HILLSIDE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Bright and early, it’s a school day for DESHAWN BERNARD, 14, African-American who lies in bed staring at the ceiling without a single effort to move.

DESHAWN (V.O.)
Hillside. A place of broken dreams, dangerous gangs, abandoned mothers and...

Deshawn looks over at a picture of him and two others in a happy professionally taken picture, his brothers TRYIS BERNARD, late 20s and JAHEIM BERNARD, early 20s.

DESHAWN (V.O.)
... and fallen brothers.

Deshawn moves around his room. He slips into any clothing he can find in his trashed room. The walls are covered with basketball stars.

Deshawn straps on his backpack. He kisses the tips of his fingers and presses them against the image before leaving.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Deshawn heads toward the kitchen when he halts right outside the door. He peeps around the corner to see his brother Jaheim in an argument with his mother TONYA BERNARD, 40s.

JAHEIM
Momma, we gonna make it. I’m the man now. I can get money. Don’t worry about it.

TONYA
How? You don’t have a job yet. How you gonna get money?

Tonya runs her hands over a newspaper.

JAHEIM
I’ma get it. I got an interview today at the warehouse. I got it.

Jaheim looks down at his mother studying the newspaper. He snatches the paper from her.
JAHEIM (CONT’D)
That ain’t gonna bring him back.

Tonya sobs. Jaheim wraps his arm around his mother.

Deshawn watches from a distance.

Tonya straightens herself.

TONYA
I’ve got to get to work.

She hops up and leaves. Jaheim throws the newspaper in the trash and storms out the back door.

Deshawn goes to the trash and picks up the newspaper. On the front page is an article with his brother Tyris’ picture with the title, “Man Killed By Police No Weapon Found.”

Deshawn rips the article out of the paper.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Deshawn walks alongside his best friend BYRON A.K.A. SPIKE, 13, on the way home.

SPIKE
I can’t wait until school out. We can go to basketball camp and school them other boys.

DESHAWN
When we go to the pro, what team we going with?

SPIKE
The Bulls.

DESHAWN
Why not the Lakers?

SPIKE
Because they suck.

DESHAWN
They don’t suck. You suck.

SPIKE
Whatever. My brother told me your brother gonna lead Hillside Boyz with him.
DESHAWN
Really?

SPIKE
Yep. You know what that means?

DESHAWN
What?

SPIKE
We gonna be Hillside Boyz leaders next.

The two hoot and howl like wolves in celebration.

DESHAWN & SPIKE
Hillside Boyz! Hillside Boyz! Hillside Boyz!

EXT. PARK - DAY

Deshawn is on the basketball court alone. He practices his shots. He’s really good at it, he hardly misses.

INT. COP CRUISER - DAY

A cop car cruises slowly past the park. Inside is OFFICER CHANCE MONTGOMERY, Caucasian, late 30s, husky. He surveys the neighborhood. In the background, dispatch is communicating with other officers.

Chance slows down almost to a stop to watch Deshawn as he takes one perfect shot after another.

Deshawn bends his knees ready to make another shot when a flashback crosses his mind.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. HILLSIDE PARK - FIVE YEARS AGO - DAY

Deshawn is a puny nine-year-old with his older brother Tyris, a young teenage stud.

Tyris stands behind Deshawn as they both look up at the basketball hoop. Tyris place the ball in his hands.
TYRIS
Always aim for the back board. You remember how I told you to hold it, right?

Deshawn maneuvers his hands properly on the ball. He bends his knees and gazes at the hoop towering high above him.

TYRIS (CONT’D)
Go ahead.

Deshawn propels the ball upward. The ball SMACKS the backboard and drops down into the basket.

TYRIS (CONT’D)
YEAH! That’s it, boy! You got it.

The two high five. Tyris runs after the ball.

TYRIS (CONT’D)
Okay, let’s play.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. HILLSIDE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Deshawn’s eyes fill. Before the tears could fall, he throws the ball out of rage. He plops down on the concrete. He sobs, alone.

Chance pulls over. He crosses the park and retrieves the ball out of the grass. With little experience, he bounces the ball on the court as he makes his way to Deshawn.

Defensive, Deshawn jumps to his feet and gazes at the cop.

CHANCE
Hey. This yours?

