

CRIME SCHOOL

by

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FADE IN:

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

A man in a hunter-green prison uniform shuffles down the hall, his hands and feet shackled to a chain around his waist -- TREJEAN "TRE" THOMPSON, 50, African American. He has a handsome but weathered face, with an expression of menacing toughness. He is escorted by a paunchy PRISON GUARD.

INT. PRISON RELEASE AREA - DAY

Tre stands unshackled before a PRISON CLERK, African American woman, 30s, who sits behind a plexiglass barrier with a slot in it. She slides a clipboard and pen through the slot.

PRISON CLERK

Sign to get your gate money and
personal property.

He signs, and returns the clipboard and pen. The Prison Clerk pushes a plastic bag through the slot. Tre removes a wallet from the bag, finds a driver's license in it with a picture of his younger self. He checks the money slit -- it's empty.

PRISON CLERK (CONT'D)

Got any dress-outs?

He shakes his head no.

PRISON CLERK (CONT'D)

There's some donated clothing.

Tre turns the plastic bag upside-down. A woman's diamond wedding ring falls into his hand. There's a flash of pain in his eyes, but he shakes it off and stuffs the ring in his pocket. The Prison Clerk slides two twenty-dollar bills through the slot.

PRISON CLERK (CONT'D)

You're also entitled to a bus
ticket, anywhere you want.

Tre sticks the money in the wallet.

TRE

There's nowhere I gotta be.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

A grim building on a bleak city backstreet. Autumn leaves rot in the gutters. Tre is in clothes that don't fit and don't match. He looks around, unsure where to go. He steels himself, chooses a direction, and strides forward.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Tre's purposeful gait slows when he's surprised by a BOY gliding by on a hoverboard, then by an electric two-seater car moving silently past him. A MAN ON A CELLPHONE, wearing a wireless earbud, comes up rapidly behind him.

MAN ON A CELLPHONE

(shouting)

I said what are you talking about!

Tre whips around, balls his fists to fight. The Man On A Cellphone steps around him and continues down the sidewalk.

EXT. ROYAL HOTEL - DUSK

Tre enters a decrepit building with a worn sign that's missing letters: "Roy l H el."

INT. ROYAL HOTEL LOBBY - DUSK

Tre passes a HEROIN ADDICT, 20s, dozing in a chair. He approaches the front desk, where a mean-faced HOTEL CLERK, 50s, watches a small television.

TRE

I need a room.

NEWSCASTER (ON TELEVISION)

The gunmen demanded money before shooting the store clerk.

HOTEL CLERK

Singles are thirty-four a night.

TRE

Got anything cheaper?

HOTEL CLERK

In the basement. Shared bathroom. Gets kind of noisy down there.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Tre lies on a cot in a cramped cell, his eyes open wide. A MENTALLY ILL INMATE SCREAMS wildly in a nearby cell. Tre pulls the pillow around his head and closes his eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

TRE

I'm used to noise.

INT. ROYAL HOTEL BASEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tre hears sounds inside the rooms he passes -- a LOUD TELEVISION, a MAN YELLING IN SPANISH, a DRUNK WOMAN'S LAUGH. Garbage lines the hall, including a broken crack pipe and empty vials.

INT. TRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

About the size of Tre's prison cell, with a table, desk, bed, and a small hand-sink. Tre lights a cigarette and opens the blinds on a street-level window -- there are bars on it.

EXT. ROYAL HOTEL - DAY

Tre shields his eyes from the sun as he scans the rundown street. His gaze settles on a place called "Pawn City."

INT. PAWN CITY - DAY

Tre is at the counter of a dusty pawn shop with old jewelry and appliances. A PAWNBROKER, 60s, examines the ring Tre got when he was leaving prison.

PAWNBROKER

Six-prong, one-carat solitaire.
I'll give you two-eighty-five.

TRE

It's worth a lot more than that.

PAWNBROKER

You understand this is a loan. Six percent interest per month for three months. If you can't pay up by then, I own it.

TRE

Okay, but don't sell it. I'll be back for it.

Tre spots something on a high shelf, points at it.

TRE (CONT'D)

How much is that?

The Pawnbroker turns to see what he's pointing at -- a scratched-up, old cassette tape player.

PAWNBROKER

You don't want that old thing. I got newer ones.

TRE

No. I'll take that one.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - DAY

A dismal government office. A PAROLE OFFICER, 40s, eats a sandwich and lazily flips through a document folder.

PAROLE OFFICER

One day out. How do you feel?

TRE

Like an alien who landed on Earth.

PAROLE OFFICER

You need a non-driver State ID from Motor Vehicles, and a cellphone. You got friends from before?

TRE

None I want to see.

PAROLE OFFICER

Family?

Tre shakes his head no.

PAROLE OFFICER (CONT'D)

I'm not just here to keep you out of trouble. I can help you get services -- rent assistance, food stamps, Medicaid...

TRE

I won't need any of that.

PAROLE OFFICER

There's no shame in getting help. It's better than ending up homeless or back in prison, like most of the people who've sat in that chair.

TRE

The State's been taking care of me for fourteen years. It's time I did for myself. I want to get a job.

PAROLE OFFICER

You're a fifty year-old convicted felon. Who's gonna hire you?

TRE

So that's it, I'm done? I should just lay down and die, no good to anyone?

PAROLE OFFICER

I'm just telling you like it is.

TRE

And I'm telling you. I ain't done.

Tre fixes the Parole Officer with an iron-willed stare.

PAROLE OFFICER

Fine. I'll give you the number for a non-profit, helps ex-offenders find jobs. But don't get your hopes up.

INT. RAISEUP OFFICE - DAY

A bright room with a sign on the wall: "RaiseUP Foundation -- Rebuilding Lives, Rebuilding Hope." Tre sits across from an EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR, Latina, 40s.

TRE

I'll take whatever you got.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR

I have manual day labor. It isn't easy and it doesn't pay much.

TRE

Bring it.

MONTAGE

Tre scoops chicken parts into a grinder in a dog food factory.

Tre wipes down cars at a car wash.

Tre carries chunks of broken cinder blocks at a construction site, throws them up into a tall dumpster.

END MONTAGE

EXT. VENDOR STREET - DAY

Tre looks through a box of cassette tapes on a folding table, watched closely by the STREET VENDOR, 30s.

TRE

I remember this!

He shows one of the cassette tapes to the Street Vendor.

STREET VENDOR

Two bucks each.

TRE

We used to dance to this in the stairwell of our project when we were kids...

The Street Vendor turns to another CUSTOMER looking at books.

STREET VENDOR

Books are a dollar.

Tre frowns, pulls money out of his wallet.

MONTAGE

Tre stacks boxes coming off a factory assembly line.

Tre digs a trench with other WORKERS.

Tre carries a heavy carpet from a truck into a warehouse.

END MONTAGE

INT. TRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tre stands at the hand-sink -- it's full of ice. 70s DANCE MUSIC thumps from the old cassette-tape player. He tries to form a fist, but his hands are too stiff. He shoves them into the ice, grimaces from the cold.

INT. RAISEUP OFFICE - DAY

Tre sits across from the Employment Counselor, who's organizing papers on her desk.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR

I've heard good things. You're a hard worker, you show up on time...

TRE

I'm grateful for the work, but is there something else I could do? I got a college degree in history when I was locked-up. I'm good at learning things. I can help people.

The Employment Counselor bites her lip in thought.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR

There is something. A friend of mine runs a group home for teenage boys. She's looking for staff to supervise them.

TRE

I can do that. I want to do that.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR

I'll talk to her, but it might not even be legal for her to hire you.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

A beautiful room with rows of bookshelves. Tre is alone at a long table, reading Eldridge Cleaver's "Soul on Ice."

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Tre strides down the sidewalk with a take-out food bag. He spots a thin STREET CAT pawing at some garbage. He reaches into the bag, breaks off a piece of chicken, and puts it on the ground near the cat, who tears into it.

INT. TRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tre sits under the window, smoking a cigarette, nodding to the MUSIC on his tape player. His cellphone RINGS. He CLICKS the music off, and answers it.

TRE

(into phone)

Hello? Yes, I can be there. Okay, let me find a pen.

He scrambles to find a pen, writes on a piece of newspaper.

TRE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Got it, yes. Thank you.

He ends the call, turns the MUSIC on, and dances to it.

INT. DISCOUNT STORE - DAY

Tre looks frustrated trying on hideous shirts and ties.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre checks the address, and walks up the front steps to the large porch of a nondescript two-story house. He's wearing a less-than-hideous shirt and tie. He KNOCKS on the front door. It opens, revealing DANIELLA WOODLEY, 50s, African American.

DANIELLA
You must be Trejean. Daniella
Woodley.

She offers her hand, he shakes it.

TRE
Good to meet you.

DANIELLA
I need coffee. Do you mind?

EXT. GROUP HOME STREET - DAY

Broken sidewalks and tightly-packed houses with faded siding.
Daniella and Tre walk slow enough to sip their to-go coffees.

DANIELLA
Ever work with at-risk youth?

TRE
You know I did time.

DANIELLA
It's in your paperwork.

TRE
I got some of the younger inmates
reading books from the prison
library. I even helped one of them
get a High School GED.

DANIELLA
Here's the deal. Two staff just
quit on me. I need to hire someone
fast. But with your record, I'm
just not sure it's a good idea.

TRE
I know these boys. I was them. I
can show them how I went wrong, and
how they can go right.

They arrive back at the group home.

DANIELLA
I'll think about it, but I'm not
sure it's the right fit.

TRE
I understand. Thank you.

The front door BANGS open. DESHAWN REYNOLDS, 17, African American, muscular, storms out of the house and down the stairs. JOHN PELL, late 40s, gruff-looking, exits the house, stays on the porch.

JOHN

Go back to group now! I'm taking your points for a month!

DESHAWN

Fuck y'all. I'm sick of this shit.

DANIELLA

You're still on probation. If you break curfew, they'll send you back to detention. Nobody wants that.

DESHAWN

I'm not doing group no more.

DANIELLA

It's part of the deal.

DESHAWN

Fuck that.

DeShawn turns to leave, but stops in surprise when Tre APPLAUDS him wildly.

TRE

Yeah, that's right! You on your own now, thug! Fuck this place!

Daniella looks at Tre like he's crazy.

DESHAWN

Who the fuck are you?

JOHN

Good question.

TRE

Another black man like you, sick of people telling me what to do.

DESHAWN

You don't know me.

TRE

I know you don't need to sit in a room and hear people talk about their shit. Am I right?

DESHAWN

That's right.

TRE

Better to go back to detention!
Wait, they make you do group there?

DESHAWN

Yeah.

TRE

Okay, no problem. You live on the street with me! We steal money for food, fight other homeless niggahs, hope we don't get stabbed in our sleep. But at least you don't have to do group, right? They can take all their shit -- the house, food, clothing, heat, television, all that, and shove it up their ass!

DESHAWN

You a crazy motherfucker.

TRE

But you crazy like me, right?

Tre stares at him, wild-eyed. DeShawn looks at Daniella apologetically.

DANIELLA

Go back to group. We'll forget the whole thing.

DESHAWN

(referring to John)

What about him? He gonna take my points?

DANIELLA

John?

John stifles his anger.

JOHN

You're right, Daniella. We need to be supportive.

DANIELLA

(to DeShawn)

Go on, then.

DeShawn trudges up the stairs, exchanges a malevolent look with John, and enters the house. John follows him in.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

(to Tre)

Well, that was unique.

TRE

I shouldn't have gotten in your business. I'm sorry.

Tre takes two steps down the sidewalk...

DANIELLA

I don't necessarily agree with your methods, but I can't argue with the results.

He stops, faces her.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

We'll try it for a while, see if it works. But I'm taking a big chance on you. Am I going to regret it?

TRE

No, ma'am.

DANIELLA

Good. Make sure I don't.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Tre follows Daniella past hooks with rumpled hoodies and jackets. She waves at a set of closed doors.

DANIELLA

Our social worker, Rachel Fisher, runs group in the main room.

MEMO (O.S. -- IN MAIN ROOM)

My parents don't give a fuck!

INT. GROUP HOME KITCHEN - DAY

Daniella and Tre enter a clean, well-organized kitchen with ageing appliances. A whiteboard is labeled "Chore Chart" with days of the week and chores -- bathrooms, kitchen, floors, laundry, garbage. John fills in names: DeShawn, Marcus...

DANIELLA

John Pell is one of our day staff.

(to John)

This is Trejean Thompson, our new nights and weekends.

JOHN

What? You're hiring him?

DANIELLA

He got DeShawn to come back, didn't he?

TRE

Good to meet you.

Tre offers his hand. John grudgingly shakes it.

DANIELLA

Any advice for him, working with the boys?

JOHN

Just follow the rules and you'll be fine.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

A desk piled with papers and folders. Daniella gestures to a chair -- Tre takes a seat. She sits behind the desk, points to a row of metal gym lockers on the floor.

DANIELLA

Grab a locker to store your stuff. You'll need to bring your own lock.

She plucks a clipboard off a wall hook, shows it to Tre.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

Every shift they get points. They lose points, they lose privileges -- TV time, weekend outings. Nights can be dull. Except when they're not. Weekends you take them to parks, bowling, anywhere cheap.

TRE

They like bowling?

DANIELLA

They're teenagers. They don't like anything but YouTube and video games. They can't afford phones, or they'd never be off them.

TRE

Maybe I can get them interested in some of the books I've read.

DANIELLA

Don't expect too much. I doubt any of them will graduate High School. They've mostly given up.

Daniella pulls a stack of folders out of a drawer.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

So. Let me tell you about them.

She puts on reading glasses, opens the first folder.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

The boy you met is named DeShawn Reynolds...

INT. PROJECT APARTMENT - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

DeShawn, 15, plays a loud VIDEO GAME in a room with dirty walls and worn-out furniture.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

Started gang-banging when he was eleven. Multiple convictions for theft, assault, and vandalism.

His mother's brawny BOYFRIEND, 40s, storms into the room.

BOYFRIEND

I said turn it down!

DESHAWN

Suck my dick.

The Boyfriend grabs DeShawn by the shirt.

BOYFRIEND

What did you say to me?

DANIELLA (V.O.)

And that was before he almost killed his mother's boyfriend.

DeShawn SMASHES the Boyfriend in the face with the video game controller. The Boyfriend drops to his knees. DeShawn continues BEATING him on the head with the controller.

BACK TO SCENE

DANIELLA

Two years in juvenile detention. Got in fights every other day. Then his mother didn't want him back, said she was afraid of him.

(MORE)

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

Boy's got a lot of anger, and he can be a bully. But he's smart, writes rap lyrics. Could do good in school if he stopped fighting with everyone.

