

Alternate Intentions

By

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EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DUSK (PRESENT DAY)

As the black vehicle turns right at the corner, the scene stays focused, at eye level, facing an abandoned inner-city building.

Two different but simultaneous gun shots ring out and echo against the surrounding buildings in the distance.

Nick Jenkins breaks through a higher level boarded window from the abandoned building, and falls to the pavement. The manner, in which he falls, his legs buckle and break on impact. The scene fades to black.

The scene fades back in showing Nick lying on the ground, newly paralyzed, and surrounded by a busy police crime scene. He had been lying in the same place unconscious when he regains his senses. His body is riddled from a shotgun wound to his abdominal area.

Nick hears an officer demand that he receives medical attention and then brought into police custody.

The paramedics surround Nick's broken body and lift him onto a stretcher. The scene fades to black. Nick's flash back begins.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - MID DAY (1988)

Nick is now at the youthful age of six. Nick is outside in his front yard playing with his childhood friend, Terrance.

Nick and Terrance hear a loud roaring voice yell from inside Nick's home.

LAWRENCE

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE PREGNANT?!?

Nick and Terrance stop playing and focus their attention on the commotion proceeding in Nick's home. Terrance seems a bit startled by this situation while Nick keeps his composure.

LAWRENCE

**I THOUGHT WE HAD THIS SHIT UNDER CONTROL!!! YOU
BEEN TAKIN' YOUR PILLS?!?**

Nick takes in a deep breath and lets out a short sigh. Nick continues playing while Terrance concentrates on the issue unfolding in the house. Terrance then looks at Nick for a reaction or explanation. Nick doesn't make eye contact with Terrance and his face is emotionless. Terrance is vexed by this but assumes since Nick is unaffected then he should be as well. They both resume playing.

TERRANCE

I dunno, Nick.. I think your dad can beat up my dad..

Nick looks up at Terrance to acknowledge his comment but doesn't speak in return.

TERRANCE

I mean, he sounds mean and he carries a gun!

Nick passes a semi-proud smirk to Terrance. Nick doesn't mind basking in the pride that his father comes off as a "tough guy".

Lawrence exits the home, in a fit of rage. On his waist, Lawrence is wearing his badge and a holstered gun. Lawrence doesn't bother to acknowledge Nick or Terrance as he leaves. Lawrence enters his car and speeds away.

TERRANCE

Where's he going?

NICK

I dunno, Terrance.. Probably home..

Terrance is extremely confused by Nick's reply. Terrance doesn't quite understand the concept of a "broken home". Rather than confuse himself with further questions for Nick, Terrance pays the matter no mind and resumes playing with Nick.

Laura Jenkins calls to the two boys from the front door of the house.

LAURA

Hey, you two!... I have lunch!

Laura stands at the front door with lunch for Nick and Terrance to share.

Laura approaches the two boys with her offerings. As she walks closer, Nick can tell that her eyes are moist, as if she just finished crying. She hands the food to Terrance and immediately wraps her arms around her son, embracing him. She speaks softly.

LAURA

You know Mommy loves you, right?

Nick nods his head, still embraced.

LAURA

And nothing will ever change that..

Laura kisses Nick on the forehead and releases him. She wipes her eyes and sniffles. Laura stays there with the two friends as they begin eating their lunch. The scene fades to black.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The scene fades back in. Approximately 8 or 9 months have passed and Nick is moments away from becoming a new brother.

Nick is patiently sitting outside the delivery room where his mother is. Nick hears periodic screams and yells coming from the delivery room but understands that he is to keep his composure. A passing nurse sees Nick sitting alone and approaches him.

The nurse inquires why Nick is sitting alone and where his father is, while his mother is giving birth. Nick is hesitant on speaking to "strangers" but eventually answers with nodding and shaking his head to her "yes" and "no" questions. Nick admits his father is not there.

A doctor exits the delivery room and invites Nick to meet his sister for the first time. Nick gladly leaps out of his seat to make his sister's acquaintance. Nick stops for a moment to acknowledge the nurse who took his well-being into consideration.

Nick enters the delivery room and paces towards his mother who is holding a new born child. Laura appears exhausted with beads of sweat still on her forehead. With what strength she has left, she smiles and introduces Nick to his new little sister.

LAURA

Nick..

She pauses for a moment to build more strength for her next words.

LAURA

This is your new little sister, Tabitha Jenkins.

Nick seems shy and hesitant since he has never been presented with this opportunity.

LAURA

You can call her Tabby for short. Since you're her big brother, you have to help mommy take extra care of her.

Nick grins, which is answered by a smile from Laura. Nick inches closer to his mother and his sister. The scene then fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades in with a "friends and family" celebration for Nick's new sister. Laura's home is full of acquaintances to see the new born. Lawrence is not present.

Laura hears a knock at the door. She fights her way, through gathered people, to answer the door. Laura opens the door to see a woman standing there with her daughter, roughly the same age as Nick. The young girl is Nick's classmate friend, Nina Harris. Laura greets Nina's mother with a hug.

LAURA

Hey girl!!! How y'all doin'?

Laura acknowledges Nina and greets her with a hug as well. Laura directs her words to Nina's mother.

LAURA

C'mon in.. Everyone is already eating. Wait 'til you see our new addition. She's so precious.

Laura calls out to Nick through the commotion of the guests.

LAURA

Nick! Your friend, Nina, is here!

Nick arrives at the front door, with a huge grin. Nick begins blushing, hoping no one notices. Nick has a crush on Nina and the only person not sure of that is Nina. It is very evident in his actions when dealing with Nina.

NICK

You wanna come see the baby?!?

Nina's mother answers for her.

NINA'S MOTHER

Nina and I would love to.. Can you show us the way?

Nick abruptly grabs Nina's hand to lead her to his new born baby sister. Both mothers follow behind them. As they walk up the stairs, Nina's mother speaks to Laura.

NINA'S MOTHER

So.. Laura.. Where's papa?

Laura hesitates before she answers.

LAURA

Uh.. Lawrence is at work right now. You know..cleanin' up these city streets.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

The scene cuts to Lawrence having a discussion with a teenaged male. From a distance Lawrence appears to be doing police work. Lawrence is convincing the teenager to sell confiscated narcotics for him.

YOUNG STREET DEALER

I don't get it, Jink.. Why take dope off the streets, just to put it back out there?

Lawrence looks at the teenager and smirks.

LAWRENCE

You see.. A "narc's" job is never done. There are always drugs that need to be cleaned off the streets.. but sometimes these streets run a lil' dry.. and in order to prevent progressin' crime, there first has to be crime committed. How I look at it is.. with turnin' this dope back on to the streets, where it came from.. I might as well make it a very profitable situation for myself as well as anyone else who deals with me..

The teenager nods his head as he agrees with Lawrence's concept. The scene fades to black.

INT. ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM - DAY

The scene fades back in with Nick in his elementary classroom. Nick is sitting at a cluster of four desks pushed together, with Terrance and Nina. Nick's teacher is allowing the class to do finger-paintings.

While peacefully finger-painting and conversing about each other's art work, Sean (class bully) notices Nick and his friends from across the class room. Sean makes the conscious decision to disrupt their peace.

Sean plunges his entire right hand in red paint and walks over to where Nick is sitting, with his friends. Without warning, Sean lightly slaps Nick's cheek with his right hand, covered in paint. Left on Nick's cheek is a bright red hand print. All three friends are caught off guard by Sean's action.

SEAN

Heard you gotta new sister, punk!

Terrance and Nina wait to see what Nick will do to retaliate.

SEAN

Hope yo' daddy don't skip out on this one too!

Sean laughs at his own rude comment. Nick is angered by this but before Nick can respond, Nina's voice interrupts.

NINA

SHUT UP, SEAN!!!

Nina speaks loud enough to the point that she has now gained their teacher's attention. Before anything else can transpire, the classroom teacher interrupts the escalating situation. The teacher threatens to discipline the four students by sending them to the Principal's office, if they are unable to cooperate with one another.

All four children sit back down at the cluster of desks to appear obedient. The teacher looks down at Nick and notices the bright red hand print on his face. She scolds Nick for improper use of finger paints and demands that he cleans his face in the bathroom immediately. Nick makes an effort to explain that the incident was not his fault but the teacher cuts his explanation short and points him in the direction of the classroom door.

Sean snickers to himself, while Terrance and Nina feel sympathetic for Nick. Nick walks toward the classroom door and exits.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

The scene cuts to a confrontation between Nick and Sean on the school playground, during their recess. The confrontation initially starts with challenging words passed back and forth, which is then followed by shoving. Nick and Sean's peers notice the two shoving each other and swarm around to witness the outcome.

Nick's teacher notices the commotion and rushes over to end the fist fight.

Nick and Sean stop fighting when they see their teacher approaching. She grabs both by their arms and leads them in the direction of the school building. As they pace towards the school, she signals another school official to monitor her class while she escorts Nick and Sean to the Principal's office.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick and Sean sitting in the waiting area for the Principal's office. Both are slightly dusty, dirty, and scratched up from the fight. Sean looks over at Nick.

SEAN

You better not say nuthin' to get me in trouble..

Before Nick responds, Laura abruptly walks into the lobby holding her purse and baby-bag on one arm and Nick's sister, Tabitha, on the other arm. She appears as though she is frustrated. Laura grabs Nick and forcefully escorts him to see the school Principal.

Nick follows his mother into the back office and looks back at Sean. They both make eye contact. Sean holds up his fist and middle finger at Nick. The scene fades to black after the door closes behind Nick and his mother.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The scene fades back in later that evening, at Laura's home. Nick and his mother are sitting downstairs at the dining room table while baby Tabitha sleeps in an upstairs bedroom. Nick is sitting directly across from his mother as she verbally disciplines him.

LAURA

Now I know yo' lil' ass got more sense than to go out in public and embarrass me like that!!! You hear me?

Nick stares down at the floor.

LAURA

I know you hear me talkin'! ANSWER ME, BOY!!!

Laura's tone demands Nick's immediate eye contact. Nick answers in a shameful whisper.

NICK

I'm sorry...

LAURA

I'm sorry, what?!?

Nick replies a little louder.

NICK

I'm sorry, mom..

Laura sighs while she maintains her disappointed facial expression.

LAURA

So, then, why'd you do it? Why were you fighting at school???

Nick goes back to silent replies. Laura threatens Nick in a louder tone.

LAURA

I see you're havin' a hard time answerin' me today, so maybe I should go get my belt and beat the answers outta you!!!

Laura's loud tone wakes baby Tabitha, who begins crying from the upstairs bedroom. Laura sighs and pushes herself away from the dining room table, to tend to her infant child.

Laura returns to the dining room table holding baby Tabitha who is now silenced by her mother's presence.

LAURA

Look, Nick.. Since your daddy's gone, you're the man of the house now.. Also, now that your little sister is here, mommy needs all the help she can get..

Nick notices that his mother's voice no longer sounds threatening.

LAURA

Also.. I didn't wanna tell you this but I guess now is as good of time as any.. Since your bastard of a father believes we don't need much help anymore, it's up to me and you to help this family survive. And, now that your sister is here, eventually our money will run short..

Laura pauses.

LAURA

What mommy is trying to say is that, with times getting' harder on us, I may need to get another job or two. I may not be around as much so you may need to help mommy pick up the slack so everything stays afloat.. Do you understand?

Nick nods his head. Laura smiles at her son. She leans over to give him a one-armed hug and a kiss on the forehead. Laura's other arm is occupied by the baby. Nick wraps both arms around his mother and sister.

LAURA

I love you, Nick.

NICK

I love you, too, Mommy..

Nick is released from the hug. Laura orders Nick to go upstairs and prepare himself for bed. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades back in a month or so later. It is a beautiful sunny June afternoon. Nick is upstairs entertaining himself, playing a video game.

Lawrence pulls into the drive way. Lawrence exits his vehicle and steps through the front door to see Laura feeding Tabitha on the couch. Laura hums tunes to Tabitha to keep her settled.

LAWRENCE

Where's Nick?

Laura gives Lawrence a hand gesture, pointing toward the ceiling, symbolizing that Nick is upstairs. Lawrence stands at the base of the staircase and calls out to his son.

LAWRENCE

NICOLAS?!?

Lawrence's voice roars through the home and startles the infant, causing her to cry and whimper. Lawrence is answered by silence.

LAWRENCE

**Nicolas! Come get these groceries outta my trunk!
I know you hear me down here..**

Nick walks to the staircase and walks down the steps as if he's in no rush. Lawrence speaks in a more threatening tone.

LAWRENCE

Speed it up, boy!

Nick reaches the bottom of the steps and walks passed Lawrence, out the front door.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence follows behind him to open the trunk for Nick.

LAWRENCE

Alright.. Have at it..

Lawrence turns around and walks back into Laura's house.

Nick shuffles through the paper and plastic bags to gather as many bags as possible.

While gathering bags on his arms, Nick is interrupted by loud arguing coming from inside the house. The loud arguing is followed by the shrieks of a startled infant girl.

Nick continues to gather groceries. While shuffling through the bags, Nick accidentally opens a compartment in his father's trunk. Inside the compartment, Nick finds a handgun and a brick-shaped package tightly wrapped in silver foil, sealed with red tape that reads "EVIDENCE".

As Nick reaches for the items, he is interrupted by Lawrence exiting the home and slamming the front door. Nick sees Lawrence approaching. Nick nervously sweeps the items back into the compartment in which they fell from, just before Lawrence could catch him.

LAWRENCE

All this time and you're still not done with these bags?!?

NICK

But, dad-...

Nick's words are silenced by an unexpected slap to the back of his head from his father. Nick steps aside while his father begins snatching the grocery bags from the trunk of the car and forcefully dropping them on the driveway, in front of Nick's feet. Glass items in the grocery bags shatter and leak as Lawrence drops the bags on the pavement.

LAWRENCE

Man, I tell you.. This damn family aint worth two shits. Seems like I gotta do every goddamn thing around here.

Lawrence pauses as he continues removing grocery bags from his trunk.

LAWRENCE

I dunno where y'all sorry muthafuckas would be without me. SHIT!

Once Lawrence removes all the bags from the trunk he walks over to the driver side of his car and opens the door. Lawrence glances behind him to notice Nick still standing behind the car.

LAWRENCE

Nick! Move out the way..before you get hit!

Nick steps out the way of his father's vehicle. Lawrence turns his back on Nick and gets in his car. Lawrence slams his car door, while reversing out of the driveway, missing Nick by inches.

Laura stands at the front entrance of their home, witnessing Nick enduring so much verbal abuse. As Lawrence accelerates down the street, Laura comes to Nick's aid. The scene fades to black.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY (1998)

The scene fades in to the year 1998. Nick is sixteen years old and attending a Drug Awareness/Career Day program in his high school auditorium.

The educators inform the students of different career paths they can take after their high school career. The educators also discuss the negative effects of drug use, on the human body.

Lastly, the educators make reference that careers and drugs don't mix, which provides "irony" to the story.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The scene cuts to a loud and crowded high school hallway. Nick meets up with his two childhood friends, Terrance and Nina.

Nina begins gossiping about rumors consisting of Sean's arrest for grand theft auto and possession of marijuana. Neither Nick nor Terrance appear surprised or concerned.

The conversation then transitions to the three friends making plans to hang out at Nick's house after school, while Nick baby sits Tabitha for his mother.

They all agree to meet at Nick's house and depart before the school bell rings. The scene fades to black.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - LATE DAY

The scene fades back in later that day, after Nick is let out from school.

Nina arrives at Nick's house. She is dropped off by her older cousin, Doug Harris.

Terrance and Nick are standing outside Nick's home when Nina arrives. Nina steps out the passenger side of the car and closes the door. Doug's car windows are rolled down.

NINA

Hey, y'all...

Nina pauses.

NINA

Doug.. These are my two best friends, Tee and Nick.

Nick and Terrance acknowledge Doug. Doug lifts his head once in reply.

NINA

Nick and Tee.. This is my older cousin, Doug.

Doug begins getting a little frustrated and releases a short sigh.

DOUG

How many times we done been over this...?

Nina seems a bit confused by Doug's question.

DOUG

Don't no body call me Doug no mo'. I keep on havin' to tell y'all to call me Hurt. Y'all niggas can call me Big Hurt.

Terrance and Nick seem equally confused but agree by nodding their heads.

NICK

Aiight, Hurt...

Doug grins momentarily revealing a month containing gold teeth.

DOUG

See.. Finally..a nigga who can follow directions..

Doug admits this jokingly. Nina rolls her eyes.

NINA

Yeah, whatever, DOUG!!!

Nina walks towards Nick's house. Terrance and Nick follow Nina indoors. Doug calls to them before they enter the home.

DOUG

Aye, y'all! Hold up for a sec..

Nick and Terrance turn around to approach Doug's car a second time.

TERRANCE

Wassup???

DOUG

Y'all boys respectin' my lil cousin, right?

Terrance and Nick nod their heads.

DOUG

Y'all aint tryin' no freaky shit.. right?

Both shake their heads "no" in response.

DOUG

Now, y'all know imma have to fuck y'all up if I find out y'all lyin'.

Terrance begins to snicker at Doug's threat. Nick remains silent.

DOUG

I don't see shit funny!

Doug speaks in a stern tone. Terrance ceases chuckling.

DOUG

Anyway... Ya' boy got that good weed for the low-low. Y'all smoke?

While standing at Nick's front door, Nina sees Terrance and Nick standing by Doug's car talking to Doug. She cannot hear the conversation but has a good idea what the conversation consists of. She shakes her head in shame. Nina interrupts the conversation by calling out to her cousin.

NINA

Give it up, Doug! I don't hang around smokers!!!

Doug looks at Nina and then back at Terrance and Nick to check for any objections. He sees blank expressions.

DOUG

Oh, so, y'all don't blaze, huh?

Terrance and Nick shake their heads "no".

DOUG

I swear y'all lil' niggas these days is lame as hell.

Doug cranks his vehicle and puts it in gear.

DOUG

Aaight, well, imma go handle some real business. Imma catch up wit' y'all later.

Terrance and Nick step back from Doug's vehicle. As Doug drives off, he turns his music up loud enough to where is trunk rattles from heavy bass in the music. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING

The scene fades in later that evening, after Terrance and Nina have left. Nick is home baby sitting Tabitha and helping her with her homework, while Laura works one of her jobs.

While Nick is assisting his sister, Laura walks through the door, looking as though she had the most exhausting day at work. Nick puts his tutor session aside, for a moment, to greet his mother.

NICK

Mama! How was work? Lemme tell you about what happened at school today!

LAURA

Damn, Nick.. Let me get settled first.

Laura removes her jacket and sets her work bag on the floor. She walks passed Nick and heads to the kitchen area. She speaks to Tabitha.

LAURA

Hey, sweetie.. How was school today?

TABITHA

Fine..

Laura then heads to the refrigerator for a beverage. Nick is left standing in the same place, watching his mother ignore him. Nick sighs out of frustration. While sipping her beverage, Laura notices Nick's disturbed facial expression.

LAURA

Oh, yeah..Nick.. What was it you wanted to tell me?

Laura speaks between sips. Nick reaches in his back pocket and pulls out the pamphlets of college and career information he received earlier that day, at school.

NICK

Well, Ma'... I got these at school earlier today and I wanted to know if you would sit down and look at em' wit me. Maybe help me plan somethin' out.

Laura walks up to Nick as he hands her the pamphlets. She begins thumbing through each individual pamphlet, reading nothing but the titles on each. Laura raises an eyebrow showing some interest then hands the pamphlets back to Nick.

Laura turns her back to Nick and walks back over to the kitchen table where Tabitha continues her homework. She leans over and asks Tabitha to take her homework upstairs so she can speak to Nick in private.

As Tabitha heads upstairs, she sticks her tongue out at Nick as she passes. Nick pays Tabitha no mind. Laura then waves Nick over as she takes the last sip of her beverage.

LAURA

Okay, Nick.. Let's talk.

Nick walks over to the dining room table and sits across from his mother. He sits his pamphlets in order on the table, in front of him.

LAURA

So.. What's up?

NICK

Well, Mama.. We had career day at school today and some folks came through and spoke to us about different things we can do wit' our lives.

LAURA

Uh huh.. So what are you sayin'?

Laura seems uninterested in the conversation. Nick nervously answers.

NICK

Well...uh..what I'm tryin' to say is..um..I guess I think college would be a good idea for me.

Nick's enthusiasm is completely gone.

LAURA

College, huh.. And what is it that you wanna study to be?

NICK

Uh..well..

Laura adds her next objection.

LAURA

And just who do think is gonna pay for you to go to college? You think we got money like that? We strugglin' as it is.. You already know you can't ask your penny-pinchin' ass father for a damn thing.

Nick's eye contact with his mother is resulted to staring down at the wooden table.

LAURA

So what-chu gon' do, Nick?

Nick shrugs his shoulders indicating that he doesn't have a stable enough answer for his mother. After a period of silence, Laura speaks.

LAURA

Look, Nick.. There's absolutely nothing wrong with you wantin' to go to school. I just feel that you need more preparation. When these schools ask you for payments, they're not gonna' except you shruggin' your shoulders, tellin' em you don't know.. You need to have a better game plan before you go off makin' life changing decisions.

Nick does not lift his eyes up from the table. Laura sighs and continues.

LAURA

Honestly, it's a good thing that you decided to have this talk with me tonight cuz there's some things I've been wantin' to talk to you about.

Nick lifts his eyes from the table to give his attention fully to Laura.

LAURA

Well, as you already know, we are not rich.. And as you and your sister grow, y'all are getting more expensive.

Laura gives off a slight chuckle but ceases when she realizes Nick missed the humor in her comment.

LAURA

Mama is tryin' to make it work the best she can...but I still need help. Please don't think I don't appreciate all you do for your sister.

She pauses for a moment.

LAURA

But I still need assistance..

NICK

I mean, what else do you need me to do?!?

LAURA

Mama needs a different type of assistance. Not just you helping with your sister. I need financial assistance.. and with you bein' sixteen now..it's about time you got a job.

NICK

What kinda job?

LAURA

I dunno..maybe somethin' part time..after school..

NICK

And what about Tabby?

LAURA

Nick.. Your sister is old enough where she can almost watch herself..but until that day we will just have to enroll her in an after-school program or somethin'... In the mean time, mister, you need to find a job. These bills aint payin' themselves, you know..

Nick sighs.

LAURA

Well, it's settled then.. When I get off work, I'll pick you up a newspaper and this weekend, you can get out there and find you a job..

Laura finishes the conversation by leaving from the table and walking towards the stairs, to go to her bedroom. She leaves Nick sitting at the dining room table, gazing at the pamphlets, sitting in order, in front of him. The expression on Nick's face is anger and disappointment. When Laura turns the corner to walk up the stairs, Nick forcefully sweeps the pamphlets to the floor, using his hand. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The scene cuts to the following Saturday morning. Nick receives the newspaper from Laura. His facial expression shows lack of enthusiasm, although, Nick's actions show otherwise. Nick immediately opens the newspaper and gets to work.

