

WALK ME OUT

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ACT 1

FADE IN:

INT. OLD APARTMENT TILE STAIRWELL LANDING - MORNING

Open level on the tile floor, straight onto a wall and corner of a closed door. The sounds of people behind doors getting ready, another door opening and closing. Footsteps.

A cat wanders into frame from the left, hesitates, and then walks right as the camera follows along down the hall. The camera stops at another door, and the cat continues.

The door opens, and we see legs from the knees down walk out, close the door, and start walking left. The camera tracks along, following the man's legs as he walks the landing and down the stairs until he reaches the front door of the building and pulls it open.

EXT. 1977 NEW YORK, LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - SUMMER MORNING

MUSIC CUE: SPANISH Mambo

HECTOR (65, Cuban, stocky, quietly optimistic) steps out of the building, camera bag over his shoulder, and lights a cigar. The city hums with life around him. He exchanges nods and greetings with familiar faces—a newspaper vendor, a food cart owner, kids racing to school. At a small storefront, an old Cuban man hands him a fresh roll of cigars. A passerby's boom box blares disco, momentarily drowning out the Spanish music. Hector reaches his photo store, and shares a quick word with a friend. He steps inside, where his wife, MARIA (58, Cuban, overly cautious and suspicious), is with a customer.

INT. INSIDE THE STORE - MORNING

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Good morning, my love.

Maria looks at the clock, showing 10:20 AM

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Did you come on a donkey
or what?

Hector grins and gives her a peck on the cheek as he passes her. He walks through the curtain, dividing the front and back of the store.

INT. THE BACK OF THE STORE - MORNING

The back of the store is crammed. A counter with pictures being packaged up and envelopes, film containers, and negatives, and photo machines run by two employees, Hector's cousin TELMA (73, Cuban) and her husband, LUIS (75, Cuban, short and thin).

HECTOR
(To TELMA, in Spanish)
Hello

TELMA
(In Spanish)
Hello

Hector walks further back

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Hello, LUIS

INT. HECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Hector enters his crammed office. He takes his bag off his shoulder and puts it on the counter. He opens a door marked "Darkroom" and walks in.

INT. DARKROOM - DAY

Pictures from the previous day hang to dry. Hector pulls them down, including one he lingers on of one-two boys drinking from a hydrant as teenage girls walk by, a street photo he captured. (Credit: Camilo Jose Vergara, Chilean)

Hector pins it up, joining other street photographs. He walks out of his office, to the rear of the store, and exits.

EXT. BACK ALLEY OUTDOOR STAIRWAY TO SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Hector lights a cigar, walks upstairs and enters the gallery.

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY Hector walks to the front, passing a mix of artwork and photography and passing the only customer in the gallery. Sitting behind a small counter is FEDORA (65, Russian with a heavy accent), smoking a cigarette. She "manages" the gallery for Hector when she shows up.

HECTOR
Do you sell anything?

FEDORA
(In a heavy Russian accent
and snarky tone)
Well, good morning to you, too,
Hector. No, and I thought you were
going to be here at 10?! I have a
class I'm going to be late for now.

HECTOR
What class?

Fedora puts out her cigarette and grabs her coat and hat.

FEDORA
Painting. We paint nude today.

HECTOR
You!

FEDORA
Acht, Me? Model! Me? (beat) Maybe I
paint nude at home?

Fedora turns and smirks, flirting with Hector then walks out.

Hector turns to see the unfriendly customer and makes small
talk with her, looking at the artwork.

HECTOR
Oh, that's a beautiful piece,
madam.

The woman smugly shrugs off Hector and walks away.

INT. STORE FRONT - LATE DAY

Hector and Maria attend to the last customer of the day.

HECTOR
Here's your change, ma'am and I
hope you have a good evening.

Hector follows her to the door to lock it and turn the sign
to closed. Maria counts money and receipts at the register.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Money comes in through the door and
leaves through the window. Did you
sell anything upstairs?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
No, Nothing.

MARIA
How do we keep going like this? How
are we going to keep everyone on?

Maria looks towards the back of the shop. Hector knows she is right. Just then, Telma and Luis come through the curtain.

TELMA
OK that it's for tonight!
Everything is turned off.

Telma kisses Maria on the cheek and gives her a hug.

TELMA (CONT'D)
(In Spanish)
See you tomorrow

MARIA
(In Spanish)
See you tomorrow, baby

LUIS
(In Spanish)
See you tomorrow

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, Yes. See you tomorrow

Hector follows them to the door and locks up once again. He walks back to the counter.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
I have that job tonight uptown.
Birthday party. The Money is pretty
good. Maybe I get another job out
of it.

MARIA
Yeah, Yeah, be your charming self.
Don't eat their food, it makes you
sick all the time... and fat. Too
rich

Hector laughs

HECTOR
Oh, Yes, too rich. Definitely THEIR
food.

Hector looks at Maria, then walks back to his office

EXT. WALKING UP TO A BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Hector, camera bag over his shoulder, walks down the street and turns up the steps of a nice brownstone. He rings the bell. A woman, KAREN (45, Tall, Skinny Blonde in a black dress), answers the door. She has a drink in her hand and is a little tipsy already.

HECTOR
Hello, I am Hector.

The woman looks puzzled.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
The photographer.

KAREN
OH!Yes, Yes, the photographer. Come
in! Come In! I'm Karen. The party
is just getting started.

She walks Hector through the house, talking as Hector pays
half attention while admiring the beautiful home.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Now James knows nothing about the
party so it will be a big surprise.
Make sure you get him coming
through the door. Then we need
pictures with all his friends,
especially his college buddies. Oh,
his parents will be here so we need
a picture with them, but his father
never smiles so don't wait for that
to happen, ha. You can put your bag
down over there and well, that's
about it. Any questions?

HECTOR
No, No, is good, is good!

KAREN
OK, well let me know if you need
anything!(Karen Turns) Julia, Ken
HI!!

Karen spins to welcome guests as Hector puts down his bag and
sets up his camera and flash.

INT. THE PARTY - NIGHT

The party is in full swing. The guest of honor, JAMES (50,
well to do), is there already. Hector is shooting away.

James gathers a bunch of his college buddies on the sofa.

JAMES
Hey, hey, get a picture of us.
Schwarz, get your skinny ass in
here!

SCHWARTZ
You always did like my ass.

Schwartz jumps into the group picture as they all laugh.

CROSS FADE

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

James and Karen are with two couples talking loudly and seeing Hector walking in.

JAMES
Guys, guys, all together!

Hector takes the cue and snaps a picture of them.

CROSS FADE

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A large dining room with food on trays, and in the middle is the birthday cake. Karen lights the candles.

KAREN
Come on, James, get in here! Come
on everybody - "Haaappy birthday to
you, happy birthday to you, happy
birthday dear James, Happy birthday
to you!"

Everybody cheers and claps.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Make a wish, make a wish!

James blows out the candles. More cheers and claps.

CROSS FADE

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's late and the party is winding down. Hector is eating a piece of cake off to the side. He sees a man approaching him as he puts the cake down and wipes his mouth.

FERNANDO - (45, Cuban, sharply dressed, distinguished man with a perfect mustache), a bit drunk, approaches Hector.

FERNANDO
(In Spanish)
Hello, my friend. Please, please,
finish your cake.

Hector is pleased to hear him speak Spanish

HECTOR
(in Spanish)
Hello, hello, I'm Hector.

FERNANDO
(in Spanish)
Fernando, very nice to meet you.
Quite the party, no.

Fernando looks around the room.

HECTOR
(in Spanish)
Yes, Yes!

FERNANDO
(in Spanish)
Where are you from?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
I live downtown, off Houston
Street.

Fernando cuts him before he finishes with a chuckle

FERNANDO
(In Spanish)
No, No, where are you FROM? La
Havana? Baracoa? Cienfuegos?

Now realizing Fernando is from Cuba, Hector's eyebrows raise
and he lightens up some.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Oh, oh, yes, Artemesa, not far from
Havana.

FERNANDO
(In Spanish)
Yes, Yes, I know Artemisa, yes. I
grew up in Matanzas. My father was
able to get us out right before "Mr
Fidel" (in a condescending
tone) shut it down. He had business
connections here in New York. How
about you? Did you get out before?

Hector's face changes, knowing he wasn't that lucky.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
No, no, we weren't that fortunate.
My father worked for the newspaper
and, ah, we stayed. It didn't go
well.

Hector leaves it at that, preferring not to share details.

FERNANDO
(In Spanish)
Yes, yes, we all had to struggle.

Hector raises an eyebrow and looks sideways at Fernando as Fernando looks out at the room.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(In Spanish)

Struggle is no choice; success,
success is. (Beat) But now we all
have it good, right? Yes, yes,
good.

Smugly, Fernando starts to walk away while reaching out his hand to Hector. Hector shakes his hand.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(In English)

OK, my friend. Good to see you.
Good luck, good luck.

The party is over. Hector is near the front door, putting his coat on and grabbing his bag. Karen, very drunk, comes up behind him.

KAREN

(Slurring)

Hector, Hector, here, here, thank
you SO much. I hope you had a good
time.

Karen hands him a check. Hector takes the check as she almost falls into him.

HECTOR

Yes, thank you so much Mrs Karen,
thank you. I get you the pictures
next week.

Hector quickly grabs the door handle and makes a hasty exit.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - LIGHT RAIN

HECTOR

Good night, good night.

Hector walks down the steps and the street, looking at how late it is. He walks down to the subway.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Hector waits on the platform, again looking at his watch. The subway comes, and he gets on. Just a few people are on the subway, including two young characters eyeing him and his bag up. Hector pulls his bag closer, keeping an eye on the two out of the corner of his eye. The subway comes to the next stop, and the two guys peer at Hector again before getting off the train just as the doors close. Hector breathes a sigh of relief, staring at them as the subway pulls away.

Hector wipes his head and neck from sweat. The train finally gets to Hector's stop and he exits the train. He makes his way back up the stairs and out onto the streets downtown.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Hector walks with a jump in his step, anxious to be home. He turns off a main avenue and down a tree-lined side street. He is walking past a school playground. It's dark.

He walks along a chain link fence, unaware a group of 5 young black men are walking along the side of the school and are about to exit the schoolyard right where Hector is walking. The sound of a firetruck passing in the distance distracts Hector from noticing the gang. One of the gang notices Hector coming down the street and points to him. The rest of the gang lights up as they see a target, and they all start toward the exit quickly but quietly.

As Hector approaches the fence opening next to the school building, the gang steps out on the sidewalk in front of him. Hector is startled he stops and takes a step back.

GANG MEMBER 1
Hey man, where you goin?

GANG MEMBER 2
You got a heavy bag, let me help
you with that.

They start to circle Hector, pulling at his bags, his coat. Hector is terrified. He Holds tightly to his bag.

HECTOR
I don't want any trouble guys.

JAMO
Maybe you don't,...but we LOVE
trouble. Ain't that right, boys.

Maurice (26, Black, street smart with a chip on his shoulder) clearly the gang leader, hangs back, enjoying the encounter as his gang harasses Hector. The gang is now pushing Hector up against the schoolyard fence.

JAMO (JARVEL MOSES, 22, Black, headstrong and Maurice's right-hand man) pulls at Hector's bag again. This time, he wants it, but Hector holds it close to his chest even more tightly. Jamo is visibly angry now and pulls out a gun and puts it to the side of Hector's jaw.

JAMO (CONT'D)
You ready to die over that bag, old
man?

Hector's hesitates for a second but then loosens up on the bag as Jamo rips it away from him. Jamo lowers the gun and exits the gang, surrounding Hector to examine the bag.

He starts to open it as he walks slowly over to Maurice, now leaning up against a car. Jamo pulls out Hector's camera, eyes now wide open, staring at Maurice.

JAMO (CONT'D)
OH, what do we have here?! Nice camera!

Jamo stares back at Hector.

JAMO (CONT'D)
Look at Mr photog man! What you doin with this?

Jamo hands the bag and camera to Maurice, coming out of the shadows, and leaning against the front of a car. Maurice puts the open bag on the car's hood and looks over the camera.

Jamo starts to walk back to Hector.

Hector is still being held against the fence by the other gang members.

JAMO (CONT'D)
What you taken pictures of Mr. photog man? Where you been tonight?

HECTOR
At, at a party.

JAMO
At a party? What you doin at a party, Mr photog man?

HECTOR
Shooting pictures for...

JAMO
Shooting pictures? Shooting? Ha, I like shooting too!

The rest of the gang laughing.

JAMO (CONT'D)
Maybe I start shooting. What you think a that.

Maurice starts going through the bag and pulls out a large book; it's Hector's portfolio of work. Maurice starts looking through it, flipping through pages of black & white street photography. All high contrast. Maurice is drawn in.

MAURICE
Yo! Bring him over here.

Jamo starts to walk him over to Maurice.

JAMO
(Sarcastically)
The boss will see you now!

Maurice looks up from the book, peering at Hector.

MAURICE
You take these?

Hector nervously hesitates to answer and Jamo, still holding his arm, shakes him a little.

HECTOR
Yes! Yes.

Maurice looks back down at the book, stopping on a picture. It's a picture of women, well dressed, standing on a street corner in the rain, holding an umbrella low. So low that you only see her lips holding a cigarette.

MAURICE
You know her?

HECTOR
Ah, No.

MAURICE
How you know to take her picture
like that?

A little taken aback by the question. Hector struggles for the answer. Maurice gets angry.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You deaf!?

HECTOR
Ah, um, I just see her when I was
walking and think it might be a
picture.

MAURICE
Just like that you think it COULD
be a picture? Just walkin.

HECTOR
Si, yes.

MAURICE
And what about this one?

