

Release
by
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EXT. OUTSIDE AN INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

SONNY sprints from around a corner into view. He opens the front door of an apartment building and shoots up the stairs.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. MOMENTS LATER

Sonny stands at the door of Nadine's apartment, listening through the door. He hears a man's voice and sounds of a young girl crying.

He pounds on the door.

SONNY

Let me in motherfucker!

MAN (O.S.)

Go home Sonny. We'll settle up tomorrow.

SONNY

You cowardly mother fucker. Open the fucking door now!

A couple seconds of silence. Then Sonny grabs the door knob and yanks it back and forth.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I said, open this fucking door now!

MAN (O.S.)

Go fuckin' home Sonny!

Sonny grabs his head with both hands.

SONNY

Ahgghh!

He hears more cries from the girl. A gun shot sounds. The girl shrieks. Another shot. A body hits the ground.

Silence. Sonny freezes.

SONNY (CONT'D)

No. No. Shay. Nadine. Shay.

He backs up. He rubs his eyes with his hands and looks down. He looks up and then straight forward at the door again.

He runs toward it and slams his body into it. It breaks some, but not enough to open it.

He backs up and does it again. This time it breaks open.

CUT TO.

EXT. PRISON EXIT - DAY

Sonny, a thirty year old white male with a shaved head, tatoos, and a sad looking face, stands in front of a prison exit. A cab off to the side.

He waits for someone to come and pick him up. No one does. He walks toward the cab.

EXT. INNER CITY APT. BUILDING. DAYTIME

The same cab pulls up to Sonny's apartment building, a tenement building in the ghetto. He gets out of the cab.

Sonny looks around at his old neighborhood.

He sees a MALE DRUG ADDICT and a FEMALE DRUG ADDICT argue loudly. The Woman tries to walk away, but the man grabs her by the hair and yanks her back. Her feet lose traction and she hits the ground hard.

Sonny sighs and walks into the apartment complex.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAYTIME

SONNY'S MOM, a woman who looks ten years older than she is, worn out, opens the door and there stands Sonny. He smiles slightly. She sighs.

SONNY'S MOM

Well, look who's finally come home.

SONNY

Hi Mom.

She turns around and returns to sitting down on the couch. She lights a cigarette.

Prescription drug bottles lie on the coffee table in front of her. Sonny notices the bottles and then sits down on a chair.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I thought you would pick me up today.

Sonny's Mom reaches for one of the bottles, takes out a pill.

SONNY'S MOM

Yeah, well something came up.

She pops a pill and chases it down with a gulp of soda.
Sonny looks around the room.

SONNY

This place hasn't changed.

SONNY'S MOM

Did you think it would fall apart
without you around?

She gets up and goes into the kitchen, lighting a cigarette.

Sonny picks up a framed picture from the end table. It is a photo of his mother and his daughter, SELAH. Selah is about seven years old in the picture. They are smiling and have their arms around each other.

Sonny's mom comes back in the room. She takes the photo from him and puts it back on the end table.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

All I have left are memories.
Don't fuck that up too.

She takes a drag of her cigarette and leaves the room again. She walks down the hallway and enters her bedroom, closing the door.

Sonny looks at the picture again without picking it up. He gets up, walks to the hallway and pauses outside a different bedroom.

BEDROOM

Sonny pushes the door open more and enters the room.

He looks around at the pictures on the wall. Some pictures are of him and his daughter and some of just his daughter.

He walks over to the dresser and picks up a school picture of his daughter sporting a tom-boyish pony tail.

He brings it over to a single bed with colored, pony covered sheets and sits down. He sighs and then slowly rubs his hands across the sheets.

He puts his hand over the bridge of his nose to prevent crying. His face scowls.

He leans back, puts his feet up on the bed, and closes his eyes. He sleeps.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sonny stands over a street-side memorial holding a single red rose. Eroded stuffed animals, dead flowers, and wilted cards and pictures. He places the rose on the memorial, right below a framed picture of Selah.

About to leave he notices a young girl looking out her window. When Sonny sees her, she closes the curtains.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

NADINE, a woman in her mid-twenties, with long, straight, brown hair and a slender body, walks with her daughter SHAY.

Shay is a 7-year old girl with a similar look of her mom, but with her hair pulled back in a pony-tail.

Nadine walks ahead of Shay. Shay stops every now and then to pick something off the ground or to look into a window.

Nadine notices that Shay is distracted and not keeping pace. She turns around.

NADINE
Com'on Shay, fuck.

Shay hurries to catch up to her mom; only to fall behind again.

Nadine turns into the threshold of a building and opens the door. She notices again that Shay is far behind.

NADINE (CONT'D)
This ain't fuckin' funny Shay. Get over here now.

Shay hurries again. They enter the building.

INT. WELFARE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine and Shay wait in short line to walk through a metal detector.

Nadine empties her pockets in a basket and walks through the detector. Shay follows.

Nadine approaches the front desk. The RECEPTIONIST does not look up, focusing on her computer instead.

NADINE
Excuse me.

The receptionist still does not look up.

NADINE (CONT'D)
Excuse me. I have an appointment.

The receptionist looks at her.

RECEPTIONIST
Appointment paper.

Nadine is surprised.

NADINE
I wasn't told to bring that paper.

RECEPTIONIST
It says right on the letter to
bring your appointment slip. Did
you not read the letter.

The receptionist turns to type on her keyboard.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Last name?

NADINE
Johnson.

RECEPTIONIST
First?

NADINE
Nadine.

She types a few words. She picks up a clipboard with some forms on it and a pen attached by a string.

RECEPTIONIST
Have a seat over there and fill
these out.

NADINE
I filled these out the last time I
came.

The receptionist sighs.

RECEPTIONIST
You must fill them out every time
you come in. Do you want to see a
case worker or not?

Nadine grabs the clipboard. Shay and her move over to the overcrowded waiting room. Shay stops to pick up a pen on the ground.

NADINE

Shay, fucking A, get over here.

Nadine goes over to Shay, grabs her by her arm, and yanks her into the waiting room. Nobody seems to notice or care.

Shay begins to cry. Nadine sits down and begins filling out the paper work. Nadine sniffles next to her.

Nadine stops writing and looks at Shay. Her eyes tear up slightly.

NADINE (CONT'D)

We'll get some ice cream later.

Shay looks up at her.

SHAY

Promise?

NADINE

Stick a needle in my eye.

Shay chuckles and writes on a magazine with her pen.

INT. WELFARE OFFICE WAITING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Nadine and Shay remain in their chairs. The waiting room is less full. Shay sleeps. Nadine stares at the wall.

An African American CASE WORKER comes out of a door and into the waiting room with a clipboard. She puts on her glasses, that dangle around her neck, and looks at her papers.

CASE WORKER

Nadine Johnson?

Nadine nudges Shay to wake up.

CASE WORKER (CONT'D)

Nadine Johnson?

Shay gets up. Nadine does too. They collect their stuff and approach the case worker.

The case worker doesn't wait for them to get close. She turns around and opens the door, waiting for them to come through. She doesn't greet them. They all walk through the door and it shuts behind them.

INT. CASE WORKER'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

The case worker looks at some files. Her desk has pictures of her children and husband. They all look happy. There is memorabilia strewn throughout her cubby hole office.

Shay notices the pictures. She reaches out to touch a framed picture.

NADINE

Don't touch anything Shay.

Nadine bites her nails, waiting for the case worker to say something.

CASE WORKER

I am sorry to say that we are decreasing your benefits this term.

NADINE

Why?

CASE WORKER

It says here that you have been working at JOE'S Diner.

NADINE

That was last year. It didn't work out.

CASE WORKER

Well, there's nothing I can do. You will have to reapply and state that you no longer have that job.

Nadine rubs her head.

NADINE

So you can't just make a change now? In your computer?

CASE WORKER

It doesn't work that way. You'll have to reapply.

The case worker turns and grabs a manila folder and hands it to Nadine.

CASE WORKER (CONT'D)

Here's a new packet.

Nadine hesitates, but then grabs the packet.

Shay knocks over the framed picture.

NADINE
Dammit Shay!

Nadine looks at the case worker and then gets up. She gathers her stuff, grabs Shay's arm, and they walk away.

The case worker shakes her head.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATE EVENING

Nadine watches TV. Shay sleeps with her head on her lap.

Nadine shuts the TV off and strokes Shay's hair.

She looks at her cell phone on the end table. She hesitates, but eventually picks it up and dials. A man picks up.

MAN (O.S.)
Hello Nadine.

Nadine closes her eyes and sighs.

NADINE
I'm gonna need some extra help this month.

MAN
Sure baby. You know where I am.

She hangs up the phone. Nadine closes her phone. She looks at Shay again, stroking her hair. Her eyes sadden.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Sonny wakes up suddenly to the sound of his mother calling. She opens the door and stands in the threshold.

SONNY'S MOM
Sonny. Can't you hear me calling your damn name?

He rubs his eyes.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)
Terrance's here for you.

Sonny sits up.

LIVING ROOM

From the hallway Sonny sees TERRANCE, an African American man with short dreadlocks. He is slim and dressed in a trendy Hip Hop style.

Terrance hands Sonny's mom a bottle of pills. Sonny sees this transaction, but acts like he didn't as he enters the room.

TERRANCE

What the fuck. If it ain't Slick
Sonny, the shittiest mother fucker
on the south block.

Sonny grins. He walks over and gives Terrance a thug hug.

They look at each other for a couple seconds. They sit down.

SONNY

It's been a minute. How ya been?

TERRANCE

Shit, same old. Been up, been
down. It's up now though ya know.
Things are rollin' now.

SONNY

Are you still with Tonya?

TERRANCE

Nah, dropped her. She's pimped
now. Her mom's got the kids. It's
all good.

Awkward silence.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

So, how was the coup? Did you hang
wit' Jerry?

SONNY

Not much. He stayed in the east
block.

More silence. Terrance becomes more private. He glances toward Sonny's mom and then back at Sonny.

TERRANCE

Yo man. I know things are still
fresh, but-

SONNY

No. No way man.

TERRANCE

You don't even know what I was gonna drop.

SONNY

I do, and the answer is no. I'm going straight this time. Make things right.

Sonny looks over at a picture of his daughter on the end table. Terrance sees him glance at the picture.

Terrance stands up and walks toward the door. He motions for Sonny to come outside the apartment door.

Sonny gets up and they go outside the door.

HALLWAY

Terrance shuts the door.

TERRANCE

Yo, I get it. You want to be straight. The shit sucks in the pen. But we're smarter now. Wiser. We were just punks then. Now we're men. We won't make the same mistakes again.

SONNY

Nah.

TERRANCE

But your the best. Shit, one mistake, that's it. But we're too good to get caught again.

SONNY

We're too good to get caught again? I thought I was the one that spent the last seven years locked down.

TERRANCE

Awh. True. My bad. But we're a team. We've always been a team. A crazy ass team brah.

A loud argument comes from the bottom of the stairs.

Nadine comes up the stairs carrying too many bags of groceries. Her face is battered. Sonny and Terrance take notice.

Terrance ignores her, but Sonny cannot defeat the distraction.

Shay comes up next with a few bags of groceries as well. She's cute, but there is burden in her young face. Nadine stumbles a bit and her grocery bags fall and hit the ground.

NADINE
Motherfucker!

Sonny darts over to help her pick up the groceries. Nadine scowls at him and motions for him not to pick up any bags.

NADINE (CONT'D)
I don't need your fucking help.

Sonny looks at Shay. Shay smiles slightly, but then looks at the floor.

Nadine gets up and unlocks her apartment door. It swings open and hits the hallway wall hard. Shay flinches.

Nadine picks up some of the bags and enters the apartment. Shay follows, looking at Sonny as she enters.

Some bags remain. Sonny leans down and picks them up. Nadine comes out the door and snatches them from his hands.

NADINE (CONT'D)
I said I don't need no help. What the fuck did you not understand about that?

Nadine scans his eyes. Sonny looks back at her. She walks into her apartment and slams the door behind her.

Sonny stands still for a couple seconds then turns to Terrance.

SONNY
Who was that.

TERRANCE
Some bitch. What does it matter?

Terrance looks Sonny directly into his eyes.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
Sonny, listen. I know you're gonna need money. And when you do, holla. Aight?

Terrance and Sonny bump fists.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
Missed ya brah.

SONNY
Yeah, you too.

Terrance leaves. Sonny looks at Nadine's door for a couple seconds, but then goes back into his apartment.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING. MORNING

A sign reads JJ's Paper Supply

INT. OFFICE BUILDING. MORNING

An OFFICE MANAGER dressed in a shirt and tie sits across the desk from Sonny looking at an application and shaking his head no. He sighs.

OFFICE MANAGER
Here's the deal. You have no work
experience.

The manager glances at Sonny's tattoos, especially the one on his neck, which is a prison sign.

OFFICE MANAGER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do
for you.

The manager stands up. Sonny pauses for a couple seconds before he stands up too.

Sonny walks out the office door.

CUT TO:

INT. PACKING AND SHIPPING COMPANY WAREHOUSE. LATE MORNING

A WAREHOUSE MANAGER directs some workers in the warehouse.

He sees Sonny and motions for Sonny to approach him. They walk through the warehouse together.

SONNY
The guy at the front desk said that
you might be hiring.

The manager looks Sonny up and down.

WAREHOUSE MANAGER

Times are tough right now. We need help, but we can't afford it. (To workers), Be careful with those boxes. (To Sonny) Just can't do it man.

CUT TO:

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT KITCHEN. AFTERNOON

Sonny sits on a plastic chair outside a FAST FOOD MANAGER'S office. The manager talks on the phone in his office.

Sonny watches people almost half his age wrapping burgers and putting food in microwaves.

He sees a CUSTOMER complaining to a CASHIER.