This scene shows Nick thoroughly going through the employment portion of the newspaper highlighting the ads he has interest in. Nick goes down a list of phone numbers he collected from the paper and calling each number from his mother's home telephone. Nick checks off each number as he completes the call.

The scene then shows Nick visiting individual establishments, filling out applications for employment and shaking hands with employers as he exits.

When Nick arrives home, Laura watches her son walk through the door, still dressed in his "interview attire". She can tell Nick is exhausted. She offers Nick a meal but he refuses and heads upstairs to his bedroom for rest. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The scene fades in to another Saturday morning. Nick is at home, in the living room, watching Saturday morning cartoons with Tabitha. Laura is in the kitchen preparing breakfast. No conversation is taking place between the three family members.

Suddenly, Laura's cordless phone rings from the base. She sets her utensils down and makes her way to answer the phone. When Laura answers the phone, the caller professionally greets Laura and reassures her that he is the hiring manager for a tax service company and that he is following up with Nick on his application.

Laura asks the caller to hold and excitedly dashes through the kitchen to her living room where Nick and Tabitha are. She speaks in a low tone and advises Nick of the important call. She hands the cordless phone to Nick.

Nick takes the phone from his mother and walks into separate room to gain privacy.

A few moments later, once Nick's phone conversation is complete, he walks back into the living room where Laura patiently awaits to hear the outcome of the phone call.

Nick stays silent for a moment to build the suspense and then speaks.

NICK

Well... Looks like I start Monday, after school!!!

Laura's face lights up with excitement, for her son, as she congratulates Nick on his new achievement.

While "cheering" for Nick, Laura completely forgets about the breakfast she was preparing prior to the phone call. Tabitha advises Laura of the burning breakfast in the kitchen. Laura ceases her excitement and quickly rushes back into the kitchen to tend to her meal.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The scene cuts to the following Monday, while Nick is at school. Nick is prepared and ready for his first work day, after school. Nick is already dressed in his "business-casual" work attire. Nick receives random compliments from female teachers and classmates. As Nick, struts through the school hallway, he is caught off guard by Nina. She pulls Nick aside, away from the traffic of busy students. Before she speaks, she analyzes Nick by looking him up and down and

then passing him a facial expression showing that she's impressed by his appearance.

NINA

Well..Well..Well, Mr. Working-man.. Look at you!

NICK

Hol' up.. How you know I gotta job???

NINA

Now you know yo' mama talks.. She told my mama all about you workin'... Now my mom wants me to get a job. Thanks a lot, Nick.

Nick picks up on Nina's sarcasm and chuckles in reply.

NINA

So, you must start today.. That must be the reason you lookin' so sharp, right? ...

NICK

Yeah, I start right after school...

NINA

Aww, that's too bad.. I was gonna ask if I could come hang out wit' you and Tabby after school.

Nina passes Nick a semi-flirtatious smirk. Nick blushes instantly.

NICK

Uh..um..yeah, I guess it's too bad.. Well, maybe another time???

NINA

Sure.. Just let me know..

The school bell rings, interrupting their moment.

NINA

Damn it! I'm late..

NICK

Yeah, me too..

Nina hugs Nick before they depart and softly speaks in his ear.

NINA

If it means anything.. I'm proud of you.

Nina releases Nick and quickly paces to her next class. Nick does the same.

INT. (WINDSOR) WORKPLACE - AFTERNOON

The scene cuts to Nick arriving at his place of employment, after school. He walks through the door and greets the receptionist, advising her of his purpose being there. She hands Nick a clipboard with multiple papers to fill out. Once Nick is finished, he is escorted to an office room, with others there for the same reason as Nick. Nick is advised that the beginning stage of his job

requires him to go through an initial group training class and then one-on-one training.

As the group training class proceeds, Nick notices random applicants exit as they lose interest in the position. Nick remains seated. Once the class is over, Nick realizes only a few applicants are left. All remaining applicants are asked to exit the room and escorted to their assigned cubicles. Once seated, each applicant receives their one-on-one training on exactly how to do the job and proper phone use. Initially, Nick seems nervous and begins stumbling over his words while on the phone. It is evident that Nick is inexperienced but he chooses to stay dedicated to his goal.

In this same scene, time will transition two years later, which will be evident by captions and a change in Nick's work demeanor, as well as his surroundings. Nick is now eighteen. Viewers will notice Nick no longer seems nervous or inexperienced. His demeanor shows that he is very confident in his ability to do his job and his statistics match. Nick is one of the top producers in the company, which is stated by his plaques and certificates posted in his cubicle.

INT. (WINDSOR) WORKPLACE - AFTERNOON (2000)

While working, Nick is asked to see his supervisor in his office. Nick immediately hangs up his phone and proceeds to his supervisor's office. He knocks on the closed door. A voice inside the office calls out to Nick.

SUPERVISOR

Come in. It's open.

Nick opens the door to see his supervisor playing putt-putt golf in the privacy of his office.

SUPERVISOR

**Nick! Just the man I wanted to see.. Come on in..
Have a seat.**

Nick does as he ordered as his supervisor takes his seat behind his desk.

SUPERVISOR

First let me start by shaking your hand..

Nick's supervisor reaches from his desk to shake hands with Nick.

SUPERVISOR

**Secondly, I just want to thank you for all your hard
work and dedication you put into this company. You
don't know how much we appreciate it.. But you will
momentarily.**

Nick's supervisor pauses.

SUPERVISOR

**Nick, the numbers you pull here at Windsor Tax
Service are unbelievable. We have tenure people who
can't even compete. How do you do it?**

NICK

**Well, Sir.. I just try to do what y'all ask me to
do..right?**

Nick begins feeling nervous that his answer isn't what his supervisor's expecting.

SUPERVISOR

Good answer, Nick.. Damn good answer...

Nick slightly smirks regaining his confidence.

SUPERVISOR

Well, Nick.. You're probably wondering why you're here, in my office, today..

Nick nods his head.

SUPERVISOR

See, we know that you're only eighteen and you're a month away from graduating. Do you already have solidified plans for after high school?

Nick is at a loss for words. He begins losing his confidence again.

NICK

Well.. I'm not really sure..

Nick's supervisor nods his head.

SUPERVISOR

Okay, Nick.. That makes me feel more comfortable with what I am about to say.. We would like to offer you a lead position here at Windsor Tax Services. This is a major promotion from where you're coming from.

Nick replies with a smirk.

SUPERVISOR

We believe you'd be an asset to this company and we'd like to see you grow with us. So.. whadaya say? Are you interested?

NICK

Yes!.. I am very interested.

SUPERVISOR

Great! Well head over and meet Denise in HR and she'll explain your new duties as well as your pay expansion.

Nick's supervisor reaches across his desk to shake Nick's hand one last time.

SUPERVISOR

Welcome aboard, my friend. You are now officially apart of Windsor Tax Services.

Nick shakes his hand and thanks his supervisor as he exits his office.

The scene cuts to later that evening at Laura's home. Nick arrives home with good news to share with his mother. Laura is home with Tabitha, preparing dinner.

Nick rushes to his mother to greet her.

NICK

Hey, mama! How was your day?

Laura looks at Nick and rolls her eyes showing that she doesn't care to elaborate on how her day went.

NICK

Anyway, Ma! Guess what! I got some great news!

LAURA

What's that, Nick??? Hmm? You got some money for me? You know the electric bill is due. I left it in your room.

Laura seems a little "distracted" or absent-minded. He continues with his news, hoping to lift her spirits.

NICK

Mama.. I finally got my promotion over at Windsor. They asked me to be a lead manager. They said they'd train me on how to do taxes and all.

LAURA

Good.. More money to help wit' these damn bills that keep goin' up..

Laura replies in a nonchalant manner. Nick is slightly offended by his mother's reaction. He decides to walk away from the conversation, realizing that it's not going in the direction he had planned. As Nick heads for the stairs, he and Tabitha pass innocent taunts back and forth. Laura calls to Nick as he's in route for the stairs.

LAURA

Hey, Nick!

Nick turns around to give Laura his attention.

LAURA

I know your graduation's in a month.. You want me to invite your father?... It's up to you..

Nick thinks to himself for a moment.

NICK

Sure.. Tell him to come.

Laura looks at Nick in shock. She knows how Nick feels about his father and is surprised his answer isn't "HELL NO".

NICK

Besides... When's the last time this family was all under one roof together?...

Laura looks at Nick, now understanding why he wants to invite his father. She nods her head.

LAURA

Okay... I'll call him tomorrow..

Nick proceeds with walking upstairs. The scene fades to black.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The scene fades back in one week prior to Nick's graduation. Nick and Terrance walk through the crowded hallways as seniors now, feeling "larger-than-life". Their destination is the school's auditorium to pick up their cap and gown for graduation.

Approaching the auditorium entrance, Terrance and Nick see Nina walking away from the auditorium, holding her cap and gown. When she sees her two friends, she immediately shows expressions of excitement as she quickly paces their direction to converse.

NINA

Hey, y'all!... I got some great news..

TERRANCE

For real? What's up?

Nina reaches into her book bag and pulls out a white opened envelope and hands it to Nick. Nick pulls out the contained letter and unfolds it to read it. Terrance stands behind Nick reads the letter over his shoulder. What Nick has in his hands is Nina's acceptance letter to Tennessee State University. Nick's heart is successfully broken. Nina blurts out of excitement.

NINA

I got accepted! They want me!

Nick isn't sure how to react.

TERRANCE

Damn, girl... Gone head wit ya' bad self..

Nina chuckles at Terrance's reply. Nick is still in awe.

NINA

So.. Nick.. what do you think?

Trying to hold back the tremble in his voice, Nick replies.

NICK

Uh..I mean.. damn, this is pretty major..

Nina nods her head as Nick continues forcing the words from his mouth.

NICK

So..uh..how does your mama feel about you leaving Georgia for school? She aint gonna miss you?

NINA

Are you kiddin' me? My mama couldn't be happier. She said she's glad she'll finally have her house to herself after eighteen years. She said now she can party like its 1999!... I mean, who'd really wanna party like it's last year though?

Nina and Terrance both snicker at Nina's comment. Nick doesn't see the humor but tries his best to join in the laughter. Nick, full of emotion, smiles at Nina and hugs her. He softly speaks in her ear, much like she did to him after he landed his first job. Nick speaks the same words she spoke to him.

NICK

If it means anything.. I'm proud of you..

Nina recognizes her own words when she hears them come out of Nick's mouth. She understands why Nick doesn't seem enthusiastic as she expected. Terrance speaks to break the awkward moment he is witnessing.

TERRANCE

Aiight, you two.. Break it up. Break it up..

Nick releases Nina, realizing he is letting too much emotion show. Nina regains her composure.

NINA

Well, just to let y'all know.. Doug's throwin' me a goin' away party graduation night. I better see y'all there.

TERRANCE

Doug??? Oh, you must be talkin' bout Big Hurt.

Terrance chuckles remembering the day they met Nina's cousin for the first time. Nina rolls her eyes and responds sarcastically.

NINA

Yeah.. That guy.. So, y'all gon' be there, right?

Nick nods his head while Terrance verbally confirms his admission.

TERRANCE

Oh fo' sho'... Dre's party prolly gon' be lame anyway. We gon' be there. Right, Nick?

Nick takes his eyes away from Nina to respond to Terrance.

NICK

Yeah, Tee.. You know I'm already there..

NINA

Aiight, you two.. I gotta get goin'. I guess I'll see y'all later.

Both Terrance and Nick nod their heads. The three friends separate. The scene fades to black.

The scene fades back in to Laura's house on Nick's graduation day. Nick is upstairs, preparing himself for his big day while Laura and Tabitha search their home for an extra disposable camera.

Laura walks to the bottom of the staircase and calls up to Nick, asking if he has seen her disposable camera. Nick replies stating that he has not seen the camera anywhere.

Laura looks in her purse to see if she has any extra money. While searching she comes across a small bag of cocaine in her purse. Quickly she tucks the drugs back into a secret compartment in the lower part of her purse. She doesn't find any extra cash in purse anywhere. She calls back to Nick, asking if he has any money to buy another disposable camera on the way to the graduation ceremony.

Nick sighs out of frustration but agrees to buy another camera.

Nick remembers that he never heard whether or not Lawrence was coming to his graduation. He calls back, downstairs, to his mother.

NICK

Hey, Ma!

LAURA

Yeah?

NICK

What did Dad say?

Laura pauses for a moment.

LAURA

Nick, I talked to your father... He said he was gonna be there..

NICK

So.. you gave him the invitation? You know he can't get in without it.

LAURA

Nick, I know... But you already know how ya' Daddy is... I aint seen him so I never gave him his invitation..

Laura pauses for a moment. Nick begins to lose confidence that his father will show up to his graduation. Laura already knows how Nick is feeling.

LAURA

But we talked and he said he'd be there. He even said he got you a graduation gift ... Nick.. for what it's worth..Just trust ya father's word this time and give him his invitation in the parkin' lot, or somethin..

NICK

Aiight... Well, call him and make sure before we leave... I don't wanna be standin' out there for nuthin'...

Laura begins getting slightly frustrated with this conversation.

LAURA

Nick!... You know Lawrence is on his pager... I can't be just pagin' ya' father waitin for him to call back.. We still need to stop and get a damn camera. We're already runnin' late as it is. What's takin' you so long?

Nick complies with the frustration in his mother's tone and quickly grabs his remaining necessities and heads for the stairs.

NICK

Aiight... Mama, here I come..

INT. GRADUATION CEREMONY - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick's graduation ceremony. Laura and Tabitha have found their seats and are opening and preparing the two disposable cameras Nick purchased on their way to his graduation. Nick is back stage situating his graduation attire. He checks his watch to see that he has some time before the ceremony begins. Nick feels that this is just enough time to take a moment to meet Lawrence in the parking lot to give him his invitation for admission.

A school official advises the class of 2000 to line up according to last name. Before the school official could notice, Nick grabs his cap and quickly tucks it under his gown to hide it. Nick asks the school official if he can go to his mother's car to get his graduation cap before the ceremony begins. The school official agrees but advises Nick to hurry so he doesn't miss his name when he's called.

Nick agrees and immediately sprints out of the alphabetical alignment of students and towards the nearest exit.

EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY - DAY

Once Nick reaches the parking lot, his first instinct tells him to check by his mother's car to see if Lawrence had arrived and was waiting for him. Nick sprints to his mother's vehicle to find no one waiting by it.

Nick decides to check the main entrance to see if Lawrence is waiting for him there. Unfortunately, Lawrence isn't there. Nick only sees the school official who accepts the graduation invitations for admission.

Nick inquires if there had been anyone inquiring about "Nick Jenkins" and an invitation. The school official shakes his head "no" and Nick sympathetically nods.

Nick decides to wait around at the main entrance to see if Lawrence will show. He remembers his mother's words, telling him to trust his father this time. Nick hopes she's right. Nick's thoughts are interrupted by the faint sound of an announcer calling individual graduates and the sound of applause following each name called.

He begins pacing back and forth to relieve his mind of thoughts dealing with Lawrence letting him down and him missing his moment to accept his high school diploma.

INT. GRADUATION CEREMONY - DAY

The scene cuts to inside the auditorium, during the graduation ceremony. The announcer is currently calling the "J" portion of the alphabet. Laura signals to Tabitha for her to get her disposable camera ready. After the applause from the previous graduate dies down, the announcer calls for "Nicolas Jenkins". Laura and Tabitha patiently wait with their cameras ready.

The crowd holds their applause, waiting for the graduate to step forward to accept his diploma. No one walks across the stage to meet the announcer. The announcer calls for Nick again.

The crowd maintains their silence as Tabitha and Laura begin feeling a little embarrassed. Laura knows Nick is outside waiting for Lawrence who obviously didn't show. She shakes her head in shame. A few people throughout the crowd begin to whisper and chuckle at Nick's absence. The announcer decides to move forward with the ceremony and calls the next graduate.

Laura leans over and whispers in Tabitha's ear. Tabitha and her mother gather their belonging and head for the exit.

EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick standing outside in front of the main entrance, staring out into a full but motionless parking lot. His hand holds Lawrence's invitation which had been crumbled by Nick through frustration. Nick looks down at the crumbled invitation in his hand. Nick begins transforming his sorrow emotion into anger. He rips the invitation to pieces and retires it in the nearest trash can.

At that moment, Laura and Tabitha step out of the main entrance to find Nick. Laura can already see the emotion on her son's face. She reaches out to Nick and hugs him, whispering her apologies in his ear. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The scene fades back in at Laura's home after the graduation ceremony. When Nick, and his family enter the house, the house phone rings. Terrance is calling to inquire about Nick's absence at the graduation ceremony. Nick doesn't tell Terrance the reason he didn't accept his diploma. Nick changes the subject and makes arrangements to ride with Terrance to Nina's party, later that night. After the arrangement is confirmed, they end their conversation and Nick hangs up the phone. The scene fades to black.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - LATE EVENING

The scene fades back in with Terrance and Nick arriving to Nina's graduation party. When the two friends arrive, the party is well in "affect". Terrance finds the closest parking spot available. He and Nick exit the vehicle and casually walk towards the entrance of Nina's home. The commotion from the party is evident, even from outside the house.

INT. NINA'S HOUSE - LATE EVENING

Terrance and Nick enter the home as a few party members exit the house to get fresh air and smoke cigarettes. When Terrance and Nick enter the home they see classmates from their graduating class as well as some unfamiliar faces. They immediately focus their attention on Doug who is obviously using Nina's party as a tool to gain further clientele for drug trafficking. Nick notices Doug mingling with party members as well as making hand-off transactions, selling marijuana to select individuals.

Terrance and Nick approach Doug to greet him and make him aware of their arrival. Doug greets Nick and Terrance and then decides to give them a tour of the house party. Doug shows them where to find food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, the "smoking area" in the basement, as well as the guest bathroom.

Once Doug's tour is complete, all three joke around for a moment, and then Doug departs from Nick and Terrance. Terrance then departs from Nick, to go socialize and drink. Nick is left in the basement with the others at the party. He sits on the basement couch, next to some party members who are smoking marijuana.

They offer Nick the drug and he initially turns it down. The party member, offering Nick to smoke, is persistent and Nick gives in to peer pressure. Nick inhales the smoke from the marijuana. Moments after he inhales, Nick begins to cough violently. Others sitting on the couch begin laughing at Nick.

RANDOM PARTY MEMBER

HA! Look's like someone's got some baby lungs!!!

Nick puts up his middle finger at the party member who made the comment. He attempts to give the marijuana back.

RANDOM PARTY MEMBER

You aint done, bruh.. Keep hittin' that chronic.

Nick continues smoking the marijuana. With each drag, he coughs less and less.

Nina walks into the basement at the same moment Nick passes the marijuana back to the person who initially passed it to him. Nina is shocked. She begins giving Nick the third degree for smoking but then reassures Nick that she is only joking. Nina then inquires why Nick was absent for the graduation. Nick makes up a random excuse stating that he had some family issues.

Nick and Nina continue casually conversing. Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of glass breaking, from upstairs. Nina can already hear her cousin, Doug, yelling at someone for the mishap but feels the situation may deserve her attention. She separates from Nick with the promise to return later.

Nick heads back to the couch area as he begins feeling a little "lazy". The affect of the marijuana begins setting in. It seems as if the music he hears has been slowed down and amplified. He begins feeling euphoric while watching the environment around him. Nick "zones" out to the music and relaxes in his spot on the basement couch.

After some time has passed, Nick is still sitting in the same place on the couch, conversing and joking with others around him. Terrance is now "drunk" and is stumbling down the basement stairs to speak to Nick. Nick notices his friend having trouble walking and meets him at the base of the stairs. Terrance initially attempts to speak to Nick, in a "drunken" manner.

TERRANCE

Aye, Nick! Um.Nina had said..uh..she said..somethin'
about...um..you meetin' her outside or somethin'...

NICK

Tee! You aiight man? How much you had to drink?

TERRANCE

Man...I aint...I aint...I aint even drank that much..

Terrance pauses for a moment and his facial expression is overtaken by nausea.

TERRANCE

Oh, shit, man! Where's the bathroom at?

Nick points his friend towards the guest bathroom in the basement. Terrance sprints in the direction of the restroom, covering his mouth. Nick shakes his head with shame. Nick makes his way through the crowded party and out the front door.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick steps out the front door. He sees Nina standing on her front porch, with a few friends, having casual conversation. Nina sees Nick and instantly distances herself from the others on the porch.

Nina asks Nick if he'll accompany her on a walk through her neighborhood, so they can gain some privacy away from the party and talk. Nick agrees.

Nick and Nina casually walk through the neighborhood and converse. Nina takes this opportunity to admit her feelings for Nick to him. Nick swallows his pride and admits his feelings, as well.

It is a relief for Nick and Nina, now that they understand their feelings are mutual but they are saddened knowing that Nina will be leaving for college soon.

Nick and Nina share their pioneer kiss and decide to head back to the party.

When they arrive to Nina's residence, her party appears to be dying down. Nina separates from Nick to say goodbye to some of her friends and thanks them for coming to her party. The remaining party members exit, leaving only Nick, Nina, Terrance, and Doug left.

Doug is waiting for Nina at the entrance of her residence. He humorously scolds Nina for leaving her party with Nick. Nick, Nina and Doug head inside the house.

INT. NINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

When they enter the home, Nina and Doug immediately begin straightening up the mess left from the party. Nick goes to check on Terrance who is now passed out on Nina's basement couch.

Nick realizes that his mode of transportation is no longer accessible. Nina is aware of this so she advises Nick to wait until the morning to leave. Nina heads upstairs to call her mother to get clearance for her suggestion, leaving Nick downstairs with Doug.

Doug invites Nick into the kitchen area to have a "one-on-one" talk with Nick. Doug pulls out a marijuana blunt and lights it. He inhales once and then pulls

out several wads of loose cash. Doug begins straightening out the bills, one by one, and stacking each bill on top of another.

DOUG

So, baby lungs, I see you smokin' now..

Doug passes the marijuana to Nick and Nick accepts. Nick shrugs his shoulders and inhales smoke from the blunt, which is followed by a few light coughs. They pass the marijuana back and forth as they converse.

Nick's eyes focus on the amount of money Doug is counting. Nick notices Doug counting more than he makes in a two week time period. Nick is slightly impressed. He responds to Doug's comment.

NICK

Yeah.. I tried it for the first time tonight. I guess it aint too bad. I know my mama would probably kill me if she found out.

DOUG

I also see you and my lil' cuz lookin' like y'all might be interested in each other..

Nick blushes at the mere mention of Nina. Doug doesn't need verbal confirmation on Nick's feelings toward Nina.

DOUG

Look, man.. you seem like a cool dude and all..but if you break my lil' cousin's heart, hurt her, mistreat her, or anything like that..I'mma end up fuckin' you up, Nick. Plain and simple.

Nick immediately nods his head to show his compliance.

