

BOOK OF MALACHI

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EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY VIEW - DAWN

The CITYSCAPE OF LOS ANGELES is displayed. The city is busy as usual. The sounds of ENGINES and HORNS blares in the background. The buildings stand tall, illuminating blinding lights unto the indigo sky. The CARS driving looks like little shining ants crawling in a hurry. It's a typical rushed Los Angeles evening.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR/ LOS ANGELES HIGHWAY - EVENING

Slow and rhythmic HIP HOP music plays in the background.

MALACHI COLEMAN, 16, is in the passenger seat. He's a dark skinned, scrawny boy with a baby face. He holds a blunt to his mouth and takes a slow hit. He holds it in and then exhales. Smoke slowly escapes from his mouth.

He then passes the blunt to the driver MARCUS SMITH, 17, a bit lighter in complexion. He takes a hit from the blunt too.

The both of them nod their heads to the music. They are clearly feeling the buzz.

They are silent for a while. Marcus passes the blunt back to Malachi. He notices the look on his face, Malachi is sullen. Marcus looks confused.

MARCUS

What's wrong dawg?

MALACHI

It's nothin' man.

MARCUS

You over there lookin' like somebody stole your bitch or something.

MALACHI

Like I said, it ain't nothin'.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Lemme ask you somethin'...

MARCUS

I'm listening...

A beat.

MALACHI

Do you wish sometimes you were  
never born?

Marcus looks at Malachi like he is crazy.

MARCUS

I knew I should've never let you  
start smoking with me. Getting all  
philosophical and shit.

MALACHI

But for real though. You never  
wondered what life would be like if  
you were never born?

MARCUS

No, nigga.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I told you before man you need  
therapy for real.

Malachi looks at Marcus, partially offended.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What? There's nothing wrong with  
it. I'm "bipolar" or whatever.

MALACHI

For real?

MARCUS

That's what they say.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

But anyway you still going to Tim's  
party tomorrow night?

MALACHI

Sure, but it'll have to be after  
Dominique's "acceptance party".

MARCUS

Oh right! With her fine ass.

Malachi scorns at Marcus. A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

But don't you mean your mom's party? I know she's running everything.

MALACHI

You got that right.

MARCUS

Can I come? I promise I won't get Dominique pregnant.

MALACHI

Quit playing man! You know she ain't trying to get with you. How long you been tryin'?

MARCUS

Just wait 'til she see this dick!

MALACHI

Shut the fuck up man!

MARCUS

I'm going to put a ring on her just wait and see.

They both LAUGH. A beat.

MALACHI

But for real, she's about to go to Yale for medical school and I'm over here smoking blunts with yo bum ass everyday.

They LAUGH again. The laughter ceases. Malachi is in deep thought again. A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

What am I going to do with my life?

MARCUS

I don't know why you sweatin' so much. You know your dad can pay off any school to get you in.

Marcus LAUGHS to himself.

MALACHI

You think it's that easy huh?

MARCUS

I'm just saying your pops got that paper. Must be nice man. Some of us don't come from shit.

A beat.

MALACHI

Mo' money, mo' problems they say.

MARCUS

Negro please! Ya'll the black Brady Bunch over there.

They both LAUGH together.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ DINING ROOM - EVENING

We are in the mansion of the Coleman family. The dining room is very elegant and classy. They clearly like the finer things in life. Every Coleman sits around the table. They appear to be the perfect family.

We are introduced to MICHAEL COLEMAN, 47, a dark skinned educated man. He looks serious but is kind-hearted underneath the exterior.

CLAUDIA COLEMAN, 45, looks wonderful for her age. She keeps up with her looks and appearance, she can be a bit vain and superficial.

DOMINIQUE COLEMAN, 18, a beautiful fair skinned girl. Long, black, naturally curly hair. She's very kind, spirited, and ambitious.

Their house keeper LUCIA lays out turkey, green bean casserole, potatoes, and mixed vegetables. When she finishes Claudia looks towards Malachi.

CLAUDIA

Malachi, say grace.

Malachi is caught off guard.

MALACHI

Why do I have to say it?

CLAUDIA

Because I asked you to.

Malachi ignores her and laughs a little. Claudia looks at him sternly and clears her throat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Malachi?

DOMINIQUE  
I can say it.

Claudia turns to Dominique. A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
Just let me say it. I want to.

Claudia gives in.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
May we bow our heads in prayer.

Everyone bows their heads.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
Dear God. Thank you for the food we  
are about to receive. Please bond  
this family together with your  
love. Protect each of us Lord. Look  
after all of us to assure we are  
safe and protected. Let us be able  
to trust each other and to be  
forever bonded by your blood. Amen.

FAMILY  
Amen!

CLAUDIA  
What a beautiful prayer.

The family begins putting food on their plates and passing  
around the food. Malachi continues to smirk to himself,  
Claudia notices. Michael notices too. Michael studies  
Malachi.

MICHAEL  
(to Malachi)  
So how was your day today?

MALACHI  
Chill.

Michael prolongs his gaze on Malachi, Malachi refuses to look  
him in the eye. Michael then redirects his attention to  
Dominique.

MICHAEL  
(to Dominique)  
And you young lady?

DOMINIQUE

Good, today I was thinking how surreal it is that this is my last year. I can't believe I'm leaving.

CLAUDIA

That's because you're going to Yale University next year!

DOMINIQUE

(playfully)

Dang mom, I know but let me finish high school first.

CLAUDIA

I got everything ready for your party tomorrow. It's going to be a ball!

Claudia looks over to Malachi, a long loathing stare. Malachi looks like he is playing with his food a bit.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Maybe you can inspire that one over there a little.

DOMINIQUE

Mom...please...

A beat.

CLAUDIA

Or maybe find some friends that actually have ambition. Unlike that Marcus, that boy is a bad influence.

Malachi is silent.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Have you at least thought about some schools you want to attend? You are a junior.

Malachi shrugs his shoulders. A beat.

MALACHI

I already told you. Maybe Howard or Morehouse...some place like that...

CLAUDIA

At least start looking into their requirements.

(MORE)

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
They're not going to accept you just because you're black. They have standards you know.

MALACHI  
You seem to know a lot about college. What was your degree in again?

Claudia is taken aback.

MICHAEL  
Woah, woah, woah. Malachi, that was uncalled for.

Malachi looks over to Claudia.

MALACHI  
Sorry...okay...

Michael turns to Claudia.

MICHAEL  
(to Claudia)  
If Malachi doesn't know what he wants to do yet that's fine, he has time. Plus, there's plenty of entry level positions at AmeriBank. I can hook him up. Let's just eat okay.

CLAUDIA  
Yeah, I'm sure he'll love that. A hand out.

MALACHI  
Or I can marry rich.

MICHAEL  
Malachi!

CLAUDIA  
You know what! I can't believe how ungrateful you are. After everything we've done for you!

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Yes, I don't have a degree. Sorry if I don't want you to make the same mistakes as me!

MICHAEL  
Honey, just calm down.



Michael tries to grab her hand to calm her but she rejects it. She's too upset. Michael is triggered, you can see it in his eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 (to Malachi)  
 Malachi, I need you to go upstairs.

MALACHI  
 But -

MICHAEL  
 Now!

Malachi rises from his seat defeated, clearly upset.

He looks at Claudia with disdain. He then gives Dominique the same stare. He walks out of the dining room. Dominique is sadden and looks guilty.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Malachi lies on his bed on his back, staring into space at the ceiling, lost in thought, reflecting, wanting to be far, far, away...

KNOCK KNOCK!

Malachi is out of his daze now and sits up.

MALACHI  
 It's open.

The door slowly OPENS and Michael peeps in. Malachi rolls his eyes and lies back down.

Michael walks in cautiously, holding a plate of food with a napkin covering it. Michael places the food on a nearby stand.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
 Eat son.

MALACHI  
 Nah, I'm good.

Michael walks closer to Malachi and sits on the bed.

MICHAEL  
 Sit up Malachi.

Malachi reluctantly rises up and sit on the bed with Michael.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Listen, I'm sorry for the way I  
reacted.

MALACHI  
It's cool.

MICHAEL  
But you got to understand. Your  
mom...she has been through a lot.  
Your words really hurt her. I don't  
like seeing her like that.

MALACHI  
I understand...but why does she  
treat me like this?

Michael takes a DEEP BREATH.

MICHAEL  
I know it may seem like she is hard  
on you but that's because she cares  
about you and wants the best for  
you. We all do.

A beat.

Then Michael stares directly into Malachi's eyes.

MALACHI  
What?

Michael takes a DEEP BREATH again. A beat.

MICHAEL  
Were you high at dinner?

Malachi takes a long pause, looking guilty. Michael knows  
what this means. He looks disappointed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Why Malachi?

Malachi shrugs his shoulders. A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
And I know this wasn't your first  
time. It's happening more often  
now. What is going on with you? Is  
Marcus pressuring you?

MALACHI  
No...it just makes me feel better.

MICHAEL  
Makes you feel better?

MALACHI  
Yeah, like everything is going to be okay.

MICHAEL  
Is everything not okay now?

MALACHI  
I'm not saying that, it's just sometimes my mind races and it takes the edge off.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
Do you need to see a therapist?

MALACHI  
Why does everyone keep saying that?

MICHAEL  
I'm just asking, sounds like you're looking for an escape.

MALACHI  
I'm not...okay?

MICHAEL  
Listen.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You can do whatever you want once you move out on your own but I don't want you high ever again in my house do you understand?

MALACHI  
Yes sir.

MICHAEL  
You're only sixteen and you know they are looking for a reason to arrest people like us out there. Don't throw your life away son. Okay?

MALACHI

Okay.

MICHAEL

Love you son.

MALACHI

Love you too.

MICHAEL

I'm serious, I love you man. Don't forget that.

Michael and Malachi hug it out, then Michael stands up and walks towards the door.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Please eat before the food gets cold.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I know your high ass is hungry.

Michael CHUCKLES and Malachi smiles at his dad. Michael eventually walks out of the door and CLOSES the door behind him.

Malachi then walks towards the plate, takes the napkin off, and begins eating.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The Coleman's are in the living room, getting ready for a shindig.

There is a huge banner hanging on one of the walls saying "CONGRATUALTIONS DOMINIQUE!!!". Claudia is stressing out.

CLAUDIA

Okay, refreshments are over here. Around six-ish we will start serving the wine and champagne after that we will serve the cake...

Dominique, Malachi, and Michael exchanges looks, laughing at her.

DOMINIQUE

Mom, who did you invite?

CLAUDIA

My friends from the book club, a couple of women from church, a couple of friendly neighbors...

DOMINIQUE

So all of your friends?

CLAUDIA

Well your Aunt Trisha and your cousin Angel are coming...along with her three kids.

Claudia slightly SCOFFS. A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Dominique, I never said you couldn't invite your friends.

DOMINIQUE

It's cool, I don't want to invite them anyway. This party is starting to sound like its for old white people anyway.

Dominique and Malachi LAUGH together.

CLAUDIA

Yeah a bunch of old white people willing to help fund your Yale education. You'll thank me later girl.

A beat.

MALACHI

Hey mom.

Claudia looks over to Malachi.

CLAUDIA

Yes?

MALACHI

I'm sorry...about last night...

A beat.

CLUADIA

It's okay, water under the bridge.

She gives him a quick smile. She then scans Malachi's clothes. He has on an over sized black hoody, baggy jeans, and some black Jordan's.

CLAUDIA  
(to Malachi)  
Is that what you're wearing?

MALACHI  
Yeah, what's wrong with it? You  
said casual.

CLAUDIA  
Yes Malachi, casual not street.

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Malachi listen, I just don't want  
anyone stereotyping you. Now please  
go upstairs and find something  
presentable.

Malachi is completely dumbfounded.

MALACHI  
Are you serious?

CLAUDIA  
Yes, go change. Now.

Dominique grabs his hand.

DOMINIQUE  
Come on, I'll help you out. It'll  
be fun!

She tries to cheer him up. It does not work.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Malachi sits on his bed while Dominique rummages in his  
closet. She finds a striped button up shirt.

DOMINIQUE  
Oh, this one looks nice, goes well  
with your shoes.

She throws it on the bed.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
What do you think?

MALACHI  
Yeah, dope...

Dominique notices the look on his face.

DOMINIQUE  
What's wrong bro?

MALACHI  
(mockingly)  
I don't want anyone stereotyping  
you.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
She just don't want me scaring her  
white friends.

Dominique sits on the bed with Malachi.

DOMINIQUE  
You know how mom is. It's "my"  
party and she didn't even think  
about inviting my friends.

