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STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

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Universal Pictures

“Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything. If you're a man, you take it.”

--Malcolm X

“A young nigga got it bad 'cause I'm brown, and not the other color, so police think they have the authority to kill a minority.”

--Ice Cube

EXT. HOUSE - COMPTON - MORNING

It's a sun-blasted morning in Compton. Early enough that the streets are quiet and empty. Fluffy clouds, blue sky. If you squint, it almost looks like a nice block.

SCREEN BURN: *1987. City Of Compton.*

A RATTLING noise announces the arrival of a beat-to-shit DATSUN B-210 rounding the corner. It rolls down the street toward us, spewing exhaust and fumes. God damn, that's an ugly-ass car. FUNKADELIC thumps softly from inside.

The Datsun pulls into the DRIVEWAY of a well-kept ranch-style house. Even after the ignition is turned off, the car belches out a few more pops and rattles.

A tall, sturdy, handsome young black man climbs out, carrying a pair of large headphones, and a pull-out car stereo. He stretches, rolls his neck, grins sleepily at the sun.

This is ANDRE YOUNG, 21, but you can just call him DRE. He strolls across the lawn, jogs up the steps to the door--

INT. VERNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dre enters the house, goes to the kitchen, drops the headphones and the pull-out on the counter, opens the fridge, starts rooting around inside--

VERNA (O.S.)
This the last time, Andre.

He pops up from behind the fridge door, drinking milk straight from the carton. He comes face to face with VERNA GRIFFIN, 36, his young and tough-as-nails Mother. He flashes his smooth, easy, magnetic Dre-smile.

DRE
Shoulda seen those kids, Ma. They
was jumpin like crazy, it was sick--

She SNATCHES the carton right out of his hand. Drops of milk go flying, splash against Dre's face. His smile drops.

VERNA
You even care how it makes me look?
Call in favors to get your
thoughtless ass an interview? And
you can't even show up?

DRE
Come on, I was doin my thing. I'm
good at it, you know. People say
I'm the best they ever heard--

VERNA
What, you put a record on, push
play? You call that a job?

DRE
I don't know! Maybe one day--

VERNA
Maybe you don't care, and you'll
keep lettin every decent
opportunity pass you by. *Maybe*
you'll end up servin' the block,
just like your Uncles. I want you
alive at 81, not dead before 21.
You need a job, you need a future--

DRE
Why you think I can't make my own
money? I get paid. Look--

He pulls out a sad little wad of bills, waves it in her face.
Quick as lightning, she SNATCHES it away from him.

She looks at the little wad, twists it between her fingers,
shakes her head, gives him a hard sneer.

VERNA
Fifty bucks? Damn, Andre. You a
muthafuckin *baller*.

DRE
Gimme that. I earned that shit.

He tries to SNATCH it back, but she's too quick. She slides
it into her pocket, glares at him defiantly.

VERNA
You live under this roof? You gonna
start payin your own way. Been
lettin things slide too long.
Stayin out all goddamn night. Come
home stinkin like easy pussy--

He PUSHES past her, heads for his room, but she's right on
his heels, her anger ramping up quick--

VERNA (CONT'D)
Do NOT turn your back on me--

She grabs him by the shoulder, spins him to face her. He's a lot bigger than her, but damn she's got some strength--

VERNA (CONT'D)

When are you gonna start acting like a man? You have a child, Andre. You have responsibilities. If you can't find a way to make some real money, you're never gonna be able to take care of anybody.

Dre crosses his arms, stares her down, head cocked.

DRE

Why you gotta act all superior to me? I got a kid, yeah. You got three. But you don't see me going around talking about how much you fucked up your own damn life--

Verna's eyes FLASH. Then she suddenly HITS HIM IN THE FACE. Not a slap. Not a back-hand. A real, serious punch.

Dre steps back, puts his hand to his cheek.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ho, shit.

They turn to see a sleep-disheveled teenaged BOY gaping from a nearby doorway. This is TYREE, Dre's younger brother.

DRE

Go back to sleep, Tyree.

TYREE

What I miss?

Dre doesn't answer, just turns and calmly walks past Verna, into the kitchen. He picks up his headphones, and his pull-out car stereo. Heads for the door, opens it--

VERNA

(regret)

Andre--

But he's already closed the door behind him--

INT./EXT. DRE'S CAR - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dre sits in the car, turns the key in the ignition, but it won't start. He tries it again. Still nothing. He closes his eyes, clenches his teeth. *Fucking car.*

DRE
Perfect.

He opens his eyes, and sees TYREE walking down the drive toward him, carrying a messy bundle of CLOTHES.

TYREE
Grabbed some of your stuff.

DRE
Good lookin out, T. Thanks.

Tyree tosses the clothes in the back.

TYREE
You really not comin back?

DRE
Probably not for awhile, bruh.

Tyree frowns, looks away. Jams his hands in his pockets.

DRE (CONT'D)
Ain't goin that far. I'll still be around. Don't worry.

TYREE
(unconvinced)
Yeah.

Dre tries the key again. This time, it starts. Dre holds his fist out the window. Tyree sadly bumps it. Dre pulls away.

INT./EXT. DRE'S CAR - SOUTH CENTRAL - MINUTES LATER

Dre rolls along in that ugly-ass Datsun. It's still early, but the STREETS are starting to FILL UP. Dudes in doorways, clustered on the corners, clocking him as he passes.

He reaches for the glove compartment, opens it. His fingers slide-- over a fat pile of parking tickets-- and grab onto a cassette tape, with a handwritten label: DR.DRE TRAFFIC JAMS

He pops it in the STEREO and MUSIC pours out-- beats, scratches, a lovingly-produced MIX-TAPE loaded with samples, and rapid-fire RAPPERS (*familiar*) trading off short verses--

EXT. COMPTON - CONTINUOUS

Dre's Datsun keeps rolling, passes by a BLACK TOYOTA, and we HOLD on that Toyota as the Datsun rattles past--

A disheveled MAN (early 30s) stumbles over to the Toyota. Skinny as a rail, crack-blasted eyes darting back and forth, clocking the street. Looks like he's been up for days.

He's clutching a DISC-SHAPED METAL OBJECT--a small UTILITY HOLE COVER. The Crackhead stops at the side of the Toyota.

With a grunt, he HURLS the heavy disc-- which SMASHES through the back window. He reaches into the hole, unlocks the door, and CLIMBS INSIDE, grabbing whatever he can find--

But we don't watch the Crackhead anymore, because the ROAR of an LAPD HELO draws our attention up into the SKY, and we FOLLOW that bird NORTH as it roars over the city--

EXT. LOS ANGELES - WAY UP IN THE SKY

Flying high over the city, it's quiet up here, only the sound of WIND. BELOW, we see the tight grids of SOUTH LOS ANGELES, and the densely-packed TRAFFIC heading north on the 110 FREEWAY, as it angles toward the SKYSCRAPERS of DOWNTOWN L.A.

We move NORTH and there's DODGER STADIUM plunked at the southern tip of ELYSIAN PARK, and the LA RIVER twisting snakelike up into GRIFFITH PARK--

And NORTHWEST past the mountains of Griffith, descending into the VALLEY, where we suddenly DIVE DOWN into WOODLAND HILLS and settle upon the low-slung sprawl of TAFT HIGH SCHOOL--

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

We track backward through a CLASSROOM full of SENIORS. Well-off kids. Late 80's fashions. A mixture of big hair, acid jeans, and asymmetrical post-punk haircuts.

Aside from a few scattered Latino and Asian kids, almost everyone is WHITE. As we track further to the rear of the room, in the back row we find a lone BLACK KID:

Baseball cap pulled low over a shoulder-length Jheri Curl. Compact, muscular build. He's hunched over his desk, SCRIBBLING tight lines of text into a NOTEBOOK, his face pulled into a soon-to-be-iconic FROWN of concentration.

This is O'SHEA JACKSON, 17, but you know him as ICE CUBE.

Cube keeps WRITING, while an unseen TEACHER drones on--

MATH TEACHER (O.S.)
O'Shea? Earth to O'Shea Jackson?

Cube looks up from his notebook, sees the TEACHER staring at him expectantly, along with several STUDENTS.

MATH TEACHER (CONT'D)
Did you want to come up and put
your equation on the board?

Cube groans, gets up, walks to the blackboard. But we don't follow him there, instead we ZOOM IN on the NOTEBOOK he left on his desk, and we SEE the LINES he just wrote:

*Bored as hell and I wanna get ill. So I went to the spot
where my homeboys chill--*

INT./EXT. YELLOW SCHOOL BUS - AFTERNOON

The SCHOOL BUS cruises Southeast, out of the soft womb of the Valley, in the direction of Downtown L.A.

Inside the BUS, halfway back, Ice Cube leans against the window. He's still got that NOTEPAD, still scribbling lyrics, his focus so intense he doesn't even look out the window.

The Bus slowly EMPTIES as it rumbles along. Pretty soon, Cube is the only one left riding.

EXT. EXPOSITION BLVD - LATE AFTERNOON

CUBE waits at a BUS STOP south of Downtown, in a small crowd of PEOPLE-- and unlike earlier, NONE of them are white.

As the sun sinks lower in the sky, an RTD BUS pulls up, and the crowd slowly shuffles aboard--

EXT./INT. RTD BUS - SOUTH LOS ANGELES - LATE AFTERNOON

The BUS cruises Southbound on Western. It's getting DARKER, and the darker it gets, the less safe we feel.

Let's be real about it: compared to the Valley, it looks like BEIRUT out there. Graffiti tags. Liquor stores everywhere. Boarded-up shops. Dudes loitering, drinking, serving.

Find CUBE sitting halfway back, but unlike before, his face isn't buried in his notebook. Instead, he's carefully WATCHING everything happening on that bus.

He's checking out the CLOTHING worn by his fellow PASSENGERS. The LOGOS and SPORTS TEAMS featured on the various BALL CAPS and T-SHIRTS. The COLORS of coats and bandanas and doo-rags.

From Cube's POV, in his MIND'S EYE, tiny on-screen TEXT LABELS appear, SUPERIMPOSED over the CLOTHING ITEMS:

On a PIRATES CAP, Cube's "mind-label" says EASTSIDE PIRU BLOODS. A MARINERS CAP says ROLLIN 60'S CRIPS. A HOUSTON ASTROS shirt says HOOVER CRIPS. A YANKEES SHIRT says NEIGHBORHOOD CRIPS.

Cube himself is wearing NO COLORS at all. His outfit is a combination of whites, blacks, and greys. This is not accidental. This is a deliberate, crucial choice.

As he's clocking the riders, he notices that THREE DUDES are EYEBALLING him from the back of the bus. They're each wearing some RED on them-- *hat, bandana, shoelaces*. Cube's "mind-label" says INGLEWOOD FAMILY BLOODS.

Cube quickly averts his eyes, but the BLOODS keep mad-dogging him. One of them STANDS UP, and now we can see the hilt of a BUCK KNIFE poking up from his waistline.

Cube keeps his eyes down. The Blood starts walking toward him. The OTHER TWO get up and follow behind.

Cube slowly reaches for the WINDOW next to him, and starts SLIDING IT OPEN. He sneaks a GLANCE at the approaching Bloods, sees that they're only a few feet away, and every one of their EYES is locked right on him.

He pulls his backpack into his lap, starts threading his arms through the straps. SWEAT beads on his forehead. There's a HISS as the bus starts to SLOW.

Cube edges closer to the window. It is clear that he is fully prepared to jump the fuck out that window.

The bus STOPS, and Cube TENSES UP, every muscle primed--

The BLOODS simply pass BEHIND him, jog down the steps of the SIDE EXIT, and into the street.

The Bus pulls away into traffic. Cube closes his eyes, the tension deflating throughout his body.

ICE CUBE
(whispered, to himself)
Fuck.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - EVENING

Cube walks along the street with his backpack, just as the STREET LIGHTS are flickering to life.

As he's passing by a small HOUSE, DORIS JACKSON (Cube's Mom) suddenly appears on the PORCH, and she calls out to him--

DORIS JACKSON
O'Shea! Where do you think you're
going? Dinner's on the table.

Cube pauses, but he sees DRE'S DATSUN parked a few houses down, so he speeds up, keeps going.

ICE CUBE
Be right back, just gotta see Jinx
for a minute--

DORIS JACKSON
Haven't you hung around that
foolish child enough? O'Shea!

Cube speeds up even more, and various DUDES on the block call out to him, clowning the shit out of him--

BLOCK DUDE 1
(high-pitched, mocking)
O'Shea! Dinner time, O'Shea!

Cube grits his teeth, keeps going, he's heard this bullshit a million times before--

BLOCK DUDE 2	BLOCK DUDE 3
<i>That ain't O'Shea. That's</i>	<i>Got some raps for us, Doug E.</i>
<i>Kurtis Blow! What up, Kurtis?</i>	<i>Fresh? Let's hear that shit!</i>

Cube doesn't respond, just FLIPS THEM OFF as he passes, while the DUDES laugh their asses off, continue cat-calling--

He jogs up the STEPS of the HOUSE with the DATSUN out front--

INT. JINX'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cube walks into the LIVING ROOM, where skinny, colorfully-dressed JINX, 17, is dancing around like crazy, while his cousin DRE sits behind some TURNTABLES, experimenting--

And by *experimenting*, we mean he's trying out some new MASH-UPS, cross-fading and scratching, transforming familiar tracks into something new, wild-- shit we've never heard.

JINX
Yo Cube! Check me out.

Jinx busts out some crazy new break-dance moves. But Cube's not really paying attention to Jinx-- his eyes are locked on DRE as he works the decks with pure, absolute focus.

Because when Dre is at the decks, he's totally in the zone, completely locked into a rhythmic vibe, and you can feel the intensity. It's infectious. Cube grins, bobs his head.

CUBE
Sounds dope, bruh.

Jinx glares at Cube, wants to get his attention. But it's obvious why Cube has stopped by-- and it ain't about Jinx.

DRE
It's okay. Still figuring out the
bass line.

Cube walks over to Dre, rips out a couple of pages from his NOTEBOOK, hands them over--

CUBE
That thing we talked about the
other day. I wrote some lyrics.

DRE
That Weird Al Yankovic shit?

Cube grins, his eyes light up, stoked that Dre remembered.

CUBE
Yeah, yeah, exactly--

Dre grabs the paper, looks at it, smiles.

DRE
You should come by Eazy's later.
Maybe get you on the mic.

JINX
Nobody wanna hear Cube's corny shit
on the mic.

Cube gives Jinx a playful (but hard) shove--

CUBE
Man, shut up.

DRE
You gonna hang awhile?

Cube shakes his head, disappointed. Wishes he could.

ICE CUBE
Gotta go have dinner. Mom's gonna
kick my ass. See you later though.

JINX
Pussy ass Mama's Boy.

Cube laughs, heads for the door--

ICE CUBE
Yeah, fuck you too, homie.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Cube walks home, and sees the same group of CAT-CALLERS up ahead-- the ones who clowning him before. But now there's at least TWICE as many, and they're drinking, getting rowdy.

He hesitates before walking into their midst-- he's sick and tired of walking that gauntlet of mocking bullshit.

But then something else catches his attention-- the GROWL of an ENGINE further up the street. It's dark, but he can make out the HEADLIGHTS, which have a distinctive SHAPE--

The CAR-- a CAPRICE-- moves slowly forward, and then the ENGINE REVS again, LOUDER this time, and Cube immediately starts RUNNING TOWARD HIS HOUSE--

ICE CUBE
ONE-TIME, ONE-TIME!

The DUDES instantly drop their shit and SCATTER--

And the CHEVY CAPRICE comes ROARING up the street, right at them, fast as fuck, and JAMS up to the curb--

Cube's already at his front steps, and he hops them two at a time, arms and legs pumping furiously--

All four doors on the Caprice pop open simultaneously, and FOUR LAPD CRASH OFFICERS pile out, and they CHASE DOWN the Dudes who haven't fled fast enough--

CUBE makes it INSIDE his house, SLAMS the door behind him--

Within seconds, the 4 COPS have literally POUNCED on 4 of the DUDES, and they start working them over, brutally, hyper-extending their arms, deliberately hitting PRESSURE POINTS just to cause pain, throwing them to the GROUND--

INT. JACKSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cube stands by the WINDOW, his hand pulling the curtain aside. He's sweating, amped, catching his breath, WATCHING the CRASH unit go about their business on the street outside.

Though the sound is muffled, he can still HEAR the SHOUTS of protest from the guys on the ground, along with all the SHIT being talked by the COPS themselves--

DUDES ON GROUND
*4 cops in one car! You ain't
 arresting nobody! You just
 wanna fuck with us! Admit
 that shit!*

CRASH UNIT COPS
*Stay down! Wanna die tonight?
 Keep your eyes on the ground!
 Don't say another fucking
 word--*

From the window, Cube keeps WATCHING.

And, A FEW HOUSES DOWN, JINX and DRE are ALSO standing in their OWN WINDOW, also WATCHING the action unfold outside:

The COPS drag the Dudes off the ground, and LEAN them face-first on the HOOD of the Caprice. The Dudes SQUIRM, because the HOOD is fucking hot, and it burns them.

DUDES ON HOOD
*Aughh! It's too hot! Why you
 doin this, didn't do shit--*

CRASH UNIT COPS
*Don't move a fucking inch or
 we will Fuck You UP--*

INSIDE, Cube scowls angrily. He'd like to go out there and fuck those cops up. But of course he can't do shit.

DORIS JACKSON (O.S.)
Come to the table, O'Shea.

Cube remains at the window for a beat, while the Cops keep abusing the Dudes outside--

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL STREETS - NIGHT

Outside Cube's house, we ZOOM past the COPS taunting the Dudes on the Caprice's hood, and we ZIP up over the rows of HOUSES and ALLEYS until we're a few miles away in COMPTON--

And we SETTLE on a COMPTON STREET, where a IMPALA LOW-RIDER is cruising slowly down the street, and we SLIDE toward that particular ride, where a YOUNG BLACK MAN is behind the wheel--

INT. EAZY'S IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

We're now in the car with ERIC WRIGHT, 21, but we'll come to know him as EAZY-E. The stereo thumps out some Eric B & Rakim. He drives slow, arm dangling out the window.

This is a man who is completely in his element-- comfortable and poised, ready for anything, even when shit gets hairy.

From his POV through the WINDSHIELD, we see COMPTON coming to life as NIGHT takes over:

There's plenty of PEOPLE out on the streets. Drinking and carousing. Smoking weed in the open. Sneaking off to the SHADOWS to smoke other shit. Hollering at GIRLS walking past.

Eazy sees a LIGHTER SPARKING in the darkness, further up the block. It's a SIGNAL from a potential CUSTOMER. He pulls over to the curb, gets out, WALKS over in that direction.

Seeing Eazy on his feet, it's striking how SHORT he is-- 5'4 at the most, though his upper body is packed with muscle. Still, his stride is pure confidence, smooth, a Hustler.

While walking, a RAGGEDY GIRL sidles up to him. Hair askew, bad skin, wobbling along on high heels.

RAGGED GIRL
Hey baby, you got somethin--

EAZY
Depends, girl, you got any money?

She holds out a thick, dull-looking GOLD CHAIN.

RAGGED GIRL
This real gold, I got it from--

Eazy takes a look, then busts out laughing.

EAZY
You serious with this fake-ass
shit? This ain't worth two dollars.

He SLAPS the chain out of her hand, and it CLATTERS to the street, and she chases after it while he keeps walking--

RAGGED GIRL
Why you gotta do me like that?

He ignores her, walks over to the CUSTOMER who is huddled in the shadows next to a HOUSE. The dude has racks of PRISON INK covering his arms and running up his neck.

CUSTOMER
Good for twelve, bruh.

EAZY
Do fifteen, you get one free.

Another LAPD HELO roars by overhead, shining its SPOTLIGHT down, and everyone in the street momentarily FREEZES--

Until the HELO disappears, and street business resumes.

CUSTOMER

Aiight. Do that, then.

The Customer discreetly passes some BILLS to Eazy, who rapidly FANS out the bills, COUNTS them, then POCKETS them, so quick you barely even saw it.

Eazy reaches into his coat pocket, and just as fast, counts out 15 mini-zips of crack cocaine, slips them into the Customer's hands.

The Customer starts COUNTING them, nowhere near as fast as Eazy, who checks his PAGER while he waits.

A VOICE suddenly SHOUTS from nearby--

VOICE (O.S.)

Eyes up, cuz!

Eazy's eyes shoot to the DARK SEDAN which has silently crept up beside them, with the headlights off.

Eazy starts RUNNING before he even SEES the DUDE hanging out the window, double-fisting a pair of .38's--

POP-POP-POP-POP-POP--

The CUSTOMER takes a BULLET to the dome, and he DROPS like a sack of nickels. Eazy's already halfway down the block before the body hits the ground--

Still, the bullets keep FLYING-- POP-POP-POP-POP-POP--

Eazy makes it to his CAR and he DIVES THROUGH the PASSENGER WINDOW, slides over behind the wheel, starts up the car, and PEEELS away, all while practically laying FLAT on the seat--

He doesn't let his head come up until he's far down the street, and he keeps on SPEEDING, with the headlights off, eyes flicking to the rear-view, breathing hard--

INT./EXT. EAZY'S IMPALA - COMPTON - NIGHT

Eazy sits in his Impala across from a shitty-looking BROWN HOUSE with barred windows. A rusted swing-set leans sideways on the dead-grass front lawn.

He's still sweaty and catching his breath. Like he can't believe he's still alive. He pulls out his ROLL OF CASH. Adds the dead guy's BILLS to the roll. Starts COUNTING it.

It's a lot of money. He enjoys the weight of it. The smell. The sound it makes when he flips through the bills. It has a visibly CALMING effect on him.

When he's done, he hops out of the car, moves quickly to the TRUNK-- his EYES quickly CLOCKING the area, the cars, the graffiti tags, some PEOPLE lingering in the shadows--

He pops the trunk, reaches inside, grabs a bulging Ralph's plastic grocery bag, walks quickly across the street--

INT. SHITTY BROWN HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

It's not what you'd call "cozy". The carpet is torn up, stained, cigarette-burnt. Walls covered in TAGS. 38s on the coffee table, a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN leaning on the wall.