DOUG

I'm givin' you my certified stamp of approval because I can tell she really likes you and I can't change how she feels. But along wit' my approval stamp comes a fair warnin'... Don't make ya' mama miss you just because you decided to play games wit' my lil' cousin's heart.

At that moment, Nina comes back downstairs to notify Doug of her mother's decision.

NINA

Doug! Ma said everything was okay with Nick and Terrance stayin' the night. She knows it's too late for them to be tryin' to drive home.

Doug takes his attention away from Nick and focuses on Nina.

DOUG

Aaight, well.. Look here.. me and Nick talkin' bout some business right now..

NINA

What kinda' business? Better not be nothin' about
no drugs!

DOUG

Now, see, here you go worryin' bout all the wrong
shit. Don't worry about what we talkin' bout. Take
ya' ass elsewhere 'til we finish our discussion.

NINA

Whatever, jack-ass!

Nina turns around and begins heading back upstairs. She pauses for a moment,
remembering something she forgot to say to Nick. She heads back downstairs.

NINA

Hey, Nick.. When you get done talkin' to jack-ass
over there.. come upstairs.. I got somethin' I wanna
show you.

Doug looks at Nina like she is crazy for saying what she just said.

NICK

Aiight, Nina.. I'll be up there after I'm done
talkin' to jack-

Nick catches his last word before he says it. Doug cuts his eyes at Nick with a
stern stare.

NICK

Uh.. I mean.. I'll be up there after I'm done talkin'
to *Big Hurt* over here.

Doug approves of Nick's choice of corrected words. Nina chuckles at Nick's slip
up and heads back upstairs.

DOUG

Aiight, Nick.. I aint gonna keep you down here too
much longer. I just wanted to let you know what the
business is.

Doug stands up from the kitchen table and sweeps the stacks of bills into his
hand. He then folds the money and stuffs it in his pocket.

DOUG

Now, as for me.. I gotta go make some runs. Ya'
know..make some investments.

Nick nods his head understanding exactly what Doug means. Doug reaches in his
pocket. Nick assumes Doug is checking for car keys or some other small
belonging.

DOUG

Aiight, Nick.. Hold it down, bruh..

Doug sticks out his hand to shake Nick's hand. When Doug releases Nick's
hand, Nick looks in his palm and realizes Doug has placed a condom in his
hand. Nick is caught off guard by this.

DOUG

I don't need no new relatives runnin' around this bitch. This is just some reassurance.

Nick understands what Doug means and nods his head in agreement. Doug concludes the conversation. Doug turns his back on Nick and walks out the front door. Nick heads upstairs to where Nina's room is. Her bedroom door is closed. Nick knocks on the door. Nina's voice answers telling Nick to come in.

Nick opens the door to see Nina lying across her bed thumbing through what appears to be a diary and listening to "slow jams" on her alarm clock radio. As she turns each page, she folds back certain pages in her diary. Nick is still standing in the door way. Nina gives her attention to Nick, telling him to close the door behind him.

Nick closes the door.

NINA

You see this, Nick?

She holds up her diary with over 50 percent of the pages folded.

NICK

Yeah.. what's that?

NINA

This is my diary.. I've been writin' in it since I was like seven or eight.

Nina pauses.

NINA

You see all these folded pages?...

Nick nods his head.

NINA

These are all the pages where I wrote somethin' about you..

Nick is astonished and flattered at the same time. He had no idea Nina felt this strong for him but it is an instant reminder of just how much he will miss her after she leaves for college.

NINA

You see, Nick.. I've always had feelins' for you. I just never knew how to tell you. I guess I was nervous I would look foolish and end up losin' a good friend.

NICK

Yeah..I know exactly what you mean. I guess I was feelin' the same way all this time..

Nina gazes and smiles at Nick as she motions for him to come closer to her. Once Nick is close enough to Nina, they engage in their second kiss, which is substantially longer than the first. While kissing Nick, Nina wraps her arms around him. Before she completes her embrace she claps her hands twice and the

lamp in her room turns off, leaving them in total darkness. The scene fades to black.

INT. TERRANCE'S CAR - MORNING

The scene fades back in following morning. Terrance is taking Nick home from Nina's house. Terrance is feeling a little hung over from drinking the previous night, although, Nick enjoyed his night.

Terrance and Nick manage to hold casual conversation, on the trip to Nick's home. Upon arriving, Nick notices Lawrence's car parked in the drive way. Nick is instantly enraged. Nick doesn't voice his sudden discomfort.

Nick opens Terrance's passenger door to exit the vehicle. Before Nick closes the door, Terrance stops him and begins inquiring on what took place between him and Nina last night. Nick brushes Terrance off by explaining that it is none of his business. Nick closes the car door and proceeds with walking towards his home.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The scene cuts to inside Laura's home. Lawrence and Laura are in the dining room area talking to one another.

LAURA

Honestly, Lawrence.. I really don't think he wants to see you right now..

LAWRENCE

Why not? I'm the boy's father... Why wouldn't he wanna see me?

LAURA

C'mon now, Lawrence. You know what you did.. He really wanted to see you at his graduation. He was hurt when you weren't there..

LAWRENCE

Hurt? He's a man.. He needs to get over that baby shit. You already *know* what I do.. You know I can't be *everywhere* all the time.. You said you needed shit...so I'm out there gettin' shit for you..

LAURA

That aint no excuse. Don't you try to throw me in this. You said you'd be there and you weren't. How do you expect him to feel?

Lawrence replies in a loud, stern tone.

LAWRENCE

I expect him to be a man about this shit and keep it movin'! Damn!

Laura peeks around Lawrence as she sees Nick walking towards the front door, from the living room window.

LAURA

Well, you'll have plenty of time explaining that to him. Here he comes now...

Laura ceases speaking to Lawrence as she rises from the dining room table. Lawrence looks toward the front door as his son enters. When Nick enters the house he makes no eye contact with anyone and heads straight for the stairs leading to the upper level of the home. Lawrence feels some what guilty so he initiates conversation with Nick.

LAWRENCE

What's up, Nick.. You aint gonna speak?

Nick pauses for a moment and looks at his father. His facial expression shows that he has no interest in conversing with Lawrence.

NICK

Oh..my bad.. What's up?

Nick begins heading for the steps when Lawrence replies to interrupt him a second time.

LAWRENCE

Oh, it's like that now??? I was just comin' by to say congratulations and bring this gift I got for you. What? You gon' act like you don't want it or somethin'?

Nick stays silent. He is wondering why Lawrence is not apologizing for his actions.

LAWRENCE

Speak up, son..

Nick replies in a low tone, not really sure of what he's about to say.

NICK

Don't call me that..

Lawrence is slightly unsure of what Nick said.

LAWRENCE

What did you just say, boy?

Nick replies in a louder tone.

NICK

You heard me! Don't call me "son"!

Lawrence now understands what Nick is saying. He gives Nick the opportunity to apologize, thinking that maybe Nick has forgotten who he's speaking to.

LAWRENCE

What the fuck did you just say, lil' nigga?!? Do you know who the fuck you talkin' to?

Nick releases all the anger he had been holding in for so many years.

NICK

**Man... Fuck whoever you think you are around this
bitch! You don't do much of shit for this family!
I really don't want shit from you anyway! You had
the chance!**

Lawrence looks over at Laura whose facial expression reads "I told you so". Lawrence feels the sting of humiliation and immediately retaliates. Lawrence marches up to Nick who is standing as firm as the words he just spoke.

LAWRENCE
Talk tough now, lil' nigga!

Nick looks to the left towards the staircase showing that he is not affected by his father's words and also indicating that he is about to walk away. Before a moment's notice Lawrence places his hand on Nick's shoulder to stop him from moving and strikes Nick in the eye, as hard as he can. Nick immediately falls to the ground from the blow.

LAWRENCE
YOU THINK YOU GROWN!!! TALK THAT TOUGH SHIT NOW!!!

Nick remains silent, on the floor, as he is trying to regain his thoughts. Lawrence begins kicking Nick in the stomach repeatedly. By his second kick, Laura is rushing to rescue her son. Lawrence only has the opportunity to kick Nick a third time before Laura forces her weight on Lawrence, pushing him several feet away. She kneels to the floor to tend to her son. Laura then looks back at Lawrence.

LAURA
God damn it, Lawrence, just leave! He's had enough!

Lawrence looks at Laura, prepared to say something disrespectful, in reply, until someone on the staircase catches his attention. It is his daughter, Tabitha. Lawrence is taken over by an awkward feeling. Without knowing what to do or say, he quickly grabs his jacket and car keys and exits the home. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick sitting at the kitchen table, rubbing his throbbing eye, while Laura prepares him a sandwich bag of ice. She walks over to Nick and hands him the sandwich bag filled with crushed ice.

LAURA
**Here.. This should numb that pain and take that
swellin' down some..**

Nick places the ice pack over his face slowly as the chill initially stings and then numbs his injured eye. Moments later, the house phone rings. Laura answers the phone in the kitchen.

Nina is calling to speak with Nick. Laura inquires if Nick wants to speak with Nina first, before giving him the phone.

Laura hands the phone to her son. Laura speaks before Nick can answer the phone.

LAURA

Alright, Nick.. I'm gonna go upstairs and talk to your sister about what she just saw. You gon' be alright done here, right?

Nick looks at his mother with one eye covered and replies.

NICK

I'mma man, Mama.. I can handle it. Take it and keep it movin'...

Laura looks at her son in awe for a moment, wondering how Lawrence's words wound up coming out of their son's mouth. She nods her head and walks off, giving Nick privacy. Nick answers the phone.

Nick speaks to Nina. Nina immediately begins inquiring why Nick didn't call her when he made it home. Nick chooses not to elaborate on the situation that took place between him and his father.

Nina then goes on explaining to Nick that she and her mother are leaving for Tennessee in two days to check out the campus and learn the area. She makes arrangements with Nick to meet him at a local park the next morning to say "goodbye". Nick agrees to meet with Nina and the conversation concludes when they hang up the phone. The scene fades to black.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The scene fades in the following morning, with Terrance arriving to Nick's home. He walks to the front door and knocks on the door. Terrance is still oblivious to what took place between Nick and his father, the day before. Nick opens the door to greet Terrance.

Terrance instantly notices Nick's black eye and inquires how he got it, as well as making jokes about it. Nick changes the subject to take the focus off of his eye.

NICK

So.. you gonna take me to see Nina or what?

TERRANCE

Yeah, I got you, man..

Terrance pauses for a moment.

TERRANCE

But you gotta tell me what happened to yo' eye first!

Terrance laughs as Nick closes the door behind him. Nick shoves Terrance out of his way, showing his frustration towards Terrance's sarcastic request. Both friends begin walking towards Terrance's car. They enter the vehicle and Terrance drives off.

EXT. LOCAL PARK - MORNING

The scene cuts to Terrance and Nick arriving to the local park. Nina is already there waiting for Nick to arrive. Before Terrance can bring his car to a complete stop, Nick abruptly exits the vehicle, to meet Nina. When Nina sees her two friends, she leaps off the hood of the car and begins pacing towards Nick.

Her face, expressing enthusiasm, is quickly transformed into shock and confusion when she gets close enough to see Nick's black eye.

NINA

Oh my God, Nick!!! What happened to your eye???

Nick is caught off guard by the question and stutters before making up an answer.

NICK

Oh, that?... Um..uh..I..uh..fell yesterday..

Terrance remains in the driver seat of his vehicle. His windows are rolled down and he is close enough where he can hear their conversation. Terrance interrupts their conversation after he hears Nick's reply.

TERRANCE

Don't believe that nigga! He lyin'!!!

Nina and Nick both turn and look at Terrance showing facial expressions of frustration by his interruption. Terrance smiles back at them. Nick quickly changes the subject.

Nick and Nina begin conversing about how much they'll miss each other once Nina leaves for college. They make the best of the situation and agree to wait for each other until Nina finishes school and returns to Georgia.

Nina concludes the conversation by stating her "goodbye's" to Nick and Terrance. Once the conversation is over, Nina departs. The scene fades to black.

After Nina leaves for college, Nick's flash back leaps forward to the year 2002. All characters age and experience life accordingly.

INT. (WINDSOR) WORKPLACE - DAY (2002)

The scene fades in with Nick tediously researching information, on his computer, in his significantly larger cubicle. Nick is surrounded by photos of family and friends, as well as many new awards and plaques symbolizing all of Nick's hard work.

While Nick is working, he is interrupted by his supervisor, who stops by his cubicle to make "small-talk".

SUPERVISOR

Yo, Nick! What's up, bro?

Nick turns his seat around to give his supervisor his attention. Nick is slightly offended by the "bro-gesture" but chooses not to comment.

NICK

Mr. O'Brien.. What's up?

SUPERVISOR

Oh, nothin'... just wanted to stop by and congratulate you and your team on the numbers you all pulled in last month. I bet you're enjoyin' that bonus check, huh?

Nick smiles.

NICK

Oh, yeah! Every penny of it!

SUPERVISOR

That's good, Nick.. That's what I like to hear.

Nick's supervisor glances over at the calendar pinned on Nick's cubicle wall.

SUPERVISOR

So, Nick.. It's Mother's Day.. What did you get for that special lady?

Nick has forgotten about Mother's Day but quickly devises an answer.

NICK

Uh..I'll probably stop and drop off some flowers and a card to her on my way home..I guess.

Nick's supervisor looks at Nick and smiles.

SUPERVISOR

Yeah, Nick.. I think she'll like that.. You want to know what I got for my mom?

Nick nods his head. His supervisor points to a window with a view of the parking lot. Outside of the window is a brand new Lincoln, parked in plain view.

NICK

Hold up.. you got her that car?!?

Nick's supervisor nods his head and smiles with pride. Nick begins feeling somewhat envious.

At that moment, Nick's supervisor's cell phone begins ringing. The supervisor checks the caller-ID and concludes their conversation. The supervisor takes the call in his office and closes his office door. Nick goes back to doing his work.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - AFTERNOON

The scene cuts to later that day after Nick is off work. Nick heads straight to a local flower shop to purchase a dozen roses for his mother. Nick realizes he has the finances to purchase another dozen, so he does so, hoping to make his gift more memorable for Laura.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick arriving to his mother's home. Nick pulls into the driveway and exits his vehicle. He knocks on the door, with two-dozen roses in his hand.

Shortly after he knocks, Tabitha answers the door with the cordless phone to her ear. Given that she is in the middle of conversation, she fails to greet Nick.

Nick steps into the house and follows Tabitha into the living room.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING

NICK

Hey...where's mama?

Tabitha doesn't reply with words. She rolls her eyes at her older brother and points up toward the ceiling, indicating that Laura is upstairs.

Nick proceeds with making his way up the flight of stairs. Once Nick reaches the top of the stairs, with the roses still in his hand, he heads straight for his mother's bedroom. Nick opens the door and initially greets his mother. His words are cut short due to what he discovers.

NICK

Happy Mothe—...

When Nick opens the door he sees Laura, sitting on her bed, snorting lines of cocaine off of a personal mirror. Nick is completely in shock by what he sees.

NICK

What the fuck?!?... What the fuck is this shit?!?

Laura tries to hide what she's doing but quickly gives up once Nick's words confirm his awareness.

LAURA

God damn it, Nick! What are you doin' here? You aint never heard of knockin'?

Laura then looks at the items Nick is holding and is able to answer her own question as why Nick is there.

NICK

Fuck why I am here.. What the fuck are you doin' up here, mama?!? Is this the shit you do now? Huh?!?

Laura looks to the floor in shame.

NICK

So this is what you've resulted to, huh???...

Nick begins recalling his mother's words when she asked him for financial assistance and requested that he holds off college to work and help her with bills.

NICK

This is the reason yo' ass runnin' around broke???
This is why you gotta work so many jobs, huh? THIS
IS THE FUCKIN' REASON YOU ASKED ME NOT TO GO TO
COLLEGE???

Nick ceases yelling to give Laura the opportunity to speak. She says nothing. Nick begins getting frustrated.

NICK

Oh..you aint got shit to say now, huh?!? Okay...I
know what'll get yo' ass talkin'...

Nick reaches and grabs the personal mirror containing her powdery substance. Nick turns his back on his mother and paces towards her bathroom.

LAURA
Hold on, Nick! Where you goin' with that?!?

Laura gets up from the bed to follow her son into the bathroom.

LAURA
NICK!!! Come back here! What are you doing?!?

By the time she reaches the bathroom, Nick is standing in front of the toilet as he lets the cocaine slide off the mirror and into the water. Nick flushes the toilet. When Laura witnesses this, she immediately falls to the floor, at Nick's feet. She screams and begins crying.

LAURA
NICK!!! NOOOOO!!!

Laura lays there crying at Nick's feet for a moment and then looks up at Nick. Nick speaks to shame his mother.

NICK
Look at you..

Laura remembers seeing Lawrence from the same angle saying the same words, in the past. Laura lowers her crying to whimpering.

LAURA
Nick.. I need help..

Nick looks at his mother suspiciously.

NICK
What kinda help you need now, mama? You aint getting' no more money outta me..

LAURA
Nick.. I need professional help.. I can't go on like this..

Nick looks at his mother slightly disgusted by her, but at the same time, sympathetic. Nick lets out a long sigh. He steps over his mother and out of the bathroom.

LAURA
Where are you goin', Nick?!?

Nick proceeds walking out of the bathroom and toward the stairs.

NICK
I gotta go make some phone calls.. You said you need help, right?...

Nick makes his way down the stairs where Tabitha is still using the cordless phone. Tabitha watches her older brother stomp through the living room like a mad-man. Nick reaches into a nearby closet and grabs a business telephone book.

Nick looks at Tabitha and orders her to get off of the phone. Tabitha objects.

Nick looks at Tabitha with a stern face indicating that he is not joking with her.

NICK

Tabby... I'm not gonna ask you again..

Tabitha understands that her brother is serious so she proceeds in ending her conversation. Tabitha hangs up the cordless phone and hands it to Nick.

Nick sits at the kitchen table and opens the phone book. He immediately begins searching for local rehabilitation establishments. Nick begins dialing the phone numbers that he finds. The scene fades to black.

INT. REHAB DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick and Laura sitting in the office for the rehabilitation director. The office is silent as the director is sitting behind her desk flipping through papers.

The director pulls out a stapled list.

REHAB DIRECTOR

Good news, Mr. Jenkins.. Looks like we can admit your mother in our program immediately.

Nick nods his head. Laura's facial expression maintains a look of shame.

REHAB DIRECTOR

Now, your mother would be required to stay with us, the entire time, while she attends our program. This program runs a period of six weeks, under our supervision. Since your mother is the guardian of a minor, will there be someone able to care for the child while she is attending our program?

NICK

Yes ma'am.. I'll be the one watching over my little sister..

REHAB DIRECTOR

That's fine, Mr. Jenkins. Now, one thing that I feel obligated to tell you is that if your payments are not consistent, we'll have no other choice but to exclude your mother from the program. Do you understand?

Nick nods his head.

REHAB DIRECTOR

Alright, Mr. Jenkins..Thank you for your time. Your mother can begin her treatment the day we receive the first payment.

The director rises up from her seat and holds her hand out to shake hands with Nick and Laura. Nick and Laura exit the office.

Once outside the office, Laura pulls Nick to the side to speak to him.

LAURA

Nick..did you hear that?

NICK

Hear what?

LAURA

They said I'm gonna be in here for six weeks, Nick..
Tabby's birthday is in three weeks!

NICK

Don't worry about that... You got bigger shit to worry
about. Tabby will be fine. Better you miss one
birthday then miss em' all because you're dead from
an overdose somewhere.

Laura is in awe from how Nick speaks to her.

LAURA

Well, you make sure she has a good birthday, Nick.
You tell her I'm sorry I can't be there..

Nick nods his head. The scene fades to black.

EXT. TABITHA'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The scene fades in three weeks later, on Tabitha's birthday. Nick arrives to Tabitha's high school to pick her up after her school day. Nick honks his car horn to get Tabitha's attention.

Once Tabitha arrives to the vehicle, she enters the passenger side and greets Nick. When she opens the door she sees flowers and a birthday greeting card sitting on the passenger seat, waiting for her.

TABITHA

Hey, Nick! Are these for me???

Tabitha enters the car and closes the passenger door.

INT. NICK'S CAR - AFTERNOON

NICK

Who else would they be for, Birthday Girl? Happy
Birthday, lil sis..

Tabitha smiles at Nick and reaches over to give her brother a one-armed hug. Nick then puts the car in gear and drives away from the school.

While driving to Laura's house, Tabitha opens the card she received from Nick. Tabitha is immediately reminded that she has not received her birthday wishes from either parent. Tabitha begins feeling depressed. Nick picks up on her depression.

NICK

What's wrong, Tabby??? You're not allowed to frown
on your birthday..

Tabitha sighs.

TABITHA

I know, Nick.. It's just that I miss mom.. and I miss dad. I've been callin' dad all day to give him the opportunity to wish me Happy Birthday. All I'm getting' is voicemail, ya' know..

NICK

Yeah.. I know..

Nick pauses and then attempts to build Tabitha's confidence on her birthday.

NICK

Tabby, look.. It's not our fault that we can't see our parents all the time. Mom and Lawrence don't always make the best decisions, but we gotta keep it movin'... And I'm sure they would feel better knowin' that you had a good time for your birthday, rather than sittin' around mopin' about why they're not here..ya know?

Tabitha slightly smirks.

NICK

So..what do you say? Since it's your birthday...let's go out and do whatever it is that Tabby wants to do..How does that sound?

Tabitha begins smiling as she makes her decision.

TABITHA

Okay, Nick.. Run me by the house real quick so I can change clothes..

Tabitha decides to go to Dave & Buster's.

EXT. DAVE & BUSTER'S - EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick and Tabitha arriving at Dave and Buster's later that evening. When they exit the vehicle, Nick notices Tabitha's clothes are a little revealing.

NICK

Tabby! Did you bring a jacket? Where's the rest of your outfit?

Tabitha looks at her brother and rolls her eyes.

TABITHA

Are you serious??? This outfit is hot! I don't need a jacket. Besides, Nick, we're gonna be inside.

INT. DAVE & BUSTER'S - EVENING

They enter the busy establishment and immediately find a table. Nick and Tabitha order food and virgin drinks for Tabitha to celebrate her birthday. They both share casual conversation over dinner. They appear to be having a good time

together. Nick, nor Tabitha notice the older caucasian male (The Man) watching Tabitha from the bar.

Once Nick and Tabitha complete their meal, they embark on playing arcade games and a few rounds of pool. The Man at the bar continues watching and following Tabitha, discreetly. While in the middle of a pool game, Tabitha gets the urge to use the public restroom.

TABITHA

Nick.. Let's take a break.. I need to go use the restroom.

Tabitha lays her pool stick across the pool table. She walks away from the pool table and in the direction of the restrooms. The Man at the bar watches her as she walks to her destination. He takes his last shot of liquor and slams the glass on the bar as he pushes himself out of the bar stool. The Man follows Tabitha's path to the women's restroom. Nick is oblivious to what's going on but his waiter notices The Man's actions. The waiter chooses to enlighten Nick as to what he has just witnessed.

