

MARIA

by

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A single street light illuminates a dark alley. It's light reflects off a small puddle. Suddenly, a foot steps into the puddle at a running pace disturbing the reflection. Three Black youths, TION (17), DARRYL (17) and BEN (16), are chasing DIEGO (15) a Hispanic male wearing a DARK HOODIE, his face barely visible, is running at his full speed, fearful, as if his life depended on it. Sweat is pouring down his face and he is breathing heavily and erratically. As he continues to run he glances behind him. The alley is empty. Diego begins to slow down to a trot, then to a full stop as he slumps over trying to catch his breath. Three different sets of feet (SHOES) one after another trod through the same puddle Diego just ran through a moment ago. VOICES can be heard echoing against the buildings in the alley and in the night air as we see...

SERIES OF SHOTS

--Empty ghetto streets and buildings from varying angles

TION

Where did he go?

BEN

I don't know. He was right in front of us.

TION

You should have been keeping an eye on him.

Diego is alerted to the voices. He straightens up trying to figure out where the voices are coming from. He hears more voices.

DARRYL

We have to find him before he gets to Jefferson.

BEN

Yeah. Don't let him get to Jefferson. We can't follow him if he crosses.

DARRYL

Fuck that. When we find him I'm gonna kick his fuckin' ass. They gotta know not to come over to our side. Let's split up.

(MORE)

DARRYL (CONT'D)

Ben, go down 6th. We'll take 7th.
Don't fuckin' let him get away.

A fearful and panicked look appears on Diego's face once again. He hears running footsteps but is unsure of where they're coming from. He continues to run in his original direction.

2

EXT. BODEGA - NIGHT

2

The bodega serves the entire neighborhood and is owned by a Hispanic family. It sits Jefferson Blvd, the street is known as the dividing line in the community. One side is predominately Hispanic and the other is predominantly Black. The bodega is on the Black side of the street, but is known as the "Neutral Zone" by the kids. It's also is the line that determines which high school the boys attend. Two young Hispanic males, PEDRO (17) and ARTURO (16) are exiting a corner bodega. Pedro works at the bodega. Suddenly, Diego comes running from around the corner and slams into Pedro and Arturo. They recognize Diego immediately.

ARTURO

Whoa ese. Cómo estás. Slow down.

Diego tries to speak but he is completely out of breath.

PEDRO

What the hell, Diego. Where are you coming from? You know that's not...

In a panicked state Diego interrupts Pedro and points behind him as he tries to speak again but the words are coming out sporadically between his heavy breathing.

DIEGO

They're... chasing... coming...
kick my... ass.

PEDRO

Que? Speak up I can't understand you.

Suddenly, Tion and Darryl appear from around the corner where Diego came from. They are immediately confronted by Pedro and Arturo who quickly stand in front of Diego who is now a bit more defiant.

DIEGO

(pointing at Tion and
Darryl)

Them!

(MORE)

DIEGO (CONT'D)

That's what I was trying to say.
They were chasing me and saying
they wanted to kick my ass.

Pedro and Arturo become defensive but are confident in their numbers.

ARTURO

Is that what they said?

TION

(intimidated by the Diego's
increased numbers)
Hey, your boy came into our hood.
He knows the rules. You don't cross
Jefferson, we don't cross
Jefferson.

ARTURO

(looking around)
Well, we're here now. On your side.
What are you going to do about it.

DARRYL

(pointing at the bodega)
Hey, we let you cross here *only*,
because one of your gilipollas
amigos father owns this bodega
dump.

PEDRO

(stepping forward)
What did you say?

Arturo, Pedro and Diego move towards Tion and Darryl as if they are about to start a fight. Tion and Darryl intimidated, back-step, slightly. Suddenly, they all hear a voice emanating from behind them as Ben appears out of nowhere.

BEN

He said you're stupid and this
place is a sad excuse for a store.
Can't you speak your own language?

Tion and Darryl smile at the site of Ben. Diego and his friends back up against the store window now surrounded by Ben and his friends.

ARTURO

(defiantly)
Come on, Cabrón. Let's see what you
got. I ain't scared of you.

The two gangs start moving towards each other in a rumble like scenario. Just as they are about to leap onto one another, they hear a loud noise at the entrance of the bodega. They all turn to see the bodega owner, JUAN (40) Hispanic male, holding a BROOM tightly between his hands. He is sweeping the entrance purposely making loud noises.

JUAN

Pedro? I thought you were going home.

All the kids do a complete 180 and stand around as if nothing is happening.

PEDRO

Yes sir. I was just talking to a few of my friends. We were just about to leave.

JUAN

OK, entonces ve. I'll see you tomorrow.

As Pedro and his gang start to leave Pedro turns towards Ben and whispers.

PEDRO

Another time ese.

BEN

Anytime. Just say when.

Juan makes sure Pedro is completely out of site before he turns towards Ben and his gang. They smile at Juan.

JUAN

(accusingly)

Don't smile at me. I know what you guys were up to. Now get out of here before I call the policia.

TION

We weren't doin' nothin'. Fuck you and your shit store.

The boys turn to leave as Tion flips Juan the bird.

JUAN

(voiced raised in anger)

Get out of here you delinquents. I remember who you are. You're all a bunch of drug dealers and thieves.

(MORE)

JUAN (CONT'D)

Next time I see you I'm calling the police. Don't come back! You hear me! Don't come back!

CUT TO:

3

EXT. MATHER BACK PORCH - DAY

3

DRE (16) and his best friends, MIKE SINCLAIRE (15) and Ben are sitting on the back porch talking about their basketball game from the day before.

DRE

(to Mike)

Dude, you were suppose to post up on that play.

MIKE

(to Ben)

You called a switch.

BEN

Don't blame me, I was on the bench the last five minutes.

DRE

(to Ben)

Yeah, that was because coach caught you eyeballing TESS in the stands when you missed my pass.

BEN

Ah, gimme a break. She doesn't even know I exist.

MIKE

I believe that.

(to Dre)

But, coach didn't bench you when you were making goo-goo eyes at ROSIE (15, Latina) during the tip-off after half-time.

DRE

That's because he knows the team needs me.

Dre's younger brother, WES (12), enters the room.

WES

Hey guys, what 'cha doin'?

DRE

Wes, get outta here. We're talking big boy stuff, here.

MIKE

Why don't you go to the skate park? I'm sure you can find some friends there.

WES

I wanna hang with you guys. Besides...

(to Dre)

Mom told you to help me with my Halloween costume. We going trick-or-treating, tonight.

Mike and Ben laugh.

BEN

Trick-or-treating is for kids.

MIKE

Yeah, I'm goin' bag snatching, instead.

DRE

(to Mike and Ben)

OK, OK. Cut it out.

(to Wes)

Go inside. I'll be in when we're done and I help with your costume, but I ain't goin' trick-or-treating with you. I'll stay home handing out candy, before that happens.

Wes goes into the house, but stops just inside the back door where he can still hear their conversation.

MIKE

(to Dre)

Look, dude, Rosie goes with HECTOR. You couldn't beat him out for quarterback in Pop Warner, what makes you think you can take Rosie from him?

BEN

Mike, you didn't hear?

MIKE

What?

BEN
They broke up.

MIKE
No way!

BEN
Way! Rosie caught him kissing another girl. There was a big fight. Rosie beat the girl bad, gave her a black eye and a bloody nose. Then, she kicked Hector in the nuts.

DRE
See, Mike. I do have a shot. I just have to find out where she hangs out.

MIKE
You might GET shot. You know those Chavez High dudes don't play that.

BEN
(to Dre)
Look, you want to talk to Rosie, right?

DRE
Yeah.

BEN
There is a way. If it works, you will get your shot. Plus, me and Mike could get a shot at one of Rosie's friends.

MIKE
They are hot. What's your plan?

BEN
Chavez High is having a Halloween dance, tonight. It's a costume party.

DRE
What if we get caught. They will kill us.

BEN
My sister knows Rosie from track. They race against each other all the time. Rosie invited her to the dance, but My dad won't let her go.
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

Anyway, Rosie will be there. That's your shot.

DRE

I go in with a killer costume as cover. I get Rosie to dance with me, we hit it off, I get her alone, work my magic, me and Rosie become lovers for life. We will be like Lois Lane and Clark Kent.

MIKE

You're crazy, man. We go in there, we get Rosie and her friends to the dance floor for a slow dance. We reel'em in, set a date to meet up later and we make a quiet exit, like Superman.

BEN

Guys, Lois Lane, Clark Kent and Superman are the same story.

DRE

SHUT UP, BEN!

MIKE

SHUT UP, BEN!

Wes, having heard the whole thing, quietly tips away.

4

INT. MATHER LIVINGROOM - EVENING

4

Dre is wearing a SPIDER-MAN COSTUME, Mike is wearing a GLADIATOR COSTUME and Ben is wearing a EVIL JESTER COSTUME. Each one has the perfect mask to hide their faces. They are dressing Wes.

WES

This is too cold. I can feel the air coming underneath. How do girls live with wearing dresses all the time?

MIKE

Stop complaining. You wanted to be a ghost, so be a ghost.

BEN

Maybe, if you run, you will warm up from body heat.

MIKE

Really?

DRE

Just wear your jeans and a
sweatshirt under it and you'll be
fine.

WES

Hey! That's a good idea.

(beat)

Why can't I go with you guys?

DRE

(sounding like a dad)

Because, we are going to trick-or-
treat man style. You're a kid.
Plus, mom is really looking forward
to taking you. You know she loves
it when she can baby you.

WES

Yeah, but I'm getting tired of
that. I am not a baby, anymore.
Besides, mom doesn't let me trick-
or-treat long. We don't even stay
out an hour.

DRE

That's because she gets tired of
walking. Make her happy by going
with her and I will split all the
candy I get with you. It'll be like
you going out twice.

WES

You promise?

DRE

Promise.

SHONDRA (34) and BECKY (30) enters.

SHONDRA

Hey! Look at my babies! You look so
good.

BECKY

I love the costumes. You boys
really went all out this year.

SHONDRA

(suspiciously)

Yeah, what's up, boys.

DRE

Nothings up, mom. We just decided to have a little more fun, this year.

BECKY

You better keep an eye on them, Shondra. They might be trying to catch girls.

DRE

Stop it, auntie. You always say stuff like that.

BECKY

Well, you are handsome. Any girl would be lucky to catch you.

SHONDRA

She will have to be fast enough to get around me. He ain't getting no girlfriend before he graduates college and has a good paying job.

DRE

This is embarrassing. Come on, fellas. Let's hit it. Wes, have fun. Count how many people you spook.

SHONDRA

You boys have fun and be safe.

Dre gives his mother and aunt a kiss and he and his friends exit.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Let's go get this over with. Wes, honey, aren't you cold under there?

WES

Yeah, mama. I'm gonna go put something on under this.

Wes exits to his room.

BECKY

Don't you have a costume?

SHONDRA

I'm wearing it. I'm going as a mother.

BECKY

You wear that every day.

SHONDRA

So, that's why you are dressed like a chamber maid?

BECKY

I'm a LADY PIRATE. Girl, you better recognize. If a man invites me to a party, tonight, you and Wes are on your own.

SHONDRA

You don't need to remind me. I remember last years Halloween. What happened to that guy?

BECKY

Girl, turns out he's gay.

SHONDRA

What!

BECKY

Yes, he was looking for someone he could share makeup ideas with.

Shondra laughs. Wes returns.

WES

OK, mama. Let's do this! I got candy to get.

They all exit.

5

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

5

Dre, Mike and Ben are walking to the dance.

DRE

OK, we have to keep our mask on the whole time. If they see who we are, we're dead.

MIKE

We should have a signal.

BEN

A signal?

MIKE

In case our plan fails. We need something so we know to break out.

BEN

How about just yelling, "Get outta here!"

DRE

Mike's right. If one of us gets in trouble, just whistle. We can get away and meet up, back here.

MIKE

Sounds like a plan.

BEN

OK.

MONTAGE

- Wes getting candy at a home.
- Becky flirting with a man who is taking his daughter trick-or-treating.
- Wes at another home getting candy.
- Becky flirting with another man. He takes his son and hurries away. Shondra laughs.
- Wes eats a piece of chocolate and gets it on his costume.
- A man approaches them. Becky makes sure her costume is perfect, but he walks up to Shondra. They talk until his daughter comes up. He gives Shondra his number and exits. Becky is sad.

END OF MONTAGE

6 INT. MATHER LIVINGROOM - NIGHT 6

Shondra and Becky sit in the living room talking. We see Wes in his bedroom, holding his costume. He looks at it and he gets a devious look on his face.

7 EXT. CHAVEZ HIGH - NIGHT 7

Dre, Mike and Ben are hiding behind the bushes, watching the kids enter the gym where the dance is being held.

DRE
OK, you guys know what to do,
right?

MIKE
Act like we belong here.

DRE
Right. Don't do anything foolish.

MIKE
If Rosie is wearing a mask, how are
you gonna know who she is?

BEN
My sister told me Rosie is wearing
a MALEFICENT COSTUME. She did the
makeup.

DRE
Perfect. I just saw her go in.
Let's go.

They put on their masks and come around the bushes as if they are part of the crowd. They speak to people as they enter. It appears their plan is working.

8 INT. CHAVEZ HIGH GYM - NIGHT 8

The dance floor is a bit crowded. Mike goes left in search of a girl to dance with. Ben breaks right. Dre spots Rosie dead ahead on the other side of the room talking with her friends. He begins to walk towards her, but he notices a girl in a PRINCESS COSTUME, MARIA (16, Latina), standing next to the dance floor. She is beautiful. Their eyes meet and Dre is smitten. He forgets about Rosie and approaches Maria to ask her for a dance. They can't take their eyes off of each other. Dre whispers something in her ear, she nods and they leave the dance floor and exit out a side door.

9 EXT. CHAVEZ HIGH GYM - NIGHT 9

Dre and Maria stand against a railing overlooking a courtyard.

DRE
I'm sorry. I had to get outta
there. It's hard to hear.

MARIA
That's alright. I agree.

DRE

You are beaut... I mean, your costume is beautiful. Did you make it?

MARIA

Thank you. No, my dad bought it. Yours is not so bad, either.

DRE

This old thing. It was collecting dust in the closet.

Maria laughs.

MARIA

Who are you?

DRE

Spider-Man! Don't you get it.

