

THE LAST MINSTREL SHOW

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Master Script

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G A T E K 3 3 P E R S

BLACK SCREEN.

A woman hums, soft and soulful. Her voice is full of beautiful pain--It's an old spiritual.

We can hear others in the background humming along to her voice--They too sound mournful.

SCENE OPENS.

EXT. UNKNOWN PLACE - COTTON FIELD - EVENING

CLOSE SHOT - A pair of fair-skinned hands, dirty and scarred, pick cotton. They belong to the woman singing. Her left hand has an INFINITY TATTOO on it. A brand?

The singing and humming grows louder. An OVERSEER can be seen riding a black horse several yards away from the woman. The sun sets behind them, making it hard to see their face. Her hands move faster as he gets closer.

The Overseer cracks their whip in the air as they get closer. Their eyes--the only thing visible on their face--glow purple. Is he...BLACK? We can't tell just yet.

OVERSEER
(Dark/Demonic)
Pick it!
(Cracks whip)
Pick it!

The woman moves faster and sings louder. Her fingers bleed as the thorn-cotton pricks her skin. She wipes the blood from her hands on to her spotted dress.

EXT. UNKNOWN PLACE - COTTON FIELD - LATER

The sun is low. The camera follows behind the woman, focusing on her blood streaked spotted dress as she walks through the cotton field and toward a small shack in the distance. Her arm dangles in the frame as she walks. Is she white? Too hard to tell just yet.

CEILING SHOT - She walks in the direction of the lone shack in the middle of the cotton field. More of her body is shown; slender, weak, exhausted. A large sun hat covers her whole head and neck, but a single strand of hair trails down her back. Blonde?

EXT. UNKNOWN PLACE - COTTON FIELD/SHACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

The camera focuses on the cotton field from the porch of the shack. Half of the woman's body can be seen as she rocks in a rocking chair. She sings beautifully as she watches the sun set. Her voice, again, angelic and soulful.

The woman removes her hat, revealing a head full of light blonde hair and a pale but reddened neck--She IS white. She continues to sing and rock.

CONTINUED...

We hear the door to the shack open. The woman's rocking slows and her singing fades.

A man, dressed extraordinarily, steps up next to her--This is Lucky. We can't see his face, but we can see that he doesn't belong in this time--or this world.

He places a hand on her shoulder.

LUCKY

Kinsley Dawson...Have you found it?

The woman--Kinsley--hesitates as she turns to look at him.

KINSLEY

Y-Yes...I understand that I was wrong now. I'm s-sorry, really, and I'm ready to go home.

Lucky looks her up and down closely. He isn't confident in her answer.

He reaches inside his luxurious overcoat and pulls out an old fashioned war pistol. In his other hand he twirls a strange looking card.

LUCKY

Well, we shall see. May luck be on your side.

Lucky hands her the gun and the faced-down card.

CLOSE SHOT - Kinsley hesitates but takes the card from Lucky and places it between her index and middle finger of her left hand, keeping it faced down but ready to flip over. With her right hand, she takes the pistol. Her hand quivers. Kinsley holds the pistol to her temple and pulls the hammer--muscle memory.

Lucky turns his head to look down at her and we get a glimpse of the side of his face; He's a young, ruggedly handsome, brown skinned, gentle looking man. He wouldn't harm a fly...

Kinsley's breathing grows rapidly. It's time; Flip the card, pull the trigger.

CLOSE SHOT - Kinsley nervously looks down as she slowly begins to flip the card. Her hands shake uncontrollably. The world around her begins to shake/vibrate violently. She quickly flips the card, glances at it momentarily, pulls the trigger AND--

BLACK SCREEN.

Dead silence.

Then, a woman hums--It's Kinsley. This time she sobs in between the soulful humming. Her cries are sharp.

EXT. UNKNOWN PLACE - COTTON FIELD - EVENING

The scene opens--We're back in the cotton field. The camera holds a shot of Kinsley's hands--field and overseer on a horse in the background--as she hums and picks cotton. Deja Vu.

Kinsley's sobs grow louder. She lets the pain take over. She's going to break any second.

The overseer cracks their whip and gallops towards Kinsley.

OVERSEER
(Dark/Demonic)
PICK!
(Cracks whip)
PICK!

Kinsley hums louder. Her hands tremble with fear; she can't pick anymore, so she stops.

The Overseer gallops closer to her.

OVERSEER (CONT'D)
(Dark/Demonic)
PICK! PICK!

Kinsley tries to drown out the demonic voice with her singing, but it's too loud.

OVERSEER (CONT'D)
 (Dark/Demonic)
 PICK!!!

Kinsley's bloodied hands shake with terror as the Overseer gets closer--Kinsley freezes.

The Overseer closes in AND--

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN PARNELL'S OFFICE -
 EARLY AFTERNOON

Detectives Vince Jackson (Black--Biracial, 30s) and Donald Warren (White, 50s), partners, sit in front of their captain, Jacob Parnell (White, late 50s), as he goes over the some paperwork--He's irritable.

Vince
 Cap', we--

Captain Parnell
 Shut up.

Donald
 Captain, we just--

Captain Parnell
 Shut. Up.

Vince and Donald look at each other nervously.

Captain Parnell flips through the last pages of the report and tosses it on the desk lazily. He sits back in his chair, dissatisfied, and sighs.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
 You know...You two shitheads have caused me to lose a lot of sleep this week. I can't believe how bad you fucked this Gold Coast case.

Donald starts to interject, but Captain Parnell silences him with a raised hand.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
 I'm not finished. Now, if this asshole, what's his name...
 (Strong emphasis)
 'DeSean'...decides to sue the department, it's your asses that're gonna' be on the line. Not mine.

DONALD

He won't get the chance, Cap'; Me and Rook here will put a boot in his ass before he ever gets a chance to talk.

Captain Parnell and Donald laugh. Vince is uncomfortable with the joke, but he forces a short and fake laugh/smile.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Yeah Donnie, you know you're my go-to man if we get to that point.

Captain Parnell glances at Vince and senses that he's uncomfortable with the comment, so he straightens up--Back to business.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)

Well, gentlemen, either way...I have to shift you two to another case for a while, just until the fire dies down. Don, I'll be putting you back on the Lincoln Park murders--the ones you were working on before Jackson joined.

(To Vince)

You'll tag along while you wait to hear back from the DA's office.

Donald's mood shifts.

DONALD

Oh...Yeah, there wasn't much traction there though, Cap'. Seemed like a bunch of freak accidents, really. You think it's worth taking another look at?

Captain Parnell stands and gathers himself to leave.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Well, if it was just a freak accident, prove it. Besides, that's why we brought a pair of fresh eyes on the case to help.

(Puts on jacket)

Now, gentlemen, if you'll excuse me, I have an important meeting I need to get to on the south side.

Donald smiles--He knows something about this meeting that we don't.

DONALD

Is that the standing meeting you have every Friday around 1 on the south side? The one with that eager-to-know-it-all college intern from Englewood? The pretty, light brown one with that tight, volleyball ass?

CAPTAIN PARNELL

(Smirks)

Only way my interns can learn is through experience, Warren.

Captain Parnell gives Donald a deviant smile and a wink. They hold another laugh, breaking it when they see Vince isn't amused.

Captain Parnell clears his throat and gestures for the detectives to leave the room.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)

Well, I'll leave you men to it.
Make me proud today.

Captain Parnell holds the door open and the detectives leave and the three men exit.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Vince and Donald walk to their desks.

Donald changes his mind; he walks to Vince's desk and sits on it.

DONALD

Parnell's a piece of work, isn't he?

VINCE

(Sarcastically)

Yeah, I guess you could call it that...

Vince avoids eye contact--Donald notices. Donald wants to win Vince over, so he changes his approach.

DONALD

Listen, Rook...That back there?
(Whispers)
That back there was me lettin' his ass know that I got some dirt on his name.

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)

It's my way of keepin' balance;
keep 'em in check. Now, he'll think
twice before he says "It'll be your
asses on the line, not mine".

Vince's mood eases. Maybe Donald isn't so bad.

DONALD (CONT'D)

He's an ass. It's my job to protect
all of us until I'm in his seat.
Then, you can protect me when
you're in that DA's seat. Circle of
life.

Donald laughs. Vince smiles. The energy between the two
softens. They're guards are down.

VINCE

(Sighs)

Yeah...Well, tell me about these
Lincoln Park murders he mentioned.
What happened?

Donald lifts a finger--hold on. He goes to his desk and
shuffles through a pile of papers. He returns and hands a
file to Vince.

Vince scans the papers.

DONALD

The Lincoln Park Murders: was
working on this before you were
assigned to special investigations.
There were a string of deaths that
got pushed to our special
investigations team not too long
ago because of...their nature.

VINCE

Their nature?

Donald motions for the file. He shuffles, then hands a paper
to Vince:

CLOSE SHOT - 'Brian Witherspoon - White Male - 32 - DECEASED -
Asphyxiation'

DONALD

Take for instance this guy. Young,
white, wealthy. Girlfriend called
nearly 6 in the morning and said he
had gone missing in the middle of
the night. Just up and disappeared.

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)

Wasn't 'til officers showed up that they realized he was dead--lynched and hanging from part of the ceiling in his "play room".

Vince studies the picture of Brian; he recognizes him.

CLOSE SHOT - A picture in the police file shows Brian as a handsome, well-groomed, and happy-looking young man.

VINCE

I know this guy. Played football with 'em in high school. Real racist piece of shit. You check the girlfriend out? Probably his wife by now. Her name is...Uh, Karen, right?

Donald laughs.

VINCE (CONT'D)

What?

DONALD

Your old buddy Brian must've had a real change of heart after high school. We checked out Karen--the fiancé--and she was on a business trip in Florida for 2 weeks. Brian's SIDE CHICK was on the scene. Flip the page.

Vince turns the page over and continues to read the summary of the report.

VINCE

(Reading)

LaKeshia Williams...28...Black Female? No way in hell.

DONALD

It's right there.

VINCE

I don't believe it. There's no way. Man, I'm telling you, it was like a damn cult with these guys--a rich, privileged, arrogant ass cult. They ran Whitney Young.

DONALD

Welp, that black bug bit him. LaKeshia Williams was the side piece for a long time before he died.

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)

We questioned her, but footage from the condo didn't implicate her as the "murderer".

VINCE

Was it a break in? Robbery?

Donald twists his face.

DONALD

Hard to explain, Rook. I think I'll let you decide for yourself...

Donald begins searching for something on his tablet.

As Donald searches, the camera pans over to focus on Vince; he studies the file--Something is off.

Donald finally finds what he was looking for; security camera footage.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Got it. Check this out, kid...You tell me what YOU see.

Donald presses play and hands Vince the tablet.

The video plays:

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - SECURITY FOOTAGE

Security camera 1 footage time reads 1:14 a.m. - Brian stumbles through his condo and into the front part of a long hallway. Drunk? Sleepy? Off balance. He walks very awkwardly.

Security camera 2 footage time reads 1:15 a.m. - Brian stumbles past the second camera--it covers a short section of the long hallway. Just before he goes out of frame, the screen fizzles & twists--something is distorting it.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Vince and Donald watch intently.

DONALD

Now, watch this.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - SECURITY FOOTAGE

Security camera 3 footage time reads 1:15 a.m. - The back end of the long hallway leading into the kitchen is quiet. Brian doesn't come into the frame...But he should've.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Vince's eyebrows raise.

VINCE

Where did he go? Is there a side room, or a closet?

DONALD

Nope, straight hallway. The "playroom" is at the back of the kitchen--secret door. Keep watching...

Donald speeds up the footage and we see the time skip. 1:40 a.m., 2:00 a.m., 2:40 a.m., 3:15 a.m. He stops when he gets to 3:30.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Look, here he comes.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - SECURITY FOOTAGE

Security camera 3 footage time reads 3:31 a.m. - Brian comes into the frame. He's dressed differently and walking normally. He has rope in his hand.

Brian walks into the kitchen, confused-like, and looks as if he's talking to himself. He's uncomfortable. Afraid.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Vince looks on. None of this is making any sense to him.

VINCE

What the--

DONALD

Keep watching, this is where it gets good.

Vince gives Donald a twisted look.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - SECURITY FOOTAGE

Security camera 3 footage time reads 3:32 a.m. - Brian begins behaving erratically. He fights off an invisible attacker. He begins to clutch his neck, gasping for air. As he fights to breathe, he stumbles towards the back of the kitchen.

FAR SHOT - Brian tosses the rope over his shoulder as he opens the secret door to the "playroom". He steps inside and closes the door behind him.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Vince and Donald sit quietly for a moment.

VINCE

What the fuck did I just watch?

DONALD

Like I said earlier; freak accident.

Vince frowns.

VINCE

You don't think it was more than that? He disappeared for two hours, then came back dressed completely differently. I mean what the hell was that?

Donald reflects for a moment and then shrugs it off.

DONALD

I didn't know what to make of that either. But we followed up with the side piece LaKeshia and...

(Chuckles)

They were into some freaky shit. I mean...Some REALLY wild stuff, Rook. I chalked it up as an accident.

VINCE

What kind of "freaky shit" leaves a man hanging in his home?

DONALD

(Whispers)

Come on man;

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)
Role playing, bondage and BDSM, ya'
know, that 50 shades bullshit all
you young fuckers like.

Donald scrolls through the tablet and shows Vince pictures taken for evidence; several exotic photos show LaKeshia and Brian dominating and violating each other sexually (Pictures blurred).

DONALD (CONT'D)
She was reluctant to tell us about
Brian's "dark" side, but she caved
when we pressured her a little.
(Winks)
He would have her do all kinds of
shit to him: burning, whipping,
choking...

Vince is surprised. He realizes something.

VINCE
So, you believe they were caught up
in some kind of role play that
night and things went a little too
far...Brian gets tied up, damaging
his windpipe and airways...and...he
suffocates?

Donald nods.

DONALD
That's what it looks like. I think
she lied about Brian being missing.
She panicked. Who wouldn't? They
got a little too kinky that night
and, unfortunately, Brian paid the
price. His fiancé Karen...she was
so messed up about it that she left
town. Moved back with her parents
in New York.

VINCE
Yeah, I can see why, but...What
about his erratic behavior? Can't
ignore that. And the time gap?

Donald ponders on the question, then remembers something.

DONALD
They found narcotics in his blood.
Something unidentifiable...or
rare...One of the two.
(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)

And the tech guys said it was just static, might've been a power surge in the area that threw the cameras off. I agreed. Didn't seem like too much more.

Vince squints--he's not satisfied. He flips through the pages some more.

VINCE

Unidentified narcotics? A 2-hour power surge? I don't know, Don.

DONALD

I guess you're right, does sound strange. Probably why they got you to make a quick pit-stop to special investigations. Let's check it out?

VINCE

Let's check it out.

Vince and Donald gather their things and exit.

EXT. CHICAGO - NEAR NORTH SIDE - AFTERNOON

Donald and Vince walk out the front doors of the 18th District Chicago Police Station. It's a cold February day. Light snow drifts.

Vince looks in the direction of the Chicago Skyline where the CABRINI GREEN PROJECTS once stood. Donald stands by an undercover police SUV, waiting for Vince.

DONALD

Enough daydreaming, Rook. I'm driving--You got lunch.

Vince sips his hot coffee, still reminiscing, then gets in the truck.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Vince joins Donald inside the truck. The warm air from the heater knocks a chill off of him.

VINCE

What you thinkin' for lunch?

DONALD

Let's go to that place you kept bragging about the other day, the one on Lincoln Ave.

VINCE

Batter and Berries? Yeah, I love that place.

(Checks phone)

We better get a move on, they close around 2 or 3.

DONALD

Better be worth every damn penny too.

Vince laughs.

VINCE

Motherfucka', I'M buying. DRIVE.

They drive off.

EXT. CHICAGO - NEAR NORTH SIDE - SAME TIME

BIRD'S EYE VIEW - The truck pulls away, headed north.

EXT. CHICAGO - LINCOLN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

LOW BIRD'S EYE VIEW - The camera follows the truck as it slowly drives through the Lincoln Park neighborhood. It's beautiful; a winter wonderland.

People move along the sidewalks, businesses are booming with life, excitement is in the air.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The detectives observe the neighborhood as they roll up the street. Donald nods his head and sporadically sings along to a Marvin Gaye song playing at a low volume in the background.

Vince shakes his head as he looks out the window.

VINCE

You know, I've been living in Chicago my entire life, 32 years, and still...I'm always amazed every time I come to the north side. It's ridiculous. Completely opposite of the south side.

DONALD

I thought you grew up on the north side? In the Cabrini Green projects?

Vince ponders. He pushes something down inside of him.

VINCE

I was there until I was about 10... But I still could never find myself exploring neighborhoods like this by myself growing up. Too dangerous.

CLOSE SHOT - Donald gives Vince a funny look--What do you mean "too dangerous"?

VINCE (CONT'D)

Reason I became a cop. Keep the streets safe.

Donald nods and keeps enjoying the music.

DONALD

Yeah, you keep putting that cape on everyday Rook. Regular ol' Superman.

They laugh.

EXT. LINCOLN PARK - AFTERNOON

The police truck stops in front of Batter and Berries. The detectives get out and quickly move inside.

INT. BATTER AND BERRIES - CONTINUOUS

The restaurant is full of life. Young couples, black and interracial, eat and laugh.

Vince and Donald enter and approach the counter. They're greeted by a hostess (Black, 20s).

FAR SHOT - One couple (Black man, 20s and Hispanic woman, 20s) immediately identifies them as police and their mood changes.

HOSTESS

Good afternoon gentlemen. Dining in? Or takeout?

VINCE

Actually, I had a call in: order
for Jackson.

The hostess scrolls the screen of her tiny computer until she
finds his name.

HOSTESS

Ah, yes. Here you are. The mustard
catfish, extra hot sauce, and the
Caribbean pork chop with the side
of sangria French toast. Your total
is \$49.93.

Vince pays the bill.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)

Ok gentlemen, I'll be right back
with your order.

CONTINUED...

Vince and Donald wait patiently as the hostess walks to the
back.

The couple that recognized the detectives gets up to leave.
As they walk by, the young Hispanic woman laughs and hides
her face in her boyfriend's shoulder.

Laughing, the young Black man avoids eye contact with the
detectives as he walks by.

YOUNG HISPANIC WOMAN

(Whispers)

Cute couple...

Donald hears her.

DONALD (O.C.)

Excuse me?

The couple continues to walk, trying to ignore him.

Donald grabs the young Black man's arm aggressively,
completely ignoring the young Hispanic woman.

DONALD (CONT'D)

What the hell did you just say?

YOUNG BLACK MAN

Hey man, calm down. She was just
joking. It's not that--

Donald pulls him in closer and stares him down viciously, one hand on his gun holster. The young Black man is terrified.

Vince tries to calm Donald.

VINCE
Hey, c'mon Don. Their just kids.

Donald ignores him--he realizes something.

DONALD
I know you, don't I?
(Stares harder)
Probably had to put my foot in your
neck for that smart ass mouth.
Yeah...I think I did.

VINCE
(Pleading)
Don, c'mon...

The hostess returns.

HOSTESS
S-S-Sir, your food.

CLOSE SHOT - Donald stares at the young man a while longer. There's a dangerous rage and anger behind his eyes. He could snap at any moment.

HOSTESS (O.C.) (CONT'D)
P-Please, sir. Take it.

Donald looks on a moment longer then releases the young Black man.

DONALD
Get the fuck outta' here...You and
that spic' bitch of yours better
learn to watch your mouths.

Embarrassed, the couple leaves in a hurry. The restaurant is silent.

Donald turns and grabs the bags from the hostess. He acts as if nothing happened.

DONALD (CONT'D)
(To Hostess)
Mhmm, smells great.
(To Vince)
Let's go Rook.

Donald exits.

Vince lags behind for a second, looking around the restaurant. People give him confused and disgusted looks, or they just avoid looking at him at all.

Vince looks at the hostess and they stare at each other a moment; her eyes are sad and pleading--"Aren't you going to say something? Aren't you going to do something?"

Someone in the back yells and catches Vince's attention.

YOUNG BLACK MAN #2 (O.C.)
(Yelling)
Fuckin' coon...

Vince shakes it off and turns to leave.

CLOSE SHOT - Disappointed, the hostess shakes her head and goes back to work.

EXT. LINCOLN PARK - CONTINUOUS

Donald is waiting on the sidewalk for Vince. They walk to the police truck in silence.

FAR SHOT - Someone across the street can be seen watching the detectives, but they don't notice.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

An awkward silence fills the air as they start eating their food.

Vince pauses and prepares himself.

VINCE
Hey...What was that about in there?

Donald shrugs the question off as he chews his food. No big deal.

DONALD
Those two...I know 'em; assholes.
(Drinks water)
They've caused a lot of trouble with protests and all that other "Black Lives Matter" bullshit. Arrested 'em before too. They're lucky I didn't wanna' cause a scene.

Vince bites his tongue.

DONALD (CONT'D)
 Besides...We got bigger fish to
 fry. Let's get a move on.

Donald stops and admires the food. He loves it.

DONALD (CONT'D)
 They sure do know how to cook
 though, don't they? You did alright
 today, kid. Not bad.

They pull off.

EXT. LINCOLN PARK - OUTSIDE BRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - LATER

The police truck stops in front of a beautiful townhome. Movers carry furniture out of the front door and onto a moving truck. Brian Witherspoon's parents, Mary and Thomas Witherspoon, direct them.

Donald and Vince exit the truck and approach the grieving parents--They're overwhelmed.

THOMAS
 Oh, for God's sake! Don't you
 people ever get enough? Me and my
 wife can't keep doing this!

Thomas is very aggressive, but Donald engages him calmly and empathetically.

DONALD
 Sir, please...We're not here to
 cause any harm.

Donald approaches the grieving parents cautiously. Something in him softens. He's very gentle.

DONALD (CONT'D)
 We just want to find out what
 happened to your son.

Thomas flashes an impatient look. Mary, a bit more reasonable, motions for the detectives to step inside.

MARY
 Yes, of course. Please...Come
 inside.
 (To Thomas)
 Honey, are you coming?

Thomas rolls his eyes--he's had enough of talking.

THOMAS
 (Stern)
 No.

Mary nods and walks away; she doesn't want to fight with her husband. Donald follows her into the townhome.

Vince trails behind, stopping to speak with Thomas.

VINCE
 Sir, I'm very sorry about Brian. I went to school with him...Whitney Young.

Thomas softens a bit.

THOMAS
 Yeah?
 (Sigh of relief)
 You were a dolphin, huh?

VINCE
 Yes sir.

Thomas wipes his mouth and face, holding back tears. He sits on the curb. Broken.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 He didn't deserve this.

Thomas' grief shuts off like a light switch and he quickly becomes angered.

THOMAS
 It was that bitch...That BLACK bitch. She did this to my boy.

Vince is surprised but he catches himself when he realizes that Thomas--like most white people--doesn't realize Vince is a Black man.

Vince bites his tongue and decides to use it to his advantage.

VINCE
 So...You have reason to think it's her fault?

THOMAS
 (Confrontational)
 OH! I know it! She was my boy's worst distraction.

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

He was such a good kid before he met her...You see the picture they're trying to paint about him now?

Vince starts to say something, but he changes his mind. Let him finish.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

They're calling him some kind of sex freak in the papers and on those damn blogs my wife wastes her time reading...

(Begins sobbing lightly)

My son was a good man! A better man than me...Until her. Fucking bitch.

VINCE

Mr. Witherspoon; What was Brian getting into? Before he passed--

THOMAS

(Aggressive)

She killed him! He didn't "pass". My son wasn't getting into anything! That fucking BLACK CUNT kept trying to mix him into her bullshit!

