

# **MICHAEL'S LAST SUPPER**

Written by

**DERRICK BYRON VERNON JR.**

*Based on a true story*

*Revised and expanded draft*

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Aerial drone shot of a suburban neighborhood. The camera sweeps over tree-lined streets and houses, finally zooming in on Carl and Charlette's home.

INT. HOME - KITCHEN - DAY 2

The kitchen is small and cluttered with dishes piled up in the sink. A window over the sink lets in a shaft of sunlight, illuminating the tension between Carl and Charlette. Carl's face is etched with worry lines, and Charlette's hands tremble slightly as she leans against the counter.

CARL

(Frustrated)

One of us will have to cut our hours.

CHARLETTE

(Desperate)

But we're behind on payments. We have to keep the apartment.

INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michael, a teenager with a kind but concerned expression, enters, sensing the tension.

MICHAEL

(Concerned)

Woah. What's wrong?

CARL

(Sighing)

We can't afford to keep Shania in the Boys and Girls Club, but she can't be home by herself.

MICHAEL

(Resolute)

I can watch her after school until things pick up.

Charlette looks at Michael with a mixture of relief and guilt.

CHARLETTE

(Softly)

Oh, we don't want to keep you from having fun with your friends.

MICHAEL

(Smiling)

It's okay. Really. I want to spend more time with Shania anyway. The parents look at each other, then nod and hug Michael.

CARL

(Grateful)

Thank you, son.

CHARLETTE

(Reassuring)

This will be temporary.

Charlette moves to the stove, beginning to prepare dinner. The kitchen fills with the aroma of spices and cooking food. Brayden, energetic and beaming, bursts in.

CHARLETTE (CONT'D)

(Scolding)

You're late, Brayden.

BRAYDEN

(Excited)

Sorry. I had a late basketball tryout. And guess what.... I made varsity! The family erupts into excitement, congratulating him.

MICHAEL

(Proud)

I knew you had that tryout in the bag. You worked so hard this summer.

BRAYDEN

(Grinning)

You were right, lil' bro. Thanks for your help.

CHARLETTE

(Gentle)

Well, boys, finish up and get ready for school tomorrow.

CARL

(Kissing Charlette)

Love you. Goodnight.

CHARLETTE

(Smiling)

I'll be up there once Betty drops off Shania. Boys, time for bed. Brayden and Michael walk off together, Brayden playfully ruffling Michael's hair.

BRAYDEN

(Excited)

Michael, I have my first basketball game during the last period.

MICHAEL

(Nod)

I'll be there.

BRAYDEN

(Smiling)

Cool. See ya then. Night  
Charlette stops Michael, her eyes filled with concern.

CHARLETTE

(Concerned)

Are you sure you don't mind watching your sister after school?

MICHAEL

(Reassuring)

Mom, I don't mind. I promise.  
The front door opens, and Shania, a lively and affectionate young girl, runs in and hugs Michael tightly.

CHARLETTE

(Explaining)

Shania, Michael is going to pick you up after school temporarily.

SHANIA

(Excited)

Heck yeah! Michael is fun to hang out with.

MICHAEL

(Teasing)

You know what, Shania? You are my favorite sister.

SHANIA  
(Giggling)  
Silly, I'm your only sister.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight cuts through the blinds, striping Michael's room in hard bars of silver.  
Basketball posters flutter lightly in the breeze from a cracked window. Michael tosses in his sleep, caught in something deeper than a bad dream.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A pair of headlights tear through darkness.

Michael stands in the middle of the street, frozen. Somewhere nearby, Shania laughs.  
Then the laugh twists into an echo.

GUNSHOTS rip through the night.

Michael sees a silhouette that looks exactly like him collapse onto the pavement.  
He tries to run toward it, but his legs won't move. He looks down -- his shoes are glued to the asphalt.

SHANIA (O.S.)  
Michael!

Michael jolts awake with a gasp.

Back in his room, drenched in sweat. He stares at the doorway, trying to slow his breathing. Brayden, half-asleep, appears in the doorway rubbing his eyes.

BRAYDEN  
You good?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Just a stupid dream.

Brayden leans on the frame, reading his brother better than the words.

BRAYDEN

You never call something stupid unless it shook you.

Michael tries to laugh it off.

MICHAEL

I said I'm good.

Brayden steps in, sits on the edge of the bed.

BRAYDEN

Then tell me what happened.

Michael hesitates.

MICHAEL

I saw something bad happen.

To me. To all of us, maybe.

I don't know.

Brayden puts a hand on the back of Michael's neck, grounding him.

BRAYDEN

Ain't nothing happening to you while I'm here.

Michael looks at him -- wanting to believe it.

MICHAEL

Promise?

BRAYDEN

On everything.

A small beat. Michael nods. Brayden stands.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

Get some sleep, Chef. You got school tomorrow.

MICHAEL

Only you would call me Chef at two in the morning.

BRAYDEN

Only because one day you're gonna be rich and act like you forgot us.

That finally pulls a real smile from Michael.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

Night, lil' bro.

MICHAEL

Night.

Brayden exits. Michael lies back down, still unsettled, eyes open to the dark.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 3

The kitchen is dimly lit by a single overhead light, casting

a warm glow over the room. The countertops are cluttered with the remnants of dinner - plates, utensils, and a half-empty pot of spaghetti sauce. The sink is filled with soapy water, and the faucet drips rhythmically. The walls are adorned with family photos, and a small calendar hangs near the fridge, filled with notes and reminders.

CHARLETTE, in her late 30s, stands at the sink, her face a mask of exhaustion. She wipes her hands on a dish towel, watching as BRAYDEN and Michael, shuffle out of the kitchen, still bickering softly.

CHARLETTE

Enough, boys. Time for bed. We'll talk in

the morning.

Brayden and Michael give half-hearted nods and disappear upstairs. The sound of their footsteps fades, leaving Charlette in a heavy silence. She sighs deeply, turning back to the sink.

She plunges her hands into the warm water, scrubbing a plate absentmindedly. The room is quiet, save for the faint hum of the refrigerator and the occasional creak of the house settling. Outside, the wind rustles the leaves, adding to the night's stillness.

Suddenly, Charlette winces. Her left hand cramps up, her fingers curling involuntarily. She tries to shake it off, but the pain intensifies, sharp and unforgiving. In a moment of distraction, the plate slips from her grasp.

CRASH!

The glass plate shatters against the floor, pieces scattering in all directions. Charlette gasps, clutching her hand to her chest. Tears spring to her eyes, not just from the pain, but from the overwhelming weight of everything.

She leans against the counter, breathing heavily. The sound of the breaking plate echoes in her mind, a stark reminder of how fragile everything feels. She looks around the kitchen, the mess and chaos mirroring her own turmoil. The broken glass glitters on the floor, tiny shards catching the light. Charlette stares at the shattered pieces, her shoulders slumping. She takes a deep breath, trying to steady herself. The night feels colder, the kitchen darker, as she bends down to pick up the fragments of her broken life.

Michael wakes up from his sleep, startled by the sound of breaking glass from the kitchen. He rushes downstairs, his heart pounding with urgency. Seeing his mom in pain, he rushes to her side, his eyes wide with concern and determination, his jaw clenched as he fights to stay calm.

MICHAEL

(Startled)

You haven't gone to get that hand checked out yet?

CHARLETTE

(Avoiding eye contact)

No, Michael, not yet. It's too

expensive.

Michael looks at his mother, concern etched on his face, before turning back to the stairs.

MICHAEL

(Firmly)

You need to get that hand checked out. It looks bad. Goodnight.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

A drone shot follows Brayden, the dark alley echoed with the distant hum of the city, punctuated by the scurry of rats and the occasional drip of water, as Brayden cautiously approached to meet Kirby.

KIRBY

(Excited)

Hey! You ready to make some cash?

BRAYDEN

(Whispering)

Kirby, I don't know about this, man.

This

place gives me the creeps.

KIRBY

(Calmly)

Chill, Brayden. We've done stuff like this before. Just stick to the plan.

BRAYDEN

(Nervously)

Yeah, but this feels different. I

mean,

what if something goes wrong.

KIRBY

(Reassuring)

Nothing's gonna go wrong. Trust me.

We're

in and out, quick and clean.

BRAYDEN

(looking around paranoid)

I can't shake this bad feeling. The alley's so dark, and those sounds.... it's like we're being watched.

KIRBY

(Firmly)

Focus, Brayden. If you keep thinking like that, You'll mess everything up. Just breathe and follow my lead.

BRAYDEN

(Taking a deep breath)

Okay, okay. I'm with you. Let's just get this over with.

KIRBY

(Happy)

That's the spirit. Now stay close and keep your eyes open. We got this. Kirby hands him a gun. Brayden looks startled.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

(Serious)

We're going to do a lick. Roscoe, standing in the shadows, hands Brayden a mask.

ROSCOE

(Stern)

This is your chance to prove yourself. Show me you got what it takes.

Brayden, freaking out, shakes it off and puts on the mask.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

A Drone shot captures Roscoe leading Kirby and Brayden to a small grocery store. Brayden stops, frightened.

BRAYDEN

(Whispering)

Wait. I know this place. My dad knows the owner.

ROSCOE

(Grim)

Shut up. We're in this now. Kirby runs into the store, and Brayden follows, dazed. Kirby holds the old man behind the counter at gunpoint, yelling at him to open the register and get on the ground. Kirby motions for Brayden, who starts putting the money in a

bag. Brayden finishes, and they run out.  
Roscoe, Brayden, and Kirby run into an empty house, breathing hard. Brayden looks terrified and panicked.

KIRBY

(Threatening)

Keep your mouth shut! You better not say anything to anyone.

BRAYDEN

(Fearful)

I'm not going to say a word!

Roscoe grabs the bag and starts dividing the cash. They looked at each other, Kirby and Roscoe smirking.

ROSCOE

(Approving)

Alright. You did good, Brayden.

Brayden sneaks in through his bedroom window. He hides the gun under the dresser in a sock and lies down for bed. The family eats breakfast and watches the news. A robbery is being reported.

NEWSCASTER

Two young males with masks. The owner of the store says, "Thank God no one was hurt."

CARL

(Surprised) Wow! That's crazy.

CHARLETTE

(Nods) Yeah, it is.

Kirby pulls up to the house and honks the horn. Brayden grabs his backpack and heads outside. Michael follows.

MICHAEL

(Hopeful)

Can I ride with you?

BRAYDEN

(Awkward)

Maybe next time. See you at the last period.  
Kirby pulls away, and Michael starts walking to school. Kirby hands Brayden a bag of fentanyl.  
Michael walks down the hall and sees Brayden at a distance, handing a student a bag. He can't clearly see what it is.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Lunch rush. Trays slam. Kids crowd every table. Michael threads through the noise and spots Brayden at a corner table with Kirby and two older boys who clearly don't belong in the building.

Michael sets his tray down without asking.

MICHAEL

You skipping the people who actually care about you now?

KIRBY

Relax, preacher boy. We just talking.

MICHAEL

That's what trouble always says before it starts.

Brayden leans back, embarrassed.

BRAYDEN

Michael, chill.

MICHAEL

No -- you chill. You got colleges watching you and you're over here acting regular.

Kirby smirks.

KIRBY

Maybe regular pays faster.

Michael turns to Brayden, ignoring Kirby.

MICHAEL

Everything fast ain't good. You know that.

A beat. The bell rings in the distance.

BRAYDEN

I said I'm good.

Michael stands, disappointed.

MICHAEL

That's the problem.

You keep saying that like I can't see you.

He picks up his tray and leaves. Brayden watches him go, feeling the sting of being known too well.

Brayden gets grabbed by school officer Chris. Michael runs over.

OFFICER CHRIS

(Angry)

Where did you get this?!

BRAYDEN

(Defiant)

It's not mine!

MICHAEL

(Desperate)

It's mine! I found it while walking to school this morning. Brayden said he would get rid of it for me. Officer Chris looks at Michael and Brayden, then pockets the bag and releases him.

OFFICER CHRIS

(Warning)

Alright. I believe you. But I better not catch you with anything again, you hear me?

Brayden and Michael walk off together. Brayden puts his arm around Michael.

BRAYDEN

(Relieved)

Nice save, bro. I owe you one.

MICHAEL

(Worried)

What are you doing with that stuff?

I don't want you to get hurt.

BRAYDEN

(Confident)

Don't worry, bro. I've got this. I was just making a quick buck.

Brayden walks off to class, leaving Michael concerned.

INT. GYM - DAY 11

Michael walks into the gym and up the bleachers.

MICHAEL

(Encouraging) Brayden, don't hold back!

BRAYDEN

(Nervous)

I'll try; I'm super nervous.

