

20,000 DAYS

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FADE IN

The opening credits roll over a completely white screen, which begins to turn yellow.

We break through the flaming edge of the sun heading out in a straight line toward space like a ray of light.

We head through space, passing Mercury.

We go by Venus, passing space debris along the way.

Earth intercepts our journey.

We head through the clouds.

As we break through the clouds we're heading toward a big US city, but we're not sure which one.

As the credits end, we head directly to a street corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET CORNER -- DAY

The year is 1971. It is a typically dirty corner. The kind you expect to get mugged on.

There is a fenced off yard next to a brick building. Few cars are driving on the road.

We see a black prostitute working the corner as she is smoking a cigarette.

A run down Cadillac pulls up from the right with a good looking but unnamed black man driving.

Eva (the prostitute) doesn't miss a beat as she leans into the passenger side window.

EVA

(Almost too low to hear over the natural sounds) Hey baby. Lookin' for some fun?

The John says something we can't hear.

Eva smiles and gets into the car.

They leave us looking at an empty street corner.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

We are in the bedroom looking at the bathroom.

A naked Eva comes in RUNNING to the bathroom.

She vomits into the toilet.

She gets up and looks into the mirror.

We see her face in the mirror.

EVA

Shit!

CUT TO:

INT. CITY HOSPITAL -- DAY

It is the main city hospital 9 months later.

Eva is walking in the front doors. She is very pregnant.

She is still wearing "work clothes".

She walks up to the sign-in window.

A white average looking female nurse is working there.

She is working on paperwork and doesn't look up until Eva knocks on the counter.

NURSE

May I help you?

EVA

Yeah. I'm about to pop here.

NURSE

Excuse me?

Eva backs up to reveal her stomach as she points to it.

EVA

I said I'm about ready to fuckin' pop here. You got that?

NURSE

Oh. OK. Fill out these forms. The doctor will see you in a moment. What's your name?

EVA

Eva Carder. That's C-A-R-D-E-R.

NURSE

OK, Ms. Carder. I'll tell the doctor you're here.

Eva takes the clipboard and sits down and fills out the forms.

INT. CITY HOSPITAL DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

In the doctor's office, Eva sits on the table.

The doctor comes in. DR. SMITH is a white male 42. He's very good-looking and very professional.

DR. SMITH

Hello, I'm Dr. Smith. I'll be your doctor for the delivery.

EVA

Great. Let's get this over with.

DR. SMITH

Yes, well, I just went over your paperwork. You haven't seen any doctors during your pregnancy?

EVA

I was too busy to waste my time with the check-ups. Ya' know what I mean? Let's just get this kid outta here so I can get back to work.

DR. SMITH

You're 21 right?

EVA

Yeah.

DR. SMITH

Well, that's a nice healthy age to have children. I don't foresee any obvious problems, but I still want to run some tests.

Eva pulls out a cigarette and lights up.

DR. SMITH

Excuse me. There's no smoking in the hospital.

Eva blows smoke into Dr. Smith's face.

EVA

What're you gonna do? Fuckin' throw me out?

Dr. Smith takes a deep breath and chooses to ignore the problem.

DR. SMITH

We need to run some tests before we bring you into the delivery room. And there's also...

EVA

Fine, fine. Let's go.

DR. SMITH

There's also a problem with payment. Your paperwork doesn't indicate any steady income.

EVA

(Putting on her working smile) Tell me doctor. Is the missus keepin' you happy lately?

DR. SMITH stares back at her, fully comprehending what she is implying and seeming to decide whether or not to take the offer.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

EVA is lying in bed. A nurse comes in.

NURSE #1

Well how are we today?

EVA

(Sarcastic) Just great.

NURSE #1

Good, now the doctor will be here in a moment to..

Dr. Smith walks in with a clipboard.

DR. SMITH

Good afternoon, nurse.

NURSE #1

(surprised) oh, hello Dr. Smith. I didn't expect you in so soon. Um, would you like me to go take care of the billing paperwork?

DR. SMITH

Um, no, that's OK. Her bill's already been handled.

Nurse is slightly shocked and starts to leave.

EVA

Oh, nurse. Before you go, could I get some water?

Looks at Dr. Smith and smiles

I'm kinda thirsty.

Nurse looks at Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith looks away from the nurse and starts scribbling something on the clipboard.

Nurse looks to Eva.

Eva just smiles.

Nurse leaves.

DR. SMITH

Well Eva, we're going to induce labor today and see about getting you out of here.

EVA

Aw, what's the matter? Want me to leave so soon?

Dr. smith starts to leave, but turns around.

DR. SMITH
Oh, and Ms. Carder?

EVA
Yeah?

DR. SMITH
According to your tests, you're having twins.

Dr. Smith leaves a very stunned Eva.

CUT TO:

INT. DELIVERY ROOM -- DAY

Eva is on the table screaming in pain and giving birth. Dr. Smith and the appropriate staff are around.

DR. SMITH
OK. Push. Push!

EVA
I AM pushing!

The sound of a baby is heard.

DR. SMITH
It's a boy! They're both boys!

CUT TO:

EXT. EVA'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

It is now 1976. A sunny spring morning.

We see the front of a two-story low-income apartment complex. A few unsavory people are seen sitting around.

We see two twin 5-year-old black kids running and playing around the front gate.

We zoom to Eva coming out of her front door on the second floor.

She looks around for her kids and finally sees them.

EVA

Anthony! Mark! Get your butts back in here.

INT. EVA'S APARTMENT

We are in the kitchen/dining room. It is run down and unkempt.

Eva is at the old stove smoking her cigarette and cooking eggs.

The kids are at the table playing around waiting for breakfast.

Mark knocks a glass off the table and it breaks.

EVA

God-Damn it, Mark!

MARK

Sorry Mom.

EVA

Clean it up!

The door knocks.

EVA

Now what?

As Mark cleans up the mess, Eva goes O.S. to the door.

We hear the door open.

A male voice is heard but not recognized.

EVA (O.S.)

Hey, I told not until 9:00. I ain't workin' while my kids're here.

The male voice says something unintelligible.

Don't worry about it baby. You know I'll take good care'a you, right? Alright. See you in a while.

Eva walks back in to the kitchen/dining room.

EVA

Alright kids. Get off to school now. Go on. Get.

The kids run off to get their things.

Eva takes a broom and sweeps the rest of the broken glass into a dirty corner and leaves it there.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND -- DAY

It is 1979. The kids are now 8 years old.

We see Anthony and Mark involved in a playground fight.

Kids are all around trying to watch while three other kids are fighting with the two brothers.

An old female teacher, MRS THOMPSON shows up.

MRS THOMPSON

Alright, break it up. Break it up.

She grabs Anthony and Mark.

MRS THOMPSON

Come on you two.

ANTHONY

But Mrs. Thompson, they started it.

MRS THOMPSON

Yeah, yeah. That's what you always say. Come on. It's off to Principal Whittler's office for you two.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

We are in Principal Whittler's office. It is a typical school office, with his name on the front door. Principal Whittler is a balding white male, 56. The typical principal.

The brothers are sitting at the other side of the big cluttered desk.

PRINCIPAL WHITTLER

Well boys, I see you're at it again.

MARK

They were calling Anthony names!

PRINCIPAL WHITTLER

I don't care what they did. You boys are always getting into fights. Now what have I told you?

ANTHONY/MARK

(unhappily) No fighting.

PRINCIPAL WHITTLER

And?

ANTHONY/MARK

Do our schoolwork.

PRINCIPAL WHITTLER

That's right. Your test scores are atrocious, but we'll work on those later. Now go to detention.

The kids leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET THE KIDS LIVE ON -- DAY

We are looking down the run down the city road Anthony and Mark live on. We see the school bus head toward us. It is taking the kids home after school.

INT. THE SCHOOL BUS

We see the bus driver, a black 35-year-old male, looking down the road while some kids are goofing around behind him. We can't see the brothers. The bus driver sees something in the road and is trying to figure out what it is.

BUS DRIVER

Now what the hell is going on?

EXT. THE STREET

The bus pulls up close to the apartment the brothers live in, but can't get to it because there is an ambulance with its lights flashing in the way. There is also a fire truck and some police cars at the scene.

INT. THE SCHOOL BUS

A young white police officer is walking up to the bus. The bus driver opens the door when the officer arrives.

OFFICER #1

(Stepping onto the first step) Is there an Anthony and Mark Carder on this bus?

BUS DRIVER

(Looking back into the bus) Anthony!
Mark! You best get up here.

All the other kids look back at the brothers who are sitting in the back seat. The brothers are confused but get their old, torn backpacks and head toward the front.

OFFICER #1

You kids are Anthony and Mark?

ANTHONY/MARK TOGETHER

Uh huh.

OFFICER #1

(Leading them off the bus) Boys, I'm afraid there's a problem. We got a call from the apartment manager. Your mother's

been found dead. I'm afraid we have to take you downtown to the child services office.

He leads the kids to a police car.

They are placed in the back seat.

As they drive away, the brothers look out the back window.

They see a gurney with a body bag being wheeled to the ambulance.

CUT TO:

INT. FOSTER HOME -- DAY

It is a winter afternoon, 1986.

We are seeing the dining room of the latest foster parents. It is very nice and clean, but not rich and with obviously used furniture.

Their foster mother Beatrice come in and sits down going through bills. She is a 43, white, normal blasé looking housewife.

We barely hear deep thumping break-dance music starting to get louder.

Beatrice looks up from the bills. She is obviously not happy.

BEATRICE

Damn it.

She heads out.

EXT. FOSTER HOME -- DAY

Beatrice comes out the front door and sees exactly what she expected to see. A red beefed up Chevy convertible is pulling into the driveway with its stereo pumping deep bass break-dance music and breaking the silence of this middle class quiet neighborhood. Mark is in the passenger side and Anthony is in the back with another kid. The car skids to a halt, leaving

another set of tire tracks on the driveway. The kids are all laughing, but Beatrice is not happy at all.

She starts walking toward the car.

BEATRICE

(yelling over the music) Anthony! Mark!
Get out of that car right now! James,
turn that noise off.

The driver, James, turns down the stereo.

JAMES

(sarcastic) Hello, Mrs. Smith. How are
you today?

James is a black 17 year-old gang leader who doesn't care about anyone that isn't in his gang, although he does follow the rules of not stealing from those in your neighborhood. The other kid is Ghost. He is a 15 year-old white kid. He is a classic follower and does whatever the gang does. He has no opinion for himself.

Beatrice looks at him just long enough to see his devilish smile and decides to ignore him.

BEATRICE

Come on you two. Let's go.

ANTHONY/MARK

Aww, man.

BEATRICE

Now!

Although they are not happy about having to go inside, the two brothers grab their backpacks and start getting out of the car.