Maurice points to a picture of an old black man on a stoop, his face weathered and glistening with sweat. He is wiping his forehead with a handkerchief and holding a cigarette in the other hand.

HECTOR
I take from a distance, while
waiting for a bus.

MAURICE
You just see it!?

HECTOR
Si, yes,

JAMO
Yo, Maurice what we doin here, man?

Sirens break the moment, they look up, and police lights are seen coming down the street.

JAMO (CONT'D)
Time to go!

Maurice grabs the book and the camera and throws them back into the bag. He throws the bag over his shoulder, and grabs Hector by the arm and drags him along with the rest of the gang back into the schoolyard and down the side of the school. At a break in the school building, Maurice stops. Yelling AT the rest of the gang.

MAURICE
Head to the bar; I'll meet you guys there.

The gang looks a little puzzled, but seeing the police pulling up, they keep going. Maurice pulls Hector down the alley. Hector's even more distressed. They scurry down the alley, and the sounds of sirens echo.

Maurice pulls a lagging, out-of-breath Hector along. Hector falls to one knee and leans against the wall. Maurice is yelling and yanking on his arm as he struggles. This triggers a flashback in Hector.

BEGIN FLASHBACK 1 - STREET PROTEST

EXT. THE STREETS OF HAVANA - NIGHT

A 10-year-old child, Hector, is in the streets as a raucous demonstration occurs. It's chaos. It's the beginning of the revolution. A man is dragging young Hector by the arm down the street; protesters are marching, yelling, and simultaneously, a band on the street is playing. Big faces smoking big cigars are looking down at him. Finally, he is pulled down a side street to safety. Stopping momentarily, the man bends over to see if Hector is OK. He pushes him against a wall and jumps up on a crate to get high enough to take a picture or two of the demonstration. Then, he jumps down and grabs Hector by the arm again, whisking him down the alley away from the crowds.

END FLASHBACK 1

HECTOR

Look, look, I don't say nothing.
Take the bag.

MAURICE

Shut the fuck up, keep moving for
you get my ass popped.

They turn down another alley that leads to the street. Maurice stops at the corner edge of the building and peers down the street; all is clear. He settles against the building, lights a cigarette, and offers Hector one. Hector, taken aback, signals no and catches his breath.

HECTOR

Take the bag, look, I just go and
say nothing.

Maurice, his mind somewhere else, almost forgetting the situation, grabs open the bag on his shoulder and opens the book again. Stuck between two pages is Hector's business card. He grabs it. Hector, still catching his breath.

MAURICE

This you?

Hector looks at the card, then at Maurice, realizing he knows where his store is now. He doesn't say anything.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Yeah, this is you.

Maurice removes the bag and shoves it back at Hector, holding the card in his other hand.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna come see ya sometime.

Maurice looks both ways down the street again and heads down the street, leaving Hector on the corner of the alley. Hector, surprised, shaken, and disheveled, puts his bag over his shoulder, closes it up, and steps out of the alley. He walks a few steps down the street in the opposite direction and stands under a store awning to collect himself. Looking down the street to ensure Maurice is gone, he wipes his face with a handkerchief and starts a fast walk down the sidewalk, turning to ensure Maurice is not coming behind him.

INT. NIGHT - COMING INSIDE APARTMENT

From inside Hector's apartment, we hear struggling with keys. Hector opens the door, realizing he is making a racket. He tries to come the rest of the way in quietly and not wake up Maria. He goes to the kitchen, puts his bag on a kitchen chair, takes his coat off, and hangs it up on a hook. He looks at his hands, and they are still shaking.

He grabs a bottle of rum on the counter and a short glass from the cabinet. As he puts the glass down on the kitchen table, his hand still trembling, it falls over, making noise. He sits down and pours a drink. He leans over close to the glass and throws the drink back.

Just then, Maria enters the kitchen, woken by the noise. She rubs her eyes and looks at the stove clock.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
So late?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)

Yes, late. The party went late. She looks at the bottle in front of him, puzzled.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
What's wrong? What did you eat?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Oh, all is good. That rich American food. Too much.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
I told you not to overdo it.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, yes, you're right.

Maria moves closer, they look into each other's eyes.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
You're tired, come to bed.

Hector grabs Maria's hand and kisses it.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
I'll be right in, go to bed, go to bed.

Maria walks away and back to bed. Hector is left at the table to contemplate what happened. He stares off. In front of him on the wall, among other pictures, is a B&W picture of a young boy, Hector, 10 years old, standing next to his Father on a rural porch, leaning on a post. The camera pushes in towards the picture, then a close-up of Hector's face.

BEGIN FLASHBACK 2 - MEN HARASSING FATHER

EXT. - CUBA, RURAL HOME PORCH - DAY

A young Hector is standing on the porch with a concerned look. Off camera, the muffled sounds of three men arguing. Cut to the men standing on the road next to a car. Two large men arguing against the one with his back to us and the house. A slender man with a hat on. One of the two men puts his finger on the shoulder of the other, pushing him back some and knocking the man's hat off behind him. He stumbles back some and goes to pick up his hat. We see he is wearing a camera around his neck. It's Hector's Father. He sees the boy on the porch watching and quickly changes the distressed look on his face to a forced, uneasy smile in an attempt to console the worried boy. The other men also see the boy and decide to return to their car and leave.

END FLASHBACK 2

INT. - HECTOR'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A noise from garbage cans outside breaks the flashback. We zoom out from the top corner of the room, Hector finishing his drink, sitting at the kitchen table, staring at the wall.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. THE BACK OF THE STORE - DAY

It's business as usual at the store. Hector is happily working away. Thelma and Luis are working around him.

Maria calls to Hector from the front of the store as she finishes up with a customer.

MARIA
Hector...

Maria is looking beyond the customer, out to the street in front of the store. She calls out again, a little louder.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Hector?

Sensing that Hector isn't hearing her, she turns and sharply pulls back the curtain to the back of the store and leans in.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Hector! Someone is outside the store!

Hector chuckles and turns to Luis.

HECTOR

I hope so. It's New York!

Hector turns to Maria and sees the concern on her face.

MARIA

Hector!

Hector, seeing her concern, walks towards her.

HECTOR

What's the big problem...

Hector pulls back the curtain, steps into the store, and he sees it. Maurice, leaning up against a car, peering into the store and now at Hector. Hector's face turns to shock.

Maria is standing next to him and staring at the man.

MARIA

(In Spanish)

I don't like this, maybe I call the police.

Hector snaps out of his initial shock.

HECTOR

(In Spanish)

No, no...I'll take care of this.

Hector comes out from behind the counter and exits the store. We watch from inside the store as Maria looks cautiously on.

EXT. IN FRONT OF STORE - DAY

Hector cautiously walks up to Maurice; he looks up and down the street to see if Maurice is alone. He is.

MAURICE

(Snarky tone)

Hello Hector.

HECTOR

What are you doing here?

MAURICE

I told you I would stop by sometime.

Hector is looking at Maurice, worried and not knowing what to expect. Maurice looks over his shoulder towards the store. Marie is behind the counter, looking back at him.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Nice store

Hector turns his head towards the store. Seeing Maria looking back at him, he forces a smile on his face, nods and raises his hand slightly, as if to say (but not very convincingly) everything is OK and turns back to Maurice.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I bet you got a lot a nice things
in that store.

HECTOR

I don't want any trouble. Why you
show up here?

MAURICE

Relax. Why you right away think I
want trouble? Maybe I want to buy
you lunch today.

HECTOR

You want to buy me lunch??

MAURICE

NO I don't want to buy yo ass lunch
today!

Hector looks at Maurice confused and still troubled.

HECTOR

I don't understand.

MAURICE

Look, when me and you had our first
"get together" I saw that book you
had.

HECTOR

Yes.

MAURICE

(Uncomfortably)

Yeah, well, let's just say... I'm a
fan of that kind a thing.

Hector looks at Maurice even more confused.

HECTOR

What thing?

MAURICE

The pictures! Those pictures on the
street you took.

HECTOR

Uh, OK. Thank you?

Maurice frustrated, sensing that's all Hector thought he came
to say.

MAURICE

No, man! What I'm saying is that I get that. You know what I'm saying?

HECTOR

No.

Maurice is even more frustrated and uncomfortable trying to get across what he really means.

MAURICE

Man, I get what that is. I see that. I see that shit all the time, like you seeing it. You dig.

Hector, perplexed at where this is going, looks back again at Maria with an even less convincing nod and smile. Maria looks back, now more worried; she steps toward the phone on the wall and glances at it. Hector turns back to Maurice.

HECTOR

No. I...

Maurice jumps off of the car gets in Hector's face.

MAURICE

Look man, maybe I should a just come here and robbed yo ass. Maybe I still should!

HECTOR

No, no! It's good, is good. I understand, I just don't know what you want from me?

MAURICE

What I want? What I want is you,...YOU to show ME how to do THAT!

Both stare at each other. Maurice wide-eyed, head turned, matter-factly kind of glance. Hector is still stunned.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I want you to show ME how to do THAT.

HECTOR

OK, OK, so you have a camera?

MAURICE

NO, I don't have a camera! I could have HAD a camera. I KNOW a guy that has cameras. Com-prend-a Amigo?

HECTOR

OH! Oh, Si, si

Hector wipes the sweat from his brow.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
So you going to rob me of a camera?

MAURICE
Now is that any way to talk to the
guy that got you out of trouble?

HECTOR
Got me OUT of trouble?

MAURICE
Yeah, that's right. My boys were
ready to jack you up.

HECTOR
Oh, yeah, yeah..

MAURICE
I see this as you lending me one
and giving me a few tips.

HECTOR
A few tips?

MAURICE
Yeah, that's right a few tips.

Hector starts shaking his head and mumbling in Spanish.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
What?

Hector stops mumbling and looks back at Maurice.

HECTOR
What do you know from photography?

MAURICE
I know things. I know some things.

HECTOR
Really?

MAURICE
Yeah! One a my step dads had a
camera, he let me shoot some
pictures some times. I felt it.

HECTOR
You felt it?

MAURICE
Yeah, I felt it.

Hector starts mumbling in Spanish again, grabs a cigar out of his shirt pocket, and lights it up. Staring back at Maurice between mumbles and lighting up.

Maurice looks at Hector, puzzled.

HECTOR

What do you mean you felt it? How old?

MAURICE

Like at 11. I felt it. I get it. I see it. Like you see it. I see what you see, on the street and I see that all the time.

Hector, now arms crossed as if examining Maurice, he takes a big puff on his cigar. He shakes his head in disbelief of what he is about to say.

HECTOR

OK.

MAURICE

OK, what?

Hector turns and takes another look at Maria in the store, with a forced smile and nod of "all good."

HECTOR

OK, I "lend" you a camera. Then you leave me alone. Si?

MAURICE

Why you trying to get rid of me?

HECTOR

Look, you come to the back of the store, 5:30, after we close, ALONE. I set you up and that's it. Si?

Maurice looks just past Hector at Maria in the store.

MAURICE

Yeah, yeah, OK. 5:30, ALONE.

Maurice walks away, staring back at Hector. Hector turns to the store but watches Maurice walk away, then at Maria, as he walks back into the store.

INT. STORE FRONT DAYTIME

Hector enters the store, changing his demeanor to try and cover up what just went on.

MARIA
(Worried, In Spanish)
What in the world was that that all
about? Is everything OK?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, Yes, all fine. No problem.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
No problem? What do you mean, no
problem? You were talking so long.
Who is that? How do you know him?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Maria, is all good. We were just
talking.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Just talking? Do you owe him money?
Is he a bookie? Are you gambling?

Hector puts his hands up

HECTOR
Maria! It's all fine. He is just
someone I meet at the party I shoot
the other night. Just a friend.

Hector hastily heads through the curtain to the back of the
store just as a customer comes in that Maria has to focus on.

MARIA
(Mumbling, In Spanish)
Just a friend. Sure. That's not
just a friend...

INT. BACK OF STORE - DAY

Hector makes his way through the back, to his office.

HECTOR
(Mumbling, In Spanish)
What the hell am I thinking? I must
be out of my mind.

Hector enters his office and sits down behind his cluttered
desk. Rubbing his forehead, contemplating what just happened.
Luis pokes his head into the office.

LUIS
(In Spanish)
Hello, everything OK?

Hector looks up and tries not to look concerned.

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Yes, yes, no problem, no problem.

LUIS
 (In Spanish)
 You sure?

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Mmmm...no, but I work it out, yes,
 yes.

INT. STORE FRONT - EVENING

Maria follows the last customer to the front door, locks it,
 and turns the sign to closed. Hector is at the counter,
 checking the cash register.

MARIA
 OK, is good, let's go home.

HECTOR
 You go home, I still need to take
 care of some bills.

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 OK, yes. I'll start dinner. Don't
 stay too long.

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Yes, yes, not long.

INT. BACK OF STORE - EVENING

Maria, Telma, and Luis put on coats and headed out the back
 door. Hector follows them, shuffling them out the door.

LUIS
 (In Spanish)
 See you in the morning.

TELMA
 (In Spanish)
 Good night.

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 See you in the morning

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 Not late!

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, not late. I'm home soon.

Following them out and holding the door open, they exit down the back stairs and walk down the alley.

EXT. BEHIND STORE - EVENING

Hector steps outside and says goodbye. He turns his head and spots Maurice walking down the alley from the other side. Panicking, he steps back into the doorway some, waving at Maurice to hide. Maurice stares back, confused. He keeps walking. Maurice reaches the stairs without them seeing him, and Hector rushes him inside, locking the door behind him.

MAURICE
What the heck was that all about?

HECTOR
I told you five-thirty not five o'clock!

MAURICE
Easy, man, it's cool.

HECTOR
It's cool?...almost no cool.

Hector turns to walk towards the counter where he has a camera sitting. Maurice follows and looks all around.