Deshawn doesn’t answer. A look of anger and curiosity spreads across his face.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
I’m Officer Montgomery. Chance Montgomery. What’s your name?

DESHAWN
Deshawn.

CHANCE
Hey, Deshawn. I believe this is your baske--
DESHAWN
What are you doing here?

CHANCE
To give you your ball back. You looked upset.

DESHAWN
Why you in Hillside? We don’t like cops.

CHANCE
It’s my job. I have to make sure it’s safe.

Deshawn chuckles.

DESHAWN
Too late.

Deshawn turns to walk away.

CHANCE
What is your last name Deshawn?

DESHAWN
Why?

CHANCE
Just curious. You look familiar.

DESHAWN
Bernard.

Something hits Chance.

CHANCE
Are you Tyris Bernard’s brother?

DESHAWN
Yep.

CHANCE
I’m sorry.

Deshawn shakes his head.

DESHAWN
No, you not. You just like them.

CHANCE
I was on vacation with my family when it happened. If I were there, that never would have happened.
DESHAWN
Vacation?

CHANCE
Yes. I took my family to Disney World. Have you ever been?

DESHAWN
No. Can’t afford it.

CHANCE
One day you will.

DESHAWN
I know. After I get into the NBA I’ma take my brother and momma.

CHANCE
NBA, huh? Are you any good?

Deshawn smacks his teeth. His snatches the basketball out of Chance’s hand. He steps a good distance from basket and takes the shot. The ball drops with perfected ease into the basket.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
Can you do it twice?

DESHAWN
You got money?

Chance digs in his pocket. He retrieves a twenty-dollar bill.

CHANCE
Will this do?

Deshawn smiles.

Deshawn dribbles the ball between his legs like an absolute pro. Chance comes at him to block him from making the shot. He manages to push him back to the other side of the court.

Trapped, Deshawn takes the shot. The two watch as the ball fly through the air and lands perfect into the basket.

Chance is blown away. Deshawn holds out his hand.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
Who taught you to shoot like that?

DESHAWN
My brother. Tyris.

Deshawn shoves the money into his pocket.
CHANCE
You’re really good, Deshawn. You could become a professional NBA player if you really want to.

DESHAWN
I know.

CHANCE
It takes more than skill, you have to stay in school and make good grades. Who knows, you might change your mind and be something else, maybe an architect.

Deshawn eyes the ground then looks back up into the cop’s face. A deep sadness.

DESHAWN
That’s what my brother was gonna be.

Regret stains Chance’s face.

CHANCE
I’m really sorry.

Deshawn picks up the basketball.

DESHAWN
Yep. Me too.

Deshawn walks away.

INT. MONTGOMERY HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chance comes into the bedroom. His wife KRISTEN MONTGOMERY, 30s, blonde is already in bed. She doesn’t look too pleased.

Chance hops into the bed.

KRISTEN
I tried to call you today. I wanted to have lunch together. I called your Captain, he said you were patrolling Hillside.

CHANCE
Yeah, I was. Mike called out, family emergency.

KRISTEN
So you volunteered?
Yeah, it wasn’t a problem. It was several of us close by. I didn’t mind.

You could have let someone else do it, Chance.

Chance turns to her.

It’s not a big deal.

Really? Hillside is one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the city. They have gangs, drugs, and other bad business. I don’t want you going over there.

I’m a cop, Kristen, it’s my job.

It’s also your job as the father of our two girls to protect them and be here for them.

What do they have to do with this?

What if something happens to you? What are we suppose to do?

Chance gets out of bed.

You live Kristen. Just live.

He walks out.

Chance flips on the light. Kristen follows him.

We need you here Chance.

Chance pours a glass of water.
CHANCE
I met this amazing kid today. Deshawn Bernard. He wants to be a basketball player.

KRISTEN
Bernard? Sounds familiar.

CHANCE
He’s the younger brother of Tyris Bernard, that kid that was gunned down a month ago. Poor Deshawn. It must have been really hard on him.

KRISTEN
The news said there was a gun.

CHANCE
There wasn’t.

KRISTEN
He was in that gang though.

Chance looks at Kristen quizzically.

CHANCE
What are you saying? That he deserved it?

KRISTEN
I’m saying, actions have consequences. You live in a neighbor like that, around all that bad stuff and bad things happen.

Chance chuckles. He amazed by his wife’s opinions.