CUSTOMER

This burger is soggy. Look. It tastes like shit.

The manager yells from his office.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Come in here please.

Sonny gets up and enters the office. The manager motions for him to sit down. He takes a seat in front of the unorganized desk of the manager.

The manager, a chubby white man about Sonny's age with a goatee and a messed up comb-over, does some things on his computer for a few seconds. He finishes typing and looks up at Sonny.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do for you?

Sonny sighs.

SONNY

I just want to work.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Yeah that's obvious, but why would you expect me to hire you? Do you have any special qualities that are above and beyond those fucking bozos out there?

Sonny takes off his hat and rubs his head. He puts his hat back on.

SONNY

I'm good with people.

The manager chuckles and glances at Sonny's appearance.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

That's funny. And Hulk Hogan's my fucking body double.

He turns to his computer again and types something. He strokes his come over.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)

We just had an asshole quit so I can give you lunch shift on the fryer for minimum. But no interaction with the customers.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE. DAY

SONNY enters the door and stops to get his mail. He has a Burger Boy shirt draped over his shoulder. He carries a Burger Boy bag.

He turns and notices Shay sitting on the bottom step of the staircase. She blows into a broken pinwheel. She has red eyes, obviously been crying.

Sonny tries to ignore it. He walks past her to go up the stairs. She flinches. Sonny notices but keeps walking.

SHAY

Do you work at Burger Boy?

Sonny stops. He hesitates.

SONNY

Not yet.

Shay looks up at him.

SHAY

Where did you get that shirt then?

SONNY

I mean, I just got the job. Haven't worked yet.

SHAY

What you got?

Sonny looks at the bag and lifts it a bit. Her eyes brighten.

SONNY

Nuggets.

SHAY

I love Nuggets. What sauce did you get? I love honey mustard. It's better than barbecue sauce, don't ya think?

SONNY

No sauce.

SHAY

Oh.

She turns again to face the ground. Sonny continues to walk up the stairs. He stops. Turns around. Walks down a couple steps back. He extends the bag to her.

Shay looks up. She hesitates. Sonny gestures for her to take it.

SONNY

Here.

She finally grabs it.

SHAY

Thanks.

SONNY

Yeah.

He starts up the stairs again. Shay stands up.

SHAY

Do you know how to fix things?

SONNY

What?

SHAY

Can you fix this?

She holds up the broken pinwheel. He comes down a couple steps and grabs the pinwheel.

SONNY

What happened to it?

Her face saddens and she looks away. She looks down at her bag of nuggets.

Sonny stands still, holding the pinwheel and looking at her.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I hate when things break.

She looks up. Her eyes agree with him. He turns again and walks up the stairs and around the corner.

INT. SELAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonny sits on the bed trying to spin the pinwheel. It does not spin freely.

He grabs a pair of scissors and makes a couple small snips on a blade. He puts a small piece of tape on the same blade and straightens the base of the pinwheel attached to the stick.

He blows on the pinwheel again. This time it works. He sets it down on the dresser next to the bed.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Sonny and Terrance shoot hoops. Terrance shoots and misses. Sonny rebounds. Sonny dribbles to the top of the key.

SONNY

You're still shitty.

TERRANCE

Who are you? You been ballen' in the joint. I got other stuff going on out here.

SONNY

Yeah, but you're still shitty.

Terrance lunges for the ball but Sonny dribbles around him and makes a lay-up.

Sonny throws Terrance the ball.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Game.

Sonny approaches Terrance. Terrance gets awkward, avoiding eye contact with Sonny.

TERRANCE

I know I didn't visit you as often
as I should've.

SONNY

It's aight man.

Some silence.

TERRANCE

Thanks for not snitching. I owe
ya.

SONNY

It's cool man.

TERRANCE

I mean it cuz. I owe you big time.

Sonny looks into Terrance's eyes. He grabs the ball from
Terrance.

SONNY

By the way, what ever happened to
my part of the score?

Terrance looks down and shakes his head.

TERRANCE

Ah man. You been in the joint for
a minute. You don't expect it to
still be here do ya?

SONNY

I guess I do. I wanna get out of
here. Somewhere with more grass
than concrete. Ya feel me?

TERRANCE

I'm sorry man. But it's gone, but I
can get you more. You know that.

SONNY

I know.

TERRANCE

Like I said. I owe ya.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny and his mom are watching TV. The TV show is the Maury
Povich show in its typical fashion, a dramatic reveal of
"who's the father."

A knock at the door. Sonny's mom takes a drag of her cigarette. The glow of the TV flashes on her pale skin.

Sonny gets up to answer it. He opens the door and there stands Shay from next door. She is jittery. She looks back and forth between her apartment door and Sonny. She holds a couple orange gerbera daisies.

SHAY

I was wondering if I could put
these on your daughter's memorial?

Sonny's mom looks at Shay holding the flowers. She grabs a pill bottle, gets up and goes to her room. Sonny watches her leave. He looks back at Shay.

SONNY

Um...sure.

SHAY

Wanna come with me?

SONNY

Sure, I ain't doing nothing here.

A dramatic fight happens between two men on the Maury Povich show.

Sonny puts on a MLB "on field" cap with a straight rim. As he leaves out the door he stops.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Oh, wait.

He goes back in and into his daughter's room. He grabs the pinwheel off the dresser and comes back to the door.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Here.

Shay's eyes light up.

SHAY

Thank you. It's so beautiful.
It's even prettier than before.

She hugs Sonny. The hug is awkward for him, but not for her.

EXT. SELAH'S MEMORIAL - EVENING

Shay places the flowers on the memorial. Sonny stands beside her.

Shay looks at a the battered picture of Selah.

SHAY

She is so pretty. You must have
been so happy with her.

Sonny looks at the ground.

SHAY (CONT'D)

I wish I was as pretty as her. My
mom says that I am, but I don't
always believe her. Only
sometimes.

Sonny looks back up at her. Shay turns to look at the
memorial.

SHAY (CONT'D)

I hope that when I die, people put
flowers and stuffed animals next to
my picture. Hopefully lots of
tigers. I like tigers. I know
that boys are supposed to like
tigers, not girls. But tigers are
my favorite.

Sonny gives her a sad smile. Shay touches Selah's face on
the picture.

SHAY (CONT'D)

Did you try to save her?

Sonny's eyes deepen. He looks at the picture.

NADINE (O.S.)

Shay!... Shay!

Shay's mother comes around the corner and sees Shay talking
with Sonny.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Fucking shit Shay. What the fuck
are you doing out here!

SHAY

Mom, I was just giving flowers to
Selah.

Shay's mom comes close to Shay, bends down and firmly pulls
her close.

NADINE

Baby. I just got so scared. I'm
sorry I didn't even notice you
left. I'm sorry.

SHAY

Mom, this is Sonny. He's our
neighbor.

Nadine looks him up and down and gives him a guarded look.
She pulls Shay closer to her.

NADINE

Well, let's go.

She leads Shay away from the memorial. Shay struggles loose
and.

SHAY

Hold on mom.

She runs back to the memorial and places the pinwheel in the
stack of stuffed animals.

SHAY (CONT'D)

(whispering to Sonny)

I think she would enjoy this more
than me.

Sonny looks at her. His eyes water but no tears fall.

Shay runs back to her mom. He watches them walk away.

Nadine turns to look back at Sonny. They lock eyes again.

He turns back to the memorial and watches the pinwheel blow
gently by the breeze.

INT. BURGER BOY RESTAURANT - DAY

Sonny stands over the deep fryer as it beeps progressively
louder. He stares at the wall behind the fryer. The manager
walks up to Sonny and talks directly to his ear.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Hey jerk-ass. You gonna take those
fries out or should I?

Sonny shakes out of his distraction.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)

Cause if I have to do it. You can take your tattooed ass back to the ghetto, or hood, or whatever ya'll call it. Are you picking up what I'm dropping?

Sonny takes the fries out of the fryer and dumps them in the strainer next to it.

The manager walks towards his office, picks up a cheeseburger that another employee wrapped and takes a bite. He enters his office. *

Sonny returns to introspection.

EXT. BUS STOP - EVENING

Sonny steps off a bus with his Burger Boy shirt draped over a shoulder and walks past CHERRY, a drug-addicted, twitchy, trainwreck of a woman in her mid-twenties. The bangs of her curly hair barely cover an oversized bump on her forehead.

CHERRY

(to a woman passenger)

Excuse me ma'am. I just need a quarter for the bus.

The lady keeps walking.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

(to another bus passenger)

Sir. My kid needs some medicine and I don't get paid until tomorrow. Can you spare a few dollars?

The man walks by too.

Sonny stops and peers back at Cherry. He walks back to her.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

(to another person)

My kids need some groceries, can you give me some change?

Sonny gets her attention.

SONNY

Cherry?

Cherry looks at him. Her eyes are blood shot. Her face is riddled with scabs. Her body is skinny and malnourished.

The only thing still attractive about her is the shape of her eyes.

Sonny hands her a couple dollars.

CHERRY
Sir, thank you sir. I just need
food for my kids.

SONNY
Cherry, it's Sonny. From West
High.

Cherry walks away from the bus stop. She looks at each car that passes by, trying to catch the eyes of potential customers.

Sonny walks with her. She looks at him.

SONNY (CONT'D)
It's me, Sonny. West High.

CHERRY
Oh, Sonny. Yeah, I'member you.
Can you give me some money?

She hears a car horn beep. She responds to the car and puts up her hands. The car keeps going.

CHERRY (CONT'D)
Fuck!

SONNY
What's up with you?

CHERRY
What?

Another car pulls to a stop across the street. Cherry waves at the car and then runs over to it and gets in.

Sonny watches the car pull away. He sees pre-teen boys playing craps up against the side of an apartment building.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny walks around the corner of his apartment building. He notices a group of young, black men beating the shit out of another black man who is on the ground. They kick him in the ribs and the face.

Sonny does not want to get involved but can't help glancing over at the fight.

A THUG, who appears to be the leader, watches the MAN get beat up by his BOYS. He notices Sonny pause at the door and look at them.

THUG

What the fuck are you looking at nigga?

Sonny turns around and faces him.

SONNY

Do you always have people fight for you?

The thugs steps up to him and flashes his gun tucked under his belt. Sonny notices.

THUG

Walk away bitch.

The thug stares at Sonny. Sonny takes a deep breath, turns around, and walks into his apartment building.

The thug turns back to the fight.

INT. JAMES'S OFFICE. LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny's parole officer, JAMES, an African American with a muscular build, short hair, and a gentle face greets Sonny as he enters his office.

JAMES

Hey what's up Sonny.

James gets up from his chair. He extends his hand to shake Sonny's hand. Sonny shakes it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Take a seat.

Sonny sits. James sits on the edge of his desk. Sonny keeps his eyes to the floor. James bends down a bit to get a glimpse of Sonny's eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So how's it going?

SONNY

It's alright.

James reaches for a folder and opens it. He takes a couple seconds to examine it.

JAMES

Since this is our first meeting, I just have to ask you a few standard questions. Is that cool?

SONNY

Yeah.

Sonny looks around the office. He rubs his tired eyes.

JAMES

Do you still live at 44 S. Grey St.?

Sonny nods.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Is your phone still 555-5276?

SONNY

Yeah.

JAMES

Have you had a chance to look for a job yet?

SONNY

Yeah, got one already.

JAMES

Where?

SONNY

Burger Boy, downtown.

JAMES

Okay.

James makes a few notes on his file. He reads a bit.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It says here. . .

He pauses and looks up at Sonny. He looks back down.

JAMES (CONT'D)

. . .that your daughter died while you were in prison. Just a year ago.

Sonny looks down at his hands. James looks up at him. Sonny's eyes fill with tears, but none of them fall. James tries to look into Sonny's eyes, but Sonny doesn't let him. James looks back at his folder.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Does your mom still live at your
apartment?

Sonny looks back up at James.

SONNY
Yeah.

James closes his file.

JAMES
Okay, I think that's good. It
looks like we meet again next week.
Same time, same place.

Sonny gets up to leave. James gets up too. They stand under
the threshold of the door. Sonny avoids eye contact.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Sonny?

Sonny makes eye contact with James.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about your daughter.

SONNY
Yeah. It's just life.

Sonny walks out the office door and down the hallway. James
watches Sonny walk down the hall and around the corner.

James goes back to his desk, sits down, and grabs a framed
photo of him and his daughter. He looks at it for a couple
moments and sets it down.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Sonny stands outside of Nadine's door. He hesitates to
knock. He doesn't knock, turning to walk away instead.

The door opens and Nadine comes out with a bag of trash. She
is startled a bit.

NADINE
Oh, shit. What the fuck!

SONNY
Sorry.

NADINE
Did you knock?

SONNY
No.

NADINE
Oh. Ok.

Nadine walks to the stairs.

SONNY
But I wanted to.

Nadine turns around.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Sorry that I scared you the other
day. I didn't mean to.

NADINE
Well. Shay thinks everyone's safe.

SONNY
True.

Nadine continues down the stairs. Sonny walks to his door
and takes out his keys. He looks back toward the stairs.

SONNY (CONT'D)
See ya around.

He opens the door and goes inside. Nadine is almost out of
Sonny's sight and doesn't respond.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny leans against the front door. He hits the back of his
head against the door a few times. He sees his mother passed
out on the couch again.

He turns around, opens the door and leaves.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine puts her bag of garbage into a trash can behind the
apartment. Sonny approaches her.

Nadine turns around and is startled by Sonny.

NADINE
What the hell man! You can't just
come up on me like that.

SONNY

First off. I wasn't trying to pick you up.

Nadine walks around him. He turns to her as she walks away. She stops and turns around.

NADINE

I don't know you. My daughter doesn't know you. I can't just-

She takes a breath.

NADINE (CONT'D)

I don't-

Sonny comes closer to her. Nadine folds her arms and looks away from him.

