

BROTHER

Written by

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An Original Screenplay

INT. MLK JR. HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Crowds of students pour through the doors of the school auditorium. They take their seats and chatter amongst themselves.

PRINCIPAL STEVENS (mid-40s) enters from stage right and strolls toward the podium, left hand in pocket. He pushes up the bridge of his thick glasses and clears his voice before he addresses the audience.

PRINCIPAL STEVENS

Alright, se-settle down students.

Students chat louder. Principal Stevens lets out a jarring whistle into the microphone. Students hold their ears as the chatter subsides.

PRINCIPAL STEVENS (CONT'D)

Much better. Ahem, let's begin this ce-ceremony by co-co-commemorating -

A STUDENT blurts out a comment from the middle of the auditorium.

STUDENT

Looks like ol' Stevens can't even te-te-te-tell us why we're even fucking here in the first place.

The audience roars with laughter. Principal Stevens whistles over the students, but the incessant snickering drowns out his voice.

MR. MONROE (33), a virtuous, philosophical English teacher, silences the crowd with a megaphone.

MR. MONROE

That's 200 lines after school for you, Mr. Lucas. Anyone else wanna join him?

Dead silence emanates from the audience.

MR. MONROE (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. Now, before Mr. Lucas rudely interrupted Principal Stevens, he had an announcement to make. Sir?

PRINCIPAL STEVENS

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Without further ado, we would like to honor a student who's shown exceptional service, in and out of our co-co-community.

JEREMY OLIVER (16), a bright, timid African-American student, clenches his right hand as he stares down at the cuts on his knuckles. He massages the wounds with his left hand.

PRINCIPAL STEVENS (CONT'D)

When someone mentions Jeremy Oliver, a number of things come to mind. Not only is he an outstanding student and gifted athlete, but he is one of those individuals who go out of their way to organize fund raisers for our school and help serve food to the homeless on weekends.

Jeremy sinks into his seat; his eyes fixate on his right hand.

PRINCIPAL STEVENS (CONT'D)

Jeremy ca-can be a model for all of us and we ca-ca-can learn a lot from his example. Therefore, on behalf of our school, we would like to present Jeremy with this Martin Luther King Jr. humanitarian award for his generosity and service to our community. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming up to the stage, Mr. Jeremy Oliver.

A mix of silence and applause fills the auditorium. Jeremy takes a deep breath, gets up, and walks toward the stage.

Students whisper amongst themselves. Jeremy can hear the faint whispers in the back of his mind. He shakes Principal Stevens' hand and accepts his award.

Jeremy stares at his award with disgust before he speaks into the microphone.

JEREMY

Thank you, Principal Stevens and fellow classmates.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

It is a huge honor to be recognized for this achievement and I am grateful for this opportunity to serve our community.

Several small bursts of applause arise from the audience. Jeremy glances at his right hand again.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

The late Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" Not ourselves, but for other people. These people can be family, friends...even strangers.

Suddenly, the doors of the auditorium open and a maimed STUDENT (15) wearing a neck brace and an arm cast gets wheeled in. The student locks eyes with Jeremy. A moment of silence ensues.

Principal Stevens motions for Jeremy to continue. Jeremy looks back toward the audience.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

As I was saying, MLK believed in selflessness and stressed the importance of service to people that we don't know. He -

Jeremy pauses and glances at his right hand shaking uncontrollably. He slowly turns his head back to the audience, only to find the auditorium empty, except for the student confined to the wheel chair.

Jeremy and the student stare at each other, not a single word coming from either of their mouths. Jeremy clutches his right hand, closing his eyes and looking away.

INTERCUT BETWEEN JEREMY AND STUDENT

The student desperately tries to break free from the GANG MEMBERS restraining him, one on each arm.

STUDENT

I don't know what you're talkin' about. I ain't seen any goddamn crack.

Jeremy removes his jacket and begins to roll up his sleeves. He walks toward the student, while cracking his knuckles.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

No! No, please! You can't. I didn't steal nothin'.

JEREMY

Wish I could believe you.

Jeremy cocks his right arm back and strikes the student in the face. An endless stream of blood streams down the student's nose.

STUDENT

Aaaaaargh!

JEREMY

(kneeling)

You think you can just get away with taking our stash, huh? Should've thought about that before you messed with us.

