

(The Boys of Dozier)

by
(Pernell Mcnear & Cherise Mcnear)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by
(Current Writer, date)

Pernell Mcnear
4824 Alvarado Dr. Tampa, FL 33634
(813)249-8638

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: "NORTH FLORIDA" THEN 1968

EXT. GREEN DISTRICT - AFTERNOON

A poor black neighborhood, known as the East End. Homes abandon, broken down cars, and liquor stores make up this poverty stricken neighborhood. KIDS are busy playing basketball in the middle of the hot asphalt.

CAMERA REVEALS: JERRY WHITE, a very dark little boy, 16 years old with the swagger of a "Old Coon" making his way down the street.

Jerry pimps down the street smoking a cigarette, pointing a finger at one of the MEN sitting on the corner, DEXTER GREEN, dressed in a black suit.

JERRY

Dexter Green! When you gon' let me roll with ya man?

DEXTER

Go head lil' nigga. You know ya too young to hang with a gangster... you need to have your lil' ass in school somewhere!

JERRY

I hear ya Dexter!

Jerry continues walking making his way to the other KIDS playing basketball.

The Kids abruptly stop their game as Jerry approaches. They look at Jerry as if he was cursed with some kind of disease. Jerry's SOUTHERN DRAW is a representation of a true "SOUTHERN BOY".

JERRY (CONT'D)

Y'all ain't gotta stop the game 'cause I came around.

The KIDS say nothing, try to ignore Jerry.

Still smoking his cigarette, Jerry grabs the ball.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Come on, let's play!

Jerry snatches the ball from the boys.

JERRY (CONT'D)
I guess y'all gonna let me do what
I want too, huh?

One of the kids, BILLY, 16, steps up.

BILLY
Y'all step back!
(grinning)
I'm sick and tired of you runnin'
around here fuckin' with us! I'm
'bout to put a stop to this shit
right here and right know!

JERRY
(laughing)
Yeah, that's what I'm talkin'
'bout. I'm 'bout to take your
black ass to school.

BILLY
Let's go!

Not afraid of Jerry, Billy drops down into a defensive stance. Jerry dribbles the ball through his open legs and tries to go around Billy. Billy steals the ball from Jerry.

Jerry stands frozen.

Billy smiles, begins to dribble.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Ya ready?

Billy dribbles left and crosses back over right leaving Jerry in the wind. Jerry runs behind Billy as he makes his way to the basket. Jerry knows he's beat as Billy goes up for the lay-up... In desperation, Jerry commits a hard foul sending Billy tumbling down on the hard asphalt. Jerry stands over Billy; like the bully he is.

JERRY
Sit your punk ass down!

Kids run over to pick up Billy.

KID #2
(talking to Jerry)
See that's why nobody wanna play
with your black ass! You always
startin' trouble!

JERRY
Forget you... ya...

WOMAN (O.S.)
(Firmly)
... Jerry, get your little bad ass
over here!

The kids break out in laughter.

Jerry walks away shamelessly.

JERRY
I'll be right back.

KIDS
(still laughing)
Yeah right!

INT. SHOTGUN HOME - DAY

JERRY (V.O.)
This is my Foster Mom, Diane. She
adopted me when I was nine years
old. All she ever wanted from me
was to clean my room and go to
school. And to be totally
honest... I couldn't even do that.

Standing in the doorway is, DIANE, thrity, with the demeanor
of an older woman, grabs Jerry by his ear.

DIANE
(still angered)
What I told you 'bout bullying them
kids? Get your lil' bad ass in
this house... right know!

Jerry enters the house, Diane follows.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DIANE
Sit down!

Jerry flops down on the couch.

Diane pulls out a pack of Benson and Hedges cigarettes,
lights one.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 (taking a slow drag)
 Jerry, I can't keep goin' through
 this with you... Skippin' school,
 breakin' into cars, beatin' up
 people...

Jerry drops his head down in his lap.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 The state called here for you
 today. They wanna put you in a new
 school.

JERRY
 (flustered)
 What for? I ain't done nothin'. I
 likes the school I'm in -- and
 besides my grades are gettin'
 betta'!

DIANE
 Not that kinda school Jerry.

JERRY
 What kinda school?

Pause, as Diane takes a pull from her cigarette. Finally:

DIANE
 A school for boys.

JERRY
 (thinks)
 You talkin' about that crazy
 schools for boys?!

In panic mode, Jerry sprints towards the door, unlocks it.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 I'll run away before they try and
 take me to some damn crazy school
 for boys!

Jerry opens the door.

DIANE (O.S.)
 You can't run forever son.

Jerry looks back, thinks, then...

JERRY

(trying to convince her)
I promise Mamie, I'll be good! I
won't mess up again! Please don't
send me away!

Diane's face is overcome with grief, eyes tear up.

DIANE

(crying)
I'm sorry baby. There's nothin' I
can do. They comin' for ya today.

JERRY

(screaming)
Please Mamie, let me stay! What
you want me to do? I don't wanna
leave you Mamie.

DIANE

Jerry, you're a ward of the state.
You gotta do what they tell you
baby.

JERRY

(still crying)
Mamie please call and tell 'em I'll
be a good boy. Please don't let 'em
take me away!

Diane walks over to Jerry and begins to embrace him.

Jerry continues crying on her shoulder.

The KNOCK at the door startles them.

Jerry holds on to Diane tighter.

DIANE

I love you son. I'm sorry.

Diane stares at the door...

DIANE (CONT'D)

Come in.

TWO WHITE MEN dressed in PRISON GUARD UNIFORMS, black shades,
walk in.

Jerry drops down to one knee and grabs on to Diane's leg.

JERRY (V.O.)

I knew right then that my life was
about to change forever.

(MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Every since I was a kid I heard stories about this place, but never in a million years would I have thought that I would end up here. I knew I was bad but damn, give me a chance to make this right. I thought I could've been a puck-wood driver, a janitor, or maybe even a pimp, but not this... not in the chain-gang.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(still crying)

Please Mamie, don't let 'em take me away!

The prison guards run over to Jerry and snatch him up off the floor.

PRISON GUARD

Come on boy, it's time to go!

Jerry tries to break lose from the Prison Guards iron-grip. Unable to break lose Jerry continues screaming.

JERRY

MAMIE!!! MAMIE!!! Please don't let 'em take me away!

Diane can't help but cry hysterically as she looks at the guards drag Jerry out of the house.

Jerry face is overcome with fear as he looks back at Diane.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That was the last time I would see Diane alive -- Nice lady.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. REFORM SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Establishing. Old run down buildings needing rehab make up this secluded area that looks something like a post-era slave camp. Chain-link fences surrounds the whole compound. The sun shines down violently, as the wind blows through the PALM TREES.

INT. REFORM SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Jacket on, ready to leave, Jerry sits alone with his head down; dazed.

VOICE (O.S.)
(Southern draw)
Hey boy...

JERRY (V.O.)
That's Officer Wilson -- mean son of a bitch. This is one the many altercations that he and I shared. I never figured out why he hated me so much -- I guess it was because I was black. Go figure.

The deep voice startles Jerry as he lifts his head up.

CAMERA REVEALS: DAVID WILSON, thirty, mean as a rattle snake, his taunt grins are reminiscent of former SOUTHERN SLAVE OWNERS.

WILSON
Yeah boy, I'm talkin' to you!

Jerry stands, walks to the back.

INT. REFORM SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

WILSON
What's ya name boy?

JERRY
(scared)
Jerry... Jerry White.

Wilson shakes his head.

WILSON
(sarcastically)
White hunh? Don't nothin' look white about you boy.

Wilson continues with his paperwork.

Jerry stands silently until--

JERRY
When is I goin' home?

Wilson stops writing, lifts his head up.

WILSON
Did I tell you to talk?

JERRY
Nope.

Wilson walks over to Jerry.

WILSON
What'd you say to me boy?

JERRY
(scared)
When is I goin' home?

WILSON
Let me tell ya somethin' you smart
little nigger! You address me as
sir when you talk to me! You
understands me boy?

JERRY
Yep.

CRACKKKK!!!

Out of nowhere, a thick stick smashes upside Jerry's head.
Jerry holds his ground, stares.

WILSON
I'm only gon' ask you one more time
Boy. Do you understand me?

JERRY
(knows he better say the
right thing)
Yes... yes sir I understands you
sir.

WILSON
That's what I thought! I can see
now, me and you gon' have a real
good time here.

Wilson, reaching into a box of prison uniforms.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Oh, by the way to answer your
question. You are at home now boy.

Wilson throws Jerry his uniform, lands on the floor.

WILSON (CONT'D)
 Now take them damn clothes off!
 This is what ya wear from now on!

Jerry bends down, picks it up.

WILSON (CONT'D)
 Now get the fuck outta my office
 before I beat the tar off you boy!

Jerry looks back at Wilson, walks out.

EXT. BUSY STREET - NIGHT

The night is busy as PEOPLE enjoy a nice, quiet evening about the town.

Standing in a DARK ALLEY is a YOUNG BOY, clean cut, nice looking, but looks like life has taken a toll on him.

Young Boy looks around at the patrons as they walk to their cars and to their homes.

He stares in silence like an animal hunting his prey until he sees a YOUNG WHITE WOMAN walking by herself.

KA-CHACK!!! Young boy jams the clip into a pistol.

He waits until the woman walks away from the light and soon as she turns the corner...

Young Man JUMPS out of the bushes, grabs the lady by her arm and puts his hand around her mouth.

YOUNG BOY
 (anxious)
 Listen lady... I don't wanna hurt ya... I jus' want your purse. But if you start screaming I swear to god I'll cut your fuckin' head off and want think twice about it! You hears me lady?!

Woman nods: yes.

YOUNG WOMAN
 (pleading for her life)
 Please, Mister... please don't kill me!

YOUNG BOY
 I ain't gon' kill you lady. I jus' gotta feed my little brother.

Young Boy grabs the purse and takes off running.

The Woman starts SCREAMING. PEOPLE hear her screaming and run over to help her. The Woman is so scared she can hardly get her words out.

YOUNG WOMAN

This guy... this black guy grabbed me by the neck and...

OLDER MAN

... It's alright slow down... just tell us what happened.

YOUNG WOMAN

(finally calm)

This black guy grabbed my purse and he... he took off runnin' down the street.

OLDER MAN

(pointing)

He took off that way... Let's get that nigger!

EXT. BUSY STREET - NIGHT - SHOTS OF YOUNG MAN

Young Man pumping down the street.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Young Man races into Apartment Building...charges up to the second floor.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Charges up to the second floor, trips on stairs, gets up, adrenaline pumping, His HEART BEATS loudly as the SOUND of SIRENS gain on him.

Young man reaches the door, KNOCKS on it.

Young man looks around frantically as he waits on someone to open the door.

YOUNG MAN

(looking around)

Open the fuckin' door!

The door slides open.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He slides in, closes the door, and breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. PITT'S HOME - NIGHT

CAMERA REVEALS: WILLIE PITTS, 16 years old, clean cut, nice looking, and highly intelligent. Willie is sitting down at the kitchen table with his MOTHER, forty, with a million dollar smile, doing his homework. Mother is looking at his REPORT CARD.

MOTHER

(excited)

Willie I'm so proud of you baby!
You may be the first one in the
family to finish high school and go
to college!

WILLIE

Yes Ma'am.

MOTHER

Your Daddy would be so proud of you
-- God bless is soul. You just
keep up the good work baby. I
promise we'll get through this.

Willie finishes his homework.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I need you take the garbage out
before it gets too late.

WILLIE

Yes Ma'am Momma.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Willie walks to the garbage can and places the garbage in the container.

Suddenly... Willie HEARS VOICES coming somewhere from behind him. He turns around as sees TWO WHITE MEN walking briskly towards him.

WILLIE

(throws the garbage can on
the ground)

Fuck this, I'm outta' here!

Willie breaks out in an innocent run towards his apartment building door--

OLDER MAN (O.S.)

STOP!

Willie looks petrified as he turns around.

The MEN approach Willie swiftly, throw him on the ground.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

(out of breath)

You didn't think you were gonna get away, did you boy?

WILLIE

I don't know what your talking about sir!

OLDER MAN

I guess that's why you took off runnin', hunh boy?

WILLIE

Momma! Momma! Please help me!

SIRENS blare at a distance, as one of the men puts his knee in the back of Willie's neck. Willie is spread full eagle on the ground as the men continue to harass him.

OLDER MAN

We got your black ass now boy!

The sirens are close now, POLICE arrive on scene.

Meanwhile: heads are out of the window and some RESIDENTS are starting to gather in the courtyard. They are sick and tired of the Police coming around harassing them.

RESIDENT # 1

Hey, that's Willie down there! Run up stairs and get his Moma!

RESIDENT # 2

Awright. I'll be rat' back!

Resident # 2 disappears off screen.

Willie looks around as the police officers put him in handcuffs.

WILLIE

What y'all want with me?

POLICE # 1

(tighten the handcuffs)

Shut your god damn mouth, boy! I'm
the one askin' the questions here!
If I have to say somethin' else to
ya, imma' let my nightstick do all
the talkin' for me!

RESIDENT # 1

Hey, that's a little boy down there
leave him be!

POLICE # 2

Who in the hell asked you anything?
Jis' shut your god damn mouth
before I arrest you for assaulting
an officer!

POLICE # 1

(talking to other police)

Call tha' chief! Looks like we
might have a riot on our hands!

Police bolts to the squad car.

By this time Willie's Mother walks down, loses it.

