

TEEN NOONIE doesn't break his gaze, but he's listening. YOUNG MALIK leans forward, elbows on his knees, voice low but cutting through the moment.

YOUNG MALIK (CONT'D)

Police found the punks that shot him. I know that pain. I know what it feels like to want to trade places too. But this...this right here,...this is what happens when you soft, when you let up lil brother. Weak get swallowed out here, you know that. And don't think it can't happen when you leave. That blood won't wash off even when you at college my boy.

YOUNG MALIK stands up and looks over to TEEN NOONIE.

YOUNG MALIK (CONT'D)

So, you do what you gotta do out there. Altgeld will be waiting for you. But don't take too long. We lose time, we lose money.

YOUNG MALIK pats TEEN NOONIES shoulder, then walks away, leaving him in the waiting room alone.

END FLASHBACK...

28

EXT. REC CENTER - PARKING LOT - DAY (2005)

28

Next morning following his late night talk with NIA, NOONIE pulls into the parking lot of the rec center. He exits the car. He's wearing a more determined look on his face than we've ever seen.

Across the street sits DETECTIVE MALLOY in her car again, eyeing NOONIE. He turns to her with a petty wave, then continues in the rec center doors.

29

INT. REC CENTER - LOBBY - DAY (2005)

29

The sound of laughter and action of kids playing basketball fill the air of the rec center lobby. MS. ODESSA abruptly stops NOONIE in his tracks with a clipboard and begins rattling off today's items.

MS. ODESSA

You got an 11am call with Principal Williams. The gameroom is running their checkers tournament. 2 games started in the gym and pre-schoolers are in their painting class and you only received 2 threats today, down from 7 last week.

NOONIE

(Jokingly)

You ain't even gon say hello, good morning Noonie?

MS. ODESSA smirks, folding her arms.

MS. ODESSA

Hello. Good morning. And goodbye. Now get to work.

She hands NOONIE the clipboard and walks off. He chuckles softly and starts flipping through the list of papers. As he scans the last page, his eyes grow with concern.

NOONIE

Hey! Where's Jaden?

MS. ODESSA turns around to answer.

MS. ODESSA

He never showed up.

NOONIE'S face morphs from concern to anger. He looks at the gym, and then to the front doors of the rec center from where he just came. He's made a decision.

30

INT. NOONIE'S CAR - DAY (2005)

30

NOONIE drives around Altgeld Gardens, frantically looking for JADEN. He rolls past every corner he knows dealers spot up at. Moments later, he spots him.

JADEN posts up on the side of the building next to the mural of names. NOONIE parks his car out of view.

31

EXT. MURAL ON 130TH STREET - ALTGELD GARDENS - DAY (2005)

31

NOONIE walks up on JADEN and startles him. JADEN looks like he's been caught.