In addition to Eazy, there's FIVE other people spread around the room. Two GIRLS lounging on a vinyl couch, eyes glazed, and three DUDES dressed Crip Blue-- one keeps an eye out the WINDOW, and the other two are gathered around--

EAZY, who has the CONTENTS of the GROCERY BAG spread out on a long TABLE at the far end of the room: three FREEZER BAGS each containing 200 mini-zips of ROCK.

DUDE 1
Six for the Rocks?

EAZY
Only if you take all three.
Otherwise it's Seven-fifty.

The other Dude frowns, sucks air through his teeth.

DUDE 2
Six? Damn. Where's it come from?

EAZY
I dunno. Fuckin Bolivia? Who gives a shit. Let's finish this up. You know I almost got blasted tonight? I'm gettin out of this game.

Dude starts laughing, *yeah right*. But then he abruptly stops, because there's a deep RUMBLING coming from outside, and the WINDOW LOOKOUT suddenly steps back, eyes wide--

LOOKOUT DUDE
Ho, shit--

Everyone RACES to the WINDOW, and they all REACT with pure adrenaline-soaked TERROR because--

There's a MASSIVE ARMORED VEHICLE rolling down the street toward them. 6 TONS of steel, with a 14-foot BATTERING RAM mounted on the front. **LAPD** emblazoned on the side.

EAZY
Fuckin Batter-Ram!

Everyone in the room FLIES into action, quickly STASHING the WEAPONS and the PRODUCT, all of it DISAPPEARING into hidden FLOOR COMPARTMENTS and CLOSETS. The GIRLS snap out of their daze, and start HELPING the Dudes lock the shit down--

The RUMBLING grows steadily LOUDER--

Eazy quickly RE-PACKS all his own SHIT and retreats toward the BACK of the house, ready to make a quick exit--

DUDE 2
*Aw shit here they come, they comin,
get ready homies--*

The RUMBLING is so LOUD now, it's like the Batter-Ram is RIGHT OUTSIDE, and the whole house seems to VIBRATE--

There's a deafening **CRASH!!** Everyone in the room FLINCHES and DUCKS DOWN, covering their heads--

But when they open their eyes, nothing has happened. *The walls are still standing.* EAZY jogs back into the room, looks out the WINDOW, and immediately starts LAUGHING HIS ASS OFF.

Because OUTSIDE, we see that the BATTER-RAM is SMASHING THROUGH THE WALLS of the HOUSE RIGHT NEXT DOOR. The 14-foot RAM POLE is literally inside the neighbor's living room.

DUDE 1
Holy--

Eazy just keeps LAUGHING. Can't believe how lucky he is.

EAZY
Fuckin Po-lice. Took down the wrong house! Oh, Jesus. Oh, shit.

NEXT DOOR, the Batter-Ram REVERSES, and in the process, HAULS OUT a gigantic CHUNK of wall. We can SEE RIGHT INTO the house next door. An ELDERLY WOMAN in a house dress emerges, her face twisted in shocked outrage--

ELDERLY WOMAN
You kilt my house! YOU
MOTHERFUCKERS KILT MY HOUSE!!

She walks right up to the BATTERING RAM and SPITS on it.

NEXT DOOR, Eazy and the others keep WATCHING out the window, and now everybody's LAUGHING and dancing around. Lighting up joints. Cracking open beers.

Eazy brings his grocery bag back over to the table, dumps all the PRODUCT back onto the surface--

EAZY

Get me that money, gotta finish up
this business--

EXT. EAZY'S HOUSE - COMPTON - NIGHT

ESTABLISH the front of another SMALL RANCH HOUSE on a different block. We follow some GIRLS as they make their way down the SIDE ALLEY, laughing, smoking, passing a 40--

And we keep following them, as MUSIC gets louder, until we emerge in the compact BACK YARD, where at least SEVENTY PEOPLE are crammed together, PARTYING their asses off.

Everyone's here-- regular folks, Bangers, skinny girls, big girls, dealers, athletes-- a true 'hood cross-section.

Now we find EAZY as he makes his way through the CROWD, and we FOLLOW along with him, meeting people as he meets them:

There's YELLA and MC REN chatting up a couple of girls. Without ever stopping his forward motion, Eazy quick-HUGS the two guys, and passes them each a dime-bag of WEED--

EAZY

Weed for Yella, weed for Ren--

He passes JINX, TYREE and WARREN G who are good-naturedly BATTLING each other with dance moves, and Eazy DANCES with them for a few beats before moving on--

He pauses briefly to quickly MAKE OUT with a drunk-looking girl, and his hands grab onto her ass, but then he breaks the kiss and moves deeper into the CROWD--

Making his way toward the FRONT of the lawn, he passes by D.O.C. and ARABIAN PRINCE, bumps fists with them, and pushes through to the DJ TABLE, where DRE is working the DECKS--

Bobbing his head, headphones on, mashing up some Funkadelic with some ICE-T. Shit works perfect, it's cool as hell. Dre's got the crowd in the palm of his hand.

ICE CUBE stands beside Dre, grooving to the beats, but looking slightly nervous. Eazy quick-hugs Cube, then bops over to Dre, gives him a fist-bump.

Eazy looks out over the crowd, grinning happily. He loves this shit, this scene, this sound. All right in his back yard. He grabs the MICROPHONE and yells into it--

EAZY (CONT'D)
(to the crowd)
Raise that shit up, Compton!

In the CROWD, everyone HOLLERS and their HANDS raise the roof. Eazy pulls out a paper bag full of JOINTS and he starts TOSSING HANDFULS to the Crowd. Everyone SCREAMS, Fuck Yeah.

Eazy puts his arm around Cube, leans close, has to SHOUT over the thumping din of the MUSIC--

EAZY (CONT'D)
Cube, you look nervous. What's up?
You ready to jump on, get these
people bouncin?

Cube looks out over the raucous crowd, everyone dancing crazy, and a few HOMEBOYS in the back are even waving their NINES in the air-- not aggressively, but, you know. *Still*.

ICE CUBE
Hell yeah, but. You sure it's cool?
There's dudes strapped up in here.

Eazy laughs, but he's cool about it, not condescending. His laugh is sly, raspy, infectious. He leans over to Dre--

EAZY
Guess what. Crazy muthafucka called
Ice Cube is scared to rap.

Dre laughs, gives Cube a playful shove.

EAZY (CONT'D)
You gonna be alright. Just don't
suck, and they won't blast you.

Cube looks momentarily freaked. But he hardens himself, clenches his jaw, puffs out his chest.

ICE CUBE
You got My Adidas?

Dre digs through a CRATE of records beside him, and within seconds, he's holding the correct VINYL up in Cube's face: a RUN-DMC WHITE LABEL, with the vocals removed.

DRE
Indeed I do.

Dre drops the record on one of his turntables, cross-fades over, and the opening beats of MY ADIDAS pound through the speakers. The crowd ROARS in approval-- even though New York is 3000 miles away, everyone here loves Run-DMC.

Dre grabs the MIC from Eazy, flips it on. Grooves around while MC'ing with his laid-back baritone.

DRE (CONT'D)

Here we go, party people in the house! This nigga from down the block, he gonna get ya'll jumpin, that's right, you know it. Give it up for muhfuckin Ice Cube--

Dre hands off the Mic to CUBE, who steps before the CROWD-- and they all EYEBALL him, suspicious. They're clearly not gonna give him respect til he earns that shit.

But Cube's up to the challenge. He's got plenty of swagger, his VOICE is incredibly powerful, thick with attitude-- he spits words like projectiles, each landing with impact.

ICE CUBE

*This track is dope but check it.
I'm bout to wreck it. This ain't
about no God damn Adidas. Now it's
all about my motherfuckin Penis--*

Some girls in the crowd HOOT, and some of the dudes half-smile, intrigued but still not convinced.

But then Cube launches into a blistering rapid-fire RAP, perfectly copying the cadences of "My Adidas", but with entirely NEW LYRICS, all hilarious shit about his DICK.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)

(Raps about his Penis, awesomely)

After only ONE VERSE, the Crowd's already in love with Cube. They go NUTS. Laughing, screaming, jumping around. The LYRICS are DIRTY AS SHIT. It's so much fun. It's like a Richard Pryor show and a Rap Show rolled together.

While Cube stalks in front of Dre's decks, performing, Dre looks very pleased indeed, his grin huge. He knows something special when he sees it, and hears it--

EXT. EAZY'S BACK YARD - LATE AS HELL

The party has mostly wound down. Most people have cleared out, except for a few people MACKING in the shadows, and a few others PASSED out on the patchy grass.

Eazy, Dre, and Cube are still hanging out by the turntables, sitting in lawn chairs, just spinning some mellow R&B, the volume turned down low.

EAZY

But it's always the same. Press a record for a dollar, sell it for two. But I'm thinking into the future. I wanna elevate this shit, you know? Start my own label, put Compton on the map. Show people what it's like out here.

DRE

I hear that. Believe me. But we need real studio time. And that shit costs money.

EAZY

You know I got money.

CUBE

So your Compton label. You got a name for that?

Eazy grins, nods, leans back in his lawn chair.

EAZY

Call that shit *Ruthless Records*.

Cube and Dre look at each other, raise their eyebrows in appreciation. Not a bad name at all.

DRE

Who you got in mind for Ruthless?

EAZY

Something raw, you know? With balls. Street music. Like a soundtrack for the hood.

Dre's eyes light up, and he exchanges a look with Cube.

DRE

Yo. There's this new track I got. For my East Coast niggas, Home Boys Only. And Cube wrote some lyrics. It's hard, it's raw, it's real. It's hood. It's what you want.

Eazy nods, gets up out of his chair, groans sleepily. Rolls the kinks out of his neck.

EAZY

Okay, Dre. You make that studio
shit happen, and I'll cover it.
Gonna go sleep now. Had myself a
long-ass day.

Eazy wanders back into the house. Dre and Cube remain
outside, watching as the SKY starts to light up a little,
because the sun is about to rise.

CUBE

Man, I'm not even tired.

DRE

Me neither, dude.

They both sit there, watching the sun rise, with excitement
humming through their veins--

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - DAY

Dre sits in front of a huge MIXING BOARD, headphones on,
adjusting the levels on a hard-driving BEAT.

Nearby, a small CREW of Kangol-wearing RAPPERS ("*Home Boys
Only*, aka "*HBO*") are gathered around the MIC, reading PAGES
of Cube's LYRICS, their expressions confused.

One of the crew walks over to EAZY, sitting off to the side,
checking his pager. He waves the Lyrics at Eric.

HBO 1

Eric, I don't know. This doesn't
make any sense.

Eric look up from his pager, frowning, annoyed.

EAZY

Course it makes sense. Cube's a
poet. Shit is real.

HBO 1

The fuck is "Ganking?" And what's a
"6-4"? We don't talk like that--

ICE CUBE (O.S.)

It's a car, man. A '64 Impala.

Everyone turns to look at CUBE, who stands off to the side,
arms crossed, annoyed.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)
Gankin is when someone steals from
 you. This shit explains itself. It
 ain't that hard.

Another HBO dude chimes in--

HBO 2
 Whatever. Point is, this some West
 Coast bullshit, and we gonna sound
 corny if we try--

EAZY
 Don't lay this on Cube, man. You
 guys are starting to annoy me.
 We're trying to make something
happen up in here--

HBO 1
 So, what? You trying to use us to
 make your Compton thing happen?
 Man, nobody cares about Compton--

Dre INTERRUPTS from the board, looking impatient--

DRE
 Ya'll got something to say about
 Compton? Come on, let's hear it.

Nobody says anything.

DRE (CONT'D)
 No? Then shut the fuck up. All this
 East Coast-West Coast shit. We are
 losing time, and I wanna lay
 something down. Can we do that? Can
 we make some music? Because that's
 all I care about right now.

Everyone looks at each other. The vibe is tense, unpleasant.

HBO 1
 (to Eazy)
 Sorry, Eric. Not gonna happen. This
 ain't us. And I ain't fuckin with
 this Jheri Curl school-boy--

ICE CUBE
 Man, fuck you and your fake L.L.-
 wanna-be punk ass.

HBO 1 grins at Cube, CRUMPLES the Lyrics sheet into a ball,
 and DROPS it on the floor.

HBO 2
Yeah. And what, nigga?

ICE CUBE
You wanna find out?

Cube and the HBO dude stare daggers. Eazy gets up, stands beside Cube. Dre whips off his headphones and flanks Cube from the other side.

Clearly, these guys have each other's backs. It wouldn't be smart to mess with them. Nothing else needs to be said. The HBO dudes exit, without saying another word.

Eazy wanders back over to the couch, plops down, sighs.

EAZY
Well there goes the muthafuckin talent. (beat) And what's wrong with Jheri Curls?

Cube sits down hard, puts his head in his hands, groans.

ICE CUBE
Fuhh.

The three of them-- Dre, Cube, and Eazy-- sit there for a second, in the cramped, insulated silence of the studio.

DRE
Whatever, fuck it. Cube, get on the mic. You wrote it anyway.

ICE CUBE
Ain't happening, bruh. I got a group already, they'll trip.

Dre sighs, shakes his head. Eventually, his eyes shift over to EAZY, slumped in a chair across the room. Dre STARES.

EAZY
Don't be lookin at me like that.

DRE
Like what?

EAZY
Man, don't even think about it.

But Dre's thinking about it, alright. His eyes are lit up like a Christmas tree.

EAZY (CONT'D)
Hell. Fuckin. No.

DRE
Don't you get it? Fuck them Kangol-
wearing bitches. This song's all
about you, man!

EAZY
You know I love you, Dre. But you
crazy. *I'm Not. A Rapper.*

Cube walks over and hands Eazy the lyrics sheet.

CUBE
Come on, E. You got this.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - LATER

The lights are mostly OFF. Eazy huddles over the MIC, wearing wrap-around SUNGLASSES and a wool cap pulled extra low. You can barely see him-- and that's the whole point.

Dre sits behind the board with Cube. He starts up the BEAT, and CUES Eazy with his finger--

EAZY
(dry, flat)
Cruisin down the street in my 6-4--

Dre winces. Eazy's delivery was pretty terrible. Dre STOPS the track, calls out to Eazy--

DRE
Hit that first beat hard. CRUISE'in
down the street. CRUISE'in.

When Eazy tries it again, it almost sounds worse--

EAZY
Cruisin down the street in my 6-4--

Cube stands up, shakes his head, heads for the exit.

CUBE
I'm outta here. No offense but this
is kinda painful.

Cube disappears out the door. Eazy looks embarrassed.

EAZY
See, I told you this was bullshit--

DRE
Hold up. Close your damn eyes.
Breathe. Think about...
(MORE)

DRE (CONT'D)
somethin that makes you feel good.
(beat) Tell me what you thinkin
about.

Eazy grins widely.

EAZY
Pussy.

DRE
Good. Now take the pussy for a
ride. Cruise with that pussy.

Dre starts the TRACK again, and CUES Eazy--

EAZY
Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.

Dre grins, nods. Much better. He stops the track again.

DRE
Yeah! That was tight. Now we only
got 59 more lines to punch in.

Eazy GROANS, pulls his hat down even lower--

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - MANY HOURS LATER

Cube enters the studio, backpack slung over his shoulder.
EAZY is curled up on the couch, zonked, snoring. Dre doesn't
even look up from the Board.

CUBE
Sup? Ya'll finished yet?

Dre looks at Cube, his eyes red-rimmed but still alert.

DRE
Not exactly. (beat) Locked in about
two verses.

CUBE
Two? There's six verses in that
shit! You ain't even halfway done?

DRE
Gotta get it right.

On the couch, Eazy suddenly wakes up.

EAZY
What the fuhh? Whoa. I'm trippin.
The hell time is it?

Cube checks his watch.

CUBE
Almost 4.

EAZY
That late? For real?

Cube stares at Eazy a beat, eyebrow cocked.

CUBE
4 in the afternoon, bruh.

EAZY
What?

Cube laughs, shakes his head, walks out the door--

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - EVEN MORE HOURS LATER

Dre and Eazy have been at it for such a long time, they're both a little INSANE at this point. Too much focus, not enough sleep. TYREE is there too, just lounging, watching.

DRE
Just hit it right. On the beat.

EAZY
Gonna hit it like I hit ya mama.

Tyree laughs out loud. Dre rolls his eyes, rubs the fatigue out of his face.

DRE
Fine, cool, whatever. Just don't mess it up this time.

Dre starts up the BEAT, finger-CUES Eazy, who dives in--

EAZY
She said somethin, I couldn't believe. So I grabbed the stupid bitch by her nappy-ass weave.

Eazy's delivery is so dry and perfect, Dre and Tyree start LAUGHING their asses off.

TYREE
That's what I'm talkin about--

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - WHO THE FUCK KNOWS

Dre, Cube and Eazy sit in the studio, along with TYREE, D.O.C., YELLA, and REN.

Dre pushes PLAY on the freshly completed TRACK, and it starts THUMPING from the speakers. It's "BOYZ N THA HOOD".

It's raw and somewhat primitive, but it's nasty, dangerous, and also-- *crucially*-- it's funny. Nobody expected it. You can tell from their surprised, wide-eyed expressions.

CUBE, especially, looks thrilled about how good his lyrics sound booming from the speakers.

REN

Damn. Never heard anything like that before.

YELLA

For real. It's like you're right t here on the street. Just livin a day in the Life.

D.O.C.

Some dope ass lyrics, Cube.

CUBE

Dre, for real. You did it. Turned this dude into a rapper.

EAZY

You really think it sounds good?

Eazy pushes up his sunglasses, really looks at Cube, and you can tell he's still very insecure about this.

CUBE

Wouldn't lie about that shit. It's dope. It really is.

Eazy tries to hide his excitement, puts his shades back on.

EAZY

You got more songs?

CUBE

Hell yeah. I got a million.

Everyone listens some more, the excitement building.

EAZY
When people hear this shit, they
gonna be like, *those are some crazy-*
ass fuckin Niggas.

ICE CUBE
Straight-up gangsta niggas.

DRE
I'm down with that. As long as they
know we Niggas with attitudes.

Everyone laughs, and looks at each other, like, damn.

EAZY
Fuckin N.W.A. in the house, bitch.

Everyone freaks out about this. High-fiving. Dre pulls Cube
close, grinning, speaks low into his ear--

DRE
Maybe it's time you said See Ya to
your other group...?

Cube thinks about this, bobbing his head, listening to the
TRACK-- his LYRICS spitting out over Dre's pounding BEATS--

INT. MACOLA RECORDS - DAY

BOYZ continues playing OVER--

A STACK of VINYL RECORDS moving through a PRESS--

And a Machine STAMPING the WHITE LABEL onto the MIDDLE--

CLOSE on the WHITE LABEL-- **BOYZ N THA HOOD.**

In the RECEIVING area, EAZY picks up a couple BOXES of
RECORDS. He PAYS for them, and hauls them away.

In the BACKGROUND, we see a white-haired, MIDDLE-AGED GUY in
a velvet track suit, going through some files. He WATCHES
Easy as he leaves, his expression curious.

INT. CENTRAL AVE - RECORD STORE - COMPTON - DAY

BOYZ keeps on THUMPING--

DRE stands at the counter of another RECORD STORE, with a BOX
OF RECORDS. The CLERK takes about SIX RECORDS--

EXT. COMPTON - HOUSE - NIGHT

BOYZ continues OVER--

Eazy emerges from another RUN-DOWN HOUSE and jogs across the street to his Impala. He climbs inside, pulls out a large WAD of CASH and stuffs it into the glove compartment.

It's business as usual, a hustler is always hustlin--

EXT. ROADIUM SWAP MEET - DAY

BOYZ continues as Eazy brings TWO BOXES of RECORDS to a SWAP MEET BOOTH operated by STEVE YANO, who frowns at him.

EAZY
Trust me. We're blowin up local.
These gonna go quick.

STEVE YANO
Only paying for one, Eric. Sorry.

Eric snorts, makes a brushing-off gesture, walks off, always moving, already onto the next thing in his mind--

EAZY
Whatever, Yano. You'll be paging me
by Wednesday. And the next boxes
gonna cost double--

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - DAY

Dre's at the board, Eazy (and Yella and REN, maybe) are watching, while Cube tears up the MIC.

ICE CUBE
*Do anything for a hit or two. Give
the bitch a rock she'll fuck yo
whole damn crew. Might be yo wife
and it might make you sick. Come
home and see her mouth on the
Dopeman's dick--*

Dre CUTS OFF the track, and everyone REACTS to the ferocity of Cube's new lyrics.

YELLA
God damn that's cold.

REN
I love it, but. Come on. They never
gonna play that on the radio.

EAZY

So what? Our shit is for the
street. We just gotta get out
there. Gotta make people know.

Eazy gets up to leave the studio--

DRE

Where you going? Ain't finished--

EAZY

Gettin sick of haulin records all
over town. Sick of fuckin with the
swap meet. That's small-time.

And Eazy's GONE, banged out the door.

CUBE

The fuck? He still slangin rocks?

DRE

How much money you throwin in for
studio time, school-boy?

The other guys laugh. Cube frowns, but Dre's got a point.

INT. MACOLA RECORDS - OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON: *BOYZ N THA HOOD* playing on a TURNTABLE. We PULL
BACK to REVEAL the white-haired MIDDLE AGED GUY, and he's at
his desk, LISTENING to the record intently.

He's wearing another velvet track suit-- red this time. His
face is craggy, seasoned, wise. He's got terrible posture,
but his eyes are lively, hyper-alert. Meet JERRY HELLER.

PULL BACK FURTHER to REVEAL that EAZY-- wearing SUNGLASSES--
is sitting on the other side of the desk. Jerry STOPS the
record when it's finished. Sits there, fingers steepled.

JERRY HELLER

Well. That's very interesting.
(beat) Would you mind taking off
your sunglasses?

Eazy doesn't move a muscle, doesn't take them off.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)

Because it's important to me. To
connect with people. To look them
in the eyes--

EAZY
Interesting don't mean shit.

Jerry grins, leans back in his chair, regards Eazy.

JERRY HELLER
 Take 'em off and I'll tell you what
 I *really* think.

Eazy huffs, and slowly-- very slowly-- removes the shades. He stares right back at Jerry, his eyes hard, confrontational.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
 Thank you. What I wanted to tell
 you was... that track just...
knocked my goddamn socks off. I
 think it has more potential than
 anything I've ever heard, in my
 entire career. And that's no joke.

