

WHITE BOY RICK

Written by

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Based on the life of Richard Wershe Jr.

FADE IN:

INT. A PRIVATE JET - 1986 - NIGHT

The luxury vessel cruises the celestial darkness of the midnight sky as the camera glides through pools of moody lighting and the figures illuminated beneath.

A strongly built black man reclines in an attitude of perfect contentment, puffing on a Cohiba as the head of a naked woman rhythmically rises and falls in his lap, massaging his penis expertly with the arts of her trade.

He exhales a jet of perfumed smoke and the camera glides past him to another black man straddled by two voluptuous black women feeding him their full-bodied ebony breasts.

He takes a sip of cognac and the camera glides deeper into the plane through the slow-moving atmosphere of decadence and carnal pleasures where two other black men are sitting at a mahogany table in front of a Ribao currency counter.

The machine rifles through a stack of hundred dollar bills. One of the men removes the bills from the receiving tray and wraps the bundle tight with a mustard currency strap and sets it in a duffel bag.

The camera glides further into the interior toward a solitary figure enthroned on a leather chair.

As the image takes focus two conspicuous features immediately reveal themselves: He is the only white person on the plane, and even more surprising, he is very young, disturbingly young, a mere teenager, draped in a snowy mink coat, a thick donkey rope gold chain around his neck, a velvet Kangol bucket hat slung low across his brow.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I made more money this year than
Ronald Reagan. Think about that, a
sixteen year-old kid making more
money than the President of the
United States.

As the camera continues toward Ricky's adolescent features, there's an unnerving dissonance between the images we've already seen and the words spoken from this kid's mind. But this is no wet-dream teenage fantasy. He is speaking the truth.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

But do you think the government
wants to stop me?

(MORE)

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Shit, they put me on this throne.
 I'm a Federal employee, tax dollars
 hard at work.

The camera pushes tighter and lands on the watery reflection of his eyes.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 I am the War on Drugs.

The camera draws slowly away from his eyes and Ricky Wershe is now standing atop a Little League mound preparing to deliver his final pitch.

TITLE: THREE YEARS EARLIER

He looks in for the sign, nods, and then throws the pearl through the warm sunshine and past the swinging bat where it smacks into the catcher's glove in a dusty burst. Strike three. The game is over.

EXT. DETROIT, THE EAST SIDE - LATER

Ricky walks home after the game, the sidewalk buckling from neglect, the weeds waist-high and rampant, growing through the cracks.

The street is virtually abandoned and the peculiar absence of sound isolates his cleated footsteps, evoking the loneliness of one traveling a bleak northern forest, not the diseased heart of a major city.

We follow young Ricky for some time when the distant rumble of a U-Haul truck interrupts the silence. The truck honks twice and then pulls to a stop beside Ricky.

Three people are sandwiched in the front seat. They are the Majorksi's: Dad drives, mom sits in the middle, and son Dave hangs out the window. Everyone says hi to Ricky.

RICKY WERSHE
 Thought you guys were leaving
 tomorrow?

DAVE
 Dad starts his new job Monday.

MR. MAJORSKI
 Sorry about that, Ricky. I know I
 said I'd take you boys to pizza
 tonight, but I want to get unpacked
 and settled before the first day.

RICKY WERSHE
That's alright.

MR. MAJORSKI
Our new place is just a few minutes
north of Eight Mile. Come on out
whenever you like.

DAVE
Later Ricky.

RICKY WERSHE
Later.

Dave and his family wave goodbye and the U-Haul pulls away.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Dave was my best friend, and once
they moved out, I was the only
white kid left in the neighborhood.

Ricky watches the U-Haul recede into the distance and then continues on his way home through a living museum of urban decay -- and behind the carcass of each burned-out building, dilapidated home, shuttered business and weed-infested lot, is the broken dream, the forlorn hope, the future of industrial America: dying, dead, extinct.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Detroit wasn't always this fucked
up. At one time, it was the richest
city in the United States,
birthplace of the auto industry,
the assembly line, the
refrigerator, credit financing, the
industrial mecca and promise of
tomorrow.

As we follow Ricky down the street, we become spectators to the Detroit of yesteryear, a brief history from its modern birth in the early 20th Century through the post-war boom years and up until the apocalyptic present.

The block is now transformed -- freshly painted facades, bustling streets, new homes, and we travel across the burgeoning skyline and plunge into the Packard Automotive Plant --

The buzz and hum of industry. The swarming assembly line. A red fender is slapped onto a chassis. Men attack it with pneumatic rivet guns and bolt the fender in place.

That same car now drives down a residential street. A man from that assembly line is behind the wheel, his wife beside him in the front seat, his two wholesome kids in back, a portrait that would make Norman Rockwell proud.

The man steers into the driveway of their new home. Life sure is swell.

Inside the house the children watch TV. The dad reads the newspaper. The dutiful mother cooks dinner in a state-of-the-art kitchen -- all the trappings of middle-class success.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

But the promise of tomorrow wasn't offered to everyone equally, and there were racial tensions simmering below the surface. At the auto plants, if the blacks did get hired, they were thrown the shit jobs for shit wages.

A Chrysler plant. A huge industrial bathroom. Five black janitors mop, scrub, and plunge toilets.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

They were either handed a broom and a mop, or sent to work in Hell.

The molten heat of the foundry. The hulking cauldron bubbles with liquid ore. Sweltering, miserable, dangerous.

Outside the same plant. The shift has ended. A bus stop adjacent to the vast parking lot. White men drive out in new cars while black man huddle in line for the bus.

The bus lets out somewhere on the East Side. The black men climb out and funnel toward a high-rise housing project. Norman Rockwell never painted this side of town.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

But people will only eat shit for so long. It had to touch off at some point. And in 1967, it did.

The night sky is ablaze. Detroit is literally on fire as a massive conflagration engulfs the city. Buildings collapse in the flames.

Rioting and looting in the streets. The National Guard is called in. It looks like a war zone.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

By the time the riots ended, 43 people had been killed and more than 2,000 buildings were burned to the ground. Most of them were never rebuilt.

The Rockwellian white family climbs into their car. A mattress is tied down on the roof. A chair pokes out of the bungeed trunk. A cargo trailer hooked to the rear bumper.

They back out of the driveway, revealing a FOR SALE sign staked on the front lawn.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

When the smoke settled, everyone with means, both white and black, started leaving the city for the suburbs -- and the jobs left with them.

Interstate 75. Traffic crawls northward, the roofs of cars loaded with belongings, the White Flight has begun.

We watch the city depopulate and decay. A time-lapse of sorts. Factories shuttered, the chain link fence locked, never to reopen. Neighborhoods abandoned. Neon signs flicker and then go out forever.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

And with the city's collapse came the drugs...

A heroin needle is thrust into a vein.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

...And the violence came with them.

A rapid succession of gun shots echo through the urban landscape -- the crime scene photographs of young dead black men sprawled on the streets, twisted in every attitude of murder. Families mourning.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

By the early '80s, Motor City USA had become the Murder Capital of the World.

Scenes of poverty and despair, the streets littered with trash, husks of stripped cars rot on the pavement.

And now we're back to young Ricky Wershe, walking home in his baseball uniform.

He moves across an abandoned lot, through the hulking remains of a burned-out concrete building that looks like it's been struck by a five-hundred pound bomb, across a residential street and up the front steps of his modest brick home.

He produces a key hanging from a string around his neck and unlocks the front door.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ricky steps into the living room where his older sister, DAWN, 16, smokes a joint on the couch, watching television.

 DAWN
Hey, Ricky.

 RICKY WERSHE
Hey, Dawn.

 DAWN
You want a hit?

 RICKY WERSHE
Sure.

Ricky sits down on the couch beside his sister. She passes him the joint. He takes a hit and hands it back to her.

 DAWN
Did you win?

 RICKY WERSHE
Yeah.

She takes off his baseball cap and musses up his hair.

 DAWN
Sorry I didn't come watch you.
 (she hits the joint)
I just got really tired all of a sudden.

Ricky shrugs. Dawn passes the joint back to him and we leave them staring at the television.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - LATER

Dawn and Ricky are passed out on the couch when the front door swings open in a hurry, not an angry hurry, but an energetic one, revealing their father, RICK SR., a small-time hustler always searching for the next deal. Like a shark, he never stops moving.

He sniffs the air.

RICK SR.
Dawn, you been smoking weed again?

DAWN
No way.

RICK SR.
Bullshit.

Rick Sr. holds an UZI in one hand and an AK-47 in the other. He has an AR-15 assault rifle slung across his back. He cuts an unusual figure, to say the least. A one-man Rambo without the muscles.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
I give you two a lot of freedom. I try and treat you like adults. All I ask for is a little respect in return.

DAWN
Dad, I wasn't smoking weed. I burned some toast, that's all.

RICK SR.
Don't give me that shit, Dawn. Look, you can do what you want on your own, but under my roof, you gotta follow my rules.
(still holding assault rifles)
Drugs ruin lives.

He says this final line without a trace of irony. He is a man tragically ill-equipped for fatherhood.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Hey, Ricky. Go on out to the car and grab the rest of the guns before somebody steals them.
(leaving room)
I got some great deals today down at The Armory. Some great deals. We're gonna make a killing this week.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ricky and Dawn sit in front of TV dinners at a small formica table in the kitchen.

But they are not eating at the moment, their attention focused on their father, who is standing with his back to them, the phone receiver to his ear. The female voice on the other end of the line is screaming at him.

Rick Sr. slowly hangs up. He grips the receiver in its cradle for a long moment before turning around and shuffling over to the table with an air of defeat.

He slumps into his chair and stares blankly at his TV dinner. He exhales, and after a tense and prolonged silence, says flatly:

RICK SR.
Your mother is a whore.

The words settle, and then provoke.

DAWN
What?

RICK SR.
Your mother is a whore. W - H - O -
R - E.

DAWN
You're a fucking whore, Dad.

RICKY WERSHE
Don't say that about, Dad.

DAWN
Fuck him. All he cares about is
making a quick buck.

RICKY WERSHE
Fuck you. You're a whore, Dawn.

Rick Sr. slaps the back of Ricky's head.

RICK SR.
Don't call your sister that.

DAWN
Then don't call Mom one.

Rick Sr. shoots a fierce look at Dawn. He just defended her and now she's attacking him again.

RICK SR.
Tell me then, sweet Dawn, what do
you call a woman who walks out on
her family for another man -- a
princess? A fucking princess?
(MORE)

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Is that what you think your mother
is -- a goddamn Disney fucking
princess?

This unleashes Dawn's tears. She shoots out of her chair.

DAWN

She didn't walk out on us. You
walked out on her a long time ago.

Now Ricky stands.

RICKY WERSHE

Fuck you, Dawn. No he didn't.

Rick Sr. slaps the back of Ricky's head again.

RICK SR.

Ricky, don't fucking swear at your
sister.

DAWN

And you wonder why I use drugs. You
wonder why.

RICK SR.

I'm trying. I'm really trying. I'm
doing the best I can.

DAWN

Well you need to try harder --
'cause you suck.

RICKY WERSHE

Dad doesn't suck -- you suck. He
puts food on the table.

DAWN

They're fucking TV dinners.

Rick Sr. starts pounding his fists on the flimsy table. It's
all very juvenile and terribly depressing and dysfunctional --
charging headlong toward the hysterical.

RICK SR.

I suck? I suck? Suck this --

He erupts from his chair and flips the table into the air as
we -- FREEZE FRAME -- pieces of mongrel fried chicken and
Salisbury Steak and peas and corn and cherry cobbler and
aluminum TV dinner trays are suspended in a shiny colorful
buffet, hovering in a lunatic world without gravity.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I guess we were a typical Detroit family at the time. Like the city around us, we were falling apart.

EXT. THE EAST SIDE - NIGHT

A neighborhood blighted from poverty and the impossible Detroit winter.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Nobody had anything. No hope, no jobs, no money -- except for the drug kingpins.

A candy-painted Cadillac with Truespoke wheels and Vogue Tyres rolls to the front of a jumping nightclub where valets swarm the vehicle and open doors.

A kingpin in a full-length mink coat steps out. He swaggers around the shimmering hood and picks up his two female passengers who are lavishly bedecked in furs and jewels. They each take an arm and the trio floats up the red carpet.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
In Detroit, the kingpins were as famous as movie stars in Hollywood. To my generation, they were heroes, modern day Robin Hoods in the brokest city in America.

Camera follows the trio through the front door and into a swirling galaxy of kingpins and their harems, each trying to outdo the other with flamboyant displays of wealth and status.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Guys like Maserati Rick, Demetrius Holloway, the Best Friends Gang, Young Boys Incorporated, the Chambers Brothers, Pony Down. These were the young black men that ruled the streets.

EXT. THE EAST SIDE - DAY

Ricky pedals his BMX bike down the block.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
And in my neighborhood, twin
brothers, Leo "Big Man" Curry, and
Johnny "Little Man" Curry, ran
things. They were two of the
biggest kingpins on the East Side.

Ricky steers into a gas station. He dismounts at the air
compressor to fill his tires.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
They owned the Marathon Garage up
on the corner of Warren and Lemay,
a couple blocks from my house.

Ricky bends down to his bike tire and unscrews the cap and
pretends to fill it up. He's transfixed as he stares across
the asphalt where the CURRY BROTHERS and a couple of foot
soldiers and several busty women chat each other up.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Everybody looked up to the Curry
Brothers. They had pimped out cars
and Japanese super-bikes, gold
chains and diamond rings, brand
name clothes, and most of all, they
were always surrounded by beautiful
women. I used to ride my bike up to
the garage just to look at them. My
tire wasn't even flat.

JOHNNY CURRY sits in his ride with one leg on the asphalt as
his hands caress the thighs of a young woman in a skin-tight
leopard print dress.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
They had everything that anyone
could ever want.

Ricky observes the sideshow, longing to be one of them,
longing for the fame, recognition, and the sexual favors of
women. But his presence goes unnoticed -- just a poor loner
white kid in a black city.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
And I wanted to be one of them. But
I was white, and they were all
black. And in Detroit, race had
always trumped desire. Your skin
color chose your place for you,
both good and bad, whether you
liked it or not.

Ricky finally screws back on the tire cap, hops on his bike and drifts down the street the way he came, glancing over his shoulder every now and then at a life and attention he only wishes he could have.

INT. LIGHT GUARD ARMORY, DETROIT - DAY

A sprawling gun show. Hundreds of fold-out tables display assault rifles, pistols, shotguns, hunting rifles, knives, swords, weapons of all kinds and war paraphernalia.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

My father hustled a bunch of different jobs. And guns was one of them. On the weekends, when I wasn't playing baseball, he would take me to the shows with him.

Amid the bustle, we find Ricky, his dextrous fingers dismantling an AK-47 with rapid precision.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

By the time I was thirteen, I knew more about guns than Dirty Harry.

He removes the dust cover, slides out the carrier spring, and scrutinizes the piston bolt.

RICKY WERSHE

This ain't Russian.

GUN VENDOR

Pardon me, son?

RICKY WERSHE

This is an Egyptian AK. It ain't Russian.

GUN VENDOR

Egyptian? How old are you?

RICKY WERSHE

Old enough to smell bullshit.

GUN VENDOR

That rifle there was smuggled out of the Soviet Union by a high-level CIA spy.

RICKY WERSHE

Smuggled out of your ass, maybe. You should be ashamed of yourself.

(MORE)

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)
Trying to take advantage of a child
and all. I should report you.

The gun vendor stutters with a mixture of anger and fear. He
throws a nervous glance or two around the convention hall.

GUN VENDOR
Well, uh, I'm sure we can work out
a deal.
(a false smile)
Right?

And then suddenly, as if rehearsed, Rick Sr. bolts into the
picture, feigning a look of outraged distress.

RICK SR.
What's going on, son?
(to vendor)
Are you trying to sell my child a
firearm?

GUN VENDOR
Why, no, of course not.

RICK SR.
Does he look eighteen to you?

GUN VENDOR
We were just talking guns, that's
all. Right kid?

RICK SR.
Let me see this.

Rick Sr. snatches the body of the dismantled AK-47 from the
table and examines it with contempt.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
How much you want for this Egyptian
piece of shit?

GUN VENDOR
Uh... two hundred?

Insulted by the price, Rick Sr. looks around and finds a
SECURITY GUARD stationed by the door, and waves him over.

RICK SR.
Security!

The vendor shits his pants.

GUN VENDOR

A hundred dollars. I'll give it to you for a hundred dollars.

RICK SR.

For two... Two AK's for a hundred dollars.

GUN VENDOR

Fine - fine. Whatever price you want. Just take the guns and go. Please.

A knowing grin crosses Ricky's face.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

And that's how we hustled. Father and son, we were a pretty good team.

EXT. LIGHT GUARD ARMORY - LATER

Ricky pushes a shopping cart bristling with guns and ammunition through the parking lot. Rick Sr. strides alongside, spirited, beaming with success.

They arrive at their car. Rick Sr. pops the trunk and they start unloading the arsenal.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

My dad sold most of the guns out of the sporting goods store he managed downtown.

CUT TO -- Rick Sr. stands behind a glass counter, wearing a collared shirt and name tag. He slides an assault rifle from the gun rack, turns around and hands the weapon to a customer.

CUT TO -- Late at night. Rick Sr. walks through the cavernous sporting goods store. The shelves are completely barren now. It's sad, eerie, you can't help but feel for the man.

He steps through the glass front door and onto the sidewalk and the lights go out behind him in a crashing succession, starting from the back and creeping forward, until all is dark inside.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

But when the store went out of business, we started selling guns out of our house.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE, GARAGE - DAY

Ricky stands behind a fold-out table with an array of handguns spread on top.

RICKY WERSHE
You drive a cab, right?

CAB DRIVER
Yep.

RICKY WERSHE
That's a pretty dangerous job, huh?

CAB DRIVER
Sure is.

RICKY WERSHE
You ever been robbed?

CAB DRIVER
Too many times.

RICKY WERSHE
You ever been shot?

CAB DRIVER
Twice.

RICKY WERSHE
It would've been different if you
had a gun.

CAB DRIVER
That's why I'm here.

Ricky surveys the various firearms, and with practiced salesmanship, takes a black snub-nosed revolver from the table, whips open the cylinder, spins it, and slams it shut.

RICKY WERSHE
The 38 Special. Now that's a
cabbie's gun.

Ricky hands the revolver to the laconic cab driver. The cab driver raises the weapon and aims it at the back wall. A thin smile breaks his inexpressive features.

CAB DRIVER
I'll give you a hundred and fifty
for it.

Ricky winces, but it's all part of his show. He holds up his finger -- give me a moment.

RICKY WERSHE
Let me talk to the boss.

Ricky steps over to the side door, unlocks it, steps into the kitchen and shuts the door behind him.

THE KITCHEN

His dad is on the phone, negotiating a deal of some sorts.

Ricky opens the fridge, pours a glass of milk, grabs an Oreo cookie from its package, dips the cookie in the milk, and takes a bite.

He casually walks into the living room, lifts the remote control off the couch, turns on the TV, clicks through a few channels, and finally, heads back through the kitchen and into the garage without ever saying a word to his dad.

THE GARAGE

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)
I can't do it for that price.

CAB DRIVER
One seventy-five.

RICKY WERSHE
I'll see what I can do.

Ricky repeats the charade. He opens the side door, shuts it behind, and is now back in the kitchen.

THE KITCHEN

His dad acknowledges him, raises his thumb and jiggles it up and down -- how's it going out there? -- Ricky gives him a thumbs up.

Ricky grabs another Oreo. His dad motions for one. Ricky hands him the one he's holding, reaches back in the package for another, sips his glass of milk.

He moves into the living room again, checks a couple more channels with the remote control, and finally back out to the garage and his customer.

THE GARAGE

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)
Two twenty-five.

CAB DRIVER
Two hundred.

RICKY WERSHE

This is a family owned business here. We gotta make some profit. Do you give rides for free?

