

NEW BLACK

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CHARITY BOXING RING - NIGHT

The crowd is buzzing with enthusiasm. The lights are dim on the sea of people, focused only on the measured ring.

Two HOODED OPPONENTS accost each other; The RED FIGHTER bouncing and BLUE FIGHTER innocuous.

REFEREE

Fighters, in the middle!

The red fighter bounces eagerly to the center, the other creeps with intention.

The Ref gives instruction then signals for sportsmanship.

The red hooded fighter puts his gloves out with a puckish smile. Resentful eyes of the blue fighter just stares at it, then -- Adeptly, the blue fighter pulls his glove back revealing something small and metal. The crowd gasps.

He goads for everyone to exit, threatening only the red fighter who welcomes death. The referee tries to intervene, which causes a shot in the air and the scattering of everyone in the arena.

The blue and red fighter are left alone in the ring, security pointing their weapons.

The sound of a SHOT ricochets off the walls of the arena.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY EARLY 2000'S

A black, skinny, convoluted mix of a highbrow kid pore's through what seems to be a rhyme book, muttering every so often. In front of him sits vacant school books. He is JOEL TAYLOR (17) -- sporting a du-rag with a baggy SPACE HOODY.

A burner flip phone DISRUPTS the silence. The LIBRARIAN and other PATRONS shoot over nasty looks. He shields to answers.

JOEL

Did it come yet?

(Listening)

I am waiting but its taking forever.

Joel throws his head back, annoyed.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
 No I'll just walk -- see you later  
 and love you.

Embarrassed, he gathers his things heading towards the exit  
 Right before the exit door, his attempted apologetic smile  
 toward the LIBRARIAN is met with a withered snarl.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
 Have a nice night.

No response.

EXT. FRONT OF LIBRARY

KIDS play as the sun sets on the urban houses to his left.  
 Eyes narrowed with a deep sigh, he turns about to the  
 opposite darkening street.

He stops, punches in a number on the burner -- it RINGS.

I/E. SUBURB HOME - LATER

Joel is creeping around a modern-style home, peeking through  
 a window with amusement. Over his shoulder, a dancing  
 teenage kid with a few extra pounds goes hard to HOUSE MUSIC.

A WOMAN comes in, BARKING. Obvious this is his MOTHER.

MOTHER  
 Boy turn that music down! Up in  
 here trying to start an earthquake.

CHUBBY TEEN  
 BUT MAMA I --

She shuts him down with a look, leaving the teen staggering  
 over to the BUMPING radio.

Joel, holding back his laughter gets sidetracked by the once  
 again LOUD RING of his phone.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME TIME

JOEL  
 (to self)  
 Oh snap!

His search to silence it fails heavenly as the dancing teens  
 goes to turn the music down.

Joel finds the silence right when the music drowns -- The teens ears search toward the window -- His mother calls, diverting him to the other room.

Joels panic comes to a fold, mimicking the dancing and laughing in silence.

SIDE OF HOUSE

Not noticing, a furtive voice creeps up on him.

CHUBBY TEEN

You picked the wrong house tonight  
homie!

Out of Joel's peripheral, a shining metal handgun held tightly on the outreached hand of the dancing teen.

Joel shoots his hands up, completely ossified.

CHUBBY TEEN (CONT'D)

Make one move and its yo' last!

Joel boost his hands higher, a wrinkle of a smile forming.

JOEL

I didn't know gangsta's had them  
type of moves.

Joel does a half-twerk with his back to him, igniting the chubby teen.

CHUBBY TEEN

Yo you really must want to get  
shot!

Joel

Hopefully you can teach me those  
dance moves first.

The teen shoots over to him, grabbing at his shoulder.

CHUBBY TEEN

What you just sa --

-- Joel turns, revealing a deceitful smile, then falls down laughing.

CHUBBY TEEN (CONT'D)

(lowering weapon)  
Oh this dude right here!

JOEL

Man I wish I got that on video  
recorder.