MAURICE
It's like a whole world back here.

HECTOR
Yeah, don't worry about all that.

MAURICE
OK, OK, chill. I'm just lookin'.

Hector is at the counter with an older camera of his.

HECTOR
Come over here.

Maurice walks over to the counter, still staring around.

MAURICE
What's this?

HECTOR
This the camera I'm going the
"lend" you.

Maurice looks it over on the counter.

MAURICE
That don't look as nice as that
camera you had.

HECTOR
What, you think I "lend" you my
camera? No.

MAURICE
Don't get all high and mighty on
me, I'm just sayin'...

HECTOR
(Holding the camera up to his eye.)
This seen more city than the mayor.
(Beat) What do you know from
cameras?

MAURICE
Look, I'm just sayin'...

HECTOR
What does your stepdad have? What
kind of camera?

MAURICE
Oh, hell, I don't know. It was
pretty nice though. It took good
pictures, I know that.

HECTOR
IT took good pictures or HE took
good pictures?

MAURICE
What the hell that suppose to mean?

HECTOR
The camera, has no life. Just a
machine. Man finds life through
camera.

MAURICE
Whatever, man.

Aggravated, Maurice grabs the camera and starts to look
through the lens, then peers at Hector, then back through the
camera. Hector walks to his office and looks back at Maurice.

HECTOR
Come on.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - EVENING

Maurice walks into the cluttered, looking around. Hector
grabs a roll of film and starts to load it into the camera.

MAURICE

Whoo, slow down. Show me what you doin'.

Hector stops and looks up at Maurice. He can't believe that he is at all interested in this.

HECTOR

OK. So this is how you load the film. You know what film is, no?

MAURICE

YEAH I know what film is!

HECTOR

So you pull this out on top (pops the film rewind lever) and drop the film in here. Put this back down and wind it just a little so no slack. Then you feed it into here (spindle on the right) and make sure it lines up. (thumbs the film advance lever a little) Then close and shoot three. Done.

MAURICE

I got you.

HECTOR

Sure.

Hector begrudgingly hands the camera to Maurice.

MAURICE

That's it?

Hector shrugs his shoulders as if to say, "what else?"

MAURICE (CONT'D)

How about you show me a little somethin'? What I do?

HECTOR

OK

Hector takes the camera back from Maurice

HECTOR (CONT'D)

So, you look through here and you focus here. Si?

MAURICE

OH! Right, right, I see. I get it. So that's it? That's all?

HECTOR

Ahhh, no...

Hector goes over to his desk, opens a drawer, shuffles through papers, and pulls out a small booklet. "Kodak Pocket Guide To 35mm Photography"

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Here, go home, you read this.

Maurice looks at Hector a bit stunned.

MAURICE
Really? That's how we doin this?
Dam. You ain't a teacher much are
you?

HECTOR
All you need to know, right in
there.

Hector taps his finger on the book. Shrugs his shoulders.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
If you come back, I develop the
film. If

Maurice looks at Hector pissed off.

MAURICE
What you mean, IF?

HECTOR
If?

Maurice takes a step towards Hector to confront him.

MAURICE
Why you think I might not come
back?!

Hector is now a little scared and defensive.

HECTOR
I just say, you have my camera
you...

MAURICE
What?!

HECTOR
I just say...

The tension escalates

MAURICE
Say what?! If I wanted to rob your
ass I'd take this whole place down.

Maurice is now right up in Hector's face.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You dig?!

HECTOR
Si, Si, dig.

Maurice backs off Hector and stuffs the camera and booklet into his bag, still peering at Hector. Hector nervously looks at Maurice as he packs up.

Maurice turns and heads to the back of the store. Hector follows. Both in silence.

Maurice swings open the door and heads down the stairs. Hector follows and stands in the doorway. Maurice turns.

EXT. BACK OF STORE - NIGHT

MAURICE
I'll see you when I'm done with this.

HECTOR
(Tensely)
OK, OK.

Maurice walks down the dark alleyway. Hector looks on, then steps back into the store, closes the door, and locks it.

INT. BACK OF STORE - NIGHT

Hector walks back to his office, lights a cigar, and turns out the light over the counter. Staring off at an old camera, maybe his father's, he starts to think back again to his youth in Cuba.

BEGIN FLASHBACK 3 - NEWSPAPER OFFICE

INT. LONG STAIRWELL - DAY

A young Hector and his Father, camera in hand, walk up the long wooden stairs. Hector follows closely behind his Father, eyes wide open. It's the first time Hector has come to work.

INT. LARGE OPEN OFFICE - DAY

Hector follows his Father through the door that says "HOY - Un Diario aAl Servicio Del Pueblo" (TODAY - A Newspaper at the Service of the People) and into a large office/newsroom with many desks, people hustling around, cigar smoke in the air. His Father sits Hector up on the corner of his desk. His Father walks a few steps into his boss's office, the door open enough for Hector to hear.

They are having a heated discussion about his story. How dangerous do they want to be? What if Batista is overthrown? Then what? Hector is overhearing this while looking at pictures in a folder on the desk of people shot, violent protests, etc. From the office, his Father looks at Hector as he turns and forces a confident smile on his face to try to make as if all is fine. His father exits the office, walks over to the desk, and sees the folder open and the pictures, a worried look on Hector's face. He closes the folder and looks deep into Hector's eyes.

HECTOR'S FATHER
(In Spanish)
It's too much for you. Too much.

His Father picks him up off the desk and carries him away.

FADE OUT.

END FLASHBACK 3

ACT 2

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Maurice enters the apartment door that opens to the kitchen, and his mother is standing at the stove cooking.

MAURICE
Hey Momma

His mother looks at him with a sideways glance.

MAURICE'S MOTHER
Where you been all day? You find a job?

MAURICE
Ain't Nobody be hiring Momma.

MAURICE'S MOTHER
(Cynically)
Ain't nobody hiring...You mean
ain't nobody looking. I know what
you up to.

Maurice glances at his Mother as his baby brother runs in.

MAURICE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Stop running in the house. Go wash
up for supper.

Maurice walks out of the kitchen and through to his room. His girlfriend, LATOYA WILLIAMS (21, Black, high-strung, from Georgia, Southern accent), is lying on the double bed.

LATOYA

Well, look who decided to show up.
Where the hell have you been
keeping me waiting and all? I been
talking to your Momma for two
hours.

Maurice puts down his bag and takes his coat off.

MAURICE

I been workin it baby, you know.

LATOYA

Workin it my ass, I know what you
been workin and I told you can't be
WORKIN it any more. You gonna be
working it in jail and then what?
Then what you do about us?

Maurice, staring at the ceiling.

MAURICE

I know baby, I know.

LATOYA

You know but you don't know. You
know for a long time but you still
running with your boys doin all
that shit. What about that job with
your uncle at that factory?

Maurice turns and looks at Latoya.

MAURICE

You know I ain't made for no
factory job.

LATOYA

You keep sayin that but how we
gonna get married? I ain't living
like this. No sir. Ah ah. No. We
need our own place.

Maurice just looks at her with a fed-up look.

MAURICE

You don't think I know that?

LATOYA

I don't know what you know anymore.
That's what I'm sayin. My Daddy
expect more than this for me.
That's all what I'm sayin.

MAURICE

Shit, your Daddy poor as dirt
that's why he sent your ass up here
to live with your aunt.

Latoya jumps up off the bed.

LATOYA
How dare you talk bad about my
Daddy. He's a good man. He's a good
man. He do what he can with all us
kids; hardly no work in Georgia.

Maurice opens his bag, pulls out the camera, and puts it on
the bed.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
What the hell is that? Who you
steal that from?

MAURICE
I didn't steal it.

LATOYA
Oh, you didn't steal it? No? It
just fell outa the sky and land in
your bag? Praise the Lord! (Beat)
What you take me for?

Maurice gives Latoya a sideways look as if to say "you really
want me to tell you what I take you for."

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Oh, you better not! No. I ain't
little Miss Georgia anymore. You
made sure a that.

Maurice picks the camera up off the bed, looking it over.

MAURICE
I got it,... I borrow it from this
guy.

LATOYA
Ha! Oh, you borrow it? You mean
permanently?

MAURICE
No

LATOYA
No?

MAURICE
No

LATOYA
You take me for a fool, I swear.
You say you gonna change and nothin
change.

Maurice, mad, jumps up off the bed and stands over Latoya.

MAURICE
Enough! I borrowed it and that's
it. You dig? That's it!

Just then, Maurice's Mother calls from the kitchen.

MAURICE'S MOTHER
(Off-camera)
Who settin' the table?

Maurice is still standing over Latoya, Latoya looking up at him, a bit scared, and put in her place. She turns her head slightly but keeps eye contact with Maurice.

LATOYA
I'm comin Momma

Latoya raises an eyebrow and smirks slightly, then walks out of the room.

Maurice walks to the window and looks out, then down at the camera in his hand. He raises it to his eye and looks out.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - NIGHT

Back out on the street corner with his gang, Maurice sits on the stairs next to Jamo and pulls out the camera.

JAMO
What the hell, man. You take that
off that fool the other night?

MAURICE
Something like that.

JAMO
Why didn't you hock that, shit?

MAURICE
I'm gonna mess around with it some.

JAMO
What you mean? You gonna be mister
Pho-grapher.

Jamo and the other guys on the stoop laugh a little.

JAMO (CONT'D)
You got film in that thing?

Jamo starts to get excited

MAURICE
Maybe

Jamo jumps up off the stoop. Strikes a pose.

JAMO
Yo, Shoot ya boy.

MAURICE
Yeah, I'll shoot ya ass

Maurices points his fingers like a gun at Jamo.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Phew!

JAMO
Como on, get my good side.

Jamo showing one side of his face.

MAURICE
Yo momma say you ain't got no good side.

The rest of the gang laughs.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
sit yo ass down.

Jamo dejected; he sits back down on the stoop.

CROSS FADE

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - NIGHT

Cut to later that same night.

The gang is still doing business on the street. One of the gang members spots a rival gang car coming down the street.

GANG MEMBER 1
Yo, Maurice - It's Izzy

He points to the big Cadillac car coming down the street.

It's Maurice's rival, ISAAH WASHINGTON (IZZY, 27, Black)

(In slow motion) Maurice stands up and the gang eyeballs them, driving slowly, music blaring, and the passengers hanging out the windows. They're eyeballing Maurice's gang.

Maurice's boys hold their hands inside their jackets, ready to pull a gun if necessary. Izzy smirks at Maurice as he passes by and drives down the street.

GANG MEMBER 2
Kinda shit he pullin' drivin' here?

MAURICE
He got nothin', jive ass.

A final look at the tail lights going off in the distance.

It's late, and Maurice decides to leave.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Alright, I'm outa here. Jamo, take
care a business.

JAMO

I got you Mo.

Walking down the street, Maurice pulls out his camera and starts looking at things to consider taking a picture of.

A woman getting off a bus. Two bums drinking and sitting propped up against a store. A guy arguing with a cabby in the street. Maurice tucks into an apartment stoop, checking things out.

Two punk-rock girls walk toward him. He lifts his camera, tracking them. Just before passing, one flips him off—he snaps the shot, laughs, then steps from the doorway and walks down the street.

Maurice continues down the street, the camera still out; he glances over and sees a police car slowly approaching him. He pretends like he doesn't see it as it rolls alongside him. The officer on the passenger is looking directly at him.

OFFICER MORGAN

(Sarcastically)

Nice night, Maurice.

Maurice turns and sees it's Officer Morgan and his partner, someone who knows Maurice only too well. He closes his eyes briefly, and his face shows he knows how this will go.

MAURICE

Sure is.

OFFICER MORGAN

What ya got in your hand there,
Maurice?

Maurice stops as the car parks, and both officers get out.

MAURICE

(Flippantly)

It's a camera.

The police car stops, and Officer Morgan gets out.

OFFICER MORGAN

Oh, a camera, how nice. You
starting a new career? /s

Maurice stares at the officer as he walks around him and then grabs the camera from Maurice.

MAURICE

Before you go askin', yeah, it's mine.

OFFICER MORGAN

Oh, I'm sure! Hear that, Joe? Maurice said it's his, so we're good here. /s

Both officers laugh.

OFFICER MORGAN (CONT'D)

You mean it's yours now. Let's go figure out whose this was a half hour ago.

Officer Morgan handcuffs a despondent Maurice, puts him in the police car, and drives away.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Maurice is sitting in a holding cell inside a room full of desks and police action all around him. DETECTIVE BRENNEN (55 White), smoking a cigarette, walks over to his desk and looks at the camera and paperwork on it.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

(Holds up camera and looks around the room)

What the hell's this?

Officer Morgan is at the coffee pot at the side of the room.

OFFICER MORGAN

It's a gift our boy got for being a model citizen it seems. /s

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

Who?

Officer Morgan nods his head and points to the holding cell.

OFFICER MORGAN

Maurice

Detective Brennen looks over at the cell and sees Maurice peering back at him.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

Oh shit. The weeks not complete unless I see your ugly face in here.

MAURICE

I didn't steal it.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Of course not. Why would we think
that.

MAURICE
I'm tellin' ya, I didn't steal it.
Like I told him...

Officer Morgan walking over to the detective's desk.

OFFICER MORGAN
Yeah, Yeah. He claims he "borrowed"
it from this guy on the business
card.

Officer Morgan picks up the card off the desk and throws it
back down. The detective picks it up. Looks over at Maurice.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Only you would rob a camera and
take the business card of the guy
you robbed. Ha.

Detective and Officer laughing.

MAURICE
I didn't rob it. Call that guy and
he tell ya I "borrowed" it.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Oh, I'm going to call him, don't
you worry. I'm sure he'll be happy
to hear you're holding his camera
for him.