MOTHER

What the hell are y'all doing with
my baby?!

POLICE

(picking up Willie off the
ground)

Your boy snatched a lady's purse
and we're gonna see to it that he
gets what he deserves! He'll be
down at the station with the rest
of the niggers who wanna assault
white women!

MOTHER

What are you talkin' about? My son
has been here with me all night
doing his homework!

POLICE

(taking Willie to squad
car)

Tell it to somebody who believes
ya!

The police throw Willie into the back of the patrol car, slam
the door, drive off.

Jerry looks around the chow hall.

JERRY

I said, "I don't want no trouble."

Micheal stands up.

MICHEAL

I don't give tow shits 'bout what you said boy! Around these parts you stick with your own kind!

Jerry sits down.

By this time Officer Wilson walks over to the table.

WILSON

What seems to be the fuckin' problem here fellas?

TONY

Mr. Wilson, this monkey right here seems to be the problem! He jus' came outta nowhere and told me and Mikee to move.

MICHEAL

That's right! We told him we didn't want no trouble... but he didn't listen.

JERRY

(standing up)
I was just...

WILSON

... Sit your ass down and shut your fuckin' mouth! I had just 'bout enough of you flappin off at the jaws!

MICHEAL

God damn coon tried to attack me!

WILSON

(to Tony and Micheal)
You fellas finish eatin' and head out on for detail.

TONY

Awright Mr. Wilson.

WILSON

(to Jerry)

As for you -- you got a week in the hole. Maybe next time you think about startin' a fight in the chow hall.

Tony and Mike antagonize Jerry as they walk away from the table.

JERRY

(to Mr. Wilson)

I didn't do nothin'!

WILSON

Yeah I know it. You boys never do nothin', including not washin' your ass!

INT. PRISON BUS - AFTERNOON

Willie sits in the back of the bus alone, biting his nails, fear written all over his face. The bus finally comes to a stop. Willie looking bleak and hopeless, looks out the window.

BUS DRIVER

Awright boys, get your shit together and get off my fuckin' bus!

The BOYS move around frantically trying to pick up their belongings.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

Get the molasses out your ass and let's move!

Bus Driver points.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

Over there to The White Building, let's move!

Wilson watching the prisoners, looking at their records, motions for them.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The boys jostle in a single file line in front of THE WHITE HOUSE until their names are called.

Willie is next in line.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)
Willie Pitts!

A beat.

BUS DRIVER (O.S) (CONT'D)
Willie Pitts!

Willie crosses into the building...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Willie stares around the room.

WILLIE'S POV

Musty ceilings, blood stained walls complete with handprints that are reminiscent of tortures past and present. Willie stands frozen.

BUS DRIVER
Hey!

No response.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)
Hey you!

Willie snaps back into reality, tries to compose himself.

BACK TO SCENE

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)
What the hell you lookin' at boy?

Willie looks around, dazed.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)
Say boy, I'm talkin' too you.

WILLIE
(crying)
I'm sorry sir.

BUS DRIVER
Can you read, boy?

WILLIE
Yes sir... yes sir I can read.

BUS DRIVER

Well you betta damn well hope so,
'cause I'm only gonna give you the
rules one time! If you don't
follow 'em, the next time you come
in here, it want be to talk! You
understands me?

WILLIE

Yes Sir.

Bus driver throws a HANDBOOK, Willie picks it up.

BUS DRIVER

Now get on up out of here!

Willie Exits.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Who's Next?

INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

It is almost pitch black. The only thing we can see is a
broken down box spring on the floor.

Jerry sits, his eyes transfixed on the bars. Out of
frustration Jerry grabs the bars and tries to break them
apart, not budging Jerry slides down to the floor of the
cell. Finally-- Jerry drifts off into a coma like sleep...

FLASHBACK - INT. JERRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A young Jerry lays tucked in the bed, eyes wide open,
listening to his Mother MAKING LOVE to some strange man. The
sounds bring a frown to his face. As a routine now, Jerry
pulls the COVER over his head.

The sounds continue...

TIME CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - TWO HOURS LATER

Dead silence, Jerry climbs out of bed, wearing underwear. He
moves to his doorway, listens for a beat, crosses into...

INT. JERRY'S HOME - MOTHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry's MOTHER is lying on the floor like a rag doll.

JERRY (V.O.)

This way nothing new, my mother lying on the floor asleep -- just finished making love to some strange man. But tonight... yeah tonight was different, something didn't seem right. When I usually open the door she's asleep with a cigarette in her hand.

Jerry makes a beeline over to his Mother. Bending down next to her fallen body he touches her.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Momma! Momma! Why won't you wake up!

No response.

Momma still not answering. Jerry SLAPS her face hard.

Her body lies stiff as log.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - MOTHER'S ARM (NEEDLE EMBEDDED)

JERRY (CONT'D)

(crying)

No Momma... wake up... wake up!
Come on Momma! Wake up!...

END FLASHBACK.

INT. SOLITARY - CONTINUOUS

Jerry JUMPS up, SWEAT covers his body. Looks around. Finally calms down.

JERRY (V.O.)

Just like that, I'm all alone, nine years old and my mother lying on the floor dead -- shit, wish I knew my father, maybe he could have come and saved me.

EXT. SNEADS FLORIDA - NIGHT

Establishing. Older SHOTGUN HOMES.

INT. ROOSEVELT'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Lying in bed is JAMES, 50, fat, nasty, with a bald head, naked under the sheet. A half-empty bottle of Seagram's Gin and an ashtray full of butts are on the night stand.

Lying next to James is ROOSEVELT SIMS, 15, dark, and seemingly very unhappy. TEARS start to roll down Roosevelt's young innocent face.

JAMES

... You jus' remember, you betta'
not say nothin' to nobody!

Jerry stares into space, wishing this son-of-a-bitch would lay down and die like a dog in the street.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(pours a shot of gin)
You hears me boy?

ROOSEVELT

Yeah... yeah I got it.

JAMES

(takes a sip)
You betta' get out of here 'fore
yo' Momma come home and see us.

Roosevelt climbs out of bed, wearing underwear. He moves to the window, sees his Mother walking down the street. Roosevelt kneels down, rests his arm on the window sill, watches his Mother.

ROOSEVELT

My Momma don't care 'bout me,
'cause if she did she wouldn't let
you do me like 'dis.

Roosevelt continues staring out of the window.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

If my Daddy was here, he wouldn't
let y'all do 'dis to me.

JAMES

Boy yo' Daddy don't give a Dam
'bout you, 'cause if he did he
wouldn't never left in the first
place!

ROOSEVELT

(softly)

He didn't leave! My Momma jus'
ended up with yo' fat, black ass!

JAMES

What you say to me boy?

ROOSEVELT

Nothin'... I ain't say notin'.

JAMES

Like I was sayin'... you aints' got
to worry yourself 'bout him, 'cause
I's yo' Daddy now!

ROOSEVELT

You aint...

James jumps out of bed, charges Roosevelt like a bull in an arena.

JAMES

Boy you betta' get your little
narrow ass out of here 'fore I come
over there and beat the living shit
out you!

Roosevelt storms out of the room like a bat out of hell.

INT. ROOSEVELT'S HOME - LATER

Roosevelt sits stone-faced, his back against the wall.

Tears roll down Roosevelt's face as he listens to James and his Mother LAUGH, as if nothing ever happened. Roosevelt paces around the room; he can't take it any more. He creeps to the door, trying not to make a sound. Opens the door...

INT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

Roosevelt crosses into the kitchen, still trying not to make a sound. Roosevelt walks over to the kitchen drawer.

CLOSE-UP - REVOLVER

Roosevelt slowly places the bullets inside the revolver.

Ready; he exits.

INT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

Roosevelt walks down the hallway quietly, slowly pushes the door open.

INT. HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roosevelt sees his Mother lying in bed with James, pulls the hammer back quietly, walks toward them.

There's no turning back now, Roosevelt has snapped.

ROOSEVELT

James...

No Answer.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

James...

James rolls over.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

James...

James, half-focused, sees Roosevelt standing over the bed, sits up, taps Mother on the shoulder.

JAMES

Baby... Baby get up! This lil' crazy muthafucka' got a gun!

Roosevelt points the gun at James.

ROOSEVELT'S MOM (O.S.)

No, Roosevelt...

JAMES

(begging)

Come on son, put the...

ROOSEVELT

... You won't take nothin' else from me again.

JAMES

(shakes his head)

NO!!!

... BOOM!!!!

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. SHOWER ROOM - DAY

Jerry stands with his head bowed as the cold water cascades over his body. Jerry turns for a minute as he sees that he is being watched.

Wilson stares at Jerry from a distance, as if he was admiring Jerry's body.

Jerry continues washing up, trying not to look at Wilson.

Finally--

WILSON

Alright White, that's enough! Time to go!

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

BOYS play basketball. Jerry casually strolls through the yard.

Willie sits down on the bleachers reading a book.

Jerry sees Willie sitting down, walks over to him.

JERRY

Somebody sittin' here?

Willie young, naive, and scared as hell, shrugs his shoulder...

WILLIE

You can sit down.

JERRY

What your name is?

WILLIE

(hesitate)

Willie... my name is Willie.

JERRY

(lights up a cigarette)

My name Jerry, but they call me Geechie back home.

WILLIE

Where are you from?

JERRY

I'm from Panama City. Where you from?

WILLIE

I'm from Walton County.

JERRY

I never been there, but I hears it nice.

They sit speechless...

JERRY (CONT'D)

(taking a slow drag)

So what they got you in here for Willie?

WILLIE

(trying to proof his point)

They got me in her for assaulting a white woman... but I didn't do it!... Soon as my Momma can get money for a lawyer she's gonna get me out of here.

JERRY

What assault mean?

WILLIE

That means when you try and hurt somebody.

JERRY

So let me get this straight. You mean to tell me that they got you in here for hurtin' a white woman?

WILLIE

Yeah, but I didn't do it!

JERRY (V.O.)

I was sad for Willie... sad because I truly believed what he was saying. But you know how it goes when you mess with a white woman, they gonna make sure that your black ass is prosecuted to the full extent of the law...

JERRY (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 Aw hells Willie, you aint never
 gettin' up out of here.

A WHISTLE blows.

In unison Willie and Jerry stand, walk off.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

The boys sit around playing games and listening to MUSIC.
 BLACKS BOYS ON ONE SIDE, WHITES ON OTHER.

JERRY (V.O.)
 I once heard, if you go looking for
 something, you will find it. And
 boy did I almost find it that day --
 an ass whipping. I guess it was my
 antagonize personality, always
 wanting to compete.

Roosevelt sits three bunks away all alone, he wants no part
 of the world or anyone in it, just to be left alone.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 (talking to Willie)
 It must be Wednesday?

WILLIE
 What makes you say that?

JERRY
 That's when they bring new inmates
 in.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Watch this Willie.

JERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (talking to Roosevelt)
 Hey boy, you thinks you too good to
 come and hang with the rest of us
 niggas?

Jerry looks at Willie in amusement.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Say boy, I'm talkin' to you!

Roosevelt looks up, stands, his bloodshot red-eyes give a
 sense that he's not the one to be messed with.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(taken aback)

Hey, I'm sorry. I ain't mean to bother you! I was just seeing if you wanted to come down here and play some cards with us... that's all.

Willie pulls Jerry's shirt.

WILLIE

Sit down man!

JERRY

Yeah you right. That nigga there crazy.

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And boy was he ever. I guess getting molested by your stepfather for all those years could drive any one insane -- poor Roosevelt.

Jerry sits back down, continues listening to music.

EXT. PRISON YARD - AFTERNOON

BOYS lift weights, play basketball, play cards or find solace in any other activity besides being inside.

TWO SHOT - JERRY AND WILLIE

They are walking along the fence.

Roosevelt sits alone, staring into space.

JERRY

You hear anything from your Mama?

WILLIE

She wrote me a letter the other day and said she was gonna send a letter to the state about what happened.

JERRY

(dismissive)

I hope that work out for you.

WILLIE

So Jerry, you never told me what you were in here for?

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Say Jerry, you...

JERRY
(stops in his tracks)
... The only crime I ever committed
was being poor and coloured.

They continue walking, speechless...

JERRY (CONT'D)
You see that nigga over there.
What's that nigga's angle?

WILLIE
He don't talk, just stare into
space all the time. He must be on
them drugs or something.

A WHISTLE blows.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

Roosevelt lies asleep in his bunk.

Wilson creeps in the building, kneels down by Roosevelt's bunk, puts his hand on Roosevelt's shoulder and gently starts to shake him. Roosevelt looks at Wilson in a daze. Suddenly... Roosevelt's eyes fill with fear. Roosevelt tries to get up and run.

BANG!!! Wilson, infuriated by Roosevelt's reaction, slams his head down on the bed.

Roosevelt MOANS.

WILSON
(stuffing a piece of
material in his mouth)
Shut tha' fuck up! It's time for
you to pay your dues, boy.

Wilson snatches him off the bed, throws him on the floor.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wilson and another GUARD, JESSE, 30, hold Roosevelt down.

Roosevelt's SCREAMS for help go unanswered.

Wilson pushes the material further down his mouth.

WILSON

Shut your god damn mouth boy! No one is here to help you!

FOOTSTEPS on the dingy cement floors echo from a distance...

Roosevelt moves around frantically, trying to break loose. A moment later, a MAN'S VOICE appears over the commotion.

WARDEN JACKSON (O.S.)

Take it easy boys.