Eazy's face registers a moment of surprise: He really didn't see that coming. But he quickly suppresses it, re-solidifies his expression into hard stone.

EAZY
 I know it's good.

JERRY HELLER
 You really paid your friend 750
 bucks just to meet me?

Eazy just shrugs, whatever, water off his back.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
 Well that was unnecessary. I
 would've met you for free. But
 that's in the past. What I'm
 thinking about is the future. And
 more money than you ever thought
 possible. That sound good to you?

Eazy just stares, cold, unreadable. Jerry rubs his eyes, frustrated, his regular spiel isn't having its usual effect.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
 Let's try this again. Tell me what
 you think I can do for you, Eric.

Eazy lets his eyes wander around the shabby office. The furniture is sad. The posters on the walls are old and irrelevant. The carpet is stained and ratty.

EAZY

Maybe I'm the one who can do
somethin for you.

JERRY HELLER

You think because I don't have some
flashy office, that means I don't
know what I'm talking about?

EAZY

I don't know. Do you?

Jerry leans on his elbows on the desk, cocks his head at
Eazy. The balls on this kid. He's never met anyone like him.

JERRY HELLER

Let me tell you what I see. Lotta
raw talent. Lotta *braggadoccio*. But
if you think anyone's gonna talk to
you, if you think anyone's gonna
let you into the building where you
might talk to somebody-- somebody
who matters-- you're crazy.

Eazy frowns, looks out the window.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)

That's what I do for you. I've been
in this business over 20 years. You
sign with me, I will use all those
years of everything I know,
everyone I've met, every favor I'm
owed, and I'm owed a lot. I will
protect you, I will cover your ass,
I will block out all the noise of
this business so you and your
friends can be as creative as you
wanna be. But there's gotta be
trust. So I gotta know. You think
you can trust me?

Eazy stares at him a little while. Finally, he nods.

EAZY

Yeah I can trust you. But first
let's see if you can really do all
that shit you say you can do.

JERRY HELLER

Fair enough. (beat) So what does
N.W.A. stand for anyway? "*No Whites
Allowed?*"

Eazy looks at Jerry. His mouth drops open a little. A hard nugget of tension hangs in the air. But then Eazy starts LAUGHING. Pretty soon, Jerry's laughing too.

EAZY

Yeah. Somethin like that--

INT. K-DAY RADIO STATION - DAY

Behind the controls, iconic Disc Jockey GREG MACK is spinning *BOYZ IN THA HOOD* over the airwaves of Los Angeles. He grins, bobbing his head, digging this shit, big-time.

He glances over to the TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD, which suddenly LIGHTS UP like crazy, with dozens of CALLERS. Greg Mack picks up the phone, PUNCHES one of the extensions--

GREG MACK

K-DAY, you got Greg Mack. (beat)
That's Eazy-E. Local rapper outta
Compton. In a new group called
N.W.A. & the Posse. (beat) You damn
right it's dope!

EXT. EAZY'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

A beautiful afternoon, perfect for a Sunday BBQ in Compton. Music is playing, people are eating, drinking, smoking, dancing, having a great time.

Over by the garage, Eazy is standing in a circle of everyone in the soon-to-be-legendary N.W.A. lineup-- DRE, CUBE, YELLA, and REN. (Is A.P. There too?)

REN

Homeboy's white. The fuck he know
about us, how we live down here?

EAZY

He don't have to. He just gonna
help us make money, get us shows,
get us distribution for Ruthless--

CUBE

And you pay him?

EAZY

Naw, he just takes 20% of whatever
we make. That's how managers work.

CUT TO:

INT. RECORD LABEL OFFICES - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Jerry Heller sits at a conference table, playing the SONG for the gathered EXECUTIVES, who also parse through the various PHOTOS of the Group, posing aggressively with the guns.

EAZY'S VOICE (O.S.)
*Jerry's out there right now, in the
 world, talkin up our shit!*

The Execs' FACES tell us all we need to know-- they either don't get it, are frightened by it, or just plain hate it. They SHAKE THEIR HEADS NO--

BACK TO:

EXT. EAZY'S BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

CUBE
 And you trust this dude?

Eazy cocks his head at Cube, crosses his arms.

EAZY
 Cube, I gotta know. You in this,
 right? You skippin off to Arizona
 soon, and I just wanna make sure--

CUBE
 I told you, bruh. Just because I'm
 goin to college don't mean N.W.A.
 ain't my priority--

EAZY
 --because we headin into serious
 territory, homie. Ain't got time
 for no bullshit--

Dre throws his arm around Eazy, puts a stop to it--

DRE
 Come on now. Cube has never failed
 to deliver dope shit. He always
 comes correct, ready to work. That
 ain't gonna change. Aight?

Cube and Eazy clink beers, smile, it's all good.

EAZY
 And for the record, yeah I trust
 him. Whiteboy got us on the radio.
 That ain't no joke. So I gotta
 know. Do you niggas trust me?

Everyone nods, wordlessly expressing their solidarity.

YELLA
Can Jerry Heller bring me more
pussy? Because I will sign on that
muhfuckin dotted line right now.

And everyone LAUGHS their asses off--

INT. JERRY'S DELI - DAY

Dre, Cube, Yella, Ren and Eazy are squeezed into a large booth with Jerry Heller. Ren glances around the huge interior, and picks up the menu, frowns, confused.

REN
(to Jerry)
So do you, like, own this place?

Jerry laughs out loud, but kindly, not dickish.

JERRY HELLER
No. But it is my favorite place.
And it's got a great name.

Cube and Yella laugh too, playfully shove Ren around.

CUBE
God damn you're dumb.

Meanwhile, Eazy's in sunglasses mode, his face unreadable as stone, letting Jerry do all the talking for him.

JERRY HELLER
So I'll be honest. We've had a lot of passes. People are scared of you guys. They think you're dangerous. But I think that's a good thing. And we've had a nibble from a guy named Bryan Turner. Runs a hot new label called Priority Records--

DRE
Priority? Doesn't sound familiar.
Who else they got on the label?

Jerry pauses a beat, finding the best response.

JERRY HELLER
Well. Like I said, they're new. A lot of very successful hit compilations. like K-Tel.
(MORE)

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
But they've got a major act now,
selling millions, hand over fist--

The guys start calling out random acts--

YELLA/REN/CUBE
Whitney Houston? Prince? Bon Jovi?

JERRY HELLER
Heh. No... The California Raisins.

The guys all look at each other like, *the fuck?* Then they bust out laughing. Jerry keeps a strong face.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
So, yeah Priority is a very forward-thinking company, and they're--

DRE
Yeah, I heard that. (beat) *Through the Grape Vine.*

Everybody laughs their asses off some more. Until EAZY finally pipes in, having been silent this whole time.

EAZY
Can y'all shut the fuck up for a minute and let Jerry talk?

Everybody calms down, contrite, but still giggling.

JERRY HELLER
Thanks, Eric. Here's the thing. Priority has money. You guys can make a real record. Sell it nationwide. But we're not in there yet. Turner still needs some... convincing. So I'm gonna bring him to your next show--

DRE
At Skateland? For real?

JERRY HELLER
For real, Dre. So it's gonna have to be the show of your lives. You're gonna have to bring the thunder, fellas. Can you do that?

The guys all stare back at Jerry, with the fire in their eyes. Goddamn right they can do that--

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The boys are in the STUDIO, laying down a new TRACK. We can sense the TIGHTNESS forming between them, as each member gels perfectly into their respective roles:

DRE rocks the beats, YELLA scratches it up, CUBE raps the hard shit, backed up by EAZY and REN. It's GANGSTA GANGSTA--

ICE CUBE
(at the mic)
*This is a gang, and I'm in it. My
man Dre will fuck you up in a
minute. With a right-left-right-
left you're toothless. Then you say
god damn they Ruthless!*

EXT. COMPTON - STREET - DAY

GANGSTA GANGSTA continues to PLAY OVER--

All of N.W.A. are participating in a PHOTO SHOOT in a shitty, garbage-strewn ALLEYWAY marked up with GANG TAGS.

EAZY (O.S.)
*'Cause I'm the E, I don't slang or
bang, I just smoke muthafuckas like
it ain't no thang.*

The boys all pose, posture, and scowl, while the PHOTOG moves amongst them, snapping away. Pretty soon they're posing with PISTOLS and SHOTGUNS--

*Not because they're really Gangstas, of course, just because
the weapons make them look dangerous.*

EXT. ALL OVER SOUTH LOS ANGELES - DAY

As GANGSTA GANGSTA keeps playing, we cut to VARIOUS LOCATIONS around South L.A., where NWA MEMBERS are PUTTING UP POSTERS:

On TELEPHONE POLES and WALLS and DUMPSTERS and ROAD SIGNS:

N.W.A. - LIVE AT SKATELAND

They're going up EVERYWHERE, in Compton, Watts, Florence, Baldwin Hills, Inglewood, Long Beach...

EXT. CITY PARK - SOUTH CENTRAL - SUNSET

The Boys are all partying in a PARK, with the early-evening sunlight diffusing beautifully through the trees. For a minute, you actually forget you're in the ghetto.

They're all surrounded by local GIRLS-- who have gradually grown in numbers as their star continues to rise-- though nobody commands more female attention than EAZY himself--

And GANGSTA GANGSTA keeps THUMPIN--

EAZY (O.S.)
*And all you bitches, you know I'm
 talkin to you. "We wanna fuck you,
 Eazy!" I wanna fuck you too!*

And the track suddenly CUTS OUT to the sound of MUFFLED CHEERING and CHANTING and the location changes to--

INT. SKATELAND RINK - BACK STAGE - NIGHT

Eazy, Cube, Dre, Yella and Ren are BACK STAGE, all dressed in their black Raiders gear. The CROWD can be heard, cheering and chanting, through the walls.

They're all SWEATING, amped, nervous, excited.

DRE
 People are packed to the roof up in there. We gotta murder it.

ICE CUBE
 No doubt. Let's go fuck it up--

Out front, the LIGHTS GO OUT and the crowd lets out a ROAR like you wouldn't believe. It vibrates through the walls, and rattles right through their bodies.

EAZY
 This is crazy. *This is crazy--*

REN
 Here we go--

They all rush toward the STAGE--

INT. SKATELAND RINK - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Out in the CROWD, we see the full-blown PACKED MASS of the CROWD. Crammed together, hands in the air, screaming, even though nothing's happened yet.

At the BACK of the room, we see JERRY HELLER slipping inside with nervous-looking BRYAN TURNER, a young record exec.

Since it's so DARK in the room, and everyone is focused on the STAGE, nobody really pays these two WHITE GUYS much mind, although they do receive a few confused, hostile glances.

BRYAN TURNER

You sure this is... *safe*...?

JERRY HELLER

Try not to look so scared. If they smell it on ya, you're finished.

Turner FREEZES and his eyes go wide, and Jerry laughs, slaps him on the back.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)

Just messing with ya. Relax. You're in for a real treat.

Just then, the STAGE LIGHTS come on, and NWA is spread out in FORMATION on stage, with DRE on a riser in the middle, manning the decks. He puts up his FIST--

The bass-heavy ASSAULT of DOPEMAN kicks in. The crowd goes APESHIT. Jumping up and down. Crushed against each other--

Up on STAGE, CUBE stalks to the edge, lets loose--

ICE CUBE

*It was once said by a man who
couldn't quit--*

And and CROWD SCREAMS BACK, because they know every lyric--

THE CROWD

*DOPE MAN PLEASE CAN I HAVE ANOTHER
HIT??*

For a split second, Cube is agape with surprise-- *he can't believe they know the words--* but he GRINS and keeps going--

ICE CUBE

*The Dopeman said Cluck I don't give
a shit if your girl kneels down--*

THE CROWD

AND SUCKS MY DICK!!!!

The song CONTINUES, and all the guys on stage trades LOOKS with each other, like, *Oh my God, this is sick--*

Out in the CROWD, we find JERRY and BRYAN, standing at the rear of the fray, occasionally BUFFETED by a jumping FAN.

JERRY HELLER
You feel that, kid?

Bryan Turner can only NOD HIS HEAD, gaping, in awe. The act on stage is such a power-house, and the energy in the room is so intensely visceral, surrender is the only option.

The crowd suddenly SURGES around them, and a dancing fan COLLIDES with Bryan, sending him flying, and he SPLATS on the ground nearby, dazed--

Jerry RUSHES over to help him up, laughing the whole way--

EXT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - DAY

Eazy, Dre, Yella and Ren are standing out in front of the building, waiting to be let in.

EAZY
Yo, where's Cube?

YELLA
Maybe he stopped for some pussy.

An LAPD CRUISER pulls up to the curb, and two COPS get out and approach, holding their billy-clubs.

REN
(low, to the others)
Aw, here we go--

COP 1
You guys supposed to be somewhere?

EAZY
Yeah. Here. We're recording, we're going to work--

COP 2
(like he said nothing)
Move along now, get out of here--

DRE
We ain't doing anything wrong.

One COP heads right over to Dre--

COP 1
You got a problem?

DRE
You care about my problems?

Within seconds, the Cop has Dre UP AGAINST THE WALL, legs spread, frisking him roughly, hyper-extending his arms--

DRE (CONT'D)
Oww, what the fuck--

Suddenly JERRY appears, rushing over, confused, shocked--

JERRY HELLER
Hey, hey, these guys are with me,
they're my clients, this really
isn't necessary--

COP 2
Let us do our jobs, sir--

Cop 2 now has his pistol out. They get Yella, Ren and Eazy up against the wall, too. Frisked, prodded, poked.

Jerry watches, troubled, as his young clients simply go slack, let themselves be searched. They've gone through it too many times, they know it's better not to resist--

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

It's the STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON sessions. Jerry and the GUYS-- *except for CUBE*-- are pacing around the studio, still pissed off and amped from their encounter with the po-po.

Dre is sublimating his rage by WORKING at the Soundboard, chopping up a new SAMPLE, the HOOK from *The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band's "Express Yourself"*.

Just then, CUBE comes through the door. He doesn't say anything, just plops into a chair, fuming.

YELLA
The hell happened to you?

CUBE
You want the short version or the
long version?

EAZY
We three hours behind, nigga. Ain't
got time for no stories--

CUBE
Aaight, the short one then.

And when CUBE TELLS HIS STORY, it's RAPID-FIRE, too fast to completely understand, but full of incident. Like a 30-minute short film condensed into 30 seconds.

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Phoenix is bullshit. Full of
assholes and wannabes and
snitches. Anyway I was hangin with
this dude called Phil.*

We see CUBE partying with some PEOPLE-- including PHIL, a tall skinny Black man with cornrows. Drinking, smoking, speeding around town in a RED JEEP, pulling up at a PARTY--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Phil sold about 20 pounds of weed
per week. Mostly college kids.*

At the PARTY, everyone is dancing, wasted--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Anyway, ones of Phil's so-called
friends wanted some of that action,
so he started selling, too--*

A shady-looking WHITEBOY-- trying very hard to be Black-- opens a GYM BAG full of OUNCES OF WEED on a TABLE--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*But he was too stupid to do it
right, bougie motherfucker--*

PULL BACK to reveal his CUSTOMERS pulling out BADGES-- they're UNDERCOVER COPS-- WHITEBOY tries to RUN but they TACKLE him to the ground--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*'Course Whiteboy snitched, and a
few days later they picked up Phil--*

At a PHOENIX GAS STATION, a squad of COPS rushes PHIL'S RED JEEP, and they HAUL PHIL out of the car, kicking and screaming, they throw him on the ground and CUFF him--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Then Phil's supplier decided that
everyone who knew Phil was a
snitch, and I almost got blasted--*

Cube walks down the street with two GIRLS, and a CAR rolls slowly past-- POP-POP-POP-POP-POP-POP-POP!

Cube SCREAMS and RUNS while the dude keeps BLASTING, and Cube JUMPS over a fence, and some bushes, and disappears--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Anyway, today I'm flying back to
 L.A., and these dudes grab me,
 throw me in a room--*

At the PHOENIX AIRPORT, Cube is brought into a SMALL ROOM and QUESTIONED by a pair of square-looking GUYS IN SUITS--

CUBE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*They like, "We know you runnin shit
 into L.A. for Phil", and I'm like
 "Nigga, I'm gonna miss my plane!"
 So they search me, and of course
 they don't find nothin.*

Cube now RUNS FOR THE GATE, but when he arrives-- sweaty and gasping for breath-- it's too late, the doors are closed. He SLUMPS into a seat, shakes his head, can't believe this shit.

We cut BACK TO the STUDIO, as CUBE finishes up his story.

CUBE (CONT'D)
*So I ain't fuckin with Phoenix no
 more. Also, I wrote this shit.*

Cube digs some PAPERS out of his back pack, passes them around to everybody. They all READ the papers. Every single one of them REACTS to the LYRICS, wide-eyed.

DRE
Damn.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

CUBE is RAPPING at the MIC--

ICE CUBE
*Fuck the Police comin straight from
 the underground. A young nigga got
 it bad cause I'm brown. And not the
 other color so police think, they
 have the authority to kill a
 minority. Fuck that shit, cause I
 ain't the one, for a punk mutha-
 fucka with a badge and a gun--*

As Cube continues his assault, PULL BACK to reveal DRE, EAZY, YELLA and REN watching from the booth, and they're all absolutely GIDDY. This track is everything they believe in.

DRE
All coming together, baby--

At the FAR CORNER of the STUDIO, find JERRY watching with BRYAN TURNER and PAT CHARBONNET, Priority's lead publicist. Turner looks very nervous. He leans over to JERRY--

BRYAN TURNER
We can't really put this on the
record, can we--?

JERRY HELLER
Are you insane? Pat, you tell him.

Pat grins while she listens to Cube's fusillade--

PAT CHARBONNET
When people hear this track,
they're gonna talk about it.
Everyone's gonna talk about it.
It's gonna get loud.

JERRY HELLER
And that's why we're putting it on
the goddamn record.

Turner nods, intrigued, likes the sound of that--

EXT. COMPTON STREETS - DAY

DRE is crouched behind a TRASH CAN FIRE, expression defiant.

VOICE (O.S.)
Action!

DRE
*You are about to witness the
strength of street knowledge--*

PULL BACK to REVEAL that we're on the SET of the VIDEO SHOOT for "*Straight Outta Compton*".

As the TRACK plays, we see the GUYS having an absolute BLAST making this video. It's a dream come true.

--The whole GROUP struts down the street, followed by a large GROUP of their local homies. TYREE is there, trying to look hard, but mostly he's just so happy to be a part of this--

--NWA RUNS down the street, CHASED by ACTORS dressed as LAPD COPS, who wave PROP-GUNS around, threatening--

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

As *STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON* keeps pumping, we see the FIVE MEMBERS of NWA standing together in an ALLEY behind the building. They're all holding 40s up in the air, a toast.

EAZY

God damn. Busted our asses,
finished the record. Don't matter
what anyone else thinks. This shit
is real. We told the truth.

DRE

Hell yeah.

They all CLINK their 40s, look at each other, faces filled with excitement, anticipation, and genuine affection.

They all take a long DRINK. Yella CHOKES on some foam, coughs all over the place, and everyone LAUGHS, jostling and shoving, eventually POURING BEER all over each other--

It's a loose, chaotic, joyful celebration of brotherhood--

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - RUTHLESS - DAY

Eazy sits across from a pleased-looking Jerry, who hands Eazy a factory-sealed RECORD. Eazy holds the record in his hands, stares at it, *though we can't see it yet*.

JERRY HELLER

You ready for this, son? This is
yours. You own this. And your whole
life's about to change.

A slow smile spreads across Eazy's face--

INT. RECORD STORE - SOUTH CENTRAL - DAY

A young KID-- about 14-- grabs the LAST COPY of a RECORD from a packed record store. He stares at the COVER--

It's *STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON*. The kid grins, gets on the LINE for the cash register. The line stretches across the store. *Everyone's buying the same damn record.*

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - NIGHT

Cars ROLL up and down the street, real slow, while PEDESTRIANS holler at the RIDERS, and the riders holler back.

And NWA TRACKS are THUMPING from EVERY CAR that passes.
Literally, every car. Low-riders BOUNCE their hydraulics.

We hear CUBE'S VOICE, and EAZY'S, and REN's and DRE's,
echoing out over the CRENSHAW CROWDS that stretch in both
directions. It's like the entire HOOD is partying--

But this shit stretches far beyond the Hood, because--

INT. UCLA - FRATERNITY PARTY - NIGHT

In a cavernous BASEMENT, a massive FRAT PARTY is going on,
full of mostly WHITE KIDS, they're all DANCING--

And the MUSIC is, once again, NWA. All of the kids SCREAMING
the LYRICS along with a crazy motherfucker named Ice Cube--

EXT. PRIORITY RECORDS - DAY

A huge TOUR BUS is parked in front of the building. **NWA** is
printed on the side. All the GROUP MEMBERS are saying goodbye
to their family and friends, as they head out on TOUR.

Cube is saying goodbye to a pretty girl named KIM. The way
they look at each other, it's obvious they're in deep.

Nearby, DRE says goodbye to TYREE, whose face is pinched with
disappointment and longing.

DRE
Ain't gonna be that long.

Tyree steels his expression, doesn't wanna look soft.

TYREE
Yeah. I know. Ain't no thing.

Dre gives him a hug, then turns and jogs up the steps onto
the bus. Tyree puts his hands in his pockets, looks down.

EXT. MIDDLE AMERICA - DAY

The TOUR BUS rolls through the Plains--

INT./EXT. NWA TOUR BUS - DAY

INSIDE the bus, all of NWA is pressed to the WINDOWS as they
pass by a SUBURBAN SHOPPING MALL, their eyes wide--

Because there's a PROTEST going on out there. Several dozen angry PEOPLE are gathered, and they're throwing NWA RECORDS and TAPES into a PILE.

They carry SIGNS that say NWA HATES WOMEN! and SAY NO TO GANGSTA RAP! and PROTECT OUR KIDS FROM NWA FILTH! A local NEWS CREW captures the scene.

YELLA

What the fuhhh? How do they even
know about us out here?