INT. HECTORS KITCHEN - NIGHT

The phone on the wall rings, Hector emerges half asleep from
the bedroom.

HECTOR
Hello? (BEAT) YES? (BEAT) Yes?

Maria, now awake, stumbles out of the bedroom.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Who is it?

Hector covers the receiver.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
It's fine, it's fine. Go back to
bed.

Maria shakes her head at Hector and goes back to bed.

Hector takes his hand off the receiver and watches Maria return to bed, still listening to the call.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Hector walks up to the police station, and walks inside.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Hector approaches the front desk, an officer behind glass.

DESK OFFICER

Yeah.

HECTOR

Detective Brennan. Please. He call me.

DESK OFFICER

Who are you?

HECTOR

Hector Alvarez

The Officer picks up the phone, staring at Hector suspiciously.

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hector follows a young officer down a hallway that's lined with benches and suspects, eventually reaching a large room where the detective and Maurice are.

Hector is walked over to the desk of Detective Brennen. He sees Maurice in the holding cell.

DESK OFFICER

Here he is.

Detective Brennen looks up from the desk at Hector and holds up the business card.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

This you?

HECTOR

Yes.

Maurice spots Hector and stands up at the front of the cell.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

You have a camera stolen today?

Detective Brennen holds up the camera. Hector glances over at Maurice. Maurice looks back, knowing Hector could tell him it was stolen if he wanted to.

HECTOR
No

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
No?

HECTOR
No

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Is this your camera?

HECTOR
Yes

Detective Brennan, aggravated, looks over at Maurice and stands up, blocking the view to Maurice. He looks Hector straight in the eye.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Did he steal this camera from you?

HECTOR
No

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
No?

HECTOR
No

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Well what the hell is HE doing with
your camera?

Hector now nervous at the situation.

HECTOR
I lend to him.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Really!? (Mocking Hectors broken
English) Oh, I lend to him?

HECTOR
Si, I mean yes.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
(leaning in and in a whisper) Did
he threaten you to come in and
cover for him?

Hector stares at Maurice just past the detective's head.

HECTOR
No, he no threaten.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
No

HECTOR
No

Detective Brennen steps back, and now more frustrated, he gets loud, making sure the rest of the officers can hear him.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Oh, OK, so he no steal. He no threaten. You just "lend" him your camera?

Maurice now sees this is not going well. He looks around the room as the other officers laugh at the situation. Officer Morgan included, he walks closer to Hector.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN (CONT'D)
(To Officer Morgan)
What the hell did you drop in my lap here?

OFFICER MORGAN
Ha, so we got a spic coverin' for some spook. What a fuckin' surprise.

The room laughs.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Yeah. How about I lock you up with em and the judge can figure you two out in the morning.

Hector now in a panic as he realizes this is turning on him.

HECTOR
NO, no, I tell you I lend to him...

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
I lend, I lend, I call bullshit!

The POLICE CAPTAIN walks in, hearing the commotion.

POLICE CAPTAIN
What the hell is going on in here?

The Police Captain walks over to Detective Brennen and sees the camera in his hand.

POLICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
What are you a photographer now?

The officers in the room chuckle, making Detective Brennen embarrassed for being called out.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
No, Captain its this guys and...

POLICE CAPTAIN
Well give em his dam camera and get
this cell cleared out, we got a
wagon full coming in from a brawl.

Police captain looking around the room.

POLICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
What the hell the rest of you
doing, get the hell to work.

The Police Captain storms out of the room. Detective Brennan,
now pissed off and embarrassed, stares down Hector and
Maurice. Frustrated, he shoves the camera into Hector and
turns to Officer Morgan.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Well! Get Maurice out of the cell.

OFFICER MORGAN
What?!

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
You heard me get his ass out of
there!

Officer Morgan walks over and lets Maurice out of the cell
and walks him to the detective's desk.

OFFICER MORGAN
(Quietly to Maurice)
Oh, this ain't over, boy.

Officer Morgan sits Maurice in the chair next to the desk.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Oh, I don't know what the two of
you are up to but something tells
me we're going to see you bth again
real soon.

Hector and Maurice look at the detective and say nothing.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN (CONT'D)
Well? Get the fuck out of my sight!

The detective signals the same young officer who walked
Hector in to escort them out.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Hector and Maurice walk out of the station. They walk down
the street, and Hector stops, pulls out a handkerchief, wipes
the sweat from his face and turns to Maurice.

HECTOR
What were you doing that they
arrested you with the camera?!
What?!

MAURICE
What was I doing? NOTHING, I was
just...

HECTOR
Nothing? Nothing? They just arrest
you for nothing?

MAURICE
Yes! What you think, they need a
reason?

HECTOR
Sure, sure...

MAURICE
Shit, you just like them. What do
you think when they see a brother
walking down the street at night
with a fancy camera. "oh, that
can't be that niggas camera." And
they throw yo ass in the car.

HECTOR
Yeah, yeah..

MAURICE
YEAH! That's how it rolls out here.
We guilty, we always guilty.

Hector looks at Maurice, half believing him.

HECTOR
You see how they think I lie for
you?

MAURICE
Shit, your fine man.

HECTOR
Fine, sure. Fine.

MAURICE
Yeah, fine. They forgot you
already. Fine.

Maurice goes to grab the camera back from Hector. Hector
pulls away and looks at Maurice like he's crazy.

HECTOR
What you think?

MAURICE
Yo, let me have the camera back.

HECTOR
(In Spanish) What are you crazy?

Maurice steps in again to grab the camera and Hector pulls away again.

MAURICE
Bro, what you doing? Let me have the camera.

Hector, in disbelief, looks at Maurice stunned.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Why would I give you the camera again? You see what just happened? Crazy. Crazy!

MAURICE
Loco? I know what you sayin. I'm not loco.

HECTOR
Si! You Loco in the head!

MAURICE
Look! Nothing changed. We had a deal and I'm still doin this.

HECTOR
Deal, deal? You deal get me out of bed and almost in jail.

Maurice is blowing it off as nothing.

MAURICE
Jail? Phew, you ain't going to jail.

HECTOR
Oh, no jail huh? No

Maurice now turns more aggressive.

MAURICE
I'm not fuckin with you bro. We still in this Gimme the camera!

Hector is now so frustrated and perplexed. He is now pacing and shaking his head, ranting in semi-coherent Spanish, stopping from time to time to look at Maurice.

HECTOR
(In Spanish) He's crazy. Crazy. I do the right thing and this is where it gets me. Mr. Nice guy. What the heck was I thinking. I should have stayed in bed, but NO. Go do the right thing...

MAURICE
I don't know what the hell you
sayin.

Hector stops and stares at Maurice.

HECTOR
OK, fine. Fine. Here.

Hector shoves the camera at Maurice. He takes it, shocked.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Fine. You take the camera. You KEEP
the camera. You go - I go, never
see you no more.

MAURICE
Wait, no no..

HECTOR
Oh yes, yes you take, that's all.
(In Spanish) No more, no more.

Hector wringing his hands as if to wash them clean.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(In Spanish)
Complete. Finished. No more.

Hector walks down the street, talking to himself in Spanish.

Maurice is left standing on the sidewalk with the camera.

MAURICE
No, no. We ain't done, my friend.
To be continued! You and me, amigo!

FADE OUT.

INT. STORE FRONT - WEEKS LATER - DAY

Hector enters the storefront after running some errands.
Maria is standing at the counter.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Hello, my love.

Maria has a concerned look on her face looking at Hector.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Hello

Hector now sees Maria's concerned look.

HECTOR
What's going on?

MARIA
I had a visitor while you were out.

Maria holds up a handful of film containers. Unsurprised, Hector puts down his bag and laughs at Maria.

HECTOR
We do develop films here, si?

MARIA
Oh, these are from your friend.
Maurice!

The color goes out of Hector's face as he looks at the films, looks at Maria's face, and walks towards her slowly.

MARIA (CONT'D)
I thought you said we are done with
this man?

HECTOR
What? (Beat) Yes, yes, we done.
(Beat) What did he say to you?

MARIA
Oh, he was looking for you /s

HECTOR
Did he say...

MARIA
Oh, he say he stop back to see you
in a few days.

Hector looks at Maria, taking a big swallow and she looks on in disbelief.

MARIA (CONT'D)
You say we done with him!

Hector sheepishly looks at her, grabs the films, and walks through to the back of the store as Maria continues.

INT. BACK OF STORE - DAY

Hector walks through the back towards his office.

MARIA
(In Spanish, off camera)
Don't worry, we are done with him.
We will never see him again. Don't
worry. I worry! I Worry!...

Luis sees Hector looking stunned.

LUIS
You see a ghost?

Hector continues walking to his office.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - DAY

Hector enters the office, sits at his desk, and stares at the films in his hand.

Luis walks into the office.

LUIS
(In Spanish)
Hector, Hector, are you OK?

Hector hesitates, then turns to Luis.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, yes

Luis is not convinced

LUIS
(In Spanish)
It doesn't look like it's OK.

HECTOR
It's OK, All good.

Unconvinced, Luis shrugs his shoulders and walks out.

LUIS
(In Spanish)
I don't see good.

INT. BACK OF STORE - DAY

Hector walks out of his office and into the back of the store. Luis and Telma are there working. Hector, still looking at the films in his hand, stops for a second, then looks up at Luis. He walks over and hands Luis the films.

HECTOR
Develop these for me, please.

Luis looks up at Hector, thinking this is a bad idea.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Give them directly to me.

Hector looks toward the storefront, where Maria can be heard speaking to a customer. Then looks back at Luis.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Just me.

And Hector walks off to the back door and walks out.

EXT. BACK ALLEY STAIRWAY TO SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Hector walks out the back, stops, lights a cigar and looks down the alley both ways and shakes his head. He looks up the back stairs, hesitates, then walks upstairs to the gallery.

INT. BACK OF GALLERY - DAY

Hector enters the back door and walks toward Fedora, sitting at the front counter, smoking and staring at him. Hector stops before the counter and stares at her. Fedora stares back, takes a long drag on her cigarette, and an even bigger exhale, waiting for Hector to speak.

HECTOR

Why?

Fedora looks at him, puzzled.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Why? Why do I attract crazy? Why?

Fedora raises her eyebrows and tucks her chin, thinking he implies she is crazy.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Life is hard enough. Why crazy, too?

Fedora starts to chuckle and smirk at Hector.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Oh, is funny? Really? All I try to do is the right thing. Do right.

Fedora is unsympathetic, with a forced frown.

FEDORA

(In Russian))

Why me? Why Me? (In English) Boo-hoo, Boo-hoo /s

Hector stops pacing and looks at Fedora a bit stunned.

FEDORA (CONT'D)

Maybe you crazy? Crazy attract crazy. This whole city crazy. Why not you?

HECTOR

Why do I talk to you?

FEDORA
This, I don't know. See? Crazy.

Hector looks at her and then turns to leave, shaking his head and muttering in Spanish.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
Come on, come on. Who makes you
crazy? Maybe your new friend? Hmm.

Hector stops and turns back to Fedora, curious if she knows who he is talking about. He slowly walks back towards Fedora.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
Oh, maybe I'm not so crazy. I see
this young black man, I see.
Fedora glances behind her through the front store window and down to the street.

FLASHBACK - DAY - STREET IN FRONT OF THE STORE

Hector and Maurice are arguing in the street, but now we see Fedora looking on from above, inside the gallery window.

End Flashback

FEDORA
What is he, pimp? Loan shark? You
owe money?

Hector hesitates, chuckles lightly and shakes his head.

HECTOR
No. (Beat) Worse - photographer.

Fedora is taken aback. Hector draws on his cigar, turns and walks toward the back door.

FEDORA
(In Russian)
Nonsense. (in Broken English) Now I
know you crazy.

Hector walks out the back door as Fedora mumbles in Russian.

INT. BACK OF STORE - DAY

Hector is working in the back of the store, packaging pictures at the counter. Luis walks up next to him, stops, and stares at Hector.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes?

Luis puts Maurice's films and proof sheets on the counter before him. Hector looks over the shoulder of Luis and sees Maria at the front counter. He takes the films and proofs, looks at Luis, and walks to his office.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - DAY

Hector enters the office, closes the door, and sets the films and proofs on the counter. Grabbing his loupe, he scans the proof sheets, shaking his head. He flips through shots, unimpressed, then pauses, sets down his cigar, and takes a second look. Spotting one of interest, he marks it with a grease pencil, then circles two more.

Gathering the proofs and negatives, he walks into the darkroom, sets them by the enlarger, and leaves. The red safe light casts a glow over the marked proofs.

INT. STORE FRONT - EVENING

Hector and Marie are at the front of the store, each working with a customer. Hector finishes up with his customer, and Maria joyfully calls him over.

MARIA

Hector, come. See these! Come.

Hector says goodbye to his customer and walks over curiously.

HECTOR

What is.

MARIA

Come. Look at these.

The customers are a young couple with a baby. As Hector gets closer, he recognizes them. He took their baby pictures.

HECTOR

AH! Mr and Mrs Thomas, good to see you again. The pictures come out good, no?

HUSBAND 1

Just great, Mr Hector, just great.

WIFE 1

Wonderful! So cute! We love them.

MARIA

Si, so cute. Ah.

Maria starts to package up the pictures

WIFE 1
Maybe we'll have you take her
pictures again... FOR CHRISTMAS!

HECTOR
Oh, yes. I would love to.

The couple have their pictures and walk to the door to leave.

WIFE 1
OK, see you soon!

HUSBAND 1
Bye, Bye. Thanks you

MARIA
See you soon! Thank you.

HECTOR
Bye now! Thank you.

Hector and Maria watch them leave as they close the door.

MARIA
Remember when we were like that?