CHANCE
I looked him up. Tyris graduated from the nearby community college. He studied architecture. He was a kid with dreams, like Deshawn, they just grew up in a bad place. You can’t punish them for that.

Chance walks away. Kristen yells after him.

KRISTEN
Well, it doesn’t mean you have to go risking your life to save theirs.

The straw that breaks the camel’s back. Chance explodes.
CHANCE
I’m a cop, Kristen! It’s what I do. I risk my life. I won’t hide away when there are innocent people out there who needs me. I don’t care how they feel about us, they need our help. Or else what’s the point?

Kristen is stunned into silence.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
You of all people should know. You’re a teacher. You’ve met hundreds of children from broken homes. You try to help them, don’t you?

KRISTEN
I’m not a social worker Chance. I’m a teacher. It’s not my job to fix broken homes. I have two girls to think of, who needs me at the end of the day.

Chance is at a lost for words.

CHANCE
I love my girls as much as you do, but I didn’t become a cop to live the good life. I became a cop because I like saving people’s lives. I won’t apologize for that.

Chance leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Chance is too awake to sleep. Kristen comes in. She climbs in and carefully cuddles up to Chance. Chance wraps his arm around her.

KRISTEN
I’m sorry. I’m just afraid. You’re right, they do need your help. You’re a great cop, father, and husband. Just be careful okay?

CHANCE
I will.

Chance plants a kiss on her lips. Kristen closes her eyes but Chance’s eyes stare at the ceiling.
INT. HILLSIDE PARK - DAY

Chance parks the cruiser on the side of the road. He watches Deshawn and his friends play a game of ball.

Deshawn goes to take a shot when he sees Chance’s car. He tosses the ball to Spike.

DESHAWN
Hey, you keep playing alright? I’ll be back.

SPIKE
C’mon man, we about to beat them.

Deshawn jogs to the cop car. Chance gets out.

DESHAWN
You ain’t tired of Hillside yet? You here every day.

CHANCE
It’s my job.

The two perform a handshake.

From a distance, Spike and a few of the other boys watch in disbelief.

SPIKE
What’s he doing?

Deshawn checks out Chance’s car.

DESHAWN
Can I get in?

CHANCE
Yeah, other side.

INT. COP CRUISER - DAY

The two hop in the cruiser.

Deshawn is amazed by all the gear.

DESHAWN
I never been in one of these before.

CHANCE
Let’s hope you never will, but only if you’re an actual cop.
DESHAWN
Can you keep this?

CHANCE
As long as I’m a cop, yes.

DESHAWN
What else you get?

Chance looks around.

CHANCE
Well, I get this utility belt. It has mase, a baton, handcuffs, a gun...

DESHAWN
Can I have the gun?

CHANCE
No. You’re a minor.

DESHAWN
I can’t wait to get my own gun.

CHANCE
Just make sure you use it for the right reasons, protection. I hear the Hillside Boyz gang can be pretty dangerous.

DESHAWN
No they ain’t. They protect us.

CHANCE
From who?

DESHAWN
You.

CHANCE
We’re not all bad, Deshawn.

Deshawn nods. A small smile on his face.

DESHAWN
I know.

Deshawn looks around, he picks up an officer ball cap.

DESHAWN (CONT’D)
Can I have this?
Deshawn sports the hat. He checks himself out in the sun visor mirror.

CHANCE
Deshawn, what do you know about Hillside Boyz?

DESHAWN
Why?

CHANCE
I’m just curious. Do you know someone whose in it?

DESHAWN
No.

CHANCE
Are you sure? It’s okay to tell me.

DESHAWN
I ain’t no snitch.

CHANCE
So you do know someone?

DESHAWN
Nope.

Chance chuckles.

CHANCE
Okay, I’ll drop it.

DESHAWN
Good.

Suddenly dispatch buzz through.

DISPATCH
Radio to units 412 and 122.

Chance snatches up the microphone.

CHANCE
This is unit 412, go ahead.
DISPATCH
Please respond to 1254 Benet St. in North Hillside for a report of several gunshots heard.

CHANCE
Copy, en route.

Chance looks to Deshawn.

CHANCE.
I have to go. You stay at the park. Don’t go anywhere, you hear me?

Deshawn nods.

Deshawn hops out. Chance flips on his lights and bolts down the road out of sight.