MARIA

(snappy)

I know the costume. I mean you! You seem much nicer than most of the boys at this school.

DRE

Oh, I forgot.

(removing mask)

Hello, my name is Dre. And you?

Maria thinks she knows him, but can't place where from.

MARIA

I'm Maria. How long have you been here? I don't think I've ever seen you at school. What classes are you in? Are you new?

DRE

Oh, I don't go here. I go to Lincoln High.

MARIA

(surprised)

Lincoln! Now, I know who you are. You're that basketball player that made the shot that beat us, yesterday.

(worried)

What are you doing here? If the guys see you, they will kill you.

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

Quick, put your mask back on,
hurry!

DRE

I wanted to do something fun,
tonight. I did not expect to meet
someone so beautiful.

Dre starts to pull his mask on.

MARIA

Wait!

Maria stops as his mask is just over his eyes. She puts her hands on his face and gives him a kiss, then she pulls his mask over his face.

MARIA (CONT'D)

That is a very brave thing of
you... to risk danger for a little
fun.

DRE

Well, that plan just got better.
Your beauty is like a star in the
sky. The more I watch, the brighter
it shines.

MARIA

That's nice. Are you a poet?

DRE

I didn't think so... until now. Do
you have a boyfriend?

MARIA

No. Do you have a girlfriend?

DRE

No.

CUT TO:

10

INT. CHAVEZ HIGH GYM - NIGHT

10

Wes snuck out of the house and has come to the dance in his costume. He's looking for Dre and his friends.

He is trying to act like a high school kid, but is awkward and clumsy. He sees a CUTE GIRL (16) watching him, so he walks up to her trying to be cool.

Maria has an excited look on her face, as she thinks this is romantic. Dre and the boys are chased by Ralphie and friends, but they get away.

12

EXT. MATHER BACKYARD - NIGHT

12

Dre is furious.

DRE

Wes! What were you thinking? You could have gotten all of us killed, tonight!

WES

I heard you guys talking about going to the dance. I didn't tell mom. You know you would have been in big trouble, if I told. But, I wanted to go, too. Why are you so mad?

DRE

You are not old enough to hang with us. You could get hurt. We do dangerous things.

WES

Yeah, but you have fun doing those things. I want to have fun. That was fun back there, admit it.

DRE

You have fun with your friends at the skate park. You and I have fun playing video games and riding bikes. That should be enough. When you're older, you can hang with us. We do man things.

BEN

(to Dre)

Yeah, like you kissing that girl. She wasn't Rosie.

MIKE

(to Dre)

Hey! You kissed that girl? You tryin' to be a player, now?

BEN

You can't have two until you have one.

DRE

Shut up, you guys. Wes, understand,
you cannot hang with us unless we
say so. Got it?

WES

(reluctantly)
Got it.

CUT TO:

13

INT. CHAVEZ HIGH GYM - NIGHT

13

Pedro, Ralphie's best friend, returns to the gym with the
rest of the guys. Pedro confronts Maria.

PEDRO

Maria, I saw you! What were you
doing talking to that mayate? Did
you know he is from Lincoln?

MARIA

He asked me to dance with him and
then we talked. Why do you care,
anyway?

PEDRO

You belong to me! Nobody talks to
my girl! Especially, matones
negros!

MARIA

Pedro, I'm not your girl! I never
was and never will be!

PEDRO

You know you are. You always act
like you're too good for everyone,
just because your daddy owns a
bodega.

MARIA

I am not. Stop saying that. We went
to the movies once and only because
my father made me. Stop telling
everyone I am your girlfriend. They
are not matones.

PEDRO

Dre, huh. You will stay away from
that matones or I will tell your
father. You know he will not be
happy about that.

MARIA

Vete al infierno, Pedro. You think you can talk to me that way, because you work for my father. Stay away from me. I never want to see you, again.

Maria exits.

CUT TO:

14 INT. MATHER KITCHEN - NIGHT

14

Dre and Wes sneak into the house through the kitchen. Shondra is sitting in the living room, waiting for them.

SHONDRA

Where have you been!

The boys are startled.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for you to come home.

DRE

Sorry, mom. We went to a Halloween dance.

SHONDRA

A Halloween dance! You didn't tell me about no Halloween dance. Wes, you were suppose to be in the bed.

WES

I know. Dre called me about the dance. I was so excited, I must have forgot to tell you.

DRE

(taken aback by Wes' comment)

It was my idea. You wanted us to spend more time together and I thought he would have fun. I'm sorry, mama.

SHONDRA

Dre, you of all people know better than that. Where was this Halloween dance?

DRE
(hesitant)
At Chavez High. They had chaperones
and everything.

SHONDRA
Chavez High! Who do you know at
that school? You know those
Mexicans always give you trouble at
your games. Why would you go to
their dance?

DRE
It was alright. Ben's sister is
friends with a girl at that school.
She told Ben about it and we went.
It won't happen, again. I promise.

SHONDRA
Damn right, it won't. It was
irresponsible of you to take Wes
there. I am so disappointed in you,
Dre. You two go to bed... Now! I'll
decide your punishment, later.

The boys exit. As they walk down the hall towards their room,
Wes thanks Dre.

WES
(whispering)
Thanks for covering for me.

DRE
(whispering)
Thanks for throwing me under the
bus, kid. You should have stayed
home.

WES
I'm sorry for causing problems. I
just wanted to be part of your
group. You guys are so cool.

DRE
It's O.K., this time, but you have
to understand, you are too young to
hang with us. You have a lot to
learn and a lot to prove before you
can do that.

CUT TO:

15

INT. MARIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

15

Maria is thinking about Dre when her father, Juan, knocks at the door.

MARIA

Come in.

Juan enters.

JUAN

Hello, sweetheart. How was the dance?

MARIA

It was nice.

JUAN

Did you dance with Pedro?

MARIA

Can we not talk about Pedro?

JUAN

Why? What happened?

MARIA

Papa, I just don't feel like talking about Pedro. The dance was nice. I had fun.

JUAN

O.K., that's all I wanted to know. You know, me and your mother met at a dance. She was...

MARIA

Papa, I'm tired. Can you tell me about that, later?

JUAN

Sure, sweetheart.

MARIA

Way later?

They laugh.

JUAN

Yes. I'll let you sleep.

Juan exits. Maria's CELLPHONE VIBRATES. It's a text from Dre.

It reads: "Hi Maria. It's me, Dre. Sorry about having to make such a quick exit. My little brother got us caught. Are you O.K.?"

Maria starts texting: "I'm O.K. How 'bout you?"

She reads Dre's reply: "Yeah, we were too fast for them. They couldn't keep up."

She texts: "I had fun and I really enjoyed meeting you."

Dre replies: "Let's meet up, tomorrow at Duncan Park, near the basketball courts, at 10:30. Me and the guys are gonna play for awhile."

She texts: "Sure! I'll see you, then."

Dre replies: "Great! Don't worry, I won't be wearing my Spider-man costume." He put a smiley face at the end.

BACK TO MARIA

Maria realizes she cannot go to that park alone. She decides to call her best friend, NADINE (15).

NADINE

Hello?

MARIA

(excited, giddy)

Nadine! You will not believe what just happened!

NADINE

(talking fast, excited)

Maria? What happened to you? Where did you go? Why was Pedro so mad at you?

MARIA

I met a boy!

NADINE

At the dance? Who?

MARIA

Yes. Did you see the boy in the Spider-man costume?

NADINE

Yes. Everyone was talking about it.
(gets it)

Oh my god! You met Spider-man?

MARIA

Yes! His name is Dre and he is amazing and handsome and...
(trying to sound grown)
Sexy.

NADINE

Girl, what do you know about sexy?

MARIA

I know he is cute. He wants to meet me, tomorrow at Duncan Park. Can you go with me?

NADINE

(surprised)
Duncan Park? Maria, is he black? Tell me he is not black.

MARIA

(hesitant)
Yes, he is, but please come with me and at least meet him. You will like him, I know it.

NADINE

You know we can't go there. It's not safe. We could get in trouble crossing into that area.

MARIA

By who?

NADINE

The people over there. You know nothing good happens over there.

MARIA

My papa's bodega there and he knows the people, well.

NADINE

Yeah, 'cause they need things from his bodega. That does not protect you.

MARIA

I don't need protection. That boy like me. He will take care of us. He won't let anything happen. Besides, he has cute friends.

NADINE

But, what about our familias?

MARIA

(serious)
Do you think I should ask if we can
bring them?
(laughing)
Their not invited. If you don't
tell, nobody will know.

NADINE

(reluctantly)
O.K., I'll go with you. But, only
because I worry about you. You know
your dad will not approve of that
boy.

MARIA

Don't worry. Once my dad sees I am
happy, he will be fine with it.

NADINE

What about Pedro?

MARIA

He's nothing to me. My dad thinks
he's a great kid with a bright
future, but you and I both know
better.

NADINE

What about Miguel?

MARIA

Miguel's just my brother, not my
boss. I'll meet you at your house
at 10 and we will go from there.

NADINE

Alright. I'll see you at 10.

The call ends and Maria goes to bed.

16

EXT. CORTEZ FRONT PORCH - DAY

16

Maria is sitting on the front porch when her phone vibrates.

ON MARIA'S PHONE SCREEN

"Pedro: Hi Maria, sorry about last
night. Please forgive me. I was
angry."

BACK TO MARIA

She sighs and ignores the message. Her mother, LUCIANA CORTEZ (36), joins her on the porch.

LUCIANA

Hi Maria. What's wrong?

MARIA

It's Pedro. He keeps texting me. I wish he would stop.

LUCIANA

Why? Do you not like him?

MARIA

No! You and papa always talk about what a nice couple we make. Ever since he took me to the movies, all I hear about is what a nice boy he is. The truth is he is not that nice.

LUCIANA

Oh, Maria. I don't think you are giving him a fair chance. He is such a good help to your papa in the bodega. Plus, he really likes you. He speaks highly of you. He even asked your papa for permission to take you to the prom.

MARIA

WHAT!? No way! The prom! I will not go!

LUCIANA

Calm down. Just think about it. It will be fun. I think it is close to the time of your big dance competition. That would mean two big events in one year.

MARIA

Mommy, you don't understand.

LUCIANA

Maria, Pedro is the first boy you ever dated. It went well. He brought you home from the date early.

MARIA

It was not a date, mommy. It was a walk to the movies and popcorn and it was still torture. Besides, Pedro is a jerk and he bullies people.

LUCIANA

You are just making things up. He is a well-mannered young man with a strong Mexican background. He is handsome, he will be attending Yale, next year, to become a lawyer. If you do not open your eyes and see the future, someone else will catch his eye and where will you be?

MARIA

Dancing on the stages of Broadway and the world. Have you forgotten my dream, mama?

LUCIANA

No Maria, that's all it is, a dream. When will you grow up, Maria? Pedro is the best prospect any girl could ask for. I am not telling you to marry him, just go out and see what can happen. You are a truly gifted dancer, but eat and Pedro will be a good provider.

MARIA

Ok, mommy. I don't want to talk about it anymore. I'm meeting Nadine to rehearse for the competition.

LUCIANA

Alright, just give it some thought. Your father and I think Pedro can make you very happy.

MARIA

(sarcastically)
Sure, I'll think about it.

Maria exits.

CUT TO:

17 INT. MATHER KITCHEN - DAY

17

Dre and Wes are having breakfast.

WES

What we gonna do, today?

DRE

WE ain't doin' nothin'. Me, Mike and Ben are going to see the new Avengers movie.

WES

Why can't I go? I wanna see that movie, too.

DRE

You got any money?

WES

No.

DRE

That explains it. No money, no movie.

Shondra enters.

WES

Morning, mama.

DRE (CONT'D)

Morning, mama.

SHONDRA

Morning, boys. What are your plans for today?

WES

Dre is going to the movies.

SHONDRA

What about you? You're not going?

WES

No...

DRE

Mama, Mike and Ben are going and we are gonna meet up with some of the team. Wes can go to the skate park.

SHONDRA

I'll tell you what Dre, you can go to the movie, but you have to promise me you will play with your brother, after the movie is over.

DRE

Ah, mom...

SHONDRA

Don't you, ah mom, me. You and Wes used to be inseparable. You need to spend as much time together as you can. It won't be long 'til you are off to college, Dre. You boys are gonna miss each and it will be too late. Cherish the time you have left now.

CUT TO:

18

EXT. DUNCAN PARK - DAY

18

Kids are playing on swings, on tennis courts, and in the skating area. We see Maria and Nadine walking through the park towards the basketball courts. While they are not the only Hispanic kids in the park, they are an obvious minority. A group of AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIRLS (TEENS) keeps their eyes on them.

NADINE

(nervous)

Maria, where is he? Those girls look mean.

MARIA

Don't worry, just act like you've been here before.

NADINE

I don't think this was a good idea.

Just then, Dre, Mike and Ben are headed their way. Dre has a BASKETBALL under his arm.

MARIA

(excited)

Nadine, that's him. The tall one with the basketball.

NADINE

(also excited, whispering)

Girl, his friends ARE cute!

MARIA

I told you. I know how you are. You can never pass up a hot guy, don't matter where he's from.

(stern tone)

Just stay away from mine.

NADINE

You know I love trouble.

Dre sees the girls.

DRE

(excited)

There she is, fellas. The one on the right.

BEN

You were right. She is fine! Her friend ain't bad, either. You did leave out the part were they are Mexican.

DRE

What did you expect? We met her at a Chavez High dance. There ain't that many Blacks there except maybe their basketball team.

BEN

I saw a some that night... but none of them as fine as those two.

MIKE

Keep it in your pants, dip-shit. They are both out of you league.

DRE

Hey, you two. Stay away from Maria! She's mine.

BEN

Hey, Dre! Why you even go there? I would never do you that way. You be trippin'.

MIKE

That's what you always think.

They all meet.

DRE

(hugs Maria)

Maria! Hi! I'm glad you made it.

MARIA

Hi, Dre. This is my friend, Nadine.
Nadine, this is Dre, the one I told
you about, and...

DRE

Hi, Nadine.
(they shake hands)
These are my friends, Ben and Mike.

Ben is speechless. He can't take his eyes off of the two
girls. Mike is uninterested.

DRE (CONT'D)

(nudging Ben)
Ben, say hello to the ladies.

BEN

(back to reality)
Oh, oh, hi.

Ben shakes both the girls hands.