They both LAUGH together.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
I think your outfit is dope as it  
is.

MALACHI  
Thanks sis.

A beat.

DOMINIQUE  
Hey, Malachi?

Malachi turns to Dominique.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
I just want to say sorry.

Malachi looks confused.

MALACHI  
For what?

DOMINIQUE  
About yesterday. I saw the way you  
looked at me after dinner.

Malachi looks guilty. A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
I just hate how she compares us,  
you know?

(MORE)

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

It's so unfair and it makes me feel guilty. I just don't want you to hate me.

MALACHI

Sis, it's not your fault. You accomplished a lot. She's just proud of you, no need to apologize for that.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

And I could never hate you.

DOMINIQUE

Thanks.

A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

You may not know it yet but you will eventually find your way too...

Malachi LAUGHS to himself.

MALACHI

Oh yeah? Name one thing I'm good at.

A beat.

DOMINIQUE

Listening.

Dominique kisses Malachi on the cheek. Malachi smiles.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

Now, change and let's go back downstairs. Don't leave me all by myself.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The festivities are happening. There is a CROWD now. Claudia is the life of the party greeting everyone and making sure everyone feels at home. There is a GROUP of upper class white women standing around with their champagne glasses LAUGHING and TALKING. Claudia attends to them mostly.

Dominique and Malachi just stand to the side awkwardly drinking their punch, watching everyone.



They don't know anyone there. Michael walks up to them and looks at his children, reading their minds.

MICHAEL

Yup, I don't know anyone here either.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Just smile and nod.

Claudia catches Dominique's eye.

DOMINIQUE

Oh god.

CLAUDIA

Dominique!

Dominique gives her mother a fake smile.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

You remember Carol, Rachel, and Diane don't you?

Dominique looks over to Michael. His look says "remember what I said". Dominique turns her head back towards her mother and her friends. Dominique simply smiles and nod. Claudia smiles back, she waves her hand, beckoning Dominique.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Come over here, don't be shy at your own party! They want to say hi!

Dominique walks slowly towards them with that fake smile. The women say numerous things like "Congratulations!", "You've grown so much!", "You're so beautiful!". Claudia basks in all of this, Dominique is uncomfortable.

Michael and Malachi are left to themselves. Malachi stares at all the attention Dominique is receiving, feeling left out. Michael notices.

MICHAEL

I'm proud of you son.

Malachi snaps out of his trance and looks at Michael questionably.

MALACHI

What makes you say that?

MICHAEL

Just wanted you to know that, in  
case I don't say that enough.

Michael puts his hand on Malachi's shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And plus I don't need a reason.  
You're my son, my only son. That's  
the only reason I need.

MALACHI

That's a cop out, you just can't  
find a reason.

Michael LAUGHS briefly.

DING DONG!

Michael suddenly turns to Claudia. She beckons him to open  
the door.

MICHAEL

(to Malachi)  
Come on, let's go open the door.  
Your mom is too busy entertaining  
the white folks.

Malachi smirks to himself. Michael walks away and Malachi  
follows.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - NIGHT

Michael OPENS the door.

We see TRISHA GIVENS 50, ANGEL GIVENS 30, and Angel's three  
kids; KEION (8), KJ (5), and DAMARIUS (2).

We can tell they don't come from the same caliber as the  
Coleman's but Michael still welcomes them with open arms.

MICHAEL

Family! How's everything going?

TRISHA

Oh everything is fine Michael so  
good to see you.

She goes in for a hug.

ANGEL

Hey Uncle Michael.

MICHAEL  
 Hey niece, those little ones ain't  
 so little no more.

ANGEL  
 You got that right. This one right  
 here about to be three next month.

She points at the two year old DAMARIUS.

MICHAEL  
 Three?

KEION  
 Uncle Michael.

Michael looks at the eight year old KEION.

MICHAEL  
 Yes?

KEION  
 I just turned eight and I'm in  
 third grade. I'm a big kid!

KJ  
 And I'm five!

MICHAEL  
 Ya'll about ready to go to college  
 with Dominique!

Everyone LAUGHS. Trisha and Angel both turn around and see Malachi. They just noticed him.

MALACHI  
 Hey ya'll.

TRISHA AND ANGEL  
 MALACHI!!!

They all join in on a group hug. They hug him very tightly, motherly hugs.

ANGEL  
 How are you doing? You're getting  
 so grown up!

TRISHA  
 Over there all quiet!

MALACHI  
 Everything is fine. How are ya'll?

ANGEL

Good, good.

TRISHA

Wonderful Malachi, thank you for asking.

A beat.

ANGEL

Where is my genius cousin Dominique? I haven't seen her in ages. Can't wait to catch up!

MICHAEL

She's right inside, come on in.

Trisha, Angel, Malachi, and the kids walk inside. Michael CLOSES the door behind him.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MOMENTS LATER...

Malachi stands off by himself sipping on a cup. Angel catches him and walks over to him.

ANGEL

So...what's in the cup?

MALACHI

(jokingly)  
It's been a long day. Mind your business cuz.

ANGEL

I get it. You see me sipping too right? Having three kids will do that to you.

She suggests to the glass of wine she is holding. They both LAUGH.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

So, how's everything...really...

Malachi shrugs his shoulders.

MALACHI

Everything is everything.

A beat.

ANGEL

You seem....

Malachi waits for her to finish.

MALACHI

What?

A beat.

ANGEL

Your smile, it isn't the same.

Malachi is confused.

MALACHI

What do you mean?

ANGEL

You're faking it. I can tell. You can't hide from me, we got the same blood.

They CHUCKLE together. A beat.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

If you ever need someone to talk to. Just give me a call. You still have my number right?

MALACHI

Yes.

Keion and KJ starts running around.

ANGEL

Keion! KJ! Stop running in this house!

Angel rolls her eyes and looks over to Malachi.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I got to go.

She runs after her children. Malachi ponders on her words.

He then looks across the room and sees Dominique talking with an OLDER WHITE MAN, in his early 40's, very handsome. They seem to be very close, LAUGHING together and almost touching.

Malachi continues to sip his cup.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR/ STREETS - NIGHT

Marcus and Malachi are in the car again smoking another blunt. They are LAUGHING together.

MALACHI

Yo, my mom was trippin' the whole day. She even made me change my outfit. Saying "I don't want anyone stereotyping you".

MARCUS

You for real man?

MALACHI

Deadass!

They both LAUGH. A beat.

MARCUS

Why don't you ask Dominique to come out tonight? Her party's over right?

MALACHI

Dawg, what did I tell you?

MARCUS

Just do it nigga.

MALACHI

So, you want me to invite someone to someone's else's party that didn't even invite me?

MARCUS

Nigga! He asked me to spread the word. Stop getting smart!

Malachi begins dialing his cell phone it RINGS twice then.

DOMINIQUE

Hello?

Malachi puts Dominique on speaker phone.

MALACHI

Hey Dominique. What's up?

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)

Where are you? Did you sneak out?

MALACHI  
I'm with Marcus.

MARCUS  
(flirtatiously)  
Hey Dominique.

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Boy, if you don't get out my ear.

Everyone LAUGHS.

MARCUS  
Fuck you then, you ain't getting invited!

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Hold up, invited where? There's a party somewhere?

MARCUS  
Never mind now.

MALACHI  
Marcus has a friend who is having a party -

MARCUS  
Or as you bougie niggas call it a soiree.

They all LAUGH.

MALACHI  
Marcus's friend Tim is having a soiree...and he wanted to invite you.

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Well, thank you Marcus.

MARCUS  
Don't play nice now!

They all LAUGH. A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
So what's up? You gonna pull up or what?

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
You just told me I'm not invited!

MARCUS  
Girl, get your ass over there!

A beat.

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Malachi text me the address.

MALACHI  
Alright.

Dominique HANGS UP the phone. Marcus is smiling ear to ear. Malachi notices. A beat.

MARCUS  
Yo, if we go to this party we got  
to be lit.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
I got something in the glove  
compartment.

Malachi opens the glove compartment. Malachi finds a BLACK PISTOL.

MALACHI  
We're going to be lit alright. What  
the fuck man?

Marcus turns around and Malachi suggests to the pistol.

MARCUS  
Oh my bad.

MALACHI  
My bad? What the fuck is this for?

MARCUS  
It's my right! It's in the  
constitution nigga! That's not what  
I wanted you to find. Keep looking!

Malachi digs further in the glove compartment and finds a clear plastic bag with white powder in it.

MALACHI  
Once again, what the fuck?

MARCUS  
Got it from Tim.



Malachi looks at Marcus puzzled. Marcus parks the car on the side of the road.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Give me that.

Malachi hands over the cocaine bag to Marcus. Marcus reaches over and digs inside the glove compartment. He grabs a handheld, rectangular mirror and places it on the arm rest. He then digs in his pocket and pulls out a dollar bill rolled very tightly like a mini tube.

He delicately opens the tiny bag and pours some of the white substance on the mirror. He then carefully creates two lines from the powder with a razor.

With no hesitation he places the tube inside his nose, lean over and SNIFFS one line of the powder into his nose. After the line he leans back in his seat for a moment, feeling a rush, he's euphoric.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You got to try it man.

Malachi just watches. He's shocked, horrified, yet curious.

MALACHI

What is it like?

MARCUS

Like being on top of the world.  
Nothing can bring you down.

Marcus hands Malachi the rolled up dollar bill. Malachi slowly grabs it...

He takes a DEEP BREATH not sure if he should do it.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Nigga, hurry the fuck up!

Malachi then leans over and SNIFFS one line.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Marcus speeds through the highway. Their faces are in pure ecstasy. They look at each other smiling. Malachi's grin is the widest.

He stares out of the window, everything is going by so fast. The street lights passing by are a blur, like a comet shower. He looks ahead at the street, the ride feels like he's in a video game. Malachi looks back at Marcus.

MALACHI

I love you man.

Marcus turns back to him.

MARCUS

What the fuck?

MALACHI

I love you man, I love me, I love everyone, I love everything!

Marcus burst out LAUGHING and continues to speed down the road.

INT. DRUG HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The party is lively, it's crowded, the MUSIC BLARES from the speakers. Malachi and Marcus just entered. Marcus begins dapping some people and saying "what's up?".

Malachi just lingers in the background greeting people. He doesn't know anyone there but is confident with asserting himself and making himself known.

Everyone seems to be moving quickly, lights are brighter than usual, and the music is louder too. It's like the soundwaves are penetrating Malachi's eardrums making him dance a little. Marcus notices.

MARCUS

You are one jokey nigga.

Marcus daps someone. His name is TIM, 25, he's a tall and slender white guy with dreads. He looks a bit unkempt and shaggy.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What's up man?

TIM

Thank you for coming out.

He looks over to Malachi.

TIM (CONT'D)

Yo, is this Malachi?

Malachi is confused.

MALACHI

How do you know my name?

TIM  
Marcus told me about you.

MARCUS  
I told him you've been kind of down  
and need some medicine, if you know  
what I mean.

Marcus and Tim LAUGHS a little. A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
(to Tim)  
He's on some of your shit now.

Tim's face lights up.

TIM  
Oh really? How do you feel man?

MALACHI  
Fucking great!

Marcus and Tim both LAUGH together.

TIM  
Well, let me know if you ever need  
more. I got plenty more where that  
came from.

MALACHI  
Yeah definitely what's your number?

Malachi pulls out his phone.

TIM  
555-843-7981.

Malachi puts the digits in his phone and saves it.

MALACHI  
Got it!

He puts his phone in his pocket.

All of a sudden, Malachi spots Dominique with a drink in her  
hand. Malachi can't wait to talk to her, practically  
sprinting towards her.

Marcus and Tim watches him run and LAUGHS at his behavior.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Dominique!

Dominique turns around.

DOMINIQUE  
Hey, Malachi!

She notices the wide grin on his face and the sweat on his forehead. At first she is confused, but then she smiles.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
I've never seen you so happy  
before.

MALACHI  
What can I say? I'm glad to see  
you, you're my only sister! We got  
to stick together.

DOMINIQUE  
Okay...? Glad to see you too!

A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
But why did you invite me to this  
dingy ass house?

MARCUS (O.S.)  
Well, well, well...

Marcus slowly walks towards Dominique. She smiles at him delighted.

DOMINIQUE  
Well, well, well...

MARCUS  
If it isn't the most beautiful girl  
in the world.

Dominique seems flattered. She playfully flips her hair.

DOMINIQUE  
Get in line Marcus.

MARCUS  
I will, I will wait a lifetime for  
you.