INT. FOSTER HOME -- DAY

The kids march in ahead of Beatrice and place their backpacks on to the dining room table.

BEATRICE

Now you boys know I don't like you
hanging out with those hoodlums. They are
just trouble.

ANTHONY

Man, what do you care? They ain't bothered you.

BEATRICE

You watch your mouth young man or I'll slap you so hard Mark'll feel it too.

Anthony lowers his eyes and decides to back down.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Now Principal Whittler called again. Said you too "missed" last period again.

MARK

Aw come on, Mrs. Smith. Math is boring

ANTHONY

Yeah. And we ain't ever going to use it.

BEATRICE

Now you look at me. Ninth grade is serious.

She goes to the refrigerator to grab some milk.

You two start screwing up now and they'll pull you from here and stick you into another foster home and this is already the sixth one you've been in. Now they pay us good money to watch after you two.

ANTHONY

(Whispering to Mark) Yeah. She don't wanna lose her paycheck.

They both start giggling.

Beatrice pops her head over the door.

BEATRICE

Hey. You watch it now.

The two stop their laughing and Beatrice goes back to grabbing some milk.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)

Now get goin' on your homework.

We hear the front door open.

JULIE (O.S.)

Mom. I'm home.

BEATRICE

Over here, baby. In the kitchen.

Julie runs in and gives her mom a hug. She is Beatrice's biological 10 year old daughter. She is pretty and spoiled rotten.

JULIE

(After the hug.) I got an "A" on my spelling test today.

BEATRICE

Well good for you, dear. That's my little baby.

The phone rings.

BEATRICE

Hold on dear. I'll be right back.

Beatrice leaves. Julie walks over to the dining room table.

JULIE

(With obvious dislike for the brothers.)
Hey, dorks.

ANTHONY

Man. Beat it, little one.

MARK

Yeah. Go play with your Barbie dolls or something.

JULIE

(Running to her mom) Mom!

LIVING ROOM

Beatrice is talking on the phone.

BEATRICE

No. I'm afraid we're not interested right now. Uh huh.

JULIE

Mom! Mom, they're picking on me.

Beatrice places here hand over the phone so the salesman can't hear her.

BEATRICE

(Yelling) You boys leave her alone. And get that homework done. You got chores to do.

DINING ROOM

Anthony and Mark look at each other with disgusted looks on their faces.

Julie runs to the corner to look into the dining room and stick her tongue at the brothers before heading to her room.

MARK

(Looking back to Anthony) Dude, she's always getting us in trouble.

ANTHONY

No kidding. Man she's gonna grow up to be as mean as her mom.

MARK

Or worse.

ANTHONY

Yeah. Remember the Stephans?

Beatrice steps back into the kitchen to finish making lunch.

MARK

Or God. Don't remind me.

BEATRICE

You boys aren't done with your school work yet?

MARK

We just got started.

BEATRICE

Well never mind that right now. Anthony, go mow the backyard. And Mark. Clean up the tool shed.

ANTHONY

What?

MARK

Aww, come on.

BEATRICE

Hey, do you want dinner?

MARK/ANTHONY

(Knowing they are beat.) Yeah.

BEATRICE

(Pointing to the backyard) Well, you best get those chores done.

The kids get up to go do the meaningless labor Beatrice calls chores.

DINNER TIME

We see a plate of macaroni and cheese dumped on the table in front of Anthony.

ANTHONY

Aww, man.

Beatrice dumps a similar plate in front of Mark.

MARK

We had this last night.

Beatrice sits down. Her, Julie and Dad all have steak and vegetables in front of them.

DAD

Now you boys just have to be happy with what you got. You're lucky we took you in. Now eat your dinner and don't waste it.

The brothers eat their meal although they obviously don't like it.

The dad is 45, white and mean. He has no love of the brothers. They are moochers as far as he is concerned.

DAD (CONT'D)

Now what's this I hear about the principal calling again.

JULIE

(Hoping to get them in more trouble) They ditched again, daddy.

DAD

(Shaking his fork at them) Now you boys are in big trouble. If I hear about you boys ditching again, I'll give you the belt again. You got that?

ANTHONY/MARK

Yes, sir.

They continue eating in silence. The rest of the family beside the brothers are obviously enjoying their meal.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL CORNER STORE -- DAY

We see the refrigerated section of a small convenience store. Luther, A 41 year-old black man walks up with a crate of milk and places it on the ground and starts loading the fridge. He has run that store for many years and has no plans of leaving any time soon.

The bell rings indicating that someone has entered the store.

Luther turns to see who it is.

We see Anthony, Mark and two other kids stroll in chatting and looking for munchies to buy. All the kids are dressed up like 1980's gang members and have back-packs on.

MARK

Hey Mr. Luther. What's up?

LUTHER

Well, hello boys. School out already?

JAMES

(Chuckling slightly) Not exactly.

LUTHER

(Looking upset) Now boys. You know I can't have you in here when you should be in school.

ALL BOYS

AAWWW.

LUTHER

Now go on. Get.

The kids leave.

EXT. SMALL CORNER STORE

The kids come out of the store. They head to James' car, which is parked right in front of the store. They hop in without opening the doors. James gets in the driver's seat, Mark is in the passenger seat and the other two get in the back.

ANTHONY

Man this sucks!

GHOST

Yeah, this sucks!

JAMES

Oh shut up, Ghost. Ah, fuck him. No sweat man. We got other shit to do anyway.

MARK

Oh? What's up man.

JAMES

Some dopes from West Side pounded on Jerry this morning.

ANTHONY/GHOST

(Completely surprised) What?

MARK

No way.

JAMES

Yeah, man. Fucked him all up. He got out, but he looks as ugly as Ghost here.

Anthony starts laughing.

GHOST

Hey, fuck you, man.

MARK

We hittin' them back?

JAMES

You know it man.

ANTHONY

We're getting' them tonight, right?

JAMES

Man I ain't waitin' that long. I'm knockin' those assholes right now. You in?

GHOST

Yeah. Let's go get those mutherfuckers.

Mark looks back at Anthony who doesn't see any problem with the idea and they both shrug and nod in acceptance.

JAMES

Well, all right then. Let's fuck 'em up.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIC PARK -- CONTINUOUS

A few scenes of the city cruise by before ending up at a grassy public park.

We see a couple of white, black and Chinese gang kids playing football and listening to break-dance music from a boom box.

As we pan back, we see the Chevy convertible pull up with its tell tale skid.

Mark Looks at the football players then back to James.

MARK

Dude, they got their whole gang there. Let's go grab some friends.

JAMES

Dude, don't worry, we can handle this bag of punks. Look at them. They fucked up Jerry this morning and here they are just like it was no big deal.

GHOST

Yeah. Those punks. Let's go waste them.

ANTHONY

So how we gonna do this?

JAMES

(Pointing to the glove compartment) Get my toy, man.

Mark opens it up and grabs a set of brass knuckles and hands it to James.

GHOST

What about us, man? You got some for us too?

JAMES

Don't worry Ghost. You know I got you covered man. They in the trunk.

GHOST

Cool, man. I'm gonna sock whoever kicked Jerry man.

They all get out and go to the trunk where James opens it.

EXT. PARK -- CONTINUOUS

Looking back on the football game, we see the quarterback Beef, who's waiting for a hike. Beef is 19, black and the head of the West Side gang. He is bigger and stronger than anyone in his gang.

Past him, in the background we see James, Anthony, Mark and Ghost walking up to the group.

BEEF

OK, ready. Hut. Hut.

JAMES

(Yelling) Give him the ball already. He ain't got none of his own.

The entire West Side gang look their way.

GHOST

(Laughing) Yeah you big jerk. No balls.
Get it?

BEEF

Man what you doin' here, James? (Pointing
out behind James) You best take your punk
ass back over there where you belong.

JAMES

Man what was that shit with Jerry this
morning?

BEEF

(Giggling at the memory) Oh yeah him.

JAMES

Yeah him. He belongs to me and your boys
jumped him.

BEEF

Well, he was trying to pick off some
stores on our side of town, so we had to
teach him a lesson.

JAMES

Don't shit me, Beef. Jerry don't pop no
Circle K. He's strictly a pick-pocket.
And besides, you knocked him at the
school. He wasn't in your territory.

BEEF

I say he was.

JAMES

Don't even think of goin' there, man. You
know I ain't givin' you no land like some
punk ass Indian.

Beef uses his size to try to intimidate.

He puffs up and stands closer to James to look down on him.

BEEF

Is that so?

JAMES

Dude. Back up man, or my boys and me will
fuck you up.

We see James' friends getting pumped up and ready for a fight.

BEEF

Man, you are dumb. (Pointing back to his entire gang) Try counting the sides again.

James looks behind Beef. He doesn't seem impressed.

JAMES

Yeah so what? I see 'em.

He looks back at Beef.

I'm dumb but you're blind sucka'.

Suddenly realising what James is saying, Beef looks back behind his gang to see a mess of James' gang walking up with baseball bats and chains.

Parents are grabbing their children and carrying them to safety upon seeing these kids show up.

Beef turns around.

James punches him right in the face with his brass knuckles.

A huge gang fight ensues.

Anthony and Mark are caught in the middle of it punching rivals and get punched back.

We hear a police siren and see a cop car pulling.

Many of the kids scatter to keep from getting caught, but many are still fighting, including the brothers.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY JAIL -- DAY

We see a bunch of the kids behind bars. They split the gangs up into two cells so they can't fight with each other through the wall, but that doesn't stop them from slinging insults back and forth. They are more mad about not getting to beat up the other gang than they are about being in jail.

EAST SIDE MEMBER #1

Standing by the door.

Yeah. You bastards just try comin' into our neighborhood again.

WEST SIDE MEMBER #1

Hey, fuck you dick. We'll go wherever we want.

EAST SIDE MEMBER #1

Yeah, fuck you too. You punk ass.

GHOST

Yeah. Fuck you.

We zoom into the East Side cell where Anthony and Mark are sitting on the only bench sharing it with three other kids. James walks over to them and talks to Anthony.

JAMES

That was some good fighting man.

ANTHONY

Fuckin' punks, man.

JAMES

Yeah they learned their lesson man. You don't fuck with East Side.

GHOST

(From behind James.) Yeah. We showed them, man. WooWho!

Ghost goes back to taunting West Side. James turns back to Anthony.

ANTHONY

(Toward Mark) Man, the Smiths are goin'a kill us.

JAMES

Dude fuck them man. You can come hang with me. I'll take care'a you.

MARK

No Shit? Really?

JAMES

Fuck yeah, man.

Puts his hand on Mark Shoulder

You know East Side take care of their
own.