Thomas reaches into his jacket and pulls out a brochure--it's style is old and it's purplish in hue. He stares at it intensely.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Sex houses! Underground parties! And whatever this shit is...

Thomas hands the brochure to Vince. Vince is intrigued by its bright colors and style. He opens it and a card falls out, hitting the ground.

Vince picks the card up and examines the back of it: Strange. It's carnival-like, but mystic. He flips it over.

CLOSE SHOT - We see an image of a man-sized show monkey on the other side and a mini-sized King's jester. The jester dances for the monkey--their roles are reversed.

Vince places the card in his pocket.

The camera slowly pans over the brochure. It reads:

INVITE ONLY.

FOR THOSE WHO SEEK A TIME AND PLACE...

TO DO THE THINGS OF MALICE TASTE...

ALL IN GOOD FUN AND SPIRIT, YOU'LL LEARN QUITE MORE THAN YOU KNOW...

COME LIVE, LAUGH, AND PERFORM AT THE LAST MINSTREL SHOW!

Vince examines the brochure's cover for another half second and makes a face--Weird. He brings his attention back to Thomas.

VINCE

Sir, do you have any other reason to believe that Miss...LaKesha Williams, would harm Brian?

Thomas all but gives up. He's tired.

THOMAS

Do those animals ever need a reason to do any-fucking-thing they do? Fucking whining and crying about "BLACK LIVES MATTER" in the streets all day, but won't work. Neighborhoods look like shit. Always trying to get over on the tax-payer. Nothing's ever enough for them.

(Deep breath)

I'd trust her as much as I'd trust a snake.

Thomas stands and his body language becomes unfriendly.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Listen, go talk to Mary because I'm DONE. If you jackasses would've arrested that cunt like you should've done in the first place, we wouldn't be talking right now would we?

Thomas takes a few steps away from Vince and goes back to directing the movers.

Vince looks at the brochure again--Strange. He tucks it in his pocket and walks away.

INT. BRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The energy and feel of the room is dark, quiet. Mary and Donald sit on the couch. Mary grieves as she shows Donald pictures of Brian--Elementary school, high school, college.

Vince walks in and sits quietly, not wanting to disturb their conversation.

MARY

My Brian was such a good boy. Here,
take a look.

Mary hands several pictures to Vince, one of them a high school picture.

Vince remembers the face instantly.

VINCE

Yup, just as I remember.

Mary gives Vince a confused look.

VINCE (CONT'D)

I went to high school with your
son, ma'am. Whitney Young.

Mary is pleased by this. A fond memory of Brian's high school days warms her face up.

MARY

Oh, yes. That's wonderful. He loved
his high school and his football
buddies so much...He had such a
good time.

Her mood drops.

MARY (CONT'D)

So...then I guess you already know,
right? The things they're saying
about him? But they aren't true--He
wasn't any of the things they're
calling him. Brian was a good boy.

Vince ponders a moment. He doesn't want to upset her, but the truth is...

VINCE

Mrs. Witherspoon; what exactly is
being said about your son?

Mary starts to withdraw but Donald places a hand on her knee, reassuring her.

MARY

Those "social justice" blogs and news sites are just saying awful things about him and the people he associated with. Calling him a sex freak. A racist. A bad person--But he wasn't any of that!

Mary takes out her phone and shows it to the detectives.

CLOSE SHOT - Mary scrolls through her phone; media posts, blogs, and news articles read "**Human Trafficking Ring Leader Found Dead**".

Vince makes a face when he sees "Human Trafficking Ring Leader". What is that about?

MARY (CONT'D)

(Timid)

Yes, he was into some...exotic things--BUT, he wasn't the man they're trying to make him out to be. Their lies and the attention have cost my family so much. We've even been barred from The First Order Country Club indefinitely.

(Quick sob)

They don't want to associate themselves with the embarrassment of these allegations.

Thomas barges in, still upset. He stops, surveys the room, and walks towards the back.

A moment passes and Thomas calls for Mary.

THOMAS (O.C.)

Come here Mary!

Mary stands.

MARY

I'm sorry, you have to be going now. Please, find out what really happened to my son.

Vince and Donald stand as well. Time to go.

DONALD

Thank you Mrs. Witherspoon, really. We're going to do everything we can to find out what happened to Brian.

MARY

Thank you so-so much.

Mary shows the detectives to the door. Vince stops to ask one more question.

VINCE

Wait, Mrs. Witherspoon, can you tell me anything about this?

Vince hands Mary the brochure and card. Mary frowns as soon as she sees it--embarrassed.

MARY

Y-Yes...Well, like I said before, Brian was into some exotic things. This is an invitation to a...comedy show. A "race show". But it's supposed to be fun, inclusive even. He actually went with...That girl--the Black one. The actors are like her, you know; BLACK. They went right before he...

Mary holds back tears.

MARY (CONT'D)

Maybe she got upset about the whole thing and--

THOMAS (O.C.)

MARY!

Mary rushes them out the door. She hands Vince the brochure.

MARY

Here, keep it. You have to go now. Please, just find out what happened. Investigate that girl if you need to. Just--

Donald places a hand on her shoulder.

DONALD

Don't worry...We'll get her.

Mary smiles and closes the door.

EXT. LINCOLN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

The camera follows Vince and Donald as they walk to the police truck.

VINCE
Did you see that; "Human
Trafficking Ring Leader"?

They enter the police truck.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

DONALD
Yeah; just made things a lot more
interesting, huh?

Vince shows the brochure and card to Donald.

VINCE
Did the old woman mention anything
about this before I walked in?

Donald looks over the items quickly--they don't interest him--
and hands them back to Vince.

DONALD
Not much. Said that Brian and the
side piece were going there to have
"fun". You know, she got that kid
into some really fucked up shit.
Look at this.

Donald pulls out his iPad and shows it to Vince.

CLOSE SHOT - We see a picture of Brian dressed as a KKK
member, hood up and face out, and LaKesha stands on a chair
next to him dressed in old and worn down clothing--A slave.
Another man, also dressed in KKK robing, stands on the other
side of LaKesha but his face is covered.

The camera zooms in and we see a noose around LaKesha's neck.

DONALD (CONT'D)
(Laughing)
Klan and the slave girl. She's a
piece of work, probably a good time
though--look at those legs.

Vince becomes visibly puzzled.

VINCE
And Brian? Surely she didn't come
up with **THIS** idea by herself.

DONALD
Why not? You must've never had a
taste of one of these black beasts;
(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)

once they get a hold of you, your
ass ain't getting away. Next thing
you know you...You're maxing out
credit cards and seeing your
chiropractor 20 times a year--Most
expensive piece of chocolate you'll
ever have in your life. Just don't
let the wife catch you.

Donald winks

Vince swallows everything he really wants to say and
digresses.

VINCE

Alright, let's just get outta'
here. Got a location on her?

Donald flips through his iPad.

CLOSE SHOT - Vince looks at Brian's townhouse and notices
something--

CUT TO:

EXT. LINCOLN PARK - BRIAN'S TOWNHOUSE - SAME TIME

The silhouette/shadows of Mary and Thomas argue in the window
upstairs.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE SHOT - Vince watches Mary and Thomas argue, then turns
away as he remembers something--What was that look?

DONALD

Got her. Profile says that she
lives on the south side. Englewood.

Vince shifts. His expression shows that he's excited about
going there.

VINCE

I guess...Let's go.

Donald studies Vince. What's his problem? He shrugs it off
and starts the car. They drive away.

EXT. CHICAGO - LAKE SHORE DRIVE - LATER

The police truck glides smoothly down Lake Shore Drive.

The city of Chicago is gorgeous in the background. Snow drops slowly. One of the best looking cities in the world.

EXT. CHICAGO - DAN RYAN EXPRESSWAY - EARLY EVENING

The police truck exits the Dan Ryan Expressway on 55th street. The differences between the south and the north sides of Chicago are immediately noticeable; garbage is scattered along the streets, beggars linger at every corner, buildings look tired and depleted. It's a completely different world.

The police truck cruises along a side street--more of the same dire conditions are seen--until it reaches 63rd street in Englewood. The truck turns right, passing a "Welcome to Englewood" sign.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Donald checks the police truck's computer.

DONALD

Oook, she's right off 63rd. Morgan Street.

Donald glances up from checking the directions and decides to run a red light--He slams the brakes as a group of Black kids hurry past the front of the truck. He honks the horn at them as if the would-be-accident was their fault.

Vince gives Donald a look, annoyed, but it doesn't bother Donald one bit.

VINCE

Be careful driving up this way man, there's a lot of kids and old people that live around here.

Vince points. Donald ignores him; his smirk is sick and twisted.

DONALD

Shit...If I hit 'em, it won't be me who pays: it'll be the department.

(Laughs)

Maybe they'll take the money and clean these fuckin' streets.

EXT. ENGLEWOOD - CONTINUOUS

The police truck cruises up the 63rd street corridor. We see Vince inside the truck as he reminisces.

CONTINUED...

The police truck makes a turn on Morgan street and parks a few houses away from **LAKESHA'S HOME**. It's a stakeout now.

DONALD

(Points)

It's the brown one, two houses up.

VINCE

Ok, let's go.

DONALD

Wait--gotta' check the place out first. Can't just stroll on over there; it's Englewood. A jungle. Two good looking fellas like us with badges draw attention when we walk up to one of these people's houses.

(Leans in)

Luckily, we can do whatever the fuck we want because we're the goddamn police.

Donald smirks at Vince. Vince gives a half-hearted smile back.

They wait quietly for a few moments, observing their surroundings, then they get out.

EXT. ENGLEWOOD - CONTINUOUS

Vince and Donald exit the police truck and walk to LaKesha's house.

Vince notices several men, young and old, watching them from the porch of the house next door.

VINCE

Soooo...How do you plan to play this since the footage cleared her the first time?

EXT. LAKESHA'S HOME - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

They approach the door.

DONALD

Sanchez was the first detective to question her...Said he had some fun too, if you know what I mean.

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)

(Winks)

She won't be hard to crack. And besides, that's why you're here.

Vince puzzles over Donald's comment about Detective Sanchez-- What?

VINCE

What do you mean he--

Donald bangs on the front door, startling Vince. No one answers.

Donald bangs again, louder this time. The door cracks open; A young woman, horribly fatigued and sickly in the face, leans half her body out the door. This is **LAKESHA WILLIAMS**.

DONALD

LaKesha Williams?

LaKesha nods; it almost makes her fall backwards.

DONALD (CONT'D)

I'm Detective Warren. This is my partner, Detective Jackson. One of the other detectives from our division spoke with you about Brian Witherspoon a week and a half ago...

LaKesha nods again. Her eyes barely open.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Can we step inside?

LaKesha becomes very alert--eyes darting back and forth. She shakes her head 'No'.

Donald frowns; he doesn't like being told no.

DONALD (CONT'D)

And why not?

LAKESHA

(Quiet)

I-I-I...I can answer any questions you have h-here.

Donald looks at Vince impatiently.

DONALD

No, we'd rather step in.

One of the young men watching, Elliot Ross Jr. (Black, late teens), from the porch next door stands up.

ELLIOT ROSS JR.
Aye; y'all got a warrant?

Donald, instantly irritated, places his hand on his gun and turns around to face the young man.

DONALD
Shut the fuck up, punk! Am I
talking to you?

The young man steps back, a smirk on his face. An older man, Elliot Ross Sr. (Black, 30s), stares at Vince closely--He recognizes him.

LaKesha steps out on the porch and locks the door behind her. Before she closes the door, Donald gets a look inside. Something catches his eye.

LAKESHA
What do you want?

Donald rolls his eyes. He's frustrated, but he lets it go.

DONALD
(Sighs)
When you talked to the last
detective, you didn't tell him
about this...

Donald takes his iPad out and shows LaKesha the pictures of her, Brian, and the other masked man.

LaKesha looks over the pictures. There's a wild but distant look in her eyes.

LAKESHA
I don't know this woman.

Donald frowns. Vince steps in before Donald gets too frustrated.

VINCE
You know, lying to the police is a
criminal offense: Obstruction. You
wanna' take another look?

Something comes over LaKesha--She realizes the situation and collects herself.

LAKESHA

I-I mean, yes, I know it's me, but I'm no longer that person. She's gone.

Donald is curious.

DONALD

Gone?

LAKESHA

Dead.

(Intense look.)

I've moved on from that life.

DONALD

After you killed Brian Witherspoon?

LaKesha cringes as she hears Brian's name.

LAKESHA

I...didn't...kill...him.

LaKesha looks away.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)

What happened to him was his own doing, I couldn't change that.

DONALD

So...Again, you killed him?

Vince steps in again.

VINCE

We're just trying to get a sense of what happened leading up to his death. The ME's report said that Brian ultimately died because of asphyxiation; he was strangled. And he had rope-like bruises around his neck. But the security camera footage from that night shows that he was by himself in the kitchen...Then...He went into...His..."secret room". We just wanna' know what happened.

Vince takes the iPad. He shows LaKesha more erotic pictures and headlines of Brian; some of them with other women, some with her, and headlines calling him a human trafficker.

Donald steps back and observes him. He's impressed.

VINCE (CONT'D)

This isn't you; it's who Brian wanted you to be for him. You're a good woman. You were a college student getting your Masters degree before you met him. You got caught up in his world and it's taken a toll on you.

(Places hand on her shoulder)

I know the feeling: I've been overwhelmed trying to get a promotion and...I feel like I've been doing things I wouldn't usually do, saying things I wouldn't usually say. So, I get it...

Vince swipes some more and stops on a picture of LaKesha-- it's from her graduation for her Bachelor's degree.

LaKesha faintly smiles and runs her fingers over the picture.

VINCE (CONT'D)

But if there's anything you can tell us that'll help us find out what happened to him--where you went that evening, if anyone came by his place, any of his other women who might've been jealous that he was spending so much time with you--you need to let us know.

LaKesha ponders for a long moment, thinking very deeply about something.

Vince looks at Donald. Donald nods--Good job, kid.

LAKESHA

(To Donald)

I can't help you understand what happened to Brian...

Donald blows air, mad.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)

(To Vince)

But, I can tell you where we were...Maybe it'll help you find the **answers** you're looking for.

Vince pulls the small brochure from his pocket.

VINCE

Was it here?

LaKesha's eyes bulge. She faintly smiles for a moment, then it fades.

LAKESHA

Yes...That is the place. Well, the experience. You'll find what you're looking for with a man named Lucky.

DONALD

You know...If you keep playing games with us, you're gonna' find yourself in a world of hurt.

(Steps away)

The next time I come back, it'll be with a warrant, and then you'll be down at the station. Better straighten your story up, and quick.

Donald leaves the porch.

VINCE

I'm sorry about him. Thank you for cooperating with us.

(Hands her a card)

If you remember anything, please don't hesitate to call me.

LaKesha takes the contact card and Vince notices a small infinity sign tattooed on her hand. The ink is like nothing he's ever seen before. It's not a normal tattoo.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Have a good evening.

Vince turns to walk away. LaKesha grabs his arm tightly.

CLOSE - There's a wondrous, longing, hopeful look in her eye.

Vince hesitates, nearly afraid.

LAKESHA

Good luck on your journey. It won't be easy...But it'll be worth it. Meeting HIM is worth it...Only if you're ready.

They stare at each other for a long moment. Vince feels something; Not sexual, fear, or curiosity...Whatever it is, it makes him uneasy.

VINCE
 (Hesitant)
 Goodnight Miss Williams.

LaKesha pulls away and withdraws back into her dark home.
 Vince leaves the porch.

EXT. ENGLEWOOD - EARLY EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Vince meets Donald on the sidewalk and they move towards the
 police truck.

Vince is visibly concerned.

VINCE
 Something seemed off about that
 girl.

DONALD
 Ya' think?! Junkie, Rook. You
 didn't notice? She's definitely on
 something.

Vince shakes his head--That can't be it.

VINCE
 You think so? Nah...I mean, maybe,
 but it seems like she--

DONALD
 Kid...she's a junkie! That's it.
 C'mon, you saw it.

Donald nudges Vince. Get it together, kid.

DONALD (CONT'D)
 We need to get a warrant and get
 inside that house. Get a drug
 arrest, that'll really put the
 pressure on her. Then we can tell
 her that the new ADA might go easy
 on her if she just confesses.

Donald winks at Vince. Vince is disgusted, but he hides it
 well.

VINCE
 You really think that girl--all 105
 lbs of her--was capable of
 strangling Brian; 6'4, 240 lbs?
 (Throws hands)
 Really?!

Donald slows down, he smirks. He's amused at Vince's eagerness.

DONALD
Crackheads do more exciting shit
than choke a man to death all the
time. You'll learn that quick in
these neighborhoods.

Donald laughs, but Vince doesn't find anything funny.

CONTINUED...

Just as the detectives get ready to enter the truck, Vince notices that the group of men who were next door to LaKesha's house is walking towards them.

ELLIOT ROSS SR (O.C.)
Vince? Vince Jackson?

Donald pauses, confused.

DONALD
You know him?

Vince says nothing.

ELLIOT ROSS SR. (O.C.)
Little Vinny--That is you!

EXT. ENGLEWOOD - CONTINUOUS

Elliot Ross Sr. walks close to Vince, smugly taking a half-step back when Vince non-verbally let's him know that he's a little too close.

Elliot's son and friends stand a few feet away from them. Their body language is hostile.

ELLIOT ROSS SR.
Well I'll be damned...Little
Vinny's a big, bad cop now.

Elliot Sr's voice is light--He's mocking Vince.

Vince stands as still as a statue, ready to strike at any moment.

ELLIOT ROSS SR. (CONT'D)
What you doin' back in the
neighborhood, white boy?
(Energy shifts--hostile)
(MORE)

ELLIOT ROSS SR. (CONT'D)
 You and ya' massa' come on down to
 the ghetto to make sure us black
 folks ain't gettin' outta' line?
 Gon' whoop us like CPD did that boy
 DaSean last week?

One of men in the group behind Elliot takes a step forward.

BLACK MAN 1
 We know that ain't happenin'...

Donald closes the driver's side door and impatiently walks
 around to the front of the police truck.

DONALD
 Alright now, that's enough. You
 boys head on back home--Would hate
 to arrest you for nothing.

ELLIOT ROSS SR.
 (Jokingly)
 We ain't did nothin'! Just havin' a
 little fun. But we'll let you BOYS
 get on protectin' and servin'.
 (Whispers to Vince)
 Well Red, ya' still a lil' bitch I
 see...Can't fight your own--

Vince instantly loses it; he uses a police maneuver to flip
 Elliot Sr. to the ground.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince draws his gun and presses it into Elliot's temple. A
 strong rage can be seen on his face. Donald draws his gun as
 well and waves it at the crowd, backing them up.

Elliot Jr looks at Vince in horror. Vince catches Elliot Jr's
 eyes and begins to calm down--This isn't him.

DONALD
 (To Crowd)
 Back up! Unless you want to be down
 there with him.

The crowd steps back.

Vince looks down at Elliot as if he's the scum of the earth.
 He loosens his grip and leans in to whisper in Elliot's ear.

VINCE

(Whispers)

The next time I see you, you'd
better have your tail tucked
between your fuckin' legs or so
help me God...

Vince glares at Elliot.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Hear me?

Elliot, stern-faced, struggles to keep his pride and dignity in tact as he notices his friends, family, and son watching.

Vince's eyes widen. His nostrils flare. He presses the front of the gun into the middle of Elliot's forehead.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Do...You...HEAR...Me?

The two men hold a dramatic stare-off for a moment, but Elliot caves--he's defeated and realizes it. He nods.

Vince lets Elliot up from the ground. Embarrassed and angry, Elliot walks away. The crowd follows.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince gathers himself and dusts off his coat. He notices Donald smiling at him and it forces him to smile.

VINCE (CONT'D)

What man? WHAT? He was outta' line.

Donald is pleased. He shrugs.

DONALD

Hey; I didn't say anything! You're
going to do just fine. Juuuuust
fine.

Vince hides his shame and embarrassment as he watches the crowd disperse--He's gotten very good at doing it.

Vince and Donald enter the police truck.

EXT. ENGLEWOOD - SAME TIME

From a distance--over an UNKNOWN PERSON'S shoulder--we can see Vince and Donald as they enter the truck. The crowd flattens out and the street goes back to the normal.

The UNKNOWN PERSON watches the truck until it leaves, then they leave as well.

INT. POLICE TRUCK - LATER

FRONT SHOT - Vince sits in silence as Donald drives them back to the station. He thinks heavily.

Donald nods and hums along to Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On". The last bits of sunshine disappear on the horizon beyond the windshield.

EXT. CHICAGO - NEAR NORTH SIDE - EVENING

The police truck parks in front of the police station. The detectives exit.

Donald walks inside the police station. Vince stands on the sidewalk and looks south towards where the CABRINI GREEN PROJECTS once were. He's remembering something.

Vince turns when he hears the front doors open again--It's Donald.

DONALD

Come on, Rook. Get your head out the clouds.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - EVENING

The room buzzes as the detectives walk in. Something big just happened.

Donald grabs the chunky arm of Detective PETER ROBBINS (White, 20s), a privileged and private-school bred kid from the suburbs, as he passes by in a rush.

DONALD

Hey, Robbins, what's going on? What happened?

Peter, round and jolly, shakes his head as he takes a bite into his doughnut. He nods towards one of the flat screen tv's on the wall and waddles to his desk.

DETECTIVE PETER ROBBINS

(Walking away)

Just take a look up there, Donny.
Fuckin' CRAZY.

Vince and Donald turn their attention to the tv screen just as a BREAKING NEWS headline appears. A reporter appears.

REPORTER 1

Welcome back. We're still live over Lake Michigan with chopper coverage as the rescue team fights to get through the ice.

Footage of a helicopter flying over the snowy Lake Michigan plays on a small screen next to the reporter's head.

REPORTER 1 (CONT'D)

For those just tuning in; there's reports of at least 10 people trapped beneath the ice in Lake Michigan. Rescuers have not reported any sightings so far, but we're still keeping those out there in our hopes and prayers.

INT. CAPTAIN PARNELL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Captain Parnell sits at his desk. He stares at his phone as a video plays--He's watching a social media video of the scene at Lake Michigan from earlier that day:

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - LAKE MICHIGAN - FLASHBACK

From the sky we see a beautiful display of Chicago's "front yard".

We move toward the ground and see 10 young men and women, all white, standing quietly at the lakefront. All of them are dressed strangely; worn/weathered clothing in the middle of the winter? Barefoot? And they all seem to be overcome with a dreadful emotion. Sorrow? Grief? They hum in unison...It's familiar--the same humming from the opening scene.

One of the young men bends down to grab a backpack, we can tell it's heavy by the way he struggles with it. He adjusts, puts it on, and steps out onto the thinly frozen top of Lake Michigan. The ice creaks and cracks below his feet. The others watch him closely.

CONTINUOUS...

The rest of the group straps their heavy backpacks on, joins the first young man on the ice, and link hands. By this time, more cars and people have gathered around to watch;

a few people call the police, others yell for them to come back. One woman tries to walk out onto the ice and stop them, but her husband holds her back.

CONTINUOUS...

We're now watching them through a live social media feed that was taken earlier in the day by a bystander; the group gets about 200 yards out before the ice really starts to test them, but they continue on.

At 250 yards, the icy floor caves and pulls one of them under. They continue to walk on and one-by-one they fall through the ice until none of them are left. None of them struggle to swim back up. Once they go under, they disappear.

END FLASHBACK.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN PARNELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Captain Parnell's face is red with stress.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
(To himself)
My God...

INT. - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Captain Parnell steps out of his office and into the busy central office where everyone is talking about the video. He makes eye contact with Donald and motions for him to come into his office, then does the same with Vince. They both head into his office.