After a moment of deliberation, the cab driver reaches into his pocket, removes a wad of small bills and deals the money onto the table.

MOMENTS LATER -- Ricky pulls up the garage door and the cabbie walks down the driveway and into his yellow cab.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The way I figured, when you're living in a war zone, you're a fool if you don't carry a gun.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE, THE EAST SIDE - DAY

Ricky exits the liquor store with a Coke. He opens it and takes a sip, straightens a .25 automatic pistol in his waistband, hops on his bike and pedals down the sidewalk.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Throughout my childhood, there were hundreds of murders a year in my neighborhood alone. Hundreds.

Ricky steers off the sidewalk and onto the street to avoid a dead black man who is prostrate in a pool of blood. Other people step around the body. It's literally no big deal to anyone.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The Grim Reaper didn't give a fuck whether it was Christmas, Thanksgiving, or your birthday, if you were a baby in a crib or an old ass grandmother in a wheelchair or a star athlete on his way to college. Day in and day out, the bodies were collected.

EXT. THE EAST SIDE - NIGHT

In the back of a supermarket parking lot, Rick Sr. counts out money he has just received from a young black man, who is standing beside him. Ricky hovers nearby.

RICK SR.

And two hundred and twenty five...
Ricky, hand the man his stereo.

Ricky reaches into the trunk of their car and lifts out a large white box. It's a brand new Alpine car stereo.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

It's a pleasure doing business with you, Jamal.

Jamal leaves with his stereo. Ricky and his dad climb into their car.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

This is gonna be our year, Ricky. I can feel it. 1984 is gonna be a big year for America.

(musing)

We got the Olympics coming up in Los Angeles. A Presidential election. Lots of good stuff. Competition is good. It's good for everyone. Good for the soul. You can do a lot with competition.

(then something profound)

You can win.

He hands Ricky his cut from the proceeds. Not much, maybe twenty bucks.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Whoever said money can't buy you happiness was never broke. Some rich fuck made that up to keep poor people from dreaming. Fuck him.

Ricky produces a knot of bills from his pocket, takes off the rubber band and adds his new earnings to his bank roll.

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah, fuck him.

Ricky tucks the knot back in his pocket.

RICK SR.

I got a line on a couple dozen of those video player things, you know, the ones that you can watch the movies on?

RICKY WERSHE

VCR's?

RICK SR.

Yeah, VCR's. You think we could move them?

RICKY WERSHE
Easy. They're becoming really
popular.

Rick Sr. nods, smiles at the prospect, turns over the engine
and they drive out of the parking lot.

RICK SR.
This is gonna be our year, kiddo.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Ricky brushes his teeth in the bathroom. His father yells
from the other room.

RICK SR.
Let's go, Ricky. Get your ass in
gear.

There's a rap on the front door. Rick Sr. looks through the
peephole.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
What the fuck do they want?

He opens the door and greets his visitors with a toothy
smile.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Hey, fellas. What's going on?

TWO FBI AGENTS stand on the front porch. One is Agent Bell,
the other Agent Turner.

AGENT BELL
Hey, Rick. Good to see you this
morning.

Rick Sr. and Agent Bell shake hands.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)
This is one of my colleagues, Agent
Turner. Mind if we come in?

RICK SR.
Well, it's sort of bad timing. I'm
about to take Ricky to school.

AGENT TURNER
It'll only take a few minutes.

Rick Sr. fidgets, glances over his shoulder into his house, then cranes his neck out the front door and looks up and down the street. He ushers them inside.

RICK SR.

Can you guys park around the block next time instead of right in front of my fucking house?

AGENT TURNER

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure thing.

Rick Sr. leads the agents into the living room and over to the couch.

AGENT BELL

(to Turner)

Rick used to manage the sporting goods store across the street from headquarters. The one that's all boarded up now.

AGENT TURNER

Next to Roscoe's?

AGENT BELL

That's the one... I miss seeing you, Rick.

RICK SR.

I miss working there. Fucking economy.

AGENT BELL

I gotta drive all the way across town now just to buy a fucking nightcrawler. Pain in the ass.

The agents sit down and set a stack of manila folders on the coffee table. Rick Sr. sits across from them.

RICK SR.

What can I do for you, gentlemen?

AGENT TURNER

You got any coffee?

RICK SR.

I'd have to make some.

AGENT TURNER

We got the time.

RICK SR.

Guys, I gotta take my son to school. I just told you that.

AGENT TURNER

He's late everyday. What's one more?

Rick Sr. glares at Agent Turner -- who the fuck are you? -- and then stands and moves toward the kitchen, when Agent Bell, playing the good cop, puts a hand on Rick's shoulder and eases him back into his chair.

AGENT BELL

Forget about the coffee, Rick. We'll get some when we leave.

Agent Bell opens a manila folder and spreads a series of photographs on the table, ranging from mug shots to long lens surveillance types. All young black men.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

You know any of these guys?

Rick Sr. takes a stack of photos from the table and flips through them.

RICK SR.

Some of them look familiar, but I couldn't tell you their name's or anything like that.

AGENT TURNER

You sure?

RICK SR.

Yeah, I'm sure.

AGENT TURNER

They all live on the East Side, but you don't know any of them? Hell, a couple of them are strutting around right now with guns you sold them rubbing against their big black cocks.

RICK SR.

Now wait a fucking minute.

AGENT TURNER

No -- you wait a fucking minute.

RICK SR.
Owning a firearm is a constitutional right of every American citizen. It's called the Second Amendment. You might want to look it up.

AGENT TURNER
Is that so?

RICK SR.
Sure is.

AGENT TURNER
You know how many times I've heard that line of bullshit?

RICK SR.
I have a retail license to sell firearms.

AGENT TURNER
To convicted felons? Out of your garage? Please show me that fucking permit. What about your son? Is he allowed to sell guns? He's a minor, isn't he? What Amendment is that fuck-face?

Agent Bell sets his hand on Agent Turner's chest who is leaning forward like an angry dog on a chain.

AGENT BELL
Whoa. Take it easy. Rick is on our side. He's one of the good guys. He'd tell us if he knew anything. Wouldn't you Rick?

RICK SR.
You're goddamn right I would.

Rick Sr. tosses the stack of photos back onto the table.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
I don't know why you brought this asshole with you.

AGENT TURNER
To clean out yours.

RICK SR.
You'd like that wouldn't you?

AGENT BELL

Hey -- knock it off goddamnit.

(on an exhale)

On better days, Agent Turner is actually one of our more congenial types. He's new to Detroit, so cut him some slack.

RICK SR.

(flustered)

I'm fucking cool.

Rick Sr. lights a cigarette.

AGENT BELL

The FBI can't fight the good fight without help from the community, without help from people like you. Honest citizens. Family men.

Agent Bell produces a white letter-sized envelope from his coat pocket and sets it on the table. The shape of the envelope suggests there's cash inside. He pats it gently.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

The FBI respects people's time. It respects what they hear, what they see. Intelligence is worth something.

(pauses, then says)

If you don't mind me asking, how much do you make a month?

RICK SR.

Not as much as I'd like.

AGENT BELL

We can help you with that.

Ricky is standing in the hallway. He's been watching the entire time, fascinated with the exchange, a deep, penetrating curiosity written across his face.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

Crack cocaine is ruining Detroit. Hell, it's ruining America. We're on the front lines. You're on the front lines. We're all fighting this war together. Our children's lives are at stake.

RICK SR.

Look, I would help you if I could, really. I don't want dope in this neighborhood any more than you do.

Agent Bell takes the envelope of cash off the table and puts it back in his coat pocket. But of course, this is a calculated move, and he shrewdly anticipates that --

Rick Sr. doesn't want to lose the deal -- whatever that deal is at the moment. There was money on the table and now it's gone -- and we can see his mind racing -- how do I get it back?

He takes a long pull on his cigarette, exhales a stream of smoke, and scratches the back of his neck. He looks at his son in the hallway, reluctant to bring him into the conversation, but his mercenary impulses override any moral qualms he might have.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Maybe my son knows something. He's always out and about.

(motions)

Hey, Ricky. Come here. I want you to meet a couple friends of mine.

The FBI agents swivel their heads as Ricky walks over.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

This is my son, Ricky. This is Agent Bell. And what was your name again?

AGENT TURNER

Agent Turner.

They shake Ricky's hand.

RICK SR.

(to photos on table)

Do you know any of these guys? They live in the neighborhood.

Ricky sifts through the stack of photos. His father and the FBI agents are studying his every move, his eyes, his breathing, searching for a physical tell. Ricky can feel their burning stares. He's practically sweating.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You know any of them, Ricky?

RICKY WERSHE

I don't think so.

RICK SR.
None of them?

RICKY WERSHE
Nope.

Agent Bell starts gathering the photos from the table and putting them back into the manila folders.

AGENT BELL
We appreciate your time this morning, Mr. Wershe. Like I said, it would only take a few minutes.

But Rick Sr. has cause for suspicion. The nuances of his son's movements, the inflection of his voice, the unnatural pauses, inform him that his son has not been forthright. Moreover, he wants the goddamn money.

RICK SR.
Could you gentlemen hold on for a moment? If you don't mind, I'd like to talk to my son in the other room.

AGENT BELL
We got all day.

RICK SR.
Ricky, come here.

Rick Sr. leads Ricky into the kitchen.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You sure you don't know any of those guys in the photos?

Ricky stares down at the floor and does not answer. Rick Sr. slaps the back of Ricky's head.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Now listen to me. Those assholes out there can make my life really fucking difficult, yours too. You understand?

RICKY WERSHE
I don't want to be a snitch, Dad.

RICK SR.
You're not snitching. You're only giving them information. Drug dealers are scum. They ruin lives.

RICKY WERSHE

But Dad --

RICK SR.

Just tell them who those niggers are in the goddamned photos -- and they'll pay us for it and be on their way. Can you help your dad out? Can you do that for me?

Ricky continues staring down at the linoleum.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Can you do it for our family?

After a long pause, Ricky reluctantly nods yes.

Father and son walk out of the kitchen together and sit back down at the coffee table across from the agents.

Ricky lifts the stack of photos from the table. He studies the first one.

RICKY WERSHE

This guy's dead.

The revelation visibly embarrasses the Feds. Agent Turner clears his throat as Agent Bell readjusts his butt cheeks on the sofa.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

He got blasted last week.

(hands photo to agents)

I guess you can take him out of your file.

Agent Turner nods and scribbles on a note pad. Ricky studies another photo.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

This guy has been locked up for almost a year now.

AGENT TURNER

Where?

RICKY WERSHE

Wayne County. Guess you can take him out of your file too.

Further embarrassment from the agents, more nodding, throat clearing, studious note taking.

Rick Sr. can smell the money. He pats his son on the back.

RICK SR.

All right, Ricky. Keep it up.

(to agents)

He may not do well in school, but he's got street smarts -- and that'll get you a lot further in life. He's a fucking genius as far as I'm concerned.

But nobody is really paying much attention to Dad's commentary.

Ricky studies another photo. He turns it around and displays it to the agents.

RICKY WERSHE

This is "Big Stink."

AGENT TURNER

What's his real name?

RICKY WERSHE

Don't know.

AGENT TURNER

Do you know why they call him "Big Stink"?

Ricky shakes his head as his father takes a stab at humor.

RICK SR.

Maybe he shits his pants?

But Rick Sr. is the only one who chuckles. He's got that giddy surge of a gambler on a hot streak.

Ricky flips through the rest of the stack and then hands the photos back to the agents.

RICKY WERSHE

I know most of their faces, but not their names or who they run with.

Ricky thinks he's finished. But the agents aren't done with him just yet. They open another manila folder with a single photo inside. It's a long lens surveillance shot of two men in mink coats conversing outside an East Side night club.

AGENT TURNER

What about these two guys? You know them?

Ricky looks at the photo. As we push in on the men's faces we recognize them as the Curry Brothers.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)
Of course you do. And we're gonna
take these fuckers down.

MOMENTS LATER

Rick Sr. escorts Agents Bell and Turner to the front door.

AGENT BELL
Your son was very helpful today.

Rick Sr. is smiling like a pig in shit as he pats the agents
on the back. The envelope with cash is now in his right hand.

RICK SR.
You know where you can find us.
I'll have the coffee waiting for
you next time. Just be sure to park
around the block.

The agents step outside and Rick Sr. shuts the door behind
them. He turns around and waves the envelope at Ricky, who is
still sitting in the living room.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
(like the O'Jays song)
Money - money - money - MUUUHH-
NAAAY! MUH-NAAAY!

But Ricky does not share his father's enthusiasm.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Look at that, easiest money we ever
made.

Rick Sr. tears open the envelope and starts counting the
money onto the coffee table, crisp hundred dollar bills, ten
of them.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ. I thought the
government was broke.

He fans the money like playing cards across the table.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
I think a ninety/ten split is more
than generous. Does that sound fair
to you, Ricky? I mean, after all,
you live under my roof -- and those
guys are my contacts.

But Ricky only nods absently. He looks ashamed.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Good. It's a deal then.

(changing course)

You can't tell a soul about this, Ricky. Nobody. Not even Dawn. We could get killed if somebody found out about this. Understand?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah.

RICK SR.

Who knows, we might even be able to make a nice little side business out of this.

Rick Sr. hands Ricky a hundred dollar bill and then folds the other nine bills and stuffs them in his pant pocket.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You hungry? Let's go celebrate.

RICKY WERSHE

What about school?

RICK SR.

Screw it. You can go tomorrow.

RICK WERSHE (V.O.)

I had become an FBI informant, and I didn't even know it. I was just fourteen years-old.

EXT. THE EAST SIDE - DAY

It's late afternoon and junior high school is letting out for the day as Ricky walks down the sidewalk and turns onto a neighborhood street.

A sedan with tinted windows creeps down the block behind him as if preparing for a drive-by. When the sedan pulls alongside --

AGENT TURNER (O.S.)

Hey, White Boy.

Ricky whips to his left and finds Agent Turner chuckling from the passenger seat. Agent Bell drives.

Ricky scans the neighborhood, the packs of students walking home, some cruising in cars, a few residents sitting on tumbledown porches, drinking beer and bullshitting.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)
Let's go for a ride.

Ricky is frozen. He doesn't know what to do.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)
The longer you stand there, the
more suspicious you look.

Ricky opens the back door and ducks inside -- where he's startled by a rawboned BLACK MAN in the backseat. Sunglasses conceal the man's eyes and a hoodie enshrouds his corn-rowed scalp. Agent Turner swivels around from the front seat as the car eases down the street.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)
Ricky, that's Officer Jackson of
the Detroit Police Department. We
all work together. He looks rough,
but he's really a teddy bear.

Officer Jackson nods to Ricky, cold and stony, hardly a teddy bear. He's been undercover for so long that he is a cop in title only, as much a product of the street as the criminals he takes down -- more gangster than the gangsters.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)
You feel like making some money,
Ricky?

AGENT BELL
Of course he does.

RICKY WERSHE
Does my dad know about this?

AGENT TURNER
What do we look like -- kidnappers?

AGENT BELL
We're the good guys, Ricky. And so
are you.

INT. THE FBI SEDAN, GRATIOT AVE - LATER

The sun smolders behind the industrial haze and the silhouetted smoke stacks of dying factories as the sedan cruises down the avenue. Everyone is chewing on burgers, fries, sipping sodas.

AGENT TURNER

I'm gonna put this whole situation in simple terms for you, Ricky. You know who the First Lady is?

RICKY WERSHE

The President's wife?

AGENT TURNER

That's right. Nancy Davis Reagan. You get an A in civics for the day. Well, it turns out that the First Lady is very fucking angry these days. She's so fucking angry that she's declared war. A War on Drugs. You know what that really means? That means that if she doesn't get what she wants, if she doesn't win this fucking goddamn war, the President doesn't get any pussy. She locks his dick out of her vagina. And that's bad for the country. Hell, it's bad for the whole fucking world. Because when the President of the United States of America ain't getting laid, he gets really fucking frustrated, and the next thing you know the nukes start flying and we're buried in World War III with the fucking Russians.

OFFICER JACKSON

We gotta win this war, kid. Or else we're all fucked.

AGENT TURNER

Have you ever bought crack cocaine, Ricky?

RICKY WERSHE

No.

AGENT TURNER

Do you know what it looks like?

RICKY WERSHE

Of course.

OFFICER JACKSON

You ain't just saying that to be cool, right brutha?

RICKY WERSHE

I've never smoked it. But I seen it.

AGENT TURNER

Good. We're gonna play a little game. And the more you play, the more we pay.

RICKY WERSHE

What's the game?

OFFICER JACKSON

The Crack Cocaine Game.

AGENT TURNER

We're gonna stop by a few houses on the East Side, and you're gonna go inside and buy some crack.

Ricky stops chewing his burger. Officer Jackson can smell the fear.

OFFICER JACKSON

You ain't no punk, Ricky? Are you?

RICKY WERSHE

(not convincing)

No.

OFFICER JACKSON

They said you was born and raised on the East Side. Shit, I think we got the wrong muthafuckin' White Boy back here. We got us a Grosse Pointe Country Club Cracker is what we got.

(affecting a white voice)

Are you a good putter, Ricky? How's your tee shot, Richard?

RICKY WERSHE

I ain't no punk.

Jackson grins, nudges Ricky on the shoulder.

OFFICER JACKSON

I'm just fucking with you.

The sedan turns off Gratiot and down a dark street. Even from inside the car the neighborhood is scary.

Agent Bell kills the headlights and rolls to a stop behind a car on blocks.

AGENT TURNER

(pointing)

You see that house down there? The abandoned one with the lights off?

RICKY WERSHE

The one the crack head just walked out of?

AGENT TURNER

That's the one.

Agent Turner hands Ricky a twenty dollar bill.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)

We need you to go around to the back door and tell them you want two dime rocks. This is what's called a "controlled buy", and these buys help us build a case against drug dealers. Understand?

Ricky nods.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)

You ready?

RICKY WERSHE

What's my take?

AGENT TURNER

For what?

RICKY WERSHE

For playing the game.

OFFICER JACKSON

Listen to this muthafucka -- what's my take? You tell 'em boy. Shit, East Side all the way.

AGENT TURNER

Did we take care of you last time?
(off Ricky's look)
OK then. Now go get us some crack.

Ricky reaches into his waistband and removes his .25 auto. He pulls back the slide halfway, checks the chamber, making sure it's loaded -- which triggers panic and alarm inside the car.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)

Whoa - whoa - whoa - what the fuck are you doing, kid? You can't do that.

RICKY WERSHE
What do you mean?

AGENT TURNER
We can't allow you to carry a
firearm.

RICKY WERSHE
You got one.

AGENT TURNER
We're the fucking FBI.

Officer Jackson loves the drama. What do the Feds expect --
this is the fucking street.

OFFICER JACKSON
You can't send no warrior into the
jungle without no spear.

Agent Bell, the senior most officer, turns around from the
driver's seat. He is calm, measured, composed.

AGENT BELL
Ricky. I can appreciate your desire
to protect yourself. But the gun
stays in the car. Don't worry, we
got your back. That's why we're
here.

Agent Bell holds out his palm.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)
We'll give it back to you at the
end of the night. When we're done
playing.

Ricky hands Agent Bell his .25 auto.

OFFICER JACKSON
Straight fuckin' gangsta. I love
this nigga already.

Ricky exits the sedan and moves down the dark street toward
the crack house.

He steps into the weed-infested front yard and follows a
trampled footpath down the side of the house. He pushes
through overgrown bushes and hanging vines.

A figure approaches on the narrow footpath, a shadow really,
and shimmies past Ricky without even noticing him. The crack
head has only one thing on his mind -- smoking the rock he
just bought.

Ricky turns the corner to the rear of the house where light spills from underneath a wrought iron door.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I ain't gonna lie, but I was scared
shitless.

He approaches tentatively, his heart pounding. He knocks on the door. A slit opens at eye level and there's a sawed-off shotgun barrel pointed at him.