NADINE (CONT'D)

I can't.

She turns around and walks away, back into the exterior entrance to her apartment. She shuts the door.

Sonny paces a bit and then notices her as she passes by the window of the stairs. He throws his arms up into the air.

SONNY

Can't what? I didn't even ask you anything.

She disappears up the stairs.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

INSIDE NADINE'S APARTMENT

Nadine moves to her kitchen table chair and sits down. Her hands are shaking and she rubs them together.

She gets up and opens the fridge. She grabs a beer, opens it, and takes a long drink. She hears a KNOCK on the door. She doesn't move. The knocking persists.

She finally gets up and jolts the door open.

NADINE

What!

There stands THE LANDLORD, a middle-aged white man with a hardened face, well kept hair and a lanky build.

She flinches by slightly moving the door closed. The Landlord stops the door with his foot.

THE LANDLORD

No, no, no. That's not part of the deal.

She releases her pressure on the door. He walks right in. She doesn't resist, but her face hardens. The door closes in our face.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James stands in front of SIX PAROLE OFFICER RECRUITS. Mostly men and one woman. They have notebooks in front of them.

JAMES

Welcome to P.O. training. In the next couple weeks we will get to know each other pretty well. Hopefully, you will leave here better prepared for the work of a Parole Officer.

The recruits fidget around, ready to get started.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay. Turn in your notebooks to page six. Let's get started with the effects of incarceration and integration back into society.

INT. JAMES' DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

James opens the door of his daughter's bedroom. She's asleep in her bed. He walks to her and sits down on the edge of her bed. She doesn't wake up. He looks at her and moves her bangs away from her face.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sonny wakes up to the sound of water spraying, coming from the kitchen.

SONNY'S MOM (O.S.)

Shit. Shit. Sonny. Sonny. Get your ass up. Aaaaggghh!

Sonny snaps out of his bed and rushes out the door.

KITCHEN

The kitchen sink has sprung a leak and water sprays all over the kitchen. Sonny's mom stands in the corner out of reach from the water spray.

Sonny runs over to the sink to fix the problem, water sprays him, soaking him.

SONNY'S MOM

Shut it off Sonny! It's ruining
the kitchen!

Sonny opens the cupboard below and looks frantically for the shut off valves.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

Fuck Sonny, shut it off!

SONNY

I'm trying!

He finds the valve and shuts it off. He sighs, sits down, face dripping with water. He begins to laugh.

His mother sees a coloring book page from the fridge. It's soaked. She grabs it.

SONNY'S MOM

Shit. No, not this one.

She holds it delicately, but it's drooping because of the water.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

You fuck up everything around here.

Sonny stands up. She walks to him and pushes him in his chest. She walks out of the kitchen, down the hall, and into her room.

Sonny leans against the counter and sighs. Water drips from his hair and clothes.

SONNY

Shit.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Sonny approaches a MAN sitting on a folding chair outside his apartment building.

SONNY
You see Terrance?

The man points toward the local bar across the street.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

Sonny walks into the front door of the bar. Terrance is at corner table with the Landlord. They don't notice Sonny because they are engaged in heavy conversation.

Sonny approaches the table, eyeing Terrance's company.

SONNY
Terrance? What's hap'nin'?

TERRANCE
Sonny, what's up nigga? What are you doing up in here?

Terrance stands up and the Landlord leans back, taking a sip of his vodka on the rocks.

SONNY
Just chillin'.

TERRANCE
Cool. Cool. Wanna go somewhere else?

SONNY
Na, it's cool here.

Sonny looks at the Landlord again.

Terrance looks at the Landlord.

TERRANCE
Ah shit, Sonny this is The Landlord.

Sonny folds his arms and nods.

SONNY
The Landlord? Do you have a first name?

THE LANDLORD
Na, just the Landlord.

He takes another sip of his drink. Sonny looks around the bar.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Wanna know why?

Sonny's eyes say, "Why not."

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Cause I own these streets.

The Landlord smirks. Sonny zeros in on him.

Terrance gets up, grabs Sonny by the arm and leads him away from the table over to the bar.

TERRANCE
So, what's up. Whachya need mein?

Sonny looks over Terrance's shoulder at the Landlord.

SONNY'S MOM
Who the fuck is he?

TERRANCE
Take it easy. He's the Landlord.
I work with him sometimes.

SONNY
He's *your* boss?

TERRANCE
I didn't say that. I said "with"
him, not for him.

Sonny looks around Terrance again, but Terrance makes him focus on him. He leans in closer to Sonny.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
He's connected. He gets good jobs.
He knows about everything that goes
down within a 100 mile radius. He
gives me some jobs. Okay? In fact
I got something for you that pays
well. Easy job. Some quick cash.
Told you about it.

Sonny rubs his head in frustration.

SONNY
I'll talk at you later man.

He walks away.

TERRANCE
Sonny? Com'on cuz.

Sonny walks out of the bar. The Landlord notices.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sonny and his mom watch TV. There is a knock at the door.

He gets up and opens it. It's Nadine. She looks around as if frightened. She smokes a cigarette.

SONNY

You aight?

Nadine fixes her hair.

NADINE

What were you in jail for? You a murderer?

Sonny is taken back by this.

SONNY

No.

NADINE

You ain't no fuckin' child molester are ya?

SONNY

Fuck no.

She takes a drag of her cigarette. She glances toward the apartment stairs and then back at Sonny. She looks around Sonny at his mom lying on the couch.

NADINE

Is that your mom?

Sonny gestures for her to come in.

SONNY

Yeah, wanna come in?

Nadine reacts to the sound of the front door opening and closing downstairs.

NADINE

We can be ready tonight if you want to pick us up. about 6.

SONNY

What?

NADINE

If you want to take me out on a date you have to take Shay too. Is that a problem?

SONNY

No. For sure.

Nadine walks away and into her apartment.

EXT. PUTT PUTT GOLF - EVENING

Sonny, Nadine and Shay sit around a table overlooking a miniature golf course. A half eaten pizza sits in front of them. Sonny and Nadine drink beer. Nadine smokes a cigarette. Shay holds a putter and glances back and forth between the table and the golf course.

SHAY

Mom, can I play some more?

NADINE

Yeah sweetie, go ahead.

Shay gets up and leaves the table.

Sonny and Nadine sit in silence for a few seconds. They watch Shay play golf.

SONNY

Where did you stay before my neighborhood?

NADINE

Your neighborhood?

SONNY

Well, sort of.

NADINE

We lived in Madisonville.

SONNY

Why did you move here?

NADINE

We needed cheap rent. Her dad left us nothing but bad memories.

Nadine looks over at Shay and smiles. Sonny does the same.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - LATE EVENING

Sonny and Nadine reach the top of the apartment stairs. Sonny carries a sleeping Shay.

Terrance hears them and hides around the corner of the next flight of stairs.

Nadine opens her apartment door. She looks around inside and then opens the door wider for Sonny to bring Shay in. Sonny takes her down the hall and into her bedroom.

SHAY'S BEDROOM

Sonny lays Shay on her bed and tucks her in with her pink bedspread. He looks around her room. There are pictures and toys of horses and princesses all over the room.

NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Nadine stands by the open front door, glancing over to the apartment building stairs now and then.

SONNY

You aight?

NADINE

Yeah. I had a fun time.

SONNY

That's cool. Me too. Shay is wonderful.

Sonny brushes passed Nadine. They make brief eye contact. He enters the hallway.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Can we hang again?

NADINE

I don't know, maybe.

SONNY

Maybe?

NADINE

Yeah. We will.

Nadine smiles slightly and shuts the door.

HALLWAY

Sonny stands still looking at the shut door.

Terrance comes around the corner, startling Sonny.

SONNY

What the fuck brah, walkin' up on me like that.

TERRANCE

You know you're asking for trouble nigga.

SONNY

Whachya talking about?

Terrance lowers his voice.

TERRANCE

The Landlord is no one to fuck with.

SONNY

What the hell you talking about?

TERRANCE

Come-on Sonny, don't be stupid. That's his bitch.

SONNY

Nadine?

TERRANCE

Yeah. He owns this building and she doesn't pay rent. She's his favorite

SONNY

Fuck him.

TERRANCE

Don't say that man. You've been gone for a minute. There's new blood in this hood.

SONNY

He's the new blood?

TERRANCE

Him and others, but he's the man right now. You know how this shit works.

SONNY

Yeah.

TERRANCE

I'm just saying, cause I love ya
brah. Don't mess with him. He's a
dirty motherfucker.

Sonny moves passed Terrance to get to his door.

SONNY

What are you doing here anyway?

TERRANCE

I got a proposition for ya.

Sonny puts the key in the lock.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

It's a simple transfer that's all.
No risk, just profit.

Sonny opens the door. Terrance grabs his arm.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

You were the best Sonny. And,
straight, I know you need the money
man. I'll make it a sweet deal.

Sonny pulls his arm away and enters his apartment, shutting
the door behind him.

INT. BURGER BOY - EVENING

Sonny comes into the back door of kitchen. He hurries to put
on his shirt and clock in. He walks passed the manager's
office.

His boss notices him pass. He yells from his office.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (O.S.)

Hey asshole. Come in here.

Sonny stops and tenses up.

OFFICE

Sonny enters the manager's office. His boss twirls a pen and
leans back in his chair.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Take a seat.

Sonny sits down.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Let me guess. You're mad at me
because you are late?

Sonny stares at him.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Well, I'm used to pricks like you
thinking everyone else is the
problem. None of you ever blame
yourself. It's always someone
else's fault.

He stops twirling his pen. He smooths out his come-over and
leans forward.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Well guess what. It is your fault.

He leans back.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Now get to work. And don't expect
to get paid for the first two hours
of work.

Sonny doesn't move. He stares at the manager.

FAST FOOD MANAGER (CONT'D)
Well, go, get out of my office.

Sonny gets up, slamming the chair against the wall. The
manager flinches. Sonny throws his hat at the manager.

SONNY
Fuck this place. Fuck you. You're
lucky I don't beat you down right
here.

Sonny turns around and walks out.

KITCHEN

The other employees watch as Sonny leaves the office. He
takes off his work shirt and throws it on the floor. He pops
open the back door of the kitchen and leaves.

EXT. APARTMENT FIRE ESCAPE - LATE EVENING

Sonny sits on a folding chair outside on the fire escape, watching the activity of the hood. The street is loud. Sonny sees a fight break out between two teenage girls.

Behind him we can see Nadine and Shay enter the hallway carrying grocery bags and a fridge pack of soda. Nadine notices Sonny. She opens her apartment door and motions for Shay to go inside. She sets her groceries inside the door and then walks up to the window by Sonny.

NADINE

Hey.

Sonny turns to see Nadine. He sees Shay peek her head around the door behind Nadine. Shay waves sweetly. Sonny waves back and smiles.

NADINE (CONT'D)

What's up?

SONNY

Not much.

She crawls out onto the fire escape and sits down. They sit in silence for a few moments.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Do you ever want to leave this place?

Nadine listens.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I mean, I love this place. This is where I learned to ride a bike. That house down the street is where my grandma and grandpa used to live. Memories, you know.

A police car screeches by.

SONNY (CONT'D)

But there's so much fucking drama. I feel like I'm going to burst.

Nadine nods.

NADINE

Yeah.

Nadine reaches and grabs Sonny's hand.

Sonny tightens his hand on Nadine's and looks in her eyes.

Nadine slides over and sits closer to Sonny. He puts his arm around her. She leans her head into him.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sonny cooks breakfast when he hears a knock at the door. He puts down his spatula, wipes his hands and then answers the door. There stands James.

SONNY

What took you so long?

JAMES

Can I come in?

Sonny motions to come in. He goes back to cooking his eggs and bacon.

SONNY

So, news travels fast.

JAMES

What happened?

SONNY

He's an asshole.

JAMES

Yeah I know. Other P.O's have had trouble with him in the past.

Sonny brings a frying pan over to the table.

SONNY

Breakfast?

JAMES

No. Trying to lose a few.

SONNY

Suit yourself.

Sonny shovels some food on his plate.

JAMES

I don't care about that asshole.
How are you?

Sonny sits at the table. He shakes salt and pepper over his eggs.

SONNY

You think I'll go back to hustling
don't ya?

JAMES

Well, it's all too common for
people in your situation.

Sonny eats a piece of bacon.

SONNY

People in my situation, huh?

JAMES

I didn't mean it like that.

Sonny takes the last bite of his eggs, gets up and puts his
dishes in the sink.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Look, Sonny. I'm not trying to
come down on ya. I get. I do. I
used to be you.

SONNY

Well, I'll get another job. I'm
better than fast food anyway.

JAMES

Alright. Can't argue that.

Sonny's mom comes into the room smoking a cigarette and
looking pretty high. James watches her, but she doesn't
acknowledge his presence.

She sits down and turns on the TV. James gets up from the
table.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, call me if you need help. I
got some connections if you need
them.

James opens the front door then turns toward Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Sonny, be careful.

Sonny nods. James leaves. Sonny looks at his mother. Her
eyes are glazed over.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Sonny cleans his kitchen; putting dishes away, washing the counter and that type of stuff. There is a knock at the door. He walks over and opens it. Nadine.

SONNY
Hey. What's up?

NADINE
Shay's at school. Wanna do something?

SONNY
Sure. Let me find a car.

EXT. RIVER BOAT DOCK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Sonny and Nadine stand on a dock above watching barges trudge by. Sonny stands closer to the edge than Nadine.

Nadine turns as if to get off the dock. Instead, she lunges toward Sonny and pushes him into the water. He goes under and comes right back up.

She laughs. Sonny treads water, smiling.

SONNY
What the fuck.

Nadine laughs harder. Then she runs and jumps in as well, almost on top of Sonny. They playfully tread water together, splashing each other.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny and Nadine are soaked. They stand by the doors of Sonny's car.

