

Straight Outta Compton

by  
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October 2, 2012

OVER BLACK:

DRE (V.O.)

You are now about to witness the  
strength of street knowledge.

And then... silence. A record player scratches at the air.  
Someone needs to flip the goddam 45.

OPEN TIGHT in a tiny Compton home. Summer. 1980. Blazing hot.  
16-year-old ANDRE YOUNG, DR. DRE, sits in his underpants on  
the edge of his bed. He has on a huge pair of white  
headphones. He's got two record players at his fingertips and  
all the time in the world to get this shit right.

ERIC (V.O.)

Look fast. This is where it begins.

He drops the needle on Curtis Mayfield's *Super Fly*. He eases  
into the song, studying the beats. He lies back, suddenly  
sleepy. The music takes him out.

EXT. SKIES OVER SOUTH CENTRAL LA - DAY

WE ARE INSIDE A GHETTO BIRD. An LAPD copter. We swoop down  
low over the neighborhood until we PICK UP an LAPD squad car.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL STREET - DAY

NOW WE ARE INSIDE THE SQUAD CAR. We see the neighborhood over  
the barrel of a shotgun pointed out the window. Cruise by...

EXT. CUBE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A tidy, middle class home. 15-year-old ICE CUBE, school books  
in hand. He bangs out the front door. He steels himself. It's  
a long fuckin' walk to the bus.

ERIC (V.O.)

The chaos.

HOLD ON his foot on the top step. As the foot plants,  
Grandmaster Flash's *The Message* comes in. Cube moves down the  
street, trying to quickly pass 4 TEENAGE NEIGHBORS-

NEIGHBOR

Here's Mr. Rap Man now! Give us a  
rhyme, Cube.

ICE CUBE

Fuck off.

NEIGHBOR 2

Hurry up nigga. The Valley bus is waiting on you.

NEIGHBOR 3

Why you not going to Jefferson with the rest of us?

Cube is still walking.

ICE CUBE

Girls round here too busy waiting on these fake ass ballers to give you the time of day. Girls in the Valley are fucking.

NEIGHBOR

You show me one girl who let you-

Just then. A block away. An engine ROARS. The boys freeze.

NEIGHBOR 3

One time!!!

The boys scatter just as a militarized LAPD POLICE UNIT moves in. Intense action. Cops snag Neighbor 1, throw him to the ground. Cube, books in hand, runs with all his power. One cop suddenly notices him.

COP

Hey! You!

But just then Cube dives into the open door of the school bus. Cube nods his thanks to the DRIVER, who closes the door. The Cop flips Cube off. Cube returns the finger. And the bus takes Cube out of the hood.

INT. DRE'S MOM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dre is still 16. He has a makeshift dj booth. One of his mom's famous parties is in full swing.

ERIC (V.O.)

The groove.

2 dozen PEOPLE - all 30s, all sporting big collars and bigger hair - wait. One pretty woman - VERNA GRIFFIN - yells out:

VERNA

Andre! Play some music, baby!

He carefully drops the needle... Parliament Funkadelic's *One Nation Under a Groove* demands attention.

Dre watches as Verna melts into the music. The crowd moves. Dre's younger brother TYREE does a ridiculous dance. And Dre smiles. This is where he belongs. OFF THE MUSIC--

EXT. CUBE'S SCHOOL - DAY

Upper middle class high school. Mainly White kids milling about. Making out. Screwing around. GUARDS stand nearby, not giving the kids any trouble.

ERIC (V.O.)  
The injustice.

Cube steps off his bus with the other Black kids. He looks around at this Mayberry-like scene and he fumes. Life is so fucking unfair. The GUARDS eye him and the other Black kids.

EXT. COMPTON STREET - NIGHT

ANTHONY, a nervous drug dealer, walks quickly. His younger cousin, ERIC WRIGHT, is with him. Eric is 21 with compact muscles and a fuck-it-all attitude that's either going to get him killed or make him famous.

ERIC (V.O.)  
The streets.

ANTHONY  
That's 2 Gs. I never moved this much at one time-

ERIC  
-Slow the fuck down, nigga.

Eric looks left. A black and white rolls past. A COP shines a flashlight on them. Anthony and Eric walk slower, just two guys out for a nice stroll.

ANTHONY  
(stressed)  
Motherfuckas. I ain't there in 2-

ERIC  
(forcefully)  
-You got what they need. You in charge.

The cops move along. Eric casually steps over trash.

ANTHONY  
(wants him to go faster)  
Let's go!

Eric is not one to move just because someone tells him to.

ERIC

Cops all over. You panting like a bitch. You go in hot them niggas gonna think something is up. Chill.

ANTHONY

The fuck you know? Wait here, little man. Keep a look out.

Anthony walks into an alley. Eric looks down the street, watches as the cop car does a u-turn and heads back his way.

So Eric strolls into the alcove of a shitty apartment building. There inside, he walks in on a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN smoking crack in the stairwell.

ERIC

Mrs. Jones?

She looks up. They know each other. Neighbors.

MRS. JONES

(embarrassed)

Eric.

ERIC

You buying from Ray Ray?

She looks at him. And if you thought that Eric might have a shred of concern for her, then you're a fucking sucker.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What you paying him? Thirty a rock?  
(she nods)

I sell to you for \$20 and I won't make you do anything to me.

(she's nervous)

I'm growing my business. One time offer.

Just then, 2 SHOTS RING OUT. Eric runs out of the building. Chaos in the alley - yelling. Eric cautiously moves in. He hears his own footsteps crunch on the garbage. At the end-- a Chevy Impala. Lights on. No one in sight. He searches the car - no Anthony. Then he sees: the trunk is slightly ajar.

He carefully pops the trunk. A mangled Anthony is shoved inside, the warmth already fading. Blood pours over the huge money roll in his sock. Eric grabs the money before it's ruined. Just then -- a GUN moves into frame and presses to Eric's neck. We don't see who's holding it--

VOICE

Give me that fucking money.

Fuck. This is it. This is where it ends. Eric always thought he was too smart for this. His eyes dart, breath quickens-

VOICE (CONT'D)

On your knees-

Eric sucks at the air. Looks at the sky. And a SIREN calls out- WHOOP - at the mouth of the alley. The GUNMAN takes off. Eric never gets a look at his face. The cop moves in--

Eric runs. He climbs a fence, out of the alley. It doesn't matter where to. He just runs - the siren in his ears. Finally he stops, panting. He looks around at his broken neighborhood... There's nowhere for him to go.

Sirens build to a deafening screech. What's he supposed to do with his life now?

ERIC (V.O.)

Look fast, Muthafucka. This is where it begins.

GROOVE INTO:

We trip into a *stylized video montage*...laying out the world that created NWA. The opening notes of Sugar Hill Gang's *Rappers Delight* demand attention. Look fast.

CUT TO:

A quick image of the 1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (V.O.)

I have a dream!

SMASH INTO The 1968 OLYMPICS. TOMMIE SMITH and JOHN CARLOS raise their damn fists.

MALCOLM X (V.O.)

The price of freedom is death.

RICHARD ROUNDTREE stares us down, with a gun in hand. KOOL HERC spins *Space Cowboy* as we watch 1970s BREAK DANCERS steal the show.

AND THE IMAGES SPEED UP. MICHAEL JACKSON moonwalks across the stage. RUN DMC's *It's Like That* spins in.

A CRACK WHORE desperately tries to sell herself in the middle of a South Central street.

In Watts, A MOTHER screams over her wounded SON. Pregnant GIRLS. More police brutality. More drug dealing. More injustice.

The Space Shuttle Challenger EXPLODES as LL Cool J sings *I Can't Live Without My Radio*. All the sounds and images build until we can't take it anymore.

A second of loud silence.

INT. EVE'S AFTER DARK - NIGHT

Fingers press to a spinning record. The fingers push the record back and forth. Back and forth.

PULL BACK. The fingers belong to ANTOINE CARRABY, DJ YELLA, 21. He's on stage at Eve's After Dark, a Compton nightclub. Look at the PEOPLE dancing: Shoulder pads, gold chains, leather pants; it can't be any other era other than 1984.

The club manager, LONZO WILLIAMS, who sports Jehri curls and gold, springs onto the stage. He's followed by a nervous, 17-year-old Dre. Yella watches him warily. Lonzo grabs the mic.

LONZO

This muthafucka here bet me all his records he's better than DJ Yella. Tell me what y'all think.

BOOS AND LAUGHS as Dre steps to the turntable, 500 COMPTON FOLKS look to whup his ass if he doesn't start the party.

Dre mixes The Marvelettes' *Please Mr. Postman* with Afrika Bambaataa's *Planet Rock*. For a reason only he knows, it totally works. Dre practices his magic. The music gets into people's bones like nothing they've ever heard. The club jumps. And Dre smiles.

A gaggle of 6 GIRLS hangs around his booth. One - SPARKLY GIRL - makes sure he sees everything she has to offer.

Yella nods at Dre. The sound is singular. Yella raises the volume. The party gets louder. And Dre never wants to be anywhere else. This is home.

From the back of the club, GREG MACK - a radio DJ in his late 20s - is stone cold sober as he watches them intently.

INT. EVE'S AFTER DARK - NIGHT

The club is empty - except for Mack and Dre. Dre wears a purple satin jacket with "World Class Wreckin' Cru" embroidered on the back.

MACK

You got one chance with this.  
That's it.

DRE

(anxious)

I need to get my mixes out there,  
man. I've been looking for an  
opportunity, you know?

Yeah, Mack knows. Who, frankly, doesn't? Aren't we all just kids looking for a start? Mack softens.

MACK

5 o'clock. Rush hour. People in  
their cars. We'll call it--

INT. KDAY RADIO STATION - BOOTH - DAY

Greg Mack speaks into a microphone with a stentorian boom.

MACK

The Traffic Jam.

Mack presses play on Dre and Yella's mix.

INT. BLACK TEENAGE BOY'S BEDROOM - DAY

TIGHT ON a boy - let's call him JOE - as he turns the dial on his radio and picks up the mix. The sound is fucking awesome. A smile spreads over his face.

EXT. AM/PM PARKING LOT - DAY

PULL BACK from Joe. He's now joined by 100 OTHER KIDS. The Traffic Jam blasts from car stereos. These poor kids are creating their own club, right there on Crenshaw.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

PULL BACK. EVERY CAR on the street plays the mix.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - RUSH HOUR

PULL BACK. Bumper to bumper. Every single car blasts the Traffic Jam. PULL BACK. There's a lot of damn cars on the freeway. One of them is...

CUBE'S BUS. CRAZY KIDS toss shit and dance to the mix. But Cube takes the music in, stares at his notebook, and writes.

EXT. ROADIUM SWAP MEET - DAY

It's fuckin' hot outside and the Swap Meet is packed with sweaty, poor shoppers. Teams of POLICE stroll up and down each aisle like they own the place. Knock off electronics, baby clothes, bananas -- you name it, it's at the Radium. Eric and his friend MC REN, handsome but almost always unsmiling - walk through the crowd. Eric examines the booths like he's going to get quizzed on them.

MC REN

It's too damn hot. The fuck we doing here?

But Eric doesn't hear him because he has stopped dead in his tracks. There before him is the most crowded booth of all -- a record stall manned by a Japanese-American dude, STEVE YANO. One of Dre's Traffic Jams blares. FEMALE SHOPPERS grapple for records. Yano sells as fast as he can move.

ERIC

(to Ren)

You see that shit?

Eric examines the operation. The bills changing hands. Money. Money. More money. He moves closer to the booth. Picks up an album and sees Dre's photo--

ERIC (CONT'D)

I used to kick it with this nigga.

YANO

You buying?

Eric grabs a thick stack of records. He pulls a large roll of cash out of his sock and peels off a few bills. Hands them to Yano. Makes an impression.

INT. LONZO'S STUDIO - DAY

The garage is tricked out as a recording studio. Dre and Yella work on a mix.

It sounds harder, deeper, funkier than the Traffic Jam mixes. The rest of the Wreckin' Cru - CLI-N-TEL and others - hangs out nearby.

LONZO  
What's that shit?

Lonzo struts in, reminding everyone he owns the place.

DRE  
(quietly)  
Something I'm trying out. Something harder.

Lonzo tosses two PARKING TICKETS at Dre:

LONZO  
More tickets on your car.

DRE  
Motherfuckin' police.

LONZO  
Yeah. It's the police's fault you don't know how to park your damn car right.

The guys laugh. Dre seethes. The music plays.

LONZO (CONT'D)  
This music. I don't like it.  
(Dre stares at him)  
Nobody want to hear that hard shit.

DRE  
That hard shit's starting to pop.

LONZO  
Like who? Who poppin'?

DRE  
Schoolly D.

YELLA  
Oh. You hear that new Run DMC?

DRE  
Run DMC is the bomb.

LONZO  
I heard Schoolly D. Lemme ask you. It's Saturday night. You got your lady in a red dress. Tight. Ass just perfect.

LONZO (CONT'D)

You got her in the club and she's loose. She's gettin' ready. And you're gonna start yellin' 'bout niggas pulling straps? Hoes? Your lady don't want to hear that. *That* ain't gonna get you no ass. Hell naw.

DRE

We gotta evolve. Our shit's played. Lemme put some new cuts up at the club and let the crowd decide.

LONZO

You're my DJs. Contractually. I pay you 50 bucks a night to play my music.

(beat)

'Less you don't want me to pay you anymore.

Dre stares hard at him. With his money on the line, Dre has no choice but to stay silent. Lonzo smiles. He knows he won.

LONZO (CONT'D)

(eyes on Dre)

Randi! Come here, baby.

A large WOMAN walks in, wheeling a suitcase behind her.

LONZO (CONT'D)

Randi here got your costumes for the show.

DRE

(protesting)

Costumes?

LONZO

(irritated)

Why don't you show Dre what he's gonna wear.

Randi holds up a ribbed, white sequins body suit. Like a sparkly doctor's uniform.

DRE

Hell no.

INT. CLUB - THAT NIGHT

Dre is at the turntable, sweating profusely in the sparkly doctor's costume. It's not a great look.

His brother, Tyree, is behind him, cracking up. Dre shoots him a shut-the-fuck-up look. There is still a group of girls, though, including Sparkly Girl. Now she's pregnant. Dre smiles warily at her.

EXT. JINX'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

A backyard BBQ. Lots of FAMILY. Inside, a group listens to a RICHARD PRYOR album. Cube is with his friend, JINX.

ICE CUBE

How long he staying here?

JINX

Not sure. His momma kicked him out the house. She got him a job interview but he didn't go 'cause he was DJ'ing at Walton for their school dance.

EXT. JINX'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Dre spots his brother walking toward the party, wearing red pants. He bolts out the door after him.

DRE

The fuck you doing with those pants?

TYREE

They're tha bomb, right?

Dre grabs him, dragging him off the street.

DRE

You gotta stop fucking with this shit. Coming into a Crips hood wearing those. This is not a game, Tyree. Don't play with this shit.

TYREE

Okay, Pops.

Dre shoves him.

DRE

You gotta grow the fuck up. We talked about this.

TYREE

You talked. You starting to piss me off, Dre.

TYREE (CONT'D)

I get enough of this shit from mom.  
I don't need you role modeling me.  
Where's your job? How you taking  
responsibility and growing up now  
that you got the pregnant  
girlfriend?

DRE

She's not my girlfriend.

TYREE

Even better.

He walks into the party. Dre follows.

EXT. JINX'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Cube and Jinx still huddle...

ICE CUBE

(stressed)

I'm not sure which rhymes to kick.

JINX

He one of the biggest muthafuckin'  
DJs in the city. Don't embarrass  
me, nigga.

(looking past Cube)

Yo Dre. Dre!

Dre nods, still in a dark mood from Tyree.

DRE

What up.

JINX

This my homie, Ice Cube. He lives  
up the street.

ICE CUBE

(nervously)

Yo, what up.

JINX

Cube's in the crew. Stereo Crew. I  
told you.

DRE

Where you get that name, Ice Cube?

ICE CUBE  
 (stumbling)  
 My brother gave it to me 'cuz I'm  
 smooth as ice.

DRE  
 Well, let me hear your shit.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Cube and Jinx are on stage. HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE dance below them to one of Dre's beats. Over the music, Dre yells:

DRE  
 You up after this song. Get on fast  
 fore Lonzo shuts this shit down!

He pulls Cube in so Cube can hear:

DRE (CONT'D)  
 You better rock the house because  
 otherwise this crowd gonna throw  
 full cups at your ass.

Cube swallows. The song fades. CLOSE ON Dre's hand as he drops the needle on the next track: DOPEMAN.

ICE CUBE  
 It was once said by a man who  
 couldn't quit "Dope man, please can  
 I have another hit?" The dope man  
 said, "Clucka, I don't give a shit  
 If your girl kneel down and sucked  
 my dick." It all happened and the  
 guy tried to choke her. Nigga  
 didn't care, she ain't nothing but  
 a smoker. That's the way it goes,  
 that's the name of the game

The song continues. The crowd WHOOPS with approval. And with Dre's music, the whole thing is tha bomb. The People love it. Dre and Cube look at each other - they got something here.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 Dre's sounds. Cube's words.  
 Lightning in a muthafuckin' bottle.  
 They just needed me.