WAITER

Excuse me, sir...

NICK

Yes?

The scene cuts to Tabitha flushing the toilet and exiting the stall. She walks to the sink and begins washing her hands. Tabitha looks up at the mirror and sees The Man from the bar standing behind her. Initially she is startled by his presence but then she assumes that maybe he has made a mistake and stumbled into the wrong restroom.

TABITHA

I'm sorry.. This is the ladies room!

The Man pulls out a large pocket knife and flips the blade open.

THE MAN

Don't scream!

The Man begins walking closer to Tabitha. The scene cuts to the conversation between Nick and the waiter.

WAITER

Look, man.. I really don't like to cause no drama or nothin' but..

The waiter seems hesitant to finish what he's saying.

WAITER

Man.. I saw your girlfriend head toward the bathroom, right... Then I saw this cat at the bar follow her..and..

Nick hears what the waiter is saying but pays no attention to the invalid label he has given Tabitha. Nick fears the worst and leaps out of his chair and sprints towards the women's restroom.

Once Nick is at the entrance of the restroom, he aggressively opens the door. Nick sees what appears to be an empty women's restroom.

Nick calls Tabitha's name but is answered with silence. Nick begins glancing under the stalls to find which one may be occupied by Tabitha. All stalls are empty except for the last. Nick notices his sister shoes and he sees a pair of dirty construction boots that seem as though they are trying to hide as Nick steps closer to the last stall.

Nick immediately kicks in the stall door to find Tabitha beaten unconscious, slumped over the toilet, and her clothes ravaged. Nick notices The Man from the bar occupying the stall with his sister.

The Man quickly pulls up his pants and raises his hands in the air to show surrender. This gesture is not satisfactory for Nick.

Nick's becomes emotionless, lacking the ability to act with reason. Nick grabs The Man and repeatedly strikes him in the face. The Man falls to the ground. Nick begins kicking The Man, over and over, in his abdomen. Nick picks The Man up off the floor and tosses him across the bathroom, towards the sinks. The Man trips and falls onto a sink that breaks away.

Nick walks over to The Man, now lying on the bathroom floor next to a piece of broken sink. Nick kicks The Man in his stomach. Nick kneels down and places his knee on The Man's chest to prevent him from moving. Nick glances over at the stall where he made his frightening discovery. Tabitha is still lying in the stall slumped over the toilet. Nick's rage increases again.

NICK

I'MMA KILL YOU!!!

Nick grabs the piece of broken sink and strikes The Man repeatedly across the face, knocking The Man unconscious.

Nick is surrounded by what looks like a vicious murder scene, with trails of blood all around leading to where The Man lays on the bathroom floor. Nick has no intentions of stopping his wrath until he is suddenly interrupted by a random woman who walks into the restroom, unaware of what's taking place.

Immediately, the woman notices Nick with his knee planted on The Man's chest and the bloody scene surrounding them. She screams as loud as she can, running in the opposite direction. Nick looks around him seeing the damage that he has done. Nick drops the bloody piece of porcelain sink.

Nick can hear the lady screaming for someone to call the authorities. The scene fades to black.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The scene fades in weeks later, after Tabitha's birthday. After that night, Nick had been arrested and awaiting trial. The scene opens in court as Nick's case is being heard by a Judge.

JUDGE

**In the case of Nicolas Jenkins versus The State..
Have we reached a verdict?**

A court official walks to the Judge's podium and hands the Judge a folded piece of paper. The Judge reads the verdict and then begins flipping through photos taken at the scene, the night of the incident.

JUDGE

Mr. Jenkins... You're being charged with attempted murder. Do you understand this charge?

Nick clears his throat.

NICK

Uh..well...

The Judge immediately interrupts Nick.

JUDGE

I asked you a "yes" or "no" question, son.. Do you understand this charge?

NICK

Yes..your honor.

JUDGE

Now, I understand your younger sister is the young lady involved in this case. I do understand that you were coming to her defense, Mr. Jenkins... But at the same time..we, as citizens, do not obtain the right to take the law into our own hands and decide another man's punishment... That night, Mr. Jenkins, you had other options of retaliation.. Due to the severity of your assault, this court finds you guilty on the grounds of attempted murder. This sentence holds a minimum of three years in the State penitentiary. This court is adjourned.

The Judge slams the gavel and lifts himself out of his seat turning his back on Nick and the court.

COURT OFFICIAL

All rise!

Two officers assist Nick out of his chair and escort him passed Tabitha and Terrance, out of the courtroom. Tabitha cries as she watches her brother exit the courtroom. Terrance tries to comfort her. The scene fades to black.

EXT./INT. PRISON - DAY/NIGHT

The scene fades in showing Nick boarding the bus that takes him to prison. This scene elaborates on Nick's experience in prison. There will be no dialogue, instead, a musical instrumental expressing Nick's sorrow, while in prison. This scene will depict actions showing Nick on lock down, witnessing jail fights, as well as Nick doing his best to avoid confrontations.

This scene will also depict Nick focusing on positives, reading educational and inspirational literature, as well as being visited by Tabitha and Terrance. The scene fades to black.

INT. PRISON VISITATION AREA - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick entering the visitation area. Lawrence sits on the other side of the glass. Nick is not excited to see his father. Nick sits down and picks up the phone and places it to his ear. Lawrence picks up his phone and does the same.

LAWRENCE

Well..well..well.. If it aint bad-ass Nick Jenkins..
Why am I not surprised to see you on the other side
of that glass..

NICK

Man fuck you.. What do you want? Because, really, I
aint got shit to say to you.

LAWRENCE

Damn, son! Why you gotta be like that? I'm just a
father, stoppin' by to see my son..

NICK

You a couple decades late on that shit, man.. Why
are you really here? What? You wanna rub this shit
in my face?

LAWRENCE

Look, Nick.. I'm just here to talk to you.. That's
all. Offer some fatherly advice.. I see you've been
charged with Attempted Murder. That's a felony,
son.. What are you gonna do wit' your life now?

Nick begins getting frustrated with the conversation.

NICK

What am I gonna do wit' my life?!? Don't you think
I know what I've been charged wit'? You don't think
I know I gotta fuckin' felony? I'll tell you what
I'mma do wit' my life, Lawrence! I'mma do anything
and everything in my power so I don't turn out
fucked up like you! You're a piece of shit excuse
for man! How do you look in the mirror and call
yourself a father?

Lawrence looks at Nick with a disturbed facial expression.

NICK

What? You think I'm supposed to be grateful now
that you wanna come around and try to be a father?
FUCK YOU, LAWRENCE!

Lawrence takes a moment to digest the words spoken by his son. Lawrence then remembers who's on which side of the glass.

LAWRENCE

You know what, Nick.. I tried to come by here and
offer yo' dumb ass some guidance but I see you too
fuckin' ignorant to recognize that. With that bein'
said.. You belong behind that glass..

Nick's face is filled with rage.

LAWRENCE

I'll tell you one thing, son.. I see you don't have too much longer in prison.. Get out, on my streets, and fuck up if you want to.. I'll personally see to it that yo' ass sits behind bars for much-much longer than you are now.. Try me..

Nick's actions are over taken by anger and he retaliates by slamming the phone against the shatter-proof glass. The prison guards notice the nuisance and immediately retain Nick. Nick, struggling to break free, is hauled away while Lawrence sits on the other side of the glass smirking with pride. The scene fades to black.

EXT. PRISON - LATE DAY (2005)

The scene fades in a few months later. Nick is released from prison, serving the minimum of 3 years. Terrance is there to pick Nick up after he's released.

INT. TERRANCE'S CAR - LATE DAY

TERRANCE

Nick..what's up?

Nick acknowledges Terrance but doesn't reply verbally. Terrance is a little timid speaking with Nick. Terrance proceeds driving away from where he picked Nick up. The two friends maintain an uncomfortable silence for a moment.

TERRANCE

So..what's the move, Nick? You a free man now.. What you tryin' to get in to?

NICK

I dunno, Tee.. I could go for some real food.. You know it's been a while. You don't even wanna know what they feed you in there, man..

Terrance chuckles for a moment.

TERRANCE

Yeah, man, I can imagine.. I think my mama's cookin' tonight. You already know you can come through.

Nick nods his head. The conversation goes silent until Nick speaks again.

NICK

Aiight... How's my mama and my lil' sis doin'?

TERRANCE

Tabby and yo' moms are fine.. We headin' to see them now.. You know I gotta take you by there first, before we go any where..

Their conversation goes silent for a moment.

NICK

Aye, Tee.. What ever happened wit Nina?

TERRANCE

Man.. I heard she moved back. I think she's workin' in her field now. I really don't hear too much from her these days..

Nick nods his head.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DUSK

The scene cuts and picks up with Terrance and Nick arriving at Laura's house. As they pull into the driveway, Laura and Tabitha step out of the house to greet Nick. Nick exits the vehicle. When Laura is close enough to Nick she wraps her arms around him.

LAURA

Oooh, my poor baby!!! I'm so happy you're finally home!!!

Nick smiles at his mother as she releases him. Nick looks over at Tabitha who is standing behind Laura.

NICK

Damn, sis.. You not gon' speak?

Instantly Tabitha begins tearing up. She sprints to her older brother and hugs him harder than ever. Nick embraces his younger sister and smiles, feeling grateful to be home.

Terrance interrupts their reunion to invite Laura and Tabitha to his mother's house for dinner. Laura accepts Terrance's offer.

INT. TERRANCE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - EVENING

The scene cuts and picks up later that evening at Terrance's mother's home. Gathered around the dinner table are Nick, Tabby, Terrance, Terrance's mother, and Laura.

They all manage to carry on casual conversation as Nick vigorously eats his first home-cooked meal in over 3 years.

Laura and Terrance's mother begin inquiring on Nick's plans now that he's been released from prison. Nick reassures the family that his plans are to resume working for Windsor. ...

An uncomfortable silence falls over the kitchen table as all eyes focus on Nick.

LAURA

Nick.. Do you really think Windsor's gonna take you back? You know.. with your criminal record and all.

Nick looks down at his plate, in shame.

NICK

I mean.. I think they will. I almost know they will. That company wouldn't be where it is right now, if it wasn't for me. Windsor is built on my hard work.. If not, I guess I gotta find a job else where..

LAURA

If you say so, Nick.. I'm just sayin'... Make a plan
B..or even a plan C..

Everyone at the table suddenly avoids making eye contact with Nick, as they continue eating.

INT. (WINDSOR) WORKPLACE - MORNING

The scene cuts to the following day. Nick arrives at Windsor Tax Services to speak with his former supervisor about resuming his old position. Nick walks into the entrance lobby and speaks to the receptionist.

After dealing with the rude receptionist, she allows Nick to see his old supervisor.

Nick walks through the doors leading him into the rest of the building. He makes his way to his destination and knocks on the door. Nick hears the supervisor call out.

SUPERVISOR

It's open. Come in..

Nick opens the door to see his old supervisor sitting behind his desk.

SUPERVISOR

Oh, man!!! Nick Jenkins.. I was wonderin' if that
was you.. Man, it's been a while. Come in.. Close
the door.

Nick closes the door behind him.

SUPERVISOR

Go ahead.. Have a seat, Nick.. What can I do for ya'?

Nick clears his throat.

NICK

Well, Mr. O'Brien.. I was kinda' hopin' maybe I
could ask for my job back.

The smile on the supervisor's face fades. He looks down at his desk and then back at Nick.

SUPERVISOR

Nick.. I was hopin' this day wouldn't come..

Nick looks confused.

SUPERVISOR

I read the police report. I can't hire you with a
felony. C'mon now, Nick.. You already know that..

Nick looks down at the floor, in shame.

NICK

Mr. O'Brien.. I need this job. You said you read the police report. It was a messed up situation. There's no other way? I'll even start back at entry level and work my way back up..

The supervisor shakes his head "no".

SUPERVISOR

No, Nick.. I'm sorry. Honestly, I'm not even allowed to let you through those doors, if you can't pass a background check. There's really nothing I can do. It's against company policy. These are rules you know better than anyone.

NICK

So.. You're tellin' me after all the hard work I've done for this company??? I broke my back for y'all.. Just so y'all can turn ya' backs on me, huh..

Nick pauses for a moment, hoping to gain sympathy.

SUPERVISOR

I'm sorry, Nick.. I don't know what to tell you..

Nick nods his head with a disturbed look on his face. He forcefully lifts himself out of his chair and exits the office, slamming the door. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades in showing Nick using the internet to find jobs, as well as filling out paper applications.

EXT. EMPLOYERS' OFFICES - DAY

The scene then shows Nick being rejected by employer after employer, based solely upon his criminal record.

Nick becomes frustrated with his "job hunt" and takes the first job that will hire him.

INT. FAST FOOD STORE - EVENING

The scene fades in with Nick working for a local fast food chain. Nick is tediously working the dinner shift, taking orders for the drive-thru and preparing food to be served.

While serving a paper bag of food, out the drive-thru window, Nick doesn't look at whom he is serving but is greeted by excited words that catch his attention.

NINA

OH MY GOD!!! Nick Jenkins!!! Is that you!?

Nick looks up to see Nina Harris. Immediately Nick begins grinning.

NICK

Oh!...um.. uh..Nina..Hey!

NINA

Wow... It is you! It's been so long..almost five years now..What's new?

Nick smiles.

NICK

Nothin' much.. Just workin' hard..

NINA

Oh..so you work here, now?

Nick hands Nina her food.

NICK

Unfortunately.. At least that's what my name tag says..

Nina briefly giggles.

NINA

So..What happened at Windsor? I figured you'd be ownin' that place by now..

NICK

Oh, you didn't hear about what happened? I ended up-

Nina interrupts Nick.

NINA

Oh yeah.. I heard.. How's your fam holdin' up?

Nick is about to answer her question when the car, waiting in line behind Nina, begins blowing their horn. Nina takes her attention away from Nick and lifts herself partially out of her driver's side window to reply to the driver of the vehicle behind her.

NINA

I'm so sorry.. Can you give me a moment?

Nina sits back in her driver's seat and focuses her attention back on Nick.

NINA

So Tabby and your mom are holdin' up okay?

Nick nods his head. Their conversation is interrupted a second time by the driver behind Nina. This time the driver yells out to Nina.

MAN IN CAR

Damn, baby-girl, you fine as hell!!!!... Let a nigga get yo' number!!!

The other occupants, in the man's car, begin chuckling at the driver. Nina ignores the entire car.

NINA

Anyway, Nick.. I know you're busy at work. You can fill me in on the details later. Here..let me give you my new phone number.

Nina reaches in her purse to grab a pin and paper to write her telephone number on. The man in the car behind her resumes blowing his horn to get her attention. Nina immediately becomes frustrated. Nick looks back at the car.

NINA

Let me handle this, Nick..

Nina exits her vehicle and stands with the driver's door still open. She speaks to the man in the car.

NINA

LOOK!!! I'm tryin' to give this guy my phone number but you seem to be persistent on makin' that harder than it should be. Do you mind not bein' so rude, so I can hurry up and get out y'all's way?

Nick tries to hold back his laughter. Nina goes back to writing her number, bearing down on the roof of her car. She hands the paper to Nick.

NINA

Here... call me later tonight...if you want...

NICK

Aiight.. we'll talk later.

Nina gets back in the driver's seat of her vehicle and drives away.

INT. TERRANCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The scene cuts to later that evening. Nick goes to Terrance's apartment after work. Nick knocks on the door, waiting moments before Terrance lets him in.

TERRANCE

My main man, Nick..just in time.. how was work today?

Terrance closes the door behind Nick.

NICK

Work?...uh.. work actually wasn't that bad, today..

Terrance walks over to his counter area picks up a marijuana blunt off of the counter-top. Terrance lights the object and inhales. They smoke and pass the blunt as they converse.

TERRANCE

Not that bad?!? Looks like someone had a good day.. What happened, bruh?

NICK

Man.. you'll never guess who I happened to see today..

Nick begins smiling and blushing.

TERRANCE

Who? You must've seen Nina or somethin'?

NICK

Yeah..man! She came through the drive-thru. I couldn't believe it.. She even gave me her number..

TERRANCE

So what does that mean? You gonna start pursuin' her now?

NICK

Yeah, man.. I think so..

TERRANCE

You think y'all can pick up where y'all left off, over four years ago?

NICK

See..that's what I've been thinkin' about.. I mean, it's been all these years. I'm still feelin' her but do you really think she'd wanna be wit' a dude wit' a felony?

Terrance shrugs his shoulders.

NICK

And, then, wit' me workin' these two jobs.. Let's see, I do breakfast at one joint, and lunch and dinner at another spot. I dunno if I'll even have the time to pursue Nina. Not to mention the money I make. She probably wants a "six figure nigga"...

TERRANCE

I dunno what to tell ya' Nick.. I mean, Nina's never seemed like the materialistic type. She might be able to look passed all that stuff. I say play the game how it goes and let the chips fall where they may.

Nick nods his head. The topic they're discussing ceases and they maintain silence for a brief moment.

NICK

Aye, Tee..

TERRANCE

What's up?

NICK

Where'd you end up gettin' this chronic from???

TERRANCE

Oh yeah.. I ended up shoppin' wit' Doug.. Nina's cousin. He still doin' his thing. I hear that nigga is "big time" now.. I heard he has people sellin' shit for him, while he stacks paper..

Terrance chuckles for a moment.

TERRANCE

Shit..must be nice..

Nick nods his head.

NICK

Yeah..must be..

Nick begins wondering if Doug would ever consider "employing" him, at least to make some extra money and maybe even to impress Nina with a gift or two. The scene fades to black.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - MORNING

The scene fades in with Nick arriving at Doug's house the following morning. Nick walks to the front entrance and knocks on the door. Moments later, Doug answers the door. Doug smiles when he notices Nick.

DOUG

OH SHIT!!! My nigga, Nick Jenkins! Man, it's been years. I heard yo' ass got sent up state for puttin' a hurtin' on some "cracka"... You better chill out with that shit.. You a black man in the state of Georgia, bruh.. They'll put yo' ass under the cell for shit like that..

NICK

Yeah, man.. It was a fucked up situation.. Anyway.. You think we can talk business real quick???

Doug looks at Nick suspiciously.

DOUG

Business? What kinda business???

Nick looks around trying not to be obvious.

NICK

You know, Hurt... Money business... "Real" money business..

Doug looks at Nick, now knowing what he is referring to.

DOUG

Oooh.. So you tryin' to get down like that now, huh?... You do a lil' bid up state and now you get out thinkin' you all hardcore, huh? For a nigga who used to be so "straight-laced" you sure as hell don't act like it no more..

NICK

Naw, man.. It aint nothin' like that. I aint tryin' to prove nothin'... It's just that.. I'm kinda hurtin' for cash right now. I can't land a decent job wit' a damn felony. I'm just tryin' to make some money til' I get back on my feet.. You feel me?

DOUG

I feel you on that, Nick.. Step in so we can talk..

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - MORNING

Nick walks into the house as Doug closes the door behind Nick.

DOUG

Let's have a seat at the kitchen table.. We can talk in there.

Nick follows Doug through the house leading to the kitchen area. Nick and Doug have a seat at the kitchen table.

DOUG

So you tryin' to get put on, huh.. Aiight.. Well there's some basic rules I gotta lay down, if you gon' be workin' for me.

Doug pauses for a moment.

DOUG

Now, if you've ever been to summer camp or swimmin' lessons, you might be familiar wit' the term "buddy-system"...

Nick looks confused and interrupts Doug.

NICK

Buddy-system???

DOUG

Now, Nick.. There you go gettin' ahead of yourself.. This aint the part for askin' questions. Just wait til' I finish..Damn..

Doug pauses.

DOUG

Back to what I was sayin' about the "buddy-system"... Now, if a nigga works for me.. He's gotta be down wit' my "buddy-system". Meanin' that I'll team him up wit' someone else to sell my shit. See, what I noticed in this game is that a lotta niggas be gettin' knocked on some dumb shit. So, how I see it is that two heads is better than one. If you watch this dude's back, then he'll watch yours, especially if money's involved. I won't even supply dealers if both "buddies" aint present when it's time to re-up. It's like a trust code we work off of. You'd be surprised how far that shit has got me..

Nick nods his head.

NICK

Aiight, Hurt.. I can dig that.. So how long you think it'd be before I can get teamed up wit' a ...a "buddy"?

Doug takes a moment to think to himself.

DOUG

~~Hmmm.matter-of-fact~~, Nick.. I think I already got a "buddy" for you. Let me call this nigga now and see if y'all can't meet up today..

Doug pulls out his cell phone and dials a number. A few moments pass before someone on the other end of the phone answers. Doug speaks but Nick cannot hear what the other party is saying. Doug makes arrangements for Nick to meet the anonymous character.

Doug hangs up the phone and looks at Nick.

DOUG

Aiight, Nick.. Let's go for a ride.

EXT. PROJECT APARTMENT - NOON

The scene cuts to Doug and Nick arriving to a run-down apartment project. Doug honks his horn twice. Nick sits in the passenger seat, patiently waiting to see who his "buddy" will be.

Moments later, the individual inside the apartment briefly peaks out the blinds, over the window, and then exits the apartment.

Nick immediately recognizes the man who is destined to be his "buddy" as his childhood class bully, Sean. As Sean walks closer to Doug's vehicle, he recognizes Nick.

SEAN

OH SHIT! Nick Jenkins!!! What's goin' on, my nigga?!?

Doug instantly interrupts Sean's excitement.

DOUG

Man, if you don't get yo' slow ass in this car!!! We got shit to discuss. Hurry yo' ass up.

INT. DOUG'S CAR - NOON

Sean enters the back seat of Doug's vehicle. Doug reverses out of the parking space and drives off. The scene follows the car as the three men have a discussion while Doug drives. Sean continues his excitement from the back seat.

SEAN

Man..hell naw!!! I aint even know that was you in this car, Nick! Man, what you been up to, bruh? Last I heard, yo' ass was in prison. Man I got locked up too. What-chu do, Nick?

NICK

Man, we aint here to talk about that shit right now..

DOUG

Yeah, man... Calm yo' silly ass down, back there. We here to talk business. Sit back and pay attention if you tryin' to make this money...

Sean sits back in his seat and appears as he's listening.

DOUG

Anyway... I see y'all two muthafuckas know each other so I aint gotta worry about introductions, right? Y'all can re-acquaint later...

Nick and Sean nod their heads.

DOUG

So..here's the deal. There's some lil' young niggas around the way who lucked up and got they hands on some better shit then what we pushin' right now. You know, that shit aint too good for business...

Doug pauses.

Doug

So, now we on some favor-for a-favor type shit. Y'all want me to put y'all on and I want what them young niggas got.

SEAN

So, what you need us to do, Big Hurt?

DOUG

I'mma need you to shut the fuck up and listen...

Doug pauses looking at Sean through his rear-view mirror.