Deshawn puts on his ball cap. Spikes runs over.

SPIKE
What was that all about?

DESHAWN
He had to go. Shootin’ in North Hill.

SPIKE
What’s that on your head? He gave you that?

DESHAWN
Yeah.

Spike looks him up and down.

SPIKE
Sellout.

Deshawn offended.

DESHAWN
I ain’t no sellout.

SPIKE
Then what you doin with that cop hat then?

DESHAWN
He gave it to me.

Spike gets in his face.
SPIKE
He killed Tyris.

DESHAWN
No he didn’t. It was another cop.

SPIKE
They all the same.

DESHAWN
No they ain’t.

SPIKE
If we gonna be Hillside Boyz, we can’t be talkin’ to any cop.

DESHAWN
I ain’t talkin to him.

SPIKE
Get rid of it.

DESHAWN
What?

SPIKE
If you a Hillside Boy, get rid of the hat.

Deshawn snatches the hat off his head. The boys watch as he crosses the park to a trash can. A hint of guilt plops on his face before he shoves it in.

DESHAWN
We good?

SPIKE
Yeah, we good. Come on, let’s play.

Spike and the others run to the baskets. Deshawn looks back at the can before he joins them.

INT. DESHAWN’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Deshawn is doing homework on his bed when he hears sirens. A reminder.

He opens the window and hops out.
INT. HILLSIDE PARK - NIGHT

Deshawn creeps across the park to the trash can from earlier. He pulls out the police cap now covered with food and trash.

EXT. HOME - NIGHT

Deshawn hoses off the cap.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Tonya walks into the laundry room. She looks worn down and nearly defeated. She gets read to open the dryer when Deshawn runs in.

DESHAWN
I got it, momma.

TONYA
Oh, thank you, Deshawn. Those your brother clothes. Lay them out so they don’t get wrinkled.

DESHAWN
Yes, ma’am.

Tonya sighs with exhaustion.

TONYA
I’m going to bed. Good night baby.

DESHAWN
Good night, momma.

Deshawn waits until she’s out of sight. He pulls the clothes from the dryer. He pulls the police ball cap out of the mix.

INT. DESHAWN’S BEDROOM - LATER

Deshawn pulls out a shoe box from under his bed. Inside is a gun, the news article of his brother Tyris and a large fold of cash.

He places the ball cap into the box and closes it shut.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Chance is at his locker preparing to go home when another officer walks in THOMAS, 40s.
THOMAS
What a day, huh? Thank God it’s Friday.

CHANCE
Won’t make a difference for me, I’ve got to work this weekend.

THOMAS
That sucks. Hey, great job on the arrest today. I heard there was another shooting in North Hillside.

CHANCE
Yeah. I guess I got there in time.

THOMAS
I don’t know how you do it.

Thomas sits on the center bench and unties his shoes.

CHANCE
Do what?

THOMAS
Patrol Hillside.

CHANCE
Somebody’s got to do it.

THOMAS
Better you than me.

CHANCE
It’s not bad. Remember that kid Tyris Bernard who was gunned down a month ago?

THOMAS
Yeah?

Chance unloads his utility belt.

CHANCE
I met his brother a week ago. Deshawn Bernard. The kids a hell of a basketball player. He’s a great kid. He’s got big dreams.

Thomas doesn’t look too happy about it.

THOMAS
Did you hear about Mark?
CHANCE
No. Are they charging him?

THOMAS
No.

Chance freeze. He looks at Thomas.

CHANCE
No?

THOMAS
Rumor is they’re letting him off the hook. They’re justifying it as self-defense.

CHANCE
Are you serious?

THOMAS
He felt threatened, Chance, he had to do what he had to do. He had a gun.

CHANCE
There was no gun. I read the notes and check evidence myself. There was no gun.

THOMAS
Well, regardless, he did what he thought was right at that moment.

Anger bubbles up on Chance’s face.

CHANCE
You sound like my wife.

THOMAS
Well, you need to listen to her then. And you need to stop getting friendly with this Deshawn kid. His brother was in the Hillside gang and his second oldest brother is doing the same. You know how this goes, Chance. It’s only a matter of time before he’s a part of it too.

CHANCE
The kids just need reassurance. They’ve lost trust in us, Thomas. They need protection and good influence.

(MORE)
They rely on the gangs for protection because they have no one else.