FROM THE BACK, Eric watches, his head clicking off numbers as he takes in sexy girls, the money, the drinks, the money, Dre working the turntable, the money.

Cube finishes. The crowd SCREAMS! They love him. ON STAGE, Lonzo dictates:

LONZO  
*Love Letters* next.

DRE  
(pissed)  
You can't follow that up with *Love Letters*.

LONZO  
Don't pull this shit with me, Dre.  
Stop fuckin' arguing with me on everything!

Yella drops the needle on *Love Letters*, the cheesiest love song ever. The energy immediately gets sucked out of the club. Eric is amused as the crowd stampedes off the floor.

INT. THE CLUB - THE BAR - LATER

Music continues. Dre approaches Eric, who still wears shades.

DRE  
What up, E. How you been?

ERIC  
Long time. You still sleeping on the couch at your grandmamma's?

DRE  
You still washing dishes at Coco's?

ERIC  
Nah. I got a paper route now.

They laugh, enjoying the shit-giving.

DRE  
Yeah. Word on the street is that's a lucrative paper route.

ERIC  
Nah. I'm outta that, man.

DRE  
Yeah right.

ERIC  
(hiding his earnestness)  
For real.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Thinking about starting a record  
label. Call it Ruthless Records.

DRE  
(scoffing)  
What you know about starting a  
record label?

ERIC  
Slangin' work. Slangin' records.  
Hustle's a hustle.

DRE  
Yeah. And you always know the  
hustle.

ERIC  
(defensive)  
I don't see you working some punk  
ass \$3.35 an hour bullshit.

DRE  
(getting tired)  
All right, man. What's your game?

ERIC  
(changes the tone)  
I got some money saved up from my  
previous ventures. Thinking about  
putting together some demos.

DRE  
Demos of what?

ERIC  
That music you and that lil' homie-

DRE  
-Ice Cube.

ERIC  
Ice Cube. That hard shit. People  
loved that. People'd pay for that.  
You see how that fluffy I love you  
girl shit cleared the floor?

DRE  
You like the hood stuff.

ERIC  
I like whatever's gonna make me  
snaps. And I like the shit you  
putting out. I'll let you make your  
music the way you want.

They lock eyes -- an understanding is born. Dre is in knots.

DRE

Man, that sounds cool. But Lonzo...  
I'm broke enough as is. Whatever I  
got coming in, is from him. I can't  
jump. I'd love to, but I can't. I  
got...obligations.

Eric is smooth. Always.

ERIC

No problem. You change your mind...  
(he writes his number)  
...hit me up.

Dre watches Eric walk away.

EXT. STREETS OF COMPTON - LATE NIGHT

Dre is driving home. His car is... words don't suffice. It's a Datsun B2-10 that's so rusted, you can see the street through the floor. The back windshield is gone... Dre idles at a light. Only one break light is lit up. Suddenly, there are flashing police lights in his cracked rearview. Shit.

INT. COMPTON JAIL - NIGHT

Dre is on a pay phone talking to Lonzo.

LONZO

Unpaid parking tickets? That's the pussiest reason I ever heard for somebody going to jail.

DRE

I owe \$500 for the ticket and \$900 for half the bail. I don't got it.

Lonzo pauses.

LONZO

No, man.

DRE

No?

LONZO

I'm gonna let you sit in jail awhile. Maybe you learn something.

Dre is enraged. He slams down the phone. AN OFFICER hovers.

DRE  
Can I make one more call?

EXT. COMPTON JAIL - DAWN

Dre walks out of jail. Across the lot, Eric leans against his Suzuki Samurai, looking fresh-faced even at 5:30AM. They share a long look.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - EVENING

Dre is at the board, a million switches stretching out before him. Cube and Eric are behind him. A group called HBO is at the mic, wearing Kangols. Some TECH guys hang around. A new guy - THE D.O.C. - stands with Cube and Eric.

DRE  
You lead, I'll follow. You come in hard with "Cruisin'" and I'll be right there.

The rappers look at each other.

RAPPER  
(sounding flat)  
Cruisin' down the street.

As promised, Dre has the music there, right under him, supporting him. But something is very wrong. The guy stops.

DRE  
Let's do it again.

RAPPER  
Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.

The guy stops. The music goes for a second until Dre cuts it.

RAPPER (CONT'D)  
Man, what the hell is a 6-4?

From the back of the room:

ICE CUBE  
(defensive)  
A car.

RAPPER  
Whyn't you just say car?

ICE CUBE  
'Cuz 6-4 sounds dope and car don't.

DRE  
Let's go again.

RAPPER  
Hold up.  
(he reads the lyrics)  
All about making that G.T.A. The  
fuck is a G.T.A?

ICE CUBE  
Grand Theft Auto.

The rappers look at each other.

RAPPER  
I can't do this shit, man. It's  
west coast shit. I don't know about  
this. Maybe we redo the lyrics-

DRE  
(quickly)  
Hell naw. We're not messin' with  
Cube's lyrics. The lyrics are the  
lyrics.

Cube is grateful. Eric doesn't blink.

RAPPER  
Then we gotta roll.

It's a challenge. Tension. No one stops them. HBO heads out  
the door. Now it's just Cube, Dre, D.O.C. and Eric.

ERIC  
Fake ass L.L. muthafuckas.

The sound engineer, DONOVAN SOUND, a White 30-something guy,  
pops his head in:

DONOVAN  
Hate to be a dick, but you guys  
paid for a full session. Dig?

Eric just looks at him. Donovan pops his head back out.

DRE  
Sorry, man, I know you put up a lot  
of money. Thought they were real.

ERIC  
No big deal. We figure something  
else out.

But it is a big deal. Eric stands.

DRE  
D.O.C. You could do it.

D.O.C.  
I'm writing my own shit, man.

DRE  
Cube?

ICE CUBE  
Man, I can't hang here all night. I  
got a test tomorrow.

Dre looks hard at Eric. Eric looks at Dre warily.

DRE  
You do it.

ERIC  
Hell naw.

DRE  
I'm serious. You do it.

ERIC  
I ain't no rapper.

DRE  
Your voice is cool. I can hear it.

D.O.C.  
Just try it, E!

DRE  
Try it.  
(Eric's thinking about it)  
Studio's paid for one way or the  
other.

That seals the deal.

ERIC  
Give me the lyrics.

Dre hands him the lyrics. Eric looks them over.

DRE  
Put the headphones on. Stay a  
coupla inches away from the mic.

Eric gives him a long look, then moves to the mic.

DRE (CONT'D)  
Okay. You start. I come in. Ready?

CLOSE ON: Eric's lips move in toward the mic.

ERIC (V.O.)

It wasn't supposed to be like this.

DRE'S finger over the button. And we wait. And wait. And when we can't take it anymore... The first syllable comes out of Eric's mouth--

ERIC

Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.  
Jockin' the freaks, clockin' the  
dough. Went to the park to get the  
scoop. Knuckleheads out there-

DRE

(interrupting)

-All right. All right.

Silence. What Eric just did wasn't necessarily good or polished, but the potential is there and Dre knows it.

DRE (CONT'D)

(doing it the right way)

Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.

ERIC

Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.

DRE

Hit the first part hard. CRUISin.

ERIC

CRUISin.

DRE

(correcting)

CRUISin.

ERIC

(getting frustrated)

This is ridiculous. I ain't no  
rapper. I don't even have a name.

The guys all think.

D.O.C.

Who's that short lil muthafucka on  
the show?

DRE

Webster.

D.O.C.  
MC Webster.

They laugh. Cube points out the obvious:

ICE CUBE  
Nah. Man, you Eazy. Eazy-E.

Eazy says nothing, but we can see he kinda likes that. He puts on his shades. Donovan adjusts some settings.

ERIC  
So how's this shit supposed to go?

DRE  
CRUISin'.

ERIC  
And then what?

DRE  
Just start with CRUISin'.

ERIC  
CRUISin'.

DRE  
Again.

Eric can't stand it.

ERIC  
D.O.C. Cube. Y'all get the fuck  
outta here. Me and Dre gonna work  
it out.

Cube, D.O.C. and Donovan head out. It's just Eric and Dre. But Eric is still self-conscious. Eric turns down the lights, puts on his shades, and turns his back to Dre.

DRE  
You ready?

CLOSE ON: Eric's lips again.

ERIC  
Let's go.

The music and beat begin and play throughout the following. But we don't hear Eric as we see--

Dre's fingers work the levels. Eric at the mic. Dre blows out a speaker. Donovan snaps a new one into place.

Eric's eyes droop. Dre kicks him. Then Dre blows out another speaker. Donovan, annoyed, replaces it again.

Tyree brings in bags of food. And Dre still rides Eric, the two of them frustrated as hell with each other. Dre blows out a third speaker! Dre and Eric eyeball each other, tension mounting until WE HEAR THE AUDIO CUE:

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE??? (From *Mr. Big Stuff*)

SLAM TO:

EXT. DAWN OVER LOS ANGELES.

Rush hour traffic snaking along the freeways, the smog looks pretty against the early morning sky.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

IN THE STUDIO. The guys assemble, including Tyree. The song plays with Eric's audio intact.

Cube listens. Yella listens. Donovan the sound recorder listens. Eric has his shades on, but we think he's listening. The track ends. Everyone looks at each other, sly grins casually breaking out on everyone's faces. It's undeniable. Eric's voice, Dre's sound, and Cube's lyrics *fucking work*.

D.O.C.

Never heard anything like that.

They feel that tingle at the back of their necks. Like a little magic just got blown their way.

ICE CUBE

(to Dre)

Yo. You turned this dude into a rapper.

Everyone congratulates Dre and Eric.

ERIC

(pointing to Dre)

This motherfucker nearly killed me.

Dre smiles, their bond deepening. Tyree approaches Dre:

TYREE

That sounded real good...

But he keeps walking.

DRE  
Where you going?

TYREE  
I gotta bounce.

Dre watches Tyree go with some concern. He hustles after him.

EXT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - PARKING LOT

Dre catches up with Tyree as he waits for the bus.

DRE  
Where you going?

TYREE  
Promised someone I'd help him out.

DRE  
You got school in-

TYREE  
-You gonna bust my balls again?

Dre looks at him, frustrated. What's he supposed to do? The bus is a block away.

DRE  
(softening)  
What do you think of the song?

TYREE  
You know it's the bomb. I don't  
need to tell you.

DRE  
Hang with us. Stay here.

The bus pulls up.

TYREE  
Got my own business to take care  
of.

He pounds Dre goodbye and gets on the bus, which pulls away. Dre wants to rip him down off of that bus. Suddenly, Eric is at his side. He tosses the car keys at Dre.

ERIC  
Let's get some breakfast.  
(as they exit)  
You think it's cool?

It's endearing - Eric is actually worried.

DRE

My Auntie is about ready to kick me the fuck out. I don't got time to waste on projects that ain't gonna pay.

ERIC

Didn't answer my question, nigga.

DRE

It's okay. Needs work. We'll see.

Dre's nervous. He needs this to work.

INT. KDAY RADIO STATION - BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Greg Mack is on the air.

GREG MACK

This is a new track from a young Compton rapper, Eazy-E...

He pushes play. The song that will change their lives begins.

EAZY

Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.  
Jockin' the freaks. Clockin' the dough.  
Went to the park to get the scoop,  
knuckleheads out there cold shootin' some hoops.

EXT. MACOLA RECORDS - DAY

OVER THE TRACK...

In his Suzuki, Eric eyeballs a plain brick building in Hollywood. He takes a large roll of cash from his sock.

EAZY

A car pulls up who can it be?

INT. CUBE'S HOUSE - DAY

The radio is on in the living room. Cube is there as his mother, DORIS, his father, HOSEA, his SISTER and BROTHER listen. His father squeezes his shoulder lightly, his pride conveyed with this simple, silent gesture.

INT. MACOLA RECORDS - DAY

THE SONG KEEPS GOING. Eric watches through a window as machines spit out a stack of records. A white-haired, white guy - JERRY HELLER - watches Eazy watch the records.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Dre stands with his brother, Tyree. They peer into a hospital nursery. A tiny, beautiful BABY looks up at them. The line for FATHER is filled in with "Andre Young." Tyree pats his shoulder. Dre is overwhelmed with emotion - and responsibility.

EXT. MACOLA RECORDS - DAY

Eric and Ren load *Boyz N Tha Hood* records into his car.

INT. CUBE'S HOUSE - DAY

Cube's family still listens. When the next verse comes on--

ERIC (ON SONG)

She said something that I couldn't believe so I grabbed the stupid bitch by her nappy-ass weave. She started talking shit. Wouldn't you know. Reached back like a pimp. Slapped the ho.

Cube's mom stares daggers at him. Cube looks at his feet.

EXT. ROADIUM SWAP MEET - DAY

Eric is at Steve Yano's booth. Yano listens hard as the song finishes. When it's done, Yano tries to hide just how blown away he is. Eric sweats as Yano plays him.

YANO

That's a lot of money for a song no one's ever heard of.

Eric switches into dealer mode.

ERIC

I'm gonna do something special 'cause I like you. This box here normally sells for 50 but I'm gonna give to you on the house. You want more, you hit me up.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 (Yano goes for the box)  
 But next box'll cost you 75.

Even with this, Yano takes the box.

INT. KDAY RADIO STATION - BOOTH - DAY

Back at KDAY the song ends. Silence. Greg Mack waits. QUICK CUTS AS... Each guy waits. Anticipates. Cube. Dre. Eric. The tension couldn't be higher. This is their fork in the road.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 We're Black kids. 1988. America.  
 We're nothing.

Then, boom! The phone rings at KDAY. Greg Mack answers.

GREG MACK  
 Yes? The track is...

But before he can get the words out of his mouth... EVERY SINGLE LIGHT ON THE SWITCHBOARD heats up. Mack knows he has gold on his hands.

GREG MACK (CONT'D)  
 The track is *Boyz N Tha Hood*. And the only place you can hear it is right here on The Mack Attack.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A PARTY in action on Eric's front lawn. Someone's got a car bouncing down on the street. GIRLS everywhere. Cube smiles broadly with a GIRL ON EACH ARM (they're not particularly hot - at this point the fact that he has any girls is a HUGE improvement). *Boyz n tha Hood* cranks. Eric and Dre take in the action.

ERIC  
 Last night I caught some nigga out in my garbage looking for something that says Eazy-E that he could sell.

DRE  
 What'd you do?

ERIC  
 Invited him into the bathroom gave him a genuine, 100% Eazy-E piece of shit.

They laugh.

DRE  
Things getting crazy.

ERIC  
Things getting *good*.

DRE  
(tamping down his stress)  
Just need some money now...

ERIC  
It'll come. We getting real. Legit.  
Gonna be big.

DRE  
That's right.

They snap. They're together in this. But-- WHOOP! Oh shit!  
Cops. 3 cop cars converge on the street.

COP (ON P.A.)  
Break it up!

The crowd scatters, screaming.

ICE CUBE  
Aw fuck.

His girls leave him in a hurry. A COP grabs a TEEN and puts  
him up against the car.

COP  
You have any weapons on you?

Cube, Dre and Eazy walk into Eazy's house. They all take a  
last look, glaring at the cops.

ERIC  
(re: the cops)  
Muthafuckas.

They lock the front door behind them.

EXT. MACOLA RECORDS - DAY

Cube and Dre wait in Eric's idling car.

ICE CUBE  
What we doing here?

DRE  
Don't know. Eazy said pick him up.

By the LOADING DOCK, REN paces nervously. Suddenly, Eric bursts out the back door of Macola, 2 huge boxes in his arms.

REN  
(whisper shouting)  
Start the goddam car!

Eric and Ren fly into the open door. Dre floors it out of there. Ren introduces himself to Cube and Dre:

ICE CUBE  
What the fuck y'all doing?

EAZY  
Stealing the records.

DRE  
You stealing our own damn records?

ERIC  
More I pay to them, less I pay to you.

ICE CUBE  
But you ain't paid us nothing yet.

Eazy looks at him. Cube rolls his eyes and looks at Ren.

REN  
What up? I'm Ren.

ICE CUBE  
You helping Eazy steal shit?

ERIC  
Nah. He coming onto my label.

Cube and Dre size Ren up.

ICE CUBE  
Label? Man you can't even pay for the records like normal.

DRE  
They gonna catch you.

ERIC  
Fuck 'em.

Quiet in the car. Eric is agitated.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Dude, you driving like a girl. I promised I'd get these over to the swap meet by 4.

Dre looks at him in the rearview.

DRE

Stealing our own records. Selling them outta your car to a swap meet. Man, we gotta take this operation to the next level.

Eric looks out the window. He has to hold onto them.

ERIC

I'm thinking we make ourselves an official group.

(to Cube)

You hot from Stereo Crew and CIA.

(to Dre)

You hot from Wreckin' Cru. Ren's got some dope lyrics. People know Eazy-E now. We put together an All Star group.

ICE CUBE

What we call ourselves?