(mimics his dancing)

What's that -- the new baby gangsta  
groove?

The chubby teen is his cousin, RENZO DONALDSON (17). He goes to wrestle with him playfully. Joel retreats from his uncontrolled laughter by trying to escape a choke hold.

RENZO

Bet you ain't laughing now.

Joel breaks free, still amused.

The gun goes OFF, hitting the next door neighbors window. The light pops on, leaving them both frozen.

They look at each other -- without a word they jet off into the night.

MOMENTS LATER

Renzo is gasping for air, Joel stops for him.

JOEL

Dude, what you jus --

-- Shut up, look...

... He pulls the lever back to show him it's just a BB gun.

JOEL

Where you get that?

RENZO

Don't worry about it.

JOEL

Didn't you just get out?

RENZO

Didn't you lose cool points with  
that wack ass space sweater!

JOEL

Look cuz, you just got out of Juve,  
now you sportin' a pistol.

RENZO

Pssh, this is a toy foo'.

JOEL

Explain that to your neighbor when you get back.

RENZO

Well they blame everything on me anyways...

(to self)

Who got they loud music up? Renzo!  
Who stole our dog? Renzo! Who poured dishwashing liquid in our pool? Renzo.

Joel has a look of wonderment on his face then --

JOEL

But you did put dishwashing liquid in their swimming pool....

RENZO

(beaming)

I know, I figure they wanted to act so saintly and clean, I figure I'd help them out.

The both laugh at this bit of brilliance, not noticing a car pulling up from their rear as they gather themselves from the run.

The car is plated with two-tone exterior paint and 24inch spinning rims. A FIGURE methodically rolls the window down before they can react.

Out comes a real gun from the darkness inside. Renzo and Joel freeze once again.

Out of the shadow of the passenger seats reveals the smiling face of BREVEN "SCUDA" JONES (19), the town deviant with street vernacular.

SCUDDA

Run yo shit nigga, haha.

RENZO

Awe, this clown right here!

Joel's heart pounding 90 miles per beat, exhales. Renzo jumps in the backseat, ushering Joel to do the same.

SCUDDA

Got ya'll little niggas.

Joel didn't find this humorous at all. Still standing, reluctant.

RENZO  
Come on foo'.

SCUDDA  
(to Renzo)  
Who this G?

RENZO  
That's cuzzo, he's cool.

Joel definitely doesn't look cool about this situation.

SCUDDA  
Get in the car Star Wack.

INT. CAR - MOVING

Late 90s HIP HOP music plays in the backdrop. They skirt off along the road. Joel observes Scudda rolling a blunt, the driver observant, but silent.

SCUDDA  
Hey you remember P-noke right?

PERCY "P-NOKE" SIMS (19), the driver, looks in the rear view mirror, more about action than words.

RENZO  
Yeah from P-road right? What up my dude.

P-Noke nods once more.

RENZO (CONT'D)  
What ya'll doing out this way anyways?

SCUDDA  
Looking for, opportunities...

... P-noke scoffs, Scudda throws his tongue out in amusement, finishing up rolling up his blunt.

RENZO  
Whatever nigga, let me hit that blunt!

SCUDDA  
Nah nigga, ain't yo young ass on parole or some shit?  
(to p-noke)  
This nigga out here messing with white folks pool and shit.

RENZO

Look, ever since we moved over there *they* stay calling the police.

SCUDDA

You know they ain't ready for niggas to be out in the burbs, I don't know why yo' Mama move ya'll out there anyways.

(to Joel)

What about you little nigga, how you like the burbs?

JOEL

(raises consonance)

I'm from P-road, the other side though.

Scudda gives a light laugh, amused and in disbelief.

SCUDDA

(saying it properly)

I'm from the P Road -- You said that like it was Bel-Air or some shit.

Joel looks out his window, wondering.

SCUDDA (CONT'D)

So what you really saying is you about that life?

Scudda lights the blunt, hits it and then passes it over to P-noke.