Anthony and Mark look at each other and like the way things are
turning out. Some break-dance music from 1986 starts as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SMITH'S HOUSE -- DAY

We see the brothers coming out the front door of the Smith's
house carrying bags as the music continues.

Beatrice and Steve follow them out.

They are yelling at the kids although we can't hear them.

The brothers turn back before getting into James' Chevy.

Anthony yells some things back at them.

Mark gives them the middle finger.

The Smith's are aghast at what they just saw.

The brothers throw their bags into the back seat and jump in.

James backs up the car and spins the tires as it drives away as
we see the Smiths watch them leave, anger still on their face.
Beatrice looks back at her husband and we see her mouth:

BEATRICE

(No sound) Can you believe them?

Dad realizes that they have lost and puts his arm around her and
brings her in the house while she continues to rant and rave.
The music is still playing as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY OUTLINE -- DAY

A number of shots showing the brothers participating in the gang
life go by.

We see them relaxing with fellow members having a beer.

Another scene of Mark taking payments and passing drugs to a customer on a city corner while Anthony takes watch.

Another scene of them stealing a new Toyota Camery.

C/U of a beer can, a water pipe next to cash, and some cocaine on a mirror.

We see a slightly older Anthony and Mark sitting at a party with some beers in their hands.

They turn to each other and shake hands, happy with their continuous party lifestyle.

The last scene is James smiling and shaking his head yes at the party liking what he is seeing. The music stops as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 7/11 -- DAY

It is now 1990. We see a dirty city corner in downtown gangsville during the middle of the day. A good amount of cars are driving by. There is a 7/11 at the corner.

We see Anthony and Mark walk into it.

INT. 7/11 -- CONTINUOUS

We see the inside of the 7/11 through the B/W monitor of the security camera above and behind the counter.

Some white guy is working the counter doing busy work. No one else is in the store.

We see the brothers walk in.

They spilt up. Mark heads to the candy isle while Anthony goes toward the cold beer section.

REGULAR CAMERA ANGLES

Anthony grabs a case of Budweiser and walks off.

Mark looks around for a while and then grabs a Milky Way and some Red Vines.

Anthony comes around the corner and they both head off to the front counter. It appears they've done this before.

EXT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

We see a 40ish beer belly white police cop driving around inspecting the neighborhood. His younger partner, Jim, is in the passenger seat. Jim is a bit bored while looking around.

JIM

Boy, this is the slowest day yet. Have you ever been this bored before, hank?

HANK

Enjoy it while it lasts, Jim.

INT. 7/11 -- CONTINUOUS

The brothers arrive to the counter.

7/11 WORKER

Did you find everything you needed?

MARK

Not yet.

Anthony Pulls out a gun and points it toward the worker

ANTHONY

Open the register and give us the money.

The worker puts his hands up and opens the cash register.

MARK

Now we have.

OUTSIDE

The cop car drives by the 7/11. Hank looks over and sees the robbery in progress. Jim is scanning forward and doesn't see it.

HANK

Quiet time's over rookie.

Jim realizes he missed something and looks over.

Hank swerves the car around the corner and hits the lights & siren.

INSIDE

ANTHONY

Come on. Hurry up!

The brothers hear the siren, get scared, and look out the window. Their POV reveals the cop car pulling into the parking lot quickly.

ANTHONY

Aw fuck!

MARK

(Grabbing Anthony's arm.) The back door dude. Come on!

They both run toward the back door of the store.

OUTSIDE

Out front Hank pulls up, and jumps out of the car while Jim calls in the crime on the radio.

INSIDE

Hank runs in with his hand on his holstered pistol. He looks to the 7/11 worker.

7/11 WORKER

(Pointing) They went out the back.

Hank runs after them.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The brothers give chase through a couple of streets, but Hank is gaining on them.

Occasionally we see Jim bringing up the rear.

The brothers run into an alleyway.

It's fenced off in the middle.

They begin climbing over it.

Hank comes around the corner behind them and stops.

HANK

(With weapon drawn) Halt! Don't even try it.

The brothers quit climbing. Their faces showing a look of defeat. Anthony looks over at Mark with an idea on his face.

MARK

No, Dude, no.

Anthony drops to the floor and immediately spins around with his gun and fires.

Hank steps back behind the corner to avoid getting shot.

We look directly at Anthony and hear another gun shot.

He is hit in the back and goes down.

We see Jim on the other side of the fence at the end of the corridor with his weapon drawn and pointing at them.

The look on his face shows he can't believe what he just did.

MARK

(Looks around and realizes what just happened.) NO!

Hank comes around the corner and sees what Jim did.

HANK

Aw Jesus.

Hank starts moving toward the brothers.

Mark, crying, drops to his knees and holds Anthony.

He sees the weapon on the ground.

In anger he grabs it and begins to point it at Jim.

Hank points his weapon back at Mark.

HANK

Don't do it, son. That won't help your friend there.

JIM
Put it down! Put it down!

HANK
Move back Jim! (Softer) Put the gun down son.

Mark hesitates. He is still crying and still very angry.

Mark turns the gun toward Jim.

Put it down! It won't help. Put it down and give up. We'll get an ambulance for him.

MARK
(Looks back toward Hank) He's DEAD!

HANK
Maybe not. Now drop the gun and get against the wall. The sooner you give up, the sooner we can help him.

Mark angrily considers his options, but, realizing the situation is out of his control he throws the weapon away.

Hank runs up and grabs Mark and drives him against the wall, pointing his gun to him.

HANK
(To Jim) Get the call in now!

Jim is still dazed, but grabs his belt radio and calls in for an ambulance.

Hank cuffs Mark.

Mark is crying hard and calling Anthony's name.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Anthony is on a gurney, eyes open, as a body bag is zipped over him.

Mark is in the back seat of a cop car watching and crying.

Hank and Jim are standing together by another car. Hank is visibly upset.

HANK

Damn it, rookie. What were you thinking.

JIM

I'm sorry, Hank. I just reacted.

That answer upsets Hank who pulls his billy-club out and swings it down onto the trunk of the car.

Before the club hits, we:

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

The hammer of the judge bangs down.

We see a fairly empty courtroom. Mark is in jail clothing and is sitting in the defendant's chair.

Next to him is some white attorney who is dressed in a not too expensive suit and tie.

The judge is an older black man.

JUDGE MARSHALL

Son, you've been found guilty of attempted robbery, resisting arrest and possession of illegal narcotics. Do you have anything to say before I pass judgement?

MARK

No sir, Judge Marshall sir.

JUDGE MARSHALL

Now I'm sorry to hear you lost your brother during all this, but I can't let that influence my judgement. Mark Carder. I sentence you to spend a period not less than 10 years in State Penitentiary. Case closed.

BALIFF

All rise for the honorable Judge
Marshall.

Everyone rises and the judge leaves. Mark is visibly unhappy.

INT. JAIL VISITING CENTER -- DAY

Mark is sitting in front of a glass shield.

James shows up on the other side and sits down.

They both pick up a handset.

JAMES (FILTER)

I heard about Anthony.

MARK

Yeah.

JAMES

This is fucked up.

MARK

Man, tell me something I don't know.
Thanks for showing up at my trial, by the
way.

JAMES

Dude, you know I hate being around court
houses and jails. Your lucky I showed up
today.

MARK

(Snickering) Oh yeah. Just a fuckin'
bundle of good luck, ain't I?

James is silent.

MARK (CONT'D)

So what now, man?

JAMES

What do you mean?

MARK

I mean how are you getting me out of
here?

JAMES

Dude, in case you didn't notice, you're in jail.

MARK

Man, you said you'd always help me out. I don't wanna spend ten years in here. You gotta do something!

JAMES

What do I look like? A fuckin' lawyer? What, you think me and the boys're gonna bust you out or somethin'?

Mark's face begins to look surprised and/or scared.

I mean you're my homie and all but, well shit dude. You got caught, and I mean bad. I can't do anything stupid and bring it on me, man. I got things to run.

MARK

You're dropping me?

PUNCHES the glass.

YOU FUCKIN' DICK!

JAMES

Hey man.

MARK

You mother fucking, stealing bastard. I just, I just lost Anthony and you're gonna let me hang here and rot?

James is again silent.

You fucker! You get me outta here or I'll tell them all about your shit.

JAMES

HEY! Don't you even think it you shit! After all I did for you?

MARK

All you did for me?

JAMES

That's right. I got you out of that shitty foster home and took care of you.

MARK

The fuck you did. We sleep on everyone's floor and gave you most the money.

JAMES

I told you that's how things work, man.

MARK

You didn't tell us shit!

JAMES

You're being a little ungrateful.

MARK

Get me the fuck out of here.

JAMES

I can't.

MARK

So what? I just sit here for ten years?

JAMES

Hey man. I'll be right here for you when you get out.

MARK

If I see you when I get out, I swear I'll fucking kill you.

JAMES

Don't you threaten me. I'll fuck you up like I did Beef.

MARK

You son of a bitch.

Drops the phone and starts to leave.

James gets up too.

Suddenly Mark ATTACKS the glass trying to get at James.

James is startled.

MARK

You fucker. I trusted you. WE trusted you.

James can't hear him on his side of the glass but seems to get the gist.

He gives Mark the finger and walks away.

Mark starts crying.

Some guards arrive and grab him and drive him to the nearest wall to restrain him.

James doesn't look back.

As we see Mark being restrained, the sound of jail doors closing and other jail sounds become very prominent.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK SCREEN

Sounds of prisoners talking/arguing.

Sounds of jail cells opening and closing.

Sounds of a siren.

COP

Get down! Get down!

Siren Ceases.

Natural jail sounds continue.

PRISIONER

Man, one day I'm gonna get out of here.

(Echo 3 times) Get out of here.

CUT TO:

INT. PAROLE OFFICE -- DAY

LADY

That's right. It may be your day to get out of here.

It is the year 2000. Mark is sitting in front of three people, two men and a woman, who are behind a table.

PAROLE LADY (CONT'D)

Now we've reviewed your record. You haven't been a saint this past few years.

MARK

No ma'am, I haven't. If I was I'd be dead.

PAROLE LADY

Yes. I see you had a couple of fights. I suppose you're going to tell me it wasn't your fault?

MARK

Wouldn't help none, would it?

PAROLE LADY

No Mr, how do you pronounce your last name?

MARK

Carder. Just like Carter with a "T", except spelled with a "D".

PAROLE LADY

Yes, Mr. Carder. No. I'm afraid it would not help you at all.

Mark is silent.

However. We on the parole committee don't see any real reason to keep wasting our money on you. We are granting you parole at this time.

MARK

(Very happy)Thank you. Thanks a lot.

EXT. PRISION FRONT GATE -- DAY

We see Mark walk out of the front gate. He is dressed in regular clothing. He is looking around.

GUARD HOLDING THE GATE

This is your first day out. What are you going to do first?

