

Murder at Mardi Gras

By Nadine

FADE IN

NEW ORLEANS. FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

People are opening up their stores, some people are sweeping the street.

INT. APARTMENT - FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

A late 30s black man (Dante) is talking on the phone. His conversation is inaudible. He is medium height, buzz cut bald-fade haircut, 5 o'clock shadow beard, wearing a long sleeve pullover striped knitted crew neck casual sweater, jeans, sneakers, he has iced square stud earrings, and an expensive looking silver watch, he is not fat and not skinny. He finishes talking on his cell phone and puts the phone on the table, he looks at his watch, he grabs his coat on the sofa, walks towards the door and leaves his apartment.

INT - CAFE

Dante walks into the cafe, he walks up to the counter.

DANTE (To Barista)

Morning. Can I have a tea and the regular morning breakfast, please.

BARISTA (To Dante)

Sure thing.

DANTE (To Barista)

Thank you.

Dante walks over to a small table and chairs, and sits down.

A mid-40s african-american man (Space) walks into the cafe, he is slightly overweight, high flat top hairstyle, patchy beard, wearing a long sleeve casual button down shirt, t-shirt, trousers, shoes, he walks up to the counter and orders, he looks around, he sees Dante and smiles, Dante smiles back at him. Space walks over to Dante and sits down opposite him, Space goes to give Dante the fist bump handshake, Dante shakes his head and chuckles.

DANTE (To Space)

Space, you're like 45 years old, and I'm not 25 anymore, I'm not doing that.

SPACE (To Dante)

(Raises his eyebrows) Okaaaay?!

DANTE (To Space)

Who gave you that nickname, anyway?

SPACE (To Dante)

Because I love researching space and I like my own space...

Space laughs.

DANTE (To Space)

What's up with your new haircut?! It's 2023

SPACE (To Dante)

Listen, these haircut's are coming back in style!

The Barista brings them their tea and coffee.

DANTE (To Barista)

Thank you.

The Barista walks away.

DANTE (To Space)

You know it's Mardi Gras tonight...

Dante takes a sip of his tea.

SPACE (To Dante)

Yeah, my favorite time of the year. (Sarcastically)

DANTE (To Space)

Too many people?

SPACE (To Dante)

Yep.

Space takes a sip of his coffee.

DANTE (To Space)

Listen, Cisco and Micah are coming over tonight, gonna play some cards, you wanna join us?

SPACE (To Dante)

Yeah, sure, love to...but, you could have called me on the phone...

DANTE (To Space)

Yeah, well, guess I want to be old school as well sometimes.

DANTE (To Space)

Come by around seven?

SPACE (To Dante)

Okay.

The Barista brings them their breakfast.

DANTE (To Barista)

Thank you.

SPACE (To Barista)

Thanks.

BARISTA (To Dante and Space)

You're welcome.

The Barista walks away.

Space and Dante start eating their meals.

SPACE (To Dante)

This looks good, I'm hungry!

DISSOLVE TO

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dante is cleaning his apartment. The front door opens straight into the living room, the window/balcony is adjoining to the living room, the kitchen and the bedroom are adjoining to the living room.

The doorbell rings.

He walks to the door.

He opens the door.

A late 30s African-American woman (Cassie) is standing there, she is short, slim, wearing leggings and a crewneck sweater, sneakers, layered pixie cut hairstyle with a few green highlight strands, She smiles at Dante.

CASSIE

Hi, baby.

You gonna let me in?!

She walks straight into his apartment.

DANTE

Cassie, I'm kinda busy...

CASSIE

You've been avoiding my calls...I had no choice but to come here.

(Beat)

DANTE

So, what is it?

Cassie shakes her head and shrugs her shoulders.

CASSIE

Nothing dramatic, I just wanted to see you.

Cassie walks up to Dante...she grabs the collar of his sweater and tries to kiss him, he removes her hands from him, he walks away a few steps.

DANTE

Cass, my friends are gonna be here soon...you and me clearly need to talk, but now is not the right time.

CASSIE

Like I said, if you'd have stopped avoiding me, we wouldn't be having this conversation right now, would we?! (angrily).

Dante sighs.

DANTE

Look, I...

The doorbell rings.

DANTE

I gotta get that.

He goes to the door.

There is inaudible talking...the door shuts, a man walks in (Micah) early 30s, biracial, skin tone is pale, tall, slim,

man-bun on top of curly hair, wearing a sweater, slim fit chino trousers, shoes.

Micah stops and stares at Cassie for a few seconds.

MICAH

Oh...

Dante walks into the living room.

MICAH (To Dante)

I didn't know you had company.

DANTE (To Micah)

Cassie was just leaving.

MICAH (To Cassie)

Cassie...(nods his head in acknowledgment)

MICAH (To Cassie)

Haven't seen you in a while...how you been?

CASSIE (To Micah)

None of your business...that's how I've been.

Cassie starts to walk out of the apartment.

CASSIE (To Dante)

I'll see you soon, D

Cassie leaves the apartment.

MICAH

You still messing with this chick?

