

Fate of the Dogs

written by

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EXT. UNIVERSITY - NOON

On a sidewalk, outside a university, is a young, black, male, dressed ivy league casual. DOUGIE (20) strolls along, earbuds in, counting his money. To his right, a wide, modern campus building, next to a small, yet preppy university park.

He crosses the street to his left.

He enters outdated, low level apartment complexes. The urban decay has taken over. Plastic AC units hang out of windows. Loose wiring hang off electric boxes like vines.

Leaning against a wall of a complex and standing watch for customers and the law, is a CORNER BOY.

The most common, bottom-of-the-barrel position in the drug world. A corner boy is the first to handle a customer and currency, but the last to reap the rewards that trickle down the hierarchy.

Although corner boys tend to fall to their own stereotypes, this one in particular, is a chain smoking, receding hairline, middle-aged man.

From a distance, the corner boy recognizes Dougie and, through his raspy voice, calls out to him.

CORNER BOY

Dougie, ay! You here pretty early.
You throwin a surprise party
tonight or somethin?

Dougie shakes hands with the corner boy.

DOUGIE

Nah, just here for me today.

CORNER BOY

No plans for da weekin then, uh?

DOUGIE

Shit, not really. Yo, why they got
you standing out here for? Ain't
you usually watching from yo place?

Dougie points to a second floor apartment unit.

CORNER BOY

I'm just waitin to pick up lunch.
Can' work deez rush hours with un
empty stomach, knoimsayin?

DOUGIE

Yeah, yeah.

CORNER BOY

How much you lookin for?

DOUGIE

A quarter.

The corner boy disapprovingly smacks his lips together. Nevertheless, he turns and looks around the corner of the complex, whistling and signaling for a quarter.

CORNER BOY

Aight, man. Head over.

DOUGIE

Aight.

Dougie hands his money to the corner boy and begins walking around the corner of the complex towards a wide alley for resident parking.

CORNER BOY

Stay in school!

Turning the corner, we see the further end of the complex previously hidden. A little boy quickly runs into an apartment unit.

Next to the unit, on plastic chairs, or leaning against an SUV, are a group of young men talking amongst each other. The SUV has all its doors opened, playing bass boosted music which drowns most of the group conversation until Dougie moves closer and closer to them.

The group notices Dougie approaching them so they hush down. The energetic, young, black man, DRIZZY (17), the epitome of a wanna-be rapper, dripping in jewelry, turns to Dougie and recognizes him.

DRIZZY

Ayo, nobody told me y'all had early release today. Shit, there's gon be a line of y'all college homies waiting 'cause we ain't ready for no rush hours right now. Rest of my crew don't even get here for like another hour.

DOUGIE

Ain't no early release in college, Drizz. You can leave when you want.

DRIZZY

Fo' real?

DOUGIE

For real. It's just me who early today, though.

DRIZZY

(Chuckling)

Yeah, but what gives? Just a quarter? No bulk? So what, no party this weekend?

DOUGIE

Nah, takes time to set them up.

KID IN CHAIR 1

Shit, homie, seen yo ass walking down here just now and I started getting all hyped.

DOUGIE

What, y'all high school kids don't party no more?

DRIZZY

It ain't that, man. "College party." The quintessential term when describing a great night out.

KID IN CHAIR 2

Ain't that right.

Suddenly, a man pokes his head out the open window from the apartment unit Drizzy and his men were hanging next to.

MAN IN WINDOW

(To Dougie)

Ayo, yo order ready.

DOUGIE

Alright, well, might be one next week, aight?

DRIZZY

Pft. Well, I'm expecting one now. Don't let us down, homie.

Dougie walks past Drizzy and his crew to the end of the complex. He turns a corner and disappears. A whistle rings throughout the complex from the corner boy again. Drizzy heads towards the gravel road the corner boy stands.

DRIZZY (CONT'D)
 (To his group)
 Lunch is here boys!

A black SUV comes down the road, down to a crawl, then stops right next to the corner boy. Drizzy begins a light jog towards the SUV, holding his pants up as they sag.

As he nears, the driver of the SUV, TRAY (23), sporting a wife beater and a durag, is seen handing out a bag of fast food and a cup holder with drinks to the corner boy.

CORNER BOY
 Thank you, Tray. Always coming thru.

Drizzy arrives and signals the corner boy to join his men.

DRIZZY
 Go on man, take yo break.

TRAY
 Drizzy...

Tray and Drizzy go in for a fist bump.

DRIZZY
 What up, Tray, Kaleb.

KALEB (25), the passenger sporting 70s sideburns with a soft fond for camo outfits, including a beret, takes a pause from typing in his laptop to lean forward into view. He speaks despite biting down on a rolled joint by the tip.

KALEB
 Last rush hour of the week coming up. Y'all ready?

DRIZZY
 Yeah rest of my crew will be here soon. It'll be smooth as always. Nothing to worry about.

KALEB
 Worried? *Sheeiiit*, way you been running this here hotspot, I ain't never been worried.

Drizzy chuckles.

KALEB (CONT'D)
 For real, you'll be lieutenant in no time.

TRAY

Just watch out for campus police.

DRIZZY

Tsk, man, only time I've ever even seen police is on my way to party deep into them campus dorms. I ain't never even seen police roll through this street.

TRAY

Yeah that's kinda the point, homie. Police just be creepin up on y'all.

KALEB

Brotha, you paranoid. They don't do that 'round here. Anyways, there's gon be a meet today so when you finished with yo rush hours, head over to Ignacio's, aight?

DRIZZY

Aight.

Tray rolls his window up, turning up the volume on the radio, before driving off.

SERIES OF SHOTS - KALEB & TRAY'S DAY AT WORK

-- The two drive along the streets as Kaleb browses his phone.

KALEB (V.O.)

Who next?

TRAY (V.O.)

We got a delivery in the condos.

KALEB (V.O.)

Uptown? Ain't no driver on that?

-- They park next to a condo complex. Tray steps off the SUV and heads inside while holding a backpack.

TRAY (V.O.)

I do, but the homie got burnt with a twelve hour shift at his day job.

-- Tray knocks on the suite room he's delivering to. Someone opens, he walks in.

KALEB (V.O.)

Twelve hours?! Hell naw.

-- Tray comes out the condos and heads towards the SUV.

TRAY (V.O.)
Gotta pay them bills yo, got to.

KALEB (V.O.)
Aight, who next after that?

TRAY (V.O.)
We checking up on Miguel.

-- At a courtyard surrounded by apartment complexes, we see Kaleb lecturing a young Mexican man. Pointing around and trying to instill some knowledge into him.

KALEB (V.O.)
Miguel been slacking. I ain't expecting much from him.

-- After Kaleb is seen finishing his lecture, the young Mexican man tries to repeat back to him what was explained.

TRAY (V.O.)
Yo, that homie just lacks intuition. Just teach him all the ins and outs of running a hotspot and he'll... he'll get the hang of it... eventually.

-- Kaleb and Tray stare back at the young man in disbelief at how he managed to miss the entire point of Kaleb's lecture.

KALEB (V.O.)
Aight, and then?

-- Tray's SUV is seen reversing into the open garage of a standard low income house.

TRAY (V.O.)
Drop this shit at the stash house, then we good. Just the meet left.

-- Kaleb and Tray walk out the front door of the house and get into the car that was parked next to the curb.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

EXT. ROW HOUSES - EVENING

Along red brick row houses, on the decent side of the city, is the nappy hair, patchy beard, MACK (26). He relaxes on the top steps of a row house, fidgeting with a blade of grass.

Two ladies, dressed for a Friday night out walk down the sidewalk towards Mack.

LADY 1
Heyyy, Mack.

MACK
Hey, ladies, how we doin tonight?

The ladies giggle and smile back at him, continuing their walk. Mack watches them as they walk off. He spots Drizzy walking towards him from a distance. Drizzy walks past the ladies, he turns to look at them from behind, then turns to Mack, amazed at the beautiful view he witnessed.

DRIZZY
Daaamn! Where was they heading to?
The club? Mack, me and you, right
now, I take lefty you take righty,
we walk them ladies to the club
like gentlemen.

Tray's SUV arrives.

MACK
(Laughing)
You for real?

DRIZZY
Hell yeah, I am! Look at them, yo!
(To Tray's SUV) These homies will
understand. Let's go, Mack!

MACK
I'm down, but how you gonna get in
tho? You gotta be 21 to enter.

DRIZZY
Shit. I needs to get me a fake I.D.

MACK
Oh, you know what? That's true. I
don't know anyone who does fake
I.Ds though.

DRIZZY
But you know everything 'bout this
here game, Mack.

Drizzy takes a seat on a step below Mack. Kaleb and Tray step out the SUV.

MACK

But I ain't never needed no fake I.D. Maybe Kaleb or Tray know about that.

Kaleb and Tray walk towards them.

DRIZZY

Ayo, Kaleb! Who do fake I.Ds 'round here?

Kaleb approaches Mack.

KALEB

Fake I.Ds? Boy, watchu need one for? (To Mack) What's good, Mack?

MACK

What up, Kaleb.

Kaleb and Tray find a seat on the steps.

DRIZZY

To get into them clubs, homie.

KALEB

Man, ain't nothing special about clubbing. Bunch of sweaty brothas tryna get with any girl you lay eyes on, feel me?

DRIZZY

Yo, Kaleb you don't even party, period. So like you can't understand how much I need this.

TRAY

That West Side dawg, Booker, he got like, uh, "jack of all trades" type of guy, don't he? Witness Protection type shit, right? Surely, he offers small services like fake IDs.

KALEB

There you go, there's yo man. Just go make friends with the top dawg, Booker, and get him to show you around.

DRIZZY

... Who's Booker?

MACK

Ayo, anyways, how we do today?

KALEB

Better than usual. Man, bless that stadium, it's boosting our economy already.

MACK

More customers?

KALEB

That's right. We starting to deliver lunch to our hotspots cuz they ain't got the time for it during rush hours.

MACK

That right, Drizzy?

DRIZZY

Hm? Oh yeah, just like y'all said, expect more customers.

MACK

... What kind you getting?

DRIZZY

Hood homies.

MACK

Hood homies? From where?

DRIZZY

I don't really know. I ain't much for making conversation with them.

MACK

They causing trouble?

DRIZZY

... A lil. I mean they don't intend to, I think, but it's just their presence. I seen it spook some of the college kids, you know? Cuz like they already coming to buy drugs, risking they future and all that, hoping not to get caught, then they turn 'round the corner and see all these gangbangers and shit hanging 'round. It spooks them white boys. Makes them turn 180.

(MORE)

DRIZZY (CONT'D)

Others tho, they like their hood homies, they assimilate, that way they can say they from the hood, or they know homies from the hood... but it seem like that's the minority.

TRAY

What time they there, Drizzy? We ain't never seen none when we stop by.

DRIZZY

Mornings, evenings. Shit, now that I think of it, they there any time y'all not there. I hear Miguel having the same problem too. These hood homies are scaring his dope fiends away.

MACK

... They East side.

TRAY

Shit. For real?

MACK

Make sense, don't it? This area ain't exactly known for having "hood homies" but now with that stadium getting built in East side they start showing up? And ain't no coincidence they never show they faces around y'all... Shit. They snooping.

TRAY

That stadium don't sound like much of a blessing now... They must know we running an op, and you know that's gonna land in Malcolm's ear.

MACK

Maybe it already has.

DRIZZY

(At the row house)

Yo, what's taking him so long?

MACK

He's on a business call. He'll come down soon.

Tray, who had been fidgeting with a twig, notices something off in the distance.

TRAY

Yo, did Ignacio invite another party to his business meeting or something?

Down the road, a black SUV approaches and parks across the street. Stepping off the passenger side, towering at 6'3, and sporting a white tank top with sagging jeans to show off his upper body muscle is the lieutenant of the East, BRONZE (32).

With a guard to his side, he makes his way towards the group, glancing right and left, walking the ghetto catwalk. Mack recognizes the bulk of muscle from a distance, he lifts his hood up to cover his face.

MACK

Shit.

DRIZZY

Damn, is that Bronze?

Bronze walks up to the group. He towers over them, his shadow casted fully on Tray. He stares them down.

BRONZE

Ohh, man! (To his guard) We only drove thirty minutes south, right? Swear it feels like we drove south over the border with how hot it is here in this bitch.

His guard nods. Bronze turns his attention to the boys.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... So this the independent running an 'op' so far from the projects, huh? Heh, you know, I ain't never step foot in this area before, shit, I wouldn't even think you could run an op this far from the 'jects, but here y'all are..

He glances at each and every one of them.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

But y'all hear it's like this now, Malcolm lost some territory, now he looking to expand again, and this area, as far from the 'jects as it may be, is good real estate. So, I needa talk to whoever runnin' this.

Bronze is left in silence. Our group of boys, except for Tray, avoid looking at him.

BRONZE (CONT'D)
 Hmm? (To Drizzy) Is it you? (To
 Tray) How about you, man? You look
 built for this shit.

More silence. Our boys look a little tense.

BRONZE (CONT'D)
 (Impatient)
 Yo! I gotta tell Malcolm we dealing
 with a bunch of stuck up kids?

MACK
 Aye...

Mack unveils his face and sits up straight.

MACK (CONT'D)
 ... chill, I'm the leader.

Seeing this unveiling from Mack, Bronze can't help but just
 let out a chuckle. He's amused.

BRONZE
 Aight, you the leader. So "Mr
 Leader", what am I gonna tell
 Malcolm? He gonna get his real
 estate or not?

MACK
 ... I gotta think on it, man.

BRONZE
 There ain't much to think on--

MACK
 -- Nah... there is.

Bronze is a little taken back by Mack's response. He appears
 ready to give him an ultimatum, but instead he motions for
 Mack to join him for a walk, off to the side.

BRONZE
 Lemme have a word with you, man.

MACK
 Whatever you wanna tell me, you can
 tell me in front of my crew.

BRONZE
 Nah... just a quick word.

The crew stares at Mack. Tray gestures for him to go along
 with it. Mack walks with Bronze just a few yards away.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... You got any plans tomorrow noon?

MACK

What?

BRONZE

You free tomorrow? Cuz I'm thinking we should get lunch.

Mack stares at Bronze with a dumbfounded look. Bronze clearly has no regard for the situation he is in. Instead he's treating it like two brothers meeting.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... C'mon, just lunch. I got a lot to say, but I ain't got the time for it right now. Kinda caught me by surprise with that big reveal. So, tomorrow noon? Food court, peak hour, public place, and it'll just be me and my ugly grill there, no bodyguard. We can talk this out better. What you say?

Mack is caught off guard by the entire exchange. It can't be a trick of some sorts. It has to be genuine.

MACK

... Aight.

BRONZE

Heh, aight. I know there's a mall next to the highway so, I'll be at that one, 1:30ish.

MACK

Right.