Case in point. It’s too late for most of them. It’s dangerous. If I were you I’d stay out of it. Do your job and go home.

Chance is over this now.

What would you know about danger? You’ve been patrolling the same gated neighborhoods for ten years.

Thomas stands.

They know me over there. They trust me.

Of course they do, you’re the only one who patrols that area. Even the new guys can’t get those shifts.

What are you saying, Chance?

I’m saying how would you know what dangers are out there when you’re in the better parts of the city?

Thomas gets in his face.

You wanna know what I know? I know that patrolling Hillside is a waste of time. It’s nothing but a bunch of broken families, drugs, crimes, and thugs. I have a wife and kids to care for. I’m not gonna risk my life for some gang.

Chance gets back in his face.

Then you don’t deserve to be a cop.

I don’t have to listen to this.
CHANCE
Don’t worry, I was just leaving.

Chance puts away his belt and SLAMS the locker shut. He stops at the door.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
Why did you become a cop by the way?

THOMAS
To protect my friends and family from danger.

CHANCE
Yeah? Well who protects their friends and family from danger? Who’s going to make sure they’re communities are safe enough to live in? Huh?

Thomas says nothing.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
All lives matter Thomas, not just ours.

Chance leaves.

INT. PRECINCT LOBBY - DAY

Chance rushes toward the exit when he sees a crowd of cops off to the side.

At the center is OFFICER MARK RAINES, the cop accused of killing Tyris. The cops surround him shaking his hand wishing him luck on getting off.

Chance swells like a raging bull. He storms over to the crowd, pushes his way through.

MARK
Hey, Chance!

Chance blows him straight in the face. Cops pull him off. Mark holds his bleeding nose.

EXT. BERNARD’S HOME - DAY

Chance pulls up in front of Deshawn’s home. There is a car already in front.
A MAN in a suit carrying a briefcase, a lawyer, comes down the steps and hops into his car.

Deshawn comes out of the house. He isn’t happy at all. He must have heard the news.

Chance gets out of the car. Deshawn burns with hate. The cop hat dangles in his hand.

    CHANCE
    Deshawn, let me explain to you--

    DESHAWN
    Explain what? That cop getting away with killing my brother?

Deshawn throws the hat at him.

    CHANCE
    This isn’t over yet.

    DESHAWN
    What does it matter? We all know what’s going to happen. He gonna get away with it. Yall always get away with it. My brother’s dead because of you!

Angry tears roll down Deshawn’s cheeks. Pain swallows him up.

    CHANCE
    Deshawn, not every cop is like that.

    DESHAWN
    Liar! I hate you. Get out of my neighborhood.

Jaheim comes out of the house. He pulls his brother to him.

    JAHEIM
    Is there a problem, Officer?

Chance looks at the gun dangling by Jaheim’s side.

    CHANCE
    No. No problem.

Chance climbs back into his car and leaves.

INT. CHANCE’S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chance sits at the table, he’s far away in thought.
Kristen comes in. She blinks at the light.

    KRISTEN
    Honey, it’s two in the morning, come to bed.

    CHANCE
    I will, in a while.

Kristen sits down next to him.

    KRISTEN
    There’s nothing you can do now.

    CHANCE
    He’s going to get off. They’re already celebrating it.

    KRISTEN
    You tried...

    CHANCE
    Deshawn hates me now. Distrusts me. They all do.

Kristen is unsure what else to say. She places a hand on his.

    KRISTEN
    Don’t give up. Keep doing what you’ve been doing. Eventually, they’ll see that not all cops are bad.

Chance nods.

    KRISTEN (CONT’D)
    Come to bed now. You need rest.

Chance gets up and follows his wife out.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chance jogs through his neighborhood. He takes notice of his beautiful surroundings. Each home, a repetition of the one before it, beside it and across from it. A cookie-cutter neighborhood.

Chance passes by each row of streets with more replicas of lovely homes. Nuclear families work and play in their perfect yards. Worry-free smiles on their faces.

Chance breaks into a run.
He breaks when he comes to the entrance of his community. The huge black steel gates with key code entrance.

He watches as a citizen leans out of her car to key in her code. The gate opens automatically and closes immediately after she drives in.