Dominique did not expect that response, it pierces her heart. Malachi leans over and whispers to Marcus.

MALACHI  
Yo man, got some more?

Marcus rolls his eyes at Malachi.

MARCUS  
I'm kind of in the middle of  
something.

DOMINIQUE  
Some more what?

MARCUS  
Don't worry about.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
We'll be back, don't go nowhere.

DOMINIQUE  
Trust me, I won't.

She stares back at Marcus smiling flirtatiously.

INT. DRUG HOUSE/ BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marcus and Malachi continue to snort cocaine together; line  
after line.

BLACKOUT

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - DAY

Malachi wakes up, he then rises from bed, sits up, and holds  
his head.

His head is pounding....THUMP, THUMP, THUMP,...

He's trying to remember how did he get home the previous  
night but nothing is coming to his mind...just that thumping  
headache....

THUMP THUMP THUMP!

His phone RINGS. He looks at the caller ID it is DOMINIQUE.

MALACHI  
Hello?

DOMINIQUE  
Malachi!

MALACHI  
Dominique?

DOMINIQUE

Hey.

MALACHI

Why are you calling me? Aren't you here?

DOMINIQUE

No, I'm not.

A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

If mom and dad asks where I'm at, tell them I spent the night at Kimberly's.

MALACHI

Who is Kimberly?

DOMINIQUE

Just do it!

MALACHI

Where are you for real?

Dominique HANGS UP. Malachi hears the DIAL TONE and hangs up the phone. Malachi lies back down.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - DAY

MOMENTS LATER...

KNOCK KNOCK!

Malachi wakes up groggily, not sure where he is.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Yeah...

Michael OPENS the door and sees Malachi lying down. Malachi looks horrible. Michael is concerned.

MICHAEL

You missed breakfast. Is everything alright?

Michael notices the way Malachi looks.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You look terrible.

MALACHI  
Yeah, I just have a pounding  
headache.

MICHAEL  
From what?

MALACHI  
Not sure, it just came out of  
nowhere.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
Where is your sister?

MALACHI  
She said she was at Kimberly's.

MICHAEL  
She didn't tell Claudia and I.

Michael looks suspicious.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
That's not like her.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Do you need anything an aspirin?  
Water?

MALACHI  
Please...

Michael studies the way Malachi looks. He looks like a  
helpless infant.

MICHAEL  
I'll be back.

Michael closes the door behind him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/ HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

The school bell RINGS. Malachi is at his locker switching out  
books. He looks over to his right. Far away in the distance,  
he sees Marcus and Dominique with each other in the hallway.  
They look friendly with each other, a little too friendly.

Malachi collects his books and then SLAMS his locker shut.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - DAY

Marcus is in the driver's seat as usual and Malachi is in the passenger seat. They are passing another joint.

MARCUS  
Saturday was lit as fuck!

MALACHI  
Yeah it was dope.

MARCUS  
How was the powder man?

MALACHI  
I practically died the next morning, my dad had to help me recover.

MARCUS  
Awww, daddy's always there to save the day.

MALACHI  
Shut up man!

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
What happened after the party?

MARCUS  
I had to drop your coked ass off. You were dancing like a fool at first and then you hit a major comedown. Dominique helped you up the stairs to your room.

MALACHI  
And after that?

Marcus looks at Malachi for a second and Malachi looks back at him.

MARCUS  
I went back home.

MALACHI  
By yourself?

Marcus is triggered.

MARCUS  
Where the fuck you getting at!?



MALACHI

I noticed the way you and Dominique  
were on each other today.

Marcus looks guilty.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Did ya'll fuck?

MARCUS

Nah man...you know she don't want  
me...

Malachi pierces Marcus with his eyes. Marcus can tell Malachi  
knows the truth.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Why does it matter to you anyway!?

MALACHI

She's my sister Marcus.

MARCUS

What you think I'm going to hurt  
her or something!?

MALACHI

No, I'm trying to protect you dawg!

MARCUS

What do you mean?

A beat.

MALACHI

She's just having fun with you man.

Marcus looks offended.

MARCUS

You don't think I'm good enough for  
her do you!? You know what!? You  
try to act like you're so different  
from the rest of your family! Ain't  
shit different about you dawg!

MALACHI

It's not that. It's just she likes  
to have fun. She don't take dudes  
seriously.

MARCUS

You're just jealous!

MALACHI  
Jealous of what!?

MARCUS  
That I actually found some pussy!  
What about you man!? You still a  
virgin!

A beat.

MALACHI  
So, what is that supposed to mean!?

MARCUS  
Starting to think you play for the  
other team for real.

This triggers Malachi.

MALACHI  
You know what man fuck you!

MARCUS  
Fuck me!? Fuck you!

MALACHI  
I'm just trying to look out for  
your stupid ass!

MARCUS  
You know what motherfucka!?

Marcus pulls over to the side of the road and SLAMS on the  
breaks.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
Get the fuck out!

MALACHI  
Are you serious!?

MARCUS  
Get the fuck out NOW!

Malachi feels defeated and slowly opens the door and steps  
out of the car. Malachi closes the door and stands beside the  
car for a couple of seconds.

MALACHI  
Come on man, I'm sorry it's just -

Marcus ACCELERATES on the pedal and drives away, leaving  
Malachi in the dust...

Malachi is dumbfounded...

He then picks up his phone and dials a number.

RING RING!

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Hello?

MALACHI  
Can you pick me up?

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Where are you? I thought you rode  
with Marucs.

Malachi looks around.

MALACHI  
I'm on University Road.

Malachi SIGHS.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Just come pick me up please.

INT. DOMINIQUE'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - DAY

Dominique's driving, Malachi is silent while he sits on the  
passenger seat. His face is balled up.

DOMINIQUE  
Malachi, tell me what happened.

A beat.

MALACHI  
Can we just go home?

Dominique puts her hand on Malachi's knee.

DOMINIQUE  
Malachi, talk to me!

Malachi jerks his knee away from her hand. A beat.

MALACHI  
You got to ruin every fucking thing  
don't you!? Everything always got  
to be about you right!? Can't have  
shit when you're around!

Dominique looks baffled.

DOMINIQUE  
Excuse me!?

MALACHI  
I know you fucked Marcus!

Dominique is caught off guard. A beat.

DOMINIQUE  
Sorry...but what is the big deal?

MALACHI  
Because...I -

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
He's my best friend Dominique...

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
You know how you go.

DOMINIQUE  
What are you talking about?

MALACHI  
You don't take your relationships seriously.

DOMINIQUE  
That's because they're all little boys. I need a grown man to take care of me.

She smiles at Malachi jokingly. He doesn't smile back. Dominique notices how serious Malachi is and wipes the smile from her face.

MALACHI  
Marcus really likes you. Just don't hurt him.

Dominique looks guilty. A beat.

DOMINIQUE  
Malachi, he knows we're just having fun. We made that very clear. I told him straight up, this is just physical and he agreed. Okay?

Malachi is silent.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

Okay!?

A beat.

MALACHI

Alright. Whatever.

DOMINIQUE

Listen, I'm sorry okay. If you want I can stop seeing him.

Malachi is quiet.

MALACHI

I don't really care anymore. Do what you want...

DOMINIQUE

Just don't tell mom and dad okay.

MALACHI

Alright. Whatever.

Malachi stares out the window still angry inside.

TITLE CARD: TWO MONTHS LATER...

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - DAY

DING DONG!

Malachi is in the hallway and is caught off guard. He walks towards the front door and OPENS it.

He sees a WHITE MAN, in his 40's, he's tall, and handsome. Malachi is confused.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Hey, can I help you?

KEITH

Malachi?

Malachi is stunned that he knows his name.

KEITH (CONT'D)

It's so nice to finally meet you. I heard a lot about you. I'm Keith by the way.

Keith sticks out his hand, Malachi slowly shakes it, dumbfounded.

KEITH (CONT'D)  
Can I come in?

DOMINIQUE (O.S.)  
Keith!

Dominique runs towards Keith and gives him a huge hug. She then let's go of it.

Malachi is so confused.

KEITH  
Are you sure your parents are ready  
for the news?

Dominique seems apprehensive.

DOMINIQUE  
They don't have a choice.

A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
(to Keith)  
Come inside.

Keith follows Dominique inside the house. Malachi glances at Dominique, trying to figure out what is going on. Dominique ignores him for the moment.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

The whole family sits in the living room. Dominique and Keith sits on a love seat together, very close together almost cuddling.

Michael and Claudia are across from them and watches Dominique and Keith intently. Malachi sits by himself on a nearby solo couch.

Claudia leans in very closely.

CLAUDIA  
Come again Dominique?

DOMINIQUE  
This is my fiancé, Keith.

Dominique grabs his hand. Claudia and Michael looks away. Malachi is shocked.

MICHAEL  
Fiancé?

DOMINIQUE  
Yeah, its finally official. He  
proposed yesterday.

Dominique sticks out her hand so that Claudia and Michael can see the gorgeous ring on her finger. Claudia is vehement but tries to smile.

CLAUDIA  
You're supposed to start college  
soon honey.

DOMINIQUE  
Well, I was thinking about taking a  
break.

CLAUDIA  
Taking a break?

DOMINIQUE  
I wanted to move in with Keith and  
see where things go from there.

Michael and Claudia are both silent. Claudia looks as though she is about to lose her cool again.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
Mom, he's a really great guy. He's  
a neurosurgeon. Has his own  
mansion, no kids.

MICHAEL  
How old are you Keith?

KEITH  
I'm 42.

It's a lot for Michael to hear. Claudia mentally left the conversation, her hand is on her forehead, covering her eyes. She can't even look at Dominique and Keith. She has her legs crossed and her foot is shaking.

MICHAEL  
How long have you two been dating?

KEITH  
About eight months now.

MICHAEL  
That's only one month after her  
18th birthday.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Her age...that doesn't bother you?

KEITH  
Why would it? She's an adult.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
Where did you two even meet?

Dominique and Keith LAUGH together.

KEITH  
I was a guest speaker at her school  
for Career Day.

He reminisces on that day.

KEITH (CONT'D)  
She had so many questions and was  
so enthusiastic about being a  
surgeon. We just kept talking and  
talking. We found out we had so  
much in common, we couldn't stay  
away from each other...

A beat.

KEITH (CONT'D)  
We just click, we work together...

Keith holds Dominique's hand tighter.

KEITH (CONT'D)  
I love her.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
You don't think you're moving too  
fast? It's only been 8 months...

A beat.

KEITH  
If you're in love, what is there to  
wait for?

A beat. Then Michael turns to Dominique.

MICHAEL  
Dominique, baby just think about  
what you're doing.

(MORE)



MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You got accepted to Yale's medical school, their acceptance rate is only 5%. You will practically be getting a full scholarship, this is an opportunity for you to build a thriving career for yourself. If you two love each other so much, why don't you just wait until you're finished?

DOMINIQUE

School will be always be there and plus I felt so pressured to go to college right after high school. I've been thinking about taking a break for awhile even before Keith came along, just to breathe a little. I've spent so much time trying to make you guys happy that I lost myself. It's not like you two noticed. You guys just want me to be your trophy daughter -

MICHAEL

That's not true Dominique.

DOMINIQUE

Yes it is!

CLAUDIA

YOU'RE THROWING YOUR WHOLE LIFE AWAY!

The sudden outburst has everyone shook. There is complete silence for about ten seconds. Dominique's eyes slowly well up.

DOMINIQUE

No mom, I'm throwing your vision of who you want me to be away. All of my life, you've been controlling me. Living vicariously through me!

Claudia tears up.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

This is my life mom! Not yours! You've had your chance. It's too late for you! Let me live my life!

CLAUDIA

So what are you going to do now huh!? Just sit around and be a house wife!?

DOMINIQUE

Well, the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree now does it!

Claudia quickly rises up and SLAPS Dominique. Michael and Malachi are alarmed and holds Claudia back. Keith holds Dominique.

KEITH

(to Claudia)  
What the hell is the matter with you!?

Michael turns to Claudia.

MICHAEL

Claudia, what are you doing!?

Claudia is frozen, she says nothing, tears are falling. Keith caresses Dominique and rubs her cheek.

KEITH

Are you okay?

Dominique nods her head, crying. Keith gives Dominique a quick kiss on the lips and hugs her tightly.

Michael and Claudia watches, disgusted.

KEITH (CONT'D)

We're out of here!

Keith and Dominique holds hands, they hurry away, Keith leads the way.

Tears are escaping Claudia's eyes. She tries to run after Dominique.

CLAUDIA

Please, Dominique listen I'm so sorry -

DOMINIQUE

There's nothing else to say mom!

