

DEALER
Yall got it?

DARIUS flashes a grin, hands off his package. TEEN NOONIE steps forward, calm, offering his. The DEALER keeps eyeing TEEN NOONIE, trying to pinpoint why he looks so familiar. Then it clicks.

DEALER (CONT'D)
Ayy, Ain't you Mr. Wards boy? I knew
I recognized you.

TEEN NOONIE continues to look tough, but doesn't respond.

DEALER (CONT'D)
(Mocking)
Aight youngin I know what it is.
Lil Ward out here hustlin.

The DEALER pulls up his shirt and flashes a shiny pistol in his waist. He then shifts into a more serious tone. He steps face to face with TEEN NOONIE. TEEN NOONIE puffs out his chest more and doesn't back down.

TEEN NOONIE
You think I'm scared of that?

DEALER
You ain't folks but still puffin
out ya chest. Don't end up on the
wall Lil Ward.

The DEALER continues to eye TEEN NOONIE, and as he slowly backs away, he slips folded cash into DARIUS'S hand and walks back from where he came.

DARIUS exhales, laughing nervously.

DARIUS
(Laughing)
Yo you cold, Noon.

TEEN NOONIE doesn't answer. DARIUS stuffs the cash into his jacket pocket. He taps TEEN NOONIE to come on and they begin walking back to the projects.

MOMS (40s) sits on their modest couch, folding clothes and watching the news. TEEN NOONIE walks in the front door and tries to ease his way upstairs past to his room.

MOMS

Noon!

TEEN NOONIE

Mam?

MOMS

Where you comin in from?

TEEN NOONIE

I was just round the way throwing
the ball with Brian. Then we...

MOMS doesn't break her eye from watching TV and cuts TEEN
NOONIE off before he can continue making up a story.

MOMS

(Sarcastic)

So you weren't running behind
Darius then?

TEEN NOONIE'S face can't hold the lie anymore and drifts into
defeat. If there's one person in the world to square up with,
he's no match for MOMS. He sighs and readies himself to hear
it.

MOMS (CONT'D)

You know that boy missing in your
history class. They found him shot
on 130th in the back of the
laundromat. Heard his mama crying
from inside their house. About the
same time Ms. Gloria told me she
saw you running behind Darius.

TEEN NOONIE

I'm sorr...

MOMS

You must of forgot we all family
around here. We watch out for one
another.

MOMS stops folding and turns to TEEN NOONIE now so he can see
and feel what's she's saying.

MOMS (CONT'D)

And I'll be damned if I'm the next
mama crying over her dead baby
Noon.

TEEN NOONIE fingers through the cash in his pocket for extra
comfort but tonight it doesn't seem like a win anymore.