MC REN

Crazy Motherfuckers.

The guys laugh.

ERIC

Nah. I got it. N.W.A.

ICE CUBE

What that mean?

ERIC

Niggaz With Attitude.

Ren whoops with laughter. Dre chuckles.

ICE CUBE

Hell yes. That's it.

DRE

Hell yes.

ERIC

But listen. Y'all rollin' with me, then you're with me.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
No fuckin' around with other shit.  
This our crew now.

This is a rare moment. Brotherhood washes over the car.

DRE  
This our crew.

ICE CUBE  
For sure.

Eric has kept them in his fold for another day.

DRE  
(quietly)  
But maybe talk to Lonzo. See if he  
could hook you up with someone who  
could help us kick it up.  
(pressing harder)  
I'm running out of time here. I got  
obligations.

Eric looks at him.

INT. MACOLA RECORDS - DAY

Lonzo walks Eric down the hall. Eric eyes the posters on the walls. We see that he's a tiny bit nervous. Lonzo stops at the break room - broken vending machines. Faded poster of Bobby Jimmy and the Critters. And there with a paper cup of coffee is the white-haired white guy, JERRY HELLER.

LONZO  
This is Jerry Heller.

Eric doesn't say a word. He pulls a money roll out of his pocket and slips \$750 to Lonzo. Lonzo smiles, then exits.

JERRY  
Have a seat.

Eric sits in a stained chair and stares at Jerry.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
So what can I do for you?

ERIC  
You ain't doing for me. I'm gonna  
do for you.

Jerry likes the attitude.

JERRY

What are you gonna do for me?

ERIC

I got a hit song-

JERRY

-Let's not get ahead of ourselves.  
You got a song getting airplay. I  
wouldn't call it a hit-

ERIC

-And who you representing these  
days? Who are your big acts?

JERRY

(beat)

I managed Elton John. War. Otis  
Redding. Creedence Clearwater-

ERIC

-And who you manage now? You  
hanging out in the break room of a  
print-your-own record shop, waiting-

JERRY

-Listen. I heard your song. It's  
good.

(beat, seriously sincere)

It's fucking good, man.

ERIC

I know it.

JERRY

So that's the dumbest money you  
ever paid because I would have met  
you for free. You just had to ask.

Okay. Now it's clear: they're kindred spirits.

JERRY (CONT'D)

So what's your plan?

Eric takes a long moment. Does he trust him?

ERIC

We're working on a solo album for  
me, since Eazy-E the one people  
know off *Boyz N Tha Hood*. Then we  
gonna do an NWA record with the  
whole crew. Come out a few months  
later. Gonna be a one two punch.  
And I'm looking at other acts.

ERIC (CONT'D)

There's a girl group JJ Fad. And Dre got this kid from Dallas named D.O.C.

JERRY

-All right. All right. What's this all add up to?

For once, Eric is not quick with an answer.

ERIC

(honest)

Guys all looking to me like I know what I'm doing. I'm keeping this operation together for now but the truth? I know the streets. Not the music business. So fuck if I know what it all adds up to.

JERRY

You're waving your arms a lot. Making a lot of noise. And you don't have a plan for all that?

No one talks to him like that. He stands to go.

EAZY

I come to you because I need someone to deal with the bullshit, not create more bullshit.

JERRY

(sarcastic)

I apologize if I offended you.

ERIC

All right. All right.

(figuring it out)

I'm gonna be the biggest black-owned label in town.

JERRY

That so? You heard of Berry Gordy? Quincy Jones?

ERIC

(only half kidding)

They still alive?

Jerry smiles. The balls on this kid!

ERIC (CONT'D)

You in or out?

Heller sits back.

JERRY  
You know I'm Jewish.

ERIC  
So?  
(moving on)  
What do you think?

JERRY  
I think your song is one of the  
most exciting things I've ever  
heard in my life.

Eric sits back down.

ERIC  
What's that mean?

JERRY  
It means, yeah, I'll deal with your  
bullshit. First order of business  
is to find you guys distribution.

ERIC  
How this gonna work financially?

JERRY  
I'm a manager. I get 20% off the  
top. That's it.

Is he to be believed? Eric - and we - aren't sure.

ERIC  
That's it.

JERRY  
That's it.

Eric takes a long look at him.

ERIC  
I let you in, you with me. Don't  
you ever fuck me.

Heller holds out his hand.

JERRY  
You have my word.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 Don't get your drawers in a bunch.  
 He's not the White devil. Life  
 ain't ever that simple.

They shake.

INT. RECORD EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

A fancy conference room. Views of the Hills. Jerry presses play on a cassette deck. He nervously looks up at 5 WHITE GUYS IN SUITS and gauges their reactions as *8 Ball* begins:

EAZY (V.O.)  
 I don't drink brass monkey. Like  
 the beat funky. Nickname Eazy-E  
 your 8 Ball junkie.

JERRY  
 (speaking over)  
 This is our new track.

EAZY (V.O.)  
 Bass drum kicking, to show my shit  
 Rap a hole in my dick, boy, I don't  
 quit.

JERRY  
 Here are some photos of the guys.

He passes around photos. The Executives stare at photos of Eric bathed in chains. Cube doing his very best scowl.

NWA (V.O.)  
 Crowd rocking motherfucker from  
 around the way. I got a six shooter  
 yo mean brave. Rolling through the  
 hood to find the boys. Kick dust  
 and cuss crank up some noise.  
 Police on my drawers, I have to  
 pause. 40 ounce in my lap and it's  
 freezing my balls.

Jerry bops his head like he's listening to Hall & Oates.

JERRY  
 Powerful. Right?

They just stare at him and he knows he's fucked.

EXT. ERIC'S GARAGE - DAY

Cube and Dre enter Eric's garage. It's pitch dark.

ICE CUBE  
Wanna talk to you about a new song.

They flip on the lights. Yella is in the middle of the floor having sex with a GIRL.

ICE CUBE & DRE  
Oh!

YELLA  
Turn off the damn lights!

Cube and Dre run back out of the garage, laughing.

ICE CUBE  
What the fuck?

DRE  
I coulda gone to my grave without  
seein' his yellow ass.

They can't stop laughing. We take in the hood: A couple of BOYS clown on beat up bikes. A plane approaches LAX.

DRE (CONT'D)  
So what's your new song?

Cube digs a notebook out of his pocket. Dre looks it over.

DRE (CONT'D)  
How's it go?

ICE CUBE  
Fuck tha police coming straight  
from the underground. A young nigga  
got it bad cuz I'm brown. And not  
the other color so police think.  
They have the authority to kill a  
minority.

DRE  
Fuck tha police? Hell no.

Cube's face falls.

ICE CUBE  
Why not?

DRE

I ain't fuckin' with them. They get a nigga in the crosshair, you fucked.

ICE CUBE

Exactly. So fuck them. Everyone says it.

DRE

But not everyone puts it on a damn record.

ICE CUBE

Those muthafuckas-

DRE

--Will fuck you up. Trust me.

20-some years in Compton - Dre has seen unspeakable shit. Cube is disappointed. He puts the notebook in his pocket.

DRE (CONT'D)

Look. We got a month 'til you leave for school, right?

(Cube nods)

We got Eazy paying for studio time. Let's just lay down as much as we can before you go.

He moves into the garage.

DRE (CONT'D)

(derisively)

Fuck the police. Shit.

(conspiratorially)

Let's fuck with them real quick.

He makes a fake gun with his hands. Cube gets it, does the same. Dre kicks in the garage door with his foot.

DRE (CONT'D)

LAPD! Hands out of THE PUSSY!

Inside, Yella yelps. Cube dies laughing.

INT. CUBE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cube packs a suitcase. His mom pokes her head in.

DORIS

Andre is waiting out front for you.  
 (he moves to go)  
 O'Shea. We leave in an hour.

He nods. She lingers, a trace of worry on her face.

EXT. CUBE'S HOUSE - CURB - DAY

Cube and Dre are on the curb. Cube reverentially holds a copy of the *Dopeman* and *8 Ball* LP.

ICE CUBE

Looks dope, man.

DRE

You sure you leaving?

ICE CUBE

(remorseful)  
 Got to have a plan, you know?

DRE

So architectural drafting school?

ICE CUBE

It'll get me a job.  
 (beat)  
 I'll be back to do shows with  
 y'all.

DRE

Or you'll be a World Class drafter.  
 (Cube looks at him)  
 I'm sure Phoenix will be cool.

Cube stands. They hug.

ICE CUBE

Yeah. It'll be cool.

EXT. PHOENIX VISTA - DAY

Cube stands on a road looking out over dry, dusty, quiet, depressing, hot-as-hell Phoenix.

ICE CUBE

Phoenix is bullshit.

Suddenly, 2 FANS approach.

PHOENIX PHIL  
Hey, man. This is you, right?

He holds out the LP. A slow smile overtakes Cube's face.

ICE CUBE  
Nobody ever recognized me before.

FAN #2  
We love your shit, man.

Cube looks around: is this a set up? No. It's for real.

EXT. RESEDA ROLLER RINK - NIGHT

Cube waits impatiently in a parking lot. Finally, Yella, Dre, MC Ren, and Eric pull up in a black Astrovan on rims.

ERIC  
(through the window)  
There's the boy genius.

ICE CUBE  
Fuck you too.

As they get out of the car--

YELLA  
Hey man. How's school?

ICE CUBE  
All right. We gonna do this? We  
supposed to go on in 5 minutes.

They hurry to the stage door. Several RENT-A-COPS stop them.

COP  
Entrance is around front.

ERIC  
We're the goddam show.

COP  
That so?

ICE CUBE  
We're already late!

The cops eye them. Can't believe these guys would be the show. Eric sees he's not winning this fight.

ERIC  
Fuck it.

He moves toward the front of the building. The guys follow.

INT. RESEDA ROLLER RINK - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The CROWD is insane. Eric looks at Yella's pants.

ERIC  
The fuck are those?

YELLA  
Parachute pants.

He looks at the other guys. Ratty t-shirts. Shorts.

ERIC  
Hold up.

Eric actually looks nervous. We're not sure why.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I don't want to look bootleg  
walking in off the street in front  
of this crowd. What y'all got in  
the bags?

Everyone starts digging through their duffle bags.

ICE CUBE  
I got a Raiders shirt. Jeans.

YELLA  
I got a Raiders hat.

DRE  
I got a shirt, too.

ERIC  
All right everybody put on your  
Raiders shit.

They quickly pull the signature black gear over their heads.

INT. RESEDA ROLLER RINK - STAGE - NIGHT

It's hot. It's dark. It's a roller rink for fuck's sake. But the CROWD is going crazy for NWA. This is the hometown crowd. *This* is who NWA was created for.

Jerry enters with BRYAN TURNER, a skinny White Canadian.

JERRY

When you hear them live it's a  
whole different thing.

Bryan looks nervous as hell in this all-Black crowd.

The guys take the stage and the CROWD loses it. SCREAMING.  
SHOUTING. TOTAL INSANITY. They launch into DOPEMAN. Every fan  
knows every lyric.

ICE CUBE

It was once said by a man who  
couldn't quit. Dopeman please can I  
have another hit?

And the song continues. The NWA guys are thrilled with the  
crowd's response. Eric smiles at Dre. This is the best  
feeling in the world.

Jerry looks at Bryan, who is completely enthralled by the  
energy. He doesn't need to say a word to sell him. The  
crowd's response is so visceral, Bryan is hooked.

INT. RESEDA ROLLER RINK - NIGHT

In a crowded, makeshift backstage area, the guys are  
surrounded by a preposterous number of YOUNG WOMEN.

DRE

(quietly to Yella)  
Yo, man. I can't bring these girls  
back to my auntie's house.

YELLA

I already got 3 coming with me to  
my apartment. You bring some. We  
divide 'em up there.

They pound. Dre grabs Cube.

DRE

Yo Cube. Can I borrow your ride to  
get to Yella's?

Dre is being pulled by TWO giggling girls.

ICE CUBE

I didn't get my mom's car tonight.  
She dropped me off.

ERIC

Excuse me muthafukkas.

Eric is surrounded by a HAREM OF 10 WOMEN. It's just ridiculous. Everyone moves to let them pass.

ICE CUBE  
 (to Dre, teasing)  
 You all impressed with yourself  
 with just 2.

Dre watches Eric go.

DRE  
 Fuck you. You comin'?

ICE CUBE  
 (frustrated)  
 I gotta catch a flight.

But just then, Eric is back.

ERIC  
 Need y'all in the van. Now.

INT. BLACK ASTROVAN - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The BUZZ of FIFTY WAITING GIRLS filters into the van. The guys are all crowded inside. The door slides open and Jerry enters with Bryan Turner.

TURNER  
 (starts shaking hands)  
 Great show. Bryan Turner. Loved  
 your set.

ERIC  
 (to Jerry)  
 This happening?

JERRY  
 (almost emotional)  
 It's happening.

DRE  
 What's happening?

JERRY  
 Bryan, you do the honors.

Bryan uncomfortably squats on the floor.

TURNER  
 I'm the owner of a new label,  
 Priority Records. And we'd like to  
 offer Ruthless Records a home.

TURNER (CONT'D)

I'd like to put out an Eazy-E album immediately then follow that up with an NWA album. I think you guys are gonna be big. And I'd like to go with you on the journey.

JERRY

Terrific. Isn't that great?

DRE

I'm not familiar with Priority Records.

TURNER

Well, we're new. I have lots of industry experience but this is my thing. My venture. And I only have one other act signed right now, so-

DRE

-Who's the other act?

Jerry looks at his feet.

TURNER

Very successful act with a song on the Billboard Hot 100. But they have an R&B sound. Won't compete with you in any way. I'll be able to focus all my attention on you.

DRE

What's the name of the act?

TURNER

(swallowing)

The California Raisins. You know their work?

The guys stare at Turner.

ERIC

Yeah. They heard it through the grapevine.

Jerry laughs.

JERRY

Good one! Look. Bryan is making us a very generous offer. It's a wonderful opportunity.

ERIC  
 (holding out his hand)  
 Thank you very much.

Bryan likes this.

TURNER  
 You're welcome. Welcome to Priority  
 Records!

The guys just look at him. Jerry gets Bryan out of there fast. He opens the van door.

JERRY  
 (leading him away)  
 Let's discuss the scheduling.

They exit, sliding the door. Ren turns to Eazy:

REN  
 How you hustle that dude into  
 giving us a contract?

ERIC  
 (shit eating grin)  
 It's what I do.

DRE  
 The motherfuckin' raisins?

ERIC  
 I'm tapped out, man. I can't keep  
 fronting all this cash. You wanna  
 get in the studio or not?

Eric locks eyes with Dre. Again, there's that intensity between them. Is this their dream coming true?

ICE CUBE  
 You on top of the financials with  
 this dude? We still ain't seen no  
 real money.

ERIC  
 I'm on it man. Don't worry. Next  
 year gonna be our year.

Eric opens the door, letting the Girls at them.

**TITLE: 1988**

OPEN ON: TV NEWS FOOTAGE of the murder of Karen Toshima.

## NEWS ANCHOR

27-year-old Karen Toshima was gunned down right outside the gates of UCLA in a hail of bullets as rival gangs brought their fight out of the inner city and onto the quiet streets of Westwood Village.

## WHITE UCLA STUDENT

(crying)

I saw her lying there on the sidewalk outside the restaurant. On the street. And the Black guys were shooting-

PULL BACK from the tv to reveal Eric in bed with TWO WOMEN. He watches the news out of the corner of his eye.

## CHIEF DARYL GATES

I am assigning thirty police officers to the case. We will catch Ms. Toshima's murderers. The streets of Los Angeles are safe...

One of the Women licks Eazy's stomach. The report switches from Daryl Gates to an African American Community Leader:

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADER

There were 387 gang-related murders last year. One shooting in Westwood and the whole city's up in arms!

Eric grabs the 2ND WOMAN'S breasts as CONGRESSWOMAN MAXINE WATERS offers her 2 cents:

## MAXINE WATERS

There is a deep feeling in the community that the philosophy of the police department is to 'let them kill each other' in South Central LA. The Black community has known for years that a problem is not a problem until it hits the White community.

Eric turns off the tv and gets back to what's important.

**A MASH UP OF NEWSCLIPS. CHAOS IS HERE--**

A GEORGE HW BUSH CAMPAIGN AD SHOWS A PICTURE OF THE BLACK BOGEY MAN -- WILLIE HORTON.

## ANNOUNCER

Dukakis on crime.

MIKE TYSON KNOCKS OUT MICHAEL SPINX. He raises his arms!

The LA RAIDERS run onto the field.

NEWS COVERAGE - the AIDS Quilt is on the Lawn in DC.

SMASH INTO A NEWS CONFERENCE IN LA--

CHIEF DARYL GATES

I am pleased to announce Operation  
Hammer. We will make life miserable  
for gang members.

EXT. RUN DOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

POOR BLACK PEOPLE in their pajamas run out of the apartment building as the LAPD conducts a sweep.

WE SPEED UP TO--

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

RONALD REGAN up close.