HECTOR
We were never that young. Ha

Maria nudges Hector

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Oh, we were. Not as care free as
them but young. Once.

Hector turns Maria to himself and holds her close.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, we were young once, I think.
But young ended early. We had no
time for young.

Now, looking into each other's eyes.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
We did OK. Right? Still OK.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes! Of course. Look how far we've
come. What we escaped.

Hector kisses Maria just as Telma comes through the curtains.

TELMA
 (In Spanish)
 Hey, you two, no monkey business.
 Closing time.

Hector and Maria laugh as Telma walks to the front door, turns the sign, locks the door, and walks back.

TELMA (CONT'D)
 (In Spanish)
 Let's go home. MARIA
 (In English)
 OK, OK.

INT. BACK OF STORE - EVENING

Telma, Luis, and Maria leave out the back door. Hector stands by the door to his office.

MARIA
 Not too late

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Yes, yes.

The door closes, and Hector walks into his office and into the darkroom. He shuts the door.

INT. THE DARKROOM - NIGHT

Hector sits at the enlarger, holding a negative to the light before loading it. He switches to red lights only, adjusts the image, and exposes a sheet of paper. Placing it in a holding box, he repeats the process but adds short exposures and hand-burning to refine details.

CROSS FADE

Now, standing over a developer tray, we start to see images appear on the paper Hector is moving around.

CROSS FADE

From a distance, Hector pulls a photo out and hangs it up to dry, but we still can't make out the image.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

From outside the coffee shop, we see Hector sitting inside at a window counter, drinking coffee and looking out.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Hector is at the counter, staring out the window. Peering up and down the street as if to look for someone. He nervously looks down at his watch and continues to look out.

Finally, Maurice walks by the window, looking at a piece of paper in his hand. He stops and looks up at the store sign as Hector knocks on the window. Maurice looks at him with frustration and walks into the coffee shop and to Hector.

MAURICE

YO! What's with all the cloak and dagger phone message bullshit. You the Cuban James Bond or some shit?

HECTOR

Sit down, sit down.

Hector motions for Maurice to sit down.

MAURICE

You know how out of the way this place is for me?

HECTOR

OK, OK. Look, I can not have you come by the store. You make everyone nervous, especially Maria.

MAURICE

Wow. Now you puttin me out AND hurting my feelings. What I ever do to you?

Hector looks at Maurice with a stunned look on his face. He tilts his head some and raises his eyebrows.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Yeah, OK, OK. Whatever. Why am I here?

Hector slowly turns and reaches into his bag and pulls out the proof sheets and a loupe and puts them on the table.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

What's this?

HECTOR

That's the film you shoot.

MAURICE

Why the hell it's so small?!

HECTOR

This is a proof sheet, so you see if you have anything.

Maurice looks at him, puzzled. Hector grabs the proof sheet and loupe to show Maurice how to look at them. Then he hands them back to a skeptical Maurice.

Maurice starts to look through the images. Eventually, he shakes his head a little, somewhat approving of his shots.

MAURICE
So what do you think? Not bad,
right?

HECTOR
No, mostly bad.

Maurice puts the sheet and loupe down.

MAURICE
What the hell, man?

HECTOR
No! What I mean is you have a
couple good. But mostly bad.

MAURICE
Oh, wow. Now I feel better. /s

HECTOR
Look, when you shoot, you hope to
get one or two really good shots.
Some time, you get nothing. You had
two OK shots.

Maurice gives Hector a dirty look, grabs two of the sheets with the frames circled, and points to them.

MAURICE
These two?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes.

Maurice raises the loupe to examine the two frames. At the same time, Hector pulls the first single-exposure enlargement of one of those out and puts it on the counter.

Maurice sees it and gives Hector a look of frustration.

MAURICE
OK, why you have me looking at
these.

Maurice picks up the print and starts looking it over.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Yeah, OK, OK, this looks pretty
good this size. Yeah

HECTOR
Yes, pretty good but not finished.

MAURICE
What do you mean not finished.

Hector pulls out the print he worked on in the darkroom.

HECTOR
Take a look at this.

Maurice looks at the prints, looks back at Hector and then puts the sam pictures side by side.

MAURICE
Whoa, now we're talkin'.

HECTOR
You see the difference?

MAURICE
Yeah, how'd you get to this.

Maurice holding up the last photo.

HECTOR
This is what it become in the
darkroom

Maurice looks at Hector confused.

MAURICE
What are you taking about?

Hector grabs all the proofs and prints and lays out on the counter from left to right, the proof sheet with the image circled, then the original print, then the final print.

HECTOR
When you look through the camera,
this is what you look at. This is
what you see

Hector points to the proof sheet image circled.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
When you look, you try and see what
that will look like here.

Hector points to the first print.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Composition, light, focus. But you
also thinking what you can do here.

Hector points to the final image.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
In the print, the darkroom. When it
all comes together, sometimes, not
often, it's OK...

Hector points to the circled image on the proof sheet.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Then it becomes pretty good...

Hector points to the first print.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Then, only sometimes, it becomes
really good.

Hector points to the final print.

MAURICE
Yeah, yeah, that's some heavy shit
right there.

Maurice picks up the final print again, looking at it.

HECTOR
Look, if you want to learn some I
show you. But if not, it's no
problem.

Maurice looks past the print and out the window and sees his
nemesis, Izzy, driving down the street with his crew.

MAURICE
Oh, shit!

Maurice ducks behind a poster taped to the store window.

Hector sees what he is doing but doesn't know why.

HECTOR
What you doing?

MAURICE
Yo, that red car across the street?

Hector looks and sees the car double parked across the
street, the driver getting out and going into a store.

HECTOR
Yes, he's parked.

MAURICE
Parked? What are they doing?

HECTOR
The driver went into the store.

MAURICE
What about the other guys?

HECTOR
They stay in the car.

Maurice peeks around the corner of the poster and sees the car. Then ducks back.

MAURICE
OK, good.

HECTOR
I take it they not friends of yours.

MAURICE
No they are not and I shouldn't be in this neighborhood. At least not alone.

Hector, getting nervous, starts packing up his stuff.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Where you going?

Hector looks up at Maurice.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Just hang. I need you to tell me what they doin'.

Hector looks at Maurice, then out the window. He sees the driver coming out of the store with a pack of cigarettes.

HECTOR
He's coming back out.

MAURICE
Who?

HECTOR
The driver. (Beat) He's getting into the car.

MAURICE
OK, OK. (Beat) Is he pulling away?

HECTOR
No

MAURICE
No?! What the hell they doing?

HECTOR
Just sitting there (Beat) Wait, now they driving away.

Maurice exhales.

MAURICE
OK, good..

Just then the car pulls a U-turn.

HECTOR
Oh no,

MAURICE
What!

The car pulls a u-turn and is now driving right by the donut shop they are in.

Hector is in a panic and starts to shield his face from them, even though they have no idea who he is. Maurice is pinned up against the glass, behind the poster.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
What are they doing? Are they
stopping? What?!

Hector is trying nonchalantly to track the car out of the corner of his eye.

The car drives by the storefront and one of the gang turns towards the window laughing, which catches Hector's eye.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
What are they doing?!

The car finally passes the store and speeds off down the street. Hector looks down the street, exhales and turns towards Maurice. Maurice's body language stressed, his hands turned up as if to say, "What"

HECTOR
Is good. They're gone.

Maurice, not confident that they are gone, peeks around the poster and then down the street.

MAURICE
What the hell you keep me hangin
like that?

HECTOR
What. (Beat) Who are those guys.

MAURICE
The competition.

Hector's demeanor immediately recovers, and he finishes packing up his bag as Maurice, still nervous, peeks out the window, still partially covered by the poster.

HECTOR
OK, when do you want to shoot some
pictures?

Maurice looks at Hector puzzled, still recovering.

MAURICE
What the hell you talking about.

HECTOR
You and me. I show you a few
things. Late afternoon. Sunday?
Boathouse at the park say 5PM.

Maurice is shocked that Hector is right back in the photo
discussion. Shakes his head slowly at Hector.

MAURICE
Suuure, Sunday.

HECTOR
OK, good, unless your friend owns
that too? /s

MAURICE
Don't be a wise ass.

Hector grins at Maurice and walks out the door. Hector walks
past the window with Maurice, looking out to see if all is
clear. Hector glances at Maurice, raises his eyebrows twice,
and keeps walking. Maurice looks back, not amused. He grabs
his things and walks out the door. Checking both ways down
the street, he walks fast in the opposite direction.

EXT. PARK BOATHOUSE - DAY

It's Sunday, and Hector is sitting on a park bench, camera in-
hand, near the boathouse and is taking everything in. He sees
a boy and his Father with a toy boat on a string, pulling it
through the lake's edge. Two lovers on a blanket under a
tree. Two hippies walking around the lake with a radio
playing. Looking around, Hector looks at his watch and stares
off into the distance.

Suddenly, Hector hears a couple arguing behind him in the
distance but getting closer. He eventually turns around to
see Maurice and a girl, Latoya. Hector is a little concerned
now, not knowing who this girl is or why he is with her.

Hector stands up as they approach him. Lotaya is still
rambling on, and Maurice looks embarrassed.

HECTOR
Olla

Maurice nods at Hector

LATOYA
So where's the girl! Were she at!

Latoya paces around, almost ignoring Hector and looks around for a girl that she thinks Maurice is really meeting

MAURICE
I told you there ain't no girl!

LATOYA
Oh, yeah, yeah. You think I'm a fool, don't you? Well, let me tell you something...

MAURICE
Latoya!!

Latoya stops pacing around and looks at Maurice.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
This is Hector!

Latoya walks slowly around Hector, giving him the evil eye.

LATOYA
Really?

Latoya continues to examine Hector.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
So YOU'ER Hector, huh?

Hector stares at Latoya, half surprised and half amused.

HECTOR
Yes, nice to meet you.

LATOYA
Yeah, I bet it is.

Maurice looks on with a look of disgust.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
What the hell you doing with my Maurice? You some kinda con man or into freaky shit?

Hector is taken aback. Maurice has had enough and steps in.

MAURICE
That's enough! You happy now? Ain't no Ho, no cheating around. Just Hector. You need to go!

Latoya, still not completely convinced, slinks back toward Maurice, glances at Hector, and looks into Maurice's eyes.

LATOYA
 Yeah, yeah, OK. I'll go. (Beat)
 Give me a dollar; I need ice cream.

Maurice reaches into his pocket and pulls out some bills.
 Latoya helps herself to a couple of dollars, kisses Maurice,
 and then turns to walk away as she stares back at Hector.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna get me an ice cream and
 go. (Beat) but I'm watching you.
 HEC-TOR!

Latoya walks away towards the ice cream stand. Maurice steps
 up to Hector, still staring at Latoya as she walks away.

MAURICE
 She's crazy

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Yes, Crazy.

Maurice turns and looks at Hector as if that's an insult
 coming from him. Hector tries to make a save.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 I mean, she's a nice girl, nice
 girl.

He immediately turns and starts to walk.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 OK, let's go.

Maurice, a few steps behind Hector, catches up to him and
 they walk off talking.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE PARK - DAY

Hector and Maurice walk out of the park together to the
 street, cameras in hand, talking, but we can not hear them.

Now, walking down the street, Hector continues teaching.

MAURICE
 So where we going now?

HECTOR
 We're looking.

MAURICE
 Looking?

HECTOR
 Yes.

They stop on a street corner.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Look around.

Hector starts looking around the busy street and a puzzled Maurice follows suit and starts looking around.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
You see anything interesting?

MAURICE
Interesting?

HECTOR
To shoot. Anything interesting.

Maurice looks at Hector and then looks around again.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Remember what I said about
composition and light. You have to
find the picture hiding that others
don't see.

Maurice and Hector continue to scan the area, looking at all aspects of people, cars, stores, and buildings. It's late in the day, and the sun is setting, casting shadows all around.

MAURICE
Is there a reason we just stopped
here? We got the whole city.

HECTOR
Yes. Tell me why. What do you see?

Maurice continues to look around.

MAURICE
I see a lot a what I see everywhere
else in this city.

HECTOR
Hmm, yes. But here it's different.
The light, this is why I come here.
Good shadows.

MAURICE
OK, I see it.

HECTOR
Shadows make everything
interesting. Look down that street.

Hector turns and points to the street behind him. Maurice looks down that street.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
All shadow from the buildings. No
contrast. Boring.

They both turn back to the street in front of them.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Good picture, good contrast. Light.

MAURICE
So you just come here?

HECTOR
No! The sun moves, the light moves,
I move. Sometime I walk slow, and I
look and Sometimes I just sit...

Two young women walking in opposite directions in the
crosswalk bump into each other, hitting the bag out of one of
their hands. Arguing in the street, cars now beep their horns
as the light turns green.

Hector and Maurice seize the opportunity, shoot a few frames,
and then it's over, the women move on.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
And sometimes New York comes to
you.

One of the women fighting pass right by Maurice as he stares
at her

WOMAN 1 FIGHTING
What the hell you looking at!?

Maurice just lets her by, smiling at her. Hector raises his
eyebrows at her.

MAURICE
You ain't lying.

Hector turns and nods at Maurice, and they both walk of..

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maurice is lying on his back in bed, playing with the camera
and listening to music. Maurice hears the front door open.

INT. MAURICES APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Latoya enters the front door, puts her keys down, and sees
Maurice's Mom sitting on the sofa watching TV.

MAURICE'S MOTHER
Latoya, that you?

LATOYA
Yes Ma'am, how you doin Mama?

MAURICE'S MOTHER
I'm good, Maurice is home.

Maurice's Mother nods her head to the bedroom door, closed and music coming out of it.

Latoya walks to the bedroom door to walk in.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Latoya opens the door and walks in with an attitude. She stops, looks over at Maurice on the bed, head turned. Maurice looks up at her, reaches up and turns the radio down some.