The two walk back, Mack returns to his spot on the steps but instead remains standing, perplexed, as he watches Bronze and his guard enter the SUV and drive away. As soon as Bronze's SUV turns the corner, our boys let out a sigh of relief.

TRAY

Shit! Why the fuck was I right?

Suddenly, the front door of the house the boys were sitting in front of opens. Stepping out, looking fresh out of bed by his sportswear, is the sharp, young Mexican man, IGNACIO (27).

He closes the door behind him and with his signature Clint Eastwood stare, he looks off at the corner Bronze turned at, not even acknowledging the boys sitting at the steps right in front him.

DRIZZY
(Worried)
Ayo Ignacio, you saw who that was,
right?!

Ignacio continues gazing ahead. He stands next to Mack, also gazing. Ignacio observes him.

IGNACIO
... Wasn't that yo brother?

MACK
... Yeah... We got a problem.

CUT TO:

Against black:

"FATE OF THE DOGS"

INT. SUV - LATE EVENING

On the highway, Bronze stares out the passenger window.

BRONZE
So how you liking this gig so far,
man?

DRIVER
It's aight.

BRONZE
"Aight"? "Aight" got you off them
street corners. I remember working
my ass off for a gig like yours
back then. Me and this other dude,
"Chunky", we was the only ones
trusted to drive around Rupert and
his crew. This was right before I
became lieutenant and let me tell
you, it's the best gig you gonna
have. No real responsibilities, no
customers, no corner bullshit, but
nearly the same pay as lieutenant.
It's good, man, it's good.

The driver shakes his head in disagreement.

DRIVER

I'm meant for the streets.

BRONZE

Yeah well, you still gon get time for that, but right now I need to be showing you everything about this op. I'm trying to make this transition as smooth as possible.

EXT. HILLTOP - CONTINUED

Bronze's SUV drives up a hill on a dirt road. The headlights reveal another black SUV ahead parked at the top.

There's a man leaning against the hood of the SUV, staring out at a large construction site with the city skyline in the far distance.

Bronze steps out and starts heading towards him. He glances at the bodyguards standing near the mysterious man, keeping his back watched. As he finally comes to his view, Bronze greets the king of Eastside, MALCOLM (26).

BRONZE

What's good, Malcolm?

Malcolm, part of the new breed of gangsters, continues staring ahead at the view. He wears an oversized polo shirt and jeans. No bling, no fronting, full of confidence. His face, more particularly, his stare, is uncanny and intimidating, there might be no soul behind those eyes.

MALCOLM

Bronze...

Bronze joins Malcolm in staring out at the view.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

... They finished bulldozing my shit.

BRONZE

Lotta history gone... Them complexes were the hub of this game.

MALCOLM

Now where them OGs meeting? Hotels?

BRONZE

Seem like it. Spook not coming?

MALCOLM

Said he was right behind you.

Behind Bronze all along, another SUV arrives. Stepping out is SPOOK (20s). The tall, mysterious, all-seeing, all-knowing eyes of the East. He, like Malcolm, is stoic and part of the new breed. He makes his way towards the meet.

SPOOK

All the product been moved to the new stash houses now, but we still got our peoples relocating outside our territory. They won't be able to sell, and if that keeps up, all our stash houses gonna fill up.

MALCOLM

Mm. I ain't settling to getting my shit bulldozed. 'Fact, think it's time to expand over to West side.

BRONZE

(Concerned)

West side? How we gonna do that?

MALCOLM

We taking "Tall Man" out the picture. He been in the game long enough, time he make way. Once he out, whatever cartel he doing business with gonna be looking for a new distributor before their product expires. And when they look, they'll find us. And only us.

BRONZE

If I know Booker and all them old timers, they've learned and adapted from Rupert's mistakes.

MALCOLM

We ain't gonna go at his people like that. Nah, just him.

BRONZE

Assassination? (Shaking his head)
His connect will pull the plug on this city if we do some shit like that. They don't want none of that "south of the border" business leaking here. Plus, our connect, our cartel, that we doing business with? They ain't gonna like it if they find out we flirting with one of their rivals.

SPOOK

You really playing devil's advocate.

MALCOLM

Yeah cuz I don't need no "yes-man".

BRONZE

Like I was saying, Rupert's connect didn't come crawling when y'all took him and his people out.

MALCOLM

No... you did... and that was all we needed.

BRONZE

Why not just buy the connect, then? You know Booker would sell his baby mamas for the right price. That dawg greedy.

MALCOLM

I don't buy. I take. N'fact, think on this: say you right, say we take Booker out and his connect pull back. That leaves me with the only product in town, and with that, we devour West side and sell our shit there too.

BRONZE

... Ours don't bring in enough to distribute all over West side. And if we just leave that area empty, then we just making way for the next Booker. And that next Booker gonna be more fiercer than ever.

SPOOK

Why not just meet with the connect? We meet and make 'em think we'd be like insurance in case anything happen to Booker. And when, coincidentally, something do happen, we go from potential clients, to only clients.

MALCOLM

Only way we even getting in touch with them is through a vouch, just like Bronze did for us with Rupert's connect.

(MORE)

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

We gotta get one of Tall man's people, or Tall man himself to vouch for us.

SPOOK

... I can get you one of Booker's people, but at the cost of breaking diplomacy.

MALCOLM

What you thinking?

SPOOK

We could frame one of Booker's representatives. Get a West side homie locked up in an East side block and he'll dig his nails into the walls to tell you anything.

Bronze shakes his head. Disappointed. Malcolm, on the other hand, seems intrigued.

MALCOLM

Aight, get it done.

BRONZE

If we break diplomacy, there's no coming back. You asking for an all out war doing something like that.

MALCOLM

Who's gon challenge us? Me and Booker the only ones with a kingdom. We bring him down, then we the only ones who could fill that power vacuum.

Bronze remains unsure. Malcolm notices.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Aye, this what you signed up for. Don't fret, Spook gonna run that shit clean.

Spook nods.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(To Bronze)

What you should be worrying on is getting me that independent. What you find?

BRONZE

Uhh...

Bronze takes a non-suspicious quick glance at his driver off by the SUV, just to make sure he's not listening in.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... Not a lot, man. Checked out all the hotspots our peoples told us about, but wasn't much to it. Real simple shit, wasn't no corner streets, kinda secretive actually. In between apartments, almost like an alley, inside apartment courtyards, five people max running each hotspot, but I didn't spot no chrome, or muscle. Shit, most of them people don't look made for the game. There's definitely an op going on, just can't read the room.

MALCOLM

If they running it so close to downtown, they gotta keep it under the radar... You put my word out there?

BRONZE

Yeah, if anybody running anything there, we should be hearing back from them soon.

MALCOLM

Aight, then we done here.

Malcolm, Bronze, and Spook begin heading back to their SUVs.

INT. ROW HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ignacio's gang is gathered around a coffee table. Ignacio and Mack sit on their separate chairs at both ends of the table. An AR-10 rests behind Ignacio on a counter. The rest of the crew sits on the sofa against the wall. All are in silence, waiting for their leader to speak first.

IGNACIO

... It was good while it lasted..

The gang becomes visibly sad, but they know it's the truth.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

... He was right. Sooner or later we would've been found out. That's why we plan for this.

MACK

You already got something in plan?

IGNACIO

I've always had. From here on now,
y'all need to trust me on whatever
I tell y'all to do, alright?

Everyone nods in agreement.

KALEB

What you want us to do?

IGNACIO

Wait a little longer.

All nod.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

No one tools up. It stays the same.
I need a calm and collected crew.
We have one shot, and I'm gonna to
make it count.

DRIZZY

Yo, but like, won't Malcolm be
coming at us hard?

MACK

He ain't coming at us yet, not even
when he finds out that we standing
up for ourselves.

TRAY

Me and Kaleb dealt with this
before, way back.

MACK

(To Drizzy)

Any gang that stands up to Malcolm,
he gonna try to intimidate them
first. He gonna put his men in
their territory and they gonna
start causing trouble and drive
customers away. They'll be
strapped, but they won't use unless
necessary. And all these
shenanigans is just gon be Malcolm
watching, waiting. Cuz usually,
gangs backs off, but if they still
standing, then that's when he comes
at them.

KALEB

Our peoples ain't never dealt with something like that before, though.

IGNACIO

More reason why no one gonna be armed. We just gotta hold out Malcolm's intimidation for a little while. Until then, stand tall. Keep everyone calm.

Everybody nods. Ignacio turns to look at Mack.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

So what were you and Bronze talking about?

MACK

Yeah, so, dawg, I was over here thinking he was about to intimidate me or something, but instead, he asking me if I'm free for lunch tomorrow.

TRAY

What?

IGNACIO

What'd you tell him?

MACK

I told him "yeah". I'm thinking it's a good opportunity to get some info out of him, you know?

KALEB

He could do the same to you. That's what he known for ain't it? Deception.

MACK

Nah, he seemed kinda desperate.

DRIZZY

Desperate? Bronze?

IGNACIO

Go for it. After all, he do think you're the leader.

MACK

Oh yeah, dawg, I don't know, Bronze was just--

IGNACIO

-- It's all good. (To everyone)
From here on out, if Malcolm's
people are nearby, or if you're
even outside: I don't exist, you
don't know this place, and Mack has
always been yo leader. You need to
talk to me? Or I need to talk to
you? We got our phones, aight?

MACK

Yeah, that's good.

Ignacio notices Drizzy looking unsure about that.

IGNACIO

What's on your mind, Drizzy?

DRIZZY

I don't know, man, that just seem
like a... "fake" move.

MACK

Ain't no rules to the game of
surival, Drizz.

TRAY

No integrity in this animal
kingdom.

KALEB

This here a dog-eat-dog world,
brotha.

Drizzy is forced to accept this.

IGNACIO

(To Mack)

Oh, and tell Bronze we ain't
selling.

Mack nods.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

This is it. Fate in motion.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

In the parking lot, we see an SUV roaming around looking for
a spot to park in, which it eventually finds.

Malcolm and his driver arrive. They head into the hotel.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUED

In the conference room, there's a setup that strongly suggests a formal business meeting except for every men's attire in the room.

Polos, jeans, button ups, bling. Walking in, you'd smell the cologne every OG sprayed on that morning. The "Original Gangsters", the old timers, they all speak to one another.

Soon, the room is hushed down by the man at the center of the adjoined tables as Malcolm enters and takes his seat. The man in the center is BOOKER (49). A tall man. Tall even sitting down. King of Westside, and a bona fide leader... on the outside.

BOOKER

Aight, aight! Time to get to business. Y'all hear?

The room comes down to a silence.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

(To Malcolm)

Glad you could join us, Mr.Malcolm.

MALCOLM

(Sarcastic)

Wouldn't miss it for the world.

BOOKER

Only reason we having this meet is for you.

MALCOLM

Heh, I didn't know shit about that.

BOOKER

Yeah, well, if we may commence, this business meeting is to address yo territory problem. As you all must know by now, Mr.Malcolm recently lost a large portion of his territory due to the now broken bond between us and the suits. Now ain't no one in this room solely responsible for that, and if this territory problem had happened to any one of us, I'm sure we'd all feel the same way Mr.Malcolm be feeling right now. So Mr.Malcolm, you want compensation, we may have it, if the terms are met.

MALCOLM

Watchu mean, "Tall Man"?

BOOKER

These gentlemen have territory they are willing to give to you, for the right price.

MALCOLM

I don't buy territory.

BOOKER

Now, we know how you run with it, but this the best option for everyone, including you. Right now, we at a very rare state where no one got beef with no one, where everyone gives to the pot and everyone gets from the pot, where we vote, and we'd like to keep it that way.

MALCOLM

You right, this is a very rare time period, and history says they don't tend to last very long.

OG 1

Booker, I told you this homie wasn't gonna listen.

Booker gestures for OG 1 to calm down.

BOOKER

Malcolm, you took down Rupert Jackson and his people, in an all out blitz. You ignored everything this game was founded on in a chase for the crown. And now, here you are today, "King of the East". You did things your own way back then, but now, you gotta do things the crown's way. Rupert, and every dawg before him, abided by the same rules once they wore the crown. Meaning no disrespect, but you ain't no exception to these rules.

MALCOLM

"Rupert the Beloved". You don't keep the crown by being beloved. Y'all watch now... y'all watch how a kingdom is run.

BOOKER

So it really gonna be that way?

MALCOLM

Count on it.

And with that, the room fills with hushed whispers. Most give Malcolm the death stare as he gets up and leaves. Others are amused by the sheer confidence he had to threaten veterans, OGs, into letting him continue his reign of terror.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Along a road, a fair distance from the school, Drizzy and his friends are gathered around the driver side window of an SUV. Mack speaks to them from the driver seat.

MACK

Alright, listen up, y'all need to start talking shit about Malcolm.

Drizzy and his friends become visibly confused.

MACK (CONT'D)

That's right. Spread the word. Start rumors and shit. He a bitch, his people torture animals, his product weak. All that, aight? That's propaganda. We tryna stain his and his people's rep. That way everybody gonna be fearing doing business with him, and then we gonna be there, like always, to sell to them.

DRIZZY

Why would our people's do business with them in the first place?

MACK

Because in the end, they ain't yo people's, Drizz, they consumers. They hear that someone selling cheaper, better dope? They leaving us without hesitation. But, if we put the scare in them, if we make them think Malcolm's product laced or his people's former serial killers, then they gonna have some doubts, but they'll still be consumers, and that's where we come in.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

We just let em know that we got their back like always, our product straight, and maybe we gonna be dropping the price. Now, they come to us, like they should be. Ya feel me?

DRIZZY

I don't know, Mack. Ignacio always talking about how loyal our people's are, how they would never betray us.

MACK

(Sigh)

Ignacio can be a bit of a... idealist.

Drizzy and his friends nod in agreement.

MACK (CONT'D)

Another thing, ain't no secret that some of y'all be going up to party in them trap houses all around Malcolm's territory, and if we weren't about to get into some cold war with him right now, that'd be aight, we'd let that slide, but now, that won't fly. Stay away from East side. All of you. Anyone up there find out you with us, there's no guarantee you'll be coming home.

DRIZZY'S FRIEND 1

(Nodding)

Yeah, but like, with that rumor spreading thing, it's all good, but like, people we do business wit in there (school), they the types that barely listen to they own mom's. You ask me, no matter what we say, you gon have peoples dealing with Malcolm's people when they come here. What we do then?

MACK

... Ostracize them. Don't beat they ass up. Don't threaten their lives, just let em know they ain't with us no more. If they yo friends, then they ain't no mo'. They just betrayed you... They outcasts now.

DRIZZY

Damn, that's some shit we ain't never done before tho, Mack. We like a community, you know? I mean, shit, I be smoking with the people who buy from me, hanging at their crib, partying with them, knowumsayin?

MACK

Yeah, well... they the old days now.

The realization that the times are changing hits Drizzy.

DRIZZY

Right, right...

MACK

Other than that, y'all just keep on doing whatcha doing, aight?