She puts the folder aside, opens the next one.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

Santiago Espinoza. They call him "Sticky" cause he steals anything he gets his hands on.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY [FLASHBACK]

SANTIAGO "STICKY" ESPINOZA, 15, Latino, overweight, moves through a dimly lit parking garage, inspecting the cars.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

Undocumented parents with four kids. He thought he was helping the family. Started with shoplifting, hubcaps, car radios. Worked his way up to grand theft auto.

Sticky pulls a "slim-jim" device from his jacket, uses it to break into a car.

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR - PARKING GARAGE - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Sticky hot-wires the car to START it. He puts it in gear and takes off, LAUGHING.

BACK TO SCENE

DANIELLA

He's got some mechanical ability, though. Fixed our TV last week. Just needs to apply it in the right direction.

She puts the folder aside, opens the next one.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

Guillermo Sanchez. Goes by Memo. He's what we call a crossover kid. Went from child welfare, foster homes, to juvenile detention.

INT. DETENTION CAMP CAFETERIA - DAY [FLASHBACK]

GUILLERMO "MEMO" SANCHEZ, 15, Latino, small and slender, eats with other JUVENILE INMATES in an institutional dining hall.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

His father was abusive, violent.
Fled the country when the cops
finally came for him. His mother
was charged as an accessory. She's
serving time now.

Memo carries his tray to the trash-can area, where a small
DETENTION CAMP BOY, 16, slowly discards his garbage.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

Memo's a hard case, mean even. He's
got a mouth on him.

MEMO

(to Detention Camp Boy)

Hurry the fuck up, slow-ass pendejo
motherfucker, before I stick this
fork in your eyes, send you back
blind to your dumb-shit parents.

The Detention Camp Boy speeds up, terrified.

EXT. DETENTION CAMP CAFETERIA - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Memo exits the cafeteria, sees a food delivery truck parked
nearby, the DRIVER unloading boxes from the back.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

He's something of an escape artist.
Ran away from three foster homes.
Even got out of a locked detention
camp.

INT./EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - DETENTION CAMP - DAY [FLASHBACK]

The truck cab looks empty when the DRIVER gets in. He STARTS
the truck and drives away from the cafeteria.

Memo huddles in the slim space behind the passenger seat.

BACK TO SCENE

Daniella sets Memo's file aside, opens the next one.

DANIELLA

Drew Kresky. Came from Illinois
when he was fifteen, after his
parents kicked him out of the house
for being gay.

EXT. SUBWAY UNDERPASS - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

A filthy street with PROSTITUTES and DRUNKS. DREW KRESKY, 16, white, slender, poses in a skirt, wig, and high-heeled shoes.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

He lived on the streets for over a year before he was arrested for drug possession and prostitution.

A car pulls over. Drew leans in the passenger window, then gets in. The car moves to the shadows, turns off its lights. There's MUFFLED YELLING in the car. The passenger door flies open. Drew is kicked out onto the ground. The car takes off. Drew touches his lip -- it's bleeding. He licks the blood off his finger, takes out a joint, and lights it.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

Could do better in school if he wasn't getting high all the time.

BACK TO SCENE

She puts the folder aside, opens the last one.

DANIELLA

Marcus Porter. DeShawn's mini-me.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - DAY [FLASHBACK]

A dark, filthy room. MARCUS PORTER, 14, thin, African American, watches POLICE OFFICER #1 and POLICE OFFICER #2 handcuff MARCUS' MOTHER, 33, her face haggard from drug use. A FEMALE OFFICER, 30s, approaches him. Marcus holds a drawing he was working on -- a superhero fighting a monster.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

Parents were drug addicts. Father OD'd. Mother got busted.

MARCUS' MOTHER

(to Marcus)

Get bail money!

FEMALE OFFICER

(to Police Officers)

Call child services. I'll stay with the kid.

The Police Officers hustle Marcus' Mother out the door.

DANIELLA (V.O.)

Nice boy, but good luck getting two words out of him. Can draw real good though.

Marcus continues working on his drawing. The Female Officer looks at it -- he has added a cop's badge to the superhero.

BACK TO SCENE

Daniella closes the folder, looks up at Tre.

DANIELLA

Marcus is a year younger than the others, who are all seventeen, or about to turn seventeen. They have to leave here when they're eighteen. So we don't have much time left with them. You understand, it's not just parents who failed these kids. It's the schools, child services, the whole system. If we don't turn them around, most will end-up in adult prisons. But you can't just feel sorry for them, or they'll play you. And then we'll fail them too. You have to discipline them, but our goal is progress, not punishment.

She glances at her watch.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

They should be getting out of group now.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Tre and Daniella exit the office as DeShawn, Sticky, Memo, Marcus, and Drew emerge from the main room -- all 17 except Marcus and Memo, who are 16. They are followed by RACHEL FISHER, 42, a beautiful woman with nervous energy.

RACHEL

Write down situations where you felt powerless, or out of control, and how you dealt with them. We'll talk about them next week.

DANIELLA

Rachel, this is our new staff, Trejean Thompson.

TRE
You can call me Tre.

RACHEL
Oh, sure, hi. Nice to meet you.

The boys head toward the stairs, looking angry and sullen.

DANIELLA
Come here, boys. I want you to meet
the new staff.

DREW
It's our free time!

DANIELLA
This'll just take a minute.

The boys grudgingly return. Rachel heads out the front door,
followed a moment later by John.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
This is Mr. Thompson.

DESHAWN
The homeless niggah?

DANIELLA
I don't want to hear that. And he's
not homeless.
(to Tre)
This is Sticky, Marcus, Drew, Memo,
and you've met DeShawn.

DESHAWN
(quietly, to Marcus)
Don't trust this niggah.

DANIELLA
Mr. Thompson will be doing nights
and weekends.

TRE
You can call me Tre.

MEMO
Like lunch tray?

The boys CHUCKLE.

STICKY
Can we go now?

Daniella nods. The boys STOMP up the stairs. DeShawn pushes past Sticky.

DESHAWN
Move it, fat boy.

MEMO
Culero.

DESHAWN
What did you call me?

DANIELLA
Can you make it up the stairs
without fighting?

They continue in silence, SLAM their bedroom doors.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
Your first shift is tomorrow night.
You'll be training with Mateo, who
does weekend nights.

TRE
Thank you.

DANIELLA
Come by my office if you need
anything. Even if it's just to
escape for a few minutes.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre exits the house, sees Rachel and John standing in front.

RACHEL
I told you sports aren't my thing.

JOHN
Those tickets were expensive.

RACHEL
I didn't ask you to buy them!

Tre avoids looking at them, heads up the sidewalk. Daniella pokes her head out of the house.

DANIELLA
John, can you add-up points today?
I have to leave early.

Rachel strides off in the direction of Tre. John shakes his head in frustration.

EXT. GROUP HOME STREET - DAY

Rachel catches up to Tre, who is slow navigating the sidewalk's unfamiliar cracks and buckles.

RACHEL
Don't worry, I'm not following you.

TRE
I wouldn't think you were.

RACHEL
We don't have to walk together if you want to be alone.

TRE
You look like you're in a rush.

RACHEL
I always do, even when I'm not. Is your car up this way?

TRE
No, I...don't have a car. I'm going to the bus stop.

Tre looks away, ashamed.

RACHEL
I should take public transportation more. It's so wasteful, driving alone everywhere.

Rachel blushes, embarrassed by her admission of solitude.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Where did you work before this?

TRE
Various places.

RACHEL
What kind?

TRE
Prisons, mostly.

RACHEL
I've heard it's tough getting inmates to open up.

They continue for a moment in awkward silence.

TRE
You're a therapist?

RACHEL
Clinical social worker. I do
counseling in child welfare and
juvenile justice settings.
(beat)
They're good kids. They just have
issues. Who doesn't, right?

They arrive at the bus stop.

TRE
This is where I catch my bus.

RACHEL
My car's just down the street. I'm
going downtown if you want a ride.

TRE
That's okay, I...have things to do.

RACHEL
Of course. Guess I'll see you at
the house.

Tre watches her walk away, a trace of longing on his face.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Daniella grabs her coat. John has an irritated smirk.

DANIELLA
I have a doctor's appointment. I'll
see you tomorrow. Thanks.

She leaves the office. John closes the door, opens a filing cabinet and searches through the files. He pulls out a folder labeled "Trejean Thompson," opens it, and studies the pages.

INT. GROUP HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

MATEO GARCIA, 40s, Latino, sits at the kitchen table with Tre, showing him forms on a clipboard.

MATEO
You do a bed check every thirty
minutes. Mark the time here.

INT. TRE'S ROOM - DAY

Tre is asleep on the bed, despite the sunlight leaking through the crooked window blinds.

INT. GROUP HOME SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tre opens a door -- Drew, Marcus and Sticky are asleep. He opens another door -- DeShawn and Memo are asleep.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tre reads a newspaper with a pen in his hand. He circles a few items in a section titled "Free This Weekend."

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre holds the door open for the boys leaving the house.

TRE

You're in for a treat today.

EXT. CITY PARK STAGE AREA - DAY

Tre and the boys in a CROWD listening to a 70s JAZZ FUSION BAND. Tre is enthralled. The boys look annoyed.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Tre and the boys move past other PARKGOERS wearing coats and hats in the cold of late Autumn.

DESHAWN

Why couldn't we see some rap?

DREW

Or techno.

MEMO

You can make us do this shit, but you can't make us like it.

EXT. MUSEUM SCULPTURE GARDEN - DAY

Tre leads the boys around the sculptures. DeShawn pushes Marcus along when he lingers to look at one of them.

STICKY

This is worse than that jazz.

TRE

Marcus, you're an artist, you can appreciate this.

MEMO

He draws cartoons.

TRE

Comics are art like anything else.

Marcus smiles.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Daniella works at her desk. John enters.

JOHN

Can I have a word with you?

DANIELLA

Sure.

John sits opposite her.

JOHN

I was telling a buddy of mine, a retired prison guard, about the new hire, and he said he knew Tre, and that he served time.

DANIELLA

That's confidential.

JOHN

Do you know what he was in for?

DANIELLA

They told me on the phone.

JOHN

You sure it's safe to have him around the kids?

DANIELLA

I appreciate your concern, but I know what I'm doing.

JOHN

I'm just thinking about the boys.

John scowls as he leaves the office. Daniella looks worried.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY LANE - DAY

BOWLERS in other lanes KNOCK over pins. The boys are slumped in chairs, looking bored. Sticky walks to the edge of the lane and drops his ball in the gutter. Tre marks the score.

TRE

Another zero for Sticky.

DeShawn stands up.

DESHAWN

I gotta piss.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

DeShawn lopez through the bowling alley, but stops when he sees a woman's purse unattended on a chair.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY BATHROOM - DAY

DeShawn exits a stall, stuffing money in his pockets, the purse on the floor behind him. He finds Tre waiting for him.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY LANE - DAY

Tre arrives with DeShawn, both simmering with anger.

DREW

What happened?

TRE

DeShawn stole a woman's purse. So I made him give it back. That violates his probation, so he's going back to detention.

MARCUS

No!

TRE

He broke the rules.

DESHAWN

Shit, we know you frontin'.

TRE

You want to go back to detention?

DESHAWN

I don't know. Do you?

DeShawn and Tre stare each other down.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)

That's right. King niggah here is a straight-up gangsta. Fourteen years in lock-up, ain't that right?

MEMO

For real?

TRE

Who told you that?

DESHAWN

I ain't no snitch.

TRE

It's nothing to be proud of.

DESHAWN

Tell them why you got sent-up.

TRE

I'm not talking about that.

DESHAWN

Motherfuckin' armed robbery.

DREW

Shit, did you rob a bank?

TRE

Prison was the worst thing that ever happened to me. I'm here to make sure it doesn't happen to you.

MEMO

But you here, right? They gave you another chance. So give DeShawn another chance.

TRE

What do you say, DeShawn? You gonna pull this shit again?

DESHAWN

Naw. Detention can kiss my ass.

TRE

This is the last time. You screw up again, you're on the first bus back to juvie. That goes for all of you.

MEMO

Did you take someone out? Is that why you got sent-up?

TRE

I said I'm not talking about it.

STICKY

Damn, you finally got something good to say and you won't say it.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

Rachel and the boys seated in a circle.

RACHEL

So, it's Memo's birthday today.
Let's all wish him happy birthday.

MEMO

Don't. I hate birthdays. Any
fucking holidays.

RACHEL

Why?

Memo looks at the floor.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You don't have to talk about it,
but I wish you would.

MEMO

My parents never got me shit, okay?
This one time, it was Easter, and
the kid next door got a basket of
chocolate eggs. I asked my parents
for one, and they beat the fuck out
of me.

DeShawn rolls his eyes.

RACHEL

You have something to say, DeShawn?

DESHAWN

I never got shit either, but you
don't hear me whining about it like
a little bitch.

MEMO

Fuck you.

Rachel holds a hand up at Memo to stop talking.

RACHEL

That's why we're here, DeShawn. To
talk about stuff like that.

DESHAWN

He can talk about whatever he
wants. But I don't have to give a
shit about it.

INT. GROUP HOME SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tre looks in a bedroom -- Drew, Marcus and Sticky are asleep.
He looks in another bedroom -- DeShawn and Memo are asleep.
Something catches his attention, he steps into the room.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - DAY

Tre approaches the bed where DeShawn appears to be sleeping.

TRE
Give it to me.

DeShawn opens his eyes.

DESHAWN
I ain't tired.

TRE
I don't care. Give it to me.

DeShawn hands Tre a small, handheld video game.

TRE (CONT'D)
Get it from me in the morning.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tre reads a library book -- "The Fire Next Time," by James Baldwin. DeShawn's video game is on the table next to him.

INT. GROUP HOME KITCHEN - DAY

Tre watches Drew, Marcus, DeShawn and Memo finish bowls of cereal. Memo rinses his empty bowl in the sink.

TRE
You got kitchen duty today, Memo.

Sticky trudges into the room, pours himself a bowl of cereal.

MEMO
(to Sticky)
Now I gotta wait for you? Why you so slow? You usually the first one here.

TRE
That's enough.

DESHAWN
(to Tre)
Gimme my game.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

Tre stares at the table: no video game. He searches the chair he was sitting in, and the floor around it -- finds nothing.

INT. GROUP HOME KITCHEN - DAY

Tre enters as Drew, Marcus, and DeShawn are putting their bowls in the sink. Memo stands by the sink, looking impatient as Sticky slowly chews each bite of his cereal.

TRE

Has anyone seen DeShawn's video game?

DESHAWN

You lost my game!

TRE

I don't know what happened to it.

DESHAWN

(to Sticky)

Is that why you were late to breakfast, stealing my game?

DeShawn kicks Sticky's chair -- he spills milk on himself.

TRE

Let me handle it.

(to Sticky)

Did you steal his game?

STICKY

I don't want that stupid baby game.