LATOYA
Well, I see you're back from your
"Date?" /s

Maurice looks at her with a look as if to say "Really?."

Latoya puts her bag down and steps towards Maurice.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Did you guys have a nice time? You
going steady now?

Maurice grabs Latoya's arm and pulls her down on the bed.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Did he get you some flowers?

Latoya looks around the room.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Careful, I don't want to be
cheating on you two or nothing.

Maurice grabs her tight and kisses her deeply. Then stops and looks into her eyes.

MAURICE
Yeah, and we kissed just like that.

Latoya pushes Maurice off of her and Maurice laughs.

LATOYA
Augh, I bet you did.

Maurice, still laughing, sits up.

MAURICE

You crazy. Why do I put up with you?

Latoya props herself up on the bed.

LATOYA

I'm crazy? I'm not running around with El Photo Graphy Man!

MAURICE

Awe, What you know about anything.

LATOYA

I know old mister Fee-dell ain't payin' the bills for you and me to get married.

MAURICE

Fee-dell, god. So you know, he nearly die from "Fee-dell". His old man did.

LATOYA

Yeah, well, we all runnin from something, all runnin from somethin.

MAURICE

Girl! What you know about running.

Latoya jumps up on the bed.

LATOYA

How dare you! You know I had to run from Georgia. I couldn't survive down there.

MAURICE

Shiit, the only thing you run from was yo mama's bad cookin'.

Insulted, Latoya starts picking up pillows and stuffed animals and throwing them across the room at Maurice.

LATOYA

You take that back! You know I had to run from there. AND my mama's a good cook.

Maurice, deflecting pillows and laughing, moves toward Latoya, eventually grabbing and hugging her close, face to face. He goes to kiss Latoya but she resists him.

LATOYA (CONT'D)

You apologize. You say your sorry.

MAURICE

OK, I'm sorry

He kisses her.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry yo mama a bad cook.

Irate, Latoya tries to push away from Maurice, but he holds on tight, and eventually, they fall on the bed. Maurice on top of Latoya.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Gimme a kiss; I gotta go out.

Latoya resisting.

LATOYA
Oh, No!

MAURICE
Come on, baby.

Latoya reluctantly gives in and lets Maurice kiss her.

LATOYA
You gotta stop this going out.

Maurice rolls off of Latoya and gets up off the bed.

MAURICE
Yeah, yeah.

Maurice grabs his coat and puts the camera in his bag. When he opens the bag, we see he has a gun in the bag.

LATOYA
I'm not kidding you. I'm not living like this.

MAURICE
You living like this till we ain't living like this.

Latoya sits up on the bed.

LATOYA
What's that supposed to mean? Maybe I just leave.

Maurice looks at Latoya and chuckles.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
You think that's funny? You think I'm joking? I'm not joking.

Maurice walks to the door and leaves.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
I'm not joking, Maurice!

Latoya throws a book at the door as Maurice closes it.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Oh, you'll see. You'll see.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maurice walks through the kitchen, past his Mother, sitting watching TV.

MAURICE
See you later, Momma.

Maurice's Mother glances over at him.

MAURICE'S MOTHER
You behave now, not too late.

Maurice walks out the front door and closes it behind him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Maurice and his crew are conducting business. A car pulls up; the passenger nods toward the crew. One of Maurice's guys approaches the car, leans into the window, and the guy hands him some money and hands him a small package from his waistband. The car rolls away.

Just then, their rival gang rolls up across the street in a large sedan. They spot each other and the car comes to a stop. Maurice's crew are all on their feet and on edge. Two of them reach into their waistbands, showing guns. One of the passengers in the back of the car waves his gun at them.

They start to pull away, staring each other down. Then, the driver's side passenger points his gun at them and fires a single shot as the car speeds away.

Maurice's crew duck, then come up ready to shoot back, but the car is too far gone.

JAMO
Shit, I told you this was all
heating up. This gettin real.

GANG MEMBER 1
Oh, this is on! This is on!

GANG MEMBER 2
We gotta get these guys, man. This
can't stand!

Maurice is just standing on the sidewalk, not speaking.

JAMO
Mo, what the hell! We gotta do
something. Mo!

Just then, the sound of police cars in the distance is heard,
and Maurice's head turns in that direction.

MAURICE
We gotta roll, let's go.

Jamo looks frustrated at Maurice, who isn't as mad as he
should be. The gang hesitates.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Let's Go!

Maurice heads down an ally, and the gang reluctantly follows
him. Jamo catches up to Maurice.

JAMO
What are we gonna do? We gotta
handle this. Like HANDLE this, bro!

MAURICE
You think I don't know!

JAMO
OK, OK, so we roll over to their
turf and pop a few over their
heads.

MAURICE
We hold off, they think we coming
right over. We wait, and we
surprise their ass.

JAMO
Wait!? We need to take this down
now!

Maurice snaps, throwing Jamo against the wall and putting a
gun to his face.

MAURICE
You in charge now? You making the
calls?

Jamo is surprised at Maurice's change of tone.

JAMO
No, man. I'm just sayin'...

Maurice pushes Jamo back some.

MAURICE
You just sayin' what?! That you in
charge?

JAMO
Not saying that, just sayin.

MAURICE
Yeah I hear what you sayin and we
doing what I'm sayin. You dig?

JAMO
I Dig, I dig.

Maurice stares Jamo down for a few seconds more, then looks around and the rest of the gang, who are silent. He turns and continues to walk down the alley with the others in the gang following first, and then Jamo follows behind.

MAURICE
We'll get em on Friday, I know
where he goes.

Jamo doesn't want to wait but reluctantly agrees. Maurice breaks away from the gang and heads home.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - MORNING

Maurice and Lotoya are sleeping in bed when a knock comes on the door. It's the police, and they break open the door just as Maurice's Mother gets to the kitchen.

OFFICER MORGAN
Where is he?

MAURICE'S MOTHER
What the hell you doin! You leave
him alone.

Maurice's little brother, clings to her mother, crying.

Officer Morgan and three police officers barrel through the apartment and throw open Maurice's bedroom door. Maurice and Latoya shoot up from the bed just as Officer Morgan grabs Maurice and throws him on the floor, and handcuffs him.

LATOYA
Ahhh, Oh my god!

Latoya is now huddled in the corner of the bed.

OFFICER MORGAN
Busy night, eh Maurice?

MAURICE
What the hell you talkin about?

LATOYA
Maurice, what they talkin about?

MAURICE
I didn't do nothin!

Maurice looks at Latoya from the floor. Officer Morgan looks up at the other officers.

OFFICER MORGAN
Find the gun.

The other officers start to flip the room over, starting with the bed. Latoya jumps up and sits in the corner of the room, scared to death.

MAURICE
Yo Man, I didn't shoot nobody!

LATOYA
NO! Maurice, tell him no!

OFFICER MORGAN
Sure you didn't. Oh, I guess Isaiah just shot himself.

MAURICE
Whoa! You crazy? I did not shoot Isaiah

Another officer finds Maurice's bag and puts it on the bed and rifles through it. He pulls out Maurice's camera and looks at Officer Morgan.

The officer dumps out the rest of the bag out, no gun. Another officer comes into the room.

OFFICER 2
No gun.

OFFICER MORGAN
That's alright, we got witnesses. Get em up.

OFFICER 2 gets Maurice up and drags him out of the room.

LATOYA
Maurice, no! What did you do!?

They take Maurice out of the room. Latoya jumps up, crying and coming after Maurice but an officer holds her back as Maurice gets taken away.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
No! Tell em it's not you! Tell em!

MAURICE'S MOTHER
Where you taking him!? Where you taking him!?

Maurice's Mother hugs Latoya and consoles a sobbing Latoya as the officers leave the apartment.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT 3

INT. STORE FRONT - MORNING

Maria, working with a customer, sees Latoya walking towards the store from across the street. Latoya swings open the front door and enters, out of breath and visually upset.

LATOYA
Where's Hector?

Maria looks up at Latoya with contempt and the customer turns towards her also.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Hector! Where is he?

The customer turns back to Maria, Maria turns back to her.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
I'm sorry, one of Hector's
"special" customers. Crazy.

The customer takes the pictures and cautiously walks out past Latoya, looking back at Maria and raising her eyebrows.

LATOYA
Is Hector here!?

MARIA
What you want with my Hector? You
crazy or something?

LATOYA
I didn't know who else could help.

MARIA
Help? Help with what? You and that
crazy boyfriend of you? Hector not
you father, not you boy friends
father. You boy friend trouble,
always trouble.

LATOYA
Not always, not always. But yes,
he's in trouble, but he didn't do
it. He didn't do it.

MARIA
Oh sure, sure. He no do nothing.
Nothing. That's why you look for my
Hector. You need to go.

Maria comes from around the counter and starts shoeing Latoya out of the store.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Let's go, your trouble not our
trouble. Let's go.

LATOYA
But I just need to talk...

Just then, Hector walks through the front door and right into the middle of the storm between Maria and Latoya. Shocked, his cigar now drooping from his mouth.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
Hector! You need to help me!

MARIA
Oh, no. She just going. No help
here!

LATOYA
Maurice is in jail, but he didn't
do it!

MARIA
Out! Let's go!

HECTOR
Hold on, hold on!

Hector shuffles the ladies back inside the store and out of the open doorway. He closes the door.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
What is all this.

The two ladies start talking over each other, each pleading their case to Hector. Maria speaking in Spanish.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Hold on, hold on! (In Spanish to
Maria) Hold on!

Both ladies stop yelling.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Where is Maurice?

LATOYA
In jail! That's what I'm trying to
tell you. But he's innocent!

Maria throws up her hands and starts yelling at Hector.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Innocent! Oh sure. Always innocent.
Not our business.
(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

Not your business. THIS is our business and you need to throw her out.

HECTOR

Maria...

MARIA

(In Spanish)

No!, No!. Enough! Enough! Nothing but trouble these two!

HECTOR

Maria...

Maria walks away, behind the counter and towards the back room curtain.

MARIA

No Maria! No Maria! Hector! (In Spanish) I see it. You're going to do it again. Maybe you go to jail next. Ah! You're crazy. Crazy!

Maria continues to mutter in Spanish as she walks through the curtains to the back of the store, just as Luis comes through the curtains and passes Maria, looking to see what all the noise is about. Hector looks at Luis and then back to LaToya.

LATOYA

I'm sorry, but you the only one that can help.

HECTOR

What, what did he do?

LATOYA

He didn't do nothin, but they say he killed someone. But he didn't! They just came bursting in...

HECTOR

Who?

LATOYA

The police! They just bust in the door and take him. They take him away, but he's innocent.

Hector looks up at Luis, who is staring back at him in disapproval. Hector hesitates, still listening to Maria yelling in the distance.

LATOYA (CONT'D)

He didn't do it, I know he didn't.

HECTOR

OK, OK, let's go.

Just as they get set to walk out the door, Latoya stops, reaches into her bag, and pulls out Maurice's camera.

LATOYA
Wait, here.

Hector stops and grabs the camera from Latoya and takes a few steps to the counter to hand it to Luis. Luis takes it and gives one more raised eyebrow stare at him before Hector turns and walks out with Latoya.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Maurice sits in a noisy jail cell, alone in despair. Up walks Detective Brennen.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Well, well, well, look who's back?
(/s)What a surprise!

Sitting on his bunk, Maurice looks up at the detective with a defeated look. The detective leans in towards Maurice.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN (CONT'D)
This time, we got you. (/s) And
it's a two-for-one! You killed
Isaiah, and we got you!

MAURICE
(Quietly)
I didn't do it.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
(/s)What's that, Maurice? I
couldn't hear you.

MAURICE
I didn't do it.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
(/s) OH, but you sure did! And you
hit the jackpot! You're going to
death row, Maurice. Ha, ha, ha...

Detective Brennen walks away laughing as Maurice slinks down in his bunk, defeated.

INT. POLICE STATION FRONT DESK - DAY

Maurice and Latoya walk into the police station and wait as the desk officer deals with someone just brought in. The officer finishes and looks up to see Maurice and Latoya.

DESK OFFICER
Yes.

HECTOR

Yes, we want to see about someone
who was brought in this morning.
Maurice Johnson.

DESK OFFICER

Johnson...

The Desk Officer looks through the report blotter.

DESK OFFICER (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah, well, he's been arrested
for murder.

HECTOR

Can we see him?

DESK OFFICER

Ah, Noo. He's being arraigned this
afternoon upstairs.

Just then, Detective Brennen walks behind the desk officer
and puts some paperwork in the inbox and happens to look up
and see Hector and Latoya.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

Ahhh, looking for your friend
again, ahwhat's Your name...

HECTOR

Hector.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

Hector! You better turn around and
come back in 25 years, that is if
he doesn't get the chair. Ha

LATOYA

But he didn't do it! He didn't!

The detective and the officer both laugh. Detective Brennen
leans across the desk towards Hector.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

I told you he was bad; bad guys
always do bad and bad guys end up
back here. This time for good.

The detective pulls back and walks away, leaving the desk
officer with his arms crossed, head tilted, and smirking at
the two of them. Latoya is now crying; Hector consoles her,
and they turn and walk away.

INT. COURTROOM - AFTERNOON

The courtroom is busy and noisy, with one after another being
arraigned. Hector and Latoya enter the back of the courtroom
and find a seat near the front.

One after another stream through with charges stated, guilt or innocence plea, and bail set.

Time goes by, and Maurice has still not been brought in. Finally, Maurice comes through the side door and is led into the courtroom with a public defender. He sees Latoya and Hector in the gallery but is not encouraged by it as he is set behind the defendant's table. He glances back once more before the judge calls his name out.