Drizzy and his friends have no other option but to accept the changes. Mack drives off.

DRIZZY'S FRIEND 2

Shit, man, no more partying. (To Drizzy) And I had this bitch up there I was about to fuck with.

INT. FOOD COURT - NOON

Sitting alone, for the first time looking vulnerable and nervous, like a gentle giant, is Bronze. He sips on his soda and pops a fry into his mouth as he looks around for Mack.

Eventually, Mack turns a corner into the food court. He spots Bronze. Mack stares down an unaware Bronze who continues eating, looking for him in the wrong direction. Eventually, Bronze turns and spots him, smiling as soon as he does.

BRONZE

Ayyy! You showed up! Starting to think that wasn't gon happen.

MACK

Well, I'm here now.

BRONZE

Yes you is... Take a seat, man.

Mack sits down. He keeps his hands in the pocket of his hoodie. Bronze on the other hand, looks excited.

He's leaning forward, hands on the table, expecting Mack to begin a discussion, but to no avail.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... So how you been? Tell me 'bout you, man. We got a lot of catching up to do.

MACK

I'm good. Just here to talk business.

BRONZE

Heh, in all honesty, ain't much to talk there. Whatever you running, I can't figure it out. Don't help that y'all don't associate with a color or a sign.

MACK

Ain't no need for that, dawg.

BRONZE

Yeah maybe, but how you gon wave the flag and call to arms yo own peoples when the time comes? You gotta build the brand.

MACK

Brands attract cops.

BRONZE

Mack, smart as always. Four years, man. Four years. What you been up to in that time, huh? I wanna know.

Mack gives Bronze a look that says "you asked for it."

MACK

Well... last time you saw me, I was, what? I was in an SUV looking back at you, stuck with Jamal's crew, on my way to massacre Kenard and his family just for talking shit. Of course, that didn't happen since someone must have tipped off Kenard or something, and I was the only one in Jamal's crew who wasn't found dead, or shit, wasn't found at all. Did y'all ever put two-and-two together?

Bronze's smile is wiped off his face.

BRONZE

... Wasn't that hard. Malcolm wanted to hunt you down, but I convinced him it'd be more efficient to just spin the story. Tell everyone, we had a snitch and you got kidnapped and killed by Kenard's people. Gave us more reason to crack down on him even harder. Eventually finding him, and torturing him to death.

MACK

That doesn't sound very cost efficient--

BRONZE

-- It wasn't, but it was either that or let Malcolm become obsessed with hunting you down...

Beat.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... So where'd you go after that.

MACK

One of Kenard's people dropped me off in this town. I held my end of the deal, they held theirs.

BRONZE

But then you started trapping all over again. C'mon, Mack.

MACK

Not like I ever wanted to. And where the fuck was my brother when I needed him, huh? Oh that's right, neglecting me cuz I wasn't blood to you and neglecting mom cuz what? Shit, I never even found out.

BRONZE

Cuz she cared more about you. She was the happiest when it was just you and yo pops. Yo daddy seemed decent too while he was still around. I got jealous, but I saw how mom was, and I just felt like I needed not get in the way of that. I mean, I was just the lost cause by then.

MACK

(Shaking his head)

Man, you really believe that? If you visited once you'd find out how much she'd speak about you to me. How much stress she got from hearing about homies getting shot up cuz she feared one day it'd be yo name poppin up. How much she wished I had a big brother to help my awkward ass and put me on the straight, but nah. You abandoned us, man, and I had to come crawling to you when she passed, cuz who else did I have? Ain't that some fucked up shit?

BRONZE

... I'm sorry.

MACK

Yeah, well... fuck it... it is what it is.

BRONZE

... I'm retiring.

MACK

What?

BRONZE

In a month or two, imma be out- out the game, for good.

MACK

Good for you.

BRONZE

... Come with me.

MACK

You gotta be joking.

BRONZE

All these years, I've never coped with what I put you through. It kills me, knowing that I put you down the same path as me, when I could've set you on the straight. If I hadn't found you yesterday, I would've spent months looking for you even if I was out the game.

(MORE)

BRONZE (CONT'D)

I prayed I'd find my little brother
to make amends with, and God
listened.

MACK

... and now he's punishing you.

BRONZE

It doesn't have to be this way,
Mack.

MACK

I don't need you and yo money.
(Stands up) I'm good here.

BRONZE

Mack, you were never built for
this. You told me that, remember?

MACK

I got people here. They need me.
And I don't abandon family.

Mack begins walking away but quickly remembers Ignacio's
message.

MACK (CONT'D)

Oh, and tell Malcolm we ain't
stepping off neither. If y'all
wanna come after us, then so be it.

Mack resumes walking away. Bronze watches on, alone.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUED

Inside his car, Mack takes out his phone and begins dialing.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

Mack.

MACK

Yo, Ignacio, just got done meeting
with Bronze. Thought I'd let you
know, I didn't really get much
outta him. He got on my nerves,
dawg, so I had to leave.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

What'd he do?

MACK

Ugh, this dawg tried bringing up my past, and you know I hate talking about that shit, especially since, it's him. Then he tries bringing up how he retiring soon like he been earning that 401k doing god's honest work. And he has the audacity to tell me that he wants me to retire with him so I can just step off and let him and Malcolm take over. Fucked up, right? But I told him no, then just left.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

He didn't ask anything about our op?

MACK

Nah, man, he don't know nothing.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

You really believe that?

MACK

I mean, like I said, I think he just trying to get me to step off. It'd make things a whole lot easier for him and Malcolm.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

Mm. The quicker he leaves, the better, given his circumstances.

MACK

What circumstances?

IGNACIO (VOICE)

He's in his forties, he's got a wife, he found God, he's being phased out by a youngin, and he burned his rep with his generation when he decided to run with Malcolm. Not to mention if Malcolm falls, he a dead man. You ask me, he was being genuine.

MACK

Yo, how you know all this?

IGNACIO (VOICE)

I got connections.

MACK

Well, I doubt he was genuine, but yeah, just wanted to let you know.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

I think he might try to meet with you again, and I think you should meet with him again. Distract him. Put some hope in him. It'll be useful in the long run, you know?

MACK

Yeah.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

How'd that thing with Drizzy go?

MACK

Right, yeah. They gon do it.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

Anybody buck?

MACK

A little, yeah. Ain't no problem, though.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

They're teenagers, Mack. And we taking the fun away from their gangster fantasy. They're gonna buck, and some might not listen.

MACK

Right. I'll keep an eye on them.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

Alright then, I'll talk to you later.

MACK

Aight, man.

Mack hangs up.

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - EVENING

Isolated, and surrounded by an asphalt prairie, is a small, walk-up Mexican restaurant. It's golden lights from the inside contrast the post-sunset blue tint outside. A few yards away, near decaying houses is an SUV, parked, running it's engine and shining it's headlights.

Inside, Bronze sits calmly. Moments later, another SUV makes a U-turn to align its driver window with Bronze's. The window rolls down to reveal Malcolm.

BRONZE

What's up? Spook not coming?

MALCOLM

He busy tonight.

BRONZE

Hm. How the meet go?

MALCOLM

It'll do. Whatchu find today?

BRONZE

... Pssh. Not much, man. I mean, they running things smooth, you know? But I ain't seen no sign of--

MALCOLM

-- Aight enough of this shit. Tomorrow morning, start closing in on them hotspots you found. This was supposed to be done by now, yo. I'm starting to lose money, and imma be losing more by the day cuz nobody selling fast enough to empty out them stash houses, and you ain't getting me that territory. We need to speed this shit up.

BRONZE

I don't know, man, if--

MALCOLM

-- And put my name out there. People need to know it's me they dealing with.

BRONZE

... Aight.

MALCOLM

This is more than just profits. This is learning from other's mistakes, remember?

BRONZE

Right...

Malcolm rolls the window up and drives off.

EXT. CORNER STORE - NIGHT

An SUV parks next to a corner store in the dead of night. It's headlights and engine go off as three men step out and head inside the store.

Inside, ODELL (34), one of Booker's representatives, and his bodyguards walk up to SPARKY (60), the owner of the store, an old man in a bowling shirt.

ODELL
Ayo, we here for Spook.

SPARKY
Who?

ODELL
Spook. Here for a meet.

Sparky seems to have no idea who Odell speaks of.

ODELL (CONT'D)
Aha, don't tell me we got the wrong address.

In the back corner, Spook comes out a doorway.

SPOOK
Ay.

Spook gestures them to follow him.

In the back, with the limited amount of space amongst the store supplies, Spook has set up a table and chairs on opposite ends for the meet. Odell and Spook take their seats.

ODELL
What's up with yo old man back there?

SPOOK
Sparky starting to lose his mind. Damn shame. He can barely remember a thing. I'm practically running this place for him.

ODELL
That so? Spook, doing some honest work for once.

SPOOK
Yeah, that surprising?

Odell nods viciously.

SPOOK (CONT'D)

Well then, we full at surprised because listen to this... Malcolm wanna sell some shares.

ODELL

For his connect? Ha, nah bruh, he ain't never been like that.

SPOOK

Our shit got bulldozed, money is being lost by the hour, ain't no way we gonna be selling an entire shipment in the streets.

ODELL

I mean, no shit. Everybody know that, that's why we had that meet yesterday. And seeing how that went with Malcolm threatening everybody, there's been talks of, uh, "sanctioning" y'all. And I, personally, feel like that's gon be a unanimous decision. Tonight is just kind of a "what the fuck he want now" type of thing, you know?

SPOOK

Y'all really think Malcolm was gon stand up and announce that he needs help at the roundtable? Y'all really don't know him.

ODELL

Seem like he don't want us to know him.

SPOOK

Y'all can't be making impromptu meets like that. You really wanna know him, this is how, 1-on-1.

ODELL

I feel like I'm getting to know you, Spook. I feel like we could be good friends. The best of friends, but you know what, man, Malcolm wanna sell, huh? Yeah, okay, Booker might consider, so let's talk business.

SPOOK

... Aight.

The two lean in to discuss.

INT. BRONZE'S CONDO - CONTINUED

Bronze and his girl sit in their dining table eating dinner. Bronze appears distraught, resting his head on one hand while he fidgets with his food.

BAM.

Bronze slams down his fist on the dining table, briefly launching his plate up into the air. His girl freezes up. She dares not look at him. She musters up the courage to stand up and take her plate to the kitchen. Bronze pays no attention.

EXT. SPARKY'S CORNER STORE - CONTINUED

Odell and his crew are seen coming out the store, Odell in particular is having a good laugh.

ODELL

Even in a time of crisis, them
homies can't be reasonable.

Odell and his crew enter their SUV and drive away. A sedan, across the street from Sparky's, suddenly shines its headlights and roars its engine.

It begins a slow crawl towards "Sparky's", and as it arrives, the passenger window rolls down and an assault rifle sticks out and begins UNLOADING an entire magazine at "Sparky's". Bullets sink into bricks at sonic speed, windows shatter as the car makes its way to the street corner and speeds off.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - MORNING

On a sidewalk, at the border of a university, is Dougie.

He counts his money while strolling to Drizzy's hotspot like always. After crossing the street, like always, he looks towards the apartment complex where he last met the corner boy, except this time someone else stands there.

A young boy, no older than 15, wearing a clearly oversized black collar shirt, with a resting face of a childhood cut short. It's one of Malcolm's corner boys. Dougie hesitates, but is curious to find out who they are and what's going on.

MALCOLM'S CORNER BOY

Wassup. Watchu want, man?

DOUGIE

Yo, uh, what happened to my man
Josh?

MALCOLM'S CORNER BOY

I don't know watchu mean. You
looking to buy?

Dougie catches a quick peak around the corner to notice that none of Drizzy's people or Drizzy himself are anywhere in sight. Instead, it's Malcolm's people, adults in black jeans, black hoodies. Dougie immediately recognizes this and feels a strong urge to leave.

DOUGIE

Nah, I'm good.

MALCOLM'S CORNER BOY

If you ain't buying, then keep on
walking, punk bitch.

Dougie hurries away, fearing trouble.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL PARKING LOT - CONTINUED

Watching Dougie walk away, in residential just across the street, parked inconspicuously from their old hotspot is Kaleb's SUV, and Kaleb in it.

He puts away his phone. Drizzy and his crew are huddled on one side of the SUV as they snoop on Malcolm's people.

KALEB

Aight, Tray is on his way to check
on Miguel's hotspot. Now tell me
again how the hell this happened?

DRIZZY

Yo, Kaleb, like I said, me and my
crew was just setting up for the
day, when all of a sudden all these
SUVs start rolling up in here and
these homies get out and tell us
that this they hotspot now.

KALEB

And you didn't stand yo ground like
we told you to!?

DRIZZY

Yo, they strapped! Each one of
them! I wasn't about to stand up to
that!

KALEB

Drizzy, we told you they wasn't gonna be using they chrome. They just trying to intimidate you!

DRIZZY

Well... they did.

KALEB

And what about our product in there?!

DRIZZY

... Wasn't no time to save it.

Kaleb is baffled. He pulls out his phone again and dials a number, lighting up a blunt in the meanwhile.

KALEB

Ignacio gotta know 'bout this, Ignacio gotta know.

INT. IGNACIO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUED

Mack sits on the couch waiting on Ignacio to finish his call, which he eventually does.

IGNACIO

That was Kaleb. Miguel and Drizzy have now lost their hotspots.

Mack appears unfazed by the news.

MACK

Can I be real with you? I didn't expect any of them to stand up for themselves or the crew... They inexperienced. They unarmed & untrained. I mean, most of them, the youngins, they just playing soldier. The others? They your average joe living paycheck-to-paycheck trying to make some extra money on the side to be able to go out and actually enjoy they lives. You ask me, I don't see any loyalty or courage in any of them, so asking them to do something like this usually won't be enough.

IGNACIO

Nah, there's loyalty, but you're right, they're inexperienced.

(MORE)

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

If anything, it's my fault none of them got training... (Sigh) I just needed a few days. Now we have to hurry..

MACK

Right... So what's the next move?

IGNACIO

Our war chest, let's put that to use. I'm thinking a furloughed program for everyone who ran those hotspots.

MACK

You sure that's a good idea?

IGNACIO

It's gonna be necessary for these next few weeks or so. If we don't do this, we'd basically be firing all our people just as a new employer comes into the market.

MACK

So you wanna pay our people... for loyalty?

IGNACIO

No, we're ensuring their loyalty isn't disturbed... Every Friday, have the lieutenants visit their people to give them their pay. Tell them that all we ask for is to stay put and quiet.

MACK

That's a lot of money. How long this gonna last?

IGNACIO

Win or lose... about a month.

MACK

Aight, aight.

Contemplating, Ignacio sneaks a view at his AR-10 resting in a corner of his living room.

INT. JAIL VISITING ROOM - NOON

Down a dimly lit room, left and right, are visiting stations for guests. Entering the room is Malcolm. He browses around looking for Odell.