DANTE

Look, we're all gonna have a nice night.

Dante smiles at Micah, and puts his arm on Micah's shoulder in a buddy/friend way.

Micah smiles at Dante.

DANTE

You want a beer?

MICAH

Yeah, please.

They walk to the kitchen.

INT. BAR - FRENCH QUARTER

Cassie is having a drink.

A man (Cisco) walks past and looks into the bar, Cisco is Brazilian, early 40s, bald, medium height, wearing a T-Shirt, hoodie, jogging pants and sneakers. He looks at Cassie like he knows her, she sees him and looks at him the same way.

INT. APARTMENT

Dante and Micah are talking in the kitchen.

MICAH

Yeah, so, I was pissed that I lost another homie to a relationship.

DANTE

That's too bad, man.

The door knocks.

Dante goes to the door, it's Cisco.

DANTE

Cisco, how's it going?!

CISCO

Hey, how you doin'?

DANTE

Come on in, Brotha.

Cisco walks into the apartment into the living room.
Micah walks out of the kitchen into the living room.

MICAH

How are you, Cisc?

CISCO

Hey, Micah.

Cisco and Micah give each other a quick man-hug and handshake.
Cisco sits down on the sofa.
Micah sits down on the other sofa.

MICAH (To Cisco)

How's Siobhan?

CISCO (To Micah)

She's good.

Dante walks into the living room and hands Cisco a bottle of
beer, Dante sits down on the same sofa as Cisco.

CISCO (To Dante)

Thanks.

CISCO (To Dante)

Guess what?! I saw Cassie in a bar across the street.

DANTE (To Cisco)

Yeah, she was just here.
Left after Micah got here.

CISCO

That woman nothin' but trouble!

The door knocks.

DANTE

Excuse me, guys.

Dante walks to the door.
Cisco and Micah continue talking.
Space walks into the living room.

SPACE

Hey, fellas.

MICAH (To Space)

Hey, how you' doin'?

CISCO (To Space)

Space.

DANTE

Guys, now that everyone's here, let me set up the cards.

There is a pack of cards on the coffee table.

MICAH (To Dante)

Yo, D. Where are our snacks, man?! (Jokingly)

Dante chuckles.

DANTE (To Micah)

Oh yeah, sorry. I will get on that.

MICAH (To Dante)

I can do it.

DANTE (To Micah)

You sure? I'm the host, I mean, I should...

MICAH (To Dante)

It's fine, Dude. I'll do it.

Micah gets up and walks to the kitchen.

DANTE (To Micah)

Okay, thanks, M

There is some crowd noise outside and some music being played outside.

Space walks up to the window and looks out.

SPACE

Everybody getting ready for Mardi Gras.

DISSOLVE TO

STREET - FRENCH QUARTER

The Mardi Gras parade.

Cassie is standing outside the bar looking at Dante's apartment across the way from the bar.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. APARTMENT

Dante's phone rings.

DANTE

Excuse me, guys.

Dante picks up his cell phone from the table and walks into the kitchen.

DANTE

Yeah.

INTERCUT - STREET, FRENCH QUARTER / INT. APARTMENT

CASSIE

It's me.

DANTE

Yeah, I know, I saw your name on my phone.
Look, my guys are here, Cass.
Why don't I give you a call tomorrow?

CASSIE

Nah, fuck that. I want to see you now.

Dante sighs frustratingly.

Space looks at Dante from the living room.
Dante has a frown expression on his face. He doesn't see Space looking at him.
Dante hangs up the phone and walks back into the living room.
Dante sits down.
They continue the card game.

CROSSFADE:

INT. APARTMENT

The guys are still playing cards and laughing loudly and talking.

There is a knock on the door.

DANTE

Pause the game, guys. Pause the game.

Dante gets up and walks to the front door.
We hear inaudible talking at the front door.
Cassie walks into the living room.
Everyone becomes silent.

CASSIE

Don't stop playing on my account.
I'm here to see Dante.

Dante walks into the living room.

DANTE (To Cassie)

Cass, let's talk in the kitchen.

Cassie starts to walk into the kitchen.

CISCO (Mumbles)

Damn hoe.

Cassie hears, she stops and turns around.

CASSIE (To Cisco)

Who you callin' a hoe?! (angrily)

Cisco doesn't respond.

CASSIE (To Dante)

Why are you letting him talk to me like that?
Kick his black ass outta here!

Dante looks down on the ground for a moment.

DANTE (To Cassie)

Cass, look, I...

DANTE (To Cisco)

Yo, don't be calling her a hoe...get the fuck outta here.

CISCO (To Dante)

Nigga, are you serious?!
You gonna let this bitch come between friends?!

DANTE (To Cisco)

Did you not hear me?! I said don't disrespect her!
Now get the fuck out!

Cisco gets up to leave.

CASSIE (To Cisco)

Cisco. What kind of name is that?!

CISCO (To Cassie)

Obviously it's short for Francisco.

CISCO (To Dante)

Your lady's not very bright, Dante.

DANTE (To Cisco)

Just leave.

Cisco is walking out of the apartment.
He turns to the other guys.