DeShawn lunges for Sticky, but Tre blocks him. They stand chest-to-chest.

DESHAWN

Step off, motherfucker.

TRE

Go upstairs.

DESHAWN

What are you gonna do? Take my points away?

Tre puts on his mean face from prison.

TRE

I ain't playin'. Go upstairs.

DeShawn backs down, heads for the door.

DESHAWN

Oh, you hard now. All right. But you buying me a new game.

LATER

Tre sits at the kitchen table, drinking coffee. Rachel enters, heats a teakettle on the stove.

RACHEL
You want some tea?

TRE
No, thank you. Coffee drinker.

RACHEL
Are you gonna quit?

TRE
What? No. Why do you think that?

RACHEL
People burn out. Most don't last more than a couple months.

TRE
You have.

RACHEL
I was a wreck when I started. I couldn't sleep, thinking about the boys, what they've been through. I learned that you have to let go of it at the end of the day, or it'll make you crazy.

TRE
How do you let go of it?

RACHEL
I don't. That's why I'm such a mess.

Rachel smiles at him. His expression softens. They look into each other's eyes -- a moment that's broken by the teakettle WHISTLING. They turn away, flustered by their attraction.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Tre and the boys in the beautiful library room.

TRE
Look at this place. The world's knowledge all around you.

DREW
Um, it's called Google.

MEMO

Can we go now?

TRE

One more thing.

INT. LIBRARY CHECK-OUT COUNTER - DAY

A LIBRARIAN, 60s, aims a code scanner at each book in a small stack on the check-out counter. The scanner BEEPS as it reads each book's code. Tre picks up the first book.

TRE

W.E.B. Du Bois. Learn some history.

He shoves the book at DeShawn, picks up the next one.

TRE (CONT'D)

Candide. You're gonna like this.

He passes it to Drew, picks up the next one.

TRE (CONT'D)

Don Quixote. This is really funny.

He gives it to Sticky, and hands the next book to Marcus.

MARCUS

(reading the title)

Steal Like An Artist.

STICKY

What? I want that!

TRE

It's about using your creativity.

STICKY

Never mind.

Tre picks up the last book.

TRE

Great Expectations. It's about an orphan surviving in the world.

He hands it to Memo.

MEMO

We ain't gonna read these dumb-ass books.

TRE

I can't force you. All I can do is
put them in your hands.

Memo puts his book on the counter and walks away. Sticky and Drew do the same. Marcus follows them with his book in his hand, but DeShawn tears it away from him and puts it on the counter, glaring at Marcus threateningly. Marcus hangs his head, and trails after Sticky, Memo and Drew. DeShawn gives Tre a triumphant look. Tre shakes his head, disappointed.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre leaves the house, sees Daniella sitting on the steps.

DANIELLA

I needed to get out of my office.
Take a seat for a minute.

Tre sits next to her.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

How's it going with the boys?

TRE

I'm trying, but I can't get them
excited about learning things.

DANIELLA

They have to trust you first. You
told me you were them once. Show
them that. Talk about things they
want to talk about.

INT. TRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tre lies on the bed, smoking, deep in thought.

INT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre holds the door open as the boys traipse out of the house.

EXT. CITY PARK CHESS AREA - DAY

Tre and the boys arrive at an area of the park with CHESS PLAYERS hunched over chess boards on square tables, wearing hats and scarves against the late-Autumn breeze.

DESHAWN

You gonna make us play chess?

TRE

Sit down.

Tre sits at an empty table. The boys slump down around him.

TRE (CONT'D)

Okay. You want to talk about crimes, let's talk about crimes.

ALL BOYS

All right! Yeah!

TRE

I'm not talking about *my* crimes, but yeah, we can talk about stuff. Before you ask me any questions, though, let me ask you one.

(beat)

If you were gonna rob a place, what place would you do?

DESHAWN

I'd take down a bodega, easy.

TRE

How would you do it?

INT. BODEGA - DAY [IMAGINED]

DeShawn enters, sticks a gun in the STORE OWNER's face. An ELDERLY CUSTOMER cowers nearby.

DESHAWN (V.O.)

Walk in, stick a gat in his face, say...

DESHAWN

Gimme the scratch, motherfucker!

The Store Owner puts a few wrinkled bills on the counter.

BACK TO SCENE

TRE

Bodegas got, what, a couple hundred bucks? You gonna have to take one down every week.

INT. BODEGA - DAY [IMAGINED]

The Store Owner watches DeShawn stuff bills in his pocket.

TRE (V.O.)

Soon enough you gonna get caught, or you gonna get shot, either by the police...

POLICE OFFICER #3 bursts into the store.

POLICE OFFICER #3
Freeze!

DeShawn turns -- Police Officer #3 SHOOTS him.

INT. BODEGA - DAY [RE-IMAGINED]

The Store Owner watches DeShawn stuff bills in his pocket.

TRE (V.O.)
Or some vigilante.

The Elderly Customer pulls out a gun and SHOOTS DeShawn in the back. He crumples to the floor, blood pooling around him.

TRE (V.O.)
You gonna bleed-out for a couple
Benjamins?

BACK TO SCENE

TRE
Who's got a better idea?

STICKY
I'd take out a bank, get mad cash.

TRE
Tell me how you'd do it.

INT. BANK - DAY [IMAGINED]

BANK CUSTOMERS wait in line for TELLERS. Two SECURITY GUARDS watch nearby.

STICKY (V.O.)
First I spray the place with an
Uzi, so everyone knows I mean
business.

Sticky enters, FIRES an Uzi around the room, hitting a Security Guard, who drops to the floor. The Bank Customers, Tellers, and the other Security Guard crouch in fear. Sticky points the Uzi at a MALE TELLER.

STICKY (V.O.)
Then I'd say...

STICKY
Put the bills in the bag, bitch!

BACK TO SCENE

TRE

What if a teller trips the alarm?
Cops are there before you can
scratch your ass.

INT. BANK - DAY [IMAGINED]

POLICE OFFICER #4, 30s, and POLICE OFFICER #5, 40s, appear,
point their guns at Sticky.

POLICE OFFICER #4

Hands up!

Sticky turns -- the Police Officers GUN him down.

INT./EXT. GETAWAY CAR - CITY STREETS - DAY [IMAGINED]

Sticky behind the wheel, PEELING away from the bank.

STICKY

Later, cabrones!

TRE (V.O.)

Even if you get away, the bills got
an ink bomb.

Sticky looks in a bag on the seat next to him -- an ink-
packet EXPLODES, spraying the money with dye. A police car
follows, SIREN blasting.

INT. PRISON - DAY [IMAGINED]

OLD STICKY, 75, stands in an open prison cell.

TRE (V.O.)

And when they catch you, you gone
for life. Bye bye, Sticky!

The prison door SLIDES SHUT on Old Sticky.

BACK TO SCENE

TRE

Anyone else got a brilliant idea?

MEMO

What about a supermarket?

TRE

Too many witnesses.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY [IMAGINED]

A JUDGE, 60s, frowns at Memo, who's on the witness stand.

The entire COURTROOM AUDIENCE -- supermarket customers clutching grocery bags -- points at Memo.

COURTROOM AUDIENCE

He did it!

The Judge BANGS his gavel.

JUDGE

Guilty!

BACK TO SCENE

DREW

How about a jewelry store? I can get rich *and* look fabulous.

TRE

That's good -- jewels are easier to carry than cash. But, do you know how to beat security cameras? Motion detectors? Heat sensors? Jewelry stores got all that.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - NIGHT [IMAGINED]

Drew stands in a jewelry store with ALARMS going off all around him. He sees a safe in the back room.

TRE (V.O.)

Do you know how to crack a safe?

Drew runs up to the safe, and HITS it with a hammer -- it bounces out of his hand.

BACK TO SCENE

TRE

You don't know shit. Who else?

MARCUS

How about, like, a burger place?

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY [IMAGINED]

Marcus aims a gun at the CASHIER. Red lights blink on the many security cameras pointing at him.

TRE (V.O.)
 We'll put aside all the witnesses,
 cameras, and everything else. Fast
 food joints, gas stations,
 convenience stores, supermarkets,
 they all got drop-safes. The people
 who work there can't open them.

The Cashier puts a few bills on the counter, looks at the
 drop safe, and gestures helplessness.

BACK TO SCENE

DESHAWN
 So tell us, thug. What would you
 hit?

OTHER BOYS
 Yeah!

TRE
 I got the perfect spot. It's got
 cash, jewels, all kinds of stuff.
 Security is light. Staff is light.
 And they're in every bad part of
 town, where cops don't give a shit.

ALL BOYS
 What? What is it?

TRE
 Why should I tell you?

ALL BOYS
 Come on! Tell us!

Tre leaves them hanging a moment.

TRE
 A pawn shop.

EXT. PARK FOUNTAIN - DAY

Tre and the boys walk past other FOUNTAIN VISITORS.

MEMO
 How would you do the pawn shop?

TRE
 I got some ideas.

STICKY
 We could be your crew!

OTHER BOYS

Yeah!

TRE

You youngsters are trippin'.

DESHAWN

We serious. You tell us what to do,
we do it.

TRE

Y'all ain't got the skills. I need
people who know how to break in and
out of places.

MEMO

I broke out of a detention camp. I
can break in or out of anywhere.

TRE

Can you draw floor plans, diagrams?

DESHAWN

Marcus can do that. You said he's
an artist.

TRE

You know how to steal a car?

STICKY

I can boost a ride in twenty
seconds flat!

TRE

What if we have to muscle someone?
Punk-ass kids ain't strong enough.

DeShawn raises his fists in a fighting stance.

DESHAWN

Square up, motherfucker. I'll show
you how strong I am.

TRE

You gonna go in the pawn shop to
case it out? Y'all look like little
thugs-in-training. They'll call the
cops before you get in the door.

DREW

Honey, give me a clothes budget and
some makeup, I'll make you look
however you want -- old, young, a
man, a woman...

MEMO

Maricon.

TRE

See? That's why you can't be a crew. You got to trust and respect each other, or it won't work. Stop. Look at each other.

Tre stops. The boys form a half-circle.

TRE (CONT'D)

If we're gonna do this, you got to be like brothers. If you can't do that, I'll find another crew.

The boys look at each other, nod agreement.

INT./EXT. PUBLIC BUS - CITY STREETS - DAY

Tre and the boys in the back of an empty bus.

STICKY

So when do we gonna do this thing?

TRE

There's too much you'd have to learn -- safecracking, alarm systems...

DREW

Teach us!

TRE

You'd have to study real hard.

MEMO

We can do that.

TRE

So why don't you do it in school?

DESHAWN

We don't give a fuck about school. We give a fuck about this.

TRE

If we did it, it would be my way, my rules. I can't get half-way down the line and have my crew drop out when you lose privileges or get detention. So no lost points, no failed classes, no missing school.

(MORE)

TRE (CONT'D)

You do your homework, stay out of trouble. Think you can do that?

DESHAWN

Shit, this haul better be good.

MEMO

What happens if we fail a class?

TRE

Ask me if you need help. But you drop a class, and you're off the crew. You get caught with drugs, you're gone. You understand?

ALL BOYS

Yeah. Okay.

TRE

All right. You're my crew, for now.
(beat)
Except Sticky.

STICKY

What? Why me?

TRE

What happens when we split up the take? You gonna steal someone else's share?

STICKY

No!

TRE

You wouldn't steal from someone on this crew? You never done that?

STICKY

No.

TRE

See? You're lying. That's why I can't trust you.

Sticky stares out the window a moment, then he pulls DeShawn's video game out of his pocket, hands it to DeShawn.

DESHAWN

I knew it was you.

STICKY

Sorry, homes.

DeShawn sneers angrily, but then nods, accepting the apology.

TRE
That's more like it.

INT. LIBRARY CHECK-OUT COUNTER - DAY

Tre approaches the Librarian, who's sorting books.

TRE
Excuse me. Is there someone here
who can help me?

LIBARIAN
What do you need help with?

TRE
Google.

INT. LIBRARY COMPUTING CENTER - DAY

Tre scrolls and types on a computer.

LATER

Tre watches a printer spit out a stack of paper.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Memo and Sticky play a VIDEO GAME on the television. DeShawn listens to music through headphones. Marcus draws in a notebook. Drew checks his reflection in the window glass.

Tre enters with a bulging grocery bag. He pulls stapled packets from the bag, tosses one at DeShawn...

DESHAWN
Hey!

The other boys look up. Tre throws packets at them.

TRE
Listen up, now.

MEMO
We gonna plan the robbery?

TRE
Project. That's what we gonna call
it -- the project. But first, you
gonna learn from the best. You
wanna play basketball? Watch
Michael Jordan. You wanna rap?
Listen to Biggie.

DESHAWN

Naw, Kendrick Lamar.

TRE

You gonna learn about the biggest heists in history, what they did right, what they did wrong.

(beat)

Harry Winston, Paris, two thousand eight. Four men dressed as women stole more than a hundred million dollars in jewels.

DREW

My people!

TRE

Hatton Garden, England. Three-hundred million in cash and jewels. Millennium Dome, London. Seven hundred million in diamonds.

STICKY

We gonna be stupid rich!

TRE

If they'd gotten away with it. Which they didn't. You're gonna read these and tell me why. You fail this, I'll know you're not the right crew. Now get out of here, it's time to get ready for bed.

The boys shuffle out of the room. Marcus lags behind.

TRE (CONT'D)

What is it?

MARCUS

I can't do my math.

TRE

Break it out. We'll do it together.

Marcus pulls a math book out of his backpack.

TRE (CONT'D)

But first, you gonna talk to me.

Marcus looks down.

TRE (CONT'D)

I know you don't like it.

Marcus quickly sketches on his drawing pad -- a figure hiding its face with the spread fingers of its hands.

TRE (CONT'D)

We all feel like that sometimes.
But you -- you didn't do anything
wrong. The people who hurt you,
they should be ashamed.

Marcus looks at Tre, pain in his eyes.

TRE (CONT'D)

You know how many people got your
talent? Almost no one. But it's up
to you to show it. You got to stand
up for yourself, stand up to people
who put you down. Even DeShawn.

Marcus adds a few quick lines to the figure -- a smile between its spread fingers.

EXT. GROUP HOME STREET - DAY

Tre walks through pouring RAIN, drenched. Rachel passes in her car. She pulls over and rolls down the passenger window.

RACHEL

You want a lift somewhere?

TRE

It's okay, I'll get the bus.

RACHEL

You're soaked.

TRE

I'd get your car all wet.

She unlocks the door, pushes it open. Tre hesitates.

RACHEL

We don't have to talk or anything.
I'll just give you a ride.

He looks around at the rain, and gets in.

INT./EXT. RACHEL'S CAR - CITY STREETS - DAY

Rachel drives. Tre rubs his shoulders for warmth.

RACHEL

You're cold.