Malcolm spots him and takes a seat at his station. Odell is alarmed at the sight of him. Malcolm smirks at him. He picks up the phone. Odell cautiously follows suite.

MALCOLM

Odell Robinson... Heh, used to hear a lot about you back in the days. You and yo crew would always be running around causing trouble. Never thought it'd be to me, tho.

ODELL

(Hushed fury)
I didn't do shit. You set me up.

MALCOLM

You sure? There's a poor old man who says otherwise.

ODELL

This means war, you know? Booker, and every mothafucka out there, when they hear about this, they gonna come for yo ass.

MALCOLM

Maybe. But not because of you. Booker and every OG out there only thinking about themselves. You seen the money they been making with Booker's connect? They just waiting to see if I'm really coming after them or not, and if I am, then they dipping on out with it, but not before sending all their pawns on a crusade. Every pawn, every youngin, gonna be left on they own to deal with my wrath. Except for you, maybe.

Malcolm leans in.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

As of now, all them dawgs at the roundtable don't care whether you live or die.

(MORE)

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

So your fate rests on me... If you talk, I'll make sure you see the end of your sentence, but if you don't, then you on yo own. In *there*, and out *there*.

ODELL

(Defeated)

... Man, watchu want?

Malcolm sits back in his chair, relaxed.

MALCOLM

Booker's connect. Tell me about it.

EXT. RUNDOWN CHURCH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bronze and Spook have gathered at the back of this church. They both rest easy against the hood of their SUVs. Malcolm arrives. He steps out begins walking towards them. An unnerving smile on his face.

MALCOLM

What's good?

BRONZE

You tell us. Got us meeting here in a rush.

MALCOLM

I got good news... Odell talked. Gave up 'Tall man' and the connect right then and there. Homie showed no heart.

SPOOK

We got a meet with them?

MALCOLM

Not yet. We getting him a phone up in there so he can call and make a meet. We close. Heh, n'fact, Spook, start planning on how you gonna take down 'Tall man'. Can't be no break in between icing that dawg and pouncing on his territory.

SPOOK

I'll get on it.

BRONZE

You expecting everybody to come at us or something?

MALCOLM

Oh no doubt, but we ain't giving no geriatrics breathing room to assemble. Otherwise, we'd be fighting uphill when, right now, we can just drop in on that hill and bring it all down with one swing.. Yeah.

(To Bronze)

You take them territories yet?

BRONZE

We took 'em. No problems at all.

MALCOLM

Mm. Any leader or some shit start showing his face, take him out. We done being gentlemen.

BRONZE

I don't know about that. We took over like it wasn't no thing, and yeah we done that before, but the entire way, since we first arrived, not me or any soldier spotted anything resembling muscle. I start trying to find out why and turns out that independent is the first there ever was in that area. So no competition, means no bodies, means no police, so no muscle. But if suddenly, we start gunning down near them white suburban neighborhoods... heh, police gon pacify this whole city for the next decade.

MALCOLM

So what you thinking then?

BRONZE

We tighten our borders, and continue how we doing right now. Cuz if they do got muscle hidden, they ain't using it in their territory. Nah, nobody winnin' there, they'll be using it on ours.

MALCOLM

Aight, get started.

BRONZE

You got it.

MALCOLM

We done here.

The three go to their separate SUVs.

EXT. GATED NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

If the American dream was a neighborhood, this would be it. Red brick houses left and right, giant doorways and crisp, clean cut, artificial lawns to take pride in. Amongst the silver and black "mom" sedans, stands out a green, beat up '98 Ford Explorer. It's engine running being the only ambience in the otherwise quiet neighborhood.

Inside, Ignacio and Mack wait for Drizzy to come out of his house. The radio playing trap music at a low volume, Mack takes a sip from his thermal bottle. Drizzy comes out the front door, yawning. He enters the explorer.

IGNACIO

Morning.

DRIZZY

Oh man, morning, indeed. Wassup, Ignacio, Mack.

Mack takes his stainless steel thermal bottle out of the cupholder and offers it to Drizzy.

MACK

What's good, Drizz? You had breakfast yet?

DRIZZY

Nah, heh, I ain't had time even with an alarm.

MACK

That's aight. We gon stop by and get something at the gas station. I'm buying.

DRIZZY

Ay, good looking out.

Ignacio drives off.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - CONTINUED

On a street corner overlooking a small park, is Ignacio's explorer. All three men sit in the explorer, Mack examines the area, Drizzy munches on his breakfast burrito.

MACK
So this the spot, huh?

IGNACIO
Yeah.

MACK
... Is that a school over there?

IGNACIO
It is. And you got some nice condos
all around, too.

MACK
You sure this is a good place for
it, man?

DRIZZY
Good place for what?

IGNACIO
This your new spot, Drizzy.

DRIZZY
New spot? Aw shit, back to work
already, huh?

IGNACIO
Oh no, I meant new hang out spot,
or corner, or whatever you youngins
call it. This here is where you and
your friends will hang out at for
four hours a day, once a day, just
like it was with your hotspot.

DRIZZY
Just hang out? No dealing or
anything?

IGNACIO
Nah. Y'all just gonna be acting as
bait.

DRIZZY
Wait, what?

MACK
Don't worry, y'all do this
correctly, none of y'all gonna get
hurt. We just need you and your
friends to hang out here, until
Malcolm's people kick y'all out.

DRIZZY

So y'all want us to get treated
like a bunch of lil bitches again?

IGNACIO

When it's all part of the plan,
yeah.

MACK

Still not sure this gon fool
Bronze.

IGNACIO

It's not supposed to. Just do as we
spoke.

DRIZZY

What we talking about?

IGNACIO

Drizzy... I want this place looking
alive. Bring some lawn chairs,
bring a speaker, just don't get
kicked out for being too loud tho,
just make it work, alright?

DRIZZY

Sheit... okay.

IGNACIO

By the way, what's this I hear
about Malcom's product making
waves?

DRIZZY

Oh, uh... Shit. Yeah, his people
invaded a party, handed that shit
out to everyone, and it's been
spreading like a virus ever since
then.

Ignacio becomes visibly annoyed.

IGNACIO

Thought our people's were supposed
to fear Malcolm?

DRIZZY

Ain't no fear of God at any party.

Ignacio calms himself down despite barely breaking a sweat.

IGNACIO
 (Deep breath)
 Don't punish no one for switching
 over. If anything, just remind them
 that we always available..

DRIZZY
 ... Aight.

IGNACIO
 ... I gotta make a call. And Tray
 need to start doing some recon.
 Malcolm seems to know all about us,
 but what we know about him?

EXT. STRIP MALL - NOON

Malcolm and Spook find a parking spot in front of a Mexican restaurant. They head inside expecting to meet with Booker's connect, but instead find a surprise sitting in the center, waiting for them.. Booker himself.

For once, Malcolm raises his eyebrows, amused. Spook, not so much. Booker motions for them to sit at his table.

BOOKER
 My connect thought maybe you and I
 should have a little talk first.

MALCOLM
 Oh yeah?

BOOKER
 Yeah. Cuz they got a call a few
 days ago from Odell telling them
 some youngin in the East wanna make
 a deal with them.

MALCOLM
 That's right.

BOOKER
 (Frustrated)
 ... We had a deal.

MALCOLM
 Look who you talking to Tall Man.

BOOKER
 ... What's the endgame here? Hm?
 Control of all them dope fiends
 West to East?

(MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)

You making yo self a bigger target with what you chasing. Like I said before, you ain't no exception, Mr Malcolm. Anyone who wears the crown ends up dead or in prison.

MALCOLM

Point is, they wore it. Yo connect the final piece to doing something none of you old dawgs, or anybody in this game has ever done. You know how much that means to me. Besides, you all been in this game long enough, time y'all make way. Don't live long enough to become a villain now, 'Tall man'.

BOOKER

Well, with the way you going about trying to hustle around me to get to them, I doubt they'll wanna talk any business with you. Right now, they only trust me to distribute. Because I keep my word. Been that way since you was a pup.

MALCOLM

I never mess with no connect. Vouch for me, let them know that, then we all get what we want.

BOOKER

Tell me then, what exactly do I want?

MALCOLM

To finally put that retirement money to use. You got enough to travel the world for the rest of yo life. Break the cycle, Booker, and quit while you ahead. Because, right now, by acting all stubborn, you helping history repeat itself, fulfilling your part in this cycle. The part where the greedy, stubborn top dawg gets got.

Malcolm sits back on his chair, relaxed, seeing a face of doubt on Booker.

EXT. HIGHWAY UNDERBRIDGE - NOON

Tray and Miguel arrive at a parking lot looking off at the highway underbridge in the distance. Tray shifts the gear to park. Miguel slicks back his shiny hair.

TRAY

So this the spot?

MIGUEL

Yeah, homes, this the spot. Told you it wasn't that far from my hotspot, or what was my hotspot.

TRAY

And you say you know some of them?

MIGUEL

I know a few, yeah, my pops even hangs with them.

Tray and Miguel get out the car and start walking towards the underbridge. We see them walk towards "Tent City", a homeless camp with polyester tents scattered around, styrofoam "big gulp" drinks and all sorts of other trash swaying on the ground like leaves, or rotting away into the soil.

The homeless sit outside their tents, some lost in their minds, others chatting half-assed to each other like zombies. Miguel approaches a homeless man unpacking all sorts of trash off his grocery cart from behind.

This is SUNNY (52). On this blistering day, he sports flip-flops, shorts, and a white tank top underneath his favorite olive green military jacket. Although his outfit is obviously dirty and ripped, he also sports a sharp, clean shaven, side part haircut.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

Oh shit, yo Sunny, you actually got that haircut?

Sunny is surprised to hear that familiar voice. He turns and looks to find Miguel and his friend.

SUNNY

Miguel? Damn boy, you come here to beat my ass for switching? I thought you'd understand.

Sunny pulls out a copper bar off his cart, ready to use it if necessary.

MIGUEL

Woah woah woah! Nah, man! It's cool, it's cool! I ain't here for that! I'm just- we just here to talk! I promise you, Sunny!

Sunny is unsure.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I promise, man. I understand why you switched- why all y'all switched. C'mon, homes. Y'all didn't have no choice, I know.

SUNNY

... We didn't.

MIGUEL

I understand that. That's why we ain't here to beat nobody's ass.

SUNNY

... Aight...

Sunny puts away the copper bar.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

(Chuckling)

You son of a bitch! You had me all scared!

Sunny and Miguel go in for a half-hug handshake.

MIGUEL

Shit, imagine how I felt. But yo, told you my barber would hook you up.

SUNNY

(Feeling his hair)

Heh, yeah boy, I got it! Just yesterday. I even made sure to shower at the shelter before heading out to get it cut.

MIGUEL

That's good, man. I'm sure he appreciated that. But, uh, anyways, my friend here, Tray, wanna talk to you about something real quick, if you ain't busy.

SUNNY

Tray? Like a lunch tray?

TRAY

Yeah, like a lunch tray.

SUNNY

(Extending his hand out)

Nice to meet you, "lunch tray", I'm Sunny.

TRAY

Why they call you that?

SUNNY

Oh, back in the day, I used to be up in the sky, like the sun.

He makeshifts a plane with his hand.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

And the troops? Down there, I'd bring a smile to their face every time they saw me.

TRAY

You ex-military?

SUNNY

Yes, sir. Air force pilot. Two tours.

TRAY

Damn. How you end up here?

SUNNY

Well, government says it costs too much to fix a broken veteran. So, when you get home, the wife tries to support you, but that only builds resentment the more money you cost. Only a matter of time before you become a burden, get divorced, and kicked out the house.

TRAY

That's some shit. I know someone who ex-military too, tried to leave his old life behind only to come back straight to it cuz no one was helping him.

SUNNY

Yeah, it can be that way. But anyways, what you here for again, lunch tray?

TRAY

We just here to ask around if any of y'all know anything about the people that have taken over the hotspots.

SUNNY

Them new cats out there? Naw, they ain't the talking type like Miguel here. Them new cats, they stuck. Something big missing in 'em, you know?

TRAY

So you don't know anybody here who may know something?

SUNNY

Not really. I mean, I know some who used to be in gangs, but not that new one.

TRAY

Can I talk to one of them?

SUNNY

Oh yeah, for sure! (Shouting) Ay, Chunky!

A voice shouts back from a tent nearby.

CHUNKY

Whatchu want, Robert?

SUNNY

Come out here! There some people wanna talk to you!

A nearby tent zips open, and out steps CHUNKY (44), the rags to riches to back to rags OG gangster still stuck in the past. He has a permanent annoyed look in his face.

TRAY

What's up, man. Didn't mean to disturb you.

CHUNKY

Nah, I was just... laying down.

TRAY

So I hear you used to be in a gang?

CHUNKY

(To Sunny)

You told 'em?

(To Tray)

Yeah, used to. I chauffeured the dawg, Rupert, and his men around.

TRAY

You drove 'em around? Just like Bronze?

CHUNKY

Just like Bronze. 'Cept I ain't no fucking traitor.

TRAY

Well that's good cuz we tryna get rid of Bronze and the others.

CHUNKY

Who? You? An independent up against the big dawgs? *Pssh*, and the wheels of history keep on spinnin'.

TRAY

'Cept we ain't like him. He coming after us, we just trying to defend ourselves, and that means going on the offense.

CHUNKY

You don't think it was like that for Malcolm? Rupert wanted his shit, to build that stadium, build good relations with them suits, but Malcolm wasn't bucking. Still, Malcolm knew sooner or later, it would mean war. So he rallied up his small army and went blitzkrieg on us. Just like that, the new generation took over, and every time that happens, every time the youngins get power too early, the game gets more fierce. Y'all ain't got no respect for the wise, no patience, gotta make a point to everyone, and everything must happen now. It's a travesty.

TRAY

Listen man, I can promise you this, we ain't trying to be like Malcolm. We ain't trying to take over East side. We just wanna be left alone.

(MORE)

TRAY (CONT'D)

We had it good before all this shit happened. I used to hustle up north before Malcolm took that, but I left to come here, somewhere far from the game, where nobody would bother us. It's why you here too, ain't it? If you think we wanted war, man, you wrong. But now, seeing how Malcolm be like, we gotta take him and his crew out. Then, we'll go back to how things were. I'm asking for you to help us with that. I'll listen, we can plan something.

CHUNKY

(Sigh)

... Nah... Just give me a 20 and I'll tell you whatever you want.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - NOON

Drizzy and his friends have claimed the basketball court and the shaded picnic tables as theirs. Lawn chairs have been set up around the basketball court, music is played from bluetooth speakers, and everyone is socializing with each other.

Off in the distance, an SUV parks discreetly behind a tree. It's Bronze and his driver. They have arrived to scope out the scene.

BRONZE

So this the spot?

DRIVER

Yeah. Some cats spotted them yesterday here. Said it looked like a new hotspot.

BRONZE

What you think? This really look like one?