DOUG

Anyway, like I was sayin'... This is what I need y'all to do... Check these young niggas out. From what I understand...They supposed to be pickin' up a new supply next Thursday. Since they young, you know they don't know shit. All y'all gotta do is put on ski-masks and flash some pistols and they'll come off of whatever they got...

Sean starts snickering.

SEAN

Damn, Big Hurt... You want us to do them lil' niggas like that???

DOUG

Hell yeah! They fuckin' wit' my money. This is survival of the fittest, ya' dig???. And since we gon' rob these lil' niggas, this is a 100% profit for us, which y'all can get the bulk of as long as I get cut in on the back end, ya' know?...

Nick and Sean nod their heads.

DOUG

Aiight...so, today is Saturday so y'all got less than a week. All y'all gotta do is case the spot out. I'll make sure y'all can change cars out so don't nobody get suspicious. Aiight?

Doug pauses for a moment.

DOUG

Aiight...so, now is the part for questions. Y'all got any questions? Anything I didn't answer?

Doug looks at Nick and Sean. They both shake their heads "no".

Doug pulls back into Sean's apartment complex and parks. Sean exits the car and enters his apartment.

Doug looks at Nick.

DOUG

Aye, Nick.. I gotta lotta faith in you. I think this might be a good opportunity for both for us. You appear to be a nigga about his business unlike that clown that just got out my back seat. So..I don't want you stressin' about makin' ends meet. That shit can, sometimes, distract a nigga from his goals, you know?

Doug reaches in his pocket and pulls out a thick wad of cash. Doug hands the entire wad of cash to Nick.

DOUG

Here's a lil' loan that should ease yo' mind for a while. Just so you aint gotta worry about no "nine-to-five". Now don't think I aint gonna expect this shit back. Once you get right...I'mma want my money, ya' dig?

Nick nods his head.

NICK

I appreciate that, Hurt.

The scene fades to black.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick and Sean casing the apartment project occupied by the individuals they are supposed to rob, by Doug's orders. The scene shows Nick and Sean switching vehicles as the days pass. Nick keeps a notebook with him while he cases the apartment. In this notebook, Nick documents the total number of occupants in the apartment, their gender, as well as the routine times when certain occupants come and go.

When Thursday arrives, Sean is already curious to why Nick has this notebook. While sitting in the car, watching the apartment, Sean decides to inquire.

INT. DOUG'S LOANER CAR - DAY

SEAN

Aye, man.. We've been watchin' this spot for the last few days.. I keep seein' you pull out that notebook and jot shit down in it. What the fuck is you writin'???

Nick looks over at Sean.

NICK

I'm just writin' down important information that we need to know, if we gon' pull this shit off right..

Sean looks confused

SEAN

Pull this shit off right??? This shit is simple.. I don't see how we can go wrong. Big Hurt said this shit would be easy.. Like a smash and grab. It's just some young niggas, man. Just flash the tool and shake em' up a lil' bit..

Nick shakes his head in disbelief.

NICK

So, what you gon' do when he flashes a tool right back at you??? You can't expect niggas who sell dope not to be packin'... I don't care how old they are.

Sean shrugs his shoulders.

SEAN

Shit, man.. Let that lil' nigga pull a gun out on me. I'mma already have the drop on him. I'll blow his ass off. It's kill or be killed, my nigga.

NICK

But why take a man's life, if you aint got to?

Right after Nick finishes his question, one of the male apartment occupants, they are watching, is shown walking towards the apartment carrying a large black duffle bag. Sean pays no attention to Nick's last questions as all of his attention is focused on the man carrying the bag.

SEAN

Yep! There goes our money, right there!

Sean reaches beneath the passenger seat, grabbing two automatic hand guns. Nick looks at Sean suspiciously as Sean loads the weapons.

NICK

Man, what the fuck is you doin'???

Sean tucks one gun in his pants and cocks the other.

SEAN

C'mon, Nick! Let's go get this money, bruh!

Sean quickly exits the vehicle, forgetting to take his ski mask. The man carrying the duffle bag has already entered the apartment. Sean jogs across the street to the apartment as Nick sits in the driver's seat of the car and watches.

Nick looks down at his opened notebook where he had last wrote the number of occupants at the present time. Nick reads: Male occupants: Five. Female occupants: Three.

Nick sighs and shakes his head. Nick continues watching the situation unfold, wondering how he'd be able to explain Sean's "mess-up" to Doug.

EXT. YOUNG DEALER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sean walks up to the apartment door and knocks.

INT. YOUNG DEALER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The scene cuts to the inside of the apartment. On the other side of the door are four pre-adult males smoking marijuana and playing a sports video game while two pre-adult females watch and chat with each other.

They hear the knock at the door. One of the males pause the game and gets up to answer the door. He grabs the shotgun leaning next to the wall by the door. He lifts the gun up, with his finger on the trigger. The young dealer calls out to Sean on the other side of the door.

YOUNG DEALER 1

WHO THE FUCK IS IT?!?

The scene cuts back to Sean standing on the other side of the door.

SEAN

Aye.. It's Riley from up stairs!

The young dealer cracks the door slightly, revealing half of his face, pressing one foot against the door to keep the visitor from forcing his way in. The young dealer does not reveal the shotgun on the other side of the door.

YOUNG DEALER 1

Man, we don't know no fuckin' Riley from up stairs..

SEAN

Yeah..me and my chick just moved in up there. We outta sugar. I came down to see if we can borrow some.

The young dealer takes his attention away from Sean and looks back at his friends, still holding the door in the same position. The young dealer chuckles to his friends about Sean's request.

The others chuckle slightly. The young dealer then looks back at Sean but is answered with Sean's gun pointed in his face through the cracked door. Before the dealer can take action, Sean pulls the trigger, ending his life. The young dealer falls back and the shotgun he's holding slides across the floor. This catches everyone's attention, in the apartment.

YOUNG DEALER 2

OH SHIT!!!

Sean forces his way through the apartment door. One of the males sitting on the couch quickly dashes for the shotgun but Sean fatally shoots him before he is able to achieve his last goal. Sean applies this murderous routine to the rest of the males and females in this room.

INT. DOUG'S LOANER CAR - DAY

Without witnessing Sean's complete wrath, the scene cuts to Nick, still sitting in the vehicle, watching. Nick hears Sean's gun shots as well as the screams that cease after each shot rings out. Nick instantly becomes nervous. Nick looks at his watch and speaks to himself.

NICK

Aiight now, Sean.. You got three minutes to come up outta there..or I'm leavin'... You aint worth goin' back to prison..

INT. YOUNG DEALER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The scene cuts back to Sean inside the apartment. Sean is surrounded by a bloody murder scene. He makes his way down the hall way.

SEAN

Aiight... Where y'all lil' niggas got this shit hid at?

As Sean paces down the hall, he notices someone peek out the hall bathroom door. When the individual sees Sean, he quickly closes the door.

SEAN

Bring yo' scary ass up out that bathroom, nigga!!!

The scene cuts to the male on the other side of the bathroom door. He is young, unarmed, and appears scared. The scene cuts to Sean. Sean waits a moment giving the male the opportunity to reply. Sean receives no reply so he fires several bullets at the closed door. After Sean stops firing, he hears a "thud" from behind the bathroom door. Sean walks over to the bathroom door and opens it, looking around for the black duffle bag. All Sean finds is the male lying deceased in the bathtub.

SEAN

SHIT!!!

Sean slams the bathroom door. The scene then goes to the point of view of someone peeking at Sean from the bedroom door behind him. It is the last female occupant left alive. When Sean turns around, she swings the bedroom door open pointing a small pistol at Sean.

FEMALE OCCUPANT

FUCK YOU, NIGGA!!!

She fires her weapon once, catching Sean's shoulder. Sean's balance is barely thrown off. Sean stumbles but regains his stance.

SEAN

FUCKIN' BITCH!!!

Sean raises his weapon, letting go the remainder of bullets left in his gun, in the direction of the female. As the bullets pierce her body, she falls back and lands limp on the bed behind her. Sean is now the only one left standing in the apartment.

He takes a moment to check the damage done to his shoulder. The wound isn't severe. Sean walks into the bedroom to search for the black duffle bag. He sees the black duffle bag on the bed, under the female's deceased body. Sean shoves her body to the floor.

SEAN

Move, bitch.. You bleedin' on my future..

Sean grabs the bag and throws the strap over his shoulder as he sprints out of the apartment.

EXT. YOUNG DEALER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick watching Sean run away from apartment with the black duffle bag over his shoulder. Nick is partially relieved. Nick starts the vehicle before Sean enters the car. Nick grabs the ski mask and quickly throws it over his face. Sean aggressively enters the passenger side of the car and slams the door.

INT. DOUG'S LOANER CAR - DAY

SEAN

Drive, nigga! I got shot!

Nick puts the car in gear and speeds away from the crime scene. The scene fades to black.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LATE DAY

The scene fades in with Nick and Sean sitting at Doug's kitchen table with the black duffle bag sitting on top of the table. Doug is standing in his kitchen watching the news broadcast reviewing the situation that Sean was responsible for. The news reporter concludes the story.

NEWS REPORTER

Witnesses say they saw a man run from these apartments, entering a vehicle parked on the street, just before fleeing the crime scene. The driver and the man have not been identified. Police have no leads but believe the murders to be drug and/or gang related. Back to you, Tom.

Doug cuts the television off with a remote. He turns around looking at Nick and Sean with a disturbed facial expression.

DOUG

How did y'all niggas end up makin' the fuckin' news?

Both Nick and Sean stay silent.

DOUG

Fuck it.. I don't even wanna know..

Doug walks over to the kitchen table where Nick and Sean are sitting. Doug looks at Sean with his bandaged shoulder.

DOUG

And how did yo' dumb ass manage to get shot?!?

Sean looks up at Doug.

SEAN

Man, Hurt... This dude came out the back room wit' guns a blazin'. I dodged as many of them bullets as I could but the last one caught me. That nigga got what was comin' to him, though.

Doug and Nick look at Sean suspiciously, wondering how truthful his story is. Doug sighs.

DOUG

Whateva, man.. The important shit is y'all niggas is still breathin' and y'all got what y'all was there to get.

Doug unzips the black duffle bag to analyze its contents. Doug dips his pinky finger in the white powder and tastes the product. Doug nods his head.

DOUG

This is some good high-end shit.. Y'all did good..

Sean smirks at Nick.

DOUG

Aiight... Now we can do business..

The scene fades to black.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY/NIGHT

The scene fades in showing Nick and Sean taking action to move the product for Doug. The scene will start off showing Nick doing most of the leg work as he markets the product on the streets of Atlanta.

While the scene plays through, it is evident that Nick is gaining more and more clientele of various races and ages. As this portion of the scene concludes, the camera angle will be through Nick's point of view, showing many random people walking up to Nick, buying narcotics from him. Some of the faces Nick sees are repetitious, and the viewers will be able to notice the gradual decline in their appearance, showing the effects of the narcotics. Nick's clientele begins looking desperate and pitiful. The scene cuts to black.

INT. NINA'S OFFICE - MORNING

The scene fades back in with Nina arriving to her office work place, one morning, finding her desk covered with several bouquets of roses. Nina is astonished at the appearance of the flowers.

Nina finds a card sitting on her desk waiting for her. Before she is able to read the card, one of Nina's co-workers stops by her office to inquire about the

roses. Nina assures her co-worker that she's not sure who sent the flowers but she has an idea who may have sent them. Her co-worker urges her to open the card and find out.

Nina opens the card and reads it. While reading, Nina's smirk transforms into a grin. Once she's done reading, she places the card on her desk.

CO-WORKER

Well..what did it say? Was it from who you were expecting?

NINA

Yeah..they're from him.. And he wants me to meet him for dinner tonight..

CO-WORKER

Is that right? So..You gonna go?

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Before Nina answers her co-worker's question, the scene cuts and picks up with Nick sitting at an elegant restaurant, waiting for Nina to arrive. Nick is dressed for the occasion in a formal suit and tie. Moments later Nina approaches Nick's table. Nick stands up to greet her.

NICK

For a moment there, I didn't think you were gonna make it.

Nick pulls Nina's chair out from under the table and allows her to have a seat.

NINA

Yeah, it took me forever to find somethin' to wear. I don't normally go out like this, you know..

Nick sits back down in his chair.

NICK

Really? Well, maybe that might change in the near future.

Nina blushes as she begins flipping through the restaurant menu. Her eyes widen when she sees the prices of the food.

NINA

Wow, Nick.. This place is kinda pricey. I don't know too many people who work in fast food that can afford this. You been savin' up?

Nick sips his glass of water.

NICK

Somethin' like that.. I actually don't work in fast food anymore.

NINA

Really? What do you do now?

Nick is caught off guard by Nina's question. He makes up a believable lie.

NICK

Well, you know how Terrance works for his father's construction company, right?

Nina nods her head.

NICK

Well, apparently construction companies are pretty lenient on background checks so Tee's dad lets us manage a few of his sites. It's still kinda "hush-hush" because it's an over look on my record.. But the money's pretty good, though.

NINA

I see.. Well you better thank your lucky stars for your connections, Nick. I know it's hard for a minority man to make somethin' of himself these days..especially with a record... You know..I'm glad to see you haven't given up though.

NICK

Give up? Never that. I gotta make that money..

Nina looks at Nick and smiles.

NINA

That's not what I was talkin' about, Nick..

NICK

What do you mean then???

NINA

Nick.. I'm glad to see you haven't given up on us.

Nick smiles back at Nina.

NINA

I mean..those flowers and this dinner... It all shows me that you still care and that you haven't changed from the guy I knew before I left for college. For a moment there, I was worried.. Some people say prison has its ways of changing a man. I was worried that maybe your feelin's for me may have changed..

Nick reaches across the table and grabs Nina's hand.

NICK

Nina..my feelin's for you will never change. As long as I'm alive on this earth, you don't ever have to worry about losin' any part of my heart.. And I'mma do what I can to make sure you don't ever have to worry about that again..

Nina continues blushing as she tears up at Nick's words. Nina leans over the table to kiss Nick. The couple kisses and the scene fades to black.

EXT. TABITHA'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The scene fades in with Nick arriving to Tabitha's school to pick her up. Tabitha is not expecting Nick to be there. Nick is driving one of Doug's "loaner cars". When Nick arrives, he initially spots a sign reading: DRUG FREE ZONE. Nick pays close attention to the sign and hopes there is no reason to open the trunk of the car he's driving.

The scene cuts to Tabitha boarding her school bus, with her friends. Nick spots Tabitha and honks his horn to catch her attention. Tabitha sees Nick and quickly decides to catch a ride home with her brother. Tabitha paces towards the vehicle and enters the passenger side. She closes the door and speaks in a sarcastic manner, as she looks around the car.

INT. DOUG'S LOANER CAR - AFTERNOON

TABITHA

Wow, Nick.. Nice car... Which decade did you snatch this one out of?

NICK

You still chose to ride in it verses a trip on the bus..

TABITHA

A trip on a camel beats a trip on that bus, Nick..

Nick chuckles at his sister's remark. They depart from the school parking lot.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The scene cuts to Nick and Tabitha arriving to Laura's home. They both exit the vehicle proceed with entering the house.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Tabitha initially heads up stairs. Nick walks into the kitchen, finding Laura washing the dishes.

NICK

Hey, mama.. How's your day goin'?

Laura looks back at Nick.

LAURA

Oh, hey, Nick! I'm fine.. how are you?

NICK

I'm aight, mama..

LAURA

That's good to hear... Hold on.. Aren't you supposed to be at work?

NICK

Uh.. I'm actually off today.

Nick pauses for a moment and tries to elaborate before Laura could ask more questions.

NICK

Which is why I picked Tabby up from school... I thought I'd come out here and spend family time wit' y'all. Actually, I kinda wanted to talk to you wit' out Tabby around. You gotta moment?

Laura cuts off the water tap.

LAURA

Sure, Nick.. What's up?

Nick has a seat at the kitchen table. Laura follows him. Nick clears his throat before speaking.

NICK

Well, mama.. I just wanted to know.. Are you and Tabby fine? Is everything alright?

LAURA

Yeah, Nick.. why do you ask?

NICK

I mean.. I know times get hard.. I just wanna let you know, y'all can ask for help if and when y'all need it. We still a family, right?

LAURA

Yeah, Nick.. Of course we are. What would change that?

NICK

I dunno, mama. Just askin'...

Nick pauses.

NICK

Mama...

LAURA

Yeah?

NICK

You haven't been gettin' into any old habits, have you?

Nick now understands what it's like to fall into temptation and go against principles.

LAURA

Absolutely not, Nick! You flushed my last line down the toilet over three years ago.. I know what you're thinkin' Nick.. Even though I didn't finish rehab..the time I spent there did a lot for me. I understand how detrimental that shit can be to my

family. I love y'all too much to put y'all through that again.

Nick smiles and nods his head, feeling somewhat embarrassed for even asking.

NICK

Okay, mama.. I was just askin'... I'm just sayin'... If you ever feel weak or think you might do somethin' your gonna regret.. I just want you to be strong enough to let me know.. You can go back to rehab if you want. I'll still front the bill.

Laura replies in a sarcastic tone, almost offended by her son's offer.

LAURA

Well, thank you but no thank you, Nick.. I'mma be just fine.. Besides where you gettin' all this money from anyway? What? Did the economy drive up the price of burgers?

Nick is now offended by his mother's words.

NICK

Actually, mama.. I don't work in fast food no more..

LAURA

Is that right? Well..what do you do now?

Nick decides to give Laura the same answer he gave Nina.

NICK

Uh..well, I work with Terrance and his Dad.. You know.. Doin' construction.

Laura looks at Nick suspiciously.

LAURA

That's funny... Terrance's mother never mentioned anything about that.

NICK

That's because Mrs. Parker doesn't really know. Terrance and his Dad pulled some strings to get around my record. I'm getting' paid "under the table".

LAURA

Aiight, now, Nick.. I hope you know what you're doin'...

NICK

Don't worry, Mama.. I always know what I'm doin'...

Nick speaks confidently. At that moment Nick's cell phone begins vibrating. He flips the phone open to see the caller ID read: SEAN. Nick closes the phone.

NICK

Speakin' of work.. There's the job callin' me right now. I guess I gotta go.

LAURA

But I thought you said you were off work today, Nick..

NICK

Yeah, I'm off until they call me. It's kinda like an "on-call" position. Once everyone else is coordinated, then that's when they need me.

Laura nods her head still looking suspicious. Nick lifts himself out of his chair and walks over to his mother and kisses her on the cheek.

NICK

Aiight, Mama.. Y'all need anything.. I'm just a call away..

LAURA

Yeah, Nick.. I know.

Nick walks away from his mother and in the direction of the front door. On his way to the door, Nick spots his mother's purse. Nick grabs a wad of cash out of his pants pocket and slips it in his mother's purse. Nick continues walking out the front door. The scene fades to black.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades in a few days later, with Nick and Sean arriving to Doug's house. Sean arrives in his older model vehicle which is now sitting on significantly larger chrome wheels. Nick is dressed in his typical casual attire, while Sean's appearance is a little more "flashy" than usual. They exit their vehicles and walk to the front door.

Sean knocks on the door. Moments later Doug answers the door, with his cordless phone to his hear. Doug is in the middle of a conversation where he is threatening one of his dealers to pay him his money.

Doug motions for Nick and Sean to enter without speaking to them. Doug continues talking to the individual on the phone as Nick and Sean enter the house.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

DOUG

I don't give a fuck about your excuses, bruh.. You two months in the hole. That shits unacceptable!!!

Doug pauses for a moment to hear the individuals reply. Sean snickers at Doug's conversation.

DOUG

Look! Save the bullshit! You better find my fuckin' money before they find you in a fuckin' ditch! Aiight?!?

Doug immediately hangs up the phone. He looks at Nick and Sean.

DOUG

What y'all want? Y'all havin' trouble movin' that product or somethin'?

Nick and Sean glance at each other and then look back at Doug.

NICK

Actually, Hurt... it's the opposite. We all sold out and our customer's aint too happy taken rain checks, ya know.

Doug chuckles.

DOUG

Yeah, I done been down that road before.. but, damn.. Y'all came off that product pretty quick. For some "new-comers" y'all know how to handle business.. So, what y'all need me to do? Get some more shit for you to push? Y'all like how that money's comin' in huh?

Nick and Sean simultaneously nod their heads.

DOUG

Aiight... I can make that happen. Shit's only a phone call away..but..uh.. What's up wit' the "back-end payment" from what y'all just moved. Where's my cut?

Nick reaches in his pocket while Sean starts looking nervous. Nick pulls out a wad of cash and begins flipping through the bills.

SEAN

Uh..Big Hurt... um, you think I can get you on the next go-round? I had some loose ends to tie up and I aint really got your "cut" on me right now..

Doug looks disappointed.

DOUG

Aiight, now, Sean.. You heard what I just told the nigga on the phone. Don't think the same shit don't apply to you.. Next time, you better let me know in advance before you go spendin' my cut on clothes and shit.. lookin' like yo' ass just stepped outta a flea market or somethin'...

Sean glances down at his attire and then looks back at Doug.

SEAN

I got you, Hurt.. I promise.

Doug stares at Sean with a stern expression, and then receives Nick's payment. Doug counts the bills, momentarily, and speaks.

DOUG

Good man, Nick.. It's all here.. even that lil' somethin' extra you owe. Good man..

Nick smirks at Sean. Sean is envious that Nick receives gratitude while he receives insults and threats.

DOUG

Aaight... let me get on the horn wit' my main Russian connect. He'll get y'all right again..

Doug pulls out an international calling card and dials the appropriate numbers. Doug puts the phone to his ear and moments later, the other end answers.

DOUG

Yuri, my nigga!... This is Big Hurt in Atlanta.. I need-

The individual on the other end interrupts Doug in mid-sentence.

DOUG

My bad, man.. I didn't mean to wake you.. I aint know it was *that* late over there.. Anyway.. I need to place an order...

Doug pauses to hear the individuals reply. Doug arranges the necessary details and ends the call. He then speaks to Nick and Sean.

DOUG

Aaight... I'll contact y'all when the shipment comes in.

Nick and Sean nod their heads and prepare to leave when Doug stops Nick.

DOUG

Nick.. You stay.. I need to holla' at you for a moment.

Sean departs and Nick remains seated.

DOUG

Aaight, Nick.. So I had a talk wit' my baby cousin the other day.. You already know what she told me.

Nick appears shamed for a moment.

NICK

Look, Hurt... it was just-

Doug interrupts Nick.

DOUG

Nick.. You aint gotta explain yourself to me. You a grown-ass man. I just wanna state my concerns.

Doug pauses.

DOUG

Now, I don't mind you datin' Nina. Just make sure you keep her outta what you do. She don't need to know how you get your money... She told me you was

doin' construction or somethin'... That's a good cover up for now. But, look.. If y'all decide to get serious later on down the road.. You need to exit the "game". You said you got in to make some money.. So get in..get what you came to get..and then leave this shit as a memory. She's got too much potential to be wit' a dope dealer.