Dominique has nothing but rage and disgust in her eyes. This pierces Claudia. She breaks down, Michael tries to hold her but Claudia pushes him away, needing space.

Dominique gives one more look over to Malachi saying "farewell" with her eyes and then Dominique and Keith leaves the room. We hear the front door OPEN and then SLAM.

Malachi is completely dumbfounded. Claudia continues to YELP in agony.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - EVENING

Malachi's phone is RINGING. Malachi walks towards his phone and looks at it.

Marcus is calling. Suddenly, the call ends.

Malachi notices that he has SEVEN MISSED CALLS from Marcus. Malachi takes a long breath and then calls Marcus back. Marcus picks up the phone.

MARCUS (O.S.)  
CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS BITCH!?

Malachi pushes the phone away from his ear. He then takes a DEEP BREATH and talks to Marcus calmly.

MALACHI  
Marcus, calm down please.

MARCUS (O.S.)  
HOW THE FUCK SHE'S GONNA TO LEAVE  
ME FOR SOME OLD ASS WHITE NIGGA!?

MALACHI  
Dude calm down. What is happening?  
I am honestly just as confused as  
you. What is going on?

MARCUS (O.S.)  
This whole time me and Dom were  
together she had a whole other  
dude! She said they were in an open  
relationship, I didn't know that  
shit!

Malachi's face drops.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
Now they're engaged and she's  
cutting ties with me! THAT BITCH!

MALACHI  
Please stop calling her that.

MARCUS (O.S.)  
I FUCKING LOVED HER MAN!

A beat.

MALACHI

Just chill alright and let's meet  
up for a blunt to get your mind off  
things. Everything will be okay.  
Alright?

You can hear Marcus BREATHING HARD trying to calm himself  
over the phone. A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Alright?

MARCUS (O.S.)

Alright.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Marcus and Malachi are in the car smoking once again. Marcus  
is quiet. Malachi passes the blunt back to Marcus.

MALACHI

So you don't have anything else to  
say now?

Marcus is silent. He just SPEEDS through the highway. His  
focus is like an eagle's.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Slow down before you get us  
arrested man.

Marcus just stares at Malachi blankly, he's completely vacant  
and cold, it's scary. It's like he's not even there. Malachi  
is frightened.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Everything alright man?

Marcus is unresponsive and just continues to speed through  
the highway. Malachi decides to keep quiet.

INT. MARCUS'S CAR/ STREET - NIGHT

Marcus parks on the side of the street, in front of a lovely  
mansion.

MALACHI

Where the fuck are we?

A beat.

MARCUS  
You want some more weed right?

MALACHI  
Yeah...don't you usually get it  
from Tim?

MARCUS  
Just wait in the damn car.

MALACHI  
But -

MARCUS  
WAIT IN THE DAMN CAR!

Malachi is silent. Marcus exits the car and SLAMS the door shut.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
Goddamn! Fucking talk too much!

Malachi is frightened and waits patiently. He watches Marcus hurry closer to the MANSION and then he walks around it towards the backyard. He disappears in the night's shadows.

Malachi waits patiently in the car, very confused as to what is going on. He continues to stare where Marcus disappeared to.

MALACHI  
Where the fuck is he?

MOMENTS LATER...

Malachi hears a distant FEMALE SCREAM coming from the mansion. Malachi is alarmed and immediately gets out the car and SHUTS the door behind him.

He runs closer and closer to the house, and then towards the backyard. He reaches the side of the house, looks down, and notices a busted basement window.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?

Malachi kneels down and carefully walks through it, cautious of the shattered glass.

INT. MANSION/ BASEMENT - NIGHT

Malachi enters through the window, he's inside the basement now, examining the place. He walks towards the staircase, up the stairs is a busted door leading inside the house.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
PLEASE! PLEASE DON'T DO THIS!

Malachi immediately runs up the stairs and follows the voice...the voice sounds familiar...

INT. MANSION/ HALLWAY - NIGHT

He runs down the narrow hallway in a hurry. He see's an opening, it looks like it's leading to the kitchen. Malachi hurries inside.

INT. MANSION/ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Malachi enters the kitchen and suddenly stops in his tracks. He is stunned at the sight he is seeing. Malachi sees Keith and to the side of him stands Dominique. They are panicking in fear and trembling with their hands over the heads.

Malachi turns around and sees Marcus standing there with his black pistol pointing it at Keith. He sees Malachi through his peripheral vision.

MARCUS  
I thought I told you to stay your  
ass in the car!

Malachi is completely dumbfounded but tries to talk as calmly as possible.

MALACHI  
Marcus...what are you doin'?

MARCUS  
Trynna kill this nigga!

Keith has his hands in the air, trying to be sincere towards Marcus.

KEITH  
Listen, Marcus -

MARCUS  
Shut the fuck up!

DOMINIQUE

Please don't do this Marcus! I told you we were just having fun!

MARCUS

But you didn't tell me about this dude though!

DOMINIQUE

I'm so sorry!

MARCUS

Shut the fuck up bitch!

He then points the gun at Dominique.

MALACHI

Don't point that gun at my sister!

Marcus then points the gun at Malachi. Malachi is alarmed.

MARCUS

And what the fuck you gonna do!?

MALACHI

What the fuck is wrong with you man!?

MARCUS

I will kill everyone in this motherfuckin' house if I have to!

MALACHI

Put the gun down!

MARCUS

No!

MALACHI

Put the gun down now!

All of a sudden Marcus breaks down and begins CRYING. His guard is down and the gun is lowered, he still holds it. He puts his hands on his knees continuing to break down.

Keith takes this as an opportunity to try and tackle Marcus. He runs towards him.

Marcus quickly points the gun at Keith, he's about to pull the trigger -

MALACHI (CONT'D)

NO!

Malachi pushes Marcus's hand - BANG!

Malachi and Keith are in hysterics examining their bodies making sure the bullet didn't shoot them. They're all fine.

Keith turns towards Dominique, GASPS, and then races towards her.

We see Dominique now, blood seeps through her nightgown. She was shot in the heart. She slowly falls to the ground.

KEITH

NOOOO!!!

Keith rushes towards her and kneels down. He holds and caresses her body on the ground, her blood staining his clothes. Her eyes are half open and she COUGHS UP blood.

Marcus and Malachi panics.

MARCUS

(to Malachi)

YO, WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO!?

MALACHI

ME!? YOU'RE THE ONE WITH A FUCKING GUN!

MARCUS

I WASN'T TRYING TO SHOOT HER MAN!  
THIS IS YOUR FAULT!

MALACHI

YOU'RE THE ONE BUSTING IN HERE WITH  
A GUN POINTING IT AT EVERYBODY!  
FUUCK MAN!

Keith stands up and starts dialing his phone, panicking.

Malachi runs towards Dominique's body and kneels down.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

DOMINIQUE! DOMINIQUE! WAKE UP!  
PLEASE!

Malachi continues to shake her body, wishing for her to wake up, nothing. Tears fall down his face. Her eyes are still half open, she looks straight at him for a moment and then her eyes slowly shut. Life has left her body...

MALACHI (CONT'D)

DOMINIQUE!? DOMINIQUE!?



KEITH  
 (on the phone)  
 Hello yes!? My fiancé has just been  
 shot!

Keith begins to CRY. A beat.

KETHI  
 Two African-American teenagers...

Marcus runs towards the hallway.

MARCUS  
 COME ON MALACHI!

Malachi takes one last look at Dominique and then kisses her  
 on the cheek. He then rises up and chases behind Marcus.

EXT. KEITH'S FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Marcus and Malachi dashes towards Marcus's CAR.

MARCUS  
 Come on get in!

MALACHI  
 You must be fucking crazy if you  
 think I'm getting in that car with  
 you man!

MARCUS  
 Where the fuck are you going then!?

KEITH (O.S.)  
 THE COPS ARE ON THE WAY FUCKERS!

They turn around and see Keith on the front porch still on  
 the phone.

MARCUS  
 Fuck you then!

Marcus gets inside the car, CRANKS it, and then drives off.  
 The engine ROARS down the street. Malachi does not know what  
 to do, so he just begins sprinting.

MONTAGE:

He runs through several backyards, jumping over fences like  
 hurdles...

Panicking, sweating, out of breath, crying...

EXT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Malachi BANGS on the front door. Completely out of breath and sweating from head to toe.

Michael OPENS it, Claudia is besides Michael, their faces are sullen.

MALACHI

Mom! Dad!

He begins to well up.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

It's Dominique...she's...she's...

A POLICE OFFICER walks up from behind Michael and Claudia.

POLICE OFFICER

Malachi Coleman.

Malachi looks at him, shocked and confused.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

I have to detain you for the murder of Dominique Coleman. Until we have fully investigated this crime...

Malachi is completely dumbfounded. He looks at his parents. It's clear they are distraught and disappointed. He is used to Claudia giving him those looks but not Michael. It breaks him.

EXT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ FRONT YARD - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION:

Two POLICE CARS are parked in the Coleman's driveway now. Malachi is in handcuffs as one of the police officers leads him to the back of the police car.

Claudia cries to herself breaking down, while Michael holds her. Michael watches as Malachi is forced inside of the cop car. Michael sheds one tear, shaking his head.

Malachi is in the back seat CRYING to himself. The police car drives away.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Malachi takes his mug photo at the police station...

The POLICE takes his fingerprints...

He urinates in a sample cup...

His cell door SLAMS...

INT. POLICE STATION/ CELL - NIGHT

Malachi lies on the bed staring at the ceiling, processing the night's event, wanting to be far, far away...BREAKING DOWN...

INT. POLICE STATION/ VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Malachi is sitting down. He looks through the glass in front of him. One of the guards OPENS the door. Michael and Claudia slowly enters, like the weight of the world is on them. They sit at the two seats across from Malachi.

There is a very uncomfortable silence. First Malachi makes eye contact with Claudia. Her eyes are filled with tears, she looks enraged. Malachi then looks at Michael, he has tears in his eyes too. He looks at Malachi but not the way we are used to. Michael is not sure who his son is right now.

Malachi's eyes well up....

MALACHI

I didn't do it...

Everyone is silent. Malachi continues...

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Marcus was about to shoot Keith...I was trying to stop him...and the bullet, it hit...it hit Dominique...

Malachi BREAKS DOWN...

MALACHI (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to...

Michael and Claudia takes this in...shedding tears with their son.

MICHAEL

What were you two even doing over there?

MALACHI

I don't know, I was riding with him and he just stopped there and got out the car. I didn't know that's where she was living...

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

I was waiting in the car and a couple of moments later I heard Dominique's scream...

Claudia and Michael flinches a little.

MICHAEL

Why would he target them?

A beat.

MALACHI

Before Keith and Dominique got engaged, they were in an open relationship...

Michael and Claudia looks at each other questionably.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Dominique and Marcus were sleeping together for awhile.

Claudia GASP.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Once she broke it off with him, he got angry...

CLAUDIA

Preposterous! She would never sleep with a low life like him! You would say anything to make her look bad!

MALACHI

Why would I lie about that!?

CLAUDIA

You know what I think!? Marcus always wanted her and could never have her and you!? You were always so jealous of her and everything she accomplished! You two hated her and planned this whole thing! You wanted that bullet to hit her!

MALACHI

Mom!? How could you think that of me!?

CLAUDIA

I always knew you would eventually end up in jail!

MICHAEL

Claudia, calm down.

Claudia BREAKS DOWN again.

CLAUDIA

I just keep thinking about the last thing I did to her!

She YELPS in pain. Michael tries to console her but she pushes him away and rises from her seat abruptly.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

I'll be in the car, I got a funeral to plan.

She walks off wiping her tears. The guard opens the door for her and then closes it once she leaves.

There is silence between Michael and Malachi for a moment.

MICHAEL

She still has to process everything. Just give her time to heal. She still loves you.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Do you know if they caught Marcus?

MALACHI

I have no idea.

MICHAEL

Do you know how long they're trying to keep you in here?

MALACHI

They told me that the investigation can take another day or two. I gave them fingerprints and samples already.

Malachi BREAKS DOWN again.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Dad, I didn't mean to do it...

MICHAEL  
I know son...

Tears fall down Michael's face. His daughter is dead and he hates seeing his son like this. Michael chokes up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I got to go...your mom is waiting  
on me...you take care...

Michael slowly presses his fist against the glass and Malachi presses his fist as well, like they're giving a pound through the glass. They give each other a slight smile despite the situation and the tears in their eyes.