INT. CAPTAIN PARNELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Captain Parnell drops down in his chair.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Please, gentlemen, have a seat.

Vince sits, Donald stands.

DONALD
What's going on Captain?

Captain Parnell sighs long and heavy. He doesn't know what to make of what he just watched.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Ah, just...Been a long day, as I'm sure you can tell. But first; what did you men learn today about those Near North Side murders? Give me the highlights.

Donald sits down, leans back comfortably, and looks at Vince--
Go head, you got it kid.

Vince straightens up since he's on the spot.

VINCE

Uh, well sir, w-we...We started with the Brian Witherspoon case. Interviewed his parents, checked out his home, checked out the girlfriend--I mean, "side" girl.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

And?

Vince nervously shuffles around, looking for his iPad. Donald smirks--pathetic--and loans Vince his iPad.

VINCE

(To Donald)

Thanks...

(To Captain Parnell)

Well, we got some intel that Brian Witherspoon might've been connected to a human trafficking ring and--

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Anything credible?

Vince scrambles through pictures and files.

VINCE

Hold on, hold on...Here!

(Displays iPad)

We got a few hits on some disturbing videos and images from the intel team. Dark net stuff. Brian was--

CAPTAIN PARNELL

His involvement can be verified?

Vince rushes again. He can sense he's being tested.

VINCE

Yes. His mother, Mary Witherspoon, verified the family's membership with The First Order country club. I booked a few of their members for fraud and money laundering when I was still in uniform. Aside from that, the dark web images we found of Brian were uploaded to a heavily encrypted "sex for sale" website. They buy, trade, and sell thousands of videos and pictures with each other. Sometimes women and children get sold on the site as well--like online shopping for sex traffickers. I figure if we tie him to this, along with the--

CAPTAIN PARNELL

We're looking for who killed him, not the other way around. Can't put a dead man in prison. What did you get on HIS murder, specifically?

Vince is taken aback; why is the Captain avoiding this conversation? He glances at Donald, who gives him a look and gestures for him to continue--You know what you have to do.

VINCE

(Reluctant)

The side woman, LaKesha Williams...It's possible that she may be junkie. She was barely cooperative today, but...

Vince gives Donald another look.

VINCE (CONT'D)

But we could probably get her talking if we get a warrant on the place...Press the issue with a few drug cases.

Captain Parnell is a little more pleased now.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Junkie huh? They'll do and say just about anything for the right price.
(To Donald)
She cute?

DONALD

Eh...
(Hand shake)
(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)
Tight little ass though. I'd let
her polish me if she cleaned up a
little.

Captain Parnell and Donald laugh. They give each other a look
when they notice Vince is un-humored.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Well, uh, anything else?

Vince stares at the ground, his mind somewhere else.

Captain Parnell taps on his desk.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
Hey; still with us?

Vince comes back to reality.

VINCE
Oh, yeah--I'm here. We came across
this too...
(Displays brochure)
It's some sort of underground night
club, or comedy club, or something.
The mother said they do a "modern
day minstrel show". Brian was there
a couple nights in a row with
LaKesha Williams before he died.
She said we'd find what we were
looking for there.

This pleases Captain Parnell.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Minstrel shows huh...?
(Smirk/Slight laugh)
Well, anyway, I want you to check
it out Jackson; get as much
information as you can. See if
there's anything there that can
tell us what happened to Brian. Ask
questions. If you get enough for a
warrant, let me know and we'll file
it.

(To Donald)
You stay on top--I mean, stay on
LaKesha Williams. The case. Get me
something concrete and I'll get you
a warrant.

Captain Parnell gives Donald a subtle wink.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
Good work today detectives,
(To Vince)
And great work today, kid. Really.
You'll be BLUE KNIGHT material in
no time.

DONALD
Ok Cap, sounds good. Thanks.

VINCE
Thanks Cap. Appreciate it.

The detectives get up to leave.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Hold on a second Vince.

Captain Parnell nods at Donald. Donald nods, leaves the room,
and closes the door behind him.

Vince sits back down.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
I know you're only making a pit
stop in our division, and it's been
great having you...I just want to
let you know that if you need
anything, you don't hesitate to
ask. We're family here. If it
wasn't for your old man back in the
day, I'd probably be a dead son-of-
a-bitch right now.

Vince masks his true emotion--resentment?--and displays
content and appreciation.

VINCE
Thanks, Cap'. I feel welcomed here.
I'll keep doing my best.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Alright, sounds good son! Well, I
don't want to hold you up. Go home
and get some rest.

VINCE
Will do. Have a good night.

Vince exits.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We slowly move through Vince's large apartment. It's well designed and very clean. A bachelor pad. Jazz music plays on a sound bar in the living room.

We enter the inside of Vince's room and through the door of a connecting master bathroom we see Vince as he showers.

Through the steam and we see that Vince's back is welted and scarred--Old wounds. Lashes? Cuts?

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Vince moves gracefully--dancing, swaying, grooving--as he prepares dinner in his kitchen; steak, garlic noodles, grilled vegetables, dinner rolls. He's a completely different person outside of work.

The doorbell buzzes. Vince cleans his hands and goes to answer it.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - SAME TIME

The camera slowly rises from the ground to show the body of a beautiful, elegant, dark-skinned woman standing in front of Vince's door. This is ALICIA. Her dress fits tightly, highlighting her curves.

She goes to ring the bell again and the door opens: Vince stands before her, strong and shirtless. Alicia looks him over--she likes what she sees.

ALICIA

Were you going to make me wait all night?

VINCE

Well...I'd be worth the wait, wouldn't I?

The two of them share a passionate look--they want to dig into each other. Vince grabs her hand and guides her inside.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Vince grabs Alicia by the neck and presses her against the door, closing it. They kiss deeply as if it's been months since they last saw each other.

Vince feels her up and her dress begins to drop, exposing her breast. He bites her neck and works his way down to her chest.

ALICIA
S-Slow down baby. It's not going
anywhere.

Vince ignores her; he continues kissing all over her body. He lifts her into the air and carries her into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vince carries Alicia into the dimly lit bedroom, eager to get her clothes off. He tosses her onto the bed. Alicia lets out a laughing-scream.

ALICIA
(Laughing)
So we're not going to have dinner?
Talk? Nothing? Just fuck???

Vince gives her a sneaky smile as he pulls her underwear from under her dress.

VINCE
Yeah...We'll get to that.
(Smirk)
How was your day???

Vince stuffs his head between her legs. Alicia bites her lip as she struggles to concentrate and answers his question.

ALICIA
It...I-I-It was--AH! It was good,
baby.
(Deep Breath)
Fuck!...It was good...it was really
good.

VINCE (O.C.)
(Muffled)
Yeah? What...What did you do?

Alicia tosses her head back--She's mesmerized.

ALICIA
Shit! I, umm...Ummm--Goddamn, boy.

Vince lifts his head.

VINCE

I asked you a question, baby. If you can't concentrate and answer, I'll stop.

Alicia shakes her head vigorously: DON'T STOP.

ALICIA

Ok, ok...I'll concentrate.

Vince shoves his head back in between her legs.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

I...AH! I-I worked baby, I worked.

VINCE

(Muffled)

Was work...Good?

ALICIA

It was--...It--...IT--

Alicia can't take it anymore. She sits up and pulls Vince from between her legs. A crazy hunger grows in her eyes. She wants him.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The room is dark, music plays, a cool breeze drifts in through the window; the mood is set.

Vince and Alicia make love. It's intense, passionate, and fun. They laugh, giggle, moan, and battle each other. They know each other's bodies very well, but they still go at it like they're new lovers.

Something flashes behind Vince's eyes and his mood intensifies for a few moments--He pounds and thrusts as if he's angry. Alicia enjoys it, but she notices the change--Something is bothering him.

CONTINUED...

They end with soft and sweet kisses on each other's face and foreheads.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Vince and Alicia, both half naked, sit and eat together at the dinner table. Alicia smirks as she stares at Vince hungrily. She wants more of him.

Vince eats in silence. He's in his world.

ALICIA
Mr. Jackson...You really out did
yourself tonight.
(Smiles)
My legs are still tingling.

Vince gives her a half-hearted smile without bringing his eyes from his plate. Alicia senses something is wrong.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
Long day?

Vince sighs. He picks at his food, uninterested.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
Oh...Bad day.

VINCE
It was alright...

Vince drops his fork.

Alicia looks over him; she knows he's hiding something.

ALICIA
Ok...Now that we're done lying,
let's tell the truth. What
happened?

Vince wants to tell her the entire truth, but he doesn't. He makes something up.

VINCE
I just...I don't know if going for
the ADA position was the best move.
Maybe I should've stayed where I
was at instead of moving back to
Chicago...Or took that opening in
Seattle I told you about. I don't
know, just figuring things out.

Alicia gets up from her chair and sits on Vince's lap. She kisses him softly.

ALICIA
Baby, you got this. If ANYBODY can
be a damn good cop, detective,
"ADA", it's you. You've worked so
hard for everything you have.
You're ready.

She kisses him again.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
Do you need anything from me? Is
there anything I can do to help?
You know I'm here for you...

Vince hesitates; he wants to say something but he pushes it
down--Another time.

VINCE
(Smirks)
Some more of that chocolate...

Alicia frowns a little.

ALICIA
I'm SERIOUS Vincent. I just want--

Vince pulls her closer.

VINCE
I'm fine, baby. I promise. Ok?

Alicia smiles and nods. They kiss.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

Vince and Alicia lay naked under the covers. Alicia sleeps
peacefully. Vince watches as the lights from passing cars
dance on his ceiling.

Vince's eyes grow heavy as he slowly drifts off to sleep.

VINCE'S POV - The screen blurs as Vince dozes off. Then--

BLACK SCREEN.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - EVENING - FLASHBACK

VINCE'S POV - Vince's eyes blink open a half second later--
We're now back in his childhood apartment. Vince stares at
the lights on his ceiling; someone's parking their car
outside of the window.

9-year-old Vince, scrawny and fragile, hears someone coming
through the front door and sits up in the bed.

9-year-old Vince's face grows anxious as he checks the time
on his alarm clock. OH NO--He gets up and hides under his
bed. We can hear the front door of the apartment open and
heavy footsteps growing louder.

VINCE'S POV - His eyes dart around, adjusting to the darkness. The bedroom door flies open. A pair of shiny boots sit in the doorway. They belong to David Mitchell (White, 40s), Vince's father.

DAVID MITCHELL
(Drunk)
BOY! Wer' the hell are ya?!

VINCE'S POV - He watches as the boots stumble drunkenly around the room; closet, behind the small dresser, around the bed.

DAVID MITCHELL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
BOY!!

VINCE'S POV - He continues watching as David Mitchell seemingly gives up; David stands there for a moment, then he lifts the bed frame off of the ground in one swift motion. David Mitchell is an average sized man but looks huge in the eyes of his young son.

David grabs 9-year-old Vince with his free hand and lifts him into the air easily, then drops the bed and uses both hands to slam his son into the wall.

DAVID MITCHELL (CONT'D)
(Angry)
Yer' gonna' disrespect me in my own house, boy? ARE YA'?!

9-YEAR-OLD VINCE
No sir! No!

David drops 9-year-old Vince to the floor and follows up with a strong slap to his face.

DAVID MITCHELL
Look at ya'...Fuckin' black runt.
LOOK AT YOU!

9-year-old Vince curls into a ball and quivers. Terrified, he presses his body against the wall.

David turns to leave. The camera curls around and focuses back on the scared little boy.

DAVID MITCHELL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Ya' know wha', yer' not even worth the energy...

9-year-old Vince continues to shiver with fear and jumps when the door slams, darkening the room.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - MORNING

The room is busy with detectives filing paper work, getting coffee, taking morning naps. Typical morning.

Vince sits at his desk in deep thought. He snaps out of it when Donald taps him on the shoulder.

DONALD (O.C.)
Always got that head of yours in
the clouds.

VINCE
(Sighs)
Long night.

DONALD
Yeah?
(Smirks)
Tell me about her.

Donald smiles eagerly. Vince gives him the "yeah right, you wish" look.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Ok, ok, I get it. Locked down like
a fortress. You're worse than my ex-
wife; woman wouldn't show an ankle
if I didn't pay for something
first.

They laugh.

VINCE
You're crazy. What you got for me?

Donald hands Vince a folder with several pieces of paper and pictures inside.

DONALD
Intel team did some digging this
morning and found the last known
location of that MINSTREL SHOW the
Captain wants you to check out:
it's a traveling show--changes
locations every week. Took them a
few hours to crack it too.

VINCE
Why? Was the address a dud or
something?

DONALD

Not a dud...
(Points to folder)
A riddle.

Vince, confused, squeezes his eyebrows together. A riddle?

Vince opens the folder and scans the files--Not too many clues and not too much to go on. He finds the address, an old warehouse in Chicago's near west loop, and a decoded riddle on one of the strange looking invitation cards stapled to the paper.

Vince reads the riddle to himself and rolls his eyes: whoever wrote it is full of themselves. He skims the rest of the files and closes it.

VINCE

Ready to go check it out?

DONALD

No-Can-Do, Rook. Gotta' go serve
this uh...warrant, for LaKesha
Williams.

Vince begins to frown, but hides it quickly. He knows that something is up.

VINCE

A warrant? Already? That was
fast...

Donald gives him a look: don't overstep.

DONALD

Yup. Just a Sneak-and-Peek. So
you're on your own today.

Vince nods.

VINCE

Ok, cool.
(Puts on coat)
Well, I'll catch up with you later.

Vince leaves the room.

Donald watches him closely...A sneaky look lingers in his eye.

EXT. CHICAGO - NEAR WEST LOOP - OLD WAREHOUSE

From the sky we can see the police truck as it pulls up to an old warehouse.

Vince exits the truck and walks briskly to a front door. He tries to open it, but it's locked. He tries two other doors but they're locked as well.

VINCE
(To himself)
Fuck...

Vince walks along the front of the warehouse, scanning for an opening--Nothing.

EXT. CHICAGO - NEAR WEST LOOP - OLD WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He walks around the side--Nothing.

EXT. CHICAGO - NEAR WEST LOOP - OLD WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He walks around the back and...Bingo; A door sits halfway open bouncing in the wind. Vince enters and closes the door behind him.

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vince scans the room with a flashlight. The place looks like it hasn't been used in a while. An old meat shop/storage.

He looks around for clues, but there's nothing interesting. He moves on.

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - BACK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The long, white hallway is eerily quiet. It feels void of everything except cold air.

Vince moves slowly. He hears something behind one of the doors and goes to check it out.

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - SAME TIME

Vince moves through the door and into the spacious main warehouse. The lights are dim but we can see it's cleaner than the rest of the warehouse. The area looks like it's been used recently and that it was emptied in a hurry.

A single table and two chairs sits in the middle of the room. Someone, hidden in a shadow, stands on the other side of the table.

Vince adjusts his eyes and realizes someone is standing in the shadows, leaning against the table.

CONTINUOUS...

The camera crawls towards the table and zooms into a close shot of the person as they reveal their face; This is Lucky (Black, Unknown Age)--Tall, slender, mysterious looking, but also friendly looking. Lucky lights a closed cigarette/joint as we hear Vince's footsteps in the background get closer.

VINCE (O.C.)
Police...You work here?

Lucky ignores the question; smiling, he inhales from the closed cigarette/joint deeply and exhales a thick cloud of PURPLISH SMOKE.

VINCE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Hey!

Lucky, very calmly and arrogantly, looks up at Vince. He inhales the joint again and blows more thick SMOKE in Vince's direction. The smoke settles in the air strangely.

LUCKY
Apologies...
(Slight bow)
Welcome.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince approaches hesitantly. Something doesn't feel right to him.

VINCE
What are you doing here?

Lucky eases his way around the table, never taking his eye off Vince--He doesn't blink.

Vince, with his weapon already drawn, moves closer and through the SMOKE--He's alert.

LUCKY
Relax. Officer...?

Lucky gestures: tell me your name.

Suddenly, Vince eases a little, holstering his weapon--He doesn't know why.

VINCE

Jackson. 'Detective' Vince Jackson.

Lucky smiles. He already knew his name. He offers Vince a seat. The perfect gentleman.

LUCKY

Please, please, sit. Relax a little...

Vince wipes DUST from the wooden chair and sits. We can tell he's uncomfortable but he's still complying. Why?

Lucky sits across from Vince and inhales more smoke from the closed cigarette/joint again, blowing it up into the air around them.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

How may I help you today, Detective Vince Jackson?

VINCE

Mind putting that out? I know it's legal and all now, but don't be disrespectful.

Lucky, amused, puts the joint out.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Now, who are you and wha--...What are you d-doing in here?

Vince shakes his head as he stumbles through his words. Headache? Migraine?

LUCKY

My name? It's Lucky--

VINCE

Your REAL name.

Lucky smiles.

LUCKY

That's been my name for as long as I can remember. It's who I am-- Lucky. You wouldn't deny me of my civil liberties in the land of the free, would you, Detective?

Vince shrugs--Maybe. His demeanor is very loose now. Relaxed.

VINCE
Whatever. You know anything about
this?

Vince grabs the MINSTREL SHOW brochure from his pocket and
slides it across the table. Lucky picks it up and flips
through.

LUCKY
It looks like an opportunity?

VINCE
Opportunity?

LUCKY
Yes...An opportunity.

Lucky places the brochure down on the table.

VINCE'S POV - His vision is fuzzy now. He notices an infinity
tattoo on Lucky's hand--the same tattoo from the opening
scene and the one Vince saw on LaKasha's hand. What does it
mean?

VINCE
H-Hey--

LUCKY
Do you believe in the soul,
detective?

Lucky stands. The room around them is dead silent.

VINCE
W-What do you mean?

Lucky begins to circle the table.

LUCKY
The soul; our 'higher' self? And
that higher self being shaped by
the decisions we make every single
day.

Vince ponders this.

VINCE
Yeah...I guess.

LUCKY
Good, that's very good.

Silence.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
How would you judge your own soul?

Vince is taken aback. What is this? What's happening?

VINCE
L-Look...I'm...You're--

Vince struggles with his words as disorientation begins to consume him. He tries to shake it off.

VINCE (CONT'D)
I'm asking the damn questions here,
OK? My soul is just f-f-fine. Y-You
answer m-me, not the other w-way
around.

VINCE'S POV - The rooms begins to spin a little.

LUCKY
Relax, detective, just a simple
idea for you to ponder over. I like
to get to know a man--really know
him--before I get intimate...That's
all.

Lucky stalls for a moment.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
My name, as you know, is Lucky. I
was born of the earth in the land
of the freest men in history...

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Vince listens very closely as Lucky speaks because--

VINCE'S POV - All of Vince's senses are distorted/intensified to the max now. It's as though Lucky's voice is inside of Vince's head.

LUCKY
I organize an experience here in
the United States. It's a fun
little experiment,
entertaining...But most
importantly, it's an opportunity. I
guess that's what you can call me;
A man with opportunities. I assume
that's what you came to learn more
about. Yes?

Vince nods his head lazily. He's almost out.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
Well, Detective Vince Jackson; I
can show you better than I can tell
you...

Lucky examines Vince carefully.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
Find your way to the show tonight.
I think you especially will enjoy
what it has to offer...

Vince finally fades away completely after Lucky's last words--
He's unconscious.

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lucky stands over Vince, staring at him blankly. He pulls a
STACK OF CARDS--the same kind from the opening scene and the
one Vince got from Brian's father--from his coat pocket and
shuffles through them without looking, never taking his eyes
off of the unconscious Vince.

The camera focuses on Lucky's hands as they shuffle the deck.
He moves ridiculously fast as he shuffles.

Suddenly, he stops. He slips the top card of the deck between
his index and middle fingers. Then, like magic, he makes the
card dance/flip gracefully back and forth between all his
fingers. Lucky looks at the card.

CLOSE - An odd picture of a half-black, half-white (split
down the middle) man. The man has a horrified look on his
face. Each arm tears at the skin on the opposite side--the
white arm tears at the black skin, the black arm tears at the
white skin.

Lucky is pleased. His eyes dance between the card and the
unconscious Vince. He places the card in Vince's limp hand.

LUCKY
May luck be on your side...

Lucky, very smoothly and gracefully, exits the frame. We hear
his footsteps as he leaves.

The camera holds a full shot of Vince as he sits unconscious
in the chair, then it slowly pans down and zooms in on the
card AND--

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - LATER

Time passes.

The camera continues to hold a shot of the card in Vince's hand. The man on the card begins to...Move? YES! The half-black, half-white man on the card is moving; He scratches at his skin, then he begins to yell.

CARD MAN
HELP ME! HELP ME!

Vince stirs.

CARD MAN (CONT'D)
Hey! HEY! Get up, asshole!

Vince wakes, disoriented. He looks down at the card in his hand and his eyes bulge. Is this real?

The card man dances around in pain as he rips at his skin. Vince watches in disbelief.

CARD MAN (CONT'D)
(Yelling)
Are you going to help me, Vincent?
Or are you going to stand there and
watch? PICK ONE!

Vince jumps from his chair, dropping the card on the ground. "What the hell is going on? There's no way this is real."

Vince freezes; he notices something big and dark--almost the size of a garage--swaying back and forth in the corner of the warehouse. It's hidden in the shadows, but looks like a giant monster.

The GIANT THING takes a step toward Vince, shaking the entire warehouse. The lights are too dim to reveal what it is yet.

The camera pans to Vince's face: He's terrified!

GIANT (O.C.)
(Dark/Demonic Voice)
COME HERE, RUNT!

The voice is familiar to Vince. He tries to figure it out as he takes a step back.

GIANT (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I SAID...COME HERE!

The GIANT takes another step, and another, and another. It's sprinting!

Vince turns and runs towards the door he used to get into the main warehouse floor.

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - BACK HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Over the shoulder of someone, or something, we see Vince burst through the door and slam it behind him. He presses his body against the door and stands still. A few moments pass and nothing happens.

VINCE
(Panting)
Shit...Fuck...What the fuck...

Vince, catching his breath, notices something out the corner of his eye.

VINCE (CONT'D)
What the--

Vince shudders with fear.

The camera pans around; a large group of sleek-black, blank-faced bodies stand at the end of the hallway. The BEINGS are horrible looking things.

CONTINUOUS...

The BEINGS step in unison towards Vince, slowly and mechanically. Step. Step. Step. One foot after the other.

Vince turns to run BUT--

VINCE (CONT'D)
(To himself)
WHAT THE FUCK...

The hallway begins to slant upward, preventing Vince from running away. He scratches and claws to climb up, but can't! He quickly grabs onto a crease in the wall, preventing him from sliding down.

Vince turns his head and looks behind him; The BEINGS are still walking toward him; their feet are sticking to the ground. They get closer and closer.

Vince loses grip and begins sliding down the hallway towards the BEINGS.

Vince slides into the BEINGS--they pull and grab at him. Dozens of hands cover him.

Vince yells AND--

BLACK SCREEN.

EXT. CHICAGO - CABRINI GREEN PROJECTS - CONTINUOUS

We drifts over the old CABRINI GREEN PROJECTS. No one is outside. No cars drive by. No planes, birds, or movement.

Vince, still screaming, opens his eyes.

VINCE'S POV - The dark figures are gone. All that can be seen is a clear blue sky.

He sits up and realizes where he is; this is where he grew up. He winces--a bad memory stabs at his mind.

Vince stands and observes the ghost town. He's alone.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince walks towards his old project building. Memories of his childhood flash behind his eyes as he gets closer--they aren't pleasant. He closes in on the living room window of his old unit on the first floor.

Over Vince's shoulder we can see two shadows arguing behind the curtains.

Vince's face quivers...He knows who they are.

VINCE
(Whispers)
Ma'...