NICK

Yeah.. You right about that..

DOUG

Aiight, Nick.. Just so we both understand.. I'll holla at you when that "work" comes in. Give it a few days.. Oh and keep an eye on ya' "buddy"... He don't seem too bright and it's always the dumb muthafuckas that fuck it up for everybody..aiight?

Nick nods his head. Nick departs as the scene fades to black.

INT. LAWRENCE'S MEETING PLACE - NIGHT

The scene fades in a few weeks later. Lawrence is holding a meeting between himself and the six individuals who sell confiscated narcotics for him. Since Nick has been selling narcotics for Doug, Lawrence has noticed a steep decline in his profits. Lawrence elaborates on his frustration, in this meeting.

The scene begins with Lawrence aggressively dumping a bag of cash money on a table. After all the money falls to the table, Lawrence begins scolding the group of dealers for the amount of money, in front of them.

The money is substantially less than what his dealers, usually produce. Lawrence demands an explanation. The group of street dealers remains silent, too nervous to answer, until one amongst the group raises his hand.

LAWRENCE

Do I look like a school teacher to you? Are we kids in a fuckin' classroom now??? We all grown men here. Quit wit' the "raisin'-a-hand" shit and speak if you got somethin' to say.

The individual clears his throat before he speaks.

STREET DEALER 2

Well, it's like this, Jenk.. I had one of my usual customers turn my shit down just the other day. Talkin' bout I need to get on top of my game.. He said there's some new folks in town pushin' better shit for better prices..

Lawrence looks at the man speaking, catching on to every word.

LAWRENCE

Go on..

STREET DEALER 2

To me.. it sounds like these folks is the ones gettin' all our money.. I mean..you the law, Jenk..

Why don't you find out who's movin' in on us and shut they whole operation down?

Lawrence looks at the man as if he's about to retaliate or say something disrespectful.

LAWRENCE

Now, that's the smartest thing I heard come from any of y'all tonight.. It's about time one of y'all gave me a solution-oriented answer...

Lawrence begins sweeping the stacked bills back into the bag.

LAWRENCE

Aiight..so here's the plan. I'mma do what I can on my end to find the ones responsible. Y'all keep your ears to the streets and report back to me wit' any useful information you find.. And let this be the last time we have a meeting like this..aiight?

Lawrence zips up the bag and exits the meeting area. The scene fades to black.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY/NIGHT

The scene fades in with Nick and Sean steadily moving the new product for Doug. "Business" appears to be going well for them. Amongst the city drug addicts, they are the "talk of the town". This scene will basically depict Nick's rapid financial increase. Nick is oblivious to the fact that his father is searching for him. Lawrence has no idea that the man he is searching for is his own son.

An "Irony-scene" can be included, showing Nick marketing narcotics, while Lawrence drives by in his car, both unaware of how close they are to one another.

INT. TABITHA'S GRADUATION CEROMONY - DAY (2006)

The scene cuts to the day of Tabitha's high school graduation. Lawrence and Laura are present but Nick is not. The scene initially picks up with Laura and Lawrence sitting side by side in the audience as they applaud Tabitha when she receives her diploma.

EXT. TABITHA'S GRADUATION CEROMONY - DAY

The scene cuts to Laura, Lawrence, and Tabitha exiting the building. Tabitha is carrying a dozen roses given to her by her father. All three appear happy and excited. Tabitha speaks to Laura.

TABITHA

Hey, mama.. I thought you said Nick would be here.. What happened?

LAURA

I dunno, Tabby.. Last time I spoke to him.. He said he was comin'.

At that moment, Nick pulls into the parking lot, in a new luxury coupe vehicle. Nick parks the car next to where his mother's car is parked and exits the vehicle. Since the three family members are walking in the direction of the Laura's car, they notice Nick.

LAURA

Hold up... Isn't that Nick right there? Who's car is he in?

TABITHA

I dunno... But that sure is a nice car...

Nick approaches his family as they walk closer to him.

NICK

Hey, Tabby! Congratulations!

Nick hugs his sister and kisses her on the cheek.

NICK

Sorry I'm late... I had a few issues tryin' to buy your graduation gift.

TABITHA

That's okay, Nick.. You didn't have to get me nothin'... Dad is sendin' me to Jamaica before I go to college! That's my graduation present!

Nick shrugs his shoulders.

NICK

Oh, well I tried..

Lawrence interrupts their conversation.

LAWRENCE

Nice wheels, Nick.. Don't tell me you're into grand theft auto now... I don't wanna have to bust you on your sister's big day.

Lawrence chuckles. Nick doesn't reply.

NICK

Anyway, Tabby... Don't you wanna check out the gift I got for you?

TABITHA

Absolutely!!!

Tabitha and Nick excitedly pace towards the vehicle Nick arrived in as their parents follow. Tabitha opens the passenger door and looks on the seat expecting to see a wrapped gift and/or card. The seat is empty.

TABITHA

Where is it, Nick?... I don't see nothin'.

Nick smiles.

NICK

Check the glove box..

Tabitha opens the glove box to find a sealed envelope containing a card. Without hesitation, she opens the card to find some words Nick wrote and a car key taped to it. The card reads: This should beat those trips on camels... Congratulations, Tabby.

Tabitha looks at Nick in confusion.

TABITHA

A car key? ... Well, where's the car?

Nick looks at Tabitha and smiles.

NICK

You're sittin' in it...

Tabitha's eyes widen after she hears Nick's reply. She looks around the interior of the car and then back at Nick in shock.

TABITHA

Stop lyin', Nick.. It's not nice playin' wit' people like that.

NICK

No need to lie.. It's all yours.

Nick's facial expression confirms to Tabitha that he's speaking the truth. Tabitha gasps and begins acting extremely excited. She stands up and hugs her brother.

TABITHA

Oh my gosh, Nick!!! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

NICK

You're welcome, lil' sis.. Now make sure you wear your seat belt and drive safe. This thing's kinda fast...

Tabitha releases her brother from her hug and goes back in the car to see all the options and accessories the vehicle has to offer. Laura and Lawrence step up to Nick as he watches how excited his little sister is.

Laura begins inquiring how Nick is able to afford such a gift. Nick makes up a lie stating that he purchased the vehicle from his construction supervisor at a reduced price and the payments are deducted from his check.

LAURA

Alright now, Nick.. Be smart wit' ya money.. Don't bite more than you can chew.

NICK

Don't worry about me, mama.. I got it under control.

At that moment, Tabitha steps out of the vehicle, even more excited than before. She rushes up to Lawrence.

TABITHA

Dad..come check out this car!!! It's got
everything.. It's even gotta in-dash CD changer!!!

Lawrence quickly becomes envious of Nick and the gift he's purchased for his sister. Lawrence allows his envy to blind him of his typical instinct to expect the gift's origin may have been from illegal money.

LAWRENCE

Naw, that's okay baby-girl.. I'll check it out
another time.

Tabitha immediately turns her attention to Nick.

TABITHA

Hey, Nick.. Let's take this baby for a spin!!!

NICK

Aiight, Tab.. Let's go.

Tabitha enters the driver's seat as Nick enters the passenger. Tabitha agrees to meet her parents back at home. The scene fades to black.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick arriving to Doug's house, a few weeks after Tabitha's graduation. Nick walks up to Doug's front door and knocks. Moments later Doug answers the door.

NICK

Aye, Hurt.. What's up? You said we need to talk?

Doug motions Nick to enter the home.

DOUG

Yeah, Nick.. C'mon in.. We got some business to
discuss.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

Nick follows Doug in the direction of the kitchen table where they typically discuss business. Nick notices Sean isn't there. Nick remembers Doug's policy about not discussing business unless both "buddies" are present.

NICK

Where's Sean.. He don't need to be here?

DOUG

Naw, Nick.. Not this time. What we gotta discuss
doesn't concern Sean.

Nick and Doug sit down at the table.

DOUG

Aiight, Nick.. Here's the deal.. My main supplier
from Russia has been havin' some concerns lately..
Askin' me a bunch of questions about my operation
and shit..

NICK

Questions? Concerns? About what?

DOUG

Really, Nick.. He wanna know why I keep callin' him almost weekly now.. He wanna know why I'm gettin' shipments more often than usual..

Nick appears confused.

NICK

But I thought movin' more quantity is good for business... What? Is he not gettin' his dues or somethin'?

DOUG

The money's cool Nick.. You aint gotta worry about the money. It's the opportunity you should be concerned about. Basically, he wanna know why business is boomin'...

NICK

So..what did you tell him?

DOUG

The only truthful answer I could give him..

NICK

What's that?

Doug smiles at Nick.

DOUG

I told him "Nick Jenkins"...

NICK

You gave him my name? Why?

DOUG

C'mon, Nick.. Let's be honest.. Since you've been dealin' for me.. Profits are steadily goin' up.. My supplier can't help but notice.. so he wants to start dealin' wit' you personally. Think of it like a promotion or somethin'... You'd be on my level.. Kinda like partners and shit..

NICK

So what about Sean?

DOUG

Man, don't worry about that nigga, Sean.. I'll deal wit' him.. Like I said, you need to be concerned with the opportunity and what it can do for our business..

Nick nods his head.

NICK

Aiight, Hurt... So what's my next move then?

DOUG

Next... You need to meet up wit' my Russian connect,
Yuri Slocovich. He just wanted me to run the idea
passed you first to see where ya' mind is at.
Yuri's the type of dude who doesn't want anyone to
waste his time.. Shit, I can relate to that though..

Nick nods his head as Doug reaches in his pocket and pulls out his cell phone and calling card. Doug flips the phone open and dials the appropriate numbers. Moments later, Yuri answers phone. Doug arranges a meeting between him, Yuri, and Nick at a local diner.

Doug hangs up the phone.

EXT. LOCAL DINER - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick and Doug arriving at the diner. Yuri is already seated and waiting when they arrive.

INT. LOCAL DINER - DAY

When Nick and Doug enter the diner, Doug spots Yuri as Yuri motions for them to come over and sit at his table. Doug walks towards the table as Nick follows. Both Doug and Nick sit down at Yuri's table.

Yuri initially makes the observation that Nick is younger than he expected. Doug agrees that Nick is young but vouches for his ability to make a profit.

Yuri nods his head and then speaks directly to Nick.

YURI

So...tell me why I should deal with you? Americans
spend money regardless.. What makes you so special?

Doug looks at Nick, wondering if he is prepared to answer this question.

NICK

Well, honestly.. I understand why you may be
skeptical.. I know when dealin' wit' new people,
you're always takin' a chance. But that's what this
business seems to be about.. Takin' chances.

Yuri nods his head as Nick pauses.

NICK

And you seem like the type of person who has takin'
some chances and apparently made some good
decisions.. otherwise you wouldn't be sittin' in
front of me now..

YURI

That is correct..But I already know this about me..
What about you?

Nick pulls a single dollar bill out of his pocket and holds it up.

NICK

Me? Well let's just say I'mma man who knows how to work numbers. Numbers can be applied to almost anything these days... even a single dollar. One thing that I understand is the value of a dollar. I also understand what it takes to earn this dollar. What I do is take that information and maximize it to the fullest extent. I strive to over achieve. If not, why try to achieve any thing at all...

Yuri smirks at Nick and nods his head. Yuri then looks at Doug.

YURI

Okay, Douglas... I will take a chance with this "Nicolas"... He seems very confident in his abilities.

Doug looks at Nick with pride. Yuri reaches in his jacket pocket and pulls out an international calling card. Yuri slides the card across the table, to Nick. Nick picks the calling card up and examines it.

YURI

This is how we will communicate, Nicolas... With this calling card and this calling card only... If you try to contact me any other way, we will never speak again, understood?

Nick nods his head as he slides the card into his pocket. Yuri concludes the meeting.

Yuri

But I do apologize, gentlemen... I must be going now. How do you Americans say... A fat lady is singing... and now this is over...

Yuri chuckles slightly and lifts himself out of his seat.

YURI

Good day to you both.. Nicolas..keep in touch.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY/NIGHT

The scene cuts to Nick immediately connecting with Yuri Slocovich and marketing his product. Nick is now at Doug's status where he's able to "employ" his own street team to work for him.

Nick begins gaining income that he never imagined. In order to hide his income from the IRS, Nick opens store fronts that secretly sell narcotics to trusted consumers. With Nick's knowledge of tax preparation, from Windsor, he finds it easy to evade certain tax situations. This scene will depict Nick's rise to power.

This scene will also show Lawrence's frustration as he continues to search for the one responsible for his steady decline in drug profits. The scene fades to black.

INT. NINA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick arriving at Nina's luxury apartment one evening. Nina is home preparing a dinner for Nick and herself. Nick knocks on the door with a bottle of wine in one hand. Nina answers the door and greets Nick with a kiss. Nick enters the apartment.

Nick begins commenting on how good the food smells. Nina asks Nick to have a seat at the dining table and she will bring the food momentarily.

Nick walks into the dining room. Nick places the wine on ice on the table. Nick notices that Nina isn't paying him any attention. Nick reaches in his pocket and pulls out a jewelry box containing a new diamond set for Nina. He opens the box and sits it in front of Nina's plate. Nick has a seat in the chair across from where Nina will sit. Nick patiently waits for Nina to enter the room.

Moments later Nina enters the dining room. She does a "double-take" when she sees opened jewelry box. Her face initially lights up with excitement and then transforms to disappointment.

Nina begins expressing her frustration with Nick constantly giving her expensive gifts and how she worries if he can afford it. Nick reassures her that money is not an issue. Nick makes up a lie stating that he has bought stock in growing business establishments and he is already seeing a significant return on his investment.

Nina accepts Nick's lie as the truth and then encourages Nick to use his money to better himself and go back to school. Nina expresses her concern for their future.

Nick attempts to reassure Nina that their future, together, is bright and she has no need to worry.

Nina still isn't comforted. She decides to let the matter go to prevent a debate that could possibly ruin her dinner.

NINA

It's hard for me not to worry, Nick.. It seems almost like yesterday, you were this guy that I ran back into at a fast food spot and now your runnin' around spendin' money like some big time hot shot.. I guess you better thank your lucky stars for Terrance and his dad. It's hard to find good friends that you can trust, these days.. Terrance looked out for you.. Don't forget that.

NICK

Naw.. I could never forget about Tee.. I'mma look out for him like he's looked out for me..

Nick and Nina continue having dinner. Nick starts wondering if Terrance might have a place in his operation since trustworthy people are vital.

EXT. TERRANCE'S CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick arriving at a construction site where Terrance is working. Terrance spots Nick and begins walking towards the car. Terrance opens the car door.

TERRANCE

Damn, Nick.. Nice car.

NICK

Yeah.. wipe them dirty-ass feet before you get in..

Terrance kicks his boots against the curb before entering the vehicle. Nick drives away from the construction site once Terrance is in the car. The scene cuts to Nick and Terrance's conversation inside the moving vehicle.

INT. NICK'S CAR - DAY

TERRANCE

So where'd you get this whip from, Nick? You ballin' or borrowin'...

Nick glances at Terrance and then back at the road.

NICK

I'm survivin', Tee.. I'm survivin'...

TERRANCE

Aiight..Nick.. So what did you wanna talk about? My lunch break aint but so long..

NICK

Tee.. Lemme ask you this.. How much you makin' where you work now?

Terrance thinks to himself for a moment.

TERRANCE

I dunno.. Probably anywhere between forty or fifty thousand a year.. Before taxes..

NICK

Okay.. well, what if I told you I can get you that in a month or two?

Terrance looks at Nick suspiciously.

TERRANCE

What you talkin' 'bout, Nick.. How you gon' do that?

NICK

Terrance.. let me just be honest wit' you about somethin'...

Terrance looks at Nick as he pauses.

NICK

I've been workin' wit' Nina's cousin Doug.. You already know what he do.. I aint borrowin' this car, man.. This is my shit. Right now we got shit movin' in a major way and I was wonderin' if you wanna get down.

Terrance's face shows a skeptical facial expression.

TERRANCE

So, that's what you do now? You down wit' that illegal money, huh? I guess one trip to prison wasn't enough for you..

NICK

C'mon, Tee... You don't know what it's like tryin' to make decent money when you gotta felony? I wasn't plannin' on makin' a career outta this but its like money keeps fallin' in my lap. I don't plan on doin' it for life.. Besides me and Hurt got shit on-lock to the point where it's practically impossible to get caught. The shit is damn-near untraceable.. I'm just tryin' to share the opportunity wit' a trustworthy friend like you.. Aint too many people in this industry that you can trust, you know..Once you see how that money comes in, you won't regret a damn thing, bruh..

Nick ceases speaking to gage Terrance's reaction.

TERRANCE

Aiight, Nick.. I'll hear you out on this.. But right now, I need to get back on the clock. You think we can meet up tonight and discuss the in's and out's of this so called "industry"?

NICK

Yeah, we can do that.. Matter of fact.. I got the perfect place. I know the owner of a local strip joint. He's one of my customers..and so are most of the dancers... so they treat me pretty well when I go up in there. I'll pick you up later tonight and we can go there and talk...Aiight?

Terrance nods his head.

TERRANCE

Aiight, Nick.. That's a bet...

EXT. TERRANCE'S CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick pulling up to the construction site where he initially picked Terrance up. Terrance exits the vehicle. Nick drives away. The scene fades to black.

EXT. LOCAL STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

The scene fades in later that evening, showing a congested strip-club parking lot.

INT. LOCAL STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

The scene cuts to the inside of the busy establishment. The scene will show the activities in the strip-club as the scene leads to the VIP area where Terrance and Nick sit and discuss "business".

While talking, Terrance notices some commotion at the front entrance.

TERRANCE

Hold up, Nick.. Isn't that Sean from school?

Nick directs his attention at the entrance of the club to see Sean and three of his friends being patted down for weapons. Nick notices that the security guard reveals hand guns on Sean and his friends. The security guard points towards the parking lot signaling for Sean and his friends to return their weapons to their vehicles before entering the club. All four men exit and return unarmed. The guard pats them down a second time before allowing them to enter.

Sean and his three friends walk through the strip-club obnoxiously enjoying the scenery. Nick is unsure of what Doug said to Sean in reference to the end of their "buddy-partnership". Sean and his three friends walk into the VIP area. Sean notices Nick. Sean nudges his friend standing next to him and then points directly at Nick. Nick hears what Sean says to his friend.

SEAN

Aye, man.. There go that bitch-ass nigga right there..

All three of Sean's friends focus on Nick. Sean and his friends approach Nick, while Nick remains seated and unaffected.

SEAN

I bet yo' bitch-ass aint expect to see me up in this muthafucka, huh?

Nick confidently replies.

NICK

It's a public place. Why should I be shocked 'cause you here?

SEAN

Oh you tryin' to be a smart-ass, huh? See, that's yo' muthafuckin' problem, Nick. You think you so fuckin' smart. I bet you thought you was real smart tryin' to cut me outta the money, huh..

NICK

I didn't cut you outta shit.. I just played the hand dealt to me, bruh.. I wasn't the one who capped yo' salary..

Sean immediately snaps back.

SEAN

Man, save the bullshit! A muthafuckin' salary aint the only thing gonna be capped around here.. Bring yo' ass outside and see what the muthafuckin' business is.. We got them tools on deck, bitch!

Nick pauses and looks at Terrance. Terrance seems concerned but doesn't say word. Nick looks back at Sean.

NICK

There you go, Sean.. Runnin' yo' mouth, creatin' problems..

Nick pauses.

NICK

For yourself...

SEAN

What the fuck is you sayin'? I'm problem free right now. You gon' have a problem in a minute. I got my three shooters wit' me. By the looks of it, you kinda' out numbered. So now who's the one wit' the problem?

Nick smirks at Sean. Nick then reaches in the back of his pants and pulls out an automatic pistol. Sean as well as everyone else in the VIP area look surprised at Nick, holding his gun. Nick slides the clip out of the gun and holds the gun in one hand and the clip in the other.

NICK

Aiight, here's the deal... I got twelve rounds in the clip..one in the chamber. Total, that's thirteen bullets. Now, I see four of y'all... You tell me who's out numbered. Y'all guns are all the way in the parkin' lot... So..uh..who's the one wit' the problem..

Nick slides the clip back in the gun. Sean and his three friends take a step back. One of the security guards notices the situation unfolding in the VIP area. The guard heads over to resolve the situation. The guard walks in between Nick and Sean.

SECURITY GUARD

Is there a problem here, Mr. Jenkins?

Nick is staring sternly at Sean.

NICK

A problem? That's what we were just discussin'... I dunno.. Do we have a problem here, Sean?

SEAN

Naw..aint no problems..

NICK

Good..

Nick tucks the gun back in his pants and then looks at the security guard.

NICK

Aye, man.. these cats was just leavin'... Do me a favor and show em' to the door. They're not welcome in this club.. Their money is no good here..

The guard nods his head and begins walking the four men to the door.

SECURITY GUARD

Aiight, y'all heard him. Kick rocks..

As Sean walks in the direction of the door, he glances back at Nick.

SEAN

Aiight..Nick.. I got you..

Nick watches as the four men exit the strip-club. Nick looks over at Terrance and speaks.

NICK

You see what I mean about "trustworthy" people in this industry?

The scene fades to black.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick and Terrance sitting in an office that Nick has set up to plan and organize the operations of his "business". Terrance and Nick are concentrating on a large area-map, discussing the most opportune areas to move their product.

Nick is interrupted by his cell phone vibrating. Nick looks down to check his phone. The caller ID reads: NINA. Nick decides not to answer. Nick proceeds with discussing "business" with Terrance.

Nick's phone vibrates again, interrupting him a second time. Nick checks his phone the find a text message from Nina reading: We need to talk.. NOW!!!

Nick sighs and checks his watch.

TERRANCE

You aiight over there, Nick?... Looks like you havin' a hard time focusin'.

NICK

Yeah.. Nina's been blowin' me up for the last two hours. She typically don't call like that.. I'm hopin' it's not an emergency.

TERRANCE

Why don't you call her back and see what's up?

NICK

I did but she said she doesn't wanna talk about it over the phone.. Only face to face..

TERRANCE

Sounds like the shit might be important. Why don't you go see about her?

Nick looks at his watch a second time.

NICK

I want to but my mama is flyin' into the airport in an hour. I sent her on a cruise for Mother's Day and so I'm supposed to pick her up..I really don't have the time to do it all..

Nick thinks to himself and comes up with a solution.

NICK

I got it... Why don't we do this... Why don't you just drop me by Nina's place so she and I can talk about whatever it is that's botherin' her... And then you take my car and pick moms up from the airport. All you gotta do is take her home and pick me up after you leave..

TERRANCE

Aiight, Nick.. I can handle that..

INT. NINA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick walking down the hallway leading to Nina's apartment. Once Nick is at her door, he knocks and moments later Nina answers the door. Nina looks at Nick with an angry facial expression. Nick walks into the apartment as Nina closes the door behind him. Nick turns to Nina and is answered with a forceful slap across his face.