MICHAEL

(Reassuring) You got this.

The game begins. Brayden is nervous, missing every shot,

turning the ball over. At halftime, the coach tells the players to hydrate and meet in the locker room. Brayden storms out in the hallway, discouraged.

COACH K

(To Michael)

Hey, can you please talk to your brother?

MICHAEL

(Nods)

Yeah, I will.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY 12

MICHAEL

(Supportive)

Bro, don't worry. You're going to bounce back.

I suck.

BRAYDEN

(Frustrated)

MICHAEL

(Encouraging)

I know you can turn this around.

BRAYDEN

(Smiling)

Okay, I'll get back out

there.

(Hugs Michael)

Always knowing what to say.

INT. GYM - DAY 13

Brayden, encouraged by his brother

Michael's reassuring

words and unwavering belief in him, returns to the gym after storming out, apologizes sincerely to his coach and teammates for his earlier outburst, and steps back onto the court with a renewed determination and a focused mindset.

BRAYDEN

(Apologetic)

I'm sorry for storming off, coach.

I'm ready.

COACH K

(Reassuring)

It's fine, Brayden. Let's get back

to the game.

Back on the court, Brayden is unstoppable. Every shot he takes swishes through the net, his movements fluid and precise. He plays fierce defense, stealing the ball and blocking shots with an intensity that electrifies the gym. The crowd is on their feet, the sound of their cheers reverberating off the walls. The coach watches in awe, his expression a mix of disbelief and pride, while Brayden's teammates feed off his energy, their confidence soaring. Michael, standing on the sidelines, beams with pride, his eyes glistening as he watches his brother transform into a phenom right before his eyes.

He cheers louder than anyone, his heart swelling with joy and admiration for Brayden's incredible performance.

COACH K (CONT'D)

(Whispering to the assistant  
coach)

A prodigy is born!

Brayden walks to Michael and hugs him.

MICHAEL

(Excited)

Congratulations! You exceeded my  
expectations, bro!

Kirby approaches from the stands with his friends.

KIRBY

(Grinning)

Nice work, man. We're gonna get big  
money at your games.

Michael doesn't understand the reference. Puzzle look on his  
face.

BRAYDEN

(Smiling)

Don't trip, Kirb, I got you.

KIRBY

(Excitement)

The whole city is going to be put  
on notice.

As Kirby slips out of the gym, unnoticed by most, Michael  
rushes to pick up his little sister Shania, pausing  
briefly to clasp Brayden's shoulder, his voice filled  
with pride and admiration as he says, "Good game, Bray."  
In that fleeting moment, the gym's bright lights seem to  
dim around them, the echoes of cheering fans and  
squeaking sneakers fading into the background, leaving  
only the profound bond between the brothers and the  
unspoken promise of unwavering support.

MICHAEL

(Clasp Brayden's shoulder)

Alright, I have to go pick up  
Shania from school. See you at  
home!

(Rushed)

BRAYDEN

(Waved)

See you!

FADE OUT

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - EVENING 14

Michael picks up Shania, who is excited to see him. They walk together, chatting.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Aerial drone shot of a suburban neighborhood transitioning from daylight to dusk. The camera descends, focusing on Michael walking with Shania, who is happily skipping beside him.

EXT. PARK COURT - LATE AFTERNOON

The chain net snaps under the weight of another Brayden jumper. The park is alive with little kids, trash talk, and the metallic rhythm of dribbles on cracked concrete.

Michael arrives with Shania's backpack slung over one shoulder. He watches Brayden train like he's trying to outrun something.

MICHAEL

You been out here all day?

BRAYDEN

Trying to make sure I don't ever have to stay here.

Michael catches the edge in his voice.

MICHAEL

You hoop angry, you start seeing enemies where there ain't any.

BRAYDEN

Maybe there are enemies.

Michael steps onto the court and steals the ball clean.

MICHAEL

Then stop letting them make you

sloppy.

Brayden grins despite himself. They play a quick one-on-one. Brayden is bigger, stronger. Michael is smarter, patient, sneaky with angles.

On the sideline, Shania acts like an ESPN announcer.

SHANIA

Brayden with the ball! Michael with the ugly defense!

MICHAEL

Ugly defense wins rent money.

BRAYDEN

That's definitely something a short dude would say.

Michael scores on a crafty bank shot.

SHANIA

Ooooooh! Chef Mikey got game!

Brayden laughs, finally relaxed.

BRAYDEN

You been teaching her to roast people?

MICHAEL

Natural talent. She gets it from me.

Shania puts her hands on her hips.

SHANIA

I get it from me.

The brothers laugh. For a second the world is light.

Michael tosses the ball back.

MICHAEL

Come on. Mom's gonna say I'm running a daycare and a taxi service.

BRAYDEN

Give me five minutes.

MICHAEL

Three.

BRAYDEN

Four.

MICHAEL

Three and a half.

BRAYDEN

Deal.

Michael points at him.

MICHAEL

And no Kirby after.

The name lands. Brayden's smile fades a little.

BRAYDEN

I said deal.

Michael hears the dodge beneath the answer, but lets it go -- for now.

EXT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - EVENING

Michael stops at an ice cream truck parked near the school. The vendor, a cheerful middle-aged man, hands over an ice cream cone.

ICE CREAM TRUCK DRIVER

(Smiling)

Cookies and cream, enjoy!

Thanks!

SHANIA  
(Smiling)

Michael and Shania laugh and chat while walking home, the setting sun casting a warm glow on them.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Michael and Shania play Candyland on the living room table, the board game spread out between them.

SHANIA  
(Curiously)  
How did Brayden do?

MICHAEL  
(Smirking)  
First half of the scrimmage was  
horrible.

SHANIA  
(Teasing)  
I bet he was bummed out and quit.  
Michael, brimming with excitement, can barely contain his enthusiasm as he tells Shania all about Brayden's incredible performance during the scrimmage, his words tumbling out in a joyful rush.

MICHAEL  
(Excitedly)  
No, he didn't quit. In the second half, he played unbelievably! Suddenly, gunshots ring out. Michael's face turns pale as he instinctively grabs his scared sister and drops to the ground, shielding her. The room is filled with tension and fear. Michael's phone buzzes. It's his dad.

(Carl and Michael on the  
Phone, Cameras on Michael  
during the phone call)

CARL  
(On the phone, urgently)  
Is Shania okay? The neighbor said  
they heard gunshots.

MICHAEL  
(Trying to stay calm)

We're okay.

CARL

(Relieved)

Your mom will be home soon. Give Brayden a call to see where he's at. I can't get a hold of him.

MICHAEL

Okay, dad, I will.

Michael dials Brayden number, his hands trembling.

(Michael on Phone with  
Brayden)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(On phone with Brayden  
worried)

Hey! Are you okay? There were gunshots in our neighborhood, so dad was worried about you.

BRAYDEN

(Concerned)

What For real? I'm okay.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

(Quieter, to someone else)

I'm leaving to check on my brother and sister. There were gunshots in the neighborhood.

Time passes. Michael tucks Shania into bed.

MICHAEL

(Reassuring)

Shania, it's going to be okay.

SHANIA

(Holding his hand) I always feel safe with you.

MICHAEL

(Smiling)

Thanks, sis. I will always make sure you're safe.

SHANIA

(Trusting)

If you say we are, then I believe it. Thanks, bro. You're my guardian angel. Night.

Michael smiles, touched by her words, and kisses her forehead.

Carl sits, rubbing his eyes and looking exhausted. His time card reads that he's been working 14-hour shifts. He and his co-workers watch television during lunch.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

Basketball star Brayden Conrad has amazed the city, leading his team to a 9-0 start. We have never seen anything like it. This young teen has 15 colleges looking at him.

CARL

(Proudly) That's my boy!

CO-WORKER JIM

(Impressed)

Carl, have you made any of the games yet?

CARL

(Sighing)

I haven't gotten a chance to watch any of my son's games.

CO-WORKER JIM

(Concerned)

Carl, I neglected my family because I was a professional musician. Don't let it happen to you.

CARL

(Troubled)

I understand where you're coming from, Jim, but I just—

GARRETT

(Cutting in)

Carl, can I see you in my office?

Carl gets up and follows Garrett into his office. Garrett closes the door behind them.

INT. BOSS OFFICE/ CARL GETTING FIRED- DAY

Carl is pulled into his boss Garrett's office, a sterile, windowless room lined with filing cabinets and a single, harsh overhead light casting stark shadows. After being told he's fired after 15 years with the company, Carl's face contorts with a mix of shock and betrayal. In a fit

of rage, he knocks papers and a coffee mug off Garrett's desk, the items crashing to the floor. Without a word, he storms out of the building, his coworkers watching in terrified silence, their eyes wide with fear as the sound of his heavy footsteps echoes through the otherwise quiet office.

GARRETT

(Grim)

Carl, I'm sorry to say this, but I have to let you go.

CARL

(Enraged)

What! Are you serious? I've been with this company for 15 years!

GARRETT

(Apologetic)

I understand, but due to budget restraints-

CARL

(Furious)

Don't give me that bullshit!

Carl knocks papers and a coffee mug off Garrett's desk, the items crashing to the floor.

CARL (CONT'D)

(Seething)

If you think I'm going to take this sitting down, you've got-

GARRETT

(Calming) Now, calm down, Carl-

CARL

(Exploding)

Don't you dare tell me what to do.

I don't have to listen to you anymore. Go to hell.

Carl storms out of the office. Garrett sighs deeply.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Charlette cooks while Michael helps Shania with homework at the table. The place is

small, crowded, and alive. Pans hiss. Pencil scratches. A cheap radio plays old R&B through static.

SHANIA

I hate math.

MICHAEL

Math hates everybody. You just gotta hate it back correctly.

Shania giggles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay, what's eight times six?

SHANIA

Forty.... seven?

Michael acts like he's been physically wounded.

MICHAEL

You trying to get me fired from being your tutor?

Shania laughs harder. Charlette turns, smiling despite her exhaustion.

CHARLETTE

Leave her alone. She's trying.

MICHAEL

I'm teaching with love, Mom.

Shania narrows her eyes.

SHANIA

You teaching with drama.

Michael puts a hand to his chest.

MICHAEL

That too.

Brayden enters, sweat-soaked from practice, spinning a basketball on one finger.

The room brightens for a beat.

BRAYDEN

What's for dinner?

CHARLETTE

The same thing I always make when nobody in here is rich.

BRAYDEN

Then I'm grateful.

Michael looks at him.

MICHAEL

You good?

BRAYDEN

Yeah.

MICHAEL

You lying?

BRAYDEN

A little.

Shania looks between them.

SHANIA

Y'all do that too much.

Michael and Brayden trade a look, then both crack up.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

See? That's exactly what I mean.

Carl enters from work, worn down but trying to fake normal. Michael clocks it. So does

Charlette.

CARL

Anybody save me a plate?

MICHAEL

Depends. You got rent money?

Carl points at him.

CARL

You're funny till your chores show up.

Michael raises both hands. Small laughter around the table. A fragile family rhythm.

It's the kind of ordinary that will hurt later.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is dimly lit, a single lamp casting long shadows across the room. The furniture is modest and slightly worn, reflecting years of family life. Charlette sits on the couch, her face etched with worry. The sound of the front door slamming open startles her, and she turns to see Carl stumbling in, reeking of alcohol.

CARL

(slurring)

Charlette.... I lost my job today.

Charlette's worry transforms into anger as she stands, her eyes blazing.

CHARLETTE

(piercingly)

You come home drunk, Carl? This is how you deal with it?  
Carl's face twists in frustration, his movements unsteady.

CARL

I needed.... I needed something. I thought you'd understand!  
Their voices rise, each word sharper than the last. The tension in the room is palpable, suffocating.

CHARLETTE

(angrily)

Understand? You think I don't have enough on my plate? You're supposed to be the rock, Carl, not another problem!

Carl's anger flares, and he knocks over a lamp, the crash echoing through the house.

CARL

(yelling)

I've given 15 years to that place!

I needed you to be there for me!

The commotion wakes the children. Brayden and Michael run downstairs, their eyes wide with fear. Shania clings to Michael, who quickly steps between his parents, his face a mask of determination.

CHARLETTE

(Enraged)

Carl, that is enough! Get out of my house, or I'm going to call the police!

MICHAEL

(pleadingly)

Dad, stop! You need to leave. Now please.

Carl's eyes meet Michael's, and for a moment, there is silence. The intensity of the argument lingers in the air, a palpable tension that leaves everyone on edge. Carl's shoulders slump, the fight draining out of him. He turns and stumbles out the door, leaving the family in a strained silence, the echoes of the argument still reverberating through the room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Concerned) Mom, are you okay?