DOORMAN
What the fuck you want?

RICKY WERSHE
Two dime rocks.

DOORMAN
Step into the light muthafuckuh.

Ricky steps into the shaft of light spilling from the door slit. His fresh features are at odds with the situation.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)
You ain't no smoker.

RICKY WERSHE
It's for my mom.

The doorman chuckles.

DOORMAN
She fine? Let her know I'll give
her a nickel rock next time if she
sucks my dick.

The doorman howls.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)
Gimme the money white boy.

Ricky pushes the twenty dollar bill through the slit. The doorman takes the money and shoves a crack vial with a red cap out the other side.

INT. THE FBI SEDAN - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky hops back into the sedan.

AGENT TURNER
Did you get it?

Ricky opens his palm and reveals the crack vial with two dime rocks inside.

AGENT BELL

Thatta kid.

Officer Jackson takes the vial and removes the tiny red cap with his teeth. He dumps a rock into his hand and packs it into a thin glass pipe.

To Ricky's astonishment, Jackson sparks a torch lighter and takes a hit, the blue flame hissing and crackling as it devours the rock. Jackson closes his eyes and exhales the smoke as the euphoria slams into his brain.

OFFICER JACKSON

It's the real deal, gentlemen. The real muuuuthaaaaafuuuuuuckin deal.

Jackson offers the pipe to Ricky.

OFFICER JACKSON (CONT'D)

Go on. Hit it, boy.

Ricky stares at the smoldering pipe with a mixture of terror and bewilderment.

OFFICER JACKSON (CONT'D)

Go on. We won't tell nobody.

An ugly silence chokes the interior, the yellow crack smoke feathering the stagnant air, Ricky's head whirling -- until Jackson snatches away the pipe and bellows.

OFFICER JACKSON (CONT'D)

Shit, I'm just playing with you. We can't smoke this -- this is evidence.

He shoves the vial with the remaining crack rock into a large Ziploc bag.

AGENT TURNER

(to Ricky)

Ready to do another one?

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS

As Ricky buys crack from various houses throughout the night, strutting through the murky shadows, feeling more comfortable, gaining a confidence and rhythm to his deeds.

-- His knuckles rap on a door. He hands over the money and receives a crack vial.

-- He climbs into the sedan. The agents congratulate him. Officer Jackson give him a high-five, takes the vial, and smokes a rock.

AGENT BELL
You tired yet, Ricky?

AGENT TURNER
(ironically)
Don't forget it's a school night.

The dashboard clock reads: 11:38PM.

RICKY WERSHE
I'm straight.

OFFICER JACKSON
Kid's a gamer. Let's keep rolling.

And the crack game rolls on as the sedan cruises the burned-out and beleaguered streets.

INT. THE FBI SEDAN - LATER

The sedan idles in front of Ricky's house. The dashboard clock now reads: 3:03AM.

Agent Bell hands Ricky back his .25 auto which rests atop a small cash payment for his night's work.

AGENT BELL
You did a really great job tonight,
Ricky. You played the game well.

Agent Turner gives Ricky a business card.

AGENT TURNER
From now on, we're gonna be your
handlers. If you need anything, or
if you see or hear anything that
you think we should know about, you
give us or Officer Jackson here a
call.
(to Jackson)
You got a card on you?

Jackson laughs.

OFFICER JACKSON
A fuckin card? Yeah, right here.

He flips off Agent Turner.

Ricky opens the door and steps out. Jackson gets out as well, pulls the hoodie over his head, and struts down the street, hops a chain link fence, and disappears into the night.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The taillights from the sedan fade into the distance as Ricky enters.

He moves quietly through the dark living room and into the kitchen where his father is sitting at the formica table, smoking a cigarette and nursing a whiskey.

RICK SR.
How much you make?

RICKY WERSHE
Not much.

RICK SR.
Hand it over.

RICKY WERSHE
I earned it.

RICK SR.
Those are my contacts. You agreed to the deal, fair and square. This is *our* business, not *your* business. It's a partnership.

To be sure, there are many disturbing aspects to the conversation, but perhaps the most disturbing is Mr. Wershe's complete failure to concentrate on anything other than the basic compensation he believes is due him.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Nobody likes a welcher, Ricky. Nobody does business with them. I gave us this opportunity. I created it, not you.

Ricky reaches into his pocket and produces a thin stack of cash and hands it to his father.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
Thank you. Next time you need to call me and ask for permission to work with them. I'm gonna give those assholes an earful tomorrow.

Rick Sr. counts out one-hundred and fifty dollars in small bills. He gives Ricky a ten and a five.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
 Cheap fuckers... They should be
 paying us a lot more than this.

Ricky moves down the hallway toward his room while his dad remains in the kitchen.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
 You seen, Dawn?

RICKY WERSHE
 Not since the weekend.

RICK SR.
 I don't trust her new boyfriend. I
 don't trust him at all. Why can't
 she date any white guys?

RICKY WERSHE
 There aren't any.

Ricky closes his door and locks it. He pulls up his pant cuff and removes THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS hidden inside his sock.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 If there's one thing my dad taught
 me, it was to always be one step
 ahead.

He reaches under his bed, slides out a SHOE BOX, and stuffs the money inside.

EXT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - DAY

Ricky steers his BMX bike into the lot and parks at the air dispenser. But like before, he's not here to fill his tires -- he's here to observe, to admire, to fantasize.

Music bumps from the garage where a small crew has gathered around several tricked-out rides.

As Ricky pretends to fill his tires, stealing glances at the gathering, a member of the crew breaks from the crowd and struts over to him. He is BOO CURRY -- Johnny and Leo's younger brother.

BOO
 You need to find the dude that sold
 you them faulty tires and beat his
 ass.

Ricky is caught without a reply, and nods in deference to the towering figure.

BOO (CONT'D)

You fill those things up so much we need to start charging you.

Boo chuckles. But the banter is only a friendly preamble for his real intentions.

BOO (CONT'D)

You live over on Hampshire, don't you?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah.

BOO

Your dad drives a black Rancho?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah.

BOO

I heard he could hook a player up with a Mac-10.

RICKY WERSHE

The Mac-11's better.

BOO

Is that right?

RICKY WERSHE

It's smaller and lighter. 1090 rpm's versus 1380 rpm's.

The jargon registers a blank stare from Boo.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

That's rounds-per-minute. The Mac-11 is a much faster gun. That's what I'd get if I were you.

Boo glances over his shoulder at Johnny and Leo, who are watching the exchange from the open doorway to the garage. It's clear that they sent Boo over here to do their bidding. Boo nods to his older brothers, the kingpins, indicating that the conversation is bearing fruit.

BOO

How do I get a hold of your dad?

RICKY WERSHE
You don't have to. I can hook you
up with whatever you need.

BOO
No shit?

RICKY WERSHE
I'd be a fool if I lied to the
Curry Brothers.

Boo chuckles.

BOO
All right then. Gimme two Mac-11's.

RICKY WERSHE
When?

BOO
How about Saturday?

RICKY WERSHE
How about Friday?

Boo chuckles again. He can't believe the hustle in this kid.

BOO
Friday it is. What's your name?

RICKY WERSHE
Ricky.

BOO
I'm Boo.

RICKY WERSHE
I know.

EXT. THE EAST SIDE - DAY

The sun is setting as Ricky pedals his bike through the neighborhood with a duffel bag slung across his handlebars.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
And so when Friday rolled around, I
delivered as promised.

Ricky steers into the lot and over to the garage where Boo is waiting for him. Ricky rides inside and Boo pulls down the roll-up door.

INT. MARATHON GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky opens the duffel bag, revealing --

RICKY WERSHE
Two Mac-11's.

Boo reaches inside, takes one of the weapons, feels the weight, nods, pleased, impressed.

TIME CUT

When Boo rolls up the garage door, the night glitters with a fleet of washed and waxed luxury vehicles idling in the lot, lined up as if for a parade, each one chromed and candied in its own ghetto fabulous way.

Ricky straddles his bike, awestruck, the surface of his eyes gleaming with the reflection.

BOO
What you doing tonight?

Ricky shrugs.

RICKY WERSHE
Nothing.

BOO
You wanna roll with us?

But Ricky is speechless. He's not quite sure if the invitation is genuine or if Boo is just fucking with him.

BOO (CONT'D)
Leave your bike in the garage.
It'll be here when you get back.

Ricky sets his bike against the wall and follows Boo over to the lead vehicle -- a shimmering Berlina Coupe. If money was no object, and you were playing a pimp for the night, this would be your official ride.

Johnny leans across the front seat.

JOHNNY CURRY
Yo Boo. He can ride with me.

Ricky hesitates before climbing inside.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)
Ready to roll?

Ricky marvels at the plush leather interior and the gaudy accessories.

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah... Fuck yeah.

The fleet pulls onto the boulevard, ten, maybe fifteen cars deep, cruising along at an easy roll, taking their time, wanting to be seen.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Riding around in Johnny Curry's front seat gave me instant respect. I don't know why the Curry Brothers took such a strong liking to me. Perhaps I was the exotic white kid, almost like an alien or circus midget or some sort of novelty. Whatever it was, they immediately brought me into their crew.

The convoy pulls into the parking lot of Royal Skateland and files inside.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

On the weekends, or any night for that matter, the Curry Brothers and their crew would take over Royal Skateland.

INT. ROYAL SKATELAND - CONTINUOUS

The joint flashes with strobe lights as a DJ holds sway behind a couple of turntables. A giant disco ball hangs over the center of the rink as dozens of skaters roll around the floor.

The atmosphere has a dreamlike, almost mesmerizing effect on Ricky, the whirling colors, the thumping music, turning his head to admire the overflowing rush of beautiful black women that are seemingly everywhere.

A section of tables has been cordoned off with red velour ropes and brass stanchions. A bouncer unlatches the rope and the Curry crew situates themselves at the reserved tables. Ricky sits down with Johnny, Leo, and Boo.

JOHNNY CURRY

You like cognac?

Ricky nods, sure, why not. Johnny signals a waitress to bring the table a round of drinks.

A LITTLE LATER in the night.

Ricky sips cognac, nodding to the beat of the music, when his attention becomes transfixed in the way that only an enchanting woman can bring about --

TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL -- as CATHY VOLSAN sashays her sensual hips and finely sculpted backside, skating in reverse. It's as though a spotlight follows her around the rink.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Cathy Volsan was Johnny's girlfriend. She also happened to be Mayor Coleman Young's favorite niece, which made her the crown princess of Detroit. But even though she was royalty, she loved bad boys, most specifically, drug dealers.

She skates past Johnny's table and blows him a seductive kiss, winks, and caresses her luscious thighs in an expert tease.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

She had a special police detail assigned to her, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, which not only assured her safety, but that of the Curry Brothers.

At the rink side, Johnny leans over the railing and whispers to TWO YOUNG LADIES. He points in the direction of two plain clothes POLICE OFFICERS, Cathy's detail, who are watching the action at one of the ingresses to the rink.

On Johnny's orders, the ladies skate over to the cops, flirt with them for a moment, and then escort them over to the men's bathroom where one of Johnny's crew stands guard outside.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

One of the young ladies is now bent over the porcelain sink as a cop thrusts into her from behind while the other young lady rides on top of the other cop inside a stall. Both ladies are still wearing their pink skates and moaning loudly for effect.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The Curry Brothers knew how to treat people, especially the cops.

(MORE)

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Watching over the Mayor's niece was
the best detail a Detroit cop could
ever dream up...

EXT. MANOOGIAN MANSION - DAY

Camera tracks down the horseshoe driveway of the Mayor's stately residence and past the tricked-out rides of the Curry crew and up the marble front steps and through the towering front door and out to the grassy backyard where Johnny and Cathy are reciting their vows with the shimmering river behind them.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
...And when Johnny and Cathy tied
the knot, Mayor Young happily
opened the gates of Manoogian
Mansion to send off his favorite
niece.

Beneath the floral wedding bower, MAYOR YOUNG kisses Cathy on the cheek and then hugs Johnny Curry.

MAYOR YOUNG
Welcome to the family, Johnny.

Now the Mayor's cronies, the power elite, move in to congratulate Johnny and Cathy on their nuptials.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Nobody played the game better than
Johnny "Little Man" Curry and Leo
"Big Man" Curry. They understood
politics on every level. They
understood the power of it. If the
Curry Brothers hadn't been born
black, and in Detroit, I swear to
god they would have ruled the
world.

Ricky and the crew throw rice onto the newlyweds. It all seems like an impossible dream, only it's all too real in the backwards ass city they call Detroit.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I can't remember the exact date
when I stopped going to school. It
wasn't something I really planned
or anything. It just sort of
happened...

INT. THE FBI SEDAN - NIGHT

They have just wrapped up another night of work as the sedan pulls to a stop down the street from Ricky's house. It's very late and the neighborhood is dead quiet.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
...I was either hanging with the
Curry Brothers or running around
with the FBI all night.

It's the same configuration as before: Agent Bell drives and Agent Turner sits in the front passenger seat. Officer Jackson sits alongside Ricky in the backseat.

Agent Turner hands Ricky a knot of cash, his payment for the night. Then Agent Turner nods to Officer Jackson, who hands Ricky a small paper bag.

RICKY WERSHE
What's this?

OFFICER JACKSON
A bonus.

Ricky peers inside the bag --

AGENT TURNER
It's half a kilo of cocaine.

RICKY WERSHE
What do you want me to do with it?

AGENT TURNER
Sell it.

RICKY WERSHE
To who?

OFFICER JACKSON
Ricky, you could sell rice to the
muthafuckin' Chinese.

AGENT TURNER
It's important that you get your
hands dirty. Word will spread
around the neighborhood. It'll make
you that much more authentic. Less
suspicious.

AGENT BELL
An informant needs to erase all
doubt about his credentials. All
doubt that he's not a criminal.

RICKY WERSHE

I don't really want to sell coke.

AGENT TURNER

It's all part of an act. You're thinking too deeply about it, kid. The key to your job is being a great actor. This is your stage, and you need to own your part.

AGENT BELL

War isn't pretty, Ricky. And sometimes you have to make moral compromises in order to win.

The hesitation, the reluctance, the misgivings are written across Ricky's features.

OFFICER JACKSON

You scared? Shit, we just gave you an extra seven thousand dollars. You should be thanking us. If you don't want it, I'll fuckin' sell it.

AGENT BELL

Ricky, trust us. Don't think so much. We know what we're doing. You're a great kid, and you're doing a great job.

(then)

Do you trust us?

Ricky nods. But it's not very convincing.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

Good. Now get some rest.

Ricky exits the sedan and walks down the street toward his house.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I may have done some illegal stuff on my own, but I never sold drugs until the cops gave them to me.

EXT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - DAY

Ricky struts onto the lot. He's wearing a brand new red Adidas track suit and Top Ten sneakers. He greets Boo with a handshake.

Boo steps back to admire Ricky's new threads. In fact, Boo and Ricky, apart from one being black and the other white, are dressed like identical twins.

BOO
You biting my style, Ricky?

Boo chuckles. He leads Ricky around the side of the garage to several new super bikes.

BOO (CONT'D)
Look at that shit. Kawasaki Ninjas.
Fastest street bike in the world.
That's what Ninja means in
Japanese: Fast Muthafucka. Can you
ride?

RICKY WERSHE
I've been dirt riding before.

BOO
Same shit, bro. Only on the street.
Let's go pick up some hoes.

Boo and Ricky, with reckless bravado, each straddle a Ninja and turn onto the street and race down the block.

EXT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - LATER THAT NIGHT

After racing around the city all day, Ricky and Boo ride back into the lot and pull the Ninjas into the garage. A group of young men play eight ball at a pool table in the corner.

Johnny Curry, the consummate business man, sits in the back office at a desk. He stands and waves Ricky over.

JOHNNY CURRY
Shut the door.

Ricky shuts the door.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)
You doing some hustling on the
side?

Ricky turns pale.

RICKY WERSHE
What do you mean?

JOHNNY CURRY
You know, hustling a little of the
white?

Ricky bows his head, scared, can't look Johnny in the eyes.

RICKY WERSHE

I should've asked you first. I know this is your neighborhood and all.

JOHNNY CURRY

It ain't like that little man. It's all good. Just get it from me from now on. I'll set you up.

(on Ricky's nod)

Who'd you get it from? One of my guys?

RICKY WERSHE

No, it was uh, it was my dad's friend.

JOHNNY CURRY

White dude?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah. From the suburbs.

Satisfied, Johnny moves over to a closet and removes a triple-beam scale from inside. He places the scale on the desk along with a set of calibrating weights.

He sets a weight on the scale and slides the measure until the pointer balances out.

JOHNNY CURRY

What does that say?

Ricky squints and reads the measure on the scale.

RICKY WERSHE

250.

JOHNNY CURRY

250 grams.

Johnny sets another calibrating weight on the scale and slides the measure until the pointer rides flush.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)

What does that say?

RICKY WERSHE

500. 500 grams.

Johnny sets another weight on the scale. Ricky reads the measurement.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

650 grams.

JOHNNY CURRY

That's a life sentence in the State of Michigan. You get caught holding 650 grams of cocaine or more and you're leaving prison in a coffin. Remember that. Always have your shit wrapped tight. Know your game. Never have your drugs and your money in the same place. And never bring any drugs here. Understand?

RICKY WERSHE

Yes, Johnny.

JOHNNY CURRY

You got a lot of heart. Stay smart and you might last a while.

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - DAY

A suburb of Detroit. Nothing but white people here. Ricky sits across from FBI Agent's Bell and Turner.

AGENT BELL

Who calls the shots, Johnny or Leo?

RICKY WERSHE

It seems like they both do. It's all really organized, and they don't tolerate any bullshit from their workers. They know all the laws and they never keep the drugs and the money together.

(lowering his voice)

They got the Detroit police in their pockets. You're never gonna take them down.

AGENT TURNER

You let us worry about that, Ricky. We know who we can trust and who we can't.

Ricky looks around the restaurant, on edge, nervous. He watches the patrons coming through the front door, a white family with two young kids.

AGENT BELL

Keep going, Ricky. You're safe here.

AGENT TURNER

There ain't a spook for five miles.
As soon as they cross Eight Mile,
the cops pull them over.

AGENT BELL

Go on.

After another nervous search of the crowded breakfast joint, Ricky continues.

RICKY WERSHE

The crack business never sleeps.
Around the clock, guys are cooking
it up and slanging rocks for the
Curry Brothers.

As Ricky debriefs the agents, we see the images and scenes related to his testimony --

EXT. AN EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A car stops in front of a crack house.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

At a specific time each day, two
couriers drive around from house to
house picking up all the money from
the crack sales.

TWO MEN exit the house and approach the car. One of the men carries a large grocery bag, the other has his hand inside his coat on his gun, scanning the neighborhood for potential danger, police or would-be jackers.

The grocery bag is handed to the passenger and the car pulls away. It's all very well-orchestrated. Just like a Brinks pick up.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The cash is then brought back to
the garage and tallied up.

INT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - NIGHT

A bank of video games line the back wall. Ricky plays Donkey Kong while Boo gobbles up power pellets and ghosts in Pac-Man.

Johnny Curry enters, holding two swollen industrial-sized garbage bags, and calls out to --

JOHNNY CURRY
Hey, Ricky.

Ricky turns around from Donkey Kong.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)
Can you count?

But the question is rhetorical.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)
I already know Boo can't.

INT. THE BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky follows Johnny into the back room. Johnny turns the swollen garbage bags upside down and empties a mountain of wrinkled cash onto the table, which spills onto the floor.

JOHNNY CURRY
What does that look like to you?

RICKY WERSHE
A lot of fuckin' money.

JOHNNY CURRY
It's a fuckin' problem, is what it is. Until it gets organized.