SONNY
I got no towels.

Nadine opens the door and sits down, soaking the seat. Sonny does the same.

Sonny turns on the car and then the radio. A Michael Bolton song plays. They both laugh.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Obviously not my car.

NADINE

Really? I took you for a Bolten fan from the moment I met you.

She laughs. He smiles.

She reaches over and holds his hand. They lock eyes. She leans over and kisses him.

He reaches down and turns up the Michael Bolten song. Their laugh breaks up their kiss.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny walks Nadine to her front door. She opens the door and looks inside. She turns back to Sonny. He leans in to kiss her, but she turns away. He kisses her on the cheek.

NADINE

Shay will be home soon.

He nods. She goes inside and shuts the door.

INT. NIGHT - SONNY'S DAUGHTER'S ROOM

Sonny lies on the bed. He looks at a picture of Selah. He places it down on his chest, close to his heart, and closes his eyes.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Sonny sits on a swing within a jungle gym. Terrance emerges from the darkness and approaches him. He sits down on a swing next to Sonny. They sway.

TERRANCE

So we gonna do this?

SONNY

Yeah. I'm back in.

TERRANCE

That's the shit. Yeah!

SONNY

But I want a favor. I need a gun again.

TERRANCE

No prob nigga.

He raises his hands into the air.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
My boy is back!

INT. SONNY'S DAUGHTER'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sonny lies on Selah's bed. His eyes well up with tears, but none of them fall.

EXT. TERRANCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. LATE EVENING.

Sonny knocks on the door. A BIG MAN opens the door and lets him in.

INT. TERRANCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. SAME TIME

Sonny enters the living room. Terrance sits behind a table.

The big man walks over and stands behind Terrance as if protecting him.

Terrance pulls a duffle bag out from under his table. He places it on the table. Terrance smiles at Sonny.

Terrance opens the bag and pulls out a form wrapped in a cloth. He opens the cloth and shows Sonny a hand gun.

TERRANCE
By request. Just for you my number
one nigga. It's loaded, just in
case.

He places the gun on the table. Sonny reaches over and grabs it. He puts it in his jacket pocket.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
Here are the keys to the car
outside.

Sonny grabs the keys. He reaches for the duffle bag, but Terrance grabs his wrist.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)
If you get caught, you know what to
do. Or should I say what not to
do.

Sonny pulls his wrist away from Terrance's grasp, grabs the bag and leaves the apartment building.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. SAME TIME

Sonny walks over to a car, puts the duffle bag into the trunk and gets into the car.

Sonny drives for awhile. He looks into his rear view mirror. A police car pulls behind him and travels with him for awhile.

The policeman puts on his car's lights and siren.

Sonny remains cool. He shifts in his seat. He puts his hand into the pocket with the gun.

The cop car speeds up and passes Sonny's car, driving off into the distance. He loosens his grip on the gun.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. NICE NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Sonny and Terrance lean on the front of a 1969 Ford Mustang Fastback. Terrance smokes a cigarette.

Down the street a lady comes out of her front door. She gets into the passenger side of a Lincoln town car and pulls away.

Terrance throws his cigarette on the ground. Terrance walks toward the house. Sonny gets in the car.

EXT. BACK DOOR

Terrance slips around the house to the back door and breaks in. He passes through the

KITCHEN

He exits the kitchen and enters a

LIVING ROOM

And walks up a set of stairs and enters.

THE MASTER BEDROOM

He empties drawers until he discovers a jewelry box. He snatches it and empties the contents into a grocery bag that he pulls from his pocket.

He exits the bedroom.

LIVING ROOM

He glides down the staircase and into the

KITCHEN

He walks back through the kitchen. At the back door he pauses, turns around and opens the refrigerator door.

He grabs a couple bottles of beer and walks out the back door.

EXT. BACKDOOR

He comes out the door. Walks to the front.

I/E. CAR

Sonny sees him and picks him up.

SONNY

Think anyone saw ya?

TERRANCE

Maybe, but to these people we all look alike. Wanna beer?

He holds up a beer. Sonny grabs it.

They both laugh and drive away.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Sonny and Terrance watch a MECHANIC disassemble the 1969 Ford Mustang Fastback.

TERRANCE

Aw man. I wish we could keep that one.

Sonny nods.

A MAN comes out of an office and hands Terrance an envelope. He opens it up and scans the stack of \$100 dollar bills.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Sonny pulls a duffle bag from underneath his bed. He unzips it. Inside there is a little bit of money. He places a couple stacks of bills into it, zips it back up and puts it back under his bed.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A MAN in his early twenties enters the front door of an apartment building. Inside he is greeted by TERRANCE'S GUARD.

APARTMENT

The guard opens the door to an apartment where Terrance and Sonny are sitting with a few small plastic storage bins under their table full of weed.

The young man gives them an envelope of money. Terrance looks at its contents and then hands him a grocery bag. The man peers in the bag; satisfied, he leaves.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Sonny puts more money into the duffle bag. It is almost full now. He examines the money.

His mother sees him slide the bag under the bed as she walks by his door.

Sonny zips up the bag and slides it under his bed.

END MONTAGE

I/E. SONNY'S CAR - DAY

Sonny drives. Nadine and Shay sit in the car with blindfolds over their eyes with wide smiles and giggles from Shay.

NADINE

When can we take these off. It's been so long, I think I've lost my ability to see.

Shay continues to giggle, almost hysterically.

SONNY

We're almost there. Just around this curve.

Sonny pulls the car around a curve, revealing a horse farm.

EXT. HORSE FARM - DAY

Horses trot around, some with riders. He pulls up to the entrance and stops the car.

He snaps out of his seat and opens the doors for Nadine and Shay. They get out.

SONNY

Ready?

SHAY

Come-on, come-on, come-on.

Sonny takes off their blindfolds. Shay's smile cannot get any larger.

SHAY (CONT'D)

Mom look at all the horses.

She looks at Sonny and Nadine.

SHAY (CONT'D)

Can I go look at them?

They both nod. She runs to the fence. Now Sonny smiles wide as well.

Nadine looks at him, but shows concern. Sonny notices her strained eyes.

SONNY

What's up. You aight?

NADINE

I'm cool.

She walks over to Shay who feeds the horses some carrots.

Sonny watches both of them. His eyes flash with joy.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance sit in The Landlord's booth at The Landlord's bar. There is a pretty good crowd. There is heavy Hip Hop music playing as most of the crowd dances in the middle of the bar's dance floor.

Sonny sips on a rum and coke, while Terrance slams back a couple shots of tequila.

Terrance acts like the big shot, smoking a Philly sweet and leaning back into his booth. He's drunk.

He watches the ladies and a couple of them glance over at him. He blows kisses to them.

Terrance reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out an envelope filled with money. He slides it across the table. Sonny picks it up and puts it into his pocket.

Terrance goes back to watching ladies dance. He motions to the waitress to bring another round of drinks. The waitress does not see him motion.

TERRANCE

What the fuck. I know she sees me.

He motions again. The waitress sees him, but motions to him that she is busy but will be right there.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Nah, Terrance don't wait for no bitch.

Terrance stands up on the table of his booth.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Hey bitch, bring me my drink or get the fuck out of my bar.

Sonny tries to pull him down.

SONNY

Take it easy Terrance.

Terrance pulls away.

TERRANCE

Nah man. That's fucked up.

Sonny tugs on his arm again to get him to sit down.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Don't fucking touch me brah.

Sonny looks at him, gritting his teeth.

He throws a few dollars on the table and slips out of the booth seat. He walks to the door.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Sonny, where you going man? I'm just fuckin' with her. Stay man.

Terrance laughs. Terrance starts to dance a bit while standing on the table. He slips a bit, but catches himself. He laughs again.

Sonny looks him up and down with compassion. He turns away and walks out the door.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sonny walks in the front door. His mom is passed out on the couch in a sitting position. The TV. blares and a very long ash hangs from her cigarette.

He walks over to her and leans over her. He nudges her.

SONNY

Mom.

She stirs a bit, but she's too passed out to wake up. Sonny takes her cigarette out of her mouth and puts it out in the ashtray.

He gently repositions her so that she lies on the couch. He puts a blanket over her.

He turns off the TV and goes into his bedroom.

BEDROOM

Sonny enters the room and shuts the door behind him. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the money filled envelope.

He falls to his knees and reaches for the duffle bag. He notices that the bag is empty. He rips the bag open. The money is gone for sure.

SONNY

Motherfucker!

He gets up off his knees, opens the door, slamming it against the wall and storms into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

He stands over his mother who is still sleeping.

SONNY

Where's the fucking money!

His mom wakes up confused and frightened.

SONNY'S MOM

What! What! Sonny?

He holds the bag in front of her face.

SONNY

Where's the fucking money!

She sits up. Sonny grabs an ashtray off the coffee table and throws it across the room. It smashes against the wall.

She shoots up and runs out of the living room and down the hall toward her room.

Sonny sits down on the couch. He puts the empty bag on his lap.

She walks into her room and shuts the door behind her. Sonny leans back and puts his face in his hands.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Aagggh! Fuck!

INT. NADINE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Nadine wakes up from the commotion from Sonny's apartment. She puts on a robe.

SHAY'S BEDROOM

Nadine peeks into Shay's bedroom. She's asleep.

SONNY'S APARTMENT DOOR

Nadine knocks on Sonny's door.

NADINE

Sonny?

There is no answer.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Sonny? It's Nadine.

She turns to leave when the Sonny opens the door. His face is flushed with anger.

NADINE (CONT'D)

You alright?

SONNY

Na, nothing good here.

There are a couple seconds of silence.

NADINE

Wanna come over and have a drink?

NADINE'S APARTMENT

Sonny sits on a couch as Nadine mixes a gin and tonic behind him. She brings it over to him and sits down next to him with her own drink.

She looks at him. He rubs his eyes and scratches his head. His eyes are heavy. His soul heavier.

Nadine reaches over, softly touches his neck. He looks at her. She leans in and sweetly kisses him. After they kiss Sonny lays his head on her lap.

She caresses his hair until he falls asleep.

NADINE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Nadine rushes into the living room.

NADINE

Get up! Sonny get up! You got to leave now.

He sits up, rubs his head and scowls.

SONNY

What's up?

Nadine scrambling to find Sonny's shoes.

NADINE

You got to get out of my apartment.

SONNY

Why?

NADINE

I can't explain now, but you gotta leave.

She finds his shoes.

Sonny sees Shay standing under the threshold of the hallway. She is holding a blanket and rubbing her eyes. He smiles. She smiles back.

He turns to Nadine, grabbing his shoes from her. He puts them on and walks to the door.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Sonny. I'm sorry.

Sonny opens the door. He turns back quickly. Nadine flinches as if he is going to hit her. Sonny notices her flinch. He scans her scared eyes.

HALLWAY

Sonny walks down the stairs and out the front door of the apartment.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE. MOMENTS LATER

Sonny paces outside of his apartment building. He stops and leans up against the wall. He lights a cigarette and smokes.

The Landlord comes around the corner carrying a coffee and a newspaper. The Landlord stops at the entrance, looks at Sonny. Sonny looks at him. The Landlord chuckles, opens the door and enters.

Sonny slides to a sitting position.

SONNY

Damn it!

Cherry steps out of the car of an old ugly man. He pulls away almost before she closes the door.

She approaches Sonny. Her eyes are glazed. She sees Sonny sitting against the wall. She makes a b-line for him.

CHERRY

Sonny. Sonny. Hey Sonny. Hey.

Sonny looks up at her.

SONNY

What's hap'nin.

Cherry is twitchy and shifty.

CHERRY

Sonny, I won't ask you this again,
but you got some extra change for
the bus?

SONNY

Not now Cherry.

CHERRY

Just a couple quarters, come-on.

Sonny gets up and walks toward the apartment door.

SONNY

Not now I said.

As he's about to go into the door.

CHERRY

I know something about Terrance....

Sonny pauses.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Terrance and you.

He turns around.

SONNY

What are you talking about.

CHERRY

Just some money, come-on, and I'll
tell ya.

SONNY

Com'on Cherry.

He digs into his pocket and hands her a twenty dollar bill.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Whachya know?

She looks around to make sure no one is listening.

CHERRY

He played you man.

SONNY

What?

CHERRY

He set you up. And he took the
score himself.

SONNY

What the fuck are you talking about?

CHERRY

He said that he sent you to the basement, so that he could leave with the stuff, and you get jammed.

Sonny looks around with an angry expression. He looks back at Cherry. She is so fucked up. He can't help but feel pity.

SONNY

Cherry. Don't fuck with me. How would you know this?

She draws closer to Sonny. She's almost sober like for a moment.

CHERRY

I'm invisible. No one gives a shit about a crack whore. They say things in front of me, thinking I ain't listening. They don't see me anymore.

He turns around and goes into the apartment building, slamming the door behind him.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sonny sleeps. He dreams.

EXT. STREET - DAY (DREAM)

Sonny is handcuffed and leaning face down on a police car.

The police car's lights flash and a small crowd of neighborhood people watch the policeman frisk Sonny.

Sonny looks to the crowd and notices Terrance looking at him and nodding.

He sees his mother who holds his daughter, Selah, close to her body. Selah cries hysterically. Her grandma holds her tight so that she cannot run to him.

She wiggles free and runs to him. He turns around and kneels down to receive her. She disappears.

The police grab him and pull him up onto his feet. They put him into the back of the police car.

As the car pulls away Sonny looks out the back window. The crowd blurs and now he sees only Nadine firmly holding a hysterical Shay who reaches her arms out to Sonny.

SONNY'S BEDROOM

Sonny wakes and sits up, breathing heavy. He puts his face into his hands and fights back tears.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Sonny and James Are having breakfast together. Sonny is very discouraged. He drinks his coffee with quick sips.