Jeremy punches the student again, this time breaking his nose. The student begs for mercy.

GANG MEMBER #1

That's it. Make this sorry ass bleed for what he did.

Jeremy hesitates. Without the support of the gang members, the student barely stood upright.

GANG MEMBER #2

What're you waiting for? Finish him.

JEREMY

(to gang members)

Look, he's had enough. Let's just take the stuff and go.

Jeremy turns around and begins to walk in the opposite direction before one of the gang members stops him.

GANG MEMBER #1

Whoa, hold up Jer. This guy stole from us. He needs to be taught a lesson.

JEREMY

We already taught him a lesson and recovered the stuff. He -

GANG MEMBER #2  
 (reaching for a baseball  
 bat)  
 Needs to be taught another lesson.  
 Do it.

Gang member #2 hands the baseball bat to Jeremy. Jeremy reluctantly takes the bat.

GANG MEMBER #1  
 (to gang member #2)  
 Hold his arm up. This fucker'll be  
 sorry he ever crossed us.

Gang member #2 holds the student's right arm up perpendicular to Jeremy. The student mutters to Jeremy, coughing up blood.

STUDENT  
 Ple-ple-please. Have mercy...

Jeremy alternately looks at the bat, then at the student.

GANG MEMBER #2  
 C'mon, Jer. Big G is waiting. You  
 don't wanna get on his bad side.

JEREMY  
 But...but -

GANG MEMBER #1  
 What, are you scared or somethin'?  
 You said it yourself that you  
 wanted in so you could provide for  
 your family. This is your ticket  
 in, so either man up or join this  
 pathetic fuck.

Jeremy's hands twitch as he clenches the bat. Drops of blood fall from the cuts on his knuckles. He slowly raises the bat, closes his eyes, and looks away.

The bone-crushing noises echo in the background.

SUPERIMPOSE: BROTHER

SUPERIMPOSE: 1 YEAR AGO

EXT. BOB'S LIQUORS - DAY

Jeremy casually walks down the street.

INT. BOB'S LIQUORS - DAY

Jeremy steps into the store and heads toward the dairy section. He grabs a quart of milk and brings it to the register.

LIQUOR STORE CLERK, 45, eyes Jeremy closely.

LIQUOR STORE CLERK  
That'll be \$1.95.

Jeremy reaches into his right pocket and pulls out a handful of loose change. He counts it, but realizes he is short a nickel.

LIQUOR STORE CLERK (CONT'D)  
You going to buy this or what, kid?

JEREMY  
Look, I'm only short a nickel. Can you please just let me have this? I really need this for my family.

LIQUOR STORE CLERK  
Sorry kid, but no can do. I can't just let you buy a quart of milk at a discounted price.

JEREMY  
But it's only five cents. Please. I'll pay you back in a couple of days.

LIQUOR STORE CLERK  
I'm really sorry kid, but it's against the law and, unfortunately, I have to take this back.

Jeremy sulks in disappointment.

JEREMY  
I understand. Thanks anyway.

Jeremy heads for the door and starts walking toward his apartment complex, struggling with his raggedy, one-strapped backpack filled with a great amount of textbooks.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Jeremy checks his mailbox, but finds nothing. SCREAMS echo throughout the apartment building. Jeremy sighs and reluctantly trudges up the stairs.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - DAY

Jeremy turns the corner to find MRS. CALLOWAY, 52, banging on his apartment door, but quickly retreats behind the wall. Mrs. Calloway's short, plump stature gives a false impression of her intimidating personality.

MRS. CALLOWAY

Mrs. Oliver! Open this door! Your rent is two months overdue.

No answer comes from the Oliver apartment. Jeremy continues to hug the wall, peeking slightly into the hallway. Finally, Mrs. Calloway gives up.

MRS. CALLOWAY (CONT'D)

Alright, Mrs. Oliver. Have it your way. If I don't have your rent by the end of the week, I will be forced to evict you and your family from the premises. You can wallow on the streets for all I care.

Mrs. Calloway marches down the hallway in an angry manner. Jeremy checks to see if the coast is clear and carefully opens the door to his apartment.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Countless potato chip bags and empty cans of food litter the kitchen, extending toward the living room. Dirty laundry lay scattered across the floor and the apartment, as a whole, reeks of rotten eggs.