MIKE

Hi.
(to Ben)
You know, we still got next.

DRE

(to the girls)
We were just playing basketball.

BEN

(to Dre)
We're gonna head back.

NADINE

(flirtatious)
Mind if I come along?

BEN

(surprised)
Sure!

MIKE

(uncaring)
It's a free park.

Ben and Nadine walk off.

MARIA

They seem happy.

DRE

Yeah. I'm surprised. Ben is usually nervous around girls.

MARIA

Nadine was nervous about coming here.

DRE

Why? This is a cool place.

MARIA

I know, I like it, here.

19

EXT. DUNCAN PARK SKATE AREA - DAY

19

Dre and Maria have made their way to the skate area where we see Wes riding his SKATEBOARD. He is good. Dre and Maria sit on a bench.

DRE

Why did you agree to meet me?

MARIA

I don't know. We didn't get to finish our chat, last night. What made you want to talk to me?

DRE

Well, I'll tell you. When I came into that gym, last night, I had other plans.

MARIA

(curious)
What plans?

DRE

That's not important. What is important is seeing you on that dance floor, moving your body, grooving to the music. It was as if I was watching an angel fly down from heaven. I was drawn to your beauty. It was more than just a dance.

MARIA

Aw, that's so sweet.

DRE

Maria, let me tell you something. When you dance, it's like...

(MORE)

DRE (CONT'D)

how silk feels, that's how you dance. Like how English Toffee taste... that's how you dance. You're smooth, like... satin. You are raw as hell on the floor.

MARIA

You a good talker. Are you sure you are not a poet?

DRE

Not that I know. I do know I like you.

MARIA

(smitten)

You do have a way with words.

DRE

I mean ever word. You are the most beautiful girl I have ever known. Like an angel. And when we began to dance, I couldn't think about anything else. I had to get to know you. So, I asked you to step outside with me.

MARIA

That was a bold move.

DRE

(proud)

You think so?

MARIA

(laughing)

I mean crashing the dance! That took guts. Those guys could have killed you.

DRE

(realizing what she meant)

Oh, yeah. It didn't turn out the way we planned. My little brother, that's him over there,

(gesturing towards Wes)

Was suppose to be trick-or-treating with my mom, but he showed up and all hell broke loose.

MARIA

He's cute. He's good on that skateboard, too.

DRE
I hope we didn't ruin it for you.

MARIA
Not for me. The boys were pretty
upset.

DRE
I figured as much. We were too fast
for them.

MARIA
(checking her watch)
Shit!

DRE
What is it?

MARIA
I need to get back. I have to help
my father with something. Call me,
later.

DRE
I will. I'll walk you the
basketball court.

20

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

20

Mike, Ben and Nadine are sitting on the bench, talking.

MIKE
(to Nadine)
I saw you at the dance.

NADINE
(sarcastically)
So.

MIKE
You were hanging with one of the
guys on the basketball team.

NADINE
Your point?

MIKE
Why are you here?

BEN
Idiot, you know she came here with
her friend.

MIKE

I'm not an idiot. I mean, we know why her friend is here. She is in love with our boy. Dre is gonna take her away and she will be court side at all his Laker games.

NADINE

You both are crazy. Maria is not gonna give him the time of day.

MIKE

How do you know?

BEN

She did show up, today.

NADINE

Maria has big plans. She is gonna be an award winning dancer. She's going to Juilliard and will be known the world over as a premiere dancer.

Mike and Ben laugh.

MIKE

You don't know Dre. When he sets his mind to it, he gets everything he wants.

BEN

Yeah, everything.

NADINE

We'll see.

(to Ben)

What about you? What are your plans?

BEN

(shy, nervous)

I'm gonna be Dre's agent.

NADINE

Um, a lawyer. How exciting.

Just then, Dre and Maria walk up.

MARIA

Nadine, we have to leave.

NADINE
 (puzzled)
 Why? I was having fun.

MARIA
 I told you I have to meet my dad
 for something.

NADINE
 O.K.
 (to the boys)
 It was nice meeting you. That was a
 really brave thing you did, last
 night.

BEN
 We'd do it again, if we know it
 would lead to this.

DRE
 SHUT UP, BEN!

MIKE
 SHUT UP, BEN!

CUT TO:

21 INT. BODEGA - DAY

21

Pedro is stocking shelves as Juan is cleaning up.

JUAN
 Pedro, did anything happen between
 you and Maria at the dance, last
 night?

PEDRO
 (deceitful)
 Nothing big. I really like her. We
 had such a good time on our date
 and at the dance. That is, until
 some matones negros tried to crash
 it and almost ruined everything.

JUAN
 Matones negros? What happened?

PEDRO
 Yeah, they were from Lincoln High.
 But, we chased them away.

JUAN
 You have to watch out for those
 boys, Pedro. They are known for
 being a bad influence on our
 people.

(MORE)

JUAN (CONT'D)

They have no ambition for success. They only contribute negatively to society.

PEDRO

I know. Even the ones at my school cause problems. But, me and my friends keep them in check. We make sure they do not mix with our people. But, we did have an argument, at the dance, though. She was telling everyone she is not my girl. I know she likes me, Mr. Cortez.

JUAN

(referring to Maria)

Don't worry, Pedro. You know you have my blessing. Maria will come around. She is just like her mother. Give her time to see what a good young man you are.

PEDRO

Thank you, sir.

JUAN

Maria is under a lot of pressure, right now. She has a dance competition coming up. I wish she wouldn't focus so hard on that. There's no future in that.

PEDRO

I know. But, she is good at it.

JUAN

Yes, it's in her blood. Her mother was a great dancer.

(steering the conversation
back to Maria)

Maria will see you two are good for each other. After all, you have been friends since... well, kindergarten.

PEDRO

True, I have liked her from the first day I saw her.

JUAN

Well, be patient. With my help, you two will be the big hit at her competition.

PEDRO

You think so? It will be such a fun event.

Juan grabs some boxes and heads out the back of the bodega.

CUT TO:

22

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

22

Dre, Mike and Ben are huddled around a DUMPSTER. They are on BIKES AND/OR SKATEBOARDS. A slight whiff of SMOKE is drifting away from the center of the huddle. A slight COUGH is heard. Suddenly, a rear door opens from one of the stores leading onto the alley. Juan appears carrying a few boxes to the trash.

BEN

(to Dre and Mike)

Watch this.

He throws his empty beer bottle against the wall near Juan. Juan hears this and confronts the boys in the alley yelling at them in Spanish. Dre looks in the same direction as Ben responds to Juan.

BEN (CONT'D)

Yo, shut the fuck up, man. Why don't you go back into your little store, you illegal alien?

After a few minutes of back and forth griping with Juan, Ben puts his hand into the shape of a gun and places it to his temple and gestures, as if shooting himself. Juan says something, in Spanish, as he turns to go back inside. Dre nods his approval at Ben. They go back to smoking and drinking when, all of a sudden Ben looks up.

BEN (CONT'D)

Are you kidding me.

Dre looks in the same direction.

DRE

What?

BEN

It's your punk-ass brother.

Mike draws on his CIGARETTE.

MIKE

Did you tell your brother where we were?

DRE

No way. He must of followed us.

Wes can be seen approaching the group on a BICYCLE in the near distance.

WES

(yelling from a distance)
Hey guys, wacha doin'? Hey guys...

DRE

Shit! Put those out. Quick!

The boys start to get rid of their cigarettes. Some stomp them out while others flick them away.

MIKE

(while taking a last drag)
What's the big deal. He's just your punk-ass little brother.

DRE

Yeah, but he's my punk-ass little brother with a punk-ass big mouth. He'll narc if we don't let him hang with us and we don't want that, do we?

Both Mike and Ben nod "no" in unison. Wes reaches the group slightly out of breath.

WES

(slightly short of breath)
Hey guys. Didn't you hear me. I was yelling a mile away.
(noticing the smoking and drinking)
Hey, what are you guys doing?

DRE

(slightly annoyed)
Yo Wes, go home. Why you here?

WES

You promised mom that you would play video games with me.

The boys snicker. Dre rolls his eyes and becomes more agitated.

WES (CONT'D)
(bargaining)
But, I'd rather hang with you guys.

The boys let out a slight moan.

MIKE
Yo, Dre, what's up? Get rid of him
and let's go to my house.

Mike tosses a bottle at Wes' feet. The bottle breaks.

WES
(scared)
Hey!
(suddenly acting brave)
I saw you smoking. I'm gonna tell
if you don't let me play with you.

MIKE
What the fuck?

Mike gets up and moves towards Wes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Who the fuck do you think you're
talking to.

Dre gets up and moves between Mike and Wes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(irritated)
Yo Dre, you better put a muzzle on
that fuckin' brother of yours
before someone shuts him up for
you.

DRE
(angry)
Hey, calm down. He's not gonna say
anything to anyone.
(towards Wes)
Are you?
(back at the group)
Listen, I'm gonna take him home,
play a game or two with him and
I'll call you later so we can hang.
Cool?
(beat)

MIKE
(still irritated)
Fine. But, if he ever mouths off
again...

DRE
 (in a commanding voice)
 I got it! Chill!

Wes and Dre head home. As they walk away Dre smacks Wes in the back of the head.

23

INT. BODEGA - DAY

23

Juan goes behind the counter still angry about what just happened in the alley. He is taking inventory and he sees his gun. He picks it up and thinks back to the moment when Ben made the gesture of shooting him in the head. Pedro sees this.

PEDRO
 Juan, what are you doing with a gun?

JUAN
 (startled for a moment)
 Oh, Pedro, someone gave it to me... for protection... you know... with the robberies and things. I don't even know how to use it.

PEDRO
 Alright! I told you to get protection. You been to the range?

JUAN
 No. I don't like guns. Someone could get hurt. I should have just installed cameras.

PEDRO
 Cameras? No! Cameras don't protect you. You know the first thing a robber does when he knows you have cameras?

JUAN
 What?

PEDRO
 He puts on a disguise that will make it hard to identify him. Plus, he could still shoot up the place and kill people.

JUAN
 (thinking)
 I see your point. No cameras.

PEDRO

You have a gun, the bad guy comes in, points his gun at you, you show him yours, done deal. Robber captured, arrested and nobody dies, yo. You're a hero for saving your bodega and the neighborhood is safer, because the bad guys know not to mess with you.

(sarcastically)

And they don't mess with me, because they know I work for you. Consíguelo?

JUAN

Lo entiendo.

(nervously)

I will probable never use it.

(happier)

Thanks for helping, today. You can leave early. You are a good boy, Pedro, a good worker.

PEDRO

Tell Maria I said "Hi."

JUAN

(really interested)

I will. You two make a cute couple. Give it time.

24 INT. MATHER LIVINGROOM - DAY 24

We see IDA (65), Wes and Dre's grandmother, in a recliner watching TV.

IDA

(yelling towards the kitchen)

Hey Shondra, can you bring me a glass of water?

25 INT. MATHER KITCHEN - DAY 25

We see Shondra, at the stove cooking while Becky, her sister, is leaning against the counter with a GLASS OF WINE in her hand. They're in the middle of gossiping.

SHONDRA
 (yelling towards the living
 room)
 Give me a minute. I'm cooking.

BECKY
 You need to put her in her place.
 Stop letting her treat you like her
 slave.

SHONDRA
 (agreeing with attitude)
 Right?

*
 *

Shondra and Becky go back to gossiping. A few seconds later
 they hear Ida yelling, again.

IDA (O.S.)
 Shondra!!!!

SHONDRA
 I said give me a minute.
 (to Becky)
 She's old. She needs someone to
 take care of her. You obviously
 don't want to. That leaves me.

BECKY
 Yeah, but it doesn't mean you're
 her maid. Plus, you already have
 two boys to raise and they're a
 handful on their own.

SHONDRA
 I know. And recently Dre's been
 acting up.

BECKY
 What do you mean?

SHONDRA
 I don't know. He's been talking
 back to me and sneaking out at all
 hours. I swear I don't know where
 he is half the time.

BECKY
 Oh, he's just being a typical
 teenager. You know how boy's are,
 at that age.
 (finishing her drink)
 I have to run. I have a big date,
 tonight.

SHONDRA
Anybody I know?

Becky is hesitant to respond.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)
Never mind. Here, do me a favor and
take this water to mom. I'll see
you, later.

They hug and Becky exits. As she does, she hands Ida the
glass of water and says goodbye.

26 INT. MATHER BOYS BEDROOM - DAY

26

Wes and Dre are entranced in a video game. Suddenly, Wes
wins.

WES
(excited)
Yes! In your face! That's 3 games
in a row!

DRE
(defeated)
Aw, man... let's do something else.
I'm tired of losing.

WES
What 'cha wanna do?

DRE
I don't know. I'm kinda hungry. You
wanna get something to eat?

WES
You got any money? I ain't got any.

DRE
We don't need money.

Dre jumps off the BED and grabs a TOY GUN from the closet. He
shows it to Wes.

DRE (CONT'D)
We got this.

He shows Wes the toy gun.

WES
What you talkin' bout, Dre?

DRE
 You know... like the video game. We
 just walk in, show the gun and we
 get whatever we want.

WES
 (entertained)
 You're joking right? Whose gonna
 believe that?

Dre flashes the gun quickly at Wes as if to hold him up then
 takes a closer look at the gun.

DRE
 Look at this.

Dre grabs a SCREWDRIVER from a nearby DESK and pulls the
 RED SAFETY TIP from the barrel.

DRE (CONT'D)
 See, it looks like the real thing.
 If we act right, for sure, anyone
 will be scared.

Wes looks at Dre as if he's an idiot.

DRE (CONT'D)
 Plus, you've been bugging me about
 hanging out with the big boys. This
 could be like your initiation.

Wes has a new look on his face. He thinks for a moment,
 then...

WES
 O.K., let's do it.

DRE
 That's what I'm saying.

Dre high fives Wes.

27 EXT. MATHER FRONT PORCH - DAY

27

Ida sits on porch as Wes and Dre exit the house. She notices
 Dre, looking suspicious while slipping something in his
 pants, but she can't tell what it is.

IDA
 (curiously)
 Where you boys up to?

DRE
 (very snappy)
 Non of your business, old lady.

IDA
 (angrily)
 Watch your mouth, boy!

28 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

28

Wes and Dre leave the house.

WES
 Where we goin'?

DRE
 C'mon, just follow me.

Dre and Wes head up the street towards the bodega.