INT. JAIL/ MALACHI'S CELL - MORNING

A cop OPENS Malachi's cell. The sound of it wakes Malachi, he rubs his eyes.

COP  
Detective Davis wants to see you.

Malachi looks confused.

INT. JAIL/ CONFESSION ROOM - DAY

Malachi sits down at a table. DETECTIVE DAVIS (50's) walks in, carrying some files. He takes a seat right across from Malachi.

DETECTIVE DAVIS  
Good morning Mr. Coleman.

Detective Davis sticks out his hand and Malachi slowly shakes his hand back.

MALACHI  
Good morning.

DETECTIVE DAVIS  
I called you in today because  
you're free to go.

Malachi is shocked but elated.

MALACHI  
Thank you so much.

DETECTIVE DAVIS

We caught your friend Marcus. We decided to keep him in a different facility. He confessed to me he came to Mr. Keith Evans home to kill him. Even though you guys were in the same car he said you had no idea that was his plan. He mentioned he owns the pistol and his fingerprints matched the ones on the gun. Not yours.

A beat.

DETECTIVE DAVIS (CONT'D)

We also found a large amount of PCP in his system, that's probably what made him so violent.

Malachi is shocked.

MALACHI

What's going to happen to him?

DETECTIVE DAVIS

He has to go to trial first. But with the combination of committing homicide and using such dangerous drugs, he's most likely getting life.

Malachi sinks in his seat, his eyes are getting full.

DETECTIVE DAVIS (CONT'D)

But you are free to go, any other questions or concerns?

MALACHI

No, not at all.

DETECTIVE DAVIS

Well, congrats to you. Get on out here and I don't want to see you here again.

Detective Davis smiles at Malachi. Malachi smiles too but only half-heartedly. His mind is still on Marcus.

EXT. JAIL HOUSE - DAY

Malachi holds a gym bag and patiently waits in front of the jail house.

Suddenly, a LUXURIOUS CAR pulls up, Michael is in the driver's seat. He parks the car in front of Malachi, gets out, run towards Malachi and gives him a huge hug. Malachi hugs back tightly.

MICHAEL  
Welcome back son.

MALACHI  
Thank you.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - DAY

Michael drives as Malachi is in the passenger seat. Michael can't stop smiling.

MICHAEL  
I knew you'd be out of there in no time.

Malachi smiles a bit. A beat.

MALACHI  
Where's mom?

Michael looks at Malachi sharply.

MICHAEL  
At home...still planning everything...

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Listen, Malachi.

Malachi turns to Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Your mom...she's still taking in everything. She's a little on edge. Just be cautious what you say to her, okay?

MALACHI  
Okay.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - DAY

Michael and Malachi OPENS the front door and enters the home.



INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ OFFICE - DAY

Michael and Malachi enters the room. Claudia is at a desk writing down notes.

MICHAEL  
Look who's back home!

Claudia turns around and sees Malachi. She looks completely drained, her eyes are red and puffy. She forces a smile.

CLAUDIA  
So good to see you Malachi.

She immediately turns around and continues to write notes.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Now, if you all would excuse me, I  
have to finish planning the  
funeral.

Her eyes never leaves the paper she is writing on.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ STAIRS - DAY

Malachi walks up the stairs with his bag.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/DOMINIQUE'S ROOM - DAY

Malachi steps into Dominique's room. He looks at her queen sized bed, the pink decorations, and the musicians and bands posted all over her walls, processing her absence.

His eyes well up.

INT. MALACHI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Malachi has a phone to his ear.

RING RING!

Someone picks up.

TIM  
Hello?

MALACHI  
Hello, Tim?

TIM  
Malachi?

MALACHI  
Yeah it's me.

TIM  
Yo, I'm so sorry to hear what  
happened?

MALACHI  
Thanks.

TIM  
And I can't believe what Marcus  
did, that's terrible man.

MALACHI  
Yeah, I know...

Malachi tear up. A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Hey Tim? I need a favor man.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - DAY

Malachi is dressed in a black suit. He leans over, with a rolled up dollar bill in his nose. On his dresser are two white lines of powder.

He SNIFFS one line and then the other. He lies on his bed, euphoric.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
Malachi! It's time to go!

INT. CHURCH/ ALTAR - AFTERNOON

A choir is performing a NEGRO SPIRITUAL. Everyone in the congregation is feeling the spirit.

There is a casket at the front of the altar. Dominique's corpse lies in it. She looks beautiful, peacefully sleeping.

Michael, Claudia, and Malachi walks together towards the casket to look at Dominique.

Claudia looks at Dominique's face first and immediately BREAKS DOWN. Michael has to hold her.

CLAUDIA  
OHHHH GOD!

She shakes feverishly.

Trisha and Angel walks up to her in tears. First Angel gives Claudia a hug, they let go. Then Trisha walks up to Claudia and gives her a tight and consoling hug, like a true sister. They WAIL together in pain, it's sad to watch but also cathartic for them.

Michael looks at the casket of his deceased daughter. His eyes well up, he falls to his knees and WAILS.

A consoling hand is on Michael's shoulder. Michael looks up and sees Keith. Keith sheds a tear as well. Michael stands up and they hug each other, like brothers.

Keith then turns to Malachi.

KEITH  
I'm sorry Malachi, for everything.

A beat.

KEITH (CONT'D)  
I also want to say...thank you...

Malachi nods. Keith tears up again and walks away.

Malachi turns his head and looks at Dominique's body, still processing her death. He can't take it and begins to CRY silently.

Angel runs up to him and hugs him tightly.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Malachi examines Dominique's TOMBSTONE, shedding a tear. Angel walks up to him wistfully.

ANGEL  
Hey cousin.

Malachi wipes his tear and then turn around.

MALACHI  
Hey.

Angel hold his hand tightly and stares at the TOMBSTONE with him.

ANGEL  
She sure looked beautiful. May she rest in peace.

She turns to him. A beat.

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
Keep your head up. You tried your  
best to save her.

Malachi nods.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)  
What the hell are you doing here!?

Malachi and Angel turns towards Claudia.

Malachi sees a mysterious man near Claudia. He's a black man,  
tall, built, looks like he's in his early 50's. Claudia looks  
disgusted at him.

Angel sees him. She suddenly GASPS and runs away.

TERRANCE  
I heard what happened and I just  
wanted to come by. I am so sorry.

CLAUDIA  
Get out!

Michael runs towards Claudia.

MICHAEL  
What's the -

He sees Terrance, his face is flushed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You got about five seconds to get  
out here man.

TERRANCE  
Listen man, I don't want no  
trouble.

Trisha walks up to Claudia, Michael, and Terrance.

TRISHA  
Oh hell no! I thought we said don't  
come around us!

CLAUDIA  
How did you even find us!?

TERRANCE  
Everyone in town is talking about  
it. I heard it on the news.

A beat.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)  
 Listen, I just want us to be a  
 family again. I'm not the same  
 person.

Terrance takes a step closer to Claudia but Michael steps in  
 the way. Malachi has never seen him so enraged.

MICHAEL  
 Today ain't the day bruh.

Terrance smiles at Michael.

TERRANCE  
 So be it. Ya'll looking good by the  
 way.

Terrance then turns around, not too far away is Malachi. He  
 examines him, he's shocked.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)  
 Is that!?

A beat.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)  
 Hot damn! Malachi, my boy! You  
 looking like a grown man now!

Malachi is confused and remains silent.

Terrance turns to Michael again. Michael's fists balls up.  
 Terrance notices, he smiles a little.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)  
 I just wanted to share my  
 condolences...ya'll take it easy  
 now...

He slowly walks away defeated.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - DAY

Michael is driving, his face is disturbed. Claudia is in the  
 passenger seat holding her head, and Malachi is in the back  
 pondering. Everyone is quiet.

MALACHI  
 Who was that?

Michael looks at Claudia and Claudia looks back at him  
 apprehensively.

CLAUDIA  
That's your uncle Malachi.

Malachi is confused.

MALACHI  
My uncle?

CLAUDIA  
Your uncle Terrance. My brother.

MALACHI  
I never knew I had an uncle.

CLAUDIA  
Yeah, well he was locked up.

MALACHI  
For what?

A beat.

MICHAEL  
Drug possession.

Michael looks at Malachi through the rearview mirror. His eyes pierces through Malachi's. Malachi feels guilty.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
This is why we are so hard on you.  
We don't want you ending up like  
him.

MALACHI  
How long was he in jail for?

MICHAEL  
About 15 years.

MALACHI  
Dang, that's a long time just for  
some drugs.

MICHAEL  
Well...he's done a lot more than  
that.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Just know he's not a good person  
Malachi.

CLAUDIA  
Please, please, please can we  
change the subject...

Malachi stare back out of the window. A million questions are on his mind but he keeps silent.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/ HALLWAY - DAY

Malachi is at school changing his books in his locker. Students are walking by staring at him and whispering things about him.

STUDENT #1  
They did it on purpose. They  
planned the whole thing.

STUDENT #2  
I heard they were high on PCP and  
went crazy.

STUDENT #3  
He lied to the police, that's the  
only reason they let him go.

Malachi is triggered.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/ BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Malachi is in a stall, with a text book on his lap and a rolled up dollar bill in his nose. He SNIFFS the cocaine on the text book with complete ease.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - EVENING

Malachi lies on his bed CRYING to himself. He hears KNOCKS.

Malachi quickly wipes his tears.

MALACHI  
Come in.

Michael OPENS the door and walks in.

MICHAEL  
It's almost time for dinner.

Malachi turns around. His tears are gone but his eyes are still red and puffy. Michael notices.

Michael walks closer towards Malachi.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I know it's hard.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I still have my moments too.

Malachi feels comfortable with letting go of some tears now.  
He shakes.

MALACHI  
People at school...they still  
believe I tried to kill her, my own  
sister.

MICHAEL  
Don't listen to them man. They  
don't know shit.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
You got to be strong Malachi.  
People are going to talk but you  
have to stand strong by your truth.

A beat. Michael notices Malachi shaking.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
It looks like you're about to have  
a panic attack. Are you okay?

MALACHI  
Yeah, I'm good.

Malachi continues to shake. Michael watches, something is not  
quite right.

MICHAEL  
Clean up your face and I will see  
you downstairs for dinner. We are  
still a family.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ DINING ROOM - EVENING

The remaining Coleman's are at the dining room table sitting  
quietly. The food is in front of them but they can't eat  
right now. It's an uncomfortable silence. Michael and Malachi  
stares at an empty seat at the table, speechless at the sight  
of it. Claudia has her head facing down, like she doesn't  
want to be there.



MALACHI  
I will say grace...

Malachi bows his head, Michael follows him, Claudia's head is already down.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Dear God...

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Thank you for the food we are about to receive. Please bond this family together with your love. Protect each of us Lord. Look after all of us to assure we are safe and protected. Let us be able to trust each other and to be forever bonded by your blood. Amen.

MICHAEL  
Amen.

Malachi and Michael begins digging in and passing the food to each other.

Claudia is still checked out. Michael notices.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Claudia, honey...you got to eat.

She's still silent and immobile. She eventually removes her hand from her face and digs into the mashed potatoes with a large wooden spoon. She SLAMS the spoon on the plate.

She then tries passing the food to Malachi. Malachi grabs the big bowl. They make quick eye contact. Claudia quickly looks away. Malachi notices.

The family continues to eat in silence.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
(to Malachi)  
Why don't you tell her what's going on at school?

Malachi turns to Claudia, she only looks at her food.

MALACHI  
No it's okay. I don't want to talk about.

MICHAEL  
Malachi, we have to talk about it.

CLAUDIA  
Just tell me already.

Her face never leaves the plate. A beat.

MALACHI  
People at school are still  
gossiping, saying I killed  
Dominique.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
Can you believe this Claudia!?  
There must be something we can do,  
that is harassment. He's still  
grieving...

Claudia is nonchalant and shrugs her shoulders.

CLAUDIA  
That's what they believe, what can  
we do about it?

Malachi isn't surprised by her response. Michael furrows his  
eyebrows.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Can we just finish dinner please?

Michael is confused.

MICHAEL  
Claudia?

MALACHI  
It's because she agrees with them.

Michael is caught off guard. Claudia's head is still down. A  
beat.

CLAUDIA  
That is not true Malachi.

Malachi turns towards Claudia.

MALACHI  
Oh really!? Then look me in the eye  
mom!

She continues to look down.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
LOOK AT ME!

Claudia quickly raises her head and stares directly into Malachi's eyes. Her face is enraged and full of tears she is shaking and hyperventilating.