Jeremy shakes his head in disgust as he puts down his backpack.

JEREMY

Mom? Mom, it's me. Are you here?

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

LAUGHTER emanates from the bedroom, spurring Jeremy to head in that direction. He knocks on the door and opens it to reveal his mother, SERENA OLIVER, 34, sniffing cocaine.

JEREMY

Mom? Mom! What the hell are you doing?

SERENA OLIVER

Oh hi, Jer!



Serena sits on her bed and laughs endlessly. Jeremy snatches the rest of the coke before Serena has a chance to sniff it.

JEREMY

Mom, Mrs. Calloway was asking for the rent again. She said our rent is two months overdue. Why haven't you paid her?

Serena stares at Jeremy and continues to laugh uncontrollably. Jeremy grabs Serena and tries to shake some sense into her.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Dammit, mom. Do you even care anymore?

Serena shoots a puzzled look at Jeremy and touches his nose, bursting into another period of laughter.

SERENA OLIVER

I got your nose! I got your nose!

Jeremy lets go of his mom and sadly watches her as she loses herself in her own little world. Looking down, Jeremy exits the bedroom, closing the door behind him.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

As Jeremy shuts the bedroom door, he hears tiny footsteps approaching from behind him. Jeremy turns around to see PAT, 8, and BRENDA, 5, peeking from around the corner.

JEREMY

Hey, you two.

PAT AND BRENDA

Big brother!

Pat and Brenda run toward Jeremy, who gives them both a hug. Jeremy hears a stomach grumbling.

JEREMY

Are you both okay?

PAT

I'm hungry.

BRENDA

I'm hungry too. What was all that noise, Jer?

JEREMY

Don't worry about that. It's nothing.

Jeremy glances again at the trash flooding his apartment. He kneels down in front of his younger siblings and flashes a half-hearted smile.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

How's about I go get something to eat for you guys?

Pat and Brenda nod in excitement. Jeremy digs through one of the closets and pulls out an old, battered NIKE shoe box. He swaps out his books and places the shoe box in his backpack. Lacing up his shoes, Jeremy hugs his younger siblings.

PAT AND BRENDA

Hurry back, big brother!

Jeremy nods back and leaves the apartment.

EXT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

BENNY WILSON, 16, leans against the outside walls of the apartment building. Benny pulls his hood over his beanie as he tucks his hands into the pockets of his baggy sweater.

Jeremy exits the apartment building.

BENNY

There you are. I've been waiting for your sorry ass for what seems like forever.

JEREMY

Sorry, B. You know the drill.

BENNY

Yes, your crazy psycho bitch of a landlord won't leave you and your family the fuck alone.

JEREMY

Not only that, but my mom hasn't exactly been the mother of the year, you know. Now, all she does is get high and go out with guys looking for an easy bang. Most of the time, she neglects Pat and Brenda.

A lone CAN WHISTLES along the sidewalk. Jeremy kicks it into an alley.

BENNY

That's fucking rough, dog.

JEREMY

While I'm in school, my mom gets fucked up on shit and my younger brother and sister are left to fend for themselves. I promised to bring them something to eat.

Benny rubs his chin.

BENNY

Hmmmmmm. I think I know just the thing. You got the stuff?

JEREMY

Oh, yeah.

Benny and Jeremy walk a couple of blocks down the street and head toward an old, abandoned warehouse.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

A group of hobos, hippies, and runaways lay situated along the dark, decrepit walls of the 5,000 square foot building.

Jeremy clenches the strap of his backpack as he and Benny navigate through the sea of people.

JEREMY

Are you sure about this, B?

BENNY

Yeah, don't worry. You do wanna get somethin' for your younger sibs, don'tcha?

JEREMY

Okay. Let's just make this quick. I'm startin' to get a bad vibe in here.

Jeremy and Benny reach the far end of the warehouse where a small, but stable makeshift fort stood erect. Two MEN acting as security guards block the entrance.

BENNY

We're here to see Victor.

The men whisper to each other before motioning for a pat down.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
C'mon, fellas. Is this really necessary?

The men nod to each other and grant Benny passage. They turn their attention toward Jeremy.

MAN  
What's in the bag, kid?

One of the men swipes Jeremy's bag while the other administers a pat down.