Mark thinks for a moment.

MARK
I'm getting drunk.

Walks off.

The guard shakes his head.

GUARD HOLDING THE GATE
See you soon, asshole.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE CLUB -- NIGHT

The bar/dance club is hopping. There are lots of people drinking and dancing.

The music in the background is typical club dance tunes.

We see Mark with a drink in his hand obviously a little drunk and having a great time with the people around him.

He walks up to the bar stools.

There is a red headed woman sitting next to him, sipping a drink. She is not the best looking one in the bar, but she is dressed to kill.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

MARK
Mai Tai.

The woman looks back at him.

WOMAN
What about your tie?

MARK
It's invisible.

WOMAN
I thought ties were supposed to catch people's attention?

MARK

Yeah. See what a great job it did?

The woman smiles, suppressing a laugh.

MARK (CONT'D)

What's your name?

SUSAN (WOMAN)

Susan.

They shake hands.

MARK

I'm Mark. Nice to meet you. You wanna dance?

SUSAN

What about your drink?

MARK

Know what the difference between you and that drink is?

Susan shakes her head no.

The drink is replaceable.

SUSAN

Pity for the drink.

They head out and dance very sensuously.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM. -- NIGHT

They mimic the dance moves in bed. It is a short, dark, quick sex scene.

EXT. VARIOUS DATING SCENES -- CONTINUOUS

Multiple scenes showing Mark and Susan together dating.

They are spending time together cheaply.

Walking on the beach, having sex, watching TV, having sex, Etc.

No scene shows them in an expensive situation.

There is also two scenes of them fighting, showing Susan yelling at Mark over something and Mark yelling back in defense.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's the year 2000.

They are at a very unfurnished, cheap apartment.

Susan is sitting on the bed wearing a nightie.

She's watching Mark brush his teeth through the open door of the bathroom.

Mark is only wearing sweat pants.

SUSAN

Dear?

MARK

HHMM?

SUSAN

I have a surprise for you.

MARK

(After spitting) What's up?

SUSAN

Look in the cupboard.

Mark opens the cupboard to find a single used pregnancy test. The result is positive.

Mark realizes what this means and looks back at Susan for confirmation.

Susan takes a deep breath and smiles slightly.

He heads over and grabs her in his arms and pulls her off the bed.

MARK

Are you totally positive?

SUSAN

I took that test yesterday and went to the doctor today to confirm it.

The song "Arms Wide Open" by Creed begins playing in the background.

Mark is stunned.

MARK

(Under his breath) Holy shit.

SUSAN

Now, I don't want to pressure you.

MARK

Nah, nah. I mean. Damn! We gotta take care of this.

SUSAN

Wait a minute. I will not get an abortion.

MARK

I don't mean that. I mean we gotta take care of the little fucker. You know. Together.

SUSAN

You mean?

MARK

Hell yeah, Damn it. I ain't leavin' no kid o' mine like my pop left me. Shit. We're getting married baby.

SUSAN

Oh sweetie.

They hug tightly.

INT. WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

It is a poor but not unbeautiful Chapel.

Mark and Susan are at the alter getting married. They are wearing cheap wedding clothes.

Susan is visibly pregnant. They're obviously trying to make as nice as wedding as possible despite the fact that they're broke.

The song continues until the end of the scene which sees the couple leaving as husband and wife.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The year is 2002. We see Mark sitting in a run down La-z Boy watching TV.

He has a beer in his hand and is wearing torn, dirty clothes. The living room is fairly dark except for the glow of the TV.

The phone rings.

MARK

Hello?

BILL COLLECTOR (FILTER)

Hello, Mark Carder? This is Jim Smith from Sprint Telephone Collections. Our records indicate that your bill is quite overdue and so I..

MARK

Yeah, thanks for reminding me. Look, I'm on my way out the door right now. You'll have to call back some other time.

BILL COLLECTOR

Great. When would be a good..

Mark hangs up the phone.

We hear a baby crying.

Susan walks in holding their 2-year-old child.

SUSAN

Damn it, Mark. When are you going to get a job?

MARK

Don't sweat it baby, I got this job interview tomorrow. Little D got this thing lined up for me.

SUSAN

(Heading into the kitchen) Oh hell. You couldn't get a job if it bit you in the balls.

MARK

Hey, fuck you. I'm doin' the best I can here. Everyone wants degrees and shit, you know that.

Susan sits down at the table still holding the child and starts chopping up some Cocaine still on a mirror on the kitchen table.

SUSAN

No good worthless son of a bitch. You'll never amount to nothin'.

MARK

Hey kiss my ass. I'm going to be somebody someday. You watch. I'm going to make somethin' of myself and show everyone. You just wait and see. You..

INT. MCDONALDS -- DAY

We see a Mark dressed up and working at the cash register of a run down fast food joint serving an old man.

MARK

Want fries with that?

OLD CUSTOMER

Sure.

MARK

'K. That'll be \$6.75.

As the old customer looks down to get the cash, Marks face obviously shows that he feels sorry for himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARK'S CAR -- DAY

It is now 2004. Mark is driving a beat up old Ford Escort.

Susan is in the passenger seat and their baby is in the back seat.

Both Susan and Mark are laughing.

SUSAN

So I said "Hey bitch, that cupcake's mine!" And she's just staring at me like a deer in headlights going, "oh, oh , oh. I, I, I'm S-s-sorry."

Mark laughs.

MARK

I can't believe you did all that just for another fuckin' cupcake.

SUSAN

Oh fuck her. I get what I want and I wanted the damn cupcake. I mean, what's she gonna do? Report me to the boss because I took the last cupcake?

MARK

Uh, the last two cupcakes.

SUSAN

Alright fine. The last two cupcakes. Hell I was hungry. After all, We did spend a lot of energy in bed last night.

Susan and Mark smile.

As the car goes across an intersection, a car speeding from the right runs through a stop sign and T-bones them on the passenger side.

It is a bad auto accident.

Mark gets out.

He is banged up and bloody.

The other driver gets out too.

DRIVER

Geez, buddy. Are you alright?

MARK

Yeah, yeah. Damn, fool, what were you thinking? You ran right through the stop sign.

DRIVER

I know. I'm sorry. I've got insurance.

MARK

Yeah, you better. You're buying me a new car, buddy.

DRIVER

Don't worry. It'll all be taken care of.

MARK

Yeah, it better, otherwise..

SUSAN

MARK!

Mark turns around.

A very bloody Susan is crying and holding a very bloody 4-year-old.

MARK

Oh my God. ADAM!

He rushes over to Susan.

He tries to hold Adam, their child, but he just drops to the ground crying.

He sees the driver.

He rushes over to him and starts punching him.

MARK

You mother fucker. You baby killing, I'll kill you, you son of a bitch.

Some onlookers pull Mark off the driver.

Mark is still swinging.

MARK

You no good son of a bitch. Let me go.
I'm gonna kill him. You hear me. I'll
kill you.

EXT. ACCIDENT SCENCE -- DAY

The police and ambulance are on the scene now.

We see a paramedic trying to help Adam.

Another paramedic is looking after Susan who is awake and
responding.

We see the driver being placed in the back seat of a police
vehicle.

An officer is taking notes, standing with Mark.

OFFICER #2

Thank you for all your cooperation, Mr.
Carder. I'm sorry about the incident, but
the paramedics are looking after your
wife and child.

MARK

Is Adam going to be alright?

OFFICER #2

Now we'll know more later. The paramedics
are doing the best they can right now.

MARK

What about that fuckin' bastard? I want
that fucker in jail.

OFFICER #2

Yes sir. He's committed a very serious
crime. He'll be detained pending the
outcome of this situation, and charges
will be assessed. The paramedics have
checked you out, right?

Mark shakes his head yes.

The ambulance leaves with lights FLASHING, CODE 3.

The officer sees this and doesn't like it, but tries to hide his concern when he looks back at Mark.

OFFICER #2 (CONT'D)

Well, you're lucky to get out with just a few bruises. Now I suggest you head to the hospital so you can be with your wife and son. Come on. I'll give you lift.

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Susan is in a hospital bed. Mark comes up to her.

MARK

How're you doing honey?

SUSAN

I'm OK. How's Adam?

MARK

I don't know. They won't say anything.

SUSAN

What do you mean they won't tell you anything?

MARK

Now, now. I'm sure it's fine.

A nurse walks in.

NURSE #2

Mr. Carder?

Mark turns around.

OUTSIDE SUSAN'S ROOM

Mark and the nurse walk out into the hall. The nurse says something we can't hear.

Mark falls to the floor crying.

Close up on a frying egg.

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Susan and Mark are in the kitchen making breakfast.

They are clearly unhappy.

Susan is at the stove. Mark is pouring orange juice.

They prepare their breakfast and eat in tense silence.

INT. LUTHER'S STORE -- DAY

It is now 2005. The bells of the front door ring as Mark walks into the store. Mike, a white 40 year-old professional walks in behind him. They start shopping around.

MARK

I'm telling you Mike, things are just getting worse.

LUTHER

Hello Mark. Howdy Mike.

MARK & MIKE

Hello Luther.

MIKE

So, what do you mean by getting worse?

MARK

She's blowing up at any little thing now. It ain't gonna last much longer.

MIKE

You gonna get a divorce?

MARK

She hasn't been the same since the accident.

MIKE

No offense, Mark, but she was a bitch even before that.

MARK

Oh she just got cranky once in a while.

MIKE

(Sarcastic)Uh, Yeah. OK.

They are at the counter. Luther starts ringing them up.

MARK

Besides, I think she's cheating on me.

MIKE

Gee. There's a shock. Get rid of her already. It's obvious you two got nothing left for each other. Aren't I right, Luther?

LUTHER

Ah, you know me, boys. I ain't gonna stick my nose where it don't belong.

MARK

Oh, bullshit, Luther. You know more about people's business in this neighborhood than a pack of P.I.'s.

LUTHER

Hmm. You're right. Dump the bitch.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Mark and Susan are arguing.

SUSAN

What do you mean, divorce?

MARK

Look, Susan. It's obvious the loves gone. Things aren't working between us anymore.

SUAN

Oh how can you say that?

MARK

What about that shit with that guy from your work. Kenny?

SUSAN

OK, so I made a mistake once.

MARK

Twice a week for months.

SUSAN

But that's over now.

MARK

He moved.

SUSAN

God Damn it, Mark. Don't hold that against me.

MARK

We do nothing but argue. Shit when was the last time we laughed together? Look we'll get a mediator and split everything up 50-50. It'll be better this way.

Susan goes running into the kitchen crying. Mark turns around.

MARK

(To himself) God I hate breakin' up. Damn moody bitch.

We hear Susan SCREAM.

Mark TURNS AROUND.