REAGAN

Just. Say. No.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL STREET - DAY

A TEENAGE BOY, covered by a white sheet, bleeds out in the street. He's got one brand new Air Jordan on one foot, the other foot missing the shoe. POLICE OFFICERS mill about. Nearby, a WOMAN screams. FASTER--

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

An HONOR GUARD stands at attention as another Police Officer is buried. OH SHIT--

EXT. COMPTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Even NANCY REAGAN gets in on the act, riding atop a battering ram, smashing straight into someone's house.

AND ON. AND ON. AND ON AS THE WAR ON DRUGS EXPLODES.

INT. PHOENIX AIRPORT - DAY

Cube, legs spread, is not happy at all. A COP frisks him. And the kicker: The Cop is LATINO.

COP

I see you here every weekend.

ICE CUBE

I do shows in LA. I go to school here.

COP

(whispering)

You think I'm a idiot? I know you're dealing dope through here.

The cop lets up - there's nothing on Cube. Cube fastens his belt. The fucking humiliation. Enough!

ICE CUBE

(furious)

How's that war on drugs goin' for y'all? You winning yet?

Now the cop is pissed. He slams Cube against the wall.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)

I'm always gonna be a suspect, right? 'Cause the way I look?

COP

One more goddam word out of you, I take you in. You get sent up. While you're there maybe you get into an fight and you accidentally kill the guy. Now you're in for life. So right now. If I were you. I would shut your goddam mouth.

Cube fumes.

EXT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Eric, Yella, Ren, Arabian Prince, D.O.C, Tyree, Dre and Donovan check out Yella's new car, a decked-out 1984 Toyota Supra. The bass is cranked and the car vibrates so hard it looks like it's going to fall apart.

YELLA

I'm getting the equalizer installed next week.

REN

You filled your backseat up with the woofers. What's the point of a car like that if you can't fuck in the back?

DRE

Yella doesn't need a girl.  
(does jerk off motion)  
He's got his right hand.

The guys die laughing. Cube's Dad drops him off at the curb.

ERIC

You late.

ICE CUBE

(mumbling)  
Missed the fucking plane.

They move inside.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

They settle in...

ERIC

(to all)  
Let's go! They want the masters in 3 weeks.

ICE CUBE

(nervous)  
Hey. Hey listen up!  
(they stop)  
I know Dre don't wanna do this song. But... you gotta admit the police been out of control.  
(everyone stares at him)  
I mean, they always been fucked up, but lately... If you're Black you don't even have to do shit and you'll end up getting harassed.

YELLA

Lock me up for driving my friend's car.

MC REN

Cracked in the head just walking down the street-

ICE CUBE

They trying to control us like animals. And I'm tired of it.

EAZY

-All right. You got a song or we gonna just sit around here bitching about it?

ICE CUBE

(giving it his all)

Fuck tha police comin straight from the underground. Young nigga got it bad cuz I'm brown. And not the other color so police think they have the authority to kill a minority. Fuck that shit, cuz I ain't tha one for a punk muthafucka with a badge and a gun. To be beatin' on and thrown in jail. We could go toe to toe in the middle of a cell. Fuckin' with me cuz I'ma teenager. With a little bit of gold-

He goes on for a few more lines until Eazy can't take it.

EAZY

Hold up, hold up.

Silence in the room. It's like everyone just got punched in the gut. Ren actually claps.

ERIC

That's hardcore. That's us.

(to Dre)

That's what we do.

Everyone agrees.

DRE

(grudgingly)

Okay. Let's try it.

ERIC

(to Dre)

Man, you're crazy. We doing that.

Cube feels his stress ease a bit.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry has a new, but still shitty, office. He shows Eric an album -- Eazy-E's *Eazy Duz It*. Eric touches the cover.

Calm washes over him - the feeling of success bringing him the peace he's always hunting for.

JERRY

Listen, Eazy. I've been thinking.  
You have two albums dropping soon.  
Some money coming in from Priority.  
It's time to move up in the world.  
(Eric looks at him)  
Why don't we get you a pussy hide  
out? Near me.

ERIC

This a keep your enemies close  
situation?

JERRY

This is a look out for your friends  
situation. It's nice out by me.  
Quiet. Serene. I'll show you the  
good restaurants.  
(beat)  
I'm worried about you. All the  
attention you're starting to get.  
The streets are going to come after  
you. You have a big bullseye on  
your back. I don't want to see you  
living in the hood anymore.

But Eric's not paying attention. He takes the record out of the sleeve. The sun glints off the slick new wax.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

200 CROWD EXTRAS stand by. A jailhouse set is built on the stage. CAMERAMEN, BOOM OPERATORS, COSTUMERS... you name it. It looks like a real, professional video shoot. We PICK UP as Cube walks toward Eazy and Yella.

ICE CUBE

Sorry I'm late. Plane got held up.  
Where do you want me?

ERIC

The director's got a plan.  
Dre, Ren and Yella gonna be on  
stage. They get the crowd chanting  
"We want Eazy. We want Eazy!" And  
I'm gonna jump in, glass flying,  
like I'm breaking out of jail.

ICE CUBE

That's cool. Where am I gonna be?

ERIC

We got you in the front. Here.

He points to the front of the Crowd - where the extras are.  
Cube looks at him.

ICE CUBE

You serious?

ERIC

What?

ICE CUBE

Man, I don't want to be in no  
fucking audience.

YELLA

You ain't been around and we got to  
get this video done fast. We got it  
all arranged.

ICE CUBE

(hurt)

For real, Eazy?

This is the sort of shit that Eric hates dealing with.

ERIC

It's cool man.

Eazy walks away, unable to handle the conflict. Cube is  
pissed. And we hear the girls sing "Eazy! Eazy!"

ERIC (CONT'D)

You coming with us to New York,  
right?

ICE CUBE

What are you talking about?

But Eric is gone.

YELLA

NWA's representing the west coast  
at a rap seminar.

(with meaning)

We gonna play the Apollo Theater.

Cube is 19. This is a big fucking deal. As they talk, TRACK  
TO Eric who eyes an ENORMOUS GUY hanging out in the crowd.

ERIC

(quietly to Ren)

Who that?

REN

Suge Knight. You know. Used to go  
to Centennial. I don't know why  
D.O.C. hanging with him.

For some reason, Eric does not like the look of him.

INT. THE APOLLO THEATER - DAY

The guys are backstage, nervous. The crowd boos a VERY SWEET  
GIRL SINGER off the stage.

MC REN

They booing a 13-year-old girl!

An ELDERLY STAGE HAND shuffles past, takes a look at them.

STAGE HAND

Where you boys from?

DRE

L.A.

STAGE HAND

Figured you weren't from around  
here. Khaki pants. Goddam. And I  
ain't seen a Jehri curl in years.  
Good luck!

The guys exchange looks. They run and rub the famous stump.

ERIC

Everybody stay chill. It's gonna be  
all right.

DRE

(sarcastic)

Yeah. It's just the Apollo.

Everyone looks at him, terrified.

INT. APOLLO THEATER - NIGHT

The lights come up. The crowd looks at them. They look at the  
crowd. A bead of sweat drips down Dre's forehead as he  
presses the first chord of *Boyz N Tha Hood*.

ERIC

Cruisin' down the street in my 6-4.  
Jockin' the freaks. Clockin' the-

And the first BOO begins. Another joins in. And another. Until the entire Apollo theater is on their feet, booing the guys down. Eric stops singing. They leave the stage humiliated. The whole thing lasted about 7 seconds.

BACKSTAGE... They are so embarrassed they can't speak.

YELLA

Why we do that song? We know nobody on the east coast understand-

ICE CUBE

-Cuz that's the one. That's what people know us for.

MC REN

We got new material. Better material.

ICE CUBE

Why's it better? That's song's the shit. If they don't like it on the east coast, fuck 'em.

DRE

Enough east coast west coast-

ERIC

(quietly)

-Would y'all shut the fuck up?

They stop, panting, listening to him.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Yo. We hot. We gonna be hotter. Our record's out next week.

(re: the audience)

So fuck 'em. They'll be linin' up to suck our dicks next week when our record drops.

ICE CUBE

But E-

ERIC

Enough a this shit! I ain't standing around listening to y'all bitch and moan.

It came out a little too harsh. But fuck it. Eric ain't one to apologize. He puts his sun glasses on. Again, there's no way he's going to get into a confrontation. He walks off.

SLAM TO BLACK:

REN (V.O.)  
 Oh yeah. Right about now, Compton's  
 in tha muthafuckin' houuuuuuuuse!

POW! Right into the title track of *Straight Outta Compton*...

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

TIGHT ON everyone in a circle, looking down, serious scowls on their mugs. Eric points a gun at us. This is the famous image of the *Straight Outta Compton* cover.

FLASH. A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps the picture.

CUT TO:

NOW WE SEE THE ALBUM UP CLOSE.

Eric stares down at it in his hands.

INT. RECORD STATION - DAY

A RADIO STATION EXECUTIVE has the record in *his* hands.

EXECUTIVE  
 We're not playing this filth. No.  
 No way.

He drops the album into the trash.

EXT. ROADIUM SWAP MEET - DAY

Steve Yano looks down at the record in his hands, a look of awe on his face. Behind him, Eric counts out an enormous wad of cash. The song keeps playing.

YANO  
 This is the banned album and I have  
 it!

He passes copies out to a LINE OF FANS A MILE LONG.

EXT. WATTS PARK - DAY

KIDS IN WATTS crowd around a record player--

TEENAGER

You hear this shit?! You can't buy  
it. Can't hear it on the radio. But  
I got it!

We FOCUS ON one 15-YEAR-OLD BOY who is so moved, so amazed,  
so blown away by the profundity of the words, the music, the  
fucking power, that he sits down.

15 YEAR OLD

That's me. They singing about me.

TEENAGER

You cannot ignore us. You cannot  
deny us. They telling the whole  
damn world, "Kiss my Black ass.  
Kiss my muthafuckin' Black ass."

15 YEAR OLD

I got to get a copy.

EXT. CITY TERRACE PARK - EAST LOS ANGELES

A HUGE CROWD of HISPANIC TEENAGERS party in the park, singing  
and grinding along to the song.

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - DAY

Bryan Turner looks down at a Billboard Magazine. *Straight  
Outta Compton* has entered the charts at #XX. He smiles.

INT. WHITE SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

A bunch of WHITE TEENAGERS play ping-pong in their basement.  
A TV is on in the corner.

WHITE TEENAGER

Did you hear this?

They all look at the TV. Someone turns up the volume:

ANNOUNCER

...Rappers from Compton, California  
that go by the name of N.W.A. are  
going head to head with MTV because  
the music channel has refused to  
play their video, citing graphic  
imagery and excessive violence...

WHITE BOY

It's banned from MTV?

The ping-pong ball drops. In a single line the kids file out of the room.

IMAGES SPEED UP

TITLES for YO! MTV RAPS. The guys take a ride on the back of a flatbed with FAB FIVE FREDDY.

FAB FIVE FREDDY  
We in Compton California and I'm  
cooling out with Eazy E and NWA!

The guys are posed like a posse of serious tough guys.

FLASH TO:

A NEWSCASTER-

NEWSCASTER  
White teenagers in suburbia are  
glorifying the excesses of what's  
being called gangster rap.

FLASH TO:

THE GUYS pose for THE COVER OF NEWSWEEK.

Chains glinting. Scowls scowling.

FLASH TO:

EXT. A RECORD STORE - DAY

A PROTEST. PEOPLE stomp on cds and hold up signs that say "NWA Is Not OK" and "Ban Gangsta Rap.'

FLASH TO:

A FEMINIST is furious.

FEMINIST  
They can wrap it up in any package  
they want. They can call it  
political. Call it the truth as  
they see it. I call it  
misogynistic. Violent. Disgusting.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

As the guys walk down the steps--

WHITE JOURNALIST

And what responsibility do you think you bear as spokespersons for Black inner city youth?

EAZY

Do I look like a muthafuckin' role model?

He pushes past the journalist.

ICE CUBE

We made this music for the underground. Y'all the ones who put it on the radio.

FLASH TO:

QUICK CLIPS OF LIPS. BLACK AND WHITE. SAYING--

NWA. NWA. NWA. NWA. NWA. NWA. NWA. NWA.

BACK TO:

EAZY RESPONDS:

EAZY

Why people worrying about a few cuss words? Don't our government got bigger things to worry about?

This lands hard. The sequence halts, underscoring this point.

EXT. COMPTON STREET - DAY

PAT CHARBONNET, a publicist, watches as the guys are interviewed.

ICE CUBE

We make these records for us. Words like bitch and nigga may be shocking for somebody who is white, but that's not why we use them. It's everyday language of people around my neighborhood. When they refer to a girl, they might say 'bitch' or when referring to a guy, they might say, 'that nigga over there.' It's not used by us the way bigots used to use it.

Pat is intrigued. Cube takes the political content seriously, as opposed to--

ERIC

(smiling)

A woman is a woman. A bitch is someone who carries herself in a stuck-up way. A bitch is someone who fucks everyone except me.

Pat does not love that answer. As the interview ends, Pat pulls Cube aside--

PAT

Hi. Pat Charbonnet. I'm the publicist for Priority. You were saying some pretty provocative stuff back there.

ICE CUBE

Am I in trouble?

PAT

(she smiles)

I'd like to put you out front more. You're the writer. You have a clear sense of what these songs are trying to communicate.

ICE CUBE

I guess I do.

PAT

Great.

She looks down at her pager, which is going off.

ICE CUBE

Can I ask you a question? Do you know if they're paying for our food on the road?

She smiles. He's so young.

PAT

I would think so. What does it say in your contract?

ICE CUBE

I don't have a contract.

PAT

(thinks that's crazy)

Why not?

Uh oh.

EXT. WESTLAKE HOUSE - DAY

Jerry stands with Eric outside his house in the suburbs. On the side is spray painted: "Go Home Nigger."

JERRY

(horrified)

I don't know what to say. What is wrong with people? I'll get you a new house.

EAZY

Fuck 'em. I pay my taxes.

(he walks away)

Paint over it.

JERRY

I brought you out here. I'm sorry. I'll pay for the painting.

EAZY

Jerry. You ain't responsible for this shit.

JERRY

I'm responsible for you. Without you I'm back at Macola, ambulance chasing any guy who walks in off the street with \$500 bucks.

Eazy looks at him, uncomfortable with this emotional display.

EAZY

It's cool, man. Tell the painters to paint it black. Jet. Black.

Jerry nods, still choked up.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Go home and get packed, Jerry. 'Cause America ain't ready for us.

JERRY

Wait. Before we...

(digs for papers)

We have to run over to the bank. I got all these deposits I need you to make. Lot of money here.

EAZY

You do it.

JERRY

I'm not on the account.

EAZY  
So get on the account.

JERRY  
You sure?

Eazy pauses, looks at Jerry. He warns him:

EAZY  
You and me in this thing.

The intensity of Eazy's look is discomfoting.

JERRY  
(honest)  
That's right. We're in this thing.  
The only thing I wake up thinking  
every day is how I can take care of  
you best.

And for Eazy that's enough said. Jerry watches him walk off.

EXT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

TWO TOUR BUSES idle in the lot. ROADIES load equipment, a bunch of CUTE GIRLS giggle as they get on the bus. The guys are pumped up, wearing their best Fila and Ellesse suits. Eric looks at the bus -- NWA is painted on it.

EAZY  
(to Jerry, re: the sign)  
Nice touch.

ROADIE  
(calling)  
Yo Eazy! This the one you want?

He hoists an assault rifle out of a duffle bag.

JERRY  
(panicking)  
What the fuck is that?

EAZY  
(to Jerry)  
It's cool.  
(to Roadie)  
Yeah. Put it there with the nines.

JERRY  
Eazy. You can't bring all these  
guns on the bus.

Cube, Ren and Yella check out the bag full of guns, clown around, point the guns at each other.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You're going to Tennessee. Alabama. A busload of Black guys can't roll into the deep south with weapons.

Cube looks up, silently assessing the conversation.

EAZY

I ain't rolling on a busload of Black guys *without* weapons. You want me to go out there without protection? Fuck that. You're the one said I got a bullseye on my back.

JERRY

In the hood. The bullseye is in the hood.

EAZY

Least I know the rules in the hood. I don't know what's waiting for me out there. Do you?

JERRY

We hired bodyguards, let them-

EAZY

-The guns stay, man.

Eazy walks away from him. Jerry grabs his arm.

JERRY

Put the guns with the crew. You guys on one bus. Crew and guns on the other. We get pulled over, you guys don't know anything about what's going on on that bus.

Eazy pulls his arm back.

EAZY

(sarcastic)

You the boss, Jerry.

WE PICK UP Dre saying goodbye to Tyree--

TYREE

Maybe I could meet up with you? Check out Nebraska or some shit.

It's so plain and sweet. He's just a kid. Dre feels tremendous love for him. He pulls him in for a hug.

DRE

Hell no. You got school. Can't do that if you're on the road with me.

Tyree is mad. He pulls out of the hug.

DRE (CONT'D)

Tyree-

TYREE

Have a good trip.