DRIVER

Yeah, you got a bunch of lil homies hanging out in a corner.

BRONZE

And they still here, huh? But where the dope fiends at?

Bronze observes the scene and the surroundings intensely.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... This don't add up... No fucking way they even dealing popsicles.

DRIVER

What you think it is then?

BRONZE

At best, it is what it seem like, just a bunch of youngins hanging around. At worst, it's a--

Before Bronze can respond, he spots someone across the park walking towards the group of teens.

It's Mack.

Immediately, Bronze becomes fixated on observing Mack. He watches his little brother walk up to Drizzy, who was waiting for him.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUED

Mack and Drizzy walk a few yards away from the court to speak alone.

MACK

So how y'all doing? Any trouble keeping everybody here?

DRIZZY

Nah, it's all good. Everybody holding their end. We even got some people from the neighborhood joining us.

MACK

I see that. You better be careful with them. Don't need anybody knowing what all this really about.

DRIZZY

Oh I'm way ahead of you, Mack. My peoples don't even know why we doing this. They suspect something might be up, but they ain't even bothering with it. I tell 'em not to worry about nothin, they don't. I got this!

MACK

Aight. How they spending that furlough money? You know anything about that?

DRIZZY

Oh yeah, umm, you know how they is...

MACK

Yeah? They spending big?

DRIZZY

More like, carelessly. They ain't buying new cars or anything, but they been clubbing a lot, making it rain, you know?

MACK

They like to party, huh?

DRIZZY

... Well, yeah. You know how we homies be.

MACK

I hear there's been lotta parties lately. Which ones they been to?

DRIZZY

Ah, you know, house parties in the area.

MACK

Trap houses? Any out the city?

DRIZZY

... Some.

MACK

Yeah? They tell you that?

DRIZZY

... They usually post it online.

MACK

Hm. Interesting, Drizzy... I'll have to check that out.

DRIZZY

Yo, Mack, they was just partying. Nothing to fret about.

MACK

We'll see. Keep in touch, Drizz.

Mack begins walking back from where he came. As soon as he does, Bronze sees an opportunity to speak to him in private.

BRONZE

Stay in the car, man. I'll be back.

Bronze exits the vehicle and begins a fast paced walk towards Mack across the park.

DRIVER

What? Where you heading?

BRONZE

Just stay in the car, homie!

Bronze hurries to catch up to Mack, not wanting to shout at him from across the park, or else Drizzy and the others would hear him. Just as Mack is about to enter his vehicle, Bronze catches up to him.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

Ay, ay, ay.

Mack turns around, "surprised" to find Bronze.

MACK

Oh, you gots to be joking.

BRONZE

I just wanna talk.

MACK

So you track me down and follow me just to talk?!

BRONZE

Nah! It ain't even like that! I was just... rolling by and I saw you.

MACK

"Just rolling by," huh?

BRONZE

Got reports of a new hotspot and I was just checking it out, aight? You just happen to check by at the same time as me, that's all. Mack, I don't like how we left things last time. There's still a lot we need to talk about.

MACK

Is there?

BRONZE

Yes. I deserve a chance to make amends with you, don't I?

Beat.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... Obviously there's no time for it right now. How about, you stop by my house this Friday? For dinner. We can talk then. Give me your phone number, and I'll send you my address.

Mack remains quiet, giving a hard suspicious stare at Bronze, but sticking to the plan.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - MIDDAY

Ignacio waits patiently in his car for Tray and Kaleb to arrive. His AR-10 rests on the passenger seat next to him. Tray and Kaleb eventually arrive as their SUV enters the lot and park driver-side-to-driver-side with Ignacio.

TRAY

'Sup Ignacio, how that recon go?

IGNACIO

(Annoyed)

Uneventful. Just your standard corners. I hope y'all managed to find something better.

TRAY

I did. Miguel took me to the homeless he used to deal with and I struck gold there. Met this guy who used to drive Rupert and his people's all around so he knew the ins and outs of the op.

IGNACIO

The infrastructure?

TRAY

The same one Malcolm took over. And he ain't exactly trying to be no innovator, so I'm thinking he sticking with the same infrastructure Rupert used, cuz I mean, like, if it ain't broke don't fix it, right?

IGNACIO

Right.

TRAY

So this dude tells me about this place where Rupert and his connect would meet up to resupply. It's this warehouse they knew the owner of who was cool letting them resupply there, for a cut, of course. So we just came from checking it out, and it's still there. It was hard to find, looks like shit, but I mean, I guess that's why they loved it. Especially Bronze, who I'm assuming is in charge of resupplies since he the one who got Malcolm Rupert's connect.

IGNACIO

Hm, you know, their hierarchy might change real soon. There's a good chance Bronze will no longer be in charge of that resupply after tonight.

TRAY

What's tonight?

IGNACIO

A shift in the tides. My men are ready to strike.

TRAY

Oh shit... are you...

IGNACIO

No. Not me. I have other plans tonight. In the meanwhile, you two should get ready, also.

TRAY

We gon hit them?

IGNACIO

You're gonna cripple their market. An entire shipment, gone, will add fuel to their problems.

TRAY

I'm assuming you already got a plan?

IGNACIO

Sort of... How would you two feel about camping outside the warehouse for an entire day?

Kaleb pops into view from the passenger seat.

KALEB

Damn, Ignacio! One crazy-ass plan after another. What's up with that?

IGNACIO

Work with me. How about half a day?

KALEB

Pssh... Well, I don't about you, Tray, but I got unlimited data, and as long as this baby here (SUV) can blow cool air, I think I can manage.

IGNACIO

I'm thinking we need to modify the SUV too.

KALEB

C'mon, Ignacio! I'm trying to help you here!

IGNACIO

Nothing extreme, more of a... disguise.

TRAY

Yo, I don't know about sitting here for half a day. That's twelve hours!

IGNACIO

I'm just spitballing here... Imma go home and work out the details. I'll let y'all know what I come up with, alright?

TRAY

Aight, dawg.

IGNACIO

Aight, later.

Kaleb and Tray drive off.

SERIES OF SHOTS - AS IT STANDS

-- Drizzy's old hotspot, in the evening, Malcolm's people gathered around, blasting music, talking to each other.

-- Miguel's old hotspot, in the evening, some homeless men walk up under lampposts to Malcolm's dealers, those on "break" sit around in a lawn chair.

-- The new "hotspot" at the park, Malcolm's people have now taken over. Beer bottles and chip bags scattered on the shaded picnic tables, music is blasted from an SUV, people shout at each other as a result.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Stepping out the store in his high-end uniform, is Drizzy's friend. The same one who mentioned having a love interest up in Malcolm's territory.

The friend heads for his car, a modern, mean-looking, award winning car.

Inside, he takes off his shirt in a hurry, unveiling a white t-shirt and a thin, gold necklace he had been wearing underneath. This is his facade, "the gangster".

He starts up his car and reverses out the lot, revealing the car parked next to his, and in it, Ignacio. He had been waiting patiently, and now, he also reverses out the lot.

INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Four men sit inside a van, cruising along the streets of a neighborhood. WE SEE down the road from the inside of the van as the invisible fifth passenger sitting in the far back. From the silhouettes, we can tell the two in the back are wearing baseball caps, the passenger a beanie and the driver a nappy, small afro. Everyone remains steady, until the driver speaks.

DRIVER

We coming 'round the corner. Y'all get ready.

In unison, both backseat passengers reach into a duffle bag in between them. They pull out bandana cloths and begin tying them around their face, bandit style. The front side passenger has also done the same with his cloth.

Now, the two in the back pull out three gun range earmuffs, one for each, and one for the passenger up front.

They don't wear them just yet, instead they hang them around their necks as they begin loading their assault rifles which had been previously sitting on their laps, hidden from US.

Upon turning the corner, the passenger hands the driver his hearing protection.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Aight. On my command..

All at once, everyone puts on their hearing protection. The passenger rolls down his window. The driver now steers with his left hand as his right arm is raised above the cupholders, open palm away from US.

What lays ahead on the road to the left has now become familiar, it's the new hotspot at the park Malcolm's people took over. Under the lights of the shaded picnic table, we can see at least a dozen of Malcolm's people hanging out.

Once at a crawling pace, at just the right moment, at just the right angle, the driver **CLENCHES** his hand into a tight and powerful fist.

In an instant, the minivan stops. The passenger climbs halfway out the window and mounts his assault rifle on the roof of the van. The passengers in the back slide open the left side door and quickly get into their marine-like combat pose behind the vehicles parked on the curb.

And just like that, without hesitation, they **SHOOT** upon Malcolm's people. No "spray and pray" rapid fire nonsense. These are **QUICK, CALCULATED**, single shots only those with extensive military firearms training can do. The moment one target goes down, they move to the next.

BAM. BAM. BAM.

Those who fire back, are prioritized.

In less than a minute, a massacre is committed. The passenger slides back into the van as the other two rush back. The last one in slides shut the van door and like that, they **SPEED** off, leaving the high **SCREECH** of car alarms piercing the once calm night.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAWN

Drizzy is seen walking alone towards school. A few cars are parked along the curb which he walks next to. He passes by a familiar SUV, but fails to notice it as he is lost in his own thoughts. Ignacio steps out the SUV and begins walking behind him.

IGNACIO

Drizzy...

Drizzy instantaneously freezes up. Ignacio gets close enough to put his arm around him. He notices Drizzy holding a green folder.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

... You still in theatre, huh? That's nice. It'll keep you busy while we're shutdown...

Beat.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

... I wanted to check up on you. I know you must be feeling a lot of things right now. Probably have some suspicions as to what happened to your friend so imma tell you right now, he faced the consequences. You were there when Mack gave you and your friends orders to not travel to East side. It was outdoors, there was no one else around, so he was the only person y'all heard. He gave clear instructions, no play on words, so there couldn't have been any misinterpretations. Yet still, your friend disobeyed these orders. He showed no loyalty. And for what? A girl? Drizzy, these are the consequences. When we first hired y'all, we made it clear as day that if you have any concerns, tell us. We've avoided so many problems through this trust, but your friend felt he couldn't bother with that...

Ignacio stares off into the distance, putting his hands behind his back to observe.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Y'all a little different from who we usually hire. Most of our people, you've seen them, people like Miguel, they're the ones who the system punishes arbitrarily. They're living paycheck-to-paycheck, or have parents who got dealt a bad hand when they came to this country.

(MORE)

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

My people need this work *and* money, so they can actually make enough to go out and not just enjoy their lives, but improve it. I hire people of this community on the hope that one day they'll leave us for something better.

IGNACIO takes a deep breath.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Y'all? Y'all don't need this. I get the feeling y'all only doing this to live a fantasy, but let me tell you, when it gets real like right now, I expect y'all to stay with us. I can't have no one trifling, because with way things are right now, if someone goes down, I'll make sure they go down alone... for me and my people's safety. You got that?

Drizzy has no choice but to nod in agreement.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Good. Don't be late for class now.

Ignacio gives the fear-frozen Drizzy a pat on the shoulder and heads back to his SUV.

INT. BRONZE'S CONDO - MORNING

For the first time, Bronze, Spook, and Malcolm meet up indoors. Bronze hosts the meetup in his minimalistic, clean apartment. All three have gathered in the living room. Bronze and Spook are deep in thought, or at least pretending to be as they await for Malcolm to speak.

MALCOLM

How'd you lose an entire crew, Bronze? Thought that was supposed to be one of the safest areas?

BRONZE

It is- it is! What happened last night was unseemly.

MALCOLM

(Furious)

You fucking joking homie?! All the signs pointed to some shit like this going down!

(MORE)

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

You kick some homies off they hotspots then you kick them again when they not making money, not selling shit, minding they own business?! Maybe they wasn't thinking clearly when they was full of rage, maybe this shit's gonna bite them back, but you should've expected some retaliation after the shit you pulled off!

Malcolm breaths like a bull.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I want them all dead before they come at us again. You gon go down there and hunt them all down.

BRONZE

I... I can't--

MALCOLM

-- what the FUCK did you just say?!

BRONZE

Yo, Malcolm, I fucked up. I know I did, but...

Beat.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... they're untouchable now. The city is shook, people are angry, police is everywhere looking for anything. They raided them two other hotspots and arrested our peoples just this morning! We start sending in more, they gonna end up filling up the jails, and since they don't even know who did what, they gonna blame us for the shooting of our OWN peoples, just to calm everyone down... Nobody- I mean *nobody* is so much as walking out a corner store drinking a cold one in that area any time soon. What they did wasn't in the heat of the moment, this was planned. Them independents shot themselves in the foot so we couldn't put one in they head... I say, we put this on hold and focus on securing Booker's territory.

(MORE)

BRONZE (CONT'D)

We got the deal, but like you said, Booker's people will buck and, unfortunately, we ain't got many soldiers left, so we prioritize Booker's people over the independent. And as far as rep goes, I'll take the hit, not you. So nobody gonna be calling you anything.

Malcolm is livid. Nonetheless, he knows Bronze is right. He stands up, and begins heading out. Spook follows.

MALCOLM

Don't worry about picking up that re-up tonight, or any other night. Spook in charge of that now.

Spook is surprised to hear that.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(To Bronze)

You border patrol now. No one enters or leaves. And until every one of those independent motherfuckas are dead, imma keep a hold on your retirement money.

Bronze accepts his orders with a simple, defeated nod. Malcolm and Spook walk out the apartment.

INT. CONDO ELEVATOR - CONTINUED

Spook and Malcolm enter an elevator.

SPOOK

Boss, there's been word around that Bronze was spotted parleying with a possible independent member.

Malcolm turns to look at Spook, genuinely caught off guard by the news.

SPOOK (CONT'D)

... The two were seen at the park a few days before the shooting.

MALCOLM

Who saw 'em?

SPOOK

Silver. The youngin he's mentoring. Apparently, they were just gonna roll by and check on the spot at the park, but suddenly this homie, Bronze, hops out the car and starts walking towards some homie.

MALCOLM

Why didn't you tell me this just now, in front of him?

SPOOK

Would be like pulling on the leg of a horse, no?

MALCOLM

Mm... This homie can't be that stupid...

SPOOK

Whatchu want me to do?

MALCOLM

... Put a follow on him.

SPOOK

Right.

EXT. WEST SIDE INDUSTRIALS - EVENING

In the industrial area of West side, at twilight, when all offices and warehouses are closed, when the streetlights are dimly lighting up the roads ahead, there is a lone SUV driving on the sun bleached asphalt. It is Spook's SUV on its way to meet with the connect.

Inside, there is Spook and two other men. Spook looks out the window from the passenger seat, closely observing his surroundings, familiarizing himself with it.

SPOOK MEMBER 1

Can't see shit with these street lights.

SPOOK MEMBER 2

Slow down then homie, these roads ain't fixed.

SPOOK MEMBER 1

We already 'bout to be late.

SPOOK MEMBER 2

Nah, they just around the corner.