DRE (CONT'D)
 Listen. It's time for you to grow
 up and be a man. It's time you
 learned how things work.

WES
 What do you mean?

DRE
 You know that game we play?
 Gangsta 5? You know that's real
 right?

WES
 Huh?

DRE
 You know that's like real life.
 People steal cars for real.

WES
 Yeah, I know. So?

DRE
 People like Mike and Ben
 (pause)
 ... And me.

WES
 (snickering)
 Yeah, right. You ain't never stole
 no car.

DRE
 (getting serious)
 Yeah right! But we steal other
 things all the time.

WES
 You never told me.

DRE
 Well, it ain't the type of thing
 you go around telling everyone, now
 is it?

WES
 I guess not.

DRE
 (acting gangsta)
 Fo 'sho.

As they near the bodega DRE pulls WES close.

DRE (CONT'D)
 Now, if you wanna be like us you
 gotta learn how to snatch things,
 too. You gettin' what I mean?

WES
 (worried)
 I don't know. I'm kinda scared.
 (beat)
 I don't want to anymore.

DRE
 That's OK with me. I'm going to.
 I'm hungry. You run on home.

Wes turns and starts to head home as Dre watches him,
 convinced he has scared Wes out of the scheme. But, after a
 couple steps, Wes turns around.

WES
 Can you get me something?

DRE
 (acting angry)
 What the hell, Wes! No way. You
 gotta learn, if you want something,
 YOU gotta get it yourself. YOU
 gotta get tough. No one ain't gonna
 give you anything for free.
 Besides, I'm not gonna be around
 here forever, you know. I got big
 plans.

WES
But what if we get caught.

DRE
Well, that's what the gun is for,
little one. Once he sees it he'll
back off.

WES
Really?

DRE
For sure.

Wes is very intimidated, but has total confidence in his
older brother.

WES
OK.

Dre, heads to the bodega. Wes is scared but not wanting to
disappoint his brother, follows closely behind.

29 EXT. BODEGA - DAY

29

Wes and Dre are outside the bodega contemplating what to do.

WES
So, what now?

DRE
(whispering)
Quiet. I don't know. I haven't
thought about it this far. Let me
think.

WES
I thought you did this before.

DRE
Shut up!

Dre peeks inside as if casing the bodega.

DRE (CONT'D)
OK, this is what we're gonna do.
I'm gonna get the drinks, you grab
the chips. But, you gotta make sure
nobody sees you.

WES
Why?

DRE
Well, you're hungry, aren't you?

WES
(hesitantly)
Uh... yeah?

DRE
Well, how else did you think we
were gonna get something to eat,
without money?

WES
I thought that was what the gun was
for?

DRE
(suddenly remembering the
gun)
Uh, yeah. That's right. I was just
testing you.

WES
So, what if we get caught? What do
I do?
(beat)

DRE
(almost as if trying to
talk Wes out of it.)
What, are you chicken? You act all
tough when we play Gangsta 5. Now,
you're wimping out on me. You're
just a little kid after all. You
know what, we should just call it
quits. You're obviously not old
enough to handle any of this.

WES
(suddenly, with courage.)
I'm not a little kid and I'm not
chicken. I beat you at Gangsta 5
all the time.

DRE
(still trying to talk Wes
out of it.)
Yeah, but that's just a game. This
is real life.

WES
Yeah, but...
(beat)

WES (CONT'D)
 ...I'll do it.
 (beat)

DRE
 (giving in with a sigh)
 Fine.

WES
 (victoriously)
 Yes.

Dre starts towards the door, but Wes lingers behind. Wes reaches into his pocket to pull out a GREEN BANDANNA. He rolls it up and ties it around his head. Dre looks behind to see what was keeping Wes and sees the bandana.

DRE
 What the hell is that?

WES
 (prancing like a hoodlum)
 It's my colors.

DRE
 What? Are you in a leprechaun gang?

Dre snatches the bandana off of Wes' head and hands it back to him.

DRE (CONT'D)
 Stop foolin' around.

Dre enters the bodega as Wes follows.

30

INT. BODEGA - DAY

30

Wes and Dre walk around the bodega suspiciously as if casing the joint. Dre takes the toy gun and places it in Wes's pants and heads to the back of the bodega as Wes heads to the chips. Wes attempts to put a bag of chips under his shirt. Dre is casing the soda displays nervously. Juan peaks around the store and at the security mirrors, suspiciously. After a while Dre heads towards the door. As he turns down the last isle he comes face to face with Juan. Dre stands frozen in the isles. Sweat is forming on his forehead.

DRE
 RUN!!!!

Wes drops the bag of chips and starts to run out the door, but bumps into Dre and the two fall to the floor. The toy gun falls out of Wes's pants and spins down the isle. Dre and Wes

both leap for the gun. Juan, seeing the gun runs behind the counter and grabs something from underneath. Dre see's this and gets up to run out the store. Wes is still trying to get the toy gun.

DRE (CONT'D)

Leave it!

Wes is too frantic to hear anything and continues for the gun. As he picks it up, he unconsciously points the toy gun at Juan, who is now pointing his real gun at Wes.

31 EXT. BODEGA - EVENING 31

Dre realizes Wes is not there. He turns around and starts back for the door. As he approaches the door, he hears a gun shot.

32 INT. BODEGA - EVENING 32

From the doorway we see Juan standing in the store with his gun in his hand looking at Wes. Wes is looking back at Juan and after a few seconds they both look towards Wes' t-shirt, mid level, as a spot of blood starts to form down his shirt. The spot gets increasingly bigger every second. Wes looks up at Juan and then he drop to the ground.

33 EXT. BODEGA - EVENING 33

Dre sees Wes fall to the floor.

DRE

Wes!

Dre notices the toy gun has slid under the shelf near Wes. He begins to move into the bodega in an attempt to get the gun, but he sees Juan with his gun in hand and fearing he is next, turns and runs in fear.

34 INT. BODEGA - EVENING 34

Juan stares at Wes' unconscious body on the floor. From the doorway we see Juan realizing he still has the gun in his hands and throws it to the ground. He then grabs his cell phone from his back pocket and dials the police.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. STREET - EVENING 35

Dre is running down the middle of the street. Tears are running down his face as he races home.

36 INT. MATHER LIVINGROOM - EVENING 36

Ida is still in the living-room watching TELEVISION.

37 EXT. STREET - EVENING 37

Dre runs up the sidewalk, up the front path, onto the stoop and in through the front door.

38 INT. MATHER LIVINGROOM - EVENING 38

Suddenly we hear the front door slam as Dre runs into the house. Ida is in the recliner, watching television. Dre is standing in the living room out of breath, crying, sweaty looking small and in shock.

IDA
Where you been, boy?

Dre does not answer.

IDA (CONT'D)
Answer your grandma.

Still no response.

IDA (CONT'D)
Dre? Shondra, get in here. Quickly!

Shondra runs in and stops short as she sees the fear on Dre's face.

SHONDRA
Dre? What's wrong?

*
*
*

Dre stands looking at the floor in shame, silent.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)
Where's your brother? Where's Wes?!

*

Still, no response.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)
Dre!

*
*

Dre just stands in the middle of the living room ashamed to

look at anyone. He is out of breath, sweaty, in shock and looking small. POLICE LIGHTS are flashing against the CURTAINS behind him. Shondra notices the police lights and runs to the door. DETECTIVE LEE and an OFFICER are walking up.

DET. LEE

Evening miss...

(seeing Dre)

This young man fits the description of someone seen running from the scene of a shooting at the bodega.

SHONDRA

(frightened)

He's my son. What shooting?

(more frightened)

Who was shot?

DET. LEE

May I ask him a few questions?

SHONDRA

Yes. Where is my other son?

DET. LEE

Your other son?

SHONDRA

Yes. My youngest. He's not here.

DET. LEE

Miss, a young boy was shot in what appears to be a robbery attempt. My partner is at the bodega down the street investigating the incident.

SHONDRA

Oh my God! Wes!

(to Ida)

Mom, watch Dre!

Shondra takes off for the bodega. Detective Lee comes in to question Dre.

DET. LEE

(to Ida)

Pardon me, miss. Detective Lee LAPD. Are you related to this young man?

IDA

I'm his grandmother. What did he do?

DET. LEE

At this time, he is just a possible witness. I need to take him in for questioning. He was identified running away from a possible crime scene.

IDA

I'm going with you.

(to Dre)

Boy, you better talk to this man and tell him what you know.

Detective Lee has the officer CUFF Dre and they lead him out to the POLICE CAR. Ida follows them.

39

EXT. BODEGA - NIGHT

39

Shondra see a CROWD has gathered in front of the bodega. Two POLICE CARS, a FIRE TRUCK and a FIRE DEPARTMENT PARAMEDIC AMBULANCE are seen in front of the bodega. As Shondra arrives, she is stopped by a POLICE OFFICER behind CRIME SCENE TAPE. Shondra can see Wes on the floor near the entrance with PARAMEDICS performing CPR on him.

SHONDRA

(attempting to cross police tape)

Wes!

POLICE OFFICER #2

Stay back, ma'am.

SHONDRA

That's my son! That's my son!

POLICE OFFICER #2

Sorry, come on.

As Shondra crosses the police line, detectives lead Juan pass her in handcuffs towards a POLICE CAR. She is frozen in her tracks. The look of horror is on her face as she tries to get to Wes.

PARAMEDIC #1

Please stay back, miss.

Paramedics are working frantically to stabilize Wes. There is a large amount of blood on Wes and the floor.

SHONDRA

I'm his mother! Help him! Is my baby going to be O.K.?

PARAMEDIC #1

He has a pulse. We are stabilizing him for transport.

SHONDRA

Wes! Wes, baby! Mommy is here! You're gonna be alright!

(to police officer #3)

Did that man...

(pointing in the direction where the police car was)

Do this? Did he shoot my baby?

POLICE OFFICER #3

We are still sorting things out.

ANN (30) a neighbor and friend, is standing at the police line, in tears.

ANN

(to Shondra)

Shondra, is he alright?

SHONDRA

I don't know, Ann.

At that moment, the paramedics put Wes on a gurney and move him to the ambulance. Shondra is allowed to ride with them.

40

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

40

Shondra is in the waiting room awaiting the status of Wes' surgery. Becky is with her.

SHONDRA

What's taking so long?

BECKY

I'm sure they are doing all they can. Why did the store owner shoot him?

SHONDRA

I don't know. The police haven't told me anything. Mom says they took Dre in for questioning. I don't know what to do.

BECKY

I don't mean harm, but when was the last time I said those kids of yours are becoming a handful.

(MORE)

BECKY (CONT'D)

And that group Dre is running around with... well I don't like it. I'm glad I don't have kids.

SHONDRA

Wow, you never let up. My baby is laying in there fighting for his life and you want to blame him for what happened.

BECKY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean it that way.

They embrace in a long hug.

Through the waiting room window, Shondra sees STANLEY HINTON, aka SHARKY, her ex-husband. His best friend, JASON, is by his side. He motions for Jason to wait in the hall and he starts to enter the waiting room. Shondra goes to stop him before he can enter.

SHONDRA

(angry)

Stanley, what are you doing here?

NURSE

(recognizing Sharky)

Stanley? You told me your name was SHARKY.

SHARKY

(to nurse)

Chill out.

(to Shondra)

I came to see my son.

SHONDRA

That's not gonna happen.

NURSE

Stanley Hinton is on the restricted list.

SHARKY

(to nurse)

What?

(to Shondra)

What's your problem?

SHONDRA

I am tired of telling you to stay away from my sons. I don't want them to end up like you.

SHARKY

I understood your not wanting them to visit me in prison, but you have kept them away from me even after I got out.

SHONDRA

It's not like you don't know why? You are a murder.

SHARKY

Is that what you told them?

SHONDRA

No. But, Dre has asked questions. He hears things at school and in the streets.

SHARKY

What do you tell him?

SHONDRA

I don't have to tell him anything. Both of them know who you are and what you do.

SHARKY

What I do? What do I do? Do YOU know what I do?

SHONDRA

You still sell dope, steal and you are a pimp.

SHARKY

That's bullshit and you know it. You have always accused me of those things.

SHONDRA

So, you still say there not true?

SHARKY

No, not now.

SHONDRA

Oh, do I hear a confession coming on?

SHARKY

Listen, it's true I used to have a drug business. I may have held up a few people.

(MORE)

SHARKY (CONT'D)

I was known and feared in the street. True, I had people working for me... not prostitutes!

SHONDRA

Not prostitutes?

SHARKY

No! Every good dealer has people who collect for him. You always accused me of cheating on you. You were the only woman in my life. Yes, the ladies had a thing for me, but my world was making sure you and my sons had a roof over your heads. I never did cheat on you. I never would have.

SHONDRA

But, you did go to prison.
(sarcastically)
Not such an angel.

SHARKY

I went to prison because of you! That fateful night, I'll never forget, you told me she had to go to work. I stayed home to watch the boys. That is what a father does. You always accused me of having girlfriends, which was not true. Well, Wes got sick and I had to take him to the emergency room. While we were on the way, I called your job. I was told you not there, that you were not even scheduled. They never called you in. I had no idea where you were. So, I called your mother and she meet us at the hospital. Wes had a fever and they were going to keep him. So, after he was admitted, I left Dre with your mother and set out to find you. My boys in the street tipped me to where I would find you. You were with another man. We argued and it got heated and then he decided to jump in. He and I begin to fight. I busted his jaw and he fell. I grabbed you by the arm we started to walk away. Before I could tell you about Wes, that dude got up and he had a gun.

(MORE)

SHARKY (CONT'D)

I charged him and knocked him down, got his gun and the rage came over me. I aimed and I could hear you yell, "No, don't do it!" But, I was so angry, I just fired. He dropped and never got up. You have never forgiven me for that, because going to prison meant you had to raise you boys on her own.

SHONDRA

Don't try to make it sound like it was my fault.

SHARKY

I'm not. Remember, you divorced me when I got sentenced.

SHONDRA

It's not like you fought it.

SHARKY

You're right, I didn't. I felt like you did not want me anymore. So, why fight it. Let you move on. I had no idea it meant I could not see my boys anymore. They need their father.

SHONDRA

Not really. Things were fine, until now.

SHARKY

Right. Now, I'm not saying Wes would not be in that operating room had I been allowed to see him, but who knows.

SHONDRA

Either way, you just stay away from them.