She turns a knob on the dashboard -- the car's FAN blasts heat through the vents.

TRE
That's good, thanks.

RACHEL
Where do you live?

TRE
Downtown.

RACHEL
What street?

TRE
Anywhere downtown is good.

They continue for a moment with only the sound of the FAN.

TRE (CONT'D)
So...what made you become a therapist?

RACHEL
Social worker, but yeah, I guess it happened...after my divorce. I was going through some stuff. You work on your issues, and then you want to help other people with theirs.

She bites her nails, then catches herself.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Guess I'm still working on my issues. I'm a work-in-progress.

TRE
Everyone is, right?

RACHEL
What are you working on?

TRE
This job.

RACHEL
John told me something. You should know...

(beat)
He said you were incarcerated?

Tre looks out the window, his face contorting in anger.

TRE
How did he find out?

RACHEL
He said a prison guard he knows
told him.

TRE
Does he check up on everyone? Or
just people who look like me?

RACHEL
I said it was none of our business.

TRE
He must've been the one who told
the boys.

RACHEL
He did? I'm sorry. I can talk to
them, explain that...

TRE
No, I'll handle it. I don't want to
get between you and John.

RACHEL
We're not a thing. He's asked me
out a few times, but...

TRE
I meant as co-workers.

RACHEL
(embarrassed)
Right, of course.

TRE
I'll talk to him myself.

RACHEL
Don't hurt him.

TRE
Hurt him? Why, because all felons
are violent? Or all black men?

Rachel stops the car at a red light.

RACHEL
I didn't mean that...

TRE

I understand. You see me, and you think the worst.

RACHEL

He said you went to prison for armed robbery, so I thought...

TRE

You thought here's a dangerous criminal. I guess you should stay away from me for your own good.

Tre gets out of the car.

RACHEL

Trejean, wait...

He shuts the door, walks away in the rain.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tre is alone, reading a book -- Shakespeare's "Richard II." He hears SHOUTING and THUMPING upstairs.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT

Memo and DeShawn wrestle on the floor. Memo struggles to free himself from DeShawn's headlock. Tre rushes into the room.

TRE

Let go of him!

Tre pulls DeShawn off Memo, but Memo attacks DeShawn again, fists flying. Tre puts Memo chest-down on the floor.

MEMO

Get off me! Get the fuck off!

TRE

You gonna chill out?

Marcus, Drew and Sticky enter the room.

MEMO

Fuck you!

TRE

I'm not letting you up then.

MEMO

Fine! Okay!

Tre lets go of him and backs off. Memo leaps to his feet, his face flushed with anger.

MEMO (CONT'D)

I'll kill you if you ever touch me again -- both of you!

Tre points to the door, staring at Memo.

TRE

Go wait for me in the main room.

(beat)

Go!

Memo stalks out of the room.

TRE (CONT'D)

(to Marcus, Drew and Sticky)

Go back to your room.

They leave -- Tre is alone with DeShawn.

TRE (CONT'D)

What happened?

DESHAWN

He was crying. I told him to stop.

TRE

Tell me what you said.

DESHAWN

I said, "Stop crying, faggot."

TRE

Didn't I tell you to respect each other?

DESHAWN

My boys call each other faggot all the time. We just playin' around.

TRE

Bullshit. You knew he'd fight you. That's what you wanted, isn't it? Someone to fight.

DESHAWN

All right, we keeping it real? Yeah, I like to fight. That's how it is where I'm from.

TRE

I feel you. I was like that too when I was your age. A real bad-ass. In prison, I looked around, you know what I saw? A whole lot of bad-ass. And I realized it was the bad-ass that got us there. So I changed. You can too. You're stronger than the others, but more than that, you're a leader. They'll follow you if you take them in the right direction. But you gotta decide -- are you a bad-ass, or are you someone I want on my crew?

A mix of emotions plays across DeShawn's face -- anger, frustration, resolution.

DESHAWN

All right. Let's see if I can be the niggah you want me to be.

TRE

No. You got to want it.

DeShawn looks away, but nods agreement.

TRE (CONT'D)

If it happens again, you're off the crew. Tonight, you're gonna sleep on the floor in the other room.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Memo uses his sleeve to wipe the sweat off his face. Tre sits down.

TRE

You know, when I was in lock-up, you couldn't show weakness. Someone would jump you. Sometimes, I wanted to cry so bad. I'd save it up all day, and then cry in my bunk at night when no one could see me.

MEMO

What about your -- what do you call it? Your cellmate.

TRE

We had a deal to keep each other's secrets. That's how this crew has got to be, support each other.

MEMO

Tell that to DeShawn.

TRE

I did. I told him he's off the crew if it happens again.

(beat)

The same goes for you.

MEMO

I didn't say nothin' to him!

TRE

But you did say something to Drew. The same thing DeShawn said to you, only in Spanish. DeShawn was wrong, but you were wrong too. You got to know your words can hurt as much as his fists. Maybe more. I've seen you hurt everyone on this crew. Even me. It can't be that way if you want to be a part of this.

Memo nods in agreement.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Tre and the boys sit together on a bench while BASKETBALL PLAYERS compete on a nearby court, their breath turning to mist in the cold of early Winter. DeShawn has a grocery bag wedged between his feet.

TRE

Okay, let's see how you did with your assignment. Brinks-MAT warehouse, Heathrow Airport. The one where they went to steal cash, and found a pile of gold. Tell me how they got caught.

STICKY

The security guard ratted them out.

TRE

That's right. Millennium Dome, London. What went wrong?

DREW

The police knew they were coming.

TRE

Someone tipped them off, good. Antwerp Diamond Center?

The boys look around to see if anyone knows the answer.

TRE (CONT'D)

No one?

MARCUS

It was...DNA. On a sandwich.

TRE

That's right. And what is DNA?

MARCUS

I guess it's like fingerprints.

TRE

Yeah, but from any part of your body -- hair, skin, blood, even the spit you leave on a sandwich.

(beat)

Graff Diamonds heist. How did they get caught?

Beat. Silence.

TRE (CONT'D)

No? Okay re-read that part and we'll talk about it next time. How about the Hatton Garden robbery? How did it go wrong?

MEMO

Is that the one where they bragged about it?

TRE

That's right. They made a lot of mistakes, but one was that they couldn't keep their mouths shut. So, you can have the perfect plan, but it's nothing if you don't trust and respect your crew -- not to brag, not to snitch, not to do something stupid.

(to Memo)

Do you trust and respect this crew?

Memo looks angry Tre is challenging him, but then he softens.

MEMO

(to Drew)

I'm sorry I called you a maricon.

DREW

I've been called worse.

TRE

What about you, DeShawn? Do you trust and respect this crew?

DESHAWN

(to Memo)

I'm sorry about the other night. I was bein' stupid.

DeShawn pulls a large Easter basket out of the grocery bag.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)

It ain't Easter, but...

DREW

That's why it was on sale.

DESHAWN

A late birthday present. We all gave money for it.

MARCUS

It was DeShawn's idea.

STICKY

I said to get the big one.

DREW

So he could give you some.

STICKY

Damn right!

DeShawn gives Memo the basket. He tears it open, hands an egg to DeShawn, and then distributes eggs to the other boys, and to Tre. They peel off the wrappers and bite into the chocolate.

TRE

That's what I'm talking about. Trust and respect.

STICKY

You didn't trust us enough to tell us you were locked-up.

TRE

Guess we all got something to learn.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Tre calls up the stairs.

TRE

Don't forget deodorant! You boys
smell like dirty gym socks.

John enters through the front door, a distinctive leather
work bag slung over his shoulder.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

John puts his coat in his locker. Tre enters.

TRE

We need to talk.

JOHN

About what?

TRE

About you telling people I was
incarcerated.

John BANGS the locker door shut, locks it with a key padlock.

JOHN

I used to work in probation, did
you know that? I can tell an ex-con
a mile away. So my buddy, who's a
Corrections Officer, asked around,
found an inmate who knew you. He
said you were in for armed robbery.

TRE

It's none of your business.

Tre dials the cheap combination padlock on his locker until
it opens. He grabs his backpack out of the locker.

JOHN

It's everyone's business if we're
working with a convicted felon. You
might have fooled Rachel and
Daniella -- they believe all that
rehabilitation shit, but I know
what's bad is bad. Same for the
boys. You people don't change.

TRE

You people?

(beat)

What do you want from me?

JOHN

You don't belong here.

TRE

I'm not going to quit, if that's what you want.

JOHN

You're probably still on probation, so if you screw up, you'll lose your job, and you'll also go back to prison.

(beat)

Best not screw up.

Tre closes his locker door and replaces the lock.

TRE

Have a nice day.

Tre leaves. John looks at Tre's locker, with its cheap combination padlock.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre exits the house, finds Rachel standing by her car, bundled-up against the cold.

RACHEL

Let me give you a ride.

TRE

I'll take the bus.

RACHEL

Give me a chance to make up for the other day. Please.

She opens the passenger door. He gets in.

John watches them through the office window.

INT./EXT. RACHEL'S CAR - CITY STREETS - DAY

Rachel is a nervous driver, constantly checking her speed and looking in the rear-view mirrors. Tre stares out the window.

RACHEL

For the record, I don't think you're dangerous.

TRE

Maybe you should. Maybe I am.

RACHEL

Whatever you are, you're doing something incredible with the boys.

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Memo isn't running the others down.
DeShawn isn't fighting with them.
Marcus is talking more. I see the
changes.

TRE

Maybe that's you.

RACHEL

When I ask them, they all say it's
you. What's your secret?

TRE

I don't have any secret.

RACHEL

I think that's all you've got.

TRE

I just don't like...questions.

Rachel's breathing increases, her hand shakes. She pulls the
car over, puffs air to calm herself.

TRE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

RACHEL

I'm having some anxiety.

TRE

Why? Because you're scared of me?

RACHEL

No, because...I want to ask you
out.

TRE

No, you don't.

RACHEL

I wouldn't be getting so nervous if
I didn't.

TRE

You don't know me.

RACHEL

Are you seeing someone?

TRE

It's not that.

RACHEL

I get it. How embarrassing. You're not...attracted to...

TRE

No, I...I like you. I just don't think I'd be good for you. Anyone.

RACHEL

One date. And I won't ask you again. I'd be too nervous to ask anyway. Deal?

She offers him her hand.

TRE

No questions.

RACHEL

Seriously? Fine. No questions.

He shakes her hand.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You drive a hard bargain.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Tre addresses the boys at a library table.

DESHAWN

Yo, why you bring us here? We ain't gonna read those books.

TRE

No, you're gonna read other books, and do research on the computers...

The boys GROAN.

TRE (CONT'D)

For the project.

They perk up.

TRE (CONT'D)

I found the pawn shop. I'll get us the blueprints. But I need you all to find some stuff out for me. Drew, you like jewelry, right?

DREW

Diamonds are a boy's best friend.

TRE

Find out about gemstones. Where they come from, what they're worth, everything. That way, when we go to fence them, we know what we're doing. Sticky, you're gonna learn about safecracking. See what you can find on the Internet.

STICKY

You can't find that shit on the Internet. It's illegal.

TRE

Doing it is illegal. Learning about it is the First Amendment. Memo, you got locks -- how to pick 'em, how to break 'em. DeShawn, you're gonna plan our escape route. Look at traffic flow, stoplights, all of it. Marcus, you help him, draw me a map. I want a report from each of you. If I don't like it, you're gonna do it again until you get it right. Ask me if you need help. And you're gonna read those library books I tried to give you before.

MEMO

Damn, this shit is worse than school.

DREW

Crime school.

DESHAWN

Motherfuckin' crime school!

INT. LIBRARY CHECK-OUT COUNTER - DAY

Tre hands a book to each boy as they walk past him on the way out of the library.

INT. LIBRARY COMPUTING CENTER - NIGHT

Tre -- wearing a t-shirt, hoodie and jeans -- stares at a computer screen. He types "blueprints" in a search bar, and hits enter. He scans the results.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

Tre at the whiteboard, the boys gathered around him. "Surveillance, entry, security, access, escape" are written on the board.

TRE

Your reports weren't half bad. Y'all can't spell worth shit, but still. Today, we're gonna break it down to the basics. You got five parts, like puzzle pieces, they fit together. You gotta know the mark, *surveillance*. Get inside, *entry*. *Evade* security. Get *access* to the goods. And get-away clean, *escape*. You fail at any of those, you're done.

He underlines "surveillance."

TRE (CONT'D)

Surveillance is the most important. You make your plan from what you see. Antwerp Diamond heist -- how did they learn about the building?

STICKY

They got an office there.

TRE

That's right, so they could study every inch of it. What about Hatton Garden -- how did they get in?

MEMO

Elevator shaft.

TRE

They studied blueprints, found an elevator shaft. I got blueprints for the pawn shop from the city.

He waves a page of printed blueprints at the boys.

TRE (CONT'D)

What about the Amro Bank heist?

The boys look at each other -- no one answers.

TRE (CONT'D)

One of the robbers spent a year pretending to be a customer so he could study the bank. That's what we gotta do -- study the pawn shop. I've been in twice, I don't want them to get suspicious. I need two of you to go in, but you have to look like real customers.

DREW
 I can help with that.
 (beat)
 But DeShawn's not gonna like it.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

John follows the sound of MUFFLED VOICES up the stairs.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcus, Memo and Sticky sit on the beds watching Drew and DeShawn standing together in the middle of the room. DeShawn is wearing clothes and makeup to look older. Drew has women's makeup on, and is wearing a skirt, blouse, and wig.

DESHAWN
 Please show us your jewelry, Sir.

DREW
 No. Relax. Just be yourself. An older version of yourself.

The door opens -- John enters.

JOHN
 What's going on here?

DREW
 We're...rehearsing for a school play.

JOHN
 What play?

DREW
 Guys and Dolls. But updated. It's called...Dicks and Chicks.

JOHN
 I've heard enough.

John retreats, closes the door behind him.

EXT. GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY

A light SNOW falls on Tre and the boys -- Drew and DeShawn in their costumes. Across the street is "Gold Mine Pawn," with signs that read, "Cash for Jewelry," and "We Buy Gold." Next to the pawn shop is the "Hunan King" restaurant.

TRE
 (to Drew and DeShawn)
 You ready to do this?

DESHAWN

No.

DREW

Just pretend I'm your hot girlfriend.

DESHAWN

Stop.

INT. GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY

The PAWN CLERK, 40s, smokes a cigarette behind a display case full of gold and jewelry. Guns and electric guitars line the walls. DeShawn and Drew enter in their costumes.

DREW

I don't know. This place...

DESHAWN

We might as well look around.

PAWN CLERK

Can I help you?

DESHAWN

Do you have wedding rings?

PAWN CLERK

What's your price range?

DREW

Up to five thousand dollars.

(to DeShawn)

Don't even start.