CAMERA REVEALS: WARDEN JACKSON, 50, tall, slender, and with the face of a stern, strict, SOUTHERN BAPTIST PREACHER. He is dressed in a green and gold uniform with a CONFEDERATE FLAG on the sleeve -- THE DEVIL HIMSELF HAS ARRIVED.

WILSON

Is this him?

Guards stand Roosevelt up.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Yes sir boss. This is the one.

Jackson reaches into his pocket, pulls out a pipe and lights it.

WARDEN JACKSON

(taking a drag)

Congratulations Mr. Sims. Welcome to THE WHITE HOUSE. Looks like you're the first murderer we ever had here in this fine institution.

Roosevelt still trying to free himself.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Can this boy hear?

WILSON

Yes sir boss, he can hear, just don't talk much. Some say he's on that juice.

WARDEN JACKSON

(talking to guards)

We'll soon see about that, huh boys?

GUARDS LAUGH.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 Now listen here Mr. Sims. This
 will be a whole lot betta' if you
 jus' do what I tell ya. What goes
 on in these here four little walls
 stays here. If I hear any such an
 inkling about it, I'll *kill* ya'!
 You follow me so far?

Roosevelt doesn't answer.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (talking to Wilson)
 Looks like we might need to give
 him some words of encouragement,
 hunh fellas?

WILSON
 Yes Sir Boss, right on it.

Wilson disappears.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Jesse, go down yonda' and get me a
 glass of water. Looks like we're
 gonna be in for a long night.

JESSE
 Yes Sir boss.

Jesse exits.

By this time Wilson re-appears back in the room.

WILSON
 Got what ya' asked for boss.

CLOSE - WILSON'S HAND

A POLISHED LEATHER STRAP WITH SHEET METAL ATTACHED TO IT,
 COMPLETE WITH HAND GRIP.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Now ya see this here?

Petrified now, Roosevelt nods: yes

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (sarcastically)
 Always gets the conversation
 started.

They laugh.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

This is your new home now son. Ya Momma, ya Popa, sista, noone... noone her to save ya, jus' me and the rest of these fine officers. When ya' fuck up this is where they send ya' to... me, to straighten ya out, make sure you learn ya' lesson.

(Slapping the belt in his hand)

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Now Wilson, hit tha' fan.

WILSON

You got it Boss.

Wilson walks over, turns the fan on.

It is turning slowly. CREAK!!! SQUEAK!!! CREAK!!!

Warden Jackson begins to take his uniform off.

WARDEN JACKSON

Remember what I said boy. I betta' not hear a thing 'bout this here!

Roosevelt, with the same look in his eyes when he killed his stepfather phantoms the thought of fighting, he then realizes that there is three people to fight, begins to think better of it.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Now get over there and take yo' clothes off!

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

EXT. WOODED AREA- AFTERNOON

The bright sun beams down violently on the BOYS as they use SLING BLADES and MACHETES to cut down the grazing land of the Florida Panhandle. This is HELL, and they're in it. White Boys on one side. Blacks on the other.

A MONTAGE OF A FULL DAY -

Jerry covered in sweat, his nose bleeds profusely.

WILLIE
 (pointing to his nose)
 Say Jerry, your nose is bleeding.

Jerry takes his shirt, wipes the blood off.

JERRY
 (talking to Willie)
 It start bleeding when I get too hot. But it ain't nothin' to worry about.

WILLIE
 Hold your head back, it will stop the bleeding.

JERRY
 I can't. They see us not working ain't no tellin' what they'd do to us.

WILLIE
 (still working)
 Take it easy, we should be getting a break soon.

Jerry holds his head back, the bleeding stops.

JERRY
 Thanks Willie.

Willie nods.

The SOUND of a WHISTLE goes off; It's break time.

EXT. WOODED AREA - CONTINUOUS

The Boys Stand in line waiting on their food and beverages.

NATHANIEL, 14, skinny black boy, stands in the line talking to other inmates.

Standing in line behind him is Micheal and Tony.

The line is moving swiftly.

Nathaniel is next in line.

Nathaniel is minding his own business talking to the other boys until...

TONY
 (to Nathaniel)
 Hey boy.

Nathaniel turns around.

TONY (CONT'D)
 Yeah you boy. Get your black ass
 to the back of the line!

Nathaniel continues talking, as if he doesn't hear Tony.

Micheal taps Nathaniel on his shoulder.

MICHEAL
 Hey nigger, didn't you jus' hear
 what the man said?

NATANIEL
 I ain't movin' nowhere!

TONY
 (talking to Michael)
 Looks like were gonna have to teach
 this little nigger a lesson!

Tony and Micheal begin to laugh. Tony stares at Nathaniel.
 Nathaniel stares back. You can feel the tension building.

Tony walks over to Nathaniel. They're face-to-face.

JERRY (O.S.)
 Hey!

Tony turns around and... WHAMMM!!! Jerry PUNCHES Tony in the
 face. Tony's out cold...

Turns to Micheal.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 You want some of this Cracker Boy?!

The CROWD breaks out in RIOTOUS LAUGHTER until...

Just then, another Prison Guard steps INTO FRAME, raises a
 shotgun...

KA-BLAMMM!!! The BIRDS scatter...

... DEAD SILENCE

Wilson sees the commotion, runs over.

WILSON
 (to Michael)
 What the fuck is goin' on here
 Mikee?!

MICHEAL
 This nigger just came out of
 nowhere and hit Tony in the back of
 the head!

WILSON
 (grins)
 (to Jerry)
 I knew you couldn't stay out of
 trouble!

Jerry shrugs his shoulders; impassive.

WILSON (CONT'D)
 We'll see how much you don't care
 in a minute.

By this time Tony begins to moan, stands up.

TONY
 Officer Wilson I...

WILSON
 ... I don't wanna hear this shit
 from you Tony! You and Mikee get
 the hell out of here before y'all
 get the same thing these two boot-
 lip niggers gonna get!

TONY
 But Officer...

WILSON
 ... I don't wanna hear it! Get the
 fuck outta here, now!

Tony and Micheal walk away with their heads down.

Wilson looks at his watch.

WILSON (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna give you boys 10 minutes
 to get to where ya' need to be or
 I'm gonna send them boys from the
 kitchen to come down here and get
 ya'!

NATHANIEL

That was those two Cracker's who started...

WHOCK!!! Wilson gives Nathaniel a swift knee in the thigh and follows it with an elbow across the head. Nathaniel SLAMS into the ground.

WILSON

(looking down at Nathaniel)

... Shut tha' fuck up! Who in the hell asked you anything boy! Now you boys get your shit and meet me there in 10 minutes!

Jerry bends down, grabs Nathaniel by the arm. They start walking.

WILSON (CONT'D)

(talking to crowd)

What the hell ya' lookin' at? Get tha' fuck back to work!

The crowd descends...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nathaniel and Jerry sit down on a wooden bench talking.

NATHANIEL

(scared)

What you think they gone do to us?

JERRY

(slaps Nathaniel on the back)

Oh, it ain't nothin' to worry about. They probably just gone talk to us, that's all.

NATHANIEL

I don't know Jerry, 'cause I hear some bad thangs 'bout 'dis here place.

JERRY

It ain't nothin' to worry about man. All you gotta do is tell them what really happened. They ain't goin' do nothin' to us.

NATHANIEL

Them guards don't wanna hear that Jerry. You know they be lookin' out for them white boys.

JERRY

(assuring)

Just be cool Nate. It's gonna be awright.

Jerry puts his hand out.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Now give me some skin brother!

Nathaniel smiles, gives Jerry a hand shake.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Now that's...

WILSON (O.S.)

... Nathaniel...

They look at each other.

JERRY (V.O.)

By the look in Nathaniel's dark saddened eyes. I could sense that he knew things were about to take a turn for the worse.

WILSON (O.S.)

Nathaniel, I'm not gonna call you again, boy!

Nathaniel stands. Looks at Jerry for a beat, then...

JERRY

Go on in there, it's nothin' to worry yourself about.

NATHANIEL

Awright Jerry, I'll see you in a minute.

Nathaniel walks to the door.

In SLO-MO, the door closes.

Jerry sits there in silence...

TIME CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

Jerry is still sitting there patiently. He doesn't see or hear anything. Finally--

WILSON (O.S.)
Awright White, you next!

Jerry stands, walks over to the door.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sitting down in a old rocking chair wiping his hands with a towel is Warden Jackson. He reaches under his desk, grabs a bottle of Jack Daniels.

Jerry looks around the room. You can almost smell the scent of death in the air.

JERRY
Where is...

WARDEN JACKSON
... Don't worry 'bout him! I'd be more concerned with myself at this point! Now... I'm gonna tell you like I tell the rest of the boys. We can make this easy or we can make it hard. It's up to you. Now you listen and you listen good. You see that there bed?

Jerry frowns. Jackson pours a shot glass full of Jack Daniels. He downs it, pours another. Sits back in his chair, know he's in charge.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
(to Wilson)
(laughing)
This boy here is a real ham ain't he fellas?

WILSON
This the one I was tellin' you about Boss. The one always startin' trouble around the yard... tough sumbitch.

WARDEN JACKSON
We gonna see how tough he is after this.

JERRY

(throws his hands up)
You can do whatever you wants to
me. You still can't break me.

WILSON

We'll soon see 'bout that boy!

WARDEN JACKSON

Like I was sayin' before you
interrupted me. You can make this
a whole lot easier on yourself if
you jus' do what I tell ya.

Warden Jackson takes another shot of Jack Daniels.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

You see that there bed?

JERRY'S POV

An old metal bed with the mattress pulled back and blood-
stained pillow.

BACK TO SCENE

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Get on over there and lay on your
stomach.

Jerry walks over to the BED with a look of confidence as he
looks back at Warden Jackson. Jerry has to establish his
respect.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Don't make a sound. If ya' need
too, you can use that there pillow
to cover up ya' mouth.

Officer Wilson walks over, belt in hand.

Warden Jackson stops him in his tracks.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Officer Wilson, I got this one.

Wilson hands him the belt.

Warden Jackson grabs the belt, walks toward Jerry.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (strokes the belt)
 I hopes you remember the next time
 you and the other niggers at this
 school decide to get out of line.

A beat.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 This is God's work.

Warden Jackson draws back, WHOMP!!!, strikes Jerry.

Jerry grimaces in pain but doesn't make a sound or shed a
 tear.

Warden Jackson looks at Wilson, surprised.

Wilson shrugs his shoulders.

Warden Jackson draws back, WHOMP!!!, strikes again. Blood
 instantly pools on the floor. Jerry takes the slashes like
 they were taps from a parent, softly chastising their young
 child.

WILSON
 (to Warden Jackson)
 You want me take care of it Boss?

Warden Jackson doesn't respond.

He draws back for a third time, this time he puts all of his
 force into it. CHOONK!!! CHOONK!!!

This was the most pain a grown man could endure, let alone a
 young boy. Jerry takes the pain: he can't be defeated.

Jerry closes his eyes as the beatings continue.

LONG DISSOLVE:

SAME SCENE - LATER

The beating continue, far more than they should have until
 finally...

WARDEN JACKSON
 (to Wilson)
 I think he gets the point Wilson.

WILSON
 Yes sir boss. I think he does.

WARDEN JACKSON
 (wiping the sweat off his
 forehead)
 Get him the hell outta my face
 before I...

WILSON
 ... Don't worry Boss, I got him.

Jerry finally opens his eyes.

WILSON (CONT'D)
 Get on up out of here boy!

Jerry tries to get up, falls back down.

WILSON (CONT'D)
 You keep a layin' down there it's
 gonna be more of the same!

Jerry slowly picks himself up of the bed.

He is bleeding profusely. Jerry limps out of the room.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

The boys are busy playing cards and listening to the RADIO.

Jerry walks in limping.

The room goes silent as the boys watch Jerry fall limp on the
 concrete floor.

Willie jumps out of the bed and runs over to assist Jerry.

Tony stares, he knows this is all his fault. Finally--

Tony crawls out of bed, walks over to Jerry, puts Jerry's arm
 around his shoulder and helps him to the bed.

TONY
 (angered)
 What the hell you boys lookin' at?!
 Go and get me some hot water and
 Vaseline!

JERRY (V.O.)
 This was the first time Tony helped
 me out, but it definitely wasn't
 the last.

The boys scam.

TONY
(to Jerry)
Don't worry Jerry. I'm gonna take
care of ya'.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Roosevelt is moping the floor in silence.

He continues down the open bay, passing the washer and dryers
until he is stopped dead in his tracks in front of a dryer...

Inside the dryer with blood coming out of mouth, eyes wide
open is Nathaniel.

Roosevelt JUMPS back.

ROOSEVELT
Holy shit!

Roosevelt drops the broom, runs out...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

TITLE CARD: 3 WEEKS LATER

INT. PRISON YARD - MORNING

Tony is lying down on the bench lifting weights. Standing
over him is Jerry, with fresh bandages on his arms.

JERRY
Come on Tony. Give me one more!

Tony pushes up with all his strength.

No longer enemies, Tony and Jerry continue laughing and
working out together...

As Micheal walks up to Officer Wilson.

MICHEAL
Officer Wilson, can I talk to ya'
for a minute?

WILSON
(looks at his watch)
Go ahead Mikee. You betta' make it
fast... I ain't got all day.

MICHEAL
You see Tony over there?

Wilson looks, nods: yes.

WILSON
What about him?

MICHEAL
It's like every since that nigger
came back from his visit to The
White House Tony has been under him
like he's some kind of nigger lover
or something... and I don't like
it!