JAMES

It seems life is getting frustrating again.

Sonny looks to the waitress and signals for more coffee.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's been some time since you lost the Burger Boy job. Have you found something else?

SONNY

No one wants to hire a felon.

James pulls out a folded piece of paper from his jacket pocket. He hands it to Sonny.

JAMES

Here.

Sonny opens up the paper and scans it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

A buddy of mine runs a lumber yard just outside the city. He said he is willing to work with your record as long as you're dependable.

Sonny sets the paper down.

At that moment The Landlord and a tough looking BLACK DUDE with tattoos and big muscles walks into the diner. They walk passed Sonny and James. Sonny watches them pass.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You need a job man. This is a good opportunity.

Sonny and The Landlord's eyes meet. James notices that Sonny is distracted.

The Landlord sits down at the other end of the diner, facing Sonny. His thug sits at the table next to him, leaving the seat across from The Landlord open.

James turns to see who Sonny looks at. James and The Landlord make eye contact. James looks back at Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Sonny? Sonny?

Sonny finally looks back at James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay look. You don't think I know who that is? That's The Landlord. He's involved with a lot shit around here. The cops have been after him for quite awhile now.

James looks around at The Landlord and then looks back at Sonny.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Look. I'm gonna be straight up. You wanna be like that guy. A bad ass. Well, let me tell you something. He might be a bad ass, but outside this neighborhood he's got no power.

Sonny sighs.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You don't need power like that. You need freedom. And he ain't got that.

Sonny looks at James.

SONNY

I'm just trying to help some people out. What's so wrong with that?

James gets up, throws a few dollars on the table, and looks back at The Landlord who reads a newspaper.

JAMES
Take the job Sonny.

James turns and exits the diner.

Sonny drinks his coffee until he is certain James has left. He gets up and walks over to the The Landlord's table.

The Landlord's thug gets up and gets between Sonny and The Landlord. Sonny looks at him and then at The Landlord.

He reads a couple seconds more then he folds his newspaper and puts it down. The Landlord gestures for the thug to sit back down. He looks at Sonny and smirks.

LANDLORD
Sit.

The thug moves back. Sonny sits.

THE LANDLORD
So who was that, your Papa?

SONNY
Who cares.

The waitress brings a plate of food to the table and sets it in front of The Landlord.

THE LANDLORD
I figured you already ate or else I would offer you some of mine.

He picks up a steak knife and cuts into a large slab of ham steak. Sonny looks at The Landlord as he takes a bite.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Mmmm.

Sonny looks around.

SONNY
I need some money. I wanna work.

He takes another bite and chews it with a smirk.

THE LANDLORD
Now, why should I give you work?
You're creeping with my woman.

Sonny looks surprised.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Or, at least one of my ladies.

He smirks again. His thug smiles back.

SONNY

Who, Nadine? Na, we're nothin'.
She's just my neighbor.

The Landlord's smirk turns into a slight laugh.

THE LANDLORD

Doesn't fucking matter. She's a
whore anyway.

Sonny clinches his fists under the table, but maintains a
straight face.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Terrance says you're good.

He takes another bite of his steak. Sonny nods in agreement.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

I could use someone reliable and
experienced.

He takes the last bite of his ham steak, picks up his paper,
and gets up. He throws a one hundred dollar bill on the
table.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Pay for my meal and keep the rest.
Consider it an advance.

The Landlord walks out the front door with his thug trailing
behind.

Sonny looks at the one hundred dollar bill, but does not take
it right away.

He pulls out the piece of paper that James gave him and looks
at the number.

He picks up the money.

He gets up walks to the cash register.

As he pays, we see James across the street looking into the
diner. Sonny doesn't notice him.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM

James lectures to his recruits, standing behind a podium.
One of them raises his hand. RECRUIT # 1 is a well built man
with a military style haircut.

JAMES

Yes.

RECRUIT #1

To me it seems quite simple. These guys have fucked up. Isn't it our simple task to keep them from fucking up again? Keep them in line?

James nods.

JAMES

These guys fuck up for many reasons. We need to be careful not to over generalize their motivations.

RECRUIT #1

But *generally*, they all fuck ups, right?

James steps from behind his podium.

JAMES

Well. Let's take a scenario. A guy used to sell drugs. Anybody here every smoke pot?

They look around at each other wondering whether to admit it or not. James raises his hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I have. So this type of guy took care of my need. Now, he gets caught and goes to prison.

They nod.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Three years later he gets released. But now with a felony. He tries to get a good job, but can't because of the policy of most good companies not to hire felons.

RECRUIT #1

Consequence for his actions. Carma or something.

JAMES

Maybe. So then he gets third shift at Burger Boy working the fryer and making seven bucks an hour.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Now remember, he was making 20 times that selling drugs. Maybe more.

James moves closer to the recruit.

JAMES (CONT'D)

How long do you think he will keep that job before he goes back to selling drugs?

RECRUIT #1

Not long I guess.

JAMES

Right.

James goes back to podium. He checks the clock on the wall. He rubs his forehead and sighs.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Let's call it a day. Thanks.

The recruits get up to leave.

INT. NADINE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Nadine sleeps in her bed. The Landlord sits on a chair to the side of her bed. Nadine shifts a bit. The Landlord takes a cigarette out and lights it with a match.

The sound of the match causes Nadine to wake up. She notices The Landlord in her room and snaps herself up. She sits against her headboard.

NADINE

What the fuck! You can't do this!

He holds up a ring of keys and smirks.

THE LANDLORD

I'm the landlord. Why can't I?

Nadine pulls her covers tight against her body.

NADINE

Where's Shay?

THE LANDLORD

Don't worry, she's fine. I just checked on her. Sound asleep.

Nadine flairs her nostrils and gets up from the bed.

NADINE

I don't want you checking on my daughter. That's not part of the deal.

She walks to her dresser and pulls out some pants and a shirt.

THE LANDLORD

Oh, when did you get a say in this?

EXT. LUMBER YARD - MORNING

Sonny and a LUMBER YARD FOREMAN walk from the construction site's trailer office to a fork-lift.

FOREMAN

James is a good friend of mine.
I'm doing this as a favor for him.

Sonny nods respectfully.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

I expect you to be here everyday at 6:00. Can you do that?

SONNY

Yes sir.

NADINE'S BEDROOM

The Landlord gets up and walks toward her as she puts her clothes on. She pauses, noticing his close presence.

THE LANDLORD

Seems a bit unnecessary.

He puts his arms around her and nestles his face into the side of her neck. She closes her eyes in disgust.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

If you want to fuck around go ahead. I think Shay would enjoy the shelter again.

Nadine closes her eyes, flaring her nostrils. He tightens his grip. She doesn't give much of a fight. Tears roll down her face, but eventually she calms.

He pulls away from her and begins to take his clothes off. She sits down on the side of the bed, naked and defeated.

LUMBER YARD

The foreman points at the fork-lift.

FOREMAN
You ever work one of these?

SONNY
No.

The foreman extends his hand to Sonny.

FOREMAN
Your training starts tomorrow. See
you then.

Sonny shakes his hand.

SONNY
Thank you.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Nadine sits at the top of the steps, smoking a cigarette.
Sonny sits next to her. She looks down and away from Sonny.
Sonny notices her distant demeanor.

She looks at him and looks away again.

SONNY
Whatever's up, I wanna help.

She pauses, but then looks into his eyes.

NADINE
Things are fucked up. I don't want
you to get hurt.

Sonny looks at her eyes as they dart back and forth. He
grits his teeth and looks away.

Nadine grabs his hand. She leans her head on his shoulder.
He stares ahead.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Sonny walks into his apartment. His mother and STEPHANIE,
selah's mother, sit in the living room.

Sonny looks at Stephanie for a moment, but then walks over to
the refrigerator.

His mother and Stephanie watch him.

Sonny pulls a sports drink out of the fridge and takes a gulp.

SONNY'S MOM

Sonny. Don't act like you don't see us.

He stops drinking, but he still says nothing.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

Sonny. Give her a break.

SONNY

Oh, all of a sudden you want to give her a break. What about all those "fucking bitch" comments.

Stephanie looks away.

SONNY'S MOM

I was angry-

SONNY

Well so am I. Why the fuck is she here.

SONNY'S MOM

Why don't you ask her yourself?

SONNY

Okay, I will. Why the fuck are you here?

Stephanie pushes her bangs behind her ear.

STEPHANIE

I'm clean now-

SONNY

For now.

She takes a deep breath.

STEPHANIE

I deserve that.

She walks over to Sonny. She tries to look him in his eyes. He avoids eye contact.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Can we talk?

Sonny's mom gets up from the couch. She walks down the hallway and into her room.

INT. KITCHEN

She tries to hug him, but he pulls away. She sits at the kitchen table.

Sonny pauses, but then sits across from her.

STEPHANIE
I'm clean. Look.

She shows him the inside of her arms. The inner elbows show healed needle scars.

He takes a look, but shrugs it off.

SONNY
Good for you. But she's still dead.

Stephanie begins to cry.

STEPHANIE
That wasn't my fault.

SONNY
No, whose was it then?

STEPHANIE
I thought she was at Lisa's house.
I didn't know she was outside.

SONNY
Were you fucked up?

STEPHANIE
No. Maybe. I don't remember.

She puts her face in her hands. Then she lifts her head up straight.

Sonny grits his teeth.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I wanna stay clean.

Sonny sighs and then looks at her.

EXT. SELAH'S MEMORIAL - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny waits by Selah's memorial. Stephanie comes out of a pony keg with a cheap stuffed animal and a bag of hot fries.

She places them on the pile of memorabilia.

STEPHANIE

She loved these.

She backs up into Sonny. He awkwardly puts his arms around her.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING WINDOW

Nadine stands in her window seeing Sonny with his arm around Stephanie. She closes the blinds.

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Sonny and Stephanie sit on the edge of a concrete river bank, just below a bridge. His car lights shine on them. They drink forty ounce bottles of beer in paper bags. Stephanie's eyes are red from crying.

STEPHANIE

You remember how she used to
scrunch her nose when she woke up?

Sonny takes a sip of his beer.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

She used to splash so much water
out of the tub.

Sonny takes another sip.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Do you 'member how she started to
walk.

SONNY

Yeah. She looked like a duck mixed
with a rabbit. Sort of waddle
hopping.

He smiles and takes another sip.

Stephanie leans into Sonny and wraps her arms around him.

He wiggles free from her arms and gets up.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I don't know about all this.

STEPHANIE

All of what?

SONNY
This. Us. Fuck!

He winds up and throws his bottle against the bridge. It smashes and explodes.

EXT. LUMBER YARD - DAY

Sonny slams some 2 X 4's onto the arms of a fork lift. The fork lift driver drives away with the load.

Sonny takes off his work gloves and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Sonny pulls down a long gravel driveway, approaching a small cottage boxed in by some tall, beautiful, willow trees.

A FEMALE REAL ESTATE AGENT, in a blazer and skirt, holds a clipboard waiting for him by the front door.

As Sonny approaches, the woman notices his tattoos and hard appearance.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Sonny?

SONNY
Yes mam.

She extends her hand to shake Sonny's.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Nice to meet you.

Sonny shakes her hand, but doesn't reply to her greeting. A couple seconds of silence.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Well, okay. Would you like to see the house?

Sonny nods. She turns around and opens the door. They both walk in.

They travel from room to room looking at the features of the house.

LIVING ROOM

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Here is a working fireplace.

KITCHEN

REAL ESTATE AGENT
As you can see, the kitchen has
been upgraded to a modern set up.

The real estate agent walks over to the sliding glass doors
that lead out to the backyard.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Pretty large backyard despite
having so many trees around.

Sonny looks to the back yard.

SONNY
Is this yard big enough for horses?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Yes. Many residents in this area
have horses. Do you have kids?

Sonny stares at the yard.

SONNY
Yeah, a girl.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Oh, then I'm sure she loves horses.

She walks away toward another room.

REAL ESTATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Over here are the stairs to the
finished basement.

Sonny continues to look out into the yard.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny makes his bed, while Stephanie looks on standing by the
door to the bedroom.

SONNY
You can stay in here. I'll sleep
on the couch.

Stephanie walks over to Sonny as he finishes making the bed. He stands up and she slips up to him.

STEPHANIE

Sure you don't want to sleep in here too?

She leans in and kisses him. Sonny seems to enjoy the kiss.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Just like old times, huh.

Sonny gently pushes her away from him. He walks to the bedroom door. He exits, shutting the door behind him.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - EARLY MORNING

Sonny, Terrance and The Landlord sit at his table. He eats breakfast again, but Sonny and Terrance only drink coffee.

THE LANDLORD

I like to talk about work early in the morning. Most people of my ilk seem to enjoy the night scene at some hopping club or something. But me, I like a quiet bar, early in the morning, with some scrambled eggs. Know what I mean?

Terrance nods his head in agreement. Sonny barely moves.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

What the fuck is up with you. Not interested?

Terrance looks at Sonny and gives him a disappointed look.

SONNY

I'm sorry, just tired. I'm in.

The Landlord smirks and takes a bite of his toast, looking directly at Sonny.

THE LANDLORD

I know of a movie theatre owner who stashes money in the film room. Lots of money. He's old school. Doesn't trust banks.

TERRANCE

Fuck yeah!

THE LANDLORD

I want you guys to take it from him.

He reaches into a bag lying next to him. He pulls out two guns.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You'll need these. He ain't no pussy cat.

Terrance grabs his right away and looks down the barrel. Sonny hesitates, but then grabs his. They both put them under their belts.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

Sonny come up the stairs. As he walks passed Nadine's door he pauses. He listens closely to the sounds of Shay inside. He wants to knock. But he doesn't. He walks passed and into his apartment.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT

Inside his mother and Stephanie watch TV, wrapped in blankets. Sonny looks at the coffee table and notices his mom's pill bottle. He walks to his room.