SCUDDA (CONT'D)

Cause if you are really about the life.

(points gun towards him)

Then their ain't no fear... Right?

Beat. Scudda is definitely looking for a response. Joel squints his eyes, turning towards the pistol, finding courage through the exchanged glare.

JOEL

You ain't doing nothing for me but a favor.

After a few seconds, Scudda pulls the gun back and gives him a smile.

SCUDDA

You got heart lil homie.



RENZO  
No doubt, that's 'Fabo' son.

The look on Scudda's face is priceless; more like fear.

SCUDDA  
(recovering)  
No disrespect little bro, just  
making sure you good out here in  
these streets.  
(takes another hit)  
So what they call you?

JOEL  
Joel, but everybody call me JoJo.

RENZO  
He lyin', they called him busta  
boy.

They all laugh at this sheer comedic attack except Joel, who shoots Renzo a look.

RENZO (CONT'D)  
Nah he fam so you know how we get  
down.

Scudda finally passes the blunt back. Renzo takes it and right before he takes a hit he catches the disapproving eyes of Joel, looks back at it, then back at Joel, shakes his head and sends it back up front.

RENZO (CONT'D)  
Ya'll heard about that party  
tonight.

SCUDDA  
Yeah that's where we was headed  
before we picked up you two scrubs.

RENZO  
What's the hold up then? Lets ride  
through and set it off.

SCUDDA  
Chill my nigga shit, can we get  
something to eat first.

RENZO  
Don't they got food there?

P-noke scoffs and Scudda dismisses his negligence for "hood gathering customs."

SCUDDA

Nah nigga, see that's how I know  
you new to the shit  
(to P-noke)  
That's why niggas be getting dealt  
up, making assumptions.

RENZO

Ok, if they ain't got no food there  
then it's on me.

SCUDDA

(to P-noke)  
You hear this nigga.

P-noke just shakes his head, observing the road and his  
surroundings closely.

RENZO

Ya'll niggas already know I'm good  
for it.

Renzo pulls out a wad of cash -- only a drug dealer.

SCUDDA

Don't get to cocky out here my  
nigga, you know what happens...

Renzo pulls out the bebe gun, flashing it with a smile.

RENZO

Oh we about that action.

JoJo body language says otherwise -- Renzo throws a fist into  
Joels chest to veer him from his imagination out the window.

RENZO (CONT'D)

I heard Quinn might be there too.

Joel's spirit jumps but his body is Delphic, pretending not  
to care.

RENZO (CONT'D)

Matter of fact, let me hit that  
blunt, got the feeling it's gone be  
a good night.

I/E. HOUSE PARTY - LATER

The crowd is vibing out and pretty diverse. It's mostly guys  
trying to score and groups of friends here and there -- Some  
in school and some not.

HIP HOP MUSIC from the early 2000s penetrate the walls. Most patrons attire is baggy clothing, sports jersey, fake oversized jewelry with a few guys wearing shiny grills in their mouth. Renzo works through the crowd, follow by Joel.

Scudda and P-noke fade off into the crowd -- Renzo goes to introduce Joel to a menacing GUY serving in what seems to be a host capacity.

INT. FOYER

RENZO

(to Joel)

You remember the big homie Xavier right?

JOEL

The one that got all them college football offers right?

RENZO

Right, but he messed up his knee. Not everybody an academic like you.

JOEL

What you mean? You got the same grades as me, if not better.

RENZO

Yeah but I'm OG, you just a goo-fee!

JOEL

Whatever, plus I don't even know if I got accepted, that letter taking forever.

RENZO

I already know you gone get in but losing your virginity is something I highly doubt will happen.

Renzo is slightly in front of the observing Joel who's looking for someone, then gets ushered over by Renzo.

RENZO (CONT'D)

This my cousin, he always looking lost which is why he trying to build a spaceship as you can see.

XAVIER STETSON (21) is menacing, but seems smarter than what Renzo put out. He gives Joel a smug/half smile look.

XAVIER

Just don't do nothin' stupid little homie.