SHARKY

Where's Dre?

SHONDRA

At the police station. Why?

SHARKY

I need to see him. He must be devastated.

SHONDRA

Don't go there. Stay away from him.

SHARKY sees Becky in the waiting room. He goes to her.

SHARKY

Becky, how are you?

BECKY

(concerned)

Sharky, you O.K.? It looked a little hot out there?

SHARKY

Yeah, I'm fine. You know me. I roll with the punches.

BECKY

Yeah, you're looking good.

SHARKY

Not so bad, yourself.

SHONDRA

Alright, cut it out, you two.

SHARKY

Any word on Wes? Where's Ida?

BECKY

Nothing, yet. Mom is with Dre.

41 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #1 - NIGHT 41

Dre is seated at the table. Tears in his eyes, nervous. Ida is sitting against the wall behind Dre.

DET. LEE

Ok, son. You were walking to the store to meet up with your brother when you heard a gunshot?

DRE

Yes.

42 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #2 - NIGHT 42

Juan is sitting at a table. Det. Lee is questioning him.

DET. LEE

So, what made you believe the boys were planning on stealing something?

JUAN

I don't know. It's just the way they were walking, I guess.

43 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #1 - NIGHT

43

DET. LEE

Then, you saw the bodega owner with a gun and you ran.

DRE

Yes.

44 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #2 - NIGHT

44

DET. LEE

Think closely. How many kids were there?

JUAN

Two. Just two boys.

DET. LEE

Two, huh. At what point did you see the gun?

JUAN

When one of them picked it up. He was going to shoot me. I thought I was going to be killed.

45 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #1 - NIGHT

45

DET. LEE

Why? If you saw your brother was shot, why did you run instead of helping him?

DRE

I thought he was going to shoot me? Is Wes dead? Can I see him? He wasn't moving.

DET. LEE

As soon as we are done, here.

46 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #2 - NIGHT

46

DET. LEE
What happened to the gun?

JUAN
My gun? The detective took it.

DET. LEE
The gun the kid had?

JUAN
(worried)
Didn't you guys get it?

DET. LEE
The only gun we found was yours.

JUAN
What! But, he had a gun! I know he did!

47 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM #1 - NIGHT

47

DRE
(getting bold, less nervous)
Wes didn't have a gun. Our mom would never let us have a gun.

DET. LEE
The bodega owner says both of you were in the bodega and your brother not only had a gun, but he was going to shoot him.

DRE
That's a lie! I wasn't in there. Wes wanted some chips. Wes was just a kid. He didn't have a gun. I'm telling you the truth.

As Dre speaks, he thinks about what the detective is telling him and he realizes they have not found the toy gun.

DRE (CONT'D)
(anxious)
Can I go? I want to see my brother.

IDA
Yeah, we need to get to get back to see about my other grandson.

DET. LEE

Sure. I think we are done here.
Stay close, though. We may need to
ask you more questions.

(to Ida)

We need you to sign some paperwork
at the Sargents desk, then he is
free to go.

IDA

Thank you.

(to Dre)

Let's go see about your brother,
boy.

They exit the interview room.

48 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM #2 - NIGHT

48

DET. LEE

Your family is here to get you. I
think we have all the information
we need, for now. Stay close. We
may have more questions, later. We
have investigators gathering
evidence at the bodega.

JUAN

Thank you. I never intended to
shoot the kid.

DET. LEE

Say no more, Mr. Cortez. We have
your statement.

They exit the interview room.

49 INT. DESK SARGENTS AREA - NIGHT

49

As Dre and Ida stand in front of the DESK SARGENT. She is
signing the release. Juan and his family are across the way
in a holding area where Juan is preparing to be released.
Maria and Miguel arrive. Maria runs to Juan.

MARIA

Papa! Are you alright?

JUAN

Si, I am fine. They asked
questions, I answered. There may be
a hearing. I am meeting my lawyer
in the morning. How is the boy?

MIGUEL

Was that boy trying to rob you?

JUAN

(sad, near tears)

Si, Miguel. I told the police everything. It's like a nightmare. Is he dead? Did I kill a boy?

MIGUEL

We don't know. I think he was alive when they took him to the hospital.

JUAN

I hope he is OK. I should have never accepted that pistola.

MIGUEL

It's not your fault, papa. The kid should not have tried to rob you.

MARIA

Shut up, Miguel. Papa just shot a kid and you are making it sound OK.

MIGUEL

But, it is. If he dies, it means one less black thug in the neighborhood.

MARIA

(furious)

How can you say that. You are so cruel.

MIGUEL

I have been telling papa to move the bodega to our neighborhood for years. He has been robbed more times this year than ever before and it's always the blacks.

Pedro enters the police station running.

PEDRO

I came as soon as I heard. Is Mr. Cortez alright?

MARIA

(furious)

What the hell are you doing here, Pedro?

MIGUEL

I called him.

MARIA

Why? This is a family matter, he is not family.

MIGUEL

That's not your call. You are just a kid. Pedro helps papa and he is like familia, to me.

MARIA

I don't want you here. Go away!

PEDRO

I am only concerned, Maria. Who was it?

MARIA

It was someone who tried to steal from the bodega.

PEDRO

(happy)

Alright! I told you, Mr. Cortez. Having a gun is the best protection.

MARIA

(surprised)

Pedro! You knew papa had a gun? Did it come from you?

PEDRO

Hell no. Someone else did. I simply talked him out of getting rid of it.

MARIA

Why on earth would you do that?

PEDRO

Because, the bodega has become easier and easier to rob. Eventually, someone was gonna get hurt. I didn't want Mr. Cortez to be that someone and we see he was not.

Maria notices Dre at the Sargents desk.

MARIA
 (excited)
 Dre!

She runs to him. Juan, Miguel and Pedro are stunned. She hugs Dre. Juan and Pedro do not like what they are seeing.

DRE
 (excited and confused)
 Maria, what are you doing here?

MARIA
 Someone tried to rob my fathers bodega, this evening and he shot them. What are you doing here?

DRE
 (still confused)
 My little brother was shot... this evening... at a bodega. They had to ask me questions.
 (Gets it, stunned)
 Wait! Your father owns the bodega on Jefferson!

MARIA
 (confused)
 Your little brother tried to rob my fathers bodega?

Just then, Pedro, comes over to take her away.

PEDRO
 (angry)
 Maria! What are you doing with this matones? I told you, stay away from him.

MARIA
 (Angry)
 Shut up, Pedro. You don't own me. Get away from here.

DRE
 Who are you, asshole? The girl said get away from here.

PEDRO
 I know who you are. You tried to crash our dance. I promised you an ass whooping and here it comes.

Miguel sees things about to escalate and rushes over. He grabs Pedro's arm before he can throw a punch and whispers in his ear.

MIGUEL

Not here, Pedro, not now. Did you forget where you are? We can get him in due time.

Pedro thinks about it and nods in agreement. He backs down. Miguel takes Maria by the arm.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

We have to go, now.

PEDRO

(to Dre)

Watch your back. I'm watching you.

MIGUEL

(to Dre)

You better stay away from my sister or you will have to answer to me.

Dre gives both Miguel and Pedro a hard stare as they go back to Juan. Dre sees Juan questioning them as they exit. Ida finishes with the instructions from the Desk Sargent and they leave. Dre is troubled by the thought that Maria's father is the man who shot Wes.

50

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

50

MARIA

(to Juan)

Papa, why would you have Pedro here?

MIGUEL

I told him what happened. He needed to know.

MARIA

You see, he almost caused a problem back there.

JUAN

Maria, calm down. It's OK. Pedro is only concerned.

MARIA

That's crap...

(to Pedro)

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

And you know it Pedro. Stay away from me.

PEDRO

(to Juan, pointing at Dre)
That boy, back there. He's one of the boys that tried to crash the dance! Was he part of the robbery?

JUAN

I'm sure he was here for questioning. Run along, now, Pedro. I'll see you at the bodega, tomorrow.

Pedro exits.

JUAN (CONT'D)

(to Maria)
My dear Maria. I saw what you did. Who was that boy?

MARIA

Papa, he is Dre. I met him at the dance. I really like him. He is a nice boy. He is not like Pedro.

JUAN

He is black!

MARIA

Yes, but he is nice. He treats me with kindness and consideration.

MIGUEL

You know, better, Maria. How could you?

MARIA

Listen, it's not like I planned it. It just happened.

JUAN

Enough of this madness!

MARIA

Papa please! I can explain!

JUAN

Maria, there is nothing to explain. This will pass, because you will never see that boy, again.

MARIA

But, papa!

Juan continues to walk towards Miguel's car.

MIGUEL

(to Maria)

Papa has spoken. It is to your advantage to follow his word.

MARIA

Shut up, Miguel.

They enter the car and head home.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. SINCLAIRE BACKYARD - EVENING

51

MIKE

So, that Mexican scum shot your little brother in cold blood?

DRE

(angry)

He hated us and wanted us died. He didn't care which one of us it was. He had a gun. He was just waiting for the right time to do it.

BEN

We should get him. Make him suffer.

DRE

Make him suffer? Wes has suffered enough. My family has suffered enough.

BEN

And that illegal alien has to pay a bigger price.

MIKE

Yeah, I know I used to call Wes your punk-ass brother, but he didn't deserve to shot.

DRE

I have to think of something.

MIKE

I already have.

DRE

What?

Mike walks over to the back porch and raises a loose board. Underneath it is a revolver. Mike holds it.

MIKE

This. This is what you need. Think about it. He tried to kill you guys. Remember the code... they take one of ours, we take one of theirs. It's the only way to send a message to those assholes.

The more Dre thinks about what Mike says, the more his anger rises.

BEN

Where did you get that?

MIKE

It's my mom's. She keeps in the house for protection. I borrowed it. I have to get it back after you do it.

Dre takes the gun from Mike.

DRE

(admiring the gun)

That man took my brothers life. The police let him walk out, right in front of me. It's the right thing to do. I will get justice for Wes.

Ben, realizing Dre and Mike are serious, gets scared.

BEN

Let's think about this for a minute, fellows.

MIKE

Shut up, Ben. Grow up.

DRE

I gotta go. I catch you later, Mike.

Dre exits in a hurry, with the gun.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

52

Dre is seen walking down the street near the alley. He hears a voice calling him from the alley. He looks to see it's his dad, Sharky.

SHARKY
Dre, come here!

DRE
Why? What do you want with me?

SHARKY
Look, I know your mom doesn't want me near you. That's why we can't be seen in together in the open. Come here, I need to talk to you.

Dre turns down the alley and they walk together down the alley.

53 EXT. SHARKY'S HOUSE - EVENING

53

Dre and Sharky come to the house and sit on the porch.

SHARKY
You know, I always have an ear in these streets.

DRE
Yeah, so what?

SHARKY
I know what you are about to do.

Dre begins to get a little nervous, but does not want to show it.

DRE
(defiantly)
What do you mean, what I'm about to do?

SHARKY
Come on man, don't take it to that level. I am and always will be your father.

DRE
So.

SHARKY
It's not that easy.

DRE
Being a father?

SHARKY
That plus killing somebody.

DRE
YOU did that!

SHARKY
I learned my lesson. Where did you
get the gun?

DRE
(surprised)
The gun?

SHARKY
Play stupid! Hand it over?

DRE
What makes you think I have a gun?

SHARKY
I told you, I have eyes AND ears
all over these streets. I know
about things long before they
happen. Nothing goes on that I
don't know about.

Dre pulls out the gun and places it on the table and stands
up.

DRE
There, man. Now, what's your point?

SHARKY
I know you're upset about Wes. So
am I. Your mother never gave me a
chance to get close to him the way
you and I did before I went to
prison and your mom shut me out of
your lives.

DRE
I've heard that before. I got
something to do. Say what you have
to say so I can go.

SHARKY
Think about what you want to do.
You think you're tough. You think
you're a man. It's not that easy.

DRE

First off, you have no idea what I am going to do. Nobody does. Second off, when do you think you can boss me around? You have been nowhere for seven years, now you want to play daddy!

Sharky grabs Dre and holds him against a wall.

SHARKY

(really pissed)

I AM YOUR DADDY!

Sharky releases Dre as he sees fear in his eyes.

SHARKY (CONT'D)

(calm)

You better not forget it. Listen, yes, I went to prison for murder. That does not mean you have to. I'm going in the house. You decide what you want to do. It's your choice. I tried to give you guidance and you still want to be bitter with me. Remember, the road you choose, is the road you will travel the rest of your life.

With that, Sharky goes into the house, shaking his head and leaving the gun on the table. Dre stands looking at the gun debating silently whether to pick it up or just leave.

54 INT. CORTEZ LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

54

When Juan, Maria and Miguel have arrived home from the police station and Maria is still pleading her case.

MARIA

Papa, please. Dre is not a bad boy.

JUAN

I told you, I don't want to hear anymore of this.

MARIA

But...

Luciana enters the room.

LUCIANA

What's the matter, Juan? How did everything go with the police?

MIGUEL

Maria was caught hugging on a black thuggish boy... in the police station.

LUCIANA

Oh my God! I was afraid this would happen. She does not know anything about those people.

JUAN

Maria, Pedro is who you are to date. This Dre character is not the kind of young man I will allow you to see.

MARIA

Papa, Dre treats me like a lady. He is kind and intelligent and... I love him.

JUAN

(angry)

You are forbidden to see him or any boy of his kind and that's it! Now, off to your room.

As Maria heads to her room.

JUAN (CONT'D)

Maria! Get back here, now!

Maria turns and comes back.

JUAN (CONT'D)

Give me your phone.

Maria, reluctantly, hands it over.

JUAN (CONT'D)

You will not be making any calls, tonight, young lady. You are hereby grounded.

MARIA

Grounded! But, papa...

JUAN

That's what I said.

MARIA

How long?

JUAN

Indefinitely. I am so angry with you, right now, I don't know how long it will take for you to learn your lesson.

MIGUEL

(whispering to Maria,
teasing)

Whoa, indefinitely. I never had one that long.

MARIA

Leave me alone, Miguel.

JUAN

Now, go to your room and think about what you have done.

CUT TO:

55

INT. MARIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

55

Maria sits on her bed angry that her dad has grounded her. Suddenly, she hears a tap on her window. It startles her. She hears another and another. She goes to the window to find it is Dre tossing rocks at her window. Maria smiles and opens the window.