Chance stares at the massive gates, a metaphor of his life; safety, protection, crime-free neighborhood, great schools, law-abiding neighbors; a perfect lifestyle. A lifestyle Deshawn and others like him have never known or would ever know in their lifetime and generations to come.

Unable to tolerate the notion, Chance turns away and jogs back home.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Jaheim sits in the car next to his best man DERRICK “TANK” BRASMAN, 20s.

TANK
What you gonna do for your initiation? You know it’s got to be something big.

JAHEIM
I got something.

TANK
What is it?

JAHEIM
Ambush.

TANK
On who?

Jaheim gives a sinister smile.

JAHEIM
A cop. Get the guys, tell em to meet me at the warehouse.

TANK
Bet. Let’s do it.

INT. CHANCE’S HOME - NIGHT

Chance prepares to leave. Kristen straightens up his uniform.
CHANCE
What kind of starch did you use on this? It’s stiff as a board.

Kristen giggles.

KRISTEN
It makes you look nice and neat.

CHANCE
And stiff.

Kristen kisses him.

KRISTEN
Be careful.

CHANCE
Always. Try not to stay up. Get some sleep.

KRISTEN
I haven’t gotten sleep since the girls were born.

CHANCE
You wanted them.

KRISTEN
You did too.

CHANCE
I did. Have a good night. I love you.

KRISTEN
I love you too.

INT. COP CRUISER - NIGHT

Chance strolls through the neighborhood. There is an eerie dead silence in the air.

Dispatch buzz in.

DISPATCH
Radio to unit 412.

CHANCE
This is unit 412, go ahead.
DISPATCH
Report to address 2344 Dyler St. for a domestic disturbance.

CHANCE
Copy that, I am on the way.

EXT. HOME - NIGHT
Chance hops out of the car. He waits for any sounds. He walks up to the door and listens. Silence. He knocks.

A YOUNG WOMAN answers the door. A scowl on her face.

YOUNG WOMAN
What you want?

CHANCE
Someone called the police for a domestic disturbance.

YOUNG WOMAN
No. Ain’t nobody call you.

GUNSHOTS are heard. The woman SLAMS the door shut.

Chance ducks down. He draws his gun. He reaches for his magazine. Nowhere.

CHANCE
What the hell?

He checks the ground.

CHANCE (CONT’D)

Damnit!

Chance sneaks out to his car.

Coming toward him is a massive group of men armed with all sorts of weapons.

Jaheim spots Chance trying to get in his car. He shoots at the car. Chance runs off on the side of the house.

He watches as the boys shoot up the cop car. Others SMASH the glass and STAB the tires.

CHANCE (CONT’D)

Shit!

Chance disappears behind the house.
INT. DESHAWN’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Deshawn is on the bed, anger evident on his face.

Tonya bursts through the door.

TONYA
Get on the floor, they shootin’!

Deshawn quickly gets to the floor. Tonya crawls out of the room.

Deshawn looks up at the picture of him and his brothers.

DESHAUN
Jaheim...

Deshawn crawls out the window.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Deshawn creeps down the street. GUNSHOTS are still heard in the background.

Deshawn notices the burning cop car. He spots the familiar name on the rear, Montgomery. Fear floods his face.

Jaheim and his mob hoot and holler down the street. He turns to them.

JAHEIM
Spread out! Find him, bring his ass here alive!

The mob goes wild, they scatter like insects.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Chance dodge between bushes and over fences from yard to yard. He hides behind a car.

He pops open his phone and dials.

CHANCE
Hello, this is Officer Montgomery from unit 412, I need back up to North Hillside. I’ve been caught in an ambush. I need back up now!

He clicks the phone. A NOISE comes. He freezes.
DESHAWN
Hey, Chance!

Chance peeps around the car.

CHANCE
Deshawn, what are you doing out here? Go home!

DESHAWN
They’re looking for you.

CHANCE
I know that.

DESHAWN
Come on, I know where to hide.

Chance is reluctant at first, especially after their last conversation.

DESHAWN (CONT’D)
Trust me.

Chance follows him.

INT. ABANDONED HOME – NIGHT

Chance and Deshawn break into the boarded up home.

DESHAWN
They won’t find us here.

Chance kneels to catch his breath.

CHANCE
Deshawn, listen to me.

Deshawn turns to him.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry, about the cop. It wasn’t right.

DESHAWN
When I find him, I’m gonna hit him in his face.