FREEZE FRAME ON RICKY'S HUGE EYES STARING AT THE MONEY:

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I thought it was the greatest problem I ever seen. I wanted that problem. But you gotta understand: the Curry Brothers were grossing over a hundred thousand a day. One hundred thousand. And almost all of it was in small bills, which is fine for buying snacks at the liquor store, but not for buying large amounts of cocaine.

RESUME NORMAL SPEED:

JOHNNY CURRY
The white muthafuckas -- no offense -- that bring the cocaine into the city by the planeload don't take small bills for payments. They want hundreds. That's it.
(MORE)

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)

Which creates a major fuckin' hassle in my life, the hassle of which, I'm now turning over to you. I need you to separate the fives from the tens from the twenties and stack them into neat piles. You can keep the singles.

RICKY WERSHE

What about the fifties and hundreds?

JOHNNY CURRY

There shouldn't be any. They should've already been sorted out. Grab yourself a soda. You're gonna be here all night.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - CONTINUOUS

Ricky sits across from the FBI agents.

AGENT TURNER

Who are the white motherfuckers he's talking about? Who brings the cocaine into the city?

RICKY WERSHE

I don't know.

AGENT TURNER

It's imperative that you find out. We want the head of the snake.

AGENT BELL

Keep going. This is all really good information.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ricky reaches into the heap of cash and pulls out a handful. He begins sorting the fives from the tens from the twenties, arranging them according to each bill's denomination.

It's tedious and time-consuming labor, but Ricky seems to be thrilling in the task.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I had never seen so much money in my life, and it was a rush just to be in the same room with it. By the end of the night, my fingertips were raw.

Over the course of hours, the mountain of cash is reduced to neat stacks covering the entire table, like paper bricks.

Johnny enters with a Ribao currency counter and a large bag of rubber bands and sets them on the table.

JOHNNY CURRY

You ever used one of these things?

RICKY WERSHE

No.

JOHNNY CURRY

The key is to only grab about this much at a time.

He lifts a stack of fives from a pile, about two inches worth.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)

Otherwise you'll jam the machine.

He feeds the bills into the receiving tray and the machine rifles the money through.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)

Once the digital display says one hundred, grab a rubber band and bundle that shit up. I want everything: the fives, the tens, and the twenties banded in stacks of a hundred. Got it?

Ricky nods. Johnny motions to the discrete stacks of one dollar bills set off to the side.

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)

How many singles were there?

RICKY WERSHE

981.

Johnny nods, smiles. There's a warmth to his expression as that of a mentor to a protege.

Johnny takes a twenty dollar bill from one of the piles and hands it to Ricky.

JOHNNY CURRY

Now you're over a thousand. Not bad
for a night's work.

EXT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - DAY

A blue Mercedes Benz with tinted windows pulls into the lot and stops beside Johnny and Ricky. Ricky holds two duffel bags.

The driver's side window rolls down, revealing the always sexy Cathy Volsan behind the steering wheel, wearing gold-plated Vuarnet sunglasses and lurid red lipstick.

Johnny kisses her.

JOHNNY CURRY

(to Ricky)

You think you can handle her?

Ricky nods and climbs inside the car with the two duffel bags.

INT. CATHY'S MERCEDES BENZ - SAME

Ricky shuts the door.

CATHY VOLSAN

Hey, sweetheart.

She unexpectedly pecks Ricky on the cheek, leaving a puckered tattoo of lipstick on his skin.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

Let's go banking.

As the Mercedes pulls away, Cathy slides her hand onto Ricky's thigh and walks her long red fingernails down his jeans as if moving along a piano. She's flirting with his nervousness, which is evident.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

Oh. I'm sorry. My hand wandered.
I'm so used to Johnny sitting
there.

A SERIES OF SHOTS --

As Ricky and Cathy visit local banks, exchanging hundreds of thousands of dollars in small bills for crisp hundreds.

-- An obsequious BANK MANAGER greets Cathy and escorts her over to his desk, where Ricky, acting as valet, follows behind with a duffel bag. Cathy gestures imperiously to Ricky, who reaches into the duffel and stacks the manager's desk with rubber-banded fives and tens.

The small bills are run through a money counting machine and exchanged for ten-thousand dollar stacks of hundreds.

Cathy hands the money to Ricky, who places the hundreds inside the duffel. The bank manager hugs Cathy goodbye, and the queen departs with her valet in tow.

The process is repeated throughout the day, across the city from one bank to another, Cathy's security detail of undercover Detroit cops ensuring safe passage.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - CONTINUOUS

Agent Turner scribbles notes, stays his pencil momentarily to ask Ricky a question.

AGENT TURNER
What banks did you visit?

RICKY WERSHE
A bunch.

AGENT TURNER
First National, Citibank, CINB?

RICKY WERSHE
I don't know. Probably.

AGENT BELL
We need specifics, Ricky. How much money do you think you exchanged?

RICKY WERSHE
Probably like two or three million. I wasn't keeping track. We had to go back to the garage twice to drop off the hundreds and refill the duffel bags with the smaller bills.

AGENT BELL
And they do this how many times a week?

RICKY WERSHE
At least a couple.

AGENT TURNER

You gotta do a better job with the details. You gotta be thorough if you want to be part of this team. We're serious. You need to be serious too.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. A BANK PARKING LOT - DAY

Ricky and Cathy step out of the glass doors and walk over to her Benz. She unlocks the trunk and Ricky sets the duffel bag inside.

CATHY VOLSAN

I need to make one more stop.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE, CHANGING ROOM - LATER

The changing room curtain slides open and Cathy is standing in a hot pink thong and bra. She spins around slowly and admires her backside and perky breasts in the mirror and then turns to Ricky, who is standing just outside the room, rigid with discomfort.

CATHY VOLSAN

How does it fit?

Ricky is terrifyingly aroused at the dangerous and forbidden fruit dangling before him, the way the hot pink thong and bra accentuates her curves, the contrast of the provocative colors against her radiant chocolate skin.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

How does it fit? What the fuck was I supposed to say? She was gorgeous, she was a Playboy centerfold, she was an image that men jerk off to for the rest of their lives.

He struggles to answer her.

RICKY WERSHE

Good, I think.

CATHY VOLSAN

You think?

RICKY WERSHE

No, I mean, it looks really nice on you, Cathy. Real fly.

Cathy giggles at his nervousness.

CATHY VOLSAN

Feel how smooth that is.

She takes his hand and runs his fingertips along the string of her panties that hugs her waistline.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

You think Johnny will like these?

RICKY WERSHE

Of course.

Ricky is about to cum in his teenage pants. He tries to avert his eyes when she lifts his chin with her long seductive fingernails, forcing him to make eye contact with her.

CATHY VOLSAN

Good. I just want my man to be happy, you know.

She is staring at him. Inches separate their lips.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

You're cute when you're nervous.

She moves closer to Ricky and it appears that she is going to kiss him. But this is all an ego-feeding dance to Cathy, a dance she's undoubtedly been performing with men since a very early age.

A moment before their lips meet, Cathy steps back into the dressing room and whips the curtain shut, leaving Ricky craning forward in the hallway, breathless with fear and sexual desire.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I was certain that hanging with Cathy would get me killed and I wanted to run away from her as fast as I could. But I couldn't. And she knew it.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - CONTINUOUS

The agents are hanging onto every salacious detail as though Ricky were recounting some glorious sexual conquest.

AGENT TURNER

You dirty dog. You fucked her didn't you? You went in the dressing room and bent her black ass over.

But Ricky does not share their enthusiasm. He's pale with sweat and nerves, his face creased with anxiety.

RICKY WERSHE

I gotta get outta here.

AGENT BELL

Finish your waffles.

RICKY WERSHE

I don't want to meet in places like this anymore. Anybody could see me here.

AGENT TURNER

Relax, kid.

AGENT BELL

We wouldn't do anything to jeopardize your safety, Ricky.

Agent Bell reaches into his overcoat and produces a white envelope and slides it across the table.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

You played really well this week.

Ricky takes the envelope and climbs out of the booth, his eyes casting about for danger, and leaves the restaurant.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Yeah, it was all a big fucking game to them.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ricky opens the door to his room and walks over to his bed. He kneels down and reaches underneath for his shoe box --

RICK SR. (O.S.)

You're a welcher, Ricky.

Ricky spins around and finds his dad standing in the far corner, holding his shoe box of money.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

A fucking welcher. I didn't raise a welcher, but you sure figured out how to become one. You must've gotten it from your mother.

RICKY WERSHE

Gimme that.

RICK SR.

I tried to teach you right. To teach you how to be a good business partner. Real life lessons. But what do you do? You go behind my back and make side deals. Well, I won't tolerate that, not in my house. I won't be a rug, Ricky. I won't get fucking stepped on.

RICKY WERSHE

Give it back.

RICK SR.

Give it back? Give it back? I'll shove it down your fucking throat.

In a violent lunge forward, Rick Sr. smashes Ricky in the face with the shoe box. The top flies off and cash explodes out like feathers from a pillow.

The blow knocks Ricky back onto the floor. His father pounces and straddles him, scooping up handfuls of cash and stuffing them into Ricky's mouth.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You want it so bad -- then fucking eat it. Eat it you fucking brat.

But Ricky manages to squirm out from under his enraged father, gain his feet, and draw his .25 automatic from his waistband.

His chest heaving, lip bloodied and quivering, Ricky levels his pistol on his father.

RICKY WERSHE

Get out.

RICK SR.

You wanna be a big shot? You wanna shoot me? Do it you fucking punk.

RICKY WERSHE
Get out of my room.

RICK SR.
Shoot me. Go on. Show me how tough
you are. Show all your new drug
dealer friends how bad you are.
Show the FBI you got what it takes
to be a rat.

But Ricky, tears welling in his eyes, can't shoot his father,
and both of them know it.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
This is my house. This is my room.
And this is my fucking money.

With his pistol still trained on his father, Ricky slowly
backs out of his room and leaves the house.

EXT. A GAS STATION - NIGHT

Ricky stands next to a phone booth, watching each car that
pulls into the station as if expecting someone. Not far off,
a sedan idles in a parking slot, puffing exhaust into the
frozen night.

Headlights flash into his eyes as a beat up Chrysler pulls
into the station and parks beside him.

Dawn steps out of the driver's side and walks over to her
brother.

RICKY WERSHE
Where you been at?

DAWN
I'm here ain't I?

Now up close and in the light, Dawn looks tired and strung
out, the haggard and drawn features of an addict. She reaches
her hand up to Ricky's swollen face and touches his bloodied
lip.

RICKY WERSHE
You don't look good.

DAWN
Neither do you.

RICKY WERSHE

You gotta get off that pipe, Dawn.
You gotta leave that boyfriend of
yours.

DAWN

Baby brother, it ain't him. It's
me.

Each of them is on the verge of tears: the raw frustration of their lives, the bleak city around them, the frigid night air clashing against their skin.

Dawn notices the sedan idling nearby and squints as if in recognition.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Is that grandma's car?

Ricky nods.

DAWN (CONT'D)

She let you borrow it?

RICKY WERSHE

Well, not really.

Dawn shakes her head with resignation and doesn't pursue the matter. What's the point?

A thin smile creases her wearied face and she endearingly rubs Ricky's head, mussing his hair in an attempt to cheer him up. She'll always be his older sister.

DAWN

In another year, you'll whoop Dad's
ass.

Ricky smiles, shrugs.

RICKY WERSHE

I meant what I said.
(off Dawn's look)
You need to leave your boyfriend
and get off the crack pipe. I can
get you an apartment, I'm making
good money right now.

Dawn looks away, fragile, about to fall apart -- when her eyes widen --

DAWN

Ricky -- there's a dude getting
into grandma's car.

By the time she makes the observation, the man is already behind the wheel and ripping out of the parking lot.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Yeah, that's Detroit for you. You slip for one moment, you leave the keys in your car -- well, your grandmother's car, the car you just stole from her -- and some motherfucker will steal from you, what you just stole from someone else -- every goddamn time. It's what people in Detroit like to call: The Circle of Fuck.

Ricky pulls out his .25 auto and lines up a shot but the guy is already out of range, leaving a wake of black rubber smoke.

RICKY WERSHE

Let's go. Let's go.

Ricky climbs into Dawn's passenger side and Dawn gets behind the wheel. She guns the car out of the gas station and across the two lane street into oncoming traffic, nearly causing a head-on collision with a couple of vehicles which lock up their brakes and swerve and fishtail on the icy surface.

Dawn is an adept driver, but more than anything, she's got serious heart, and quickly closes ground on their grandmother's stolen vehicle, weaving in and out of the cars she's passing.

Pistol in hand, Ricky leans out the passenger side window, trying to get an angle.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Pull alongside him Dawn.

DAWN

I got it pinned -- this is as fast as she'll go.

Ricky fires at their grandmother's car -- BLAM -- BLAM. The driver swerves in an attempt to elude the gunfire.

Ricky fires again, yells.

RICKY WERSHE

Pull over motherfucker!

He fires another volley, blowing out the back windshield, yells in frustration.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)
Can't this piece of shit go any
faster?

DAWN
Fuck you.

Ricky aims to fire once more -- when behind them the SWIRLING BLUE AND RED LIGHTS of law enforcement flash along with a wailing siren.

EXT. WAYNE COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

Officer Jackson opens the door to the parking lot, allowing Ricky to exit first. They walk across.

RICKY WERSHE
What about my sister?

OFFICER JACKSON
Already took care of her.

RICKY WERSHE
What are they charging me with?

OFFICER JACKSON
Other than being a total fuckin'
dumbass?
(then)
Here's how it's gonna go down.
You're gonna show up to court on
the date they assign you, but the
arresting officer ain't gonna be
there, and the charges will be
dropped. Understand?

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
And it was that simple. The lesson
was clear: when you work for the
government, you can shoot at
whoever the hell you want and get
away with it.

Jackson arrives at his unmarked sedan. He reaches into his pocket for the keys and unlocks the passenger door.

OFFICER JACKSON
Next time you wanna shoot someone,
take 'em down a dark fuckin' alley,
or wear a fuckin' ski mask. But
don't go shooting at people in the
middle of the fuckin' freeway.
That's just fuckin' stupid.

Jackson opens the door for Ricky and pushes him inside.

INT. MARATHON GARAGE - DAY

Ricky enters the garage where he is welcomed like a hero for his high-speed shoot-out and subsequent arrest. Word gets around fast on the street.

BOO

Thatta boy. Shit, White Boy got heart. He ain't gonna let nobody steal granny's ride.

This provokes laughter from the crew. Boo hugs Ricky, pushes him in a brotherly manner. Other members of the crew congratulate Ricky with high-fives and hugs.

BOO (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Ricky, we'll find the dude. Probably some cracked-out smoker. He's gonna show up at one of the houses and try and trade granny's ride for a dime rock, only instead of a dime rock --
 (pulls gun from waistband)
 -- he's gonna get a cap in his ass.

Johnny shakes Ricky's hand.

JOHNNY CURRY

You can't let nobody take you for no punk.

(then)

You were arrested last night, right?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah.

JOHNNY CURRY

Late night, huh?

RICKY WERSHE

Like three in the morning.

JOHNNY CURRY

You bailed out quick.

RICKY WERSHE

I guess so.

JOHNNY CURRY

How much was your bond?

On the surface the string of questions seem innocuous, but there's a subtle, calculated shrewdness to them that could only come from a hard-bitten gangster. The last question pauses Ricky, and he responds haltingly.

RICKY WERSHE

Uh, I think it was like fifty thousand.

JOHNNY CURRY

Fifty thousand?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah, definitely. Fifty thousand.

Johnny nods in a casual manner, looks around the garage, as if not paying too much attention. He throws out the next question in an offhand manner as well.

JOHNNY CURRY

Your dad bail you out?

RICKY WERSHE

Yeah, it was my dad. My dad paid for the bond.

JOHNNY CURRY

Five grand?

RICKY WERSHE

Five grand, what?

Boo leans into the conversation.

BOO

What the fuck, Johnny? You his fuckin' P.O. or something? You want a beer Ricky?

Ricky nods. Johnny halts his subtle questioning for another time. But there has been a vague uneasiness about the conversation, a threat of suspicion lingering in the air, barely perceptible, but there.

JOHNNY CURRY

My dad bailed me out the first time I was arrested too. The moment the street thinks you're a punk, the game's over.

Johnny takes Ricky under his arm and leads him toward the back of the garage.

EXT. AN ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT

In a dark corner of the parking lot, Ricky meets with Agent Bell and Agent Turner. Officer Jackson smokes a cigarette on the back steps of the boarded-up church. The place is abandoned and isolated. It's a safe place to talk.

RICKY WERSHE

I can't do this anymore. It doesn't feel right.

AGENT BELL

We get it, Ricky. It's totally natural to have second thoughts about what you're doing for the government. It happens to everyone who works undercover. You see the other side, they treat you well, make you feel like family, give you some money, get your dick wet -- and then you start doubting the mission. You start doubting the war. But it's all an illusion, Ricky. These are bad people. The Curry Brothers are not your friends. They're ruthless killers who pollute the community with their drugs. This isn't a movie. This is real life.

Ricky fidgets, pulls a pack of cigarettes from his jacket, and lights one. He is visibly nervous.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

You'll look back on this moment one day and realize that you were doing the right thing. We're the good guys, and you're one of us, remember that. We saw your potential the day we met you, and you've proven to be an invaluable asset. You haven't let us down one moment.

Ricky takes a drag on his cigarette and then exhales a jet of smoke into the cold night, a prolonged, stressful exhale.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

Look, you're young, Ricky. We don't need to rush things. We'll slow the operation down a bit here in Detroit. But before we do, we need you to go out to Vegas for a few days.

RICKY WERSHE

Vegas?

AGENT BELL

Yes. We're sending you to the Thomas Hearns fight.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Tommy Hearns was the "Motor City Cobra," "The Hit Man". Raised on the streets of the East Side, he was a hometown hero, and wherever Tommy fought, the Detroit underworld followed.

CUT TO:

TOMMY HEARNS -- rockin' a jerry curl, delivers a series of knockouts to various opponents. His race-horse cut muscles glisten as he devastates his rivals with a ferocious and balletic grace.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

It was said, that when Tommy was fighting, it was the only time you couldn't buy crack in Detroit, because everyone that sold it, was watching Tommy.

THE CROWD -- Detroit kingpins take up the first three rows where they shout and cheer behind sunglasses, gold chains and Rolex watches and double-breasted Armani suits.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. THE CHURCH PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

AGENT TURNER

It'll be a goddamn drug convention. All the major traffickers from Detroit, and many others from around the country will be there. You'll be privileged to information that we otherwise wouldn't have access to here.

Agent Bell leans into the sedan and retrieves a manila envelope and starts removing the contents.

AGENT BELL

This is your Driver's License. You are now 21 years old. Remember the birth date. Someone might ask you.

RICKY WERSHE
Nobody is gonna believe I'm 21.

AGENT TURNER
If you believe it, they'll believe
it. Besides, they have to. It's
real. It's legal.

Agent Bell hands Ricky the license. Then reaches inside the envelope and retrieves another item.

AGENT BELL
This is a round trip ticket on
United Airlines. You ever been on
an plane?

RICKY WERSHE
No.

AGENT TURNER
You're a lucky kid, Ricky. We treat
you good here, don't we?

Jackson chimes in from the shadows.

OFFICER JACKSON
Yeah, you a lucky white boy. They
should be sending my black ass
instead.

Agent Bell reaches back inside the envelope and produces a smaller white envelope.

AGENT BELL
And this is fifteen hundred dollars
for meals and other incidental
expenses.

AGENT TURNER
Now remember, Ricky, you're not
there to have fun. We need you to
gather intelligence -- so pay
attention. Vegas is a wild place,
and we need you to be mature about
it. In other words, don't get
carried away.

OFFICER JACKSON
If you make it to the Crazy Horse,
tell my cousin Charmina that I sent
you.

RICKY WERSHE
What's the Crazy Horse?

AGENT TURNER

A place you're only allowed to go
to if the Curry's go there.
Understand?