Some PROTESTERS start STOMPING on the pile, smashing the records, crushing the tapes, ripping the posters, while other protesters shout and holler their approval--

EAZY

Well, at least they buyin' our shit
before they smash it--

EXT. ARENA - BACKSTAGE PARKING - NIGHT

In ST. LOUIS, the TOUR BUS pulls up inside the SECURITY AREA behind the VENUE. The bus DOOR hisses open, and we RAMP DOWN into SLOW MOTION--

NWA DISEMBARKS THE BUS. God damn they look cool. Still dressed in all-black, but now their shit looks cleaner, more expensive. They're all rocking GOLD-- rings and thick-rope chains. And when EAZY gets off last--

He's wearing a KEVLAR VEST. It's not clear if the vest is for protection, or simply because he likes the reaction it gets.

We hear SCREAMS, and POV WHIPS over to the GATE, and oh shit, here they come-- THE GIRLS. At least two dozen. Plenty of make up, crazy weaves, biker shorts, big titties, bouncing--

INT. ARENA - LATER THAT NIGHT

HUGE BASS SLAMS DOWN as the LIGHTS blind our eyes. NWA up on stage, tearing midway through their most dangerous song--

EAZY

*The E with the criminal behavior.
Yeah, I'm a gangsta, but still I
got flavor. Without a gun and a
badge, what do ya got? A sucker in
a uniform waitin to get shot--
by me, or another nigga. And with a
gat it don't matter if he's smaller
or bigger--*

Interestingly, we see that here in Middle America, the majority of the audience is WHITE. But that doesn't make them any less rabid, as fans.

We also SEE, in the BACK, a row of UNIFORMED COPS, looking tense, rattled, shooting each other pissed-off GLANCES. They clearly hate this song, and having to listen to it--

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Another ANTI-NWA PROTEST, this one taking place outside a CHURCH. The CROWDS are HUGE-- several hundred people.

And their PILE OF NWA SHIT is huge, like 7 feet tall. Someone DOUSES it with GASOLINE, and LIGHTS it up. The crowd ROARS as the flames shoot up into the night sky--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Find DRE sitting on a bed in an empty hotel room, talking on the PHONE. Muffled MUSIC and LAUGHTER thumps through the WALLS of the adjacent rooms.

He's on the phone with TYREE, and we will INTERCUT back to VERNA'S HOUSE back in Compton, where Tyree still lives.

TYREE

I just mean, maybe you could fly me out there? Could meet up with ya'll in Dallas, somethin--

DRE

I would if I could, T. But you got school. And Moms would kick my ass up and down the block if I took you on tour--

TYREE

Just a couple shows. I wanna be there, Dre! They're talkin about you guys on MTV every day, it's crazy, my friends can't believe it--

Dre laughs, sighs. He misses his brother.

DRE

We'll be back in Cali soon, bruh. Give you the star treatment. Backstage, the after-party, all that shit--

Back in Compton, Tyree deflates against the wall.

TYREE

Okay. (beat) I gotta go, man.

DRE

Yo, come on, hold up a minute--

CLICK. Tyree's gone. Dre sets the phone down. Sits there quietly for a moment. Then he gets up, walks to the DOOR to the adjacent ROOM. He hesitates.

Finally he OPENS the DOOR--

And on the OTHER SIDE, shit is absolutely GOING CRAZY. Music is pumping, people dancing. There's GIRLS everywhere, and a lot of them are topless. Some are full-on butt-ass naked.

Everyone's drinking, smoking weed, and we get a quick PEEK of some freaks having sex in the bathroom.

Dre is quickly SWEPT UP in the bacchanal, he forgets his problems next door, forgets his family, forgets everything except the present moment, because it's too much fun--

INT./EXT. TOUR BUS - SOMEWHERE ON A HIGHWAY

The TOUR BUS cruises through the night, in the middle of nowhere. But INSIDE--

The PARTY keeps on going. Everything you need. Girls, beer, weed, you name it. REN has a VIDEO CAMERA and he's FILMING the other guys.

In the BACK of the bus, they start PLAY-ACTING a GANGSTER MOVIE, starring themselves. Using real GUNS.

DRE has a PISTOL and he's POINTING it at YELLA, who falls on the ground on top of a PRETTY GIRL, who squirms around, screaming with delight.

YELLA

Don't shoot me, Dre! I don't wanna die without tapping this big ass!

Eazy points his own PISTOL right into CAMERA, and smiles--

EAZY

I'm mufuckin Eazy-E, and I'm here to assassinate the pussy.

Everybody's dying laughing, having a blast... until we see ICE CUBE, toward the FRONT of the bus, watching the action. He smiles, but he's not in the mood to join them.

He goes back to his NOTEPAD, resumes scribbling. He's got a lot of ideas, a lot of words, and he can't stop--

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SOMEWHERE ON TOUR

Cube wanders into a large conference room, where the only other occupant is PAT CHARBONNET, poring through a pile of papers, files, and NWA promotional materials.

PAT CHARBONNET
Hey, Cube. Where's the other guys?

Cube just shrugs, plops down in one of the empty seats.

CUBE
Sleeping I guess. I'm the only one who knows how to get up in the morning.

PAT CHARBONNET
I've been watching all the press you guys have been doing. And I have to say, you really stand out. Really strong camera presence. People at the label have noticed.

CUBE
No shit? For real?

PAT CHARBONNET
People think you're gonna be a big deal someday.

Cube smiles shyly, looks down at all the NWA swag spread across the table. His own face, reprinted again and again.

CUBE
So, um. Since you're at Priority. Do you know when we're supposed to, like, get paid?

Pat sets down her pen, looks at Cube, confused.

PAT CHARBONNET
You mean you haven't-- hasn't your management been handling that?

CUBE
Who, Jerry? He never tells us shit. It's just him and Eric, doing the whole Ruthless Records thing--

PAT CHARBONNET

Well I'm sure it's covered in your contract with Ruthless. (beat) You have a contract, right?

Cube just stares back at her, totally at sea. Like he's hearing this all for the first time.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Cube, Dre, Yella and Ren stroll into the LOBBY, carrying bags of McDonalds. As they walk, Cube's eyes drift over to the FANCY RESTAURANT adjacent to the Lobby.

INSIDE the restaurant, he can see JERRY and EAZY sitting at a table together, having dinner. Cube frowns.

CUBE

I'll meet you guys upstairs.

Cube peels off from the group, heads for the Restaurant. The others watch him go, then head for the elevators--

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Cube walks right up to Jerry and Eazy's table, carrying his bag of McDonalds. Eazy and Jerry are eating steaks, and drinking champagne.

Jerry gives Cube a wide-- though nonplussed-- smile. Eazy simply puts on his sunglasses.

JERRY HELLER

What can I do for you, Cube?

CUBE

Um. Just wondering when we're gonna see a contract. Because--

JERRY HELLER

Real soon. I promise. Just been putting the final touches on it--

CUBE

Really? Cool. So, like, this week?

JERRY HELLER

Totally. Absolutely.

Cube looks over at Eazy, but it's like he's a statue. No reaction whatsoever. Cube reaches down, picks up Eazy's champagne glass, drains it, and puts it back down.

CUBE
Shit's pretty good. Yum.

Cube grins, turns and walks out of the restaurant. Jerry watches him go, no longer smiling.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Cube and Ren each lay on a bed, watching sports on TV.

REN
And what'd Eazy say?

CUBE
Didn't say shit. As usual. All I know is, we're selling out arenas. We got a platinum fuckin record. And we're still broke? Living at our parents' houses and shit? That's us on the record, man. When we gonna get our piece of it?

Ren thinks about it, nods.

REN
For the record. I'm with you, Cube. When Jerry gives us a contract, I ain't gonna sign that shit until we know it's right.

CUBE
Thanks, man.

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - BRYAN TURNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Bryan Turner sits at his desk, reading a LETTER, his eyes wide. Slowly, the color drains from his face.

BRYAN TURNER
Holy. Shit.

He gets up, walks over to a FAX MACHINE, starts dialing--

INT./EXT. TOUR BUS - HOTEL - THE SOUTH - NIGHT

The BUS is PARKED in front of a DIFFERENT HOTEL. INSIDE, the guys are gathered around JERRY, who holds the LETTER.

YELLA
The muhfuckin FBI? You serious?
They gonna come after us--?

Jerry puts his hands out, placating.

JERRY HELLER

No, nothing like that. I mean,
yeah, the label isn't happy about
it, and they don't want you to
perform that song anymore--

REN

What? That's bullshit--

JERRY HELLER

I'm just saying we should be
cautious about it...

Dre abruptly stands up, staring at his pager, looking
worried. He quickly walks off the bus.

They all watch him go, confused, then Eazy goes and grabs the
letter from Jerry. Waves it in the air.

EAZY

Don't matter. The FBI can't do *shit*
to us. Except give us free
publicity. That's why we're sending
this to the press. Right, Jerry?

Jerry hesitates. Didn't necessarily see that coming.

JERRY HELLER

Well, uh. If that's what you wanna
do, then we can do that...

EAZY

That's what we're doing.

Eazy gives the letter back to Jerry, who folds it up, puts it
in his pocket, gets up, walks off the bus.

CUBE

(to Eazy)

Jerry say anything about contracts?

Eazy stares at Cube, his expression darkening.

EAZY

Man, no offense. But you're workin
my last nerve about all that--

CUBE

Whatever, Eric. I'm just sayin what
everyone else is thinkin.

Eazy crosses his arms, squares off against everyone.

EAZY

That true? Ya'll unhappy? Ya'll got
problems how Ruthless do business?

Nobody says anything, they all just look at their shoes. Cube
can't believe this shit, and he quietly fumes.

EXT. HOTEL - THE SOUTH - MINUTES LATER

Dre shuffles slowly out of the hotel, in a daze, like he just
awoke from a fucked-up dream. He walks over to the BUS.

But he doesn't get on. Instead, he simply SITS DOWN on the
pavement next to the bus. Stares straight ahead. His eyes are
filled with shock and disbelief.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS as the rest of the guys-- Ren, Yella,
Cube, and Eazy-- exit the bus, and surround Dre. They can
tell something is very, very wrong.

Yella crouches down next to him, speaks low.

YELLA

Yo, Dre. What's goin on.

Dre pulls his knees up to his chest. When he speaks, his
voice is barely a whisper, a croak.

DRE

My Mom called. (beat) Tyree. He's
dead. My little brother's dead.

YELLA

No way, man. No fuckin way--

Cube and Ren crouch down beside him, faces shocked.

Suddenly we see QUICK FLASHES of WHAT HAPPENED--

--We see TYREE some of his FRIENDS in a NASTY STREET BRAWL
with three other DUDES. Everyone's SWINGING like crazy--

DRE (O.S.)

He got in a fight. Some dude sucker-
punched him. He went down.

--We see TYREE take a hard punch from his blind spot, and he
CRUMPLES to the ground. Before his FRIENDS can help him, he's
DRAGGED to the CURB, and his HEAD laid on the edge--

--His assailant JUMPS UP in the air, and aims his boot-heels
straight for Tyree's propped-up skull--

We CUT BACK to DRE sitting on the ground, before we see/hear the IMPACT. Even so, all the other guys FLINCH.

YELLA

Fuck.

DRE

Curb-stomped him. Now he's gone.

Dre starts crying, quietly, face in his hands. Cube puts his hand on Dre's shoulder. The others circle closer.

CUBE

When my sister got murdered.
Couldn't get out of bed. Just
wanted to die. Couldn't deal.

DRE

*He should've been with me. Never
would've happened. It's my fault--*

YELLA

Don't say that, bruh. Ain't your
fault. Evil shit always be
happening in the hood.

Eazy moves in closer. Very slowly, he puts his hand on Dre's head, rubs it a bit. It's a bit startling-- Eazy's not one for tenderness. But it's clear he feels Dre's pain.

EAZY

They got my cousin, too. (beat)
Fuckin Compton.

Eazy sips a 40, pours some on the ground. He hands it to Dre, who takes a long, long pull. All he wants is to escape.

PULL BACK as the guys remain clustered around Dre. Looking so small, so vulnerable, crouched in front of the Bus, alone in the parking lot. NWA against the world.

EXT. CEMETERY - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Dre, wearing a SUIT, stands beside Tyree's fresh grave, his arm around heartbroken VERNA, who cries her eyes out. They're surrounded by family, cousins, friends, neighbors.

It's solemn and quiet. Dre remains stoic, staring hard, trying his best to remain strong for his mother--

EXT. LONESOME HIGHWAY - AMERICA - DAY

The NWA TOUR BUS hurtles through the a remote flatland--

Now we see A QUICK MONTAGE of POP CULTURE moments:

KURT LODER on MTV NEWS talks about the FBI LETTER--

KURT LODER

*And now that NWA has been publicly
targeted by the FBI-- who have
claimed that the rap group's
incendiary track, "F The Police"
encourages violence against law
enforcement officers-- it is now a
plain fact that the Compton bad-
boys are now The Most Dangerous
Band In America--*

And we see NWA on the COVER OF ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE--

Then we see various NEWS REPORTS covering the story, and a
certain PHRASE keeps being REPEATED, over and over--

*"...the world's Most Dangerous Band", "NWA are the Most
Dangerous Group in the World", "Meet the Most Dangerous Band
in America", "...why do cops hate The Most Dangerous Group?"*

The NEWS CLIPS hit a CRESCENDO until the only thing we hear
are TWO THINGS: "N.W.A.", and "DANGEROUS"--

EXT. JOE LOUIS ARENA - DETROIT - NIGHT

TITLE BURN: **AUGUST _____, 1989. DETROIT.**

It's cold as hell, but the CROWDS are thick and rowdy as they
are slowly absorbed through the entrance gates. There appear
to be a large amount of COPS spread throughout the crowd.

Toward the back of the PARKING LOT, we see a small fleet of
about FIVE CAPRICES pulling in. The doors open, and a whole
bunch of WHITE GUYS get out, approach the arena.

They wear bulky sweatshirts and jeans, but from the neck-up,
they're clearly COPS-- in PLAINCLOTHES.

INT. JOE LOUIS ARENA - DETROIT - NIGHT

Backstage, the mood is tense. The guys have been on the road
a long time. They've been stirring up a lot of shit. It's not
the jovial free-for-all we've witnessed previously.

Through the walls, we can hear (and FEEL) the CROWD chanting and screaming: **NWA! NWA! NWA! NWA!**

The guys huddle up. Get themselves pumped.

REN
Should we do it anyway?

YELLA
It's just a damn song. What they gonna do, throw us in jail?

EAZY
They might. And we a long way from home. Enemy territory.

CUBE
I don't give a fuck. If Dre drops that shit, I'm fuckin shit up.

Everyone looks to Dre. He is, after all, the man at the controls. He remains stone-faced, considering.

DRE
I don't know. Maybe I drop it, maybe I don't. See what happens.

INT. JOE LOUIS ARENA - DETROIT - LATER

On STAGE, Cube and Ren are trading off freestyle, while Dre scratches it up on the decks. They're feeding off the crazy ENERGY from the CROWD, which is jammed right up to the stage.

CUBE
We know what you want. Let's bring that nigga out here. Give it up for Eazy Motherfuckin E--

The crowd goes APESHIT as EAZY appears, wearing sunglasses and a KEVLAR VEST that seems to cover his entire body. He stalks across the stage like a predator.

Cube walks to the edge of the stage, and almost TRIPS-- he looks down, sees a COP at the edge, smirking at him. Holding out the BILLY-CLUB he just tried to trip him with.

CUBE (CONT'D)
(to Cop)
The fuck you doing?

The Cop MOUTHS something to Cube, without speaking: Fuck You. Then he WINKS and quickly ghosts himself in the crowd.

Cube stands there, shocked, can't believe it. He looks over at DRE, who is staring right back at him, mouth open, having just seen the whole thing, too.

It's clear from EAZY'S vamping that Dre is now supposed to drop one of Eazy's tracks. But the vibe has changed. Cube NODS to Dre, and Cube raises both his hands in the air--

When Cube's arms are fully extended, he quickly SNAPS BOTH MIDDLE FINGERS to attention. The CROWD RESPONDS, by getting LOUDER than we've ever heard, and RETURNING the gesture.

We're talking THOUSANDS of people, all of them with BOTH MIDDLE FINGERS RAISED, accompanied by a deafening ROAR-- *this is the real shit, this is what they came here for--*

Dre DROPS IT, and the opening salvo of FUCK THA POLICE starts POUNDING from the speakers. The CROWD starts BOUNCING and THRASHING. Cube jumps right into it, pure adrenaline--

CUBE (CONT'D)
 FUCK THE POLICE COMIN STRAIGHT FROM
 THE UNDERGROUND. A YOUNG NIGGA GOT
 IT BAD 'CAUSE I'M BROWN--

Eazy looks pissed off. It was supposed to be HIS song. But before he can even process it--

POP-POP-POP. BOOOM!

Cube stops rapping. The CROWD is momentarily STUNNED-- What the fuck was THAT? Gunfire? A fucking BOMB? Whatever it was, TOTAL CHAOS BREAKS OUT--

The CROWD starts SURGING for the EXITS. Suddenly, HUNDREDS OF COPS have MATERIALIZED out of nowhere. The COPS start SWARMING the crowd, and making their way toward the STAGE--

All the members of NWA quickly DROP their mics and rush off stage, while the Arena descends into mayhem behind them, and yet, crazily, the BACKING TRACK keeps on PLAYING--

EXT. ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

In the LOADING AREA behind the arena, The GUYS are all being quickly HUSTLED into a waiting VAN--

EAZY
 (to Dre)
 Why you play that? You tryin to get
 us all killed--

DRE
Man, FUCK them--

The van doors SLAM SHUT just as a cadre of COPS moves toward them. And the van PEELS OUT of the area--

EXT. HOTEL - DETROIT - MINUTES LATER

The Van SCREECHES to the curb in front of the HOTEL, where the TOUR BUS is idling nearby.

As the members of NWA climb off the van, they immediately notice TWO THINGS--

First, there are several hundred rabid FANS already gathered outside of the hotel entrance.

Second, there are also A SHIT-LOAD OF POLICE. And as soon as they're spotted, the cops start CLOSING IN.

YELLA
Oh my GOD.

ICE CUBE
Oh shit. Here we go--

They try to RUN toward the BUS, but the COPS are immediately ON them, grabbing them, pushing them to the ground, frisking them, CUFFING them--

And that only makes the Crowd EXPLODE even more. They start throwing BOTTLES and ROCKS at the Cops. The Cops have to DUCK and SWERVE to avoid the projectiles.

The CROWD starts CHANTING, at a deafening volume--

CROWD
FUCK THE POLICE. FUCK THE POLICE.
FUCK THE POLICE. FUCK THE POLICE--

The COPS look either angry-as-hell, or scared-as-hell. They know they have to get out of there before it gets any hairier. They DRAG the members of NWA toward waiting SQUAD CARS, and start PILING them inside--

We can see JERRY HELLER trying to shove his way through the crowd toward the SQUAD CARS--

JERRY HELLER
You have no right! This is illegal!
You can't do this--

But the Cops don't give a shit, they SLAM Jerry up against the side of the Tour Bus, hold him there--

COP

Stay fucking put, Old Man--

Jerry watches helplessly as the Squad Cars peel away into the night, taking the boys away--

INT./EXT. TOUR BUS - OPEN ROAD - THE NEXT DAY

The BUS cruises along, in the middle of nowhere.

INSIDE, in the back, all FIVE GUYS are gathered around the BUS TV, huddled close together, drinking beers. There's a NEWS REPORT about the DETROIT RIOT.

EAZY

God damn. Check another channel--

REN flips over to another station, and there's ANOTHER report about NWA. IMAGES of the GUYS flash across the screen, along with CLIPS from the "*Straight Outta Compton*" video.

DRE

Look at that. Crazy--

They're all wide-eyed and happy as hell. They are the news.

INT. DOUBLETREE SUITES - PHOENIX - NIGHT

CUBE walks down the hotel hallway, stops in front of a door. He KNOCKS, but there's no answer. He notices the door is PROPPED open with the dead-bolt, so he pushes inside--

INT. JERRY'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Cube enters the dark room. At the far end of the room, there's a DESK, with a lone LAMP illuminated, casting weird, creepy shadows across the room.

And JERRY HELLER sits behind the desk, his face mostly obscured in shadow. Cube grins, bemused, because this tableau is clearly deliberate, a dramatic show of power.

JERRY HELLER

It's nice to see you, Cube.

CUBE

Yeah? Well I can barely see you,
Jerry. What's with all this
Godfather shit?

Jerry ignores the comment, rises from behind the desk,
carefully places a stapled sheaf of PAPERS on the desk.

JERRY HELLER

I know you've been very eager to
sign a contract with Eric's
company, Ruthless Records.

CUBE

It's your company too, right? You
and Eric. All for one, one for all.

Jerry sighs, shakes his head.

JERRY HELLER

That's incorrect. It's not my
company. I work for you. I've made
that clear from the beginning.

Cube just nods, like, *yeah right*. He picks up the contract,
pages through it. It's really thick. Full of dense legalese.
It might as well be in Latin.

CUBE

Alright, cool. So I can take this,
show it to my Mom, or something?

Jerry stares at him for a beat. Places his hands on the desk.

JERRY HELLER

You want to show it to your mother?

CUBE

Yeah. Why not? She's smart as hell.

JERRY HELLER

I'm afraid not. You'll need to sign
it here. In this room.

CUBE

But I have no idea what it says.

JERRY HELLER

I can assure you, it's all
standard. You can read it now, if
you like.

Cube's expression darkens. He clenches his jaw.

CUBE

Jerry, you know I can't understand this shit. None of us can. That's why we need to show it to a lawyer--

JERRY HELLER

Cube, didn't you know? Everyone else already signed it. You're the only one who hasn't.

Cube flips to the last page. The Signatory page. Sure enough, there's DRE's signature, and YELLA's, and even REN's.

CUBE

(to himself)

Ren? The fuck, dude--

JERRY HELLER

Look. Cube. This is a great thing. This is what you always wanted. And there's also *this*.

Jerry lays a CHECK on the desk in front of Cube. It's made out to HIM. And it's for \$75,000. Cube can't help it, his eyes go wide. It's more money than he ever dreamed of.

CUBE

Damn. (beat) Thanks, man.

He reaches for the check, but Jerry SNATCHES it away.

JERRY HELLER

Soon as you sign this contract, this money is all yours.

Cube freezes. He realizes he's being shaken down. He's so angry, he can barely hold it inside.