Mark sees Susan run at him with a kitchen knife above her head.

Susan STABS at Mark.

Mark backs up to avoid the down-slash.

She tries again.

They struggle.

Susan ends up turning the knife around and stabbing Mark in the groin.

Mark screams and starts going down.

Susan looks at Mark in fear.

She drops the knife and runs out of the apartment.

Mark crawls to the phone and dials. He holds it to his ear.

OPERATOR (FILTER)

9-1-1. What's the emergency?

Mark can't say anything.

He collapses.

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM, HOSPITAL -- DAY

Mark is in the bed. A doctor comes in.

DOCTOR

Well, how are you today, Mr. Carder?

MARK

I feel like shit.

DOCTOR

Yes. Well, considering what you went through, I'd say you're pretty lucky.

MARK

So what's the damages?

DOCTOR

Well, the blade was just shy of the major lower artery, otherwise you'd be dead.

MARK

Oh great.

DOCTOR

However it severed the testicular cord. I'm afraid you will never have kids again.

MARK

WHAT?! No. Fuck no!

Mark winces in pain.

DOCTOR

Please try to relax. You're still very injured. The repair we had to do was quite intensive and deep. The stitches will be painful for a long while.

MARK

There's nothing you can do at all? I mean I want kids.

DOCTOR

Mr. Carder. To be quite honest, you have no medical insurance. We are only allowed to perform the minimum amount of care to keep you from dying. I'm afraid that you just don't have any method of paying for the operation, and our company just won't accept that.

MARK

Oh that's bullshit. This is a hospital. You're supposed to heal people. You're supposed to..

Another wince of pain.

DOCTOR

Mr. Carder, please.

A police officer comes in.

OFFICER HALL

I'm looking for Mark Carder.

MARK

I'm Mark.

OFFICER HALL

Mr. Carder, I'm Officer Hall. I'm here to ask you a few questions about the incident.

MARK

Oh, wonderful. Did you arrest the bitch already?

OFFICER HALL

Excuse me?

MARK

Susan. Did you arrest her for attacking me, or do you need me to tell you where she normally hangs out so you can find her?

OFFICER HALL

Actually, Mr. Carder. She's filed a report against you.

MARK

WHAT!?

OFFICER HALL

She says you attacked her.

Mark is stunned.

INT. COURT ROOM -- DAY

There is a bit of talking in the court room.

a white female judge, with the name plate Judge Edna showing, bangs her gavel.

JUDGE EDNA

Alright, alright. Quiet. Quiet.

The court quiets down. We see Mark on one side, and Susan at the other.

JUDGE EDNA (CONT'D)

Now Mr. Carder, this is an unusual case. I don't often handle combination divorce and restraint cases, but considering your violent behavior..

Mark stands up with the help of a cane.

MARK

Your honor. I told you, she attacked ME!

Judge Edna bangs her gavel again.

JUDGE EDNA

MR. CARDER! Sit down and shut up. If you disturb my court again, I'll hold you in contempt.

Mark is visibly not happy, but he sits down.

JUDGE EDNA (CONT'D)

Now this woman is just lucky that she knew enough self defense to keep you from killing her. The fact that you got hurt during your own attack does not sway me at all.

We see Susan sitting there teary eyed and smiling meekly. She is obviously faking it.

Mark looks very upset. He can't believe this is happening to him.

JUDGE EDNA (CONT'D)

This report I've read accounting years of mental and physical abuse you subjected this poor woman to is just sickening. Now I am awarding Susan Carder full divorce rights in compensation for your violent actions and the horrible way you treated her over these years..

Mark is again stunned.

I am giving her total property rights to all items acquired during your marriage, and you, Mr. Carder will still be responsible for all bills incurred and due. Now I am imposing a full restraining order against you, Mr. Carder. If you come within 200 yards of Susan here, I will toss you in jail for many many years. Do you understand?

Mark is talking to his lawyer. The lawyer is holding up his hands and shaking his head no. He can't help him.

JUDGE EDNA (CONT'D)

(Angry) Mr. Carder! Did you understand what I said?

MARK

But your honor, I didn't..

JUDGE EDNA

Do you understand!?

MARK

(defeated) Yes, your honor.

JUDGE EDNA

Good. Court dismissed.

The court begins to empty.

MARK

What kind of public attorney are you?

ATTORNEY

Hey, I did the best I could.

Mark looks over at Susan who is getting ready to leave. Susan looks back at him and gives a little triumphant smile.

EXT. OUTSIDE COURT ROOM -- DAY

Mark walks out with a slight limp and leaning on a cane.

(He walks with a limp for the rest of the movie.)

He looks around.

He strolls along the block.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANCIS' APARTMENT -- DAY

Mark is sitting on the old couch.

Francis is walking into the kitchen. Francis is white, two years younger than Mark, and a real drug head. His life revolves around getting his next hit.

MARK

I'm telling you, Francis, that judge is a real bitch. She must have something against men or something.

Francis is preparing something in the kitchen, but we can't see what.

FRANCIS

Sounds like she really gave you the dick.

MARK

You have no idea. Man, I got nothin' now.

Francis comes out with a pipe and bag of drugs.

MARK (CONT'D)

I think she's a dyke or somethin'.

FRANCIS

Well, don't sweat it man.

He sits next to Mark and places the drugs on the table and begins to load the pipe.

FRANCIS

I've known you for years man. Trust me, you're better off without her. Here. First hit belongs to you.

MARK

Nah, man. I ain't smokin' no crack.

FRANCIS

Fine. More for me. I was just tryin' to be a good host.

Francis takes a hit from the pipe.

But if you want to wallow in your own sorrow..

Mark thinks about it for a moment.

MARK

Give me the damn pipe.

Francis hands the pipe over.

FRANCIS

That's my man. I knew you needed the escape.

Mark takes a hit while Francis smiles.

FRANCIS

Yeah, there you go old buddy. Ol' Francis here has got you covered.

C/U on Mark's face through a layer of smoke. Nothing but black is behind him.

He looks very stoned and is smiling stupidly.

We watch the years tick by year by year.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAFEWAY PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

The year is 2015. We see Mark coming out of Safeway with a cart full of groceries.

Halfway into the nearly empty parking lot, He stops and looks ahead.

He is confused.

Looks around.

Starts moving and looking around frantically.

MARK

Oh, son of a bitch.

Moves directly into an empty parking area.

Checks around himself.

MARK

My fuckin' car! God DAMN it!

He can't find it.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLAR TREE STORE -- DAY

The year is 2016. Mark is walking around the aisles, grabbing a few things.

He goes up to the checkout counter.

The check out lady starts totalling out Mark's merchandise.

DOLLAR TREE LADY
How are you today?

MARK
Fine.

Mark reaches into his back pocket for his wallet, but can't find it.

MARK
Oh, God Damn it. Hold on, I can't find my wallet.

Mark goes around the small store frantically looking for his wallet.

He can't find it.

MARK
(To the check out lady.) I can't believe this.

DOLLAR TREE LADY
I'm afraid I can't let you take the merchandise.

MARK
Yeah, yeah.

Mark leaves.

EXT. MARK'S CAR OUTSIDE DOLLAR TREE -- DAY

Mark gets into his beat up Mustang.

It won't start.

He sits for a moment and starts to laugh.

Starts going back and forth between LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY and violently BEATING up the inside of his car.

An occasional passer-by glances quizzically at Mark, but continue walking on.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUTHER'S STORE -- DAY

We see Luther at the counter doing busy work.

The bells ring again.

He looks up to see Mark walk in.

Mark is not looking happy at all.

Luther doesn't stop working.

LUTHER

Well hello, Mark. How are you today?

MARK

Not good, Luther. I just came to say goodbye.

LUTHER

(Only slightly interested) Movin' outta this neighborhood, huh?

MARK

No.

PAUSE

I'm going to kill myself.

LUTHER

(More involved in the conversation now, but still not stopping his work) Oh? Is that so?

MARK

My life's been a waste, Luther. Ain't no use going on.

LUTHER

Boy you're dumber than I thought.

MARK

What you mean by that?

Luther stops his work.

LUTHER

I mean that you ain't gonna kill yourself. Your gonna continue on with your life and people will thank you for it.

MARK

Oh bullshit! This whole world has beat me down every day of my life. I ain't stickin' around any longer for it's amusement.

LUTHER

Boy, you ain't killin' yourself just when you finally startin' askin' for help.

MARK

Help? HELP?

LUTHER

Yeah. That's the word.

MARK

Listen, I have received nothin' but a kick in the ass since the day I was born. I never knew my father. My whore of a mother died when I was 8.

Luther goes over to the front door and turns the "closed" sign on, still listening as Mark continues.

Anthony and I were shipped off to God knows how many foster homes. Oh SURE we'll take good care of you. We want to be your family. And the moment the caseworkers leave, BAM! You're the little slave they always wanted to hate. Ain't a single foster home ever treated Anthony or me with respect. We left that shit, thinking the gang would be a better place to live and what did that get me? It got my brother killed. My fuckin' twin brother God Damn it. The fuckin' judge throws the book at me and puts behind bars for way too long. I finally get a

wife and she ends up making the old K.K.K. look nice. I lost my son in some fucked up car accident. Susan attacks me and I end up the bad guy in court. I can't have no more children. I tried getting a job, no. I tried starting my own business, no. Everyone has fucked me and laughed in my face and I ain't gonna take it no more!

LUTHER

Good. Then change yourself and start doing what your supposed to do.

MARK

I already told you...

LUTHER

And I ain't talkin' about killin' yourself, boy. I'm talkin' about changin' yourself. Half the shit in your life is your own fault.

MARK

What?

LUTHER

Cripes, boy. Don't tell me you haven't figured it out yet.

MARK

Damn it, Luther, stop callin' me boy. I've known you for 30 years.

LUTHER

And you still act like an immature little brat.

PAUSE

Now you listen to me. Now I have watched you all these years, thinkin' you finally gonna get it right on your own, but you haven't. Obviously you need some help.

MARK

And what? Your gonna give it to me?

LUTHER

Well either that or a good ass whoopin'. Now I figure you deserve both, but you only gonna get one today.

ANOTHER PAUSE

You think you're the only one in the world with some problems? Look around this neighborhood, boy. There are plenty of people around here that aren't doin' so good, and that's just this block. The world's full 'a people who have problems. Hell you ain't human without a few problems.

MARK

I've had enough problems for 20 people.