JEREMY  
Hey, watch it man! Those are mine.

The man who grabbed the backpack briefly peruses its contents before handing it back to Jeremy.

MAN  
Go on in.

INT. VICTOR'S FORT - DAY

Various goods from popular toys to vintage comic books lay organized on a fold-out table. VICTOR (18), a recent juvenile offender, lounges on a couch, reading a 'Playboy' magazine and eating 'Funyuns'.

VICTOR  
(without looking at his guests)  
Whaddaya want?

BENNY  
Yo, Vic. It's me, Benny. I brought my homie here, He's hoping to make a trade.

Victor glances at Benny momentarily before springing up from his spot on the couch. His cold, unnerving stare begins to fill Jeremy with anxiety.

VICTOR  
So, what do you have for me?

Jeremy looks over at Benny, who nods for him to open his backpack. He could feel Victor growing impatient as he struggles with the zipper, finally getting it to budge.

Victor removes the shoe box from the bag and removes the top cover.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Let's see here. We got an old 'Spiderman' action figure, a pocket watch, some beaten comics, and a pair of 'Jordans'. That all you got?

JEREMY

Look, I know it's not much, but those are all my prized possessions. My family needs help and I wouldn't be giving these up if I didn't have to.

Victor glances at Jeremy and looks at all the items again, thinking the matter over before making a decision.

VICTOR

Alright, I'll give you five cans of chili and a gallon of water for the pocket watch and the 'Jordans'.

JEREMY

That's it!? What about the 'Spiderman' or the comics?

VICTOR

Hey, take it or leave it, man. That's my final offer.

Annoyed, Jeremy pauses as he tries to get a grip on the situation. Benny calms his nerves and encourages him to take the offer.

JEREMY

Okay, deal.

VICTOR

Atta boy. At least you're smart enough to take good advice when you need it.

Victor takes the pocket watch and the 'Jordans' from Jeremy before retreating behind a curtained section of his abode. A few minutes later, he returns with the cans of chili and the gallon of water.

Jeremy quickly loads the cans and water in his backpack, zipping it up as Victor extends his hand in gratitude. Reluctantly, Jeremy accepts and the two shake hands.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
Pleasure doin' business with you...

JEREMY  
Jeremy.

VICTOR  
Right. Jeremy. Come again any time.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY - LATER

Jeremy and Benny stroll down the sidewalk.

JEREMY  
Who is that guy anyway? How do you know him?

BENNY  
I met him a couple weeks ago when I was walkin' home. The guy was dressed in one of those orange vests, picking up litter under the highway.

JEREMY  
And you talked to him?

BENNY  
Well, I noticed he was wearin' this new pair of kicks that I saw on a display at the shoe store and I asked how much he'd want for 'em.

JEREMY  
So, how much did he ask for?

Benny puts both hands in his pockets and looks down at his feet.

BENNY  
I really wanted those shoes, Jer. The only thing I had to offer was the 'Sammy Sosa' rookie card you gave me.

Jeremy stops dead in his tracks.

JEREMY  
That card!? Why? I remember you wanted that card for a long time. I saved up for nearly three months just to get you that card for your birthday.

BENNY

I know. And I'm sorry. I just really wanted these shoes.

Jeremy lets out a sigh of disappointment before the two continue on down the street. The last rays of sunshine begin to descend under the mountains in the distance.

BENNY (CONT'D)

It's starting to get dark. I should head home.

JEREMY

Yeah, me too. My little brother and sister are probably wondering where I am. Later, B.

Jeremy and Benny bump fists before the two depart on their separate paths.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - SLAUSON AVENUE - NIGHT

Jeremy cautiously walks down the street, clutching his backpack.

JEREMY

Damn. I knew I shouldn't have stayed out long.

The jarring sound of speeding cars echo along the buildings. Continuing down the street, Jeremy notices a group of TEENAGERS leaning against a wall. He pays them no mind as walks past the group. One of the teenagers catches up to him.

TEENAGER #1

Hey bro, whatchu got in the bag?

JEREMY

(looking forward)

It's nothin'. Look, I gotta get home to my family.

A second teenager blocks his path.

TEENAGER #2

Sure as hell don't look like nothin'.

The rest of the teenagers surround Jeremy's back side.