CUBE

That's my money, Jerry. I earned it. I wrote every song. I been on tour for months. Performing. Getting arrested and beat down. And you gonna try to *gank* me?

JERRY HELLER

That's ridiculous.

CUBE

Give me my money, Jerry.

JERRY HELLER

You're kidding me, right? Who do you think pays for everything?

(MORE)

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
All the hotel rooms, the parties,
the transpo, the *girls*? You think
that's *free*?

Cube closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath. He must literally
will himself to not implant his fist in Jerry's face.

CUBE
I'm gonna ask one more time. Are
you saying I can't have this money
I earned, unless I sign this
contract, right now, without
showing it to anybody?

Jerry just crosses his arms, looks at Cube, says nothing.

CUBE (CONT'D)
(bye, Felicia)
Bye, Jerry.

He turns and walks out of the room.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - VIDEO SHOOT - DAY

Dre, Eazy, Yella, and Ren are all hanging out by the craft
service table. A VIDEO CREW is busy in the background,
setting up dollies and lights.

Eazy is eyeballing D.O.C., who stands over by a trailer with
a very large, rather intimidating-looking DUDE. Eazy nudges
Dre, gestures in that direction.

EAZY
Yo. Who's that big ugly
motherfucker hangin with Doc?

Dre glances over, while stuffing his face with some chips.

DRE
That's Suge. Doc's bodyguard or
some shit.

Eazy keeps staring over there. Suge slowly turns, and stares
right back at Eazy-- his gaze is steady, cold, and eerie.
Eazy gets a bad feeling from this dude.

CUBE (O.S.)
Sup, fellas.

The guys turn to see CUBE striding over, smiling. Eazy won't
even look at him. He simply turns his back, and walks to his
trailer, followed by Yella.

Cube's smile falls. He walks over to Dre, who stands there awkwardly, hands jammed in his pockets.

CUBE (CONT'D)
Dre, what's going on?

DRE
I don't know, man. I don't know.

Dre walks off, too. Now it's just Cube and Ren.

CUBE
So that's how it is, huh?

Ren just shrugs, stares at the ground, feels like shit.

REN
You can't just sign that shit? We
can keep going. Keep making
records. Take over the world.

Cube sighs, shakes his head. He's done arguing this bullshit.

CUBE
Oh, I'm gonna keep making records.
Believe that, homie.

Ren leans close to Cube, speaks low.

REN
You know what Eric said? He said,
*"Cube ain't shit. He gonna
disappear just like Arabian
Prince."* And everybody laughed.

Cube grits his teeth, fumes.

CUBE
Fuck that midget.

REN
For the record. I think he's wrong.

CUBE
So that's it?

Ren shrugs, smiles sadly, holds out his fist. Cube bumps it.

Cube watches as Ren walks off, jogs up the stairs to a trailer, goes inside. Cube stands there a bit longer, now all alone, his friends gone. He walks off the empty set--

EXT. LOS ANGELES - VISTA - DAY

The City of Los Angeles spreads out infinitely, like a buzzing, hazy carpet of a billion moving parts.

TITLE BURN: **THREE MONTHS LATER**

EXT. DRE'S NEW HOUSE - CALABASAS - DAY

There's a PARTY going on. The gang's all here, everyone we know, except for Cube.

Over by the poolside gazebo, JERRY (wearing an expensive, but hideously loud, track suit) talks with EAZY.

JERRY HELLER

It's gonna be fine, Eric. We're moving up, to the next level. Dre has this beautiful house now. And you're right down the street. Just like you wanted it.

EAZY

Yeah, I know. But Dre needs inspiration. Cube really got that nigga fired up, you know? I don't want him to lose that fire--

JERRY HELLER

Look at him. You really think he's lost the fire?

They both look over at DRE, across the pool, who is DANCING with three drop-dead beautiful GIRLS. His smile is massive. He clearly loves his new house, and this sweet life.

EAZY

Yeah I get it. He drownin in pussy. But that don't mean--

JERRY HELLER

You gotta stop worrying so much. Let me do the worrying for you. Fact is, Ren can write just as good as Cube. Maybe even better. Losing Cube was the best thing that could happen to N.W.A. You'll see.

Eazy nods, smiles, Jerry's words have a soothing effect.

EAZY

Thanks, Jerry. (beat) I'm gonna go fuck now.

Jerry laughs, slaps Eazy on the back. Eazy walks off, heads toward a group of bikini-clad GIRLS who are smiling at him.

Jerry stands there, smiling, enjoying the sunshine, the pretty girls, the party vibe. His eyes wander to the PORCH, where SUGE KNIGHT is standing, smoking a cigar.

Suge stares at Jerry, his expression blank. Almost looks like he's studying Jerry. The Old Man stops smiling-- it's obvious Suge gives him the fucking creeps.

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - DAY

CUBE walks down the hallway with Pat Charbonnet (now Cube's MANAGER). WORKMEN mount some GOLD RECORDS onto the wall.

CUBE
I've been ready for weeks. Just
trying to land the right producer--

PAT CHARBONNET
Forget about that a minute. Got
some people who wanna meet you--

Pat guides Cube into a LOUNGE-- where THREE GUYS are hanging out, listening to some tracks.

When Cube sees these guys, his mouth drops open.

PAT CHARBONNET (CONT'D)
Cube, this is the Shocklee
Brothers. Hank and Keith, and--

CUBE
Chuck D. Wow. I mean. *Damn*.

The guys smile, stand up, shake hands with Cube, who is clearly (and adorably) star-struck by Chuck D.

CHUCK D
Sup, Cube? Good to meet you. Big
fan of your shit.

Cube nods, basically speechless.

CUBE
Uh. Yeah. Thanks.

CHUCK D
Oh yeah, and the Shocklees wanna
produce your new album.

CUBE

What?

CHUCK D

There's a catch. You gotta come
back to New York with us. That's
where we do it.

Cube stands there, agape, processing this information.

CUBE

That ain't no catch. I'm still
waitin on the muhfuckin catch.

Everybody laughs, Chuck D slaps Cube on the back--

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY

Cube walks along with a beautiful young woman, KIM. They're
clearly smitten with each other, it's new and exciting.

KIM

New York, for real?

CUBE

For real. Shit's crazy.

KIM

Gonna be cold out there.

CUBE

Won't be if you come with me.

She turns away, grins. She was hoping he'd say that.

KIM

You askin?

CUBE

Let me put it this way. You don't
come, the record's gonna suck,
because I'm gonna be sad as shit.

KIM

Cryin into your pillow every night.

CUBE

Damn straight.

They keep walking along. He looks at her, grins. He's lucky
to have her, and he knows it.

INT. GREENE STREET STUDIO - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Cube walks into the studio, carrying a backpack. He's got a fire in his eyes, first day at a dream job, all that.

The SHOCKLEES and CHUCK D are present, and why not, even fuckin FLAVOR FLAV is up in there. Everyone GREETs each other, with shakes, bumps, hugs.

HANK SHOCKLEE
You got a couple new rhymes for us?

Cube doesn't say anything, just grins, unzips his backpack. He turns it over, and FIVE NOTEBOOKS tumble out on the table.

Hank picks up one of the notebooks, opens it. Every page is fucking FILLED with rhymes, lyrics, concepts.

CUBE
Yeah, I got a couple--

INT. GREENE STREET STUDIO - LATER

Cube is at the mic, recording some of his new shit. Even though he's alone, he looks more poised and confident than we've ever seen him. He tears it up HARD:

CUBE
*Kicking shit called street
knowledge. Why more niggas in the
pen than in college? Now cause of
that line I might be your cellmate.
From the nigga ya love to hate.*

BACKING VOCALS
FUCK YOU ICE CUBE!

CUBE
*Yeah, ha-ha! I'm the nigga you love
to hate--*

At the BOARD, the Shocklees are LOVING it, shit sounds amazing, Cube's energy and bravado are like a juggernaut--

INT. DRE'S CAR - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Cube's track "*Nigga You Love to Hate*" POUNDS out of the SPEAKERS in Dre's sweet RIDE, as he cruises along.

Dre bobs his head, drums the wheel. You can tell by his expression: he loves this track. Wishes he wrote it himself.

DRE
God damn, Cube--

On the SEAT beside him, a CD with the plastic freshly torn off-- It's Ice Cube's *Amerikkka's Most Wanted*.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LOS ANGELES - LATER

Dre, Eazy, Ren and Yella are gathered in the studio, working on their follow-up to *Straight Outta Compton*. Eazy paces the room, looking pissed off, agitated.

EAZY
Whatever, nigga should be
embarrassed by that bullshit. Corny-
ass traitor--

Dre trades a LOOK with Ren-- they both know Cube's record is dope, and Eazy's full of shit. But they don't say anything. They let Eazy keep blowing off steam.

EAZY (CONT'D)
We gotta retaliate. Show the world
what a mark he is.

DRE
Look. Forget Cube. He didn't say
nothin about us on that record. We
should just do our own thing, you
know? Ruthless is *blowin up*--

REN
I'm with Dre on this one.

Eazy turns to them, scowls in disgust.

EAZY
Kiddin me, Dre? That faggot's
laughing at us. Shit's between the
lines, man. You can't hear it?

DRE
Not really, dude...

YELLA
Eazy's right. We don't say
somethin, people gonna think we're
weak as hell. Like he better off
without us. Some people already
saying that shit.

EAZY
Exactly, bruh. Nigga's lucky I
don't kill his ass.

Dre rolls his eyes, like, *yeah right*. But it's clear he's not gonna fight Eazy on this one. Not today.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

REN is at the mic, letting loose on a brand-new track, "Real Niggaz". While the name is never mentioned, it's pretty clear who he's talking about--

REN
*Prisoner like a hostage. Yo, you
should've covered your muthafucking
head like an ostrich. Deep in the
dirt 'cause you is a sucker. And
your ass up high so I can kick the
muthafucka--*

Dre watches from the BOARD, bobbing his head. He digs it, but yet he seems... *disconnected* somehow.

Across the room, Dre can see EAZY and JERRY talking, leaning close to each other, so nobody else can hear. Something almost conspiratorial about it.

Jerry glances over, sees Dre staring at them, so he takes Eazy by the elbow, casually guides him outside the room--

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dre's CAR jams up to the curb-- in a red zone, but he doesn't care. He hops out, jogs quickly through the front doors--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Dre stands in a hospital room, looking down at D.O.C.-- lying in bed, unconscious, head bandaged, tubes in his face-holes.

There's flowers all over the place. And SUGE is there, too, looking somber, but still, filling the room with his bulk.

DRE
How fast was he goin?

SUGE
Like 100. Maybe more. Shouldn't
even be alive. He's lucky.

DRE
Was he drunk?

Suge just looks at Dre, but doesn't say anything. Although the look clearly says, *of course he was.*

DRE (CONT'D)
Shiiiiiiit.

SUGE
Crushed his larynx. He ain't never gonna talk right again. (beat)
That's why I got my people looking into his contracts at Ruthless.
Gotta protect what he got left.

DRE
Yeah? You find anything?

Suge takes his time before answering.

SUGE
What you think about Jerry? He make you happy? He protect you?

Dre shrugs, looks out the window. It's not something he thinks about too often.

DRE
I don't know. Maybe he does.

Suge nods, rolls the kinks out of his neck. Doesn't push it.

DRE (CONT'D)
Maybe your people. They could look into my shit, too?

SUGE
I could arrange that. Most definitely, brother.

On the bed, D.O.C. lets out a morphine-laced GROAN. They both look down at him, but homeboy's still out cold.

Dre and Suge just stand there, quietly watching their friend--

EXT. YACHT - OPEN WATER - DAY

CUBE is PARTYING on a BOAT with some of his new friends, including the LENCH MOB and also KIM.

One of Cube's HOMIES grabs him by the arm, leans in--

HOMIE

Cube, you gotta hear this--

CUBE

Can't it wait til later--?

HOMIE

My cousin sent me a promo of the
new NWA joint...

Now he's got Cube's attention. They go down below--

INT. YACHT - BELOWDECKS - MINUTES LATER

Cube, some Homies, and Kim are down below, listening to "Real Niggaz" on the boat's stereo system.

DRE (ON TRACK)

*...We started out with too much
cargo. So I'm glad we got rid of
Benedict Arnold.*

Cube doesn't say anything, but his face shows his anger. Kim notices, puts her arm around him.

HOMIE 2

They talkin about you, right? But
who the fuck is Benedict Arnold?

KIM

A traitor.

HOMIE 1

Someone must've fed that to Dre. He
don't know shit about history.

Cube still doesn't say anything. He closes his eyes. Kim leans close, whispers in his ear--

KIM

Tell me what you're thinkin, baby.

Cube opens his eyes, and they're clear, full of fire.

CUBE

Thinkin about my notebook and my
pen. Back in the car, at the dock.
And I can't wait to get off this
motherfuckin boat.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LOS ANGELES - DAY

CUBE at the mic, spitting with the most audacious, virtuosic fury we've ever seen. He's like a human machine gun. Recording the most brutal dis-track in history: NO VASELINE.

CUBE
*God DAMN I'm glad you set it off.
 Used to be hard, now you're just
 wet and soft. Lookin like straight
 Bozos. I saw it comin, that's why I
 went solo.*

At the BOARD, the PRODUCERS Look at each other like, *oh, shit, this is getting real--*

And as the TRACK GOES ON, we will focus on EACH TARGET as they get BLASTED by the Lyrics--

--in L.A., we see YELLA listening to the track while DRIVING:

CUBE (ON TRACK) (CONT'D)
*Yella Boy's on your team so you're
 LOSIN'--*

Yella pulls the car over, stung, continues to listen--

--And DRE sits with some GIRLS in his mostly-unfurnished Living Room, listening to the track, looking embarrassed.

CUBE (ON TRACK) (CONT'D)
*And yo, Dre? Stick to producin.
 Callin me Arnold, but you Been-A-
 Dick. Eazy saw your ass, and went
 in it QUICK.*

The GIRLS raise their eyebrows, like damn. Dre SEETHES with humiliation, getting called out in front of the Girls.

He stomps to the stereo, and he's about to turn it off, but for some reason, he keeps on listening... because even though it's painful, the shit is hot.

CUBE (ON TRACK) (CONT'D)
*Y'all disgrace the C-P-T. Cuz you
 gettin fucked out yo' green by a
 white boy, with No Vaseline.*

--REN sits at a burger joint, listening to the TAPE on a WALKMAN, looking very unhappy:

CUBE (ON TRACK) (CONT'D)
*...So don't believe what Ren say,
 'cause he goin out like Kunta
 Kinte. But I got a whip for ya,
Toby; used to be my homey, now you
 act like you don't know me--*

Ren rips off the headphones, CHUCKS the Walkman to the side--

INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - JERRY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

But Cube has saved the best for last: he unleashes upon EAZY and JERRY, who are both in the office together, listening to the track, jaws dropped.

CUBE (ON TRACK)
*You little maggot, Eazy E turned
 faggot. With your manager, fella,
 fuckin' MC Ren, Dr. Dre, and Yella.
 But if they were smart as me, Eazy
 E would be hangin from a tree. With
 no vaseline, just a match and a
 little bit of gasoline. Light 'em
 up, burn 'em up, flame on. Til that
 Jheri curl is gone. On a permanent
 vacation, off the Massa plantation.
 Heard you both got the same bank
 account-- dumb nigga, what you
 thinkin bout? Get rid of that Devil
 real simple: put a bullet in his
temple. Cuz you can't be the Nigga
 4 Life crew with a white Jew
 tellin' you what to do--*

Jerry looks absolutely livid, while Eazy just looks shell-shocked. Jerry gets up and TURNS OFF the music. He paces the room, red-faced, as pissed off as we've ever seen him.

JERRY HELLER
*We'll sue that worthless little
 fuck. Defamation, libel,
 extortion... That anti-Semitic
 piece of shit, I'm gonna call up my
 friends at the JDL and we'll see
 how he likes that, little bastard--*

Eazy gets up from his chair, slumps toward the door, looking miserable, suddenly exhausted--

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
*Eric, come on, we gotta get
 organized here, we gotta fight--*

EAZY
You fight, Jerry. I'm tired. Gonna
go see my girl--

JERRY HELLER
(snide as fuck)
Yeah? Which one?

Eazy pauses by the door, doesn't even look at Jerry, but--

EAZY
Watch your goddamn mouth, Jerry.

And he walks out the door. Jerry shakes his head, sighs,
fumes. He picks up the PHONE, starts dialing--

INT. DRE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dre sits on the couch, watching TV, drinking a beer. Several
empties on the coffee table. He looks glum, listless, drunk.

The Fox hip-hop show PUMP IT UP is playing. It's a low-budget
show, scrappy and rough, with jarring edits.

The CAMERA tracks hostess DEE BARNES, feisty and cute, as she
interviews ICE CUBE while walking along a shitty, abandoned
TRAIN TRACK in Compton.

DEE BARNES (ON TV)
*So obviously Amerikkka's Most is a
monster album. But still, everybody
wanna know, what happened, why did
you leave NWA?*

CUBE (ON TV)
*Because I didn't like the manager.
He wasn't paying me my money.
That's the bottom line. And no more
more NWA questions! *Bleep* NWA--*

Cube pantomimes taking a SWING at the CAMERA, to show he's
serious about ending this topic. Dee laughs, nods, as if she
agrees with him--

DEE BARNES (ON TV)
Yeah, yeah, I hear you--

Dre grabs the remote and TURNS OFF the TV, jaw clenched,
pissed, embarrassed. He CHUCKS the remote across the room--

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Eazy has dinner with a beautiful and very put-together young woman, TOMICA. Even though Eazy's got a lot of ladies in his life, this one is clearly his favorite. Because she's smart.

TOMICA

Just a song, baby. Just a game.
Like schoolboys playin in the yard--

EAZY

I know. But damn.

She nods sympathetically, puts her hand on his.

TOMICA

You just keep doing what you do.
Find that new talent. This is your
world, baby. It's happening now.
Cube's just the past, barkin at
your heels. Forget him.

Eazy nods, knows she's right. He looks around the swanky restaurant. Gets a few nervous/hostile GLANCES from the other (mostly-white) PATRONS in the restaurant.

It's tough: even though he's the definition of an American rags-to-riches story, he still doesn't respect.

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - BRYAN TURNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Cube is standing in Bryan Turner's office, and we can tell, right off, things are tense.

CUBE

I'm just tellin you what you told
me. If *Amerikkka Most* blew up,
you'd advance me for the follow-up.
That's what you said.

BRYAN TURNER

It's more complicated than that,
Cube, there's metrics--

CUBE

Bryan, come on. I don't even know
what that means. I got a kid now. I
got a house. I gotta provide, you
know? And I've always done right by
you. You gave me your word.

Bryan stands up, holds his hands out, tries to soothe--

BRYAN TURNER

Cube. Come on. We're on the same team here. I'm your biggest fan--

CUBE

It's like this keeps happening to me, no matter what I do. People do the work, they should get paid, right? Why you making it seem like I'm some kinda asshole?

BRYAN TURNER

Nobody thinks you're an asshole.

Cube glances around at all the GOLD and PLATINUM records adorning the walls in Bryan's office.

CUBE

But you can't help me. That's what you're saying.

Bryan puts his hands in his pockets, hangs his head. The answer is obvious. Cube stares at him a beat, then turns his back, heads for the door--

BRYAN TURNER

Cube, wait, Cube, come back--

Cube BANGS out the door--

INT. BIG FIVE SPORTING GOODS - LATER

Cube enters the store, followed by JINX and a couple HOMIES. They head straight for a rack of METAL BASEBALL BATS.

HOMIE

Aw yeah.

They bring the BATS to the COUNTER, where Cube slaps down his AMEX Card, which says: *O'SHEA JACKSON - PRIORITY RECORDS.*

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - HALLWAY - DAY

Bryan exits the RESTROOM and suddenly hears a COMMOTION coming from down the hall. He picks up his pace--

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - BRYAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bryan comes RUNNING into his OFFICE, and when he arrives, his EYES BUG, because he SEES:

CUBE and his HOMIES, all holding BATS, and they're SMASHING THE FUCK OUT OF THE OFFICE.

They SMASH the GOLD and PLATINUM RECORDS on the WALLS. They also SMASH the ARTWORK and the GLASS COFFEE TABLE, and pretty much everything else that's smashable.

BRYAN TURNER
STOP! STOP! WHAT THE FUCK!??!

Cube and his friends keep on SMASHING, until there's nothing left to smash. The office completely destroyed.

Cube's out of breath, but he looks pretty exhilarated. He drops the bat on the floor, and his homies follow suit.

CUBE
You can keep the bats. I mean, you paid for 'em.

Cube walks out of the decimated office, followed by the other guys. Bryan remains standing there, speechless, in shock--

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LOS ANGELES

The members of NWA (minus Cube, of course) are in the studio, finishing up some new TRACKS for their follow-up album.

If the room seems crowded, that's because it is-- everyone seems to have an Entourage. JERRY is also there, and he doesn't look happy with the crowds.

He looks particularly unhappy about SUGE KNIGHT being in the room, who is now hovering behind DRE at the Board. Jerry tries to make his way over to Dre, but SUGE blocks his way.

JERRY HELLER
Just need a word with Dre--

SUGE
It can wait. Let the man work.

Suge is, literally, like a brick wall. Jerry, stymied, turns and exits the studio, jaw clenched.

After he leaves, Dre sighs. He looks tired, depressed, over it. He PLAYS BACK the track he's been working on, listens. Tries to feel it. But something's missing.

RANDOM HOMIE
Shit sounds dope, Dre.

DRE
(no it doesn't)
Whatever.

EXT. JERRY HELLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jerry pulls into his driveway, gets out of the car, carrying a bag of groceries, starts walking toward the door.

He hears a CAR DOOR SLAM, and he TURNS, sees a gleaming-new EL CAMINO parked across the street. A very large BLACK MAN we haven't seen before has emerged, and is walking toward him.

The Man STOPS about fifteen feet away from Jerry, and stands there, just staring, patiently.

JERRY HELLER
Help you with something?

LARGE MAN
This your house?

Jerry looks at the Man. Glances up and down the street. There's nobody around. It couldn't be quieter.

JERRY HELLER
Who's asking?

LARGE MAN
It's a real nice house.

Jerry glances at the front door of the house. Seems to be gauging, in his mind, how long it will take to get there.

JERRY HELLER
Do I know you?