CHARLETTE

(Sighing)

Yeah, Michael, I'm okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT ROOF / STAIRWELL LANDING - NIGHT

Brayden sits on the top landing outside, elbows on his knees, staring at the city.

Below, distant sirens scrape across the night.

Michael pushes open the stairwell door and joins him with two canned sodas.

MICHAEL

Mom sent me to make sure you don't disappear.

BRAYDEN

You mean she sent you because you're better at getting through to me.

Michael hands him a soda. Brayden takes it.

MICHAEL

Probably both.

A long silence.

BRAYDEN

You ever feel like everybody got a role in this family and mine is just....

don't screw it up?

MICHAEL

No. Your role is bigger than that.

You just keep handing pieces of it to people who don't deserve them.

Brayden knows exactly who he means.

BRAYDEN

Kirby's my friend.

MICHAEL

Kirby's convenient. That's not the same thing.

Brayden bristles.

BRAYDEN

Man, you think just because you stay home and do the right thing, you understand everything.

MICHAEL

No. I think because I stay home and watch what this does to us, I understand enough.

Brayden stands, anger flaring.

BRAYDEN

You don't know what it feels like having everybody expect you to be the way out.

Michael stands too.

MICHAEL

And you don't know what it feels like holding this house together with tape and prayer while everybody else gets to run.

That lands. Both brothers breathe hard, wounded by their own honesty.

BRAYDEN

I didn't mean that.

MICHAEL

Neither did I.

A beat.

BRAYDEN

I'm just tired.

MICHAEL

I know.

Michael steps in first and pulls Brayden into a rough hug.  
Brayden resists for half a  
second, then folds into it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Whatever happens, I'm with you.  
But I need you with me too.

BRAYDEN

You got me.

MICHAEL

Then prove it.

Brayden nods, eyes wet.

BRAYDEN

I will.

EXT. LOCAL PARK COURT- MORNING 21

An Eagle eye drone shot captures Brayden practicing  
basketball alone on an outdoor court, the morning sun casting  
long shadows. He is determined, sweat dripping from his  
forehead, every dribble echoing his resolve.  
Determined to escape the confines of the ghetto and fueled by  
anger towards his father Carl after witnessing his fight with  
Charlette, Brayden rises early each morning to practice on  
the local basketball court, channeling his frustration into  
every shot and dribble.

INT. HOME - DAY 22

Michael enters the kitchen, finding  
Charlette preparing  
breakfast. He grabs a plate and joins her at the counter.

MICHAEL

(Softly)

Mom, do you think dad will be okay?

CHARLETTE

(Sighs)

I hope so, Michael. He just needs  
time to figure things out.

MICHAEL

Okay gotta go. Love Ya

CUT TO:

EXT. MICHAEL'S ROUTE TO SCHOOL - DAY

Michael walks to school, lost in thought. He passes by a group of kids playing basketball, their laughter and cheers filling the air. He smiles, momentarily distracted from his worries.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Michael sits in class, trying to focus on the lesson. His phone buzzes with a message from Brayden: "Thanks for being there for me. You're the best brother."

Michael smiles, his resolve strengthened.

FADE OUT

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Brayden arrives at school. The camera follows him as he walks through the busy halls, students whispering and pointing at him, a mixture of awe and curiosity in their eyes.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY 24

Brayden walks into the gym, where his teammates are already practicing. The coach notices him and nods in acknowledgment.

COACH K

(Loudly)

Alright, team! Let's show Brayden what we've got today!

The team begins intense drills, Brayden leading the charge, his movements swift and precise.

CUT TO:

INT. BRAYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brayden, in a fit of anger, opens a drawer and grabs a gun hidden under the dresser. He carefully opens his window and sneaks out, his face set with determination.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 28

Charlette finishes preparing supper, the aroma filling the kitchen, and calls out to Michael to fetch Brayden, adding that Shania is at her aunt's. When Michael returns with the news that Brayden isn't in his room, a wave of

worry washes over Charlette's face, her heart sinking with a mother's instinctive concern for her son's wellbeing.

CHARLETTE

Tell Go grab your brother and tell him supper is ready.  
Okay.

MICHAEL

INT. BRAYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael bursts into Brayden's room, but it's empty. The window is open, curtains fluttering in the night breeze. Michael runs back downstairs.

MICHAEL

(worried)

Mom. Brayden not in his room and the window is open.

CHARLETTE

(Afraid)

Brayden is on the right path now, and I hope he doesn't mess it up.

MICHAEL

(concerned)

You want me to go look for him?

CHARLETTE

(Worried)

No, I want you to stay here.

In an intense conversation with Michael, Charlette stresses that Brayden needs space to breathe, and if Carl continues down the path of alcoholism, she declares with a heavy heart that she's at her breaking point.

MICHAEL

Please give him a chance. Dad lost his job.

CHARLETTE

(Upset)

He needs to stop drinking!

MICHAEL

(Sympt)

He will. Also, I'll go with you

tomorrow to get your hand checked out.

CHARLETTE

Okay, we'll go tomorrow. I'll talk to your dad. I love that man.

MICHAEL

Okay, mom, thanks. I love you.

CHARLETTE

Michael, you have a gift for making everything better.

MICHAEL

I'm just doing what anybody that cares for their family would. Don't forget to pick me up for your appointment tomorrow.

I won't.

CHARLETTE

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Brayden is hanging out with Kirby. They're playing with the gun, examining it under the dim park lights. Kirby passes a blunt to Brayden, who shakes his head.

KIRBY

My Dog. Mr. Superstar.

BRAYDEN

I'm good. I don't smoke.

KIRBY

Yeah, I need my gun I let you use for that robbery.

BRAYDEN

Well I need it. My dad came home drunk and yelled at my mom.

KIRBY

So what you want to do?

BRAYDEN

What you mean?

KIRBY

The gun, foo? You want to go get

your dad? I'll go with you.

BRAYDEN

Well, I'm not sure now after I've cooled down. I think I should head home.

KIRBY

Alright, lemme know.

Brayden leaves Kirby and starts walking home alone. Three thugs appear and start following him. Brayden turns to confront them.

MAC

Hey, aren't you the basketball star? Well, your life has expired. Brayden clutches the gun in his pocket.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

Back off! I don't want any trouble.

MAC

(Mad)

Shut up! I'm going to deal with you now.

Mac pulls out a gun and points it at Brayden's face. He pulls the trigger twice, but the gun jams. Brayden takes off running.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Brayden bursts through the front door, weeping. Relief floods Charlette's face as she sees Brayden rush through the door, his eyes wide with urgency after jumping out the window to escape the intensity of his parents' fight. Their conversation is charged with emotion as Charlette embraces Brayden tightly, her voice trembling with both worry and relief, while Brayden tries to explain his actions amidst his own tumultuous feelings.

BRAYDEN

(Weeping)

Mom, I thought I was never going to see you, Shania, and Michael again. I got myself into some trouble but escaped with my life.

CHARLETTE

(Embracing him worried)

What's going on son? You ok?

BRAYDEN

(Happy to be alive)

Yes I am, mom I'm going to bed. I'm exhausted.

CHARLETTE

Ok, Goodnight.

CUT TO:

INT.SCHOOL. DAY

Charlette picks up Michael from school, the car ride to the clinic filled with the rhythmic hum of the engine, the occasional honk of impatient drivers, and the blur of passing streetlights, tension thick in the air as they navigate the evening traffic towards the clinic.

The nurse runs tests and takes blood from Charlette's left hand. Michael waits in the lobby, playing on his phone, then joins his mother when the doctor comes out with the results.

DOCTOR

(Secretive)

Do you want to go somewhere private?

CHARLETTE

(Okay for Michael to hear the results.)

It's okay; he can hear.

DOCTOR

(Proceed with Caution)

I have good news and bad news. The good news is that if you had waited any longer to get a check-up, you might have had to have your hand amputated.

CHARLETTE

(Aghast)

Are you serious? This can't be happening.

DOCTOR

(Acknowledge Michael's

decision)  
Your son is a real hero.

MICHAEL  
(Nods and worried)  
Well, Doc, I don't think I'm a  
hero.

DOCTOR  
(Gives Good News)  
Now, the bad news. I'm sorry to  
say, but you have chondrosarcoma, a  
type of bone cancer.

CHARLETTE  
(Weeping)  
Cancer?! No, please tell me this is  
not true.

MICHAEL  
(Shocked but being strong  
for his mother)  
Mom... We are going to get through  
this, I promise. Don't worry, I am  
here for you.

DOCTOR  
(upfront)  
Charlette, you should start  
treatment today. We will do the  
best we can, and there is hope.  
Please stay strong, and let's fight  
this disease together.

CHARLETTE  
Yes, Doctor, let's start treatment  
now.

In a sweeping drone shot, we follow Charlette as she is escorted into the clinic room, the camera zooming in on her worried expression as she disappears behind the closing doors. Meanwhile, Michael strides purposefully out of the clinic's front doors, his figure gradually receding into the distance, leaving an empty sense of concern lingering in the air.

EXT. CORNER STORE / BUS STOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Michael spots Kirby outside a corner store, laughing with two older boys. The mood shifts immediately.

MICHAEL

Kirby.

Kirby turns, surprised, then amused.

KIRBY

Look who came to save the neighborhood.

MICHAEL

Leave my brother alone.

Kirby smirks.

KIRBY

Your brother ain't a child.

MICHAEL

He's trying to be something real.  
You keep putting dirt on his shoes.

Kirby steps closer, keeping his voice low.

KIRBY

Careful, Michael. Everybody loves you.  
That can make people careless.

Michael doesn't back up.

MICHAEL

That's supposed to scare me?

KIRBY

No. It's supposed to educate you.

A tense beat.

BUS BRAKES hiss nearby. Michael keeps his eyes locked on

Kirby.

MICHAEL

Brayden's better than all this.

KIRBY

Maybe.

But "better" don't pay bills.

Kirby turns and leaves with his boys. Michael watches him go, unsettled.

EXT. CLINIC PARKING LOT - SUNSET

Michael exits the clinic and stops beside Charlette's car. The evening is strangely beautiful -- orange sky, long shadows, normal people walking to normal lives.

Michael leans against the hood and breaks for the first time.

He wipes his face fast when Charlette appears at the door with a wristband and a brave smile that isn't fooling anybody.

CHARLETTE

You don't have to be strong every second.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I do.

Somebody does.

Charlette moves closer.

CHARLETTE

You're still a child.

MICHAEL

Not in this family.

That hurts them both.

CHARLETTE

Michael....

MICHAEL

No, Mom, listen to me.

We're gonna get through this.

Dad's gonna come back around.

Brayden's gonna lock in.

Shania's gonna stay a kid as long as I can help it.

Charlette starts crying. Michael hugs her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I got you.

I mean that.

CHARLETTE

I know.

That's what scares me.

Michael pulls back.

MICHAEL

Why?

CHARLETTE

Because you carry everybody like it's  
your job.

Michael gives her a tired smile.

MICHAEL

Maybe it is.

He looks out toward the street, already thinking about where  
Carl might be.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Go start treatment.

I'll get Dad.

Charlette knows she can't stop him.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Michael walks into the bar and spots his dad. Carl, seeing Michael, lifts a shot glass to drink it, but Michael slaps it out of his hand.

CARL

(Drunk and Upset to see  
Michael in the bar)

Son, What are you doing here. Go home!

How did you get here?

I walked.

MICHAEL

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Furious and weeping) Damn, Dad,  
you're selfish! Mom has cancer in  
her hand, Dad! Do you even care!?

CARL

(Shocked at the news of his  
wife having cancer)

Did you say cancer?

MICHAEL

(Sad)

Yes, Dad, cancer!

CARL

(Angry with himself)  
No, this can't be.

MICHAEL

(Upset turns to Sad)  
Mom needs you right now!

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Sad)

She told me that she loves you.

Please, Dad, do this for me. Let's  
go home.

Michael hugs his dad, and Carl gets up to leave. They hopped  
in the car.

Carl drives in silence, the weight of the news about

Charlette's cancer hanging heavy between him and Michael. The car's interior feels suffocatingly small, filled only with the sound of the engine and the occasional sigh from Carl. Michael stares out the window, his face a mix of anger and sorrow, grappling with the devastating reality that has just shattered their world. The streetlights flicker past, each one marking the distance between the bar and home, a journey made longer by the unbearable weight of their thoughts.

CARL

(Sigh of relief)

My teenager son is getting me out  
of a bar.

MICHAEL

(Compassionate)

Dad, I love you, and I believe in  
you.

CARL

(Teary eyes)

Thanks, son. That means a lot to  
me. How's Brayden doing?  
He's good.