Signaling to Renzo.

RENZO

Ahhh man whatever -- hold up, hold up!

Renzo noticing something, and shoots over -- Joel follows.

He runs into the excited back of Renzo, overlooking a circle of people doing a culturally appropriate dance.

Joel evades to get a better look. Clinging to his school backpack -- his eyes light up.

Over the heads of fitted caps, fake gold teeth and everything to do with the significance of black youth, hails two YOUNGSTER'S "pop locking and dropping it."

The MUSIC goes hard -- someone tugs at Joel, cascading him into the rhythm and flow. As he retreats, the world slows down -- he notices the most beautiful person ever, QUINN BROOKS (17). Ms. Crazy Sexy Cool in the flesh!

INT. KITCHEN PARTY - LATER

Quinn, sweating with laughter, walks to a back room. SLOWER MUSIC ensues. Renzo signals to Joel to follow as a UNKNOWN HOODED TEEN comes over to Renzo discretely about what seems like some sort of arrangement.

Renzo ushers him over, looking over his shoulder while pulling out some sort of miniature bag. Joel just stares -- He and Renzo lock eyes, with Renzo ushering him off to go see about Quinn.

XAVIER'S KITCHEN

Quinn is pouring herself something to drink. Joel probes stealthy, admiring her adornments at her backside. Joel knocks over a plastic cup, she catches him staring, amused by his clumsiness.

QUINN

They go in you, not on you.

JOEL

Just trying to touch the place up -- it's the little things that matter the most.

For some reason, Quinn finds this corny joke funny.

QUINN  
Cute -- aren't you Renzo's cousin?

JOEL  
I plead the fifth.

QUINN  
So clumsy criminals run in your family I see.

JOEL  
I'm pretty sure he's the only one, but he accounts for the whole share.

QUINN  
Is that why you're not drinking?

JOEL  
Nah, I drink all the time.

QUINN  
(examining)  
Really?

She takes a look at her drink and then presents it to him, insisting with a seductive glare.

Joel takes it with confidence, looks at the swirling poison then back up to Quinn -- downs it as smooth as silk.

His facial expression is unlike any other.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
So how was it?

JOEL  
(mouth movement)  
Hmmm... Not bad at all.

QUINN  
So have you ever had that kind before?

JOEL  
Oh yeah, thats my favorite.

QUINN  
Oh Yeah?

JOEL  
Yep, that's my preferred choice.

QUINN  
Preferred... I think you may be  
drunk already.

Joel examines himself.

JOEL  
Yeah I think I am too.

QUINN  
That quickly huh?

JOEL  
Real quick, must be strong...

Quinn approaches him, almost going in for a kiss when:

QUINN  
That was Kool aid.

Quinn gives him a sly but sexy smile before heading towards the dieing party. Joel still looking off, lost for words.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
See you later, Mr. Cool.

Joel mutters to himself, then HEARS horrible singing from the dance-floor.

INT. DANCE FLOOR AREA

The party has dwindled down. Joel searchings the room for Renzo. He's talking to the DJ with the mike in his hand. Having fun, trying to SING. SLOW JAMS plays.

RENZO  
(over the microphone)  
Did you get the number?

Quinn is in the corner on her phone texting, not paying any mind.

RENZO (CONT'D)  
(jumping off mic)  
Stop being scary and go ask her  
out.

Renzo pushes his skinny frame towards her and goes back to attempting to sing/rap on the Microphone. Nobody is listening with all the flirting going on.

Joel strides over. Still texting, she's totally oblivious of Joel coming up.

JOEL  
Hey Quinn I --

Some estranged guys walks up from out of nowhere. Quinn's BOYFRIEND ERIC (19). He wears all black. Very cow.

ERIC  
You ready to go.

Quinn looks up and sees the two guys.

QUINN  
Yeah.  
(looking to Joel)  
Oh hey again?

ERIC  
You know him?

Renzo is observing the whole thing, drops the mic and gallops over to intervene.