JEREMY

Hey, listen. I don't want any trouble. I'm just tryin' to bring some food back to my family.

TEENAGER #1

Look, kid. I hate to break it to you, but you're not goin' anywhere. So, why don't you make it easy on yourself and just give us what you got?

Jeremy steps back as the teenager inches closer towards him. He scans the area for an opening and makes a break for it.

TEENAGER #2

(to other teenagers)  
After him!

TEENAGER #1

(to Teenager #2)  
Hold up. I have another plan. This way.

Jeremy sprints across the street, trying desperately to evade the group of teenagers. He turns a corner and hides behind a dumpster. The teenagers run past him.

Jeremy sighs in relief before noticing a shadow looming over his hiding spot.

TEENAGER #1 (CONT'D)

Big mistake, kid.

Horrified, Jeremy springs up and tries to escape, but the other teenager blocks his path, punching him in the gut.

TEENAGER #2

Don't you know when to quit, dumbass?

Jeremy grimaces in pain as he falls headfirst on the ground. The group of teenagers gather around and begin to mock him. Teenager #1 picks up the backpack and signals the teenagers to leave, but Jeremy grabs the teenager's foot.

JEREMY

Please...don't do this. My family needs that...please.

TEENAGER #1

Let go, you sorry fuck.



Teenager #1 pivots the other half of his body and delivers a kick to Jeremy's face, knocking him out.

TEENAGER #1 (CONT'D)  
Good riddance.

Teenager #1 spits on Jeremy's face before making off with his backpack.

LATER

A MAN appears over Jeremy as he starts to wake up.

MAN  
Hey, sonny. Are you okay?

JEREMY  
(clutching his face)  
I'm fine, I'm fine.

Jeremy gets back on his feet and heads back down the street.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - ALLEY - NIGHT

Holding onto his right side, Jeremy limps along the sidewalk. He overhears a commotion coming from an adjacent alley and listens in on the conversation.

Two HOODED MEN converse with each other.

HOODED MAN #1  
Let's make this quick.

HOODED MAN #2  
Fine by me. You got the dough?

Hooded Man #1 scans left and right before reaching into his right coat pocket and pulling out a wad of cash. The other man takes the cash and counts it before handing Hooded Man #1 a small bag of cocaine.

Jeremy stares in awe at the large sum of money.

HOODED MAN #1  
Your reputation precedes you. Word on the street is you got the best stuff.

HOODED MAN #2  
That's what everyone tells me. Trust me, you won't be disappointed.

HOODED MAN #1  
Same time next week?

HOODED MAN #2  
Just bring the money.

The two men walk towards Jeremy's location. In a panicked state, Jeremy dives under a parked car along the street. He watches the men part ways before resuming his trek home.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

In hopes of not waking anyone, Jeremy tiptoes around the kitchen. He opens the freezer and peruses its contents, removing a bag of frozen peas. Jeremy closes the freezer door, only to find Pat staring at him.

PAT  
Big brother?

JEREMY  
(pressing the bag of peas  
to his face)  
Shhhhh. Don't wanna wake mom and  
sis.

PAT  
What happened to your face? Where  
have you been? Did you bring us any  
food?

JEREMY  
(taking out one can of  
chili from his pocket)  
I'm sorry, little bro. This was all  
I could get. Share it with mom and  
sis. I promise I'll bring more back  
soon.

Pat takes the can of chili from Jeremy and inspects several kitchen drawers, finally pulling out a can opener. The clatter from Pat's inspection causes Brenda to awake from her sleep.

BRENDA  
What's happening? Why's it so  
noisy?

PAT  
Jer brought back some food. Here,  
let's share it.

BRENDA

(to Jeremy)

Really? Oh my gosh! Thanks, big brother!

Pat opens the can of chili and distributes a portion to himself, Brenda, Serena, and Jeremy on paper plates.

PAT

Here, big brother. I'm sure you must be hungry too.

JEREMY

That's okay, little bro. You guys can have it. I just wish I could of brought more.

Jeremy watches Pat and Brenda as they gobble up their portion of the chili in a matter of seconds. He grabs Serena's plate and heads down the hallway.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremy stands in front of his mother's room. He looks down at the plate of chili and takes a deep breath.

JEREMY

(knocking)

Mom? It's me. I brought you somethin'.