MICHAEL

EXT/INT. HOME - NIGHT 34

Carl and Michael pulls up to the  
driveway and make their way  
in the house. Carl walks into the house, grabs Charlette, and  
holds her tightly. She hugs him back.

CARL

(Whispering)

I'm so sorry. I will never act like  
a fool ever again.

CHARLETTE

(Whispering)

Please don't tell Shania or Brayden  
about my cancer.

CARL

(Whispering) I won't.

Michael heads upstairs to Brayden's  
room to talk with him

about their dad.

MICHAEL

(Puzzled)

Brayden, what happened to your  
face?

BRAYDEN

(Notice his bad decisions)

You were right about Kirby. I need  
to keep my distance.

MICHAEL

(Encouraging Brayden)

We all slip up sometimes, bro. Dust  
yourself off and move forward.

BRAYDEN

(Smiles)

Yeah, you're right.

MICHAEL

(Teaching Moment)

I learned a long time ago that  
failure is final when you don't get  
back up. Can you talk to Dad,  
please? He's downstairs.

BRAYDEN

(Sympathize with Michael to  
speak to his dad)

You know I don't want to, but I  
will do it for you.

MICHAEL

Thanks, bro.

CHARLETTE

(Excited)

Michael remember it's your night to  
make  
supper.

MICHAEL

(Nervous but destined)

Yes, mom I know. I hope I don't  
disappoint.  
Carl apologizes to Brayden for arguing with his mother  
and they hug and head to the dinner table.  
The family sits down at the dinner table. Michael emerges

from the kitchen wearing an apron that reads, "Dab on the food." He brings out various dishes he prepared.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Excited)

I made fried chicken, spaghetti, mashed potatoes, and sweet cornbread.

CHARLETTE

(Surprised)

It smells really good.

SHANIA

(Shocked of how good it smells.)

It does. I hope it tastes as good as it smells.

BRAYDEN

(Hungry)

You know me, I'll eat anything.

CARL

(Grateful)

Smells really good, son.

MICHAEL

(Grateful for his family)

Let me pray before we dig in.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Says a prayer from the heart)

Dear Lord, I'm thankful for this opportunity to eat this supper with the most important people in my life, my family. I pray that you bless this food and this time that we get to spend with each other. You only know what they truly mean to me. Help us on our journey after this Supper. Let us never lose heart and our trust in God, no matter what happens. Bless the food and the hands that prepared it.

Amen!

Amen!

## THE OTHERS

The family begins to eat the food, savoring every bite.

CHARLETTE

(weeping then wiping tears  
from her eyes after  
Michael's prayer.)

That prayer was really good. Wow!  
And the food is delicious.

SHANIA

(Enjoyed)  
I finished my whole plate. You're a  
really good cook.

BRAYDEN

(Enjoyed the food)  
Supper was off the hook!

MICHAEL

(Grateful)  
Thanks, bro.

CARL

Yes, Son great food.

FADE OUT.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT 35

The house is quiet, filled with the  
soft glow of evening  
lights. Charlette and Carl tuck themselves into bed, leaving  
Shania, who is asleep on the couch. Michael sits on the  
armchair, watching a late-night show.

The flickering TV light casts shadows on his face. Michael  
looks over at Shania and gently places a blanket over her.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 36

Brayden, descending the stairs quietly, joins Michael in the  
living room. The ambiance is somber yet comforting.

BRAYDEN

(Happy)  
You stepped in and somehow brought  
us back together like nothing ever  
happened.  
Brayden embraces his brother, a mix of gratitude and  
admiration in his eyes.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

You should pursue culinary studies.

MICHAEL

(Determined)

If my family believes I can do it,  
then I'll do it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Excited)

Hey, bro, I see that you're the #1  
high school basketball prospect in  
the nation.

Brayden's eyes well up with tears, the weight of his  
brother's support sinking in.

BRAYDEN

(Teary Eyes)

You make me want to be better every  
day.

MICHAEL

(concern)

Keep away from Kirby; he's no good.  
I know you got the drugs from him.

BRAYDEN

(Worried)

I owe Kirby some money, but when I  
pay him back, I'm going to stay  
away.

MICHAEL

(Upset)

You owe him money?

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(Pleading)

Please bro, just tell Mom and Dad  
so they can pay your debt.

BRAYDEN

(Prideful)

I have to handle it on my own. I'm  
short \$500, and then I'll have all  
the money.

MICHAEL

(Passionate to Help)

\$500, that's all you need?

Michael runs upstairs and grabs a shoebox filled with money.  
He rushes back down and hands it to Brayden.

BRAYDEN

(Confused Look)

What's this?

MICHAEL

(Happy)

Your pardon!

Brayden opens the box, eyes widening at the sight of the money.

BRAYDEN

(Upset)

I am not taking your money!

MICHAEL

(Determined to help his  
brother)

Take this money and pay off Kirby!

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Remember our vow right?

BRAYDEN/MICHAEL

(Both Says it With Pride)

I'm my Brother's Keeper!

Brayden reluctantly takes the box, and they hug tightly.

MICHAEL

(Smiles)

Oh, by the way, my friend Karen  
likes you.

BRAYDEN

(Blushing)

Yah, I've got no time for girls.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

I'm taking a flight to USC this  
week.

MICHAEL

I wish I could go, but I've got to  
pick up Shania from school. But  
good luck, though.

(2Pac's "Me Against the  
World" chorus plays  
softly in the background,  
setting a poignant tone.)

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The house sleeps except for Michael.

He stands alone at the counter in an oversized apron, testing seasoning on a spoon, trying to get tomorrow night's supper perfect. On the table are recipe cards with crossed-out notes and grease stains from trial and error.

Shania wanders in half-asleep, dragging her blanket.

SHANIA

Why are you cooking in the middle of the night like a grandma?

MICHAEL

Because greatness doesn't sleep.

She climbs onto a chair and watches him work.

SHANIA

Are you practicing for your supper?

MICHAEL

Yep. Tomorrow I make something so good Brayden's gonna cry.

SHANIA

He cries at everything.

MICHAEL

True.

She studies him.

SHANIA

You been weird all day.

Michael pauses.

MICHAEL

Weird how?

SHANIA

Like you keep looking at us like  
you're counting.

That hits him. He covers with a smile.

MICHAEL

Maybe I'm counting how lucky I am.

Shania accepts that, mostly.

SHANIA

Can I help?

Michael hands her a wooden spoon.

MICHAEL

Official taste tester. That's a  
serious job.

She tastes the sauce and makes a dramatic face.

SHANIA

Needs love.

MICHAEL

That's rude.

SHANIA

It's true.

Michael laughs, fixes it, offers another spoonful.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

Okay.... now it tastes like a hug.

Michael takes that in. He kneels to her eye level.

MICHAEL

No matter what happens, you hear me?  
You stay close to Mom. And you keep being loud.

SHANIA  
Nothing's gonna happen.

Michael forces a smile.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. You're right.

Shania hugs him around the neck. He holds on a little too long.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

The sun is just beginning to rise,  
casting a warm glow over  
the quiet neighborhood. MICHAEL, walks hand-in-hand with his  
8-year-old sister, SHANIA, towards her school.

MICHAEL  
(smiling)  
Alright, Shania, you have a great  
day at school, okay?

SHANIA  
(beaming)  
I will, Michael! See you later!

Michael watches as Shania skips happily into the school building. He then turns and starts walking towards his own school, earbuds in, listening to music. The street is mostly empty, just a few cars passing by. Suddenly, the distant roar of car engines disrupts the morning calm. Two cars come speeding down the street, weaving dangerously as they chase each other. The sounds of gunfire crack through the air. Michael barely has time to react before multiple bullets hit him, his body jerking with each impact. The cars speed away, leaving chaos in their wake. Michael collapses onto the pavement, gasping for air. Blood pools around him, staining the concrete. His eyes dart around, filled with pain and confusion. A passerby, a MAN in his early 30s, rushes over, dropping to his knees beside Michael. He frantically checks for a pulse

and starts performing CPR.

MICHAEL

(weakly, struggling to  
speak)

Help.... Brayden....

The man's face contorts with determination as he continues chest compressions, but it's clear Michael is slipping away. His eyes glaze over, his breath falters, and then he is still.

The morning, once serene, is now filled with the distant wail of sirens and the cries of shocked onlookers. Michael's lifeless body lies on the ground, a tragic victim of senseless violence.

FADE OUT.

INT. CARL JOB INTERVIEW - MORNING

Carl exits his interview, looking optimistic, holding a new badge. Charlette finishes her treatment, exchanging smiles with the nurse. Both arrive home simultaneously, greeted by the ringing phone.

INT. HOME - DAY

Charlette answers the phone.

(Voice On Phone)

Hello, is this the residence of  
Charlette

and Carl Conrad?

CHARLETTE

Yes, who am I speaking to?

(Voice On Phone)

This is Officer Scott. Can I have you  
and your husband come

to the police station, please?

CHARLETTE (CONT'D)

(Freaking out)

Yes, we can. Is everything okay?

(Voice On Phone)

I need you two to come right away.

INTERCUT:

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

Carl and Charlette stand in the stark, cold room of the police station, their hearts pounding with dread as they uncover the body, revealing Michael. Charlette screams, collapsing into Carl's arms. They hold each other, devastated.

Tears stream down their faces uncontrollably, disbelief and agony etched into every line of their faces. The room feels suffocatingly quiet, the world outside fading away as they confront the unimaginable pain of losing their son, leaving them in a state of numbness and overwhelming grief.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANDLELIGHT VIGIL - NIGHT

The block glows with candles, poster boards, and handmade signs. Faces from the neighborhood gather in hoodies, church clothes, work uniforms -- everybody carrying their own version of grief.

A local pastor leads a prayer. The air is cold enough to see breath.

PASTOR

Tonight we stand for a young man who  
stood for his family.

A young man whose kindness reached further than these streets.

Charlette squeezes Shania's hand. Carl stands rigid, trying not to collapse. Brayden has not arrived yet. His absence is a wound in the crowd.

Neighbors step up one after another.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN

Michael walked my son home when he got  
bullied.

Never told nobody. Just did it.

COACH K

He wasn't on my roster, but that boy  
changed games from the bleachers.

That's leadership.

Shania can't hold it anymore.

SHANIA

He promised he'd come back.

The entire vigil breaks with her.

Charlette drops to her knees and holds her, both of them shaking. Carl stares at the candle in his hand until wax spills onto his skin and he doesn't even flinch.

The pastor bows his head again as the neighborhood closes in around the family.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Charlette and Carl sit in Michael's room, surrounded by his belongings, crying. Charlette crawls into his bed, sobbing uncontrollably. There's a knock at the door. Carl opens it to Aunt Betty, who drops off Shania, her face streaked with tears.

SHANIA

(Puzzled)

Dad, why is Aunt Betty crying? I'm going to talk to Mom.

CARL

(Teary-eyed)

No, please don't go up; your mom needs some space. She's not feeling good right now; none of us are.

SHANIA

Dad, what's going on? Where's Michael and Brayden? And why didn't Michael pick me up? He always keeps his word.

CARL

(Weeping)

Shania, I'm sorry to say this....

SHANIA

(Confused of What's going on)  
 Say what Dad? You're freaking me  
 out now, what is it?

CARL  
 (Takes a deep breath)  
 Your brother Michael was shot early  
 this morning, and he didn't make  
 it. He died.

SHANIA  
 (Crying)  
 It can't be. I was with him this  
 morning.

CARL  
 (Sad breaking the news to  
 Shania)  
 I'm sorry baby, He's gone.

SHANIA  
 (In Unbelief)  
 Michael said he'll always be with  
 me. You're a liar!  
 Shania runs upstairs to Michael's room, where Charlette holds  
 her tightly as she weeps. The family, shattered, clings to  
 each other.

CHARLETTE  
 (Sniffing and eyes teary)  
 No one says a word to Brayden until  
 he gets back tomorrow.  
 They all fall asleep in Michael's bed, the weight of their  
 loss pressing down on them.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT - DAY

The scene opens with Brayden stepping  
 off the plane at LAX.  
 He's dressed in casual yet stylish athletic wear, his duffel  
 bag slung over his shoulder. The sun is bright, and the  
 energy of the city is palpable.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. USC CAMPUS - DAY

Brayden arrives at USC, his eyes  
 widening at the sight of the  
 beautiful campus. The historic buildings, lush green lawns,

and bustling students create a vibrant atmosphere.

INT. USC BASKETBALL FACILITY - DAY

Brayden walks into the state-of-the-art basketball facility, where he's greeted by COACH WILLIAMS, a tall, energetic man in his 40s.

COACH WILLIAM

Welcome to USC, Brayden! We're excited to have you here.