The SUV turns left on a corner, and just as they're turning, Spook spots something to his right, just a bit down the road. It's a... police SUV?

SPOOK MEMBER 2 (CONT'D)

Yo, was that police camping out?!

SPOOK

Was it?!

SPOOK MEMBER 2

That shit looked unmarked!

SPOOK MEMBER 1

We walking into a setup?!

SPOOK MEMBER 2

Yo, I can't go back to jail, man!
Fuck that!

SPOOK MEMBER 1

What we gon do, Spook?!

SPOOK

... Fuck! Just keep driving, homie!
Get us out of here!

Spook is spooked out of the meet with the connect. His SUV is seen at a distance driving off. WE turn to find the unmarked SUV still just sitting there.

After a few moments, the driver gets out...

It's Tray.

He's dressed all in black like a thief. He works on taking off the spotlight from the side mirror while Kaleb steps out and begins working on removing the grill guard. Tray joins in to take it off and throw it to the side. With the unmarked-police disguise removed, both men get back into the SUV and drive towards the warehouse.

Inside, a trailer has parked into the loading dock of the warehouse. The back is opened to reveal a shipment of boxes. Kaleb and Tray arrive into the warehouse and step out.

They head towards a man in a bomber jacket, JUANFRAN (34). Juanfran sits on a table along with an associate, who smokes a cigarette. Two other men, presumably security for the connect, stand guard near the van, armed with SMGs.

JUANFRAN
 (In Spanish)
 You Spook? No more Bronze?

TRAY
 (In bad Spanish)
 No more Bronze. Just us from now
 on, Juanfran.

Juanfran notices it's just Tray and Kaleb.

JUANFRAN
 No bodyguards for the first meet?

TRAY
 Didn't think I'd need any after all
 the years we've done business
 together.

JUANFRAN
 Very true. I knew Bronze for a long
 time, I hope you're even half as
 trustworthy as him. So, here's your
 shipment. If you wanna count, I'm
 gonna go take a nap. If not, then
 we leave early for the long drive
 back.

Kaleb takes out a pocket knife and cuts open a box. He checks
 the contents of the box before stepping back into the
 warehouse.

KALEB
 Heh, everything looks good here,
 brotha. Real good.

JUANFRAN
 Good! (In Spanish) Alright, let's
 get to work.

Everyone but the guards join in to unload and load the
 shipment to Tray's SUV.

EXT. CONDO - NIGHT

Outside this luxurious, tall condo, there is a man next to
 the entrance, having a smoke. Mack is seen walking towards
 the man.

MACK
 All clear?

The man gives him a nod and they shake hands, hiding a money transaction in the act. The man heads off into the night while Mack heads inside.

Down the street with a nice view of the event that just took place and all the condo balconies, there is a hooptie with two men inside, just watching.

Mack arrives to Bronze's floor, he makes his way to Bronze's apartment where he knocks and waits. Bronze opens the door. There's a hint of misery in his face.

BRONZE

Aye, come on in.

MACK

Hope you didn't mind that I sent someone to sweep the building.

BRONZE

Nah, you fine.

Inside, Bronze leads Mack to the dinner table where two meals have already been prepped. Mack, knowing Bronze ain't never cooked, questions this.

MACK

Where yo girl at? She ain't joining us?

BRONZE

Nah, she'll be in the bedroom. You want a soda?

MACK

Yeah, that's good.

Mack takes his seat as Bronze gets him a soda. Soon, Mack dives into his meal as Bronze just stares at his.

BRONZE

So how you been?

MACK

Been alright... How about you?

BRONZE

... I don't know. Feels like I'm heading down to rock bottom again.

MACK

Why's that?

BRONZE

Well, what y'all did at the park...
costed me my retirement.

Mack stops eating.

MACK

Wasn't personal.

BRONZE

I get that... I do. But as it stands,
I got two choices according to
Malcolm... Kill all of you...

Fear strikes Mack. Did he somehow still walk into a setup?

BRONZE (CONT'D)

... Or forever be stuck in the game,
as a pawn.

MACK

... What'd you choose?

BRONZE

I haven't chosen... I don't wanna do
neither, Mack.

Mack relaxes a little.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

I just wanna leave. Go far, breath
in new air. And I would love
nothing more then for my lil
brother to join me. I don't wanna
see him forced to live a life of
crime... He wasn't made for it, cuz
he was raised by a mother who loved
him, who put good in him... So, at
first, he believes he's doing good
by giving jobs to the poor and
desperate, by trying to bring
together a community through the
drug game. He hates being alone
with his thoughts, or thinking
about the future, cuz he hasn't
accepted the fact that there's only
two endgames in this line of
business: Death or jail. He's never
pulled the trigger, cuz he's all
brains, he's never been brawns.

(MORE)

BRONZE (CONT'D)

So he'll send others to do his dirty work, even those closest to him, cuz he is just too afraid... and now, here he is watching his little brother about to do the same thing all over again.

Beat.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

Mack, we had a chance to break the cycle, to be done with all this gangsta bullshit, but now... it's gone. It's sealed in fate's grip. And it's my fault for being cautious. I thought I had time. I thought I had the magical words to convince my lil bro, who I wronged and hadn't seen in years, to just abandon the life he made for himself and join me on some fairytale shit..

Mack had been mesmerized by Bronze's words. It's the realization that Bronze had been genuine this whole time that leaves him staring. He gathers his thoughts.

MACK

... If... Malcolm is brought down, I'm sure your retirement money can be recovered.

BRONZE

... *If.*

MACK

Y'all just took a hit like never before. Judging by what Malcolm is ordering you to do, he don't know how to deal with it... I have the advantage, and it could be an even bigger advantage with your help.

BRONZE

I betrayed Rupert, I betrayed you, now you asking me to betray again?

MACK

It'll be for the good this time. When the dust settles, and I see that my people's will be in good hands, I'll consider leaving it all behind.

(MORE)

MACK (CONT'D)

My most trusted men will take charge. It'll be like the closing of a chapter for me.

BRONZE

... You for real?

Mack finds himself questioning if he's being genuine or not.

MACK

Yeah... yeah.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

In the same hill where Bronze, Spook, and Malcolm once met in to discuss the future, Malcolm arrives to a frantic Spook.

MALCOLM

What's up? Something happen?

SPOOK

Yo... the meet... with the connect... it was a setup.

Malcolm is genuinely surprised, but also annoyed.

MALCOLM

A setup?

SPOOK

We saw this unmarked police car when we was just outside the warehouse. They was just camping there ready to bust us once we entered. So we drove out of there, couldn't take no risks.

MALCOLM

Who the fuck would set us up?

SPOOK

Bronze.

Malcolm is caught off guard by Spook's quick assumption.

MALCOLM

What makes you say that?

SPOOK

On the way here, I get a text, from one of the spooks doing a follow on Bronze, and this is what he sent me.

Spook pulls out his phone to show Malcolm a picture of Mack walking out of Bronze's apartment.

SPOOK (CONT'D)

That right there is the little homie that Bronze was rumored to be seen talking to. And now there he is coming out his condo.

MALCOLM

... Put a hit on both. Don't let him get away. I want them both dead by tonight.

SPOOK

I'm on it.

INTERCUT - BRONZE AND MACK

Staring out at the starry night, Bronze sits on a lawn chair in his balcony, having a smoke. The night is tranquil in this modest area. No sirens, just the wind. Perfect atmosphere to reflect one's thoughts on.

Disturbing the peace, two car doors open and slam. Bronze takes notice, but doesn't think too long on the two silhouettes of man speaking to each other.

Mack drives along the streets, slowly entering the urban decay zone. He's distracted by his own thoughts. The weight of these thoughts soon become too much as he feels an urge to pull over. He sees an opportunity when he spots a corner store. He parks next to it and heads inside.

Bronze is tranquil like the night. His gazes at the skyline until he spots the two men cover their faces with their hoodies and begin walking towards the condo. One of the men glances up towards his balcony, and the two lock eyes. This sets Bronze into panic mode, fully realizing who these men might be. In an instant, he rushes into his apartment, to his bedroom where his girlfriend sleeps.

BRONZE

Ay, wake up! Wake up! We gotta get outta here!

BRONZE'S GIRLFRIEND

Wh- what?

BRONZE

C'mon! Get up! We gotta get outta here!

His girlfriend senses the panic and gets up. As she does, he goes to their closet and pulls out a pistol, which he tucks into his pants. His girlfriend is startled at the sight of this. Bronze leads her out their apartment.

BRONZE (CONT'D)

Head down to the lobby, I'll meet you there.

BRONZE'S GIRLFRIEND

What's going on?

BRONZE

I'll tell you later, just go.

BRONZE'S GIRLFRIEND

Baby--

BRONZE

-- Go!

Reluctantly, his girlfriend heads down the hallway. Bronze places himself against the wall to be able to peak around the corner of the hallway. On the other end there is an elevator. He places a hand on the pistol tucked behind his back, just in case. Now, he waits.

The elevator doors open. What Bronze can't see, but can hear, is the two hooded men walking down the hallway. WE SEE that they are now armed and looking for Bronze's condo. When they do spot it, one of them takes a few steps back before rushing in and KICKING the front door open. With that, Bronze has no doubt in his mind who these men are and why they are here. He rushes down the hallway to meet his girlfriend in the lobby.

Once there, he finds only his scared girlfriend sitting in a chair and the front desk clerk on his phone. Bronze motions for his girlfriend to follow him. She does, and they both head to the underground parking.

As they drive away, Bronze's girlfriend is distraught but hesitant to ask what happened as she notices her boyfriend gripping hard onto the steering wheel, an angry look on his face. Still, curiosity gets the best of her.

BRONZE'S GIRLFRIEND

... What was all that about?

BRONZE

What, you don't like going on a late night cruise around the city?

BRONZE'S GIRLFRIEND

Baby...

BRONZE

... Malcolm put a hit on me.

Bronze's girlfriend falls back on her seat, defeated. Bronze begins to contemplate the who, where, and why until he realizes Mack might be next. In a hurry, he pulls out his phone and dials Mack.

Mack comes out the store with a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. He stares down at the pack as if seeing an old nemesis again. Nevertheless, he rips out the plastic wrap and pulls out a cigarette, lighting it up in no time.

The tranquil night has stormed over him, and he embraces it as he stands in the street corner, staring back up at the stars. An SUV pulls up off screen. He pays no mind to it.

BRRRRRT.

Mack's vibrating phone scares him. He takes his phone out and sees that it's Bronze calling him. It's an unexpected call, and Mack contemplates. Does he answer? Or does--

POP.

In an instant, Mack falls and slams down into the ground. Revealed behind him, a hooded man aiming a pistol where Mack once stood. The hooded man takes a step forward and aims down at Mack's corpse.

POP.

He puts one more bullet into his head to finish the job. With that, he runs back to the SUV and SPEEDS off, leaving the lifeless corpse of Mack to bleed out in the tranquil night, and leaving Bronze's call unanswered as the phone continues to vibrate in his hand.

END INTERCUT.

EXT. ROW HOUSES - LATE MORNING

On an overcast day, Kaleb and Tray sit on Ignacio's front steps waiting. They wait as Ignacio arrives from a walk, carrying a strange looking garbage bag. Both have a sorrow look on their faces, they're lost in their heads and pay no attention to reality until their leader is standing right in front of them.

IGNACIO

... Where's Drizzy?

Kaleb and Tray are surprised to find Ignacio standing right in front of them.

KALEB

Uh, nowhere to be found. He might've gone AWOL.

IGNACIO

You ain't check his house?

KALEB

If he there, I'm thinking we shouldn't disturb him. He probably still grieving, plus his folks don't know what he really up to.

IGNACIO

Can't be risking that right now. Especially with cops creeping around every corner, questioning everything and everyone. If Drizzy or any of his friends get caught, I don't see them holding up well in a room downtown. Get a hold of him.

KALEB

Aight.

IGNACIO

Too many cops 'round here. And I know Malcolm's people must be hunting us right now despite that. Just had to deliver news to our people that we remaining shut down for a lil longer. But I'm thinking if we expand, only this area would have to be shutdown.

TRAY

Expand? Already?

IGNACIO

Rumor is that Malcolm bought Booker's connect. I choose to believe this seeing as he just had the confidence to put a hit on his own lieutenant and the supposed leader of an independent... In one week, give or take, East and West will belong to Malcolm.

(MORE)

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Everything under his name, doubled, and he'll still be eyeing us... I know we're still grieving over Mack's death, but we can't stop everything just for him. No, that just gives them time to recoup. What happened to Mack was all part of the game. You two should know this more than anybody. It's a loss, a big one... so now we hit Malcolm back harder, cuz if he ain't gone in a week's time, than we miss our chance... and it's game over for us. Our peoples are relying on us right now more than ever. We can't let them down... So, y'all find Drizzy and we'll have a meet soon.

KALEB

... Alright, boss.

TRAY

... Aight.

Kaleb and Tray head back to their SUV and drive off as Ignacio heads into his home. Inside, Ignacio takes a seat on his sofa and unveils his AR-10 he had been hiding in the garbage bag. He rests it on his lap as he stares down at his coffee table, contemplating, a menacing look on his face. Suddenly, he pulls out his phone and makes a call.

EXT. MALL - EVENING

In the second floor of this mall, there are a limited amount of balconies from the food court that one can eat their lunch from. They're wide enough for multiple tables and in one of these tables we see Ignacio and Booker. Booker has finished his plate and now watches a video on his phone, Ignacio didn't even bother ordering anything, but both are now clearly waiting.

BOOKER

I don't think he's gonna show up.

Ignacio and Booker continue waiting. Ignacio finally spots the big hunk of muscle, Bronze. It's a strange sight seeing Bronze glancing at everyone, looking paranoid, hands in his pockets.

IGNACIO

He's here.

Bronze finds his way outside to the balcony. He walks up to Ignacio and Booker, not letting his guard down.

BRONZE
You Ignacio?

Ignacio nods.

BOOKER
Bronze. Sheit, how long has it been?

BRONZE
'Bout five years.

BOOKER
Five years since you been at the roundtable... Damn, son. And I can see you still haven't been missing no meals... Hey, I heard what happened to your brother, my condolences.

BRONZE
What you here for, Booker?

BOOKER
Same reason you and my friend, 'Ignacio', are here for. We all unified under one common ongoing problem, Malcolm. He stepping it up, taking it too far, farther than anybody should ever go. And without punishment for his countless wrongdoings? No. Not anymore. Boy needs to be put in his place. Wouldn't you agree?

Bronze nods.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Well then, this here is where we forge and mold his end. You have the knowledge, I have the budget, and Ignacio has the men. With that, we make a plan to take him down.

Bronze looks unsure.

BRONZE
... How y'all know each other?

BOOKER

What, me and Ignacio? He run my independent y'all been trying to take.

BRONZE

(Surprised)

You own that independent?