The Pawn Clerk places ring displays on the counter. DeShawn and Drew approach.

DREW (CONT'D)

Wow. Can I take them all? Kidding!

PAWN CLERK

See anything you like?

DREW

Yes, that one.

Drew points to a large three-diamond ring.

PAWN CLERK

Try it on.

Drew puts on the ring, holds up his hand.

DREW

Oh my God, look at that!
 (referring to DeShawn)
 Can he take a picture, so we can
 talk about it later?

PAWN CLERK

Sure.

Drew poses with the ring. DeShawn takes a photograph using Tre's cellphone. Drew puts the ring back on the counter.

DREW

Can I try another one?

PAWN CLERK

Whatever you want.

Drew puts on a second ring. DeShawn turns around, so his back is to the Pawn Clerk. He takes photographs of the shop, including two video cameras in high corners.

DREW

This is crazy, but can I try both
 of them on at the same time?
 Instead of one big ring, I could
 get two smaller ones. Do people do
 that?

PAWN CLERK

I guess so.

Drew slides on the first ring, now wearing both. The Pawn Clerk taps his cigarette ash onto a pile of butts in an ashtray.

DREW

(to DeShawn)

Take a picture!

DeShawn moves next to Drew at the counter. Drew holds his hand out with the rings. DeShawn leans over the counter to SNAP photographs of Drew's hand -- and the back room, where a large metal safe can be seen through the open door.

DESHAWN

Damn, you crazy.

DREW

But that's what you love about me!

With his free hand, Drew sneaks cigarette butts out of the Pawn Clerk's ashtray, and slips them into his pocket.

EXT. GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY

Drew and DeShawn exit the store. DeShawn hands Tre's cellphone to Marcus as he's walking down the street. Sticky enters "Hunan King," next door to the pawn shop.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY

Marcus uses Tre's cellphone to take photographs of the back of the pawn shop.

INT. HUNAN KING - UPSTAIRS DINING ROOM - DAY

Sticky walks up the stairs to a dining room area. He looks around, walks past HUNAN KING CUSTOMERS, into the bathroom.

INT. HUNAN KING BATHROOM - DAY

Sticky looks at a small window high on the wall.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Tre and John eye each other warily. Daniella is at her desk.

DANIELLA

I asked you here because I have bad news. Mateo quit. He got another job and had to start right away. That leaves us short again. So I have to ask you both to work some extra shifts until I hire someone. John, I'd like you to do the night shifts this weekend.

JOHN

(indicating Tre)
He can do them.

DANIELLA

I don't want to pull him off days. The boys' grades are improving -- they say it's because he's taking them to the library, and helping with their homework.

JOHN

I can take them to the library.

DANIELLA

That's my decision.

John grits his teeth in anger.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

John enters to find the boys doing their homework.

JOHN

Let's go, time to head upstairs.

Sticky and Marcus put their books in their backpacks.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to Drew, DeShawn and
Memo)

Did you hear what I said?

DREW

One second.

MEMO

We're just finishing our homework.

JOHN

I'm not standing here waiting for
you. Go upstairs now!

MARCUS

(to DeShawn)

Let's go.

DESHAWN

Don't you want us to do our
homework?

JOHN

That's it. You three have lost your
points for the day.

MEMO

What!

DREW

That's not fair!

DESHAWN

He don't care. He just wants to act
like a big man.

John strides over to DeShawn.

JOHN

You want to lose tomorrow's points
too? It would be my pleasure.

DeShawn stands up, inches from John, and balls his fists.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You want to hit me? Go ahead.

MARCUS
DeShawn, don't!

DESHAWN
You'd like that. Send me back to
detention. Ain't gonna happen.

DeShawn tries to walk around him, but John moves suddenly,
knocks into DeShawn with his shoulder.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
Motherfucker.

JOHN
And there's tomorrow's points gone.
You want to go for more?

DeShawn grabs his backpack and marches out of the room. The
other boys follow, shooting angry glances at John.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Snowdrifts line the street. Tre holds the door open -- Marcus
and Sticky exit the house. Tre looks back through the door.

TRE
Where's everyone else?

MARCUS
They lost their points.

TRE
Why?

STICKY
John took them away cause they
didn't stop doing their homework
fast enough. It was bullshit.

John leaves the house and descends the stairs -- Tre follows
him down to the sidewalk, blocks his path.

TRE
Whatever you got against me, keep
the boys out of it.

JOHN
I don't know what you're talking
about.

TRE

You took away their points to get at me.

JOHN

I took away their points to teach them a lesson. The only one they understand. Crime and punishment. You should know all about that.

TRE

I get it, you don't like me. But don't take it out on them.

JOHN

Get out of my way.

Tre steps aside. John gets into his car and drives away.

STICKY

What do we do now?

TRE

Stay here and work on the project.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tre and the boys surround the whiteboard. Empty pizza boxes and to-go cups are stacked on the tables. DeShawn stands at the whiteboard, pointing to a grid of streets drawn on it.

DESHAWN

Here's the pawn shop. The fastest way out of town is the highway over here, but it could trap us if the cops are chasing us. If we take this alley here, we can hit Third Avenue, which has timed lights and lots of parking garages to ditch the car and split up if we need to.

TRE

Nice job.

(to Drew)

What can you tell us about the value of the gems?

DREW

We don't know what's in the safe, but there's at least sixty thousand worth in the front of the store.

MEMO

Ten thousand each.

TRE

Right, ten thousand each.

The boys smile approvingly. Tre tapes a photograph on the whiteboard -- the pawn shop's metal safe.

TRE (CONT'D)

(to Sticky)

Tell me about the safe.

STICKY

You could crack the old kind by listening to the tumblers in the lock. But this is digital, with half-inch steel on all six sides. Almost impossible to break into.

TRE

Good report. But not good news. Everything will be in the safe at night. So that means we have to go during the day.

DESHAWN

We put a Glock under his chin.

TRE

What did I say about that?

(beat)

I've been watching the place. The clerk leaves for lunch every day at noon, and comes back exactly one hour later. That's one hour for us to get in, get out, and get away. But how do we get in?

MARCUS

I think I have an idea.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

John enters from outside, hears VOICES in the main room, but can't make out the MUFFLED SOUNDS. He goes up the stairs...

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT

John searches DeShawn's backpack, and his clothes drawers.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tre and the other boys watch Marcus finish drawing a diagram of two buildings -- Gold Mine Pawn and Hunan King.

MARCUS

This is the pawn shop, and this is Hunan King. There's a gap between them, about eighteen inches.

(to Sticky)

How big was that bathroom window upstairs in Hunan King?

STICKY

About two feet wide, one foot high.

MARCUS

(to Memo)

Can you squeeze through that?

MEMO

I think so.

MARCUS

If we can lower Memo down six feet from Hunan King's bathroom, there's another window on the opposite wall that goes to Gold Mine's back room, according to the blueprints.

TRE

Is it locked?

MARCUS

There's a metal grate that's padlocked over it.

TRE

(to Memo)

How do we cut the padlock?

MEMO

Bolt cutters. Snap that shit right off.

TRE

Okay. We'll need a stolen car for the getaway.

STICKY

You know that's my jam.

TRE

What if Memo sets off an alarm? How do we stall the police?

DESHAWN

We set off a different alarm.

TRE

Go on.

DESHAWN

I hang near a place, like a jewelry store, and if I hear the pawn shop alarm, I put a rock through its window, light that shit up.

TRE

Draw the cops to the jewelry store. That might work. You'd be a good magician.

DeShawn looks at him quizzically.

TRE (CONT'D)

Thieves and magicians, they both use misdirection, distraction. They get you looking at one hand, so you don't see what's in the other. Like getting the cops to go to the wrong alarm. See, a good plan is more than cutting a lock or jimmying a door. It's a magic show.

(beat, to DeShawn)

Find a jewelry store that's far enough away to buy us time, but close enough to hear the pawn shop's alarm.

DeShawn nods.

TRE (CONT'D)

If the cops arrive before Memo gets out, we need someone to stall them and let Memo know they're there.

DREW

I'll do it. I'll throw some loud-ass drama at them.

(to Memo)

Believe me, you'll hear it.

TRE

Once we work out a plan, we need to memorize it and find a way to keep the timing straight in our heads.

DESHAWN

I got that.

The door flies open -- John barges in with papers in his hand. Tre tears the photograph of the safe off the whiteboard and wipes off Marcus' diagram.

TRE

See, you gotta watch where you put the parentheses.

Tre writes " $X = 4 \times (3 - 2)$ " on the whiteboard.

TRE (CONT'D)

The answer is four, right? You do the work inside the parentheses first. But if I do this...

Tre changes the equation to " $X = (4 \times 3) - 2.$ "

JOHN

What's going on here?

TRE

Algebra.

JOHN

(to Marcus)

What is this? I found it under your bed.

John shows Marcus one of the blueprints of the pawn shop, with arrows and markings on it.

MARCUS

It's a project. For school.

JOHN

You're an architect now?

MARCUS

No, it's just...art.

JOHN

This is art?

MARCUS

Artists make things from what they see around them. I see buildings.

JOHN

These are blueprints.

MARCUS

Right. Naked buildings.

JOHN
 Naked buildings.
 (to Tre)
 I found this in DeShawn's drawer.

He shows Tre one of DeShawn's marked-up maps of the city.

DESHAWN
 Damn, you stealing from everyone.

JOHN
 It looks like some kind of a map?

DESHAWN
 Yeah, it's a map for...

DeShawn sees his video game on the table.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)
 ...a video game. That I'm making.

JOHN
 You're making a video game?

TRE
 We are. It's a project we're
 working on.

JOHN
 You're not their teacher.

TRE
 Doesn't mean they can't learn.

JOHN
 There's something weird going on
 here. I don't know what it is, but
 I'm going to find out.
 (to Tre)
 Isn't it time you left?

TRE
 I'll just finish-up the math
 lesson.

John hands Tre the map and blueprints, and stalks out the door. Tre closes it behind him.

TRE (CONT'D)
 From now on, I keep everything in
 one place.

Tre writes "Project" on a manilla envelope, and folds the map and blueprints into it.

TRE (CONT'D)
Let's go, hand it over. All your
notes, everything.

The boys pull papers out of backpacks, pass them to Tre, who puts them in the envelope. Marcus hands him a drawing of Tre and the boys with "Crime School" written on it.

TRE (CONT'D)
We can't take a chance with John
poking around. I'll put this in my
locker when we're not using it.

Tre checks the time on his phone.

TRE (CONT'D)
Okay, time to go up.

The boys file out of the room. Tre holds Drew back.

TRE (CONT'D)
Just a second.

The other boys leave. Tre closes the door.

TRE (CONT'D)
Give it to me.

DREW
What?

TRE
You smell like cigarettes.

DREW
So do you.

TRE
You got a pack somewhere?

DREW
No. I stole some butts from the
pawn shop. There's only one left.

Drew pulls a cigarette butt from his pocket, hands it to Tre.

TRE
What did I say about that?

DREW
You said drugs.

TRE
I should throw you off the crew.

DREW

So what? Even if we get away with it, you think ten thousand dollars is gonna change my life? Might keep me off the street a few months while I hit every dealer in town.

TRE

You're smart, Drew. Talented. You could be a great actor.

DREW

I have lots of practice.

TRE

What, you did plays in school?

DREW

I performed in the story of my life. Very dramatic! When I was younger, I played a jock. Then I came to the city and played a queer hustler. Convincing, isn't it?

TRE

But that's not you either.

DREW

I don't know. It could be. I don't really know who I am.

TRE

Show me.

DREW

What?

TRE

Show me who you really are.

DREW

Come on.

TRE

Hi, my name is Tre.

Tre offers him a handshake.

DREW

This is stupid.

TRE

Are you scared? You know, you've got to be fearless to be an actor.

TRE (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Tre.

Drew takes Tre's hand like a delicate aristocrat.

DREW

(uppercrust accent)

Charmed, dahling, I'm sure.

Tre pulls his hand away.

TRE

That's not you.

He offers his hand again.

TRE (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Tre.

Drew grasps Tre's hand in a bro-shake.

DREW

(like a jock)

Drew Kresky, dude!

Tre pulls his hand away.

TRE

Come on, show me! I'm Tre. Who are you?

Drew drops all affectation, speaks in a Midwestern accent.

DREW

Just a boring farm-boy from Southern Illinois.

Tre extends his hand again.

TRE

Good to meet you.

Drew takes Tre's hand in a normal handshake.

TRE (CONT'D)

No more cigarettes.

DREW

Fine. You either.

They tighten their handshake to seal the deal.

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

Tre and Rachel in a sea of DANCERS with a LOUD COVER BAND playing. They dance tentatively at first, gradually synchronizing their movements until they're dancing together.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tre is on the couch, looking at the books and artwork around the room. He pops a piece of nicotine gum in his mouth.

Rachel pours two glasses of wine in the kitchen area. She emerges with the wine, sets one in front of Tre.

TRE

Sorry, I don't drink alcohol.

RACHEL

Never?

He shakes his head no.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Then I won't either.

She sets the glasses aside, sits next to him on the couch.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I haven't danced like that in years.

TRE

Me neither.

Their eyes meet -- they linger a moment, then turn away.

RACHEL

Memo told me the way you helped him after his fight with DeShawn.

TRE

Well, you got him to open-up about the Easter basket.

RACHEL

You really care about the boys.

TRE

So do you.

They look into each other eyes again...and kiss.

TRE (CONT'D)

I can't do this.

RACHEL

Why not?

TRE

You're a good person...

RACHEL

Don't make me out to be a saint.
We've all done shitty things.

TRE

Not like mine.

RACHEL

Really?

(beat)

My husband was a lawyer. He was never home, and...God, it sounds so cliché, the lonely housewife. Of course, it was our good friend, so when my husband found out I'd been cheating on him, it broke up our friend's marriage too.

(beat)

That's when I started therapy.

(beat)

Your turn.

Tre stays silent.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I just told you the worst, most painful, humiliating thing I've ever done.

Tre shakes his head.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You're right. Maybe it's not a good idea.

Tre gets up, grabs his jacket.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You know, I always tell the boys, you can't change what you've done, only what you do next.

TRE

Good advice. For the boys.

Tre hustles out the door. When it shuts behind him, Rachel punches the couch in frustration.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre holds the door open for the boys as they leave the house. The snowdrifts have withered and turned dark with grime.

TRE

We're going off-script today. Hope you know your lines.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

John peeks through the front window at Tre and the boys walking away. When they're out of sight, he grabs Tre's cheap dial-combination padlock, and yanks it hard as he turns the dial. The lock pops open. He looks inside the locker, finds Tre's envelope labeled "Project." He opens it, pulls out a photograph of the pawn shop's safe.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

A late Winter light streams across the soggy basketball courts, which are empty except for Tre and the boys.