BRAYDEN

(Smiling but Nervous)

Thank you, Coach. It's great to be here.

Coach Williams introduces Brayden to the team. The players are friendly, instantly making him feel at home. They exchange handshakes, high-fives, and a few jokes.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

In the locker room, Brayden sees his name already on a locker, alongside a pristine USC jersey.

TEAM CAPTAIN

(Excited to present a Jersey to Brayden)

We got you a little something.

Welcome to the family, Brayden.

Brayden is touched by the gesture. He changes into the jersey, feeling a sense of belonging.

INT. USC BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

The team hits the court, and Brayden joins in for a practice session. The energy is electric, and Brayden quickly finds his rhythm. He makes impressive shots, showcasing his talent. The team's chemistry is evident, and Brayden feels like he's found his place.

INT. USC BASKETBALL OFFICE - DAY

After practice, Brayden sits with Coach Williams in his office. The walls are lined with trophies and photos of past victories.

COACH WILLIAMS

You fit right in, Brayden. We believe you can take this team to the next level.

Brayden nods, feeling the weight of his decision but also the

excitement of the opportunity.

EXT. USC CAMPUS - DAY

Brayden takes a solo tour of the campus. He walks through the library, the student union, and the dorms. Everywhere he goes, students greet him warmly.

He sees students studying, chatting, and enjoying campus life. The sense of community is strong.

EXT. USC STADIUM - DAY

He stands in the empty stadium, envisioning himself playing in front of thousands of fans. The thought gives him chills.

INT. USC CLASSROOM - DAY

Brayden visits a classroom, sitting in on a lecture. He's impressed by the academic rigor and the enthusiasm of the professors.

INT. USC STUDENT UNION - EVENING

As the sun sets, Brayden meets a few student-athletes for dinner at the student union. They share stories, laugh, and talk about life at USC. The camaraderie and support are palpable.

EXT. USC CAMPUS - NIGHT

Walking back to his dorm, Brayden pulls out his phone and calls his little brother, Michael but gets a voicemail. Brayden leaves a voicemail on Michaels phone.

BRAYDEN

Hey Mikey, you were right. This place is incredible. I think I've found my new home. Call when you get this message. K love you bro, Ill be back tomorrow morning.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Back in his dorm room, Brayden lies on his bed, staring at the ceiling. He thinks about Michael, his family, and his future. He knows USC is the right choice not only for basketball but also because it's where Michael wanted him to be.

FADE OUT

Brayden's visit to USC is filled with moments of connection, support, and a sense of belonging. The warm welcome from the players, the impressive facilities, and the vibrant campus life solidify his decision.

Most importantly, knowing that USC is where Michael wanted him to play makes the choice even more meaningful. Brayden is ready to embark on this new journey, with the memory of his brother guiding him every step of the way.

INT. HOME - MORNING

The atmosphere in the home is heavy with an almost palpable sense of despair and disbelief. The air is thick with silence, broken only by the occasional muffled sobs and the creaking of the house settling in the stillness. The usually lively space feels oppressively quiet, with family members moving in slow, dazed motions, their faces etched with sorrow and shock. Photographs and mementos on the walls seem to mock the unbearable reality of their loss.

When Brayden who doesn't yet know walks in, their cheerfulness and oblivion contrast starkly with the suffocating grief around them. They are met with a jarring silence, their bright demeanor fading as they take in the somber expressions and the heavy, somber atmosphere.

BRAYDEN

(Has Good News to tell

Michael)

Where is everyone?! Michael! Guess what?! Michael!

He runs into Michael's room, not finding him. He tries his parents' door, but it's locked. Frustrated, he heads downstairs for a drink. Charlette and Carl, eyes red from crying, descend the stairs.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

(Excited but Confused)

Mom, where's Michael?! I got good news! I'm going to USC! Aren't you

happy

CHARLETTE

(With teary eyes, trying  
not to cry)

We are so proud of you, but we have  
to tell you something.

BRAYDEN

(Confused)

What's going on? You guys have been  
crying?

CHARLETTE

(Broken Hearted)

I don't know how to tell you this,  
but your brother Michael is dead.

BRAYDEN

(Confused with a serious look  
on his face, filled with

anger)

What?! Dead? That can't be. Where's  
my brother?! This isn't funny.

Charlette and Carl embrace Brayden as he breaks down. Shania  
comes running downstairs and joins them.

SHANIA

Look out the window! Everyone's  
here!

Carl opens the curtains, revealing the neighborhood with  
candles and signs saying R.I.P Michael. The family steps  
outside, embraced by their community. Daniel, the man who  
tried to help Michael, approaches Brayden.

DANIEL

(Sad about telling Brayden  
his brothers last words.)

Hey, are you Brayden?

Yeah.

BRAYDEN

DANIEL

Well, my name is Daniel. I tried  
CPR on your brother. I did  
everything I could to help him. He

did say some words before he  
 passed. He said " Help Brayden."  
 Brayden breaks down again, and Daniel hugs him.  
 DANIEL (CONT'D)

Your brother knew you were the one  
 who was going to take it the  
 hardest. Brayden, you were on your  
 brother's mind to the very end.

BRAYDEN

(Weeping)

I have to go.

Brayden walks back into the house and heads upstairs.  
 DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FUNERAL OF MICHAEL CONRAD - DAY

Charlette, Brayden, Shania, and Carl, dressed in black, sit  
 in the front row at Michael's funeral. The room is filled  
 with mourners, all sharing in the family's grief. Brayden  
 looks numb, lost in his sorrow.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 45

One week after Michael's death,  
 Brayden returns to school.

Friends surround him, offering condolences. Kirby slips him a  
 bag of cocaine to numb his pain.

KIRBY

When you need to clear your mind.

Brayden pockets it, walking away. Karen, a popular  
 cheerleader, approaches and hugs him.

KAREN

(Sad and Concern)

I'm so sorry for what happened.

Thanks.

BRAYDEN

(Broken Hearted)

KAREN

Michael was a great friend to  
 everyone, and he was always proud  
 of you.

BRAYDEN

(Soft Spoken)

Michael mentioned you, but I brushed him off.

KAREN

(Want to help Brayden get his mind off his brother)

If you're not busy tomorrow, I would love to go to the carnival with you.

BRAYDEN

(Thinking about the request)

That would actually be a good idea. I need to get my head cleared.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT 46

At the carnival, vibrant lights flicker and spin against the night sky, casting a kaleidoscope of colors over the bustling scene. The air is filled with a mix of joyful laughter, the rhythmic clamor of carnival rides, and the occasional burst of music from various attractions. The smell of popcorn, cotton candy, and fried treats wafts through the crowd, mingling with the cool night air.

Brayden and Karen are wrapped in their own world amidst the lively chaos. Their laughter and shared glances create a small haven of happiness, contrasting with the vibrant backdrop. As they walk hand-in-hand, the sounds of carnival games and the whir of the Ferris wheel serve as a temporary distraction, helping Brayden momentarily escape the weight of his grief from losing his brother just a week ago.

BRAYDEN

(Thinking about Michael)

You know, Michael would have loved this.

KAREN

(Happy)

He would. And he'd be proud of you for being here.

Brayden nods, a small smile forming. The camera pulls back, showing the Ferris wheel turning against the night sky, a

symbol of the cycles of life and the enduring strength of family and community. They kissed on the Ferris wheel as the Drone Shot Camera zoom out into the dark sky.

FADE OUT.

EXT. KAREN'S PORCH - NIGHT

The carnival glow is gone. Here it's just porch light, crickets, and the low hum of a television from inside the house.

Karen and Brayden sit on the steps, the silence between them softer than before.

KAREN

You don't have to act okay with me.

BRAYDEN

That's the problem. I don't know how to act at all.

Karen studies him.

KAREN

Then don't act. Just be here.

Brayden looks down at his hands.

BRAYDEN

Michael used to make everything feel less heavy.

Like the world could be ugly and he'd still find a way to joke in the middle of it.

KAREN

What would he say right now?

Brayden almost smiles.

BRAYDEN

Probably that I finally took the prettiest girl at school somewhere

with decent lighting.

Karen laughs.

KAREN

He sounds smart.

BRAYDEN

He was.

Beat.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

I keep thinking if I'd stayed home....  
if I'd answered my phone sooner....  
if I was a better brother....

KAREN

Stop.

He looks at her.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Grief lies to people. It tells you you  
had control over things you never had.

Brayden's eyes glass over.

BRAYDEN

Then why does it feel like I'm the one  
who should've been there?

Karen reaches for his hand.

KAREN

Because you loved him.

A long silence. Honest. Painful.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You don't have to carry this by  
yourself.

BRAYDEN

I've been carrying things by myself a long time.

KAREN

Then maybe it's time you stop.

She leans her head against his shoulder. He lets her.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK 47

The classroom is bathed in soft, natural light streaming through tall windows. The walls are lined with colorful educational posters, and desks are neatly arranged in rows, filled with students absorbed in their work. The quiet hum of classroom chatter and the occasional scratch of pencils against paper create a soothing, yet monotonous backdrop. Brayden sits at his desk, his gaze unfocused as he stares at the blank page before him. His mind drifts into a vivid flashback, the classroom fading away as memories of Michael come rushing back. He recalls Michael's laughter echoing through the house, their shared jokes, and the comforting presence of his older brother cheering him on from the sidelines of his games.

In the memory, Michael is full of life, his face glowing with pride and warmth. The scene is vivid and nostalgic, a stark contrast to the cold reality of the classroom around Brayden. Suddenly, the classroom noise filters back into his awareness. Brayden blinks, the harsh reality crashing down on him as he remembers that Michael is gone. The vibrant memories of his brother are replaced by the crushing weight of grief. The cheerful ambiance of the classroom feels distant and surreal, the laughter of his classmates a cruel reminder of the void Michael's absence has left in his life.

CUT TO: FLASHBACK

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY 49

A younger Michael, about ten years old, stands crying, holding his face. Another kid stands nearby, looking guilty. Brayden, slightly older, rushes to Michael's side.

YOUNG BRAYDEN

(Protective)

What happened, Michael?

YOUNG MICHAEL

(Tears)

He punched me!

Brayden's face hardens. He walks over to the kid and confronts him, delivering a swift punch in return.

YOUNG BRAYDEN

(Mad)

Don't mess with my brother. I'm my brother's keeper.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CLASSROOM- DAY

Brayden snaps back to the present, tears streaming down his face. He quickly gathers his things and exits the classroom.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY 51

Brayden slumps to the ground, his back against the wall, struggling to hold back tears. Karen approaches, concern etched on her face.

KAREN

(Comforting Brayden in this hard time)

Brayden, are you okay?

BRAYDEN

(Emotional Anger)

No, I'm not okay, Karen! I can't live like this, acting like everything is fine!

KAREN

(Sad)

I know it's hard Brayden. Your brother would never want you to quit on yourself.

BRAYDEN

(Weeping)

I only play basketball because of him! What's the point? Why does this hurt so much?

KAREN

(Encouraging)

He would be so proud of you. You need to keep his name alive and make him proud by not giving up.

BRAYDEN

(Sniffling)

I hear you. Sorry for breaking down like this.

The bell rings, signaling the end of school. As Brayden stands, a student bumps into him hard.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY 52

Brayden, still emotional, loses his temper and attacks the student, leaving him bloody. Security quickly intervenes, dragging Brayden to the office.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Brayden sits across from Officer Chris, seething with anger.

OFFICER CHRIS

(Sympathizing)

We all are hurting from the loss of your brother, but we can't be causing problems for others. You have to learn to live without him.

BRAYDEN

(Emotional)

I don't know how to live without him by my side! I don't know how.

OFFICER CHRIS

You are a D1 basketball player and the #1 prospect in the nation. If you give that up, then you have failed Michael! Do you want to fail Michael, Brayden? Well, do you?

BRAYDEN

(Determined)

No! I just don't know how to release this pain I feel in my heart.

OFFICER CHRIS

Would your brother be proud of the

man you would become if you quit everything? Don't answer; just ponder on it. You're good to go. Brayden stands to leave.

OFFICER CHRIS (CONT'D)

Brayden, God knows what he's doing.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Brayden exits the school and is approached by Kirby.

KIRBY

Roscoe wants to talk with you about something tonight.

BRAYDEN

(Irritated)

Tell him another day; I have a lot on my mind and am not in a mood to talk.

KIRBY

(Gossiping)

Okay, Brayden, I heard you guys are behind on bills.

BRAYDEN

(Confused on how Kirby knows about his family financial

issues.)

What? Who told you that?

KIRBY

Just because you're my homie. Your mom came over one day to meet up with Roscoe and ask if she can borrow some money.