BOOKER

I created it. I've always been fond of that lil area, but I ain't had no one willing to move so far until Ignacio came looking for me from way down south of the border. Told him of this grand opportunity near uptown where he'd be running his own thing, with his own lil place, covered by me, of course. Heh, he jumped on that opportunity in an instant. But still, none of my people wanted to join him there, so that's when I pushed for the "independent" title, to distance myself from it. A new commonwealth, if you will. If people all over this metroplex start hearing about this prospering independent far from the nastiness they gotta put up with in the projects, they gon start flocking there, like a gangster diaspora. Folk like the kind who just want to start all over, like the kind who want to breath in new air.

IGNACIO

Like Mack.

BOOKER

Yeah. Never met the man myself, but Ignacio never failed to praise him for all his efforts in helping expand that territory. Sounded like a good man.

Bronze finally relaxes and takes a seat.

BRONZE

... What y'all need from me? What y'all wanna know?

IGNACIO

How to get to Malcolm.

BRONZE

Ain't much to say there. I don't even know where he is most of the time.

BOOKER

Well, in a time of crisis, a leader typically is pushed to either end of the spectrum... the frontlines... or the bunker.

BRONZE

Malcolm ain't in no bunker. Nah, he taking his chances. Spook definitely in one of them tho, but not Malcolm.

BOOKER

Man is just full of pride, ain't he? In that case, we call him out, hurt his name. That'll get him roaming in our streets looking for us.

BRONZE

He ain't never gon hear about any homie calling him out. Me and Spook would never let bullshit like that get to him.

BOOKER

Hm... Where y'all meet? How y'all know he arriving?

BRONZE

We never meet at the same spot twice, and he usually there before us, or we just have to wait until he shows up.

BOOKER

How y'all make a meet?

BRONZE

Text or call asking to meet here or there at this or that time. He'll confirm if that works or not cuz you can't have a meet without him.

IGNACIO

Does he get chauffeured everywhere?

BRONZE

All the time.

BOOKER

No personal vehicle then... He got any hobbies? Clubs? Gambling?

BRONZE

I don't know.

IGNACIO

Who does he hang with? Where does he hang out at?

BRONZE

I don't know. Yo, I don't know shit about him. Never seen him outside of work.

BOOKER

How's that possible?

BRONZE

(Shrugs)

I have a suspicion he don't even live in East side.

BOOKER

That boy is somehow getting more mysterious.

BRONZE

... What y'all think gonna happen when Malcolm gone, anyways? Huh? This a hydra, it just gonna grow another head.

BOOKER

We was discussing that before you arrived, and seeing as this would be your last contribution to the game, if we recover your retirement money, I was leaning towards Ignacio becoming lieutenant and having him run East side.

IGNACIO

Although I never got around to agreeing to that.

BRONZE

So then you'd technically run East and West?

BOOKER

(To Booker)

Would you believe me if I told you that, I'm considering retirement too?

Bronze looks surprised.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

When that boy tried to hustle my connect away from me, he did bring up a good point. I got money. Literal tons. I could throw a dart at a board and live the rest of my life in luxury wherever it lands. So, there's no real point in staying here, chasing the urge to make more bread, when you got enough for generations. If I get to see him one last time before Ignacio's crew offs him, I'll make sure to thank the boy for pulling me out this tunnel vision I'd been stuck in for too long.

BRONZE

So if you do retire who running West side?

BOOKER

Now you all caught up in my thought process. Haven't figured that one out yet. I'm also thinking about how we can't let East side rot to the ground. Can't let a new Malcolm brew in that rot, that hate, and have him come after us, having learned from history. That don't sit well with me.

BRONZE

But you suggesting giving a pup more power than any of yo lieutenants ever had. Big Will been running his chunk smoothly for years now, right? Why not have him run East side then?

BOOKER

Big Will been dead. Killed in a car crash. Been... 'bought three years now. Freddie, his brother, been taking over since. He ain't been doing too well.

Bronze comes to the realization of how disconnected he's been from the world.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

In any case, Ignacio is far from a pup. He may not boast about it, a good quality to have if I may point out, but he got me uncharted territory on his own when no one else would. Not only that, but then he manages to expand and bring in more customers. And not just any other customers; 'the privileged', 'the neighborhood watch', and the next generation.

BRONZE

(To Ignacio)

So why you on the fence about this?

IGNACIO

I'm content with what I have. I only serve one purpose in this, and that's taking down Malcolm.

BOOKER

Although, I also am considering an alternative of slicing East side up after all this and holding off a sort of auction for it.

BRONZE

Greedy as always.

BOOKER

You won't be part of that affair, no need to get yourself concerned about it.

IGNACIO

(To Bronze)

Speaking of, you been planning to retire for a while now, isn't there a replacement in line for you yet?

BRONZE

Yeah, this kid from the streets, Silver, I was mentoring.

IGNACIO

You showed him around? Let him in on all y'all's meets?

Bronze nods.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

But now that you gone, who's mentoring him?

BRONZE

Spook, probably.

IGNACIO

There you go. He's the one. He'll get us to Malcolm.

BRONZE

Naw, he don't know shit.

IGNACIO

But he'll know where Spook is, or what he drives, or where he gets lunch every Tuesday, he'll know something that will lead us to Spook, who will lead us to Malcolm.. So, tell us everything about this kid. Booker's people will scope him out, and mine will get the info off him.

Bronze and Booker agree.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUED

Tray is seen sitting in a car a long walk away from the mall. He spots Ignacio in the rear view mirror walking towards him and getting in.

TRAY

How'd it go?

IGNACIO

As expected. You set the meet?

TRAY

Yeah, everybody on they way.

IGNACIO

Alright, let's go.

Tray starts the engine and reverses out.

EXT. IGNACIO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUED

Waiting inside his SUV for Ignacio and Tray to arrive is Kaleb. He fidgets with a phone connected to his laptop.

KALEB
(To himself)
"O.P.H. Crack"... Open-sourced, oh,
that's good. Alright, what else we
got...

A gust of smoke briefly blocks him from OUR view and we ZOOM
OUT to see that it was from Drizzy smoking a blunt. He hands
the blunt back to Kaleb.

KALEB (CONT'D)
Feeling relaxed now?

DRIZZY
Yeah. This why you always be
smoking one?

KALEB
At first, now I just kinda like the
taste of it. Drizzy, in time you
learn nothing can stop those
thoughts, those feelings. You can
either keep 'em in and let them
slowly eat you up, or you can
release them and take action. What
you going through right now, we all
been through. This the part of the
fantasy nobody tells you about.
Now, you decide whether you let
this experience toughen you... or
release you.

Kaleb spots Ignacio and Tray arriving. He steps out and
Drizzy follows to meet them at the front steps.

KALEB (CONT'D)
What's good, brothas.

IGNACIO
Kaleb, Drizzy, glad to see y'all.

TRAY
Y'all been waiting a while?

KALEB
Nah, wasn't nothin.

The crew heads into Ignacio's apartment.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUED

All find their spots in the living room.

IGNACIO

Alright. Well... Bronze has agreed to help us out. If all goes well, we'll be seeing a scramble for East side amongst independents and the West. I've decided we will not be taking part in that affair. We will remain as we are... I know Mack would've wanted that.

Kaleb and Tray nod along in agreement.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, his death leaves a seat in our ranking, but we have an order for this, right?

Once again, they nod.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

So then, next in line, Tray, you're now second in command.

TRAY

... It's an honor.

Ignacio stares at Drizzy, who hasn't made eye contact with him.

IGNACIO

Drizzy, that means you are now lieutenant. No longer will you be in charge of a hotspot. You will be in charge of a district and the people in it. How you feel about that?

Drizzy looks back down at the ground. He musters up some confidence to speak.

DRIZZY

... I don't want that.

IGNACIO

You don't want that? Hm. What's going on with you lately?

Beat. No response.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Okay, how about just telling me what you want.

DRIZZY

... I want out.

IGNACIO

Why?

DRIZZY

This ain't it for me.

IGNACIO

(Irritated)

Oh so now you feel that way, huh? You sling dope with a smile on your face for 4 months without a problem, but now you starting to think twice because your homie disrespected us? You know what, that's alright. Drizzy, you free to go... after you pay off your debt.

Drizzy nearly stares Ignacio in the eyes.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

Mack had already given you a month's worth of furlough pay, right? And as far as I'm concerned, you've spent it all partying with your friends. So when everything's back to the way it was and we need to start "cleaning" up this area, you'll do a few jobs for me, then you'll be free to go.

Ignacio ignores how distraught Drizzy is now.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

In which case, Kaleb, Tray, how y'all feel about Miguel stepping up?

TRAY

Miguel?

IGNACIO

I know he struggles, but he's brave. He's got heart.

KALEB

Uhh, I don't know. He's been having issues too.

IGNACIO

Like what?

KALEB

Well, it seem like, lately, some of our peoples been quittin'--

TRAY

-- Nah, they just exhausted.

IGNACIO

(Annoyed)

Quittin'? Or exhausted? Which one is it?

Fearing making Ignacio angry, Kaleb backs off. Tray notices.

TRAY

Some peoples been packing up and heading back where they came from. But most just tired of living in fear--

IGNACIO

(Stern)

Fear from what?

TRAY

Nothin' man, it's just... after what happened to Mack... there's been talk...

IGNACIO

(Angry)

Talk about what mothafucka?

KALEB

Bullshit, man, talkin' 'bout losing faith--

IGNACIO

(Infuriated)

-- What the fuck they losing faith on muthafucka?! My peoples forget about ME?! When this shit over y'all gon go down to them streets and remind everybody who they depend on! We gon teach 'em how I'm the reason they got any meaning in they life! All them mothafuckas gonna start praying for ME!

The room goes dead silent. For the first time, Ignacio loses his cool. He stares down each and every one present. His raging wide eye stare molds back to his usual calm expression as he reclines back to his chair, composing himself.

TRAY

... No one gonna like that.

IGNACIO

(Calm)

Yeah, well... they got no one but themselves to blame.

Kaleb, Tray, and Drizzy are seen coming out of Ignacio's apartment. All of them appear grim, the foreseeable future lingering in their minds.

INTERCUT - STALKING A CAR/DISCUSSING THE FUTURE

Stepping out from a hooptie parked on the corner of a street is Silver. He walks up to his corner boys and greets them all. He eventually finds his place against a wall and begins chatting with one of the boys. A dopefiend walks up to the corner, counting his money.

Ignacio and Bronze sit silently in Booker's living room. They have gathered at Booker's house to monitor the execution of their plan. Booker walks into the living room carrying a soda for Bronze and bottled water for Ignacio.

BOOKER

This is it. This the night.

Ignacio, Booker, and Bronze settle down to talk.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

(To Ignacio)

So you decided you gon be putting yo name out there, huh? It's a big step. In the right direction, if you ask me. You gon be making something out of yo self. Yo name gon be respected, only for a little tho. You gon have to learn how to keep it afloat.

IGNACIO

I know, but at least this way people will think twice about going after me if they know I had something to do with Malcolm's death.

BRONZE

... So who we waiting on?

Kaleb and Tray slowly drive by Silver's corner, observing everything.

IGNACIO (V.O.)
My lieutenants.

The dope fiend now walks up to a corner boy and hands him his money. The boy takes it and nods towards another boy who watches from across another street. The boy goes down an alley, and picks up the drugs ordered by the dope fiend.

The dope fiend is then instructed to head down the opposite side of the alley, where the runner boy will meet him and deliver the order.

It is here where the runner boy arrives to find the dope fiend standing motionless in front of a lone SUV in the middle of the alley. Right as the runner boy is about to hand him his order, Tray pops out from behind a dumpster, lower face covered by a bandana, and gets the runner boy on a choke hold from behind with one arm, while the other points a silenced pistol at him.

TRAY
Ay, ay, ay, this might be the easiest way you escape a gun pointed at yo face cuz all I need you to do is one thing. I need you to shout for Silver to come round the corner. Can you do that for me?

The runner boy nods in the midst of getting choked out.

TRAY (CONT'D)
Aight. But first, hand my man his order.

The runner boy sticks his hand out, palms up, to let the dope fiend pluck out his drug vials. Tray then hands him his pay for his part, which he takes quickly before fleeing the scene.

Tray loosens his hold enough to let the boy catch his breath before shouting.

TRAY (CONT'D)
Now, say it.

RUNNER BOY
(Shouting)
... Ayo, Silver! Need you to check this out!

Annoyed, Silver takes his time to head towards the alley. Kaleb, who had been idly watching from a bus stop this whole time, starts walking behind Silver, into the alley.

The moment they both arrive, Kaleb pounces and also gets Silver into a choke hold from behind, but Tray and the runner boy are nowhere to be found. Kaleb forces Silver to walk towards the SUV.

KALEB
(Whispering)
Tray! Where you at?

Tray pops out from behind the dumpster yet again.

TRAY
(Whispering)
You got him? Aight.

In a hurry, the two kidnap Silver and drive away. As the SUV drives out of the scene, it reveals the runner boy gagged and tied up behind the dumpster.

Along the ride, Kaleb holds Silver at gunpoint while he searches his pockets.

KALEB
Don't worry brotha, ain't no need for some "enhanced interrogation" to make you talk cuz believe it or not, in today's day and age, you already done all the talking for us. Everything I need to know I can easily find in...

Kaleb finds what he was looking for.

KALEB (CONT'D)
Ah!... Yo phone!

Kaleb plugs Silver's phone into his laptop.

Ignacio and Bronze sit deep in thought.

BRRT-BRRT-BRRRRRT.

Ignacio's phone vibrates in his pocket. He pulls it out and answers it immediately, putting his phone on speaker.

IGNACIO
Kaleb.

Kaleb talks to Ignacio on his own phone while scrolling through Silver's phone.

KALEB
Ay, is Booker listening? Can he hear me?

(MORE)

KALEB (CONT'D)

Cuz he need to know his people were on point. The alley, the op, this homie's schedule, they got it down to a T. Everything went as planned cuz of that good intel.

IGNACIO

You got Silver?

KALEB

Yeah he right here with me. Been reading through his phone and I'm seeing that Spook talked about staying at some safehouse in Harwood. Do Bronze know where that might be?

BRONZE

That's the safehouse on Harwood & Hickory. If he hiding there, then he got a lot of homies surrounding that place. Them two boys of yours ain't gon be enough.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Never count us out. But while I gotchu on the phone Bronze, tell us a bit about Spook.

Bronze leans closer into Ignacio's phone.

BRONZE

What you need?

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Anything we can work with. Just gotta get yo boy to tell us where Malcolm is.

BRONZE

I can tell you right now, he ain't gonna talk. He barely speak as it is.

KALEB(SPEAKER)

So he the quiet type?

BRONZE

Yeah.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

What else?

BRONZE

He the only remaining OG from Malcolm's first crew. Been there from the beginning. It's why I'm saying he won't talk. He ready to put his life on the line.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Yeah, yeah. What else? What's his role?