CLAUDIA  
Fine! I'm looking at you Malachi!  
Are you happy now!? I'm staring at  
the person who is so careless that  
he knocked a shooting bullet  
towards my daughter! I know you're  
not the brightest bulb but how  
could you be so fucking stupid!?

MICHAEL  
Claudia!? Stop it! The reports said  
it was Marcus's fault! He owned the  
gun and it was in his hand!  
Marcus's fingerprints were found  
not Malachi's! Leave him out of it!

Claudia turns to Malachi.

CLAUDIA  
I warned you about him! Just  
imagine if you weren't friends with  
him!

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Or better yet, imagine if you were  
never born. Dominique would still  
be here!

MICHAEL  
Claudia!?

That pierces Malachi in his heart. He wells up.

MALACHI  
I'm sorry okay! I tried to save  
her!

CLAUDIA  
Well, you didn't you killed her!

MICHAEL  
Claudia, please stop it!

CLAUDIA  
Why are you always defending him!?

MICHAEL  
Because he's our son!

CLAUDIA  
No - he's - not!

Shattering silence fills the room. Michael's eyes tears up.

MICHAEL  
We're not doing this right now  
Claudia.

CLAUDIA  
I am so tired of him calling me  
mom. I am not your mother Malachi!

Malachi is confused.

MALACHI  
What!?

Malachi turns to Michael, perplexed.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
What is she talking about?

Tear are falling out of Michael's eyes.

MICHAEL  
Malachi, you will always be my son.

CLAUDIA  
Cut the shit already Michael!  
(to Malachi)  
Your Uncle Terrance, remember him?  
Well, he had a little thing for 14  
year old girls.

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
That nasty man had no limits. Not  
even with his own niece...

Malachi is shocked. His eyes well up.

CLAUDIA  
Every time I look at you I see my  
brother molesting our own niece!

A beat.

CLAUDIA

Once Angel got pregnant, who was going to take care of you huh? Not her, not Terrance, not Trisha! Mom didn't believe in abortions. She convinced Trisha to let Angel have you and forced me to take you in!

Claudia LAUGHS to herself.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

She forced me to do a lot of things.

Claudia looks towards Michael, her eyes are full of regret. Michael looks directly into her eyes, hurt.

MICHAEL

Like marrying me?

Claudia is silent for a moment.

CLAUDIA

That's not what I meant Michael.

MICHAEL

You don't love me Claudia, just face it. You never have.

Claudia tears up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

When was the last time we made love? Huh? For God's sakes you won't even let me touch you half the time! The last time you let me hug you was when...

He chokes up a bit. A beat.

CLAUDIA

Well, what was I supposed to do!? 20 years ago my mother was so infatuated with you! Oh, look he's tall, dark, handsome. You should marry him Claudia. You're not wasting my money in college, you know you're not smart enough. Might as well marry this rich man and let him take care of you!

MICHAEL

So you were married to me all this time just so that you can be "taken care of"?

Claudia looks guilty.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, you would look down at me wouldn't you!? What do you know about struggle!?

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Everything was laid out for you on a silver platter! When your father died he made you an heir of a multi-million dollar company. I didn't even have a father. Didn't really have a mother either. Once I married you all my mother was worried about was what kind of gifts she's getting for her birthday, Mother's Day, Christmas.

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

She left me with nothing! She only left me to take care of her and the rest of the family!

MICHAEL

Don't you mean me?

CLAUDIA

You are just so pompous!

MICHAEL

Well, I found 25,000 out of my account today.

Claudia looks guilty. A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Yeah, tell me about that.

CLAUDIA

Listen, I'm going to be honest with you. Terrance reached out to me.

Michael's face flushes again, he's a dark man but you can see his cheeks burn red.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
I can't stand the sight of him but  
that's still my brother.

Another beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Listen, he was released from prison  
last year and he's still struggling  
to find a stable job. I figured we  
should help him out. And plus, the  
sooner he gets his life together...

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
The sooner Malachi can live with  
him. It seems like he wants Malachi  
in his life now.

MALACHI  
What!? I don't want to live with  
that monster!

CLAUDIA  
It's time you go bond with your  
father Malachi. Your real father.

Michael is dumbfounded, he's frozen for about five seconds.  
All of a sudden he flings his dinner plate across the room.  
It SHATTERS against the wall behind Claudia, leaving a huge  
dent. Claudia YELPS and Malachi jumps.

MICHAEL  
Get the fuck out of my house.

Claudia points at Malachi accusingly.

CLAUDIA  
But he killed our daughter! Our  
only child! Why would you still  
want him here!?

Michael tries to calm down.

MICHAEL  
Pack your shit and leave...

CLAUDIA  
But -

MICHAEL  
NOW!

Claudia CRIES to herself and runs out of the dining room quickly. Michael is in furious tears.

Malachi then rises from his seat trying to process everything. He is so confused and doesn't know what to do.

MALACHI

I'm going to go upstairs.

Michael quickly grabs Malachi's arm before he leaves the room, tear falling out of his eyes.

MICHAEL

You're still my son, Malachi.

Malachi nods his head, his eyes are watery.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Malachi is upstairs sniffing more cocaine in his room. He hears the DISTANT ARGUMENT of Michael and Claudia.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Please please, Michael! I am so sorry!

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Goodbye Claudia!

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

But -

And then he hears the DOOR SLAM.

Malachi takes another hit of cocaine. He lies down on his bed, staring at his ceiling, wanting to be far, far away...

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ STAIRS - EARLY MORNING

Malachi walks downstairs with his backpack.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Malachi enters the kitchen. He sees Michael sitting there vacantly in his robe, with a cup of coffee by his side. Malachi is caught off guard. Michael continues to stare into nothing, he's completely desolate. He then notices Malachi.

MICHAEL

Oh...morning...



MALACHI

Morning.

MICHAEL

You're up earlier than usual.

MALACHI

Yeah, couldn't sleep I guess.

MICHAEL

Yeah, me neither.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I meant to check up on you last night after dinner but I didn't even have myself together.

MALACHI

It's okay, I understand.

MICHAEL

How are you holding up?

MALACHI

I'm good.

MICHAEL

Listen.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry we never told you the truth after all of these years. We just wanted to protect you from all of that, you know? I didn't want you to feel any different than your sister.

MALACHI

It's cool.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Do you know where Claudia is going to stay?

MICHAEL

With your Aunt Trisha...

A beat.

MALACHI  
I guess that's it huh?

Michael's eyes well up.

MICHAEL  
Afraid so...it's been a long time  
coming.

Malachi begins to shake a little. Michael notices.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Is everything alright?

MALACHI  
Yeah.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Hey dad, can I have 20 dollars?

MICHAEL  
Oh god, you too?

Michael LAUGHS to himself. Malachi joins him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
What is it for?

MALACHI  
Lunch at school.

MICHAEL  
I give you an allowance every week.  
Are you out?

MALACHI  
Yeah.

MICHAEL  
What do you spend it on?

MALACHI  
I bought some new outfits this  
week, I'm sorry.

MICHAEL  
You got to learn how to budget  
better.

Michael stares at Malachi, all of a sudden he sees blood dripping out of his nose.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Malachi!?

Michael points at Malachi's nose. Malachi feels liquid dripping and places his hand under his nose. He looks at his hands, they are bloody.

Michael races towards the counter to grab a paper towel, he then runs towards Malachi and places the paper towel under his nose. He tries to help Malachi lean his head back.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Lean your head back.

Malachi does as he is told.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Where is this coming from?

MALACHI  
I don't know.

Malachi removes the bloody paper towel from his face. His nose is no longer bleeding but his face is still smeared with blood.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
I'll be alright.

MICHAEL  
You sure man?

MALACHI  
Yeah, yeah, I'm good.

MICHAEL  
I think you need to go to the hospital.

MALACHI  
I'm okay, I promise.

MICHAEL  
But -

Malachi snaps.

MALACHI  
Look, just chill alright!

Michael backs away. His eyes widen.

MICHAEL  
You better watch your tone. Do you  
understand me?

Malachi calms down.

MALACHI  
Yes sir.

MICHAEL  
I can't hear you!

MALACHI  
Yes sir!

Malachi and Marcus continues to stare at each other angrily.

INT. DRUG HOUSE - EVENING

Malachi knocks on the front door. The front door OPENS and Tim is there. He smiles from ear to ear, he looks dazed out of his mind.

TIM  
Malachi, my man!

MALACHI  
What's up man?

They give each other dap.

TIM  
Come on in.

Malachi walks in, the place is a mess. Trash is everywhere, bottles and drugs are all over the tables. It's dingy and worn down.

It seems like Tim has some GUESTS. They sit on a jaded couch. There are bands around their elbows. One of the guests punctures a syringe inside of their arms. They press on it and their eyes roll to the back of their head in ecstasy.

Malachi looks frightened but curious.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Want some more powder man?

MALACHI  
Yeah man but that shit had my nose  
bleeding earlier.

Tim LAUGHS to himself.

TIM  
Yeah it happens.

Malachi continues to watch the group. The needle is then passed on to someone else.

MALACHI  
Yo, is that heroin?

TIM  
Yeah man. Ever tried it?

Malachi continues to stare at the group.

MALACHI  
Nah man, looks scary.

Malachi can't take his eyes off the group. Tim notices. A beat.

TIM  
Come on man. I just took a shot.  
Let me show you.

MALACHI  
What does it feel like?

TIM  
It makes you feel like you're  
walking in a dream. All of the  
problems in the world just  
disappears.

INT. DRUG HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malachi sits down with Tim on the dingy couch. Tim wraps a band around Malachi's elbow.

TIM  
Don't be nervous man. I got you.

Tim grabs the syringe.

TIM (CONT'D)  
It may sting a little.

Tim puncture's Malachi's skin with the syringe. Malachi winces. Tim then presses the heroin inside of Malachi. Malachi's eyes roll in the back of his head.

Tim smiles, his guests smiles too.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - MORNING

Malachi rummages through his drawers, wearing a large hoodie. He's starting to lose a bit of weight. His room is a mess and unkempt. Trash is everywhere. He lifts his mattress up, nothing not even a cent.

He puts his hand over his face like he's about to scream.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ STAIRS - MORNING

Malachi dashes downstairs.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - MORNING

Malachi reaches downstairs.

INT. COLEMAN'S HOUSE/ HALLWAY - MORNING

Malachi KNOCKS on a door repeatedly. Michael OPENS up the door to the master bedroom, putting on a tie.

MALACHI

Hey dad, you got twenty dollars?

MICHAEL

Well, good morning to you too.

MALACHI

I'm sorry, good morning.

Michael looks at Malachi, he looks very unkempt and wrinkle.

MICHAEL

Aren't you going to iron your clothes a bit for school?

Malachi looks down.

MALACHI

Yeah, I'll do that.

MICHAEL

And what did I tell you about budgeting?

MALACHI

I'm sorry.

MICHAEL

You said that last week.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
This is the last time I'm doing  
this for you. We're going to have a  
serious talk later.

Malachi nods his head. Michael notices Malachi jittering again.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - NIGHT

Malachi slowly walks inside of the mansion. Everything is dark, he steps in cautiously, careful to not make a sound.

He creeps past the living room.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
Malachi!

Michael's deep and resonate voice fills the room.

Malachi is completely off guard and alarmed. He sees the table lamp TURN ON in the living room. Michael sits next to it, looking at Malachi, pissed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Come here.

Malachi walks in the living room.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malachi is in the living room now. Michael continues to dart Malachi with his angry yet concerned eyes.

MICHAEL  
It is three o'clock in the morning.  
I have to get up in two hours but I  
couldn't sleep because your school  
called and said you weren't there  
today. I've called you multiple  
times and got no answer. I didn't  
know where you were, you could've  
been dead. I was worried son. Don't  
do that to me!

MALACHI  
Sorry, it won't happen again.

MICHAEL

What is going on with you? You've been so strange lately. Where did you disappear off to?

MALACHI

Sometimes I just need time to myself.

MICHAEL

Listen, I get it. We've been through a lot. Dominique's death took a toll on all of us and it's been a month since your mother and I split. I'm here for you if you need to talk.

MALACHI

Nah, I'm good.

MICHAEL

Good? Malachi, look at you. You're missing school, you're unkempt, clearly you're not eating. I don't want to see you like this.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I think it's time for you to see a professional.

MALACHI

I told you I'm fine.

MICHAEL

No, you're not Malachi.

Michael notices that Malachi looks dazed. He can't keep eye contact with Michael. He looks dizzy.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You're getting high again aren't you?

A beat.

MALACHI

Man, ain't nobody high.