BRAYDEN

(Puzzled and Angry)

Why would she go to Roscoe for help?

INT. HOME - EVENING

Brayden storms into the house, furious. Charlette greets him warmly.

CHARLETTE

Hey honey, you hungry?

No!

BRAYDEN  
(Furious)

Brayden rushes upstairs, slamming his bedroom door. Brayden snorts cocaine, their perception begins to warp. The room seems to spin and tilt uncontrollably, with the walls and ceiling appearing to sway. The buzzing of the light bulb becomes unnervingly loud, and distant sounds—like muffled conversations and the occasional creak of the building—merge into a disorienting cacophony. Their heart races and their senses become hyperactive, amplifying every sound and sensation. Colors and shapes blur together, creating a dizzying effect that is both exhilarating and unsettling. The room feels like it's closing in, the spinning motion leaving them with an uneasy sense of detachment from reality. Then Brayden hears Michael's voice that freaks him out.

MICHAEL'S VOICE  
What are you doing?

BRAYDEN  
(Freaked Out)  
Michael, is that you? Of course, it isn't. You're gone.  
Brayden sits in despair, with his head down and tears falling on the floor. He lies on bed, closes his eyes and falls asleep.

INT. HOME - MORNING

Charlette, Shania, and Carl sit at the breakfast table, silent. Brayden comes downstairs, ready to leave.

CHARLETTE  
(Concerned)  
Where are you going, Brayden? You haven't eaten breakfast yet.

BRAYDEN  
(Annoyed)  
I don't know Mom, you should know!

CHARLETTE  
(Confused)

What do you mean by that, Brayden?

BRAYDEN

Damn! I'm going to Roscoe's!

Brayden storms out, hopping into a car with his friends.

CARL

(Upset)

Charlette, why did you let that boy speak to you like that? What did he mean by you should know?

CHARLETTE

(Guilty)

I don't know, Carl!

CARL

(Puzzled)

Tell me what's going on?

CHARLETTE

(Guilty)

I have to go to my treatment. Talk to you later.

Charlette kisses Shania and leaves. Shania goes to Michael's room, laying in his bed and falling asleep.

INT. SHANIA'S DREAM - DAY 57

In her dream, Shania finds herself in a sunlit, whimsical kitchen filled with warmth and the sweet scent of vanilla. The room is decorated with pastel colors and adorned with cheerful, homemade decorations. Her brother Michael appears, alive and radiant, his smile as bright as it was before his passing.

They stand side by side at a large kitchen counter, covered with bowls of cake batter and various baking tools. Shania and Michael laugh as they mix the batter, their faces lit with joy and carefree delight. Suddenly, Michael playfully scoops up a handful of batter and, with a mischievous grin, flings it at Shania. The creamy mixture splatters across her face and the counter, and she responds by grabbing a spoonful and hurling it back at him.

The kitchen erupts into a lively, colorful mess as they both burst into laughter, covered in splashes of cake batter. Their playful antics and the warm, sunny atmosphere create a sense of blissful innocence, a stark contrast to the grief Shania feels in waking life. The

dream feels like a precious, fleeting moment of connection and joy with her brother, wrapped in the comforting embrace of their shared happiness.

CUT TO:

SHANIA'S DREAM ACTED OUT

INT. HOME - DAY 58

Shania wakes up in Michael's bed as Carl enters.

SHANIA

(Sad)

Dad, do you miss Michael?

CARL

(Heart Broken)

(Teary-eyed) Yes, I do so much.

SHANIA

(Emotional)

The last memory we have of him is our LAST SUPPER

Shania runs upstairs, crying. Carl goes to his room, takes a shower, and breaks down, crying loudly.

CARL

(Crying)

Michael, why did you leave us!?

Shania hears her dad and cries even more, burying her face in her pillow.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A memory Brayden can't escape.

Michael sits on the edge of his bed lacing up worn-out sneakers while Brayden paces.

This is before the USC trip. Before everything breaks.

BRAYDEN

What if I mess this up?

MICHAEL

Then fix it.

BRAYDEN

What if I can't?

MICHAEL

You can.

BRAYDEN

You always say that like it's simple.

MICHAEL

It's not simple. It's just true.

Brayden stops pacing.

BRAYDEN

Why you always believe in me this  
much?

Michael looks at him like the answer should be obvious.

MICHAEL

Because I know who you are when the  
noise clears.

That memory stings. Brayden blinks back to the present --

INT. BRAYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brayden sits alone with the shoebox lid in his hands,  
Michael's old words echoing in  
the dark. He shuts his eyes, then gets up and walks out.

INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM - DAY

Shania sits cross-legged in Michael's room, surrounded by his  
things -- a folded hoodie,  
a basketball ticket stub, a cookbook with one page bookmarked  
and stained.

Karen stands in the doorway, unsure if she should enter.

KAREN

Your mom said you were up here.

Shania doesn't look up.

SHANIA

Everybody whispers now.

Karen steps in slowly and sits beside her.

KAREN

Grown-ups think whispering makes pain  
smaller.

It doesn't.

Shania picks up Michael's apron.

SHANIA

This still smells like him.

Karen's eyes well up.

KAREN

Yeah.

SHANIA

Do you miss him too?

KAREN

Every day.

Shania leans against her.

SHANIA

Sometimes I talk to him.

Not out loud. Just in my head.

KAREN

I think he'd like that.

SHANIA

I told him Brayden's being hard to  
live with.

Karen laughs through tears.

KAREN

Then he definitely heard you.

For the first time in a while, Shania smiles.

INT. ROSCOE'S TRAP HOUSE - NIGHT 59

Brayden enters, greeting everyone. Roscoe calls him into a room with Kirby and a few others.

ROSCOE

Brayden, I'm going to get down to the nitty-gritty. Your mom owes me \$30,000. I've loaned her to keep you guys from losing your place. I told her that she doesn't have to pay it back.

BRAYDEN

(Confused)

Why did you tell her that?

ROSCOE

Because you're going to pay it back.

BRAYDEN

(Confused)

I ain't paying you nothing back!

Roscoe punches and grabs Brayden, putting a gun in his mouth.

ROSCOE

(Furious)

You and your family are going to be with your brother if I don't get my money back.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

I'll kill you if you bring my brother up again.

ROSCOE

(Upset)

I'll let that slide, but next time, I will blow your head off.

BRAYDEN

Okay, I'll do it. What do I have to do?

ROSCOE

You have 3 more games before the playoffs. I'm betting \$15,000 each game. For a bonus, if you win 3 games, I will tell you who your brother's killers are.  
Brayden's eyes darken with determination.

BRAYDEN

You have a deal.

INT/INT HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME/ HALLWAY - NIGHT 60  
Brayden dominates the game, leading his team by 25 points. Charlette and Roscoe stand in the bustling high school hallway, the sounds of Brayden's basketball game echoing through the walls. Roscoe, with a determined look, leans in and asks, "Have you told Brayden yet?" Charlette, her face pale and tense, shakes her head, replying, "No, I haven't told him you're his biological father." Roscoe's eyes narrow as he tells her about his plan, "I'm going to bet on Brayden's remaining 3 games to pay off your loan." The fluorescent lights flicker above them, and the scent of popcorn and sweat fills the air, students brushing past in a rush to get to the gym.  
Roscoe confronts Charlette.

ROSCOE

So are you going to tell him or not?

CHARLETTE

(Frustrated)

When the time is right then I'll tell him.

ROSCOE

I couldn't care less. Brayden better win all 3 games, or else.

CHARLETTE

(Confused and afraid)

What are you talking about, Roscoe?

ROSCOE

Doesn't matter.

Roscoe grabs and kisses Charlette. She pushes him away. Roscoe smirks and returns to the gym, with Charlette following moments later. She sits next to Carl.

CARL

(Puzzled)

What's going on? Is Roscoe causing you any problems?

CHARLETTE

He's always up to no good, but I'm fine.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT 62

Roscoe whispers to Kirby.

ROSCOE

I need Brayden 100% focused because the playoffs are where it's at. If you give Brayden any more coke, I am going to kill you and your sister. Do I make myself clear?

KIRBY

(Scared)

Yes. I understand.

The game ends, and Brayden's family congratulates him. Brayden looks for Michael, but reality hits him hard. He tells his family he needs time alone.

INT. GYM - NIGHT

Brayden shoots jump shots by himself in the quiet gym, each swish of the net a stark contrast to the hollow ache in his heart. As the ball bounces back to him, he thinks of Michael, his brother's absence, a heavy, constant presence that shadows every shot he takes, leaving him heartbroken and longing for the days when they played together.

In the dimly lit, echoing emptiness of the basketball gym, Brayden stands alone at center court, his voice trembling as he vents to his brother Michael, his words reverberating off the silent bleachers and bouncing back to him, creating a haunting reminder of the bond they shared; his eyes welling with tears, Brayden thinks to himself how much he misses Michael's laughter and guidance, feeling the crushing weight of his absence in every corner of the gym.

BRAYDEN

(Venting Talking to himself)

Man, bro, this one was for you. I can feel you all around me, especially on the basketball court.

I know you would be proud of me.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

I want to say sorry, bro. I took some drugs and am trying to stop. I know you hated drugs, and you would always tell me to stay away from Kirby, but I didn't listen. I wish you were here to give me some advice on how to handle this Roscoe situation. Winning is my only option, but I still can't believe you're gone, bro.

(pause)

By the way, how is it up there in heaven? I bet you are playing one-on-one with Kobe Bryant. Tell the Mamba I said Hi. Peace out, bro. The door creaks open, and Kirby walks into the gym, his footsteps echoing.

KIRBY

What's up, Brayden? Good game.

BRAYDEN

(Questioned?)

Thanks. Why did Roscoe have you in a headlock earlier?

KIRBY

He was playing around.

BRAYDEN

(Can tell Kirby was lying)

That look in Roscoe's eyes told a different story. What's up?

KIRBY

Man, to be honest, you were always a real stand-up dude. People feared you in the hood, but ever since you hung around your bro, you became soft and nice, but that was a good thing. I wish I had a brother that could help me stay on the right track. Michael was special, and I was jealous that he had taken my

best friend from me.

BRAYDEN

(Showing Sympathy)

First of all, nobody can take my brother's place, and you're still my best friend. You just started running with the wrong crowd after I got out of the game.

KIRBY

(Smiling, telling Brayden a story)

I feel you. I miss Michael, too. We had great memories growing up. Remember when your brother faked like he was sick with a fever, and you and I would give him ice cream and cookies, only to find out he tricked us by putting a hot rag on his forehead and kept heating it up.

Brayden and Kirby burst into laughter, the tension easing.

BRAYDEN

(Smiling)

What happened to us, Kirby?

KIRBY

(Smiles)

I don't know, but we can change the narrative.

BRAYDEN

Yeah, we can.

KIRBY

(Worried)

Please stop the drugs because mine and my sister's lives are on the line.

BRAYDEN

(Questioned?)

What do you mean your life's on the line?

KIRBY

(Told Brayden the Outcome if he uses drugs again.)

Roscoe said if you don't stop the drugs, then me and my baby sister are dead.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

What?! I can't believe this is happening.

KIRBY

(Encourage)

I believe in you, man.

Brayden and Kirby shake hands, a sense of camaraderie restored.

BRAYDEN

(Puzzle)

I have one question. I saw my mom and Roscoe talking in the hallway.

KIRBY

(Sigh)

There are some things I just can't say, or else that's my head. What I can say is that they knew each other way before your dad was in the picture.

BRAYDEN

(Confused)

If they are good friends, why would he want to kill her?

KIRBY

Roscoe only cares about his money. Anyone that comes between him and his money is dead.

BRAYDEN

(Angry and Pissed)

He said he knew who my brother's killer was! Did you have anything to do with that!?

KIRBY

Hell Naw, I didn't have anything to do with that shooting! Michael was a brother to me. Just remember if you want revenge, it's going to

come at a cost.

BRAYDEN

(Mad)

I'm willing to pay! I'm going to  
kill my brother's killer no matter  
what!

KIRBY

We made a deal with the devil!

BRAYDEN

Yes, we have.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME KITCHEN - MORNING

Brayden hugs his mom and dad and then leaves. Carl tells  
Shania to go to her room for a minute so he and his wife can  
talk.

CHARLETTE

(Confused Look on her face)

What do we need to talk about,

Carl?

CARL

(Serious Look on his face)

Now please tell me the truth, are  
you having an affair?

CHARLETTE

(Upset at the question)

No! Why would you think that?

CARL

(Seen Her and Roscoe talking  
in Hallway)

You and Roscoe were talking to one  
another in the hallway. How do you  
guys know each other?