CISCO

You guys supposed to be my Niggas too! Thanks for having my back
(sarcastic)

Micah chuckles in disgust.
Cisco leaves the apartment.

DANTE (To Cassie)

Come on.

They both walk into the kitchen.

MICAH (To Space)

Cisco is in his 40s, he should be more mature.

SPACE (To Micah)

Yeah, well, age doesn't always come with maturity.

Space takes a sip of his beer.

INT. KITCHEN

CASSIE (To Dante)

Look, I'm not trying to play games. I want us to get back together...not the occasional friends with benefits bullshit...together for real...as a couple.

DANTE (To Cassie)

This isn't the right time to talk about this.

Cassie starts walking out of the kitchen.

CASSIE (To Dante)

I'm not giving up.

Cassie leaves the apartment.

Dante walks into the living room and sits down.

SPACE (To Dante)

Trouble in paradise?

(Beat)

MICAH

Let's get back to the game, y'all.

DISSOLVE TO

FRENCH QUARTER. STREET - NIGHT

Cassie is walking through the parade, unaware that Cisco is walking a distance behind her, Cisco's eyes are fixed glaringly at Cassie as he is following her through the parade.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. APARTMENT

The guys are clearing up the cards.

MICAH

Guys, I might go and check out the parade...get some fresh air.

SPACE (To Micah)

The balcony is all the fresh air you need, brotha.

Micah gets up.

MICAH

I'll be back soon, y'all.

Micah leaves the apartment.

SPACE (To Dante)

So, what you gonna do about Cassie?
You might need to get a restraining order.

DANTE (To Space)

Stay out of it, S.

(Beat)

SPACE (To Dante)

Tell you what.

Why don't we go into one of these bars and have a drink?

DANTE (To Space)

I don't know...um...

Okay.

DISSOLVE TO
STREET - FRENCH QUARTER

Micah is standing outside a bar. He mumbles something inaudible to himself, he rubs his fingers on his forehead for a few seconds.

INT. BAR

SPACE (To Bartender)

Two Jack and Cokes, please.

BARTENDER (To Space)

Coming up.

DANTE

You know what?! Why am I sitting here?! I need to find Cassie.

Dante gets up and starts to leave the bar.

SPACE

Woah, woah, hold on, we just got here!

Dante leaves the bar.

Space frustratingly hits his hand on the bar table.

The bartender puts his drink on the table.

SPACE (To Bartender)

Thank you.

Space takes a swig of his drink.

EXT. STREET. FRENCH QUARTER / ALLEY

Cassie is arguing with someone. We don't see who she is arguing with, the conversation is inaudible over the loud parade and music.

CROSSFADE:

EXT. STREET. FRENCH QUARTER / ALLEY

Cassie is lying DEAD on the sidewalk.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. STREET/FRENCH QUARTER - PARADE

Cisco is walking hurriedly through the parade.

EXT. STREET/FRENCH QUARTER - ALLEY

Three young women are walking past the alley, one of the young ladies sees Cassie's dead body, the young lady screams, the two other young ladies see the dead body.

Young woman

Oh my God.

EXT. STREET. FRENCH QUARTER /PARADE

EXT. APARTMENT - STREET

Micah is smoking a blunt outside some apartments.
Dante walks up to Micah.

DANTE

Let's go back to the apartment.
Finish your weed first.

Micah nods his head.

Dante walks up the stairs to his apartment.

There are POLICE SIRENS.

Micah looks down the parade, his eyes wide. He quickly finishes his blunt with one last quick hurried puff, and throws the blunt on the floor and steps on it. He then quickly walks up the stairs to Dante's apartment.

EXT. STREET. FRENCH QUARTER - ALLEY

Police, paramedic van, and Detectives are at the crime scene. More people start to crowd the crime scene, the police put yellow tape around the crime scene. Cassie's dead body is covered and is being loaded in the paramedic van.

POLICE OFFICER (To Detective)

There are no gun shot wounds or stab wounds. We think she may have been strangled. We'll know more after the autopsy.

DETECTIVE (To Police Officer)

Okay, thanks, Detective.

The Police Officer walks over to his car. The Detective puts his hands on his hips and looks at the floor where Cassie's dead body was. The Detective has a serious and concentrated look on his face.

INT. APARTMENT

Dante and Micah are in the living room.

DANTE

I'm hungry...how about you?
Thinking about takeout.

MICAH

Yeah.

There is frantic knocking on the front door.
Dante goes to the door and opens it. Space rushes in. Space is breathing quite fast.

SPACE

It's...it's...

DANTE (To Space)

Woah, woah, calm down, brotha. What's going on?

Space's breathing becomes more calm.

SPACE

It's Cassie.

(Beat)

SPACE

...She's dead.

MICAH (To Space)

What? Is this some sick joke?

SPACE (To Micah)

It's no joke...she's dead...the cops are all over the place...I saw them load her dead body in a van...she was in an alley...

SPACE (CONT'D)

You guys didn't hear the police sirens?

Tears start to roll down Dante's eyes.

(Beat)

The door knocks.

