the Maury Povich show.

Sonny puts on a MLB "on field" cap with a straight rim. As he leaves out the door he stops.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Oh, wait.

He goes back in and into his daughter's room. He grabs the pinwheel off the dresser and comes back to the door.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Here.

Shay's eyes light up with joy.

SHAY

Thank you. It's so beautiful.
It's even prettier than before.

She hugs Sonny. The hug is awkward for him, but not for Shay.

EXT. SELAH'S MEMORIAL - EVENING

Shay places the flowers on the memorial. Sonny stands beside her.

Shay looks at a picture of Selah that has been freshly posted on the telephone pole.

SHAY

She is so pretty. You must have
been so happy with her.

Sonny looks at the ground.

SHAY (CONT'D)

I wish I was as pretty as her. My
mom says that I am, but I don't
always believe her. Only
sometimes.

Sonny looks back up at her.

Shay turns to look at the memorial.

SHAY (CONT'D)

I hope that when I die, people put
flowers and stuffed animals next to
my picture. Hopefully lots of
tigers. I like tigers. I know
that boys are supposed to like
tigers, not girls. But tigers are
my favorite.

Sonny gives her a sad smile. Shay touches Selah's face on the picture.

SHAY (CONT'D)

Do you miss her?

SONNY
Everyday.

SHAY
Do you -

NADINE (O.S.)
Shay... Shay.

Shay's mother comes around the corner and sees Shay talking with Sonny.

NADINE (CONT'D)
Fucking shit Shay. What the fuck are you doing out here?

SHAY
Mom, I was just giving flowers to Selah.

Shay's mom comes close to Shay, bends down and pulls her close. She begins to cry a bit.

NADINE
Baby. I just got so scared. I'm sorry I didn't even notice you left. I'm sorry.

SHAY
Mom, this is Sonny. He's our neighbor.

Nadine looks him up and down and shows him a guarded face. She pulls Shay closer to her.

NADINE
Well, let's go.

She begins to pull Shay away from the memorial. Shay struggles back.

SHAY
Hold on mom.

She goes back to the memorial and places the pinwheel in the stack of stuffed animals.

SHAY (CONT'D)
(whispering to Sonny)
I think she would enjoy this more than me.

Sonny looks at her and says nothing. He turns to watch Nadine and Shay walk away and around the corner. He turns back and watches the pinwheel blow gently in the breeze.

INT. BURGER BOY RESTAURANT - DAY

Sonny is standing over the deep fryer as it beeps progressively louder. He's staring at the wall behind the fryer. The manager walks up to Sonny and talks directly to his ear.

FAST FOOD MANAGER
Hey jerk-ass. You gonna take those
fries out or should I?

Sonny shakes out of his distraction.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Cause if I have to do it. You can
take your tattooed ass back to the
ghetto, or hood, or whatever ya'll
call it. Are you picking up what
I'm dropping?

Sonny takes the fries out of the fryer and dumps them in the strainer next to it.

The manager walks towards his office, picks up a cheeseburger *
that another employee wraps, takes a bite and brings the
cheeseburger into his office with him.

Sonny returns to introspection.

EXT. BUS STOP - EVENING

Sonny steps off a bus with his Burger Boy shirt draped over a shoulder and walks past CHERRY, a drug-addled, twitchy, trainwreck of a woman in her mid-twenties begging people for change. The bangs of her long, flowing hair barely cover an oversized bump on her forehead.

CHERRY
(to a woman passenger)
Excuse me ma'am. I just need a
quarter for the bus.

The lady keeps walking.

CHERRY (CONT'D)
(to another bus passenger)
Sir.
(MORE)

CHERRY (CONT'D)

My kid needs some medicine and I
don't get paid until tomorrow. Can
you spare a few dollars?

The man walks by too.

Sonny stops and peers back at Cherry. He walks back to her.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

(to another person)

My kids need some groceries, can
you give me some change?

Sonny gets her attention

SONNY

Cherry?

Cherry looks at him with blood shot eyes. Her face is
riddled with scabs. Her body is skinny and malnourished.
The only thing still attractive about her is her hair and the
shape of her eyes.

CHERRY

Sir, thank you sir. I just need
cereal for my kids.

SONNY

Cherry, it's Sonny. From school.

CHERRY

Who?

She looks at each car that passes by, trying to catch the
eyes of certain men, customers.

SONNY

Sonny. West High?

CHERRY

Oh, Sonny. Yeah, I'member. Can
you give me some money?

She hears a car horn beep. She responds to the car and puts
up her hands. The car keeps going.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

SONNY

What's up with you?

CHERRY

What?

Another car pulls to a stop across the street. Cherry waves at the car and then runs over to it and gets in. Sonny watches the car pull away.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny walks around the corner of his apartment building. He quickly notices a group of young, black men beating the shit out of another black man who is on the ground. They are brutally kicking him in the ribs and the face.

Sonny does not want to get involved but can't help notice how unfair the situation is. A THUG, who appears to be the leader, watches the MAN get beat up by his BOYS. He notices Sonny pause at the door and look at them.

THUG

What the fuck are you looking at nigga?

Sonny turns around and faces him.

SONNY

Do you always have people fight for you?

The thugs steps up to him and flashes his gun tucked under his belt. Sonny notices.

THUG

Walk away bitch.

The thug stares at Sonny. Sonny takes a deep breath, turns around, and walks into his apartment building.

The thug turns back to the fight.

INT. JAMES'S OFFICE. LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny's parole officer, JAMES, leans back on his chair when Sonny enters the room. He is an athletic looking black guy with a muscular build, short hair, and a gentle, but stern face. He wears a button down shirt with no tie, a couple top buttons are undone and his sleeves are rolled up.

JAMES

Hey what's up Sonny. Take a seat.

Sonny sits. James continues to lean back on his chair. He rocks back and forth slightly while chewing on his pen.

JAMES (CONT'D)
So how's it going?

SONNY
It's alright.

James opens a folder and examines it.

JAMES
Since this is our first meeting, I
just have to ask you a few standard
questions. Is that cool?

SONNY
Yeah.

JAMES
Do you still live at 44 S. Grey
st.?

Sonny nods.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Is your phone still 555-5276?

SONNY
Yeah.

JAMES
Have you had a chance to look for a
job yet?

SONNY
Yeah, got one already.

JAMES
Where?

SONNY
Burger Boy, downtown.

JAMES
Okay.

James makes a few notes on his file. He reads a bit.

JAMES (CONT'D)
It says here. . .

He pauses and looks up at Sonny. He looks back down.

JAMES (CONT'D)

. . .that your daughter died while
you were in prison.

Sonny looks down and slightly away. James looks up at him. Sonny's eyes fill with tears, but none of them fall. James keeps looking at Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Does your mom still live at your
apartment?

Sonny, looking down, looks back up at James.

SONNY

Yeah.

James closes his file.

JAMES

Okay, I think that's enough for
today. It looks like we meet again
next week. Same time, same place.

Sonny gets up to leave. James gets up too. They stand under the threshold of the door. James extends his hand to Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Be careful.

Sonny nods and walks out the office door and down the hallway. James watches Sonny walk down the hall and around the corner. He goes back to his desk, sits down, and grabs a framed photo of him and his daughter. He looks at it for a couple moments, sets it down, and reflects.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Sonny stands outside of Nadine's door. He wants to knock but hesitates for some reason. He decides not to and begins to walk away. The door opens and Nadine comes out with a bag of trash. She is startled a bit.

NADINE

Oh, shit. What's hap'nin'?

SONNY

Not much. Just chillen. You?

NADINE

Taking out the trash. Did you
knock on my door?

SONNY
No.

NADINE
Oh.

Nadine begins to walk down the stairs.

SONNY
But I wanted to.

Nadine turns around.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Here's what's up. My Parole
Officer says I should meet new,
positive people. Get new peeps,
you know?

NADINE
Parole officer huh?

Sonny turns to put his key into his front door.

SONNY
Forget it. Don't worry 'bout it.

He opens the door and goes inside.

Nadine pauses, but only slightly before she walks down the stairs.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny leans against the front door. He hits the back of his head against the door a few times. He stops to see his mother passed out on the couch again.

He turns around, opens the door and leaves.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine puts her bag of garbage into a trash can behind the apartment. Sonny approaches her.

Nadine turns around and is startled.

NADINE
What the hell man!

SONNY

First off. I wasn't trying to pick you up.

Nadine walks around him. He turns to her as she walks away.

SONNY (CONT'D)

So, I have a fucking P.O. Who doesn't around here.

She stops and turns around.

NADINE

I don't know you. My daughter doesn't know you. I can't just-

She takes a breath.

NADINE (CONT'D)

I don't-

Sonny comes closer to her.

SONNY

I just want to do something right for once.

Nadine folds her arms and looks at Sonny.

NADINE

I can't.

She turns around and walks away, back into her apartment. She shuts the door.

INSIDE NADINE'S APARTMENT

Nadine moves quickly to her kitchen table chair and sits down. Her hands are shaking and she rubs them together. She gets up and opens the fridge. She grabs a beer, opens it, and takes a long drink. She hears a KNOCK on the door. Surprised, she doesn't move. The knocking persists.

She finally gets up and jolts the door open.

NADINE

What!

There stands The Landlord, wearing a pair of dress pants and a button down shirt with a tie. She flinches by slightly moving the door closed. The Landlord notices.

THE LANDLORD

No, no. That's not part of the deal.

She releases her pressure on the door. He walks right in. She does not resist, but her face is filled with disgust. The door closes in our face.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James stands in front of SIX PAROLE OFFICER RECRUITS. Mostly men and one woman. They have notebooks in front of them.

JAMES

Welcome to P.O. training. In the next couple weeks we will get to know each other pretty well. Hopefully, you will leave here better prepared for the work of a Parole Officer.

The recruits seem anxious to get started.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay. Turn in your notebooks to page six. Let's get started with the effects of incarceration and integration back into society.

INT. JAMES' DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

James opens the door of his daughter's bedroom. His daughter sleeps in her bed. He walks to her and sits down on the edge of her bed. She doesn't wake up. He looks at her affectionately and gently pushes her bangs away from her face.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sonny wakes up to the sound of water spraying, coming from the kitchen.

SONNY'S MOM (O.S.)

Shit. Shit. Sonny. Sonny. Get your ass up. Ahh!

Sonny gets out of his bed quickly and heads out the door.

KITCHEN

The kitchen sink has sprung a major leak and water is spraying all over the kitchen. Sonny's mom sits on a chair out of reach from the water spray.

Sonny runs over to the sink to fix the problem, water sprays him, soaking him.

SONNY'S MOM

Shut it off Sonny! It's ruining
the kitchen!

Sonny opens the cupboard below and looks frantically for the shut off valves.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

Fuck Sonny, shut it off!

SONNY

I'm trying!

He finds the valve and shuts it off. He sighs, sits down, face dripping with water. He begins to laugh.

His mother sees a coloring book page from the fridge. It's soaked. She grabs it.

SONNY'S MOM

Shit. No, not this one.

She holds it delicately, but its falling apart from being wet.

Sonny stands up. She pushes him in his chest. Sonny is surprised. She walks out of the kitchen, down the hall, and into her room.

Sonny leans against the counter and sighs; water drips from his hair and clothes.

SONNY

Shit.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Sonny walks like he is looking for someone. He approaches a MAN sitting on a folding chair outside his apartment building.