OFFICER JACKSON

He's 21 now. He can go wherever the
hell he pleases.

Agent Bell throws Jackson a look. Then:

AGENT BELL

Have a good time in Vegas, but
remember: You're working. If the
Curry's go to the Crazy Horse, then
you follow. If not, stay the fuck
out of there.

(turning to go, then)

And leave your fucking gun at home.

EXT. LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - NIGHT

The perfect place for a 15 year-old with a thousand dollars
in his pocket and a government issued fake ID.

The strip of the 1980s dazzles in all its bygone glory: The
Stardust, The El Rancho, The Flamingo, The Gold Nugget,
Caesar's Palace -- the aura of the mob still present here.

We find Ricky strutting down Las Vegas Boulevard with the
Curry Brothers and crew, twenty deep, taking up the entire
sidewalk, draped in mink coats, thick gold ropes, Kangol
bucket hats, sunglasses and diamond rings, ivory-handled
canes, puffing cigars and proud of their kingpin status.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Detroit went to Vegas to win, to
represent Tommy Hearns, to
represent the Motor City. But like
everything else in Detroit, hard-
luck was all we found.

The famous final seconds of Round 3: Tommy Hearns, dazed,
eyes crossed, legs wobbling, probably unconscious already,
staggers backward with an inexplicable mindless smile as --
Marvelous Marvin Hagler runs across the ring and finishes him
off with a crushing right hand.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Tommy Hearns was nearly decapitated
in the third round. A round that he
never fully recovered from.

Ricky throws dice at the craps table. Snake eyes. The croupier rakes in his chips.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I lost the thousand dollars the FBI gave me at the craps table in ten minutes --

INSIDE THE CRAZY HORSE -- Charmina, a full-bodied, luscious woman of the night, escorts Ricky into a private room.

RICKY WERSHE V.O.

-- and a thousand more of my own money when we all went to the Crazy Horse and I introduced myself to Jackson's niece Charmina. Needless to say, I didn't receive no fuckin' family discount. That stripper got me drunk and straight stole my money. But what proved the greatest loss of them all, and one that would eventually lead to the Curry Brother's downfall, was a simple task that someone fucked up on.

INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - NIGHT

CAMERA SPEEDS through the bustling lobby and over to the front desk where Johnny and Leo Curry are having an argument with the CONCIERGE. Ricky and the entire crew stand behind them, milling about as they wait on the bosses.

JOHNNY CURRY

Can you please check again?

CONCIERGE

I'm sorry, but there are no rooms under either Johnny or Leo Curry.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

You see, the Curry Brothers had tasked one of their lieutenants, a dude named Leon Lucas, to make the hotel and ticket arrangements for the fight...

INT. A CRACK HOUSE, DETROIT - NIGHT

LEON LUCAS takes a hit from a crack pipe. His eyes flutter in euphoria and he leans back on the couch.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

...And Leon, for whatever reason, had assured the Curry Brothers prior to jumping on the plane that everything was squared away and ready to go out in Vegas.

Leon, amid the swirling crack smoke, speaks into a phone.

LEON LUCAS

You're all set, Johnny. You're fly like Super Fly, my brutha.

BACK TO CAESAR'S PALACE

Johnny has opened a small suitcase and is removing tens of thousands of dollars and stacking the money on the counter in front of the concierge for the entire lobby to witness.

JOHNNY CURRY

How about the whole floor? We'll buy out the whole fuckin' floor then.

CONCIERGE

I'm sorry, but we've been sold out for two months. There's nothing I can do.

LEO CURRY

No. No. No. You don't understand what my brother's saying. Call up them peoples and tell them we'll buy them out, two, three, four times what they paid. We don't give a fuck.

CONCIERGE

I'm sorry, sir, but we don't engage in that kind of brokering here at Caesar's Palace.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE - LATER

The entire crew stands around like a pack of orphans with no place to go. Johnny Curry is on a pay phone, screaming into it.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The Curry Brothers were humiliated. They had been disrespected in front of their crew, in front of every baller that had showed up in Vegas, the whole world as far as they were concerned.

EXT. DETROIT, LEON LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A van creeps along the street. The door slides open and THREE GUNMAN spray the house with assault rifles.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Two weeks later, Leon Lucas's house was shot up. Problem was: Leon wasn't home. But his thirteen year-old cousin was.

LATER - The house is now swarming with Detroit cops, news crews, the coroner's office.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The death of young Damian Lucas made national headlines and brought the heat down on the Curry Brothers like never before. It's one thing when drug dealers kill other drug dealers. No one really gives a fuck. But when innocent children start dying, even the white people in the suburbs start caring. And once they start caring, your days as an outlaw are numbered. Even the corrupt cops become Boy Scouts.

INT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - NIGHT

A meeting is underway in the back room as Johnny and Leo stand in front of Ricky and about a dozen members of the crew.

JOHNNY CURRY

Look, we had nothing to do with that kid getting killed, no matter what the news is saying.

LEO CURRY

It's all a bunch of bullshit.

JOHNNY CURRY

We know the cops are offering to pay for information on the case.

(MORE)

JOHNNY CURRY (CONT'D)

Those muthafuckus been trying to find a way to take us down for over a decade now, and they think this bullshit is the best way -- branding us as child killers. But we'll pay more to keep mouths shut. Whatever the cops are offering, we'll pay double. You let people know that.

EXT. THE EAST SIDE, CRACK HOUSE - NIGHT

Ricky exits a car with a duffel bag in hand and up the cement walkway toward the front door.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Two guys that no one had ever seen sweat, were now sweating, and they became paranoid. And in the drug game, when organizations become paranoid, everyone becomes a suspect, and the guns start blazing.

Ricky climbs the front steps and knocks on the door. When no one answers he tries the doorknob, which is unlocked, and he slowly pushes open the door -- when a BLINDING FLASH and THUNDEROUS BELLOW from a gunshot swallows the night and Ricky is blown backward off the porch with a gaping hole in his stomach.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rick Sr. and Dawn rush through the front door and into the the emergency room toward the receptionist --

INT. HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

The hallway doors swing open as Rick Sr. and Dawn sprint down the linoleum floor toward --

Agent Turner and Agent Bell who are standing outside of Ricky's room.

AGENT BELL

You can't go in there, Rick.

RICK SR.

What the fuck you mean I can't go in there. He's my goddamn son. Get the fuck out of my way.

Rick Sr. looks in through the door window and sees several doctors and nurses huddled over his son. This image sets him off and he lunges straight for Turner and grabs him by the lapels and slams him against the wall.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You motherfuckers. This is all your fault.

Agent Bell grabs Rick Sr. and tries to pry him off Agent Turner when Dawn jumps into the fray and slaps Agent Bell in the face and then jumps on his shoulders and starts biting the back of his neck.

Rick Sr. then turns on Agent Bell and the four of them fall to the tile floor in a tangle of accusations, slaps, kicks, and curses, maybe some pulled hair.

Orderlies and nurses rush out of doors and stream into the hallway and pull the parties off each other.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Get your fucking hands off me. Get your hands off.

Agent Bell removes his badge and brandishes it to the hospital staff.

AGENT BELL

FBI... Appreciate the assistance, but we got it all covered.

The staff looks on with bewilderment -- they've seen a lot in their duties but never anything quite like this and they slowly go back to their tasks.

Rick Sr. and Dawn are frothing, ready to jump back into a tangle with the Agents.

RICK SR.

I want to see my son. Get out of the way.

A doctor finally emerges from Ricky's room.

DOCTOR

You can't go in there right now. Please keep it down. We'll give you an update shortly.

The doctor steps back inside.

RICK SR.

You're prostituting my son.

AGENT TURNER

You pimped him out.

Rick Sr. jumps across the hallway for Agent Turner when Agent Bell intercepts the attack and subdues Rick Sr. in a wrestling hold.

AGENT TURNER (CONT'D)

I can send you to prison for striking a Federal Agent.

RICK SR.

I can send you to prison for playing with a child's life.

AGENT TURNER

Your son is a central informant in an ongoing criminal investigation. He is crucial to its successful outcome.

RICK SR.

I don't give a shit what he is to you. He's my son. And we're through. We're through working with you -- you fucking maggots.

Agent Bell takes a deep breath and composes himself. The momentary pause has a slightly calming effect on the situation. He adjusts his posture to one of accommodation and takes Rick Sr. aside. They move down the corridor.

AGENT BELL

We live in a great country, Rick.

RICK SR.

You got that right -- greatest goddamn country in the world.

AGENT BELL

Do you realize how important you and your son are right now to the security of this nation?

As their conversation trails off down the corridor with patriotic platitudes -- CAMERA pushes through the window and into Ricky's room and over to his bed and the doctors and nurses administering to him. He's unconscious, tubes in his mouth, his intestines, all the machinery associated with a near-fatal injury.

EXT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ricky sits in a wheelchair as his father pushes him up the front walk. A colostomy bag rests in Ricky's lap.

RICK SR.

You're not a quitter, Ricky. And that's why you're still alive. Because you don't give up. You never have.

Rick Sr. pauses to remove his keys. He unlocks the door and wheels Ricky inside.

Rick Sr. is speaking with an ingratiating, overly accommodating tone, as if not only attempting to regain the favor of his son, but also persuade him to a certain course of action.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

I know it sounds crazy, but the fact that you got shot was actually a really good thing. You'll have more credibility now on the street. They'll trust you even more when you go back. I think when this is all over we'll be heroes. You'll be a hero. We'll also be, and this is important too -- a little better off financially.

(then)

The FBI promised us a big bonus.

He wheels Ricky into the living room and sets him up beside the couch. Rick Sr. takes the remote control and turns on the television.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

What do you want to watch?

He hands Ricky the controller.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Here, I'll let you decide.

Rick Sr. freezes with mock surprise.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

I almost forgot. I got something for you.

Rick Sr. disappears into the other room and reappears with Ricky's shoe box.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You were right. This is your money.
You earned it kiddo.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I had been shot in the stomach with
a .357 magnum, and not many people
live from that. Other than shitting
in a bag for a couple months, I was
back on my feet in a matter of
days.

INT. JOHNNY CURRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Johnny slings his arm around Ricky, who still has a colostomy
bag protruding from his side.

JOHNNY CURRY

It was an accident. A horrible
accident. Peeps thought you was
someone trying to rob the house.

Johnny looks to PEEPS, one of his lieutenants, who is playing
dominoes with several young men.

PEEPS

Sorry, man. Thought you was a
jacker.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Whether it was an accident or not,
the fact that I got shot by someone
within the crew and came back to
work for them gained me a whole new
level of trust and respect within
the organization. If they had
suspected me of being an informant,
they no longer did. It also, in a
strange way, made me a whole lot
cockier. I now felt invincible.

Cathy, never shy about her affection for Ricky, slides over
and places both hands on his shoulders. Maybe it's Ricky's
age, maybe it's because he's white, but Johnny does not pay
any attention to her flirtations with the teenager.

CATHY VOLSAN

We were so worried about you,
sweetheart.

She kisses Ricky on the cheek and moves off. Johnny goes back
to business.

JOHNNY CURRY

You good to drive with that bag in your side?

RICKY WERSHE

It's nothing.

JOHNNY CURRY

Good. I need you to make a run for me up to Harper Woods to a very important person's house.

EXT. A LARGE ESTATE - NIGHT

A woodsy suburb. An electronic iron gate slides open and Ricky pulls down a sweeping tree-lined driveway toward a stately mansion bordered with manicured lawns and marble statuary.

Ricky exits the car and rings the doorbell.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Art Derrick was pumping. He single-handedly supplied the entire city of Detroit with cocaine. He was also out of his fucking mind.

ART DERRICK, an eccentric and slovenly middle-aged white dude in a bathrobe, opens the front door.

ART DERRICK

Holy shit. You're white.

Ricky shrugs at the obvious.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

They said they were sending up a white boy, but I just figured they meant some light-skinned brother. But you son --
(he taps Ricky's chest)
-- are white.

RICKY WERSHE

Like the snow.

Art loves the poetic simile --

ART DERRICK

Like the fucking snow!

Art reaches into his left pocket and fishes inside it.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

Why are you carrying around a shitbag -- you a fucking cancer patient or something?

RICKY WERSHE

I got shot.

ART DERRICK

That'll do it. You live on the East Side?

RICKY WERSHE

Born and raised.

Finding nothing in his left pocket, Art reaches into his right pocket.

ART DERRICK

The East Side is a scary fucking movie. It's not even real anymore. I don't even like driving through there in the day time. I'm waiting for some fucking zombie cannibal to rip me out of my car and start chewing my fucking arm off. Know what I mean? I don't even stop at the red lights no more --- no sir, chirp chirp -- I just keep motoring right through like Mario fucking Andretti. Do you guys even have any food left over there? What about fresh water?

Art finally removes a MASTER LOCK KEY from his pocket.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

A key for the keys.
(hands it to Ricky)
Don't lose it.

And just like that he smiles and shuts the massive door. Then he yells from inside --

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

Come back and see me anytime -- you fucking zombie cannibal.

A great bellowing laugh reverberates and fades down the hallway inside.

EXT. A STORAGE UNIT - NIGHT

TIGHT ON THE KEY as it slides into a Master Lock and the shackle pops open.

Ricky removes the lock from the staple as Boo pulls open the roll-up aluminum door.

The two of them enter the storage unit and approach a pallet loaded with 100 kilograms of cocaine.

Ricky and Boo stuff the kilos into sea bags.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
About a month later, the hammer
dropped.

EXT. A CRACK HOUSE - DAY

A battering ram busts down the front door.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
Earlier in the year the FBI had
managed to break into Johnny
Curry's house and tap his phone.

Federal Agents crash into the house and slam Boo to the kitchen floor as he cooks up a batch of crack on the stove. Two Agents tackle Peeps and slam his face into a mountain of cocaine on a coffee table.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
And after that, there was nothing
that the Mayor or his cronies in
the Detroit Police Department could
do to protect the Curry Brothers
from the Federal Government.

INT. THE MARATHON GARAGE - DAY

Agents storm the garage. Leo Curry and several of his lieutenants are caught by surprise and raise their hands in surrender.

Leo and his men are loaded into a paddy wagon.

INT. JOHNNY CURRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Camera rushes through the house and up the staircase and into the bedroom where Johnny throws off white satin sheets and jumps out of bed in his boxers as ---

Cathy Volsan leaps out of bed fully naked and runs over to a robe on the chair as Federal Agents swarm into their master bedroom with guns drawn.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

And just like that, Johnny, Leo, and Boo, and eighteen other members of the Curry organization were rounded up and thrown in jail. Their decade-long reign as East Side kingpins was over... And mine was just beginning.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

In the dark corner, Ricky and Rick Sr. meet with Agent Bell and Agent Turner. Officer Jackson smokes a cigarette from his customary perch on the back steps.

RICKY WERSHE

I'm done. You guys got what you wanted.

RICK SR.

Hold on, son.
(to agents)
Fellas, he's just a little hot right now.

AGENT BELL

Understandably.

RICK SR.

That's right. Understandably.

RICKY WERSHE

I'm through. I ain't doing this anymore.

AGENT TURNER

Ricky, you don't make the rules. We make the rules. You don't tell us when you're through. We tell you when you're through.

RICK SR.

That's right, Ricky. They're our bosses. And they've taken pretty good care of us so far.

RICKY WERSHE

They nearly got me fucking killed.

RICK SR.
Don't fucking swear at me.

RICKY WERSHE
They fucking used us.

RICK SR.
Don't fucking swear at me
goddamnit.

RICKY WERSHE
Dad, nobody is gonna invite you to
the White House. We're not heroes.
These guys don't care about us.
They never have.

AGENT TURNER
Right now, you guys are protected.
Nobody knows about your
involvement. Nobody knows that you
guys were acting as informants. But
that secrecy, that protection,
comes from us. It's called
cooperation. It would be a horrible
thing if we were forced to list you
as a witness for the government in
the Curry Brother's trial.

RICKY WERSHE
You can't do that.

RICK SR.
Yes, son, they can. They can do
whatever they want. They're the
government. Let's just settle down
everyone.

Rick Sr. takes Ricky by the arm and leads him a few steps
away.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
This well ain't dry, Ricky. It's
far from dry. Relax. What are we
going to do if they expose us? We
need their protection. And we also
need their money.

RICKY WERSHE
I don't need their money.

RICK SR.
Well I do. I'm unemployed right
now.

RICKY WERSHE

You do what you want. I'm through.

Ricky turns and starts walking across the parking lot.

AGENT TURNER

You can't just walk away, Ricky. It doesn't work like that.

RICKY WERSHE

(over his shoulder)

Fuck you.

Ricky glances over at Jackson, who is smoking in the shadows of the church and staring at him with a dark and brooding intensity. There's a heavy threat in his voice when he says --

OFFICER JACKSON

See you around White Boy.

Ricky does not reply as he leaves the parking lot and turns onto the sidewalk and into the night.

RICK SR.

(to agents)

I'll talk to him, fellas. I'll get everything back on track. We've got a lot more work to do together, let me tell you. There's still a lot of cleaning up that needs to be done around here.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I was tired of being a pawn. I wanted to be a king.

EXT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - DAY

Under the flame of the midday sun, the gold-plated initials AD shimmer with near-blinding intensity at the bottom of the swimming pool. Art is giving Ricky a tour of his estate.

ART DERRICK

You see that, Ricky? AD. Those are my initials. Women love it. They love that shit. They come swimming over here and they see my initials engraved in gold at the bottom of my pool, and they say to themselves, he's creative. He's got imagination.

(MORE)

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

And all women, Ricky, whether they be skinny or fat, big tittied or little tittied, black assed or white assed, proud, loud, cock-swallowing biker chicks or naughty housewives with buttermilk skin, want to be fucked by a man with imagination.

The tour moves on...

INT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

A gold disco ball spins from the ceiling of Art's dance club that he's constructed in his basement. A full bar, lounge area, mirrored ceiling and walls.

ART DERRICK

And this -- this tells them that I'm fun.

He breaks into an enthusiastically cringe-worthy rendition of Cyndi Lauper.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

'Cause girls just wanna have fuuu - un. They just wanna, they just wannahhhahha. You know that song? When I play that down here, the panties start flying off like a flock of horny geese. You should see this place the next morning -- I'm literally peeling the panties off the ceiling --- 'cause girls just wahhhaannaaa--hah-hah-have fuuuh-huh-huuunnnn. You probably like that rap shit, huh? You fucking Eastside cannibal.

INT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Upstairs now, in the ornate living room, a lavish decor of Italian marble and gold trim. Art opens a humidor resting on a table and hands Ricky a cigar.

Art produces a lighter and they start smoking.

Art points to a Gucci briefcase sitting on the couch.

ART DERRICK

You know what that is, Ricky?

RICKY WERSHE

Of course.

ART DERRICK

Then what is it?

RICKY WERSHE

What do you think I'm fucking retarded?

ART DERRICK

No. I just want you to guess. I bet you can't guess what it is. I bet you think you know what it is. But I'm like James Bond and everything isn't always what it appears.

RICKY WERSHE

I don't know then. You got me.

ART DERRICK

Of course you know what it is. Look at it. Come on. What is it?

RICKY WERSHE

This is stupid.

ART DERRICK

Sometimes, however, things are exactly what they appear to be. So is that what it appears to be -- or not what it appears to be?

RICKY WERSHE

It's a fucking briefcase, all right.

Art takes the briefcase from the couch, and with both hands, presents it flat-wise, as if about to render a magic trick.

ART DERRICK

No. It's not a briefcase.
(flips it open)
It's a TWO MILLION DOLLAR BRIEFCASE.

The briefcase is stacked flush with two million in cash.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

And this, my friend, tells the women that I have the final ingredient in the I-Wanna-Fuck-Him-Cocktail... I've got imagination. I'm fun. And I'm rich.

He high-fives Ricky.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
Slam dunk motherfucker.