JUDGE PRESTON
Maurice Johnson

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Yes, your honor

JUDGE PRESTON
I'm seeing first-degree murder?

The judge looks up at the prosecutor for confirmation.

PROSECUTOR
Yes, your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
How does the defendant plead?

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Not guilty, your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
Very good.

PROSECUTOR
Your honor, we ask that the
defendant be held without bail.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Your honor, we ask that...

The judge immediately cuts the Public defender off.

JUDGE PRESTON
Save your breath, counselor. Based
on the charges and this gentleman's
illustrious record the court orders
him to be held without bail.

The judge hits the gavel on the desk.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
Next case.

An officer steps up and takes Maurice by the arm to lead him away. The Public Defender turns to Maurice.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
I'll meet with you in a few days.

Maurice turns to his Mom, Latoya and Hector.

MAURICE

I'm sorry.

Maurice's Mom and Latoya are in tears; Maurice is led out of the courtroom. The Public Defender turns around to them.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Are you with Maurice?

His Mom and Latoya nod yes.

HECTOR

Yes.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Look, you need to get me any information on why he couldn't have done this.

LATOYA

He's innocent, I'm telling you.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Yeah, well, that's not going to work. I need a solid alibi. Facts, witnesses. (beat) OR who actually did it.

The Public Defender pulls a card out of his briefcase and closes it. He hands Latoya his card.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)

Let me know.

And with that, the Public Defender walks out of the courtroom, leaving the three of them stunned.

75

FADE OUT. 75

EXT. BEHIND STORE - EVENING

Hector is visibly defeated as he walks up the back steps. He stops at the top of the stairs, thinking about what happened in court. He takes two last puffs on his cigar and tosses it into the ally. He looks at the door, knowing how he left it with Maria, and opens the door and enters.

He walks towards his office. Luis and Telma, working at the counter, see Hector walk in and know things are tense.

LUIS

(In Spanish) Hello

TELMA

(In Spanish) Hello Hector.

HECTOR
(In Spanish) Hello, Hello.

Luis and Telma walk away to do other work, revealing Maria standing at the far end of the counter near the curtain to the front of the store. Maria looks at Hector with disdain. Hector stops and looks at Maria.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
(In Spanish)
Hello

Maria says nothing. Her expression says it all.

MARIA
Hmph

She shakes her head and turns and walks through the curtain to the front of the store, leaving Hector behind.

Hector turns to go in his office but not before seeing Luis and Telma staring at him after watching the tense moment. They both quickly turn and get back to work.

INT. HECTOR'S OFFICE - EVENING

Hector walks into his office and sits down at his desk, staring at Maurice's camera sitting on his desk.

Fedora walks into Hector's office, startling Hector some.

FEDORA
Ah, finally! I'm looking for you
all day. They arrest you, too?

Hector turns to her and says nothing.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
Ha, ha, ha - No?

HECTOR
No. What do you need?

FEDORA
Everything is set for this month's
open house. You have any changes to
who we feature?

Hector hesitates, looking at Fedora.

HECTOR
No, we keep the same.

FEDORA
You sure about this?

HECTOR
Yes, keep the same.

FEDORA
Suit yourself! You are boss. I
close up and go home now.

HECTOR
OK, see you tomorrow.

Fedora turns and walks out.

FEDORA
(In Russian)
See you tomorrow.

Just then, Luis walks in with his coat on.

LUIS
(In Spanish)
You OK?

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Yes, yes.

LUIS
(In Spanish)
What are they going to do with this
guy? Did he do it?

Hector turns to Luis and hesitates.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
I don't know, I don't.

Luis, looking concerned, stares at Hector. Then, he realizes
he has something in his hand.

LUIS
Oh, here.

Luis lays negatives and proof sheets on Hector's desk.

HECTOR
What's this?

LUIS
From the camera (pointing to
Maurice's camera on Hector's desk.)

Hector chuckles to himself and shakes his head.

HECTOR
OK.

Hector picks them up.

LUIS
 (In Spanish)
 Hey, Maria is up front. You better
 speak with her.

Hector looks up at Luis, who raises an eyebrow and nods his head slightly to convince him he needs to do this.

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Yes.

LUIS
 (In Spanish)
 See you tomorrow.

Luis walks out.

INT. STORE FRONT - EVENING

Maria is at the front of the store, stocking shelves. Hector enters through the curtain slowly, knowing what he's in for.

Maria sees him but keeps closing up.

HECTOR
 Maria

Maria ignores him

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Maria

Maria still ignores him, but she is visibly angry.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Maria, please...

Maria can't hold her anger in anymore, she turns to Hector.

MARIA
 Please?! Please!? (In Spanish) What
 should I please? You run off to
 help this criminal, this what,
 murderer now? Now you see what I
 see? What he is? Bad! Very Bad!

HECTOR
 (In Spanish) I know, I know...

MARIA
 (In Spanish) Do you? Do you know
 now or are you just telling me
 this?

HECTOR
 (In Spanish) I see this now. I
 should have listened to you. I'm
 sorry.

MARIA
 (In Spanish) You should be sorry.
 We struggle too much to lose this
 trying to save some scoundrel.

Hector walks close to Maria.

HECTOR
 (In Spanish)
 Yes, I'm sorry. I'm sorry to upset
 you. Forgive me.

Hector reaches to hold Maria.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Let's go home.

Hector turns off the light switch and they both walk out
 through the curtains to the back of the store.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

The park buzzes with Cuban music and cigar smoke on a lively
 Sunday. Hector and three others play fast and loud at a
 domino table, their ends in a triumphant slam. (In Spanish)

DOMINOES PLAYER 1
 Domino!!

ALL PLAYERS
 Ahh!

DOMINOES PLAYER 2
 Again?! Come on? No one is that
 lucky.

HECTOR
 Check his pockets.

DOMINOES PLAYER 3
 I know you won't find any money. He
 still owes me.

DOMINOES PLAYER 1
 I'm just that good. And you owe me
 after this day's over.

DOMINOES PLAYER 3
 Yeah, yeah, sure, let's go. Set
 them up.

They start to shuffle the dominoes.

Hector looks down the street. A bank with a sign that has the time and date. He locks in on it. Something has him thinking.

DOMINOES PLAYER 3 (CONT'D)
Hector (beat) HECTOR!

Hector snaps out of it and goes back to the game.

DOMINOES PLAYER 1
Come on, let's play.

Hector hesitates.

HECTOR
No, no. I need to go.

Hector stands up.

DOMINOES PLAYER 2
(In Spanish) One more, come on!

DOMINOES PLAYER 3
Sit down, Maria will wait.

HECTOR
No, I will see you guys later.

Hector turns and walks away. They ask another friend to sit down and play as Hector walks off.

INT. BACK OF STORE - AFTERNOON

The dimly lit back of the store floods with light as the door opens, and Hector steps in and walks to his office.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Hector turns on the light and grabs the negatives and proofs on his desk. He scans them on the light box with a loupe, searching intently. He studies a single frame, grabs the proof sheet and negatives, and heads into the darkroom.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - EVENING

Hector is now at his desk holding a manila envelope that we assume has the photos. He grabs the detective's business card off his desk and stares at it momentarily, then picks up the phone and starts to dial it. It's ringing.

INT. POLICE STATION FRONT DESK - EVENING

The desk officer is processing a suspect for an officer. The phone is ringing. After a few rings, he answers it.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

DESK OFFICER
7th precinct, Sargent Cooper.

HECTOR
Hello, yes, can I speak with
Detective Brannon... please?

DESK OFFICER
Hang on.

The desk officer turns to a board with all the names on it, saying who is in and who is out.

DESK OFFICER (CONT'D)
Yeah, No. Detective Brannon isn't
in. He'll be in in the morning.

HECTOR
The morning?

DESK OFFICER
Yes, in the morning.

Hector hesitates.

DESK OFFICER (CONT'D)
Is there something else I can help
you with?

HECTOR
Ah, no, no. Thank you.

DESK OFFICER
OK, great.

The officer hangs up the phone.

INT. HECTORS OFFICE - EVENING

Hector looks at the phone as he slowly hangs it up. He picks up the envelope and stares at it briefly. He stands up with it and turns the light out as he heads out the door.

INT. HECTORS KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hector enters his apartment. Maria is standing at the stove, cooking dinner as the radio plays Spanish music.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
It's about time! Dinner was ready
long ago.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
Sorry, time slipped away.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
Sure, sure. Sit down, let's eat.

He puts the envelope on the kitchen table and kisses Maria as she plates the food. Maria sees the envelope.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Yeah, yeah.

Hector washes his hands. Maria puts the food on the table and turns the radio down. Hector sits and pours them a drink from a pitcher. Maria sits down, and they start to eat.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
So good.

They continue to eat.

MARIA
I spoke to my sister today.

HECTOR
Oh? She good?

MARIA
Si, still complaining about money.

Hector nods and continues to eat. Maria looks up at the envelope. Hector sees her glancing at it but keeps eating.

Finally, Maria looks at Hector, then at the envelope, and raises her head, motioning to it.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Did you stop at the store?

Hector raises his head to look at Maria; then she motions with her head again towards the envelope. Hector looks down the table at the envelope, then back to his food.

HECTOR
Si

MARIA
Angel's baby pictures upstairs?

HECTOR
No, no.

MARIA
Then what?

HECTOR
It's nothing

Maria looks at Hector with a look of suspicion.

MARIA
Nothing?

Hector shakes his head slightly to say no.

MARIA (CONT'D)
OK, so what, you have naked lady
pictures in there?

Hector chokes on his food, takes a drink and wipes his mouth
with the napkin.

HECTOR
Ha, no.

Maria is getting agitated that he won't tell her.

MARIA
(In Spanish)
What's the big secret, what?

Hector, nervous knowing he has to tell her, turns and puts
his hand on her. Maria looks down at their hands, concerned.

MARIA (CONT'D)
(In Spanish)
Oh, I don't like this.

Hector looks directly into Maria's eyes.

HECTOR
(In Spanish)
If you found something, something
that would right a wrong, would you
hide it?

Maria looks at Hector, not sure what he is talking about.

MARIA
What are you talking about?

HECTOR
If you had something that could
show someone is innocent...

Maria quickly pulls away her hand and stands up.

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 Oh no! Don't you tell me this has
 anything to do with HIM!

HECTOR
 Maria!

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 What did you say to me, what did
 you say? You were done with him.

Hector stands up.

HECTOR
 I know what I said but...

Maria now paces in front of the stove, yelling, arms flying.

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 I don't believe it. Of all things,
 of all things. After you tell me
 "no more Maria, I'm done with him
 Maria"

HECTOR
 Maria.

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 Why? Why? Why would you continue to
 do this? Mary Mother of God, why
 is he doing this.

HECTOR
 Maria stop.

MARIA
 (In Spanish)
 Has he lost his mind, or have I
 lost mine...

Hector, out of character, shouts and pounds on the table.

HECTOR
 MARIA!

She stops and looks at Hector.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Sit Down!

Maria stops and grits her teeth, looking sideways at Hector.
 She reluctantly sits down as Hector pulls out the chair for
 her. They both sit down, and Hector grabs the envelope.

Hector pulls out the pictures and puts them on the table.

MARIA

I don't understand. What are you showing me?

HECTOR

These are the pictures Maurice had in the camera the night he was arrested.

Maria just looks at Hector confused.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

The police say the man was shot and killed at 10:15 PM that night. People heard and saw.

MARIA

Si, so, what?

Hector pulls the one picture closer. It's of a woman and her dog on a street corner. Hector points.

HECTOR

Look down the street.

Maria presses in to get a closer look.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

It's the bank with the date time and temperature. It says the same day, 10:08 PM.

MARIA

So.

HECTOR

(In Spanish)

This store, this bank, is by Grand Street; the shooting was all the way across on 14th Street near the park. He couldn't have done this.

Maria looks at Hector, still not completely convinced.

MARIA

Maybe he take the picture, then run over and shoot him.

Hector looks at Maria, perplexed.

HECTOR

Too Far.

MARIA

Well, you never know.

HECTOR

Ah, you watch too many soap operas. This doesn't happen.

MARIA
So what you do now?

HECTOR
I take it to the detective and show him.

MARIA
Ah - They no believe it, they never believe from us.

HECTOR
They have to.

Maria looks at him in disbelief.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
I have to try.

Hector puts the pictures back into the envelope.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
I have to try.

FADE OUT.

INT. POLICE STATION FRONT DESK - MORNING

Hector walks into the station with the envelope in his hand. He walks up to the Desk Sergeant.

DESK OFFICER
Yeah.

HECTOR
Can I speak with Detective Brennan, please?

DESK OFFICER
Who are you?

HECTOR
Hector Gomez, it's about Maurice Sanchez.

The Desk Sergeant looks at Hector and dials the phone.

DESK OFFICER
Yeah, I got a Hector Alvarez here at the desk, wants to talk to you about Maurice Johnson.

The Sergeant listens on the phone.

DESK OFFICER (CONT'D)
What do you want to talk to him about?

HECTOR
I have an evidence that he doesn't
do this crime.

The Desk Officer looks at Hector, laughing at him.

DESK OFFICER
He says he has "an" evidence that
he didn't do it. (Beat) Ha, Yeah,
right.

To Hector.

DESK OFFICER (CONT'D)
What kind of evidence?

HECTOR
I have a picture.

Hector, excited, starts to take the picture out of the folder
and holds it up to show him.

DESK OFFICER
He's got a picture. (Beat) I don't
know, how about you come up here?
Right

The Desk Sergeant hangs up the phone.

DESK OFFICER (CONT'D)
OK, have a seat. He's coming up.

Hector nods and takes a seat.

Finally, Detective Brennan enters the lobby, spots Hector,
and walks over. Hector stands up, nervously excited.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
You just don't give up, do you?
What do you care about this guy?