LUTHER

You're closer to that ass whoopin'. So what? You think there's some problem quota floating about? You think God says "OK. You can have it all, but you. Well I just don't like you. You're living a life of shit." Hell God don't care about anyone. God don't choose to make people happy or sad. Quite frankly I stopped believing God exists. Once I stopped blaming him for my problem years ago, and started takin' responsibility for my own actions, I've been happy ever since. Now like I said, half the shit in your life is your own fault. Yeah, so you didn't grow up in the best family. So what? That don't mean you get to take it out on everyone else. Susan was a no good bitch that you picked up at the bar, and you knew that the first night you fucked her. Now when have you ever heard of a happy marriage between strangers who met at the bar? People don't go there to meet their life mate. They go there to get fucked up and to fuck. You were being stupid.

And you think you're the only one who lost a loved one in an accident? Why do you think they're called accidents? Life didn't "plan" to fuck you over, it just happened, so stop trying to find the

culprit who sabotaged your life 'cause it's you. Shit, you've been punishing yourself every day of your damn life, and I can't figure out why. You seem to think life owes you somethin' and it don't. I've watched you walkin' around like, "OK, Life. You've been mean to me. Now it's time to be nice and let me win the fuckin' lottery. Life don't work like that, son. It don't apologize for being mean to by handing you the things you want. You've been goin' about this all wrong. Life don't give you nothin' until you give something first. Now you ain't once done anything for anyone except yourself, and you get what you deserve. Nothin! Go get a job.

MARK

I've tried..

LUTHER

Oh no you haven't. You never wanted to work. You just wanted to be on a payroll and get a check each week. Ain't no one gonna support a mooch at their work. I've seen how you dress for job interviews. You're entire wardrobe says "Don't expect much out'a me." And I know how hard you work when you do get a job. Shit well fed mice work harder than you do. You give nothin' to nobody and that's exactly what you get back. Nothin'.

MARK

All the good jobs want an education, and you know I never..

LUTHER

Then fix that.

Mark is getting agitated.

MARK

It's a little late for that. I'm 45 for God's...

LUTHER

If you ain't too old to complain about it, then you ain't too old to do something about it. Now go on and learn somethin' and get your G.E.D. If not for the education, then for your heart. Or better yet, do it for both. And you start being nice to people. Help them out when they need it. And don't expect nothin' for your trouble. Just go about your life helpin' folks and you just might see things change. Or maybe you won't, but so what. Those people you help won't care about any problems you have. They'll just be so damn grateful for the kindness you gave them. They might even pass it on to other folks.

MARK

And what do I get out of it?

LUTHER

There you go being greedy again. It ain't about what you'll get out of it. People all the time give their hard earned money to charity and what do they expect out of it? Nothin'. And what do they get from it? When it's done right, everything. Hell the foster system that helped you was paid for by charity.

MARK

The foster system was a fucked up system..

LUTHER

And if better people contributed to it and helped with it, it would have been a whole lot better now wouldn't it? Now those foster families you dealt with weren't contributing to society. They just wanted free money without working. Every one of them. And look at how messed up they were. Now you've been doing the exact same thing they did, and you ain't any better off then they were. You ain't killin' yourself. You ain't that dumb. Now you know what you need to turn your life around? Deep down you

gotta have "probitas". Do you know what "probitas" is?

Mark shakes his head no.

"Probitas" is Latin for "honesty". You gotta be honest with yourself before you can get anything you want. And you gotta be honest with others about who you are. Now I know you've seen a few people make business deals by being dishonest and it looks like they got away with it, but I promise you they get what they deserve in the end. It works every time. I know. I'm still paying for some mistakes I did in my younger days. And you're gonna pay for what you fucked up for the rest of your life. But no matter how much you fuck up, you can still be nice to others. Ain't no one can ever take away your power to be nice and helpful to others 'til you're dead. And then the nice things you did will live forever, along with the shit you've put people through. Now what do you want people to remember about you when you finally die?

Pause

You also gotta have probitas about what you want.

MARK

Oh, I know what I want.

LUTHER

And what's that?

MARK

I wanna be rich and famous and to be respected and I want this shit to stop happening to me.

LUTHER

No you don't. What you want is to be happy. You don't really care about all those trappings. If you had a million dollars a few years ago, you'd just waste it on stupid shit, thinkin' it would make you happy, and it might. For a while. But

once you ran outta money you'd be right back to being the unhappy pathetic excuse for a man that you were before the money, all 'cause you don't know what you really want. Now what you really want is for people to like you and for you to feel good about yourself, and you ain't gonna get there by being lazy and not helpin' anyone. Once you realize that, then you start having probitas and you can start fixin' yourself.

The bells ring.

Some young punk comes in the door.

LUTHER

Sorry. We're closed. Family emergency.

PUNK

Emergency is right.

Pulls out a gun.

Now give me your money.

Luther and Mark hold their hands up.

Luther moves toward the register.

LUTHER

Now just relax son. No need for anyone to get hurt.

PUNK

Shut up and open that safe.

Luther Heads to the safe and starts opening it.

Luther looks over at Mark with sad eyes.

Mark sees him and looks over at the young robber.

He SEES HIMSELF in his younger days holding the gun.

(YOUNGER MARK AS) PUNK

Come on. I ain't got all day.

MARK

Now hold on, son. You don't wanna do this.

(THE REAL) PUNK

And what do you know old man? My mom left us and my dad's a dick.

MARK

Son, I could go toe to toe with you on bad stories, but that ain't the point.

LUTHER

You listen to him, now.

PUNK

Shut up and get that money. Why ain't the safe open yet?

LUTHER

(Lying) You got me all shakin'. I can't work the dial right.

The punk gets frustrated.

MARK

Now what the fuck you need that money for? You're old enough to get yourself a job.

PUNK

Fuck that. There's as much in that safe as I can make in a year of workin'.

Mark starts naturally inching closer to the gun man.

MARK

Yeah, and you'll spend years in jail when you get caught.

PUNK

I ain't getting' caught am I?

MARK

Not yet, but if you keep this up, you will. It happened to me.

PUNK

You used to smoke stores?

MARK

And wasted ten years in County Pen for it. Now look, I got a friend who needs an intern at his office. It ain't good work, but it's honest and you'll get health insurance and good experience for better jobs.

PUNK

Yeah? And go from one job to the next? No thanks. Get that fuckin' safe open!

MARK

How long you gonna pop stores? You wanna do this when your 30 and got kids to take care of and a wife to fuck every night? How would they like having robber in their family? Now you drop the gun and I'll get you that job.

The punk points the gun at Mark.

PUNK

And if I don't?

Mark takes the gun away from him and throws him in the corner. The punk doesn't have an escape route.

MARK

Then I'm gonna drag you to that job. Now my friend's a lawyer and he needs someone now and you need a job bad. Either that or I kick your ass..

PUNK

You ain't touchin' me.

MARK

(continuing) And then I'll drag your ass to the police and let them find you a new boyfriend in jail.

Points the gun at the punk.

Now which way do you want your life to go?

PUNK

(Thinking unhappily a moment) All right.
What does this job do?

MARK
You still in school?

PUNK
No.

MARK
Well you are now. I ain't lettin' my
friend have an idiot for an employee.
Luther, call Mike up.

LUTHER
You sure? I can call the cops.

MARK
(Asking the punk) Which do you want? You
wanna go to jail and be someone's bitch?

PUNK
No, man. I don't wanna go to jail.

MARK
Then I need your word that you'll work
hard. Otherwise I'll come and kick your
ass.

PUNK
Fine, fine. I'll try it.

MARK
Can't ask for more than that. Luther.
Call Mike.

Luther dials the phone.

Now, punk. Give me your wallet.

PUNK
What?

MARK
Wallet! NOW!

The punk gives him his wallet.

Mark looks in it while still pointing the gun at the punk.

OK. Stanley. Tell me your phone number so I can call your dad and tell him what a great kid he has.

Stanley does not look happy.

EXT. LUTHER'S SHOP -- DAY

Mike is standing with Mark.

MIKE

So you really think I could use this kid?

MARK

Yeah. He has some personal issues, so don't push too hard. But I do want you to give him some work ethic. It'll do him good. Just don't give him access to anything important. Make him earn it.

MIKE

OK. How come you're doing this for him? He's just a punk. Normally you'd have just shot him or gave him to the cops.

Mark looks back at Luther who gives him a nod.

Mark turns back to Mike.

MARK

I figured you could use the help, and this kid could use the education. Speaking of which, make sure he stays in school.

MIKE

Well, I'll call his dad and talk to him. I'm sure we work something out.

MARK

Right on. Keep me informed.

MIKE

Will do. See you later.

MARK

Bye.

They both walk off.

Mark walks over to Luther.

LUTHER

That's a good first start. Where do you go from here?

MARK

Shit, I don't know. Hell, that kid'll probably rip Mike off and I'll be blamed for it.

LUTHER

Well that is certainly possible. But no matter what you do something bad might happen from it, and that's no reason not to do good deeds. Besides, Mike's a bright guy. He won't let that kid do anything he's not supposed to.

MARK

Alright, alright. You made your point.

LUTHER

Well, we'll see if I have or not. In the mean time why don't you head out and see this world the way you've always needed to. Go on. I'll take care of the rest here.

MARK

OK. I'll see you later, Luther.

Mark leaves.

LUTHER

(to himself) I just hope you're better off when you do.

Mark walks down the street looking around for the first time.

The sounds are louder. The images are crisper.

His POV reveals kids running around having fun.

Some kids scooter by him.

He watches them pass by and smiles.

We hear clear sounds of cars passing and people talking.

We see a woman on the porch.

WOMAN ON PORCH

Howdy.

MARK

Howdy. How are you today?

WOMAN ON PORCH

Happy as can be.

MARK

Well good for you. Keep up the good work.

WOMAN ON PORCH

Thank you. I will. You too.

Mark walks off smiling.

Ahead of Mark a kid runs into an old lady who drops her grocery bags.

KID ON SCOOTER

Sorry.

C/U on Mark's Face.

We see a flashback to young Anthony & Mark riding skateboards.

Mark hits an old man.

The old man's glasses drops and breaks.

Young Anthony and Mark keep on riding.

YOUNG MARK

Sorry.

Back to today. C/U on Mark's face again.

The kid rides past Mark.

Mark grabs him by the arm and stops him.

MARK

Let's go help her pick those bags up.

KID ON SCOOTER

(realizing he has no other choice)
Alright.

They head back over to the old lady.

They bend down to help her pick up the fallen food items.

OLD LADY

Oh thank you folks. You know, I'm not as quick as I used to be.

MARK

That's OK. This kid's really sorry about hitting you. Aren't you?

KID ON SCOOTER

Yeah. I'm sorry. I should've looked where I was going.

OLD LADY

Well no one got hurt, but I'm just glad you hit me instead of a car hitting you, understand.

KID ON SCOOTER

Yes ma'am. I'll be careful.

All the groceries are picked up.

MARK

Well that's done. (To the kid) Next time you help someone without me needing to grab you, OK?

KID ON SCOOTER

Yes sir.