MARIA

(whispering)

Dre, what are you doing here?

DRE

(whispering)

Maria, I had to come see you. Especially, after seeing you at the police station.

MARIA

(sad)

Yeah, my father has grounded me.

DRE

What? Why?

MARIA

He doesn't want me to see you.

DRE

Maria, I can't stop thinking of you. You are so beautiful. I love you, Maria.

MARIA

I love you, too. I miss you so much.

DRE

We need to talk.

MARIA

I agree. Come on up.

DRE

What about your dad?

MARIA

Don't worry about him. I won't see him until tomorrow.

Dre heads for the front door.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(frantic)

Dre, no! Not that way.

DRE

You said, "Come up."

MARIA

Climb up.

(pointing to a plant truss)

Over there.

Dre climbs up and into the window.

MARIA (CONT'D)

You are so funny.

DRE

Maria, your father shot my brother, last night.

MARIA

I know. I'm so sorry. He says he was trying to rob him. Is he alright?

DRE

He is in a comma. I'm not sure if he's gonna make it. He was not trying to rob your dad. My mom, aunt and grandma are at the hospital. I couldn't stay there. I couldn't take it.

(MORE)

DRE (CONT'D)

I keep thinking about Wes, but then I keep thinking of you. I had to see you. Thanks for letting me in.

MARIA

When I saw you at the police station, I thought you were being arrested for killing someone.

DRE

(surprised)

Huh! You actually thought I could have killed somebody?

MARIA

No. Not at first. Only at the police station. I couldn't think of any reason why you would be there.

DRE

(insulted)

I am not a killer.

MARIA

(feeling bad)

I know. I'm sorry for thinking that. Come here.

Maria give Dre a hug.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Dre, I love you. You are so sweet.

DRE

Then, who was that goon at the police station?

MARIA

(jokingly)

Which one?

DRE

(serious)

The one who wanted to punch me.

MARIA

That would be Pedro. He goes to my school and works for my father. My parents think he and I should date, but I can't stand him.

DRE

Really?

MARIA

Really. He took me to a movie, once. It was terrible. He treated me like he owned me. He wanted me to serve him. I had to buy him popcorn and a drink. He never opened the door for me.

DRE

That is bad.

MARIA

At school, he tells everyone I belong to him. He bullies me. The more I tell people I don't like him, the more they don't believe me. Everyone thinks he is nice. He has his teammates cover for him. They are afraid to stand up to him.

DRE

He doesn't scare me.

MARIA

He doesn't like you or anyone from the your school. That is why the games are so tough when our schools play each other. Pedro has vowed to kill you, the next time he sees you.

DRE

Let him try. He will get a big surprise.

MARIA

I don't want anything to happen to you.

DRE

Don't worry. I know how to take care of myself.

Maria sits on her bed while Dre sits on the floor, next to the bed. They continue talking until Dre falls asleep on the floor. Maria covers him with a blanket, then she crawls into bed and falls asleep.

CUT TO:

56

INT. MARIA'S ROOM - DAY

56

Maria and Dre are awakened by a knock on her bedroom door.
It's Juan.

JUAN

Maria? Open the door, please.

MARIA

(panicking)

Papa? Ok.

(whispering to Dre)

Dre, you gotta leave!

JUAN

Maria? What are you doing?

DRE

(whispering)

Dang! I didn't mean to stay all night.

MARIA

(rushing Dre)

Hurry!

Dre starts to climb out.

DRE

Thanks for listening, Maria.

(quickly blurts out)

I love you!

He steps outside the window.

MARIA

Wait!

She rushes to the window, reaches for Dre and kisses him.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Call me, later.

Dre nods and climbs down from the ledge and runs away, just as Maria lets Juan in the room.

JUAN

(angry)

Maria, what is going on!

MARIA

(looking sad, depressed,
staring out the window)

Nothing's going on.

JUAN

Why are you locked in your room?
Why did it take you so long to open
the door.

MARIA

I was thinking about last night.

JUAN

What about it. I meant what I said.

MARIA

But, papa, you don't understand...

JUAN

We are not having this discussion.
Not now.

(changing the mood)

Listen, get dressed. Breakfast is
almost ready.

MARIA

OK, papa.

CUT TO:

57 INT. CORTEZ KITCHEN - DAY

57

Miguel is seated at the table. Luciana is fixing the plates.
Maria enters.

MARIA

(cheerful, sitting)

Morning, Miguel. Morning, mama.

MIGUEL

Morning, Maria.

LUCIANA

Morning, Maria.

MARIA

Where's papa?

MIGUEL

He went to open the bodega.

LUCIANA

(hurt, angry)

Against his lawyers... and my
wishes.

MIGUEL

Mama, he has to keep the bodega
open. It's important. Besides, me
and Pedro will be there to help.

(MORE)

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

(to Maria)

You should rethink how you feel about Pedro. He is a good kid and papa really likes him.

MARIA

(sarcastically)

Then let him date Pedro.

MIGUEL

(angry)

Don't get smart!

MARIA

You and papa are so stuck on Pedro. You don't even know him. He is mean, he lies...

MIGUEL

Hold up! Pedro is the best person for you. You need to give up on that muchacho negro.

MARIA

That "muchacho negro" happens to be more of a gentleman than Pedro will ever be.

MIGUEL

Maria, those people are not like us. They don't even like us.

MARIA

What are you talking about, Miguel.

MIGUEL

The only reason they date our females is so they can abuse them. They treat them bad.

MARIA

You are just saying that, because papa told you that when he found out you had sex with a black girl.

LUCIANA

(shocked)

Miguel! You did what?!

MIGUEL

It was not like that, mama.

MARIA

(deviously)

That's not how it seemed when papa talked to you about it.

LUCIANA

I can't take this. I'm gonna talk to your father about this when he gets home. I just don't know what has gotten into my children.

She leaves the kitchen in disgust.

MARIA

(laughing)

Look whose in trouble, now.

MIGUEL

(back to the subject)

Maria, do you know what happens when you have kids by those people?

MARIA

Say it, Miguel. What?

MIGUEL

The kids are treated bad. They grow up to live a life of crime. It's not good.

MARIA

How do you know? You don't even know Dre or his family. You think you know Pedro, but you don't.

(pause)

Do you know anything?

MIGUEL

I know papa has forbid you from seeing that boy and if I catch him even looking your way...

(moving closer to Maria)

I will kill him.

(more seriously)

On... the... spot.

MARIA

(laughing)

You think you are so tough. You are nothing more than papa's puppy dog. I'm done talking to you. Just stay out of my business!

With that, Maria leaves the kitchen as Miguel sits shaking his head.

CUT TO:

58 EXT. LINCOLN HIGH - DAY

58

Dre, Mike and Ben stand in front of the school talking about Wes.

BEN

Hey, Dre. We didn't think you'd be here, today.

MIKE

Yeah. How's Wes? Is he gonna be O.K.?

DRE

(sad)

The doctor says he's in stable condition. His surgery went good.

MIKE

(sad)

Wow, Dre, I can't believe it. He just shot him? For nothing?

DRE

(angry)

Yeah, man. The police think Wes was gonna shoot the bodega guy. But, they didn't find a gun and they won't, because he didn't have one.

BEN

(puzzled)

If they didn't find a gun, how do they know he was shot?

DRE

(to Mike)

Tell me, again, why do we let him hang with us?

MIKE

(laughing)

Because, he makes us laugh.

DRE

(to Ben)

Listen, they think Wes had a gun and was gonna shoot that bodega guy. But, the bodega guy shot first.

BEN

(gets it)

Oh!

(pause)

That makes sense.

MIKE

(to Dre)

My mom said the police arrested you.

DRE

They didn't arrest me. They just took me in for questioning.

MIKE

(excited)

What was it like? Did they point a spotlight in your face?

BEN

Did they make you sit in a dark empty room? Were you in a cell with murders and rapist?

DRE

No! It wasn't like that. They just wanted to know what I knew about the whole thing.

MIKE

What'd you tell them?

DRE

What do you think? Wes went to the bodega to get a soda and some chips, I went to see what was taking so long, I heard a gunshot, Wes was on the floor, I got scared and ran home. End of story.

BEN

And they just let you go?

MIKE

My mom told me they let that Mexican bigot go free.

DRE
Yeah, they did.

MIKE
Did you see him?

DRE
Yeah. But, you know who else was there?

MIKE
Who?

DRE
Maria!

Who? BEN Who? MIKE

DRE
Maria...
(surprised by their
reaction)
The hot chick from the dance?

Oh! BEN Oh! MIKE

MIKE (CONT'D)
(excited)
At the police station?

DRE
Yes!

MIKE
What was she doing there?

DRE
The bodega guy is her father.

MIKE
Her father! Did she see you?

DRE
Did she see me? She ran right up
and kissed me!

BEN
Wow!

MIKE

Did her dad flip out?

DRE

I don't think he saw us. But, her ape-ass brother did. He threatened me.

MIKE

Is he big? What does he look like?

DRE

He's on the basketball team. You know, the one who kept hanging on the rim trying to get people to notice him. Nah, he thinks he's one bad cholo, but he doesn't scare me.

BEN

That's the guy who slammed you into the wall when you drove the lane on him for the tenth time. You better be careful.

MIKE

Those Chavez High dudes are still looking for us.

DRE

(whispering)

Can I tell you something?

Sure.

MIKE

Sure.

BEN

DRE

(still whispering)

You gotta promise not to tell anyone.

MIKE

We promise. Come on, already.

DRE

Ben? Promise...

BEN

I promise, man. What's up?

DRE

(quietly)

I spent the night in Maria's room.

MIKE
(disbelief)
Aw, no way!

BEN
Was she there?

DRE
Of course, she was there.

MIKE
How'd that happen? Her dad and her
brother would have killed you.

DRE
They didn't know. She let me in the
window.

MIKE
Where was everybody?

DRE
My mom, aunt and grandma were at
the hospital. I got tired of
sitting there waiting on the
doctor, so I went to see Maria. I
just wanted to talk about things. I
really love her.

BEN
Did you guys do it?

DRE
Do what?

MIKE
You know... you and her alone... in
her room... all night long.

DRE
(shocked)
It wasn't like that! We talked. We
got to know more about each other,
she let me know how she felt about
everything... and me. Then I fell
asleep.

MIKE
(disappointed)
That's it? Boring!

DRE
Her dad almost caught us. I got out
of the room just before he came in.
(MORE)

DRE (CONT'D)

If he had been seconds sooner, he would have caught us kissing.

MIKE

(disbelief)

OK...OK, that's enough. Now, I know you're exaggerating. I could believe you talked to her, but not all the other stuff.

Dre gets a text from Maria.

It read: "Dre, it's me, Maria. I'm sneaking my mom's phone. I'm glad you came over, last night. But, you have to be careful. My father and brother are both angry about me seeing you. My brother says he will kill you, if he sees us together. Just be safe. OXOXOX"

DRE

(showing Mike and Ben)

See, I told you. You guys are my best friends. I would never lie to you.

The BELL RINGS for the start of school.

DRE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

(to Mike)

Oh, if anybody ask, I spent the night at your house.

MIKE

Dude, seriously.

DRE

Do you think I would have told my mom I spent the night in a girl's bedroom?

MIKE

Why not, she wouldn't believe you, either.

BEN

I believe you, Dre. You da man!

They go to class.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. CHAVEZ HIGH - DAY

59

Maria and Nadine are sitting on a bench.

NADINE
(shocked)
You let him in?

MARIA
Yes! It was so romantic.

NADINE
What did he say?

MARIA
Well, he was really sad. His
brother was still in a comma. But,
he said he had to see me.

NADINE
Girl, you fooled me. I would never
think you would talk to a black
guy.

MARIA
Why? Don't tell me you don't like
them. I saw you at the park,
remember? You were drooling all
over Mike.

NADINE
I was not!

MARIA
I saw the way you were looking at
him when they were walking up.

NADINE
Anyway, what about your father? If
he finds out...

MARIA
When we got home from the police
station, he hit the ceiling. He was
so mad about seeing me talking to
Dre. He grounded me and took my
phone.

NADINE
No!

MARIA

That's why I couldn't call you,
last night. I used my mom's phone
to send Dre a text this morning.

NADINE

Your mom is cool with it?

MARIA

No, she was doing the laundry and
left her phone on the table. Miguel
is pissed, too.

NADINE

You are so bad.

MARIA

Nadine, I need your phone.

NADINE

No. Why?

MARIA

I have to talk to Dre. I need to
see him.

NADINE

No, Maria. I can't. You know my
parents check my phone records.

MARIA

Come on, Nadine. I'll send a text
and you can delete it after I'm
done. It'll be fine.

NADINE

Are you sure?

MARIA

I do it all the time. When I texted
Diego and BENNIE when they asked me
out, I deleted the text and my
parents still don't know.

NADINE

Really?

MARIA

Remember that time Pedro accused me
of going out with Diego?

NADINE

Yeah.

MARIA

Well, he took my phone to look for anything from anyone other than you or my family. He never found anything, because I deleted the messages.

NADINE

Wow, you are so brave. That's why I love you. But, I don't know...

MARIA

(begging)

Please, Miguel is keeping an eye out for Dre and if I am with him, nothing will happen.

NADINE

You really do love that boy, don't you?

MARIA

He is so sweet. And he really cares about me.

NADINE

Oh, that's so romantic.

(pause)

OK, here. The things I do for love.

Nadine gives Maria her phone. Maria sends Dre a text.

It reads: "Dre, it's me, Maria. I'm using Nadine's phone. Meet me at the park at 4. We need to talk. Miss you."

CUT TO:

60

INT. LINCOLN HIGH - DAY

60

Dre's phone buzzes. He sees a text from a strange number. He sees it's from Maria.

He replies: "Miss me, huh. I miss you, too. I'll see you at 4. But, why the park?"

Maria replies: "My brother is looking for you. We can't go where he may see us. I'll explain everything when I see you."

Dre replies: "OK. See you at 4."

CUT TO:

61 EXT. CHAVEZ HIGH - DAY

61

MARIA

There, it's all deleted. Thanks.

NADINE

What are you gonna do? How can you date a black guy knowing your father will kill you for disobeying him.

MARIA

My family will be fine with it, once I get them to see what kind of person Dre is. He is the nicest, kindest boy I have ever known.

NADINE

But, your dad likes Pedro. We both know he hired Pedro as a way for the two of you to become close. Pedro always makes sure everyone knows you are his girl.