WILSON
(nodding)
Uh-hunh.

MICHEAL
Is that all you gonna say?

WILSON
(blowing up)
Goddammit Mikee who in the hell you
think you talkin' to boy?

Micheal jumps back in defense.

WILSON (CONT'D)
There's nothin' I can do about that
there! Christ, everybody thinks I
can just snap my fingers and the
whole god damn world can change!
Well it don't fuckin' work like
that Mikee, this is a free world,
ya' free to talk to who the hell
ya' wants to!

Micheal is totally shamed.

MICHEAL
It's like...

WILSON
(thinks)
... Wait, hold on! Mikee don't you
get outta here in a couple months?!

MICHEAL
Yes, sir.

WILSON

Then what the hell you so worried
about them for?

MICHEAL

I was just hoping...

WILSON

... Get over it! I can't stop him
from talkin' to who in the hell he
wants to! Now get the hell on out
of my face Mikee!

Micheal looks at Wilson like he wants to say something else.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I said, get the hell outta my face
boy!

Micheal walks off, head down.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

Bed time as usual. The boys are preparing for their hour of
free time before head check. Tony has laid out the blanket
for the card game and is shuffling cards. Roosevelt whom
sits alone enters casually.

ROOSEVELT

Say Jerry, can I talk to you?

Jerry is taken aback, this is the first time Roosevelt has
said a word since he's been there.

JERRY

(smoking a cigarette)
Sure... sure Roosevelt.

Jerry stands up. Limpes over to Roosevelt.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(to Willie and Tony)
Say fellas, you boys gonna have to
s'cuse me a minute.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry and Roosevelt stand side by side.

JERRY

(nervous)
So Roosevelt... what's goin' on?

A beat.

ROOSEVELT
Say Jerry, I hears thangs.

JERRY
What kinda things.

ROOSEVELT
Thangs like you ain't afraid of
nothin'.

Pulls out a Newport from his pocket, lights it.

JERRY
Talk to me Young Blood.

ROOSEVELT
The other day I was cleaning up the
laundry room and I... I saw Nate in
the dryer.

JERRY
(shocked)
In the dryer?!

ROOSEVELT
Yeah, in the dryer.

JERRY
(worried look)
What the hell you talkin' about
man?!

ROOSEVELT
He was dead.

JERRY (V.O.)
I guess Nathaniel was right that
day -- the eyes never lye. I
should have spent more time telling
him how to defend himself from them
bastards instead of assuring him
everything was gonna be alright.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(takes a pull)
Them dirty ass Honkeys!

ROOSEVELT
I gotta tell ya this, man. I'm
scared Jerry... scared they gone
kill me next!

JERRY
 (shaking his head)
 Calm down Roosevelt man, let me
 figure this shit out!

ROOSEVELT
 I couldn't tell nobody else, man!
 Help me man... I'm next! You gotta
 help me Jerry!

JERRY
 (thinks)
 So why they wanna kill you
 Roosevelt?

A awkward beat.

ROOSEVELT
 I can't say.

JERRY
 (agitated)
 Well what the hell you want me to
 do if you don't say nothin'?

ROOSEVELT
 (emasculated)
 They said they was gonna kill me if
 I say somethin'.

JERRY
 (concerned/ anger)
 Who Roosevelt... who said they was
 gonna kill you?

ROOSEVELT
 (determined)
 Warden Jackson and Wilson... they
 said it!

JERRY
 Calm down. Let me get this
 straight. They said they was gonna
 kill you? Why in the world they
 wanna kill you Roosevelt?

ROOSEVELT
 (beat)
 Jerry, them sick muthafuckas' raped
 me!

Jerry moves in closer.

JERRY

What?!

ROOSEVELT

Yeah! They took me to that damn White House in a dark room and raped me!

JERRY

Naw, you gotta be shitin' me man!

ROOSEVELT

(shaking his head)

Man I ain't pulling ya' leg man! I ain't nobody's toy, they raped me!

Roosevelt in a trance starts to rock back and forth.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

That's what my Step Daddy did and that's why I killed his ass! But I'm scared now Jerry... these Rednecks is crazy! I don't know what to do. Please Jerry you gotta promise me you aint's gonna tell nobody else.

Roosevelt stares at Jerry.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

What we gonna do Jerry?

Jerry takes this all in, takes another pull from his cigarette.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Jerry!

Jerry snaps back to reality.

JERRY

I don't know, but we gotta do somethin' to get away from this place. You just gotta be cool, don't let them cock suckers know they gettin to you.

ROOSEVELT

See Jerry, that's why I came to you. I know'd you could get us up out of this place.

JERRY

Now hold on, Roosevelt! I didn't say we was gonna' escape from this place. We just gotta tell somebody about what's goin' on in here!

ROOSEVELT

(shakes his head in disbelief)

Who in the hell gonna believe two poor little niggas? This is the State of Florida -- Klan capital of the south. You think they gonna believe me, a murderer, you gotta' be fuckin' crazy!

JERRY

(thinks, convinced)
I guess you right.

Meantime: Officer Wilson walks in the Dormitory for head check.

OFFICER WILSON

Line it up!

ROOSEVELT

(whispering)

You need to do somethin' before they come for you next!

JERRY

We betta' get on up outta here.

INT. VISITATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

The lobby is filled with visitors.

Standing in line is Willie's Mother and a LAWYER.

CUT TO:

INT. VISITATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Willie moves through the crowd trying to make his way to the window.

Willie's Mother and a man whom we come to know as WILLIE'S LAWYER sit down.

MOTHER
(emotional)
Wow, look at my Baby! You look so
grown up. How you doing baby?

WILLIE
I'm alright Momma.

Willie's looks at the man with a cold stare.

WILLIE (CONT'D)
Who is this?

MOTHER
(excited)
This is the Lawyer I was telling
you about! We're getting ready to
get you out of here baby! He just
completed the paperwork for you!

Willie's disappointment is obvious.

LAWYER
That's right Willie. I just filed
the motion to get you released. It
could take a while before the State
get's the paperwork, but you coming
home right soon!

Willie is not convinced.

MOTHER
What's wrong Honey? Didn't you
hear what the man said? You coming
home baby!

Willie looks around at the guards, leans up to window.

WILLIE
(quietly)
Momma, you gotta get me out of here
sooner than that. It's a lot of
stuff going on in here that they
don't want y'all to know about!

LAWYER
(concerned)
What are you talking about Willie?

WILLIE
Listen, I can't tell you right now
because they're listening to our
phone calls, but I need to get home
before somebody else gets killed!

WILSON (O.S.)
 Alright Pitts, time's up!

Willie stands up.

WILLIE
 (sensing something)
 Momma I gotta go! Please try and
 get me out of here sooner. I love
 you Momma, I gotta go.

Willie storms out of the room.

MOTHER
 I love you too baby.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Jerry and Tony wash dishes, joke around...

JERRY
 Listen Tony, I gotta ask you
 somethin'?

Tony dries the dishes.

TONY
 Shoot.

JERRY
 What you up in here for?

A beat.

TONY
 I was stealing cars.

JERRY
 You means to tell me as rich as
 your daddy is, he ain't get you
 off?

TONY
 (dismissive)
 Please! My Father couldn't wait to
 get rid of me!

JERRY
 (clearly sad)
 Least you had a Daddy. My Daddy
 left my Moma when she was 6 months
 pregnant with me.
 (MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

That sorry muthafucka' didn't even have the balls to come back and see about me when my Momma overdosed!

Tony takes this all in.

TONY

I'm sorry to hear that Jerry.

JERRY

(truly pissed)

If we was the last people on earth I wouldn't even piss in his mouth if he was dyin' from thirst.

They continue washing dishes speechless for a moment.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Tony you been here for a while right?

TONY

For about 3 years, since I was 13.

JERRY

That's a long ass time.

TONY

I got one more year.

JERRY

So let me ask you this? What go on in that dark room in the White House? I hears so many stories I just don't know what to believe.

TONY

What ever you hear, believe it.

JERRY

You means they...

TONY

... That's the least of what goes on in there!

JERRY

Why they do such a thing?

TONY

They say they just doing the Lord's work.

JERRY
I don't thank the lord work like
that Tony.

TONY
I don't either, Jerry.

They continue washing dishes until...

WILSON (O.S.)
Tony...

TONY
(to Jerry, whispering)
It's only a matter of time before
they come for you next, Jerry.

WILSON (O.S.)
Tony...

TONY
Coming Sir.

Tony exits.

Jerry stands frozen.

EXT. PRISON YARD - AFTERNOON

Sunday afternoon scene. There is a baseball game in progress. BLACKS VS. WHITES. Jerry is on the sideline coaching LUSCIOUS.

JERRY
(practice swings)
Swing that there bat Luscious,
don't you be scared boy!

Luscious strikes out.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Aw, hell Luscious I can do betta'
than that.

LUSCIOUS
Well get your black ass out here
instead of tryin' to be the coach.

JERRY
You know what, you right!

Jerry walks up to the plate.

Instant UPROAR for protest.

WHITE BOY#1
 What the hell you doin'? You a
 coach, you can't play in the game.

LUSCIOUS (O.S.)
 Aw shut up, it's jus' a game!

As he walks over to the sideline where the Black Boys are
 sitting.

WILSON
 (talking to Boys)
 Where is Willie Pitts?

In unison.

BOYS
 He over there on third base.

WILSON
 (yelling to Willie)
 Willie Pitts, get on over here boy!

Jerry stops, looks at Wilson, shakes his head.

Wilson gives Jerry a taunt grin.

Willie runs over to Wilson.

WILLIE
 (breathing hard)
 Yessir, boss.

WILSON
 Warden Jackson wanna see ya.

WILLIE
 (nervous)
 What did I do Sir?

WILSON
 Jus' get ya belongings and let's
 go!

Willie grabs his jacket and glove. The other boys watch
 every move in silence.

Willie walks with Wilson...

JERRY
 (looking at Wilson)
 You gonna be okay Willie?

WILLIE
 (forcing a smile)
 Yeah Jerry. Thanks.

Willie walks away with his head down...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at the desk with freshly polished cowboy boots placing tobacco in his pipe is Warden Jackson.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Come on in.

Willie walks in, door closes.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 Come on in... sit down a spell.

Willie sits down.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (lights his pipe, takes a puff)
 Congratulations Mr. Pitts, looks like ya goin' home next week.

WILLIE
 (smiling)
 Yes sir... yes sir I am.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Looks like they found the right man who snatched that lady's purse.

WILLIE
 Yes sir. I knew it was a matter of time before they caught him.

WARDEN JACKSON
 (laughing, lights his cigar)
 I know I ain't gonna here nothin' about this here place?

Willie stops smiling.

WILLIE
 (nervous)
 No... no sir boss. You don't have to worry about me, sir.

WARDEN JACKSON
It's for your own good.

Takes a pull from his cigar.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
You know I have the power to make accidents happen, if you know what I mean?

WILLIE
(trying to convince him)
I understand boss. You don't have to worry about me.

WARDEN JACKSON
Officer Wilson over heard ya' talkin' to your pretty little Momma the other day. I sure would hate for somethin' to happen to her on her way home from work.

WILLIE
(swallows his spit)
Yes sir. I understand.

Warden Jackson quiets a bit and lies back in his chair, takes a pull from his pipe.

WARDEN JACKSON
You free to leave.

WILLIE
Yessir.

Willie exits.

WARDEN JACKSON
(to Wilson)
You think he's gonna be a problem?

WILSON
I'll take care of it Boss.

WARDEN JACKSON
Fine... fine work Wilson.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

Guard moves down the aisles, counting heads. The Dorm is quiet the only thing we HEAR are the CRICKETS from outside. Finishing the count, the Guard exits.

Officer Wilson and another GUARD, JONES, 35, stroll in, trying not to be seen or heard. Four bunks down from where they are is Willie, fast asleep.

Wilson points to bed.

WILSON
(quietly)
Where's the tape?

Jones points to the tape in his hand.

Wilson grabs it, stands next to Willie's bunk.

Willie wakes up, eyes full of fear, tries to move; it's too late they have the duct tape over his hands and mouth.

WILSON (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Grab him up! Take him out the back door!

EXT. SWAMP AREA - CONTINUOUS

TWO SHOT JONES AND WILSON

As Willie moves frantically to break loose.

JONES
What are we going to do now Wilson?

Looking down at Willie.

WILSON
Don't you worry yourself about it.

THUNK!!!

Wilson kicks Willie.

Willie moans softly under the duct tape.

WILSON (CONT'D)
You just hold this nigger down like I told ya'!

JONES
Hold him down?

WILSON
(firmly)
Didn't you hear what I said?! Hold him down!

Willie moves frantically on the ground; trying to free himself.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Take his pants off!

Jones takes Willie's pants off.

WILSON (CONT'D)
We gonna teach this little nigger
boy here a lesson!

Wilson takes a BROOM HANDLE. WHAMM!!! Wilson shoves the broom handle up Willie's Rectum.

Willie SCREAMS. Wilson takes the broom handle. WHAMM!!! Wilson shoves it again. Willie SCREAMS in agony.

Wilson grins in amusement.

Jones is taken aback.

JONES
(wanting no part of this)
What the hell are you doing
Wilson?!

WILSON
(still laughing, excited)
You act like you ain't never seen a
nigger cry before! I know ya'
Poppa used to take you on those
late night klan meetings boy!

JONES
I thought we was just supposed to
scare him up a little bit?!

WILSON
(enjoying it, shouting)
We are, YEE- HAW!