STEPHANIE

Sonny, can you bring me my sweatshirt from the bedroom?

Sonny walks into his room.

INT. SHAY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Shay is tucked in her bed. Nadine sits next to her and runs her fingers through her hair.

SHAY

Can I go over to Sonny's tomorrow?

Nadine stops stroking her hair.

NADINE

I don't think so, not tomorrow.

SHAY

Can he come over here?

NADINE
I don't think so sweety.

SHAY
Why?

Nadine gets up from the bed and walks to the door.

NADINE
I don't know, honey, but it's time
for sleep.

She turns off the light and shuts the door.

NADINE'S APARTMENT KITCHEN

Nadine opens her fridge, grabs a beer and opens it. She sits down at the table and take a sip of her beer.

She reaches for a stack of photos and begins to flip through them. The photos are of their experience at the horse farm. She stops on one particular photo, that of Sonny and Shay sitting on a horse together, smiling.

She puts down the photo. She takes another swallow of her beer.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance sit watching a movie. A few others are there as well, but not many.

Sonny and Terrance get up and go into the hallway.

HALLWAY

They see the THEATRE OWNER (70) talking to the TICKET CASHIER. He holds a money bag. He walks toward Sonny and Terrance.

Sonny goes to the water fountain and takes a drink. Terrance takes out his phone and pretends to text someone.

Once the owner passes them he approaches a door. He opens the door and as it shuts Sonny puts on a snow mask and moves quickly to the door and prevents it from closing all the way.

OWNER'S OFFICE

The owner notices the door does not click closed and turns around.

As he turns Sonny runs up on him and grabs his arms and mouth. The owner tries to yell, but Sonny holds him tight. Terrance comes in with a mask on as well and pulls his gun out. Sonny is surprised. He sticks it in the face of the owner.

TERRANCE

Shut the fuck up old man. Don't make me shit your pants.

SONNY

Terrance!

Sonny gestures for Terrance to ease up. Terrance pulls the gun from his face and into his side.

TERRANCE

Now where's the money?

The owner holds out the money bag.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Don't fuck with me old man. Where's the stash.

The owner doesn't respond. Instead he tries to get away from Sonny.

Terrance moves the gun from his side up to the side of his head.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Give me the fuckin' money or I swear I will blow your head off.

SONNY

Take it easy man.

TERRANCE

Don't tell me how to do this. You want the stash or not?

SONNY

Come-on old man, just show us where the stash is.

The owner's eyes dart to a panel in the wall and then back at Terrance.

Terrance looks over to the panel.

He goes over to the panel and rips it from the wall, revealing a hiding place.

He reaches deeply in and then pulls out a duffle bag. He sets it on the ground and opens it up.

TERRANCE

Yeah.

The bag is full of money. He zips it back up.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Terrance walks by the owner and Sonny. He takes the butt of the gun and smacks the old man in the side of his eye. It bleeds fast and he falls to the ground. Sonny tries to break his fall, checking if he's okay. He's knocked out.

Terrance runs to the door and looks back at Sonny.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Let's go!

Sonny hesitates, but follows. They take off their masks and leave the projector room. No one sees them leave out a side exit door.

EXT. INNER CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance walk toward Sonny's apartment building.

SONNY

What the fuck Terrance. What was that? He's an old man.

TERRANCE

Did you want him to call the popo on our ass?

Sonny shakes his head.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Most people get harder in prison. You didn't go get soft did ya?

SONNY

Gotta bring up the pen huh?. Why the fuck was I there anyway.

Terrance laughs and then gets serious.

TERRANCE

What the fuck you talking about?

SONNY

I don' know. Why don't you tell me?

Terrance steps into Sonny's face.

TERRANCE

Are you accusing me of something?

SONNY

Seems like you're getting smart now.

TERRANCE

Fuck you Sonny.

He begins to walk away.

SONNY

No, fuck you asshole. I went to jail for you.

Terrance turns around and walks toward Sonny.

TERRANCE

You went to jail because you were stupid, not because of me.

Sonny stands right up to Terrance. Terrance pushes him back.

SONNY

Don't touch me.

TERRANCE

I'll fucking touch you if I want. Things aren't the same since you been gone. So, don't try to act like you're still the shit around here. Now move, I got to get this money to The Landlord.

Sonny swings and punches Terrance in the mouth. Terrance falls back, but then charges Sonny. He tackles Sonny, who slams into the brick wall of the apartment building.

Sonny punches the back of Terrance's head. He pushes Terrances's neck to get him off.

Sonny gets up and tries to kick Terrance, but Terrance grabs his foot and throws him to the ground again.

He gets on top of him and punches him in the face.

Sonny struggles to get him off of him, and finally does. He pushes Terrance into a car and follows that with a punch to the back. Terrance buckles to the ground and Sonny slams his head on the car door. Terrance falls to the ground, but then kicks Sonny in the balls. Sonny buckles to the ground.

Terrance jumps on top of him. Sonny flips him over and is about to punch his head, which is lying on the curb. Terrance cannot move. Sonny pulls back his fist. Terrance closes his eyes.

Sonny holds for a second and then decides not to punch him. He rolls over to the ground next to Terrance, both breathing heavy and bleeding.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

You did get soft.

Sonny laughs and so does Terrance. Sonny wipes blood off of his lips, looks at the blood and laughs again.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - EARLY MORNING

The Landlord looks at Sonny and Terrance. They are still cut and bruised from their fight with each other.

THE LANDLORD

What the fuck happened to you two?

TERRANCE

I fell down some steps.

Terrance looks at Sonny.

SONNY

I ran into a door.

The Landlord smirks.

THE LANDLORD

Whatever turns your cranks.

The Landlord hands both Sonny and Terrance a thick envelope full of money. Terrance looks inside. Sonny puts it into his pocket without looking inside. The Landlord notices.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You see, that's why I like you
Sonny. Terrance doesn't trust me.

He takes a drag of his cigarette. Terrance looks at The Landlord.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

We need more good men like you in
my business.

Sonny maintains eye contact with The Landlord.

A WAITRESS brings over a plate of breakfast food.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Ah. Anybody hungry?

EXT. LOCAL FAIR - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance put on their masks and slip into a portable trailer.

Inside are TWO MONEY COUNTERS counting money and one security guard. Sonny grabs the security guard and puts him to the floor.

Terrance points his gun at the money counters and pulls out a small duffle bag. He throws it at one of the men.

TERRANCE

Don't get stupid, just put the
money into the bag.

They begin to put the money in. Sonny takes the radio and gun from the security guard.

Terrance grabs the duffle bag. They back out of the trailer, shut the door and disappear around the corner.

EXT. ALLEY

They grab some clothes tucked behind a dumpster and put them on over their clothes. Terrance puts the money bag into a different colored bag and throws it over his shoulder. They gather themselves and walk into the crowd of people at the fair.

INT. NADINE'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Nadine sits on her couch, rocking slightly back and forth. The photo of Sonny and Shay is in her hand. She places it on the coffee table, gets up and walks to her front door. She exits into the hallway.

APARTMENT HALLWAY

Nadine walks to Sonny's door and knocks on the door.

SONNY'S APARTMENT

Stephanie and Cherry sit in the living room. Stephanie picks up a crack pipe and lights it, taking a drag. Cherry hears the knock at the door.

CHERRY

I think someone is at the door.

Stephanie finishes her drag and listens. Another knock.

Stephanie blows out her smoke and places the paraphernalia under her couch and tidies up the table a bit. She gets up and walks to the door.

She opens the door and there stands Nadine.

STEPHANIE

Yeah?

Nadine squints her eyes and furrows her brows. She looks around Stephanie, searching for Sonny.

NADINE

Is Sonny here?

STEPHANIE

No, he's working.

NADINE

Working?

STEPHANIE

Who the fuck are you?

NADINE

A friend. When will he be home?

Nadine notices the smoke and smell.

STEPHANIE

How should I know. Are you his bitch or something?

Stephanie looks at Cherry. Cherry notices Nadine.

CHERRY

Hey Nadine.

NADINE

Cherry, what's up? Does Sonny know you're here?

Stephanie blocks Nadine's view of Cherry.

STEPHANIE

Who the fuck are you?

NADINE

I'm no one. Just tell Sonny I stopped by.

APARTMENT HALLWAY

Nadine walks away from the door. Stephanie leans out the door.

NADINE

Stop smoking that shit. Some of us have children here.

STEPHANIE

Fuck you. That ain't my problem.

Nadine opens her front door and slams it behind her.

SONNY'S APARTMENT

Stephanie closes her door and walks back to the couch.

STEPHANIE

Who the fuck was that?

CHERRY

She and Sonny.

STEPHANIE

My Sonny?

CHERRY

She also fucks The Landlord.

Stephanie reaches under the couch, pulls out her crack pipe, lights it and takes another drag.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sonny comes into his bedroom. Stephanie lies on the bed, eyes open. Sonny rummages through his dresser, looking for something.

STEPHANIE
Met your slut today.

Sonny snaps around to her.

SONNY
What?

STEPHANIE
The slut next door.

Sonny slams his dresser drawer.

SONNY
Go back to sleep.

He walks toward the door.

STEPHANIE
She fucks The Landlord you know.

Sonny stops.

SONNY
Shut your God damn mouth. Who the
fuck are you?

Stephanie sits up.

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry. I'm just saying what
everyone else already knows.

Sonny turns around.

SONNY
You're staying here for now because
you are the mother of my child.
That's it. No other reason.

Stephanie gets up and walks to Sonny. She reaches to hug
him.

STEPHANIE
Com'on Sonny sleep in here tonight.

Sonny avoids her touch, walks out the door and shuts it
behind him.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Sonny dresses for his work at the lumber yard. He grabs a
pair of work gloves and leaves the apartment door.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Sonny's mom lies on one couch and Stephanie on another. There is a needle, a spoon and a lighter on the coffee table. A few beer bottles strewn about the table as well.

Sonny comes into the front door of the apartment. Stephanie gets up to her feet quickly, trying to put the paraphernalia into a small bag and hide it. But Sonny is quick to realize what is going on.

SONNY

What the fuck. In ma's house.

STEPHANIE

It's not what it looks like.

Sonny grabs Stephanie by her arm.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Sonny!

She resists, pulls her arm from his grasp and grabs a bottle of beer. She throws it at Sonny, but she misses. It smashes against the wall.

He rushes toward her and grabs her by the throat, pushing her against the wall.

Sonny's mom gets up.

SONNY'S MOM

What the hell is going on? Sonny
what are you doing?

Sonny presses Stephanie's head against the wall.

SONNY

You're never going to change. Get
the fuck out.

He grabs her by the hair, pulls her to the front door and chucks her out. He locks the dead-bolts.

He walks into his bedroom and walks back out a couple seconds later with a small bag of Stephanie's clothes and belongings. He unlocks the front door, opens it and throws the bag outside.

He shuts the door and locks the dead-bolts again. Stephanie yells outside the door, crying hysterically, causing all sorts of drama. She bangs her fists on the door.

STEPHANIE

Sonny! Sonny! I didn't mean to.

Sonny ignores her and walks over to his mother.

SONNY

Don't you fucking let her in!

He walks into his bedroom and slams the door.

His mother stands there, looking back and forth between Sonny's bedroom door and the front door. The banging on the door continues.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny takes his cell phone out of his pocket. He dials.

JAMES (O.S.)

Hello

SONNY

I need to get the fuck out of here.

JAMES (O.S.)

Sonny?

SONNY

Shit. I'm losing it.

JAMES (O.S.)

Calm down. I'll come by and pick you up.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny is outside pacing the sidewalk. He notices the thug and his boys in front of his apartment.

He tries to avoid their attention, but the Thug notices his distress and calls his boys to come with him over to Sonny.

As they come close, Sonny tries to calm down and ignore them.

THUG

Hey bitch.

Sonny doesn't give him attention. The thug moves closer.

THUG (CONT'D)

Hey nigga. I'm talking to you.

Sonny turns to him.

SONNY

I heard ya, but I don't respond to
bitch.

THUG

Hey bitch.

The thugs punches Sonny in the face and Sonny falls down.
The thug's boys come over and join in with the beating.

Sonny gets to his feet and charges the Thug. He is met with
the back of a gun to the top of his eye. Blood gushes out of
his eye.

Just then James pulls up in his SUV. He sees Sonny getting
beat up. He comes to a stop and jumps out of his SUV and
toward Sonny.

JAMES

Sonny.

The Thug calls his boys off Sonny and they confidently walk
away. James sprints over to Sonny and kneels down to him.

The thugs walk around the corner.

James goes to his SUV and grabs a towel. He comes back and
puts it on Sonny's eye and gets him to sit up. Sonny is
dazed and confused.

James gets him up to his feet and into his SUV. He gets in
too and they drive away.

INT/EXT. JAMES'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny puts his face into his hands. The towel is soaked in
blood.

SONNY

Aaagh!

JAMES

What was that Sonny?

Sonny rubs his forehead.

SONNY

Fuck!

James remains silent, letting Sonny calm down.

JAMES

Take it easy. It's okay. Shit.

Sonny takes a moment to calm down, and then takes a deep breath.

SONNY

I don't how I'm gonna survive.
It's too fucking hard. There's too
much shit.

JAMES

Okay.

Sonny leans his head back on the head rest, facing his door window.

INT/EXT. JAMES' CAR - LATE NIGHT

James and Sonny have been traveling for about an hour. They are now in a rural landscape. Sonny sleeps. His eye has stopped bleeding, but is very swollen.

There are beautiful pine trees all over. James drives down a driveway and stops at the garage door of a house with an exterior light on.

Inside we see a man, James' dad, SAM (70), opens the window curtains and looks out. He then opens the front door and waves at James. He wears a sweater, some sleep pants, and slippers. James nudges Sonny.