He walks off. Dre is torn. Should he go after him? He doesn't.

MOVE TO-- Cube catches up with Jerry.

ICE CUBE

Hey yo Jerry, man.

JERRY

What can I do for you?

ICE CUBE

When are we gonna get some contracts?

Jerry doesn't miss a beat.

JERRY

I'll get right on that.

EXT. STYLIZED MARQUIS - NIGHT

We see the line up for the tour. NFL-like video shots of each of the acts: Salt-N-Pepa. Kid-N-Play, Too Short, Kwame, The D.O.C. AND Headlining... NWA!

INT. ATLANTA ARENA - NIGHT

The guys are on stage. We've never seen them happier or more in their element. The opening sirens of GANGSTA, GANGSTA begin. We watch with awe as they perform their hearts out. They have earned it. They are stars.

ICE CUBE

Here's a little somethin' bout a nigga like me. Never shoulda been let out the penitentiary.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)

Ice Cube would like ta say that I'm  
a crazy muthafucka from around the  
way.

Since I was a youth, I smoked weed  
out. Now I'm the muthafucka that ya  
read about.

It plays like a flat out, good time, rock concert. The CROWD  
loves them. And we can't help but dance in our seats.

EXT. NASHVILLE THEATER - NIGHT

The guys get off the bus. Nerves play with them. Eazy glances  
up at the marquis -- EAZY-E and NWA. Dre slaps Eazy's back.

INT. NASHVILLE THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The crowd CHEERS as D.O.C. finishes. Eazy stretches.

REN

(to Dre)

You see how White the audience is?

He's right. White people make up a majority of the audience.  
It's a little weird. Jerry notices the place is packed with  
COPS. Mean ones. They don't appear to be enjoying the show.

JERRY

(in Eazy's ear)

Don't do *Fuck Tha Police*.

And for once, Eazy simply nods in agreement. Jerry watches  
the guys enter the stage to rapturous applause.

ANNOUNCER

N.W.A.!!!!

INT. NASHVILLE HOTEL - LATE NIGHT

WE TRACK THROUGH discarded clothes, shoes, panties until we  
find Yella and Dre. They're in (separate) double beds, having  
sex with TWO FANS. As they do their work...

YELLA

I can go longer.

DRE

Fuck that.

YELLA

Watch.

KEEP TRACKING into the hallway where Ren and Cube stare down a LINE OF EAGER AND WILLING WOMEN.

ICE CUBE  
This is fucking unreal.

REN  
I call the one with the dookie braids.

ICE CUBE  
(pissed)  
Man...

TRACK DOWN TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE...

INTO another hotel room. CLOSE ON: Eazy. He's sitting on the edge of a bed, in the middle of a conversation with Jerry.

EAZY  
He says he wants to see a contract.

JERRY  
Cube has made more money this year than any other 20-year-old kid out of South Central-- Excuse me.

He looks down. Now we see that he's just stepped on a WOMAN who's in the middle of blowing Eazy.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
When you're done here, maybe you talk to him.

EAZY  
(grinning)  
It's gonna be a long night.

JERRY  
Someday you might want something more than 100 blow jobs a day.

Eazy looks at him like he's crazy.

EAZY  
I'm not dealing with contract shit. That's why you're here. Handle it.

Jerry turns to go. He shuts the door.

EXT. NASHVILLE HOTEL - MORNING

The guys, their GIRLS and the Roadies tumble out of the hotel, looking like shit. TWO COPS sit in a car, watching.

COP

What's the next stop on their tour?

The cops look at each other.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY

The guys are hanging out in a booth, bickering.

REN

That's retarded.

DRE

I'm in.

Cube is ignoring them, writing in his notebook.

YELLA

Hell yeah!

D.O.C.

Tell us again how you keep score.

YELLA

Getting jacked off, quarter point.  
A blowjob, half a point. And the  
pussy, one point. So where  
everybody at?

DRE

2.

REN

Me too. 2.

YELLA

Thought you said it's retarded.

REN

It is.

EAZY

10.

ICE CUBE & DRE

10?!

A WAITRESS delivers food.

REN  
How's that even possible?

EAZY  
I'm a machine.

DRE  
You got any feeling left in your  
dick?

EAZY  
I'm the Energizer Bunny. I keep  
comin' and comin' and comin' and-

ICE CUBE  
(murmuring)  
-We gonna need another bus just to  
carry your Trojans.

And ELDERLY COUPLE looks at them. Eazy notices, talks louder.

EAZY  
Nah, man. Lambskins.

DRE  
Lambskins? Those don't protect for  
shit.

EAZY  
What the point of putting it in the  
pussy if you don't feel the pussy?

Dre is disturbed. Everyone else laughs.

INT. ALABAMA STATE POLICE STATION - DAY

A TROOPER pulls a fax off the machine. Reads.

TROOPER  
(to his PARTNER)  
We got some rappers coming through  
town who think they're real funny.

He shows him the fax.

TROOPER #2  
I think we should share these  
lyrics with some other departments.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENTS NATIONWIDE

QUICK SHOTS as POLICE across America receive faxes of NWA lyrics. The LAST SHOT is a CINCINNATI POLICE OFFICER reading:

CINCINNATI POLICE  
 (incredulous)  
 Fuck tha police?

INT. ALABAMA ARENA - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Through the walls, we hear KID N PLAY perform. As our guys head out, Cube quietly asks Eazy:

ICE CUBE  
 Yo man. I'm still waiting for that contract.

EAZY  
 Contracts ain't my department.  
 That's Jerry's arena.

ICE CUBE  
 But I'm asking you.

EAZY  
 I take care of you. Why you even question me?

ICE CUBE  
 We're 2 weeks in to a national tour and I haven't seen the payscale.

EAZY  
 The producers got a little something up front because they made the music, and the performers-

ICE CUBE  
 Whoa. Whoa. What producers?

EAZY  
 Me. Dre. Yella.

ICE CUBE  
 The fuck are you talking about?

EAZY  
 Producers get paid more-

ICE CUBE  
 -I produced just as much as Yella fucking produced.

EAZY

-You a lyricist. A performer-

ICE CUBE

-How you gonna produce songs  
without lyrics-

EAZY

-It's how it is, man. It's how the  
industry is-

ICE CUBE

-Fuck that-

EAZY

-Producers get paid more-

ICE CUBE

-That's fucking bullshit. Eric. You  
living in a house up in Westlake  
Village and I'm still staying at my  
momma's-

A STAGE HAND interrupts--

STAGE HAND

You're on.

Cube is so pissed he seethes.

ICE CUBE

I want to see it in writing how  
much I'm getting.

Eazy walks away from him.

EAZY

Talk to Jerry.

Cube can't believe it.

INT. ANOTHER ARENA - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

The NWA guys and several LADIES watch a video, cracking up. A  
ROADIE whispers into Dre's ear and Dre walks off. Suddenly, a  
drunk D.O.C. sees someone-

D.O.C.

How you doin', man?

Everyone turns to look-- SUGE KNIGHT is there.

D.O.C. (CONT'D)  
 Everybody. This Suge. He gonna be  
 kicking it with me.

EAZY  
 Now you need a bodyguard?

D.O.C.  
 Hell yeah. You seen all the bitches  
 trying to get at me?

As everyone laughs, Eazy watches Suge, stone-faced. He's not at all happy that he's there. But all the reverie stops as Dre walks back into the room, looking like hell. No one has to say a word. Something is wrong. Eazy gets up, goes to him--

DRE  
 (quietly)  
 My brother's dead. He got into a  
 fight. Somebody blindsided him and  
 busted his head on a curb...

No one knows what to say. Dre holds a look with Eric, who doesn't move to comfort him. Dre turns and exits.

EXT. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CEMETERY - DAY

Dre cries as his brother is lowered into the ground.

CUTAWAYS--

MORE FAXES, slowly working their way across America. POLICE DEPARTMENT TO POLICE DEPARTMENT TO...

EXT. FBI - WASHINGTON DC - ESTABLISHING SHOT.

MILT AHLERICH, Assistant Director of the FBI, reads the fax.

MILT AHLERICH  
 (yelling to ASSISTANT)  
 I want everything you can find on  
 this rap group Niggaz With  
 Attitude.

INT. PHILADELPHIA ARENA - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Dre storms in. Everyone except Eazy follows.

DRE  
 That's the worst fucking show ever.  
 The fuck happened with the lights?

YELLA  
They the same as always-

DRE  
-No they not. And you fuckin around  
with the sound, man.

He throws a chair against the wall.

YELLA  
I didn't do shit with-

Then Dre throws a lamp. Everyone stares at him as he falls apart. He finds a plate of food and smashes that. A hammered D.O.C. joins him. Soon they're squirting mustard, shoving tomatoes, you name it... food flies everywhere. The place is utterly trashed when Eazy walks in.

EAZY  
The fuck, man?  
(to everyone else)  
Y'all let him do this?

Dre stops, panting with anger, sadness, frustration. Eazy takes his arm. Pulls him away.

EAZY (CONT'D)  
Can't do this shit, Dre. You need  
time, take time. But you can't be  
destroying shit on the tour, man.

Dre rips his arm away from Eazy, then storms out.

INT. PRIORITY RECORDS - DAY

**TITLE: AUGUST 1, 1989**

Bryan Turner scans a fax, going pale white as he reads.

INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Jerry talks to the guys. The fun atmosphere is over.

MC REN  
From the FBI?

JERRY  
From Assistant Director Milton  
Ahlerich.

DRE  
What's it say?

JERRY

A song recorded by the rap group  
N.W.A...encourages violence against  
and disrespect for the law  
enforcement officer and has been  
brought to my attention...  
Advocating violence and assault is  
wrong. Bah dum, dum, dum...

(skipping)

Law enforcement officers dedicate  
their lives...and recordings such  
as the one from N.W.A. are both  
discouraging and degrading....  
Music plays a significant role in  
society and I wanted you to be  
aware of the FBI's position  
relative to this song and its  
message. I believe my views reflect  
the opinion of the entire law  
enforcement community.

YELLA

So what's that mean?

ICE CUBE

Means the 1st Amendment don't mean  
shit when it comes to a bunch a  
niggas.

JERRY

Our promoters are insisting you  
don't play *Fuck Tha Police* for the  
remainder of the tour. No one will  
insure you if you play it.

ICE CUBE

Why?

JERRY

They're afraid of it. Of you.

EAZY

Release that letter to the press.  
(everyone looks at him)  
One thing we learned with the  
protests. The bans. You can't buy  
publicity like that. They poke us,  
we swing on 'em.

INT. JOE LOUIS ARENA - DETROIT - NIGHT

Ren and Cube huddle backstage. Slick Rick does his thing.

ICE CUBE  
 (whispering)  
 My lawyer says, if they give us  
 contracts, we don't sign until he  
 looks at them.

REN  
 I'm not signing nothing.

Dre approaches.

DRE  
 This is bullshit. They putting us  
 on second. We got the hottest  
 record. We should be going next to  
 last, right before LL.

REN  
 These promoters been riding us  
 since we stepped off the damn bus.

ICE CUBE  
 We should do *Fuck Tha Police*.

REN  
 We promised we wouldn't do that  
 shit.

ICE CUBE  
 Fuck it. They putting us on second.

They think about this for a second.

DRE  
 If I throw it on, you better do it.

REN  
 I don't know, man.

INT. JOE LOUIS ARENA - DETROIT - NIGHT

On stage, they finish up *Straight Outta Compton*. Dre is on  
 the turntables. Ren and Cube on the mic. The crowd is going  
 bananas. Chanting "EAZY! EAZY! EAZY!"

YELLA  
 (to Cube)  
 Introduce Eazy, man. Bring him on.

But instead, Cube looks at Dre.

DRE  
 We doing it?

Cube nods once. Yeah. It's on.

MC REN  
Drop that shit.

The music starts up.

ICE CUBE  
(rapping)  
Fuck tha police coming straight  
from the underground.

Chaos breaks loose. Everything everyone has always been afraid of - rioting, mayhem - busts loose. A gun fires! IN THE CROWD - SCREAMS of terror. PEOPLE SCRAMBLE FOR THE EXITS.

ON STAGE - the guys are nervous as hell. From their POV, it looks like a massive wave of chaos is coming right at them. HUNDREDS of people are trying to storm the stage. Suddenly, POW, POW, POW, POW. Gunshots.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)  
Oh shit.

The guys drop their mics and get the hell off the stage.

BACKSTAGE-- They run past a furious Eazy--

EAZY  
Why the fuck did you do that...?

ICE CUBE  
(as he runs)  
Dre started the record.

Shit gets hotter. MEN swarm, badges coming out of their sweatshirts. Undercover Detroit Police.

COP  
POLICE!

Mayhem. Complete craziness. Fighting, pushing, cops hemming people up against the wall.

EAZY  
Let's go.

Eazy, Yella and Cube are together. They bolt through the crowd and immediately into an idling van.

OUTSIDE--

Jerry is yelling at the DRIVER of the EQUIPMENT BUS-

JERRY

I don't give a fuck about the  
goddam crew. Get that motherfucking  
bus over state lines, now!

The doors close. The bus pulls out abruptly.

PICK UP

Ren and Dre. They've been separated from the other guys. They bolt out of the Arena, wearing nothing but t-shirts. It's Detroit. It's winter. It's 5 fucking degrees outside and these guys are from California. There's no choice. They run.

They run off down the street, through the snow, shaking.

INT. DETROIT HOTEL - NIGHT

Ren and Dre stagger toward their room, panting, nearly frozen. They run right into Eazy, Yella and Cube, arms full of suitcases.

EAZY

Where the fuck you been? Come on.  
We got your shit. Let's go.

TURN BACK TO THE ELEVATORS--

The doors open immediately. A GUY holds the door open.

GUY

Y'all coming?  
(the guys pile on)  
Y'all here?

EAZY

Let's go, man.

The doors close. The Guy hits the emergency stop. Then pulls out his badge.

GUY

Detroit PD. You all under arrest.

INT. DETROIT HOTEL - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The NWA guys are eyeball to eyeball with a bunch of COPS. A NEW COP walks in--

NEW COP

(laughing)  
Bam. Bam. Bam.

NEW COP (CONT'D)

You motherfuckers hightailed it off the stage the second you thought shit was going down.

MC REN

The fuck you talking about? They was shooting.

NEW COP

Who?

(everyone stops)

You left us with no choice.

DRE

You were shooting?

COP 3

Are you crazy? Can't fire a weapon in a crowded arena.

NEW COP

M80s. Those woke people up.

COP 4

No way we were gonna let you get through that song.

A hard silence. Crazy tension.

NEW COP

We could send you to jail for violating Michigan's obscenity laws.

(he looks at his friends)

Or you could help us out.

EAZY

How's that?

ANOTHER COP stands up--

ANOTHER COP

(holding out paper)

You autograph this for my daughter?

Everyone's mouths drop open in shock. It's not funny. The tension is still there. The guys are irate, but say nothing. The Overseer mentality still does a number on them.

INT. TOUR BUS - DAY

The sun is scorching. Each man sits alone with his thoughts. They pass a WELCOME TO ARIZONA sign. No one even flinches.

INT. DOUBLETREE INN - ARIZONA - DAY

Cube opens the door to a hotel suite. It's dark inside. There's a crack of light in a room ahead.

ICE CUBE

Yo Jerry! You wanted to see me?  
Jerry?

Into the next room. It's still dark... save for a small desk lamp turned on low. Jerry sits calmly at the desk, papers in front of him.

JERRY

Come in, Cube.

Cube sits down, bemused at the theatrics of it all.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You've been asking about a contract, so I have a contract here for you.

ICE CUBE

Good.

JERRY

I also have this.

Jerry picks up a large check, made out to O'Shea Jackson, in the amount of \$75,000.

ICE CUBE

Damn.

It's the most money Cube has ever seen. Jerry uncaps a pen, hands it over to Cube.

JERRY

Just sign on the bottom.

Cube looks at the contract. Everyone - even Ren - has signed.

ICE CUBE

Well I gotta look it over. Gotta have my lawyer look at it at least.

JERRY

Then I can't give you this money.

ICE CUBE

You saying if I don't sign this here and now, you're not gonna give me my money?

JERRY

It's not your money yet.

ICE CUBE

I been on this tour for months,  
man, and I earned-

JERRY

-Just sign the contract-

ICE CUBE

-Let me look it over-

JERRY

I can't let you out of this room  
with that contract.

Cube almost laughs. The whole situation is ridiculous. He stands up and leaves without signing the contract.

INT. PHOENIX THEATER - NIGHT

In the dressing room, Jerry, Bryan Turner and the NWA guys pose for a publicity shot with a big platinum album. FLASH!

Everyone un-poses. As they walk off, Cube is clearly the outsider. The tension is palpable. The other guys stare at him hard. Yella whispers something in Ren's ear.

DRE

(quietly)

What the fuck, Cube?

ICE CUBE

This has nothing to do with you.

Dre is really getting angry. Eric is casually walking away.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)

Eric. I need to talk to you.

Eazy stops walking, they wait for the other guys to walk on.

EAZY

Man, what the fuck you doing?