Wilson shoves the broom handle. WHAMM!!! Wilson shoves it again.

Jones can't bear to look anymore, turns his head.

WILSON (CONT'D)
The boys will be real disappointed
when I tell 'em you a god dam
nigger-lover!

JONES

(fed up)

Fuck you Wilson! This is no way to
treat an animal let alone a human
being! How are you going to
justify this?!

Wilson looking down at Willie.

WILSON

(trying to calm down)

That's jus' it Jones, niggers are
animals. Now gimme that there
rifle!

JONES

Get it your fucking self! I'm
leaving! I can't have this on my
conscious!

WILSON

Suit yourself.

Jones begins to walk away.

Wilson places the rifle at Willie's head.

Willie still trying to break lose, his muffled screams go
unanswered under the tight fitted duct tape around his mouth.

WILSON (CONT'D)

(to Jones)

By the way Jones, 'round these
parts we don't need no
justification. We do what the hell
we want! And as far as this body
goes... it's jus' more food for the
gators to eat.

Wilson cocks the rifle.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Now if I was ya I'd leave, 'cause
it's 'bout to get real ugly 'round
here. If ya catch my drift?

Jones continues walking.

BOOM!!!

Jones closes his eyes, keeps walking.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MORNING

The boys are busy doing a road detail.

JERRY
 (digging a hole)
 Where Willie at? I ain't seen him
 this morning.

ROOSEVELT
 I don't know Jerry. I hear he
 gettin' released.

Jerry continues working in silence for a moment.

JERRY
 (thinks)
 I don't know Roosevelt. Somethin'
 ain't right.

Roosevelt stops working, looks at Jerry.

ROOSEVELT
 What you talkin' 'bout, Jerry?

A beat.

JERRY
 Willie had about three more days
 before he was supposed to go home.

Roosevelt begins to cry.

ROOSEVELT
 I told ya' Jerry, these crackers
 ain't gonna let us make it home!

JERRY
 Well make it home Roosevelt. You
 jus' keep workin' and don't worry
 about it. I'll take care of ya'
 Young Blood.

ROOSEVELT
 You sho'?

JERRY
 You got my word. Now get to
 workin' before they see ya and
 break out that whipping stick.

ROOSEVELT
(convinced)
Awright... awright Jerry.

They continue working.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Jerry and Tony are on kitchen detail, again.

JERRY
(quietly)
Hey Tony, I gotta ask you somethin'
man.

TONY
You always wanna ask me something.

They laugh.

JERRY
It seems like some strange shit
goin' on in this place man.
Brothers are disappearing right and
left before it's time for 'em to go
home.

Tony continues working.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Don't you hear me man? I think
they killin' 'em man!

TONY
(looks around, quietly)
Jerry, I gotta tell you something.
I hear rumors about the black boys
coming up missing before it's time
for them to get released. I think
they kill them and dump the bodies
in the swamp and say they were
trying to escape or something.

Jerry EYES light up with fear.

TONY (CONT'D)
Over the years I only known one
black boy to make it up out of
here. I think they beat him crazy,
to the point where he couldn't even
talk no more.

JERRY

(scared shitless)
 What the fuck you talkin' about?!
 Why you ain't tell me this before?!
 I thought we was boys?!

TONY

We are boys, but I didn't think I
 could talk to you about it.

JERRY

(yelling)
 What the hell you mean you couldn't
 talk to me?!

Tony signals his hands to lower it down.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(pays it no attention)
 I think they killed Willie the
 other night and they gonna come
 after me and Roosevelt real soon!
 I gotta' find a way to get us up
 outta here, man!

Micheal listens in on Tony and Jerry's conversation.

TONY

(trying to talk him down)
 There's no way to escape. There's
 armed guards all around this place!
 Lets say you did make it past the
 guards there's swamp land all
 around this place!

Jerry stands speechless.

TONY (CONT'D)

Wait! I think there is a way out.
 We can't talk about it here. We
 have to talk about it in the yard,
 where it's noisy.

JERRY

(desperate)
 You gotta' get me outta' this place
 Tony!

TONY

(looking around)
 Alright... alright just try and
 calm down. We're gonna work things
 out.

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

We better get back to work before
they come back in here and see us.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Established.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Warden Jackson and the Guards are in the office having a meeting.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

WARDEN JACKSON

Come in.

Micheal walks in.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

What can I do for you Mikee?

MICHEAL

(speaking softly)

Warden Jackson I...

WARDEN JACKSON

... Speak up boy, ain't nobody
gonna hurt ya!

MICHEAL

(clears his throat)

Sir I... I overheard Tony and Jerry
talking in the cafeteria.

WARDEN JACKSON

Okay go on Boy. What else?

MICHEAL

They were... they were talking
about a way to get up out of here!

WARDEN JACKSON

(brushing him off)

What ya' mean gettin' up outta
here?

JERRY

You know sir... getting up out of
here... escaping!

Warden Jackson looks at the guards, they laugh.

WARDEN JACKSON

Ya' gotta' be shittin' me Mikee.
There ain't no way in hell Tony
would be talkin' to some nigger
about escapin'.

MICHEAL

You don't understand sir, he's
changed!

OFFICER WILSON

That's right boss. He has changed.
I see Tony talkin' with them
niggers all the time.

WARDEN JACKSON

No way! You mean to tell me Tony
has turned into some kind of nigger
lover after all this time? I jus'
find that hard to belief.

Officer Jones takes it all in.

OFFICER WILSON

What ya' want me to do 'bout it
boss?

WARDEN JACKSON

(thinks)

Yeah, get Tony on in here. I
wanna' see what he gotta' say 'bout
all of this!

OFFICER WILSON

You got it boss. I'll see to it.

Wilson walks out.

WARDEN JACKSON

(to Micheal)

As for you, good work. I'll see
about makin' some changes to your
paperwork.

MICHEAL

Thank you sir.

WARDEN JACKSON

(firmly)

If you happen to be lyin'... I
don't have to explain to you what's
gonna happen, do I?.

MICHEAL
Yes sir, I understand.

WARDEN JACKSON
You free to leave.

Tony exits.

Meanwhile: Officer Wilson and Tony walk in the room.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
Come on in Tony, grab a seat.

Tony sits down.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
Do you know what ya in here for?

TONY
(looking down)
No sir.

WARDEN JACKSON
Some of my sources have told me
that you and some of the other boys
have been talkin' 'bout an escape.

TONY
(raises his head)
Sir that's a god damn lie! I don't
know nothing about no escape!

WARDEN JACKSON
Tony, you know what happens to
people who lie to me, right?

TONY
Yes sir! I have no idea of what
your talking about!

Warden Jackson looks at Officer Wilson, gives him a subtle
nod.

Wilson leaves the room.

Tony sits in silence.

Micheal walks in with Officer Wilson.

Tony looks at Micheal without saying a word, knows Micheal
ratted him out.

WARDEN JACKSON

Now, I'm only gonna ask you one more time Tony. What was you and that damn Jerry White talkin' about?

A long beat.

TONY

(snidely)

What you gonna do, call my Daddy?

Micheal chuckles softly.

WARDEN JACKSON

(remains calm)

Well Tony... I don't have to tell ya' what's next.

TONY

No, Sir.

WARDEN JACKSON

Alright then son, I'll see ya' next door.

Tony stands up, walks out with his head up.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tony sits in silence, staring at the ceiling.

Warden Jackson and Officer Wilson walk in, paddle in hand.

WARDEN JACKSON

I'm sorry son. But this is gonna hurt me more than it's gonna hurt you.

Warden Jackson nods at Wilson.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

You know the drill. Go head and take 'em off.

Tony stripes down to his underwear.

Warden Jackson rolls up his sleeves.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

My advice to you Tony, stay away from those niggers! Now get on over there and spread 'em.

Tony walks over to the bed slowly.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (to Wilson)
 Awright then, let's get it over
 with. Wilson, hit the fan.

SQUEAK!!!

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Tony lays in excruciating pain on a blood stained gurney. The kind of gurney that you wouldn't let your dog lye on, let alone a human being.

The "DOCTOR" appears, looking drunk. Looks more like an undertaker instead of an doctor.

DOCTOR
 (to Tony)
 (laughing)
 Looks like ya' got yourself in some
 real deep shit this time boy.

Tony doesn't react.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Let me take a look at it.

DOCTOR'S POV

Tony's ass is split wide open. Tony's underwear is emerged with so much blood that it looks like they are a part of his body. His back has wooden splinters in it and his legs are so badly damaged that from the looks of it, Tony may never be able to walk again.

BACK TO SCENE

Doctor touches Tony's ass.

Tony SCREAMS out in severe pain.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 It don't look too bad.

The Doctor signals to the Nurse.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 Go and get me some hot water.
 Looks like we might have to do a
 lil' surgery in here tonight.

Nurse nods, exits.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'll bet ya remember the next time
you talk about escapin', you stupid
sumbitch.

Tony continues moaning.

INT. WILLIE'S HOME - DUSK

Willie's Mother is sitting down at the kitchen table reading
the newspaper.

DOORBELL RINGS.

Willie's Mother jumps up with excitement; she thinks it's
Willie coming home. She runs to the door.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Officer Wilson and Officer Jones are at the door. Mother
looks around, confused.

MOTHER

Where's Willie... where's my baby?

Officer Jones puts his head down.

JONES

I'm sorry Mrs. Pitts. There is no
easy way to put this, but Willie...
Willie didn't make it.

MOTHER

What do you mean he couldn't make
it? Did he miss the bus or
something?

JONES

(lying/ but remorseful)
No Mrs. Pitts, I'm afraid he didn't
make it.

(Pause)

Willie tried to escape from the
school and when he got to the swamp
area we think... we think the
gators got a hold of him.

Mother begins to cry.

MOTHER

(livid)

You mean to tell me Willie tried to escape less than three days before he was supposed to get out! I'm not buying that crap! Someone is going to answer...

WILSON

... Now you listen here Lady! Willie knew the rules when he tried to escape! We ain't gotta answer to nobody! What you need to do is come on down and get his belongings so we can move forward with this!

MOTHER

You sick son-of-a-bitch!

Mother reaches for Wilson. Jones pushes him back.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

My son has told me about you Wilson... you Country, Redneck, coloured people hating, peckerwood! I know you muthafuckas' had something do with my son's death and I'm going to get to the bottom of it! Now get the fuck away from here before all of niggas commist to whipping up on y'all asses!

Wilson grabs his keys, stares at Willie's mother with blank, hating eyes.

WILSON

(trying to push her buttons)

You have a nice day Ma'am.

MOTHER

(still crying)

Fuck you Wilson! You're gonna pay for this... you're gonna pay for this with your life!

JONES

I'm sorry Mrs. Pitts.

They exit and SLAM the door behind them.

Mother sits, cries hysterically.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

Jerry is lying on his bed reading the BIBLE. Cut off from the rest of the world, Jerry seems hopeless. This seems like the only way Jerry can get some peace is to go back to what he knows best. Roosevelt appears next to Jerry's bunk.

ROOSEVELT

Say Jerry, can I talk to you?

Jerry closes his bible.

JERRY

What's goin' on Young Blood?

ROOSEVELT

I overheard some of the white boys talkin'. They was sayin' that them Guards beat Tony so bad he won't be able to walk again.

JERRY

Is that right?

ROOSEVELT

(irritated)

Yeah Jerry that's what I'm sayin'!
You acts like you don't even care!
If they can do that do one of them,
what the hell you think they gonna
do to one of us?!

JERRY

You can't belief everything you
hear Young Blood.

ROOSEVELT

I'm tellin' ya I seen him leavin'
yesterday!

JERRY

Leavin' to go where?

ROOSEVELT

Home! That's what I'm tellin' ya',
he went home!

Jerry sits speechless, takes it all in.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

So what you gonna do Jerry? It
ain't like...

JERRY

(loses his cool)
 ... Just shut up Roosevelt! I
 don't know what we gonna do! We
 probably gone die up in here!

ROOSEVELT

(sits down)
 What you sayin' Jerry, we ain't
 gonna get up out of here? Naw
 Jerry, I aint tryin' to hear that!
 We gotta' do somethin'... I can't
 jus' die up in this place.

Jerry stands up and gives a rubdown to Roosevelt's shoulder,
 assuring him.

JERRY

Stop crying Blood. We gonna be
 awright. I'll figure somethin'
 out.

ROOSEVELT

You got too! We aint's got a lot
 of time 'fore they come and get me
 and take me in that dark room
 again. Maybe this time I won't be
 so lucky and get off by jus'
 sucking them white man's peter!
 Maybe next time they... they might
 want me do somethin' else Jerry!...
 I don't know if I can do that
 Jerry... I might lose it and kill
 one of them crackers like I did my
 step daddy!

JERRY

Don't worry Roosevelt they ain't
 gonna do nothin'. It's too much
 stuff goin' on around here. They
 gotta let things cool down before
 they do somethin' else.

A beat.

ROOSEVELT

(finally calm)
 Awright Jerry, I hope you right.

JERRY (V.O.)

For the first time in my life, I
 was scared. It seemed like every
 thing was caving in on me at once.
 (MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I felt like breaking down a couple of times, but for some reason I kept getting stronger. For the first time in my life, somebody depended on me, and to be honest, I loved it.

MONTAGE

Jerry performs details around the compound as...

Jerry reads his bible more intensely as...

Jerry begins to go to the library and pickup books to read as...

The BOYS around camp are busy doing their own things doing business as usual as...