CHARLETTE

(Honest)

We were good friends in high  
school.

CARL

(Puzzled)

Just friends? You were more than  
friends.

CHARLETTE

(Afraid to tell Carl)

(Paused)

Okay, Roscoe and I dated before you  
and I met.

CARL

(Angry)

Why would you keep something like  
that hidden from me? When did you  
two stop sleeping around?

CHARLETTE

(Cracked Voice)

I don't know.

CARL

(Upset)

That's a lie. You have to know when  
you two broke up.

CHARLETTE

(Frustrated)

We broke up two months before we  
got together!

CARL

(Angry and Confused

because of the 2 months)

Two months before we met.

CHARLETTE

(Angry)

I knew you were going to act like  
this!

CARL

(Takes a deep breath

before speaking again)

So I wasn't losing it when I saw  
you two talking at the game.

CHARLETTE

There is nothing between me and  
Roscoe. That was a long time ago. I  
haven't seen him since that day.

CARL

(Angry and hurt, with

teary eyes)

Stop lying! I did my investigation on a payment that was made a few weeks ago, and the name on the invoice was Roscoe Douglas. There's no way this man is giving you \$30,000 without having sex!

(Weeping and Angry)

Before I leave! One question, and please don't lie to me. Is he mine?

CHARLETTE

(Confused)

What are you talking about?

CARL

(Sad and Heart Broken)

Is Brayden my son?! We got together 17 years ago in the month of September, and you had him in April instead of June.

CHARLETTE

(Weeping in Guilt)

I'm so sorry, babe. Please forgive me.

CARL

(Angry)

I lost my son and Roscoe still has his!  
Carl storms out of the house. Meanwhile, Shania walks downstairs.

SHANIA

(Sad look on her face) Mom, is Brayden my brother?

CHARLETTE

Of course, he is.

SHANIA

(Sad Crying)

I heard everything, Mom. Dad isn't coming back, huh? I'm still his daughter.

CHARLETTE

(Hurt)

He's coming back. He just needs

some time to clear his mind.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Shania sits on the couch beside her  
mom, her small hand  
gently resting on Charlette's, offering silent comfort in  
the wake of Carl's departure. The room is dimly lit, the  
evening shadows creating a cocoon of intimacy around  
them. Charlette's face is streaked with tears, her body  
shaking with silent sobs, as she processes the  
devastating truth that Brayden isn't Carl's son and that  
her beloved Michael is gone. Shania wraps her arms around  
her mother's shoulders, whispering softly, "We'll get  
through this together, Mom," her voice filled with a  
tender strength that belies her young age.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME - NIGHT

Brayden is making every shot from the get-go. He glances at  
the crowd and notices Carl isn't in the stands, but his mom  
and Shania are. He sees Roscoe, Kirby, and his friends.  
Brayden's team is winning by 35 points, and the coach pulls  
him out to avoid injuries. The bell rings, and the game is  
over.

BRAYDEN

(Confused)

Where's Dad?

CHARLETTE

(Sad)

He and I had a fight.

BRAYDEN

Over what? Roscoe, huh? That money  
you borrowed from him?

Charlette is speechless, and Brayden storms out of the gym.

CUT TO:

INT. BRAYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brayden wakes up in a cold sweat.

BRAYDEN

(Broken Hearted Venting)

Michael! Why did you leave me? I

need you, bro. Please come back to me.

Charlette stands outside Brayden's room and hears him. She starts weeping.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME - NIGHT

Brayden is struggling in the first quarter, thinking about his dad and brother. His coach tells him to get in the game. Brayden is benched after missing his fifth straight shot in a row during the second quarter. Brayden's team is down by 12, with no answer for the star player on the opposing team. Brayden becomes frustrated. He tries to call his dad, but it goes straight to voicemail. Brayden looks at the stands and sees Roscoe point at the clock.

Then Roscoe rubs his left ear while talking, a tick that Brayden also has. Brayden notices this and looks confused. Halftime arrives, and the team is down by 18 points. The team goes into the locker room to try to come up with a plan to win the game. Roscoe walks up to Charlette.

ROSCOE

You better make sure your son wins this game or else.

CHARLETTE

What are you talking about?

ROSCOE

I made a bet on Brayden's games. If he doesn't win, it'll be bad news. She walks off furious to the team's locker room.

CHARLETTE

(pulls Brayden outside the lockers away from everyone)

Brayden! You better not go through with this deal with Roscoe.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

Roscoe is going to hurt you and Shania if I don't win. He's going to tell me who Michael's killers are!

CHARLETTE

(Weeping)

Please let your brother rest. He's gone, and you have a life to live.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

I'm going to win this game for Michael! My brother's killer will pay!

(Brayden breaks down crying in anger)

I miss him so much, mom  
Charlette grabs him and cries with him.

CHARLETTE

(Weeping )

I miss him, too.

BRAYDEN

So that means I have to win.

Brayden walks into the gym with a determined glare, kisses his right hand, and places it on his shoes in remembrance of his brother. The crowd's murmur grows as he takes his place on the court. Brayden is giving it his all, doing everything he can on the court. His energy is contagious, and the team starts to rally, putting them within one point with 5 seconds on the clock and the ball at the half line. Brayden glances at the crowd and sees a silhouette of his brother Michael and smirks. Brayden gets the ball with 5 seconds on the clock, takes a long three-pointer with the defender contesting his shot; the ball is in the air in slow motion and swish. The gym goes crazy, everyone runs to the court and lifts Brayden up, yelling, "We're going to the playoffs!" Brayden watches someone he doesn't recognize hand Roscoe a suitcase full of money, and they all leave.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Charlette, Shania, and Brayden are eating dinner at the table with two empty seats. Brayden looks at the seats and sighs. Charlotte notices how sad he looks.

CHARLETTE

Alright, Shania, go take your bath.

Shania leaves, and Charlette turns to Brayden.

CHARLETTE (CONT'D)

(Nervous about telling him  
the truth about his  
biological dad)

Brayden, can we talk in the living  
room?

Brayden walks into the living room with Charlette.

CHARLETTE (CONT'D)

Son, I have to tell you the truth  
about why your dad left. I can see  
how it's hurting you not to know.  
When I was 16 years old, I had a  
high school crush, but he cheated  
on me with other girls. We broke up  
when I was pregnant with you. My  
parents wanted me to get rid of  
you, but I refused. I moved out  
with friends.

CHARLETTE (CONT'D)

After 2 months, I met your dad,  
Carl, and he was everything I ever  
wanted in a relationship. I was too  
afraid to tell him I was pregnant  
when we met, so I hid it from him.  
I did a terrible thing...and I made  
it seem like it was his. We finally  
had the conversation, and it broke  
his heart, so he left.  
Charlette starts weeping.

BRAYDEN

(Look of disappointment  
and anger on his face)

So you are the reason why Dad left.  
I knew there was more to the story.  
So you're telling me that Carl is  
not my real dad?

CHARLETTE

He is your father, son! Not your  
blood father, but he's always been  
there for you.

BRAYDEN

All these years... you lied! How can you keep something like that hidden for so long? Then who is my father!?

(angry with tears falling down his face)

Who is my father?

CHARLETTE

Roscoe is your father.

BRAYDEN

I hate you, and I'll never forgive you for this!  
Brayden storms out of the house.

INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He knocks on a window, and Karen opens it and lets Brayden in. Brayden tells Karen everything. They start kissing and then have sex. Fade out, then in on them cuddling.

KAREN

So what are you going to do knowing that Roscoe is your dad?

BRAYDEN

I really don't know, but as weird as it sounds, I'm kind of happy. I always wondered why I never really bonded with Carl like Michael did. Don't get me wrong, he was always there for me, but now I have to confront my real pops and ask him the hard questions. First of all, why he wants to kill us. I see where I get my rage from now.

KAREN

You sure you don't want to talk to Carl? I see him hanging around the bar by my house sometimes.

BRAYDEN

(Frustrated)

No. I'm not interested in talking

to him.

(pause)

Okay, Karen, I got to go. I love you. I'll call you later, k?

KAREN

(Smiling) How silly?

BRAYDEN

(Confused)

On the phone of course.

KAREN

(Laughs)

You don't have my number.

BRAYDEN

(Laughs)

Oh yeah, we kind of skipped that part right into desserts.

Karen smiles and grabs Brayden's phone and puts her number in. They kiss and say goodbye to one another. Brayden then leaves and heads to Roscoe's house.

Brayden walks up to the porch, hesitating for a moment before knocking. The door creaks open, revealing KIRBY.

The trap house is a dilapidated structure, its windows covered with makeshift blinds and the air thick with the pungent, acrid smells of weed and cooking cocaine.

The dim lighting casts eerie shadows across the graffitcovered walls, and the sound of low, murmured conversations mixes with the rhythmic beat of a bassheavy soundtrack. The floors are littered with discarded paraphernalia, dirty needles, and empty bottles. Thugs lounge on tattered couches, their eyes glazed and movements lethargic, while others huddle around a grimy table, cutting and packaging drugs. The atmosphere is heavy with tension and paranoia, a palpable sense of danger lurking in every corner.

KIRBY

What's up Brayden. Come in.

Brayden steps inside, tension crackling in the air. ROSCOE is seated on a leather couch, a smirk on his face.

ROSCOE

Brayden! Congrats on the game.

Don't get comfy, though. The

championship is a must-win. I bet  
50,000 dollars.

BRAYDEN (MAD)

Forget that for now. I have  
something else I want to talk  
about. Why didn't you tell me you  
were my pops? You left me and my  
mom with a stranger that became my  
dad because you didn't want to take  
responsibility!

ROSCOE

(Upset)

Yeah, you my son, and so what? You  
think I give a damn? I was a street  
dude, and I wasn't ready for no  
kid. But did I leave? No, I stayed  
close by and kept an eye on you. I  
had my homies protect you. Why you  
think these little dudes respected  
you growing up? Because they knew  
who your pops was.

BRAYDEN

(Upset)

Wait, what? Kirby, tell me you  
didn't know this.

KIRBY

(Afraid)

Yeah, I knew. I couldn't tell you.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

You should have told me!  
Brayden pulls out a gun and threatens to shoot Roscoe.

ROSCOE

Put down the gun, son.

BRAYDEN

(Angry)

Son! Don't call me son! Keep your  
side of the deal! You said you were  
going to tell me who my brother's  
killers are!

ROSCOE

I will as soon as you put the gun  
down.

One of Roscoe's goons sneaks up behind Brayden and tackles  
him, making him drop the gun. Roscoe picks it up, and his  
gang starts kicking Brayden in his stomach and ribs.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

(Furious)

Stop! Stop kicking him, Idiots! He  
needs to play in that championship  
game.

Brayden's ribs are hurt, and he is in pain.

BRAYDEN

I'm not going to play.

ROSCOE

If you don't, then your family is  
going to die one by one. Even that  
girlfriend of yours.

Brayden is coughing and gasping for air.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

Get him up and get some ice on his  
ribs. Stay here until I get back  
from picking up a package.

Okay, OG

HOMIE #1

Kirby hands Brayden a towel with ice in his to put on his  
ribs.

You Okay?

KIRBY

BRAYDEN

Yeah, I am. Sorry for getting mad  
at you, dog. I blacked out. Thanks  
for everything.

KIRBY

That night, your brother died.  
Roscoe, me, and Quinn was in....  
Kirby stops talking because Roscoe walks in.

ROSCOE

Get up, Brayden, to see how you feel.  
 Brayden gets up, a little sore but able to play.

BRAYDEN

I told you I am not....

Roscoe puts a gun in Brayden's mouth.

ROSCOE

Not what? Say it, and I'll blow your head off your shoulders. Son, don't make me hurt you. I have a lot of money riding on this game. If you win, then you're good for life, and I'll never step into your life ever again.

Brayden hesitates, but ultimately agrees to play. Roscoe leaves to pick up a package. Brayden is in the bathroom staring in the mirror as he washes the blood off his face.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

INT. BRAYDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 71

Young Brayden, about 10 years old, is sitting on his bed, holding a basketball. Michael, a teenager, enters the room with a smile.

MICHAEL

Hey, little bro. You practicing for the big leagues already?

YOUNG BRAYDEN

(Excited)

Yeah! I want to be just like you, Michael.

MICHAEL

(Taking the ball)

Remember, it's not just about the game. It's about staying true to yourself, no matter what.

YOUNG BRAYDEN

You think I can do it?

MICHAEL

(Placing a hand on

Brayden's shoulder)

I know you can. You're a fighter,

Brayden. Never forget that.

Brayden snaps back and walks out the bathroom.

INT. ROSCOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brayden prepares to leave, reflecting on Michael's words. He exchanges a moment with Kirby and prepares mentally for the championship game.