LARGE MAN
Probably not.

The two men stare at each other.

JERRY HELLER
Do you work for Suge Knight?

The Man doesn't answer. Instead, he just gazes upon the house, the lush surrounding lawn, the trees.

LARGE MAN
Have yourself a good night.

He makes a hat-tipping gesture to Jerry. Except he's not wearing a hat. Then he walks back to the car, climbs inside.

Jerry hurries to the front door, fumbles for his keys, DROPS the back of groceries-- *doesn't care, fuck the groceries--* and finally gets the door open, breathing hard--

INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry enters his office, carrying a briefcase, closes the door behind him. He sets the briefcase on the desk, opens it.

Inside, resting atop some papers and files, is a BERETTA 9MM. He takes out the pistol, feels the weight of it.

He opens a desk drawer, carefully puts the pistol inside, and closes the drawer--

INT. HUGE NIGHTCLUB - HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

It's a massive INDUSTRY PARTY packed with artists, execs, journalists, PR flacks, hangers-on, and wannabes. MUSIC is BOOMING, people are dancing, and getting wasted.

Find DRE on the UPPER FLOOR of the club, looking down at the crowd. Eyes glazed, drunk, but with has an edge of nastiness, contempt. *You don't wanna fuck with Dre right now.*

And that's when he sees DEE BARNES standing nearby, talking to some friends. Dre's eyes narrow. He struts over to her, loose and deadly, dangerously drunk--

DRE

What up, Dee? You havin yourself a good time?

Dee turns to him, smiles politely as he looms over her. She sees Dre's HOMIES lingering in the background, observing.

DEE BARNES

What up, Dre. Good to see you.

DRE

Saw that bullshit you did with Cube. Really had you under his spell, huh? Ate up everything he said. Let him dis us. Sell us out.

Dee's smile fades. She faces Dre, refuses to be intimidated.

DEE BARNES

I just let him tell his story.
That's what I do. It's my job.

But Dre's too mad, he can't hear the other side.

DRE

I thought we were cool, you and me.
But you don't give a fuck. You just
wanna laugh at NWA, make us all
look like fools--

Dee's eyes flash. She takes a step toward him.

DEE BARNES

That's bullshit. And you're doin a
pretty good job of making yourself
look like a fool right now.

DRE

Bitch, what?

She THROWS HER DRINK IN DRE'S FACE. A moment of shocked
silence. Then Dre's eyes go blank. In an instant, he's ON
her, grabbing her by the hair, SHOVING her backward--

She SCREAMS, and tries to fight him off, but that's
impossible, he's way too strong--

DEE BARNES

GET OFF ME, HELP, PLEASE--

Some of her FRIENDS try to STEP IN, but they're quickly
PUSHED BACK by DRE'S HOMIES--

Dre SHOVES her through a SIDE DOOR into the HALLWAY beyond--

INT. NIGHTCLUB - RESTROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dre starts SLAMMING Dee up against the wall, again and again,
just fucking FLINGING her around like a rag-doll, while she
screams, cries, begs for him to stop--

But he's too far gone, snapped, on auto-pilot, and the
expression on his face is so blank it's terrifying--

She somehow manages to BREAK FREE from him, and she SPRINTS
down the hall, and he CHASES after her--

Until THREE SECURITY GUYS race in, jump on Dre, physically
DRAG him backwards down the hall, while he STRUGGLES--

EXT. HOLLYWOOD SHERIFFS STATION - SUNRISE

As the sky starts to fill with sunrise colors, DRE shuffles
slowly out of the Sheriff Station, down to the sidewalk,
where a big SUBURBAN is idling at the curb.

The driver's door opens, and SUGE KNIGHT climbs out, approaches Dre, and they bump-hug in greeting.

SUGE
Glad you called me. Get in, I'll
take your ass home.

Dre wordlessly climbs in shotgun, and Suge closes the door behind him, gets back behind the wheel--

INT. SUGE'S SUBURBAN - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

They ride along the mostly-empty streets, with the music turned low. Dre looks pretty miserable, hung over, ashamed.

SUGE
Bitch had it coming.

Dre keeps his eyes out the window, shakes his head.

DRE
I don't know about that, man. I
fucked up. Lost my mind.

Suge waves it off, like, *you're being ridiculous--*

SUGE
Don't even trip. (beat) I did what
you asked. Had my people look into
your contracts.

Now Dre looks over at him, his interest piqued.

SUGE (CONT'D)
It ain't good. Not that I'm
surprised or anything. Fuckin
cracker's a straight-up criminal.

DRE
What you mean by that?

Suge gestures to the BACK SEAT, where a thick FILE is resting on the leather.

SUGE
Everything you need to know. It's
all in there.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - THE NEXT DAY - NIGHT

Eazy sits alone in the studio, listening to the masters of some new tracks. It's late, and there's nobody else around.

Dre comes in through the door, holding the FILE from Suge. Eazy barely looks up when Dre walks in.

EAZY

So what up. Sounded pretty urgent on the phone.

Dre sits down across from him, his expression intense, full of purpose, fired up.

DRE

I know you don't like hearin this shit. But it's about Jerry. We gotta get rid of that motherfuck--

EAZY

Is that seriously the reason you're up in here? I thought we were past all that--

DRE

I found out some shit, Eric. Real shit. Jerry been takin twice as much money as he's supposed to get, from all of us, and it's been happening since the beginning--

Eazy finally turns and looks Dre in the eyes.

EAZY

You know why you rich, Dre? You know why you live in a big house? Why you fuck the finest bitches? That's Jerry, brother. He busted us through the door. He made that shit happen, and you wanna turn on him just like Cube--

DRE

Cube was right, fool! Just look at this shit. Just look. You'll see. We made it because our shit is dope, Eric, not because of him. We can keep going, we can own the goddamn world, we just can't be fuckin with him anymore.

Eazy just shakes his head, turns back to the Board. Dre looks pained. Can't believe he can't get through to Eazy.

DRE (CONT'D)

Dude. We go back a long, long way. We been through all this together. You and me.

(MORE)

DRE (CONT'D)

We started this NWA shit. I just want it to be good, I just want it to be right.

EAZY

I'm stickin with Jerry, Dre. That's it. Ain't discussin it no more.

Dre looks down at the file in his hands. The papers tremble, because he's trembling, too. Like he wants to explode.

DRE

So you won't-- you won't trust me, you won't even hear the truth.

EAZY

Ain't no truth in there.

Dre stands up. He's sweating, almost dizzy.

DRE

Look at me, man. Why won't you look at me? It's like I don't mean shit to you. Like I never meant shit.

Eazy won't look at Dre. He simply puts on his sunglasses, and shrugs. The cruelest shrug you ever saw. Dre looks like he's about to cry. But there's no way in hell he will.

DRE (CONT'D)

Alright then.

Dre walks out the door, and SLAMS it so hard, the walls shake. Eazy FLINCHES, even though he wishes he didn't.

EXT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Dre comes out of the building, in a state, like every muscle in his body is tensed up. He gets into his CAR, starts it up, and PEELS OUT, speeding off into the night--

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry sits behind his desk, going over some papers. Suddenly he feels strange, the hairs on his neck standing up. He looks up, and STARTLES, because he's no longer alone in the office.

SUGE KNIGHT is standing just inside the door. Jerry never even heard him come in. He seems to fill up the room.

JERRY HELLER

Jesus. Scared the hell out of--

SUGE

I'll make this quick.

He walks toward Jerry, very slowly, as he speaks.

SUGE (CONT'D)

Dre's not with Ruthless anymore.
Neither is D.O.C. They with me now.

JERRY HELLER

Well I don't know anything about
that. There's proper channels and--

SUGE

So I'm gonna need you to give me
their contracts.

Now Suge is right up against Jerry's desk. Jerry tries very
hard to keep a cool exterior.

JERRY HELLER

I wish I could help you. But all my
contracts are with the corporate
attorneys. In Century City.

Suge slowly stretches his arms backwards, then slides his
hands into his back pockets. Giving Jerry a good view of the
HOLSTERED PISTOL riding his armpit.

SUGE

See, I don't believe that.

JERRY HELLER

It's absolutely true. Would you
like me to call them...?

Jerry reaches for the phone. As he does, he slowly opens the
DESK DRAWER near his lap. Inside, we (but not Suge) can
barely SEE the glinting tip of that Beretta 9.

SUGE

Why you sweatin, old man?

JERRY HELLER

I'm hypoglycemic. You got any more
questions for me, Mr. Knight?

They stare at each other for a few beats. Suge finally nods,
allows the tiniest smile. Maybe he's even a little bit
impressed by the cojones on this old white Jew.

SUGE

You'll be hearing from us.

Suge turns and walks out the door. Only when he's gone, does Jerry close the desk drawer. And he nearly collapses on his desk, overwhelmed.

JERRY HELLER

Jesus fucking Christ--

INT. S.O.L.A.R. STUDIOS - NIGHT

Dre sits in a totally different STUDIO with SUGE and some intimidating-as-fuck BLOODS that Suge likes to keep around.

DRE

I don't like it.

SUGE

You wanna get free, or not? This is business. This how it goes.

DRE

I know. But still. We go way back, and I don't want shit to get dirty--

SUGE

Chill. It'll be alright. Just throw a little scare. No harm done.

Dre looks very unhappy. Like, *what the fuck have I gotten myself into now?*

DRE

Whatever. But if you're doin it here, I don't want nothin to do with this place. I'll record at home. I got my shit there anyway.

SUGE

Dre, this is Death Row, right here. In this room. This where the magic gonna happen.

Dre shakes his head.

DRE

No. My house. You do your thing your way, and I'll do mine. And for the record, this is fucked up.

Dre walks out of the room--

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Eazy's out on the patio, the lights in the pool throwing blue squiggles everywhere. He's on a cordless phone.

EAZY

I don't know, man.

Eazy LISTENS to someone on the other end, but we don't hear.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Why it gotta be over there?

Eazy listens to the response. He sighs, stands up, stretches.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Aiiight. Fuck it. Guess I ain't sleepin either.

EXT. S.O.L.A.R. STUDIOS - LATE AT NIGHT

Eazy is parked across the street. He looks at the building, not happy about it. Enemy territory. He opens up his STASH BOX in a hidden panel below the radio.

There's a PISTOL in there. He reaches in, puts his hand around it. Hesitates. Pulls his hand away, leaves the piece inside. He gets out of the car--

INT. S.O.L.A.R. STUDIOS - MINUTES LATER

Eazy walks into the Studio, and sees only SUGE sitting there, smoking a cigar. He comes further into the room, peeks around, looking for Dre--

EAZY

The fuck is Dre?

SUGE

That nigga went home.

SLAM. Eazy SPINS, sees that THREE LARGE BLOODS have entered the studio, and closed the door behind them. There's no exit.

Eazy realizes he's just walked into a straight-up buzz-saw. But he shows no fear. He puffs his chest out.

EAZY

Fuck you, Suge. Fuck all y'all. You ain't shit. Shady muthafuckas.

Suge doesn't react, pulls out a sheaf of papers, and a pen.

SUGE

You gonna sign this. Releasing Dre
and D.O.C. from their contracts at
Ruthless. Nice and legal.

EAZY

Kiss my ass.

Suge just stares at Eazy awhile.

SUGE

Don't make me change you, Eazy.

EAZY

The fuck is that supposed to mean?

Suge stands up. His eyes are cold, dead-black anthracite.
The THUGS move up closer behind Eazy.

SUGE

You know where I come from.

EAZY

Tell these Mandingo niggas to back
the fuck off me.

SUGE

You gonna sign my contract?

Eazy's face. Can't hide his fear anymore. Or his anger. His
mind's eye QUICK-FLASHES to the STASH BOX:

The PISTOL inside. His HAND on the pistol. LETTING GO of the
pistol. LEAVING the pistol behind.

EAZY

(so quiet, to himself)
Stupid--

And a large HAND falls on Eazy's SHOULDER--

INT. TOMICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - SOME HOURS LATER

Tomica is asleep in bed. She WAKES UP with a start, when she
realizes EAZY has just let himself into her room.

TOMICA

Eric? That you?

He makes his way slowly over to her bed. She turns on the
bedside lamp, illuminating the room--

EAZY

Turn it off. Please.

Troubled, she turns it off. He climbs onto the bed beside her, fully clothed. Curls up on his side.

TOMICA

Baby, what's going on? What happened?

Eazy doesn't respond. Just shakes his head. She leans close to him, takes his face in her hands. His expression is blanker than paper. Just... nothing.

It's obvious Tomica has never seen him like this before. We have never seen him like this before.

TOMICA (CONT'D)

You're scaring me. Tell me what happened. You don't look right--

EAZY

It don't matter. Don't wanna talk.

She wraps her arms around him, and holds him. They lie together in the dark.

INT. DRE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dre sits in the vast emptiness of his LIVING ROOM, which, like the rest of the house, is mostly UNFURNISHED.

There's GIRLS hanging around, wandering through the house, out by the pool, wearing his clothes. But they stay in the BACKGROUND, like set decoration.

He's set up a makeshift STUDIO in the Living Room. A brand-new top-of-the-line SSL (SOLID STATE LOGIC SOUNDBOARD), some turntables, some keyboards, tower speakers.

Other than that... he's got nothing. Notebooks full of blank paper. He looks, frankly, terrified. Totally lost.

Restless, he gets up from in front of the SSL, wanders into the kitchen, where SNOOP is making himself a sandwich.

SNOOP

Still got that writer's block?

Dre sits on a stool, puts his face in his hands. It's clear he's someone he can be completely real with.

DRE

I'm fucked. I got nothing. All my money's tied up in Ruthless.

SNOOP

You ain't fucked. You the Doctor. This is what you do.

DRE

Not by myself.

Snoop chuckles, shakes his head. Heads for the door--

SNOOP

You ain't by yourself, neither. See all those fine ladies out there? We about to smoke a joint the size of a blimp, cuz. Come on outside with us. It might help.

DRE

Naw, that ain't me.

Snoop shrugs, smiles, like, *well I tried*. Heads outside with his sandwich, joins the LADIES out there--

INT. JERRY HELLER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DEAD OF NIGHT

Jerry's asleep in bed. He WAKES UP when he hears NOISES coming from downstairs. He immediately opens the drawer on his bedside table, takes out a HUGE GUN, a .44.

He gets out of bed, puts on his BATHROBE, and creeps stealthily into the HALLWAY--

INT. JERRY HELLER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jerry slowly enters the KITCHEN, his hand-cannon out in front of him, but he quickly realizes it's EAZY, rooting through his refrigerator. He deflates, lowers the gun.

JERRY HELLER

Jesus, Eric.

Eazy pulls some leftovers out of the fridge. Sees Jerry standing there, barely reacts. Starts eating.

EAZY

You the one who gave me a key.
Where'd you get that thing, anyway?
Dirty Harry?

Jerry carefully places the .44 on the kitchen island.

JERRY HELLER

I have lots of guns now. It's the world we live in.

Eazy pushes the food away. Truth is, he's not hungry. And he still looks... *not right*. His eyes are faraway.

EAZY

I'm gonna kill Suge. Gonna blast him. It's a decision I've made.

JERRY HELLER

You're not gonna do that.

EAZY

The fuck I'm not. I don't have a choice. He came at me. He came at us. We don't hit back, we're over. That's the way it's always been.

Jerry settles himself into a chair.

JERRY HELLER

Never said we won't hit back. But this isn't Compton, Eric. We don't hit back with bullets. We do it with lawyers.

EAZY

I don't care about the money.

JERRY HELLER

Of course you do. You're smarter than them, Eric. You've always been smarter than them.

EAZY

(like Jerry said nothing)

I know where he lives. I can get to him. Won't be that hard.

Jerry gets up, walks to Eazy. Puts his hands on his shoulders, looks at him seriously. Pain in his eyes.

JERRY HELLER

Then you'll be in prison. For the rest of your life. You'll never kiss your babies again. No more life. No more Ruthless. No more anything. Never, ever again.

Eazy struggles with this. Conflict twists his face.

EAZY

Can't let him live. Can't let him
get away with it--

JERRY HELLER

He won't get away with it. None of
them will. Those papers Suge made
you sign? Absolutely invalid,
illegal, inadmissable. You trust
me, right?

Eazy stares back at Jerry. Stares at him hard.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - STREET - DAY

We see CUBE cruisin down the street in a sweet, gleaming GOLD
IMPALA LOW-RIDER, arm dangling out the side, wearing his
signature scowl. He pulls up to the curb.

VOICE (O.S.)

Cut! Reset!

We PULL BACK, and now we realize this is a MOVIE SET. The
street is blocked off. Dozens of CREW. Lights, camera, a boom
operator, dolly track, all that shit.

A MAKEUP GIRL hurries over to Cube, starts fixing him up.
Cube looks around. It's a street just like where he grew up.
And yet-- couldn't be more different. Surreal as fuck.

INT. DRE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM STUDIO - DAY

Dre sits at his SSL, playing back some BEATS he's composed.
It sounds pretty cool. A rough, primitive version of some
very familiar sounding shit.

Dre looks pretty frazzled. Like he hasn't slept right in
weeks. But he's determined to stay focused.

SNOOP appears nearby, bobbing his head, grooving.

SNOOP

I like that shit.

DRE

(nah)

It's alright.

SNOOP

Let's go for a ride? Get out of
your head a little bit.

Dre rubs the fatigue out of his face. Looks at Snoop. It's true, he could sure use a break.

INT. DRE'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

They ride along in the hazy Cali sunshine, listening to PARLIAMENT. Snoop's at the wheel, smoking a fat-ass JOINT, while Dre rides shotgun.

Snoop holds out the jay, but keeps his eyes on the road.

DRE
Naw, I'm cool. (beat) Fuck it,
gimme that thing.

SNOOP
That's what I'm talkin about.

Dre takes the joint, takes a deep pull. Holds it in. Finally COUGHS out a truly massive cloud.

DRE
Damn. Ooh. That kinda hurt.

SNOOP
Then you doin it right.

Dre takes another hit. Even bigger this time. When he exhales, you can barely see inside the car anymore. Dre's eyelids droop. A goofy smile spreads across his face.

DRE
Wow. What is in this shit?

SNOOP
That's the Chronic, nigga.

Dre leans forward, TURNS UP the music. The beats are fat, tasty, like they're filling up his body.

DRE
God damn that sounds good. Has it
always sounded this good?

SNOOP
You really never smoked before?

DRE
No! What the fuck was I thinkin?
Must be out of my damn mind. (beat)
I can feel it in my nuts, man. Is
that normal? What the fuck?

Snoop can't stop laughing. You ever gotten someone high, who's never been high? It's great. This is what that's like.

Dre suddenly gets a very intense, astonished look on his face. Like something just clicked.

DRE (CONT'D)

We gotta go back to the house. We gotta go now.

SNOOP

Aww yeah--

Snoop hits the brakes, bangs a quick U-TURN in the street, heads back the other way--

INT. DRE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM STUDIO - DAY

Dre is at the SSL, surrounded by WARREN G, KURUPT, and SNOOP. We can also see SUGE, hanging back by the kitchen.

Everyone's smoking Chronic. The vibe is distinctly more positive than before. There's flow going on up in here.

Dre PLAYS BACK a new track. We can recognize it as a very rudimentary version of *G-THANG*. Everybody's GROOVING to that shit, while Dre's VOCAL pumps out--

DRE (ON TRACK)

--At the same time with the dope
rhyme that I kick. You know, and I
know, I flow some ol' funky shit.
To add to my collection, the
selection, symbolizes dope, take a
toke, but don't choke. If ya do, ya
have no clue, of what me and my
homie Snoop Dogg came to do--

Everybody's laughing and high-fiving, because the track is obviously cool as shit.

SNOOP

Oh yes indeed. Smoother than peanut
butter, muthafucka.

Suge wanders over, listens, bobs his head a bit.

SUGE

So that's what your shit's all
about now? Weed?

Dre shrugs, grins, gives him a look like, *why the fuck not?*
Suge stands there, stone-faced. Finally, he nods.

SUGE (CONT'D)

Cool.

Satisfied, Suge wanders back to the kitchen. Snoop fires up a fresh joint. Walks over to a mic stand, pulls out his pad.

SNOOP

Okay. I got some shit to add onto that shit. You ready for me?

DRE

Let's do it--

As Dre's fingers descend to the Board--

EXT. DRE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

G-THANG continues OVER--

A raging PARTY spilling all over Dre's back yard and pool. Girls everywhere. Freezer-bags stuffed with high-grade weed scattered about the scene.

DRE holds court in the gazebo, blowing off some much-needed steam. His eyes settle on a WOMAN who is different from the rest. She's not drunk, or dancing, or flirting. She's beautiful, but in an understated way.

The WOMAN turns, like she senses Dre's gaze. She looks right at him, with clear, bright, but wary eyes. He stumbles over to her-- he's pretty tipsy.

DRE

What's your name, beautiful?

WOMAN

Nicole...

DRE

Will you be my queen today, Nicole?

He slings his arm around her. She wrinkles her nose at the booze on his breath, and wriggles free.

NICOLE

Not today.

She walks off. He frowns, frustrated, drunk. He watches her go. Damn she looks fine, even walking away.

Meanwhile, over by the SIDE of the house, a visibly tipsy WARREN G is trying to dump out the USED COALS on a kettle-style GRILL. Some of the coals bounce up against the SIDING.

He tries to kick some of the coals away, but he's distracted by some GIRLS who are HOLLERING at him from the pool. So he heads over there, laughing, drunk--

But after he LEAVES, we HOLD on the COALS. They might look spent, but they're still HOT as shit. As we watch, small tendrils of SMOKE begin drifting up the SIDING, blackening at the edges, and the smoke begins to GROW in volume--

EXT. DRE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - A BIT LATER

The PARTY is still going strong. SNOOP is FREESTYLING for a small GROUP gathered around him, blowing all their minds--

SNOOP
One, two, three into tha Four,
Snoop all faded on the
muthafuckin...

Snoop STOPS mid-flow, and STARES, wide-eyed, at the HOUSE--

SNOOP (CONT'D)
What the fuhhhh--

Everyone TURNS, and immediately the GIRLS START SCREAMING--

Because DRE'S HOUSE IS ON FIRE. There are huge orange FLAMES licking up the side, and it's spreading quickly, BLACK SMOKE pouring up into the sky--

Everybody SCATTERS and starts RUNNING in every direction, and they're tripping over each other, falling splat on the lawn, because let's not forget everyone is WASTED--

Find DRE, watching the flames, almost like he's hypnotized by it, because it doesn't seem real. Warren G stands beside him, watching the flames, eyes like saucers.