Jerry is still cut off from the rest of the world. He's busy working out and focusing on his books as...

Roosevelt begins to communicate with the other boys around the compound, picking up bad habits, cigarettes and anything else he can get his hands on as...

Finally-- we rest on Jerry, just shy of 18, Jerry looks like he's ready to take on the world. His mannerism have changed drastically since the adolescent we seen prior. His mind is sharp as a tack. Jerry's physique is chiseled like someone made his body out of clay. The school is quiet, no more beatings just every one doing their time. Things couldn't be better for Jerry until...

INT. CAFETERIA - DUSK

Jerry is busy washing the dishes as usual with another boy CLYDE, 16. Nothing much is said between the two, just business as usual until...

CLYDE

Say Jerry. How long you been up in here man?

JERRY

I've been in here since I was 16. So that's almost two years.

CLYDE

Two years? Man I know you seen a whole lot since you been up in here.

JERRY

(sighs, shakes his head)
Yeah Clyde, more than you could
ever imagine.

CLYDE

I hears some real bad things about
this here place. Is what they say
true about what goes on around
here?

JERRY

Clyde, all I can tell you is...
stay out of trouble, do your time,
and keep your mouth shut.

CLYDE

From what I hear, all that don't
even much matter, they still gonna
get ya. I hear that's some kind of
ritual for them guards or
somethin'.

JERRY

Where'd you hear all this from
Clyde?

CLYDE

From Roosevelt, he been tellin'
everybody. He say it's jus' a
matta' of time before they get
ya... So Im'a keep juicin jus' like
the rest of 'em... take my mind
away from all of this shit.

JERRY

(disappointed)
So now you bangin' hunh Clyde?

CLYDE

Shit yeah! Everybody doin' it.
It's some shit them guards brought
in to keep our mind off of doin'
this time!

Jerry shakes his head in disbelief.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

(thinks)
Yeah Jerry it's some good shit. If
you want, I can get ya some.

JERRY

Naw, Clyde. I think I'll pass.

Jerry walks away, looks back.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(saddened)
Say Clyde, you watch yourself.

CLYDE
(smiling)
I ain't worried 'bout shit. As long as I can get my juice I'll be awright until I get up out of this place. Anyway Jerry I'll rap with you a little later, me and the rest of the boys are gettin' ready to play a little cards up in this joint.

Jerry continues washing dishes.

JERRY
Alright Clyde, I'll rap with you later.

Clyde exits. Jerry finishes washing dishes, throws his rag on the sink.

FOOTSTEPS appear offscreen.

Jerry looks around.

Officer Wilson appears.

WILSON
How's it goin' White?

Jerry doesn't respond.

WILSON (CONT'D)
What's wrong boy? Don't ya hear me talkin' to you?

Jerry stops working, turns around.

JERRY
I hear you.

WILSON
Well... get your shit. Warden Jackson wants to see ya.

Wilson gives his signature evil grin.

Jerry SLAMS the broom on the floor, exits.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry is sitting down, seemingly talking to himself. We can't make out what he's saying, but from the looks of it, he's praying.

Officer Wilson appears.

WILSON

Warden Jackson wants to see ya now.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Warden Jackson is sitting at his table with his feet propped up, smoking a pipe.

WARDEN JACKSON

Come on in White.

Jerry sits down.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

So White, looks like your gettin' ready to be released soon. You thought 'bout what you gonna do when you get up out of here?

Jerry inches up from seat, sits on the edge.

JERRY

(confident)

Well sir... I was thinking about becoming a lawyer or somethin'.

Warden Jackson and Officer Wilson LAUGH.

WARDEN JACKSON

Now come on White... a Lawyer? You know they don't let niggers become no Lawyer! I suggest you be a cook or somethin' like that. I hears you pretty good with your hands.

A beat.

JERRY

(forcing a smile)

I guess you right Sir. I don't know what I was thinkin'. I guess the books I've been ready got me a little confused or somethin'.

WARDEN JACKSON
 (still laughing)
 I guess so White.

They sit speechless...

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 So they tell me you been keepin'
 your nose clean... staying to
 yourself for a change. Anything we
 should know about... anybody
 talkin' about up some kind of
 escape or somethin'?

JERRY
 No sir. I think everyone gets the
 picture about tryin' to escape.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Awright White... jus' keep ya nose
 to tha' ground and you'll be goin'
 home soon real soon.

JERRY
 Is that it Sir?

WARDEN JACKSON
 (thinks)
 You free to go.

Jerry stands, walks toward the door.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (lights his pipe)
 Hey White.

Jerry stops, rolls his eyes, turns around.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (takes a pull)
 I don't have explain to ya 'bout
 what happens to poor little colored
 boys who run their mouth, do I?

JERRY
 No sir Warden Jackson, I suppose
 you don't.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Good.

Jerry continues walking.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
(sarcastically)
Good luck to ya White.

JERRY
Thank you, Sir.

Jerry exits, SLAMS the door.

INT. WILLIE'S HOME - DAY

Willie's Mother is sitting down listening to the RADIO. We can see the agony, and defeat in this woman: aged, bags under her eyes, extreme weight loss, she is depressed.

Suddenly--

We HEAR a KNOCK at the door.

She sits for a beat, goes to the door.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

She opens the door, looks around. There is no one in sight. She has a puzzled look on her face. As she goes to close the door, she notices an envelope on the floor. She reaches to pick it up.

MOTHER
(to herself)
What's this?

She closes the door.

INT. WILLIE'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

She sits down. Afraid to open the letter, she sits in silence. Finally--

MOTHER
(to herself)
Aw, what the hell.

She rips the envelope open.

JONES (V.O.)
Hi Mrs. Pitts, you probably don't remember me, but I'm one of the guards who came to your house to inform you about your son Willie.

Mother reacts with anger.

MOTHER
(sighs)
That bastard!

JONES (V.O)
Mrs. Pitts, I think there are some things you need to look into concerning the death of your son. I can't really go into detail right now, but I can simply tell you that your son did not try to escape.

Mother begins to cry.

JONES (V.O)(CONT'D)
Please consider taking me up on a meeting. I think it will be beneficial for you and the rest of the boys down at the school. I hope that this letter doesn't go any further than you until we meet in person. Here's my number.

Mother takes the letter, puts it back in the envelope.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

This area of the library has been used for little nothing more than storage in recent years. Jerry sits in silence reading his books.

Officer Jones appears.

JONES
I see you been keeping yourself busy reading a lot of books. You have any plans when you get out of here?

JERRY
(dryly)
Naw, not really... just ready to leave.

JONES
You know Jerry, I'm not the enemy.

JERRY

(firmly)

Please, all you crackers are the enemy! They just sent you in here to pick me! But I'm gonna keep my mouth shut and do my time!

Jones looks around.

JONES

I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this, but you know there not going to let you leave.

Jerry lifts his head up for a moment, continues reading.

JONES (CONT'D)

Don't you get it Jerry? They never let you guys make it out of here alive!

JERRY

(turning the pages)

What does it matter to you? Aren't you one of them? I'm not stupid... I know what goes on up here. But I tell you one thing, you crackers try to kill me, I'm gonna to take a couple of you muthafuckers with me!

JONES

Jerry listen...

JERRY

... No you listen Officer Jones! That's all I have to say! Now you go and tell Warden Jackson and that other fat bastard Wilson that!

JONES

Calm down. I'm just trying to help you out White.

JERRY

Help me out how Jones? I don't trust none of you dirty crackers!

JONES

Have I ever done anything to you White?

Jerry stands up.

JERRY
Are we done here Sir?

JONES
Sit down for a minute... let me
talk to you.

JERRY
(finally calm)
What is it?

JONES
I was there with Willie when he...

JERRY
... I bet you were.

JONES
No listen White. Willie didn't try
to escape.

Jerry is shocked, sits back in his seat.

JONES (CONT'D)
Warden Jackson had him killed, he
thought he was a threat to talk.

Jerry begins to shed a tear.

JONES (CONT'D)
I didn't have anything to do with
it!

JERRY
I see. So you mean to tell me that
you just stood there and watched
him while he was slaughtered like
some animal... naw Jones I ain't
trying to hear that!

Jones is clearly shaken up, shakes his head: no.

JERRY (CONT'D)
What makes you so different from
the rest of them?

JONES
I took this job because I wanted to
make a difference. Once I found
out what goes on in here I tried to
leave but...

JERRY

... but what? I guess Warden Jackson would have had you killed too?

JONES

That's right! This crap has been going on way before you and I got here and it's going to continue that way when we leave.

JERRY

What am I supposed to do?

JONES

Stay alive.

JERRY

Stay alive. How am I supposed to do that?

JONES

Just do that, I'll worry about the rest.

JERRY

Why do you care so much?

JONES

Everybody deserves a second chance, even you White. Just because your a product of your environment doesn't mean that you should be slain like some animal in the jungle.

JERRY

I don't know what to say.

JONES

Don't say anything. Just hold it together.

JERRY (V.O.)

I didn't trust Jones. Did Warden Jackson send him in there to pick me... get some information from me. But what choice did I have? I could have kept him at a distance too, but something -- something was telling me different.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

Warden Jackson sits behind the desk with his feet propped up smoking a cigar, the usual.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

WARDEN JACKSON

Come on in.

In walks Lt. GOVERNOR SMITH, a older white gentleman with a look of anger on his face.

Lt. Governor Smith grabs a seat.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Well, well, well. What brings ya down to these parts of the woods, Smith?

SMITH

(strong southern accent)
How's it goin' bubba?

WARDEN JACKSON

Couldn't be betta'. You ain't been that far removed from here to forget how thangs' go around here. So what can I do you for?

SMITH

Listen Jackson, I ain't gonna shoot the shit with ya. I been hearin' alot of things goin' on around these parts... things I aint to proud of.

WARDEN JACKSON

What kinda thangs?

SMITH

The kind of things that's got people askin' alot of questions... questions I aint got the answers too.

WARDEN JACKSON

I see. So what's that gotta do with me and how I run my yard?

SMITH

Your yard? If I ain't mistakin' the taxpayers of this great state of Florida pay for this yard!

WARDEN JACKSON
 (standing up)
 God dammit Smith, what is it?

SMITH
 I got some nigra woman down south
 tellin' me that you got somethin'
 to do with her son's death!

WARDEN JACKSON
 Is that right?

SMITH
 Cut the shit Jackson! You and I
 both know what goes on around here,
 but that doesn't mean the whole god
damn state has to know! You better
 keep it together before we all end
 up gettin' screwed!

WARDEN JACKSON
 (grabbing his clipboard)
 Is that it you cornhole fucker? If
 so I have bidness to tend too.

SMITH
 I ain't goin' down with ya, about
 no fuckin' murders Jackson!

Smith walks toward the door.

SMITH (CONT'D)
 I'll be back down here in a couple
 weeks to check and see how things
 are goin'!

WARDEN JACKSON
 You bet ya'.

Smith SLAMS the door.

EXT. PRISON YARD MOVING TWO SHOT - DAY

Roosevelt and Jerry Jog around the manicured grounds.

JERRY
 You know I'm gettin' out of here in
 a couple of days.

ROOSEVELT
 (stops running)
 Jerry I'm scared, I...

JERRY

... Roosevelt I don't want wanna hear this shit from you. You gonna make it man! Listen...I put something under your bed this morning.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(breathing hard)

Don't ask me no questions. You just look under your mattress. That should protect you until I can figure somethin' on the outside.

ROOSEVELT

What you gone do Jerry?

JERRY

I don't know Young blood.

ROOSEVELT

Jerry them crackers don't give a damn 'bout us. We jus' less niggas they gotta' deal with on the street!

JERRY

You stop talkin' like that!

Roosevelt becomes emotional.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(hugging him)

I'm sorry little bro. I didn't mean to yell at you. I need you to stop listenin' to those no good brothers feedin' you that bull shit.

The WHISTLE BLOWS.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Make sure you look under your mattress when we get back in.

ROOSEVELT

Thanks Jerry.

JERRY

You know I got your back.

INT. DORMATORY - NIGHT

An INMATE is mopping the floor. He glances back and sees Warden Jackson approaching with a Wilson and a COUPLE OF GUARDS.

OFFICER WILSON
 (pointing to the bunks)
 Awright girls... y'all know the
 drill! Everybody front and center!

Inmates jostle trying to get to their bunks.

WARDEN JACKSON
 (to wilson)
 Awright... let's git' to it!

The guards walk from bunk-bunk throwing down ever thing they can get their hands on.

INTERCUT THE VARIOUS REACTIONS

As the shake down continues.

Wilson finishes with an INMATE and makes his way down to Roosevelt's bunk.

Jerry nervous, wipes the sweat off his forehead.

OFFICER WILSON
 (to Roosevelt)
 Awright boy, what kinda contraband
 you hidin' in here?

IN SLO-MO, Wilson flips the mattress...

Wilson finds a sharpened screwdriver with duct tape wrapped around it, shoots Roosevelt a nasty look.

Roosevelt is scared shitless; he forgot to look under the fucking mattress.

OFFICER WILSON (CONT'D)
 That's your ass boy!

Wilson signals to one of the guards.

Roosevelt is taking away.

Warden Jackson makes his way over to Jerry's bunk.

Jerry stands his ground firmly, establishing his respect.

Warden Jackson stares at Jerry for a moment.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Awright White... let's see what ya'
 got.

Jerry steps to the side allowing Warden Jackson enough room to operate.

Warden Jackson picks up Jerry's Bible.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 I'm pleased to see ya' been readin'
 your bible.