SONNY
Hey bro, you seen Terrance?

The man points toward the local bar across the street.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

Sonny walks into the front door of the bar. Terrance is at corner table with a man that Sonny has never met. They don't notice Sonny because they are talking business.

Sonny approaches the table, eyeing Terrance's company.

SONNY
Terrance? What's hap'nin'?

TERRANCE
(nervously)
Sonny, what's going on?

Terrance stands up and the strange man leans back, taking a sip of his vodka on the rocks.

SONNY
Just wanted to see ya.

TERRANCE
Cool. Cool. Wanna go somewhere else?

SONNY
Na, it's cool here.

Sonny looks around Terrance at the man.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Who's your friend?

Terrance looks at the man.

TERRANCE
Ah shit, Sonny this is The Landlord.

Sonny folds his arms.

SONNY
Oh, so this is the famous Landlord.
Do you have a first name.

THE LANDLORD
Na, just The Landlord. Wanna know
why?

SONNY
Why?

THE LANDLORD
Cause I own these streets.

The Landlord smirks. Sonny just looks at him.

Terrance grabs Sonny by the arm and leads him away from the
table over to the bar.

TERRANCE
So, what's up. Whachya need mein?

Sonny looks over Terrance's shoulder at The Landlord.

SONNY
(softly)
Is that The Landlord?

TERRANCE
Yeah. This is his bar.

SONNY
What are you doing with him?

TERRANCE
Take it easy. I work with him
sometimes.

SONNY
He's *your* boss?

TERRANCE
I didn't say that. I said "with"
him, not for him.

Sonny looks around Terrance again, but Terrance makes him
focus on him.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
He's connected. He gets good jobs.
He knows about everything that goes
down within a 100 mile radius. He
gives me some jobs. Okay? In fact
I got something for you that pays
well. Easy job. Some quick cash.
Told you about it.

Sonny rubs his head in frustration.

SONNY
I'll talk at you later man.

He walks away.

TERRANCE
Sonny?

Sonny walks out of the bar.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sonny and his mom watch TV. There is a knock at the door. He gets up and opens it. It's Nadine. She looks around as if frightened. She smokes a cigarette. She tries to look like she has it together, but she doesn't. Sonny notices.

SONNY
You aieat?

Nadine fixes her hair.

NADINE
What were you in jail for? You a
murderer?

Sonny is taken back by this.

SONNY
No.

NADINE
You ain't no fuckin' child molestor
are ya?

SONNY
Fuck no.

She takes a drag of her cigarette. She looks away quickly and then back at Sonny. She looks around Sonny at his mom lying on the couch.

NADINE
Is that your mom?

Sonny gestures for her to come in.

SONNY
Yeah, wanna come in?

Nadine reacts to the sound of the front door opening and closing downstairs.

NADINE

We can be ready tonight if you want to pick us up.

SONNY

Yeah, sure.

Nadine walks away and into her apartment.

EXT. PUTT PUTT GOLF - EVENING

Sonny, Nadine and Shay sit around a table overlooking a miniature golf course. They are eating pizza. Sonny and Nadine drink beer. Nadine smokes a cigarette. Shay looks like she wants to play more golf, holding a putter.

SHAY

Mom, can I play some more?

NADINE

Yeah sweetie, go ahead.

Shay gets up and leaves the table. We can see her playing golf in the background.

Sonny and Nadine sit in awkward silence for a few seconds.

SONNY

Where did you stay before my neighborhood?

NADINE

Your neighborhood?

SONNY

Well, sort of.

NADINE

We lived in Madisonville.

SONNY

Why did you move here?

NADINE

We needed cheap rent. Her dad left us nothing but bad memories.

Nadine looks over at Shay and smiles. Sonny does the same.

SONNY

So your man is not her dad

Nadine looks back sharply.

NADINE

My man? Who? The Landlord? No,
he's just my landlord.

She takes another sip of her beer and looks away. Sonny sips again too. Nadine takes another drag. She looks at Shay again. Sonny looks at Nadine. Sonny looks at Shay too.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - LATE EVENING

Sonny and Nadine reach the top of the apartment stairs. Sonny is carrying Shay, who is sleeping.

Terrance hears them and hides around the corner of the next flight of stairs.

Nadine opens her apartment door. She looks around inside and then opens the door wider for Sonny to bring Shay in. Sonny takes her down the hall and into her bedroom.

SHAY'S BEDROOM

Sonny lays Shay on her bed. He looks around her room. There are pictures of horses and princesses on the wall. Her sheets are strawberry shortcake.

NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Nadine stands by the open door. She keeps looking outside.

NADINE

Sonny, I had a fun time.

Sonny is confused.

SONNY

That's cool.

Sonny walks passed Nadine, but not without them both seeming attracted to each other. He enters the hallway.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Can I see you again?

NADINE
I don't know, maybe.

SONNY
Ok.

Nadine smiles slightly and shuts the door.

HALLWAY

Sonny turns toward his own front door. Terrance comes around the corner, startling Sonny a bit.

SONNY
What the fuck bra, walkin' up on me like that.

TERRANCE
You know you asking for trouble nigga. The Landlord is no one to fuck with.

SONNY
Whachya talking about?

Terrance lowers his voice.

TERRANCE
She's his girl. You feel me?

SONNY
What the hell you talking about?

TERRANCE
Come-on Sonny, don't be stupid. She gives him benefits.

SONNY
For what?

TERRANCE
Rent. But she's his favorite.

SONNY
Fuck him.

TERRANCE
Don't say that man. You've been gone for a minute. There's new blood in this hood.

SONNY
He's the new blood?

TERRANCE
Him and others, but he's the shit
now. Let's put it this way. He
does what he wants, when he wants.
That's how it is. You know this
type of shit.

Terrance looks around to make sure no one is listening. He
whispers.

SONNY
Yeah.

TERRANCE
I'm just saying, cause I love ya
bra. Don't mess with him. I hate
to say it. You might find yourself
dead too.

SONNY
Fuck that man.

Sonny moves passed Terrance to get to his door.

SONNY (CONT'D)
What are you doing here anyway?

TERRANCE
I got a proposition for ya.

Sonny puts the key in the lock.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
It's a simple transfer that's all.
No risk, just profit.

Sonny opens the door. Terrance grabs his arm.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
You were the best Sonny. And,
straight, I know you need the money
man. I'll make it a sweet deal.

Sonny pulls his arm away and enters his apartment, shutting
the door behind him.

INT. MCDONALD'S - EVENING

Sonny comes into the back door of kitchen. He's late so he hurries to put on his shirt and clock in. His boss sees him from his office.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (O.S.)
Hey asshole. Come in here.

Sonny tenses up. He enters the manager's office. His boss is twirling a pen. His desk has papers and trays on top of it.

OFFICE

FAST FOOD MANAGER
Take a seat.

Sonny sits down.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Let me guess. You're mad at me for you being late?

Sonny just stares at him.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Well, I'm used to pricks like you thinking everyone else is the problem. None of you ever blame yourself. It's always someone else's fault.

He stops twirling his pen. He leans forward.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Well guess what. It is your fault that you're late.

He leans back.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Now get to work. And don't expect to get paid for the first two hours of work.

Sonny doesn't move. He stares at the manager.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Well, go, get out of my office.

Sonny gets up suddenly. The manager flinches like a frightened cat. Sonny throws his hat at the manager.

SONNY

Fuck this place. Fuck you. You're lucky I don't beat you down right here.

Sonny turns around and walks out.

KITCHEN

The other employees watch as Sonny leaves the office. He takes off his work shirt and throws it on the floor. Sonny aggressively pushes open the back door of the kitchen and leaves.

EXT. APARTMENT FIRE ESCAPE - LATE EVENING

Sonny sits on a folding chair outside on the fire escape, reflecting. Street noises are abundant. Behind him we can see Nadine and Shay enter the hallway carrying grocery bags and a fridge pack of Mountain Dew. Nadine notices Sonny. She opens her apartment door and motions for Shay to go inside. She sets her groceries inside the door and then walks up to the window by Sonny.

NADINE

Hey.

Sonny turns to see Nadine. He sees Shay peek her head around the door behind Nadine. Shay waves sweetly. Sonny waves back and smiles.

NADINE (CONT'D)

What's up?

SONNY

Quit my job.

She crawls out onto the fire escape and sits down. They sit in silence for a few moments.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Do you ever wish you could leave this place?

Nadine listens.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I mean, I love this place. This is where I learned to ride a bike. That house down the street is where my grandma and grandpa used to live. Memories, you know.

A police car screeches by.

SONNY (CONT'D)

But there is so much fucking drama. I feel like I'm going to burst.

Nadine nods.

NADINE

Yeah.

Nadine reaches slowly and gently grabs Sonny's hand.

Sonny tightens his hand on Nadine's and looks in her eyes.

Nadine slides over and sits closer to Sonny. He puts his arm around her. She leans her head on his shoulder. The Camera pulls away from above.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sonny is cooking breakfast when he hears a knock at the door. He puts down his spatula, wipes his hands and then answers the door. There stands James.

SONNY

What took you so long?

JAMES

Can I come in?

Sonny motions to come in. He goes back to cooking his eggs and bacon.

SONNY

So, news travels fast.

JAMES

What happened?

SONNY

He's an asshole.

JAMES

Yeah I know. We've had trouble with him in the past.

Sonny brings a frying pan over to the table.

SONNY

Breakfast?

JAMES

No. Trying to lose a few.

SONNY

Suit yourself.

Sonny shovels some food on a plate.

JAMES

I don't care about that asshole.
How are you?

Sonny sits at the table. He shakes salt and pepper over his eggs.

SONNY

You think I'll go back to hustling?

JAMES

It's all too common for people in your situation.

Sonny eats a piece of bacon.

SONNY

People in my situation, huh?

JAMES

I didn't mean it like that.

Sonny takes the last bite of his eggs, gets up and puts his dishes in the sink.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Look, Sonny. I'm not trying to come down on ya. I get. I do. I was you awhile back.

SONNY

Well, I'll get another job. I'm better than fast food anyway.

JAMES

Alright. Can't argue that.

Sonny's mom comes into the room smoking a cigarette and looking pretty high. James watches her, but she does not acknowledge his presence.

She sits down and turns on the TV. James gets up from the table.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, call me if you need help. I got some connections if you need them.

James opens the front door then turns toward Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Sonny, be careful.

Sonny nods. James leaves. Sonny looks at his mother. She's depressed and worn out.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Sonny cleans his kitchen; putting dishes away, washing the counter and that type of stuff. There is a knock at the door. He walks over and opens it. Nadine.

SONNY

Hey. What's up?

NADINE

Shay's at school. Wanna do something?

EXT. RIVER BOAT DOCK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Sonny and Nadine stand on a low dock above somewhat shallow water, watching barges slowly go by. Sonny stands closer to the edge than Nadine. Nadine turns as if to get off the dock. Instead, she pushes Sonny into the water. He goes under and comes right back up. She laughs intensely.

Sonny treads water.

SONNY

What the fuck.

Nadine laughs harder. Then she runs and jumps in as well, almost on top of Sonny. They playfully tread water together, splashing each other.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny and Nadine are soaked. They stand by the doors of Sonny's car.

SONNY
I got no towels.

Nadine opens the door and sits down, soaking the seat. Sonny does the same.