He sees his cousin standing toe-to-toe with Eric.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Why don't you find a girl you can get, like at the library.

Joel throws off his book-bag, ready.

JOEL  
Why don't you make me.

Quinn, surprised at his confidence, tries to intervene but her boyfriend throws her to the side. He goes to grab Joel but gets clocked by Renzo's pellet gun.

RENZO  
Boom, Got your ass!  
(to Joel)  
Now we can go.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Joel is walking along Renzo, dilapidated and peeved. Renzo keeps looking over for validation but to no avail.

They walk along the sidewalk, street lights BUZZING.

RENZO  
You gotta admit, I clocked his ass pretty good -- Couldn't stand that dude growing up.

No response from Joel.

RENZO (CONT'D)

I couldn't let you get your ass handed to your, especially in front of Quinn.

Joel puts his hood on, turning the other cheek.

RENZO (CONT'D)

Well ain't you gone say something?

Joel adjust his backpack and looks down at the ground, avoiding the cracks with his abnormal clean shoes.

RENZO (CONT'D)

Uggghhh that dude had it coming cuzzo plus Quinn liked how you flexed on him. You got that college shit down but you need a little street in you too!

JOEL

-- Just stop! You already done enough, as usual.

Renzo stops in his tracks.

RENZO

What that suppose to mean?

JOEL

You know what I mean! Every time we having a good time you go and do the most devious thing you can think of.

RENZO

I was just looking out for yo ass.

JOEL

By smashing foo's head, selling, whats next, drive by? What about another dead black youth on the front page?

A strong silence protrudes as a CAR ALARM goes off in the distance. They both ignore it. They are still in the suburbs, looking out of character for their surroundings.

RENZO

I know, I'm trying to change.



JOEL

You got to or you gone end up like--

RENZO

--Like who? Chad  
(stops walking)  
Don't put that on me.

JOEL

Then stop trippin', You got a  
chance to go to college just like I  
do if you just focus on doing the  
right thing.

Renzo stammers as silence meets the heart. The buzz is wearing off.

He pulls out a unopened letter and hands it to Joel.

JOEL (CONT'D)

You got yours?

Renzo looks off with apprehensiveness.

RENZO

Got it today.

Without hesitation Joel rips it open and reads it.

They chuckle under the street lamps, unaware of a squad car pulling up with the headlights off, looming.

A few house's curtain closes, apart of the neighborhood watch committee of course.

JOEL

(softly)  
Awe man, you --

-- Lights flash, blinding them both.

RENZO

Be cool.

DOORS SLAM. Two imposing POLICE OFFICERS appear from the shadow of the night.

They walk steadily to the boys, so close their cold breath meets their cheeks bones.

EXT. SIDEWALK

RENZO

Can we help you officer?

The Officer right in front of Renzo grimaces, looks back at the tailing Officer, then SPITS tobacco.

OFFICER ONE

We got a call regarding two *males* walking around trying to steal cars in this area.

They both look flummoxed.

JOEL

It wasn't us.

OFFICER ONE

Where are you guys coming from?

RENZO

Does that matter?

OFFICER ONE

Lets see some I.D.

RENZO

Are we being detained?

OFFICER ONE

You are.

RENZO

On what grounds, cause we obviously of ain't stole no cars.

OFFICER ONE

Your past curfew.

RENZO

Well I ain't got it on me.

OFFICER ONE

Is that right?

RENZO

Yeah, that's right.

OFFICER ONE

Turn around, hands above your head.

The officer imposes his will on them, searching their pockets

RENZO  
This is harassment.

OFFICER ONE  
You did this to yourself, now keep  
still.

Both on the ground skirmishing, the officer's checks their  
pocket.

They find I.D. and the GUN in Renzo's jacket.

While brandishing it, Joel's eyes glare with fear.

JOEL  
Dude you brought that!

Renzo looks stunned. Caught.

CLICK. CLACK. The officer checks and calls OFFICER TWO over  
to examine it.