Warden Jackson SLAMS the bible down, continues looking around.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 I hope you believe in what ya'
 read.

Warden Jackson flips Jerry's mattress over...

Five bags of heroin lie on Jerry's bed.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 (pointing to the bags)
 What's this White?

Jerry drops his head in disbelief, he know's he's been framed.

JERRY
 You tell me!

Warden Jackson bends down, picks up the bags.

WARDEN JACKSON
 Officer Wilson, I think you need to
 come on down here!

Dead silence, as the two guys stare each other down.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 Looks like you aint making it home
 no time soon.

JERRY
 You know that's not my shit.

Wilson slowly moves to the bunk. As soon as he gets there. CRAACKK!!! Wilson HAULS OFF, SMACKING Jerry in the head with his NIGHTSTICK, sending Jerry CRASHING to the floor. Jerry holds his head trying to stop the bleeding.

WARDEN JACKSON
 (to Jerry)
 It is now.

OFFICER WILSON
 (laughing)
 I hope you didn't call a ride to
 come and git ya!

JERRY
 (from the ground)
 FUCK YOU WILSON!

Officer Wilson grabs his stick ... BAMMMM!!!... WILSON knocks Jerry across the head. A gash immediately opens on Jerry's head, blood pools on the dirty concrete.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

Jerry lays on the bare concrete, bruised face lit by what appears to be a flashlight.

Jerry's eyes POP WIDE OPEN and he lets out a loud MOAN.

FOOTSTEPS appear closer in BACKGROUND.

BAMMMM!!! The door is kicked in violently, sending Jerry scattering to the back of the small room like roaches when the lights come on.

Jones assists Jerry from the floor.

JONES
 (frantically)
 Alright Jerry we have to move
 before they come down here and get
 you!

Jerry continues sitting down.

JONES (CONT'D)
 Didn't you hear me? They gonna
 come down here, kill you, and dump
 your body in that swamp!

JERRY
(warning him)
If they catch us, you know they
gonna kill the both of us.

JONES
Didn't I tell you I wasn't gonna
leave you?

Jerry nods: yes.

JONES (CONT'D)
Well let's get the hell outta here
before they come!

Jones leads, Jerry follows.

EXT. PRISON YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry and Jones move about the compound trying not to be seen. After scanning the area for a minute, they bend down next an empty building.

JONES
(breathing hard)
Listen Jerry, this is far as I can
go. I'm gonna go and distract the
guard at the gate. When you see
the light go off, that's your
signal to leave. Here's the keys
to my truck, when you get outside
the city limits dump it, and take
off!

JERRY
(taking his shirt off)
Thank you Officer Jones, I don't
know what I would have done if
you...

JONES
(giving him an order)
... Stop talking Jerry... just make
it out this place and stay out of
trouble!

Jones stands up. Jerry LUNCHES forward giving Jones a hug.

JERRY
(crying)
Thank you.

Jones hands Jerry his keys.

SCREAM! It's distant. Sounds like Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT (O.S.)
HELP ME!... SOMEBODY HELP ME!

Jones and Jerry stare at each other a moment.

JONES
You can't worry about him Jerry.

JERRY
I can't just leave him like this
Officer Jones!

A long beat.

JONES
(determined to help)
There's no turning back from here.

JERRY
I know!

JONES
(lacing up his boots)
I can get you inside the room but
that's as far as I can go. You're
on your own from there.
(Beat)
You sure you wanna do this?

Jerry nods: yes.

JERRY
I promised him.

JONES
Alright, let's go get him!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The men move about the room in methodical fashion, trying not to make a sound.

THE SCREAMS GET LOUDER AS THEY APPROACH...

Jones signals to Jerry to approach the door.

A GUARD casually walks around the corner.

GUARD #1
(running towards them)
What the hell is going on in here?!

Jerry SPRINGS up and BOLTS towards the door.

BAMMMM!!! Jerry KICKS the door off the hinges.

JERRY'S POV: Warden Jackson standing up with his head tilted back with his back towards us while Wilson stands next to him. From the looks off it these two sick bastards are doing more than just taking a piss.

BACK TO SCENE

Wilson and Warden Jackson turn in Unison.

Wilson reaches over to pick up his belt holster from the floor...

WARDEN JACKSON

Well don't jus' stand their shell
shocked... kill that nigger!

Wilson continues reaching for his gun.

The gun is missing.

Wilson looks around. To his surprise, Roosevelt is holding his pistol six inches from his face.

OFFICER WILSON

(begging)

Now hold on Roosevelt... try and
calm down. Put that gun down and
nobody else will get hurt!

FLASHBACK - INT. ROOSEVELT'S HOME - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP - ROOSEVELT

Roosevelt stands over his Stepfather's motionless body, PISTOL in HAND, seemingly frozen in place. His eyes rolled to the back of his head like the exorcist. Roosevelt pulls the TRIGGER.

BOOM!!!

END FLASHBACK.

INT. DARK ROOM CLOSE ON ROOSEVELT'S EYES (SAME)

Roosevelt stands speechless...

OFFICER WILSON

(trying to use his
authority)
(MORE)

OFFICER WILSON (CONT'D)
 Now that's enough! You put that
 fuckin' gun down now!

CLICK!!! Roosevelt pulls the hammer back.

OFFICER WILSON (CONT'D)
 Quit fuckin' around and gimme the
 fuckin' gun!

From OFF SCREEN we hear:

JERRY (O.S.)
 Shoot 'em Roosevelt, shoot that
 bastard dead!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Bullets tear into Wilson's body.

Blood splatters against the grimy brick walls. Officer
 Wilson falls to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SAME

Jones hears the GUNSHOTS...

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SAME

Roosevelt steps back in fear, points the gun at WARDEN
 JACKSON.

WARDEN JACKSON
 (pleading and bargaining)
 Listen Roosevelt you know you can't
 get away with this... put that gun
 down and I swear you want be held
 accountable for this, I'll tell
 'em I did it... protecting you...
 now come on, what ya' say about
 Bubba?

By this time Officer Jones burst in the room. Jerry turns
 around.

JERRY (O.S.)
 No Roosevelt!...

BOOM!!! Roosevelt shoots Officer Jones.

In the midst of everything, Warden Jackson moves frantically to the Shotgun Cabinet, raises a shotgun...

KA-BLAMMM!!! A huge hole is blown into the back of Roosevelt's head, sending him tumbling down to the ground. Blood splatters on Jerry's Cheek.

From the SOUND of the shotgun, Jerry holds his shattered eardrum, as Warden Jackson points the shotgun at him, he pulls the trigger....

NOTHING HAPPENS... THE FUCKING GUN JAMS.

Jerry takes off running like a bat out of hell.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON YARD - MOMENTS LATER

As guards coming running from the White house.

Jerry frantically trying to get the keys in the door, they drop. Jerry turns sees the guards approaching with guns. Jerry finally gets the key in the door and jumps in the truck.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Jerry starts the truck.

The Guards make a dash towards the truck, firing their shotguns.

KA-BLAMMM!!! KA-BLAMMM!!! KABLAMMM!!! Missing the truck by inches as Jerry grinds the gears moving past the guards BUSTING down the METAL GATE.

MEANWHILE:

Officer Wilson lies on the floor, blood pouring from his wounds, his eyes blinking in and out as Warden Jackson holds him in his arms, police SIRENS in the distance...

WARDEN JACKSON
(rocking him back and
forth)
Hold on Bud. I ain't gonna let ya
die Bub.

Three GUARDS rush in the room in panic mode, stunned by the events that just taken place.

GUARD # 2
Shit, Boss what happened?!

WARDEN JACKSON
That fuckin' boot-lip nigger White did this! Call the locals! He took off on foot!

GUARD # 2
No Boss he's mobile! He stole a pickup truck!

WARDEN JACKSON
I don't give two shits how he got outta here, you jus' catch 'em! Call the god damn National Guard if you have too! Jus' find that nigger!

GUARD # 2
You got it boss!

The Guards storm out.

WARDEN JACKSON
Don't you go dyin' on me now. Hold on. Help is on the way.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INSERT CARD: "TALLAHASSEE FLORIDA" THREE YEARS LATER

EXT. FAMU - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

The parking lot is full.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The Auditorium is packed with PEOPLE attending Graduation. WE HEAR the dean addressing the audience in the BG, as we PAN AWAY and DOWN THE VARIOUS REACTIONS OF THE STUDENTS. CAMERA FINDS Jerry talking to himself, he's praying.

DEAN

(talking to audience)

We like to introduce too you, the
FAMU RATTLERS graduating class of
1971.

CROWD CHEERS.

The students make their way across the stage as their names
are called, Jerry last.

The Auditorium door FLINGS open as WARDEN JACKSON, gray-
haired, and a little thinner than years earlier, steps
through the door. Warden Jackson slowly makes his way to the
stage, the AUDIENCE begins to QUIET as they watch his every
move in silence. When he reaches the front of the stage...

WARDEN JACKSON

(clapping his hands)

Well awright Jerry... I mean
Roosevelt Sims. I guess you made
it.

(Shaking his head)

You didn't think calling yourself a
dead inmate's name wouldn't make
the papers, did ya? You not as
smart as I thought ya were, boy!

Jerry stands in silence.

JERRY (V.O.)

I guess you call it stupidity, but
I call it determination. See, just
like my Foster Mom Diane told me,
"you can't run forever" and I took
that to heart. I just wanted too
proof something... be somebody
before I went back in! I guess
that somebody turned out to be
Roosevelt Sims -- at least he got
something in honor of his name.

WARDEN JACKSON

(to police)

This is our man guys. Take 'em
away boys.

Jerry is put into HANDCUFFS and shuffled away.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way...

Jerry stops, turns around.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)
 Congratulations on making the
 paper.

The police continue walking.

EXT. STATE PRISON - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

CUT TO:

INT. VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Willie's Mother is sitting at the visitation area with a her
 LAWYER.

CUT TO:

INT. VISITATION ROOM - SAME

Jerry is shaken down as he walks through the doors. Not sure
 who this strange lady is, he grabs a seat.

MOTHER
 Hi, Jerry. How are you doing?

JERRY
 (surprised)
 How do you know me?

LAWYER
 Hi Jerry, my name is Mr. Murphy.
 I'm a Attorney for Willie Pitts.

Jerry JUMPS back.

JERRY
 (stunned)
 Willie Pitts is dead, been dead
 along time. So what are you people
 doing in here?

MOTHER
 That's right Jerry, he was my son.
 We looked into the corruption that
 went on down at the reform school
 and we're pursuing a law suit
 against the State of Florida.

JERRY

(looks around)

No offense Mrs. Pitts I would love to help you out -- but as you can see, that wouldn't be the best thing for me right now.

Mother laughs.

MOTHER

We gonna help you get out of this place Jerry.

JERRY

What?

LAWYER

That's right Jerry. I'm going to be representing you for free. We know everything that went on down there, and we just want to get you back on the right track.

JERRY

What do you want me to do?

LAWYER

We don't need you to do anything. We just wanted you to know that there are people who really care about you and to let you know that there is hope, just be patient and hold on.

JERRY

How long do I have to be in here?

LAWYER

They want give you a bond because of the allegations against you.

Jerry drops his head.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

(firmly)

Now isn't the time for you to go getting down. I need you to stay strong! We're going to beat this!

JERRY

I aint never been this scared in my life, there talkin' the death chamber and all...

A GUARD walks up behind Jerry, taps him on the shoulder.

GUARD #
Alright White, times up!

JERRY
I gotta go.

MOTHER
Be strong son.

Jerry stands, walks away.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Jerry sits on the edge of his bed, trying to sort through all this mess.

JERRY (V.O.)
Sad as it was, turns out Willies' death wasn't in vein... Maybe there was a GOD answering all my prayers at night.

EXT. EXERCISE YARD - DAY

The CONS are exercising. Some older inmates walk past, shoots Jerry a look, continues walking. ACROSS THE YARD another INMATE we come to know as JAMES, notices Jerry off to the side. Jerry nods hello. James takes this as an indication to engage in a conversation with Jerry.

JAMES
(offers his hands)
What's up? I'm James Howard.

Jerry glances at his hand, shakes it.

JERRY
What's up. I'm Jerry White.

JAMES
Nice to meet you Jerry.

JERRY
Same to you.

An awkward beat.

JAMES
 Say young blood, you look a little
 to young to be up in here. What
 you in here for?

JERRY
 (sighs)
 It's a long story James.

James looks around.

JAMES
 (sarcastically)
 We ain't got nothing but time young
 blood.

They laugh.

PRISON MONTAGE:

JERRY SPENDS HIS TIME READING THE BIBLE AS...

JERRY AND JAMES WALK THE YARD LOST IN ANIMATED CONVERSATION
 AS...

JERRY SITS IN THE PRISON LIBRARY READING LAW BOOKS AS...

JERRY LIES STARING AT THE DARKNESS, UNABLE TO SLEEP AS...

JERRY SORTS THROUGH SOME MAIL FROM HIS LAWYER.

Jerry has a look of frustration on his face as he finishes
 reading the letter.

EXT. PRISON YARD - MORNING

The CONVICTS are busy with their daily routines of playing
 cards, exercising, conversation, just socializing period.
 Jerry sits by isolated, reading a book.

JAMES
 What's going on? What's the sad
 look for?

JERRY
 Oh... it's nothing, just thinking.

JAMES
 What's on your mind? I never seen
 you looking this down before!

JERRY

(angered)

Can you belief that they pushed my court date back again? This is the second time... talking about they don't have enough evidence to proceed with the investigation!