INT/EXT. SONNY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine laughs again, almost uncontrollably. Sonny joins in. They settle down a bit and pick up 24 ounce beers wrapped in paper bags and opens them. They both take sips, laughing through their gulps.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny walks Nadine to her front door. She leans against the door. They hold hands. Sonny leans in to kiss her, but she turns away slightly. He kisses her on the cheek.

She turns around, opens her door, and walks into her apartment, shutting the door behind her. Sonny stands there, smiling.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Sonny sits on a swing within a jungle gym. Terrance emerges from the darkness and approaches him. He sits down on a swing next to Sonny. He sways slightly.

TERRANCE
So we gonna do this?

SONNY
Yeah. I'm back in.

TERRANCE
That's the shit. Yeah!

SONNY
But I want a favor. I need a gun again.

TERRANCE
No prob nigga

INT. SONNY'S DAUGHTER'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sonny is lying on Selah's bed. His eyes well up with tears, but none of them fall.

EXT. TERRANCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. LATE EVENING.

Sonny knocks on the door. Soon Terrance opens the door and lets him in.

INT. TERRANCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. SAME TIME

Sonny enters the living room where there are a few rough guys standing around. Terrance sits down at a chair and one of the guys stands behind him as if protecting him. Terrance crosses his legs and leans back.

Terrance motions to one of the other guys. He pulls out a duffle bag from inside a cabinet. And puts by Terrance's feet. Terrance smiles at Sonny.

Terrance opens the bag and pulls out a form wrapped in a cloth. He opens the cloth and shows Sonny a hand gun.

TERRANCE

By request. Just for you my number one nigga.

He places the gun on the table. Sonny reaches over and grabs it and puts it in his inside jacket pocket.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

It's loaded. Here are the keys to the car outside.

Sonny grabs the keys and then goes to grab the duffle bag, but Terrance stops him by grabbing his wrist.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

If you get caught, you know what to do. Or should I say what not to do.

Sonny grabs the bag and leaves the apartment building.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. SAME TIME

Sonny walks over to a car, puts the duffle bag into the trunk and gets into the car.

Sonny drives for awhile. Then he looks in his rear view mirror. A police car pulls behind him and travels with him for awhile. The policeman then puts on his car's lights and siren.

Sonny remains cool, but is obviously nervous. He reaches for his gun in his pocket.

The cop car speeds up and passes Sonny's car, driving off into the distance. He loosens his grip on the gun.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. NICE NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Sonny and Terrance lean on the front of a 1969 Ford Mustang Fastback. Terrance smokes a cigarette. Down the street a lady comes out of her front door. She gets into the passenger side of a Lincoln town car and pulls away.

Terrance throws his cigarette on the ground. Terrance walks toward the house. Sonny gets in the car.

BACK DOOR OF LARGE HOUSE

Terrance goes to the back door and breaks in. He goes straight to the master bedroom. He empties drawers of jewelry into a pillow case.

He comes out the same door. Walks to the front. Sonny sees him and picks him up.

I/E. CAR

SONNY

Think anyone saw ya?

TERRANCE

Maybe, but to these people we all look alike.

They both laugh. They drive away.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A MAN in his early twenties enters the front door of an apartment building. Inside he is greeted by TERRANCE'S GUARD.

APARTMENT

The guard opens the door to an apartment where Terrance and Sonny are sitting with plastic storage bins full of cocaine under their table.

The young man gives them an envelope of money. Terrance looks at its contents and then hands him a grocery bag. The man peers in the bag; satisfied, he leaves.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Sonny pulls a duffle bag from underneath his bed. He unzips it. Inside there is a little bit of money. He places a couple stacks of bills into it, zips it back up and puts it back under his bed.

EXT. OUTSIDE DOWNTOWN MUSEUM - EARLY EVENING

Some sort of benefit dinner is being held at a museum. Many wealthy people attend. Sonny and Terrance watch from a distance as beautiful cars pull up the street and park.

As the people clear the streets and enter the museum Sonny goes up to a BMW, smashes the driver's side window, hot wires the car and takes off. A museum attendant tries to stop him by yelling, but Sonny is fast. Sonny picks Terrance up around the corner.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Sonny and Terrance watch a MECHANIC disassemble the car.

A MAN hands them an envelope of money.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Sonny puts more money into the duffle bag and slides it under the bed. His mother sees him slide the bag under the bed as she walks by his door.

END MONTAGE

I/E. SONNY'S CAR - DAY

Sonny drives. Nadine and Shay sit in the car with blindfolds over their eyes with wide smiles and giggles from Shay.

NADINE

When can we take these off. It's been so long, I think I've lost my ability to see.

Shay continues to giggle, almost hysterically.

SONNY

We're almost there. Just around this curve.

Sonny pulls the car around a curve, revealing a horse farm. Horses trot around, some with riders. He pulls up to the entrance and stops the car. He gets out quickly goes around the car and opens the doors for Nadine and Shay. They get out.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Ready?

SHAY

Come-on, come-on, come-on.

Sonny takes off their blindfolds. Shay's smile cannot get any larger.

SHAY (CONT'D)

Mom look at all the horses.

She looks at Sonny and Nadine.

SHAY (CONT'D)

Can I go look at them?

They both nod. She runs to the fence. Sonny smiles more than he has since Selah died.

Nadine looks at him, but shows concern. Sonny looks at Nadine and notices her strained eyes.

SONNY

What's up. You aight?

NADINE

I'm cool.

She walks over to Shay who feeds the horses some carrots.

Sonny watches both of them. His eyes flash with joy.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance sit in The Landlord's booth at The Landlord's bar. There is a pretty good crowd. There is heavy Hip Hop music playing as most of the crowd dances in the middle of the bar's dance floor.

Sonny sips on a rum and coke, while Terrance slams back a couple shots of tequila. The Landlord is not there so Terrance acts like the big shot, smoking a philly sweet and leaning back into his booth. He is obviously drunk. He watches the ladies and a couple ladies glance over at him.

Terrance reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out an envelope filled with money. He slides it across the table. Sonny picks it up and puts it into his pocket.

Terrance goes back to watching ladies dance. He motions to the waitress to bring another round of drinks. The waitress does not see him motion.

TERRANCE

What the fuck. I know she sees me.

He motions again. The waitress sees him, but motions to him that she is busy but will be right there.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Nah, Terrance don't wait for no one.

Terrance stands up on the table of his booth.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Hey bitch, bring me my drink or get the fuck out of my bar.

Sonny tries to pull him down.

SONNY

Take it easy Terrance.

Terrance pulls away.

TERRANCE

Nah man. That's fucked up.

Sonny tugs on his arm again to get him to sit down.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Don't fucking touch me bra.

Sonny looks at him, gritting his teeth. He throws a few dollars on the table and slips out of the booth seat. He walks to the door.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Sonny, where you going man? I'm
Just fuckin' with her. Stay man.

Terrance laughs. Terrance starts to dance a bit while standing on the table. He slips a bit, but catches himself. He laughs again. Sonny looks at him compassionately.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sonny walks in the front door. His mom is passed out on the couch. He goes into his bedroom.

BEDROOM

Sonny enters the room and shuts the door behind him. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the money filled envelope. He falls to his knees and reaches for the duffle bag.

He notices that the bag is empty. He unzips it frantically. The money is gone.

SONNY

Motherfucker!

He gets up off his knees, opens the door angrily and storms into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

He stands over his mother who is still sleeping.

SONNY

Where's the fucking money!

His mom wakes up extremely frightened.

SONNY'S MOM

What! What! Sonny?

He holds the bag in front of her face.

SONNY

(slowly)

Where's the fucking money!

She sits up. Sonny grabs an ashtray off the coffee table and throws it across the room. It smashes against the wall.

His mom walks out of the living room and down the hall toward her room. Sonny sits down on the couch in defeat. He puts the empty bag on his lap.

She walks into her room and she shuts the door behind her. Sonny leans back and puts his face in his hands.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Aaggggh!

INT. NADINE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Nadine wakes up from the commotion next door. She puts on a robe.

SHAY'S BEDROOM

Nadine peeks into Shay's bedroom. Shay is sleeping soundly.

SONNY'S APARTMENT DOOR

Nadine knocks on Sonny's door.

NADINE

Sonny?

There is no answer.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Sonny? It's Nadine.

She is about to leave when the Sonny opens the door.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Hey. You alright?

SONNY

Na, nothing good here.

There are a couple seconds of silence.

NADINE

Wanna come over and have a drink?

NADINE'S APARTMENT

Sonny sits on a couch as Nadine mixes a gin and tonic behind him. She brings it over to him and sits down next to him with her own drink.

She looks at him. He rubs his eyes and scratches his head. His eyes are heavy. His soul heavier.

Nadine reaches over, softly touches his neck. He looks at her. She leans in and sweetly kisses him. After they kiss Sonny leans his head on her shoulder. She hugs him.

She notices that Sonny is very tired. She lies his head down on the couch, puts a pillow under his head and places a blanket over him.

He falls asleep.

NADINE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Nadine quickly enters the living room.

NADINE

Get up! Sonny get up! You got to leave now.

Sonny is surprised and confused. He sits up.

SONNY

What's up?

Nadine scrambling to find Sonny's shoes.

NADINE

You got to get out of my apartment.

SONNY

Why?

NADINE

I can't explain now, but you gotta leave.

She finds his shoes. Sonny sees Shay standing under the threshold of the hallway. She is holding a blanket and rubbing her eyes.

Sonny's face falls. He turns to Nadine, grabbing his shoes from her. He puts them on and walks to the door.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Sonny. I'm sorry.

Sonny opens the door. He turns back quickly. Nadine flinches as if he is going to hit her. Sonny notices her flinch. Concerned, he scans her scared eyes.

Sonny goes out the door and slams it behind him.

HALLWAY

Sonny keeps walking angrily down the stairs and out the front door of the apartment.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE. MOMENTS LATER

Sonny paces outside of his apartment building. He is breathing heavy and clinching his fists.

The Landlord comes around the corner carrying a coffee and a newspaper. Sonny stops pacing about five feet from the door. The Landlord stops at the entrance, looks at Sonny. Sonny looks at him. The Landlord enters the door. Sonny explodes with anger and kicks over a bicycle leaning against the building.

He leans against the same wall and slides to a sitting position.

SONNY

Damn it!

Cherry steps out of a car, obviously finished with a trick. Her customer is an old, ugly man. She approaches Sonny, jonesing for some crack. She sees Sonny sitting against the wall. She makes a b-line for him.

CHERRY

Sonny. Sonny. Hey Sonny. Hey.

Sonny looks up at her and notices her state of craving.

SONNY

What's hap'nin.

Cherry is twitchy and shifty

CHERRY

Sonny, I won't ask you this again, but you got some extra change for the bus?

SONNY
Not now Cherry.

CHERRY
Just a couple quarters, come-on.

Sonny gets up and walks toward the apartment door.

SONNY
Not now I said.

As he's about to go into the door.

CHERRY
I know something about Terrance.
Terrance and you.

Sonny pauses and turns around.

SONNY
What are you talking about.

CHERRY
Just some money, come-on, and I'll
tell ya.

SONNY
Com'on Cherry.

She looks around to make sure no one is listening.

CHERRY
He was supposed to be your friend.

Sonny becomes intrigued, but annoyed. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a couple dollars and hands them to her.

SONNY
Whachya know?

CHERRY
See, he set you up.

SONNY
What?