They start to chuckle.

OFFICER TWO  
It's a pellet gun.

Joel closes his eyes in prayer. Renzo looks flanked.

OFFICER ONE  
Face us!

The both hesitate, turning around like molasses.

OFFICER TWO  
(to Officer One)  
Probably just some concerns  
neighbors.

Officer One looks over and catches a closing curtain.

DIBATCH (V.O.)  
We have 15.190 Reported, 15.190  
Reported, over.

OFFICER TWO  
(to other officer)  
Want me to call it in?

The officer spits, examines the ID, pondering then fixates on  
Joels backpack.

OFFICER ONE  
You guys plan on going to college?

JOEL

Yes.

Joel looks over to Renzo, then nudges him.

RENZO

Yes Sir.

OFFICER ONE

(to walkie talkie)

Over

(to boy)

Nothing out here for you, do well  
ya hear!

He signals to the other Officer, skirting off in the squad car leaving them thankful.

STREET 100 YARDS FROM JOEL HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

RENZO

Can't believe we got off, I'm about  
to head back to Xavier house to  
make amends.

The embrace each other with a brotherly hand shake. Over Renzo shoulder a car LOOMS from the shadows of the street driving real slow, lights off.

JOEL

Hey I almost forgot...

... It stops with the gaze of Joel, squinting his eyes while saluting his brow to see better, Renzo's College application in hand.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Who is that?

Renzo scurries his torso.

SCREECH! Dim lights dash on the blacked-out tinted cruiser. The car deftly goes 0 to 100.

RENZO

Run!

MONTAGE - SLOW MUSIC PLAYS.

--Joel and Renzo runs towards a near by park.

--SHOTS fired, blazing through the cold air.

--Behind Joel, Renzo falls in dramatic motion.



DET CEBALLOS (CONT'D)  
(looks at notes)  
We identified him as Amir Roberts.

JOEL  
Yeah that's the dude we got into it  
with at the party.

Det Ceballos gasps for air.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Ya'll get him? Cause if ya'll have  
that's going to be the best thing  
for him!

DET CEBALLOS  
No we found him, but his alibi  
matches up with his employer.

JOEL  
(leans in)  
What?

DET CEBALLOS  
Well your report says you left the  
party around 8:40pm.

JOEL  
Ok, and?

DET CEBALLOS  
(clears throat again)  
The shooting occurred around  
10:30pm.

Joel nods his head.

DET CEBALLOS (CONT'D)  
Amir checked in at his job at  
10:30pm, according to his  
supervisor. And he's still there.

JOEL  
What about Quinn, did ya'll get her  
statement?

DET CEBALLOS  
Yeah she dropped him off with his  
car, which also didn't match the  
description of the car you gave.

Joel sighs. Confusion covers his face.

JOEL  
(angrily)  
So if he didn't do it who did?

DET CEBALLOS  
That's what we need to figure out --  
Do you know of anyone one else that  
may had rift with him?

Joel leans over and shoves his hands in his face.

JOEL  
He was mixed up in a lot of stuff.

Suddenly a NORDIC WOMEN comes in the station sobbing and  
SCREAMING.

CENTER OF DEPT FLOOR

NORDIC WOMEN  
Where is he?

Joel eyes meet the women's beyond the glass interrogation  
room mirror.

NORDIC WOMEN (CONT'D)  
Is that him?  
(trudges with tears)  
Murderer!

Joel can read her lips and slightly hear her from the inside.

NORDIC WOMEN (CONT'D)  
Murderer! You killed her.

BACK TO SCENE

Joel is taken back, totally flummoxed.

Officers usher her to another department.

JOEL  
(to Det. Ceballos)  
What was that about?

DET Ceballos scoffs.

DET CEBALLOS  
We have another situation on our  
hands.

Det. Ceballos grabs a manilla folder, opens it up and slides  
it over to Joel.

INSERT: PROFILE OF A YOUNG GIRL

BACK TO SCENCE

DET CEBALLOS (CONT'D)  
Do you know who she is?