MICHAEL

It's more than weed this time.  
You're disoriented, always  
jittering, always asking for money.  
What are you using?

MALACHI

It's nothing man.

MICHAEL

You're going to see a professional  
tomorrow.

Malachi snaps.

MALACHI

You can't tell me what to do! You  
ain't nobody fucking daddy!

Michael's eyes widen, those words struck him like lightning  
but he tries to remain calm.

MICHAEL

You take that back.

MALACHI

You - ain't - no - body - fucking  
daddy!

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

My pops is a drug addicted  
molester.

Malachi playfully shrugs his shoulder, he smiles a bit but  
it's full of pain.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Sorry I can't be the son you want  
me to be. This who I really am.

A beat.

MICHAEL

Just tell me what kind of drugs you  
are using. Let's just talk about it  
so we can fix this.

MALACHI

I'm not telling you shit!

MICHAEL

I'm not going to let you just fuck  
up your life.

Malachi LAUGHS.

MALACHI

You were always so damn self-  
righteous! But tell me this, when I  
was first born, did you really want  
me!?

A beat.

MICHAEL

Of course! We were doing what was  
right at the time.

MALACHI

What was right?! I didn't ask what  
was right! I asked if you really  
wanted me! Claudia clearly didn't.  
'Cause who can love a rape baby  
right!?

Michael wells up.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

You and Claudia kept this secret  
from me all of my fucking life!

MICHAEL

I know that you're angry.

MALACHI

Damn right!

MICHAEL

I feel like there's nothing I can  
say to heal that pain.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But just know when you were a baby,  
I looked into your innocent eyes  
and -

MALACHI

You know what I'm starting to  
think!? I'm starting to think you  
never saw me as your son, you only  
saw me as a fucking charity case!

Tears fall out of Michael's eyes.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
 You didn't give a fuck about me!  
 You were just trying to make  
 yourself look good! You were just  
 trying to win everyone's approval!  
 You loved Claudia so much you tried  
 your damnest to impress the whole  
 family by using me!

Michael's face is enraged. A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
 Got to be Mr. Perfect right?! Got  
 to be the hero! The provider! Well  
 guess what? She was using you  
 dumbass!

Malachi LAUGHS.

MICHAEL  
 You stop it right now!

MALACHI  
 Claudia never loved your clown ass!  
 She was using you the whole time  
 man and you let her!

Malachi continues to LAUGH.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
 You're fucking pathetic dude! A  
fucking joke!

Michael steps towards Malachi like he's about to knock him out. This enrages Malachi.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
 What!? WHAT YOU GONNA DO NIGGA!?  
 WHAT YOU GONNA DO!?

Malachi pushes Michael forcefully. Michael falls back a bit but regains his balance. He takes a DEEP BREATH and remains calm.

MICHAEL  
 That's not you talking, that's the  
 drugs. Now please, go upstairs and -

Malachi suddenly SPITS in Michael's face.

MALACHI

Shut the fuck up! I'm tired of you  
talking!

Michael is still for about 3 seconds, he wipes the spit off  
his face...

And then abruptly PUNCHES Malachi in the face, knocking him  
to the ground. Malachi lies on the floor YELLING in pain. His  
nose is bleeding.

MICHAEL

DON'T YOU EVER DISRESPECT ME LIKE  
THAT AGAIN!

Malachi struggles to get up from the ground. Michael looks  
guilty for what he did. Michael wants to help Malachi but he  
subsides his instincts and watches Malachi struggle to get on  
his feet.

MALACHI

Fuck you man!

Malachi is on his two feet, holding his nose.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

I'm out this bitch!

Malachi runs out of the living room and Michael chases after  
him.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - NIGHT

Michael continues to chase after Malachi.

MICHAEL

Yeah, if you leave you ain't coming  
back!

MALACHI

I don't want to come back!

Malachi reaches the front door and OPENS it. He turns to  
Michael. He has an OUTBURST.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

IT'S YOU AND CLAUDIA'S FAULT WHY  
I'M LIKE THIS!

Michael just stares at Malachi, shedding a tear.

MICHAEL

I need you to go Malachi. Until you get your shit together, don't come back in my house.

Malachi continues to CRY and then he SLAMS the door shut.

INT. DRUG HOUSE - NIGHT

Malachi walks up to the drug house. There is MUSIC BLASTING in the background. Malachi knocks on the door.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

Tim opens the door. He is dazed again.

TIM

Yo Malachi, back already?

He notices the blood on Malachi's nose, he's caught off guard.

TIM (CONT'D)

What happened man?

MALACHI

My dad kicked me out...we got in a fight. I was wondering if I could stay here until things smooth out.

A long pause.

TIM

Yeah sure man. All strays are welcomed here. You're not getting any sleep tonight though!

Tim LAUGHS a little and Malachi tries to join in but he has too much on mind. Tim opens the door wider to let him in. The music gets louder.

Malachi walks in, the place is a mess. It's dark, the only lights are the blue party lights scattered around the house.

A few people are laid out on a couch. Malachi sees people smoking weed and drinking. Some are snorting cocaine.

TIM (CONT'D)

Follow me upstairs.

Malachi follows Tim upstairs.

INT. DRUG HOUSE/ UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Tim shows Malachi to his room. Malachi looks over at the dingy twin size mattress, it has a urine stain on it. Malachi does not look happy.

TIM

You can stay in here for now.

Malachi stares at his new room vacantly.

TIM (CONT'D)

Yo we just got some more smack. Are you down?

INT. DRUG HOUSE/ DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

Malachi sits on a couch. The music continues to blare. People drunkenly dance around him.

The blue party lights reflects off of Malachi's depressed face.

Malachi has a band around his elbow and punctures his skin with a syringe. His eyes rolls to the back of his head, he's in ecstasy again.

He rests the back of his head on the couch, letting the drug rush through his veins and brain. He's conscious again and looks around the room. Everything seems like a blurred dream. Nothing is quite tangible or real.

BUZZ! BUZZ!

Malachi hears and feels a buzzing from his pocket. He picks up the phone and looks at the screen. He has three missed calls from Michael. He sees he has a voicemail. He clicks on it and puts the phone to one ear, closing the opposite ear with his finger to hear the message as clearly as possible.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Hey son, it's your dad. I just wanted to apologize for tonight... I'm worried about you out there. Please come back home and let me find you some help. I love you man. Give me call back please...

Malachi HANGS UP the phone angrily.

MALACHI

Fuck you nigga.

Malachi rests his head on the couch and closes his eyes.

All of a sudden Malachi begins to shake uncontrollably. Foam forms from his mouth. It's clear he's having a seizure. Someone SCREAMS.

Malachi's body falls to the ground, he continues to shake spasmodically for about five seconds, now he is still...stiff as a statue. Tim runs to the scene.

TIM

Holy shit! Malachi!? Malachi!?

Tim slaps him in the face a couple of times...no response.

BLACK OUT

The screen transitions to all WHITE. We see someone walking in the distance she walks towards us in a beautiful, long, all white gown...like an angel.

The closer she gets the more we recognize the face.

MALACHI (V.O.)

Dominique?

We don't see Malachi but hear him talking in the background. Dominique talks to the audience like we are Malachi.

She smiles to us.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah, it's me. How's it been bro?

MALACHI (V.O.)

Not good. I wish you were here Dominique.

We hear Malachi CRYING in the background.

MALACHI (V.O.)

It's just all fucked up.

A beat.

MALACHI (V.O.)

Dominique?

DOMINIQUE

Yes?

MALACHI (V.O.)

I am so sorry...for killing you...

Malachi BREAKS DOWN.

MALACHI (V.O.)

I am so sorry...

DOMINIQUE

You didn't kill me Malachi...

MALACHI (V.O.)

I can't live with the guilt!

DOMINIQUE

And you think drugs are going to fix everything?

MALACHI (V.O.)

It's all I have. I just want the pain to go away!

A beat.

MALACHI (V.O.)

Take me with you Dominique.

DOMINIQUE

What!?

MALACHI (V.O.)

Take me with you! I'm tired of living!

DOMINIQUE

I won't allow that. You have so much more to accomplish and plus dad will be heartbroken.

MALACHI (V.O.)

I don't care anymore.

DOMINIQUE

Well I do.

A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

Your mission isn't over yet.

She gives Malachi/the audience a hug.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)

It was great to see you again. I don't want to see you around here until you're an old man.



A beat.

DOMINIQUE (CONT'D)  
Tell dad I said hi.

She smiles one last time.

BLACK OUT

INT. HOSPITAL/ ROOM - MORNING

Malachi slowly wakes up in a white bed. He's confused and has no idea where he is. He looks around and notices that he is in a clean and simple hospital room.

Sitting in a chair to the left of him is Michael. Michael looks to Malachi and his eyes widen with joy. Michael rushes to Malachi's side, shaking with joy.

MICHAEL  
Malachi! You're alive!

MALACHI  
(weakly)  
What...what happened?

Michael wells up.

MICHAEL  
Your friend Tim saw my missed calls from your phone and called me...you overdosed...

Malachi is confused.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Thank God the cops are shutting that house down.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
The doctors found several substances in your system. They found THC, cocaine, heroin, fentanyl...

MALACHI  
Fentanyl? I never used that.

MICHAEL  
It was laced with the heroin you were using...

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Let me see your arm...

MALACHI  
Dad...

MICHAEL  
Just please...

Malachi slowly turns his left arm around. This exposes all of the track marks covering the majority of his arm.

Michael is aghast, puts his hand over his mouth, and turns away. It's almost like he's going to vomit.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Malachi?

Malachi looks guilty.

MALACHI  
Yes?

MICHAEL  
How could you let it go that far?

MALACHI  
I don't know, I'm sorry.

MICHAEL  
You know what? I blame myself.

MALACHI  
Please don't, it's my fault.

MICHAEL  
I told you not to come back, I let you go, I gave up on you...

Michael turns around and walks closer to Malachi. Looking at him directly in the eyes. Tears seeping out of his eyes like a waterfall.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I lost my daughter, I lost my wife,  
I can't lose you...I can't!

Michael kneels over and BREAKS DOWN. Malachi sheds a tear, watching the pain he is causing his father.

MALACHI  
Hey dad...

Michael looks up, still shedding tears.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Dominique said hi...

Michael continues to BREAK DOWN.

INT. REHAB CENTER/ COUNSELING ROOM - DAY

There is a group of teenagers sitting in a circle along with a counselor in the middle with a clip board. Malachi is in the room. He's looking around judging, he can't believe he's here.

COUNSELOR  
Malachi? Would you mind introducing yourself to the rest of us?

MALACHI  
My name is Malachi Coleman...and I'm a cocaine/heroin addict...

GROUP  
Hey Malachi!

Malachi looks around at the room, not really wanting to be there.

INT. REHAB CENTER/ MALACHI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Malachi is in his room, lying in bed. He can't sleep, he's sweating and panting. Tossing and turning. He hold his stomach, trying not to cry. He VOMITS on the floor.

INT. REHAB CENTER/ COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Malachi sits across a COUNSELOR, 40's. The counselor holds a notepad and pen looking pensive.

COUNSELOR  
So, Mr. Malachi Coleman. Which drug were you first introduced to? When did you first use?

MALACHI  
Marijuana, about a year now.

COUNSELOR  
How did you access it?

MALACHI

I used to smoke with my friend  
Marcus all the time.

COUNSELOR

How did it make you feel?

MALACHI

Calm, collected. It slowed down my  
thoughts.

COUNSELOR

What were some of things you would  
think about?

MALACHI

Just my life, where is it going?  
Why don't I fit in with my family?  
Why am I never good enough for my  
mom?

COUNSELOR

How is your relationship with your  
mother now?

MALACHI

She always hated me. Always  
expected the worst out of me. Her  
and my dad adopted me.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

My biological father, her brother,  
molested their niece, that's how I  
was born. All she ever did was see  
him in me.

COUNSELOR

I see...

The counselor writes some notes down.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

You mentioned earlier, your friend  
Marcus. Are you two still close?

MALACHI

I haven't spoken to him since he...

COUNSELOR

Since he what?

MALACHI  
He's in jail now for murder...he  
killed my sister...

COUNSELOR  
I'm sorry to hear that.

A beat.

MALACHI  
It used to be just me him all day  
everyday. Just getting high. My  
little escape from home.

Malachi's face lights up and then it suddenly becomes sad.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
Now I'm not sure how we're going to  
be. But I miss him a lot, I think  
about him every day...

COUNSELOR  
How close were you too?

MALACHI  
Real close.

COUNSELOR  
You had no other friends?

MALACHI  
No, not really. I don't trust  
people easily.