Jeremy slowly opens the door and discovers Serena, in bed, talking to RONNIE (45), a short, chubby man, getting dressed.

SERENA OLIVER

Jer? What are you doin' in here? Get out!

JEREMY

I just thought you'd like some food, mom. Have you even seen Pat and Bren? They've been starving like crazy.

SERENA OLIVER

Your little brother and sister are fine. Now, Ronnie baby, same time next week?

RONNIE

Maybe a place where we won't be bothered by kids.

JEREMY  
Mom, Pat and Bren -

SERENA OLIVER  
I said they're fine. Now, leave.  
Ronnie and I are trying to have a  
conversation.

JEREMY  
But mom -

SERENA OLIVER  
I said, get out!

Annoyed, Jeremy throws the plate full of chili at the wall.  
The chili splatters and hits Ronnie on the chin.

RONNIE  
Why, you little shit stain.

SERENA OLIVER  
Ronnie, please don't.

Jeremy marches out of his mother's room and slams the door.

INT. MLK JR. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Monroe walks throughout the classroom, handing back old  
exams.

The BELL RINGS.

MR. MONROE  
Alright, that's it for today. We'll  
pick this up again on Friday.

Jeremy gathers up his books and heads for the door.

MR. MONROE (CONT'D)  
Hold up, Jeremy. Could I talk to  
you for a moment?

Jeremy reluctantly turns around.

JEREMY  
Yes, Mr. Monroe?

MR. MONROE

You did exceptionally well on the last exam, but I can't help notice the physical stress on your body, not to mention the cuts and bruising on your face. Is everything alright?

JEREMY

I appreciate your concern, Mr. Monroe, but I'm fine, really. I apologize if my fatigue has been affecting my performance in your class.

MR. MONROE

I'm worried about you, Jeremy. Lately, you've been appearing exhausted and can hardly stay awake in class. Are you sure everything's okay at home?

JEREMY

I assure you, sir. Everything's a-okay.

MR. MONROE

Very well. Off you go.

Mr. Monroe watches as Jeremy leaves the classroom.

INT. MLK JR. HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN BUILDING - DAY

Crowds of students gather around their lockers. Jeremy casually strolls through the hall toward his locker. He begins to swap his books when he overhears a conversation from an adjacent group.

TYRONE, 17, leans against a locker as he greets his buddies, EARL, 16, and DANNY, 17. His saggy pants reveals a pair of dull-colored polka-dotted boxers.

TYRONE

Just got some new product in, brothas.

EARL

Yo, let me get in on that, dude.

DANNY

Damn, bro. Took fuckin' long enough. When you gonna hook it up?

TYRONE

Whoa whoa, calm the fuck down. Are you trying to announce this to the world?

Tyrone scans the area for eavesdroppers before continuing the conversation.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

Look, I got the stuff stashed away in my gym locker. There will be plenty to go around after school, you feel me?

DANNY

I can't wait. Haven't gotten high in God knows how fuckin' long.

EARL

Seriously bro. I could use a fix right about now.

TYRONE

All in good time, fellas. All in good time.

The group disperse. Jeremy closes his locker and stares in the direction of the men's locker room.

INT. MLK JR. HIGH SCHOOL - MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Several teenagers walk toward the showers, towels around their waists. Jeremy sneaks around the aisles and spots Tyrone at his locker. He carefully places his clothes over his gym bag before heading to the showers.

Jeremy scours the area, then walks up to Tyrone's locker and picks the lock. He swipes the dope and quickly stashes it into his backpack, unaware that Danny witnessed the burglary.

INT. MLK JR. HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN BUILDING - DAY

Jeremy exits the men's locker room and hurries across the hall. Benny spots Jeremy and catches up to him.

BENNY

Yo, Jer! Hey man, you wanna play some ball?

JEREMY

Sorry, B. I can't. Got somethin' to take care of.

BENNY

What, you gotta study extra hard for Mr. Monroe's English test on Friday? C'mon, we both know you'll ace the damn thing?

JEREMY

Somethin' like that. I'll see you later, B.

Jeremy darts down the hall toward the front doors of campus. Inconspicuously, Tyrone, Danny, and Earl follow him.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

Clutching his backpack, Jeremy marches toward Slauson Avenue, hoping to find a couple of drugees. Less than a block away, Tyrone appears out of an alley, much to Jeremy's dismay.