Joel examines the profile, shaking his head.

DET CEBALLOS (CONT'D)  
(leaning back)  
She was killed the same night your  
cousin was killed -- by a stray  
bullet.

JOEL  
(realization)  
Hold on, she thinks I did it?

DET CEBALLOS  
We have a witness statement saying  
that shots were exchanged --  
between you and this unknown car.

Joel jumps up irate.

JOEL  
That's a lie!

Det. Ceballos signals to an officer just shy behind Joel.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
We didn't even have a gun.

Joel wants that eye contact with Det. Ceballos but he won't give it to him.

DET CEBALLOS  
We have a statement that a gun was  
used on Amir during the fight at  
the party. Where is the gun?

JOEL  
That was a BB gun that the cops  
took.

DET CEBALLOS  
So you did have a gun?

JOEL  
We didn't have a gun, we had a BB  
gun.



Det Ceballos sighs, then signals to another OFFICER awaiting outside.

DET CEBALLOS  
Until we get the facts straight we  
are going to have to hold you.

JOEL  
What.

The JUVENILE OFFICER erects himself in the doorway.

JUVENILE OFFICER  
Don't make this harder than what it  
has to be!

JOEL  
It was a BB gun!

The Juvenile officer gets real assertive.

JUVENILE OFFICER  
(grabbing Joel)  
Get up, your being detained.

Somewhat of a struggle ensues but the Officer is way to strong.

A well-dressed African American WOMAN swoops in.

WOMAN  
Let my son go dammit!

Det. Ceballos restrains the woman. Joel is loosing it while being put under arrest.

JOEL  
Ma I didn't do it!

WOMAN  
Let him go dammit.

DET CEBALLOS  
Please ma'am.

The Officer is dragging away a teary eyed Joel, matched with his irate mother who is fighting Det. Ceballos in order to get to her Son.

INT. JUVENILE COURTROOM - DAY

Joel is standing dejected next to his PUBLIC DEFENDER. Behind him sits a few people and his Mother. They await the judge.

JUDGE LYDIA MONTCLAIR (48) enters as brisk as they come. She takes her seat and assorts the paperwork without a word or glance.

JUDGE LYDIA

A gang shooting, two people dead  
and here you stand.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Your Honor, we are still awaiting  
discovery, we request a motion to  
move the court date until all  
evidence is found.

JOEL

It was a BB gun.

The Public Defender gives him a look. Joel could care less.

The Judge looks up and rakes off her glasses. Staring him down like an Eagle.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Your Honor we --

JUDGE LYDIA

We have eye witnesses saying you  
guys returned fire, with two  
families losing loved loves,  
including your cousin and all you  
have to say is "it was a BB gun".

JOEL

That's the truth.

JUDGE LYDIA

I want to give you some more time  
to think about what has been done  
here. 60 days mandated to Juvenile  
correction center. Next court date  
will be August 1st.

Judge slams gavel -- Joel looks at the Public Defender and back at his Mom.

JOEL

This is what the truth gets you.

The sheriff comes over right when his mom jumps up, with a letter in hand.

JOEL MOM

Look baby look, you got accepted.  
Just hang on ok, hang on!

Joel's eyes becomes more misty, shaking his head at the injustice.

INT. JUVENILE INTAKE - NIGHT

Brass instructions are being beaten into their cranium. DRILL INSTRUCTOR MASON comes into play. Former military, he's nothing to play with.

DI MASON

Let the hell begin.

MONTAGE -

- 1) Joel exercises with DI Mason yelling in his ear.
- 2) Joel regurgitates, DI yelling as he bends over trash can.
- 3) Intense military exercises increase, Joel dejected.

INT. JUVENILE CORRIDOORS

The day is coming to an end. The GUARD assists a beaten Joel to his quarters. He gives instructions. Once Joel things are gather he lays down misty eyed, looking at the ceiling, pulling out his cousin's college acceptance letter.

A single tear falls down his cheek.