NICK

What the fuck was that for!?

NINA

You already know, you lyin' piece of shit!!!!...
Construction, Nick??? Construction!?

Nick already knows the direction of the conversation before Nina says another word. Nick's only concern is how she found out.

NINA

How stupid do think I am?... And to think I actually believed that bullshit!!!

Nina begins acting emotional.

NICK

Nina.. Let me explain..

NINA

Explain what, Nick? That you're a liar? That you'll tell me anything?... I mean..what else are you lyin' about, huh?... Imagine how I feel when I go to family gathering, and I see my cousin, Doug, pull up in some brand new expensive car... Now, I already know what Doug does, so I wasn't too surprised. I just figured business was boomin' for him.. It wasn't until I overheard a conversation he was havin' wit' someone else and your name came up.. Then I put "two and two" together... You and Doug are workin' together... What else would explain all this money you so happen to have all of a sudden???

Nick is speechless but he knows that he should say something.

NICK

Look, Nina.. It's like this.. When I went to prison in '02.. I though I'd never see you again..let alone have a chance to be with you. And then when you saw me at the fast-food spot, I started thinkin' about a future with you again.. but I knew you didn't want some scrub-ass nigga flippin' burgers so-

Nina interrupts Nick.

NINA

So you decide to flip "weight" instead..

NICK

No!... I mean..well.. yes..but not because I want to.. You think that's my intention?... To be an aspiring dope dealer or somethin'?... I don't wanna do this shit. It just seemed like easy money.. and I wanna be in the position to give you anything and everything.

NINA

But you do give me everything. You give me what I want and what I want is you.. But how can I have you if you're locked up in someone's jail somewhere..

Nick knows Nina has a point but he doesn't know what to say.

NINA

Look, Nick.. As much as I am against this.. I am half-way flattered that you're risking so much just to better your image for me.. But at the same time, I'm not one of these young girls that you see out here these days that thinks it's cute to be dating a dope dealer.. It's almost like dope dealers are the "doctors and lawyers" of our generation. That shit aint cute..

Nick nods his head.

NICK

So what are the chances we can just kiss and make up?...

Nick smiles as he leans in for a kiss. Nina stops him.

NINA

Listen, Nick.. I don't mind kissin' and makin' up and puttin' this shit behind us..but I want you to promise me somethin'...

NICK

What's that?

NINA

I want you to promise me that once we settle down and start our family, you'll leave this shit alone. Maybe we can move far away and focus on our family and just grow old together..happy together..

Nick smirks and nods his head.

NICK

I promise you, Nina..

Nina smiles and leans towards Nick for a kiss. The scene fades to black.

EXT. NINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The scene fades in with Terrance picking Nick up, outside of Nina's apartment. Terrance rolls down the window to speak to Nick as he approaches the vehicle.

TERRANCE

How'd it go?... Is everything cool?

Nick opens the door to enter the vehicle.

NICK

Yeah, Tee.. Everything is straight.. Run me back to the office real quick so I can drop off this "supply"...

Nick enters the vehicle as Terrance pulls off.

INT. NICK'S GARAGE - NIGHT

The scene cuts to Nick and Terrance in the garage of Nick's office location. Nick opens the trunk on his car to find an empty trunk. Nick is shocked.

NICK

Aye, Tee!... Where's the black gym bag that I had in the trunk?!?

Terrance replies in a confused manner.

TERRANCE

Uh..what black gym bag?

NICK

I had a black gym bag back here before I left you wit' my car. Where is it now???

Terrance thinks to himself for a moment. He then cups his hands over his mouth.

TERRANCE

Oh shit!

NICK

Oh shit what?!?

TERRANCE

Nick.. I think I left that black bag at your mama's house when I helped her unload her luggage..

Nick looks at Terrance in shock.

NICK

You think? Or you know? There's a big fuckin' difference!

TERRANCE

I guess I know... because we didn't stop anywhere else...and that was the only time we went into the trunk for anything...

Nick is immediately filled with panic and rage.

NICK

FUCK!!!

Nick aggressively closes the trunk and heads for the driver's door.

NICK

Do you have any fuckin' idea what would happen if she finds that bag and show's it to Lawrence!?!?

Nick enters the vehicle and quickly drives away.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The scene cuts to Nick arriving to Laura's home. Nick knocks and Laura, almost immediately, answers the door.

LAURA

Hello, Nick.. I had a feelin' I'd see you before the night was over... You lookin' for this???

Laura holds up the black gym bag that was missing from Nick's trunk. Nick already knows his mother is aware of the bag's contents. His face is filled with shame.

LAURA

Come inside so we can talk..

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick walks into the home and sits in the living room as Laura follows. She sits the bag on her coffee table.

LAURA

So, Nick.. what do you have to say about all this?

Nick asks the first question on his mind.

NICK

Does Lawrence know?

Laura shakes her head "no".

LAURA

No, Nick.. he doesn't know... but that doesn't mean I haven't been sittin' here debating about whether or not I should tell him..

Nick is speechless.

LAURA

You see, Nick.. you got me in a tough situation.. When you found out I was usin', you sent me to rehab.. What am I supposed to do now that I know what you're doin'? They offer rehab for you but your rehab comes with a judicial system.. As a mother, Nick, I really don't wanna put you through that..again..

NICK

So what are you sayin'???

Laura sighs.

LAURA

I'll make you a deal, Nick.. We can keep this as our little secret.. Lawrence doesn't need to know.. Tabby doesn't need to know.. I'll keep quiet on how you're gettin' all this money.. as long as you do one thing for me..

NICK

What's that?

LAURA

If you keep me happy and supply me wit' what I need.. No one will ever have to know.. You keep my secret and in exchange I'll keep yours..deal?

Nick takes a moment to think to himself. Nick agrees to make the deal in fear of losing his freedom and financial status.

NICK

Okay..mama..it's a deal..

Nick feels as if he's just sold his soul to the devil. To comfort himself Nick starts looking at the brighter side of the situation.

NICK

I guess it's not such a bad thing.. I mean, since you'd be gettin' it from me, I can keep an eye on how much you gettin'... You know..make sure you're not gettin' outta hand wit' it.

Laura smiles at Nick.

LAURA

What ever you say, Nick...

Nick lifts himself off of the couch and grabs the black gym bag off of the coffee table.

NICK

Alright, mama.. I kinda gotta schedule to keep. I need to get this somewhere.. before it's too late..

Laura nods her head as she watches her son prepare to leave. As Nick heads to the front door, Laura stops him and speaks.

LAURA

Nick!

Nick turns and looks at his mother.

LAURA

I know you really don't wanna hear this but..

Laura pauses for a moment.

LAURA

You're really startin' to remind me of your father..

Nick is instantly angered by his mother's words so he leaves abruptly. Laura is well aware that Lawrence sells confiscated narcotics, and can't help but notice the similarities between Nick and his father.

INT. LAWRENCE'S CAR - NIGHT

The scene cuts to Lawrence having a discussion with one of the street dealers, while sitting in Lawrence's vehicle.

LAWRENCE

Any new news on our little problem?

STREET DEALER 2

Naw, Jenk.. Niggas is keepin' shit real hush-hush about these cats.. You aint find nothin' out on your end?

LAWRENCE

That's a negative.. But I feel it.. It feels close.. I don't know why but this shit feels real close.. I'm gonna do some "undercover stings" and see what I can't find after I turn over a few rocks.

Lawrence pauses.

LAWRENCE

But still keep your ears and eyes open. We'll find them by any means necessary.. any means necessary..

The scene fades to black.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

The scene fades in some weeks later. The scene begins with Nick in his office. Terrance enters while Nick is reviewing some information. Terrance speaks to Nick as he enters.

TERRANCE

What's up, Nick? You said you needed to holla at me?

NICK

Yeah, Tee.. I need another favor, man..

TERRANCE

What's that?

NICK

Well.. we gotta shipment comin' in tonight but I can't be there to get it.. I need someone I can trust to go in my place.. And you know you're the only-

Terrance finishes Nick's sentence.

TERRANCE

Yeah, I know I'm the only one you can trust around here..

NICK

Right.. so can you help me?

Terrance sighs.

TERRANCE

Yeah, Nick.. I got you.. Where you gonna be anyway? What's so important, you can't make the drop?

Nick begins smiling and blushing.

NICK

Uh.. well.. I kinda got this big date wit' Nina tonight.. She says she has somethin' important for me so I don't wanna miss it.

TERRANCE

Damn, Nick.. You and Nina gettin' pretty serious. Y'all might as well get married, bruh..

Terrance speaks in a sarcastic manner expecting Nick to deny his accusation. Nick does the opposite.

NICK

I dunno, Tee.. I might just do that..

TERRANCE

WHAT?!?

NICK

I mean.. I've been considerin' it lately.. Besides settlin' down might be a good look for a cat like me. Maybe, I'll leave this game alone. Snatch up some land and raise a family or somethin'..

TERRANCE

Whateva, nigga.. I'll believe that shit when I see it.. I think you got that love for money.. You can't let it go..

NICK

We'll see about that.. I got enough money.. I'll leave the chase to someone else..maybe even you..

Nick gets up and begins gathering his things before he leaves.

NICK

Aiight, Tee.. Hold it down, bruh.. Call me if there's any issues wit' the drop..

Terrance nods his head and Nick exits the office.

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

The scene cuts to later that evening, with Nick and Nina riding in Nick's car. They both appear as if they enjoyed their evening. Nick drives into the parking garage for Nina's apartment. He backs his vehicle into a parking spot.

NICK

So, Ms. Harris.. What's up wit' that surprise you were tellin' me about?

NINA

Oh, that... I got it right here..

Nina lifts up her purse, revealing a small white envelope. Nick reaches for the envelope and Nina smacks his hand.

NINA

Nope..not until we get upstairs..

Nick smirks at Nina.

NICK

Damn, it's like that.. I can't see it now?

Nina shakes her head "no".

EXT. NINA'S APARTMENT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Simultaneously, a customized older model vehicle quickly drives up and screeches to a halt, horizontally, six feet in front of Nick's car. Two masked men jump out of the older model vehicle with hand guns drawn. One man speaks.

MASKED MAN 1

Aiight, Nick! Raise up out that car and get that ass robbed!!!

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

The scene cuts to inside Nick's car.

NINA

Oh shit, Nick! Do you know these people?!?

Nick shakes his head "no" and stays focused on the two robbers he's presented with. The scene cuts back to outside the vehicle.

EXT. NINA'S APARTMENT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

MASKED MAN 2

Man fuck this shit! Let's "murk" this nigga and rob his ass anyway!

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

The scene cuts to inside Nick's car. Nick hears what was said by the second masked man and begins fearing for his life. Nick throws the gear shift into "drive" and presses down on the gas pedal. Nick's tires begin screeching before he accelerates.

EXT. NINA'S APARTMENT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

The two masked men begin firing rounds at Nick's windshield. Nick accelerates out of his parking space, in the direction of the two men. One man quickly moves out of the way while the other isn't as fortunate. Nick rams his vehicle into the older model car, crushing the robber's leg's who once stood between the two vehicles. When Nick's car bounces back from the impact, the robber caught between the cars falls to the ground, dropping his weapon.

The other masked man who dodged Nick's car, begins running away in the opposite direction. Nick jumps out of his car, with his gun in one hand. Nick begins firing shots in the direction of the running robber. All shots miss the man except for the last, which hits the robber's arm. The robber continues running until he's out of site. Nick is angered that the robber got away.

Nick walks over to the other injured robber, attempting to reach for his weapon. Nick kicks the gun further out of the man's reach. Nick points his gun at the man.

NICK

You muthafuckas think you can try to rob me and get away wit' it?!? Well let this shit be a warnin' to ya' friend!

Nick pulls his trigger once, ending the man's life. Nick takes a step back to regain his thoughts. Nick heads back to the driver's side of his car to check on Nina. Nick kneels into the car.

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

NICK

Nina.. you aight?

Nina looks at Nick and softly speaks his name.

NINA

Nick..

Nina begins coughing up blood. She drops the purse from her lap, revealing a gun shot wound to her chest. Nina had been shot by one of the bullets fired at Nick's windshield. Nick immediately panics.

NICK

OH SHIT!!! WE GOTTA GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL!!!

Nick quickly jumps in the driver's seat.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

The scene cuts to Nick sitting in the waiting room at the hospital. Moments later a doctor steps into the waiting room and summons Nick.

DOCTOR

Mr. Jenkins... May I have a word with you?

Nick nods his head as he lifts himself up out of the chair he's sitting in and follows the doctor into a less public area. The doctor explains to Nick that Nina did not survive the wound. Nick hangs his head in shame and sorrow.

Nick becomes emotional and cries momentarily. The doctor asks Nick if he will be okay. Nick straightens himself up and shakes his head yes. The doctor says a few more words to Nick and then departs in the opposite direction.

Nick walks back into the waiting room with his eyes flooded with tears. Nick goes to retrieve his belongings when he sees Nina's purse. Nick reaches in the purse and pulls out the small white envelope which is now partially stained with Nina's blood. Nick sits down in a chair and opens the envelope to read the card inside. He flips the card open and reads Nina's sincere words. The last statement in the card breaks Nick's heart in half. It reads: **CONGRATULATIONS!!! YOU'RE GOING TO BE A DADDY!!!**

Out of shock and awe, Nick drops the card to the floor. The scene fades to black.

EXT. NINA'S FUNERAL - GLOOMY DAY

The scene fades in the day of Nina's funeral. Nick, Laura, Terrance, and Tabitha stand on one side of the casket. Nina's family stands on the other side of the casket, across from Nick. Almost throughout the entire funeral, Doug stares at Nick with an angered facial expression.

After the service is over and everyone is exiting, Doug pulls Nick aside for a discussion.

DOUG

Nick.. Let me have a word wit' you..

Nick nods his head and follows Doug to an area where they can talk.

DOUG

**Look, man.. This is a real fucked up situation..
Because of you, I lost my baby cousin..**

Doug pauses trying to hold back his emotion.

DOUG

**And as much as I wanna torture and kill you for this
shit.. I can't help but feel guilty, myself. I
encouraged you.. Nick, you've been an honest and
loyal friend and an even better business partner.
And due to that.. I'm not gonna hurt you.. I just
want you to know that from this day forth, we're no
longer friends, associates, or business partners.
You're dead to me, Nick..**

Nick stays silent. Doug begins walking away from Nick. Doug turns around and concludes the conversation.

DOUG

And I'd advise you to keep ya' distance from me..
Otherwise we might be speaking about "dead" in the
literal sense..

Doug turns around and continues walking away from Nick. The scene fades to black.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DUSK

The scene fades in with Nick arriving at his mother's house. Nick exits his vehicle and walks to the door. Nick knocks on the door and moments later Laura answers. She greets Nick sympathetically.

LAURA

Hey, Nick.. How ya' holdin' up?

Nick looks at his mother with sorrow.

NICK

I'm holdin' up aight, mama.. Doin' what I can..

Laura slightly smiles.

LAURA

That's good to hear, Nick..

Laura pauses.

LAURA

So, Nick.. You got my "prescription"?

Nick looks at his mother wondering if her "prescription" is the only thing she's concerned with.

NICK

Yeah..

Nick tosses his mother his car keys.

NICK

Check the glove box..

Laura catches the keys and paces towards Nick's car without saying another word.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DUSK

Nick enters Laura's house. He sits on the couch, picks up the remote and begins flipping through the channels. Moments later Laura walks into the house, stuffing a "baggy" in her pocket.

LAURA

I left some money in your glove box..

Nick isn't concerned. Laura walks passed Nick and into the kitchen area where she's not visible by Nick. Nick continues flipping through the channels on the television.

Moments later, Nick can hear the sounds of Laura using cocaine from the kitchen. Nick shakes his head in shame as he continues watching television.

Suddenly Laura's cordless phone rings. Laura answers the phone from the kitchen.

Terrance is calling, searching for Nick. Laura gives the phone to Nick and quickly retreats to her "hiding spot" in the kitchen. Nick answers the phone.

Terrance urgently explains that he has been calling Nick's cell phone, all day, and that he and Nick need to talk, in person, as soon as possible. Nick makes arrangements to meet Terrance at his office at 8pm, to discuss the important issue.

Nick hangs up the phone and announces to Laura that he is leaving. Laura doesn't reply as Nick grabs his keys and exits.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick sitting behind the desk, in his office, waiting for Terrance. Moments later Terrance walks through the door.

NICK

It's 8:15.. Let's skip the excuses and get into what it is we need to talk about.

TERRANCE

Look, man.. Before I begin.. I jus' wanna make sure you calm and collected.. I don't need you actin' like a hot-head and doin' shit that might get you locked up or murdered.. You calm, man?

Nick looks at Terrance as if he's beginning to get frustrated.

NICK

I'm calm, Terrance.. But procrastination has the tendency to upset me a little.. You mind getting' to the fuckin' point?!?

TERRANCE

Aiight, Nick.. It's like this.. Folks is comin' back to me sayin' Sean had somethin' to do wit' you and that robbery situation..

Nick's attention is peaked instantly.

NICK

WHAT?!?

TERRANCE

Word has it Sean was real pissed and sent some folks to rob you and get you fucked up..

Nick begins having flash backs of the night Nina was murdered. Nick's flash back includes the moment the masked robber called Nick by his name. That was enough

to confirm Sean's involvement. Nick begins breathing heavy and becomes angry. Out of anger Nick flips the desk sitting in front of him. Nick begins aggressively pacing towards the door to exit.

NICK
I'mma kill that coward muthafucka!!!

Terrance stops Nick before he can leave.

TERRANCE
Look, Nick.. This is exactly what I was talkin' bout..
You need to keep a clear head, man.. We got too much
money movin' for you to get fucked up on some dumb
shit. We can worry about Sean another day. Focus,
Nick.. Focus..

Nick nods his head as he forces his temper down to the point where he's breathing normally.

Terrance convinces Nick to take some time and relax at home to take his mind off of vengeance against Sean. Nick agrees.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The scene cut to later that evening. Nick is alone in his condo, trying to cope with the news he received from Terrance. Nick begins drinking hard liquor, straight from the bottle, and smoking marijuana to calm his nerves. His attempts to clear his head are unsuccessful as the more he becomes intoxicated, the more vivid his thoughts become. Nick has flash backs of pleasant times with Nina, as well as the night she was taken from him. Nick's intoxication and vengeful thoughts begin driving him insane.

Nick continues to intoxicate himself until the point where he passes out on his couch. The scene fades to black.

EXT. SEAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - EARLY MORNING

The scene immediately cuts back in. Viewers won't be able to tell if Nick is dreaming or if what they are seeing is reality in the story.

The scene opens up in broad daylight. Nick is aggressively driving through empty neighborhood streets. Nick turns onto a street which dead ends into a circle where Sean currently lives. Nick races down the street and turns his vehicle in the circle where his passenger side is facing Sean's home.

EXT. SEAN'S HOME - MORNING

On Sean's front porch, there are four of Sean's friends who watch as this mysterious car comes to a halt in front of them. They are all confused by what's going on, as their facial expressions explain their confusion.

Before Nick exits his car, he pulls his black bandana over his face hiding everything but his eyes. Nick steps out of his car with his guns already drawn. Nick raises his weapons over the roof of his vehicle, using his car as a shield.

Nick begins firing shots at Sean's unsuspecting friends, sitting on the front porch. Three of the four friends are fatally shot before having the time to react. The fourth friend tries to run into the house to warn the others. The

moment the forth friend enters the house and slams the door Nick fires a shot at the wooden door. The bullet pierces the door and fatally finds a place in the forth friend. Nick reloads his weapons and marches towards the front door.

INT. SEAN'S HOME - MORNING

Nick enters Sean's home unleashing the same rampage on all of Sean's associates who are either trying to escape or scurry for their own weapons to retaliate. Once no one else is left standing, Sean comes out of the back room with his shot gun drawn.

Sean creeps down the hallway until the hallway ends. Nick is standing at the end of the hallway, around the corner where Sean cannot see him. Once Sean notices Nick, it is too late for Sean to retaliate. Nick already has his weapon pointed at Sean's head. Sean stares at Nick in fear. Nick pulls down the bandana covering his face to reveal his identity to Sean. Sean gasps and Nick pulls the trigger, ending Sean's life.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

After Nick fires his last shot, taking Sean's life, Nick immediately wakes up in his bed. Nick is feeling very "hung over" from the night before. Nick looks over at his clock, realizing that the time is well past noon.

Nick's phone rings. The caller ID identifies the call coming from Terrance. Nick answers the phone.

NICK

What's up, Tee?

Terrance answers from the other end of the phone.

TERRANCE

Aint too much, Nick.. You feelin' better since last night?

NICK

Naw, man.. I gotta hell of a hang over and I aint sleep too well. I had this wild ass dream man..

TERRANCE

For real? What kinda dream?

Before Nick can answer, his muted television catches his attention.

NICK

Hold on a sec, Tee..

Nick places the phone down and removes the mute feature from his television. A news reporter is describing a situation that took place earlier that day.

NEWS REPORTER

Atlanta Police are scratching their heads, today, about a mysterious multiple homicide at a Southwest Atlanta home.... Neighbors say they heard several gunshots coming from inside the home, early this morning. A few witnesses say they saw a masked man, dressed in black clothing, fleeing from the scene

after the gunshots ceased. When police searched the home, they uncovered a significant but undisclosed amount of narcotics, fire arms, and money. Police believe this violent act may have been drug-related but are unsure due to the untouched narcotics and money. APD asks if you have any information regarding this case or the unidentified suspect, please contact Atlanta Police with that information. Back to you, Carl..

Nick quickly turns the television off, now realizing that his dream may have been reality. Nick picks the cordless phone and tells Terrance he'll call him back.

Nick hangs up the phone and jumps out of bed. Nick looks in his bathroom to find a pile of black clothing lying on the floor. Nick is shocked.

Out of paranoia, Nick checks his condo and looks out the window to make sure things appear normal.

Nick paces to the kitchen and grabs a black plastic trash bag. Nick takes the bag into the bathroom and begins bagging his incriminating attire. The scene fades to black.

INT. LAWRENCE'S STING SET UP - EVENING

The scene fades in with Lawrence, in the middle of an undercover sting operation with Yuri Slocovich. Lawrence is passing himself off as a local dealer, by the name of Franklin, looking to gain a better product to sell.

YURI

So, Mr. Franklin.. How is it that I can be of assistance to you?

LAWRENCE

Okay.. here's the deal. My team is movin' major weight here in Atlanta, so it's probably in your best interest to do business with me..

YURI

So, what is the deal you are proposing? If I am happy with your figures, we can do business today.

Lawrence knows Yuri is alone so he makes the natural assumption that Yuri must be carrying the narcotics in his vehicle parked outside.

LAWRENCE

How about ten units..a month. If you supply me with ten units, I can guarantee we'll move it in a month and be back at your door to do more business.. What do you say?

Yuri looks at Lawrence and begins laughing hysterically.

LAWRENCE

And, exactly, what the fuck do you find so funny?