EXT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - LATER

Art and Ricky have made their way out to the pool again where they are now seated at a table under an umbrella, smoking cigars and sipping cognac from crystal glasses.

RICKY WERSHE
I came out here today because I want to set up my own operation. I don't want to deal with any middlemen. I want to buy directly from you.
(motions to the estate)
I want this, I want what you have.

Art's demeanor has changed considerably from that of the flamboyant tour guide. He now assumes a more sober and composed attitude.

ART DERRICK
There are two kinds of people in this business: those you think you can trust, and those that you don't trust. Now, I think I can trust you. But there's this one looming question that keeps swirling around in my head like some fucking pesky black fly in that shitty ass, neither fish nor fowl, month of May. And the question is this: The Curry Brothers and pretty much their entire organization are currently in jail awaiting trial, and will shortly, I am certain, be convicted and sent to prison for a very long time. Why, my friend, are you sitting here and not with them?

RICKY WERSHE
Why aren't you?

Art takes a pull on his cigar and exhales.

ART DERRICK
Maybe you were just smarter than everybody else.

RICKY WERSHE
 Maybe I just got lucky.

Art nods.

ART DERRICK
 How old are you?

RICKY WERSHE
 Sixteen.

ART DERRICK
 That's a good age. A good age to
 start a career.

Art stares across his expansive lawn and into the bordering woods.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
 The big money isn't in the street
 hustling, hand-to-hand, nigger rich
 bullshit. You need to be moving
 weight -- major weight -- not crack
 rocks and eight balls, but hundreds
 of kilos. Planeloads full of the
 shit. I'm gonna get you off the
 street and into the air.
 (then)
 You ever been to Miami?

INT. ART DERRICK'S PRIVATE JET - DAY

Art runs wind-sprints up and down the interior of his private jet. He wears a burgundy Adidas track suit with matching headband. He does not strike us as the athletic type. Ricky sits in a plush leather chair as an amused spectator to the peculiar exercise routine.

ART DERRICK
 What do you think, Ricky? Sure
 beats the fuck out of Greyhound.

Art drops to the floor and starts doing push-ups with considerable difficulty. He only completes a few before giving up.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
 You know who I bought this plane
 from? Mick fucking Jagger. That's
 right. You believe that shit? This
 thing used to belong to the Rolling
 Stones.

Art stands up, breathless, but smiling. He climbs atop a couch.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

I feel so goddamn good I might as well -- JUMP.

FREEZE FRAME as Art leaps from the couch and attempts a toe-touching David Lee Roth split-jump. But what his maneuver flagrantly lacks in both grace and athleticism -- he is no aerial dynamo -- Art makes up for with unabashed enthusiasm. THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON HIS HOWLING SMILE.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

What do you expect? Do you expect him to be normal. His weekly commute was flying the White Bird Highway from Miami to Detroit with planeloads full of cocaine. He was making 30 million dollars a year -- a hundred thousand a day. And all of it illegal. Normal? There wasn't anything normal about any of it. It was all day, every day, fucking CRAZY.

RESUME NORMAL SPEED as Art crashes to the floor, nearly breaking an ankle or two. He braces himself on the ground with both hands and starts performing mountain climbers.

ART DERRICK

I called up Mick Jagger the other night. You know why? Because I wanted to let that fish-faced skeleton know that I've fucked more tail in his plane than he has. Him and his junkie-assed guitar player. Fuck 'em both. You believe that shit!

He stands and high-fives Ricky. We FREEZE FRAME again.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I may not have been a rock star, but I sure as hell felt like one.

EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - DAY

A harbor for the armadas of the wealthy. Art and Ricky strut down the dock.

ART DERRICK

The Colombianos are gonna love you. Most of these filthy bastards started out as lookouts in the slums of Medellin when they were still in diapers. Now they're living the American Dream -- in fucking Miami. And do you know why they're gonna love you, Ricky? Because they know what it takes to be successful in this business, the cojones that you gotta have. They're gonna see themselves -- in you.

Art and Ricky approach the end of the dock where the most magnificent yacht in a harbor full of magnificent yachts awaits them.

Art waves up to TWO COLOMBIAN MEN (LUIS and MANUELO) resting their elbows on the deck railing thirty feet above.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

!Quibo! Quibo! !Quibo!
Motherfuckers!

EXT. THE HARBOR - MOMENTS LATER

The yacht cruises out of the harbor and into the turquoise ocean waters. Art and Ricky sit across from Luis and Manuelo.

ART DERRICK

Did you bring the Cubans?

MANUELO

Si, si. Down below. After business.

ART DERRICK

What business Manuelo? I thought this was a fucking fishing trip.

Art bites his knuckles and turns to Ricky, letting him in on a little secret.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

I love Cuban whores.

Art throws his arm around Ricky.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

This young man right here is going to do big things for us back in Detroit.

LUIS
We like Detroit.

ART DERRICK
They just don't like to go there.

A round of laughter.

LUIS
No, no, yes, si. Detroit is muy
peligroso. Very dangerous. Y frio.

ART DERRICK
(patting Ricky's chest)
This kid's a fucking cannibal.

The word "cannibal" does not register with the Colombians. So Art takes his own arm and starts chewing on the flesh.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
A fucking cannibal. He eats people.

Now the Colombians get the gist of it and start laughing and nodding.

LUIS AND MANUELO
Bueno. Bueno.

INT. THE YACHT - LATER

A dispute is underway in one of the bedchambers where a naked Cuban prostitute sits at the head of the bed, staring at Ricky who is standing in the middle of the room, fully clothed.

Art, a naked and hairy sweaty mess, slouches in a chair, catching his breath. He's clearly already had his turn.

CUBAN WHORE
I no sleep with him.

ART DERRICK
What the fuck you mean you're not
sleeping with him?

CUBAN WHORE
I not fucking no child.

ART DERRICK
He's fucking sixteen, which makes
him ten years older than you were
when you first sucked-off your
uncle Tito.

CUBAN WHORE
I bet he no have hair on his
peepee.

RICKY WERSHE
(grabbing his package)
Bitch, I got all the wood you need.

She laughs with contempt.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)
What time is it?

CUBAN WHORE
No fuckee you.

ART DERRICK
It's 11:31, kid.

RICKY WERSHE
(to prostitute)
You'll be calling me daddy by high-
noon.

ART DERRICK
That's the spirit.

HIGH-NOON HAS ARRIVED

SLOW-MO -- Ricky is now behind the Cuban prostitute and thrusting into her like a human jackhammer. And yes, his prophecy has been realized -- she's calling him "Daddy" right now.

Behind the sexual event, Art emerges from the hallway, sneaky and mischievous, waving his Colombian friends into the room -- "hey take a look at this kid". Then Art winds up and slaps Ricky on the ass.

FREEZE FRAME on Ricky at the bottom of his thrust as his face contorts from the sting of Art's slap on his bare ass --

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
He's a fucking cannibal!

CUT TO:

MIAMI IN IMAGES

-- Ricky and Art race around on jet-skis with Cuban prostitutes on back.

-- Deep sea fishing. Ricky sets the hook on a massive sailfish. The pole bends violently. Art cheers on his protege.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

While my high school class was busy studying for their sophomore year finals, I was in Miami studying another type of education -- the education of living.

The guides pull the sailfish onto the deck. Ricky and Art pose for a photo with the trophy catch.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

To a sixteen year-old from Detroit, Miami was as close to heaven as you could imagine.

-- MEDIUM TWO SHOT of Art and Ricky watching a football game which is reflected in the mirrors behind them. As CAMERA TILTS down we reveal that they are both receiving fellatio from their respective Cuban prostitutes, side-by-side, at the same time, the ladies heads bobbing up and down in unison. Art looks to Ricky and slaps him five --

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Check that, it was heaven.

EXT. DETROIT CITY AIRPORT - DAY

A small private airport on the outskirts of the city. Ricky and Art climb down the stairs from the jet which has taxied over to the hangar.

Art moves toward his Mercedes parked on the tarmac. Ricky walks abreast him.

RICKY WERSHE

What about the coke?

ART DERRICK

The cops will take care of it.

Art motions to an unmarked sedan where TWO PLAIN CLOTHES COPS exit and approach the jet with large duffel bags.

As the cops pass by -- TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL -- as Ricky squints with momentary confusion when he recognizes Officer Jackson.

Officer Jackson grins and then puts his index finger to his lips in an ironic shhhhh. He winks at Ricky and climbs the stairs to the jet.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)

Detroit's finest. Who else do you want driving your coke into the city? I sure as hell ain't.

Art and Ricky hop into the Mercedes. Ricky, slightly unnerved, glances over his shoulder as Officer Jackson disappears into the jet.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The entire city was one big shit factory. The cops, the politicians, everyone and everything was for sale. As long as you paid, as long as your cash was green and plenty, you could do all right in Motown. The FBI, now, they were an entirely different beast. But I wasn't worried about them at the moment.

INT. A FORD BRONCO - DAY

Ricky drives down Gratiot Avenue toward the downtown skyline.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I came back from Miami with a fire inside me, ready to take over the city. With the Curry Brothers out of the game, there was a vacuum on the East Side and I was going to move in and seize the opportunity.

INT. DOWNTOWN HIGH RISE - NIGHT

The building manager shows Ricky the apartment. It's on the 10th floor with a view of the city.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I needed to get everything squared away and organized. I moved out of my dad's house and got me an apartment downtown. I wasn't gonna be sleeping in the same neighborhood where I was selling.

Ricky nods. I'll take it. He removes a wad of cash.

RICKY WERSHE

No paperwork.

The manager looks at the robust bank roll in Ricky's hand and nods in agreement.

BUILDING MANAGER

No paperwork.

EXT. A STORAGE UNIT - NIGHT

Ricky unlocks the storage unit and pulls up the door. He climbs into his Bronco and backs it inside.

He walks over to a refrigerator and starts removing kilos of cocaine and stacking them into a false floor in the rear cargo area.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I was gonna be lean and mobile like the Special Forces. I wasn't gonna run crack houses or get down and dirty in the street hustle, chopping up kilos and nickel and diming my way to the top. I was gonna move weight. I was gonna be a kingpin.

EXT. KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN - NIGHT

Ricky stops at the drive-thru window. The KFC GIRL hands him a bucket of chicken. He removes the lid and peers inside. But the bucket isn't filled with Colonel Sanders's secret recipe, it's filled with neatly-bound bundles of cash.

In a matter of seconds, Ricky removes the cash, stuffs two kilos of cocaine inside, and hands the bucket back to the girl.

RICKY WERSHE

This batch is all soggy and shit.

DRIVE-THRU GIRL

I'm sorry, sir. Let me get you another one.

She hands him another bucket, this one filled with chicken. He grabs a crispy drumstick, takes a bite, and drives out of the parking lot.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I was buying kilos from Art for
twelve-thousand and flipping them
for seventeen. I was making ten
thousand a week from KFC...

EXT. AMF LANES - NIGHT

Ricky steps out of a yellow cab with two bowling ball bags
and enters the front door.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
...And another twenty-thousand at
the bowling alley. Not to mention
all the other weight I was moving
to various crews across town.

He makes his way through the crowded lobby and down to Lane 7
where a group of YOUNG BLACK MEN are bowling.

He sits down at the bench seat and sets his bowling ball bags
underneath. He struts over to the ball rack and bowls a
strike.

He high-fives a few of the players, shoots down a cocktail
that was waiting for him, grabs two different bowling ball
bags where his bags had been, and exits through the back door
and into another taxi cab. Different driver. Different
company.

As the cab pulls away, Ricky unzips the ball bags where
stacks of cash stare back at him.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I even started moving into the
suburbs, selling to college kids.
Because I was white, I could drive
up there and not get hassled by the
cops.

EXT. SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Wearing a backpack and letterman jacket, Ricky walks up to
the house and knocks on the door. TWO PREPPY FRATERNITY
BROTHERS let him inside and lead him up the stairs and into a
bedroom.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
I was a fucking chameleon.

Ricky takes off his backpack and unloads three kilos onto a bed. The fraternity brothers's eyes are practically popping out of their heads.

FRATERNITY BROTHER CRAIG
 Jesus Christ. I've never seen so
 much coke in my life.

FRATERNITY BROTHER LARRY
 This is gonna be the best fucking
 party ever!!!

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 I always made sure the college kids
 paid double. Fuck 'em. Their dads
 could afford it.

EXT. SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Grinning to himself, Ricky climbs into a brand new white Jeep.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 One of the problems with making a
 lot of money, is that it never
 wants to keep quiet, no matter how
 hard you try and silence it. Money
 has its own voice that always wants
 to express itself and be heard. It
 wants everybody to know that you've
 got it.

As he pulls away, CAMERA PUSHES IN ON -- "THE SNOWMAN" custom painted across the tailgate.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 And when it speaks, it's loud and
 cocky.

And on that we cut to -- THE OPENING SHOT OF THE MOVIE --

INT. THE PRIVATE JET - NIGHT

-- AS THE CAMERA glides through the pools of moody lighting, passing a young black man puffing a Cohiba as he receives a blow-job from a prostitute, another black man fondling two prostitutes on his lap, two more black men rifling money through a Ribao currency counter, and further into the interior, to the back, where Ricky is enthroned on a leather chair, draped in a snowy mink coat.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Everything was flowing. I was doing it up big. I was moving major weight within a matter of weeks. Art even started to let me take his jet down to Miami on my own and make runs without him.

EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - DAY

Ricky and his crew climb down from the jet where they're greeted by Manuelo and Luis, the Colombians. They file into an awaiting stretch limousine.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Back then, in the peak of the crack epidemic, you couldn't get enough cocaine -- as soon as it came in it went out. The entire East Side, the entire city, every ghetto in America was hooked on that little fucking white rock.

INSIDE A CRACK HOUSE -- a MAN cooks up a batch on the stove. Then a SMOKER lights up. We rise above the house and climb into the night, the house now represented by a RED DOT on a satellite image of the East Side. There are dozens of other RED DOTS representing crack houses. We continue rising above Detroit and there are now hundreds of RED DOTS throughout the city, and pretty soon we see an image of the entire United States -- thousands of RED DOTS blanket every urban area.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ricky, dressed head-to-toe in kingpin regalia, sits with his dad at the little formica table in the kitchen. His dad admires his coat.

RICK SR.

Look at you. Double-breasted. Now that's a show stopper.

He touches Ricky's coat.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Is that real fur?

RICKY WERSHE

It's mink. Giorgio Armani.

RICK SR.

Is that like Italian or something?

RICKY WERSHE
Yeah, Italian.

His dad nods, impressed, looking him up and down.

RICK SR.
I know that chain ain't real.

RICKY WERSHE
14 carat real.

RICK SR.
Let me see that thing.

Ricky pulls the donkey rope gold chain over his head and hands it to his dad.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
You wear this thing long enough and you're gonna have a neck like a bull.

Rick Sr. puts on the chain -- and they laugh.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)
I miss having you in the house. You look good, Ricky. Really good.

RICKY WERSHE
Has the FBI come around?

RICK SR.
Those guys are like fucking parasites. They suck the blood out of you and then they fly off to suck from someone else.

RICKY WERSHE
So you haven't seen them? They haven't called you or anything, asked about me?

RICK SR.
Nope. But I sure wish they would. I could use the money. I have some information that they would want. I know valuable things.

Ricky reaches inside his mink coat and sets a ten-thousand dollar stack of hundreds on the table.

RICKY WERSHE
Fuck the FBI.

RICK SR.

Did they give you that? Are you working for them again? Is that how you got all this fancy shit?

Ricky produces another stack of hundreds and slaps it on the table.

RICKY WERSHE

Fuck the FBI.

RICK SR.

We can't just fuck the FBI, Ricky. I mean, I wish we could. But --

Ricky reaches inside his coat and slams another stack on the table, the intensity building each time he repeats the action and rebellious declaration --

RICKY WERSHE

Fuck the FBI.

His dad chuckles. So does Ricky as he slams another stack on the table.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Fuck the FBI.

Their chuckles grow into laughter, a laughter fueled by anger and defiance, escalating with each breath as father and son feed off one another with a mania building toward delusion. Ricky slams another stack on the table.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Fuck the FBI.
(and another stack)
Fuck 'em.

RICK SR.

Yeah, fuck 'em.

RICKY WERSHE

Fuck 'em.

RICK SR.

Yeah fuck those motherfuckers! Fuck 'em -- Fuck 'em -- Fuck 'em!

Rick Sr. leaps from his chair with furious animation and starts throwing punches in the air around the kitchen, the donkey rope gold chain flopping off his chest.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You know I beat the crap out of those two faggot agents at the hospital?

RICKY WERSHE

Nah. I didn't know that.

RICK SR.

Oooooohhh yeeeeaaahhhh. I kicked the living fucking shit out of them in the hallway. I straight mollywopped their asses. I was bouncing their faces off the walls like basketballs. They may teach those faggots how to lie, cheat, and deceive people at FBI school -- but they sure as hell don't teach them how to fight with their fists. Let me tell you, it was pathetic. Those two fairies punched like a couple of screaming girls. I knocked Bell out with one punch -- one fucking punch -- boom -- and then I tackled Turner, that piece of shit, and pounded his face into hamburger meat. Dawn had to pull me off -- or I would've killed both of them with my bare hands. I swear to fucking God.

RICKY WERSHE

Where is Dawn? How's she doing?

The question deflates the mood. Rick Sr. becomes visibly distressed. He sighs and shakes his head and lights a cigarette.

RICK SR.

She's staying with that fucking dirt bag boyfriend of hers over on Chalmers, smoking crack with him and doing who knows what. I think he's been getting her to write bad checks or something.

(changing subject)

Let me come work for you, Ricky. Look at all this goddamn money. Gimme a chance. You know I'm a good worker. I learn quick -- you know that. Nobody works harder than me. Nobody. I don't need to sleep. I'll stay awake all night.

(MORE)

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Whatever you need me to do. Gimme a fucking chance.

RICKY WERSHE

Don't worry about the money, Dad. I got you covered from now on.

(then)

You said Dawn was staying over on Chalmers?

RICK SR.

Yeah, Chalmers. I got the address written down somewhere. I tried talking to her, but she didn't want to listen to me. I don't know what to do with her at this point. I just don't know what to do.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON RICKY -- anger growing across his face -- he knows exactly what to do.

EXT. A HOUSE ON CHALMERS AVENUE - NIGHT

Ricky kicks down the door and storms inside. He's followed by five young black men -- his crew -- as they pour into the trash-strewn living room and across the filthy carpet toward a bedroom in back.

Dawn's boyfriend runs out of the bedroom and into the narrow hallway, holding a pistol, when he is blind-sided by Ricky's fist which is armored with brass knuckles.

The punch drops the boyfriend. Ricky straddles him and pummels his face with the brass knuckles.

Ricky gets off the man and walks into the bedroom where Dawn is curled up in the corner.

RICKY WERSHE

Dawn. Let's go.

Dawn appears numb and disoriented, groping through the haze of a drug-addled stupor.

DAWN

I can't go, Ricky. What about my stuff? I got all my stuff here.

RICKY WERSHE

Leave it. I'll get you new stuff.

DAWN

But it's my stuff, Ricky. It's my stuff. It's all I have. My stuff. It's here.

Ricky takes Dawn by the shoulders and talks gently to her as though she were a little child. There's a part of her, deep in her subconscious, that wants to be rescued from this nightmare. Like every addict, she dreams of going home.

RICKY WERSHE

I'll buy you whatever you need. All new stuff. Now let's get the fuck out of this shithole.

Two men help Dawn out of the bedroom and down the front steps and into a car.

A couple other guys drag the limp and nearly unconscious boyfriend down the steps and drop him in the weed-choked front yard.

By the time Ricky steps out the front door, there is an orange glow kindling behind him inside the house, the first flickers of flame climbing the interior walls and moldering curtains.

He stands over Dawn's boyfriend.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

If I ever see you with my sister, if you ever try and call her, if you ever step foot in this city again, you're gonna die. You understand?