Vince bursts into a sprint. The ground below him starts to move/stretch backwards, causing him to run in place. The building in front of him starts to sway. It's falling. He stops and turns to run in another direction, but his feet begin to sink into the ground as if he's in quicksand.

The building sways harder and begins to crumble. A giant piece of debris lunges towards Vince. He gets one more look at the living room window, at the shadow, just BEFORE--

VINCE (CONT'D)
NO--

The giant piece of debris speeds toward Vince and lands right on top on him, crushing his body.

BLACK SCREEN.

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - EARLY EVENING

We're back in the old warehouse--several hours have passed. The sun outside has started to go down.

Vince, back in the chair, awakes in a terror. He immediately looks at the card in his hand; the half-black half-white man stands still. Vince waits for him to move...Nothing.

Vince looks around; Nobody. He sighs: just a bad dream. His phone vibrates. He takes it out and checks it, lazily--His BODY ACHES.

CLOSE - Several missed calls from Donald, Alicia, Captain Parnell, and several others show up in the phone's notification bar.

VINCE
(To himself)
Shit...

Vince, realizing he's been asleep for several hours, stands to gather himself and puts the card in his pocket. He notices a piece of paper--old and dingy looking--on the table in front of him; it's another invitation.

Vince picks up the invitation, reads it, and pockets it. Strange. He leaves in a hurry.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - LATER

The office is just as it was the day before--People scramble left and right.

Vince bursts into the office and hurries to his desk. He removes the invitation and card from his pocket, examining them for a moment. He begins decoding the riddle.

Donald approaches Vince from behind and watches him curiously.

DONALD
Long day, Rook?

Vince continues to work silently. Donald sits on Vince's desk.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Hey--everything alright kid?

Vince breaks his concentration and looks up, his eyes full of wonder, disbelief, confusion.

VINCE
I found him--it. I found it.

DONALD
What?

Vince displays the card and the invitation for Donald to look over.

Donald glances over it, but it doesn't grasp his attention. Something else is on his mind.

VINCE
I think we--

DONALD
We have to drop this case, knock it down a level.

Vince is confused.

VINCE
But--

DONALD
We might have a serial killer on the loose. First one Chicago's seen in...I don't know how long.

Donald opens his iPad and displays several case files for Vince to explore.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Look over these.

Vince takes the iPad; gruesome pictures of dead, tormented, and mutilated bodies are attached to each case file. His eyebrows and face tightens.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Yeah...String of murders from last night and earlier today.

Vince is stunned.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Fucked up, right? One gentleman, a property developer on the south side, found his 20-year-old granddaughter and her husband dead. Hands cut off, tongues cut out...Complete Shit-show.

VINCE
Are you serious?

DONALD
(Sighs)
Unfortunately, yeah. They brought him in for a statement and all he's been mumbling about is "thieves and liars".

VINCE
Thieves and liars? A burglary?

DONALD
I have no clue. He won't say anything else though.
(Pauses)
Just "thieves and liars...thieves and liars".

VINCE
(Hesitant)
Anything point to the grandfather?

DONALD
(Ponders)
Nah; old man wouldn't--probably couldn't--hurt a fly. We think he's in shock. He'll point us in the right direction when he calms down.

Vince looks over the files again. All of the victims suffered terrible deaths in very different ways. They all have one thing in common: they're all white.

VINCE
I mean, yeah...But I think we should still follow up on what I found today. There was this guy...And he was--I don't know. There was something about him. I need to speak with LaKesha Williams again. She--

DONALD
About that...She's dead too. Overdose.

Vince is devastated.

VINCE
WHAT? DEAD?

DONALD

Yeah...

Donald stands. Something is off about his demeanor; he seems to be leaving something out.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go debrief with Cap'.

The camera sits steady over Vince's desk as Vince and Donald walk into Captain Parnell's office. Donald closes the door behind them. Then, the camera slowly pans down to the face down card that Vince got from Lucky. The camera zooms into the card UNTIL--

CUT TO:

INT. LUCKY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

The camera--still focused on a card--zooms out to show a card identical to the one we just zoomed in on, but it's on top of a deck of cards. We're now in Lucky's apartment.

CONTINUOUS...

We see the back of Lucky as he stands in front of the bedroom window--A beautiful view of the Chicago skyline looms in the distance. He's covered in strange, unfamiliar, TRIBAL tattoos.

A beautiful, curvy black woman in lingerie walks into the frame and stands next to him. They kiss. She embraces him and rests her head on his shoulder. Silently, they look out at the city.

Another woman--black, curvy, also dressed in lingerie--joins them. She kisses Lucky on the cheek. They're waiting for something.

Lucky passes a look between the two gorgeous women.

LUCKY

Alright...Go get ready.

The two women embrace him intimately then leave his side.

INT. LUCKY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Lucky, alone in the dim bedroom, sits 'Indian-style' on the floor in front of a bed. In front of him is a ritual setup;

candles burn around the room, artifacts (masks, dolls, and others alike) lie across the floor, a wooden bowl of burning PLANTS rests in the middle of the floor, 9 cards are placed on the floor in front of the bowl.

The camera rests on a headshot of Lucky as he concentrates. He closes his eyes and inhales the smoke from the burning PLANTS. He WHISPERS something to himself that we cannot hear. The camera zooms in on Lucky's lips; It's another language--old and forgotten.

LUCKY
(In Mishnaic Hebrew)
May luck be on my side...

INT. LUCKY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The room around Lucky begins to vibrate/shake. A loud drumming noise can be heard in the distance.

The smoky air looms and lingers in the air around Lucky. He inhales again--the vibration and humming grow stronger.

LUCKY
(In Mishnaic Hebrew)
And may the universe judge me
justly.

Lucky inhales again. The room around him shakes and vibrates intensely. It grows louder and louder. THEN--

DEAD SILENCE.

The camera remains on Lucky's face. We hear nothing but his heartbeat and breathing; Breath-heartbeat, breath-heartbeat, breath-heartbeat, THEN--

BOOM!

A loud crashing/booming/screaming sound erupts as Lucky opens his eyes--the room around him explodes into pieces.

The camera zooms out as Lucky is lifted into the air.

EXT. CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

Lucky rises through the air--an unknown force pulls him upward. The city/world below him LITERALLY crumbles!

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Lucky--relaxed and calm--continues to climb through the air as giant cracks open around the earth below him. Purple light bursts through the cracks. We hear his steady breathing.

Lucky's ascension slows. The earth is engulfed in purple, vibrating light. It's a magnificent, glorious scene.

Lucky, suspended in the air, watches calmly. His breathing picks up. AND--

BOOM! The purple-glazed earth EXPLODES right before Lucky! It collapses in on itself, pulls him back down in a spiral, THEN--

BLACK SCREEN.

EXT. UNKNOWN WORLD - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY'S POV - Lucky's eyes blink open rapidly. As his vision adjusts, we see the world before him: brightly lit by several suns across the sky with a swirl of colors, massive open fields, and black figures (the same ones we saw earlier in the old warehouse) all running in one direction. They're being chased by NINE HORSEMEN.

CONTINUOUS...

Lucky--atop a giant hill in this mysterious world--rests on his knees. He takes in the beauty of the place.

An OLD MAN--very ancient looking--sits on a massive throne behind Lucky. Who is he?

The Old Man watches Lucky with cold, emotionless eyes. Lucky turns to him and softens. He's vulnerable.

OLD MAN
(Forceful)
Is it done?

LUCKY
(Hesitant)
I-I--

OLD MAN
(Forceful)
WHY ISN'T IT DONE?

Lucky drops his head. The Old Man is displeased with him.

LUCKY
I-I'm doing what I c-can and--

OLD MAN
Do you remember everything I've
shown you?

LUCKY
Yes...

OLD MAN
Do you remember everything I've
taught you?

LUCKY
Yes.

OLD MAN
(Forceful)
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THEY DID?

Lucky is overcome with emotion--He can't bring himself to
look at the Old Man.

LUCKY
I...I Remember...

The Old Man leaves the throne and kneels down next to Lucky.
He places a hand on Lucky's shoulder. He uses the other to
point out into the distance.

EXT. UNKNOWN WORLD - SAME TIME

The HORSEMEN ride through the endless sea of Black Figures,
striking them down randomly and happily. Each one uses a
different weapon or form of magic to slaughter the faceless,
bland creatures.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
We've lived through centuries of
hatred at their hand--it is now
their turn to feel what we have
felt.

The HORSEMEN gallop gracefully throughout the field, enjoying
the hunt.

OLD MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yet, our people still suffer.

EXT. UNKNOWN WORLD - SAME TIME

Lucky and the Old Man stare at each other deeply. They have an old, strong bond.

OLD MAN
You're not there yet. You're not ready. You've forgotten...

Lucky becomes anxious.

LUCKY
No, I--

OLD MAN
Let me remind you.

The Old Man stands in front of Lucky then places his index and middle fingers in the middle of Lucky's forehead and lightly pushes.

LUCKY'S POV - Lucky flies backwards: He's THRUSTED into some kind of spiraling whirlwind/vortex. He blinks rapidly as he falls further and further away from the Old Man.

Lucky's vision begin fades AND--

BLACK SCREEN.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY'S POV - Still blinking, Lucky gathers his vision. He looks around and sees he's laying on a dirt road in a small town. We can tell he's not in the present day.

A large group of men, women, and children--all white and dressed in old-fashioned clothing--surround a large tree 50 feet away from Lucky. Behind the crowd is a burned, lynched black body swinging in the tree. The crowd smiles and poses for a photograph--Their faces are full of joy.

Lucky winces at the sight of the mutilated body and turns his head away from the crowd. After a moment, he looks towards the crowd again and squints to get a better look at the body hanging in the tree.

CLOSE - The charred black body swings lazily in the wind. The camera zooms closer: there's a tribal elephant necklace hanging from the dead body's neck.

Lucky stares--We can see the same elephant necklace around Lucky's neck. THEN--

WHOOSH! Lucky is thrust back into the purple whirlwind/vortex. He's tossed and turned backwards UNTIL--

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We're back in the modern day, but the time and year is unknown. Several police cars form a semicircle on a busy street, blocking traffic. Spectators record the scene on their cellphones.

Lucky stands in the middle of the street. He trembles with fear as police officers point guns at him. He realizes he has a knife in his hand and drops it immediately.

POLICE OFFICER 1
GET DOWN, NOW!

Lucky doesn't move--He's paralyzed. The police officers take a step toward him.

POLICE OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
I SAID GET DOWN, ASSHOLE!

POLICE OFFICER 2
GET THE FUCK DOWN!

Lucky begins to ease his way to the ground WHEN--

POLICE OFFICER 1 (O.C.)
HE'S GOING FOR A GUN!

LUCKY
NO--

BANG! BANG! BANG! Lucky, on his knees, falls backwards as bullets rip through his flesh. 16 SHOTS fire before the police stop. The purple vortex/whirlwind consumes Lucky just before he hits the ground.

EXT. COTTON PLANTATION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Lucky twists around and falls forward as he lands in his new destination. He hits the ground hard, gasping for air. As he checks himself for gunshot wounds, we see that he's naked and shackled by the hands.

SLAVER (O.C.)
Get up and have aht it, boy!

A boot kicks Lucky in the back as he goes to stand up. He collects himself again and looks ahead.

LUCKY'S POV - We see a field, a "big house", and, in front of him, something like a stable.

Inside the farmhouse is a younger woman, also naked and shackled, curled up into a ball against the wall. She shakes with fear.

The SLAVER kicks Lucky again.

SLAVER (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I said...HAVE AHT IT!
(Kicks again.)
It's a matin' season, aye.

CONTINUOUS...

Lucky takes a few reluctant steps towards the young woman. She looks up at him and he realizes who she is.

LUCKY
(Hesitant)
No...

We can see the SLAVER (White, 40s) looming over Lucky's shoulder; he's a large, bearded, rough looking man. His demeanor screams arrogance. His face is full of anticipation and eagerness. He's enjoying this.

SLAVER
(Eager)
Have at the bitch, boy--aye. Go head...Or do I need to stick ya'?
Get ya' goin'?

Lucky drops his eyes in fear and then takes a deep breath. He can't do it.

LUCKY
(Timid)
N-No...

SLAVER
What's that, boy?

LUCKY
No--

The SLAVER lifts his arm into the air, swings, and knocks Lucky to the ground.

Lucky lays frozen in fear. The young girl can be seen in the background watching.

OVER LUCKY'S SHOULDER - The SLAVER steps over Lucky's body and walks to the stable. We hear him unzip his pants as he gets closer to the young woman. He goes into the stable, picks the girl up, turns her around, and bends her over.

The girl weeps and The SLAVER grabs at her neck, choking her into silence.

SLAVER

(Yelling.)

Don't ya' worry boy, I'll warm it up for ya'. And when I'm dun' wit' 'er, maybe I'll have at you too-- aye?

Lucky's face is stone cold and trembling. He breathes heavily as tears fall from his eyes.

The camera slowly twists and zooms in on Lucky, straightening out his face in the frame. As we zoom closer, the ground and background behind him disappears, leaving only his teary-eyed face.

The camera begins to slowly zoom out AND--

CUT TO:

INT. LUCKY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUED

Time has passed. Lucky is back inside of his apartment--the room, apartment, and building as a whole is fully intact. Everything is back to normal.

Lucky's face is still stone cold. Tears stream from his closed eyes. He hasn't come back to reality yet.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

You're not there yet...

Lucky blinks his eyes open rapidly and sucks in some air-- He's back.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Get there. Get it done.

Lucky shakes the OLD MAN's voice from his mind. He notices one of the young women from earlier is standing behind him-- She's been calling his name for some time.

Lucky wipes his face--No one can see him like this; weak and small. He avoids looking at the girl.

LUCKY

(Calm)
It's time.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - LATER

The camera drops slowly from the ceiling.

The police station is relatively quiet and not as frantic as before. A few detectives and officers are scattered about, drinking coffee and eating snacks. Ceiling fans provide a steady, calming hum throughout the room.

Vince pours over a pile of papers; LaKesha Williams report. What happened...What REALLY happened? He glances over his shoulder here and there to keep watch--he's not supposed to be digging into this case. He's close to finding something though, he knows it.

VINCE

(Whispers to himself)
C'mon...This shit doesn't make any sense.

Vince notices something on the paper.

CLOSE - We focus on the report--it highlights certain details one after another:

'ARRIVING OFFICER - DONALD WARREN - CONTROLLED SCENE FOR 15 MINUTES.'

'LAKESHA WILLIAMS - DOA - CAUSE OF DEATH, ASPHYXIATION.'

Vince is perplexed. He pieces a thought (Donald had a 15 minute window with LaKesha; Could he have hurt her?) and looks over his shoulder at Donald in Captain Parnell's office--the two are laughing about something.

Vince gathers the report and places it in a folder. He packs up to leave for the night, then he sees the card from earlier--The half-black, half-white man--sitting on his desk. He hesitantly picks it up along with the invitation. He scans them carefully and begins to write; he's decoding the riddle on the invitation.

FAR - As Vince bends over his desk, focused on decoding the riddle, Donald peeks at him through the blinds of Captain Parnell's office.

Donald opens the door and sticks his head out.

DONALD
Hey, Rook! Come here a minute!

VINCE
One sec!

Vince writes faster. Almost there...Almost there...

DONALD
Come on, kid! We don't have all
night!

VINCE
Comin'!

Almost there...Got it! Vince folds the card into the invitation and stuffs it into his pocket. He leaves his desk abruptly.

INT. CAPTAIN PARNELL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Donald and Captain Parnell sit patiently waiting for Vince. The atmosphere is thick--they were just talking about Vince.

Vince stops in the doorway.

VINCE
What's up?

Donald glances at Captain Parnell, then back at Vince. What was that?

DONALD
Tomorrow...We're gonna' need you as
an eyewitness to testify on
LaKesh'a's drug use for the official
ME's report.

Vince is stunned, but he hides it. Something is going on.

VINCE
But I--

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Jackson...Your father was
successful here because he
protected his own. He protected his
people. He never crossed the blue
line.

Captain Parnell's demeanor is concealed and dark--not in a laughing or joking mood.

Vince nods, stiffly though. A small slither of hatred creeps behind his eyes. His nostrils flare as he remembers the pain associated with his father.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
David was a damn good officer and a better captain. I see the potential in you...But the choice is up to you.

Donald and Captain Parnell look at Vince intensely, waiting.

Vince nods again. His eyes wander the room.

VINCE
Got it.

Donald smiles at Captain Parnell. WE GOT HIM!

CAPTAIN PARNELL
(Excited)
Great, son! Great! I'm glad to hear it! How 'bout we go get a drink fellas?

Donald nods in agreement.

DONALD
Sure.
(To Vince)
You in?

Vince puts a face on--a mask--and conceals his true emotion.

VINCE
Nah, go ahead without me...Got a nice one comin' over tonight.

Vince motions his hands as if he has breasts like a woman.

VINCE (CONT'D)
(Smiling)
Young, healthy...Tight.

Donald, smiling, looks Vince up and down: 'You SLY DOG, you'.

Captain Parnell smirks.

CAPTAIN PARNELL
Lucky bastard...Well son, you have yourself a good night. Don't let her wear you out.

Vince has the perfect cover face.

VINCE

Will do.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Vince swiftly leaves the office: He's not on his way to a date--he's on a mission to do something else.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - LATER

We drop from the ceiling into a dimly lit, windowless room. There's an audience of 50-75 people facing a decorated stage--Carnival like and festive. The aesthetic of it is old; late 1800's/early 20th century. The crowd is mostly white, a few are Asian, and there are no black people in the audience.

Slow, moody carnival music plays from the sound system around the stage. The set up is very organized--A live show is about to begin.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME

Inside a small room behind the stage, Lucky stands before a group of kneeling actors. The camera scans each of their faces; they're all dressed in a variation of traditional "blackface".

The actors/actresses outfits vary but remain in carnival theme; bodysuits, preacher, "ghetto girls", black revolutionaries, hobos, etc.

Everyone remains silent as they...Pray? No, it's some kind of ritual, and Lucky is leading it.

The camera pans Lucky's body from head to toe: His shoes are shined and top notch; his dark purple dress pants are creased to perfection; he's dressed in the extravagant, otherworldly overcoat we saw him in during the opening scene; and his vest--decorated with relics from African/Haitian culture--rests neatly against his dress shirt.

Lucky mumbles something as he wraps up the ritual.

LUCKY

(In Mishnaic Hebrew)

And they too shall see...

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

A thin layer of FOG--coming from small smoke machines--settles at the bottom of the room. The atmosphere has a spooky element to it.

One of the actors, PONCHO (Black, 20's), hands out treats to the crowd from a festive cart in the back of the room--stick candy shaped in blackface and "mammy" heads, bags of chocolate covered popcorn, watermelon candies, "fried chicken" bites/candies, and others.

We get closer to the cart and see that it's filled with other paraphernalia like mammy dolls, a "Nigger Milk" baby poster, "nigglet" keychain, "coon chicken inn" bobble head, "alligator bait" black baby poster, masks with exaggerated black features, ghettopoly boardgames, "Obama Waffles", and more. Each item gets a close up shot and THEN--

RING! RING! RING! A bell rings.

The white and asian crowd members instantly surround the cart and their hands go flying; They move quickly and urgently, like hungry dogs jumping on a steak. The cart is completely empty in a matter of seconds, then the crowd disperses.

Poncho, counting money, stands smiling behind the cart. He pockets the money and walks away.

We follow Poncho as he hurries towards the back of the stage and to the dressing room door--It's time to start the show.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME

Lucky turns his head as a knock from Poncho comes to the door.

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME TIME

Nightlife is active along the street. Chilly, thin air and strong winds push people along the sidewalk. There's no snowfall, but the winter cold is on full display.

A black police truck pulls in front of an old, forgotten bar at a corner on Milwaukee avenue. Vince exits the truck.

He studies the building then removes the riddled invitation from his pocket and examines it. BINGO--Found it.

OVERHEAD SHOT - The camera follows Vince as he walks to the side of the bar, scanning it. Nothing.

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Vince walks into the alley behind the bar and scans the back wall with a flashlight. Nothing, again.

He turns to leave but stops when he notices something through the FOG coming from a vent on the wall: it's the faint outline of a drawing on the wall.

Vince moves closer to get a better look and realizes what it is--The faint drawing of the INFINITY SYMBOL Vince saw tattooed on Lucky's hand.

VINCE
(To himself)
Gotcha'...

CONTINUOUS...

Vince begins his search again THEN--

CRASH. A glass bottle shatters in the distance.

OVER VINCE'S SHOULDER - We see a homeless man, his face hidden in the shadows, sitting down against a garage on the other side of the alley.

The homeless man lazily, but familiarly, waves a hand at Vince. Vince stares at him blankly.

HOMELESS MAN
(Drunk)
Yer' lookin' fur' dose kids?

Vince hesitates. He's running low on time, so he engages.

VINCE
Looking for a friend. You seen--

HOMELESS MAN
(Aggressive)
Yer lookin' fur' dose kids! Thas'
wha' yer lookin' fur! Like 'em
young, yea'?

Vince shakes his head at the man--You're no help. He turns and continues his search.

CLOSE - The homeless man--face still hidden in the shadows--shifts. We see his teeth gleam through the darkness.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Thas' yer problem...Yer too dam'
fuckin' stubborn.

Vince pauses: What did he say? He doesn't know me!

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
They're righ' ther' ya'
know...Righ' in frun've ya'...

Vince sighs impatiently as he continues to poke around for another clue.

HOMELESS MAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Luk' down ya' idiot!

The Homeless Man laughs hysterically. Vince turns around violently.

VINCE
(Angry)
Would you shut the hell up, man!

CLOSE - The Homeless Man, teeth still beaming through the shadows, lifts his hand and points a finger toward the ground by Vince's feet.

Vince rolls his eyes and turns back around.

VINCE (CONT'D)
What...

Vince notices a trap/cellar door close to the wall. He wrinkles his eyebrows, almost sure that that door wasn't there before. Was it?

Vince checks to see if the door is open--It is.

FAR - From the bottom of a long stairwell inside the trap/cellar door, we see Vince looking down with his flashlight.

Vince turns toward the Homeless Man.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Hey, you--

The man has disappeared. Only his broken glass bottle remains.

Vince shakes his head--Crazy old man. He turns and climbs down the stairs.

INT. VENUE - BAR FLOOR - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark and the air is MOIST. Boxes of liquor and dry goods line the walls.

Two doors sit opposite the bottom of the stairwell; One has a see through window that leads into the Bar floor of the venue, the other is a golden-brown wooden door--Another INFINITY SYMBOL is carved into the wood.

Vince climbs down the stairwell. He pulls the hood from his jacket over his head. He draws his weapon and eases quietly through the golden-brown wooden door.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

We follow Vince as he creeps down another short staircase. Through a thin purple curtain, we can see the crowd and the stage looming ahead of him. The moody, carnival music is louder than what we heard earlier.

Vince gets to the bottom of the stairs and walks closer to the curtain. He's right on time for the start of the show.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The stage is now in full swing; lights flash, decorations are on display, and music bounces off the walls.

The back curtain of the stage opens and Lucky steps out. Cheers burst throughout the crowd--they love him. He bows several times and then approaches the front of the stage. He's a natural showman.

LUCKY

Come one, come all. I welcome
you...To the Minstrel Show!

More cheers.

The camera bounces through the crowd, showing gleaming, cheering faces: a beautiful blonde-haired woman, a man of Irish descent, a Catholic couple. Everyone is excited to be in attendance.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

As you all know, you're here to
laugh...and smile...and a few of
you will get a chance to live out
your wildest performance fantasies.
This is the place for you to let
loose and be whoever, and whatever,
you've always wanted to be.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Vince peaks through the curtain hesitantly. He squints; the FOG (still coming from the small fog machines around the room) whirls around in front of him as he peers ahead. His nostrils flare and his face twists. What the hell is going on?