CHERRY
He set you up. And he took the
score himself.

SONNY
What the fuck are you talking
about?

CHERRY

He said that he sent you to the basement. So that he could leave with the stuff, and you get jammed.

Sonny looks around with an angry expression. He looks back at Cherry. She is so fucked up. He can't help but feel pity.

SONNY

Cherry. Don't fuck with me.

She draws in closer to Sonny. She's almost sober like for a moment.

CHERRY

I'm invisible. No one gives a shit about a crack whore. They say things in front of us, thinking we ain't listening. They don't see us anymore.

He turns around and goes into the apartment building, slamming the door behind him.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonny sleeps. He struggles a bit. He dreams.

EXT. STREET - DAY (DREAM)

Sonny is handcuffed and leaning face down on a police car. The police car's lights flash and a small crowd of neighborhood people watch the policemen frisk Sonny.

Sonny looks to the crowd and notices Terrance looking at him and nodding slowly. He sees his mother who is holding his daughter, Selah, close to her body. Selah is crying hysterically. Her grandma holds her tight so that she cannot come to him, even though she tries desperately.

The police grab Sonny and put him into the back of the police car. As the car pulls away Sonny looks out the back window. The crowd blurs and now he sees only Nadine firmly holding a hysterical Shay who tries to squirm away.

SONNY'S BEDROOM

Sonny wakes and sits up, breathing heavy.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Sonny and James Are having breakfast together. Sonny is very discouraged. He drinks his coffee with quick sips.

JAMES

It seems life is getting
frustrating again.

Sonny looks to the waitress and signals for more coffee.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's been some time since you lost
the Burger Boy job. Have you found
something else?

SONNY

No one wants to hire a felon.

James pulls out a folded piece of paper from his jacket pocket. He hands it to Sonny.

JAMES

Here.

Sonny opens up the paper and scans it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

A buddy of mine runs a lumber yard
just outside the city. He said he
is willing to work with your record
as long as you're dependable.

Sonny sets the paper down.

At that moment The Landlord and a tough looking BLACK DUDE with tattoos and big muscles walks into the diner and walks toward Sonny and James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You need a job man. This is a good
opportunity.

The Landlord and his thug walk right by their booth. Sonny and The Landlord's eyes meet. James notices that Sonny is distracted.

The Landlord sits down at the other end of the diner, facing Sonny. His thug sits at the table next to him, leaving the seat across from The Landlord open.

James turns to see who Sonny is looking at. James and The Landlord make eye contact. James looks back at Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Sonny? Sonny?

Sonny finally looks back at James.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Okay look. You don't think I know who that is? That's The Landlord. He's involved with a lot. Cops have been after him for quite awhile now. Look. I'm gonna be straight up. You wanna be like that guy. A bad ass. Well, let me tell you something. He might be a bad ass, but outside this neighborhood he's got no power.

Sonny sighs.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You don't need power like that. You need freedom. And he ain't got that.

Sonny looks at James.

SONNY
I'm just trying to help some people out. What's so wrong with that?

James gets up, throws a few dollars on the table, and looks back at The Landlord who reads a newspaper.

JAMES
Take the job Sonny. It's the right way out.

James leaves the diner.

Sonny continues to drink his coffee until he is certain James has left. Then he gets up and walks over to the table The Landlord is at. The Landlord's thug gets up and gets between Sonny and The Landlord. Sonny looks at him and then at The Landlord.

He reads a couple seconds more then slowly folds his newspaper and puts it down. The Landlord gestures for the thug to sit back down. He looks at Sonny and smirks.

LANDLORD

Sit.

The thug moves back. Sonny pauses, looking at the thug and then sits.

THE LANDLORD

So who was that, your Papa?

SONNY

Who cares.

The Landlord folds his paper and sets it to the side. The waitress brings a plate of food to the table and sets it in front of The Landlord.

THE LANDLORD

I figured you already ate or else I would offer you some of mine.

He picks up a steak knife and cuts into a large slab of ham steak. Sonny looks at The Landlord as he takes a bite.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Mmmm.

Sonny looks around.

SONNY

I need some money. I wanna work.

He takes another bite and chews it with a smirk.

THE LANDLORD

Now, why should I give you work?
You're courting my woman.

Sonny looks surprised.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Or, at least one of my ladies.

He smirks again.

SONNY

Who, Nadine? Na, we're nothin'.

The Landlord's smirk turns into a slight laugh.

THE LANDLORD

Doesn't fucking matter. She's a
whore anyway.

Sonny clinches his fists under the table, but maintains a straight face.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Terrance says you're good.

He takes another bite of his Steak. Sonny nods in agreement.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
I could use someone reliable and experienced.

He takes the last bite of his ham steak, picks up his paper, and gets up. He throws a one hundred dollar bill on the table.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Pay for my meal and keep the rest.
Consider it an advance.

The Landlord walks out the front door. Sonny looks at the one hundred dollar bill, but does not take it right away.

Finally he picks up the money and goes to the cash register to pay for the bill.

As he pays, we see James across the street looking into the diner. Sonny doesn't notice him.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM

James lectures to his recruits, standing behind a podium. One of them raises his hand. RECRUIT # 1 is a well built man with a military style haircut.

JAMES
Yes.

RECRUIT #1
To me it seems quite simple. These guys have fucked up. Isn't it our simple task to keep them from fucking up again? Keep them in line?

James nods slightly.

JAMES
These guys fuck up for many reasons. We need to be careful not to over generalize their motivations.

RECRUIT #1
But *generally*, they all fuck ups,
right?

James steps from behind his podium.

JAMES
Well. Let's take a scenario. A
guy used to sell drugs. Anybody
here every smoke pot?

They look around at each other wondering whether to admit it
or not. James raises his hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I have. So this type of guy took
care of my need. Now, he gets
caught and goes to prison.

They nod.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Three years later he gets released.
But now with a felony. He tries to
get a good job, but can't because
of the policy of most good
companies to not hire felons.

RECRUIT #1
Consequence for his actions. Carma
or something.

JAMES
Maybe. So then he gets third shift
at Burger Boy working the fryer and
making seven bucks an hour. Now
remember, he was making 20 times
that selling drugs. Maybe more.

James moves closer to the recruit.

JAMES (CONT'D)
How long do you think he will keep
that job before he goes back to
selling drugs?

RECRUIT #1
Not long I guess.

JAMES
Right.

James goes back to podium. He checks the clock on the wall.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Let's call it a day. Thanks.

INT. NADINE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Nadine sleeps in her bed. The Landlord sits on a chair to the side of her bed. Nadine shifts a bit. The Landlord takes a cigarette out and lights it with a match.

The sound of the match causes Nadine to wake up. She quickly notices The Landlord in her room. Frightened, she quickly sits against her headboard.

NADINE
What the fuck! How did you get in here?

He holds up a ring of keys and smirks.

THE LANDLORD
I'm the landlord.

Nadine pulls her covers tight against her body.

NADINE
Where's Shay?

THE LANDLORD
Don't worry, she's fine. I just checked on her. Sound asleep.

Nadine flairs her nostrils and gets up from the bed. She walks to her dresser and pulls out some pants and a shirt.

EXT. LUMBER YARD - MORNING

Sonny and a LUMBER YARD FOREMAN walk from the construction site's trailer office to a fork-lift.

FOREMAN
James is a good friend of mine.
I'm doing this as a favor for him.

Sonny nods respectfully.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)
I expect you to be here everyday at 6:00. Can you do that?

SONNY
Sure. I will.

NADINE'S BEDROOM

The Landlord gets up and walks toward her as she puts her clothes on. She pauses, noticing his close presence.

THE LANDLORD
Seems a bit unnecessary.

He puts his arms around her and nestles his face into the side of her neck. She closes her eyes in disgust.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
If you want to fuck around go ahead. I think Shay would enjoy the shelter again.

Nadine closes her eyes, flaring her nostrils. He tightens his grip. She doesn't give much of a fight. Tears roll down her face, but eventually she calms. He pulls away from her and begins to undress. She sits down on the side of the bed, naked and defeated.

LUMBER YARD

The Foreman points at the fork-lift.

FOREMAN
You ever work one of these?

SONNY
No.

The foreman extends his hand to Sonny.

FOREMAN
Your training starts tomorrow. See you then

Sonny shakes his hand.

SONNY
Thank you.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Nadine sits at the top of the steps, smoking a cigarette. Sonny sits next to her. She looks down and away from Sonny. Sonny notices her distance demeanor.

She looks at him and looks away again.

SONNY

Whatever's up, I wanna help.

She pauses, but then looks into his eyes.

NADINE

Things are fucked up. I don't want you to get hurt.

Sonny looks at her intensely, eyes darting back and forth. He grits his teeth and looks away.

Nadine grabs his hand. She leans her head on his shoulder. He resolutely stares ahead.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Sonny walks into his apartment. Sitting on the couches is his mother and STEPHANIE, Selah's mother.

Sonny pauses, but then heads over to the refrigerator. He doesn't say a word. His mother and Stephanie watch him, wondering why he doesn't say anything.

Sonny pulls a sports drink out of the fridge and takes a gulp.

SONNY'S MOM

Sonny. Don't act like you don't see us.

He stops drinking, but still says nothing.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

Sonny. Give her a break.

SONNY

Oh, all of a sudden you want to give her a break. What about all those "fucking bitch" comments.

Stephanie looks away.

SONNY'S MOM

I was angry-

SONNY

Well so am I. Why the fuck is she here.

SONNY'S MOM

Why don't you ask her yourself?

SONNY

Okay, why the fuck are you here?

Stephanie pushes her bangs behind her ear.

STEPHANIE

Hi Sonny. I'm clean now-

SONNY

For now.

STEPHANIE

I deserve that.

She takes a deep breath.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Can we talk?

Sonny's mom gets up from the couch. She walks down the hallway and goes into her room.

Sonny stays in the kitchen. Stephanie approaches Sonny. She tries to hug him, but he pulls away. She sits at the kitchen table.

Sonny pauses, but then sits across from her.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm clean. Look.

She shows him the inside of her arms. The inner elbows show needle scars that are healed.

He takes a look, but shrugs it off.

SONNY

Good for you. But she is still dead.

Stephanie begins to cry.

STEPHANIE

That wasn't my fault.

SONNY

No, whose was it then?

STEPHANIE

(crying more)

I thought she was at Lisa's house.
I didn't know she was outside.

SONNY

Were you fucked up?

STEPHANIE

No. Maybe. I don't remember.

She puts her face in her hands. Then she lifts her head up straight.

Sonny grits his teeth.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I wanna stay clean.

Sonny sighs and then looks at her calmly.

EXT. SELAH'S MEMORIAL - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny waits by Selah's memorial. Stephanie comes out of a pony keg with a cheap stuffed animal and a bag of hot fries.

She places them on the pile of memorabilia.

STEPHANIE

She loved these.

She backs up into Sonny. He awkwardly puts his arms around her.

Above, Nadine looks out her window at Sonny and Stephanie. She closes the blinds.

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Sonny and Stephanie sit on the edge of a concrete river bank, just below a bridge. His car lights shine on them. They drink forty ounce bottles of beer in paper bags. Stephanie's eyes are red from crying.

STEPHANIE

You remember how she used to
scrunch her nose when she woke up?

Sonny takes a sip of his beer.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

She used to splash so much water
out of the tub.