Chance shakes his head with a chuckle. He stands, still breathless.
CHANCE
First off, assaulting a cop is a felony. You don’t want that.
Second, I may have already taken care of that.

Chance flexes his wrapped knuckles.

Deshawn smiles impressed.

DESHAWN
Cool.

CHANCE
Yeah. Listen, cops are on the way. If your brother doesn’t back down, it’s going to be trouble.

DESHAWN
Give me your phone. I can call help. Spike, my friend, he’ll help us.

CHANCE
Are you sure?

DESHAWN
Yeah.

Chance gives him the phone.

Deshawn dials.

INT. SPIKE’S HOME - NIGHT

Spike is in the living room watching a game on tv. The phone rings. He runs over to answer.

SPIKE
Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

DESHAWN
Hey, Spike, you gotta help me.

SPIKE
Where you at?

DESHAWN
I’m at the old shack down the street.

(MORE)
Deshawn hangs up.

Deshawn (Cont’d)
See? He coming to help.

Chance
Let’s hope he gets here in time.

Ext. Streets – Night
Jaheim is surrounded by some of his crew waiting. Spike runs up to him.

Jaheim
What is it, little man?

Spike
I know where the cop is? He wit Deshawn.

Jaheim swells.

Jaheim
Let’s go.

Int. Abandoned Home – Night
Chance paces.

Chance
Where are they?

Deshawn
Where’s spike?

Sudden Gunshots beat against the house. Chance pulls Deshawn to the ground covering him with his body.
EXT. ABANDONED HOME - NIGHT

Jaheim stands in front of large crowd of boys and men. Spike and Tank by his side.

JAHEIM
Let my brother go cop, and you won’t get hurt.

INTERCUT - CHANCE AND JAHEIM

Chance slowly gets up.

CHANCE
Are you alright?

DESHAWN
Yeah.

CHANCE
Go. He wants you out there. He won’t shoot anymore with you in here.

DESHAWN
What about you?

CHANCE
I’ll wait.

DESHAWN
Then I’ll wait too.

CHANCE
No. Go right now before you get hurt.

JAHEIM
Deshawn! You in there?

DESHAWN
Yeah!

JAHEIM
I’m proud of you boy. Bring the cop out.

Deshawn looks at Chance. Chance shakes his head.

DESHAWN
No.
JAHEIM
We ain’t gonna hurt him. Tell him to come out. We just wanna talk. Either that or we shoot the door down.

CHANCE
Alright! I’m coming out.

The mob waits as Deshawn and Chance come from around the back. Chance keeps Deshawn behind him just in case.

JAHEIM
Let my brother go, cop.

Chance puts his hands up.

CHANCE
Go.

Deshawn refuses.

JAHEIM
(to Tank)
Get him.

Tank and a few others separate the two.

JAHEIM (CONT’D)
Bring him!

The mob yells out. They drag Chance to the street.

Deshawn tries to break from Tank’s grip. He looks over at Spike. Spike nods with a sinful smile. He walks off to join the crowd.

EXT. STREETS – NIGHT

Chance is on the ground. Fear pounds in his eyes.

JAHEIM
Piece of shit!

Jaheim kicks him. Some of the others join in.

DESHAWN
No! Stop!

Tank gives Chance a couple of punches to the face. Chance is too weary to fight back.
A gun COCKS.

The boys stop their assault. Chance looks up weakly at a gun point down at him. He looks past the barrel at the hateful look in Jaheim’s eyes.

Deshawn breaks from his bonds.

JAHEIM
This is for my brother.

DESHAWN
No!

Deshawn stands in between Chance and Jaheim.

Deshawn is furious, he shoves Jaheim.

DESHAWN (CONT’D)
Is this what you want? Huh? You wanna die?

Jaheim staggers back as his brother continues to shove him.

DESHAWN (CONT’D)
You want me to lose another brother? Is that what you want?

Jaheim pushes back but Deshawn keeps coming at him with a mix of punches and shoves.

DESHAWN (CONT’D)
You want momma to lose another son? What’s gonna happen if we lose you? Huh? Answer me!

Everyone watch the two brothers go at it.

Jaheim shoves Deshawn to the ground.

JAHEIM
They killed our brother. It’s time we kill theirs.

Jaheim goes back to Chance who is crouched on the street. He doesn’t move in fear of his life.