ICE CUBE

You know about this contract shit?

EAZY

'Course.

ICE CUBE

How the fuck am I gonna sign  
something I ain't had nobody look-

EAZY

You signing a contract with  
Ruthless. I'm Ruthless. You think  
I'm gonna fuck you?

ICE CUBE

I don't trust Jerry Heller. That  
dude's no good and you giving him  
all the power.

EAZY

(feeling betrayed)

Fuck that. Fuck that. You don't  
need \$75 Gs, then...

But just then, Jerry walks in, as if on cue. He stands next  
to Eazy. It's unnerving.

ICE CUBE

Then what?

EAZY

You gonna leave and fuck around?  
Put out an album that flops? You  
crazy.

ICE CUBE

I doubt that.

They're both hurt, pissed. But too proud to give in. Cube  
looks at Jerry - tension suffocating them all.

EXT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - PARKING LOT - DAY

It's a beautiful day in Southern California. The bus pulls  
back into the parking lot. The doors open. Cube gets off the  
bus and walks away without saying a word. Eric watches him.

DRE

Cube! Hey!

Cube doesn't turn around. Dre is shocked. He can't believe  
Cube is leaving.

EAZY

He's gone. Let him go.

And with that, Cube walks away from the group forever.

ERIC (V.O.)

When you're young and stupid, you do shit. Say shit. You don't know that the best part of your life is slipping through your fingers.

EXT. CUBE'S HOUSE - DAY

He sits alone on his porch. Eyes closed. Sun on his face. Listening to the sounds of his neighborhood. KIDS playing across the street. The loud RADIO a block over. CONSTRUCTION somewhere off. Every cell in his body feels heavy. A car drives past him. Stops a few houses over. The DRIVER chats with a neighbor. But Cube has his eye on the gorgeous girl in the passenger seat. This is KIMBERLY. Cube approaches.

ICE CUBE

Hey. I'm Ice Cube.

KIMBERLY

Everybody knows your name.

He likes her sass.

ICE CUBE

What's your name?

KIMBERLY

You live here?

ICE CUBE

My family does.

KIMBERLY

So where do you live?

ICE CUBE

I'm in between residences.

KIMBERLY

So in other words you're still living at home with your parents.

He smiles. There's that sass again.

ICE CUBE

You ready to tell me your name yet?

He leans into the car. Their elbows bump.

KIMBERLY

When does NWA's next album come out?

ICE CUBE  
That's... complicated.

KIMBERLY  
So that's why you're sitting on  
your momma's porch moping with your  
eyes closed?

He can't lie to her - she sees through him.

ICE CUBE  
Trying to figure shit out.

KIMBERLY  
(cheeky)  
Ice Cube doesn't have shit figured  
out?

He likes this girl.

ICE CUBE  
What's your name?

KIMBERLY  
Kimberly.

They smile. Suddenly, Cube's mom pokes her head out:

CUBE'S MOM  
O'Shea! Phone for you. Someone  
calling himself Chuck D.

No fucking way. Cube's jaw drops. Kimberly smiles.

KIMBERLY  
(mocking)  
Bye, O'Shea.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO

MICHEL'LE, a pregnant woman, belts out a tune. Her voice is  
amazing. Eazy, Jerry and Dre watch.

EAZY  
(re: her belly)  
Nice work, pops.  
(Dre smiles)  
Her album gonna be hot.

DRE  
Yeah we'll see. Needs work.  
(quieter, stressed)

DRE (CONT'D)

Man, what we gonna do with NWA?  
Cube ain't comin' back.

EAZY

So?

(Dre just looks at him)

We got D.O.C. writing his  
muthafuckin' ass off. Ren blowin'  
it out. You the one give us the  
sound. Fuck Cube. Muthafucka.

DRE

Remind me not to get on your bad  
side.

He then steps into the studio to help Michel'le. Eazy doesn't  
take his eyes off Dre.

EAZY

(whispering to Jerry)

Get him a house.

JERRY

You got it.

EAZY

Get me one too. Nearby him.

**TITLE: 1990**

EXT. DRE'S NEW CALABASAS HOUSE - DAY

An insane POOL PARTY. HUNDREDS OF GORGEOUS WOMEN (and some  
not so gorgeous ones) splash in the water. Many are topless.  
D.O.C. is passed out on a lounge chair. Eazy and Dre look  
around. It's a long way from Eazy's lawn party in Compton.

EAZY

What you think of your new house?

DRE

I like the view.

(beat)

Where you get the money for this?

EAZY

What I always say? I take care of  
you.

For the first time, this rubs Dre wrong.

DRE

I'm not a kid, E.

DJ SPEED approaches Eazy, holding a WOMAN in his arms.

DJ SPEED  
Yo Eazy, help me with this?

She giggles.

EAZY  
(to Dre)  
Got to help my man, Speed.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POOL-- Ren and Yella:

REN  
When are we gonna get some  
muthafuckin' houses?

Yella is busy with a video camera, zooming in on the sights.

YELLA  
Man, enough bitching.

DRE does a cannonball, SPLASHING water over the lens.

INT. NY RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

TIGHT ON Cube. He's nervous, excited. He talks quietly with the Godfather... Chuck D.

ICE CUBE  
Solo album is a big opportunity. If  
I swing for the fences and miss...

CHUCK D  
Boils down to this: What do you  
want to say?

ICE CUBE  
I want to tell people what life is  
really like growing up in the hood.  
The fucking pressure. Getting it  
from all sides.

CHUCK D  
That's fine. So how was it?  
(Cube doesn't respond)  
You have to think. And answer that  
question for yourself truthfully.  
No one can write about your  
experience except you.

He hands Cube a pen.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

The guys do a spot on VH1--

VJ

How have things changed since Ice  
Cube left?

EAZY

Better.

DRE

Yeah, they got better. Really. It's  
way better cuz there ain't no ego  
trips in the group anymore.

VJ

Do you think you guys will ever  
make peace with each other?

DRE

No peace. No Peace.

EXT. VENICE BEACH BOARDWALK - SUNSET

Cube is on a date with Kimberly. They walk slowly.

KIMBERLY

They're assholes. They're just  
jealous you got a solo album  
dropping so fast.

ICE CUBE

I don't want to talk about them no  
more.

He reaches for her hand. They keep walking.

KIMBERLY

I came out here one time with my  
mom and her friend. Even with the  
dirty sand. And the freaks... It's  
nice, right? The ocean.

ICE CUBE

Yeah.

But he's looking at her. Not the ocean. Their fingers  
intertwine. He looks at her face. Her skin.

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)

You coming to my show?

His need for her is so intimate.

KIMBERLY  
If I'm not too busy.

She smiles at him.

INT. KEY CLUB - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Cube is front and center, sweating his balls off and rapping his heart out. He digs into ENDANGERED SPECIES--

ICE CUBE  
Peace? Don't make me laugh! All I  
hear is muthafuckas rappin'  
succotash. Livin' large, tellin me  
to get out the gang. I'm a nigga...

Kim watches from the wings, the calm in the eye of his storm.

EXT. 101 FREEWAY - NIGHT

D.O.C. is at the wheel. He can barely keep his eyes open. He bends down to adjust the radio. He picks his head back up just in time to see the median strip right in front of him.

The glass, the metal the horrible, sickening crunching. It's almost inconceivable that he survived.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Dre walks quickly toward a room. He sees Suge Knight comforting a crying older woman - D.O.C.'s MOM.

SUGE  
Checked with his insurance and got  
him a lawyer. He's in the clear. I  
got lunch coming up for you at  
noon. Get some rest.

She nods at him and exits. Just as... A DOCTOR walks by. Suge grabs the Doctor and holds him against the wall.

SUGE (CONT'D)  
You motherfuckers said he'd be out  
of surgery by now.

DOCTOR  
These things are complicated.

SUGE

You get me a good answer or I'm gonna show you how complicated things get.

He releases the doctor, who scurries away. And we see on Dre's face... he's impressed by Suge.

DRE

What up with that, man?

SUGE

I take care of me and mine.

Dre likes that.

DRE

Where D.O.C.? What happened?

SUGE

He's in surgery. He was twisted. Fell asleep at the wheel. Slammed into a median strip.

DRE

Is it bad?

SUGE

His face all smashed. Vocal cords torn up.

This is terrible.

DRE

All that you were talking about with his mom. You taking care of his shit now?

SUGE

Yeah. I'm his manager. I'm going to be looking into D.O.C.'s money with Ruthless. I got some questions. Not sure everything is the way it should be.

(beat)

You still happy with Jerry Heller?

DRE

Yeah.

SUGE

That's good. Man with your talent deserves to be taken care of properly.

Dre looks at his feet. Thinks.

DRE  
You want to get some food?

INT. DRE'S CAR - NIGHT

Dre flies on the freeway. Suge is in the passenger seat.

SUGE  
D.O.C. gonna be fine. Everybody  
knows when you're dealing with me  
you're gonna get the truth because  
that's what I'm about.

Dre's mind races. Just then, a BMW cuts Dre off. Dre honks, swerves, his adrenaline coursing.

DRE  
Motherfucker!

Without batting an eye, Suge pulls a gun out of his jacket, leans across Dre and fires at the BMW. The gun goes off 2 inches from Dre's face. The bullet misses the BMW, Dre swerves over 2 lanes.

Suge laughs heartily. Dre - for some unknown reason - finds this display thrilling. Here is a man who takes charge.

DRE (CONT'D)  
(appreciative)  
Fuck.

SUGE  
That's how we take care of  
business.

DRE  
Maybe when you look at D.O.C.'s  
money, you could look at mine too?

SUGE  
There's a billion dollars on top of  
a hill and we're running for it.  
We're not getting distracted.

They look at each other. Suge smiles.

## INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - DAY

The offices of Ruthless are a teenager's dream come true. Arcade games. Huge TVs. Lots of black leather. And the hottest ASSISTANTS nature created. Jerry hands Eazy a letter.

JERRY

You're not going to believe this one, E.

Eazy reads the letter.

EAZY

This for real? They're inviting me to lunch at the White House?

JERRY

It's for real. Seems there's some big Republican donor named Eric Wright. They think you're him.

Eazy hands him back the letter.

EAZY

Make the reservations.

JERRY

You're not thinking of-

EAZY

-Hell yeah. I give these muthafuckas a thousand dollars for this lunch. They give me a million dollars of publicity.

## EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Eazy, sporting a new black leather suit and lots of chains, strolls into the portico. 100 PHOTOGRAPHERS vie for his photo. He eats it up.

ERIC (V.O.)

Black man like me getting invited to lunch with the President? Never happened before. You know what it means to my Compton homies? So fucking what if the invitation was supposed to be for another Eric Wright. Fuck 'em.

INT. CUBE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Hosea and Doris watch a 60 Minutes piece on Cube--

ANNOUNCER

And even if you've never heard of Ice Cube, your kids have. His first solo album, *Amerikkka's Most Wanted*, has sold over one million copies and counting.

ICE CUBE

I'm telling Black kids to look at what the hell we doing to each other. And make a change. If not, all we have is crying mothers and dead bodies.

Mom and Dad smile at each other. Their boy is learning.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO

Dre, Yella, Eazy and Ren are working. They are not having fun. Jerry watches them.

EAZY

Do it louder.

DRE

It's good.

EAZY

It ain't. Do it again.

DRE

Don't fuckin' talk to me like that, E. I swear to God.

JERRY

Gentlemen, we are still on the clock here.

Dre looks at Jerry, seething.

DRE

We're wasting time. Wasting money.

JERRY

That's right.

DRE

That why the money coming up light?

JERRY

(weary)

Your money's not light, Dre.

DRE

Then how come you taking money from me as an individual and money I make as part of NWA. You taking money all over the place.

JERRY

It's standard. Ask around.

DRE

Money I bring in, I should be making ten times what I got.

JERRY

You have a seriously inflated sense of self-worth, Dre. Cars. Girls. Houses. Restaurants. Jewelry. It all costs money. You are getting every cent you are owed.

REN

Y'all gonna bitch all day long I'm gonna cut out.

Jerry rubs his eyes.

DRE

(to Eazy)

What you think of all this?

EAZY

I think Jerry handles the money.

DRE

(hurt)

That how it is, E?

EAZY

(snapping)

You gonna fight me on every damn thing?

Dre is irate. He walks out of the room. Eric, frustrated, throws down headphones. Ren shakes his head and exits too.

EAZY (CONT'D)

(to Jerry)

What's that Dre talking about? 20% off individual and-

JERRY

-I take 20%. You know that. Guy's  
out of his mind lately.

Eazy is exhausted. He nods. Jerry pats his shoulder.

EXT. EAZY'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Palm trees. Birds of paradise. The works. Eazy's mansion is no joke. Dre is on the front lawn, pissing on a palm tree. Eazy steps out in a bathrobe and watches him.

EAZY

What the fuck you doing?

DRE

You promised me up front money for-

EAZY

(can't take it)  
-Talk to Jerry.

DRE

(exploding)  
I don't want to talk to Jerry! I am  
talking to you! I don't trust that  
motherfucker.

EAZY

Jerry's all right.

DRE

No. He's not, E. And I ain't gonna  
stick around if you stick with him.  
I don't want him in my mixture.

Eazy stares hard at Dre, the feeling of betrayal already gnawing at his gut.

DRE (CONT'D)

You hear what I'm saying?

EAZY

We got to get this album finished.  
You laid in that last track yet?

Dre is incredulous. He sees this as a full on betrayal. Eric is choosing Jerry over him. The tension between them is heartbreaking. Eazy walks back inside.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Jerry comes in. Behind him, a woman ANGRILY YELLS-

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)  
I need to see Eazy E right now!

JERRY  
Where is Dre?

YELLA  
Ain't here yet.

JERRY  
You know about her?

EAZY  
I'm taking care of her already. Buy  
her a car or something.

JERRY  
You got it, E.

Finally Dre enters...

DRE  
Yo.

And hot on his heels is Suge Knight. Suge sits down on a couch, says nothing. Eazy looks at Dre.

DRE (CONT'D)  
He with me now.

Dre settles into a chair. Eazy decides to say nothing.

INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry is at a very nice desk. Leather couch nearby. Scotch in a decanter at his side. Times have changed for Ruthless. Suddenly, Jerry startles. Suge Knight stands in front of him, silent. In Suge's waistband is a gun.

JERRY  
(acting nonplussed)  
Hi. How ya doing?

SUGE  
I want Dre's contracts. And  
D.O.C.'s. And Michel'le's.

JERRY  
And why would I give those to you?

SUGE  
I'm their manager now.

Jerry sits back.

JERRY  
I'll get those to you.

No one moves.

SUGE  
Now.

Jerry looks at the gun. This one ain't worth fighting over. Jerry pulls open a filing cabinet. Suge is at his back, just inches from him. The whole thing is terribly menacing.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Yella and Ren are waiting on everyone else.

MC REN  
This is getting ridiculous.

Finally Dre enters, Suge at his side.

YELLA  
Where you been? The label's on us-

DRE  
-Eazy ain't here yet?

At the same time, Eazy and Jerry walk in, like they'd been waiting for Dre to make an entrance.

EAZY  
I'm here.

Immediately behind Eazy are 2 enormous SAMOAN TWINS, 2 HUGE BLACK GUYS and 2 Israeli Mossad COMMANDOS. They sit on the couch opposite Suge. Everyone does a double take. ONE COMMANDO hands Suge a card:

COMMANDO  
In case you would like to look up  
the work of the Israeli Mossad.

Suge looks at him. This isn't funny. It's fucking scary.

EAZY  
Let's get to work.

Yella and Ren share a look.

EXT. SOLAR RECORDS - NIGHT

Eazy finds the front door ajar. He lets himself in.

INT. SOLAR RECORDS - SOUND BOOTH - NIGHT

Eazy enters to find... Suge Knight. This is bad.

EAZY

Dre told me to meet him here.

SUGE

Sit down.

Eazy turns to go. Suddenly FIVE HUGE guys, wielding pipes, are standing in the doorway.

SUGE (CONT'D)

Sit down.

Eazy doesn't. Suge places a contract on the table.

SUGE (CONT'D)

Dre and me are forming a new label.  
Death Row. We want Dre, Michel'le  
and D.O.C. released from their  
contract with Ruthless.

EAZY

Fuck you.

SUGE

Fuck me? Okay.  
(getting real close)  
We got Jerry Heller in a van a  
coupla blocks from here. One call  
from me, you never see him again.

Eazy doesn't move. Is he bluffing or not? One of the thugs slams Eazy into a chair, then produces a photo of a house.

SUGE (CONT'D)

(still close)  
That your Momma's house, right?  
(Yeah. It is.)  
Nice lady like that, she got no-

EAZY

One more word about my mother-

A THUG shoves the pipe hard under E's neck. He can't breathe.

SUGE

-Or what?  
 (no response)  
 Sign the damn paper.

Eazy looks again at the photo. Without taking his eyes off Suge, he signs the contract.

EXT. EAZY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Eazy has a gun. He paces, examining the edges of his property, jumping if he hears something. Jerry enters.

EAZY

I know how these hood niggas are. I gotta answer him. I gotta hit him.