Yuri gradually stops laughing.

YURI

Ten units? One month? Why on earth would I make such a deal? My primary dealer, here in Atlanta, moves ten units in a week or less. What good are you to me?

Lawrence immediately assumes that Yuri is referring to the dealer he is searching for. Lawrence begins smiling, knowing that he is making progress in finding his true intended information.

LAWRENCE

Ten units a week, huh.. You must be doin' business wit' the top dealer here in Atlanta..

Yuri proudly smiles and nods his head once.

LAWRENCE

I'm sure we can compete. Let me get my "financial backing" on the phone and see if we can afford ten units a week.

Lawrence picks up his cell phone and dials a phone number. Lawrence waits for the other end to answer then he presses a single digit, signaling the other officers involved in the undercover sting. Yuri is completely oblivious to what's going on.

INT. POLICE SWAT VEHICLE - EVENING

The scene cuts to the officer who answered the other end of the phone. The officer advises the others that they received their signal and it is time to take action.

INT. LAWRENCE'S MEETING PLACE - EVENING

The scene cuts back to the conversation between Lawrence and Yuri. Lawrence hangs up the phone.

LAWRENCE

No answer... I guess he'll call back.

Lawrence pauses.

LAWRENCE

So, you said you supply to the biggest dealer in Atlanta.. Who did you say that was again?

Yuri begins suspecting "foul-play" so he reaches for his gun. Before Yuri can grab his gun, several tactical narcotics officers bust into the room with their automatic weapons drawn. The officer who answered the phone screams at Yuri.

OFFICER 3

GET DOWN ON THE GROUND!!! GET DOWN ON THE GROUND!!!
NOW!!!

Yuri raises both hands in surrender and begins kneeling on the ground, while staring at Lawrence. As the officers arrest Yuri, Yuri speaks to Lawrence.

YURI

You're a dead man, walking..

Lawrence looks at Yuri and slightly chuckles as he smirks.

LAWRENCE

And you're a dead man, arrested.. Who's got the upper hand?... Get his ass outta here..

The officers hand cuff Yuri and place him in the back of a police cruiser. The remaining officers collect evidence and gather their necessities. Lawrence pulls an officer to the side and speaks to him.

LAWRENCE

Look.. I want y'all to impound this guys car and leave it. Those are stern orders. Under no circumstance is this vehicle to be searched without my approval and supervision. I've been workin' on this case for months and the last thing I need is a bunch of rookies fuckin' it up for me..

OFFICER 4

Copy that, Detective Jenkins.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

The scene cuts to Lawrence and Yuri in an interrogation room.

LAWRENCE

Now, why are you makin' this harder than it should be, Slocovich.. You know what I wanna hear..

YURI

Fuck you, pig! You disgust me! I tell you nothing!!!

LAWRENCE

Fine.. Have it your way.. sit in a fuckin' cell and rot for all I care.. Or.. you can tell me what I need to know and shorten your time here tremendously.

Lawrence pauses to give Yuri the opportunity to speak. Yuri doesn't take the opportunity.

LAWRENCE

Look, Slocovich.. I don't want you.. You can take your broken-english speakin' ass back to Russia.. I don't care. All I'm interested in is a name. You mentioned you supply to the largest dealer in Atlanta. That's useful information to me.. I offer you no time served, just for a name.. Just give me the name, damnit!

Yuri looks down at the floor and then back at Lawrence.

YURI

All you want is a name?

Lawrence nods his head. Yuri looks back down at the floor as he considers Lawrence's "no time served" plea. Yuri leans forward to give Lawrence a name. Lawrence listens closely.

YURI

**The name is... Richard Lewis.. That is my attorney.
I will not speak another word until my attorney is
here..**

Lawrence begins getting frustrated with Yuri. Lawrence slams his clipboard on the table. Lawrence stands up and speaks to Yuri before he exits the interrogation room.

LAWRENCE

**Fine, Slocovich.. You wanna do this shit the hard
way.. You're gonna wish you took me up on my offer..**

Lawrence marches out of the interrogation room and slams the door.

EXT. POLICE IMPOUND - NIGHT

The scene cuts to Lawrence arriving at the police impound where Yuri's car is. Lawrence begins searching Yuri's vehicle until he comes across Yuri's hidden narcotics.

Lawrence switches Yuri's narcotics for a poisonous "look-alike" from his own car. Lawrence hides the tainted narcotics where he found the original stash in Yuri's car.

Lawrence's intention is for the tainted substances to be sold to Nick (Yuri's primary dealer) and marketed on the streets. Lawrence knows that once the poison is circulated, not only will Nick lose his clientele to a bad reputation and death, but Lawrence will be able to follow the "bread crumbs" of dead bodies which should eventually lead to Nick.

Lawrence completes the "swap" and heads back to the police station.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

The scene cuts back to Lawrence at the Police station. When Lawrence arrives, he approaches an officer and advises him to release Yuri Slocovich due to lack of incriminating evidence. The officer shows Lawrence some resistance to his request but quickly complies once Lawrence threatens to have the officer fired.

Lawrence proceeds with walking out of the police station. Lawrence walks into the parking lot and enters his vehicle. Lawrence picks up his cell phone and calls his street dealer. The street dealer answers the phone.

INT. LAWRENCE'S CAR - NIGHT

STREET DEALER 2

What up, Jenk?

LAWRENCE

Aaight... Y'all get ready to start makin' moves again..

STREET DEALER 2

Oh, for real?... You found what you was lookin' for?

LAWRENCE

Not quite.. But I found out enough..

Lawrence watches as Yuri Slocovich exits the police station.

LAWRENCE

The rest will come wit' time.. I got a plan..

STREET DEALER 2

A plan? What kinda plan, Jenk..

LAWRENCE

It's a plan to expedite things a little. Just a little plan I like to call.."Instant overdose"...

Lawrence chuckles in a sinister manner. The scene fades to black.

EXT. NICK'S MEETING PLACE - DAY

The scene fades in the following day with Nick and Terrance arriving at the drop point to meet Yuri Slocovich. Yuri is there, waiting for Nick. Nick and Terrance exit the vehicle and approach Yuri.

YURI

Nicolas.. How nice it is to see you again.. But I must say this will be our last time meeting face to face for some time..

NICK

Really? Why?

Before Yuri answers, he looks at Terrance and speaks.

YURI

The "goodies" are in the trunk.. You may fetch them..

Yuri presses the button on his key pad to unlock the trunk of his car. Terrance opens the trunk and removes the black bag. Terrance proceeds to carry the bag to Nick's car as Nick and Yuri continue their conversation.

YURI

Nicolas.. The law here in Atlanta is a bit too heavy for me.. I will remain in Russia until things..how do you say.. cool off.. You should consider laying low yourself..

Nick looks at Yuri with a confused facial expression.

NICK

What makes you say that?

YURI

As you American's say.. It is a "hunch".. Deal the remainder of the dope and take a long vacation. That is my advice to you. Take it if you will, but

if you are ever questioned.. remember you do not know
Yuri Slocovich..

Nick nods his head. Yuri places his hand out to shake Nick's hand. Nick shakes hands with Yuri.

YURI

Farewell, Nicolas.. If we meet in the future,
hopefully we can do business on another nation's
soil. I have grown tired of this America..

Yuri turns his back and enters the driver's seat of his vehicle. Nick turns around and walks to his car. The scene fades to black.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene fades in with Nick arriving at Laura's house. Nick exits his vehicle with flowers and a jewelry box in his hand. Nick paces to the door and knocks. Laura answers the door.

NICK

Happy Birthday, Mama!!!

Laura smiles at her son and give him a hug. Nick hands his gifts to his mother.

NICK

And these are for you..

LAURA

Aww, thank you, Nick!!! The flowers are
beautiful!... But uh..I'm runnin' a little low,
Nick.. You think you can hook me up wit' a lil'
somethin'-somethin' on the house, since it's my
birthday?

Nick sighs to himself. He doesn't feel very comfortable giving his mother drugs for her birthday but agrees to avoid confrontation.

NICK

Aiight, mama.. I got you..

Nick reaches in his pocket. Laura stops him.

LAURA

Nick, come inside.. Don't pull that stuff out while
we're outside.

Nick follows his mother indoors.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

Once Laura closes the door, Nick hands his mother the drugs. Laura tucks the cocaine away as Nick inquires on Tabitha. Nick makes arrangements with Laura to return later and take her and Tabitha out to celebrate Laura's birthday. Laura agrees.

Nick hugs his mother and wishes her a happy birthday one last time. Nick exits his mother's home.

INT. NICK'S CAR - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick driving in his car. While he's driving, his cell phone rings. The caller ID reads: TERRANCE. Nick answers the phone.

NICK

What's up, Tee?

The scene cuts back and forth between Terrance and Nick, while they converse. Terrance is at the office calling Nick with urgent news.

TERRANCE

Nick! We got major fuckin' problems!!! The police are pickin' up our folks left and right, man!

NICK

What?!? What the fuck is goin' on, Tee?!?

TERRANCE

I dunno, man.. This shit is crazy.. I've been gettin' calls about it but no one knows where the heat is comin' from.. Where you at?

NICK

I just left my mama's place.. Look, Tee.. Find out what you can find out and we'll meet up tonight after I take my mama out for dinner..

TERRANCE

Aaight, man.. Keep ya' phone on you just in case I need to call you.

NICK

Aaight, Tee.. Call me as soon as you find somethin' out..

TERRANCE

Okay, Nick..

Nick disconnects the call and Terrance does the same.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

The moment Terrance hangs his phone up, about a dozen tactical narcotics officers bust into the office where Terrance is. Terrance is caught off guard by this and puts his hands in the air to show surrender. The officers proceed with arresting Terrance.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING

The scene cuts to later that evening. Tabitha arrives at her mother's home with a gift in her hand. Tabitha enters the home and walks into the living room. Tabitha looks down on the floor and is shocked by what she finds.

TABITHA

Oh my god!

Tabitha finds her mother lying deceased on the living room floor and a personal mirror lying a few feet from her body. Spilled white powder is on the floor, next to the mirror. Tabitha runs out of the living room, crying. She picks up her cell phone and calls Nick. Nick is at his home. He answers the phone when it rings. The scene switches back and forth between Nick and Tabitha as they converse.

NICK

Hello..

TABITHA

Nick.. Mom's dead..

NICK

WHAT?!?!

TABITHA

She's dead, Nick.. She's dead.. It looks like she O.D.'d on cocaine or somethin'...

The blood in Nick's veins runs cold.

NICK

Cocaine?

TABITHA

That's what it looks like, Nick.. Was mom on drugs again? Did you know about this?

NICK

Naw.. I didn't know nothin'... Look, Tabby.. just stay calm and I'll be over there in a second..

TABITHA

Hurry, Nick.. Please...I.. I.. I don't know what to do..

NICK

Just be strong, Tabby.. I'm on my way..

Tabitha and Nick simultaneously hang up the phone. The scene fades to black.

The scene fades back in showing a "trickle-down" affect of Nick's tainted shipment being distributed and sold to individuals ranging from various races, ages, and social statuses. Once the "narcotics" are distributed, the inevitable occurs. The random drug users begin dying after consuming the poison sold to them and most of Nick's dealers are gradually arrested. The scene fades to black.

EXT. LAURA'S FUNERAL - DAY

The scene fades in the day of Laura's funeral. Only Nick and Tabitha are present. Lawrence is there but he watches his children from a distance. Nick and Tabitha pay their respect as Laura's casket is lowered into the ground. Tabitha and Nick proceed in walking to the car together.

NICK

C'mon, Tabby.. We gotta go see Terrance..

Tabitha notices Lawrence. She gasps and runs to her father. Nick watches. Lawrence welcomes Tabitha with open arms. Tabitha embraces her father with a hug. Nick approaches them. Tabitha speaks to her father while being embraced.

TABITHA

She's gone, Dad.. She's really gone..

LAWRENCE

I know sweetheart.. I know..

Lawrence releases Tabitha and speaks to both siblings.

LAWRENCE

Look.. I'm really sorry about y'all's loss.. It's very tragic. Did y'all know about her usin' again?

Nick and Tabitha shake their heads "no".

LAWRENCE

Do y'all have any idea where she might have got the drugs?

Nick looks at his father with a disappointed expression.

NICK

Look, Lawrence.. This aint the time or place to do your police work.. We just buried our mother. Have some respect!

LAWRENCE

Aiight, Nick.. I can respect that.. Just do me a favor and call me if you hear anything, alright?

Nick walks away from Lawrence and toward his car. Tabitha speaks to Lawrence before she departs.

TABITHA

Okay, Dad.. I'll call you later..

LAWRENCE

Alright, baby-girl.. You take care of ya'self.. and tell ya' brother stop bein' such an asshole.

TABITHA

Okay, Dad..

Tabitha walks away from Lawrence and gets in Nick's car. Nick drives away.

INT. NICK'S CAR - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick and Tabitha arriving at the county jail where Terrance is being held.

TABITHA

Wait a minute, Nick..Terrance is here???

NICK

Yeah, unfortunately..

TABITHA

Why? What happened?

NICK

That's what I'm here to find out...

INT. JAIL VISITATION AREA - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick and Tabitha entering the visitor's area of the jail. Nick sits in the chair across from the glass and Tabitha takes a seat in a chair a few feet behind Nick. Moments later, Terrance is escorted into the visitor's area. Terrance takes a seat at the window across from Nick. Nick picks up the phone and Terrance does the same. Nick speaks to Terrance.

NICK

What up, Tee? How you holdin' up, bruh?

Terrance immediately snaps back.

TERRANCE

What the fuck do you think, nigga? I'm in here and you runnin' around free.. How the fuck do you think I am?

NICK

C'mon now, man.. I'm just tryin to figure out what happened.. I'mma get my lawyer on this asap..

TERRANCE

I'll tell you what happened, Nick.. We got us a nice lil' shipment of rat poison and everything came crashin' down on me.. since yo' ass was no where to be found..

NICK

Hold up.. A shipment of rat poison?

For a moment Nick thinks back to his mother's death as he forgets Tabitha is sitting behind him and can hear at lease fifty percent of their conversation. Tabitha begins gaining an understanding of how her mother really died.

TERRANCE

Yeah, Nick.. Customers start dyin'... and everyone involved took the fall... well *almost* everyone.. You should be the one on this side of the glass... not me!

Tabitha can tell Terrance is upset at Nick but can't hear what he is saying.

NICK

Look, Tee.. I'mma do what I gotta do to get you out, man.. I know you feel like you took the fall for me.. I'm sorry about that. I'm gonna get you free, Tee..

TERRANCE

You better, Nick.. I'm facin' life or longer in this muthafucka.. And even if you do get me out... what the

fuck am I gonna do after I get out? Where am I gonna go? My family don't fuck wit' me no more after this shit hit the fan..

NICK

Terrance.. We still got plenty money.. You got options..

TERRANCE

Aiight, Nick.. We'll see about that.. I'd advise you to keep a low profile 'cause you never know who might be sayin' what.. You led a lotta folks to gettin' fucked up in this "game"...

NICK

Aiight, Tee.. I'mma do what I can, as soon as I can.. I'mma look out for you, man..

Nick holds his fist up against the glass, expecting Terrance to do the same. Terrance looks at Nick, in a disappointed manner and abruptly hangs up the phone. Terrance raises himself out of his chair and walks out of the scene. Nick takes his fist away from the glass and hangs the phone up. Nick steps away from his seat and signals to Tabitha that it is time to leave.

INT. NICK'S CAR - DAY

The scene cuts to Nick and Tabitha riding in Nick's car. Tabitha appears distant as she stares out of the passenger door. Nick speaks to Tabitha, as he is curious to how much of the conversation she heard, back at the county jail.

Nick offers to take Tabitha to get some food and shopping at the mall. She refuses both offers. Tabitha sighs.

TABITHA

Naw, Nick.. I really wanna head home right now..

Tabitha answers as a tear rolls down her cheek, viewing the man she once saw as her hero, now as the murderer of her mother.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The scene cuts to Nick arriving at Tabitha's car, parked at Laura's home. Tabitha exits the vehicle. Nick speaks before she closes the door.

NICK

Aye, Tabby.. If you need anything, just call me.. I'll be around.

Tabitha nods her head and closes the car door. She proceeds with walking into the house as Nick drives away. The scene fades to blacks.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING

The scene fades in showing Tabitha in her mother's home, pacing back and forth, in front of the cordless phone with tears in her eyes. She quickly decides to pick up the phone and hesitantly dials the numbers. The phone rings and moments later, Lawrence answers the other end of the phone.

LAWRENCE

This is Detective Jenkins...

Tabitha sighs.

TABITHA

Dad.. It's Tabby..

LAWRENCE

Hey, baby-girl... What's up?

TABITHA

Dad.. I think I know how mama got the drugs..

Silence falls over the phone. She has Lawrence's full attention.

LAWRENCE

How?

The scene fades to black.

EXT. CITY STREETS/LAWYER'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

The scene fades in, later the next afternoon, with Nick stepping out of his lawyer's office. Nick begins walking towards his vehicle, parked on a Downtown Atlanta street. Immediately, Nick notices Lawrence standing by his vehicle with a squad car parked, blocking Nick's exit. Nick sees Lawrence is there for "police business" once he notices Lawrence's badge and gun in clear view. Nick makes a quick decision to run. Lawrence notices Nick run in the opposite direction. Lawrence quickly enters the squad car and pursues Nick.

Nick runs through back alleys trying to evade Lawrence. Lawrence manages to keep up. Nick continues running until he finds an old abandoned building. Nick runs into the building hoping Lawrence doesn't see him. Nick finds a hiding place, on a higher level, next to a boarded window.

Lawrence parks the police car close by the building where Nick is. Lawrence steps out of the car and removes the badge from around his neck. Lawrence also removes the department issued firearm holstered on his waste. Lawrence then opens the trunk on the squad car and picks up his shot gun. He walks toward the abandoned building and enters.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - SUNSET/DUSK

LAWRENCE

Nicolas? You in here?

Lawrence walks further into the dark abandoned building.

LAWRENCE

Son.. I know you're in here.. What do you say you come out so we can get this shit over wit', huh?...

Lawrence continues walking into the hazardous dark building.

LAWRENCE

Aaight, Nick.. How you wanna do this, now? The easy way or the hard way?

Lawrence listens for a reply and hears complete silence until the sound of Nick loading this hand gun interrupts the silence. This sound answers Lawrence's question and gives Lawrence further insight to where Nick may be hiding.

LAWRENCE

I told you, Nick.. Get out here on my streets and fuck up if you want to.. I told you I'd be comin' for ya'...

Lawrence pauses.

LAWRENCE

You know, Nick.. They say the apple don't fall far from the tree but damn.. Like father, like son..huh?

Lawrence chuckles. Nick begins listening to every word his father is speaking.

LAWRENCE

Let me ask you this.. What kinda' bonuses you think I get outta being a narcotics agent?

Lawrence pauses.

LAWRENCE

What do you think we "narcs" gotta do when there's no more dope to clean off the street?... In order to prevent crime, there first has to be crime, Nick..

Lawrence pauses as he heads up the stairs, closing in on Nick's hiding spot.

LAWRENCE

So what if I may have made a "quick buck" off of confiscated dope.. And what if those "quick bucks" turned into "big bucks"... You see, Nick.. It wasn't a bad profession you chose..shit.. we coulda' been partners.. on some "father and son" shit.

Lawrence continues stepping closer to where Nick is in the abandoned building.

LAWRENCE

But like I said, Nick.. These are *my* streets. Shit don't go down unless I say so.. You gotta pay the fuckin' toll, Nick.. But now you see what happens when you don't pay that toll..

Nick continues to listen to his father as his voice gets closer. Nick aims his weapon at the entrance to the room where he is.

LAWRENCE

Shit, Nick.. When you don't pay that toll.. all kinda' shit can happen.

Lawrence opens the door to where Nick is with his shot gun aimed steady. They both have each other at equal gun point.

LAWRENCE

Ah ha... There he is... Bad-ass Nick Jenkins... What you think you gon' do wit' that gun, Nick?... You think you big and bad wit' that gun, huh? You may have been big and bad for a moment, but like I said, if you don't pay that toll... all kinda' shit can happen.. Shipments can get switched out... people start dyin'... folks start gettin' arrested.. all kinda shit..

Nick looks at his father now understanding what his father is admitting to.

NICK

What the fuck did you just say???

LAWRENCE

Like I said, Nick.. These are my streets.. I call the fuckin' shots.. By the way, Nick.. how does it feel knowin' that you gave your mother her last line of coke? Don't be too hard on yourself... She was always a slave to that powder.

Nick allows his anger to decide this next action.

NICK

Son of a bitch!!! I'll kill you!!!

Simultaneously, both father and son pull the trigger on their weapons. Lawrence's shot gun round fires and catches Nick in his abdomen ejecting him through the boarded window behind him. Nick's single round fires from his hand gun and pierces Lawrence's throat.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DUSK/EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick falling to the pavement breaking his legs, on impact.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DUSK/EVENING

The scene cuts to Lawrence falling to the floor grabbing his bleeding throat and gasping for air until he takes his last breath.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DUSK/EVENING

The scene cuts to Nick's body lying on the ground in the same manner as in the beginning scene. The scene fades to black.

INT. STATE PRISON - DAY (20??)

The scene fades in a decade or so later. Nick ends up permanently paralyzed from the waste down. Nick is currently imprisoned and the affects of "life in prison" are evident in Nick's physical appearance.

The scene opens with Nick slowly wheeling through a crowded prison eating area, in his wheelchair. As Nick wheels through the crowd, he looks at all the other inmates and feels sympathetic for the wasted lives gathered in that room. Nick wonders how many would ever have the opportunity to experience freedom again, knowing that he'll never be able to. Nick begins feeling hopeless and "without-a-cause". He begins wondering what mark he could leave on this earth, being stuck in a prison and trapped in a wheelchair.

Then, Nick hears a young inmate's voice, bragging about his release from prison. The young inmate begins gloating about his plans to make a great deal of money once he is released. The group of surrounding inmates nod their heads and their conversation concludes.

As the group departs away from the young inmate, Nick wheels over to where the young inmate is standing.

YOUNG INMATE

What it is, old-timer... Can I help you wit'
somethin'?

Nick looks at the younger inmate.

NICK

I happened to hear you say somethin' about gettin'
outta this place soon.. tryin' to get on the grind..
tryin' to make "that" money..

YOUNG INMATE

Yeah.. and..

NICK

Man.. What you youngster's know about makin' money..
You talkin' to a man wit' a provin' track record. I
can tell you all about makin' "that kinda' money"..
and just what "that kinda' money" will do to you..
and your family..

The young inmate's interest is peaked by Nick's words.

YOUNG INMATE

Is that right... Aiight, I got time.. Run ya' mouth,
old-timer..

The scene backs away from Nick and the young inmate as their conversation is silenced by the rest of the commotion proceeding in the eating area. As the crowd silences their conversation, the scene cuts to black and ends.