WARREN G
Your house is on fire.

DRE
(oddly calm)
Yeah. (beat) Shit's crazy.

Then Dre suddenly snaps out of it. Because--

DRE (CONT'D)
MY FUCKIN MASTERS!

Against all logic, Dre immediately RUNS DIRECTLY INTO THE BURNING HOUSE. Warren stares, agape, and then CHASES AFTER HIM, as the SOUNDS of DISTANT SIRENS ring out--

EXT. DRE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - A BIT LATER

Several FIRE TRUCKS are blocking the street, and shooting massive WATER SPRAYS into the BLAZE.

And it really is a major fucking fire. The FLAMES shoot off the roof, almost 50 feet into the air.

Dre and some of his friends remain in the front yard, watching the house burn. All of his STUDIO EQUIPMENT has been safely removed from the house, and sits on the sidewalk.

Despite the catastrophe, the vibe is surprisingly festive. People are laughing, partying, still DRINKING.

People are snapping PHOTOS, posing with Firefighters, posing with the giant FLAMES in the background.

Find DRE wearing one of the Fireman HATS, and he's POSING for all kinds of pictures, grinning like the Cheshire Cat. Many of the Firefighters are clearly star-struck.

A middle aged WOMAN-- one of Dre's NEIGHBORS-- comes wandering over, her face full of mystified incomprehension.

NEIGHBOR LADY

Andre! What the hell is going on?!

Dre laughs, goes over to her, puts his arm around her, starts trying to DANCE with her--

DRE

This my House-Burnin-Down party!
Want a beer?

NEIGHBOR LADY

Are you crazy?!

And the house keeps on BURNING, the FLAMES licking the sky--

INT. S.O.L.A.R. STUDIOS - DAY

Dre's production has now moved to S.O.L.A.R., because, well, you know what happened to the other place.

The room is CROWDED. Everybody's got FRIENDS. And here's the thing about those friends: *they don't necessarily like each other very much.*

On one side, we have SNOOP'S CREW-- many of them straight-up, hard-bangin' CRIPS. While Suge's crew are BLOODS.

There are GANG TAGS thrown up on the walls. There are assorted FIREARMS scattered about the room, leaning against walls, piled on the coffee table.

(And yeah, if you think it vaguely resembles the SHITTY HOUSE where Eazy once did his Slangin'... you'd be right.)

In the middle of the fray, DRE sits at his SSL console. He can SEE the tension in the room, like a tangible fume.

Dudes on one side of the room are throwing nasty, hostile GLANCES at the Dudes on the opposite side. And vice-versa.

Shit feels dangerous. Like something could jump off, at any moment. The only thing keeping everyone chilled out is a lot of weed, and the presence of WOMEN, keeping people occupied.

DRE
 (to the room)
 Alright, alright. We gotta get to work. Got too much to do--

Dre leans over to Warren G, speaks low--

DRE (CONT'D)
I'm fucked, bruh. Almost outta money. We don't finish this thing soon... I dunno.

WARREN G
Don't trip. We'll make it.

DRE
Shit I hope so. Can't go back to living with Moms. I'll kill myself--

As Dre gets ready to record another take, we can see the worry and tension taking it's toll on him, his eyes are glazed, a thousand-yard stare--

EXT. HOTEL - LOS ANGELES - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dre hangs out by his car, smoking weed along with WARREN G and some pretty GIRLS. The HOTEL ENTRANCE can be seen in the background, a few hundred feet away.

They're all just chillin, taking a break from a PARTY going on inside the hotel. A couple RANDOM GUYS from the party wander over to them, and insert themselves into the group.

You can tell, right off the bat, Dre doesn't like these guys. They mooch his weed. One of them starts hitting on one of the GIRLS, putting his hands on her, leaning into her.

PRETTY GIRL
(pushing him away)
Okay, okay, you can stop now--

RANDOM GUY
Aw come on, baby, think I might be
in love with you--

Dre walks up to the Guy, levels a glare at him.

DRE
How bout you move along, nigga?

RANDOM GUY
It's cool, I'm cool, just playin--

But the Guy is drunk, he can't help himself, and he moves in on the GIRL again, cups a hand around her ass--

Suddenly, DRE'S FIST comes flying out of nowhere, and CLOCKS the Guy in the jaw. God damn he can throw a punch--

Shit RAMPS DOWN into SLOW-MOTION: The Guy starts to FALL to the pavement. But while he's falling, his HAND moves to his COAT, and it comes out HOLDING A PISTOL--

Dre's EYES GO WIDE, and he turns to RUN--

Back to REAL-TIME as the Guy HITS THE PAVEMENT and simultaneously starts BLASTING-- POP-POP-POP-POP-POP--

Dre SPRINTS back toward the Hotel, followed by Warren G--

POP-POP-POP-POP-- *it's like that gun won't ever stop firing--*

There's SCREAMS and MAYHEM and nearby CAR WINDOWS get SHATTERED by all the LEAD in the air--

Dre and Warren finally MAKE IT to the Hotel Lobby, and they rush inside, adrenaline coursing through them--

Once INSIDE, they slow down, gasping for breath, and then Dre notices that Warren is GAPING at him, hand over his mouth--

DRE
What? What is it--?

WARREN G
Oh my God. Your legs, man--

Dre looks down, sees that the back of his pants' legs are SOAKED IN BLOOD. He's so pumped full of adrenaline, he didn't even notice he'd been SHOT IN BOTH LEGS--

DRE
Ohhh. (beat) *Shiiiiit--*

His eyes swim in his head, he sways, wobbles, and finally CRUMPLES to the floor, out cold--

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE BURN: **APRIL 29, 1992**

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - BACK PATIO - DAY

Find EAZY sitting out back, slumped in a chair. He looks beaten-down, depressed. Drained of energy.

TOMICA appears in the doorway, looking troubled.

TOMICA
Eric, come inside. You need to see
what's on TV.

He sighs, slowly pulls himself up out of the chair--

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Tomica and Eazy sit in stunned silence, watching the TV, which is airing it's first IMAGES of the SOUTH CENTRAL RIOTS.

Fires. Looting. Mayhem. Brutality. The LAPD fleeing the area. Koreans on their store roofs, holding rifles. Reginald Denny getting his head caved in--

EAZY
It's really happening. God damn--

INT. SOMEWHERE - LOS ANGELES - SIMULTANEOUS

Find CUBE also watching the RIOTS unfold on TV. Like Eazy, he's somewhere in Los Angeles far away from the madness.

On the TV: IMAGES of GRAFFITI TAGS, many of which say **FUCK
THA POLICE**. There's also CROWDS of young people CHANTING:

Fuck the Police! Fuck the Police! Fuck the Police!

It's almost too much to take in. Cube's own words have been adopted as the all-encompassing SLOGAN of the Riots.

He WATCHES, speechless, as his old neighborhood BURNS--

INT. S.O.L.A.R. STUDIOS - SIMULTANEOUS

Find DRE in the studio, watching the RIOTS on TV. Dre's on CRUTCHES, both of his legs wrapped in thick BANDAGES.

Suddenly two BLOODS rush in, all giddy, carrying random LOOTED ITEMS-- small appliances, a toaster, a hair dryer--

BLOOD 1

Man, you gotta get down there! It's goin off, it's amazing--!

BLOOD 2

Yeah, you're missing it, bruh--

DRE

What is this junk you grabbed? A hair dryer? Man, you don't even need this shit--

DUDE

This shit is history, Dre. We're just finishing what you started. Fuck the Police, yo!

DRE

You think this bullshit is what we were talking about?

Dre picks up the looted hair dryer and SMASHES it against the wall. The two Bloods JUMP, startled.

DRE (CONT'D)

That wasn't the point at all. That ain't what we started. And I got a muthafuckin record to finish.

Dre hobbles back to the Board, on his crutches--

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - THREE DAYS LATER

It's calm now. But the entire area is a WASTELAND. Burned out BUILDINGS and CARS, still smoldering. Wreckage.

Find EAZY cruisin through the hood in a low-rider. An echo of the first time we met him-- but now, the familiar landscape couldn't be more different.

Shell-shocked CITIZENS wandering around, trying to clean up, trying to make their neighborhood livable again.

INT. DRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dre sits in his temporary apartment, absently playing video games with Warren G. He looks burned out, depressed.

WARREN G

Epic seriously didn't want that
shit? That's crazy. It's the best
hip hop record ever made.

Dre just shakes his head.

DRE

They said it didn't even sound like
hip hop. They offered me crumbs,
man. Fuck them.

They keep playing. The mood is grim.

DRE (CONT'D)

Maybe they're right. Maybe all this
time, I've been workin on some
bullshit. Nobody wants this sound,
with live people, playing
instruments. They just want the
same old samples and shit--

WARREN G

Don't second-guess yourself, man.
Your shit is next, and everything
is gonna sound like it someday--

DRE

Whatever. It's done. It's over.

Warren looks at Dre, his expression pained. Hates seeing Dre
like this, broken, defeated.

Just then, SUGE enters from the kitchen, holding a phone. His
eyes are all lit up, like a little kid. We've never seen Suge
look like this before.

SUGE

That was Jimmy. At Interscope.

He doesn't say anything else, just stands there.

DRE

Well, speak, nigga.

Suge's face slowly stretches into a smile of pure glee.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - A COUPLE WEEKS LATER - DAY

Dre, Snoop, and Warren G are CRUISING down Sunset. All of them look as happy as we've ever seen them.

"*Fuck Wit Dre Day*" is BOOMING from the speakers. And god damn, nothing ever sounded sweeter.

They pass by TOWER RECORDS where a MASSIVE MURAL of "THE CHRONIC" COVER ART practically fills up the entire side of the building.

WARREN G
Look at that! Yeah.

They keep cruising, with all the windows rolled down. And as they ride along, the MUSIC from SURROUNDING TRAFFIC can be heard, flowing through the windows.

And, no shit, it seems like EVERY CAR IS PLAYING TRACKS FROM THE CHRONIC. All demographics:

White kids. Latino. Black. Yuppie businessmen. Girls from the Valley, from the Beach, from Beverly Hills.

It doesn't matter. Everybody digs it. Fucking everybody.

SNOOP
Today, brother. The whole universe
belongs to Dr. Dre.

Dre's in a dream world. Can't get the smile off his face.

DRE
Oh my God.

They keep driving, until the Sunset traffic swallows them up.

ON-SCREEN BURN: **ONE YEAR LATER**

EXT. EAZY'S HOUSE - CALABASAS - DAY

A large MOVING TRUCK is parked out front. MOVERS are in the process of hauling a whole bunch of stuff into the house.

Across the street, a grim-looking EAZY stands with JERRY, as they both watch the Movers.

JERRY HELLER
It's gonna be fine, Eric. We got
lots of irons in the fire--

EAZY

You call this shit fine? That's why I gotta rent out my house to random assholes, just for cash? You think Dre gotta do that? Hell no. He got the hottest record in the world--

JERRY HELLER

You're lookin at this the wrong way. You own a piece of Dre. The more he makes, the more you make, it all evens out--

EAZY

That ain't the point, Jerry! What does Ruthless really have, if all the good shit keeps walking out the fuckin door? You call that even?

Eazy stalks over to his car, looking disgusted, and climbs inside. Jerry follows him--

JERRY HELLER

You ever think about it? What we've discussed, about, you know...

EAZY

NWA ain't gettin back together, Jerry. No way in hell.

JERRY HELLER

I'm just saying. You wanna get back on top? You want that heat again?

Eazy starts up the car, won't look at Jerry.

EAZY

All this shit. You told me you had it handled. But I don't konw. It's like I'm on my own all over again.

JERRY HELLER

Eric--

But Eric just stomps the gas, peels out of there--

INT. FERRARI DEALERSHIP - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Find DRE checking out a hot-looking WHITE TESTEROSA, running his hand along the gleaming finish.

DRE

Suge, what you think?

Find SUGE KNIGHT hovering nearby. Suge looks very different-- bright red double-breasted suit, fedora, chains, shades, a huge cigar. Like he's trying *too damn hard* to be a pimp.

SUGE
Red one's better.

Suge indicates the RED TESTEROSA nearby. It's oddly humorous, the big Blood in the Red suit standing by the Red car.

DRE
Naw, I'm gonna go with white.

INT. RUN-DOWN COMPTON HOUSE - NIGHT

EAZY sits, slumped, in the living room of a SHITTY HOUSE. The room is populated by mid-level BANGERS and some ratty-looking GIRLS. One of the Bangers is counting out mini-zips of CRACK.

BANGER
Yo, Eazy. This gonna sound crazy.
But when we done with this, can we
take some pictures with you?

Eazy won't even look at the guy.

EAZY
Just make sure my money's right.

BANGER
Alright. Shit. Just askin, bruh.

Another Banger comes over with a pile of cash, puts it on the coffee table. Eazy starts counting the money.

His face says it all. *He can't believe he's back here again, slangin, just to make ends meet--*

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Dre is having dinner with NICOLE-- the woman who rejected him a while back, at Dre's gazebo. Even though they're both clearly attracted, there's a nervousness-- a *first date* vibe.

DRE
So what was that like, being
married to a Laker?

NICOLE
It was just a marriage, like any
other. He's a good man. We have a
beautiful son.
(MORE)

NICOLE (CONT'D)

But it wasn't the right fit. So it ended. And life goes on, like it does.

Dre nods, fills up his glass of champagne. Tries to refill hers, but she gently waves him away.

DRE

If you don't mind my askin. Why you workin a job? Didn't he take care of you? Set you up nice?

She thinks about it. She's got a very thoughtful, grounded, serene quality about her.

NICOLE

He'll take care of our boy's college. That's all I wanted from him. That's all I'd accept. I'm not one of those girls-- take everything they can get from a man. That bullshit just makes me sad.
(beat) I always took care of myself. No reason I can't keep doing the same thing.

Dre smiles, nods. God damn this girl is special. He gulps some more champagne. Fills it up again.

EXT. NICE RESTAURANT - VALET - LATER

Dre and Nicole wait at the valet. Dre seems pretty loose, tipsy, and she eyeballs him warily.

NICOLE

Sure you can drive okay?

DRE

Of course. I got this.

The WHITE TESTEROSA pulls up, and the valet hops out. Dre gives him a big tip, walks to the passenger door, opens it for Nicole, and stumbles, just slightly--

NICOLE

I'm gonna get a cab.

DRE

What? Come on. You ever been in one of these before? It's like ridin lightning. It's beautiful. Best car in the goddamn world--

She slowly walks over to him, puts her hand on his chest.

NICOLE

Andre. I like you. For real. But
you drink too much. And I really
don't give a shit about your car.

She gives him a quick peck on the cheek, then walks away. Dre
stands there, stunned, embarrassed.

INT. CUBE'S HOUSE - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Cube sits in the living room, watching basketball. KIM walks
through, and we see she's PREGNANT. She hands him a beer. He
reaches for her, kisses her belly.

There's a commercial break, so he starts FLIPPING channels.

He STOPS when he lands on a VIDEO CHANNEL, which just happens
to be playing NWA's "STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON".

Cube watches, grinning, until his expression grows wistful,
and even a little bit sad.

KIM

Damn. Look how young...

CUBE

Yeah.

NWA looks so energized. Fearless. Raw, untested talent.
Strutting through their old hood. Oblivious to everything
that would come--

INT./EXT. FERRARI - WESTWOOD - WILSHIRE - NIGHT

DRE'S TESTEROSA is SPEEDING along Wilshire. Even to the
untrained eye, it's clearly going way too fast.

INSIDE, we see DRE behind the wheel, gripping the wheel
tightly while some aggressive hip-hop BLASTS inside.

He's clearly still reeling from his date with Nicole.
*Everything he has, all the success, all the good shit, and he
can't even land the girl he likes--*

The car HURTLES under the 405 OVERPASS, picking up speed,
passing a SQUAD CAR in the opposite lane, which immediately
LIGHTS UP and BANGS A HARD U-TURN--

It takes a minute before Dre NOTICES the pursuing Cruiser,
distantly approaching in the rear-view.

DRE
Gotta be kiddin me--

He taps the brakes. But then he glances in the rear-view again. His eyes narrow. *Fuckin po-lice.*

DRE (CONT'D)
Fuck it--

He STEPS ON THE GAS. The engine ROARS and the Ferrari fuckin TAKES OFF into the CURVES of the WILSHIRE CORRIDOR--

The CRUISER behind him also ACCELERATES as it PURSUES--

Dre has a very tense, focused look on his face--

He takes a turn HARD, literally PINNING himself to the door with the sudden G-Force--

Up ahead, there's a sudden knot of TRAFFIC waiting at a LIGHT, and Dre has to SLAM ON THE BRAKES--

The Ferarri SKIDS SIDEWAYS and barely misses colliding with nearby vehicles. Instantly, the pursuing CRUISER jams up behind them, and ANOTHER arrives from the opposite direction.

INSIDE, Dre sits, frozen, as the RED AND BLUE LIGHTS flash through the car, blinding--

A LOUDSPEAKER rings out, the VOICE amped, aggressive--

POLICE
*TURN OFF THE IGNITION! EXIT THE
VEHICLE! HANDS VISIBLE! NOW!*

DRE
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck--

Dre turns off the ignition. Slowly opens the door, climbs out, hands raised above his head--

The COPS immediately SWARM him, get him face-down on the pavement, roughly HANDCUFF him, all within SECONDS--

INT. TOMICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eazy walks in, exhausted, he's been pounding the pavement all day. TOMICA sits at the kitchen table, which is covered in FILES and CONTRACTS and random PAPERS and BILLS.

TOMICA
Hey there.

Eazy barely responds, just a grunt of acknowledgement. She watches while he removes several small bundles of CASH from his coat pockets, then some more bundles from his pants.

He drops all the BUNDLES on the kitchen table, then walks out, toward the bedroom--

TOMICA (CONT'D)

You hungry? Want me to make you--

EAZY

Nah.

He disappears into the bedroom. She stares after him, worried. She reaches for one of the bundles, picks it up, turns it over in her fingers, looking sad.

The money is dirty. She wrinkles her nose, like it gives off an unpleasant odor... even if its only in her mind.

Still, she knows its crucial. She takes the bundles, smooths out the edges, stacks them into a neat, organized pile.

INT. TOMICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Tomica quietly enters the room, sees Eazy lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. She goes to the bed, climbs in beside him, runs her hand soothingly down his arm.

EAZY

Sorry.

TOMICA

It's okay. We don't have to talk if you don't want to.

Eazy puts his arm around her, pulls her close. They both lie there a little longer, just breathing.

EAZY

Thinkin of going to New York for a minute. Do some scoutin. Find some new acts maybe. Lotta dope shit goin on out there.

Tomica nods, smiles. Encouraged he has a plan again.

INT. JAIL CELL - JAIL - DAY

In a cramped CELL, we find DRE lying on a prison bed, wearing regulation Beiges. His hair is longer. The bed's too small. His EYES stare hard at the tiny WINDOW near the ceiling.

He looks like he's been staring out that window, just thinking, for a good long while. Like he hasn't done much else than stare out that damn window.

INT. VISITING AREA - JAIL - DAY

Dre and NICOLE sit on opposite sides of a Plexiglas partition, talking to each other on phone receivers.

In contrast to the cell, his eyes are LIT UP in her presence.

NICOLE
You know how much longer?

DRE
Got 32 down. So... 80 more days.
But they say, could be less. Might
gate out in 60.

She nods, looks away. It's a long time.

DRE (CONT'D)
Hey. Look at me, baby.

She turns back to him. In her eyes, there's a great deal of affection. But her patience is clearly wearing thin.

DRE (CONT'D)
You're keeping me alive, Nicole.
Just knowing you're out there,
waiting. It makes the time go.

NICOLE
Anybody else come to see you?

Dre looks away. Doesn't answer, though the answer is clear. She gives him a sympathetic look.

DRE
I don't care. You're the only one I
wanna see anyway. Don't give a fuck
bout anyone else.

She looks at him, nods, dabs at her wet eyes.

DRE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry this is happening.

NICOLE
I know. Me too.

He stares at her. Wishes so bad he could touch her.

DRE
You keep waitin for me?

NICOLE
I'm not going anywhere.

He stares at her some more. *Thank God for this woman--*

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CHELSEA - NIGHT

Establish MANHATTAN, in winter, after hours. Dirty snow on the sidewalks. Cold-as-shit wind blowing from the Hudson. A line of CLUB KIDS on the 12th Avenue sidewalk, in front of the massive brick edifice of the legendary TUNNEL club.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

In the VIP Area, ICE CUBE sits in a BOOTH, surrounded by friends, label-execs, and hangers-on. Cube has transformed: Thick afro. Expensive clothes. Sunglasses, even in the dark.

It's pretty clear that Cube is a huge celebrity at this point. He even has some big, unsmiling THUGS standing close.

Cube, mid-conversation, suddenly STOPS talking, and his mouth hangs open. Because he SEES that EAZY-E is entering the VIP, and slowly making his way over.

CUBE
Wow.

Eazy arrives at the booth. The THUGS tower over him, twice his size. There's a tense silence. Everybody looks at Cube, seeing how he's gonna react.

After all, these two guys have dissed and hated on each other-- ferociously and publicly-- for years. Still, Eazy gives Cube a friendly, vaguely submissive smile.

EAZY
Was in the neighborhood. Thought
I'd say hello.

CUBE
Yeah. Okay. (beat) That's cool.

The tension in the booth eases up a bit, but not completely. Conversations resume. Cube gets up, walks over to Eazy.

They both stand there, sizing each other up, neither sure what to say to the other.

EAZY

Saw your movie. It was good.

Cube slowly smiles. Knows that wasn't easy for Eazy.

CUBE

Thanks, bruh. (beat) So, like, you
wanna hang out? Come sit with us?

Eazy shrugs, looks around. Sees that a whole lot of EYES are
still watching him and Cube. And he likes the attention.

EAZY

Why the fuck not?

INT. TUNNEL - VIP - AFTER HOURS

Cube and Eazy still hang out in the VIP. They've been there a
few hours, and it's late as hell. The club has mostly emptied
out. Only a few die-hards remain.