JERRY

Kill him?

EAZY

Suge ain't gonna rest 'til I'm done. He thinks he got me in his-

JERRY

-Eric. You're not on the street anymore. You live in Calabasas, for godssake. Sue Dre. Sue Suge.

EAZY

He betrayed me!

That's the crux of it. The hurt.

EAZY (CONT'D)

I keep doing shit your way. You tell me you taking care of everything. So how'd shit like this happen?

Jerry is stung by this.

JERRY

We'll take them for every penny they've got. That's how an adult settles his fights. Trust me, E.

EAZY

Sometimes I forget just how White you are, Jerry.

Something rustles in the leaves. Eazy spins. Nothing there.

JERRY  
 (yelling out)  
 I'll file the lawsuits tomorrow.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - DAY

A party rages behind them. Eazy sits in a folding chair on the sand. Yella, Ren and Jerry are with him. On a boom box they listen to Cube's new track - *No Vaseline*.

ICE CUBE  
 (rapping)  
 Heard you both got the same bank  
 account, dumb nigga, what you  
 thinkin' bout? Get rid of that  
 Devil real simple, put a bullet in  
 his temple. Cuz you can't be a  
 Nigga 4 Life crew with a white Jew  
 tellin' you what to do.

Jerry stands, fuming.

JERRY  
 Anti-semetic, motherfucking-

EAZY  
 Shhh.

ICE CUBE  
 Eric Wright, punk, always into  
 somethin', gettin' fucked at night  
 by Mista Shitpacker, bend over for  
 the goddam cracker, no vaseline.

Eazy turns off the cassette. Jerry paces. Ren quietly smiles.

JERRY  
 That little shit thinks he can,  
 what... the bigotry. anti-Semitism.  
 Homophobia.

EAZY  
 Jerry-

JERRY  
 I'm not gonna take this shit! The  
 Jewish Defense League is going to  
 be very interested in what Mr.  
 Jackson has to say.

He takes out an enormous cell phone and walks off.

ICE CUBE (V.O.)  
I never had dinner with the  
President. And when I see your ass  
again I'll be hesitant.

REN  
Now *that's* a motherfuckin' dis  
song.

EAZY  
We gotta answer him, man. You gotta  
work on some lyrics, get some-

YELLA  
Whoa. Whoa. Who's we?

EAZY  
NWA.

REN  
There ain't no NWA without Dre.  
Cube leavin' was bad. But Dre.  
There ain't no NWA.

EAZY  
That's bullshit. Niggaz4life just  
dropped at number one! Number  
fucking one! No other fucking rap  
album ever did that. But we did.  
The fuck you saying, no NWA. We got  
heat.

YELLA  
We ain't got shit, man. I'll help  
you on other projects, but...

EAZY  
Cube ain't having the last word. We  
get some muthafuckas and we keep  
goin'.

MC REN  
No. No man. That's it. NWA's done.

This pierces Eazy. He looks at them, sees nothing but  
betrayal. There's nothing more Ren and Yella can say. They go  
back to the party. Eric is alone. NWA is no more.

FADE TO:

FILM CLIP

A scene from *Boyz in the Hood*. It's Cube's famous line--

ICE CUBE

Turned on the TV this morning. Had this shit on about how we're living in a violent world. Showed all these foreign places. How foreigners live and all. I started thinking, man. Either they don't know, don't show, or don't care about what's going on in the hood.

FADE TO:

ANOTHER FILM CLIP

This time it's the famous footage of the Rodney King beating.

REPORTER (V.O.)

The home video shows Los Angeles police beating a motorist by the name of Rodney King repeatedly after King showed no signs of resisting arrest...

NEWS CLIPS

We see a rush of mad noise - archival clips - as the world responds. Hell no. That's not gonna play in America. The Black Man is not going to be used and abused anymore!

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Pick up Dre at a house party. TOPLESS DANCERS gyrate nearby. Fist-sized clumps of marijuana are passed around on trays like candy. Dre talks quietly to his step-brother, WARREN G.

DRE

Eazy's trippin' with my funds. I can't get no money out of Ruthless. I can't even get furniture for my house. He trippin'.

WARREN G

What about your album?

DRE

I'm trying to hurry up and finish it but the sound's not right.

WARREN G

Hold up. I got something.

Warren heads to the stereo and pops in a cassette. Dre homes in on the music. There's Snoop's voice, mocking, smooth. And the funky tracks. Dre can hardly breathe.

DRE

Yo Warren. Who is that?

WARREN G

This is what I keep talking about.

This is me, Snoop and Nate.

We see on Dre's face -- the music is white hot. We can't miss - this is the beginning of Dre's new era.

INT. DRE'S NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Dre has a small set up in the middle of the great room. And that's it. No furniture, curtains, nothing. The house is empty except for the equipment. He sweats at the board.

ERIC (V.O.)

Success doesn't happen to nobody on accident. Success starts here.

Sweating your balls off while no one gives a shit about you.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - EVENING

**TITLE: APRIL 29, 1992**

Eazy, Ren and Yella are in the studio, watching tv.

NEWSCASTER

(on tv)

All four officers charged with beating King have been found not guilty of assault and three of the four officers have been acquitted of the use of excessive force--

REN

Did they not see the fuckin' videotape?

NEWSCASTER

We take you live to the intersection of Florence and Normandie where a crowd of what appears to be hundred... Good Lord.

REGINALD DENNY, a white truck driver, is dragged from his truck and is fallen upon by the mob. Silence as the men keep watching. Suddenly a phone rings, startling them.

DONOVAN

Hey guys. Priority wants your help up with a press conference at Universal Studios. Now.

They all look at each other. Us?

INT. UNIVERSAL SOUND STAGE - EVENING

GLITTERING CELEBRITIES and their HANDLERS crowd around TV sets. A podium is set up nearby. An EXECUTIVE rushes over...

EXECUTIVE

You the NWA guys?

EAZY

Yeah.

EXECUTIVE

Okay. We're going live in 5 minutes.

EAZY

Live with what?

EXECUTIVE

We need you guys to tell people to stop rioting. To calm down.

Eazy looks briefly at Ren and Yella.

EAZY

Nah. Fuck that.

Now there's an uncomfortable silence in the room. A BLACK WOMAN turns away from the TV.

BLACK WOMAN

You have a responsibility. All those boys out on those streets, they worship you. Tell them to stop fighting. To calm down.

MC REN

That fighting's the only way they gonna hear us.

Another awkward silence. The guys leave.

INT. TOWN CAR - EVENING

The guys leave Universal, driving through Hollywood, where signs of the riot are already taking their toll, even this far north. Shops are closed up. The streets are empty.

EAZY

Look at that.

As they glide past, they see a TEENAGE BOY spray painting on the side of a building... FUCK THA POLICE.

INSERT RIOT FOOTAGE. CHAOS. LOOTING. RODNEY KING PLEADS FOR SANITY. He's so emotional, he can hardly get the words out:

RODNEY KING

I just wanna say...Can we all get along? Can we all get along?

EXT. STREETS OF SOUTH CENTRAL - DAY

The TEENAGE BOYS we met earlier who were in love with the NWA album, confront POLICE IN RIOT GEAR:

TEENAGER

Kiss our Black asses.

15 YEAR OLD

No more. It's over. No. More!

TEENAGER

Fuck tha police!

This is what it comes to. This is what it all adds up to. NWA gave these boys, and young Black people everywhere, a voice.

ERIC (V.O.)

I don't give a shit about this kind of thing. Normally. But those boys. If our music makes them stand up. Say fuck you to people who need to hear it? Then hell yeah.

FADE TO:

FOOTAGE of the aftermath. Silence. Smoke. Death. LA in ruins. Cube's song *It Was A Good Day* plays. GUY in red and a GUY in blue shake hands. A truce is reached. At least momentarily. From Cube's music into a saxophone riff...

FOOTAGE: Bill Clinton plays the sax on Arsenio Hall. WE HEAR this music as we FADE INTO...

EXT. CHURCH LAWN - DAY

CUBE WITH HIS FAMILY AT HIS WEDDING.

DORIS

You ready for this? The  
responsibility of being a husband?

ICE CUBE

More than ever.

He looks over at Kimberly, his gorgeous bride.

EXT. VALLEY HOUSE - DAY

Slam directly to the set of a porn movie. A VERY LARGE BLACK WOMAN in a teddy sucks on a lollipop.

VERY LARGE BLACK WOMAN

(into camera)

Hey big guy. You want a lick?

SWING TO: Eazy, laughing his ass off, stoned.

YELLA

Cut!

Now we see-- Yella is directing the movie.

YELLA (CONT'D)

Man, I am working here. Don't you  
got somewhere to be?

EAZY

No.

Yella walks over to him.

YELLA

You been laying around, blazin' up  
in here for a coupla months, man.

EAZY

(testy)

What's your point, muthafucka?

Yella doesn't want to get into it.

YELLA

From the top!

EAZY  
 (pissy, blowing smoke in  
 Yella's direction)  
 You really hardcore now, Yella!

Just then, Jerry enters. Shields his eyes from the actress.  
 He is not pleased with the state in which he finds Eazy.

JERRY  
 Eazy. We've been waiting for you at  
 the office.

EAZY  
 Taking the day off.

Jerry grabs his arm.

JERRY  
 No. That new girlfriend of yours is  
 no dummy. She keeps giving me the  
 stink eye because I keep lying to  
 her, telling her I don't know where  
 you're at. You want to watch  
 that...  
 (re: the fat actress)  
 ...all day, you can be the one to  
 tell her.

He takes Eric's elbow. Eric shoots him an irritated look.

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

TIGHT ON TOMICA WOODS, Eric's new girlfriend. Tomica is  
 different than the other girls. She's elegant. Intelligent.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 That's Tomica. Watch her. She's  
 important.

She enters to find Eric watching Dre's new video, *Dre Day*.  
 Over this an ANNOUNCER crows:

ANNOUNCER  
 ...what many are calling the most  
 important rap album of the decade,  
 Dr. Dre...

TOMICA  
 (tries for silver lining)  
 You won the case. You get a piece  
 of everything Dre earns.

Tomica moves to turn off the tv.

ERIC (V.O.)  
 Even when I didn't deserve it,  
 Tomica always looked out for me.

Eazy grabs her hand, stops her. Forces himself to watch.

SNOOP  
 Eazy-E, Eazy-E, Eazy-E can eat a  
 big fat dick.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Eazy is on the mic, surrounded by a new crew - BG Knock Out,  
 Dresta, Dirty Red and Rhythum-D--

EAZY  
 Muthafuck Dre, Muthafuck Snoop,  
 Muthafuck Death Row, yo and here  
 comes my left blow.

DONOVAN  
 Okay. That's good. You happy with  
 that?

EAZY  
 Yeah.

But he fumbles with some papers. Straightens them.

JERRY  
 Sounds great, E!

EAZY  
 Let's go again.

INT. DEATH ROW OFFICES - DAY

Everything is Gangster Chic - gold and deep red. Suge, the  
 Grand Poobah, is stuffed behind a desk, puffing on a cigar. A  
 TERRIFYING MALINOIS SHEPHERD at his side. Dre storms in-

DRE  
 Are you fuckin' deaf?

SUGE  
 You got a problem?

DRE  
 I told you I don't want Tupac in  
 our mix. But you went and paid that  
 muthafucka \$200 Gs? For a couple a  
 songs?

The Shepherd growls. Suge pats his head.

SUGE

Pac's a poet.

DRE

I don't give a fuck. This ain't even about him. I told you I don't want him. That should be enough. Me telling you.

SUGE

Since when you think I take marching orders from you?

DRE

Since we in this 50-50. Man, I already got out of one situation. I'm not gonna be nobody's bitch-

Suge stands, shutting Dre up. The Shepherd stands with him. Dre looks at Suge, sees that he is the biggest bully on the schoolyard, and knows that he's fucked.

EXT. EAZY'S HOUSE - POOLSIDE - DAY

Eric sits in a lounge chair by the pool. A view of the smoggy Valley behind him. He signs papers without looking at them. One paper flutters away. Tomica bends and picks it up. She looks down. It's a company check in the amount of \$50,000.

TOMICA

What is this for?

EAZY

I don't know.

TOMICA

(worried)

What do you mean you don't know?

He looks at her.

EAZY

That's Jerry's job.

TOMICA

But it's your money.

EAZY

Me and the twins are going to Gladstones later. You wanna come?

But she's not listening. She sifts through the papers.

TOMICA

You're always coming in here with papers out your ears. Contracts. Checks. Receipts. You can't see what's what it's so disorganized. You need a better system.

He looks at her for a long moment.

EAZY

Maybe you could come in the office and help me out with that?

This is big for Eazy, trusting someone on this level.

TOMICA

You asking?

EAZY

Yeah.

TOMICA

You really asking? Like, you're admitting you need some help?

He feels vulnerable, but amused by her.

EAZY

This is as close as I'm gonna get to gettin' on a knee, baby.

TOMICA

(smiling)

Then I better help you out.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - NIGHT

Dre weaves through traffic in a candy apple red Ferrari. He's swerving erratically, his eyelids heavy. Just then -- flashing lights in the rearview. This Compton boy knows - you stay the fuck away from the police.

DRE

Fuck.

CLOSE ON Dre's foot. It hangs in the air. Just over the brake. It should be stomping down. Should be. But instead, he plows it onto the gas. BAM! The car leaps. 70, 80, 90 miles per hour - he flies onto the Wilshire off-ramp. He plows down the ramp, TWO POLICE CARS in pursuit. He keeps up 90mph as he rushes into Westwood, around cars, through a red light.

He looks up to see... ANOTHER COP CAR...coming straight for him. The tension ticks. Will he? Will he? Will he? No. He hits the brakes, stopping right in the middle of Wilshire BLVD. The POLICE are out of the car...

POLICE

Hands up! Out of the car!

Dre sits there for half a second, knowing he has just seriously fucked up. He opens his door and struggles to get to his feet -- that's how drunk he is. The COPS swarm on him.

INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON Eazy's face. We've never seen him so angry.

EAZY

I don't understand this shit.

PULL BACK: Eazy and Tomica are surrounded by piles of papers.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Where the fuck is the money?

TOMICA

It's gone.

EAZY

Gone where?

TOMICA

I don't know what all you're spending it on. When's the last time you looked at your bank statements? You're not bringing in the kind of money you used to. Some bills haven't been paid in 6 months!

EAZY

(he's playing catch up)  
I sold millions of records... I didn't spend all of that. Where is the fuckin' money?

TOMICA

Ask Jerry.

EAZY

I been hearing this for years. From Cube. Dre. "Jerry ain't right. Jerry crooked."

TOMICA

So instead of listening to everyone you let Jerry co-sign your bank accounts? Control all of your money? What the hell were you thinking?

EAZY

He gave me his word.

TOMICA

Maybe on the streets a man's word is good enough, but in the music business you need to read your contracts.

(she pulls papers)

Look. This is what I don't understand. Do you know how much money Jerry is taking from you?

EAZY

20 percent.

TOMICA

Not exactly. Money comes into Ruthless. He takes 20%. Then when Ruthless pays that money to the artists. To you. He takes 20% again. Did you read the contract before you signed it?

EAZY

Jerry reads the contracts!

TOMICA

It's your company. You're 30 years old, Eric.

INT. RUTHLESS RECORDS - JERRY'S OFFICE - DUSK

Jerry looks up. Eric is standing in front of him.

JERRY

E, I was gonna talk to-

But then he sees the look on Eazy's face.

EAZY

You know I'm broke?

JERRY

(treading carefully)  
We're having a cash flow-

Eazy turns to stone.

EAZY

You told me you taking 20 percent.

JERRY

Yeah.

EAZY

I didn't know that meant you were taking it twice.

Jerry puts the cap on his pen.

JERRY

For years, I've been busting my ass to make you happy. That's it. That's what my life has been about. I never lied to you.

EAZY

Didn't tell me all the truth neither though.

Jerry is an empty shell.

JERRY

(lashing out)

You think the girls I pay off for you take company check? The messes I clean up? You ain't cheap, Eric. And they don't write receipts for the shit I handle.

Eazy is not going to get down to his level.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You made it clear a long time ago. You've always been more interested in getting a piece than in business.

EAZY

Time for a change.

Eric doesn't need to say another word. This is a big moment for E - handling the hard shit has never come eazy to him.

ERIC (V.O.)

Most people are shades of grey. He wasn't evil. He says he loved me. But he fucked me, too. That's some serious gangsta shit.

INT. LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT - DAY

Dre stands with his LAWYER before JUDGE PAULA MABREY--

JUDGE

Mr. Young, you are currently serving probation on an assault charge, is that correct?

DRE

Yes, Ma'am.

JUDGE

And this drunk driving conviction puts you in violation of that probation. I hereby sentence you to an eight month jail term and an alcohol education program.

Dre's world rocks.

DRE

Eight months.

LAWYER

Your honor, Mr. Young is happy to do public service announcements. He is a prominent member of the community-

JUDGE

Yes. A prominent member of the community who seems to think that the laws don't apply to him.