MARK

Now go on. Your friends went around the corner.

The kid leaves.

MARK

Here. Let me carry those for you.

OLD LADY

Oh that's OK. My place is a few blocks from here.

MARK

In that case I insist. You don't worry.

OLD LADY

Oh, if you insist.

Mark takes the bags and walks with her.

OLD LADY

You know, this used to be such a nice neighborhood long, long ago.

MARK

What was it like then?

OLD LADY

Oh, Wonderful homes. Friendly people. You didn't have any gangsters around or reckless hoodlums running into you.

Mark winces slightly at the mention of "gangsters".

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

No sir. We had nice folk like you around.

Mark seems unsure what to say.

Yep. Everyone was very happy and helpful back then.

MARK

Maybe those times can come back.

OLD LADY

Oh you dear young man. Old times can't ever come back.

MARK

Well, then maybe we can make the future as nice as the past.

OLD LADY

Yes. Yes, that would be nice, wouldn't it?

They walk on. Mark and the old lady are both smiling.

INT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE -- DAY

It is a typical old folks' house.

The old lady walks in with Mark behind her.

OLD LADY

Herbert. Are you home? Herbert. (To Mark)
The kitchen is over there, sweetie. Just
put the bags on the counter.

MARK

OK.

Heads off to the kitchen.

Herbert comes down the stairs.

HERBERT

Joan? Are you here?

JOAN (OLD LADY)

Yes, Dear. I'm in the living room.

Herbert heads into the living room and gives Joan a kiss.

HERBERT

How was your day, dear?

JOAN

Oh fine.

She points to Mark who is walking in.

This gentleman helped me out today.

HERBERT

Oh?

JOAN

Yes. Carried my groceries for me.

HERBERT

Well, any friend of Joan is a friend of
mine.

Holds out his hand.

Herbert Davidson.

MARK

Mark Carder.

Shakes his hand.

HERBERT

Well, what do you do for a living, Mark?

MARK

Right now, I work at Tabby's.

HERBERT

The pizza place over on main street?

MARK

Yeah. That's the place.

HERBERT

Hmm, I see. I run the Boy's and Girl's Club here in the neighbourhood.

MARK

Really? That's interesting. I've heard there was one around here, but I never went to it.

HERBERT

Oh? You grew up here?

MARK

Yes sir. Lived here my whole life. How long has the Club been around?

HERBERT

Oh, quite a while. But not much longer.

MARK

Why?

JOAN

They're closing it down on account 'a not enough kids utilise it.

MARK

Really?

HERBERT

Yeah. It's hard to get these kids to attend.

MARK

Well, no offense, but kids got their own language. If you want them to respond, you gotta say something they'll hear. In my opinion anyway.

HERBERT

Really? Well, you got any ideas that might get kids to hear you?

Mark smiles.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS -- DAY

Mark is riding in an old dirty school bus driven by someone else.

Modern Rap music is playing out of speakers sticking out some windows.

Over a microphone, along with the music we hear:

MARK

Huge Party. All Day, Every day. Huge Party. Come on aboard. Bring you friends. Make it a bigger party. Come on. Huge Party.

Kids and teens of various ages are stopping their games and looking toward the bus.

MARK

Huge party. Tons of people. Your friends will be there. Will you?

Little by little they start heading over to the bus.

Kids and teens get to the bus. It stops, let's them on and continues.

There are lots of kids on the bus.

KID #1

So where is this huge party?

MARK

Boy's and Girls Club just a few blocks over. There's just two rules. Don't break the law, and no fighting. Ever. For any reason.

KID #2

Aw, man.

MARK

Hey, if you can't deal with just two rules, we can let you off and your friends will party without you.

The kid sits back.

Good choice. You're gonna have fun.

EXT. BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB -- DAY

The bus pulls in.

Kid's start running out of the bus across the basketball court and into the club.

The club is filled with Ping-Pong tables, jump ropes, a weight machine, a TV, two pool tables and other fun items.

Some kids pick out a basketball and start a game outside.

Some scooters and skaters hit the wooden, homebuilt but huge half-pipe.

The final kids are out of the bus, and Mark comes out last.

He turns to the bus driver.

MARK

Thanks, Marty. I really appreciate it.

MARTY

No problem. I hope this works out.

MARK

It will. Same time tomorrow?

MARTY

Sure. It gives me a chance to use this thing anyway.

MARK

Yeah. I was really surprised when you got it on Ebay.

HERBERT

Mark!

MARK

See ya, Marty. Hey Herbert.

HERBERT

Wow. This great! You really did a great job. Tons of the kids are asking about the rates and some have already taken applications to take to their parents.

MARK

Well that's just great. I'm sure the turn out will improve. Marty and I are going to drive the party bus every day for a few weeks to really spread the word.

HERBERT

Yeah, that old clunker sure does catch the attention, doesn't it?

MARK

Yeah.

HERBERT

Hey listen, I really appreciate your help. How would you like to work here full time? Or at least as full as I can make it?

MARK

Really? That sounds great. Sure I'd love to. What do I do.

HERBERT

Come on. I'll show you around and get you acquainted. HEY SALLY! Come here. I want you to meet someone.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB -- DAY

It is 2017. A year later. The B&G Club is really busy. Lot's of kids and teens are playing around.

Mark is talking with a kid. Both are smiling.

We hear teens arguing. Mark looks over.

Two teens in a basketball game are wrestling over the ball.

Mark excuses himself and heads over.

MARK

Boys! What's the problem here.

CHAD

It's side out. Our ball.

RICK

You fouled me! It's our out.

MARK

Alright fine. Rick, give me the ball.
Come on. Give it here.

They hand it over

Now here's the rules. Both of you, and no one else, each of you can own as much of this ball as you want. (to the first teen) Chad. How much do you want to own?

CHAD

I wanna own all of it.

RICK

Hey!

MARK

OK. And what about you, Rick? How much do you want to own?

RICK

All of it.

MARK

Well it's obvious that won't work, right?
So, what do we do? Well the most even
amount each of you can own is 50% right?

The teens agree

MARK

OK then.

Mark pulls out a knife.

We'll just cut this thing in half and
each of you can own 50% of it.
Chad grabs the ball.

CHAD

No! It's OK. We'll share it.

The other player agrees.

MARK

Then go on and play. You're team-mates
are waiting to have fun.

The kids resume the game.

Herbert is walking up.

Mark walks to meet him.

MARK

Hi, Herbert. One moment. Hey Sally! Come
here for a moment.

SALLY

Yeah?

MARK

Listen, keep an eye on Chad and Rick. If
they do OK today and tomorrow, have them
help you with some of the kid games so
they can teach the younger ones about
teamwork, alright?

SALLY

OK.

Leaves

MARK

How's it going Herbert?

HERBERT

Fabulous. Just fabulous. Listen I just got off the phone with the B&G headquarters. We're the fastest growing club around and now, we're the largest too.

MARK

Well, good. More friends for everyone.

HERBERT

They've been trying to emulate your techniques I told them about but there was some problem with the bus.

MARK

Those guys tried running the music all the time, huh? Once is a great gimmick but everyday is just disturbing the peace.

HERBERT

Yes, well, they want you to fly out and help implement your stuff in clubs all over the place.

MARK

Really?

HERBERT

Yeah.

MARK

Wow.

HERBERT

Yeah, you leave tomorrow?

MARK

What? But what about my work here?

HERBERT

Don't worry about it. You got us going. We can take over from here.

MARK

You sure?

HERBERT

Yeah. Go on home and get your things together. I'll be by at 7:30 tomorrow to pick you up. Go on. This is a great opportunity for you.

MARK

Well, if you insist.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT IN WASHINGTON D.C. -- DAY

Mark comes out carrying his bags after the plane trip.

A professional man approaches him.

RICHARD

Mr. Carder?

MARK

Yes.

Shaking hands

RICHARD

Hi. I'm Richard Templeton. I'll be taking you to your room.

MARK

Great.

They head toward Richard's expensive Lexus and get in.

RICHARD

Did you enjoy your flight?

MARK

It was very enjoyable. I've never been on a plane before. Nobody warned me about the ears plugging up so bad.

Richard laughs.

INT. MEETING ROOM -- DAY

Eight well dressed professional people are sitting at a big expensive oak table talking nonsense.

Intercom buzzes.

DAVE

Yes?

SECRETARY

Richard and Mr. Carder are here to see you sir.

DAVE

Great. Send them in.

Richard comes in first followed by Mark.

Mark is looking around the plush room.

He is dressed in jeans, tee-shirt and sneakers. A stark contrast to the room and those in it.

DAVE

Richard. How's it going?

Shaking hands

RICHARD

Wonderful.

DAVE

Great. And you must be Mark.

Shakes hands

I'm Dave Lowery. The CEO of the B&G.

MARK

Nice to meet you.

DAVE

Well let's sit down. We are all dying to hear how you did such a fantastic job over there. I'm sure many locations can benefit from your effective techniques.

They head to the table.

MARK

With all due respect Mr. Lowery, different locations have different problems. Not all the things I did will work everywhere.

Sitting down

DAVE

Fine, fine. Then we'll just use what works.

MARK

Wonderful. Now, how many of you here have children of your own?

Everyone is stunned

MARK

Come on. If you have children, raise your hand.

A few slowly start raising their hand.

DAVE

(raising hand slightly) May I ask what this is about?

MARK

Humour me. Is that all of you? No one else has kids?

All but three, including Richard, have their hands raised.

Mark is sitting, Richard is standing behind him.

MARK

Alright then. That's a good start. Now those of you without children will do better to put your efforts elsewhere instead of putting together programs for the clubs, so you probably want to leave and get started.

RICHARD

What?!

DAVE

Now see Mr. Carder.

MARK

Mr. Lowery, the Boys and Girls Club is in the business of helping young people by giving them a way out of gangs and drugs and crime. Now I don't believe that

someone that has no children of their own can or should be a voice in the creation of those important programs.

RICHARD

Now wait a minute. I looked at your file. It doesn't say anything about you having children.

MARK

(Smiling) I lost my son in an auto accident.

Leaves Richard STUNNED and turns toward the others.

Now I know those of you without children have other great qualities and that's great, but in order to help those kids, every person in the B&G has to adopt each and every one of them and make them part of our family. Now these kids will know whether we really care or not and it starts here. At the top. Having parents planning the programs sends a much clearer message than anything else we can do. So come on. Let's get to work. We have a lot of kids to help. Oh Richard?

RICHARD

Yes?

MARK

Could you, or a secretary, get me some background information on everyone in here so I can better figure out who should do what?

DAVE

Now wait just one damn minute.

Mark stands up.

MARK

Dave, I am going to help as many kids as I can. Now I don't care who I work with. I just want to make sure that no kid has to go through the kind of life I've had. Now the B&G seems to have a similar goal so I'd like to work with you, but we need

to work together, otherwise I'll find some way to do it myself.