MARIA

(angry)

I am not his girl! Pedro is not my boyfriend. We went out, one time and it was a disaster. He is rude, annoying and stupid. He's just a dumb-ass jock.

NADINE

But, you look so good together.

MARIA

(serious)

Nadine. You are my best friend, right?

NADINE

Right.

MARIA

I tell you everything, right?

NADINE

Right. What are you getting at?

MARIA

There is something I have to tell you. I have not told anyone this and you have to promise me you won't tell.

NADINE

(worried)

OK... I won't. What is it?

MARIA

Back when Pedro and me went to the movie, the first time, Pedro tried to kiss me.

NADINE

So, what did you do?

MARIA

I didn't want to kiss him. He was so rude. He swore at the ticket lady for being slow. He practically attacked the concession guy because the popcorn was not ready. I was so embarrassed. Then he wanted a kiss. He ended up kissing me on the neck.

NADINE

Why is that so bad?

MARIA

On the way back in the car, he tried it again, only this time he was more aggressive. He said,
(mockingly)
"You are mine, everyone will know it. Now, give me a kiss."

NADINE

(scared)

What did you do?

MARIA

I pushed him away. Then, he pushed me against the wall and tried to give kiss me. I got scared, so I kissed him. I thought that would calm him down, but he became more aggressive. He began rubbing my breast and when I moved his hand away, he reached under my skirt and tried to get under my panties...

NADINE

(angry)

That creep! He raped you! Did he hurt you?

MARIA

No! He tried, but I gave him a good swift kick in the nuckles, just like in the movies. He folded like a taco. I told him to keep his hands off me. He tried to apologize, but I didn't want to hear it. I told him I was gonna tell my father. That's when he became very angry and told me if I tell anyone, he will say I came on to him. That I tried to go down on him and I told him to fuck me.

NADINE

Oh... my... god.

MARIA

Plus, he said, if I caused trouble for him, he will have my family hurt.

NADINE

You think he has the balls to do that?

MARIA

He has friends who will do whatever he says. He is such a bad person. But, you see why I can't talk about this?

NADINE

That's bullshit, Maria. You have to go to the police.

MARIA

No, Nadine. I can't. They won't believe me.

(crying)

Nobody will. Pedro has everyone, except us, fooled. They think he is the fine upstanding jock that will be the two sport pro in the NFL and NBA, that he can do no wrong.

NADINE

What do you want to do?

MARIA

Nothing. I don't want my family hurt. Pedro will be going away to college in a few months and out of my hair.

NADINE

True, he is going to Miami. That's a long way from here.

MARIA

I wish it was longer than that. At least Dre and I can be happy.

CUT TO:

62 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

62

Shondra and Becky are standing around Wes' bed. Ida walks in. Wes is sleeping and has not awakened since the shooting.

SHONDRA

Where is that other son of mine? I know he feels bad, but he should be here.

BECKY

Did he have some after school thing to do?

SHONDRA

Not that I know of. He was out late, last night.

IDA

That boy was out ALL night. He came running in, this morning, just in time to change for school.

SHONDRA

Mama, how do you know this?

IDA

Unlike you, I know everything about everything that goes on in that house. I been telling you, those boys of yours are getting out of hand.

BECKY

Mama, you just want to cause trouble where there is none. You can't let things be. Wes is trying to rest and we don't need this, right now. We need positive energy in this room to help him pull through.

IDA
 There you go, with that "positive
 energy" crap. I'll leave it alone.

Wes begins to shake and convulse. The MONITORS begin to wildly beep, the NURSES rush in and send everyone to the waiting room. Shondra calls Dre.

62 pt1 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

62 pt1

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SHONDRA
 (pacing nervously)
 Dre! Where are you?

62 pt2 EXT. DUNCAN PARK - DAY

62 pt2

DRE
 At the park. I'm sorry, Mom. I
 can't take seeing Wes lying in that
 bed, like that.

62 pt1 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

62 pt1

SHONDRA
 You need to get to the hospital,
 now! Something is happening to Wes.

62 pt2 EXT. DUNCAN PARK - DAY

62 pt2

DRE
 (worried)
 What is it?!

62 pt1 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

62 pt1

SHONDRA
 (angry)
 Just get here!

62 pt2 EXT. DUNCAN PARK - DAY

62 pt2

DRE
(hurried)
I'm on my way!

63 INT. WAITING ROOM - EVENING

63

Dre runs in.

DRE
Where is he? Mama, is he alright?
What's happening?

SHONDRA
We don't know, yet. He started
shaking. They took him back to
surgery. We are waiting to see him.

LOOKING THRU THE WAITING ROOM WINDOW. WE SEE THE DOCTOR ENTER AND APPROACH SHONDRA. THE CAMERA, SLOWLY, PULLS IN AS BECKY COMES TO SHONDRA'S SIDE. DRE STANDS ON THE OTHER SIDE. AS THE DOCTOR BEGINS TO SPEAK, DRE RUNS OUT, FEARING THE WORST. WE SEE THE DOCTOR SPEAK TO SHONDRA AND SHE, SLOWLY, DROPS TO HER KNEES LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN AS BECKY DROPS ONTO A CHAIR LOOKING UPWARD. THEY ARE BOTH IN TEARS. IDA SITS WITH A SHOCKED LOOK ON HER FACE. SHE IS SHAKING, NERVOUSLY, FROM THE NEWS.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. DUNCAN PARK - DAY

64

Mike and Ben are shooting baskets. They see Dre coming towards them. They run to meet him.

DRE
(crying)
Wes is dead!

MIKE
(shocked)
What!

BEN
(shocked)
What!

DRE
Wes died! My little brother is
dead!

They huddle and cry together. Others in the park, who knew Wes, heard Dre and start coming over, some in tears, to help console him.

BEN

Why did that illegal alien kill
Wes?

MIKE

Yeah, the little twerp was a pain
at times, but I liked him. I can't
stand that stupid alien dude.

BEN

Wes never hurt anybody. He just
wanted to ride his bike or his
scooter.

MIKE

Or his skateboard.
(reminiscing)
Man, he could ride.

DRE

He didn't do anything to anybody!
(anger sets in)
I have to make that Mexican pay for
what he did to my brother. The cops
just let him walk. IT'S NOT FAIR!

They all agree.

DRE (CONT'D)

I have to go.
(to Ben)
Ben, meet me at my house in an
hour.

CUT TO:

65 INT. DRE'S ROOM - EVENING

65

Dre is thinking about Wes while he is looking at Wes' skateboard and photos of Wes at the park and playing with him when they were younger. He begins to cry as he realizes how close they were and how Wes really looked up to him. The doorbell rings. It's Mike and Ben. Dre goes to the door to let them in.

MIKE

(sees Dre has been crying)
Hey, how you doing, buddy?

DRE

(wiping tears while
walking)
I'm alright.

They enter Dre's bedroom.

MIKE

(angry)

Well, we're not. Me and Ben about how that Mexican asshole is walking free after shooting Wes and we have a plan.

DRE

A plan?

BEN

Yes, we need to retaliate!

DRE

(to Ben)

OK, brains, what are you talking about?

BEN

The code!

DRE

What code?

BEN

(very excited)

The code of the streets!

(imitating Scarface)

They take one of ours, we take one of theirs.

DRE

Take what?

MIKE

(to Dre)

Hear him out.

BEN

Not what, who. You said that bodega guys son is Miguel. The kid from the Chavez basketball team, right?

DRE

Right.

BEN

Well, I happen to know where he hangs out.

DRE
(confused)
Your point...

BEN
We make that killer pay. He took
shot someone we love, so we take
someone he loves.

DRE
(surprised)
Whoa, boy. Hold your horses. Are
you saying we kill Miguel?

MIKE
(understanding)
Don't you get it! Dre, we won't
kill anyone. We make him pay with
pain.

DRE
How are we gonna do this?

BEN
Me and Mike will wait for him to
walk home... alone. Then we will
grab him and bring him to the alley
in back of the house.

DRE
The house?

BEN
OK, I don't know. I'm thinking of
this on the fly. We'll take him
somewhere.

MIKE
Then, you come in, rough him up a
little and we are out.

BEN
He goes home, his dad sees that and
confesses that he lied about Wes
having a gun.
(happy)
It's an ingenious plan. The best I
have ever come up with.

DRE
I don't know. I think we should let
the court deal with those people.
(pause)

(MORE)

DRE (CONT'D)

If they get deported, I will lose Maria.

(upset)

I can't let that happen.

BEN

(to Mike)

Lets go.

(to Dre)

Meet us at JAKE's at 8. I think it's a good plan.

MIKE

Don't worry, this is a good thing... and something you could use. You can take your frustration and anger out on Miguel.

DRE

OK. But, Maria must never know I was a part of it.

Mike and Ben exit.

Dre's phone rings. It's Maria.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

DRE (CONT'D)

Hello?

MARIA (VO)

(concerned)

Dre. How are you? I heard the news about your brother.

DRE

Maria! I'm alright. Thanks for calling. I didn't know the number.

MARIA (VO)

I'm using Nadine's phone. The police want my father to turn himself in. They have to change the charge.

DRE

Are you alright?

MARIA (VO)

Yes, I'm fine. I feel really bad about everything.

DRE
 Me, too. My brother was my best
 friend. It doesn't seem real.
 (beginning to cry)
 I miss him.

Dre hears his mother coming in the house.

DRE (CONT'D)
 (hurried)
 Maria, I have to go. My mom's home
 from the hospital.

MARIA (VO)
 OK. Dre?

DRE
 Yes?

MARIA (VO)
 Everything will be fine. I love
 you.

DRE
 I love you, too. Bye.

65A INT. DRE'S ROOM - EVENING

65A

Shondra comes to the bedroom door and catches the tail end of
 the conversation.

SHONDRA
 Who was that, Dre?

DRE
 (being coy)
 Oh, nobody.

Becky comes up behind Shondra.

SHONDRA
 Boy, when are you gonna learn how
 to lie. You said, "I love you" to
 nobody.

DRE
 Mom, it's not important.

BECKY
 OMG, Dre, you have a little
 girlfriend!

DRE

Oh... my... God, Aunt Becky, it's not like that!

BECKY

(talking fast)

Come on, boy. Spill the beans. Is she cute? Where does she live? Is she from the north side? Stay away from them north side girls, they are nothing but sluts! What classes do you have together?

(pause)

Oh, wait. Never date anyone who goes to your school. You will never have any privacy. It will be like a 24/7 relationship. OMG, like a marriage.

SHONDRA

Becky, stop it! You're scaring the boy. Just because you tried to juggle three boys at the same time in high school, doesn't mean my son is like that.

Ida comes to the door along side her two daughters.

BECKY

Well, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. You know, Dre was almost your prom date?

SHONDRA

Shut up, Becky!

IDA

I hope it ain't that little floozie from the police station.

DRE

(shocked)

Grandma, no!

SHONDRA

What floozie, Dre?

IDA

While I was signing Dre out, after they took his statement, this little girl came running up to him and was hugging all on him.

(smiling at Dre)

(MORE)

IDA (CONT'D)

You didn't think I saw that, did ya? Grandma sees all.

DRE

Mom... grandma, it wasn't like that.

SHONDRA

Why are you so nervous? It's OK for you to have a girlfriend.

IDA

(to Dre)

You want me to tell her the rest of the story?

DRE

(giving in)

No, I'll tell her. Mom, her name is Maria and she is the daughter of the bodega owner.

SHONDRA

(shocked)

WHAT? The man who shot my baby? Your brother? Dre!

DRE

Mom, I didn't know he was her father until that night at the police station.

SHONDRA

(angry)

She's Mexican? Hell no! You better call that off! Ain't no son of mine dating no Mexican!

DRE

Why not? You don't know her. She is not like the rest of them. You would like her, if you met her.

BECKY

That ain't happening, boy. Mexican's are bad people. They hate blacks. Their kids are in gangs...

SHONDRA

Look, a Mexican killed your brother and now you want to date his daughter! How old is she?

(worried)

Have you had sex with her?

DRE
(shocked)
MOM!

IDA
(under her breath)
That's a good question.

SHONDRA
We talked about the birds and the bees when you were twelve. Mexican girls start having sex when they are eight-years-old.

DRE
Mama! It's not like that. We never had sex.
(to himself)
This is so uncomfortable.

SHONDRA
I am not gonna allow you to date outside of our race. Break up with this girl, now. There are plenty of beautiful intelligent Black young ladies you could choose from.

DRE
But, mama...

SHONDRA
What happened to that girl from the YMCA, STEPHANIE?

DRE
She had a baby last month. Everyone at school is talking about it.

BECKY
Our Black men are killing our race with these mixed relationships.

DRE
What are you talking about?

BECKY
So many of our Black men today are having babies with Mexicans, Asians and White women. For every one mixed race child born in the world, there are four fewer Black children born in the world.

DRE

That doesn't sound right.

BECKY

See! That's the mentality of the Black man and that is what is killing our race. When a man who is a mixed has a mixed baby, that babies blood is more diluted than the fathers. Eventually, there will be no more Black babies born, because their blood will be watered down.

SHONDRA

(puzzled)

I agree with those facts, but Becky, you date White men.

BECKY

This ain't about me! But, I ain't making no babies with them. When, and I say WHEN, I decide to make a baby, I will find the biggest, strongest, most handsome Black man to donate his sperm for my baby.

SHONDRA

You still believe that you will find a man who will agree to get you pregnant and disappear?

BECKY

Not really, but I don't want kids. I'm a free spirit. Kids tie you down.

DRE

I gotta go, mama. Don't worry. I'm not gonna have sex until I get married.

SHONDRA

(changing the subject)

Dre, the night Wes was shot...

DRE

(puzzled)

Yes?

SHONDRA

Something doesn't quite add up. How were you two going to buy something with no money?

DRE

Mom, I told you, we were gonna get credit.

IDA

That's just stupid, boy.

SHONDRA

How do you know he was gonna give you credit?

DRE

Because, I see you do it all the time.

SHONDRA

Credit has to be paid at some point. Look, I am still confused, why did you leave Wes there?

DRE

He wanted chips, so he was getting them. Mom, I told the police all of this. I'm tired.

SHONDRA

I need to understand what happened! Don't lie to me!

IDA

Yeah, tell the truth!

DRE

Alright, I was getting a soda and that man came up behind me and scared me. I saw him with a gun and I ran.