MICAH

I'll get it...

D, I'm sorry about Cass.

Micah goes to the door and opens it.

CISCO (To Micah)

What up, man.

Cisco walks into the living room. Micah follows.

MICAH (To Cisco)

Did you see the cops outside?

Cisco looks down at the ground for a couple of seconds, he sighs, he rubs his thumb and his two fingers on his forehead for a moment.

CISCO (To Micah)

Yeah...it's...

(Beat)

CISCO (To Micah)

Cassie!

DANTE (To Cisco)

How did you know?

CISCO (To Dante)

Huh?...oh well, uh, I got there when the ambulance was leaving, I heard these ladies tell the police what they saw, they described Cassie...her clothing and everything...I knew it was her.

(Beat)

Dante frowns, his lips tighten, he stares intensely at Cisco for a couple of seconds.

DANTE (To Cisco)

Did you have anything to do with this?

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante)

What? You can't be serious?!

DANTE (To Cisco)

I'm very serious!

Dante walks fast towards Cisco. Dante grabs Cisco by the collar of Cisco's hoodie.

DANTE (To Cisco)

DID YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS?

Cisco is leaning slightly away from Dante while Dante is still gripping Cisco's hoodie collar.

CISCO (To Dante)

I had noth...nothing to do with this...

(Beat)

Dante holds onto Cisco's collar for a few more seconds. Dante stares intensely into Cisco's eyes. Dante lets go of Cisco's collar.

DANTE (To Cisco)

You were on bad terms with Cassie.
What were the last words you said to her tonight?
Oh that's right, a hoe and a bitch, if I remember correctly.

CISCO (To Dante)

So what?! Doesn't mean I killed her.

(Beat)

The door knocks.
Dante goes to the door. It's Space.
Space walks into the living room with Dante walking into the
living room behind him.

SPACE

We gonna continue the game, guys?

(Beat)

Cisco and Micah look at each other.

SPACE

Whyyy is everyone acting weird right now?

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

Cassie's dead.

SPACE (To Dante)

Wha? The hell you talking about?

MICAH (To Space)

The police are out there...

SPACE (To Micah)

Yeah, I saw five O, but I thought there was some fight or somethin stupid like that.

CISCO

I mean, Cassie was a pain in the ass...but I don't know why anyone would want her dead.

MICAH (To Cisco)

I do.

They all look at Micah.

SPACE (To Micah)

Why the fuck would you say somethin like that, Mic?! (pronounced "Meek" for short)

(Beat)

MICAH

She thought she was all that.

DANTE (To Micah)

Hey, look, I know that you weren't keen on her, but watch it, okay.

MICAH (To Dante)

What do you mean watch it?!...what?! You gonna beat me up
(chuckles) we in high school now?!

DANTE (To Micah)

Look, I cared about her, regardless of the issues that she and I had.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Micah) (CONT'D)

...You talking bad about her, is just gonna make me angry, period.

MICAH (To Dante)

Yeah, well, guess what?! I care about you D, and she was ruining your life.

CISCO (To Micah)

Nigga, you don't gotta worry about his love life.

DANTE (To Micah)

What did you do, Micah?

(Beat)

DANTE (To Micah)

Did you do it?

Did you kill her?

(Beat)

Micah sighs, he looks down on the ground for a few seconds, his lips tighten, he glares at Dante.

MICAH (To Dante)

What makes you so special, Dante?

DANTE (To Micah)

What the hell are you talking about?!

(Beat)

MICAH (To Dante)

Look, we all know she would be good for a roll in the hay, but she isn't wife material...girlfriend material...maybe.

SPACE (To Micah)

Yo, spit it out, man.

(Beat)

MICAH

I didn't mean for things to get out of hand.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER / BAR.

Cassie walks out of the bar, she stops and starts typing on her cell phone.

MICAH walks out of the SAME bar!

He stands next to Cassie.

MICAH

Evening, Cassie.

Cassie looks at him.

CASSIE

Micah, what are you doing here?

MICAH

Needed a break from the game, from the guys...you know.

CASSIE

I didn't see you in the bar.

MICAH

Yeah, well, a lot of people in there, so...

CASSIE

Okay, well, have a nice night.

Cassie walks away.

Cassie is walking, her cell phone makes a noise, she stops by the alley, she takes her cell phone out of her bag and is texting, she puts her phone back in her purse.

Micah approaches her.

Cassie turns and looks at him shocked for a second.

CASSIE

Micah, you scared the hell out of me.

MICAH

Sorry.

(Beat)

CASSIE

So, why you creepin on me like this? It feels like you're stalking me now.

MICAH

Oh, come on, Cass, it's a public street.

Cassie starts to walk away.

Micah grabs her arm. She stops and looks at Micah.

CASSIE

What the hell do you think you're doing?! Take your hands off me!

MICAH

Why are you bothering with Dante? He doesn't fully respect you. I'm a better man than him, why Dante and not me?

CASSIE

What are you talking about?!

MICAH

What I just said.

CASSIE

You've never shown interest in me, and I am not into you...you can't just...