STICKY

Can we go? We been at it for hours.

TRE

It's got to be perfect.

DESHAWN

One more time and then we done.
(to Sticky)
Hit it.

Sticky BEATBOXES. The boys move in rhythm.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)

(rapping)

*Now here's a little story 'bout a
project. Tre Master had a five-
finger prospect. But they won't
suspect we be suspects. When we
take all the pawn shop's objects.*

INT. HUNAN KING - UPSTAIRS DINING ROOM - DAY [IMAGINED]

Sticky's BEATBOXING morphs into MUSIC. Sticky and Memo are in long jackets, eating Chinese food. They turn to a wall clock - both are hands are on "12." They jump up, Sticky grabs a backpack, and they race toward the bathroom door.

STICKY AND MEMO

Twelve up straight in the daylight.

INT. HUNAN KING BATHROOM - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Sticky locks the bathroom door. Memo puts on latex gloves.

MEMO

Sticky and Memo lock the can up tight.

They open their jackets -- they're both wearing climbing harnesses. Sticky pulls a rope out of the backpack.

STICKY

Then they clip on the snake and Memo slips out.

Sticky and Memo each clip an end of the rope to their belts. Sticky gives Memo a boost up and through the window. Memo pokes his head back in.

MEMO

Hey, don't forget, Sticky, pass the clips out!

Sticky pulls a pair of bolt cutters from the backpack, tosses them up to Memo.

EXT. GAP BETWEEN GOLD MINE AND HUNAN KING - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Hanging six feet below the bathroom window on the rope clipped to his harness, Memo turns around to face the opposite wall -- a metal grate covering a window, secured with a padlock. Memo cuts the padlock off with the bolt cutters, slides the grate aside, and opens the window.

MEMO

Memo cuts the lock and slides the latch. Lets the clips go...

Memo drops the bolt cutters...

...Marcus catches them on the ground below him.

MARCUS

Marcus makes the catch.

INT. GOLD MINE BACK ROOM - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Memo lands on the floor after climbing in the window. He unclips the rope -- it's pulled back through the window -- and he puts a ski mask on.

MEMO

Memo puts on his dope mask. Takes out the bag and hauls ass.

Memo pulls a cloth bag from his pocket and runs out the door.

INT. GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Memo stuffs jewelry and money into the bag.

MEMO

Then he stuffs the gems and the cash in. If a case is locked then it's bashed in.

Memo SMASHES a display case's glass, reaches inside to grab a handful of jewels.

EXT. BACKSTREET - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Sticky breaks into a car using a slim-jim, and hops into the driver's seat.

STICKY

Meanwhile out on the backstreet. Sticky hits a ride and takes a seat.

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR - ALLEYWAY - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Sticky pulls the car over next to Marcus.

STICKY

Then Sticky finds Marcus in the alleyway.

Marcus gets in the front passenger seat.

MARCUS

Marcus gets in and they drive away.

Sticky hits the gas -- the car rolls on.

EXT. GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Drew checks both ways down the street.

DREW

While Drew is keeping a look-out. In case the cops arrive, there's no shoot-out. And if they do, he gives a shout-out. So Memo knows he's got to get out.

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR - GOLD MINE PAWN - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Sticky and Marcus arrive in the stolen car.

STICKY AND MARCUS

*Sticky and Marcus make the scene.
Pick-up Drew...*

Drew jumps into the back seat.

DREW

*What a drama queen! Then Memo
leaves the mark and trips the
bells.*

Memo runs out of the pawn shop, setting off an ALARM. He jumps into the back seat of the car with his bag, which is now bulging with cash and jewels.

DREW (CONT'D)

Gets in the car...

MEMO

...and they drive like hell.

Sticky stomps on the accelerator -- the car takes off.

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. DeShawn hears Gold Mine's ALARM.

DESHAWN

*DeShawn down the block hears the
bells ring. Grabs a rock and does
his thing.*

DeShawn SMASHES the jewelry store window with a rock, setting off more ALARMS. Sticky arrives in the stolen car with Marcus, Memo and Drew. He pulls over next to DeShawn.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)

*That's where Sticky and the crew
will find him. They stop the ride
and he climbs in.*

DeShawn squeezes into the back seat of the car.

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR - JEWELRY STORE - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. All the boys are in the car.

DREW

*Sticky hits the gas and they make
off.*

Sticky presses the gas pedal -- the car accelerates.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY [IMAGINED]

MUSIC continues. Tre and the boys are in a circle, in an empty warehouse. Memo dumps the cash and jewels on the ground in the middle of them.

MARCUS

*They meet at the place for the pay
off.*

Tre waves his hand and the pile splits into six equal parts.

TRE

*Split it up equal, there's no rake
off.*

Tre and the boys are each holding a bag with their cut.

EVERYONE

We all get a share and we take off.

They all run in different directions.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

MUSIC continues. Tre and the boys sway in a circle.

MEMO

Let's all hope...

STICKY

We don't end up in the pen.

MARCUS

Grandmaster Tre...

TRE

And his crew of men.

DREW

So keep your mouth shut.

DESHAWN

And don't bend.

EVERYONE

*Everyone say good-night cause
that's the end.*

MUSIC stops. The boys slap hands, fist-bump.

ALL BOYS

Yeah! All right! That was dope!

TRE

Perfect.

EXT. GROUP HOME STREET - DAY

Tre and the boys stroll down the block.

TRE

See, a good plan is always more than one plan. You think of everything that can go wrong, and you make backup plans in case it does. But even then, sometimes you have to improvise. Drew, what do you do when another actor improvises?

DREW

You follow their lead.

TRE

That's right. Someone improvises, you follow their lead. Misdirection, distraction, and improvisation.

MEMO

So when we gonna do it?

TRE

There's still a lot of work. We gotta get the bolt cutters, practice with the climbing gear...

Tre and the boys see Daniella standing outside the house, her expression dark. They go silent, approach her.

DANIELLA

You boys wait inside.

They look to Tre.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

Don't look at him. I told you to go inside.

The boys go into the house, looking worried.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

When I hired you, you said I wouldn't regret it, but here we are.

TRE

What are you talking about?

DANIELLA

John showed me the plans. I had a good look at them.

TRE

We're making a video game.

DANIELLA

I think you and the boys are planning some kind of robbery.

TRE

It was an educational project...

DANIELLA

Ripping off a pawn shop?

TRE

We weren't gonna go through with it. It was a learning tool...

DANIELLA

Learning? How to be criminals?

TRE

How to study hard, work together...

DANIELLA

Do you understand what we're doing here? This is our last chance to turn these boys around, keep them out of prison. Instead, you put them on the express train. Not only did you jeopardize their future, and your job -- you risked this entire program. We could lose our license.

TRE

I used what I knew. Just like that first day with DeShawn when you hired me. And then you said to earn their trust, talk about what they wanted to talk about...

DANIELLA

So it's my fault?

TRE

No. It was wrong. I see that now.

DANIELLA

You see it now that you've been caught? But you didn't see it before?

Daniella marches up the stairs, pauses halfway.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

You're fired, by the way. In case you didn't see that either.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

The boys avoid looking at Daniella's disapproving stare.

DANIELLA

Well. To say I'm disappointed is an understatement. This plan of yours could send you all to juvenile detention if I reported it.

(beat)

But I'm not going to. You've been making progress, and I don't want to stop that...

DESHAWN

We been making progress because of him!

DANIELLA

I don't want to hear it.

STICKY

It's the first time I was excited about learning something.

DANIELLA

Your grades have improved, but...

DREW

It's more than that. He helped us...with ourselves.

DANIELLA

That's enough! We're going to pretend none of this happened.

(MORE)

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

But if I hear about anything going
on that's anything like this? There
will be hell to pay.

EXT. BODEGA - NIGHT

An early Spring RAIN falls from the sky, melting the last of
the snowdrifts. Tre walks out of the bodega with a grocery
bag. He pulls a can of beer out of it, pops the top and
guzzles it.

INT. TRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tre is asleep, surrounded by empty beer cans and a half-empty
bottle of cheap whiskey. There's KNOCKING on the door. Then
LOUDER KNOCKING. Then a FIST BANGING. He rolls over, groggy.

TRE

What?

RACHEL (O.S.)

Open the door!

TRE

Go away.

RACHEL (O.S.)

Not until you talk to me.

Tre staggers to the door, unlocks and opens it. Rachel pushes
her way in, sees the beer cans and whiskey bottle.

TRE

How did you find me?

RACHEL

I told Daniella I would quit if she
didn't tell me where you lived.

TRE

What do you want?

RACHEL

She told me what happened. John
found an envelope...?

TRE

He stole it from my locker.

RACHEL

Is it true, you were planning some
kind of crime?

TRE

No. Yes. Not for real. It was just an exercise, to motivate the boys.

RACHEL

What a terrible fucking idea.

TRE

They were improving, you said it yourself.

RACHEL

You could go back to jail, and they could go back to detention.

TRE

I know. I fucked up. But you have to believe me -- we were never gonna go through with it.

RACHEL

Do the boys know that?

TRE

No.

RACHEL

You have to tell them. You owe them that much. You have to explain that what you were doing was wrong.

TRE

Daniella's not gonna trust me with them again.

RACHEL

I'll work it out. But only because I want what's best for the boys.

Rachel exits, SLAMS the door -- Tre cringes at the sound.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Daniella works on her computer. Rachel pokes her head in.

RACHEL

Do you have a moment?

DANIELLA

I need a break from these resumes.

Rachel sits opposite her.

RACHEL

I know you're short-staffed, and I thought I could pick up some shifts until you hire someone.

DANIELLA

Really? It won't pay anything near your hourly.

RACHEL

I don't care. You need help, and I could use the extra money.

DANIELLA

Okay. Yes.

RACHEL

I have weekends free. I could take them on their outings.

DANIELLA

That'll work. Thank you.

(beat)

As long as Tre isn't anywhere near them.

RACHEL

Of course.

DANIELLA

I'll start the paperwork.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Rachel exits the office to find John waiting for her.

JOHN

Guess you heard about Tre.

RACHEL

I heard you got him fired.

JOHN

Do you realize what they were doing?

RACHEL

They weren't going to go through with it.

JOHN

It doesn't matter. Planning a crime is against the law whether you go through with it or not.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's called a criminal conspiracy.
I still have the plans, so I could
send him back to prison any time.

RACHEL

You got what you wanted.

JOHN

No, I didn't.

(beat)

I want you to never see him again.

RACHEL

You can't be serious.

JOHN

If I find out you've seen Tre, even
once, I'll go to the police. He'll
go back to prison...and the boys
will go to detention.

RACHEL

You would do that to them?

JOHN

They'll end up there sooner or
later. You can't fix what's broken,
it's time you learned that.

(beat)

And I expect you to be a lot nicer
to me in the future.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Rachel holds the door open for the boys, who plod out of the house.

RACHEL

I heard you liked to play chess.

The boys perk up, exchange knowing glances.

DESHAWN

We loves us some chess.

EXT. CITY PARK CHESS AREA - DAY

Rachel and the boys sitting at a table.

RACHEL

I'm gonna take a little stroll.

She gets up and walks away. Tre joins the boys at the table.

MARCUS

Tre!

DESHAWN

Shit, we heard you got fired!

MEMO

John found our plans?

STICKY

What does that do to the project?

TRE

The project is over. But you should know, there was no project. We weren't gonna go through with it.

DREW

What do you mean?

TRE

It was just a way to keep you right with school, and...

DREW

You're saying you lied to us the whole time?

TRE

It was wrong what we were doing. I should've been teaching you another way...

DESHAWN

We get it. You saying that now so you don't get in trouble.

TRE

I got those blueprints off the Internet -- they're to a hardware store in New Jersey. And the pawn shop clerk? He doesn't leave for lunch. I made it all up.

MEMO

You mean we did all that shit for nothing?

TRE

It wasn't for nothing. You were learning how to trust each other...

STICKY

You were the one who couldn't be trusted!

TRE

I was trying to help you...

DREW

Help us? It's like you showed us a door out of this hell and then slammed it in our fucking faces!

MARCUS

I thought we was a crew.

TRE

We are a crew.

DESHAWN

Naw, fuck you, niggah. We done with you.

The boys stalk away from Tre -- except Marcus.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)

(to Marcus)

Let's go.

Marcus shakes his head no.

DESHAWN (CONT'D)

Fuck you too then.

DeShawn and the other boys continue walking away from Tre and Marcus. Rachel returns, sees them leaving.

RACHEL

(to Marcus)

Tell them to wait for me!

Marcus jogs after the other boys.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What happened?

TRE

I told them. Now they're done with me. Which is good, they can move on without me. You can too.

RACHEL

I don't really have a choice.

(beat)

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

John said he'd turn you and the boys in to the police...if I ever saw you again.

TRE

So first he gets me fired, and now he's telling me who I can spend my time with? Hell no.

RACHEL

What are you going to do?

TRE

Better you don't know. I've caused you enough trouble.

RACHEL

I'm involved in this.

TRE

The boys are waiting, so why don't you just...

RACHEL

You like that, don't you? Trejean against the world.

TRE

That's how it is.

RACHEL

That's how you make it. Because that's how you like it. You shut people out. Okay, but don't pretend it's some kind of fucking sacrifice. It's the easy way out.

She strides away from him. He watches her go, a storm of emotions in his eyes.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Tre staggers along a dark street, clutching another bottle of whiskey. He sits down on the sidewalk, stares at the ground.

INT./EXT. BUS - CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Tre is alone, clutching his whiskey bottle, on a city bus RUMBLING through empty streets.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAWN

Tre moves past grave markers in the early morning light. He stops, stares at one of two side-by-side grave markers.

INSERT: DENISE STEVENS' GRAVE MARKER

The marker reads: "In Loving Memory Of Denise Kimberly Stephens. 1964 - 1997. Beloved daughter, wife and sister. You were taken too soon, but we know you are at peace in heaven."

Tre looks at the other marker.

INSERT: TERRY STEVENS' GRAVE MARKER

The marker reads: "Terence Mayhew Stephens. 1963 - 1997. Devoted son, brother, and husband. You are forever in our hearts."

Tre looks at the whiskey bottle in his hand, and SMASHES it on the ground. He gets down on his knees, tears running down his face. He POUNDS his head against the ground.

TRE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rachel drinks tea, gazes at the empty couch. The doorbell RINGS. She opens it, finds Tre with a bruise on his head.

RACHEL

Oh, my God, what happened?

She pulls him inside, brings him to sit on the couch.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Sit here.

She pours water on a kitchen towel, and dabs at the wound.

TRE

It's okay.

He pushes her hand away.

RACHEL

You're hurt.

TRE

Listen to me. For fourteen years, I hid behind a mask to survive. You make up a violent crime so the other inmates don't mess with you. I chose armed robbery. And when I got out, I kept the mask on. Because, you were right, it's easier than the truth. Because the truth is worse than the lie.