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lucky walks the stage; he's confident.

LUCKY

We have a special treat tonight.
One that I'm sure you all will
enjoy...

Lucky, excited, skips around a bit. He's in full entertainment mode, completely different from how we saw him earlier in the day.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

We're going to--

BOBO (Black, 20's)--hulking, like a giant gorilla--comes from behind the stage curtain. He's another actor; his outfit is that of a laborer, but still within the theme of the show.

Bobo wobbles angrily towards Lucky.

BOBO

Na', na', na' looks here na' Mista'
Lucky...

The crowd is amused by Bobo. He gets a few healthy laughs as he scratches himself and drags his feet.

LUCKY

Ah, Bobo! It's good to see you,
friend. What seems to be the
problem?

Bobo throws his arms in the air and then drops them--UGH!

BOBO

You knows my problem Mista' Lucky;
I's needs a job. I's ain't got no
moneys. I's can't do NUTHIN' if I's
ain't got no moneys.

Lucky folds his arms and thinks. Then, his eyes bulge. He's got it a plan.

LUCKY

I got it, Bobo; how 'bout you get a job?! Earn some money the good ol' fashioned way.

Bobo wrinkles his face up.

BOBO

A JOB?!

The crowd laughs hysterically at his disappointment.

The camera centers on someone--a young white man--towards the back as he claps and laughs.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

Job? YEAH RIGHT!

Lucky smirks at the comment, evil-like.

LUCKY

Yes, Bobo, a JOB. J-O-B. What's wrong with that?

Bobo begins pacing and pouting like a big baby. The wood on stage thumps every time his large feet slam against it.

BOBO

(Irritated)

Aw man! I's don't wanna' work no job Mista' Lucky!

LUCKY

Well, that's typically how it goes; you have to WORK to get paid.

Lucky looks out into the crowd and rolls his eyes--I can't believe this guy.

Bobo huffs and drops to his knees.

BOBO

Fineee...Okkkk...But Is it gon' hurts?

The crowds bursts into laughter. They enjoy the stereotypical features and mannerisms of Bobo; facial features, big stature, lazy, poor English. They're having a ball.

Lucky raises his palm to his face and shakes his head. WHAT-A-JOKE. He straightens back up and smiles.

LUCKY
 COME ON, Bobo; let's go find you a
 job.

BOBO
 Oooooooooooooooooooooo...

Lucky drags Bobo to his feet and ushers him to the back of the stage. The curtain opens and swallows the two of them.

Music plays as the actors get ready for the next scene behind stage.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The curtain opens and reveals a decorated backdrop: a construction worksite. Bobo sits on a small stool. A construction hat rests on his head. He looks tired.

Another actor, EZEKIEL (Black, 20's), comes from the right end of the stage--he's dressed in construction gear as well. He sizes Bobo up, looks at the crowd, and shakes his head. WHAT A SHAME.

The crowd is full of eager faces; they're craving the satire/stereotypical-style comedy and improv.

EZEKIEL
 Bobo...W-What are you doin'?

Bobo raises his head slowly and dreadfully. His eyes are teary.

BOBO
 I's TIRED, boss.

EZEKIEL
 WHAT? You've only been here for...
 (Checks watch)
 11 minutes!

The crowd laughs.

BOBO
 I's know, I's know boss, but this
 the longest I's ever worked in my
 life. I think I's ready to goes
 home.

EZEKIEL
 Home? But you...You--

Bobo stands and waves his hands around in the air. He's made his mind up.

BOBO

Nope! Nope! I's gotta' go. But
uhhh...Can I's have my check now?
Gots to buy me some new shoes!

Ezekiel turns and gives the crowd a stale-face.

EZEKIEL

GET OUTTA' HERE BOBO!

BOBO

(Afraid)
Okie dokie...

Snorting laughs and chuckles fill the room as Bobo hurries off the stage.

Lucky appears from the left end of the stage. He watches as Bobo scurries by. He shakes his head softly.

EZEKIEL

(To Lucky)

It's damn near impossible to get
good help now days. Give folks an
inch, and they want a mile and a
half!

LUCKY

(Sighs)

Yes Ezekiel, it truly is a
nuisance. It makes you wanna'--

Lucky pauses and watches someone come towards him from the right end of the stage.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Well look what we have here. Maybe
he'll be some help; Hey there Baba.

BABA (Black, 20's), identical twin of Bobo, emerges. He's gleaming and full of energy--A happy-go-lucky kind of negro.

BABA

(Happy)

Hey there Mr. Lucky...And good
afternoon to you, Mr. Ezekiel. How
y'all doin' today?

EZEKIEL

Hey there, Baba. Doin' pretty good, aside from the fact that I just had a lazy, good-for-nothing negro walk off the job on me. Now me and Mr. Lucky here tryna' find a solution.

BABA

Oh wow! It's funny you say that cause...I just saw a pair of Michael Jordan's I wanna' buy, but I ain't got no extra money. Think I could give you a hand--

EZEKIEL

You're hired!

Ezekiel springs towards Baba and shakes his hand vigorously. This pleases Lucky.

LUCKY

Well would you look at that. I guess it all worked out.

Lucky smirks at the crowd.

The curtain closes on Lucky, Ezekiel, and Baba.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Whispers dance throughout the crowd as everyone waits eagerly for the show to continue.

From the opposite side of the room, we can faintly see Vince standing in the doorway behind the curtain leading into the staircase.

Vince peers ahead, still trying to piece together what he's seeing; A real, modern day Minstrel Show? He notices an empty chair in the last row, holsters his weapon, and eases his way into the seat.

CONTINUOUS...

As soon as Vince sits down, the young white couple (Conner Downey, 20's and Natalie Pettis, 20's) next to him stops their conversation to greet him.

CONNER/NATALIE

(Happily)

Hey there!

Hello!

Vince nods--He doesn't want to draw too much attention to himself.

CONNER

(To Vince)

The first act is almost over, but we still have a ways to go. You haven't missed too much.

Vince doesn't engage him, but Conner presses on.

CONNER (CONT'D)

Fan of the show?

VINCE

What is this anyway, exactly?

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - SAME TIME

From the POV of SOMEONE on the stage, we see the curtain pulled back slightly--sneaky--and they fix their gaze on Vince as he talks with the young couple. They watch him for a moment and then retreat.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

We sit behind Vince as the couple, glossy-eyed and smiling, gives him their full attention.

CONNER

(Surprised)

Ah! First time, huh?

Conner smirks and glances at Natalie.

CONNER (CONT'D)

It's the Minstrel House, man!
Gotta' read the whole invitation next time my guy.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

As Conner explains the dynamics of the Minstrel House to Vince, the camera jumps around the crowd.

CONNER (O.S.)

Here, we get to enjoy the old gems of American theater.

The camera highlights different people in the crowd; we see young white and asian people laughing, mocking the actors, and mimicking stereotypical features of Bobo and Baba--one girl holds her fingers behind her ears and sticks her tongue out (a monkey). Another girl flares her nostrils and holds them up, presenting her nose as if it's bigger than what it actually is. This is the best kind of entertainment they could ask for.

CONNER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's a place to revisit our roots--
Back when the country was raw, and
everything was new and from the
heart. This kind of entertainment
is only appreciated by a few
nowadays, but it's making its way
back.

Conner and Natalie smile eerily at Vince. Their eyes hold a sick, twisted hunger.

CONNER (CONT'D)

It's like a dream come true for
entertainment junkies like us...

Vince looks at them strangely THEN--

WHOA, his whole mood shifts; a crashing wave of SOMETHING comes over him for a moment. He shakes it off and gathers himself...But he's a little more laxed now.

VINCE

It's kinda' racist though, don't
ya' think?

The couple frowns. OF COURSE not.

CONNER/NATALIE

(Objecting)

No, no way.
Never.

VINCE

But--

NATALIE

How can it be racist? We LOVE the
blacks culture, their music, their
fashion...

CONNER

(To Vince)

She gets so into it...Sometimes I
think she IS black. Ha!

Vince stares aimlessly as he tries to process everything.

Music begins to play from the stage again. The show is starting back up.

CONNER (CONT'D)
Oh! The show's starting
back...Enjoy!

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The curtain opens. The backdrop has changed; it is now an urban city street. Baba stands happily in the center of the stage admiring the shoes--Michael Jordan's--on his feet.

Bobo comes from stage left. His mood is distraught. Baba notices him and smiles.

BABA
Hey there, brother!
(Frowns)
What's wrong? Why the long face?

BOBO
(Sad)
Hey Baba, I's need some money so I
can--

Bobo pauses--WHAT? He notices Baba's new shoes. His eyes bulge.

BOBO (CONT'D)
Niceeee shoeeeesss buddy...Niceeee.

BABA
Oh! Thanks! I just bought 'em
today. Got a job down at the
construction site. Yup, sure did.

Bobo's eyes remain locked on Baba's shoes. He doesn't move or blink. He's in a trance.

BOBO
I's really, REALLY likes ya' shoes.

Bobo kneels down--nearly crawling--and starts to reach for the shoes. Baba jumps back.

Giggles come from the crowd.

BOBO (CONT'D)
I's really, really, REALLY likes--

BABA
Hey! Back it up, buddy!

BOBO
I's just wanna'--

BABA
Back-it-up!

Bobo stands. His face is scrunched together and his lips are twisted. He clenches his fists at his sides.

BOBO
I's want 'em. Take 'em off...

BABA
What?

BOBO
Let's me have 'em.

Baba smiles and pats Bobo on the head--his mood is light. Baba turns and begins walking away.

BABA
Sorry baby brother, can't help ya'.

Bobo grabs Baba's shoulder and twists him around, then he reaches in his pocket and pulls out a prop gun.

BOBO
I's said...Takes 'em off.

Baba shrugs him off.

BABA
You ain't gon' do nothin' with that, you wouldn't hurt a fly.

Bobo stands puzzled.

BOBO
Well, I's would if he was wearin' my shoes!

The crowd laughs.

BABA
Brother, just calm--

Bobo cocks the gun. He's ready to shoot.

BOBO
 I's sorry that it's gotta' end like
 this brotha'...
 (Starts crying)
 I's so, so sorry.

BABA
 WAIT--

Bobo pulls the trigger of the prop gun and a small pop and flash burst from the barrel.

Baba stumbles back, twists around, and swings his head dramatically. He falls to the ground. His tongue droops from his mouth. The crowd laughs at his dramatic death.

Bobo drops down at Baba's feet and starts weeping as he begins removing Baba's shoes.

BOBO
 (Weeping)
 Oooh Baba. I's sorry my sweet,
 sweet Baba.

Bobo removes Baba's left shoe and places it on his own foot.

BOBO (CONT'D)
 You's was such a GOOD brotha'. I's
 gonna' miss ya'. Such a shame what
 happened to ya'...

The crowd finds this hysterical.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Vince is visibly CONFUSED as he looks around the crowd. Why are they enjoying this?

Lucky walks out from stage left. He observes the scene and shakes his head.

Bobo, still weeping softly, tries on and walks around in his new shoes. He admires them--his weeps and cries turn into laughs and smiles.

BOBO
 (To himself)
 Nice, nice. I's like these.

LUCKY
 Goodness, Bobo; what have you done
 now?

Bobo looks at Baba's body on the floor and frowns.

BOBO

Oh, he just fell. Thas' all that happened.

Lucky circles Bobo and Baba. He examines Baba's dead body.

LUCKY

Well, it looks like he did more than fall; he's not breathing.

BOBO

Oh...He's just holdin' his breath, thas' all.

The crowd explodes.

Lucky, holding back a laugh/smile, stares into the crowd and shakes his head.

LUCKY

Alright, let's go. I gotta' figure out something to do with you...

Bobo and Lucky exit and the curtain closes on the actors.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The curtain opens and we see that the backdrop has changed again; life-sized, cartoon-like portraits of the actors of the show are plastered across the backdrop. A profound cartoon portrait of Lucky with his hands raised rests in the middle. Music--carnival and upbeat--plays in the background. The crowd claps along to the beat.

Vince shifts in his seat--something about the music makes him feel uneasy at first, but it grows on him.

Several of the actors--Ishmael, Destiny, Kenya, Umar (Black, 20s)--come out onto the stage. They're dressed in traditional Minstrel Show styled clothing. Their steps are synchronized, sharp, and on beat. They begin singing and dancing in unison.

Vince looks around and notices the intense crowd participation: some crowd members are more into it than others.

The white couple next to Vince, a group of six young Asian adults (college students, urban), and three young white men (jocks/frat boys) are having too much fun at the expense of the actors.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The actors sing, dance, twist, and turn across the stage.

Two actors, Destiny and Kenya (Black, 20's), mesmerize the crowd when they step out from behind they curtain--they're beautiful, curvy, and their moves put everyone in a trance. They sing a verse together.

CONTINUOUS...

The actors pause their singing--the music continues--to allow two actors, Ishmael and Umar (Black, 20's), to do a silent skit.

Vince, bewildered, watches in amazement as the actors finish the song and exit the stage. He can't believe his eyes...But, he's still at ease.

Lucky excitedly walks back out onto the stage. He takes a deep breath as he embraces the applause from the crowd--they LOVED it.

LUCKY

Now, for everyone's favorite part
of the show...

Lucky points a finger towards the crowd, scanning left to right.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

A few lucky fans will now have the
opportunity to come to the stage
and show off their improv Minstrel
skills.

Crowd members become eager--PICK ME, PICK ME. Some almost fall out of their seat trying to get Lucky's attention as he tantalizes the crowd.

The smoke machines begin to pump again--This time the fog is PURPLE.

Lucky picks his participants.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

You three...

Lucky points to the group of white jocks in the front row--They all act younger than what they really are, still living in their glory days. The three men jump up in excitement and line the stage.

Destiny, Kenya, and another actress, Africa (Black, 20's), beautiful and Nubian, begin to paint the men's faces with face paint splatters; BLACK FACE. The actresses move quickly, but their work is neat and clean.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

You six...

Lucky points to the group of Asian, urban-dressed college students, and they dance their way on stage. They practice what they'll perform on their way up; stereotypical black mannerisms, body language, hand gestures, head movements, and other obscenities.

Kenya, Africa, and Destiny paint their faces swiftly. The blackface fits them well, oddly.

Lucky scans the crowd. Everyone somewhat holds their breath in anticipation. They ALL want to be picked.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

And YOU.

CLOSE - Vince is startled, his eyes bulge. Is Lucky talking to him?

Lucky points in Vince's direction, but not at Vince; Conner and Natalie stir. He's talking to them.

VINCE

Yes, you two.

Excited, the couple gathers themselves and heads to the stage.

Vince notices that Lucky is still looking in his direction. Did he spot him?

LUCKY

Now, I'll explain the rules for those who don't know. Our 3 groups will have a maximum of 5 minutes each to act out their best Minstrel skit. They'll be given a word, or phrase, from our MIRROR OF TRUTH to incorporate into their performance.

(Smiles)

A cash prize and a backstage meet-and-greet will be awarded to the contestants with the best show.

Lucky bows in the direction of the 3 groups and...

CLOSE - As Lucky raises his head, he turns to the crowd and smirks--He seems to look Vince DIRECTLY in his eyes.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
May luck be on your side.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

A decorative mirror slowly slides down from the top frame of the stage. Eerie, upbeat carnival music plays. The pace picks up when three other actors--Tambo, Peanut, and Bones--in blackface come out with instruments (tambourine, banjo, drum set) and begin to play along with the music. The mirror continues to drop as the contestants watch closely.

MOMENTS LATER...

CLOSE - The mirror fills with a purplish haze. Digital effect? Lucky motions for the group of Asian college students to stand in front of it and they gather around cautiously.

ASIAN MAN 1
Whoooa homie, this shit is sick
yo'.

MIRROR POV - From inside the mirror, we see the eager group in front of us and the watchful crowd behind them; It almost feels like something INSIDE the mirror is looking out of it.

CONTINUOUS...

A word begins to form as we peer into the purplish, hazy mirror.

ASIAN MAN 2
Th--...Th--...Thievery.

The crowd murmurs in excitement.

LUCKY
You have your word. Now you have 30
seconds to game plan...Go!

The group huddles. Music plays.

Vince stares ahead. He doesn't approve of the scene--it's the worst kind of "fun" he's ever seen in his life, but he sits and watches, almost amused. He tries to fight his comfortability.

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
And...begin!

Two of the Asian men stand off to the side of the stage while the other four slowly walk towards the other end--they all have their arms wrapped around each other; it's a double date.

The two Asian men come from the far left side of the stage and creep up on the other four; They are pretending to rob them.

ASIAN MAN 1

Yeah what's up, nigga? What's up?
Run them pockets, mothafucka'!

ASIAN MAN 2

Yeah nigga; empty yo' mothafuckin' pockets. Now!

The other two men do not back down.

ASIAN MAN 3/ASIAN MAN 4

Fuck outta' here, nigga!
Fuck you nigga', suck my dick!

The robbers look at each other and laugh, then they pull prop guns from their pockets.

ASIAN MAN 1/ASIAN MAN 2

Talk that shit now, nigga!
Yeah bitch, what you got to say now?

The other two men follow suit; they also pull prop guns from their pockets.

ASIAN MAN 3/ASIAN MAN 4

Fuck you nigga!
Scared now ain't you, pussy!

The Asian men have a short-lived standoff, then they begin to open imaginary gunfire on each other. All four of them drop to the ground instantly.

The two Asian women stand over the dead bodies for a moment, fake crying. Then they start to laugh. They pick through the four "dead" men's pockets and clothing, relieving them of all money and jewelry--The women are robbing them!

The crowd enjoys this.

One of the men lifts his head--still pretending that he's dying.

ASIAN MAN 3

I-I thought...You l-loved me...

The Asian girls laugh as they walk away. One peeks back over her shoulder and rolls her eyes.

ASIAN GIRL 1
 (To Asian Man 3)
 Nigga...We love everything about
 you, just not you.

The crowd bursts into laughter and ooh's-and-ahh's. The four Asian men get up from the ground and join the girls at the front of the stage. They bow and wave as the crowd applauds them.

Lucky and the rest of the actors watch them closely. Their faces are friendly, but a burning resentment rests behind their smiles and eyes.

LUCKY
 Beautiful! Beautiful! Now, for our
 next contestants.

Lucky welcomes Natalie and Conner to the stage and they do the same as the group before them; they gather in front of the mirror and wait patiently.

MOMENTS LATER...

The hazy, smoky mirror takes a little longer this time but the phrase INTERRACIAL DATING forms in the smoke. The couple smiles eagerly and begins whispering to each other.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
 You have 30 seconds to--

NATALIE
 (Smiling)
 We don't need it.

Natalie prances over to Africa and asks her to remove Conner's blackface. Africa does, but with a phony smile only a few would catch on to.

Conner walks out to the middle of the stage. Natalie, still in blackface, follows shortly after. She walks provocatively and awkward-like, like her bottom half is more voluptuous than it really is. She begins circling him like an animal surrounding its prey.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Goddamn big daddy, where YO' ass
 headin'...

CONNER
 (Timid)
 H-Hey ma'am, I'm just--

Natalie abruptly stops.

NATALIE
 (Urban dialect/demeanor)
 'Ma'am'?! I ain't no damn 'ma'am'!
 You blind or somethin'? You don't
 know a bad bitch when you talkin'
 to one?

Natalie flips her flowing blonde hair and slaps a hand on her hip, drawing attention to her curves. The crowd laughs hysterically.

CONNER
 S-S-Sorry, didn't mean any offense.

NATALIE
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Mmhmmm, I guess.

Natalie begins circling Conner again.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 I bet you a, uhhh...a uhhh...a
 doctor...a lawyer...or one of dem'
 banker-mans, ain't you?

CONNER
 (Blushing)
 Oh, oh no. I wish. I go to
 veterinarian school.

NATALIE
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 DAMN nigga'; so you be 'round
 animals all day?

CONNER
 Y-Yeah. I nursed a few chickens
 this week and got them ready to go
 back with the rest of the
 livestock. It's fun.

NATALIE
 (Flirtatious)
 You a big, sexy, strong doctor.
 (MORE)

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Operating on chickens and shit, AND
 you can cook...I think I like you
 already.

Conner looks around, confused.

CONNER
 (Confused laugh)
 Thanks...Cook?

NATALIE
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Yeah boy! I mean, I use regular
 chicken stock whenever I cook...But
 I'm sho' whatever livestock is,
 it's good too. I'll eat whateva' my
 new man want me to try. Ya' hear
 me?

The crowd laughs at her ignorance and misunderstanding of the
 word "livestock".

CONNER
 Uhhh, sure. I--

Natalie becomes apprehensive.

NATALIE
 (Urban dialect/demeanor)
 So...How many baby mamas YOU got?
 Cuz I draw the line at 5.

CONNER
 (Startled)
 Oh no; no 'baby mamas' here! I
 don't have any kids AT ALL.

NATALIE
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Good, cuz I ain't 'bout to be
 taking care of kids foreva'. I got
 shit I wanna' accomplish in life
 too!

CONNER
 Well, what do you want to
 accomplish...Uh--

Conner pauses; he realizes that he never asked her name.

NATALIE
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 LaQuintisha Mercedes Burkin Dior
 Johnson.

The crowd bursts into laughter.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 And uuuhhh...After Da'Shawn,
 Tre'Shawn, LaShawn, Lil
 LaQuintishanay, Ro'Shawn Junior,
 KaShawndra, and baby Beyonce...
 (Rubs belly)
 Graduate high school, I probably go
 to hair school...Or become a
 doctor...

The crowd laughs.

Natalie presses against Conner.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Just like my new man...

Conner's eyes bulge.

CONNER
 (Timid)
 Oh wow...That's great.
 (Points behind Natalie)
 Look!

Natalie spins around, but there's nothing there.

NATALIE
 Wha--

Conner breaks away from her and runs away--He's free. Natalie lazily chases after him.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Wait bae! Waitttttt! Baeeee!

Conner and Natalie laugh hysterically. They come back to the center of the stage and bow towards the cheering crowd.

Lucky and the other actors watch them carefully, clapping--their fake smiles and fabricated enthusiasm can only be identified by those who feel it too.

LUCKY

Excellence! The talent--the unmatched commitment to becoming the character--has been on full display tonight; it'll take you all to places you never imagined you'd be...

Lucky turns and acknowledges the last group of contestants.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Please, join us. Wow us. Give us all you've got!

The final group, the 3 white jocks, make their way on stage and in front of the hanging mirror. Just like the groups prior to them, they wait for the mirror to give them a word or phrase.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The camera slowly zooms closer and closer to the mirror as it sits unchanged. No words form in the purplish haze.

LUCKY

Well, what do we have here...

Lucky walks slowly and dramatically around to the other side of the mirror, watching it closely. The mirror begins to slightly shake. The word VIOLENCE rapidly forms in the purple haze.

Ooh's and aah's come from the audience members.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Ahhh, yes. A crowd favorite; Violence. You have 30 seconds to prepare.

The group scrambles; one of them scurries over to Africa to get his blackface removed while the others gather ideas and props. They're excited. They have something in mind already--Something familiar.

CONTINUOUS...

The group settles and the two in blackface--standing next to each other--begin to erratically walk in circles in the middle of the stage. One of them has his arms extended like he's holding a steering wheel; they're simulating driving--A Driver and a Passenger.

The third man, blackface removed, makes a siren noise with his mouth and also begins to simulate driving behind the driver and the passenger--he's representing a Police Officer

The Driver and Passenger stop their imaginary car. The Police Office exits his imaginary car and approaches the "driver side window".