JAMES

We're here.

Sonny wakes up, confused, as if sleeping the whole car ride. He touches his eye in pain. He winces.

SONNY

Where are we?

JAMES

My dad's place. Come on.

James opens his door and gets out. Sonny does the same, but slower.

James walks up to his dad and gives him an affectionate hug.

SAM

Good to see you son.

Sonny walks toward them.

James turns to Sonny.

JAMES
Dad, this is Sonny.

Sam reaches out his hand to shake. They shake.

SAM
Nice to meet you Sonny. That's
quite the shiner.

They all go into the front door.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sam leads Sonny through the living room and shows him a bedroom right by the living room. He opens the door to the bedroom.

SAM
Here's where you can sleep. If you
need more blankets, there are some
in the closet.

Sonny nods respectfully.

SONNY
Thank you sir.

SAM
Don't call me sir. I'm not in the
air force any more.

They both turn to face James.

JAMES
Well, I hate to be the dead beat
here, but I'm exhausted. I'm going
to bed.

SAM
Good idea.

JAMES
Sonny? Do you like to fish?

SONNY
Yeah.

JAMES
Great. There's a lake in the back.
We'll catch some pike tomorrow.

Sam and James walk up the stairs. Sam stops and turns around.

SAM

Oh Sonny, make yourself at home.
There's food in the fridge and the
remote control is on top of the TV.

SONNY

Thanks.

They both go into separate rooms. Sonny goes into his bedroom.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM

He looks around at the pictures on the wall. Pictures of James and another boy as children. Pictures of Sam and his wife. Photos of the entire family happy together.

Sonny sits on the bed and then lies down, closing his eyes.

EXT. ON THE LAKE - EARLY MORNING

Sonny and James cast their lines into the water. They lean back and wait.

SONNY

Where does your brother live?

James reels in his line a bit.

JAMES

Well, my brother died when I was
15. Actually my Mom and my brother
both died. In a car accident.

SONNY

Holy shit. I'm sorry.

JAMES

Don't be sorry. That was a long
time ago. My dad has been living
out here ever since he retired from
the service.

Sonny reels in his line and recasts it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

He still really misses mom and
Corey.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I like to come out and keep him company as often as I can. He does pretty good by himself though.

Sonny leans back. The noises of the lake calm him.

INT. SAM'S DINING ROOM - BRUNCH

Sam, James, and Sonny sit around the table eating brunch. Sam passes Sonny the home fries and Sonny scoops a big helping on his plate.

Sam points at James.

SAM

(to Sonny)

Don't let this man sitting across from you fool ya.

James smirks.

SAM (CONT'D)

He's not always been the good guy.

Sonny looks interested.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh no. He's the reason I have high blood pressure.

JAMES

Oh come on dad. That has nothing to do with fried chicken, huh?

SAM

Have you forgotten the time you drove the car into our garage door? I don't know what you were on.

James forks another over easy egg onto his plate.

JAMES

How can I old man. You always remind me.

He looks at James.

SAM

Well, I'm just glad you lived through it.

Sonny looks at James too.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD - LATE MORNING

James and Sonny chop wood and stack it against the house.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Sonny and James toss a football back and forth.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Sonny sleeps on a hammock in the backyard. It sways to the wind. He dreams.

EXT. ON THE LAKE - MORNING (DREAM)

Sonny sits on a row boat, gently rowing through a calm lake. The birds sing and the water ripples just enough for the sunshine to shimmer across the lake.

As Sonny rows we see a young girl sitting on the front end of the boat. We don't see her face, just her long hair. She sits up straight, looking at the water.

EXT. SAM'S BACKYARD

Sonny's eyes open up slowly. He gently sways back and forth on the hammock.

EXT. NADINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sonny stands outside Nadine's apartment door, knocking.

SONNY

Nadine.

He listens through the door to see if she is inside.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Nadine.

Nadine looks out the door peephole. She opens the door, but leaves the chain locked.

NADINE

What do you want Sonny? Shay is sleeping.

SONNY
Sorry. I just wanted to see you.
Can I come in?

NADINE
No.

SONNY
Come-on Nadine.

NADINE
No. I don't need this. Shay don't
need this.

SONNY
Don't need what? What is going on
with you?

They pause.

NADINE
Is she Selah's mom?

SONNY
Huh?

NADINE
Don't fuck with me Sonny. I saw
you with her.

Sonny looks around and then back up at Nadine.

SONNY
Yeah.

Nadine sighs.

SONNY (CONT'D)
I need you Nadine. Please.

Nadine looks at Sonny, scanning his eyes to see if he is
serious or not.

SONNY (CONT'D)
I'll help. I'll do whatever needs
to be done.

There are a couple seconds of silence. Nadine shuts the
door. More silence. Then the chain slides to unlocked.

The door opens and Sonny enters her apartment.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nadine opens the door. She looks sad. Sonny steps to her and hugs her tightly. She begins to cry intensely. Sonny just hugs her.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Nadine comes out of her bedroom looking for Sonny, but there is no sign of him. She looks to the kitchen table. There is one single red rose, a NOTE, and the picture of Sonny and Shay on a horse.

NOTE

Nadine. I'll get us out of here.
Love Sonny.

Nadine picks up the picture and then the rose. She sniffs it and smiles.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - NIGHT

The Landlord and Terrance sit at his usual table. A FEW THUGS are scattered about the bar, keeping their eyes on The Landlord's table.

THE LANDLORD

How long have you been friends with Sonny?

TERRANCE

Since forever.

THE LANDLORD

Do you trust him?

TERRANCE

Yeah. He's always been true.

The waiter comes over with a bottle of wine and a glass. He pours some in the glass for The Landlord to taste.

He does the wine tasting ritual. Satisfied, he nods. The waiter leaves the bottle on the table and walks away.

THE LANDLORD

Does he trust you?

Terrance looks uncertain.

TERRANCE

Sure, what's up?

The Landlord takes a sip of his wine and leans back.

THE LANDLORD

The next job has a great payoff,
maybe a few hundred thousand.

Terrance smirks.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

But with more to gain, there's more
at risk. You can feel that right?

Terrance nods.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

We are gonna rob the robbers.

The Landlord lights a cigarette and takes a drag.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You know the horse track out in
Shelby?

TERRANCE

Yeah.

THE LANDLORD

It will be robbed, and I know when,
and by who.

He takes another drag.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

We're gonna let them rob it, then
fuckin' rob them.

He smirks and chuckles lightly. He takes a sip of his wine.
Terrance nods repeatedly in anticipation.

The Landlord leans in closer to Terrance.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You're gonna let Sonny be the
driver.

TERRANCE

He's always the driver.

THE LANDLORD

Yeah, but this time he might not
survive.

Terrance's eyes squint.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
But that's okay, because that just
leaves more for me and you.

Terrance leans back and looks away. The Landlord notices his
apprehension.

TERRANCE
Isn't there another way?

THE LANDLORD
No other way.

TERRANCE
I don't know. I-

THE LANDLORD
You what, don't want a big score?

TERRANCE
No, that's not it.

Terrance leans down and squeezes the bridge of his nose with
his hands.

THE LANDLORD
Do you want in or not?

Terrance leans back up and nods.

TERRANCE
Yeah.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Sonny and Nadine sit on her couch talking. Shay comes into
the living room, obviously just awoken from sleep. She is
tired.

NADINE
Shay, what's up sweetie?

SHAY
Can't sleep.

NADINE
Why?

SHAY
I'm scared.

NADINE
Of what?

SHAY

Everything.

Sonny catches her eyes. Shay walks to the couch and lies down beside Sonny, placing her head on his lap.

Sonny lifts up his arms to let her head rest. He looks at Nadine. She smiles.

He slowly brings his arms down, placing one of his hands on her head. He strokes her hair. She falls asleep.

Sonny's eyes water. Nadine notices.

NADINE

Sonny, what's wrong?

Sonny continues to stroke Shay's hair.

SONNY

Before I went to prison I didn't even think about my Selah that much ...Too busy hustling...In prison, I couldn't stop thinking about her.

NADINE

How old was she when you went in?

SONNY

Six...Then one day my mother came to visit me. She never visited. So I knew something was wrong.

Sonny still fights back tears. Nadine touches his shoulder.

SONNY (CONT'D)

She told me that Selah was killed by a car.

NADINE

I'm so sorry. It wasn't your fault.

Nadine begins to shed tears.

NADINE (CONT'D)

I don't know what I would do if I ever lost Shay.

Sonny reaches and touches her face. He looks her deep in her eyes.

SONNY

You never will.

Nadine looks him in his eyes, convinced.

SONNY (CONT'D)

How fast can you pack your stuff
up?

NADINE

Why?

SONNY

I got a place outside of town. I
want you and Shay to live there
with me.

Nadine scans his eyes. She fights back excitement.

NADINE

When?

SONNY

Just start packing. I have to
finish something first.

She leans her head on Sonny's shoulder. Sonny is determined.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Sonny sits in a booth. Terrance comes in the front door,
sees Sonny and sits across from him.

TERRANCE

What's hap'nin nigga?

SONNY

Nothing. What's up wit you?

Terrance looks around, shifty.

TERRANCE

The Landlord told me of a big job
coming up.

SONNY

Oh yeah. Where, what?

TERRANCE

Just got the generals last night.

Terrance pauses.

SONNY

Well. What is it?

Terrance stalls, looking around the diner.

SONNY (CONT'D)

What's up Terrance. You're acting
all shifty and shit.

Terrance looks at Sonny, but only for a couple seconds, then
looks away again.

TERRANCE

Maybe you need to sit this one out.

Sonny leans forward.

SONNY

What are you talking about. What
about all that team language. Now
you don't want me with you. What
the fuck's going on bro?

Terrance sighs, looks at Sonny, but still shifty.

TERRANCE

Peter to Pay.

SONNY

What you talking about brah?

Terrance leans in closer.

TERRANCE

He got wind of a big job going down
at the track.

SONNY

What?

TERRANCE

All he said was stealing from Peter
to pay Paul.

Terrance smirks.

Sonny is still unconvinced. He looks around frustrated and
suspicious.

SONNY

When?

TERRANCE

Saturday.

SONNY

But you don't know what we're doing yet?

TERRANCE

Take it easy brah. We'll meet with The Landlord and bang it out.

SONNY

All of us, or just you two?

TERRANCE

All of us, why?

Sonny still seems uncertain.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Relax. This is the big payoff. You can get something for that ho you hang with.

Sonny becomes angry.

SONNY

Fuck you man! You don't know her!

TERRANCE

Whoa stop trippin' brah. I didn't think that shit was so fuckin' serious.

Sonny gets up, throws some money on the table, and walks toward the diner exit.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Get ready.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

Sonny knocks on the door. Nadine opens it a couple seconds later. They lock eyes and smile.

NADINE

Come in.

NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Sonny enters, but doesn't sit down. He looks around, as if looking for Shay.

SONNY

Where's Shay?

NADINE
School, why?

SONNY
Just wondering.

Nadine suspects something.

NADINE
What's going on?

Sonny sits down at the kitchen table. Nadine follows.

SONNY
I got something for ya.

NADINE
Oh yeah?

SONNY
It's not a diamond.

Nadine eyes twinkle and she shrugs her shoulders.

Sonny reaches under his shirt and behind the belt of his pants. He pulls out a gun.

NADINE
What the hell do I need that for?

He places it on the table.

SONNY
I just think you should have it.
Just in case.

NADINE
Just in case of what?

SONNY
Life.

Nadine pauses, looking at Sonny. She picks up the gun and looks at it. She looks down the barrel.

NADINE
Is it loaded?

SONNY
No.

Sonny pulls out a few bullets from his pocket and puts them on the table.

Sonny gets up. He takes the gun from Nadine's hand.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Here. Let me show ya.

Nadine hesitates.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Come-on. I won't shoot you.

NADINE
What if I shoot you?

SONNY
That would be bad.

She gets up. He positions her so that she is in front of him. He puts the gun in her hand and places his hands over hers. They point the gun together at the wall. Sonny subtly sniffs her hair. She senses his affection.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Ready?

She nods.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Pull the hammer back.

She does.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Now aim by putting the front site
in between the rear site, pointing
it at your target.

Nadine closes one eye and looks down the barrel.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Pull the trigger.

She pauses.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Go ahead, pull it.

She doesn't do it. She can't seem to. She shakes a bit. Her face flushes red.

Sonny calms her shaking, slowly moves his finger to the trigger and helps her pull it. The SOUND of METAL CLICKS.

Nadine closes her eyes. Sonny begins to kiss her neck. She turns around and they kiss passionately.

Sonny places the gun on the table and they move to the couch, continuing to make out.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Sonny and Nadine sleep on the couch under a blanket. Nadine wakes up and looks up at Sonny. She smiles and caresses his chest with her hands.

She jumps up.

NADINE

Shit!

Sonny wakes and sits up.

SONNY

What?

NADINE

Shay. I forgot to pick up Shay.
She's at school still waiting for
me.

Sonny gets up, puts on his pants and shirt.

Nadine tries to get her clothes on, but cannot find items of her clothing. She is frustrated and flustered.

SONNY

I'll get her. Don't worry. I'll
get her and bring her back.

Nadine settles down and sits on the couch again.

NADINE

Okay.

Sonny finishes dressing and gives Nadine another kiss. She smiles. He leaves the apartment.

EXT. SHAY'S SCHOOL - DAY

Shay is sitting on the front steps of the school.

Sonny walks up to Shay. She notices him and smiles.

SHAY

Hi Sonny.

SONNY

Hi Shay.

Shay looks behind Sonny.

SHAY
Where's mom?

SONNY
She's at home.

Sonny motions for her to get up and walk with him. They turn around and begin to walk down the street.