MICAH

Well, I'm telling you now, so how about it?
Why not get rid of Dante and be with me instead.

Cassie squints her face.

CASSIE

Be with you?! No...I don't think so.

Cassie starts to walk away, Micah frowns, his lips tighten, he cups his hands in a ball and rubs his fists. He walks towards Cassie as she has her back to him, he puts his arm around NECK and starts to CHOKEHOLD, he drags her into the alley, she is STRUGGLING to breathe, she grabs his arm, but he is too strong, she starts to fall unconscious, he lets go, she starts coughing.

CASSIE

You psycho!

Cassie coughs.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

I would never be interested in you...

Cassie is breathing heavily.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

...Dante is gonna hear about this.

Micah starts to STRANGLE Cassie. She is struggling, grabbing and hitting his arms, she eventually stops struggling. Micah lets go of Cassie, her lifeless body lying on the floor, the loud music of the parade still very loud.

Micah looks behind him, there's people walking past talking loudly and laughing, but they don't see him.

Micah turns back around and looks at Cassie's dead body, his lips start to tremble, his eyes start to water, he quickly leaves the alley and walks back into the parade.

END FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT

DANTE (To Micah)

You son of a bitch! You son of a bitch!

Tears start to roll down Dante's face, he has a scowling look on his face. He runs towards Micah and starts to PUNCH Micah in the face, he punches Micah three times before Space runs to him and pulls Dante off of Micah. Micah is on the floor, Micah's nose is bloody, his bottom lip is slightly split with blood. He is breathing heavily.

Dante is breathing heavily, he is staring intensely at Micah. Micah sits up, still on the floor.

SPACE (To Dante)

You need to calm down. We are going to the police and getting this evil asshole locked up.

Dante is still breathing heavily and is still looking intensely at Micah.

DANTE (To Space)

He doesn't deserve to live.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

He's still living and breathin' when Cassie is dead and gone.

CISCO (To Dante)

Space is right, man.
We go to the police.

CISCO (To Micah)

Look, you're gonna confess to the cops, right?
You're gonna tell them everything you just told us.

Micah nods his head. He is breathing heavily.

MICAH (To Cisco)

Yeah, I'll tell them everything. Just keep him (pointing to Dante) away from me.

CISCO (To Micah)

We will, but you ain't leaving this apartment until the cops get here.

MICAH (To Cisco)

Alright, fine.

Micah is trying to catch his breath, he starts to breathe normally.

Dante walks out of his bedroom, his hands behind his back, he walks fast towards Micah. Dante reveals a silencer gun and SHOOTS Micah in the head. Micah is DEAD.

Dante is breathing heavily, his chest and his shoulders moving as he breathes, he glares with wide eyes at Micah's dead body lying there.

CISCO

OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!

CISCO (To Dante)

WHAT DID YOU JUST DO?!...WHY DID...WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!

Cisco runs up to Micah's dead body and puts two of his fingers on Micah's neck.

DANTE (To Cisco)

Why are you feeling his pulse?!...He's dead.

Cisco gets up and runs towards Dante, he grabs Dante by the collar of his clothes.

CISCO (To Dante)

You dumbass nigga. You gonna get LIFE now! And you involving us in your mess.

Dante pushes Cisco's hands off of him.
Dante walks to the front door and opens it.

DANTE (To Cisco)

You're not here against your will.
You can leave. I'll tell the cops you guys weren't involved.

SPACE (To Dante)

Shut the door.

Dante and Cisco stare intensely at each other.

SPACE (To Dante)

Shut the door, D.

Dante slams the door shut and walks back into the living room.

(Beat)

SPACE

We've got a dead body here...

CISCO (To Space)

A dead body?!...He was our friend.

SPACE (To Cisco)

He's dead now. And we've gotta keep our living and breathing friend out of prison.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

I'll do the time...I don't care anymore.

SPACE (To Dante)

Do not give up now.
You've always been there for me.

(Beat)

SPACE (To Dante) (CONT'D)

...Let me be there for you.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

What do you suggest?

SPACE (To Dante)

We make it look like it was a drug deal gone bad.

CISCO (To Space)

What??!!...That ain't gonna work!

SPACE (To Cisco)

Yes it will!

SPACE (To Dante)

Look, there's always drug dealers around at Mardi Gras. I can go and find some drugs, and we stage it.

(Beat)

Dante sighs.

DANTE (To Space)

Look, Space, I...

SPACE (To Dante)

So, you wanna do life in prison?!

DANTE (To Space)

No.

SPACE (To Dante)

Well then, let's do this.

Unless you got a better plan.

(Beat)

DANTE

I can't think right now, I...

SPACE (To Dante)

D...Let me take care of this.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

Okay.

SPACE (To Dante)

I'll be back soon.

Space leaves the apartment.

Dante sits down and stares at Micah's dead body.

DANTE

I know I shouldn't have took his life...I know I shouldn't have done it...

CISCO

But, you did do it, bro.

There's no turning back now.

(Beat)

DANTE

I was in love with her, C.

