

BEGIN FLASHBACK...

11 **EXT. ALTGELD GARDENS - NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT (1982)** 11

TEEN NOONIE (17, Black boy), skinny frame, patched-up sneakers, runs behind his best friend DARIUS (17, Black boy). Rows of Altgeld Projects fly by as they race between the buildings and courtyards. They breathe heavy as their feet pound against the cracked sidewalk. A pair of woman's eyes peek through the blinds of a home as TEEN NOONIE and DARIUS sprint past. It's the home of GLORIA JOHNSON (40s, Black woman).

12 **INT. GLORIA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (1982)** 12

GLORIA in her colorful nightgown peeks through the blinds. Offscreen a man's VOICE yells from behind her.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who was that?

GLORIA

Darius and Noonie again.

13 **EXT. CORNER STORE - NIGHT (1982)** 13

The hum of streetlights buzz overhead. The corner store's neon sign glows half-dead. TEEN NOONIE and DARIUS arrive on the side of building, hunched over trying to catch their breath. Each carries a small brown package tucked under their jackets.

DARIUS

(Jokingly)

How you gon play college ball and still can't beat me!

TEEN NOONIE

(Out of breath)

Yo ass cheated! How you gon say we go on 3...and take off at 1.

DARIUS

(Laughs)

Ay thats how it be. Gotta be ready to move at all times.

NOONIE doesn't laugh. He stands up tall scanning, eyes sharp as a small-time DEALER (20s, Black man) comes around the back of the building from the shadows. TEEN NOONIE taps DARIUS to look up and get ready. The DEALER makes his way toward them.

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)
Ay. 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.

14

INT. WARD FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (1982)

14

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.