Sonny takes another sip.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Do you 'member how she started to walk. She looked like a duck mixed with a rabbit. Sort of waddle hopping.

Sonny takes another sip.

Stephanie leans into Sonny and wraps her arms around him. He wiggles free from her arm and abruptly throws his bottle against the bridge. It smashes and explodes.

EXT. LUMBER YARD - DAY

Sonny loads some two by fours onto the arms of a fork lift. The fork lift driver drives away with the load.

Sonny takes off his work gloves and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Sonny pulls down a long gravel driveway, approaching a small cottage boxed in by some tall, beautiful, willow trees.

A FEMALE REAL ESTATE AGENT, in a blazer and skirt, holds a clipboard waiting for him by the front door.

As Sonny approaches, the woman notices his tattoos and hard appearance. She seems a bit nervous.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Sonny?

SONNY

Yep.

She extends her hand to shake Sonny's.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Nice to meet you.

Sonny shakes her hand, but doesn't reply to her greeting. A couple seconds of silence.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)

Well, okay. Would you like to see the house?

Sonny nods. She turns around and opens the door. They both walk in.

They travel from room to room looking at the features of the house.

LIVING ROOM

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Here is a working fireplace.

KITCHEN

REAL ESTATE AGENT
As you can see, the kitchen has
been upgraded to a modern set up.

The real estate agent walks over to the sliding glass doors that lead out to the back yard.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Pretty large backyard despite
having so many trees around.

Sonny looks at the jungle gym in the yard.

SONNY
Does that stay?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
The jungle gym?

Sonny nods.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Yes. It's all yours if you want
it. Do you have kids?

Sonny stares at the jungle gym.

SONNY
Yeah, a girl.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
She will love to play on it then,
huh.

She walks away toward another room.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Over here are the stairs to the
finished basement.

Sonny continues to look out the sliding glass doors.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)

Sir. Sir?

Sonny turns to her.

SONNY

I'll take it.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny is making his bed, while Stephanie looks on by the door to the bedroom.

SONNY

You can stay in here. I'll sleep on the couch.

Stephanie walks over to Sonny while he finishes making the bed. He stands up and she slips up to him.

STEPHANIE

Sure you don't want to sleep in here too?

She leans in and kisses him. Sonny seems to enjoy the kiss.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Just like old times, huh.

Sonny slowly pulls away from her. He walks to the bedroom door. He exits, shutting the door behind him.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - EARLY MORNING

Sonny, Terrance and The Landlord sit at his table. He eats breakfast again, but Sonny and Terrance only drink coffee.

THE LANDLORD

I like to talk about work early in the morning. Most people of my ilk seem to enjoy the night scene at some hopping club or something. But me, I like a quiet bar, early in the morning, with some scrambled eggs. Know what I mean?

Terrance nods his head in agreement. Sonny barely moves.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

What the fuck is up with you. Not interested?

Terrance looks at Sonny and gives him a disappointed look.

SONNY

I'm sorry, just tired. I'm in.

The Landlord smirks and takes a bite of his toast, looking directly at Sonny.

THE LANDLORD

I know of a movie theatre owner who stashes money in the film room. Lots of money.

TERRANCE

Fuck yeah!

THE LANDLORD

I want you guys to take it from him.

He reaches into a bag lying next to him. He pulls out two guns.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You'll need these. He ain't no pussy cat.

Terrance grabs his right away and looks down the barrel. Sonny hesitates, but then grabs his. They both put them under their belts.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

Sonny walks up the stairs. As he walks passed Nadine's door he pauses. He listens closely to the sounds of Shay inside. He wants to knock. But he doesn't. He walks passed and into his apartment.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT

Inside his mother and Stephanie watch TV, wrapped in blankets. Sonny looks at the coffee table and notices his mom's pill bottle. He doesn't say anything and walks to his room.

STEPHANIE

Sonny, can you bring me my sweatshirt from the bedroom?

Sonny walks into his room.

INT. SHAY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Shay is tucked in her bed. Nadine sits next to her and running her fingers through her hair.

SHAY

Can I go over to Sonny's tomorrow?

Nadine stops stroking her hair.

NADINE

I don't think so, not tomorrow.

SHAY

Why?

Nadine gets up from the bed and walks to the door.

NADINE

I don't know, honey, but it's time for sleep.

She turns off the light and shuts the door.

NADINE'S APARTMENT KITCHEN

Nadine opens her fridge, grabs a beer and opens it. She sits down at the table and take a sip of her beer.

She reaches for a stack of photos and begins to flip through them. The photos are of their experience at the horse farm. She stops on one particular photo, that of Sonny and Shay sitting on a horse together, smiling.

She puts down the photo.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance sit watching the tail end of a movie. A few others are there as well, but not many.

Sonny and Terrance get up and go into the hallway.

HALLWAY

They see the THEATRE OWNER talking to the TICKET CASHIER. He holds a money bag. He walks toward Sonny and Terrance. Sonny goes to the water fountain and takes a drink. Terrance takes out his phone and pretends to text someone.

Once he gets past them he approaches a door. He opens the door and as it shuts Sonny puts on a snow mask and moves quickly to the door and prevents it from closing all the way.

OWNER'S OFFICE

The owner notices it does not click closed and turns around. As he turns Sonny runs up on him and grabs his arms and mouth. The owner tries to yell, but Sonny holds him tight. Terrance comes in with a mask on as well and pulls his gun out. Sonny is surprised.

TERRANCE

Shut the fuck up old man. I don't want to make you shit your pants.

Terrance puts the gun into the owner's side.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Now where's the money?

The owner holds out the money bag.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Don't fuck with me old man. Where's the stash.

The owner doesn't respond. Instead he tries to get away from Sonny.

Terrance moves the gun from his side up to the side of his head.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Give me the fuckin' money or I swear I will blow your head off.

SONNY

Take it easy man.

TERRANCE

Don't tell me how to do this. You want the stash or not?

SONNY

Come-on old man, just show us where the stash is.

The owner's eyes dart to a panel in the wall. Terrance goes over to the panel and rips it from the wall. He reaches deeply in and then pulls out a duffle bag. He sets it on the ground and opens it up.

TERRANCE

Yeah.

The bag is full of money. He zips it back up.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Terrance walks by the owner and Sonny. He takes the butt of the gun and smacks the old man in the side of his eye. It bleeds fast and he falls to the ground. Sonny tries to break his fall, checking if he's okay. He's knocked out.

Terrance runs to the door and looks back at Sonny.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Let's go!

Sonny hesitates, but follows. They take off their masks and leave the projector room. No one sees them leave out a side exit door.

EXT. INNER CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance walk toward Sonny's apartment building.

SONNY

What the fuck Terrance. What was that? He's an old man.

TERRANCE

Did you want him to call the popo on our ass?

Sonny doesn't say anything, but looks anxious.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Most people get harder in prison. You didn't go get soft did ya?

SONNY

Oh ya wanna bring up the pen huh?. Why the fuck was I there anyway.

Terrance laughs and then gets serious.

TERRANCE

What the fuck you talking about.

SONNY

I don' know. Why don't you tell me?

Terrance steps into Sonny's face.

TERRANCE
Are you accusing me of something?

SONNY
Seems like you're getting smart
now.

TERRANCE
Fuck you Sonny.

He begins to walk away.

SONNY
No, fuck you asshole. I went to
jail for you.

Terrance turns around and walks toward Sonny.

TERRANCE
You went to jail because you were
stupid, not because of me.

Sonny stands right up to Terrance. Terrance pushes him back.

SONNY
Don't touch me.

TERRANCE
I'll fucking touch you if I want.
Things aren't the same since you
left. So, don't try to act like
you're still the shit around here.
Now move, I got to get this money
to The Landlord.

Sonny swings and punches Terrance in the mouth. Terrance falls back, but then charges Sonny. He tackles Sonny, who slams into the brick wall of the apartment building.

Sonny punches the back of Terrance's head. He grabs his leg and pushes him off.

Sonny gets up and tries to kick Terrance, but Terrance grabs his foot and throws him to the ground again.

He gets on top of him and punches him in the face.

Sonny struggles to get him off of him, and finally does. He pushes Terrance into a car and follows that with a punch to the back.

Terrance buckles to the ground and Sonny slams his head on the car door. Terrance falls to the ground, but then kicks Sonny in the balls. Sonny buckles to the ground.

Terrance jumps on top of him. Sonny flips him over and is about to punch his head, which is lying on the curb. Terrance cannot move. Sonny pulls back his fist. Terrance closes his eyes.

Sonny holds for a second and then decides not to punch him. He rolls over to the ground next to Terrance. They are both breathing heavy and bleeding.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

You did get soft.

Sonny laughs and so does Terrance. Sonny wipes blood off of his lips, looks at the blood and laughs again.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - EARLY MORNING

The Landlord looks at Sonny and Terrance. They are still cut and bruised from their fight with each other.

THE LANDLORD

What the fuck happened to you two?

TERRANCE

I fell down some steps.

Terrance looks at Sonny.

SONNY

I ran into a door.

The Landlord is confused.

THE LANDLORD

Whatever turns your cranks.

The Landlord hands both Sonny and Terrance a thick envelope full of money. Terrance looks inside. Sonny just puts it into his pocket.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You see, that's why I like you
Sonny. Terrence doesn't trust me.

He takes a drag of his cigarette.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

We need more good men like you in
my business.

Sonny continues to look at him and then turns away slightly.

EXT. LOCAL FAIR - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance put on their masks and slip into a portable trailer.

Inside are two men counting money and one security guard. Sonny grabs the security guard and puts him to the floor. Terrance points his gun at the men and pulls out a small duffle bag and throws it at one of the men.

TERRANCE

Don't get stupid, just put the money into the bag.

They begin to put the money in. Sonny takes the radio and gun from the security guard. Terrance grabs the duffle bag. They back out of the trailer, shut the door and disappear around the corner.

They grab some clothes tucked behind a dumpster, put them over their clothes. Terrance puts the money bag into a different colored bag and throws it over his shoulder. They gather themselves and walk into the crowd of people at the fair.

INT. NADINE'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Nadine sits on her couch, rocking slightly back and forth. The photo of Sonny and Shay is in her hand. She places it on the coffee table and gets up and walks to her front door. She exits into the hallway.

APARTMENT HALLWAY

Nadine walks to Sonny's door and knocks on the door.

SONNY'S APARTMENT

Stephanie and Cherry sit in the living room. Stephanie picks up a crack pipe and lights it, taking a drag. Cherry hears the knock at the door.

CHERRY

I think someone is at the door.

Stephanie finishes her drag and listens. Another knock.

Stephanie blows out her smoke and then places the paraphernalia under her couch and tidies up the table a bit. She gets up and walks to the door.

She opens the door and there stands Nadine.

STEPHANIE
(annoyed)
Yeah?

Nadine squints her eyes and furrows her brows. She looks around Stephanie, searching for Sonny.

NADINE
Is Sonny here?

STEPHANIE
No, he's working.

NADINE
Working?

STEPHANIE
Who the fuck are you?

NADINE
A friend. When will he be home?

Nadine notices the smoke and smell, recognizing that they are smoking crack.

STEPHANIE
How should I know. Are you his girlfriend?

Stephanie looks at Cherry. Cherry notices Nadine.

CHERRY
Hey Nadine.

NADINE
Cherry, what's up? Does Sonny know you are here?