COUNSELOR  
It sounds like you really admired  
your quality time with him.

MALACHI  
Yeah...

Malachi reminisces on his times with Marcus. Tears fall out.  
The counselor notices.

COUNSELOR  
Was it more than a friendship?

MALACHI  
What!? No!

Malachi quickly wipes his tears.

COUNSELOR  
I see.

A beat.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)  
What was your next drug of choice?

MALACHI  
I started using cocaine. Marcus  
used to get it from this drug  
dealer Tim.

COUNSELOR  
How did that make you feel?

MALACHI  
It lifted me up. I started using it  
more when...

Malachi chokes up.

COUNSELOR  
Your sister died?

Malachi nods his head, still distraught.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)  
How was your relationship with her?

MALACHI  
I loved her so much.

COUNSELOR  
You mentioned Marcus killed her how  
did that happen?

Malachi takes a beat.

MALACHI  
At the time Dominique was having  
sex with him.

COUNSELOR  
Did that make you angry?

MALACHI  
Where are you getting at?

COUNSELOR  
Just wondering.

A beat.

MALACHI

Marcus and Dominique were screwing. But she was already in a committed relationship with this older dude. They agreed to be in an open relationship together until they got engaged. Well, they got engaged. After that she cut ties with Marcus. That pissed him off.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

I remember the night he found out. I was in the car with him. He was so angry, just completely blank and vacant. He rode up to a house and busted in the basement. He was in Keith's home, I had no idea. He was trying to shoot Keith so I pushed his arm and the bullet it, it, got Dominique...

Malachi BREAKS DOWN.

COUNSELOR

I'm so sorry to hear that.

The counselor passes over a box of tissue.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

You still feel guilty for it?

MALACHI

Every day man, everyday. People at school blamed me. My mother blamed me. She wanted me out of the house so bad. It caused my parents to divorce. That shit ate me up. All I had was cocaine.

COUNSELOR

What was your relationship with your dad like?

MALACHI

Good...great actually. He was always there for me and defended me. I could always come to him about anything...but one night I fucked that up.

COUNSELOR

How so?

MALACHI

At that point I was on heroin. I was always asking him for money, I skipped school, I looked dirty. All he was trying to do was help me and I disrespected him. I yelled at him, made him feel like shit, spat in his face.

Malachi BREAKS DOWN again.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

How could I do that to him!?

COUNSELOR

Malachi, that was not you. Those were the drugs. Don't be so hard on yourself. Your dad still loves you. That's why he brought you to us. It's a disease and we're here to help you heal. You've been through a lot in your young life. You can get through this too. Okay?

Malachi nods his head, he continues to cry wiping his tears.

INT. REHAB CENTER/ VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Malachi is sitting at a table all by himself in a simple room, waiting. The door to the room OPENS. Malachi is alert and looks over, Michael enters the room. Michael sees Malachi and grins from ear to ear.

They both run to each other and give each other heartening hugs. No words can describe this moment for them, they are silent and just embracing each other's presence.

INT. REHAB CENTER/ VISITATION ROOM - DAY

MOMENTS LATER...

Michael is beaming towards Malachi. Malachi does the same.

MICHAEL

It's been so long, you look good man!

MALACHI

Thanks, you too.

MICHAEL

How's everything going?



MALACHI  
Everything is alright.

MICHAEL  
Alright? Well, I hope you're at least making progress.

MALACHI  
Yeah, I haven't used since I've been here and I've been throwing up a lot so...

MICHAEL  
I'm glad to hear that poison is leaving your body.

MALACHI  
Yeah, I'm really focused on getting healthy again. I like it here. I feel supported.

MICHAEL  
That's great, glad to hear it because their prices are no joke.

They both LAUGH. A beat.

MALACHI  
How about with you? Anything new with you?

Michael smiles, he gets giddy like a child.

MICHAEL  
Yeah, I'll show you.

Michael pulls out his phone. Michael shows Malachi his phone's background picture. It's a picture with him cuddling with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in her late 40's.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Her name is Cynthia. Isn't she beautiful?

MALACHI  
Yeah, congrats dad. How long has it been?

MICHAEL  
It's only been a month so far but I'm already smitten.

MALACHI

Well, I'm glad you're getting laid again.

They both LAUGH.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

I'm sure it's a relief after dealing with all of my bullshit.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Really, I'm happy for you. You deserve it.

MICHAEL

Thanks man. I'm happy for you too. Your smile...it's different. I actually believe it.

MALACHI

Yeah, things are getting better slowly but surely...

A beat.

MICHAEL

I told Cynthia all about you.

MALACHI

Everything?

They both LAUGH.

MICHAEL

Yes, everything. I guess I didn't tell you.

MALACHI

Tell me what?

MICHAEL

I met her at a support group I was going to. Unfortunately, she lost her brother to meth.

MALACHI

Sorry to hear that.

A beat.

MICHAEL  
 She's dealing the best way she  
 knows how to.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 So when I told her about you there  
 was no judgement at all. She  
 understands and wishes for your  
 healing.

MALACHI  
 Tell her I said thank you.

MICHAEL  
 I will.

A beat.

MALACHI  
 Hey dad?

MICHAEL  
 Yeah?

Malachi wells up.

MALACHI  
 I'm so sorry...about everything...

MICHAEL  
 It's okay son...

MALACHI  
 No it's not. I had you worrying  
 about me, using up your money, made  
 you feel like shit and I had the  
 audacity to spit in your face...

Malachi chokes up. Michael's eyes well up.

MICHAEL  
 It's a disease Malachi, I forgive  
 you for all of that.

MALACHI  
 I can't forgive myself quite yet. I  
 was a piece of shit. I don't  
 deserve all of the help and support  
 you give.

MICHAEL  
 Yes you do.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I want to apologize too.

MALACHI  
For what?

MICHAEL  
You've been in here for a month and  
a half now...

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
It's my first time here...I just..I  
just couldn't...

MALACHI  
Couldn't stand to see me here.

Michael nods his head. Tears fall out.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
I know...I failed you...

MICHAEL  
No, I failed you. I should've seen  
the signs sooner. I should've tried  
to stop it before it got to this  
point. There was just so much going  
on.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Cynthia told me about the night she  
found her brother laid out on the  
ground after he overdosed on  
meth...all I could think about was  
the night I found you.

Michael chokes up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I could've lost you son, I could've  
lost you...

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
I could've lost both of my  
children...

Micahel BREAKS DOWN.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

How could I let you get to that point?

MALACHI

Dad, I just want you to know. You're doing your part. That's why I'm here in this facility healing. You're a great father and I thank you for everything.

MICHAEL

Thanks son.

Michael wipes his tears and LAUGHS briefly.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

This is not how this visit was supposed to go.

Malachi LAUGHS with him. A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

So...you're halfway through your program. How do you feel?

MALACHI

I feel good, great actually. I got this.

MICHAEL

I know you do.

A beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Any plans once you get out?

MALACHI

Well I just want to finish high school and see what happens from there.

MICHAEL

You got this, you can finish rehab, you can finish high school, you can accomplish anything in life you want. I believe in you.

Michael puts his fist up and Malachi pounds it. They smile together.

INT. STADIUM - AFTERNOON

A graduation is taking place. The auditorium is packed with proud parents and family members.

PRINCIPAL  
Malachi Coleman!

Michael, Cynthia, Trisha, and Angel and her kids all CLAP and CHEER for Malachi.

Malachi walks across the stage, shakes hands with the PRINCIPAL, and grabs his diploma. He poses and a PHOTOGRAPHER snaps a photo of him.

FLASH!

EXT. STADIUM - AFTERNOON

Malachi is getting showered with love and support from Michael, Cynthia, Trisha, Angel.

MOMENTS LATER...

Michael, Cynthia, and Malachi are posing for a photo together. Malachi is in the middle holding his diploma proudly.

Trisha SNAPS the photo.

TRISHA  
That's a nice one.

Michael smiles at Malachi. Michael pats him on the back. Malachi smiles.

MICHAEL  
Next stop...Howard!

CYNTHIA  
We are so proud of you Malachi!

MALACHI  
Thank you.

ANGEL  
Okay, me next!

Angel runs towards Malachi. Michael and Cynthia moves out of the way.

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
Congratulations cousin!

MALACHI

Thank you.

They continue to stare at each other lovingly. Malachi gives her a warm hug and Angel hugs back, like a mother.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Thank you...for keeping me...

They both stare at each other, shedding tears. Angel smiles warmly.

ANGEL

You're welcome.

Angel quickly wipes her face.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Alright, enough with all this sappy shit. Let's take this picture!

Angel looks over to Trisha.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Momma get the kids! Where the kids!?

INT. COUNTY PRISON/ VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Malachi enters a visitation room in a prison. He walks slowly towards a seat across from a glass and sits down.

MALACHI

What's up?

We finally see who he is visiting, it is Marcus. A glass separates them.

Marcus doesn't look his best, his hair has grown out a bit, he's lost weight, his eyes are a bit sunken in.

He looks both depressed and angry.

MARCUS

Look around.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

This is my first visit from you, where have you been?

MALACHI

Been working on myself. I've been to rehab and then back to school to get my diploma.

MARCUS

Lucky you....what do you want?

MALACHI

I'm leaving town soon. Just wanted to see you before I go...

MARCUS

Where you going?

MALACHI

Moving to Washington DC. I got accepted to Howard.

Marcus smiles lightly.

MARCUS

Congrats man, I knew you'd be alright.

MALACHI

Thanks man.

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

And no my dad did not pay them off. I did that shit myself.

They both LAUGH briefly.

MARCUS

What do you want to study?

MALACHI

Counseling. I want to help people suffering with addiction.

MARCUS

That's dope man. We could use more people like that out there. I wish someone would've helped me.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'm so glad you're not back here with me man. I remember when they interrogated me.

(MORE)



MARCUS (CONT'D)

I made sure there was no way in hell they were going to lock you up. You have too much potential.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

And thank you.

Malachi is confused.

MALACHI

What did I do?

Marcus eyes are full.

MARCUS

You're the first...and probably the only person who is going to visit me here.

Marcus CRIES.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

My moms can't stand the sight of me, turned the whole family against me.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry for what I did Malachi! I'm so sorry! I was being so fucking stupid! Now I'm in this bitch for the rest of my life!

Marcus BREAKS DOWN. Malachi sheds tears with his best friend.

MALACHI

No matter what, you will always have a friend in me. Do you understand?

Marcus nods his head.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

Keep your head up...

A beat.

MALACHI (CONT'D)

I'm leaving town but every time I come back will make time to visit you. I promise. You're not alone.

Malachi hesitates for a moment.

MALACHI (CONT'D)  
I love you man...

Tears continue to seep out of Marcus's eye. Marcus nods again.

INT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ MALACHI'S ROOM - DAY

Malachi is packing his clothes and belongings into gym bags and suitcases.

He turns around and spots a framed picture on his desk. It's a picture of him and Dominique together when they were children...

They have their arms on each other, cheesing carelessly with missing teeth.

He smiles at it, picks it up, and reminisces on her memories for a moment...

He then kisses the picture.

DOMINIQUE  
Thank you sis.

He then packs the picture in one of the suitcases and zips it up.

EXT. COLEMAN'S MANSION/ DRIVEWAY- DAY

Malachi is packing all of his luggage in Michael's car. Michael helps him and so does Cynthia.

Another CAR pulls up in the drive way. Malachi turns around. It's a familiar car. Malachi's face drops.

The car door OPENS and Malachi sees Claudia stepping out of it. She looks the same, her clothes are not as pretentious but she looks very good.

She just stares at Malachi for a moment, a bit embarrassed and feeling a bit guilty.

CLAUDIA  
Hey Malachi.

MALACHI  
Hey?

She then spots Michael and smiles. She walks up to Michael and hugs him like an old friend. She lets go of the hug and looks over to Cynthia. She eyes Cynthia for awhile but she eventually smiles at her too.

CLAUDIA  
I'm happy for the both of you.

A beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
(to Cynthia)  
You have a good man here.

Michael lightly smiles at her. Cynthia smiles too.

Claudia then turns to Malachi and stares at him directly in the eye, tearing up.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Oh Malachi...

She abruptly hugs him, almost knocking him over.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
Congratulations on everything...

MALACHI  
Thank you.

CLAUDIA  
And sorry...for everything...

MALACHI  
It's okay. I forgive you.

A beat.

CLAUDIA  
I'm proud of you...son...

That pierces Malachi's heart. He hugs Claudia back, holding her tight, not wanting to let go, shedding a final tear.

FADE OUT.

THE END