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 C'mon mane! I ain't did SHIT, mane!
 You stoppin' me 'cuz I'mma BLACK
 MAN, ain't ya'?

The Officer is taken aback. He looks around in denial; no, not me...I'm the perfect gentleman--I could NEVER be racist.

OFFICER
 (Delightful)
 Oh, no. Sir, please, just calm
 down. It's nothing like that. Do
 you know why I stopped you?

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 (To Passenger)
 Do we know why he stoppin' us? I
 kno--
 (To Officer)
 Yessuh; DWB.

OFFICER
 (Confused)
 DWB?

The Officer realizes something.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Oh, you must mean DUI...?

The Driver and Passenger look at each other, confused.

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 OH! You mean IUD; my baby mama gots
 dat!

DRIVER
 (Urban dialect/demeanor)
 Who, Shaquita? I thought she had a
 GED?

PASSENGER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

Mane HELL NAW! That bitch don't do
nothin' but gets on my damn nerves
mane! I wish she was dead; D-U-D.

The Driver and Passenger laugh together.

The Officer laughs with the crowd, then he re-inserts
himself.

OFFICER

You mean...D-E-A-D. Right? I have
my own lady troubles as well.

The Driver whips his head around in disgust.

DRIVER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

DAMN man, what you gon' be; a pig,
or a English teacher??

OFFICER

(Eye roll)

Uh, neither...Anyway, I stopped you
because you were driving
erratically back there. Why were
you doing doughnuts in the middle
of the street?

The Driver thinks for a moment.

DRIVER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

Shit...Probably 'cuz we hongry. We
ain't ate alllll day.

The crowd laughs.

OFFICER

(Impatient)

Well, I'm just going to check your
license and run your plates. If
everything comes back ok, I'll let
you off with a warning.

DRIVER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

Well, I...WE...WE DE-CLINE!

OFFICER

Excuse me?

DRIVER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

WE DE-CLINE! This here racist man!
You can't pull a BLACK MAN over for
drivin' crazy--that's racist!

PASSENGER

Yeah...YEAH! Me too! I DE-CLINE!
Get ya' hand outta' my pocket,
NIGGA!

The Officer looks out into the crowd--can you believe these
fools?

OFFICER

Listen; you two sit right here.
Don't go ANYWHERE.

The Officer backs away slowly and pretends to take a walkie-
talkie from his shoulder.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

(Into walkie-talkie)
Dispatch; gonna' need backup on
Racine and Roosevelt. Got two
jokers here who refuse to show
their identification.

The Officer walks toward the side of the stage, giving the
floor to the Driver and Passenger.

PASSENGER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

Mane...We 'bouts to go to jail!

DRIVER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

How ya' that figure, mane?

PASSENGER

(Exaggerated urban
dialect/demeanor)

Mane I gots two dime bags of weed,
a sack-a-crack, a knife, a bottle
of pills, and two condoms. We
'bouts to go to jail!

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 It soun' like YOU goin' to
 jail...Not me!

The crowd laughs hysterically.

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Mane, I'm surus mane! We gots to do
 somethin'!

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 I tells ya' what; we gon' pay 'em.

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Pays 'em? Wit' what?

The Driver pulls a \$20 bill from his pocket.

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Wit' dis!

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Mane; what's dat?!

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Mane, you BLIND or sumthin'?! Don't
 you see thas' a \$20 bill.

The Driver holds the bill up for the crowd to see.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 See; CAPITOL 2, CAPITOL 0.

The crowd bursts into laughter--numbers can't be upper or
 lower case.

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Maneeee, that ain't gon' do
 nothin'.

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Well...I got this too!

The Driver pulls a prop gun from his pocket.

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Daaaaaaaang mane; where ya' get
 that?!

The Driver smirks.

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 The sto'...

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerted urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 NIGGA, PLEASE!

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 NIGGA, I did! How you gon' tell me
 I's didn't?!

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Well...Shid...Let me shoot 'em.

The Passenger reaches for the prop gun, but the Driver jumps
 back.

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Nah, nah, nah. I shoot 'em--I shoot
 'em.

The Passenger reaches for prop gun again.

PASSENGER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Fuck that mane, let me!

The Driver and the Passenger struggle over the prop gun. The Driver gains control over the gun and shoots the Passenger. The Passenger drops down and plays dead.

The Officer runs back on stage in a panic.

OFFICER
 Oh my god! What happened?

The Driver thinks for a moment, trying to prepare the perfect lie--he doesn't come up with a good one.

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 He uh...Uhhh...He fell.

OFFICER
 (Frantic)
 What? Fell? I heard a gunshot!

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 Yeah...he fell on top of the gun
 mane!

The Driver drops the prop gun and kicks it over to the "lifeless" Passenger's body.

The Officer shakes his head.

OFFICER
 You know what, I'm taking you in.
 I'm tired of this.

The Officer turns his head and digs in his pockets, looking for handcuffs. The Driver snatches a prop gun from the waistband of the distracted Officer and points it at him. He shoots the Officer and drops him.

Fake siren sounds suggest that more police are coming; the Driver contemplates this for a moment.

DRIVER
 (Exaggerated urban
 dialect/demeanor)
 (MORE)

DIVER (CONT'D)

Ok...Ok, I'll just say they playin'
dead; wait, that mean I gotta' play
dead too!

The Driver turns the gun on himself and simulates shooting himself in the head. The crowd laughs hilariously. The three men stand and take a bow in front of their audience.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - STAGE - CONTINUED

From the corner of the smoky, eerie basement, we see the entire audience clapping and applauding all of the actors and the crowd participants as they stand together on stage.

Lucky raises his hand for silence.

LUCKY

We want to thank you all for
another night of fun, laughter, and
truth. Tonight, you got to live in
another's shoes--get a taste of
their world. And as for us...

Lucky looks over his shoulder at the rest of the Minstrel show actors.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

For us...It's been a privilege to
witness you bare your souls.

The camera scans the faces of the crowd as they clap and cheer; everyone has glossy-eyes. They're fixated on the idea of "the other"--their life, their experiences, their very being. It's obvious that everyone except for Lucky and his actors are in a trance--Drugged--under a "spell".

Vince can be seen; he too is in a trance, but he's fighting to stay sharp.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Go out into the world and be who
you've always wanted to be--do the
things you've always wanted to do.
Become...the other!

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The camera jumps around to different faces in the crowd--all of them are mentally somewhere else even though they are in the room physically!

LUCKY

Our participants will be escorted
backstage for their meet-and-greet.
To the rest of you: Thank you, may
you enjoy the journey, and may luck
be on your side.

The actors link hands and bow again at the cheering crowd.
The curtain closes.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince, still struggling to hold it together, squints to make
out the symbol across the closed curtain--

VINCE'S POV - He sees another infinity symbol--it looks a if
it's alive!

More questions are raised in Vince's head, but he loses them
quickly--his mind begins to go on a TRIP.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The camera scans the dressing room; dressing mirrors, show
props, etc. We snake our way over a long room divider--there
are 12 chairs spaced apart on the other side. A dim light
casts creepy-looking shadows next to the chairs. The air in
the room seems to be void and at a stand still.

Lucky, several of the actors, and all of the participants--
the couple, the asian college group, hyped white jocks--walk
into the backroom.

Lucky situates the participants--they all seem to be in a
zombie/trance state--as the actors make "preparations" for
their backstage guests.

The actors move with purpose. The look in their eyes is
damning; their "masks" have come off now.

Lucky finishes settling the participants.

LUCKY

(To participants)

You have taken, and now you shall
give.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - SAME TIME

The room buzzes as some people--disoriented and on their own
TRIPS--interact with each and others leave.

VINCE'S POV - Vince stumbles through the crowd and we see everything through a trippy lens; colors aren't where they belong, people's voices don't fit their bodies, depth perception is altered, etc.

Vince walks past a woman and her husband, both older, and for a moment it looks like their features become demonic. They give him a pleasant, raunchy smile as he passes.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince stumbles into two of the actors, Peanut and Poncho (Black, 20's).

VINCE
(Disoriented)
W-Where...Where is L-Lu--...Lu--
...Where's the t-tall one? I
need...I need to...

Peanut grabs Vince's arm, keeping him from tipping over.

PEANUT
(To Vince)
Relax, buddy. Who ya' lookin' for?

Vince takes a deep breath and gathers himself.

VINCE
Lucky...

Peanut gives Poncho a side-eyed look.

PEANUT
He's not available right now.

VINCE
Yeah? Well, go make him available.

Poncho interjects.

PONCHO
(To Vince)
Sir, he--

VINCE
Get him! NOW!

Vince flashes his badge and gun. Peanut and Poncho look at each other again--they know Lucky won't like being disturbed.

Poncho nods and walks towards the backroom.

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucky can be seen through a crease in the room divider. The camera crawls towards him as the other actors move about in the dressing room area--they're preparing for something.

Lucky, focused but relaxed, cracks/stretches his neck and inhales deeply--he's inhaling the fog/smoke of the room. He centers his head and holds. Then, his eyes spring open.

The camera is locked on the front of Lucky now; His eyes move about the room as the camera creeps backwards. As the frame widens, we can see the 12 participants come into view one after another. They sit motionless in the chairs--Something isn't right!

CLOSE - The camera jumps through several headshots of the participants. They're slumped, dazed, and their mouths hang open. Their pupils are dilated and...Purple?

Lucky turns his head slightly as a knock comes to the door behind him. He listens as a couple of the actors go back and forth in an exchange--they're disagreeing about something. He turns around completely as someone gets closer to the divider.

AFRICA (O.C.)

Boss...Poncho says there's a cop here and he's looking for you.

Lucky smiles. This is EXACTLY what he was waiting for.

LUCKY

He's looking for much more than that, my child. Tonight is his night to journey as well...I'll be with him soon.

AFRICA (O.C.)

Yes, Boss...

Lucky turns back towards the unconscious participants.

LUCKY

(Whispers)

May luck be on your side...

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - CONTINUED

The crowd has died down a little, but some are still lingering. Vince, growing impatient, finds a chair and sits down.

VINCE'S POV - The room is still trippy and loopy, but it's more intensified now. The peak of his trip is nearing.

CLOSE - We can visibly see that Vince is uncomfortable. He leans back in his chair and closes his eyes. THEN--

BLACK SCREEN.

We can hear children--no, a child--running and laughing in the distance. As the child gets closer, we hear that the laugh is actually a cry for help...He's running from something! He gets closer, and louder, and louder, AND--

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE - Vince springs awake in a terror--bad dream.

The camera zooms out and circles him: we can see the basement is completely empty now. Where did everybody go THAT fast?

WAIT...Vince looks around again and finds someone watching him from the center of the stage.

CENTERED SHOT - Lucky, his face hidden in a shadow, sits on a chair on stage. He's dressed marvelously, differently than he was just moments ago.

Lucky shifts in the seat and we can see his eyes, glowing purple, through the shadow--calm, collected, staring at Vince. He's intrigued, pondering something.

A calming wave comes over Vince as he analyzes Lucky. He's more focused now. Laser-like.

LUCKY (O.C.)
What are you afraid of, detective?

VINCE
(Hesitant)
What?

CLOSE - Lucky's eyes are magnificent looking and curious.

LUCKY
What is your biggest fear?

Vince ignores the question and looks around the room again, confused.

VINCE
W-What'd you do?

Lucky stands and comes into full view. He trots--happily--down the stages stairs, keeping his eyes locked as he draws closer to Vince.

VINCE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Answer me.

Lucky remains silent, smiling, as he gets closer. His smile fades as he comes to a stop in front of Vince.

The two men stare each other down; both are focused.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

LUCKY

As I told you before...I'm a man with opportunities.

VINCE

From the looks of your little show, you're a con-man. A sell-out...A murderer too.

Lucky is playfully insulted and amused by the accusations.

LUCKY

Con-man...Murderer...SELL-OUT. Such vile, yet interesting words, especially from you. But, simply put, I'm an advocate for liberation.

Vince sizes Lucky up.

VINCE

Tell me about Brian Witherspoon, and LaKesha Williams. You "liberate" them too?

Lucky smiles and begins pacing back and forth in front of Vince.

LUCKY

CLOSE, but not quite. The universe liberated Brian--he had that coming to him...As I'm sure you could've guessed. But LaKesha...

(Pauses)

LaKesha was set free by her own mind.

VINCE
 (Apprehensive)
 LaKesha overdosed yesterday, that's
 your definition of being set free?
 DEATH?

Vince sizes him up again, more disgusted this time.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 She's dead and I know you had
 something to do with it.

The air between the two men is thick with tension.

Lucky gives Vince a look--somewhat of a smirk--at the mention of LaKesha overdosing; you have no idea what you're talking about. What is Lucky hiding?

LUCKY
 You know...I can help you do the
 same. I'll show you how to break
 those chains. You can free yourself
 too, but you have to be ready.

Anger swells in Vince, but he remembers something and calms quickly.

VINCE
 She said the same exact thing; that
 I'd need to be ready...That it'd be
 worth it to meet you...

LUCKY
 And do you know why that is,
 detective?

Vince, staring, says nothing.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
 It's because I'm the only one who
 can help you get back what he stole
 from you.

CLOSE - Vince's eyes erupt with anger. He tries to stand but...he can't move!

VINCE
 W-Wha--

Vince becomes frightened as he realizes his legs are completely stuck. He's paralyzed! He almost lets out a fearful gasp, but he quickly hides it as Lucky steps closer.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Let me go!

LUCKY

I'm not the one holding you down.

Lucky lifts his hands in the air and wiggles his fingers, indicating he's not in control.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

It's you. Better yet; it's **him**.

Vince's eyes lock on to Lucky with an extreme intensity--he's triggered.

Suddenly, a rumbling noise can be heard somewhere in the distance.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Ahhh, yes. There it is...

VINCE

(Sharply)

You don't know me.

LUCKY

I know more than you can imagine,
Vincent. Much more.

Lucky walks behind Vince and off camera--disappearing.

Vince struggles to turn and follow Lucky's movement, but he's still immobile.

LUCKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That's the funny thing about the
mind...

Lucky's voice echoes through the air like he's talking over a loudspeaker. Very strange.

Vince, still struggling to see over his shoulder, pauses--He senses something in front of him; By the look on his face, he won't like whatever it is when he sees it.

A bright light shines in front of Vince but we can't see where it's coming from.

LUCKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

There is SO MUCH to imagine.

Vince pants heavily. He turns to face what's in front of him
AND--

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

VINCE'S POV - We see a hand smack Vince across his face. He slowly regains himself. As his blurred vision improves, the figure of the man in front of him becomes clear; it's Vince's father David Mitchell.

CLOSE - A young Vince sits terrified in the chair. A red handprint can be seen on his cheek. He pants/breathes violently.

Vince is reliving an old suppressed moment of his childhood in REAL TIME.

 DAVID MITCHELL (O.C.)
 You fuckin' runt. Fuckin' black,
 pissy, worthless runt.

David Mitchell swings his hand again and strikes Vince across the face, almost knocking in out the chair.

Vince sits there confused, bewildered; "how is this possible?"

David Mitchell lifts his hand to strike Vince again, but stops WHEN--

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small figure rushes through the door--This is VICTORIA JACKSON, Vince's mother. She's a beautiful dark skinned woman, but her frame has been deteriorated by drug use and abuse. She hesitates toward David Mitchell--She wants to stop him but she physically can't.

 VICTORIA
 David! Please, PLEASE! Stop it!

David ignores her and strikes Young Vince anyway. Young Vince, barely reacting, does nothing--He's still in shock.

Victoria grabs David's arm before he can swing again.

 VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 PLEASE, DAVID! PLE--

David snatches Victoria's neck in his hand, choking her up. His grip is so tight that she begins to lose air.

DAVID MITCHELL

Ya' know what, bitch...I've had just about enuff outta' you.

OVER VINCE'S SHOULDER - We watch as David drags Victoria out of the room and slam the door behind him.

CLOSE - Vince, now a grown man again, watches the door in fear as he begins to remember what's about to happen next. He's startled when Lucky, who leans over his shoulder, whispers in his ear.

LUCKY

(Whispering)

You know what happens next...

A loud crash comes from the other side of the door. Victoria's screech breaks the air, then an even louder crash follows.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

You KNOW what he's going to do...What are YOU going to do?

Vince's chest rises and falls rapidly as he listens to the scuffle on the other side of the door. His nostrils flare. He's REMEMBERING something he buried a long time ago. He glances at Lucky and then breaks his immobility; He explodes to the door and tries to knock it open with his shoulder. The door doesn't budge, but he continues to slam his shoulder again and again and again. The struggle and screams on the other side of the door grow louder.

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Push, Vincent...

BANG! BANG! BANG! Vince continues to slam himself against the unmoving door.

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Push...

Another long, terrible scream--more like a shriek--breaks the air.

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Push, dammit! PUSH!

VINCE

AHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Vince thrusts forward and finally knocks the door down THEN--
WHITE SCREEN.

FADE IN TO--

EXT. UNKNOWN JUNGLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As the bright white light slowly fades, we begin to see the sun form in the middle of the screen. Tree branches and leaves surround it. The sky is clear and blue.

Vince, disoriented, blinks rapidly as he regains his vision. He rubs his eyes clear and looks around; no David, Victoria, or Lucky. No apartment. He's in the middle of a jungle.

A bucket of black tar sits on the ground a few feet away from Vince.

Vince notices the bucket and studies it for a few seconds. His concentration is broken as he hears something in the bushes/trees.

FAR - A small boy, black but fair skinned, emerges from the trees. He's timid. His clothes are those of someone from a indigenous tribe.

The boy--a finger in his mouth--slowly moves toward Vince. He barely blinks as he gets closer.

VINCE (O.C.)
Hey; You ok, kid?

The boy says nothing; he continues to take small steps toward Vince.

VINCE (CONT'D)
You alright?

The boy remains mute and his eyes remain on Vince. He approaches the bucket of tar and points to it with his free hand.

Vince glances between the boy and the bucket.

VINCE (CONT'D)
What? What's wrong?

The boy drops to his knees and stuffs his hands into the thick black tar. He works it around joyfully.

Vince, confused, watches the boy as he plays.

FAR - We can see the boy's back and Vince standing in front of him as the camera crawls along the ground towards them. The boy can be heard humming gently.

Vince stares at the boy as he works the thick, nasty tar. It intrigues him.

VINCE (CONT'D)
What're makin', buddy?

The boy ignores Vince. His humming grows louder. Rougher.

Vince goes to bend down in front of the bucket but pauses when the boy freezes--The young boy scoops a handful of tar up in his hand and extends it to Vince without looking at him. He continues to work the tar with his other hand, humming flat and dull tunes.

VINCE (CONT'D)
(Timid)
Ok, sure. Thanks...

OVER VINCE'S SHOULDER - We see the young boy let the tar drip into Vince's palm.

Vince examines the warm, thick, ugly goop. He moves it between both his hands, being careful to not let it spill. We can hear the boys humming off screen--A little bit of laughter/amusement is in his voice.

VINCE (CONT'D)
I guess it's not so bad, huh?

OVERHEAD SHOT - The camera rests about 10 ft directly over Vince's head and we see him toying with the tar. The camera slowly drifts downward, turns, and straightens up.

The easiness on Vince's face begins to fade; something isn't right.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Wait; why is it--

CLOSE - The camera focuses on Vince's hands. In the blink of an eye it appears that the amount of tar in his hands has doubled. It looks like it's growing thicker bigger in size by the second. Small people...YES, PEOPLE...can be seen crying for help and clawing in the tar.

The tar continues GROWING. It forms around Vince's hands and his fingers are swallowed by the dark liquid. The boy can be heard laughing/humming in the background as Vince struggles.

CLOSE - Vince is shaken up. He begins breathing heavily.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 What **is** this??

The young boy hums louder--it's still flat, creepy, but his laughs are more frequent. He's laughing at Vince.

Vince struggles as he tries to get the tar from his hands, but it EXPANDS and crawls up his arms...Is it ALIVE?

VINCE (CONT'D)
 HEY; get this shit off of me!

It's too late; the tar is thickening and moving up Vince's arms.

The boy, occupied with the bucket, quickly tosses some more tar at Vince's legs--It attaches immediately and begins to grow like the tar on his arms.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 No! Stop!

More humming--all children's voices--surround Vince as he struggles. They're coming from--

There! And there! And there! Several more small children come from the trees/bushes.

VINCE'S POV - His eyes dart between his hands and the children as they grab handfuls of tar from the bucket and surround him. They toss and rub the tar all over his body.

The tar grows and moves along Vince's body, keeping him from moving. He panics as the pool of tar at his feet begins to pull him into the floor! The children surrounding him laugh hysterically.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 (Panicky)
 No...Stop...STOP!

The children in front of Vince part and create a space for Vince to see the first small boy still kneeling in front of the bucket: The boy lifts his head and looks Vince in the eyes. He has a wicked, satisfied smile. He opens his mouth, displaying blackened gums and no teeth.

SMALL BOY
 (Laughing/Smiling)
 ...Scream.

Vince tries to scream, but the black tar travels up into his mouth and replaces his cry with a muffled gargle.

His legs collapse beneath him and the ground begins to swallow him whole.

VINCE'S POV - The children can be seen laughing and dancing as Vince's body and head slowly sink below ground. His consciousness begins fading AND--

BLACK SCREEN.

LUCKY (V.O.)

You've been fighting the same fight since you were a boy, Vincent. Now your fight is over--If you want it to be...

VINCE (V.O.)

W-What...What are you doing to me?

LUCKY (V.O.)

I'm giving you a second chance...A chance to choose.

VINCE (V.O.)

Choose? Choose what?

LUCKY (V.O.)

...Life.

Drip. Drip. Drip. Drip. Drops of water can be heard through the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY

The camera holds a steady shot of Vince's face, primarily focusing on his eyes. They stare ahead, blank and void of anything. Suddenly his pupils dilate and he blinks rapidly.

We're back in the alley outside of the bar; Vince can be seen sitting in the same chair from the basement. The water dripping from the train track above catches his eye as it falls into a small puddle beside him. Drip. Drip. Drip.

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Over Lucky's shoulder we can see Vince in the distance sitting in the chair.

Lucky, leaning against one of the steel beams supporting the train tracks, twirls a card in his hand as he watches Vince; studying him closely.

Vince looks around briefly before noticing Lucky standing across the alley from him.

LUCKY (O.C.)
 You let **him** bury you. You let **them**
 bury you...Then you buried
 yourself. Why?

Vince says nothing, but he wants to--Lucky is wearing him down, he's almost broken.

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 You know what he did...the kind of
 monster he was...

VINCE
 I don't know shit, just like you
 don't know SHIT.

Lucky ponders.

LUCKY
 You never accepted the fact that he
 actually did it...did you, Vincent?
 You--

VINCE (O.C.)
 Stop it.

LUCKY
 You've kept it hidden away all
 these years--

VINCE (O.C.)
 Stop.

LUCKY
 You watched him kill her and it
 killed you--

VINCE
 Stop! FUCK! I said I didn't see--

LUCKY
 YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE IT VINCENT!
 YOU KNEW WHAT HE DID! YOU KNEW!

Lucky's voice rings throughout the air as if they're in a dome. He stands directly in front of Vince now, staring him down.

Vince hesitates to stand, not sure if he'll be able to move. He inches his leg forward a little then rises to his feet slowly when he realizes he CAN move.

The two face off and stare each other down.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

You knew...You knew that your mother was dead as soon as he closed that door behind him. He killed her, disposed of her, and came back the next day like nothing happened...You were so afraid, so scared, that you decided to disassociate yourself with your mother's entire existence...So that he wouldn't do the same...exact...thing...to you.