(crying)

I was so scared, mama. I thought he was gonna shoot me, next.

Ida is watching Dre tell his story, but the look on her face is as if she thinks he is lying.

DRE (CONT'D)

I have to meet the fellas, mama. They want to plan something for Wes.

SHONDRA

OK, baby. Be careful.

DRE

I will.

Dre exits.

65B INT. MATHER LIVING ROOM - EVENING

65B

Becky, Shondra and Ida make their way to the living to sit and talk.

BECKY

Listen, I hate to say I told you so, but I did.

SHONDRA

What do you mean?

BECKY

I have always told you that boy is too much for you to handle, alone. You need a man around. At his age, you can't tell him everything he needs to know.

IDA

He is a handful. If you didn't run their father off, you wouldn't be in this spot.

SHONDRA

Here it comes. The big "if their father was here" lecture. Well, save your breath. He was no good.

BECKY

Well, he would have kept Dre from running around with those baby tugs of his.

SHONDRA

What are you talking about?

BECKY

Dre's friends. They ain't nothing but wanna be tugs.

SHONDRA

And how do you know that?

BECKY

I see them all the time. They do petty stuff like torment little kids for lunch money and things. They always do stuff like that.

SHONDRA

Are you saying Dre does that stuff?

BECKY

He's never around when I see them do things, but I wouldn't put it passed him.

IDA

Me either. That boy is trouble. He needs to go to boot camp. Let one of them Drill Sargents straighten him out.

SHONDRA

Dre is not going to no boot camp.
(crying)
I just lost one baby and I ain't gonna lose the only one I have left.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. JAKE'S FISH SHACK - NIGHT

66

The boys order fish sandwiches. Dre's phone buzzes. It's a text from Maria.

It reads: "Hi Dre. I miss you. Can you come see me?"

His reply reads: "Hi Maria. I miss you, too. I'm at Jake's with Mike and Ben. Can you meet me, here?"

She replies: "Sure! I'll get Nadine and we will meet you there in an hour."

Dre replies: "Great! I love you."

67 INT. MARIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

67

Juan enters Maria's room just as she is hiding Nadine's phone.

JUAN

(shocked)

Maria! What is that? Hand it over, now!

MARIA

It's Nadine's phone, papa. She left it and I was just letting her know I have it.

JUAN

Don't lie! Give it to me!

Maria hands him the phone. He, immediately, checks it and sees Dre's text.

JUAN (CONT'D)

This text is to that boy! You lied to me!

MARIA

I'm sorry, papa. But, I love Dre. I had to talk to him. His brother died. I had to let him know how I feel.

JUAN

I told you to stay away from him. Pedro is the only boy I will allow you to date. I will not hear of anything else. You will stay in this room and think about what you have done.

Juan leaves the room and locks the door. He goes to the living room where Luciana and Miguel are watching television.

LUCIANA

What's the matter, Juan?

JUAN

Maria has disobeyed me, again.

LUCIANA

What do you mean?

JUAN

That Black kid. She is still talking to him. I caught her texting him on this!

Juan holds up Nadine's phone.

LUCIANA

Where did she get that?

JUAN

It's Nadine's. She was in on it, as well.

MIGUEL

(angry)

She is still insisting on dating that boy?

JUAN
Look at the text.

Juan lets Miguel read the text. Miguel becomes furious.

MIGUEL
I told her never to see him, again.
I'll take Nadine her phone.

Miguel exits in a hurry.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. CORTEZ HOME - NIGHT

68

Miguel calls Pedro.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

MIGUEL
Pedro. It's Miguel.

PEDRO (VO)
Oh, hey Miguel.

MIGUEL
Dude, where are you?

PEDRO (VO)
On my way home. What's up? You
sound upset.

MIGUEL
Maria is still seeing that tug from
Lincoln.

PEDRO (VO)
(angry)
What the fuck! She knows she is
mine. Why is she doing this?

MIGUEL
I don't know. I do know I am going
to find that guy and I'm going to
kill him.

PEDRO (VO)
Where are you?

MIGUEL
I just left home. I have to stop by
Nadine's.

(MORE)

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Maria had her phone and I'm returning it. Then, I'm going to find this Dre character and end this.

PEDRO (VO)

I'll go with you.

MIGUEL

No! I can handle that punk by myself.

PEDRO (VO)

Don't do anything stupid...

Miguel hangs up. Pedro panics and heads for Maria's house.

CUT TO:

69

EXT. JAKE'S FISH SHACK - NIGHT

69

Dre, Mike and Ben are eating their food and talking. They are thinking back to the good times with Wes when Miguel shows up.

MIGUEL

Dre! Estúpido!

DRE

(startled)

What are you doing here? What do you want, jackass?

MIKE

(whispering)

Opportunity knocks.

MIGUEL

I told you to stay away from my sister. You didn't listen. Now, you are going to pay.

Dre, Mike and Ben stand up. Mike and Ben back away from Dre. Dre steps away from the table.

DRE

I don't think you want to do this, Miguel. Not here, not now.

MIGUEL

I am so tired of you and your gang of maggots! I'm gonna kick your ass.

DRE
 Why don't you go home to your
 killer daddy and stay out of my
 life.

Miguel becomes enraged and charges Dre. Dre side steps and Miguel runs into the wall, head first. Everyone cringes at the sight.

CUT TO:

70

INT. CORTEZ LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

70

The door bell rings. Juan opens the door. It's Pedro.

JUAN
 (happy)
 Pedro! How are you, son? Are you
 here to see Maria?

PEDRO
 No, sir. It's Miguel.

JUAN
 He's not here. He went to run an
 errand for me.

PEDRO
 I know. He called me. I'm worried.

JUAN
 (worried)
 Why?

PEDRO
 He said something about looking for
 the Black kid.

JUAN
 What?! That boy has such a temper.

PEDRO
 He could get hurt. We have to find
 him.

Juan runs to Maria's room.

JUAN
 Maria, where is that boy!

MARIA
 (confused)
 He's not here!

JUAN
(hurried)
Where does he live?

MARIA
(worried)
Papa, don't hurt him.

JUAN
It's not me he has to worry about.
Miguel is looking for him and he
might get hurt.

MARIA
Dre is at the fish shack.

JUAN
I have to stop him.

MARIA
I'm coming with you!

Juan, Maria and Pedro run to the car.

BACK TO:

71 EXT. JAKE'S FISH SHACK - NIGHT

71

Miguel straightens up.

MIKE
(to Ben)
That's gonna hurt in the morning.

BEN
(to Mike)
That hurts, right now.

Miguel gathers himself and charges at Dre, again. Dre side
steps and grabs Miguel as he passes and flips him on his
back. Once again, the crowd cringes, even bigger.

MIKE
(to Ben)
That's gonna leave a mark.

BEN
I can see the mark.

DRE
(standing over Miguel)
I can do this all night. Go home
before you get hurt.

Dre walks toward Mike and Ben. Mike and Ben are laughing so hard, they are not paying attention to Miguel. Miguel gets off the ground and charges Dre, one more time. This time, he rushes Dre from behind and takes him down. Dre becomes angry and fights back. Dre punches Miguel in the chin and he falls back. Miguel fights back, punching Dre in the gut. Dre doubles over, but lands a chop to Miguel's throat causing him to gag. Dre grabs Miguel's arm and flips him again. As Miguel flies through the air, a gun falls from his jacket pocket. Miguel recovers and rushes Dre pushing him into the wall knocking the wind out of him. Dre stands up and Miguel kicks him in the groin. Dre topples over. Mike rushes in and take Miguel to the ground. He punches Miguel repeatedly breaking his nose and jaw. Miguel grabs Mike by his shirt and flips him off. Miguel sees his gun on the ground and as Mike is getting up, Miguel lunges for the gun. Dre sees this and moves for the gun. Dre beats Miguel to it snatching it up, he shoots Miguel in the chest. Miguel falls to the ground and dies. The place goes silent.

MIKE

Oh, shit!

(to Dre)

Dude, you have to get out of here.

DRE

(still angry)

It was self-defense. He wouldn't stop. He was gonna kill you.

BEN

(nervous)

You have to run. Get outta here.

DRE

(to Mike)

OK, I'm going to the park. You know the spot. I'll be safe there, until I can figure out what to do.

MIKE

OK.

DRE

You have to tell Maria what happened. Let her know, Miguel had it was self-defense. She'll understand. I'll call her, later.

MIKE

OK, I will.

Sirens are getting close.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Get outta here, go!

Dre gets away as the police arrive. Juan, Maria and Pedro arrive shortly after the police to find Mike and Ben are being questioned by the police. They see Miguel's body on the ground and breakdown in sorrow.

JUAN
(to the boys)
Who did this?

POLICE OFFICER #3
(interrupting)
The shooter got away. There is an APB out for him, even though we only have a vague description of him.

JUAN
(to Pedro)
This madness has to end.

PEDRO
(to Juan)
I agree. Someone must pay.

JUAN
Let's split up and go find that punk.

MARIA
No! You guys let the police handle this. Things are totally out of hand.

JUAN
Maria, you go home, now. We are going to end this mess. Your brother did not deserve to be shot this way, at the hands of these people.

Maria sees Mike and Ben sitting near a police cruiser. She goes over to them.

MARIA
(whispering)
Guys. Did Dre do this?

BEN

(whispering)

Yes, your brother was out of control. He had a gun. Dre had no choice.

MARIA

(scared)

Is he alright? Where is he?

MIKE

(whispering)

He'll be fine. He said to tell you he is hiding at the storage shed at the skatepark.

MARIA

Thanks. I have to save him. My father is looking for him.

CUT TO:

72

EXT. DUNCAN PARK - NIGHT

72

Juan is searching around the park looking for Dre. He is alone. No one is in the park. He checks the basketball courts. He checks the bike path, he checks the hiking trail and the pond. All the while calling Dre's name with a very angry tone. He, finally comes to the skate area. Dre hears him and comes out from the shack. There is a fence between them. Dre is holding Miguel's gun.

DRE

What do you want?

JUAN

(seeing the gun)

I know you shot my son. Are you going to kill me, now?

DRE

If I have too.

(angry)

You killed my brother!

JUAN

(nervous)

It was an accident! I would never hurt a child. I thought he was going to shoot me. Is that the gun he had in the bodega?

DRE

It was a toy gun! I got this one when Miguel dropped it. We were just trying to get a snack. Wes was not going to shoot you!

JUAN

(Stunned)

A toy! I did not know that. Everybody thinks I made up the gun. Nobody believes me. You could have changed that! You could have told the police the truth! Now, my son is dead! This has to stop and stop, now. You tell the police the truth!

DRE

If I do, I'll go to jail. I'm not going to jail! Not now, not ever!

JUAN

I'll tell them you meant no harm. I'll let them know it was a mistake. I won't hold it against you. You two are just kids. It was a prank gone wrong.

DRE

But, they will still arrest me. No one will understand.

Dre raises the gun. Juan takes a step closer to Dre.

JUAN

(confident)

Calm down, let's talk this over.

DRE

Don't come any closer! I'll blow your head off! I know you don't like me! I know you don't want Maria to be with me!

JUAN

No, no, it's not like that. You see, you two are young. I want the best for my Maria.

DRE

(angrier)

So, I'm the worst!

Juan steps closer.

JUAN

No!

DRE

(in a more threatening
manner)

I told you, stay back!

JUAN

You are not the worst! But, you two
do not see what your future
together will be.

DRE

(cocky)

And now you are psychic?

JUAN

No! If you and Maria have children,
they will be ridiculed and treated
as outcast. They will have a life
of rejection. You will be setting
them up for failure.

DRE

You sound like my mom and my aunt.
Where did you guys get that idea
from? You don't know us. You don't
know me! It's not how you think.

JUAN

Look, you are smart. I see that.
You are intelligent. Maria tried to
tell me, but I would not hear of
it. You killed my son, this is
true. Do you think that makes you a
man?

DRE

That was self-defense! He came
there to kill me!

JUAN

Do you see how things happen? Me
shooting your brother was an
accident. I never meant to pull
that trigger. I never used a gun
before that day. I have regretted
it ever since.

DRE

(puzzled)

You what?

JUAN

(noticing Dre changing)
I live with the pain of killing
young Wes, every day. I relive that
moment in my head, every night.

DRE

(beginning to feel sympathy
for Juan)
You really feel that way?

JUAN

Yes. And now, hearing you, I know
you and I feel the same way. I was
wrong about you and Maria.

DRE

Don't mess with me, man.

JUAN

Seriously, it is wrong for me to
feel the way I have about you...
your family... your people.

DRE

What do you mean?

JUAN

Dre, your people are no different
than my people. We want the same
things. We, as parents, want the
same things for our children. You
kids want the same things as each
other.

DRE

I never heard that before. But, I
see it, I see it.

JUAN

Let's go make things right. It will
all turn out for the best.

Just then, Pedro arrives and stands near Juan. He sees Dre pointing a gun at Juan. Before anyone can say anything, Pedro pulls out a gun and as he fires a shot, Maria runs in from another direction.

MARIA

(runs to Dre)
Dre!

JUAN

Maria! No!

Maria gets caught in the line of fire. She is shot and falls into Dre's arms. They both collapse to the ground. Everyone is stunned.

Juan runs to Pedro.

JUAN (CONT'D)

(angry)

Pedro! What have you done?! Where did you get a gun?!

Sirens are heard in the background.

PEDRO

I told you, you need protection! I was protecting you. He was going to kill you!

Juan slaps Pedro.

JUAN

You are nothing but the thug you accused those other boys of being.

The police and paramedics show up, Pedro drops the gun and is taken into custody. Juan runs to Maria. Ben and Mike are let out of the police car and they run to Dre and Maria. The paramedics try to pull Dre away from Maria's body, but he hugs her tighter. She is dead. As the camera pulls back, we see Mike and ben running to Dre, sobbing.

MONTAGE

Maria at the dance when Dre first sees her. He is locked in on her beauty. Dre remembers the first time she kissed him.

CU of Maria from Dre's POV. She is smiling in different settings. As she looks at Dre, he sees how much she loves him.

END OF MONTAGE

73

EXT. DUNCAN PARK - NIGHT

73

CU of Dre holding Maria, crying. Camera pulls back to a wide overhead shot. Ben and Mike huddle over Dre and Maria, Juan kneels next to them with his arms around Dre and Maria.

THE END