(Beat)

DANTE

I just needed time to get my shit together, and she also needed time to get herself together...

(Beat)

Cisco sighs.

CISCO

She's gone, D. She's never coming back. We've all just gotta keep ourselves out of prison now.

EXT. STREET. ALLEY

A Drug dealer, Dontrell Phillips, is selling drugs to a man and a woman. (Dontrell is black, he has dreads up to his shoulders, he is short, not slim, but not fat).
Dontrell's customer's leave.

DRUG DEALER/DONTRELL PHILLIPS (To Man and Woman)
Aight, thanks.

Space walks up to the drug dealer.

SPACE

How you doin?
I need to buy something.

DRUG DEALER/DONTRELL PHILLIPS

Well, I've got quite a collection.
What's your poison?

SPACE

Um...some H

DRUG DEALER/DONTRELL PHILLIPS

You got it.

The drug dealer/Dontrell Phillips, takes his shoulder bag off of his shoulders and takes out a bag of needles, a separate bag of cotton balls, another separate bag of heroin. He puts it all in one large brown paper bag.
Space gives him cash, he gives Space the drugs.

DRUG DEALER/DONTRELL PHILLIPS

Enjoy.

Space walks away.

INT. APARTMENT

CISCO

Where are your sheets? I can't look at his dead body anymore.

DANTE

My room...the closet.

Cisco goes into Dante's room.

Dante is sitting down, he puts his hands on his hand with his head bowed down, for a moment.

Cisco walks into the living room with a sheet, he covers the sheet completely over Micah's dead body.

DANTE

What have I done?!

(Beat)

Cisco sits on another chair.

CISCO

There's no turning back, D.

There's a knock at the door.

CISCO

Let me get that.

Cisco goes to the door and opens it, it's Space.

SPACE (To Cisco)

Hey, man.

Space walks into the living room and puts the big brown bag of drugs on the table.

SPACE (To Dante)

I've got the stuff.

Space empties out all of what is inside the bag on the table.

DANTE (To Space)

What is this? Heroin?

SPACE (To Dante)

Yep.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

I don't know about this...

SPACE (To Dante)

I'm trying to fix your problem...our problem.
But, you will be in more trouble than we will.

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante)

Come on, Dante.
You said you would let Space take care of this.
Don't back out now, man.

(Beat)

DANTE

Okay.

(Beat)

DANTE (To Space)

So, what happens now?

SPACE (To Dante)

I'll plant some of this H on Micah...we tell the police that we
came in from the parade and that Micah was arguing with a drug
dealer.

CROSSFADE

INT. APARTMENT

Micah's lifeless body lying there with his eyes and mouth closed, his head slumped to one side. The guys are all sitting down.

SPACE

We need to call the cops...we've rehearsed our cover story...

(Beat)

SPACE (CONT'D)

...Just stay cool...and we'll be able to pull this off.

(Beat)

CISCO

So, when shall we call the police?

SPACE (To Cisco)

We should call them as soon as possible...the longer we leave it...it will make us all look suspicious. They can find out the time of death in the morgue. If we leave it too long to call the cops...they will want to know why we waited so long to call them.

CISCO (To Space)

How do you know?

SPACE (To Cisco)

Those crime shows on TV...I don't know!

DANTE

Well, let's call the cops then.

CISCO (To Space)

Give the performance of your life, man.

Space stands up and grabs his cell phone from the table and dials a number.

(Beat)

INTERCUT — INT. APARTMENT / INT. 911 CALL CENTER

SPACE (To the Emergency Call-Taker)

Hello??...yes, yes...my..my..friend...he he's...

Space starts to fake-cry.

EMERGENCY CALL-TAKER (To Space)

Okay. Sir? Sir? You need to calm down and tell me what the emergency is.

SPACE (To the Emergency Call-Taker)

It's my friend, someone shot him...my friend's dead.

EMERGENCY CALL-TAKER (To Space)

Are you sure he's dead?

SPACE (To the Emergency Call-Taker)

...Yes, we...we...the...the guy was in the apartment when we got back from the parade...they were arguing and the guy shot my friend...the guy pulled a gun on me and my friends and then he left the apartment.

EMERGENCY CALL-TAKER (To Space)

Okay. I will send units to you.
What is your address, Sir?

SPACE (To the Emergency Call-Taker)

Okay, okay...thank you. It's my other friend's apartment, in the french quarter, apartment 5555 2nd floor...

The Emergency Call-Taker is typing the information on her computer screen.

EMERGENCY CALL-TAKER (To Space)

...Okay, I've dispatched officers, they're in your area, they're five minutes away.

SPACE (To Emergency Call-Taker)

Thank you, thank you.

EMERGENCY CALL-TAKER (To Space)

Okay. You're welcome.

END INTERCUT.

The Emergency Call-Taker hangs up, Space hangs up the phone and puts the cell phone on the table.

He sits down.

CISCO

We're gonna have to act distraught.

EXT. STREET. FRENCH QUARTER

Two police officers, a male and a female, are walking to the apartment.

There is a knock at the door.

All three guys look at the door for a moment.

Dante walks to the door and opens it.