Lucky steps closer to Vince.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

You spent the rest of your life trying to please him...Gain his approval, even after it wasn't necessary. You never questioned him--NOT ONCE--about that night...About sweet Victoria...You just tucked your tail between your legs and--

In a flash, Vince snatches Lucky up by the collar and drives him backwards into one of the steel beams supporting the train tracks.

As Vince pins Lucky against the beam, a train speeds by over their heads--It moves unusually fast.

Lucky stares up at the train. He brings his head down to meet Vince at eye level; He has a very dark, amused smirk on his face.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Atta' boy; let it out...

Another train zooms by overhead and Vince glances up at it for one second. When he brings his gaze back down, he sees--

CLOSE - Vince becomes distraught.

VINCE

Wha--....No...No...No.

Instead of seeing Lucky in front of him, Vince sees his mother Victoria Jackson. Victoria smiles at Vince, warm and welcoming.

Vince refuses her; he twists away and shakes his head in denial--This CAN'T be real.

VINCE (CONT'D)
 (Panting)
 No...No...T-This can't be...N-No,
 no, no.

Victoria takes a step toward Vince. Her aura is calming and her voice is sweet and gentle.

VICTORIA
 Let it out, baby. It's ok...It's
 me.

Vince continues to stumble away from her--He refuses to believe what he's seeing.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 Vinny, baby, it's me...It's mama.

Victoria grabs Vince's arm and turns him around.

Vince hesitates to engage her, but he gives in and they embrace/hug each other. The love he has for her is strong.

VINCE
 I'm so sorry, mama. I tried to stop
 him this time, I did, but--

VICTORIA
 Shhhhh, it's ok baby...

Victoria pulls Vince close, placing his head on her chest. Vince shuts his eyes tightly as he embraces his mother.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
 I've missed you, son...But I can't
 stay.

Vince hugs her tighter.

VINCE
 Don't leave me again mama...

VICTORIA (V.O.)
 It's ok, son...

Lights and rumbling grow behind Vince and Victoria. WAIT--it's noise from the train and the train tracks above.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
 You've held on long enough; Let him
 go, and let me go too. It's time to
 live now, son. Live for YOU.

The train noises grow louder.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
It's time to...

Victoria's voice fades away AND--

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Vince lifts his head to find that his mother has disappeared into thin air. He drops to his knees.

Lucky looms behind him, watching and studying.

LUCKY
She's gone now, Vincent. Do you
want to know why?

VINCE (O.C.)
...Bring her back.

Vince turns to face Lucky, but he's disappeared.

LUCKY (O.C.)
It's not because of you...

Vince follows Lucky's voice; he's now behind him again but on the other side of the alleyway.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
She's gone because your father is a
bitter, sick white man who hated
her. And he hated you...And hated
anyone that looks like either of
you.

Vince eases towards Lucky.

VINCE
(Anxious)
I'm BEGGING you; bring her back...

Lucky struts towards Vince.

LUCKY
But...the more important thing is
that your father would've never
been held accountable for murdering
her anyway because...

Lucky kneels down in front of the broken-down Vince.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

This world cares nothing about you, me, or anybody that looks like either of us. Yeah, they'll love your talent, your skill, but you're disposable once that's dried up. Then it's on to the next...And you, Vincent, have contributed to that. You think what happened to LaKeshia was by accident? Oh no, no, no--you poor lost soul. YOU, that god forsaken police department, that partner of yours...You're all scales on the same giant snake.

(Looks around at the world)

"America...Land of the free": A joke. Millions of us have died in the belly of this beast, Vincent. MURDERED. And it's my job to put a stop to that. It's no longer our turn to suffer; it's theirs.

Lucky's demeanor is calm, confident, playful. He's done this plenty of times before.

Vince raises his head to meet Lucky's eyes; his face is full of tears.

VINCE

I...I'll do anything...J-Just bring her b-back.

LUCKY

No.

(Pats Vince's shoulder)

I can't because...This isn't my mind. It's yours.

Vince's frowns a little, confused. Lucky stands and begins to pace around/circle Vince.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Yes, you heard me correctly. This is YOUR mind; I thought you would've realized that by now...Some "detective" you are.

Vince ponders this for a moment.

VINCE

W-What? How?

The camera circles Vince as he listens to Lucky.

LUCKY (O.C.)
The smoke, Vincent...

TIME CUT:

INT. OLD WAREHOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - FLASHBACK

We flashback to the Old Warehouse as Vince remembers seeing Lucky for the first time.

VINCE'S POV - We see Lucky as he stands across the table in front of Vince, barely visible through the purple smoke.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Vince's eyes widen.

LUCKY (O.C.)
It's unlike anything you've ever
seen or heard of...

TIME CUT:

INT. VENUE BASEMENT - FLASHBACK

We flashback to Vince walking down the stairs and into the Minstrel Show; purplish smoke/haze lingers in the background and in front of him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Vince's eyes wander back and forth as he remembers.

LUCKY (O.C.)
These herbs--Medusa, Nightshade,
The Rainbow Serpent, and Kenya--
grow deep in the jungles of my
homeland. Each of them alters the
mind and body in a very unique way;
when used correctly, they can take
a person down into the pits of
their own soul...

TIME CUT:

EXT. AFRICAN JUNGLE - FLASHBACK

The camera drifts down and into a dense, dangerous, uncharted jungle somewhere in Africa.

As we get closer to the ground, two people--A boy and a man--can be seen hiking through the trees; This is a Young Lucky and his father, EMMANUEL DENNIS--A younger version of the man we saw earlier in Lucky's "trip".

As they hike, Young Lucky admires his father and the jungle around them. The entire experience mesmerizes him.

LUCKY (V.O.)

My Baba was a great man; one who wanted to know everything about everything. He was a doctor, soldier, teacher, but more importantly...An explorer. The one thing he cared to learn about the most though--the one which consumed him, ironically--was the power of the mind...

CONTINUOUS...

Young Lucky and Emmanuel Dennis continue to climb through the jungle. They approach a **pyramid-like temple** hidden under thousands of years of shrubbery, vine, and tree growth.

LUCKY (V.O.)

It has been said that our ancestors from the sky would come down from time to time and show our elders the ways of the world that we now know: Astrology, medicine, architecture, mathematics, and time...

Emmanuel Dennis kneels down in front of a vibrant patch of exotic, strange, never-before-seen herbs/plants; this is Nightshade, Medusa, Rainbow Serpent, and Kenya.

Young Lucky joins his father and watches as he carefully picks the herbs/plants.

LUCKY (V.O.)

They left gifts for us, scattered across the world, but this gift in particular...It helps you find parts of your mind--your soul--that you never knew you could reach...

EXT. AFRICAN JUNGLE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - CONTINUOUS

Young Lucky watches as his father sits in front of the camp fire and obsesses over the herbs--as he consumes large amounts, he begins to lose himself and his grip on reality.

Emmanuel laughs, cries, and talks to someone who isn't there.

CLOSE - In Emmanuel's hand we can see a picture of Emmanuel, Young Lucky, and a woman--This is Lucky's mother and Emmanuel's wife.

Young Lucky, worried, watches closely as his father loses his mind.

LUCKY (V.O.)
He became obsessed with...finding
something he lost long ago...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A very painful, disturbed, and distant look rests on Lucky's face.

LUCKY
And one day he finally went mad;
only existing in a reality that he
refused to let go. That is...
(Glances down at Vince)
Until your government decided he
was no longer worthy of living.

TIME CUT:

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - FLASHBACK

Villagers scramble as bombs and gunfire erupt from **old American war planes** in the background.

Young Lucky moves quickly through the chaos. He approaches a hut-like structure--his home--and Emmanuel Dennis' lifeless body can be seen laying in the doorway.

FAR - Lucky stands as still as stone as he watches his home burn. The camera slowly crawls up behind him AND--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

We slowly fade into seeing adult Lucky replace the Young Lucky, and Vince in the place of Emmanuel Dennis.

CLOSE - We focus on Vince.

LUCKY (O.C.)

Doctors, healers, scientists--hell, practically anyone who can aid soldiers...They die first. Those are your country's rules of engagement.

(Ponders)

He never saw it coming...But his soul was finally set free.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

And now you, Vincent--like my father, like LaKesha, and like Brian--have gone deep into your mind and your soul...Exploring it in ways that are seemingly impossible. Will you be set free, like LaKesha...or will the universe judge you the way it did Brian?

Vince looks overwhelmed, but he holds it together. Then--

CLOSE - Vince cuts anger-filled eyes at Lucky.

VINCE

If this is my mind--

Vince explodes to his feet. He grabs Lucky and drives him backwards a few feet before slamming and pinning him to the ground.

VINCE (CONT'D)

(Angry)

Then I can kill you right here, right now, with no remorse--right?! RIGHT?!

Lucky smiles; he has something up his sleeve.

LUCKY

(Grinning)

Technically...Yes, but there's something much worse here that you need to kill.

Furious, Vince lifts a balled fist to slam into Lucky's face but pauses WHEN--

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - TRAIN TRACKS - SAME TIME

The camera rests on top of the front car of a speeding L train. In the distance, the tracks begin to collapse as the steel support beams beneath it cave in--the train's trajectory is heading right for Vince and Lucky.

EXT. CHICAGO - WICKER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - ALLEY - SAME TIME

CLOSE - Vince looks at his fist, confused, then he turns around WHEN--

CLINK! CLINK! SCREEEEEECH! Metal bends, breaks, and folds as the train tracks right above Vince collapse. Scraping metal fills the air as the train draws nearer.

In a flash, the train comes crashing down. Vince jumps out of the way just before the front train car smashes into the ground right where Lucky is--WAS--laying!

Vince rolls backwards a few times, then gathers himself and looks around to see if Lucky made it--Nothing.

In the background, the rest of the train tracks and the entire train collapses from above, and the last train car hits the ground with a loud boom. The crash makes a horrible mess.

CONTINUOUS...

Smoke clears and Vince moves closer to one of the trains--he notices something moving on the inside. He hesitates when the train car door slides open.

CLOSE - Vince is taken aback by--

INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

An Old Black man wearing big, thick, black blind-sunglasses sits in one of the seats; he playfully twirls his bare feet as he watches Vince approach. He has the most calming smile on his face.

Vince is visibly confused and drained.

OLD BLACK MAN

Well c'mon na', we ain't got all day.

Vince reluctantly steps inside. The doors close just as he takes a seat next to the Old Black man.

INT. TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

OLD BLACK MAN
Well...Go head; what took ya' so
long?!

Vince stares ahead, blankly, and shakes his head. The Old Black Man shrugs in wails his arms in frustration.

OLD BLACK MAN (CONT'D)
Dammit, c'mon na'; I don't wanna'
play this game Vinny! What took ya'
so long?!

The lights flicker and the train begins moving; they're now traveling INTO the earth!

Vince begins to remember something; He feels something familiar.

VINCE
I...I-I don't...

OLD BLACK MAN
Ahhhh! Sure ya' do! Ya' DO! Ya'
know...
(Sighs)
Ya' really ain't changed that much
since you was a boy. Still got that
same DUMB ASS look on ya' face.

The Old Black Man laughs and shrugs Vince off when he doesn't laugh with him. Confused, Vince stares at the Old Man. Who are you?

OLD BLACK MAN (CONT'D)
He'll be excited to see ya'
again...

VINCE
Who--

SCRRREEEECH. CLANK-CLANK. SCREEEEECH. Scraping metal fills the air as the train travels deeper into the earth.

The Old Man looks past Vince's head, toward the train cars behind them. Vince turns to look as well.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

We can now see into the train cars behind the one we are in: Something shadowy, and BIG, can be seen moving toward them from two cars away. What is THAT?

OLD BLACK MAN (O.C.)
Oh shit, well that ain't good...

Vince stares fearfully.

VINCE
What the fuck is--

The Old Black Man pops Vince on the back of the neck.

OLD BLACK MAN (O.C.)
Watch yur' damn mouth, boy! Ya'
know betta' than that!

Vince rubs that back of his neck without looking at the man.

VINCE
OW!
(Looks on)
But what is it? Seriously?

The Old Black Man doesn't reply. Vince turns to look at him and jumps back WHEN--

CLOSE - The Old Black Man, head tilted a little, stares at Vince; his glasses are off now and his eyes are pitch black. He has one of the of the most peaceful, terrifying faces you've ever seen.

OLD BLACK MAN
It's YOU.

Vince stares at the man timidly, but unafraid. THEN--

SCRRREEEECH. CLANK-CLANK. SCREEEEECH. Vince turns around.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

FAR - The shadowy figure is now closer. It looks to be in the shape of a very large man or animal.

INT. TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Vince goes to look at the Old Black Man but--He's gone. Vince is now alone.

CLINK. CLANK. SCREEEEECH. The shadowy figure begins prying open the door to the train car Vince is in. Vince stands and moves in the opposite direction--Time to go.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince stumbles to the front of the train car in a hurry. He fights to get the gangway connection door open. He nervously glances over his shoulder as he hears the shadowy monster enter the car.

OVER VINCE'S SHOULDER - We see the shadowy figure looming behind him...It charges!

BOOM! The shadowy figure bangs against the door just as Vince gets through and closes it behind him.

EXT. TRAIN GANGWAY CONNECTION - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black abyss surrounds the train--not dirt or earth.

CLOSE - Vince quivers as he looks the 'thing' in the face--a very thin door separating him and 'it'. He's terrified. Petrified. Completely frozen. He sees something in it--

Vince shakes free from the trance and keeps moving.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

The speed of the train increases drastically--It's uncontrollable. All of the windows are busted. The train car sways side-to-side as if it'll tip over at any moment.

Vince bursts through the back of the car and speeds towards the front. He slows and comes to a halt when he sees someone in the driver's cabin driving the train--It's Lucky.

VINCE

(Yelling)

What is this? What are you doing to me?

Lucky seems jolly as he pretends to "steer" the wild train.

LUCKY

I told you, Vincent; it's NOT me!

(Nods toward the rear
train car)

It's you!

As Lucky looks in Vince's direction, we see the shadowy figure burst through the train car door behind Vince--It's blurry, but it's massive and dark and nightmare-like.

Just as Vince starts to turn his head, the figure begins to change?...

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 It's you, Vincent. It's always been
 you...

From outside the train car we can see inside; through the window we see Vince standing to the left...To the right, we also see Vince: the shadowy figure has formed itself into a mirror image of Vince: A Clone.

LUCKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 Ever since you lost your mother,
 you let him--IT--control you.
 You've been a puppet all these
 years. Now...one of you has to
 live, and one of you has to die.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

The train rumbles as it continues its spiral downward. It's a violent ride.

Vince takes a step toward himself--the copy--and Clone Vince does the same. Vince moves an arm, a leg, and Clone Vince mirrors. Everything Vince does, Clone Vince does the same. They inch closer and closer to one another.

LUCKY (O.C.)
 So...Who's it going to be, Vincent!
 You...Or 'The Other' you; it's time
 to make a decision!

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Vince and Clone Vince get closer and closer. They're both trying to answer the same question as they analyze each other; who the hell is this? It's not ME? It's something...ELSE.

Vince reaches his hand out to touch Clone Vince. They ease closer...closer...As soon as they touch, Clone Vince GRABS and TWISTS Vince's hand, spinning him into a one-armed head lock. Vince struggles to get free but Clone Vince is stronger than he is. The tussle only lasts a few moments before Vince starts to lose consciousness quickly.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - DRIVER'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The train speeds through the darkness. A light can be seen very far in the distance.

Lucky glances over his shoulder, disappointed.

LUCKY

Is that all you got, detective?
(Shakes head)
You or it, Vincent...You or 'The
Other'. Only you can choose.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

Vince struggles; he side eyes the seat next to him. He drops his weight, puts a leg on the seat, and uses it as a catapult to thrust backwards and slam Clone Vince into the wall. Vince breaks free and scrambles across the ground, gasping for air.

Clone Vince regains himself, walks behind Vince and flips Vince over, settling on top of him. Vince struggles as he tries to avoid being choked again.

Vince gains enough strength and free space to cock his fist and throw a punch; he lands a clean hit on Clone Vince--Clone Vince grows angry and tries harder to get a grip around Vince's neck.

The two struggle, their arms become entangled. Vince pulls back again for another clean punch--BANG; he hits Clone Vince right in the nose. Clone Vince sways backwards and lets out a demonic, animal-like howl--He's furious.

Clone Vince drives his arms and hands down in the blink of an eye and gets a hold of Vince's neck; Vince's face instantly turns red as he has that air squeezed out of him.

VINCE'S POV - We see Clone Vince as he chokes Vince. Vince's eyesight becomes blurry and hazy. He's losing consciousness again.

Vince fights for air. As he begins to slip away, his eyes wander--He's trying to find something deep down...Something that'll give him strength...

TIME CUT:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - FLASHBACK

VINCE'S POV - We're now back in Vince's childhood room on the last night he saw his mother.

David Mitchell stands over Vince, choking him with both hands. Young Vince kicks and tries to scream but he's muffled.

DAVID MITCHELL
 (Hysterical/Angry)
 Fuckin' black runt! You're not my
 son, nigger!

Young Vince panics as he's choked. He kicks and squirms under his father's weight but he cannot move.

DAVID MITCHELL (CONT'D)
 You're no son of mine, runt! You're
 a nigger! A NIGGER! And I'll send
 you with--

Young Vince frees himself enough to let out a muffled cry.

YOUNG VINCE
 PLEASE! I WON'T BE! I WON'T BE!

David Mitchell's rage settles for a moment. He stares at Vince.

DAVID MITCHELL
 What?

David Mitchell loosens his grip around Young Vince's neck completely, allowing him to gasp for air.

DAVID MITCHELL (CONT'D)
 What did you say, boy?

YOUNG VINCE
 (Gasping)
 I...I...I-I won't be...

DAVID MITCHELL
 You won't be WHAT?

Young Vince fights to calm down and breathe.

DAVID MITCHELL (CONT'D)
 YOU WON'T BE WHAT? SAY IT!

YOUNG VINCE
 (Trembling)
 I w-w-won't be a--

DAVID MITCHELL (O.C.)
 SAY IT!!

YOUNG VINCE
 I won't be a nigger! I won't be
 like her!

David Mitchell stares his son down with hate-filled eyes.

DAVID MITCHELL
You'll do what I say do.

YOUNG VINCE
Y-YES!

DAVID MITCHELL
You'll be whatever I say be.

YOUNG VINCE
I will! I will! Please...

David Mitchell stares at Young Vince in disgust, disappointment seeps from his skin.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BLACK ABYSS - CONTINUED

Total darkness surrounds Vince as he sits in a chair; eyes closed and head tilted downward--he looks peaceful.

BACK SHOT - Young Vince stands next to Vince as he rests in the chair. We can see out in front of them that there isn't total darkness; purple lightning flashes among black/dark clouds above them & on the horizon.

Young Vince leans over to whisper into Vince's ear.

YOUNG VINCE
(Whisper)
Don't give up this time...Luck is
on your side.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

VINCE'S POV - Vince blinks his eyes open to see Clone Vince still on top of him, choking him and smiling.

Vince digs deep and musters up the strength to throw another punch. BANG! Clone Vince loses his grip and tries to recover quickly, but Vince throws another punch--BANG! And another--BANG! He throws one more that knocks Clone Vince backwards and off of him.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Vince struggles to stand, but gets up quickly when he notices Clone Vince is already on it's feet.

Clone Vince charges Vince, but Vince ducks into a tackling position and throws them both into the wall. Clone Vince attempts to stand but Vince kicks it's face, causing it's head to bounce off the wall. Vince kicks two more times. Clone Vince buckles over, badly hurt. It stands slowly and turns around to face Vince WHEN--

CLONE CAPTAIN PARNELL
Great work today, son. Great work!
You're Blue Knight material now.
You did it!

The THING has now changed into a clone of Captain Parnell. His eerie smile--covered in blood--can't hide its desperation; It's hurt badly.

CLONE CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)
What do ya' say?
(Extends for handshake)
You made it! Your old man would be proud of you!

Anger rises in Vince and he charges.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - DRIVER'S CABIN - SAME TIME

Lucky peaks over his shoulder and we can see Vince and the Clone of Captain Parnell tussling in the background.

Lucky pulls an extravagant pocket watch out to check the time, then he looks ahead. Are they running out of time?

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Vince and the clone of Captain Parnell continue to fight. They both throw powerful blows and slam each other back and forth throughout the train car.

Vince lands a hook that sends the Clone Captain Parnell flying backwards. The THING, fearful, scrambles away slowly.

CLONE CAPTAIN PARNELL
C'mon kid...You're, you're better than this!

Vince drags himself toward the THING; he's ready to kill it. The THING turns the opposite direction in an attempt to stand up. When it turns back around, it's changed again; it is now a clone of Donald, Vince's partner.

CLONE DONALD
 You're a better man than your
 father, Rook! You gotta' know that!

Vince tries to grab the clone, but it jumps back.

CLONE DONALD (CONT'D)
 Me and you, Rook...We can run this
 city!
 (Stumbles)
 C'mon! Think about it!

Vince lunges towards the THING, but he misses when it jumps out of the way. Vince gathers himself, a confused/impatient look dances across his face as he turns and sees someone different; the THING has now changed into Elliot Ross Sr.

ELLIOT ROSS SR.
 Fuck it! It ain't gon' matter no
 way, Lil Vinny!

Vince eyes a piece of a broken metal bar on the ground under the seat next to him--one end is sharp. He grabs it, subtly, as he rises to his feet.

ELLIOT ROSS SR. (CONT'D)
 You ain't welcome in the hood no
 way! Neva' have been, white boy!
 PIG!

Vince lunges toward the THING and strikes it in the temple with the bar. They both go crashing to the ground.

The THING'S POV - We can see Vince as he lifts himself up and plants his knee into the THING'S chest. Vince's goes into a complete shock as he looks at the THING. What does he see?

CLONE DAVID MITCHELL (O.C.)
 S--...S-Son...

OVER VINCE'S SHOULDER - We can see that the THING has changed into David Mitchell, but much older than we've seen him previously. He smiles gently.

Vince tries to bottle his emotion as he looks at his bleeding "father".

CLONE DAVID MITCHELL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 You're a good boy...A good son.
 You've always been that...

The THING reaches it's hand up and rubs the side of Vince's face.

CLONE DAVID MITCHELL (CONT'D)
And I love you, son.

Vince seems to calm for a short moment THEN--

Vince drives the sharp end of the metal bar into the THING'S chest. The THING'S eyes shutter as blood flies and it lets out a horrendous, demonic, ear-aching screech--It's dead now.

FAR - From the driver's cabin we can see Vince stand up in the background. Exhausted, he walks towards the front of the train car where Lucky is still "driving" the train.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - DRIVER'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Vince enters the driver's cabin and stands next to Lucky. The two remain silent for a moment--there seems to be an unspoken "truce" that they've agreed to.

Lucky begins to say something, but he holds off and just smiles.

VINCE
Where are we? What is this place...

Lucky smirks.

LUCKY
It's you, Vincent. Your soul...

Lucky turns to leave the Driver's Cabin; he walks slowly and elegantly.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
And the next stop is completely up to you.

Lucky pats Vince on the shoulder as he walks away. He's proud of him. Vince glances over his left shoulder to keep an eye on Lucky as he leaves.

Vince looks ahead, quickly turning back again to look over his right shoulder...But Lucky, and dead body of the THING, have instantly disappeared without a trace. Vince is now alone.

VINCE
(To himself)
Ok, ok...What the fuck do I do now.

Vince looks ahead into the darkness. There's a light in the distance.

As he and the train near the light, the ride becomes more violent; the train shakes and rattles more viciously than before.

The light grows bigger in the distance--We're getting closer.

Vince becomes frantic. He looks around for anything to help slow the train down; a stop button, a brake lever, anything! But he finds nothing. He cannot avoid this.