Stephanie blocks Nadine's view of Cherry.

STEPHANIE
Who the fuck are you?

NADINE
I'm no one. Just tell Sonny I stopped by.

APARTMENT HALLWAY

Nadine walks away from the door. Stephanie leans out the door.

NADINE
Stop smoking that shit. Some of us
have children here.

STEPHANIE
Fuck you. That ain't my problem.

Nadine opens her front door and slams it behind her.

SONNY'S APARTMENT

Stephanie closes her door and walks back to the couch.

STEPHANIE
Who the fuck was that?

CHERRY
She and Sonny.

STEPHANIE
I'm Sonny's.

CHERRY
She also fucks The Landlord.

Stephanie reaches under the couch, pulls out her crack pipe, lights it and takes another drag.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sonny comes into his bedroom. Stephanie lies on the bed, eyes open. Sonny rummages through his dresser, looking for something.

STEPHANIE
Met your slut today.

Sonny turns around surprised.

SONNY
What?

STEPHANIE
The slut next door.

Sonny slams his dresser drawer.

SONNY
Go back to sleep.

He walks toward the door.

STEPHANIE
She fucks The Landlord you know.

Sonny stops.

SONNY
Shut your God damn mouth. Who the
fuck are you?

Stephanie sits up.

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry. I'm just saying what
everyone else already knows.

Sonny turns around.

SONNY
You're staying here for now because
you are the mother of my child.
That's it. No other reason.

Stephanie gets up and walks to Sonny. She reaches to hug
him.

STEPHANIE
Com'on Sonny sleep in here tonight.

Sonny avoids her touch, walks out the door and shuts it
behind him.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Sonny is dressing for work at the lumber yard. He grabs a
pair of work gloves and leaves the apartment.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny's mom lies on one couch and Stephanie on another.
There is a needle, a spoon and a lighter on the coffee table.
A few beer bottles strewn about the table as well.

Sonny walks into his apartment. Stephanie gets up to her feet quickly, trying to put the paraphernalia into a small bag and hide it. But Sonny is quick to realize what is going on.

SONNY

What the fuck. In ma's house.

STEPHANIE

(obviously high)

It's not what it looks like.

Sonny grabs Stephanie by her arm.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

What the fuck Sonny!

She resists, pulls away from him and grabs a bottle of beer. She throws it at Sonny, but she misses.

He rushes toward her and grabs her by the throat, pushing her against the wall.

Sonny's mom gets up.

SONNY'S MOM

What the hell is going on? Sonny
what are you doing?

Sonny presses Stephanie's head against the wall.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

(to Stephanie)

You're never going to change. Get
the fuck out of my life. Don't
come back.

He grabs her by the hair, pulls her to the front door and chucks her out. He locks the dead-bolts.

He walks into his bedroom and walks back out a couple seconds later with a small bag of Stephanie's clothes and belongings. He unlocks the front door, opens it and throws the bag outside.

He shuts the door and locks the dead-bolts again. Stephanie is yelling outside the door, crying hysterically, causing all sorts of drama. She bangs her fists on the door.

STEPHANIE

Sonny! Sonny! I didn't mean to.

Stephanie continues to say this same phrase over and over. Sonny ignores her and walks over to his mother.

SONNY
Don't you fucking let her in!

He walks into his bedroom and slams the door.

His mother stands there, confused. The banging on the door continues.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny takes his cell phone out of his pocket. He dials.

JAMES (O.S.)
Hello

SONNY
(agitated)
I need to get the fuck out of here.

JAMES (O.S.)
Sonny?

SONNY
Shit. I'm losing it.

JAMES (O.S.)
Calm down. I'll come by and pick you up.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny is outside pacing the sidewalk. He notices the thug and his boys that beat up a man earlier in front of his apartment. He tries not to gain their attention, but the Thug notices his distress and calls his boys to come with him over to Sonny.

As they come close, Sonny tries to calm down and ignore them.

THUG
Hey bitch.

Sonny doesn't give him attention. The thug moves closer.

THUG (CONT'D)
Hey nigga. I'm talking to you.

Sonny turns to him.

SONNY

I heard ya, but I don't respond to
bitch. Here me?

THUG

Hey bitch.

The thugs punches Sonny in the face and Sonny falls down. The thug's boys come over and begin to join in. Sonny gets to his feet and charges the Thug. He is met with the back of a gun to the top of his eye. Blood begins to gush out of his eye.

Just then James pulls up in his SUV. He sees Sonny getting beat up and gets out quickly.

JAMES

Sonny.

The Thug calls his boys off Sonny and they confidently walk away. James goes over to Sonny and kneels down to him.

The thugs walk around the corner.

Sonny's eye is gushing blood. James goes to his SUV and grabs a towel. He put it on Sonny's eye and gets him onto his feet. Sonny is dazed and confused. James gets him into his SUV and then goes to his door and gets in as well.

INT/EXT. JAMES'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny puts his face into his hands. The towel is soaked in blood.

SONNY

Aaagh!

JAMES

What was that Sonny?

Sonny rubs his forehead.

SONNY

Fuck!

James remains silent, letting Sonny calm down.

JAMES

Take it easy. It's okay. Shit.

Sonny takes a moment to calm down, and then takes a deep breath.

SONNY

I don't how I'm gonna survive.
It's too fucking hard. There's too
much shit.

JAMES

Okay.

Sonny leans his head back on the head rest, facing his door window.

INT/EXT. JAMES' CAR - LATE NIGHT

James and Sonny have been traveling for about an hour. They are now in the rural landscape. Sonny sleeps. His eye has stopped bleeding, but is very swollen.

There are beautiful pine trees all over. James drives down a driveway and stops at the garage door of a house with an exterior light on.

Inside we see a man, James' dad, SAM, opens the window curtains and looks out. He then opens the front door and waves at James.

James nudges Sonny.

JAMES

We're here.

Sonny wakes up, confused, as if sleeping the whole car ride. He touches his eye in pain. He winces.

SONNY

Where are we?

JAMES

My dad's place. Come on.

James opens his door and gets out. Sonny does the same, but slower.

James walks up to his dad, waiting at the door, and gives him an affectionate hug. His Dad, is in his early sixties, gray hair. He wears a sweater, some sleep pants, and slippers.

Sonny walks toward them.

SAM

Good to see you son.

James turns to Sonny.

JAMES
Dad, this is Sonny.

Sam reaches out his hand to shake. They shake.

SAM
Nice to meet you Sonny. Come on
in.

They all go into the front door.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sam leads Sonny through the living room and shows him a bedroom right by the living room. He opens the door to the bedroom.

SAM
Here's where you can sleep. If you
need more blankets, there are some
in the closet.

Sonny nods respectfully.

SONNY
Thank you sir.

SAM
Don't call me sir. I'm not in the
army any more.

They both turn to face James.

JAMES
Well, I hate to be the dead beat
here, but I'm exhausted. I'm going
to bed.

SAM
Good idea.

JAMES
Sonny? Do you like to fish?

SONNY
Yeah.

JAMES
Great. There's a lake in the back.
We'll catch some pike tomorrow.

Sam and James walk up the stairs. Sam stops and turns around.

SAM

Oh Sonny, make yourself at home.
There's food in the fridge and the
remote control is on top of the TV.

SONNY

Thanks.

They both go into separate rooms. Sonny goes into his bedroom.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM

He looks around at the pictures on the wall. Pictures of James and another boy as children. Pictures of Sam and his wife. Photos of the entire family happy together.

Sonny sits on the bed and then lies down, closing his eyes.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

Sonny is now under the covers and sleeping soundly. There is a knock on the door and James opens the door slowly.

JAMES

(whispering)
Sonny? Sonny?

Sonny stirs and then wakes up.

EXT. ON THE LAKE - EARLY MORNING

Sonny and James cast their lines into the water. They lean back and wait.

SONNY

Where does your brother live?

James reels in his line a bit.

JAMES

Well, my brother died when I was
15. Actually my Mom and my brother
both died. In a car accident.

SONNY

Holy shit. I'm sorry.

JAMES

Don't be sorry. That was a long time ago. My dad has been living out here ever since he retired from the service.

Sonny reels in his line and recasts it.

SONNY

Your dad was in the military?

JAMES

Yeah. The Army. Korea.

James reels in a bit.

JAMES (CONT'D)

He still really misses mom and Corey. I like to come out and keep him company as often as I can. He does pretty good by himself though.

Sonny leans back, beginning to relax. The noises of the lake calm him.

INT. SAM'S DINING ROOM - BRUNCH

Sam, James, and Sonny sit around the table eating brunch. Sam passes Sonny the home fries and Sonny scoops a big helping on his plate.

SAM

(to Sonny)

Don't let this man sitting across from you fool ya.

James smirks.

SAM (CONT'D)

He's not always been the good guy.

Sonny looks interested.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh no. He's the reason I have high blood pressure.

JAMES

Oh come on dad. That has nothing to do with fried chicken, huh?

SAM

Have you forgotten the time you
drove the car into our garage door?
I don't know what you were on.

James forks another over easy egg onto his plate.

JAMES

How can I old man. You always
remind me.

He looks at James.

SAM

Well, I'm just glad you lived
through it.

Sonny looks at James too.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD - LATE MORNING

James and Sonny chop wood and stack it against the house.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Sonny and James toss a football back and forth.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Sonny sleeps on a hammock in the backyard. It sways
slightly.

He dreams.

EXT. ON THE LAKE - MORNING (DREAM)

Sonny sits on a row boat, gently rowing through a calm lake.
The birds sing and the water ripples just enough for the
sunshine to shimmer across the lake.

As Sonny rows we begin to see a young girl sitting between
his legs. We don't see her face, just her long hair. She
sits up straight, looking at the water.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD

Sonny's eyes open up slowly. He sways on the hammock.

EXT. SAM'S DRIVEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny and James are leaving. James puts his hand on his father's shoulder.

JAMES
Thanks dad. You need anything
before we go?

SAM
No son, I'm okay.

JAMES
Well, call me if you need anything.

SAM
Okay.

They hug. Sonny reaches his hand out to Sam to shake. Sam does, but then pulls Sonny in for a hug. A real hug. One that shows that he cares for Sonny even though he just met him. Sonny feels this exchange of affection and appreciates it. He smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)
You take care Sonny. And keep this
guy in line for me.

SONNY
I will. Thanks.

JAMES
Anytime. I ain't going nowhere.

Sonny and James get into the SUV and drive down the driveway and out of sight.

EXT. NADINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sonny stands outside Nadine's apartment door, knocking.

SONNY
Nadine.

He listens through the door to see if she is inside.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Nadine.

Nadine looks out the door peephole. She opens the door, but leaves the chain locked.

NADINE

What do you want Sonny? Shay is sleeping.

SONNY

Sorry. I just wanted to see you. Can I come in?

NADINE

No.

SONNY

Come-on Nadine.

NADINE

No. I don't need this. Shay don't need this.

SONNY

Don't need what? What is going on with you?

They pause.

NADINE

Is she Selah's mom?

SONNY

Huh?

NADINE

Don't fuck with me Sonny. I saw you with her.

Sonny looks around and then back up at Nadine.

SONNY

Yeah.

Nadine sighs.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I need you Nadine. Please.

Nadine looks at Sonny, scanning his eyes to see if he is serious or not.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'll help. I'll do whatever needs to be done.