Two police officers are at the door.

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)

911 got a call from this address?!

DANTE (To Female Police Officer)
Yes, my friend...he's dead...he...he...

Dante starts to breathe fast.

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)
Okay, Sir, take it easy, take a deep breath.

Dante starts breathing a little slower.

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)
We need to ask you some questions...

DANTE (To Female Police Officer)
Of course...

DANTE (To Police Officers)
Come in, Officers.

The Police Officers walk into the apartment straight into the living room.

SPACE (To Police Officers)

Officers.

They look at Micah's dead body.

The door knocks. Dante walks to the door and opens it. It's two Paramedics with a stretcher.

DANTE (To Paramedics)

Come in.

My friend,...his body is in there.

The Paramedics walk into the apartment into the living room, they both nod a nod of acknowledgement to the Officers, the Officers nod back at the Paramedics.

The Paramedics put Micah's dead body on the stretcher and leave the apartment.

The male police officer has a little pad and a pen in his hands. He writes in the pad as he is talking to the guys.

MALE POLICE OFFICER

So, we were told that you walked in on a guy killing your friend?

They all answer at the same time.

DANTE (To Male Police Officer)

Yes.

CISCO (To Male Police Officer)

Yeah, we saw what happened.

SPACE (To Male Police Officer)

Yes, Officer.

SPACE (To Male Police Officer)

Our friend, Micah...was a relapsed drug addict...we figured there was some type of misunderstanding with his drug dealer.

Male Police Officer nods his head while writing in his pad.

MALE POLICE OFFICER

Okay, so, what did this guy look like?

SPACE (To Male Police Officer)

Uh...we didn't...we didn't see his face, he had dark clothing...um a dark hoodie and trousers...he had a plain mask on...we, we didn't see his face.

The male police officer continues to write in his pad.

MALE POLICE OFFICER

Okay, fellas. Thanks for the information. Here is my card...if you remember anything else.

The male police officer puts his card on the table.

DANTE

Thanks Officers, I'll see you out.

Dante sees the officers out. He shuts the door and walks back into the living room.

Cisco puts his finger to his lips in a straight fashion.

Cisco walks to the balcony window.

We see the police walking through the crowd via the balcony window.

Cisco turns and walks to the sofa.

CISCO

They've gone.

Cisco sits down on the sofa.

DANTE

I don't know, you guys...what if at the autopsy, they find...

CISCO (To Dante)

Find what?!

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante) (CONT'D)

...Find what, exactly?

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante) (CONT'D)

We told them some truth to the story!

He was shot in the head!

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante) (CONT'D)

Look...D...what we need now is for the cops to believe us...if they do then we're in the clear.

The autopsy stuff...the gunshot...we told them someone else did it, and I planted some drugs on Meek...they won't find my fingerprints, I'm not in the system.

We are not getting locked up!

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. MORGUE/ROOM - DAY

The Pathologist is talking to the male and female police officers.

PATHOLOGIST

The evidence is consistent with the report you gave me, however, I found some drugs and this card with a phone number in the young man's pocket, I will leave that to you to investigate.

The Pathologist hands the male police officer the card.

MALE POLICE OFFICER (To Pathologist)

Thank you.

Yes, we will look into it.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Dante is finishing hoovering the living room. He turns off the hoover. The door knocks. He walks to the door and opens it. The male and female police officers are at the door.

MALE POLICE OFFICER

Morning.

Dante stares at the police officers for a moment.

DANTE

Morning.

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER

We have new information on the murder of Micah Vaston.
May we come in?

DANTE

Yes, of course.

Dante opens the door wider and stands back, the police officers walk into the living room, Dante follows.

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)

The Pathologist found drugs and a card with a cell phone number in your friend's pocket...we found the owner of that number...it belongs to a drug dealer, Dontrell Phillips...he is in custody right now and he swears he has nothing to do with Micah's death, he says he had never met Micah before.

(Beat)

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)

Is there anything else you can remember?

DANTE (To Female Police Officer)

No...

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)

Okay...if you do remember anything...or if your friends remember anything else...please call us.

DANTE (To Female Police Officer)

Of course, Officer. We will.

The police officers turn to leave the apartment.

DANTE (To Police Officers)

So, what is going to happen to this drug dealer?

The police officers turn back around to answer Dante.

MALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dante)

We'll question him again...things do not look good for him.

The Police Officers leave the apartment.

Dante drops down in the chair. He stares at the wall.

EXT. STREET / FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

Space is walking down the street. His cell phone rings. He takes the phone out of his pocket and answers it, talking on the phone while walking.

SPACE (Talking on the phone)

Yeah, D. what's up?

(Beat)

SPACE (Talking on the phone)

Listen, I'm on my way to your place.

(Beat)

SPACE (Talking on the phone)

Okay, yeah.

See you soon, dawg.

Space hangs up the phone, puts the phone back in his pocket.

INT. APARTMENT

The door knocks. Dante comes out of the kitchen and answers the door. It's Space.

The guys hit and grasp their hands/handshake.

Space walks into the living room, Dante follows.