Jeremy quickly turns in the opposite direction; however, Earl and Danny block his path.

TYRONE

Yo, Oliver. I think we need to have a little chat.

Tyrone, Earl, and Danny start to close in on Jeremy. Without hesitation, Jeremy darts toward the park, evading countless bystanders in the process.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

Why, you little dumb fuck.

Tyrone, Earl, and Danny give chase. They bump into people and shove them to the side.

DANNY

He's getting away!

TYRONE

No shit. Run faster, you idiots!

Jeremy turns a corner. The three follow him and lose his trail for a moment.

EARL

(pointing towards the park)

Look! There he goes.

TYRONE

Don't just stand there. After him!

Jeremy blends himself within the massive crowd of visitors participating in a variety of games.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

You got big balls, Oliver, I'll give you that. I hope you know that when I get my hands on you, I'm gonna wring the fuck out of your scrawny ass neck.

EARL

Come out, come out wherever you are, you coward.

DANNY

You're in for it now, Oliver. Nobody steals from Ty and gets away with it.

Earl, and Danny shove their way through the crowd, but they find no trace of Jeremy. They catch their breaths.

EARL

Motherfucker. Where the hell did he go?

Jeremy maintains his hiding position behind a nearby shrub. Unbeknownst to Jeremy, Tyrone watches him from a few feet away.

JEREMY

Whew. Such a close call. I thought they had me for sure.

Suddenly, Jeremy hears FOOTSTEPS approaching his location.

TYRONE

Guess what, Oliver. You're abso-fucking-lutely right.

Jeremy springs up and tries to escape, but gets leveled by Danny.

DANNY

That's for making us run, you son-of-a-bitch.

Jeremy grimaces in pain on the ground.

EARL

What should we do with him, Ty? Did you get back the dope?



TYRONE

We can get that later. For now,  
let's make this sorry piece of shit  
suffer.

Tyrone, Earl, and Danny start beating the crap out of Jeremy,  
who lays on the ground, defenseless.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

Think you can just steal from me  
and get away with it, you dumb  
fuck? Not gonna fucking happen.

SIRENS ECHO. Two patrol cars approach from the nearby  
intersection. Two OFFICERS emerge from their respective cars  
and start sprinting toward Tyrone, Earl, and Danny.

EARL

Cops!? Let's get out of here.

TYRONE

I'll get the bag. You guys go on  
ahead.

Tyrone, Earl, and Danny split off in different directions  
while the officers tend to Jeremy's injuries. The officers  
call for an ambulance and have Jeremy taken to the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Jeremy lays unconscious on a hospital bed, attached to an IV.  
Benny sits beside him, arms crossed and his head slightly  
bent.

Jeremy rustles in his bed before slowly opening his eyes. He  
looks over to his side and recognizes Benny.

JEREMY

B.

BENNY

Jer! Are you okay?

JEREMY

I'm...I'm fine.

BENNY

Dude, what happened to you? You  
just bailed right after school.

JEREMY

(pointing to his jacket)  
I...I had to do it.

Benny stares at Jeremy in a state of perplexity. He searches Jeremy's jacket and discovers a small bag of dope.

BENNY

How did you get this!?

JEREMY

I...I found it. Please, B. I...I need you to do my a favor. For the sake of my family, please.

Benny looks down at the bag of drugs.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - ONE WEEK LATER - DAY

Jeremy exits the local grocery store with several plastic bags filled with groceries.

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - ONE WEEK LATER - DAY

Jeremy trudges up the stairs toward his apartment, the grocery bags rustling as he walked.

Mrs. Calloway stands in the hallway, hands on her hips, watching several MOVERS pick up furniture.

JEREMY

Mrs. Calloway? What's going on here? This is my apartment.

MRS. CALLOWAY

Not anymore it isn't. I'm sorry, but your family has been evicted. I know it's not your fault, but I can't excuse any residents from not paying their rent.

JEREMY

Where's my mom? What about my little brother and sister?

MRS. CALLOWAY

I'm sorry, Jeremy, but I have no idea where they are. I gave them notice about a week ago. As far as I know, they could be anywhere by now.

Jeremy sulks and falls to his knees. Complete silence emanates throughout his mind.

**END OF ACT I**