There are a couple seconds of silence. Nadine shuts the door. More silence. Then the chain slides to unlocked. The door opens.

Sonny enters her apartment.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine opens the door. She looks sad. Sonny steps to her and hugs her tightly. She begins to cry intensely. Sonny just hugs her.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Nadine comes out of her bedroom looking for Sonny, but there is no sign of him. She looks to the kitchen table. There is one single red rose, a NOTE, and the picture of Sonny and Shay on a horse.

NOTE

Nadine. I'll get us out of here.
Love Sonny.

Nadine picks up the picture and then the rose. She sniffs it and smiles slightly.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - NIGHT

The Landlord and Terrance sit at his usual table. A FEW THUGS are scattered about the bar, keeping their eyes on The Landlord's table, like usual.

THE LANDLORD

How long have you been friends with Sonny?

TERRANCE

Since forever.

THE LANDLORD

Do you trust him?

TERRANCE

Yeah. He's always been true.

The waiter comes over with a bottle of wine and a glass. He pours some in the glass for The Landlord to taste.

He does the wine tasting ritual. Satisfied, he nods. The waiter leaves the bottle on the table and walks away.

THE LANDLORD
Does he trust you?

Terrance looks uncertain.

TERRANCE
Sure, what's up?

The Landlord takes a sip of his wine and leans back.

THE LANDLORD
The next job has a great payoff,
maybe a few hundred thousand.

Terrance is interested.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
But with more to gain, there's more
at risk. You feel me?

Terrance nods.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
We are gonna rob the robbers.

The Landlord lights a cigarette and takes a drag.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
You know the horse track out in
Shelby?

TERRANCE
Yeah.

THE LANDLORD
I know that it will be robbed, and
I know when, and by who.

He takes another drag.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
We're gonna let them rob it, then
meet them down the road and fuckin'
rob them.

He smirks and chuckles lightly. He takes a sip of his wine.
Terrance nods repeatedly in anticipation.

The Landlord leans in closer to Terrance.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
You're gonna let Sonny be the
driver.

TERRANCE
He's always the driver.

THE LANDLORD
Yeah, but this time he will get hurt, real bad. See, we have to stop the robbers by slamming our vehicle into theirs.

Terrance's eyes squint a bit.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
But that's okay, because that just leaves more for me and you.

Terrance leans back and looks away. The Landlord notices his apprehension.

TERRANCE
Isn't there another way?

THE LANDLORD
No other way.

TERRANCE
I don't know. I-

THE LANDLORD
You what, don't want a big score?

TERRANCE
No, that's not it.

Terrance leans down and squeezes the bridge of his nose with his hands.

THE LANDLORD
Do you want in or not?

Terrance leans back up and nods slightly and apprehensively.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Sonny and Nadine sit on her couch talking. Shay comes into the living room, obviously just awoken from sleep. She is tired.

NADINE
Shay, what's up sweetie?

SHAY
Can't sleep.

NADINE
Why?

SHAY
I'm scared.

NADINE
Of what?

SHAY
Everything.

Sonny is concerned. Shay walks to the couch and lies down beside Sonny, placing her head on his lap.

Sonny is surprised and lifts up his arms to let her head rest. He looks at Nadine. She smiles.

He slowly brings his arms down, placing one of his hands on her head. He strokes her hair. Shay falls asleep.

Sonny's eyes water. Nadine notices.

NADINE
Sonny, what's wrong?

Sonny continues to stroke Shay's hair.

SONNY
Before I went to prison I didn't even think about my Selah that much ...Too busy hustling...In prison, I couldn't stop thinking about her.

NADINE
How old was she when you went in?

SONNY
Six...Then one day my mother came to visit me. She never visited me. So I knew something was wrong.

Sonny still fights back tears. Nadine touches his shoulder.

SONNY (CONT'D)
She told me that Selah was killed by a car.

NADINE
I'm so sorry. It wasn't your fault.

SONNY

(angrily)

Fuck that. I'm done making
excuses. I should've been there to
protect her.

He tucks Shay's hair behind her ear. He looks at Nadine.

SONNY (CONT'D)

But I wasn't.

Nadine begins to shed tears.

NADINE

I don't know what I would do if I
ever lost Shay.

Sonny firmly grabs her face and looks her deep in her eyes.

SONNY

You never will.

Nadine looks him in his eyes, convinced.

SONNY (CONT'D)

How fast can you pack your stuff
up?

NADINE

Why?

SONNY

I got a place outside of town. I
want you and Shay to live there
with me.

Nadine scans his eyes. She fights back excitement.

NADINE

When?

SONNY

Just start packing. I have to
finish something first.

She leans her head on Sonny's shoulder. Sonny is determined.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Sonny sits in a booth. Terrance comes in the front door,
sees Sonny and sits across from him.

TERRANCE
What's hap'nin nigga?

SONNY
Nothing. What's up wit you?

Terrance looks around, shifty.

TERRANCE
The Landlord told me of a big job
coming up.

SONNY
Oh yeah. Where, what?

TERRANCE
Just got the generals last night.

Terrance pauses.

SONNY
Well. What is it?

Terrance stalls, looking around the diner.

SONNY (CONT'D)
What's up Terrance. You're acting
all shifty and shit.

Terrance looks at Sonny, but only for a couple seconds, then
looks away again.

TERRANCE
Maybe you need to sit this one out.

Sonny leans forward.

SONNY
What are you talking about. What
about all that team language. Now
you don't want me with you. What
the fuck's going on bro?

Terrance sighs, looks at Sonny, but still shifty.

TERRANCE
Paul to pay Peter.

SONNY
What you talking about bra?

Terrance leans in closer.

TERRANCE

He got wind of a big job going down
at the track.

SONNY

What?

TERRANCE

All he said was stealing from Paul
to pay Peter.

Terrance smirks.

Sonny is still unconvinced. He looks around frustrated and
suspicious.

SONNY

When?

TERRANCE

Next Saturday.

SONNY

But you don't know what we're doing
yet?

TERRANCE

Take it easy bra. We'll meet with
The Landlord and bang it out.

SONNY

All of us, or just you two?

TERRANCE

All of us, why?

Sonny still seems uncertain.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Relax. This is the big payoff. You
can get something for that ho you
hang with.

Sonny becomes angry.

SONNY

Fuck you man! You don't know her!

TERRANCE

Whoa stop trippin' bra. I didn't
think that shit was so fuckin'
serious.

Sonny gets up, throws some money on the table, and walks toward the diner exit.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
Get ready.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

Sonny knocks on the door. Nadine opens it a couple seconds later. They lock eyes and smile.

NADINE
Come in.

NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Sonny enters, but doesn't sit down. He looks around, as if looking for Shay.

SONNY
Where's Shay?

NADINE
School, why?

SONNY
Just wondering.

Nadine suspects something.

NADINE
What's going on?

Sonny sits down at the kitchen table. Nadine follows.

SONNY
I got something for ya.

NADINE
Oh yeah?

SONNY
It's not a diamond.

Nadine eyes twinkle and she shrugs her shoulders.

Sonny reaches under his shirt and behind the belt of his pants. He pulls out a gun.

NADINE
What the hell do I need that for?

He places it on the table.

SONNY

I just think you should have it.
Just in case.

NADINE

Just in case of what?

SONNY

Life.

Nadine pauses, looking at Sonny. She picks up the gun and looks at it. She looks down the barrel.

NADINE

Is it loaded?

SONNY

No.

Sonny pulls out a few bullets from his pocket and puts them on the table.

Sonny gets up. He slowly takes the gun from Nadine's hand.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Here. Let me show ya.

Nadine hesitates.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Come-on. I won't shoot you.

NADINE

What if I shoot you?

SONNY

That would be bad.

She gets up. He positions her so that she is in front of him. He puts the gun in her hand and places his hands over hers. They point the gun together at the wall. Sonny subtly sniffs her hair. She senses his affection.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Ready?

She nods.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Pull the hammer back.

She does.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Now aim.

Nadine closes one eye and looks down the barrel.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Pull the trigger.

She pauses.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Go ahead, pull it.

She doesn't do it. She can't seem to. She shakes a bit.

Sonny calms her shaking, slowly moves his finger to the trigger and helps her pull it. The SOUND of METAL CLICKS.

Nadine closes her eyes. Sonny begins to kiss her neck. She turns around and they kiss passionately. Sonny places the gun on the table and they move to the couch, continuing to make out.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Sonny and Nadine sleep on the couch under a blanket. Nadine wakes up and looks up at Sonny. She smiles and rubs her hands affectionately across his chest.

Then she jumps up.

NADINE

Shit!

Sonny wakes and sits up.

SONNY

What?

NADINE

Shay. I forgot to pick up Shay.
She's at school still waiting for
me.

Sonny gets up, puts on his pants and shirt. Nadine tries to get her clothes on, but cannot find items of her clothing. She is frustrated and flustered.

SONNY

I'll get her. Don't worry. I'll
get her and bring her back.

Nadine settles down and sits on the couch again.

NADINE

Okay.

Sonny finishes dressing and gives Nadine an affectionate
kiss. She smiles. He leaves the apartment.

EXT. SHAY'S SCHOOL - DAY

Shay is sitting on the front steps of the school.

Sonny walks up to Shay. She notices him and smiles.

SHAY

Hi Sonny.

SONNY

Hi Shay.

Shay looks behind Sonny.

SHAY

Where's mom?

SONNY

She's at home.

Sonny motions for her to get up and walk with him. They turn
around and begin to walk down the street.

SHAY

Where did your daughter go to
school?

SONNY

She went here too.

SHAY

Do you miss her?

He doesn't answer right away.

SONNY

Too much.

They continue walking. Shay reaches and holds his hand.

Then all of a sudden a group of young high school students start fighting. The commotion gets intense very quickly. A boy who seems to be getting beat up suddenly pulls out a gun and shoots it three times into the air. The other boys cover their heads as they scatter.

Sonny pulls Shay to himself and down onto the ground. He covers her. He looks over and sees the young boy run away and around a building.

He turns back to Shay. She is crying. He holds her tight.

SONNY (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's okay Shay. I'm here.

She continues to cry and Sonny continues to comfort her.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny's mom sits on the couch watching home movies of Sonny's daughter Shay. Her eyes are red from crying.

Sonny walks in the front door and notices her watching the movies. She notices that he is there, but she doesn't acknowledge his presence.

He moves over to the chair to the left of the couch and watches the movie too. The movie shows Selah running around, leaping, and playing with a huge bubble wand. Bubbles come pouring out of the wand as she laughs. We hear Sonny's mom laughing off screen in the movie.

Sonny's eyes drop and he looks at his mom. His mom begins to cry hysterically. Sonny pauses, but then goes and sits next to her, putting his arm around her. She resists a bit, but then buries her face into his chest, continuing to cry.

SONNY'S MOM

She looks so much like you.

Sonny's face wells up with emotion and only one tear drops from his eye.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

I should have never let her go that day.

SONNY

Shh. Mom. Shh.

He holds her even tighter.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny talks on the phone with James

Sonny doesn't say anything, just listens.

JAMES

I understand Sonny. Believe me, I do. It ain't easy. But if you go back the old way, you're gonna get killed. Maybe not today. Maybe not tomorrow. But one day someone will get you when you're not focused.

SONNY

Can you do something for me?

JAMES

Depends.

SONNY

If anything happens to me, there's an envelope with a key under my bed. Can you give it to Nadine, my next door neighbor?