Space sits down, Dante sits down on another chair.

SPACE

You sounded intense on the phone, man.

What's going on?

DANTE

Those cops were here again this morning.
They gave me new info.
There was a card in Micah's pocket with a drug dealer's number...
Dontrell Phillips...

SPACE

And??!!

DANTE

You handled Micah's dead body...you planted some of the drugs on
him...

(Beat)

DANTE

Did you plant the drug dealer's card too??!!

Space sighs.

SPACE

Yeah...I did.

DANTE

And why didn't you tell me this?! (Frustrated)

SPACE

I didn't wanna put more pressure on you and have you more upset
than you already were.

DANTE

Space, the police have this man in custody for Micah's murder...he's a major suspect and he did not do it!

SPACE

Look, Dontrell is a bad guy okay?!
He's a drug dealer...
He's contributing to fucking up people's lives...
It isn't a major loss to society if this Nigga is locked up.

DANTE

But he did not do this! He shouldn't be locked up for a crime he didn't commit! Nobody should.

(Beat)

DANTE (CONT'D)

His crimes...yes, but my crime?!...no, I can't do it, I can't live with myself, If I...he...I cannot let this man go to prison, when he didn't kill Micah.

(Beat)

SPACE

So, you gonna go to the cops?!

(Beat)

SPACE (CONT'D)

...You gonna tell them that you killed Micah, and that we helped you cover it up?!

(Beat)

SPACE (CONT'D)

..You gonna get life, and we'll get a lot of years, but probably not life...

(Beat)

SPACE (CONT'D)

...Are you ready for all that?!

(Beat)

SPACE (CONT'D)

...Coz I'm not!

And I don't think Cisco would want to do time either.

(Beat)

DANTE

Maybe the law will take it easy on us if we tell them the whole story...that Micah killed Cassie.

SPACE

Take it easy on us?!

Are you serious?!

Take it easy on three black men?!

Give me a break, Dante.

DANTE

We can't let an innocent person go to prison, Space.

(Beat)

SPACE

So, what are you saying?

(Beat)

DANTE

I don't know.

(Beat)

SPACE

I know you don't wanna go to prison...Let me handle it...I've handled it so far...I've done a good job. I mean, we're not in custody...

(Beat)

SPACE

Let this drug dealer take the fall.

(Beat)

SPACE

It's one less scumbag off the streets.

(Beat)

Dante sighs.

(Beat)

DANTE

Okay.

SPACE

Good choice.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Drug Dealer Dontrell Phillips is in an interrogation room with his lawyer and the police. The male and female police officers are sitting opposite him.

MALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dontrell)

Mr Phillips, your card was found in the deceased's pocket..the deceased was a former drug addict who relapsed..

(Beat)

MALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dontrell) (CONT'D)
You're our only suspect...

(Beat)

MALE POLICE OFFICER (To Dontrell) (CONT'D)
...Give me some proof that you have nothing to do with this.

DONTRELL (To Male Police Officer)
Look, I don't know what you're talking about! I told you guys
before!

Sweat is running down Dontrell's forehead, past his eyes, down
to his mouth, he wipes his face with the cuff of his sweater.

DONTRELL (To Male Police Officer) (CONT'D)
I didn't kill nobody!

DISSOLVE TO

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Dontrell is in court.

JUDGE (To Dontrell)

Dontrell Phillips, due to your connection with the deceased and the deceased's history of drug addiction...and the drugs that you sell...and your card found on the deceased...taking into consideration that there is no extreme evidence...I'm sentencing you to a year in prison.

DONTRELL (To Judge)

What??!!

Dontrell's lawyer whispers into Dontrell's ear.

LAWYER (To Dontrell)

The judge has made her decision, a year is not that bad, you haven't got life, accept this, you will be out before you know it.

JUDGE (To Dontrell)

You will start serving your time immediately.

Everyone starts to leave the court, the bailiff walks Dontrell out of the courtroom.

SPACE is in one of the seats in the courtroom, he leaves the courtroom with everyone else.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Dante, Space, and Cisco are in the living room.

CISCO

So Dontrell is only doing a year...then he'll be out selling drugs again and ruining people's lives.

DANTE (To Cisco)

But, that's not the point...there's still an injustice...he's doing time for my crime!

SPACE (To Dante)

We already discussed this...you agreed to keep quiet, you didn't wanna do the time...

DANTE (To Space)

I know, and it's something I'm gonna have to live with everyday.

CISCO (To Dante)

Look, it's not like it's some innocent hard-working brotha...Dontrell is a bad guy!

SPACE (To Dante)

We got your back, D.

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante)

I know me and Cass wasn't cool with each other...but this whole thing is justice for Cassie, man.

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante) (CONT'D)

...You loved her...

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante) (CONT'D)

...Micah killed her, and you killed Micah.

(Beat)

CISCO (To Dante) (CONT'D)

...We got your back, Dante.

They all hug each other with the handshakes.

SPACE

We take this to our graves.

CISCO

Yeah.

Dante nods his head.

FADE TO BLACK.