KIRBY

(Irritated)

I don't think he can play like  
this!

ROSCOE

Did I tell you to speak? When did  
you get the balls to speak up  
against me and question me?

KIRBY

(Feels sorry for Brayden)

I'm just saying, Roscoe, look at  
him. That's your son!

ROSCOE

(Angry)

Kirby if you say another word, your a  
dead man.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

(voice like ice)

You better find a way to play in  
this game and win, Brayden.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

Or I'll come for you and your  
family next. Understand?

Brayden, trembling with fear and anger, nods. He glances over  
at his best friend KIRBY, who is standing nearby, eyes wide  
with a mix of fear and determination.

KIRBY

(Bold)

Brayden.... there's something you  
need to know.

Brayden looks at Kirby, confused.

BRAYDEN

What is it?

KIRBY

(Telling Brayden Roscoe  
killed Michael)

Roscoe.... Roscoe's the one who  
killed Michael.

The revelation hits Brayden like a punch to the gut. His face  
contorts with rage and grief. He turns back to Roscoe, his  
eyes burning with fury.

BRAYDEN

(Emotional and Angry)

You.... you killed my brother?

Roscoe smirks, unphased.

ROSCOE

Yeah, I did. And I'll do the same  
to you if you don't pay up.

Blinded by rage, Brayden lunges at Roscoe, grabbing a metal  
pipe from the floor. Just as he's about to strike, a  
flickering television in the corner catches his eye. The news  
is playing a story about a local basketball hero—Brayden's  
hero. He hesitates, just for a moment, lost in a fleeting  
memory.

Roscoe seizes the moment. He draws his gun, pointing it  
directly at Brayden. Kirby, seeing his friend's life in  
imminent danger, leaps towards Roscoe, trying to wrestle the  
gun from his grasp.

The struggle is intense, desperate. The sound of grunts and  
scuffling feet echoes through the trap house. Brayden watches  
in horror, unable to move, as the gun discharges.

A deafening BANG fills the air.

Kirby staggers backward, clutching his chest. Blood seeps  
through his fingers. He falls to the ground, his eyes wide  
with shock, and then.... they close forever.

Brayden screams, a gut-wrenching cry of agony and loss.

Roscoe, calm and composed, keeps the gun trained on Brayden.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

Now, where were we?

Brayden's heart pounds in his chest. The reality of his  
situation sinks in. He knows he's outmatched, but the fire of  
vengeance burns brighter than ever.

This scene should convey the high stakes and intense  
emotions, drawing the audience into Brayden's turmoil and the  
terrifying presence of Roscoe.

Kirby dies. Brayden remains silent. In the corner of his eyes, Brayden sees a newspaper hung up displaying his brother's death. In red lettering across the newspaper, it says, "Wrong Place, at the Wrong Time."

BRAYDEN

(Look Of Revenge on his face)

Pops, I'm going to play.

ROSCOE

(Puzzled)

Why you call me pops? You better not be up to anything.

BRAYDEN

(Manipulative)

Don't trip, I got this. I almost forgot who I'm doing this for.

ROSCOE

(Sigh of Relief)

Okay, you good to go. Remember, you win, then you're free to go. No more harassing you.

Brayden leaves Roscoe's house. Roscoe tells his homie to clean up the house and get rid of Kirby's body.

CUT TO:

INT. BRAYDEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 73

Karen sits on Brayden's bed as he packs up his stuff.

KAREN

(Rooting Brayden on)

Good luck tonight. I can't wait to watch it.

Brayden secretly grabs the gun from his bedside table and shoves it in his gym bag.

BRAYDEN

(Worried for her safety)

Karen, I don't want you to come tonight.

KAREN

(Confused)

What do you mean, silly? I'm going to be cheering.

BRAYDEN

(Secretive)

You might see me do something I'm not proud of.

KAREN

(Scared)

Brayden, you're scaring me. What are you talking about?

BRAYDEN

(Angry with Sad Emotion mix)

I found out Roscoe killed Michael. He also killed Kirby. Karen gasps and holds her face.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

He needs to pay.

KAREN

(Questioned?)

What are you going to do?

BRAYDEN

(Relaxed and Calmed)

Something stupid. But I have to do it.

Karen sees the gun in his bag but doesn't say anything. She looks heartbroken and gives Brayden a hug and kiss. Knowing there's nothing she can do to stop him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hours before the championship.

Karen corners Carl near a trophy case, away from the crowd. Her face is pale, urgent.

KAREN

Mr. Conrad -- Brayden has a gun.

Carl freezes.

CARL

What?

KAREN

He told me Roscoe killed Michael. He said he was gonna do something stupid.

I didn't know who else to tell.

The hallway noise fades under the weight of it.

CARL

Where is he now?

KAREN

Locker room, I think.

Carl's jaw tightens. A father's decision settles behind his eyes -- heavy, irreversible.

CARL

You did the right thing.

Karen doesn't feel better.

KAREN

Please don't let him throw his life away.

Carl looks toward the gym doors.

CARL

Not if I can help it.

He walks off with purpose, leaving Karen shaking and near tears.

INT. SKY SCRAPER COLISEUM CHAMPIONSHIP GAME - NIGHT

Brayden is in the locker room, ready for the game. He addresses his team.

BRAYDEN

(Emotional)

Okay, team, I'm going to be real with you. Ever since my bro died, I didn't want to ever touch a basketball again. I told myself that. Michael was my everything. He made an impact in our school and

our neighborhood. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him. He showed me that failure is when you don't get back up again. See, before he said those words, I was a quitter; I quit everything, but he gave me hope. Every time I ever step into a basketball gym, I will always look in the stands and see my bro cheering me on. My life has taken some wrong turns, I got involved in stuff I shouldn't have, I've done things I am not proud of, and I am sorry, team. But tonight, we are all going to be selfish.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

It's not about us; It's about Michael. I know this is last minute, but I have some customized jerseys I would like us to wear for this championship game.

Brayden and his teammates burst out of the locker room, their faces set with fierce determination, ready to conquer the championship game. The air is charged with emotion, the weight of Michael's memory driving them forward. Every step echoes with purpose as they make their way to the court, Brayden's heart pounding with a ferocious desire to win for his brother.

The gym is a cauldron of excitement and tension, packed to the rafters with a roaring crowd. Fans wave banners and signs, their cheers deafening as they catch sight of the customized jerseys emblazoned with Michael's face. The sight of the tribute sends a ripple of admiration and respect through the audience, intensifying the atmosphere even further.

On the court, the intensity is palpable. Brayden, the #1 player in the nation, faces off against the best team in the country, his eyes burning with a steely resolve.

The opposing team is equally formidable, their movements sharp and precise. The gym lights glint off the polished hardwood floor, illuminating every swift pass, every powerful dunk.

The crowd is a living, breathing entity, reacting to every play with explosive energy. Gasps, cheers, and collective groans fill the air, blending into a symphony of passion and anticipation. The pressure is immense, the stakes higher than ever, as Brayden and his team fight not just for victory, but to honor Michael's legacy.

As the game progresses, the gym feels like the center of the universe, the intensity of the players mirrored by the fervor of the spectators. Every basket, every defensive stop, every fast break is a testament to their unyielding drive, their determination to seize this moment and make it unforgettable. The championship game becomes more than just a contest; it is a tribute, a battle, and a testament to the power of love and remembrance.

INT. CHAMPIONSHIP GAME - EVENING 75

BRAYDEN

(Weeping)

Please, let's go get it done for Michael. I know he'll be proud of us.

The team cheers and gets crazy with Brayden. They have a mob mentality. They walk out listening to 5ive's "Me and My Brother.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The crowd erupts into cheers as

BRAYDEN sinks the final

basket, winning the high school championship. The scoreboard flashes the final score: 75-74. Brayden's teammates swarm him, lifting him into the air. The atmosphere is electric, with students, parents, and fans celebrating wildly.

ANGLE ON: ROSCOE, a burly man in his 40s, standing in the stands, a smirk playing on his lips. He's surrounded by MEN IN BLACK SUITS, who discreetly hand him a thick envelope. Roscoe's eyes glint with satisfaction as he counts the money.

ROSCOE

(Muttering to Himself)

Easy money.

CUT TO:

SWAT TEAM members in tactical gear, stealthily moving into position outside the gym. They communicate silently, ready to

move in. The tension is palpable.

SWAT LEADER (INTO RADIO)

All units in position. Awaiting the signal.

BACK IN THE GYM, Brayden, drenched in sweat and elation, makes his way to the sidelines. He grabs his bag, his expression shifting from joy to grim determination. He unzips the bag slightly, revealing the handle of a gun.

BRAYDEN

(Under His Breath)

For Michael.

The celebration continues around him, oblivious to the impending chaos. The noise of the crowd creates a cacophony that masks Brayden's movements.

ANGLE ON: Roscoe, still in the stands, notices Brayden approaching. His smirk fades, replaced by a wary look. He senses something is off.

BRAYDEN'S POV: The distance between him and Roscoe seems to shrink. His heartbeat pounds in his ears, drowning out the noise of the crowd. He reaches into his bag, fingers brushing against the cold metal of the gun.

Just as Brayden is about to pull the gun out, FIVE SHOTS RING OUT. The sound is deafening, echoing through the gym. The crowd screams and scatters, ducking for cover.

ANGLE ON: ROSCOE, wide-eyed and clutching his chest, collapses to the ground, blood pooling around him. The men in black suits scatter, panic on their faces.

BRAYDEN stands frozen, gun still in his bag, as chaos erupts around him. SWAT TEAM members storm the gym, shouting orders.

SWAT LEADER

Everyone down! Stay down!

The officers quickly subdue the crowd, their focus on the shooter. They wrestle CARL, a middle-aged man with a look of grim satisfaction, to the ground. Carl's eyes meet Brayden's, a silent understanding passing between them.

CARL

(Shouting as he's being cuffed)

That was for my son!

Brayden drops his bag, the weight of the moment crashing down on him. The gym, once filled with jubilation, is now a scene

of panic and confusion. Parents clutch their children, students huddle together, and teachers try to restore order. ANGLE ON: Brayden, standing amidst the chaos, eyes fixed on Roscoe's lifeless body. The adrenaline fades, replaced by a mix of relief and sorrow. He looks up at the scoreboard, the final score still flashing.

CUT TO:

The SWAT TEAM leading Carl away, their faces stern. Brayden watches them go, the noise of the crowd fading into the background.

BRAYDEN

(To Himself)

For Michael.

The camera pulls back, showing the entire gym. The once-celebratory atmosphere now heavy with the weight of violence and retribution. The championship win feels hollow, overshadowed by the bloodshed.

FADE OUT.

BRAYDEN (CONT'D)

(Afraid)

Mom! Shania! Where are you!?

Charlette and Shania run up to Brayden and rush through the doors. They see Roscoe on the hallway floor, bloody and dead from gun wounds. Karen runs up to Brayden. Brayden!

KAREN

Karen hugs Brayden, and he looks bewildered.

BRAYDEN

(Shocked)

Karen, what are you doing here?

KAREN

(Worried)

I couldn't let you do it. I had to get help.

The cops are handcuffing someone. Brayden looks up to see Carl, who is covered in Roscoe's blood. Brayden is in shock, but deep down inside, he feels relief. Carl smiles at Brayden as he walks past his body to go outside.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Brayden, Charlette, Karen, and Shania are watching TV. The news comes on, saying that Roscoe is dead and was Kirby and Michael's killer. They show the river where they found Kirby's body and the interview where Brayden tells them who it was. Carl was arrested for the murder. The family cuts the TV off.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION INTERROGATION - NIGHT

In the dimly lit interrogation room, the atmosphere is thick with tension. The only light source is a single, flickering bulb hanging from the ceiling, casting harsh shadows on the worn, metal table between them. Detective Harris leans forward, his eyes piercing into Carl's, searching for any flicker of truth.

DETECTIVE HARRIS

(intensely)

What's your motive, Carl? Why did you kill Roscoe?

Carl's face is a mask of stoic defiance, his eyes locked in a silent, unyielding stare with the detective. The room is eerily silent, save for the faint hum of the fluorescent light and the distant murmur of the police station outside. The tension is palpable, the air thick with unspoken words and hidden truths.

DETECTIVE

Why did you kill Roscoe Douglas in cold blood?

CARL

(Weeping)

Michael was so good to our family. When I found out that he had died, something died inside of me. He was my son. So when Karen told me who shot my boy, I waited for my opportunity to kill him.

DETECTIVE

Well, Carl, you will be going to prison for the rest of your life. Any last words before we book you?

CARL

I hope he rots in hell.

The END

FADE TO BLACK.