JAMES

Nothing will happen if you stay clean.

SONNY

Just promise me.

James sighs.

JAMES

Yeah. Sure.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - EARLY MORNING

Spread out on the table is a blueprint of the horse track. Terrance and Sonny watch as The Landlord points out the plan. His Thugs stand close by.

THE LANDLORD

Here's where most of the money is kept, right here. It's counted here. Now there are three levels of security that surround these two spots. We're talking millions, so the security ain't no joke.

Sonny scratches his head and Terrance looks toward the bar.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Boys, don't get discouraged.
Here's the genius of the plan. We
don't have to get passed security.

Sonny and Terrance look at The Landlord, confused.

TERRANCE
With respect, how the fuck do we
get the cash?

The Landlord leans back in his booth seat.

THE LANDLORD
We're gonna take it from the
robbers after they rob.

TERRANCE
Paul to pay Peter. Yeah.

SONNY
You mean, we're gonna let them get
the money then we take it from
them?

The Landlord nods.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Where?

THE LANDLORD
Two miles from the track. I know
their escape route.

Terrance shows his excitement. Sonny is stoic.

TERRANCE
Yeah nigga!

The Landlord points to the edge of the map.

THE LANDLORD
You guys will wait here. And when
you see them coming, well, you
know, take the fucking money from
them.

Terrance, smiling from ear to ear, waives for the waiter to
bring him a drink. Sonny just nods.

Sonny gets up and walks toward the exit. The waiter brings the drink for Terrance.

Sonny walks out the front door. Terrance looks at The Landlord. The Landlord looks him in the eyes, telling him to keep to the plan.

INT/EXT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Sonny calls Nadine on his cell phone while lying on his bed.

NADINE (O.S.)

Hello?

SONNY

Nadine. It's Sonny.

NADINE

Hi.

SONNY

Listen, will you be ready later tonight to leave?

NADINE

Yeah, we're mostly packed. Just need to load it all up.

SONNY

How's Shay?

NADINE

Sleeping.

SONNY

I'll be over late, so be ready.

NADINE

Sonny? You don't have to do this. We'll make it.

SONNY

I know, but I can't wait any longer.

Silence.

NADINE

Be careful. We love you.

Sonny hangs up the phone. He gets up from the bed and leaves the apartment.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance sit in a SUV waiting for the robbers. Sonny is in the driver's seat and Terrance in the passenger's seat. Another SUV is parked beside them. Terrance has a semi-automatic machine gun. Sonny sports a pistol and a shotgun.

Terrance takes a swig of some hard liquor and offers Sonny some. Sonny refuses.

SONNY

No man, I'm good.

Terrance pulls the bottle away but continues to look at him.

TERRANCE

How many jobs have we done together?

SONNY

Too many.

Terrance takes another swig.

TERRANCE

You remember when we were in 6th grade and we stole the answers to the "guess the baby" picture contest?

Sonny smiles and laughs slightly.

SONNY

Yeah, but we tried to make it look good by getting some wrong.

TERRANCE

We got caught though cause we matched Shauna Jackson with a baby white boy.

Sonny chuckles. Terrance drinks again. He looks directly at Sonny with regretful appreciation in his eyes.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

You've always been true to me man. Sorry I have not always been the same.

Sonny gestures for a sip of the liquor.

SONNY

You've been aieat man.

He takes a sip and hands it back to Terrance. Terrance looks out the window, uncertain.

EXT. HORSE RACE TRACK LOADING DOCK - SAME TIME

The track is lit up. The crowd is roaring. An ALARM sounds. A set of double doors slam open. Three men in ski masks burst through carrying two large duffle bags each. Its a huge score. A white Econoline van's back doors open. The men throw the bags into the back and follow them in.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - SAME TIME

The Landlord looks at his cell phone. He speed dials a number.

THE LANDLORD

Their off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Terrance holds his phone to his ear.

TERRANCE

We're ready.

He hangs up the phone and looks at Sonny. Sonny sits in the driver's side, while Terrance is in the passenger's seat. Both of them begin to check their guns. They are locked and loaded.

SONNY

Alright, get out. Get in your spot.

Terrance hesitates.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Go Terrance, what the fuck?

TERRANCE

You get out. I got this.

SONNY

What, that's stupid.

Terrance points his gun at Sonny. Sonny is surprised.

TERRANCE

Sonny. Get the fuck out.

Sonny looks in Terrance's eyes, which begin to tear up.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Just do it Sonny.

SONNY

Shit.

Sonny gets out and Terrance slides over. Sonny hides in the side ditch of the road. Terrance puts the vehicle in drive and revs the engine.

The speeding van comes over the country road ridge, spitting up dust from the gravel. It is almost pitch black. The driver of the van cannot see the SUV.

Just when the van is about to pass the SUV, Terrance pushes the pedal to the floor. He slams into the front-side of the van. Both vehicles smash up. The van flips on it's side and the SUV spins around.

Sonny waits for the accident to settle, then he gets up and walks toward the vehicle. The driver is dead. The back door of the van is open. Wheels spinning. One of the duffle bags lies half-way out the door. But Sonny notices that Terrance is trapped in the SUV, his legs smashed by the dash board.

Sonny goes directly to him to help him.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Terrance. I need to get ya out of here.

TERRANCE

No, grab the fucking money and go.

Just then a man emerges from the back of the van. He is a bit disoriented, but has a gun and he sees Sonny and Terrance. He raises and points the gun at them. Terrance notices him first.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Move!

Sonny turns around to the sound of a gun shot. He falls to the ground. It misses both of them but shatters the SUV's windshield. Terrance picks up his gun and opens fire, killing the shooter.

Terrance opens the door and falls out of the vehicle. His legs obviously broken. Sonny grabs him to check if he's okay. SIRENS sound in the distance.

Another man emerges from the vehicle. Terrance opens fire again, as does the other man. Terrance kills him too.

Sonny looks around for the third robber, but no one seems to be moving in the van, now riddled with bullets.

Sonny looks back at Terrance. This time Terrance has been shot in the chest. He is bleeding a great deal.

SONNY

Terrance. No, Terrance!

Terrance coughs up blood.

TERRANCE

Sonny. Stop it.

SONNY

Fuck!

TERRANCE

Sonny listen to me. There ain't no time. You need to get out bra.

Sonny looks at him. Terrance looks directly in Sonny's eyes.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Sonny.

SONNY

Don't you die Terrance.

TERRANCE

Shut the fuck up Sonny.

He coughs up more blood.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Look at me. Get home now. The Landlord.

He takes a deep breath and coughs hard.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Terrance leans his head back and dies in Sonny's arms. Sirens get closer.

SONNY
Fuck you Terrance.

He grabs him by the neck and pulls his head against his cheek and cries. Terrance's blood smears on his cheek.

Sonny gets up, grabs his pistol and walks slowly to the van. He points the gun at the doors as he gets closer. He slowly peeks in the door. The third robber is dead. The money is for the taking.

Sonny grabs all of the bags and loads them in the other SUV. He then grabs a container of gasoline and dumps it all over the van and SUV. He lights it and both vehicles begin to burn.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Nadine and Shay sit on the couch. Nadine holds shay close, both of them scared. The Landlord sits on the other couch with a gun in his hand.

The Landlord looks at the packed up clothes and stuff.

THE LANDLORD
Going somewhere?

She doesn't answer.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
And you weren't even going to say
goodbye. That hurts.

Shay whimpers. Nadine comforts her.

INT/EXT. SUV - SAME TIME

Sonny gets in the SUV and drives away. In the rear view mirror he sees the vehicles explode.

He picks up his cell phone and calls Nadine. There is no answer.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Nadine's cell phone rings on the coffee table. They all look at it.

THE LANDLORD
Superman is calling.

INT/EXT. SUV - SAME TIME

Sonny slams on the throttle and speeds into the darkness.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The Landlord gets up and walks over to them. He touches Shay with the hand not holding the gun.

THE LANDLORD

Shh. Don't cry. It will be okay.

NADINE

Don't you fuckin' touch her.

He looks at Nadine.

THE LANDLORD

Get up.

They don't move.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Get up!

Nadine gets up, holding Shay close.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Go to your room.

They go toward her bedroom door.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Not Shay, just you.

Nadine holds Shay tighter.

NADINE

No you motherfucker!

The Landlord goes over to Nadine and pulls Shay from her arms. Nadine tries desperately to hold on to Shay. She fails. He shoves Nadine in her bedroom and slams the door. He brings Shay, who struggles, into the living room and sets her on the couch.

INT. NADINE'S BEDROOM

Nadine is on her floor crying hysterically, frozen, and appears unable to get control of her fear.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Shay cowers on the couch. The Landlord walks toward her. He holds his gun close to his side. He sits next to Shay. He touches her leg. She flinches.

THE LANDLORD

Shh. Sweetie. It will be okay.

Shay cries more and puts her head between her legs. The Landlord touches her knee and moves to her hair. Shay trembles.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

Sonny's SUV pulls into the light of a street light. He slams on the breaks. He gets out and runs into the front of his apartment building.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. MOMENTS LATER

Sonny stands at the door of Nadine's apartment, listening through the door. He hears The Landlords voice and sounds of Shay crying.

Sonny aggressively pounds on the door.

SONNY (O.S.)

Let me in motherfucker!

The Landlord calmly looks at the door.

THE LANDLORD

Go home Sonny. We'll settle up tomorrow.

SONNY (O.S.)

You cowardly mother fucker. Open the fucking door now!

There are a couple seconds of silence. Then Sonny grabs the door knob and shakes it back and forth.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I said, open this fucking door now!

LANDLORD

Go fuckin' home Sonny!

The Landlord stands up.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR

Sonny grabs his head with both hands.

SONNY

Ahgghh!

He hears Shay cry. Then, two loud gunshots, a couple seconds apart echo through the apartment building. Shay screams. A body hits the ground.

Sonny freezes.

SONNY (CONT'D)

No. No. Shay. Nadine. Shay.

He backs up. He rubs his eyes with his hands and looks down. Then he looks up and then straight forward at the door again. He runs toward it, kicking it open.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

There lying on the ground is The Landlord, dead. Shay in a fetal position on the couch crying.

Nadine stands by her door with her gun still pointed at where The Landlord stood.

Sonny walks over to Nadine slowly. Nadine looks at him, her hands shaking, eyes tired.

SONNY

It's okay. It's me. Put the gun down.

Nadine slowly brings the gun down and places it on the ground. Sonny goes over to Nadine and hugs her.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm here.

Nadine wiggles out of his hug and rushes over to Shay. She hugs her tight. They both cry hysterically. Sonny goes over and kneels by them and brings them both into his arms. His tears begin to flow. So many damn tears finally come out.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James stands behind a podium. His recruits sit in chairs around a table listening to him.

JAMES

If you want to be a P.O. because
you want to be a tough guy then
don't.

A couple of the recruits listen more intently.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The men you will interact with are
always tougher. They don't need a
drill Sargent.

He pauses, fighting back tears. The recruits sit silently.
One raises his hand.

RECRUIT

Sir, what is it they need?

A couple moments of silence. All recruits are keenly paying
attention.

JAMES

A chance to make things right.

EXT. SELAH'S MEMORIAL - DAY

The stuffed animals, pictures and cards are a mess, battered
by the wind and rain. The pinwheel, though, smoothly spins
to the wind.

THE END