(MORE)

TRE (CONT'D)

(beat)

It wasn't armed robbery. It was
DUI. Manslaughter. Four people
died, including my sister Denise,
her husband Terry, and a man in the
car I hit who was driving home to
his family.

RACHEL

But...it was an accident.

TRE

I was drunk. I shouldn't have been
driving.

INT./EXT. TRE'S CAR - CITY STREET - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

A younger Tre is driving with his sister, DENISE STEVENS, 33,
and her husband, TERRY STEVENS, 34. They're all SINGING along
to the RADIO. Tre drifts across the center line...

DENISE

Watch out!

A car's HORN sounds an instant before the head-on CRASH.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

A HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR hands the younger Tre a plastic bag.
He reaches inside, pulls out the wedding ring. POLICE OFFICER
#6 and POLICE OFFICER #7 approach, their radios CRACKLING.

BACK TO SCENE

RACHEL

That's why you don't drive.

TRE

I can't ever get a license.

RACHEL

And why you stopped drinking.

TRE

I will again.

Rachel gets a curious look on her face.

RACHEL

Wait. You said four people died.

Tre takes a moment before he answers.

TRE

Denise was pregnant. I killed my sister and her baby girl.

RACHEL

I'm so sorry.

TRE

I'll leave now. I just came here to tell you the truth. And to say I'm sorry, for making you think I was someone I wasn't.

He rises from the couch, but she takes his hand, pulls him back down.

RACHEL

You just showed me who you are. Someone who can open up, and apologize for what they've done.

(beat)

So where does this leave us? John says we can't see each other.

He looks into her eyes.

TRE

Fuck John.

They kiss with all their pent-up passion.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tre and Rachel lounge in bed.

RACHEL

What were you like as a kid?

TRE

My father died of liver disease when I was ten. My mom struggled, worked minimum wage. I ran wild. She didn't deserve all the shit I put her through.

(BEAT)

She died a few years ago. Breast cancer.

RACHEL

I wish I knew you when you were younger.

TRE

No, you don't. I was a punk. I robbed, sold drugs. In prison, this older con named Cash saw me getting high, wasting my time. He offered me a pack of cigarettes to read a book. I thought he was crazy, but a pack of cigarettes is worth a lot in lock-up, so I did it. "Native Son," by Richard Wright. That was the start. After that, I couldn't stop. By the time I left, I'd read half the prison library.

RACHEL

What happened to Cash?

TRE

He got MS, died in prison. One day at the end, I asked him if there was anything I could do for him. He told me to do for other people what he'd done for me.

(beat)

What about you? What were you like?

RACHEL

I was different too. I wanted the whole suburban life, with the house, the husband, kids. At least I screwed it up before we got to the kids part.

TRE

Do you still want that, the whole suburban life?

RACHEL

No. I want this.

They kiss, and roll into each other's arms.

INT. PAWN CITY - DAY

Tre and Rachel at the counter with the Pawnbroker, who plucks the wedding ring out of a display case.

PAWNBROKER

Here it is. One-carat solitaire. You're lucky it's still here. Cost you twelve hundred.

TRE

I can't afford that.

Rachel hands the Pawnbroker her credit card.

TRE (CONT'D)
I'll find a way to pay you back.

Tre stares at the ring, and then places it in Rachel's hand.

TRE (CONT'D)
Take it. It's yours until I can pay you back.

RACHEL
You don't have to do that.

TRE
Please. It's just gonna sit in my pocket. I'd rather see it on you.

She slips it onto her finger.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

Rachel with the boys, who stare at the floor.

RACHEL
You need to forgive him, for your own good.

They stay silent. KNOCKING on the door.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Come in.

Daniella enters.

DANIELLA
Okay if I tell the boys something?
I want you to hear it too.

Rachel nods.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
DeShawn, I don't know how you did it, but you're gonna pass all your classes and graduate on-time. The guidance counselor said she'd write a letter of recommendation, so college is not out of reach.

DESHAWN
Shit, I can't afford no college.

DANIELLA

She'll help you with scholarships,
grants, loans. It's all there if
you want it.

DESHAWN

(surprised)

Damn.

DANIELLA

Speaking of passing tests, Drew,
your drug tests were clean for the
last six months, so you're off
probation. College is there for
you, too. You're missing a few
credits, but you can make them up
in summer school.

DREW

(sarcastic)

Great, I'll do that when I'm living
on the street.

DANIELLA

The RaiseUp Foundation has an adult
program. They'll help you find
work, an apartment. Even pay your
rent while you get on your feet.

DREW

Wow, that's...great.

DANIELLA

Sticky, your science teacher, Mr.
Gordon, thinks you could get into a
technical college if you're
interested. You could learn to fix
and build all kinds of things.

Sticky nods approvingly.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

Memo, you failed two subjects, so
you won't graduate this year.

Memo frowns.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

But your grades have improved, and
with the right help, you could get
a GED. That leaves community
college or junior college open to
you.

He looks hopeful.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
And finally, Marcus. Our baby.

OTHER BOYS
Awww! Our baby!

MARCUS
Don't call me that.

DANIELLA
You have another year to graduate.
Your grades have also picked up,
and your art teacher, Ms. Soledad,
thinks you could get a scholarship
for art school when you graduate.

Marcus smiles.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
Six months ago, I wasn't sure if
any of you were gonna make it. But
now...I am so proud of you.

Daniella smiles at Rachel, and sees Tre's ring on her finger.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
Is that a wedding ring?

RACHEL
No, it's just...a loan. From a
friend.

DANIELLA
Well, it's a nice ring.

RACHEL
Thank you.

Daniella exits.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(to all boys)
Now we know what Tre did for you.
What are you gonna do for him?

EXT. PARK FOUNTAIN - DAY

Early Spring sunshine breaks through the clouds. Rachel and the boys circle the fountain. They find Tre feeding pigeons from a bag of popcorn.

RACHEL

You shouldn't do that. It makes them dependent.

TRE

City pigeons need a little help.

MEMO

We got something to say to you.

DESHAWN

We hate that you lied to us.

STICKY

But it ain't right what John's doing.

TRE

She told you.

Tre looks at Rachel -- she nods.

MARCUS

So we talked on it, and we agreed.

DREW

We're getting the band back together.

TRE

What?

DESHAWN

We gonna help you steal the plans back from John.

RACHEL

That's not why I brought you here! I wanted you to forgive him.

TRE

No. No way.

STICKY

We're in this as much as you!

MEMO

As long as John has the plans, you in danger and we in danger.

TRE

What we were doing was wrong.

DREW

This is different. We're not doing it to make money.

TRE

It's not worth you getting in any more trouble. And that's the end of it.

Tre looks resolute. The boys shake their heads, frustrated.

RACHEL

On the other hand, maybe they have a point.

TRE

You're not serious.

RACHEL

John stole the plans from you. Stealing them back isn't wrong.

TRE

I can't believe you're saying that, after everything that happened. But no, I'm sorry. I'm not doing it.

RACHEL

Fine.

(beat)

We'll do it without you.

ALL BOYS

Yeah! That's right! She bad!

TRE

You're going to get arrested.

RACHEL

So help us. Or get out of our way and see what happens.

TRE

You have no idea what you're doing.

RACHEL

Maybe, but it's better than doing nothing. I don't want John holding this over our heads. I want to do something about it. Don't you?

Tre sees the determination on all their faces.

TRE
 (to Rachel)
 You might not like what we have to do.

RACHEL
 Bring it.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Rachel puts her coat in her locker. John enters.

JOHN
 Rachel. Meet me Friday for a late lunch before my shift.

RACHEL
 No, thank you.

JOHN
 You can't ignore me. You go out with me, or I'll go to the police.

Rachel purses her lips in silent anger.

EXT. BOAT POND - DAY

Tre, Rachel and the boys watch TOURISTS in row boats.

DESHAWN
 We could break into his apartment.

TRE
 We have to be sure he's not there.

STICKY
 We could do it when he's working.

MEMO
 We're with him when he's working.

STICKY
 Oh, right.

RACHEL
 He's forcing me to have a late lunch with him on Friday. So he'll be out of his apartment then.

TRE
 But they'll be in school.

RACHEL
 Not if I write them excuse notes.

DREW

What if he has the plans on him?

TRE

Let's think about this. Where are all the places he could put the plans when he goes to work? In his apartment...

STICKY

His car.

MARCUS

In his locker.

RACHEL

Or that ugly bag he takes to work.

TRE

We need a plan that covers all of them. Any ideas?

DESHAWN

A man once told me that you make your plan from what you see.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

John gets out of his car with his jacket and work bag.

Across the street, hidden from view, Marcus spies on him.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

John stuffs his coat in his locker.

Outside on the porch, Sticky watches him through the window.

EXT. JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Memo is at the front door of a three-story building wearing a pizza delivery uniform with the hat pulled down low, and carrying pizza boxes on his shoulder that block a security camera's view. He presses every apartment's intercom button.

TENANT (V.O. - INTERCOM)

Hello?

MEMO

Pizza delivery.

The BUZZER sounds. Memo pushes the door open.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Memo uses Tre's phone to take photographs of John's door.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Memo takes photographs of the hallway -- including a small window.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND JOHN'S BUILDING - DAY

Drew uses Tre's phone to photograph the back of the building.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Tre, Rachel and the boys are collapsed, exhausted, around a table covered in papers, photographs and diagrams.

DREW

That's one crazy plan.

RACHEL

(to Tre)

You think it will work?

TRE

Probably not.

They collect their papers and drift away from the table. Something catches Tre's attention -- a WORKER in a protective suit enters an area of the library sealed-off with plastic sheeting that's been duct-taped to the walls and ceiling.

TRE (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. One more thing.

Everyone GROANS, and shuffles back toward the table.

INT. HOME IMPROVEMENT STORE - DAY

Tre pushes a shopping cart as Marcus piles items into it -- respirators, safety goggles, protective coveralls, plastic sheeting, duct tape, utility knives, a spray bottle, a squeegee, bolt cutters, cans of spray paint...

INT. ROCK GYM - DAY

Rachel and a CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR, 20s, watch DeShawn belay Sticky on a climbing wall.

CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR

(to DeShawn)

Keep it pretty taut, but give him enough slack so he can move.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT

Memo opens a padlock with lock-picking tools. There's THUMPING up the stairs. He tosses the padlock and tools into his backpack just as John enters the room.

JOHN

Dinner in ten minutes.

Memo nods. John looks around, exits. Memo takes the lock and tools out of his backpack, picks the lock again.

INT. RACHEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tre packs gear into a large duffel bag -- protective suits, climbing harnesses, rolls of duct tape...

TRE

You ready?

RACHEL

Just a second.

Rachel snaps the heel off her shoe and glues it back on. She slides the shoes on, careful not to break the lightly-glued heel. Her breathing increases. She puffs air to calm herself.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Can you tell I'm nervous?

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Rachel KNOCKS on John's door - he answers.

JOHN

The place is right around the corner.

John exits his apartment with his leather work bag. He turns the two locks on his door.

EXT. JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

John holds the front door open for Rachel. She trips going through the door, lands in the doorway.

JOHN

Are you okay?

RACHEL

I think so. I broke a heel.

She holds her shoe up to him. As he's looking at it, she slips a thin strip of wood into the doorjamb with her other hand. He helps her up. She puts on the broken shoe and hobbles away from the building, holding onto him for support.

The door closes behind them -- but not all the way because of the strip of wood in the doorjamb.

Tre, DeShawn, Sticky, Memo and Marcus arrive with bags of gear -- Tre and Marcus in protective coveralls and booties. They stream into the building.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Memo and Tre cut plastic sheeting with utility knives. Marcus, DeShawn and Sticky continue up the stairs with a duffel bag. Memo stands in front of John's door. Tre duct-tapes plastic to the ceiling and walls, covering Memo and the door from view.

INSIDE PLASTIC SHEETING COVERING JOHN'S DOOR

Memo works on one of the door locks with his lock-picking tools.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Marcus duct-tapes plastic, hiding DeShawn, Sticky, the duffel bag, and the small window from view.

INSIDE PLASTIC SHEETING COVERING THIRD FLOOR WINDOW

DeShawn and Sticky remove equipment from the duffel bag -- a climbing harness, rope, carabiners, bolt cutters...

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tre puts on a respirator and goggles, and pulls on the protective suit's hood.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Marcus puts on a respirator and goggles, and pulls on the protective suit's hood.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

John and Rachel at a table, surveying their menus.

JOHN

You know what you want?

RACHEL

It takes me a long time to decide.

JOHN
I'll order for us.

John touches the arm of a passing WAITER, 30s.

JOHN (CONT'D)
We're ready to order.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND JOHN'S BUILDING - DAY

DeShawn lowers Sticky out the window -- Sticky's backpack has the bolt-cutters poking out the top.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tre sees Sticky outside the window on his floor. Sticky scrambles to one side, then swings back into view.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND JOHN'S BUILDING - DAY

DeShawn swings Sticky side-to-side until he can reach a window covered by a metal grate with a padlock on it. Sticky uses a carabiner to clip himself onto the metal grate. He pulls out the bolt cutters and tries to cut the padlock, but it's too thick to easily break through.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tre speaks through the respirator, at the plastic sheeting.

TRE
How's it going?

INSIDE PLASTIC SHEETING COVERING JOHN'S DOOR

Memo works on the first lock.

MEMO
I don't know if I can do it!

TRE (O.S. - OUTSIDE SHEETING)
Keep trying!

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Marcus speaks through the respirator, at the plastic sheeting.

MARCUS
What's happening?

DESHAWN (O.S. - INSIDE SHEETING)
The padlock is too thick!

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The Waiter brings John and Rachel plates of food.

RACHEL
(disappointed)
That was fast.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

An ELDERLY TENANT, 80s, emerges from an apartment, sees the plastic sheeting and Marcus in the protective gear.

MARCUS
Asbestos removal. Keep moving.

The Elderly Tenant totters down the stairs.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The Elderly Tenant finds Tre in his protective gear, and more plastic sheeting.

ELDERLY TENANT
More asbestos!

TRE
We could have a leak.

The Elderly Tenant scurries down the stairs.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

John has finished his food. Rachel has barely started.

JOHN
It's time for me to go.

RACHEL
No, wait. We hardly talked. Tell me more about yourself.

JOHN
Well, I was ROTC in High School...

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

INSIDE PLASTIC SHEETING COVERING JOHN'S DOOR

Memo turns the lock -- it CLICKS open.

MEMO
I got the first one!

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND JOHN'S BUILDING - DAY

Sticky cuts through the padlock, and pulls the metal grate aside, revealing the window behind it. He loops the bolt cutters onto the metal grate.

BUSINESSMAN (O.S.)
Excuse me. What are you doing?