BRONZE

He's the eyes of East side. He knows every deal struck, every gun bought, every gangbanger by they hoodrat. The homie just everywhere, and therefore, he know everything. I wouldn't be surprised if he already expecting y'all.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Hmm... big role, a lot of info he gotta track, I don't suppose he got a photographic memory either, do he?

BRONZE

Uh, nah, I don't think so.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Aight. Then that's all we need then.

BRONZE

Fo' real? What you gonna do?

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Ah, I'm thinking we don't even need Spook to open his mouth. 'Preciate all the info, brotha. Now lemme have some words with my boi, Ignacio.

IGNACIO

What's up?

KALEB (SPEAKER)

So if Bronze's words are anything to go by, we gon need some backup if we gon hit that safehouse, you get me?

IGNACIO

... Yeah. I'll send over some help.
Share your location. You'll have an
extra three men to work with.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Aight, appreciate it. I'll send
them straight back to you once we
done here. Expect an address in
about an hour.

IGNACIO

Alright, Kaleb. Good work. You and
Tray.

KALEB (SPEAKER)

Ain't no thang, brotha.

Kaleb hangs up.

KALEB (CONT'D)

(To Tray)

Ayo, find somewhere we can drop
this homie.

Ignacio hangs up.

BRONZE

Ain'tchu gonna need them when you
go after Malcolm?

IGNACIO

Maybe. But right now, it's either
Spook or nothing.

Ignacio heads outside to talk to his troops. Bronze watches
on before heading to speak with Booker.

BRONZE

Is he really gon try and go after
Malcolm on his own?

BOOKER

(Chuckles)

The only thing Ignacio doesn't know
about Malcolm is his current
location. If he believes he can
take him down on his own, then I
believe him too.

BRONZE

There's some history I'm missing
out on here, ain't there?

BOOKER

Hehe... you wouldn't believe it if I told you.

END INTERCUT.

EXT. HARWOOD & HICKORY SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

This two story safehouse/clubhouse on a street corner is surrounded by "security." Security mainly being hoodlums hanging out like in any other street corner, some even playing street dice. Nevertheless, all of them are armed.

Across the street, there's a strip of small abandoned shops and next to them is a road where way down on it, is the SUV of Ignacio's troops.

Two troops step out and head towards the back of the small shops, one carrying a small ladder. The ladder is used to climb on to the roof of the shops where they crawl near the edge of the shops with a clear view of the safehouse. One of the troopers takes out a walkie talkie

TROOP 1

Aight. We in position.

In between the safehouse and a liquor store is an alley leading into a small parking lot where more lackluster security stand guard. Kaleb and Tray have parked their SUV on the liquor store parking lot. They have walked into the alley and get into position. Kaleb speaks into a walkie talkie.

KALEB

In position. On yo go.

The troops crawl a few inches forward until they're almost at the edge of the shops. They place their silenced rifles on monopods, they aim, and they FIRE.

One by one they fall. There's confusion as to where the firing is coming from, a guard from the second floor peaks out from a window and is immediately targeted and brought down by one of Ignacio's troops.

As the firing is unleashed at the front of the safehouse, Kaleb and Tray take advantage of the panicking guards at the back of the safehouse by unleashing their firepower on them. One guard attempts to climb up the stairs into the safehouse, but is eliminated by Kaleb. Another attempts to flee around the corner, but is brought down by Tray from mid-range.

In a matter of seconds, all gunfire comes to a stop.

TROOP 1 (SPEAKER)

Clear.

KALEB

Y'all stay put and look out for anyone trying to make a run. We gon head inside to the second floor from the back.

TROOP 1 (SPEAKER)

Copy that.

Kaleb & Tray storm the inside of the safehouse and take down all remaining security inside. Shooting is heard outside as Ignacio's troops take down fleeing security from the first floor. Kaleb & Tray burst into a room to find Spook alone at his desk, undisturbed by the shoot out, expecting Kaleb & Tray. Kaleb notices the laptop at Spook's desk.

KALEB

Gonna need you to open that laptop now, Spook.

SPOOK

Ain't gonna happen.

Spook stands his ground. He stares down Kaleb, unphased, a sly, devilish smirk on him, knowing he and Tray are in a rush to leave. He has the advant--

BAM.

Kaleb puts one in Spooks head. He rushes over to grab the laptop.

KALEB

We ain't got time for this shit!
Let's go.

Kaleb snatches Spooks laptop. Having gotten what they came for, the two rush out of the safehouse, into their SUV. Inside, Kaleb opens his laptop and connects Spook's laptop to it. Tray brings out his walkie talkie and speaks into it.

TRAY

Aight, we got what we need. Y'all go on back to Ignacio, we'll find the address.

TROOPER 1 (SPEAKER)

Copy that.

Back at Booker's house, Bronze and Ignacio wait for the results. Meanwhile, Booker sits back on his couch and watches videos on his phone. Suddenly, Ignacio gets a text.

IGNACIO

... They found it.

Through the window in the background WE SEE the SUV of Ignacio's troops come to a screeching stop. Ignacio turns to see before looking back at Booker, waiting for his go.

BOOKER

... Call us when it's done.

Ignacio nods, and off he goes.

INTERCUT - IGNACIO & MALCOLM

Inside the SUV, one of Ignacio's troops brings up his phone to show where Malcolm is located.

TROOPER 1

These are the coordinates Kaleb sent me. A ranch with a whole lotta open field for a backyard. Apparently, Malcolm been reaching out to his cartel, asking for sicarios, assassins, and one of the ambassadors for the cartel owns this ranch. My guess is he's meeting the ambassador there who'll introduce him to the sicarios when they arrive by plane.

TROOPER 2

Or maybe they already have.

TROOPER 1

Right. Either way, we're definitely gonna be outnumbered... So what you think we should do?

IGNACIO

... Hurry.

Malcolm and THE AMBASSADOR (50) sit in the backyard patio of a massive ranch, staring off into the tremendous grassfield stretching as far as the eye can see. The ambassador sports a dark gray suit with gold jewelry at the wrist, fingers and neck. His hair indistinguishable from that of the Shah of Iran.

They both await the arrival of the sicario squad, with a SUV ready to pick them up once they land. One of Malcolm's bodyguards walks up to him and whispers into his ear news of Spook's death. For once, Malcolm shows a hint of sadness, enough for the ambassador to notice.

THE AMBASSADOR
Bad news, I presume?

MALCOLM
Yeah... bad news.

THE AMBASSADOR
(Leaning in)
My sicarios, when they are prepared, they can accomplish vengeance for any men.

MALCOLM
They can bring down an entire gang?

THE AMBASSADOR
In time... and for the right price.

The ambassador looks down at the duffel bag full of money that Malcolm brought with him.

MALCOLM
... Even if it's they own?

INT. SUV - CONTINUED

Ignacio and his troops now drive along a two-lane road with trees covering the countryside landscape left and right. They are nearing the ranch. There is a noise that disturbs the silence. The sound is faint, but quickly it grows louder. Loud enough to make all heads turn in it's direction.

WE SEE through the gaps in all the trees being passed that the sound was that of a plane coming down for a landing on the enormous, flat grass field.

TROOPER 1
Almost there.

IGNACIO
(To the driver)
Bring it down to a crawl...

Ignacio pulls out his AR-10.

TROOPER 1
We gon start without Tray & Kaleb?

IGNACIO

... I'm done waiting.

Malcolm and the ambassador watch the plane come to a stop far from the backyard. The ambassador orders a guard to enter the SUV and go pick up the sicarios.

EXT. RANCH ENTRANCE - CONTINUED

Behind the front gate, there is an SUV parked on the grass. Two cartel guards have a smoke when suddenly they are SHOT in quick succession from a silenced gun. Ignacio and his troops appear from across the street.

As they arrive to the front of the house, Ignacio and his troops split. Ignacio and two troops head around the house, the other two head inside the house. Upon turning the corner, Ignacio and his troops take no time to find cover and open fire on all of Malcolm and the cartel guards.

POP. POP. POP.

Alerted, Malcolm and the ambassador jump out of their seats, both immediately escorted by their guards to the SUV that was ready to leave.

One of the troops attempts to shoot out the tires, but a guard manages to fire back and hit him in the chest. He's dragged behind cover by the other troop. All remaining guards now focus their fire on them.

The shift of focus allows the two troops in the house to come outside and sneak attack them, bringing them all down, but not in time to stop the SUV from driving off towards the plane. Ignacio and his troops regroup next to the injured troop.

IGNACIO

How bad is it?

TROOPER 3

They just got the underside, no bone.

TROOPER 4

Burns like hell tho!

TROOPER 2

They really gonna try and escape with that plane?!

Suddenly, there's a wave of precise, calculated gunfire hitting them from the sicarios in the distance.

TROOPER 2 (CONT'D)

They coming after us, aren't they?!

Ignacio manages a peak around their cover to see one of the SUVs heading their way.

IGNACIO

(Frustration)

Yeah... We may have to fall back.

Then after we can--

Ignacio is interrupted by LOUD gunshots coming from the second floor of the house. Afterwards, there's a silence, even the sicarios in the distance have stopped firing. Ignacio carefully looks around the corner and sees the SUV that was heading towards him mowed down. Ignacio and his troops look up at the second story window. It's Tray.

TRAY

Got here just in time didn't we?

Kaleb pops his head from another window.

KALEB

Not gonna lie, we got lost for a bit on our way here. This some backwoods, off the grid shit.

IGNACIO

It's good seeing you two.

KALEB

So what we gon do about them (the plane)?

IGNACIO

... Can y'all cover fire from there?

TRAY

Yeah, dawg. Watchu got planned?

IGNACIO

I'm gonna grab an SUV and take them on.

KALEB

Just you?! Shit man... but I know better than to argue.

IGNACIO

Thank you. (To his troops) Get him (Injured troop) back to the SUV and patch him up.

TROOPER 2

Roger.

Ignacio enters one of the SUVs left untouched. He heads towards the plane. Gunfire begins all over again. This time, from both sides.

Only yards away from the plane, Ignacio parks and takes cover.

He takes shots from underneath the SUV and around the hood.

Three sicarios are brought down. The last one is hidden behind another SUV across the plane with the ambassador.

In a masterful stroke, Ignacio takes shots at the remaining two to keep them behind cover while bumrushing to the other end of their SUV where he will catch them peeking around the corner, and ultimately shoot them.

The night falls silent yet again.

A door is heard being opening. Ignacio looks over and sees Malcolm stepping out the plane. He walks over to the SUV and leans on the hood, staring off into the night. Ignacio heads over, keeping the rifle pointed at him.

MALCOLM

Should've known it was you. Got tunnel vision thinking it was just some independent getting lucky... Should've known.

IGNACIO

Wouldn't have made a difference.

MALCOLM

I used to think playing by the rules meant falling to the cycle. So I went against the grain, thinking I've found a way out. Nah... you never fall to it... you just born to it.

Beat.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

... Why you never return to me? You could've taught all these youngins what you just did there, what you learned south of the border.

IGNACIO
So you can make them killing
machines like you tried making me?

MALCOLM
Ignacio... whatever it takes. I told
you.

IGNACIO
(Shouting)
You took it too far!

MALCOLM
His kids would've grown up with
more hate towards us then Rupert
ever had. You did what was
necessary... I got you to thank for
stepping up when no one else would.
Cuz in that moment, in that house,
you made way for this empire. Now...
it's time for you to take over,
ain't it? I can see it in yo face,
you realized "the people" ain't
shit. They only care about
themselves and will leave you in an
instant. So is only fair you do the
same.

Malcolm turns to looks at Ignacio, who looks hesitant.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
... Imma go for a walk. Remember, the
crown controls all.

Malcolm begins walking towards the grassy field. Ignacio is
left frozen, momentarily. He snaps out of and instantly aims
at Malcolm, only a few yards away.

BAM!

CUT TO:

INT. BOOKER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP of Bronze who had been listening to Booker talk.

BRONZE
So they've known each other.

BOOKER
Since the sandbox.

BRONZE

Yet he just sent him down south to become a 'Sicario'?

BOOKER

Him and those troops of his, yeah. And it would've had a great payout, if they had volunteered for it. But Malcolm was too eager, and at some point whilst they were down there, Ignacio and the others fled and found their way back home, still hiding. Ol' Ignacio found purpose in vengeance. So he bided his time and waited for a day like tonight. All the meanwhile, he came looking for me, and that was about the time I was looking to expand.

Bronze goes silent, thinking about the story when suddenly Booker's phone rings. He answers.

IGNACIO (VOICE)

It's done.

BOOKER

... Good work, Ignacio. Head on home. Get some rest. We'll sort things out soon.

Booker hangs up. Bronze is left to think.

EXT. GRASSFIELD - CONTINUED

Ignacio hangs up his cell. He takes one last look at Malcolm's body before he embraces the night sky blowing a gentle, warm breeze. Finally, he turns and begins walking back to his SUV.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FATE OF THE DOGS

-- A man in a black hoodie and jeans, resembling Malcolm's people, walks along a familiar orange-bricked wall of an apartment complex. He turns the corner and we see it's Drizzy's old hotspot taken over by similar dressed men. Except now, Miguel and friends order them around.

-- Booker sits at an airport reading a brochure of the Bahamas, and wearing a Hawaiian button up shirt. A man next to him shows him something funny on his phone, we PAN OUT to see that it's another OG also wearing a Hawaiian shirt.

-- At an empty dine-in, Bronze is vouching for Ignacio to take over Malcolm's connect to the two men sitting across the table. Ignacio listens on, sitting next to Bronze.

-- Ignacio steps out of his apartment holding a duffel bag. He meets Bronze standing next to his car. His girlfriend waits inside. Ignacio hands Bronze the bag, containing his retirement money. Bronze takes it and nods. Ignacio nods and watches Bronze enter his car and drive away.

-- CLOSE UP on a series of deals. Money being paid, drugs being handed over, shaky hands opening vials.

-- At a new corner, presumably in East side, Ignacio and Kaleb watch on from an SUV as a deal is being struck. Kaleb types what he observes on his laptop.

-- Tray arrives to a loading dock at the back of a store. There's a group of boys hanging out who he confronts. A strong parallel to Bronze's first encounter with Ignacio's independent.

-- Drizzy sits alone at a park with two travel cases at his sides. He contemplates until a van parks in front of him. He collects both cases and enters the van.

-- Ignacio sits like a king at a throne as a henchman whispers something into his ear. Ignacio looks at him and nods.

-- In the dead of night, two men dressed in black break into Drizzy's home, awakening his parents. The parents are held at gunpoint by one of them as the other searches and eventually finds Drizzy's empty room.

-- A man is aggressively boasting to others at a corner. A suspicious man in a hoodie speed walks towards the boaster. When he's only a few feet away, he pulls out a pistol and shoots him straight in the head, in full sight of others.

-- Drizzy steps out in a new area. A much cleaner, suburban area. He looks at his new surroundings, an expression on his face hinting at a grudge brewing inside him...

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

THE END.