SHAY
Where did your daughter go to school?

SONNY
She went here too.

SHAY
Do you miss her?

He doesn't answer right away.

SONNY
Too much.

They continue walking. Shay reaches and holds his hand.

Out of nowhere a group of young high school students start fighting. The commotion gets intense.

A boy who seems to be getting beat up suddenly pulls out a gun and shoots it three times into the air. The other boys cover their heads as they scatter.

Sonny pulls Shay to himself and down onto the ground. He covers her. He looks over and sees the young boy run away and around a building.

He turns back to Shay. She cries. He holds her tight.

SONNY (CONT'D)
It's okay. It's okay Shay. I'm here.

She can't stop crying. Sonny comforts her.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny's mom sits on the couch watching home movies of Sonny's daughter Shay. Her eyes are red from crying.

Sonny walks in the front door and notices her watching the movies. She notices that he is there, but she doesn't acknowledge his presence.

He moves over to the chair to the left of the couch and watches the movie too. The movie shows Selah running around, leaping, and playing with a huge bubble wand. Bubbles come pouring out of the wand as she laughs. We hear Sonny's mom laughing off screen in the movie.

Sonny's eyes drop and he looks at his mom. His mom begins to sob. Sonny pauses, but then goes and sits next to her, putting his arm around her. She resists a bit, but then buries her face into his chest, sobbing.

SONNY'S MOM

She looks so much like you.

Sonny's face wells up with emotion and only one tear drops from his eye.

SONNY'S MOM (CONT'D)

I should have never let her go that day.

SONNY

Shh. Mom. Shh.

He holds her even tighter.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sonny talks on the phone with James

Sonny doesn't say anything, just listens.

JAMES

I understand Sonny. Believe me, I do. It ain't easy. But if you go back the old way, you're gonna get killed. Maybe not today. Maybe not tomorrow. But one day someone will get you when you're not focused.

Sonny sighs.

SONNY

Can you do something for me?

JAMES

Depends.

SONNY

If anything happens to me, there's an envelope with a key under my bed. Can you give it to Nadine, my next door neighbor?

JAMES

Nothing will happen if you stay clean.

SONNY

Just promise me. I won't ask you for anything else.

James sighs.

JAMES

Yeah. Sure. Just don't get stupid on me.

INT. THE LANDLORD'S BAR - EARLY MORNING

A blueprint of the horse track is spread out on the table. Terrance and Sonny watch as The Landlord points out the plan. His Thugs stand close by.

THE LANDLORD

Here's where most of the money is kept, right here. It's counted here. Now there are three levels of security that surround these two spots. We're talking millions, so the security ain't no joke.

Sonny scratches his head and Terrance looks toward the bar.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Boys, don't get discouraged. Here's the genius of the plan. We don't have to get passed security.

Sonny and Terrance look at each other and then The Landlord.

TERRANCE

With respect, how the fuck do we get the cash?

The Landlord leans back in his booth seat.

THE LANDLORD

We're gonna take it from the robbers after they rob.

TERRANCE

Peter to pay Paul. Yeah.

SONNY

You mean, we're gonna let them get the money then we take it from them?

The Landlord nods.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Where?

THE LANDLORD

Two miles from the track. I know their escape route.

Terrance shows his excitement. Sonny is stoic.

TERRANCE

Yeah nigga!

The Landlord points to the edge of the map.

THE LANDLORD

You guys will wait here. And when you see them coming, well, you know, take the fucking money from them.

Terrance, smiling from ear to ear, waives for the waiter to bring him a drink. Sonny just nods.

Sonny gets up and walks toward the exit. The waiter brings the drink for Terrance.

Sonny walks out the front door. Terrance looks at The Landlord. The Landlord with his eyes tells Terrance to stick to the plan.

INT/EXT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Sonny calls Nadine on his cell phone while lying on his bed.

NADINE (O.S.)

Hello?

SONNY

Nadine. It's Sonny.

NADINE (O.S.)

Hi.

SONNY

Listen, can you be ready to leave later tonight?

NADINE (O.S.)

Yeah, we're mostly packed. Just need to load it all up.

SONNY

How's Shay?

NADINE (O.S.)

Sleeping.

SONNY

I'll be over late, so be ready.

NADINE (O.S.)

Sonny? You don't have to do this. We'll make it.

SONNY

I know, but I can't wait any longer.

Silence.

NADINE (O.S.)

Be careful. We love you.

Sonny hangs up the phone. He gets up from the bed and exits the apartment.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Sonny and Terrance sit in a SUV waiting for the robbers. Sonny is in the driver's seat and Terrance in the passenger's seat. Another SUV is parked beside them. Terrance has a semi-automatic machine gun. Sonny sports a pistol and a shotgun.

Terrance takes a swig of some hard liquor and offers Sonny some. Sonny refuses.

SONNY

No man, I'm good.

Terrance pulls the bottle away but continues to look at him.

TERRANCE

How many jobs have we done together?

SONNY

Too many.

Terrance takes another swig.

TERRANCE

You remember when we were in 6th grade and we stole the answers to the "guess the baby" picture contest?

Sonny smiles and laughs slightly.

SONNY

Yeah, we tried to make it look good by getting some wrong.

TERRANCE

We got caught though cause we matched Shauna Jackson with a baby white boy.

Sonny chuckles. Terrance drinks again. He looks directly at Sonny with regretful appreciation in his eyes.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

You've always been true to me man. I'm sorry I have not always been the same.

Sonny gestures for a sip of the liquor.

SONNY

You've been aight man.

He takes a sip and hands it back to Terrance. Terrance looks out the window, uncertain.

EXT. HORSE RACE TRACK LOADING DOCK - SAME TIME

The track is lit up. The crowd is roaring. An ALARM sounds.

A set of double doors slam open. Three men in ski masks burst through carrying two large duffle bags each. Its a huge score.

A white Econoline van's back doors open. The men throw the bags into the back and follow them in.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT DOOR - SAME TIME

The Landlord looks at his cell phone. He speed dials a number.

THE LANDLORD

Their off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Terrance holds his phone to his ear.

TERRANCE

We're ready.

He hangs up the phone and looks at Sonny. Both of them begin to check their guns. Locked and loaded.

SONNY

Alright, get out. Get in your spot.

Terrance hesitates.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Go Terrance, what the fuck?

TERRANCE

You get out. I got this.

SONNY

What, that's not the plan. I am always the driver.

Terrance points his gun at Sonny. Sonny flinches.

TERRANCE

Sonny. Get the fuck out.

Sonny looks in Terrance's eyes, which begin to tear up.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Just do it Sonny.

SONNY

Shit.

We see an vehicle blowing dust about a mile away.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Aight brah. I don't understand, but whatever.

Sonny gets out and Terrance slides over. Sonny hides in the side ditch of the road. Terrance puts the vehicle in drive and revs the engine.

The speeding van comes over the country road ridge, spitting up dust from the gravel. It is almost pitch black. The driver of the van cannot see the SUV.

Just when the van is about to pass the SUV, Terrance pushes the pedal to the floor. He slams into the front-side of the van. Both vehicles smash up. The van flips on it's side and the SUV spins around.

Sonny waits for the accident to settle, then he gets up and walks toward the vehicle. The driver of the van is dead. The back door of the van is open. Wheels spinning.

One of the duffle bags lies half-way out the door. But Sonny notices that Terrance is trapped in the SUV, his legs smashed by the dash board.

Sonny goes directly to help him.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Terrance. I need to get ya out of here.

TERRANCE

No, grab the fucking money and go.

Just then a man emerges from the back of the van. He is a bit disoriented, but has a gun and he sees Sonny and Terrance. He raises and points the gun at them. Terrance notices him first.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Move!

Sonny turns around to the sound of a gun shot. He falls to the ground. It misses both of them but shatters the SUV's windshield. Terrance picks up his gun and opens fire, killing the shooter.

Terrance opens the door and falls out of the vehicle. His legs obviously broken. Sonny grabs him to check if he's okay. SIRENS sound in the distance.

Another man emerges from the vehicle. Terrance opens fire again, as does the other man. Terrance kills him too.

Sonny looks around for the third robber, but no one seems to be moving in the van, now riddled with bullets.

Sonny looks back at Terrance. This time Terrance has been shot in the chest. He is bleeding a great deal.

SONNY

Terrance. No, Terrance!

Terrance coughs up blood.

TERRANCE

Sonny. Stop it.

SONNY

Fuck!

TERRANCE

Sonny listen to me. There ain't no time. You need to get out brah.

Sonny looks at him. Terrance looks directly in Sonny's eyes.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Sonny.

SONNY

Don't you die Terrance.

TERRANCE

Shut the fuck up Sonny.

He coughs up more blood.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Look at me. Get home now. The Landlord. He ain't no fucking good.

He takes a deep breath and coughs hard.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Terrance leans his head back and dies in Sonny's arms. Sirens get closer.

SONNY

Fuck you Terrance.

He grabs him by the neck and pulls his head against his cheek. Terrance's blood smears on his cheek.

Sonny gets up, grabs his pistol and walks slowly to the van. He points the gun at the doors as he gets closer. He slowly peeks in the door. The third robber is dead. The money is for the taking.

Sonny grabs all of the bags and loads them in the other SUV. He then grabs a container of gasoline and dumps it all over the van and SUV. He lights it and both vehicles begin to burn.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Nadine and Shay sit on the coach. Nadine holds Shay close, both of them scared. The Landlord sits on the other coach with a gun in his hand.

The Landlord looks at the packed up clothes and stuff.

THE LANDLORD
Going somewhere?

She doesn't answer.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
And you weren't even going to say
goodbye. That hurts.

Shay whimpers. Nadine comforts her.

INT/EXT. SUV - SAME TIME

Sonny gets in the SUV and drives away. In the rear view mirror he sees the vehicles explode.

He picks up his cell phone and calls Nadine. No answer.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Nadine's cell phone rings on the coffee table. They all look at it.

THE LANDLORD
Superman is calling.

INT/EXT. SUV - SAME TIME

Sonny slams on the throttle and speeds into the darkness.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The Landlord gets up and walks over to them. He touches Shay with the hand not holding the gun.

THE LANDLORD
Shh. Don't cry. It will be okay.

NADINE
Don't you fuckin' touch her.

He looks at Nadine.

THE LANDLORD
Get up.

They don't move.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Get up!

Nadine gets up, holding Shay close.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Go to your room.

They go toward her bedroom door.

THE LANDLORD (CONT'D)
Not Shay, just you.

Nadine holds Shay tighter.

NADINE
No you motherfucker!

The Landlord goes over to Nadine and pulls Shay from her arms. Nadine tries desperately to hold on to Shay. She fails.

He shoves Nadine in her bedroom.

THE LANDLORD
If you come out of here I will kill
both of you.

He slams the door.

He brings Shay, who struggles, into the living room and sets her on the couch.

INT. NADINE'S BEDROOM

Nadine is on her floor crying hysterically, frozen, and appears unable to get control of her fear.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Shay cowers on the couch. The Landlord walks toward her. He holds his gun close to his side. He sits next to Shay. He touches her leg. She flinches.

THE LANDLORD

Shh. Sweetie. It will be okay.

Shay cries more and puts her head between her legs. The Landlord touches her knee and moves to her hair. Shay trembles.

EXT. SONNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

Sonny's SUV pulls up to the front of his apartment building. He slams on the breaks.

He gets out and runs into the front of his apartment building.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. MOMENTS LATER

Sonny stands at the door of Nadine's apartment, listening through the door. He hears The Landlord's voice and sounds of Shay crying.

Sonny aggressively pounds on the door.

SONNY

Let me in motherfucker!

THE LANDLORD

Go home Sonny. We'll settle up tomorrow.

SONNY

You cowardly motherfucker. Open the fucking door now!

There are a couple seconds of silence. Then Sonny grabs the door knob and shakes it back and forth.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I said, open this fucking door now!

LANDLORD

Go fuckin' home Sonny!

Sonny grabs his head with both hands.

SONNY

Ahgghh!

He hears Nadine scream. Then, a gun shot sounds. Shay screams. Another shot. The sound of a body hits the ground.

Sonny freezes.

SONNY (CONT'D)

No. No. Shay. Nadine. Shay.

He backs up. He rubs his eyes with his hands and looks down. Then he looks up and then straight forward at the door again. He runs toward it, breaking it open.

INT. NADINE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

There lying on the ground is The Landlord, dead. Shay in a fetal position on the couch crying.

Nadine stands by her door with her gun still pointed at where The Landlord stood.

Sonny walks over to Nadine slowly. Nadine looks at him, her hands shaking, eyes tired.

SONNY

It's okay. It's me. Put the gun down.

Nadine slowly brings the gun down and places it on the ground. Sonny goes over to Nadine and hugs her.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm here.

Nadine wiggles out of his hug and rushes over to Shay. She hugs her tight. They both cry hysterically.

Sonny sits down and looks at them. His eyes tighten and then the tears begin to flow.

So many damn tears finally release.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...I'm sorry...I'm sorry.

Shay leaves her mother's hug and goes over to Sonny. She crawls into his lap. He wraps his arms completely around her. He can't stop crying. Nadine comes over to them and leans her head on his shoulder.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James stands behind a podium. His recruits sit in chairs around a table listening to him.

JAMES

If you want to be a P.O. because
you want to be a tough guy then
don't waste my time.

A couple of the recruits focus in.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The men you will interact with are
always tougher. They don't need a
drill Sargent.

He pauses, fighting back tears. The recruits sit silently. One raises his hand.

RECRUIT

Sir, what is it they need?

A couple moments of silence. All recruits are keenly paying attention.

JAMES

A chance to make things right.

EXT. SELAH'S MEMORIAL - DAY

The stuffed animals, pictures and cards are a mess, battered by the wind and rain. The pinwheel, though, smoothly spins to the wind.

THE END