JAMES

I'm sorry too hear that man, but you can't let this shit get the best of you Jerry. You got to keep pushing. Everything is going to work itself out!

JERRY

I don't know James.

JAMES

What ya mean you don't know?!

JERRY

(truly disappointed)

I just don't know. It's like the story of my life... disappointment. I try to be hopeful but it seems like shit don't ever work out for me! I've been locked up in somebody's prison over half of my life! I guess maybe this is all I'm gonna be -- a jailbird!

JAMES

(standing up)

I don't wanna hear this shit Jerry! You made it this far, so don't sit hear and tell me you gonna to let some bullshit like that letter stop you from trying! You're a smart young man, with a bright future ahead of you, don't let this shit get you down man!

JERRY (V.O.)

Come to think about it, James was right. I've been dealing with adversity all my life. Surely I can't let something like that letter get me down. I gotta keep pushing, make this thing right.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I guess you're right.

JAMES

I know I am.

Jerry gives a smile, like his whole world has just changed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey Jerry listen. I've seen a whole lot of inmates come and go since I've been in this place... some good, some bad. But you Jerry -- you different, you got that gift, man! That gift that can help the rest of these young brothers get up outta this fucked up prison system. You just hang in there Blood, God gonna work things out for you.

Jerry wipes the tears from his face.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Come on man, let's go and get a quick workout. It's gonna help you release some stress.

JERRY

Thanks James... thanks a lot.

JAMES

You got it my man.

They exit.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOT.

INT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wearing a prison uniform, Jerry sits with his Lawyer before a white JUDGE, panning over his file. The D.A., Forty, tall, with grey-hair, towers over Jerry like a giant.

D.A. (O.S.)

Mr. White, can you tell me about the events that took place on July 15th, the night two people were murdered!

JERRY WHITE

Is on the witness stand, arms crossed, seemingly concerned about the allegations presented against him.

JERRY

How many times do I have to tell you?... I didn't kill nobody!

D.A.

Well if you didn't, who did?

JERRY

(hesitate)

Everything happened so fast... it's... it's just really hard for me to remember.

D.A.

(Fed up, refers to his notes)

Let me help you remember, smart boy! On July 15th, you and another inmate ROOSEVELT SIMS, tried to escape! You tried to escape, but WARDEN JACKSON and his DEPUTIES stopped you! Officer Wilson was killed and you got away! Isn't that how it happened?!

Jerry sits in silence for a moment.

JERRY'S POV

WARDEN JACKSON sitting in the courtroom, aged a little than before, but still the same old evil Son-of-a-bitch. Jerry knows he has to say the right things to nail this asshole, so he steadies himself, pops his knuckles.

BACK TO SCENE

Unsure what his next move is Jerry continues sitting in silence.

D.A. (CONT'D)

(to jury)

You see Ladies and Gentleman.

(MORE)

D.A. (CONT'D)

This is the same old coward who
killed two people in cold blood!
The kind of coward...

JERRY

(yells out)

... I aint kill nobody!

Jerry's points to Warden Jackson.

JERRY (CONT'D)

He did!

The entire courtroom yells, "OOOOOH". Jerry looks satisfied.

JERRY (CONT'D)

That's right. I was trying to
escape from that hell hole they
call a reform school and that's
when I heard some sounds coming
from inside THE WHITE HOUSE... the
kind of sounds that weren't normal,
if you know what I mean. That's
when I saw Warden Jackson and
Officer Jones raping my friend,
Roosevelt Sims!

WARDEN JACKSON (O.S.)

That's a god damn lie, this is an
complete outrage!

The COURTROOM erupts into complete mayhem.

JUDGE

(slaps his gavel on the
table)

Order... order in this courtroom!

The CROWD begins to settle down.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

We're going to take a 10 minute
recess!

Judge signals to the D.A. To approach the bench.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

(softly)

What the hell is going on?

D.A.

(Looks around)

I don't know!

JUDGE

I want to see you in my chambers
right now!

D.A.

Certainly sir.

INT. JUDGES'S CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

As the D.A. Enters. Warden Jackson, The Judge, and another
Officer sit around the coffee table, smoking pipes.

JUDGE

Come on in Bill (D.A.). Take a
seat.

D.A.

(Sits down)
Thank you sir.

JUDGE

I'm sure you know Warden...

WARDEN JACKSON

(stands up)
... Now you listen here Bill! You
betta' do everything you can too
keep that god damn nigger from
runnin' his fuckin' mouth!

D.A.

No offense to you Warden. But you
should have done that along time
ago.

WARDEN JACKSON

(reaching for D.A)
Goddamn your soul Bill --

JUDGE

(pulling Warden Jackson
back)
Alright, settle down Jackson! We
got bigger issues than you two
assholes getting into some kinda
pissing contest!

Warden Jackson calms down, pulls his shirt down.

D.A.

(to Warden Jackson)
Is there any truth to what that
young man is saying?

WARDEN JACKSON

What the fuck difference does it
make? Who gives a shit 'bout a
couple of little niggers dyin'
anyway? You and I both know
they're worth more too us dead than
they are alive!

JUDGE

(to Warden Jackson)
Obviously someone cares, or we
wouldn't be sittin' down here right
now!

Warden Jackson finally sits back in his chair.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Do I have your attention now
Jackson?

Warden Jackson nods: yes.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I don't wanna know what went on
down there. I just wanna know is
there anyone that can tie you to
any of these allegations?

WARDEN JACKSON

(thinks)
I think I took care of all of 'hem.

D.A.

What the hell do you mean you think
you took care of all of 'em?!
We're going to have the whole god
damn state of Florida coming down
on our assess if you didn't!

WARDEN JACKSON

(drops his head)
I said I took care of 'hem.

D.A.

What do you mean you took care of
'em, dead, alive, what?! How did
you take care of 'em. I'm not
about to go down...

WARDEN JACKSON

(looks around)

... Don't you git it you fuckin' idiot?! I said I got rid of 'em. I killed 'em all ya sumbitch! Is that what you wanted to hear?

The room is in dead silence, you could hear a pin drop.

WARDEN JACKSON (CONT'D)

Is that good enough for ya?

D.A.

(Means business)

There's nothing more I can do.

WARDEN JACKSON

What the hell ya mean, you can't do nothin'?!

JUDGE

Try and relax Jackson. I'll take care of it.

WARDEN JACKSON

How the hell can I relax? This cock sucka here gots my whole life in his hands!

JUDGE

Don't worry about him. Who you need to worry about is about to be put in prison for the rest of his life.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

(to D.A.)

You just keep doing what you're doing. I'll take care of the rest.

D.A. Nods: yes.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

(to Warden Jackson)

You know when this is over... you're going to have to resign.

WARDEN JACKSON

Resign?

JUDGE

You heard me Jackson, resign!

Warden Jackson shakes his head in disbelief.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Now Jackson, you get back in that
courtroom and don't say a word. Is
that understood?

Warden Jackson doesn't respond.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Do I make my self clear?

WARDEN JACKSON
You got a deal.

JUDGE
Alright that's more like it.

Judge stands up and exits.

INT. COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A few more officers are standing around. The trial is about
to get underway. Jerry sits in silence.

Judge walks in, EVERYONE STANDS.

Judge pans through his notes.

JUDGE
Alright counsel you may proceed.

D.A.
(Looking over notes)
You said on the evening of July
15th, you overheard some commotion
in the building while you were
trying to escape. Is that right?

A SERIES OF SHOTS

We PAN across different shots of the trial, across the JURY,
WARDEN JACKSON, and the AUDIENCE.

Jerry is getting frustrated, tears streaming down his face.

WARDEN JACKSON smiles as he takes it all in.

Jerry's Lawyer interviewing Jerry.

Finally we rest on the D.A.

The D.A. moves about the room with confidence.

D.A. (CONT'D)

I have no further questions your Honor.

Judge turns to Jerry's Lawyer. Jerry Lawyer's clearly facing defeat rambles through his notes.

JUDGE

Counsel if you don't have anything else...

JERRY'S LAWYER

... Your honor, I would like to call my last witness to the stand.

Warden Jackson is sweating bullets.

The doors to the courtroom SWING open.

COMING THROUGH THE DOOR IS OFFICER JONES. HE IS IN A WHEEL CHAIR BEING PUSHED BY WILLIE'S MOTHER.

Judge Perkins looks over at the D.A.. They both shake their head, they have no idea who this man is.

JERRY'S LAWYER (CONT'D)

You're honor I would like to call to the witness stand... Officer Nate Jones.

Warden Jackson leans over talking to one of his Officer's. Warden Jackson shrugs his shoulder's.

JERRY'S LAWYER (CONT'D)

(fixing his tie)

Mr. Jones, do you solemnly swear that the testimony that you give to this Courtroom will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you god?

JONES

Yes I do.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Would you please state your name and rank for the record please.

JONES

Capt. Nate Jones. Supervisor of Correctional Officers at the Florida Reform School for Boys.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Thank you sir.

Jerry's Lawyer pans over his notes.

JERRY'S LAWYER (CONT'D)

Now Officer Jones, how long have you been employed by the reform school?

JONES

Thirteen years.

JERRY'S LAWYER

(shakes his head)

Thirteen years, that's along time. So it would be safe to assume that you've seen you're fair share of inmates at the reform school?

JONES

Over the years I've seen quite a few inmates come through the system.

JERRY'S LAWYER

I'm sure you have.

JERRY'S LAWYER (CONT'D)

Officer Jones, I want to talk about a few of the inmates that came through on your time on the job.

(Pause)

Does the name... Willie Pitts ring a bell?

Warden Jackson face lights up like the 4th of July.

Officer Jones drops his head.

JERRY'S LAWYER (CONT'D)

Take as much time as you need.

JONES

(holding back tears)

Willie Pitts is one of the individuals that came through the school.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Can you please explain to the court the procedures for releasing an inmate.

D.A.

Objection! I would like to know what the counsel is implying?

JERRY'S LAWYER

I'm implying that the release of the black inmates was different from the release of the white inmates.

D.A.

Surely that can't be the case your Honor!

JUDGE

Make your case.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Officer Jones can you please explain the procedures for releasing an inmate?

JONES

The release for a black inmate is... death.

SCREAMS! From the AUDIENCE O.S.

JUDGE

(slaps his mallet)

Silence... silence I need order in the courtroom!

The SCREAMS continue for a moment.

The Courtroom finally settles down.

D.A.

Objection your honor. There is no proof of any of these allegations from the state.

JUDGE

Overruled. Continue Counsel.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Do you mean that these inmates were murdered?

JONES

Yes sir.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Do you have any proof of this sir?

Warden Jackson stares at Officer Jones with a cold stare.

JONES

As a matter of fact sir, I do.

INSERT CARD:

A BROWN ENVELOPE.

BACK TO SCENE

JONES (CONT'D)

Inside this envelope is photos and
a list of all the inmates who were
murdered at the hands of one man!

COURTROOM complete outrage.

A BAILIFF walks over and gets the envelope from Officer Jones. The bailiff takes the envelope to Judge Perkins. Officer Jones steals a quick glance over at Jerry sitting at the table.

Jerry responds with a smile.

JUDGE

Order... order, let's get some
order in this courtroom!

Audience finally calms down.

Judge Perkins opens the envelope. The response on his face implies he is devastated by what he is seeing.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You may continue, Counsel.

JERRY'S LAWYER

Now you say that these inmates
were murdered at the expense of
one man?

JONES

Yes Sir.

Warden Jackson frantically grabs his belongings.

JONES (CONT'D)

(pointing at Warden
Jackson)

That man!... That man right there,
Warden Jackson. He's the one
responsible for these murders!

The courtroom is stunned.

Warden Jackson stops dead in his tracks--

Officers come and arrest Warden Jackson.

Over all the commotion we HEAR--

JERRY'S LAWYER (O.S.)
I have no further questions your
honor.

The AUDIENCE breaks out in cheers.

JUDGE
(slaps the mallet)
This court is adjured!

CLOSE-UP - JERRY WHITE

We see the image of an adolescent, to young man, who never gave up hope, finally vindicated, finally free to explore the world that awaits him.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

TITLE CARD:

10 YEARS LATER

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOT

INT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The courtroom is full of YOUNG MEN awaiting their trial.

JUDGE PERKINS, A little aged prior to the man we seen 10 years earlier.

DEPUTY SHERIFF
All rise. The honorable Judge
Perkins has arrived.

The YOUNG MEN stand.

Judge Perkins sits.

JUDGE
You may be seated.

The Young Men sit.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
(to Deputy Sheriff)
Are we ready?

DEPUTY SHERIFF
I'm afraid we're waiting on the
Public Defender sir.

JUDGE
Well where the hell...

JERRY
Right here sir.

Jerry White, focused, determined, and confident as he walks
through the door.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(to Judge)
I'm sorry I'm late your Honor.

Judge gives Jerry a smile.

JUDGE
(sarcastically)
That's nothing new.

Jerry smiles back.

JERRY
(panning through his
notes)
I'm ready sir.

Judge nods, looks over his notes.

JUDGE
Maurice Jenkins.

A young man stands next to his LAWYER. ATTORNEY JERRY WHITE.

JERRY (V.O.)
In the end, I guess my best friend
James was right. You can make a
difference. So here I am, trying
to make a difference for my young
brothers and sisters.
(MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So to anyone who listens, you too
can make our world a better place,
just stay focused and rise above
the adversity in your life.

DISSOLVE TO:

FADE OUT.

THE END.

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