Sticky sees a BUSINESSMAN, 50s, in the alley behind him.

STICKY
Washing windows!

He pulls a spray bottle and squeegee out of the backpack, and cleans the window. The Businessman moves on.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

John and Rachel exit the restaurant, John with his work bag. He checks his phone.

JOHN
I'm going to be late.

RACHEL
You better go then.

John scrounges inside his bag.

JOHN
I forgot something in my apartment.
I'll see you later. There's a movie
I want to take you to this weekend.

John strides off down the street. Rachel's breathing increases -- she looks panicked.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tre glances nervously down the stairwell.

TRE
(to plastic sheeting)
How much longer?

INSIDE PLASTIC SHEETING COVERING JOHN'S DOOR

MEMO
Almost got the second one!

Memo stops picking the lock when he hears it TURN from the inside. The door opens -- it's Sticky.

STICKY

Too slow, brother.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tre tears down the plastic sheeting and rolls it into a ball. Marcus and DeShawn come down the stairs with their gear and their plastic garbage ball. Tre and DeShawn head into John's apartment. Marcus stands watch.

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Full of war movie posters, crude pornographic magazines, and dirty laundry. Sticky replaces the padlock on the closed grate with another one just like it. Tre, Marcus and DeShawn search the place. Memo holds up a pornographic magazine.

MEMO

Not even good porn.

TRE

We don't have time for that. Find the plans!

They scour the apartment.

EXT. JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

John barrels toward the door, but just before he reaches it, his path is blocked by a homeless man -- Drew in disguise.

DREW

(raspy voice)

I know you! You're the CIA agent who stole my brain!

JOHN

Get out of the way!

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Marcus peers down the stairs.

DREW (O.S. -- OUTSIDE)

You put a bug in my head, told me to marry Lady Gaga!

MARCUS

(into John's apartment)

He's coming!

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tre, DeShawn, and Sticky rush out of the apartment. Memo looks through the drawers of John's desk.

INT. JOHN'S BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tre, Marcus, DeShawn and Sticky dart up the stairs as John approaches from the floor below. The locks on his door CLICK shut. John takes out his keys as he approaches the door.

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - DAY

John enters, grabs one of the pornographic magazines. As he's leaving, he sees a paper sticking out of a desk drawer. He walks over to the desk, looks at the paper.

Memo is squeezed behind the couch. If John turns his head, he will see him. John stuffs the paper back in the drawer and heads for the front door.

EXT. JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

John gets in his car and drives away. Rachel arrives in her car with Tre in the front passenger seat, and DeShawn, Sticky, Marcus and Drew in the back.

INT./EXT. RACHEL'S CAR - OUTSIDE JOHN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Memo runs out of John's building and squeezes into the back seat with the other boys. Tre and Rachel are up front.

TRE

You gotta beat him to the house!

RACHEL

I know!

Rachel puts the car in gear and takes off, tires SQUEALING.

DESHAWN

Take Third Avenue!

RACHEL

I know!

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Rachel parks in front. She gets out with Tre and the boys, and they all hurry into the house.

John arrives in his car, parks, and walks toward the house with his work bag.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Marcus peeks from the kitchen, sees John enter the office. He hurries down the hall with a cardboard box -- CLINKING of metal cans inside it -- and heads out the front door.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Daniella works at her desk as John opens the key padlock on his locker. He tosses his jacket inside, closes the door.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

John exits the office with his work bag, finds Rachel waiting for him.

JOHN

What are you doing here?

RACHEL

I needed to talk to you. Can we go in the main room?

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

John enters. Rachel follows him in, closes the door.

JOHN

I have to start my shift.

RACHEL

There are things about me that you need to know.

JOHN

Like what?

RACHEL

Like...I have anxiety attacks.

JOHN

We'll talk about it later.

RACHEL

I think I'm having one now.

Rachel breathes heavily, paces the room.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Daniella does paperwork. The door flies open -- it's Drew.

DREW
Marcus graffitied on the back of
the house!

Daniella hustles out of the office with Drew. A moment later, Memo enters, kneels at the lockers, and works on John's key padlock with his lock-picking tools.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Drew follows Daniella toward the back of the house. When they're out of sight, Sticky exits the house with a slim-jim, and sets about breaking into John's car.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

John watches Rachel hyperventilate.

JOHN
Is it over yet? What do I do?

RACHEL
No! Just stay with me!

EXT. BACK OF GROUP HOME - DAY

Daniella stares at the back wall of the house. Marcus looks guilty. Drew shakes his head like a disappointed parent.

DANIELLA
Really, Marcus?

The mural says "Crew House" in big graffiti letters.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
Come with me, right now.

Daniella starts toward the front of the house with Marcus behind her, but Drew blocks her path.

DREW
Wait! I need to talk to you.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Memo struggles to open John's key padlock.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Sticky breaks into John's car -- and searches it quickly.

EXT. BACK OF GROUP HOME - DAY

Drew blocks Daniella's path.

DANIELLA

Can it wait?

DREW

No, I need your help. I'm having serious boyfriend issues. I need someone who understands men.

DANIELLA

Later! Come on, Marcus.

She squeezes past Drew.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Memo is still trying to open John's padlock.

MEMO

Fuck!

Sticky enters.

STICKY

It wasn't in the car. You gotta get that lock open!

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

John looks at his phone as Rachel breathes rhythmically.

JOHN

I really have to go.

RACHEL

No!

She grabs his hand, grips it tightly.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Memo springs the lock open.

MEMO

Yes!

He pulls John's jacket out of the locker -- there's no manila envelope. He looks at Sticky, shakes his head.

STICKY

It better be in his bag.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Daniella climbs the front steps, Drew and Marcus behind her.

DREW
Wait, Daniella! I lied, I have to
confess something.

DANIELLA
What is it?

DREW
You...are my role model.

DANIELLA
Oh, for Christ's sake.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Memo and Sticky leave the office and dart up the stairs just before Daniella, Marcus and Drew come in the front door. Marcus follows Daniella into the office.

INT. GROUP HOME MAIN ROOM - DAY

John shakes loose from Rachel's grip.

JOHN
Let go!

John turns to leave. The door opens -- it's Drew.

DREW
(to John)
Memo and DeShawn are fighting
upstairs!

John grabs his work bag and dashes out the door. Drew and Rachel look disappointed that he took the bag.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - DAY

Sticky watches DeShawn and Memo wrestle on the floor. The bedroom's window is wide open. John barges into the room.

JOHN
Break it up!

He drops his work bag and tries to pull them apart, but becomes entangled in the fight.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Get off me!

When his back is turned, Sticky tosses John's bag out the open window.

EXT. SIDE OF GROUP HOME - DAY

The bag sails out the second-floor window....

...Tre catches it on the ground below. He looks inside, and pulls out the "Project" envelope.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - DAY

John gets to his feet, separates DeShawn and Memo.

JOHN
You're both losing major points!

John looks around.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Where's my bag?

Rachel appears in the doorway.

RACHEL
Drew passed out downstairs!

JOHN
(to the boys)
Stay here!

John rushes out the door. DeShawn takes a climbing rope out of his backpack and tosses one end out the window.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

John finds Drew sitting on the stairs, looking a little dazed. Rachel comes down the stairs.

JOHN
Are you all right?

DREW
I just got dizzy.

JOHN
Are you on drugs?

DREW
No!

JOHN
(to Rachel)
Did you call someone?

RACHEL
I wanted to tell you first.

JOHN
(to himself)
My bag.

EXT. SIDE OF GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre clips John's bag to the end of the rope. DeShawn reels it up to the bedroom window, unclips it, and tosses the climbing rope down. Tre walks away from the house with the climbing rope and the "Project" envelope.

INT. GROUP HOME BEDROOM - DAY

DeShawn tosses the bag to Sticky, who pushes it under a desk just as John enters the room -- he finds the bag, opens it.

JOHN
Where is it?

STICKY
Where's what?

JOHN
You are all in big trouble.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Daniella comes out of the office, followed by Marcus. She sees Rachel hovering over Drew.

DANIELLA
What's going on?

RACHEL
Drew fainted. But he doesn't need an ambulance or anything.

DREW
I'm okay. I just haven't eaten today.

DANIELLA
We still have to file a report.

EXT. ALLEYWAY NEAR GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre rips up the envelope's contents, and throws them in a dumpster.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Rachel holds Drew's hand. Daniella and Marcus watch, concerned. John comes bustling down the stairs.

JOHN
We have a problem, Daniella.

DANIELLA
Another one?

JOHN
They stole the plans out of my bag -
- the ones I showed you.

John points to DeShawn, Memo and Sticky watching from the second floor landing.

DANIELLA
Come down here.

They descend the stairs.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)
Did you steal those plans?

They shake their heads no.

RACHEL
John's the one who stole them in the first place. He's threatening to take them to the police, and put the boys back in detention.

JOHN
That's ridiculous.

DANIELLA
(to John)
You say the boys stole them.
(to Rachel re: John)
You say he stole them.
(to everyone)
Maybe it's just better they're gone. Right now, I have to fill out a medical report...

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre listens from around the corner of the house.

DANIELLA (O.S. - INSIDE HOUSE)
...and then figure out what to do about the graffiti on the back of the house.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Daniella with John, Rachel and the boys.

DANIELLA

(to John)

So why don't you go back to work.

(to Rachel)

And you go home.

(to the boys)

And you all go back to whatever you were doing. Okay?

TRE (O.S.)

We can't go back.

Everyone turns to see Tre standing in the doorway.

DANIELLA

You're not supposed to be here.

JOHN

Call the police!

TRE

Even without the plans, John is still here, still dangerous.

Tre enters, takes Rachel's hand.

TRE (CONT'D)

Working with Rachel.

He lets go of her hand.

TRE (CONT'D)

Working with the boys.

He high-fives Memo.

DANIELLA

I'm asking you to leave. Now.

TRE

I'll go outside, but I'm gonna say my piece. All I'm asking is that you listen to me.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre walks down the front steps. Rachel, Daniella, and all the boys except Memo exit the house onto the porch. John watches from the doorway.

TRE

When I came here, I didn't have a home, but this house became that for me. You became my family.

(MORE)

TRE (CONT'D)

You trusted me. And I betrayed that trust. I am more than sorry for what I did. But most of all, I'm sorry to lose you all.

John moves onto the porch, away from the doorway.

JOHN

Leave now or *I'll* call the police.

Tre sees Memo slip out of the house.

TRE

All right, then. I said my piece.

Tre walks away down the sidewalk.

DANIELLA

Now that that's settled...

RACHEL

I have to say my piece too. John is lying about the plans being stolen. He just said that to punish the boys. I saw him put them in his locker.

JOHN

That's a lie!

DANIELLA

Well, there's one way to find out. Then we can all get back to work.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY

Daniella, Rachel, and the boys watch John open the key padlock on his locker. He pulls his jacket out.

JOHN

See? No plans!

Tre's ring falls to the floor.

RACHEL

My ring!

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY - DAY [FLASHBACK]

John, Daniella, Rachel and the boys are looking at Tre, standing in the doorway.

TRE

Even without the plans, John is
still here, still dangerous.

Tre enters, takes Rachel's hand.

TRE (CONT'D)

Working with Rachel.

He slips the ring off her finger as he lets go of her hand.

TRE (CONT'D)

Working with the boys.

He high-fives Memo -- and passes the ring to him.

DANIELLA

I'm asking you to leave. Now.

TRE

I'll go outside, but I'm gonna say
my piece. All I'm asking is that
you listen to me.

Tre goes outside and down the steps. Rachel, Daniella and all
the boys except Memo go out onto the porch. John stands in
the doorway, facing outside. Memo slips into the office.

INT. GROUP HOME OFFICE - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Memo uses his lock-picks to open John's padlock again.

TRE (O.S. - OUTSIDE)

You trusted me. And I betrayed that
trust.

He puts the ring in John's locker.

BACK TO SCENE

Rachel picks the ring up off the floor.

RACHEL

(to John)

You stole it from me!

JOHN

(to Daniella)

She's lying, again! In
fact...that's my ring. It was my
mother's.

DANIELLA

I happen to know that's not true.

JOHN

How?

DANIELLA

Because I saw it on her finger.

(beat)

Clean out your locker.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Daniella, Rachel, and the boys watch John get into his car, and drive away.

DANIELLA

(to Rachel)

Now I'm really short-staffed.

(beat)

Where is he?

Rachel nods to a shadowy figure down the block -- it's Tre. He approaches them, faces Daniella.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

You helped the boys, I see that.

But you also put them in danger.

TRE

My whole life, I looked for a way to get what I wanted, even if it meant breaking the rules. When I got here, I did the same thing -- I broke the rules, because I wanted so badly to help them. I thought I changed in prison, but I still have a lot to learn. But I want you to know, I'm going to keep learning, keep trying to do better.

Tre hangs his head, takes a few steps down the sidewalk.

DANIELLA

That's all I can ask of the people who work for me.

He stops, looks at her. She approaches him, offers her hand.

DANIELLA (CONT'D)

No more crime school?

He shakes it.

TRE

No more crime school.

INT. PIZZA PLACE - DAY

A WAITRESS, 40s, weaves through PIZZA CUSTOMERS with a tray of brownies -- one with a lit candle. She approaches a table with Tre, Rachel, and the boys. DeShawn and Drew wear college sweatshirts. Rachel has Tre's ring on her finger.

PIZZA WAITRESS

(singing)

Happy birthday to you! Happy
birthday to you!

She puts the brownie with the candle in front of Marcus, and distributes the other brownies around the table.

EVERYONE

Happy birthday dear Marcus...
Happy birthday to you!

Everyone CHEERS as Marcus blows out the candle.

RACHEL

(to Marcus)

What'd you wish for?

DESHAWN

Finally getting some ass.

The boys SNICKER. Rachel rolls her eyes.

MARCUS

I wished DeShawn would shut-up for
once.

Everyone LAUGHS.

TRE

Can I say something?

MEMO

(to other boys)

Yo, be quiet.

TRE

You boys...you're not boys. You're
men. Good men.

STICKY

Damn, homes, you gonna get all
sentimental and shit?

TRE

Let's have a toast.

Tre raises his glass. Everyone raises theirs.

TRE (CONT'D)
We were a damn fine crew.

ALL BOYS
Yeah! That's right!

TRE
To the crew!

EVERYONE
The crew!

They CLINK their glasses.

EXT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Tre holds the door open for Marcus, 17, and four NEW BOYS, 16, who trail out of the house.

SUPER: One year later.

NEW BOY #1
(to Marcus)
Where's he taking us?

MARCUS
Wherever it is, he's gonna expect
you to learn something.

NEW BOY #1
Damn.
(beat)
What's he like?

MARCUS
Tre?

TRE
Let's go, men.

MARCUS
As straight as they get. He's all
about following the rules.

TRE
You're in for a treat today.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END