The boyfriend is unable to nod for himself so Ricky lifts his chin and nods for him.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Good. Here's a bus ticket. Now get the fuck out of here.

Ricky slaps the bus ticket on his chest and gets into the awaiting car with Dawn inside.

As they drive away, the growing flames consume the house behind them.

EXT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - DAY

Art pushes a wheelbarrow loaded with cellophane wrapped bricks of cash across the backyard lawn. Ricky walks alongside him with a shovel.

ART DERRICK

I'm pretty sure that you're the highest paid sixteen year-old in the country right now, Ricky. Probably the world. Maybe ever... Take Rockefeller -- what the fuck was he doing at sixteen? He was making fifty cents a day, is what he was doing. You and him and me. That's interesting. I think about stuff like that sometimes. How much you make last week?

RICKY WERSHE

More than Rockefeller.

ART DERRICK

Look at me -- I know how much you made.

(computing the math)

You made right around eighty thousand.

RICKY WERSHE

Eighty thousand, one hundred and twenty.

ART DERRICK

One hundred and twenty?

RICKY WERSHE

I sold a watch.

ART DERRICK

A fucking watch -- Jesus Christ.

RICKY WERSHE

Every dollar counts.

ART DERRICK

So does your time. Don't fuck around with the watches anymore unless you wanna open a pawn shop.

They arrive at a freshly dug hole. Inside the hole is a steel safe, sunk on its ass, the door swung open.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
You see all these trees?

Art points to landscaped maple trees throughout the backyard.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
I got two million buried under each
of them. If anything happens to me,
be sure you come and dig them up.
It's my legal defense fund.

Art takes a brick of cellophane wrapped cash and lobs it to
Ricky.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
Here's your start. Always be saving
for the day when you get popped. It
happens to every one of us
eventually. Whether you die in
prison, or die sucking on fresh
native titties in some tropical
paradise, boils down to one
question: How much justice can you
afford?

Art dumps the wheelbarrow of cash into the metal safe and
shuts the door. He and Ricky start filling in the hole with
shovels.

INT. RICKY'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ricky is somewhere in the world of deep sleep when his
doorbell rings. He slowly bats his eyes -- did he just hear
that, or was he dreaming?

Then the doorbell rings again. He looks at his digital clock:
2:51am. His adrenaline kicks in and shocks him awake.

He removes a sawed-off Mossberg shotgun from underneath his
bed and creeps silently in his boxers and bare feet across
the hardwood floor toward the front door -- the shotgun
barrel aimed straight ahead.

The doorbell rings again. He pauses and listens.

He hears the sound of a distant siren, the honking of a horn
somewhere in the vast city below. But nothing else, nothing
in the hallway on the other side of the front door.

The doorbell rings again. And again -- impatiently.

RICKY WERSHE
Who the fuck is it?

After a momentary pause, a female voice responds from behind the door, meek and forlorn.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
It's me, Ricky.

He recognizes the voice and peers into the peephole -- and opens the door to --

CATHY VOLSAN

She's standing in the hallway in a black leather overcoat cinched at the waist with a belt, black knee-high stiletto boots, and black sunglasses.

RICKY WERSHE
Cathy...

She hugs Ricky and kisses him on the neck before nearly collapsing in his arms.

He cranes his neck out the door and looks up and down the hallway. It's empty.

He locks the door and moves inside with Cathy.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)
Cathy, what's going on? What are you --

CATHY VOLSAN
I need someone to talk to. Everyone is gone.

She sniffles and wipes a tear from her eye. But whether the tears are genuine or not, we can't quite tell. She's remarkably manipulative, the type of drama job they throw Oscars at.

RICKY WERSHE
Who told you I was living here?
How'd you find me?

CATHY VOLSAN
I'm scared. I don't know what to do.

RICKY WERSHE
How's Johnny doing?

CATHY VOLSAN
Johnny is going to prison for twenty years. I'm all alone.

RICKY WERSHE
Does he know you're here?

CATHY VOLSAN
I haven't talked to him in a while.

The initial shock of the unexpected visitor is wearing off as Ricky gathers his wits and escorts Cathy into the living room.

RICKY WERSHE
Sit down. You want something to drink?

CATHY VOLSAN
What do you have?

RICKY WERSHE
I got some Cristal. I know you like that.

CATHY VOLSAN
That would be nice, Ricky. Thank you sweetheart.

Ricky walks into the kitchen and takes a bottle of Cristal out of the fridge, removes two flutes from the cupboard, and walks back into the living room where ---

Cathy is now standing in front of the couch.

When Ricky makes eye contact with her, she unties the leather belt around her waist, and the leather coat falls to the floor. She is not wearing anything underneath, her beautiful naked body silhouetted against the city lights filtering in from the window behind her.

Cathy moves slowly over to Ricky and pulls off his boxers and pushes him softly down onto the couch where she climbs on top of him and begins kissing his neck and slowly riding up and down.

RICKY WERSHE V.O.
How could I say no to that? The bosses wife? It was straight out of Scarface. Only in this movie, I didn't even have to try.

INT. RICKY'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT - LATER

Ricky and Cathy lie in bed as the morning sun kisses into the room. Cathy has her head on Ricky's chest.

RICKY WERSHE
Are you still married to Johnny?

CATHY VOLSAN
Let's just be here. Me and you.

RICKY WERSHE
Are you?

She sighs and looks away.

CATHY VOLSAN
Does it matter right now, Ricky?
Does it really matter?

She kisses him on his chest and works her way up to his neck with expert seduction. Then slithers up to his ear. She can sense his arousal. She has him where she wants him and so she abruptly climbs out of bed.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)
Maybe I should just go. This was a bad idea.

But Ricky has lost his power to resist. His discretion is gone. His little head is now controlling his big head -- and its yelling this: GET HER BACK IN BED YOU FUCKING IDIOT!

RICKY WERSHE
No, Cathy. Stay. I'm glad you came.

CATHY VOLSAN
I should go. Really. This was stupid of me. This was a mistake.

RICKY WERSHE
No. Stay here, baby. It doesn't matter. I don't care what you and Johnny's thing is. I like you. I really do. I've liked you since the first time I saw you at the skating rink.

He rises and kisses her. She succumbs to his touch and starts crying.

CATHY VOLSAN
I've been so scared. I've been so lonely. I don't have anyone to talk to. I just need someone right now. I need you, Ricky.

He eases her back onto the bed for another round.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 I never should've opened the door
 for that bitch. I knew she was
 nothing but trouble. But when
 trouble is that good-looking...
 Pssh. Hey, what can I say? I'm
 human.

EXT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - DAY

Art is throwing a pool party. The assemblage is what you would expect from a man with his tastes: Beautiful women in bikinis, some topless, some baring it all, and a few shady-looking men smoking cigars and leering at every frolicking part of the female anatomy.

Ricky arrives with Cathy on his arm.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 Overnight, Cathy was my girl, and
 we started going everywhere
 together. I knew Johnny would want
 to kill me, no matter what their
 status was. But by then my head was
 so big I didn't give a shit.

Art, cocktail in hand, belly hanging over a red Speedo, greets them with his customary enthusiasm. Then starts singing the Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder duet:

ART DERRICK
*Ebony and Ivory, live together in
 perfect harmony -- I love it. I
 love you two together.*

Art throws his arm around Ricky and whispers into his ear.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
 Johnny's wife?
 (savoring the audacity)
 You're a fucking cannibal, kid. I
 had you picked the day I met you. A
 fucking cannibal.

RICKY WERSHE
 It wasn't like that.

ART DERRICK
 Yeah - yeah - yeah. Who gives a
 fuck?

Art leads them over to the barbecue grill where a man in a chef hat cooks for the party.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
 Try the bratwurst. Rudy here will
 fix you up a plate.

As Art drifts along the pool side, flirting with his guests, he continues singing the duet, mutilating the lyrics and dancing to the sound of his off-key voice.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
*We all know that people are the
 same wherever you go... Learn to
 give each other what we need to
 survive.*

Art downs his drink and runs toward the pool and tucks into a cannonball.

ART DERRICK (CONT'D)
 Watch out pretties.

Splash.

INT. THE PONTIAC SILVERDOME - NIGHT

The Detroit Pistons warm up prior to the game as Ricky and Cathy find their seats at courtside.

Cathy waves to a PISTONS'S PLAYER, who jogs over and kisses her on the cheek. They exchange flirtatious pleasantries: Hey, sweetheart. How you doing? And a few other quick pieces of small talk -- and the player jogs back over to warm-ups without acknowledging Ricky.

RICKY WERSHE
 What the fuck was that all about?

CATHY VOLSAN
 It's nothing. I was just saying hi
 to Vinnie.

RICKY WERSHE
 What do you mean nothing? It sure
 as fuck was something.

CATHY VOLSAN
 It's just Vinnie. We used to date.
 He's married now, OK?

RICKY WERSHE
 So are you.

CATHY VOLSAN
 What does that mean?

The encounter has disrupted Ricky's composure, and he doesn't have a cogent response, only:

RICKY WERSHE

It means anything is possible, isn't it? You're married and so is he.

CATHY VOLSAN

Don't be so insecure, sweetheart.

RICKY WERSHE

I ain't insecure. I got more money than that punk. He's the sixth man. He ain't even a fucking starter.

CATHY VOLSAN

Let's just have a good time.

RICKY WERSHE

I'm having a fucking great time. Shit.

Cathy cozies up to Ricky and tries to calm him. She nuzzles into his neck and kisses him.

CATHY VOLSAN

Ricky, I'm here with you. You're my man. You're the one I'm in love with. You don't have anything to worry about, baby.

RICKY WERSHE

I gotta take a leak.

Ricky stands and climbs the stairs.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM, THE PONTIAC SILVERDOME - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky pisses into a urinal when a man slides into the urinal next to him. Neither Ricky nor the camera get a look at the man -- yet.

MAN (O.S.)

Wow. Now that's a penis.

Ricky ignores the man, figures he's some crazy talking to someone else.

MAN (CONT'D)

No wonder the black girls like you, kid. You got a dick like a rhino.

It's now clear that the man is directing his lewd comments at Ricky. So Ricky turns and throws the man a threatening glare and recognizes Agent Turner --

AGENT TURNER

Let me touch that thing --

But before Ricky can react and zip up his pants, Agent Turner plunges his hand into Ricky's crotch and latches onto Ricky's penis -- and proceeds to thrash Ricky around the bathroom before pulling him into a handicap stall -- and throwing him into the corner.

Ricky doubles over in pain. He falls to his knees and pukes.

Agent Turner locks the handicap stall door. We see that Agent Bell and Officer Jackson have been waiting inside the roomy stall for them to arrive.

AGENT BELL

Hey, Ricky. How's your dicky?

Ricky pukes again.

RICKY WERSHE

Fuck you.

AGENT BELL

You still think you make the rules, Ricky. You still think you're in charge.

Agent Bell shakes his head with ironic disappointment.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

You know how you're feeling right now? Well, everyday in prison will be worse than this. Every single day in prison another man is going to have his hand on your cock. He's gonna use your cock as his tool, jamming and thrusting it wherever the hell he wants to. Every single fucking day for the rest of your life. And the most terrifying thing about it is that you're eventually going to start liking it. You're going to like being his tool.

(MORE)

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

And a little while after that, your hand is going to be on *his* cock, tugging, and spit-shining and working it back and forth in your mouth until it explodes and you're sucking down hot prison protein shakes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

AGENT TURNER

And dessert.

AGENT BELL

Even dessert. That's your future, kiddo.

AGENT TURNER

A jailhouse fag. Fresh white teenage ass. So rare. And so sweet.

AGENT BELL

You're almost seventeen now, Ricky. We'll charge you as an adult, and it'll stick.

Agent Bell bends down and slides his business card into Ricky's pocket.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)

In case you forgot where we're at.
(then)
Come and see us again, Ricky. We miss you.

AGENT TURNER

We're the good guys. You need to decide whether you're a piece of shit, or one of us.

Agent Turner and Agent Bell exit the stall.

As the casual stroll of their footsteps recede across the cement floor, Jackson kneels down to Ricky as though he's a friend imparting some trusted advice.

OFFICER JACKSON

They're giving you one more chance, kid. Don't fuck it up. Don't fuckin' waste it. You're too young.

Jackson stands upright.

OFFICER JACKSON (CONT'D)

I don't want to see you end up on the other side. You'll lose every time.

Jackson exits the stall.

After some effort, Ricky pushes himself onto his feet and pukes one last time. He retrieves Agent Bell's card from his pocket and flushes it down the toilet.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

You would've thought that would scare me straight. But it didn't. And suddenly, everybody was gunning for me.

INT. A 1985 MONTE CARLO SS - DAY

Ricky sits in the passenger seat as Dre, a member of his crew, drives down the boulevard, bumping *It's Tricky* by Run D.M.C..

They approach a busy intersection and stop at the red light.

Ricky looks in the side mirror at the vehicles behind them when he spots a van approaching and eyes it with caution.

As Ricky studies the van, his instincts tell him something ain't right -- he squints -- the glare off the windshield, is the driver wearing a ski mask?

Suddenly, the side door on the van slides back as it pulls alongside them.

RICKY WERSHE

Go Dre! Go!

Dre glances over at Ricky with momentary confusion -- when Ricky swivels in his seat and jams his own foot down on the gas pedal and the Monte Carlo peels rubber --

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Drive motherfucker!!!

Now the van door is pulled all the way open and AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE BLAZES from inside --

As Dre now understands the dire stakes and floors the Monte Carlo through the intersection, dodging the cross-traffic as a storm of gunfire follows them --

Ricky and Dre duck the barrage -- The back window shatters and bullets perforate the upholstery and blister the trunk -- another window is blown out.

THE CROSS-TRAFFIC -- horns blaring, brakes screeching --

When a pick-up truck smashes the back end of the Monte Carlo and spins it sideways -- Ricky and Dre are thrown around the interior -- but Dre manages to negotiate and steer out of the collision and motor through the intersection and down the boulevard on the other side.

The SS Monte Carlo is a very fast car and the van doesn't give chase, turns across the intersection, and flees in the other direction.

DRE

Who the fuck was that?

RICKY WERSHE

The dude was wearing a mask. I couldn't tell.

They speed down the boulevard and into the distance.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

My days were numbered, and I could feel it. The fact is, it could've been a hundred different dudes from ten different crews. But I couldn't walk away. Where would I go? What would I do? You reach a point when there's no going back, when there's no other world than the one you're in... They say that no one walks away from the game. And it's the god's honest truth.

INT. RICKY'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY

Ricky reads *Sports Illustrated* while sitting on the toilet. A quiet moment in an unquiet life.

Suddenly -- the blade of a steak knife rips through the bathroom door. The magazine flies out of Ricky's hands.

On the other side, holding the handle of the knife is --

CATHY VOLSAN

Ricky -- You piece of shit. You cheating motherfucker.

Ricky pulls up his boxers, arms himself with the plunger, and approaches the door.

RICKY WERSHE

Cathy. Just calm down. Wait a minute.

But Cathy is hysterical -- tears and rage.

CATHY VOLSAN

You're a liar, Ricky. A liar. I know you're fucking half the bitches in this city.

RICKY WERSHE

I'm not sleeping with anyone else but you, sweetheart. You're my girl. I don't need anyone else.

CATHY VOLSAN

You're a fucking liar. I found her number in your fucking pants.

In Cathy's other hand -- the hand not holding the knife -- she is waving a crumpled paper napkin with a phone number written across it. There's a name on it as well.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

Unique? Unique? What kind of ghetto ass name is that?

She puts the napkin to her nose.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

She smells like a fucking stripper.

Cathy rips the knife out of the door and stomps across the hardwood floor and over to the coffee table where she grabs the cordless telephone sitting atop it.

She dials the number on the napkin.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

(yelling across room)
We'll see motherfucker.

Ricky cracks open the bathroom door and peeks out.

Seeing that Cathy is on the other side of the apartment, he bolts from the bathroom and turns the corner into his bedroom.

He sets down the plunger and reaches between the mattress and retrieves his sawed-off shotgun and walks back out to the living room where Cathy has the phone to her ear. A woman has just answered the other line.

CATHY VOLSAN (CONT'D)

Hey bitch. You need to stay the fuck away from my man you skanky ass cunt... Who the fuck is this? You know who the fuck this is...

(Unique hangs up)

Oh no you didn't. You don't hang up on me -- you fuckin' ghetto ass bitch.

As Cathy re-dials, Ricky yanks the cord out of the wall jack and the phone line goes dead.

Furious and unintimidated by the shotgun in Ricky's hands, Cathy throws the receiver at him. He ducks and the receiver flies over his head and shatters the balcony window.

Ricky runs across the living room and looks down to the street below at --

CATHY'S POLICE DETAIL --

The shards of glass shower their car and the surrounding asphalt. The two plain clothes cops look up at Ricky's apartment and jump out of the car --

RICKY WERSHE

Cathy. Get your ass on over here and tell them everything is cool.

Cathy is now smiling at Ricky. She just shifted the power dynamic. She is once again the center of attention, the pedestal she must always stand upon.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Cathy. You come tell them everything is cool. I don't need this shit right now. I don't fucking need this.

But Cathy doesn't budge. She just stands there, gloating at Ricky's discomfort.

The cops are hustling across the street and getting ready to charge into the building.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Cathy. Get the fuck over here.
Please. Please tell them everything
is all right.

CATHY VOLSAN

Get on your knees.

RICKY WERSHE

Cathy -- they're coming up here
goddamnit. I don't need the fucking
cops in my house.

CATHY VOLSAN

On your knees. And beg.

Without any leverage in the situation, Ricky gets on his
knees and clasps his hands.

RICKY WERSHE

Cathy. Please. Can you please tell
them everything is all right?

CATHY VOLSAN

Who is the queen bitch of this
house?

RICKY WERSHE

You're the queen bitch, Cathy. You
are the queen bitch of this house.

CATHY VOLSAN

Who has the sweetest and juiciest
pussy you've ever tasted?

RICKY WERSHE

You do Cathy. You have the sweetest
and juiciest pussy I've ever
tasted.

CATHY VOLSAN

And ever will taste.

RICKY WERSHE

And ever will taste. Yes, the
sweetest and juiciest pussy I've
ever tasted and ever will taste.
The sweetest and juiciest pussy
there is in the whole fucking
universe.

Ricky glances nervously at the balcony.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

Cathy, please.

Cathy sighs and then casually makes her way across the living room. She steps onto the balcony and waves down to her police detail gaining access to the front door.

CATHY VOLSAN

Good morning. I'm fine fellas.
Everything is fine.

COP

You sure?

CATHY VOLSAN

Yes, we're fine. The phone just
slipped out of my hand.

She walks back over to Ricky and kisses him on the lips, slowly, seductively, vindictively. Then she slaps him across the face.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

She was affecting my business. She
was affecting my piece of mind. She
was a human fucking tornado and I
was caught up in it.

INT. A FORD THUNDERBIRD, THE EAST SIDE - NIGHT

Another night. Another car. Another run.

Dre drives and Ricky sits in the passenger seat as they roll through the East Side.

RICKY WERSHE

I gotta get her out of my house,
bro. She's fucking crazy.

DRE

You want me to bust a cap in her?

RICKY WERSHE

Nah. It ain't like that. I love
her, I just can't live with her.
One day she's trying to stab me,
the next day she's buying me a
diamond ring. It's insane.

They are a block from Ricky's dad's house when they make a stop at a stop sign.

There's a police cruiser parked catty-corner to them. Ricky sees that Officer Jackson is sitting in the passenger seat as if waiting for him. Jackson stares at Ricky with that cold intensity we've seen before, hate-filled and ruthless -- the most feared man of them all, a criminal with a badge.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

On May 22, 1987, it all came crashing down.

As the Ford Thunderbird rolls through the intersection, the cop car pulls behind them.

The cop car trails them for half a block and then throws on its lights.

DRE

What you want me to do?

Ricky points up ahead.