(silence)

Mr. Young. You are hereby sentenced to an alcohol education program...and 8 months in a correctional halfway house.

She bangs the gavel. And Dre officially hits bottom.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Inside a dark, dingy studio, Eazy and Yella reminisce.

EAZY

That's 'cuz Chantelle-

YELLA

MINE was Chantelle. Yours was. What was yours' name?

EAZY

I thought it was Chantelle.

YELLA

That's fucked up man. Yo. You remember that girl in Nashville?

EAZY

No.

(they laugh)

We had some good times.

YELLA

Fucked up times too.

(conversation fades)

What we doing here, man?

EAZY

I wanna play you something.

Eazy plays a tape: Bone Thugs N Harmony's *1st of Tha Month*.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Still rough. Still working on it.

YELLA

It's good.

EAZY

(needing confirmation)

It is. Right?

YELLA

They got a sound.

EAZY

Call themselves Bone Thugs and Harmony.

(tense)

It's gotta happen with them.

Yella sees how stressed Eric is.

YELLA

What's going on?

Eric stops the cassette. Coughs a little.

EAZY

(a little manic)

I'm going to New York. Gonna work on expanding my deal to international so I got more options, but I don't know, man.

YELLA

Slow down.

EAZY

(this is hard)  
I'm broke.

This knocks the wind out of Yella.

YELLA

The fuck that happen?

EAZY

I fucked up.  
(he sits back down)  
This is it for me. I gotta get my  
shit together. Get product released  
so I can breathe. Bone Thugs-

YELLA

-You gotta finish the new solo  
album. Finish it already, E.

EAZY

It ain't like it's a simple thing  
to do.  
(beat)  
I been so mad. Thinking everyone  
betraying me.  
(hardest thing he ever  
said)  
I'm the one that fucked them,  
staying with Jerry.  
(beat)  
It wasn't never so good as it was  
when we were together.

YELLA

Things got fucked up.

EAZY

(carefully)  
I was thinking. What you think  
about maybe an NWA reunion?

YELLA

The fuck you talking about?

EAZY

We all made our mistakes. Time to  
move forward.

YELLA

I'm here. I never went nowhere.

Eazy looks out at the lights of the city.

EAZY

Think people still want to hear us?

YELLA

Only one way to find out.

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT. New York circa 1995. God it's beautiful.

EXT. THE TUNNEL NIGHTCLUB - NEW YORK - NIGHT

Cube and 3 BODYGUARDS bypass the line.

INT. THE TUNNEL NIGHTCLUB - NEW YORK

Hip hop booms. The place is packed. As Cube enters, the DJ pays respect, mixes in Cube's *You Know How We Do It*.

AT THE BAR...

Eazy sips a water. He sees Cube hustled into the VIP area. Eazy strolls over. BODYGUARDS stop him.

ERIC

It's cool. I'm cool.

Through the guards, Cube locks eyes with Eric. They smile.

FADE TO:

INT. THE TUNNEL NIGHTCLUB - NEW YORK - LATE NIGHT

Cube and Eazy talk in a booth. The club is nearly empty.

ICE CUBE

So that's it? He's gone?

EAZY

He's gone.

ICE CUBE

About fuckin' time. That muthafucka-

EAZY

-You think you weren't being a pain in the ass?

EAZY (CONT'D)  
(joking, mimicking)  
I want a contract. I want money.

They laugh.

ICE CUBE  
I was 19 fuckin' years old, man.  
Forgive me. You didn't know what  
the fuck you were doing neither.

EAZY  
(contrite)  
Listen man.

ICE CUBE  
(with emotion)  
I know.

That's enough. There's no need to say anymore.

EAZY  
I'm here talking to Sony about a  
new deal.

ICE CUBE  
That's cool.

EAZY  
What you think of an NWA reunion?

Cube just looks at him.

ICE CUBE  
I don't know, man.

EAZY  
All these motherfuckas. Without us  
there'd be no West Coast rap. We  
started this gangsta shit.

ICE CUBE  
There was Ice T. King T. Other  
dudes.

EAZY  
But no one did it like us. We  
changed the world.

ICE CUBE  
(laughs)  
That's true man.  
(long beat)  
You gotta talk to Dre.

EAZY

I know.

Cube thinks.

ICE CUBE

You get with Dre and make it  
right... I'm in.

EAZY

For real?

ICE CUBE

You gonna pay me this time?

They both laugh.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - NIGHT

Dre is alone in his tiny room, watching *Price is Right*.  
Another INMATE pops his head in.

INMATE

Yo Dre. You got a call.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The receiver hangs down from the payphone.

DRE

This Dre.

EAZY

What up, Doctor?

Dre stops in his tracks. INTERCUT Eazy in his HOTEL.

DRE

How'd you get this number?

EAZY

I look you up in the phone book  
under "Convict, Muthafucka."

Dre allows a small smile for this. Eazy coughs.

DRE

Why you calling me, man?

EAZY

'Cuz we ain't talked in a minute.

Dre leans against the wall. This conversation is so hard.

DRE  
How you been, E?

EAZY  
You know? A little a this a little-  
(he stops himself)  
I been all right. You?

Eazy coughs.

DRE  
You calling me in a halfway house.

EAZY  
Fucked up again. Need me to bail  
your ass out?

Dre smiles. There is so much to say to each other. But it's so hard to get it out.

EAZY (CONT'D)  
Heller's gone.

Dre hardens a bit.

DRE  
Yeah.

EAZY  
You ever think. Maybe we could  
talk? Do some work together?

These are brothers. Best friends.

DRE  
We been through a lot.

EAZY  
Let's get together. Talk it out.

DRE  
Yeah. Cool.

EAZY  
All right man. Listen, I got about  
17 ladies at my door, so I'm out.  
Have fun in your halfway house.  
Alone.

Dre laughs. IN EAZY'S HOTEL... We see that there are no ladies. He's completely alone. He coughs again.

INT. AUDIO ACHIEVEMENTS RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Eazy is working at the studio with a bunch of RAPPERS. His cough is much, much worse. He sits on a couch, struggling to catch his breath. An ENGINEER stops the music.

DONOVAN  
 Man, you all right?  
 (Eazy nods)  
 You need to see a doctor.

EAZY  
 I did. This morning. It's just  
 bronchitis. Let's go. Keep going.

Everyone looks at each other, not moving. Eazy stands.

EAZY (CONT'D)  
 All right. Let's do my vocals.

He walks to the mic, struggling to hold it together.

EAZY (CONT'D)  
 All right. Go.

The Engineer hits the music. Eazy opens his mouth...

And he collapses. He hits the floor, hard, struggling for breath. His two Samoan bodyguards rush to him.

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Eazy is in bed. The curtains are drawn. The lights are low. He struggles for breath. Tomica enters with a stack of bills.

TOMICA  
 Eric, some of these you can pay but  
 some of them you can't.

She puts a check in front of him. He's still coughing.

EAZY  
 You told me I shouldn't just sign  
 things. So why should I just sign  
 this?

TOMICA  
 Because I know you're broke. What  
 am I going to screw you out of?  
 Your debt?

She walks away.

EAZY

Tomica!

She stops. Turns back around. He takes her hand.

EAZY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

But he sputters as he says it.

TOMICA

Take your medicine?

EAZY

Everything gonna be okay.

She smiles, wanting so badly to believe that's true.

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

The sun is barely up. Tomica wakes with a start. Eazy is wheezing, hardly able to breathe. She picks up the phone.

INT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - DAY

Eric has a breathing tube up his nose. For the first time in a week, he can breathe. A DOCTOR whispers to Tomica--

DOCTOR

We're waiting for the test results to tell us what kind of bacteria is causing the infection in his lungs. Go home and get some rest.

But she doesn't take her eyes off Eric.

INT. EAZY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tomica has car keys in hand. The phone rings:

TOMICA

Hello?

ERIC (ON PHONE)

(crying)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm--

TOMICA

What? What? Eric.

ERIC  
 (crying hard)  
 I am sorry.

She puts down all the papers.

TOMICA  
 Eric? Hello?

Silence for a second. The Doctor gets on.

DOCTOR  
 Tomica.  
 (carefully)  
 Are you sitting?

She starts to shake. She does not sit.

TOMICA  
 Yes.

DOCTOR  
 Eric has tested positive for HIV.

The world ends. The earth stops spinning. Tomica's life shatters into a million shards.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 You need to come to the hospital as soon as possible. We'll discuss the rest when you get here.

TOMICA  
 (trembling)  
 I'm pregnant.

DOCTOR  
 (silence)  
 Come in, Tomica.

INT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

A PULMONARY ASSISTANT is on a pay phone. Behind her, through the door, we see Eric in bed, hooked up to machines. A MAN - RON SWEENEY - is with him.

PULMONARY ASSISTANT  
 (whispering)  
 You're not going to believe who's here with AIDS. For real. He's talking to his lawyer making last arrangements and shit.

INT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - DAY

In Eric's room, Ron Sweeney looks over his notes. In bed, we can see clearly that Eric is fading.

RON SWEENEY  
 (this is difficult)  
 I think I'm clear on all of  
 your...I'll take care of all  
 your...arrangements.

Eric grabs his wrist, wheezes--

ERIC  
 Also get me a marriage license. I  
 wanna marry Tomica.

RON SWEENEY  
 I'll take care of it.

ERIC  
 I don't wanna go out as a joke.

He stops. But we know: Responsibility. Marriage. He's going to grow up if it's the last thing he does.

INT. YELLA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Yella's on the phone.

MAN ON PHONE  
 I heard Eazy's got AIDS.

YELLA  
 What? Who told you that?

MAN ON PHONE  
 Big Man.

YELLA  
 How Big Man know that?

MAN ON PHONE  
 I don't know, man. I heard it from  
 a coupla people.

YELLA  
 That's not right. Eazy ain't gay.  
 Hell naw.

MAN ON PHONE  
 Magic Johnson ain't gay and he got-

YELLA  
Don't be spreading rumors around.

MAN ON PHONE  
Okay, man.

Yella hangs up. But now he's worried.

INT. CUBE'S NEW HOUSE - DAY

Cube is on the phone.

RECEPTIONIST  
(on phone)  
In-patient services.

ICE CUBE  
I'm looking to talk to a patient.  
Eric Wright.

Pause as she checks.

RECEPTIONIST  
We don't have an Eric Wright, Sir.

ICE CUBE  
He's probably using a fake name.  
(beat, worried)  
I need to talk to him. Everyone  
saying he's there.

RECEPTIONIST  
I'm sorry, Sir.

Frustrated, Cube hangs up. Before he takes his hand off the phone, it rings again.

ICE CUBE  
Hello?

LAWYER  
Cube, I have someone from Ruthless  
who's looking to speak with you.

ICE CUBE  
Why?

LAWYER  
Are you sitting down?

Cube doesn't sit. But he knows it's going to be bad.

INSERT NEWS CLIP

DAN RATHER reads:

DAN RATHER

A hardcore rapper who celebrates sex, crime and violence in his music, is in the hospital tonight with AIDS. He says he has no idea how he got the fatal disease.

INT. REN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ren watches tv, his face hard as stone. DJ Speed sits beside him. They watch as RON SWEENEY, Eazy's lawyer, speaks outside the hospital. We see Tomica in the background behind him.

RON SWEENEY

I may not seem like the guy you would pick to preach a sermon. But I feel it is now time to testify. I've got thousands and thousand of young fans that have to learn about what's real when it comes to AIDS. Like others before me, I would like to turn my own problem into something good that would reach out to all my homeboys and their kin because I want to save their asses before it's too late. I've learned in the last week that this thing is real and it doesn't discriminate.

Sweeney keeps talking. Ren turns to Speed--

REN

(disgusted)

That sound like something Eazy would say?

They keep watching the statement. Ren leans in as the camera pushes to Yella, who is in tears at the conference.

INT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

A WEEK LATER... Dre approaches Eric's room. The hallway is packed with BODYGUARDS, SUPPOSED FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS and HANGERS ON - a carnival atmosphere. Dre doesn't want to talk to anyone. He looks at Eric through the window of his room.

Eric lies, unconscious, hooked up to too many machines, his chest mechanically moving up and down. Dre can't bring himself to go into the room. It's all too upsetting. He turns to go. In the hallway, a GUY calls out--

GUY

Yo Dre!

Dre wants to leave. The guy follows.

GUY (CONT'D)

It's fucked up, right?

DRE

I gotta go, man.

Dre walks quickly out of the hospital.

INT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Dre walks quickly off the elevator...right into Cube and Kim.

ICE CUBE

Hey man.

DRE

(with emotion)

Hey Cube.

ICE CUBE

You been up to see him?

A NURSE shoves past.

DRE

(upset)

He's unconscious. It's bad.

They're both so upset. There's nothing more to say.

DRE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna hit you up.

ICE CUBE

Later.

Dre goes. Cube gathers his courage, gets on the elevator.

INT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

Cube and Kim come face to face with the crowd in the hall. He stops in his tracks, unable to take another step. He spots one of the Samoan bodyguards and waves him over.

ICE CUBE

Yo. Yo.

As the Samoan gets close--

ICE CUBE (CONT'D)

Listen, man. We got a room at the hotel down the street. If he come to, you call me up and I'm back here. I'll go in and talk to him. But if he don't...

(this is hard)

I'm not gonna come back. 'Cause I got the last memory of Eazy that I want. You know what I'm saying?

SAMOAN BODYGUARD

Okay, man.

ICE CUBE

You call me when he wake up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kim is asleep. In the dark, Cube zones out on Sports Center. His phone doesn't ring.

INT. REN'S APARTMENT - DAY

**TITLE: MARCH 26, 1995**

Ren dozes in bed. His phone rings. He sleepily answers.

CALLER

He's gone man.

MC REN

What?

CALLER

Eazy's gone.

Ren sits up.... Underneath, a GOSPEL SINGER begins a soulful version of *I'll Fly Away*.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - DRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dre sits on the edge of his twin bed, quietly crying.

INT. CUBE'S NEW MANSION - NIGHT

Cube and Yella are on the phone. Their houses are quiet.

ICE CUBE  
It don't seem real.

YELLA  
It don't make sense. All his girls,  
his kids. Everyone test negative  
and he got it? What is that shit?

But there are no answers.

ICE CUBE  
I don't know, man.

YELLA  
You know. The night he died. I had  
this dream.

WE SEE YELLA'S DREAM--

YELLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I'm flying in the clouds with Eric.  
And he says, "It's getting warm."  
And then I'm watching him and he  
flies off.

Yella takes one last look at Eazy's face, blue sky over his  
head. And we PUSH IN on that face, so young and full of life.

YELLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And it felt so, so real. He was  
with me.

We PULL UP into the clouds and segue into a VIDEO.

Eric is cruisin' down the street in his 6-4. Shades on.  
Raiders cap on his head. Enjoying life. It's a beautiful day  
in Southern California. Dre sits in the passenger seat. The  
rest of the guys are in the back. They all smile, having the  
time of their lives.

ERIC (V.O.)  
You hear this shit? Rolling Stone  
magazine called NWA one of the most  
important groups of all time. Not  
that I give a fuck. People say  
we're the Beatles of rap. Naw. We  
just got the ball rolling.

COPS uneasily watch them drive, but they make no move to stop  
them. The cops have to behave themselves now. The guys laugh.

The sun shines down on Compton. Through the car radio, the  
songs of the next 20 years of hip hop - Tupac, Snoop, Eminem,  
50 Cent - you name it - all mash together and spill over...

ERIC (V.O.)

I been gone since 1995. Missed *everything*. If you told me some of the shit that would happen...? The internet. No more record stores? And what the fuck is a Google? And my homies? Look at Cube. That muthafucka told the police to fuck off and now he's a huge goddam movie star, producer, whatever the fuck? Hell naw. Never saw that coming. And Dre? You see what all he done? Eminem. 50 Cent. Snoop. That's all him. That muthafucka used to sleep on my couch. Now he's a fucking mogul? An icon? Fuck off. I had lunch at the White House once. Lemme tell you, wasn't nobody in that room thinking one day we'd have a Black President.

(beat, quieter)

I fuckin' missed the best part. All these muthafuckas. What about me? I would have been king of the muthafucking world.

The guys cruise past a Compton house....

PUSH IN THE WINDOW.

There on the bed is 16-year-old Dr. Dre. In his underpants. Headphones on his ears. He wakes up, hearing the future of hip hop in his ears.

ERIC (V.O.)

I told you to look fast. That's the future in his ears. And nobody would have believed it. Least of all me.

He takes the headphones off and looks at them. Really looks at them. Then he looks at us with a determination that would make anyone smile.

FADE TO:

NWA - older, wiser - performs *Express Yourself*--

DRE

It's crazy to see people be what society wants them to be. But not me! Ruthless...Is the way to go. They know. Others say rhymes that fail to be original.

DRE (CONT'D)

Or they kill where the hiphop  
starts. Forget about the ghetto and  
rap for the pop charts. Some  
musicians curse at home but scared  
to use profanity When up on the  
microphone. Yeah, they want  
reality. But you won't hear none...

They still got it.

Rest in peace, Eric.

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