Vince's chest rises and falls rapidly--He's afraid. He remembers something, a brief moment, and then closes his eyes. The light grows brighter on his face as we get closer to it AND--

BLACK SCREEN.

EXT. BLACK ABYSS - CONTINUOUS

Total darkness surrounds Vince as he sits in a chair, just like earlier. We see Young Vince as he stands next to Vince. Purple lightning continues to flash among black/dark clouds above them & on the horizon, but this time it looks as if it's subsiding. Something's changed.

Vince lifts his head and looks around. He analyzes his younger self, already knowing who it is, then looks at the sky, studying it.

VINCE

You've been down here a long time,
huh?

YOUNG VINCE

Since the day she left...

Vince stares ahead; he reflects on many years of being someone he truly isn't. He now understands that he cannot live like that anymore.

YOUNG VINCE (CONT'D)

You can come back now...You know
that, right?

VINCE

Back where?

The two look at each other deeply and Young Vince smiles.

YOUNG VINCE

Back home.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - DRIVER'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Vince's eyes pop open.

EXT. BLACK ABYSS - CONTINUOUS

FAR - We see the train as it dips toward a giant vibrating/pulsing ball of light. It's magnificent in size and aura.

INT. FRONT TRAIN CAR - DRIVER'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Vince's mind races as he lunges toward the light, but then something calming overtakes him. He relaxes and takes a deep breath as the train plummets toward the light, getting closer and closer by the second.

Vince's breathing slows as the train enters the light. He smirks. THEN--

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sun shines bright and lights everything up in Vince's bedroom. The covers on the bed ruffle.

Vince stirs awake, disoriented and confused.

He moves to the edge of the bed. Still out of whack, he grabs the remote and turns the television on--A breaking news report flashes across the television.

T.V. ANCHOR

We're going to tune back in with reporter Patricia Stevens live from the Wicker Park neighborhood where they say the suspicious deaths of Paul Weaver, Timothy Lynch, and Ryan Spencer came as a result of a routine traffic stop gone wrong.

Vince watches intently as the reporter goes on. They show pictures of the victims and the crime scene; there's something familiar about the faces of the victims to Vince; They were one of the improv groups at the Minstrel Show the night before--the "Jocks"--but he doesn't realize that immediately.

T.V. ANCHOR (CONT'D)

In other news, a string of robberies and burglaries were committed in the Near West Side neighborhood last night, one of them resulting in a shootout that left several dead...6 suspects are at large as of right now...

CONTINUOUS...

Frustrated, and still processing, Vince turns the television off. He grabs his phone from the dresser and checks it; he has several missed calls from work, Donald, Alicia, and others. He's slept half the day away.

VINCE

(To himself)

What the fuck happened last night...

Vince places his phone down and rushes to get ready for work.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY - LATER

The lobby is busy with business men and women as they go in and out. Everyone is going about their day, carefree of anything that is outside of their own life.

Vince exits an elevator and heads for the front door. He stops at the front desk to speak with JAMAL (Black, early 20's); a charismatic young man who works the front desk regularly.

JAMAL

(Joyful)

Aye; what's happenin' Detective Jackson. Feelin' any betta'?

VINCE

(Intrigued)

What are you talkin' about now, Jamal?

JAMAL

Oh...Last night, sir; you was kinda' out of it when you came in. Thought you might've had a long night out...Drinking, with a young lady perhaps...

Jamal smirks, then quickly hides it when he realizes Vince isn't in the mood to be playful.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
I mean, cop work,
sir...Somethin'...

VINCE
Uh...Well...What did I...Did I say
anything?

Jamal looks at him suspiciously.

JAMAL
...Sir?

VINCE
(Eye roll)
Fine, dammit; I was drunk. What did
I say, Jamal? Was I with anyone? A
man...A man dressed in purple and
black.

Jamal laughs.

JAMAL
(Laughing)
Nah...You were alone. Walked right
by me.

VINCE
Show me.

Jamal begins to pull the footage from the security cameras.

JAMAL
(To himself)
Must've been a strong drink...

Vince cuts his eyes at Jamal, then he moves closer to look at
the monitor behind the desk.

TIME TO:

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY - SECURITY
FOOTAGE

We watch Vince on the security camera as he walks through the
front entrance of the building the night before. He seems
normal enough, but moves mechanical-like, almost as if he's
on autopilot.

Vince walks past the front desk and ignores Jamal. Then, a
short, abrupt static interruption moves through the video--
The same one that we say in the security camera footage from
Brian's apartment malfunction earlier--and then it clears.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Vince looks on, confused. He can't find the words or the memories to explain what he just saw.

Jamal stares at him, an eyebrow raised.

JAMAL

Ya' cool?

VINCE

Yeah...I, I gotta' get outta' here.

Vince walks away, but pauses before exiting.

VINCE (CONT'D)

(Yelling)

And hold my packages for me!

EXT. CHICAGO - DAN RYAN EXPRESSWAY

Vince cruises down the expressway in a luxury car.

INT. VINCE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The radio host in background gives news updates about what's going on around the city. As Vince drives, he reflects; something is different about him.

RADIO HOST

Welcome back, welcome back, welcome back good folks. Some CRAZYYY stuff went down last night on the north side; three guys jumped and shot a police officer last night during a traffic stop...But the cop eventually killed all three of 'em in the altercation. Check this; all the suspects were WHITE! Ain't that crazy?!

Vince begins to remember something as he listens closely.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - LATER

The room is as busy as any other day. Detectives and cops move about as they fill out paperwork and process criminals. Another day within the "justice system".

Vince enters the room and scans it. He feels something different; a change of heart. The place doesn't give him the same feel it used to. It's lost its importance to him.

Captain Parnell and Donald Warren laugh and talk in Captain Parnell's office. Donald spots Vince and waves him over. Vince heads toward Captain Parnell's office, but he looks toward his desk first and sees someone sitting there, facing the opposite direction. Who is that?

INT. CAPTAIN PARNELL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Captain Parnell and Donald whisper about something before Vince walks into the room.

DONALD

(To Vince)

Yeah, come on in here you lucky fucker!

Captain Parnell chuckles at Donald's comment.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Yeah...if it wasn't for his father-- and this here promotion--I'd fire the bastard for being so damn late. Let me guess; trains running behind?

Vince is confused, but remains casual.

VINCE

No, I don't ride public transportation; Agoraphobic.

Donald and Captain Parnell look confused.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Anxiety with public transportation.

Captain Parnell moves on.

CAPTAIN PARNELL

Well then...It must be that you got the good news early and partied hard last night, eh?

Puzzled, Vince just stares at him. Captain Parnell points to an envelope on his desk, motioning for Vince to get it.

Vince grabs the envelope and opens it. He reads the letter inside:

CLOSE - The camera focuses on an award letter addressed to Vince; he's being congratulated for being selected as the new Assistant District Attorney for the city of Chicago Police Department.

Vince shows little emotion. He takes a deep breath and closes the letter, placing it in his jacket. Captain Parnell and Donald watch him, unsure of what to make of his demeanor.

DONALD

Well dammit, Rook; YA' DID IT! We need to see a little more enthusiasm than that!

CAPTAIN PARNELL

(Laughing)

Thought you'd be more excited than that to jump the pay scale.

Vince nods and displays a fabricated smile.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)

Your first order of business was to jump on this missing person's report for a buddy of mine; his nephew Conner was reported missing this morning after Conner's girlfriend was found in shock on the south side this morning...Girl was beaten up pretty bad.

Captain Parnell hands Vince a file; two pictures of Natalie and Conner--the couple from the night before--are inside.

Vince looks over the file. He looks as though he recognizes the faces, but he can't remember from where.

CAPTAIN PARNELL (CONT'D)

But, seeing as how you've moved up the food chain this morning...I'll pass that on to the good ol' Irish bulldog here and let you take care of that.

(Points to Vince's desk)

Guy got picked up early this morning; no I.D., no license, no fingerprints, nothing. Won't give us a name either. Said he'd only talk to "Detective Vince Elijah Jackson".

Vince looks back and analyzes the back of the man, certain he knows who he is.

VINCE

Why me?

DONALD

Ah, who knows; these city slickers are always looking for a way to get over--Hook 'em, book 'em, put 'em in the bullpen for processing.

(Pats Vince's shoulder)

Charge him with whatever you want; got your first conviction served right up on a silver platter for ya'.

VINCE

...I'll take care of it.

Vince gives Captain Parnell and Donald a half-hearted smile, stands around for a second, and then exits the office.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The camera sits right in front of the man sitting at Vince's desk--It only shows the bottom half of his face. He looks back to see Vince leaving Captain Parnell's office and smiles as he turns his head back around.

Vince approaches the desk, hesitating when he sees the man's face, and then goes to sit down.

It's Lucky; he smiles happily at Vince

Vince eases in his chair, never taking his eyes off of Lucky. They sit in silence for a moment as Vince gathers himself. Lucky watches closely.

LUCKY

Did you find it, Vincent?

Vince stares at him, ignoring the question.

VINCE

What are you? WHO are you?

LUCKY

(Smiling)

It's never about the "what", or the "who" Vincent; the "why" is always the most important.

Vince is visibly irritated, but he plays Lucky's little "game".

VINCE
Well then; "why"?

Lucky motions for Vince to look around the room, and he does.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The camera pans around the room as police officers process, interrogate, and belittle black and brown "criminals".

LUCKY (V.O.)
It's simple; everything you see here was built on the backs of our people...and for the purposes of "controlling the negro". In this imperfect world, a web of systems work together perfectly to keep our knees in the dirt...But just comfortable enough for complacency.

EXT. CHICAGO - SAME TIME

We quickly flash through a series of events; cops unlawfully and aggressively arresting people, people ignoring the homeless, single parents being forced out of gentrified neighborhoods, crooked politics, etc. We essentially see the inner workings and byproduct of a corrupt and racist system in the segregated Chicago in a flash.

LUCKY (V.O.)
The government, the police, the courts, democrats, republicans-- They're all pockets on the same pair of jeans, Vincent. Hungry hogs waiting for the slop. But here's the thing about a hog...

CUT TO:

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The camera focuses on Lucky as he gazes at Vince. His confidence and conviction are otherworldly.

VINCE
A hog will eat anything, even it's own kind...with a little encouragement.

Vince and Lucky stare at each other.

LUCKY

I ask you again, Vincent; did you find it?

Vince watches him closely.

A young white officer approaches Vince and Lucky, interrupting their conversation.

POLICE OFFICER 3

Jackson; congrats on the promotion. Cap' and Warren told me to escort this uh...

(Sizes Lucky up
disgustedly)

Piece of work...to processing. Here's the paperwork for him to be charged.

Vince glances between the officer and Lucky, pondering a thought. He looks over the file; they are bogus charges to meet a quota.

Vince realizes something.

VINCE

No, I won't be charging him. He'll be going free.

Confused, the officer flashes a quick look back towards Captain Parnell's office.

POLICE OFFICER 3

But sir, they--

VINCE

I said I won't be charging him.

POLICE OFFICER 3

Uh, ok. Alright then...

The officer retreats and heads back to Captain Parnell's office; he seemingly begins to explain what happened--shrugging and making clueless faces.

Lucky smiles.

LUCKY

Ah; you have found it. That's good.
(Points finger)
Don't lose it this time, Vincent.

Vince looks at Lucky sharply as he uncuffs him from the chair.

VINCE

So that's your plan; go around
making people do crazy
things...Making them kill...Cause
chaos.

LUCKY

There is no plan, Vincent. There is
only correction. Once the soul is
awakened and corrected...It is out
of my hands. Whatever happens,
happens.

Vince takes another good look at Lucky then nods his head
towards the door--Get out of here.

VINCE

I don't want to see you again.

Lucky smiles.

LUCKY

You won't have to...

Lucky stands to exit.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Luck is now on your side, my
friend. Use it well.

Lucky exits.

Vince checks the time on his cellphone: 2:31 p.m.

CONTINUOUS...

Vince begins to shuffle through paperwork; all mysterious
deaths and murders that he decides are linked to this strange
man who calls himself Lucky. He toils through them
thoroughly, trying to understand exactly who he is.

The camera scans various parts of a report on Vince's desk;
it states that the deceased body of LaKesha Williams was
transported from the M.E's office for "unknown reasons".

Vince sighs as he reads LaKesha's report--Her death was
unnecessary and she was such a bright girl with a good
future. He removes his jacket and pushes the papers aside to
complete something else.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - CENTRAL OFFICE - LATER

The room has quieted a little.

Vince searches the internet/archives on his desktop. He skims through old news articles and reports of U.S. attacks on foreign villages in the last 30 years. He doesn't find any relevant to what he's looking for, so he searches back even further.

Searching...Searching...BINGO! He finds an article about a well-known south African doctor and explorer who was killed in an attempt to rid a south African country of rebel groups planning to overthrow a democracy supporting political figure who was an asset to the U.S...But the article is dated nearly 70 years ago! That can't be right!

Vince finds a picture and information on Emmanuel Dennis, Lucky's father, and instantly recognizes the man from the shared vision he had with Lucky the night before.

VINCE
(To himself)
This can't be right...

Vince notices a small boy in the corner of the picture with Emmanuel Dennis--It's Young Lucky. He reads on and notices something.

CLOSE - The article says that Emmanuel was not survived by any family.

Vince thinks about this and the fact that Lucky doesn't look a day over 25; if this article is correct, it would mean Lucky is well over 70 or 80 years old!

Vince leans back in his chair and sighs. He shakes it off and looks around; he decides that he needs to get home and rest. Vince exits.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY - LATER

The main lobby is quiet. Only a few people lounge around, resting after a long day of work.

Vince approaches the front desk and gets Jamal's attention.

JAMAL
Hey, wassup my main man Vin--I mean, how are you, sir? Got some mail for you.

VINCE
From who?

Jamal examines the package.

JAMAL

Hmm, doesn't say. The guy who dropped it off was dressed horribly, but his purple vest was sharp. Handsome fella'--crazy eyes though.

Vince's eyes pop.

VINCE

Did he say his name?

JAMAL

Nah, he didn't say his name but he did say--

("Grand" demeanor)

"MAY LUCK BE ON YOUR SIDE" or some ol' Star Wars shit--I mean stuff--like that.

VINCE

Show me; show me the tape.

Jamal side-eyes Vince.

JAMAL

You been askin' for a lot of tape today. You sure you can--

VINCE

Just show me the damn tape, Jamal. C'mon.

JAMAL

Alright, alright...

(To himself)

Actin' like I'm TMZ or somebody.

Jamal pulls the camera footage from earlier in the day.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SECURITY FOOTAGE

We watch as the security camera footage rewinds through the day. Jamal presses play on the 14:30:45 time stamp. A man--Lucky--scrolls through the front door. The camera footage suddenly begins acting strangely. It's hard to tell what happens when he enters, but it clears up at 14:33:12 and Lucky can be seen exiting the building.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Vince's mind races; this can't be right because Lucky was with HIM at the station at 2:30 p.m.

JAMAL

Hmm, that's strange. It doesn't usually do that. I guess today just ain't yo' day, huh sir?

VINCE

Are you sure that this was from today?

JAMAL

You saw the date and time on there; you wanna' see it again--

VINCE

Are you POSITIVE?

JAMAL

Yes, YES! I am positive. Relax man-- Sir.

Frustrated, Vince snatches the package from Jamal and begins to walk off.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

I hope that honey you got waiting for you upstairs relaxes you; cops and robbers been kicking your ass-- I mean butt--lately.

Vince pauses, confused.

VINCE

Who are you talkin' about now?

Jamal's eyebrows shoot up as he remembers what the woman looks like.

JAMAL

That fine ass, dark chocolate, sexy sista'. She ain't say her name, but she was so fine I had to let her up. Said she was a "old friend".

Jamal winks.

Vince thinks for a moment. Who could he be talking about-- SHIT!

VINCE
Shit, Alicia...

JAMAL (O.C.)
No, it's--

VINCE
Thanks Jamal.

JAMAL (O.C.)
But sir, it's--

VINCE
THANK YOU, JAMAL.

Vince walks away and heads into the elevator.

Jamal shrugs him off.

JAMAL
(To Himself)
As soon as he fucks up and calls
her Alicia, she gon' be running
outta' here...THAT'S when I'll put
the pimp game down.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR

Vince is alone in the elevator. As it climbs up, he fumbles and toys with the package in his hand. He wants to open it, but he's hesitant.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

The elevator reaches Vince's floor and he exits it. He examines the package as he slowly walks down the hallway.

Vince opens the seal on the package but stops when he notices that the door to his apartment is slightly ajar. He thinks for a moment, then decides to draw his weapon quickly and eases inside.

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The lights in the apartment are on and the television is playing a news report in the background; someone is inside.

Vince moves through the department, staying alert.

Vince turns and sees the person: Terror instantly flashes across his face--He can't believe who it is.

The camera slowly creeps toward LaKesha Williams as she sits elegantly and majestically on Vince's couch. She's barely recognizable from when we saw her earlier; her skin and hair are fully healthy and glowing, her outfit is marvelous, and her eyes are big and brown. She epitomizes the words "BLACK POWER".

LaKesha stands, watching Vince as he looks her up and down in disbelief.

VINCE

No...No, no, no, no, no--You're dead. I SAW IT.

LaKesha tilts her head to the side.

LAKESHA

No, Vinny; PART of me died.

VINCE

(Breathing heavily)
YOU DIED...H-How is this possible--

LAKESHA

He found me...And he helped me to see my soul.

(Sizes Vince up)
I see he did the same for you.

Vince drops to the couch. His head is spinning. He places his face in his palms. LaKesha kneels down in front of him.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)

I was lost, but he freed me JUST like he freed you. And he will free more.

Vince forces himself to look at LaKesha.

VINCE

HOW are you alive?

LAKESHA

I can't tell you...

LaKesha removes some items from her bag; a wooden pestle and mortar, some candles, a ceremonial lighter, and a small bag of mixed herbs and plants (Nightshade, Kenya). She quickly places them around in ritual format. She lights the plants and herbs--as the smoke begins to fill the room, she gets up and turns off the lights and closes the door to the apartment.

Vince sits confused, dazed, and unmoving. He snaps out of it when LaKesha returns and kneels in front of him again.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)
But I can show you.

LaKesha closes her eyes and turns her palms up, motioning for Vince to place his hands in hers.

He's reluctant, but he does it; he holds her hands for a long moment, watching her closely. Then he closes his eyes AND--

BLACK SCREEN.

TIME CUT:

INT. LAKESHA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - FLASHBACK

We flashback to LaKesha's childhood home on the south side of Chicago. It's beautiful, bright, but feels empty.

The camera snakes into Young LaKesha's childhood room and creeps up behind her as she stares at herself in the mirror; she doesn't like what she sees.

LAKESHA (V.O.)
Ever since I was a little girl,
I've hated everything about the
black skin I've been in. My
hair...My nose...My lips; It's
always disgusted me.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKESHA'S CHILDHOOD SCHOOL - FLASHBACK

Young LaKesha stands on a playground as a group of lighter-skinned young girls surround her; they're all laughing and pointing fingers, making fun of her appearance.

LAKESHA (V.O.)
Kids were relentless. They were
always the worst...

In the background, we see Young Vince!--But Only very briefly; he watches as Young LaKesha is teased. LaKesha catches his eyes AND--

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

LaKesha, a little older now, sits between the legs of an older woman as she gets her hair combed and braided. The two struggle.

BLACK WOMAN 1

This nappy ass hair! See, you ain't ever gon' get a job or a man walkin' round lookin' like this. I'm gettin' tired of yo' black ass!

LAKESHA (V.O.)

The adults were just as bad though...

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK

We flashback to the actual scene from the picture we saw at Brian's house; LaKesha, Brian, and another man laugh and prepare themselves to pose for a picture. Brian and the other man are dressed in KKK robes. LaKesha, a noose around her neck, is dressed poorly and rugged.

Brian tightens the noose around LaKesha's neck and lifts her off the ground a little. We can see she's uncomfortable, but she tries to hide it with a laugh. Brian and the man notice, but they only laugh at her, not with her.

LAKESHA (V.O.)

I allowed myself to be exploited for a false sense of security. Brian made me feel like everything, and nothing...

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - FLASHBACK

We flashback to LaKesha and Brian attending a minstrel show. They laugh and smile as they're dazzled by Lucky and the actors. They are picked to perform during the improv section at the end of the show; they captivate the audience.

Lucky brings LaKesha and Brian backstage for the "meet and greet", and they begin their trips/journey.

Lucky studies LaKesha heavily and takes to her, choosing to AWAKEN her.

LAKESHA (V.O.)

But Lucky...He gave me a choice--to actually LIVE for the first time in my life...or die, and die miserably.

Lucky gives a dazed and disoriented LaKesha a small bag of herbs and plants; the same bag we saw her with Vince's apartment. He whispers instructions in her ear--we can't hear most of what he's saying until...

LUCKY

May luck be on your side...

CUT TO:

INT. LAKESHA'S HOME - FLASHBACK

The camera jumps around and follows LaKesha as she suffers through several stages of a "soul detox".

LAKESHA (V.O.)

I chose to live...But, ironically, something in me had to die.

A knock comes to LaKesha's door; she opens it to find Vince and Donald. Vince and LaKesha share a look.

LAKESHA (V.O.)

I was close to giving up, but I saw you...After all these years and something in me said "keep going". I didn't want to be like you; continuously running from who I am to please others.

TIME JUMPS. LaKesha continues to detox in her home--she takes the last of the herbs, The Rainbow Serpent. Someone knocks on her door; this time it's Donald and he's alone.

The two of them go back and forth, then Donald forces his way inside. The two struggle--Donald knocks her against the head, chokes her, forces himself on her, and then leaves when someone starts beating on the door.

LAKESHA (V.O.)

Your partner tried his best to convince me to confess to killing Brian, and he had his way with me when I didn't.

(MORE)

LAKESHA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He's a foul beast, but what he did
 to me was the final push that got
 me over that mountain.

TIME CUT:

INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK

LaKesha lays "lifeless" on a stretcher as she's rushed into an emergency room. Nurses and doctors perform on her but she doesn't move or respond.

LAKESHA'S POV - Nurses and doctors, one of them with PURPLE EYES, work on her. Everything she sees begins to fade.

LAKESHA (V.O.)
 After that...I became freer than
 I've ever been in my life.

LAKESHA'S POV - Everything continues to fade. THEN--

INT. VINCE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Vince and LaKesha are both sitting on the floor, face to face, staring in each other's eyes. Purplish smoke drifts around their heads.

CLOSE - A headshot of Vince; he peers ahead, his eyes unblinking and full of anxiety, wonder, fear, and a desire--craving--for something. The blood vessels/veins in Vince's eyes glow purple.

LAKESHA (O.C.)
 You're finally free now...

CLOSE - A head shot of LaKesha; she peers ahead, her eyes unblinking and full of love, passion, power, and empathy. The blood vessels/veins in LaKesha's eyes have a stronger purple glow than Vince's.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)
 And with that freedom...

Vince, in a trance, listens more intensely.

LAKESHA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 You can finally stop running and
 fight...

LaKesha's glow is powerful.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)
For people like you...

CLOSE - Vince is transfixed.

LAKESHA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
For people like me...

CLOSE - LaKesha smiles.

LAKESHA (CONT'D)
For her...

CLOSE - Vince's breathing grows rapid for a short moment THEN--
-

LAKESHA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
For US.

VINCE
...What happens next?

LAKESHA
It's their turn to endure the
pain...But as for US...

CLOSE - Vince's eyes bulge AND--

LAKESHA (O.C.) (CONT'D)
WE FREE EVERYBODY.

CUT TO BLACK.

END.

CREDITS.

THE END