(To the others in the room) Now if I can find jobs for some of you that are more geared toward what you do best, and set it up so you can keep the same over-compensating pay you're used to, is anyone here really going to be mad at me?

Everyone looks around for someone to object.

Good, then. Let's figure out how we can help these kids. Huh? What do you say?

Dave thinks for a moment.

DAVE

OK. Sure. Let's do it. Let's get to work. Richard, Steve, Julie. Why don't you take the day off? I'll talk to you tomorrow.

We see the 3 leaving, looking back insecurely.

MARK (O.C.)

Now can somebody show me where the worst clubs are located?

GEORGE

So you know which ones to stay away from while you get your programs working, right?

Camera back on Mark.

MARK

What's your name?

GEORGE

George

MARK

(shaking hands) Nice to meet you George, I'm Mark. Actually you're wrong. We need to start there first. Those are the ones with the most kids that need the most help. Now, what do we know about the median income in those areas. I'll bet they're low.

CUT TO:

INT. TV SCREEN BLANK

TV Screen is turned on. A Spanish female news reporter is holding a mike. The date at the bottom of the screen shows that it's now the year 2021.

MIA

Hello. I'm Mia Gardina. Tonight I talk with the CEO of the Boys & Girls Club, Mark Carder.

Scenes of Mark at clubs helping kids.

MIA (V.O.)

In just five years, Mark has brought this non-profit organisation from the brink of death to become the most influential establishment for kids and teens.

An interview with a female B&G helper

B&G HELPER

He is just wonderful around the kids. He works harder for them than anybody on the staff. He's a real inspiration.

An interview with a father.

FATHER

My son really enjoys the B&G. When he's there, I know he's having fun, learning things, and not getting into trouble.

Out of the TV now, we see Mia, holding her mike.

MIA

Mr. Carder has implemented such as homework corner. A section of the club dedicated to helping kids with their school work before they play.

Scene of kids at a table doing work with people helping them.

(V.O.)

And he has had tremendous success at getting parents involved.

MOTHER

I come here a few hours a week to help out. It's fun. My son says his friends think I'm cool.

Mia is now sitting with Mark. Mark is quite underdressed.

MIA

Thank you for coming here today, Mr. Carder.

MARK

Thank you for having me here.

MIA

You have done so much in such a little time.

MARK

I've had a wonderful staff helping me out. Everyone has put so much effort into his or her work. I can't tell you how much I appreciate them. But right now, I would like to take this opportunity to ask all the parents out there to help their children as much as they can. If they feel they don't need the help of Boys and Girls Club, that's wonderful. All that matters is making sure kids grow up happy, educated and without drugs or violence. I know we can't stop all the pain in the world. But I want to try anyway and I need your help.

MIA

You have the lowest pay of any CEO in 40 years, public or private.

MARK

I don't need lots of money. It's better spent on the kids and other people.

MIA

Is it true that when you drive around and see some guy on the corner with a sign saying "will work for food" that you actually pick them up and give them jobs?

MARK

Well, that's actually up to them. I do talk to them and if they really want a job and are willing to work, then I find something for them so they can get a paycheck. You know. Something more than food. If they just want a handout, then I can't help them. Giving them a few bucks won't get them off the corner. It just keeps them there.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DAY

It is the year 2022. Mark is giving a speech to an entire school.

The children and staff are clapping.

MARK

Thank you. Thank you.

Applause dies down.

Is there any activities that you kids would just love to have here but don't? Come on. Shout them out.

STUDENT #1

Ice skating!

Laughter. Including Mark.

MARK

Ice skating at a school in Texas. Sure. Why not? If I can get the professional help we need, and I help you build it, how many of you kids would be willing to help build and maintain an ice skating rink of your very own? Huh? If enough of you help we can do this. What do you say?

Lot's of kids CLAP and CHEER.

MARK

Well, what're we waiting for?

Grabs the mike and walks off stage.

Let's go find the right spot and get started.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKATING RINK BY THE SCHOOL -- DAY

It's 2023. Opening ceremony for the rink.

MARK

I am so amazed at you kids. We got this
created in record time.

Kids and parents cheer.

I now declare your new ice skating rink,
OPEN!

Cuts the tape. Everyone celebrates.

INT. INTERVIEW WITH MIA

MIA

I understand that you literally helped
put this rink together. You got down
there and swung that hammer and worked
right along side everyone in the
construction.

MARK

Well, I did as much as this old body will
allow. The kids and the volunteers did
all the real work. I just hit a few
nails.

CUT TO:

INT. TV SET

It is 2024. Through the TV set, we see another person being
interviewed.

INTERVIEWEE #1

Mark is just incredible. He fights real
hard for the kids. And I don't mean he
sits in his office telling others what to
do, oh no. He's the first one out there.
He's swinging the hammer, he's visiting
the school's and talking to kids and
teachers and parents. He's the first one
telling the drug pushers to get out. One
time he got an entire inner city school
to pull B's or better without exception.

He personally spent 2 months at that school helping every single kid. It was amazing.

INTERVIEWEE #2

The man is just incredible. It's like he's possessed or something. All he cares about is helping these kids and everyone around him. I mean I'm his secretary and he gets ME coffee. He's a real inspiration.

TV gets turned off.

CUT TO:

INT. NOBEL AWARD BANQUET -- DAY

It is a huge daytime banquet during the year 2025. Everyone is dressed up in their best clothes. It is obviously very important. An old Chinese man is on the stage in front of a podium holding his trophy.

MR. MANNIGAN

Again, thank you very much.

He steps away to the sound of applause.

The announcer steps up, clapping.

ANNOUNCER

Thank you, Mr. Mannigan, and congratulations. You know when he gets home, he's going to try to make that statue defy gravity.

Laughter

ANNOUNCER

And now, without further ado. Here to announce the winner of the coveted Nobel Peace Prize is a great man. He is a former recipient for his work in helping wildlife for over thirty years. I give you the Crocodile Hunter himself, Steve Erwin.

Steve Erwin, now in his late 50's, steps out to applause and up to the podium.

STEVE ERWIN

Thank you everyone. It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner in the peace category.

PAUSE

Wow. The Nobel Peace Prize. That's a magnificent honor to receive. 20 years ago, the Nobel committee decided that more sections of life were in need of honoring. They created awards in the fields of physics, astronomy, biology and technology for people in those fields that have contributed greatly to everyone all over the world. But the Peace prize remains the most desired. Today, December 5 2025. We find out who the next winner is.

The nominees this year are:

As he names the nominees, their faces flash across the screen.

Dr. Henry Gasslow for his work on ending the international nurses strike.

Sister Kary Hadley for helping Northern Russia become self-governing.

And Mark Carder for his work with worldwide gang problems.

PAUSE

And the award goes to:

Opens the envelope.

Mark Carder!

Mark seems more happy than surprised. He walks up on stage and to the podium. He accepts the prize from Steve.

MARK

Thank you Steve.

Steve Erwin Leaves. Mark turns to the audience

And thank you everyone. You know, there are times in some people lives that feel like a complete dream. They seem so far removed from their normal life that their

brain can't comprehend that it is actually happening and so it thinks it's a dream.

PAUSE

I'm having one of those moments right now.

A small bit of applause.

I know that many reporters are going to ask me if I feel I deserve this award. Let me answer that question ahead of time by saying, no. No I don't. I've followed Dr. Gasslow's efforts for a few years and he's done amazing work. Just amazing. That was a real mess he helped fix. I'm glad the nurses are back to work and getting the pay they deserve. Nurses help people and we need to make sure they can do their job. Otherwise we are all doomed.

More applause.

Sister Kary. You are a model of a human being that everyone should emulate. No one wanted to help those fine people in Russia, but you begged and pleaded for the chance, and when no one would help get you started, you walked right in there and got to work anyway. Your work has saved thousands from starvation. My compliments go out to you.

More applause.

Mark looks at the award.

Either I'm getting old, or this thing is heavy.

Laughter. A PAUSE after the laughter dies down.

I didn't have the best life. And that was my fault. I tried blaming Mom or Dad or anyone else for my problems for a long time. But an old friend taught me that I have to take responsibility for my actions. He taught me that I can do good things for others and that my actions reached further than I thought. He taught

me that doing something nice makes someone else a better, happier person and that in turn encourages them to makes others healthy and happy through their good deeds. I didn't believe him at first, but now I see how right he was. He's been dead for a while now but Luther, your good deeds are still alive.

More applause.

I just wish I had learned those lessons earlier in my life.

Camera starts to pan back towards the back of the audience.

Anything you do, whether good or bad, is like a rock thrown into an ocean. Those ripples extend far beyond the area that rock was tossed into and the larger the rock, the farther the ripples reach. Also the sooner the rock is thrown in, the further the ripples get to extend over a certain time period in comparison to a rock thrown in later.

The camera starts heading out a window and up into the clear blue sky.

In other words, doing good deeds sooner than later results in better longer results than good deeds done later. Now this seems like a simple concept, and maybe it is, but it took me way too long to learn it. Maybe I'm the only one but I don't think so.

I'm almost 55 years old now. That's about 20,000 days I've been alive. I've only started my good deeds just a few years ago. The ripples haven't traveled too far. Any good deeds I've done would have been so much better if I had only started sooner.

PAUSE

I have WASTED 20,000 days on this great planet and I am so sorry. I so wish that I could have started being nicer sooner in life. All the bad things I've done in life can never be undone, but hopefully the things I do now can start to overrun

that which I'm ashamed of. Hopefully before I die, I can do more harm than good.

The camera angle starts to head down to the ground.

It is with this idea in mind that I beg you, everyone in the audience and the people watching at home and anyone that can hear me. I challenge you with this goal.

We start to see a grassy area.

Start this week, start today, start NOW, to do good deeds for others.

As we close in, we see it is a cemetery.

Don't allow yourself to be a doormat, but please be as nice to everyone around you as possible. Listen to your parents, even if you agree with them. Treat your children nice. Encourage them in every good thing they do.

We begin to close in a one head stone in particular.

Be nice to your neighbors. Offer the homeless jobs. Help them to work. Don't just throw them a dollar bill.

PAUSE

I challenge you. Do these things now, whether you get recognition or not.

We zoom in to the tombstone where it reads:

Here Lies

Mark Carder

Born Feb. 1, 1971

Died Dec. 6, 2025

Over 20,000 days of life. Some of them he made the best of.

Don't waste 20,000 days on Earth. Don't waste even a single day. Make those ripples now and make them mean something. If your days are spent making waves of happiness and helpfulness, instead of

anger and selfishness, this whole world
can become so much better,

PAUSE

For everyone living.

FADE OUT

THE END