Jaheim aims the gun at him.

Deshawn hops off the ground. He gets in between them again. Deshawn lets the gun push in his head. His eyes fiery with boldness. No more fear.

Jaheim is stunned.
JAHEIM (CONT’D)

Move.

DESHAWN

No.

JAHEIM

I said move!

DESHAWN

I ain’t movin’ nowhere!

Cop SIRENS blare in the background. An ocean of cop cars races toward them.

Tank grabs Spike and runs. Other follow.

Chance quickly gets off the ground.

Jaheim looks at the flood of cops as they get near. He looks scared for the first time.

The cars stop and cops get out all weapons aimed at him.

COP

Put down your weapon and put your hands up!

CHANCE

Put it down. Hurry up.

Jaheim turns to Chance.

CHANCE (CONT’D)

Do it, I can help you. If you don’t put it down, they’ll kill you. Put it down.

Jaheim stares at Chance with uncertainty. He looks down at Deshawn. Deshawn is frightened. He may lose another brother. He looks back at the cops who are ready to fire.

CHANCE (CONT’D)

Put it down, now. I can help. Trust me.

Jaheim gazes at him. How can he trust him after what happened to his brother?

CHANCE (CONT’D)

Do it.

Jaheim lays the gun on the ground. He puts his hands up.
CHANCE (CONT’D)
I’m going to put your hands behind your back. Just do as I say until we get to the station.

Chance pulls Jaheim’s hands behind his back. They walk slowly to the cops. Jaheim looks back at Deshawn, fear and apology in his eyes.

A couple of cops take him off of Chance’s hands.

Deshawn watch as the car drives off. Chance comes over to him.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

Deshawn shakes his head as his eyes fill. He breaks into a cry. Chance kneels and pulls him close. Deshawn wraps his arms around the cop as if to cry to his father.

EXT. STREET - DAY
Deshawn plays in the street with some of the boys.

SUPER - ONE YEAR LATER
A cop cruiser rides toward them.

DESHAWN
It’s Jaheim!

Deshawn bolts through the yard onto the porch of his house.

DESHAWN (CONT’D)
Momma! It’s Jaheim. He home!

Tonya bursts out of the door.

The cruiser parks in front of the house.

Neighbors come out to see the commotion.

Chance hops out of the car. He goes around the side to let Jaheim out.

Deshawn runs into his arms.

JAHEIM
Shawn, what’s up man!

Jaheim looks up at his crying momma.
JAHEIM (CONT’D)

Momma...

Jaheim walks to her. Right before embrace, she SMACKS him hard across the face. Everyone’s eyes pop.

TONYA
What’s wrong with you boy?! Don’t you ever do that to me again!

Tonya pulls him into her arms. Jaheim hugs her tight.

JAHEIM
I’m sorry, momma.

Deshawn looks at Chance and smiles.

TONYA
How you get out so early?

JAHEIM
The cop help me out. I’m on parole for another year, though.

TONYA
Thank you, Officer.

CHANCE
You’re welcome ma’am.

The two go inside.

Deshawn goes to the car.

DESHAWN
How did you get him off?

Chance folds his arms.

CHANCE
I ain’t no snitch.

They chuckle.

DESHAWN
Thanks.

CHANCE
You’re welcome. Keep him out of trouble, okay?

Deshawn nods.
CHANCE (CONT’D)
Oh, I almost forgot. I got you something.

Chance hands him a box.

CHANCE (CONT’D)
Don’t lose it.

Chance leaves.
Deshawn opens the box. A huge smile brightens his face.

EXT. HILLSIDE PARK – DAY
Deshawn takes a break from a game of basketball with Spike and his friends.

SPIKE
Hey, that cop really came through for Jaheim. I know you happy.

JAHEIM
I am.

SPIKE
We still going to that summer camp next year?

JAHEIM
Yeah, maybe.

SPIKE
Maybe? How else we gonna learn to be the greatest ball players since Jordan?

Deshawn laugh.

SPIKE (CONT’D)
What could be better than that?

One of the other boys calls for them to come back to the game.

Deshawn reaches into his pocket and pulls out an official police badge with his name on it. He smiles answering Spike’s question.

SPIKE (CONT’D)
Come on Deshawn!
Deshawn shoves the badge back into his pocket and joins the boys.

FADE OUT.

THE END.