Cube and Eazy are both slumped over their table, loose with
alcohol, the vibe cool, friendly, like the old days.

CUBE

I was remembering the other day.
What that felt like. In the
beginning. Like I knew everything.
But I didn't know shit.

EAZY

Me neither. But look at you now.
All Street Knowledge Malcolm X and
shit. No more jheri curl.

Cube laughs, shakes his head.

CUBE

Yeah. Damn. Shit changes so quick.
Feels like it was 20 years ago.

They both sit there, remembering that shit, amazed.

CUBE (CONT'D)

I'd be into it, you know. Fuckin
with some new NWA shit.

Eazy's eyes flash. That's what he was hoping to hear.

EAZY

Yeah? Me too. Be like old times.

CUBE
Without the bullshit.

EAZY
No bullshit. I got you.

They both nod, their excitement growing.

CUBE
You talk to Dre?

EAZY
Naw. But I will. I will.

CUBE
See what he says. Then you let me know. Cool?

An EMPLOYEE walks by, pushing a broom, glaring at them. It's time to go. They both stand up.

CUBE (CONT'D)
I got a car coming. You need a ride? Back to your hotel?

EAZY
Naw, I'll walk. Ain't that far.

CUBE
(really?)
Okay. Your call, bruh.

Only now do they HUG, and it's a quick one, but fierce. Eazy doesn't say anything else. Just heads for the exit, without looking back. Cube watches him go.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Eazy walks back to his hotel in the freezing cold, his hands jammed in his pockets. The wind blows mercilessly. Eazy is shivering like crazy. But he keeps walking.

It's a longer walk than he thought. But now it's too late. He tries to hail a cab, but of course, none stop. He keeps trudging along, his breath making clouds, through the lonesome pre-dawn City--

EXT. JAIL - PASADENA - DAY

DRE emerges from the JAIL, shielding his eyes from the suddenly-blinding SUNSHINE. Interestingly, this is the SECOND TIME we've seen him get picked up from jail.

But it's not SUGE picking him up this time-- it's NICOLE. She waits for him by her car. He walks right up to her, wraps her in his arms. She buries her face in his neck.

DRE
Never goin back. Never--

NICOLE
You better not.

They stand that way, clinched together, for a long time.

INT. JERRY HELLER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eazy and Jerry are having another late-night confab in Jerry's kitchen. Jerry's wearing his robe.

JERRY HELLER
Well that's great news about Cube.
A reunion would really be a
lifesaver for Ruthless--

EAZY
It ain't definite. Just a
possibility.

JERRY HELLER
Well of course. But I have a good
feeling about it.

But Eazy's frowning, because something's bothering him.

EAZY
Jerry, why do we need a
"lifesaver"? We've sold millions of
records. For real. So just tell me,
straight up. Where's the money? I'm
struggling, man. For awhile now.
Not you, though. But still you're
talkin about life-savers.

Jerry makes a big show of sighing, rubbing his face.

JERRY HELLER
Eric. Come on. We've been over this
a thousand times.

EAZY
So you're not gonna answer me.

JERRY HELLER
It's late. I'm tired. Let's have
dinner tomorrow night, okay?
(MORE)

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
We'll sort everything out. You
gotta stop worrying so much. Gonna
give yourself cancer.

Eazy still looks disturbed. But he nods his head.

INT. TOMICA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Eazy paces through the living room. Tomica watches him from the couch. A sense that something is coming to a head.

EAZY
Something's fucked up. I gotta find
out what the hell is going on.

TOMICA
Eric. Hey. Stop a second.

He stops, looks at her, confused and vaguely desperate.

TOMICA (CONT'D)
I've tried to tell you before. But
you didn't wanna hear it. Now it's
time. Okay?

INT. TOMICA'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Eazy and Tomica sit at the table. Tomica watches patiently as Eazy finishes READING the immaculately-organized PAPERS she's laid out for him.

He puts the papers down, sits there. Reeling. In shock.

EAZY
The whole time. I didn't see it.
Can't believe he'd do me like that.
Can't believe how stupid I am--

TOMICA
It's not your fault. You trusted
him. He lied. And now you know.

Eazy sits there in a daze, trying to wrap his head around it--

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Eazy sits across from Jerry in an upscale restaurant. For once, Jerry's wearing an actual suit. Eazy's demeanor is extremely calm, almost like Buddha.

Jerry, on the other hand, is red-faced, fidgety. We've clearly dropped into the middle of some serious shit.

JERRY HELLER

You're gonna listen to her? Did she even go to college? Come on. You're smarter than that. She's a glorified groupie, Eric--

EAZY

This ain't about Tomica, Jerry. It's about you. Cube tried to warn me. So did Dre. And I didn't listen. I fucked up, and that's on me. But you gotta stop acting like you never did anything wrong.

JERRY HELLER

Look, I know you're upset. But I'd strongly advise you to take a breath, let me look at the papers--

Eric lets out a low, rumbling laugh.

EAZY

Jerry, for real? You can stop giving me advice. As of, like, now. I'm getting NWA back together. It's happening. But you ain't gonna have nothing to do with it this time.

JERRY HELLER

Why would you say that? I know what's best for you. I always have. That trust is our foundation, Eric.

Eazy laughs again, but this time... the laugh deteriorates into a ragged, hacking COUGH, and Jerry watches, alarmed.

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You don't look...

EAZY

Trust. God damn, that's a word. Let me tell you something, bruh. Trust is a *muthafucker*.

Jerry leans forward, sweating, desperate to salvage this.

JERRY HELLER

Look, if what I've done is so illegal, why have I never been sued?

(MORE)

JERRY HELLER (CONT'D)
 I'm such a thief, such a liar, such
 a motherfucker, how come nobody's
 come to collect? This is business.
 This is how it works. And I've done
 nothing wrong. All of it,
 everything I've put into this for
 the past 7 years, my entire LIFE,
 it was for you, Eric.

Eazy absorbs this. Then he pulls out his SUNGLASSES, and
 slowly puts them on. Stares from behind the shades.

EAZY
 You're fired, Jerry.

Eazy walks out of the restaurant. Jerry stands up, his whole
 body shaking with outrage, regret, shame, a stew of emotions.
 He LOSES IT, bellowing--

JERRY HELLER
*ERIC. GOD DAMNIT. THIS IS NOT HOW
 WE DO THINGS. COME BACK--*

Jerry abruptly stops, realizing that EVERYONE in the
 restaurant is staring at him. He sits down, smooths out the
 front of his suit, straightens his tie. Humiliated--

EXT. VIDEO SHOOT - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Dre is hanging out by a trailer between takes, reading VIBE
 Magazine. His picture is on the cover.

He's approached by GARY GRAY, the affable, amped-on-coffee
 young DIRECTOR of the video.

GARY GRAY
 Dre, you gonna be ready in five?
 We're almost set up.

DRE
 Yeah, I'm ready.

Gary Gray hurries away, talking rapidly into a Walkie. Dre's
 huge, early-model CELL PHONE rings from a table beside him.
 He picks it up, answers--

DRE (CONT'D)
 Hello?

After a short pause, a familiar, gravelly voice comes on.

EAZY'S VOICE
Long time, bruh.

Dre's eyes widen. Eazy's the last person he ever expected to hear from. But the surprise is a good one.

DRE
Ho, shit. Eric?

We will INTERCUT with EAZY, sitting at Tomica's kitchen table, while Tomica COOKS in the background.

EAZY
Yup. (beat) Felt like callin.

Dre is still vaguely mystified, at a loss.

DRE
Yeah. Okay. (beat) What up?

EAZY
You know. Doin my thing. Makin records. Killin all that pussy.

At the stove, we see Tomica roll her eyes.

EAZY (CONT'D)
How about you?

Dre paces through the VIDEO SET while talking.

DRE
I don't know. Just keeping busy.
Gonna shoot a video.

EAZY
Cool. I'm not in this one, right?

Dre laughs, a little embarrassed. (*Eazy's referring to the extremely unkind portrayal of him as "Sleazy-E" in the legendary "Dre Day" video.*)

DRE
Naw. Nothin like that, man.

EAZY
I'm just playin. You do what you gotta do.

DRE
Feels like that was a long fuckin time ago, man. For real.

EAZY
Yeah.

On both ends of the line, both guys pause, reflective.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Look, I know you're busy. Don't wanna take up your time. But I talked to Cube--

DRE

Yeah, yeah. I know. He told me--

EAZY

And we were, like. Talkin about some shit. Some possibilities.

Dre wanders back to the trailer, doesn't say anything.

EAZY (CONT'D)

And you should know. I ain't fuckin with Jerry Heller no more.

DRE

I heard that, too.

EAZY

Dre, look. I know stuff went the wrong way. I wish it hadn't.

DRE

I know. I'm not proud of all the shit I did, either.

Eazy looks vaguely relieved, glad Dre said that.

EAZY

So you think maybe, we can make something happen?

DRE

I don't know. (beat) But let's keep talkin. All I can say for now.

EAZY

Aiight. Guess that makes sense. (beat) Peace out, Dre.

DRE

Peace--

But Eazy's already gone. Dre puts the phone down.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LOS ANGELES

Eazy, Ren and Yella are back in the studio, working on the seeds for some new tracks. There's excitement in the air.

YELLA

So when are Dre and Cube gonna roll up in here?

EAZY

Next week I think. Let's just get ready. New NWA gonna change the game, just like back in the day--

REN

No doubt. I got books of new shit--

Eazy gets up from the Board. He walks toward the door, but then stops, his head droops, and he leans on the wall.

YELLA

You okay, Eazy?

EAZY

Yeah. Just. Like. Need some fresh air, somethin--

He takes a couple more steps, and then suddenly CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR, passed out cold--

REN

Oh shit--

Ren and Yella hurry over to him--

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

An AMBULANCE blares through the night, running red lights, hurtling toward the hulking edifice of CEDARS SINAI--

INT. CEDARS - EAZY'S ROOM - DAY

Eazy lies in a propped-up hospital bed, watching TV. He doesn't look particularly sick, just vaguely annoyed with the situation. Tomica sits in a chair beside him, flipping through a magazine.

A young DOCTOR walks in, carrying a chart. He looks troubled, preoccupied. His eyes dart from Tomica, to Eazy.

TOMICA

You gonna say something?

DOCTOR

Um. I'm afraid... We ran a full blood battery. And, well.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 (beat) Mr. Wright, you've tested
 positive for the HIV virus.

Tomica reflexively stands up, puts her hand over her mouth.
 Eazy squints, smiles, looks at the Doctor like he's crazy.

EAZY
 Get the fuck outta here.

DOCTOR
 --your T-cell count is 14. And
 that's very, very low--

Tomica just stands there, agape, speechless. Eazy's smiles
 slowly fades to a look of pure dread.

EAZY
 But I ain't no faggot.

DOCTOR
 Mr. Wright, there are actually
 quite a few ways that the virus can
 be transmitted--

EAZY
 It's wrong. No way. Test me again.
Test my shit again--

DOCTOR
 We've actually run the test five
 times, with five different samples,
 and the results remain--

Tomica suddenly lets out a choked CRY, and runs from the
 room, into the hallway. Eazy watches her go, overwhelmed,
 confused... and then, all at once, he gets it.

EAZY
 Tomica. She's pregnant. Oh God. Oh
 God. Does this mean she--

DOCTOR
 No. Not necessarily. But we'll need
 to test her, too--

Panic washes over Eazy's face in a flood, he covers his face--

EAZY
No, no, no, it's not fair, oh fuck
oh god oh fuck--

The young Doctor watches him, stricken, has no idea what to
 say to give Eazy comfort.

EXT. CEDARS - COURTYARD - DAY

Outside the hospital, we see that various PEOPLE have started to GATHER. About a dozen or so. They stand there quietly, shuffling around, staring up at the Hospital--

INT. CEDARS - EAZY'S ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Tomica sits in a chair pulled right beside Eazy's bed. They hold hands, look at each other. They've both been crying.

EAZY
It is what it is. Just glad you're
okay. You and the baby.

Tomica takes his hand, kisses it, cries.

TOMICA
No. We can beat this. Together.

Eazy nods his head reassuringly, but you can see it in his eyes-- he doesn't believe it.

On the bedside table, Eazy's PHONE rings. He answers it.

EAZY
Yo.

REN'S VOICE
(filtered)
*Eazy! What the fuck, cuz? People
been talkin some crazy shit. Sayin
you got AIDS or somethin? Can you
believe that? Muthafuckin Eazy-E
got AIDS? I'd kill a nigga who said
that shit about me--*

Ren starts to LAUGH. Because, to the outside world, none of this is real. But for Eazy, it couldn't be more real.

Eazy TURNS OFF the phone. Sticks the phone in the drawer. It's pretty clear he's never gonna turn it on again.

TOMICA
Who was that?

Eazy doesn't answer, just lies there, stone-faced.

INT. DRE'S HOME STUDIO - NIGHT

Dre's sitting at his SSL, working on some new BEATS. He's happy, energized, feeling the groove. NICOLE appears nearby, holding a cordless phone. He looks up, smiles--

NICOLE
It's for you.

He grabs the phone, leans it on his shoulder, keeps mixing--

DRE
What up. Yeah, that's what I'm doin
right now, some new NWA shit, some
beats for Eazy-- (beat) Wait, what?

Dre's face contorts with confusion. He stops mixing.

DRE (CONT'D)
No way. (beat) No fuckin way--

He puts his hand over his mouth, listens to the phone--

INT. CEDARS - EAZY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tomica stands by Eazy's bedside. He looks a lot worse. Weak, exhausted, his breathing shallow and ragged.

EAZY
(weak, a whisper.)
*Tomica. Baby. There's so much. I
wanna say. To people. I did wrong.
Wanna make it. Right.*

TOMICA
You'll have plenty of time to do
that. You just get well.

He looks at her sadly. He doesn't believe it. He doesn't even believe that she believes it.

RON SWEENEY appears, entering the room, trailed by two other suit-wearing MEN. One of them opens a briefcase on the table, starts pulling out some PAPERWORK.

RON SWEENEY
Tomica, can we have some time alone
with Eric? Just a few things we
need to go over. Business matters.
You understand, right?

She looks at Eazy, back at Ron Sweeney. She gets up.

INT. CEDARS - WAITING ROOM - TWO HOURS LATER

Tomica sits alone in the waiting room. She looks very small, very scared. Ron Sweeney walks into view, smiles sadly, beckons to her. She gets up, walks toward him--

INT. CEDARS - EAZY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tomica sits holding Eazy's hand, staring at him with haunted eyes. Ron Sweeney stands in the far background.

TOMICA

I can't. That's not the way it should happen. It's not right--

EAZY

(so weak)

Please. It's gotta happen, baby. Ron says it's the only way to protect me. To protect you. Think of everything I built. Gotta keep it safe.

Tomica stares off into space, slowly shaking her head. Her entire life has become a waking nightmare.

TOMICA

It's so. *Fucked up*. People are gonna think--

EAZY

Tomica. Listen to me. It doesn't matter what people think. They don't know. They don't understand. There's no other way. Please. You love me, right?

TOMICA

Of course I do, of course--

EAZY

I know it's not the way you pictured it. You deserve better. You deserve. Everything.

TOMICA

Okay.

Ron steps forward, holding some PAPERS, and a pen. He shows her where to sign.

RON SWEENEY

Sign right here. And you'll be Mrs.
Eric Wright. You'll be married.

With trembling fingers, she reaches for the pen--

EXT. CEDARS - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Outside the Hospital, the VIGIL has grown in size. There's now about a HUNDRED PEOPLE standing outside. Holding candles. Many of them are crying. Holding pictures of Eazy.

INT. CEDARS - EAZY'S ROOM - NIGHT

DRE quietly enters the room. Tomica sits slumped in a chair, trying to read a magazine. They both acknowledge each other, nodding respectfully, but neither says anything.

He goes to Eazy's bed. Looks down at his friend, whom he hasn't seen in 4 years. Eazy's eyes are closed. A RESPIRATOR does his breathing for him. He looks so small, like a child.

Dre stands there, staring down, in this extended, surreal moment. He bends down, moves closer, so his mouth is close to Eazy's ear.

DRE

(softly)

*Yo, Eazy. Wanna tell you somethin.
I know you can hear me. I know
you're still in there...*

Across the room, we sit with Tomica for a bit. She watches Dre as he whispers to Eazy. She can't hear what he's saying, and also, neither can we.

And we won't hear it, because that's between Dre & Eazy.

As Tomica watches, she wipes away a tear. After a few moments, Dre stands up straight. Whatever he had to say to Eazy, he's finished now.

Dre looks at Tomica, and his eyes are red and wet.

DRE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Tomica nods, offers Dre a heartbroken smile.

TOMICA

Thank you.

Dre walks out of Eazy's room--

INT. CEDARS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Inside, a phalanx of POLICE is guarding the front doors, preventing the MOB OUTSIDE from getting in.

Over by the MAIN WAITING AREA, find CUBE sitting in a chair. He spots DRE walking toward him, looking glazed, and Cube gets up, approaches. They hug each other.

CUBE
You see him? How he look?

DRE
I don't know. He looked like Eric.
Except asleep.

They break apart, just stand there, reeling.

CUBE
Man, what the fuck.

DRE
I know. Can't even believe it.
(beat) You goin up there?

Cube frowns, looks at the ground, looks pained.

CUBE
Can't see him like that, man. I
just can't. I got a hotel across
the street. I asked one of Eazy's
guys to call me when he wakes up.

Dre nods, doesn't push it. He understands.

They both look over at the COPS, in tight formation by the door, protecting the Hospital. Protecting Eazy.

DRE
Po-lice watchin out for Eazy.
Shoe's on the other fuckin foot
now. Crazy.

EXT. CEDARS - COURTYARD - NIGHT

MORE PEOPLE keep arriving to the VIGIL. A steady flow. They all stare up at the Hospital, watching, waiting. The crowd STRETCHES far in all directions, clogging the street--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Cube lies on the bed with Kim, watching TV. The PHONE RINGS on the bedside table. Cube stares at the phone.

INT. DRE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Dre sits on the edge of the bed, holding a phone to his ear. He listens awhile, and then nods.

DRE

Okay.

He hangs up. Looks over to the window, where Nicole is standing, looking at him sadly.

DRE (CONT'D)

He's gone.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - EVERYWHERE - DAY INTO NIGHT

A moment of quiet beauty. A TIME-LAPSE of the magnificent City of Los Angeles. From hazy, sun-blasted MORNING, to an explosively-hued SUNSET, into the electricity of NIGHT.

The TIDES on the beach rise and fall. Endless VEHICLES swarm the FREEWAYS like teeming blood vessels in veins. Clouds race across the massive sky like an avalanche, a river--

EXT. S.O.L.A.R. STUDIOS - DAY

Dre and SUGE stand outside of S.O.L.A.R. Suge's face is filled with confusion. He's wearing another absurd Red-Devil suit, fedora, gold watch on a chain.

SUGE

You're not making any sense. Death Row and Dr. Dre are one in the same. You can't just up and go.

Dre does not avoid Suge's gaze. He looks right at him.

DRE

Gonna do my own thing now. Start fresh. Nobody to answer to but myself. It's time, Suge.

Suge starts to breathe hard through his nose. He's pissed.

SUGE

You ain't takin nobody with you.
Death Row stays Death Row. And if
you even think about touching my
money? You know how I handle shit.
You think you special? I will fuck--

DRE

Suge. Stop. Listen to me.

Suge cools down a bit, though his lip remains curled.

DRE (CONT'D)

It ain't like that. I don't want
nothing from Death Row. I'm walking
away clean. You keep everything. I
don't want a cent. That's for real,
Suge. When I say clean, I mean
clean. The only thing I'm taking
with me is my own black ass. This
is what I gotta do.

Suge stands there, huge, scary, filling the sidewalk. He
stares cold daggers into Dre's eyes, but Dre refuses to look
away. He's got no other choice.

Suge looks away first. He nods. Something softens in him.

SUGE

Your new thing, what are you gonna
call that bullshit?

Dre grins.

DRE

Aftermath.

Suge snorts, shakes his head, heads inside the building.

SUGE

Corny.

Dre walks away, smiling.

EXT. COMPTON - STREETS - DAY

TITLE BURN: **ONE YEAR LATER**

A mint '64 CONVERTIBLE IMPALA rolls down the street. DRE is
behind the wheel, and CUBE rides shotgun. They cruise along,
listening to MUSIC (TBD). The SUN blazes down on them.

CUBE
I miss that dude.

DRE
Yeah. It ain't over, though.

Cube drinks from a paper-bagged 40. He passes it over to Dre. Dre doesn't drink any, instead POURS some over the edge.

The liquid flows out, the drops undulating, separating, catching the sunlight, seeming to evaporate into thin air as the low-rider rolls along.

Dre smiles, bittersweet. And as he CRUISES along, we see some quick FLASHES of MOMENTS gone by--

--EAZY'S BACKYARD PARTY. The crowd JUMPIN while CUBE shreds the mic, DRE scratching behind him, and Eazy loving it--

--EAZY in the STUDIO with DRE, reluctantly becoming a RAPPER for the very first time--

--At SKATELAND, NWA prowls the STAGE-- EAZY, DRE, CUBE, YELLA and REN-- working the CROWD into a FRENZY--

--All the GUYS in the STUDIO, laughing, having the time of their lives as they record "*Straight Outta Compton*"--

--The TOUR BUS, and all the shenanigans involved, the girls, the parties, living the dream as they become ROCK STARS--

--JOE LOUIS ARENA, where NWA turned the CROWD into an ARMY, with 15,000 people raising their MIDDLE FINGERS to the sky--

And finally-- All FIVE MEMBERS of NWA walk toward us, in ultra-slow-motion, spread across the screen--

Young. Brash. Confident. Dangerous. Fucking Unstoppable--

INT./EXT. COMPTON - IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

Dre and Cube keep cruising.

DRE
You know what I'm gonna do when I
get home?

CUBE
What?

DRE
Make music. Make somethin dope. And
the next day, too. And the next.

CUBE

No doubt. The fuck else we supposed
to do? Join the military?

DRE

Maybe, muthafucka. You know I love
blowin shit up.

They both laugh awhile. Dre turns up the stereo.

They bob their heads to the music.

And the sky couldn't be more blue--

THE END.