RICKY WERSHE

Pull in front of my dad's house.

They stop in front of the Wershe house.

Both officers exit the cruiser. Officer Jackson approaches the passenger side and halts at Ricky's open window.

Ricky looks up at Jackson --

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

What's up?

OFFICER JACKSON

Don't you wassup me, boy. Do I know you? You don't fuckin' know me. Get your ass out of the car.

Ricky stares up at Jackson.

RICKY WERSHE

What?

OFFICER JACKSON

I said get the fuck out the car.

Officer Jackson rips open the door and yanks out Ricky.

The swirling police lights flash against the houses and trees, creating their own blue and red strobing atmosphere and attracting the attention of all those inhabiting the neighborhood, including --

Rick Sr. who pulls back the window curtain to see what's going on -- recognizes his son -- and bolts out the front door and across the yard, followed by Dawn, ready to brawl.

RICK SR.

Get your fucking hands off my son.
You got a fucking warrant?

AT THE CAR -- Jackson notices a grocery bag in the passenger foot well.

JACKSON

What's in that bag?

Jackson reaches inside and removes the bag.

Ricky knocks it away from him. The bag lands on the ground and Ricky scoops it up, tucks it under his arm like a football and tries to run with it.

But Jackson pulls him down by his shirt collar -- just as the furious Rick Sr. and Dawn arrive, punching and clawing, and at once, the situation erupts into a chaotic and confused melee.

Ricky hands Dawn the bag -- and Dawn takes off running into the house.

Ricky and Dre bolt from the scene in separate directions.

Jackson and the other officer chase after Ricky -- they couldn't give a fuck about Dre.

Ricky hops a short chain link fence and turns down an alley. But Jackson is long and lean and athletic and Ricky cannot outrun him.

Jackson tackles Ricky against a wooden fence and he and the other officer proceed to pummel Ricky, punching and kicking him on the ground.

MOMENTS LATER

Jackson leads a battered and bloodied Ricky out of the alley and down the sidewalk on Hampshire Street which is now swarming with police cruisers, DEA Agents, and other task force members.

As Ricky is led through the assembly, two men start clapping, and he looks over and sees Agent Bell and Agent Turner leaning against their sedan.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 They didn't have anything on me
 except for the bag of money that I
 gave Dawn which she hid in the
 linen closet. Around thirty
 thousand, a slap on the wrist.

INT. THE WERSHE'S HOUSE - LATER

A cop finds the bag of money in the linen closet and waves it
 at Rick Sr. and Dawn who sit in handcuffs on the couch.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 But then, a few hours later, the
 cops claimed that they received an
 anonymous tip from a neighbor who
 said that they saw me stash a
 cardboard box underneath a porch
 earlier that night.

EXT. HOUSE, EAST SIDE - LATER

Officer Jackson crawls out from underneath a porch with a
 cardboard box in his hands. He opens the box and proudly
 displays the contents for the various law enforcement
 gathered about.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 They charged me with possession of
 eight kilos of cocaine, which I
 knew could get me a life sentence
 if I was convicted. But I felt I
 had a strong case. It wasn't mine.
 They didn't even find it on me...
 But when I bailed out, the media
 got hold of my story, and turned me
 into a celebrity. The next day I
 was everywhere. The next day, I had
 become "White Boy Rick."

CUT TO -- A photo of Ricky with the moniker "White Boy Rick"
 is emblazoned on the front page of the city's two major
 newspapers, *The Detroit Free Press* and *The Detroit News*.

CUT TO -- The Nightly News -- a photo of Ricky flashes on
 screen behind the anchors.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
 They labeled me a street prodigy, a
 drug-dealing wunderkind. I didn't
 even know what those terms meant.
 (MORE)

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But all the attention just made my
head swell, and I grew even more
confident and cocky.

INT. PONTIAC SILVERDOME - NIGHT

Ricky sits courtside with Cathy -- when she startles with excitement and points at the JUMBOTRON --

Where Ricky appears on the digital screen, framed in a flashing border of pulsing light bulbs like the intro for a rockstar.

The public address announcer proclaims --

P.A.
DETROIT'S OWN WHITE BOY RICK IS IN
THE HOUSE! GIVE IT UP FOR HIM
FOLKS!

The audience cheers with great passion and support, even a few players trot over and shake Ricky's hand. The fans behind Ricky pat him on the back: "go get 'em son".

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)
In a depressed working class city
without many heroes, I had become
one. Like Jesse James or Billy the
Kid or even Al Capone, they saw me
as an outlaw standing up against
the system. I loved the attention.
I couldn't possibly see how it
could work against me.

EXT. THE FRANK MURPHY HALL OF JUSTICE - DAY

Ricky struts down the sidewalk in a double-breasted Armani suit with his attorney, WILLIAM BUFALINO, a swaggering heavyweight who cuts the figure of a mob boss. Behind them walk Rick Sr. and Dawn.

As they near the courthouse steps the extent of the media circus is on a scale fit for the largest and most infamous of trials: Dozens of reporters and TV news crews mob them.

A group of security guards escort Ricky and his team through the jostling media.

Bufalino answers a few questions as he scales the courthouse steps:

BUFALINO

This is a classic frame-up job. This case reeks from a mile away and the jury is going to smell right through it. This city is notorious for its corruption, and this case is a prime example of it. Moreover, my client, Ricky Wershe Junior, is a teenager, and the State's draconian decision to try him as an adult is a moral outrage. This is a waste of taxpayer's dollars. We shouldn't even be here.

Never one to shy away from attention, Rick Sr. takes the opportunity to speak his mind to several microphones shoved in his face.

RICK SR.

After we win this joke of a case, we're gonna sue the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan for a lot of money. You can count on that.

INT. THE COURT ROOM - DAY

Ricky and Bufalino stand before the judge. His family stands behind him along with members from his crew.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

But the jury didn't see things the way my attorney presented them. They found me guilty. And the judge -- well -- I'll let him tell you what he thought of me in his own words.

A stern and merciless JUDGE stares down from the bench.

JUDGE

You, son, are worse than a mass-murderer.

The gavel strikes the sounding block.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Under Michigan's 650 Lifer Law, I was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. I was seventeen years old.

The bailiff handcuffs Ricky and escorts him out of the chamber.

He glances over his shoulder at his family and nods to them in farewell. The verdict hasn't really sunk in yet -- how could it?

The door closes behind Ricky and his father loses it.

RICK SR.

It ain't over, Ricky! Stay strong.
We're gonna get you out of here
son!

As several Detroit cops file out of the courtroom and into the hallway, Rick Sr. follows after them, unhinged and out for blood. He charges toward Officer Jackson and gets in his face.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You better watch your back out
there. You better not sleep too
well.

And on those threatening words, several bailiff's slam Rick Sr. to the ground and cuff him.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

Freedom of Speech! Freedom of
Speech! I'm exercising my First
Amendment rights. I didn't do
anything. I didn't touch him.

Officer Jackson bends down to Rick Sr., whose face is smooshed against the linoleum floor, and educates him on the law.

OFFICER JACKSON

You can't threaten a cop, dipshit.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

My dad got a year in prison for
that one. Suddenly, we were both
behind bars.

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON - DAY

Rain falls on a dreary winter day as CAMERA creeps toward the forbidding sandstone dungeon. We stay on the outside of the prison and listen to the nightmarish cacophony of the human zoo behind its walls -- the taunts, the threats, the howling, assault, rape, murder, the inhumanity of it all.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

My first year in prison was what
you might expect -- Hell.

(MORE)

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

After a year or so, it started to set in that I was going to spend the rest of my life in a cage. The freedom I was used to, living like a king, eating whatever I wanted, sleeping with beautiful women, the privilege of owning nice things, was gone. I went from making thousands of dollars a day, to five cents an hour.

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON - DAY

At his work detail, Ricky removes towels from an industrial dryer and starts folding them.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The finality of it all caught up to me and threw me into a dark place.

He has put on some muscle, and whatever boyish charm he still possessed going into this place, has vanished entirely. His right eye is black and blue, slightly swollen.

INTERCOM

Wershe -- 193034. You have a visitor.

Ricky stops folding and walks past the laundry machines and toward a GUARD standing by the door.

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

The guard escorts Ricky down the corridor. As they approach the corridor leading to the visitation area, Ricky is confused when the guard leads him in the opposite direction.

RICKY WERSHE

I thought I had a visitor?

GUARD

You do.

RICKY WERSHE

Then why aren't we going to the visitation area.

GUARD

Warden said to take you to his office.

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

The guard unlocks the door to a special visitation room adjacent to the warden's office where FBI Agent's Bell and Turner are sitting at a small table.

AGENT BELL
You can uncuff him.

The guard removes Ricky's handcuffs and steps outside.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)
How's it going, Ricky?

Taken aback, Ricky only stares at them, unable to hide his animosity.

AGENT BELL (CONT'D)
I know, stupid question. Sit down.
Please.

After several tense moments, Ricky seats himself at the table.

RICKY WERSHE
Why are we meeting in here?

AGENT BELL
As you know, they record all the conversations in the visitation area. We don't trust the guards here anymore than we do the Detroit Police Department.

RICKY WERSHE
(sarcastically)
I thought they were your pals?

AGENT BELL
Not anymore.

AGENT TURNER
It's criminal what the State has done to you. You don't deserve a life sentence. You did some bad things, but they weren't that bad.

AGENT BELL
We're here to set things right.
We're here to make amends. We can get you out of here in a few years.

A bitter chuckle from Ricky.

RICKY WERSHE

How the fuck you gonna do that?

AGENT TURNER

We're the Federal Government. We're above this pissant state that locks up teenagers for life.

RICKY WERSHE

Why don't you stop beating around the fucking bush and tell me why you drove eight hours to come see me.

AGENT BELL

We were wrong about Jackson and we want your help in taking him down. The Detroit Police Department is one massive turd of corruption, and we want to flush all the filth down the toilet. And it starts with Jackson. We know he runs a ring of corrupt cops who are involved in everything from escorting shipments of drugs into the city to contract killings.

AGENT TURNER

We need your help in getting to him.

RICKY WERSHE

I can't help you guys with that. I wouldn't know where to start.

AGENT BELL

Sure you do.
(then)
Your girlfriend.

RICKY WERSHE

Cathy?

AGENT BELL

Yes, Cathy Volsan.

RICKY WERSHE

She ain't my girlfriend no more.

AGENT TURNER

Look, we know that you still talk with her.

RICKY WERSHE

So what?

AGENT BELL

The lieutenant in charge of Cathy's police detail works hand-in-glove with Jackson.

Ricky ponders the revelation.

RICKY WERSHE

I want something in writing. I want a piece of paper that says that if I cooperate with you, you'll get me out of here. I want you to deliver it to my attorney. Then we can discuss things further.

AGENT BELL

Ricky, we can't put anything in writing. That's not how it works. But you have our word. You help us, and we'll get you out of here. What other options do you have?

AGENT TURNER

Revenge, Ricky. Jackson is the one that put you in this shithole. We're giving you a chance to get even.

CAMERA pushes in on Ricky.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I didn't give a fuck about getting even. I gave a fuck about getting out of prison... Art Derrick had already been arrested by the FBI so I wasn't worried about protecting anyone on the outside.

EXT. ART DERRICK'S MANSION - DAY

Art Derrick stands on the edge of his diving board, poised like an Olympian moments before his gold medal plunge. He inhales through his graceless belly and stares across his property at a full-frontal assault of FBI and DEA agents. The force is large enough to invade a small country.

Unruffled, and maintaining his world class aplomb, Art springs off the board and rises into a brilliant swan dive. He swims underwater to the shallow end of the pool where he's greeted by the muzzles from a score of assault rifles.

ART DERRICK

Could one of you handsome gentlemen
please hand me my robe?

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I called up Dawn and told her that
she needed to come and see me.

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON, VISITATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky sits in a cubicle speaking into a phone. Dawn sits on
the other side of the plexiglass listening to her brother.

RICKY WERSHE

I need you to call Cathy for me.

DAWN

Why? I hate that bitch.

RICKY WERSHE

I know you do. But she hasn't been
accepting my calls lately. That's
why I need you to call her for me.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

I explained what I was doing with
the FBI and how they had promised,
that if I cooperated, they would
see to my release.

A devilish grin creeps over Dawn. Setting up Cathy? The
Detroit Police Department? She can taste the poetic justice.

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON, VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Cathy now sits across from Ricky in the cubicle.

RICKY WERSHE

Thanks for coming, Cathy.

Ice from Cathy.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

You look beautiful. I like your
nails. Your hair looks fly.

But the ice storm continues.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

How have you been?

After an excruciatingly long pause --

CATHY VOLSAN

How the fuck you think I've been,
Ricky? I'm broke. You and Johnny
didn't leave me nothing.

RICKY WERSHE

I know baby. And that's why I had
Dawn call you. So I could help you
out. You see, I have a friend
coming in from Miami.

Upon hearing the word "Miami" and seeing the emphasis in
Ricky's eyes, Cathy's expression thaws from arctic chill to
millionaire dreams of lush palm trees and pina coladas.

RICKY WERSHE (CONT'D)

That's right, baby. A friend of
mine from Miami. Miami, Florida.
He's coming to Detroit next week,
and wants to meet with you and take
you out to dinner. Dawn will fill
you in on the details.

Cathy's sudden emotional transfiguration from scorching wrath
to loving kitten is nothing short of miraculous.

CATHY VOLSAN

You know I'll do anything for you,
Ricky. You know that, don't you?

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Yeah, me and any other dick with a
fat bankroll. Cathy was a Great
White Shark and the word Miami was
a bucket of blood dumped in the
water.

INT. A FINE STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

Cathy and Dawn sit across from undercover FBI agent EDUARDO
DIAZ.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

My friend from Miami was FBI agent
Eduardo Diaz, or as his parents
lovingly named him: Michael Hill...
Cathy and Eduardo hit it off just
like I knew they would.

CATHY VOLSAN

Nobody is connected like I am in
Detroit. Nobody.

EDUARDO DIAZ

Are you sure the police will cooperate? Are you certain they will protect my shipments of cocaine and cash into the city?

CATHY VOLSAN

Yes. It's all about knowing the right people. In Detroit, money talks.

EDUARDO DIAZ

Wonderful.

(to Dawn)

Dawn, thank you so much for introducing me to this lovely friend of yours.

Cathy, eager to ingratiate herself, chimes in with an embarrassing cliché.

CATHY VOLSAN

A friend in need, is a friend indeed.

Dawn wants to puke. But it's going swimmingly.

Eduardo kisses his fingers and throws the kiss to the air ---

EDUARDO DIAZ

Aye carrumba.

Cathy locks eyes with him and moves in for the kill.

CATHY VOLSAN

Spanish is so romantic.

EDUARDO DIAZ

It is the language of love.

A chill runs down Cathy's spine -- she's hit the jackpot again!

EXT. DETROIT METROPOLITAN AIRPORT - DAY

A private jet descends and lands on the tarmac.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

The next time Eduardo flew into Detroit from Miami, Jackson and his crew were there to escort him and his shipment of drugs and money into the city.

The private jet taxis and parks. Eduardo steps out and shakes hands with Jackson, who is standing beside two Lincoln Town Cars with three other men. They exchange the customary introductions.

EDUARDO DIAZ

So all of these gentlemen here are police officers, no?

OFFICER JACKSON

Detroit's finest. It's the safest way to get your shit in and out of the city.

EDUARDO DIAZ

Wonderful. Safety is very important to me.

They unload duffel bags from the plane into the Town Cars and leave the airport.

INT. A MOTEL - LATER

Eduardo pays Jackson fifty-thousand in cash. As Jackson counts the money, Eduardo opens the mini-bar.

EDUARDO DIAZ

What do you say we celebrate our partnership with a cocktail, no?

OFFICER JACKSON

Let's do it. I can feel that this is the beginning of something big.

EDUARDO DIAZ

Bueno. I'll get us some ice.

Eduardo steps outside the room and closes the door.

When the door reopens, FBI and DEA agents storm inside and slam Jackson onto the bed and handcuff him. Agent Bell and Agent Turner enter the room wearing party hats.

AGENT BELL

Surprise surprise.

AGENT TURNER

Let's get this party started!

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

Operation Backbone went on for almost a year, leading to the arrest of 11 of Detroit's finest.

A SERIES OF SHOTS as FBI and DEA agents round up corrupt police officers throughout the city.

RICKY WERSHE (V.O.)

An undercover agent even paid one of the cops to sneak a machine gun past airport security that was going to be used in a contract killing in Chicago. The agent said he did it just to see how dirty the cops really were. It was totally filthy. It was totally corrupt. It was totally Detroit.

WE GO TO BLACK:

EXT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON - DAY

The grim dungeon brings us back with the title:

ONE YEAR LATER

INT. MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON, VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Ricky speaks with Dawn through the plexiglass.

DAWN

We only got a few more minutes.
I'll let Dad speak to you last.

RICKY WERSHE

Thanks for coming, Dawn. I know it's a real long trek up here. Stay sober.

DAWN

One day at a time. I love you,
Ricky.

She kisses her hand and presses it against the plexiglass.

Behind Dawn, Rick Sr. rises out of a flimsy plastic chair and takes the receiver from her and sits down.

RICKY WERSHE

Hey, Dad. Have you heard from the FBI about my case?

Rick Sr. exhales and hangs his head. He appears to be carrying a heavy burden these days. He looks like he's aged a decade since we last saw him.

His hair has thinned considerably and the dark rings under his eyes are consistent with someone stressed to the brink.

RICK SR.

No. I haven't heard from any of them. I even posted up down at their office and waited all day. I think those bastards were reassigned or something.

Ricky is nearly emotionless from the disappointing news. He appears resigned to his bleak future. But he does his best to maintain his composure in front of his dad who is clearly having a tough time.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

I'm afraid they left us high and dry again.

Another long pause. Rick Sr. continues to struggle with his emotions. He can barely look his son in the eyes.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Ricky... I didn't know what I was doing... I was supposed to protect you and teach you the right things. I let you down. I failed you as a father. I should be sitting where you are... Not you. You were just a kid... and I didn't protect you.

The words are crushing. He's never spoken this way before, never really expressed his feelings with any sort of honesty or depth.

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

But I won't ever give up on you, Ricky. I'm gonna get you outta here.

A GUARD yells to the room.

GUARD (O.S.)

Visiting time is over. You need to wrap it up.

RICK SR.

I'm gonna get you outta here, Ricky. No matter what it costs. If it costs me my last dollar, my last ounce of strength. I won't give up on you.

(he's falling apart)

(MORE)

RICK SR. (CONT'D)

You hear me? I'm gonna get you out of here, son. You hear me? I'm gonna get you out of here... Stay strong, son. Stay strong... You'll be coming home soon.

Rick Sr. can't even hang up the phone. So Dawn leans forward and hangs it up for him.

She helps her dad to his feet and they wave goodbye to Ricky and walk toward the doorway behind them.

THE CAMERA moves with his family as Ricky watches them go from behind the plexiglass -- Ricky grows smaller and smaller until a large steel door slams shut on the visitation room and he is gone.

POSTSCRIPT

Richard Wershe Jr. has been incarcerated in the Michigan State Prison system since February 4th, 1988. Despite the repeal of the 650 Lifer Law, and the Supreme Court's ruling that sentencing juveniles to life in prison for non-violent offenses is unconstitutional, he remains behind bars. He has never spent a day of his adult life as a free man.

POSTSCRIPT (CONT'D)

Richard Wershe Sr. passed away in 2014, his promise to his son unfulfilled.

POSTSCRIPT (CONT'D)

Most of the FBI agents involved with using Ricky Wershe as an underage informant are now comfortably retired, spending their day's fishing and relaxing with their grandchildren. None of the agents involved were ever punished for this gross violation of federal policy.

POSTSCRIPT (CONT'D)

Every single one of the Detroit cops convicted in Operation Backbone have been released from prison. They are all free men...

THE END.