Hector looks at the detective and pulls out the photos.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN (CONT'D)
What are you showing me here?

HECTOR
Please, I developed the film in the
camera he had. You took from him,
yes?

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Yeah, so?

HECTOR
You said the person was shot at
10:15 that night, yes?

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

Yes?

HECTOR

Yes, so the picture Maurice take
that night is this. This was taken
at 10:08

The detective glances suspiciously at Hector. He puts on his
glasses, pulls the picture from Hector, and looks closely.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

That is the bank on the corner of
Grand Street, near the bridge. Not
near the place you say he shoots.

The detective looks up at Hector and then again at the photo.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

How do I know that he took this
picture and not you?

HECTOR

How could I take? I was home with
my wife. I get this from his
camera. Truth.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

OK, look. Even if this was his
picture. No jury is gonna let him
off on just this. This ain't
getting him off, I'm telling you
right now.

HECTOR

But the time, he can't be there.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

You think you walk in here with
some crappy picture and that makes
him innocent. Ha.

HECTOR

OK, OK. You look. It's the truth.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

Yeah, OK. What's that other
picture?

HECTOR

It's the same. I give to his
lawyer.

The detective sees the photo sticking partially out of the
envelope as Hector pushes it back in.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN

It's not gonna help. He's guilty.

The detective walks away with the photo. Hector turns and looks at the Desk Sergeant, then walks out of the station.

INT. DETECTIVE BRENNEN'S DESK - MORNING

The detective walks through the room back to his desk. His desk is head-to-head with his partner's desk.

He stops and looks at the picture one more time.

DETECTIVE PARTNER
What's that?

The detective hesitates.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Nothing.

He throws the picture on his desk.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN (CONT'D)
Let's go.

They both grab their jackets and walk out of the room.

INT. ART GALLERY - MORNING

Hector is minding the upstairs art gallery. Sitting by an open window at the front, he smokes a cigar, deep in thought, peering at the street where he and Maurice first argued.

Finally, Fedora scurries up the steps.

FEDORA
(Out of breath) Ah, OK, I am here.

Hector looks at her, frustrated.

HECTOR
What happen to just 30 minutes?

Fedora looks up at the clock on the wall.

FEDORA
I run into friend, we talk.

Fedora puts down her packages and hangs her coat up.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
How many you sell?

HECTOR
Huh, OH, I sell 10. /sc

FEDORA
Ten?!

HECTOR
Oh, sure. And Picasso come by
looking for you too.

FEDORA
Acht, you know Picasso from
Pastrami.

Hector stands up and walks to a painting as Fedora sits down
behind the counter and lights a cigarette.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
What is with your protege'? They
hang him yet?

Hector turns and shoots Fedora a look.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
What, I just make conversation.

Hector shakes his head and looks back at the painting.

HECTOR
He goes to court Wednesday. I'll
let you know when they hang him so
you don't miss it.

Hector looks back at Fedora, then back at the painting.

The phone rings, and Fedora answers it. It's a friend. She
speaks in Russian and ignores Hector.

Hector, staring at the painting, drifts away...

BEGIN FLASHBACK 4 - FATHER SHOT

The revolution is at a crescendo; Castro won, and Havana has
exploded. Hector's Father is on the losing side.

EXT. CHAOTIC HAVANA STREET - DAY

The streets are in turmoil, with a combination of revelers
and the military dragging dissenters out into the street and
throwing them into trucks.

A young hector is being pulled by his hand rapidly through
the streets by his family, specifically a man. But not his
father. They are carrying suitcases and trying to avoid being
noticed by the rebels now in charge.

They are now across the street from the newspaper Hector's
Father works for. They stop and look for him from a distance.

Suddenly, rebels burst out of the front doors, dragging
workers with them, lining them up in the street. A short
space, then two more get dragged out. It's Hector's Father.

A young Hector appears to scream out. "Papa, Papa!" But a hand quickly covers his mouth and holds him back. The hand has a deep scar going right across it. It's the scar that we saw on Luis earlier.

Hector spots his family across the street, his eyes open wide as he lightly shakes his head; no, as to say, don't show yourselves.

They realize they can't do anything. They leave, dragging Hector down the street, crying, "No, No!" as Hector's Father and others are led around the building into an alley. Gunshots ring out as Hector is dragged down the street crying.

FEDORA
Hector...Hector!

END FLASHBACK 4

Fedora, now off the phone.

FEDORA
What, you fall inside that picture?
Like I said, what good can come
from all this?

Hector turns to Fedora, trying to recall the conversation they started.

HECTOR
Sometime. Sometime good can come.

FEDORA
But what if it doesn't? What if you
wrong? Wrong about him.

HECTOR
Then I'm wrong

Hector takes a long draw and exhales from his cigar.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
And it's not on me. But, If I don't
believe...

Hector turns to Fedora.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Then that is on me.

Hectors walks and exits the back door of the gallery.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is sparsely filled; Hector, Latoya, and Maurice's Mother are seated in the second row. On the other side of the aisle are the Mother, Sister, and Brother of the murdered gang member. They are visibly upset.

The public defender hustles into court; the prosecutor is already sitting at his desk. He drops his briefcase on the desk, opens it, and removes folders for the case. He briefly turns around and sees Maurice's family and Hector; he smiles lightly, but not reassuringly, and turns back around. Hector turns to the two ladies, and they all look concerned.

The side door of the courtroom opens, and Maurice is led in by an officer. Maurice stares at them with a look of despair, then looks past them to see Maria entering the courtroom and sitting in the last row. Maurice sits behind the table with his public defender.

THE BAILIFF

All rise!

Everyone stands in the courtroom.

THE BAILIFF (CONT'D)

The Court of the Second Judicial Circuit, Criminal Division, is now in session, the Honorable Judge Howard J. Preston presiding.

JUDGE HOWARD PRESTON (67 WHITE AND GRUMPY) Walks into the courtroom and sits down.

JUDGE PRESTON

Be seated.

The judge puts on his glasses and reads the papers on his desk.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)

Alright, the State of New York vs Maurice Johnson, the prosecution is seeking First Degree Murder in the death of one Isaiah Washington.

The judge looks up at the prosecutor.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)

Is this correct?

The prosecutor stands.

PROSECUTOR

Yes, your honor

JUDGE PRESTON

Are you prepared for opening arguments?

PROSECUTOR
Yes, we are your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
OK, let's go.

The prosecutor walks up to the jury and paces before them.

PROSECUTOR
Ladies and gentlemen of the jury my name is Lawrence Hargrove for the prosecution. On Thursday, August 15th, at 10:15 PM, Isaiah Washington was gunned down in cold blood while standing on the corner of 3rd Avenue and 10th Street. The prosecution will prove that the defendant, Maurice Johnson,

The prosecutor turns and points at Maurice.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
knew the victim very well and had a street gang vendetta against him. So much so that on that night, Maurice Johnson set out to find Isaiah Washington with one goal: to kill him once and for all. This was an act of revenge for a turf war the two gangs had ongoing. Now, yes, these were two gang members, and you may say to yourself, why should we care about a gang member being killed by another? But you would be wrong. Here in America, we don't distinguish between a gang member or a non-gang member when it comes to crime, let alone murder.

CROSS FADE

The Public Defender is facing the jury and delivering his opening remarks.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Although the prosecution in this case tries to tell you this is an open and shut case, that my client just had it in for Isaiah Washington and was the one to kill him that night, this just isn't the case.

The defense will show you that Isaiah had many enemies. Yes, my client and the deceased were both in rival gangs and yes, they did not like each other.

(MORE)

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)

The problem is my client is innocent. Isaiah Washington had many enemies and his murderer could be any one of these.

Maurice Johnson was not there that night and we will show you that as we go through this trial.

CROSS FADE

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

An older German woman, CLARA SCHULZ (65, Heavy German accent), is standing in the witness box being sworn in.

THE BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

CLARA SCHULZ

I do.

THE BAILIFF

Be seated.

The prosecutor steps forward to question the witness.

PROSECUTOR

Ma'am, can you state your name and occupation for the jury, please?

CLARA SCHULZ

Yes, my name is Clara Schulz and I own Southside Liquor Store on 10th street. (Beat) With my husband Carl, of course.

She nods to Carl in the gallery, and he smiles and nods back.

PROSECUTOR

And on the night of August 13th where were you and your husband?

CLARA SCHULZ

We were in our store. We stay open late on Friday and Saturday.

PROSECUTOR

OK, and please tells us, what did you witness that night.

Clara squirms a little in her chair as she looks at Maurice out of the corner of his eye.

CLARA SCHULZ
Well, I um, I...

PROSECUTOR
Take your time, Ma'am.

CLARA SCHULZ
Well, a customer had just left and I looked outside the window and I saw the man pacing across the street. Like he was waiting for someone.

PROSECUTOR
What man was that?

CLARA SCHULZ
The man who was shot.

PROSECUTOR
Isaiah Washington?

CLARA SCHULZ
Yes.

PROSECUTOR
What time was it that saw him first?

CLARA SCHULZ
It was just after 10:00 PM

PROSECUTOR
How do you know it was that time?

CLARA SCHULZ
It was past closing time. I looked at the clock when that lady left and saw it was time to start closing up.

PROSECUTOR
And where was Carl during this time?

CLARA SCHULZ
He was in the back of the store stocking the refrigerator.

PROSECUTOR
I see. Please tell us what happened next.

CLARA SCHULZ
Well, I locked the door behind the lady and flip the sign to close.
(MORE)

CLARA SCHULZ (CONT'D)

I turned the front lights out and I go behind the counter to take the cash out of the register. That's when it happened.

PROSECUTOR

That's when what happened?

CLARA SCHULZ

I hear gun shots.

PROSECUTOR

And what did you do.

CLARA SCHULZ

I jump and look out the window and see a man shooting, shooting the other man. The man who was pacing.

PROSECUTOR

Isaiah Washington?

CLARA SCHULZ

Yes, he was being shot.

PROSECUTOR

And the person holding the gun? Who did you identify the man as?

Clara turns slightly but more so with her eyes towards Maurice and points at him.

CLARA SCHULZ

This man.

PROSECUTOR

Let the record state that the witness pointed to the defendant, Maurice Johnson. And what did you witness after the man shot Mr. Washington?

CLARA SCHULZ

We ran. He ran away down the street.

PROSECUTOR

What direction did he run from where you were?

CLARA SCHULZ

To the right, down the street.

PROSECUTOR

To the right. Let the record state that the witness identified the shooter running away West down 10th Street. No further questions, your honor.

The prosecutor walks to sit down as the defense attorney rises and walks towards the witness.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Good morning Mrs Schulz.

CLARA SCHULZ
Good morning.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Mrs. Schulz, how long have you owned your liquor store at that location?

CLARA SCHULZ
We bought it 12 years ago.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
12 years. And in those twelve years, have you ever been robbed in that store?

CLARA SCHULZ
We have.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
How many times have you been robbed there?

CLARA SCHULZ
Oh, a few times.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
A few times? Three times? Five times? More?

CLARA SCHULZ
Well, I don't know exactly...

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Mrs. Schulz, according to police records you've been held up eight times. Eight times in 12 years. Does that sound about right?

CLARA SCHULZ
Yes, I guess it may have been...

PUBLIC DEFENDER
And of those eight times was there any connection between who or what group were holding you up...

The prosecutor rises to his feet.

PROSECUTOR
Objection, your honor, what relevance does this have on a murder charge? We're not seeking robbery charges.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Your honor, I seek to show a
connection between the victim's
gang affiliation and this witness
and her testimony.

The judge looks over his glasses at the public defender.

JUDGE PRESTON
Overruled. Please continue, but
let's get to the point.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Yes, your honor. Mrs. Schulz, did
you know the person or group that
robbed you in the past?

Clara looks away from the Public Defender and fumbles with
her purse handle on her lap.

CLARA SCHULZ
Well,... yes I may have...

PUBLIC DEFENDER
You may have or you did? (Beat)
Mrs. Schulz?

Clara hesitates to answer, turning to the judge briefly, then
back down to her purse, which she continues to fumble with.

CLARA SCHULZ
I did.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
You did, didn't you? Was that group
the gang known as the Village Aces
Mrs. Schulz?

CLARA SCHULZ
Yes

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Yes. The same gang that Isaiah
Washington was a member of, Mrs.
Schulz?

The Prosecutor rises.

PROSECUTOR
Objection, your honor. What does Mr.
Washington's affiliation have to do
with this?

The judge looks over at the Public Defender for a rebuttal.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Your honor, the defense looks to prove that this witness has been compromised by intimidation to falsely identify my client as the shooter.

JUDGE PRESTON

Overruled. Please answer the question.

CLARA SCHULZ

Yes! OK? I knew them.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

You did. And did anyone in that gang speak with you about your testimony here today?

PROSECUTOR

Objection, your honor...

JUDGE PRESTON

Overruled.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Did anyone approach you at any time between the murder and today from the Aces?

Clara hesitates, looking straight at the prosecutor with daggers in her eyes.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)

Mrs. Schulz, Did anyone approach you from ...

CLARA SCHULZ

(quietly) No.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Mrs. Schulz

CLARA SCHULZ

No. No one.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

May I remind you that you are under oath.

PROSECUTOR

Objection, asked and answered, your honor!

JUDGE PRESTON

Do you have any other questions, counselor?

The Public Defender looks at the Judge, then at Mrs. Schulz, then the jury and back to the Judge.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
No further questions, your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
You may step down, Ma'am. Call your next witness counselor.

PROSECUTOR
We call Devon Marshal to the stand.

DEVON MARSHALL (24, Black Male Member of the Aces Gang) Rises from the back of the gallery and walks to the witness stand as the Public Defender and Maurice look on in disbelief.

The prosecutor walks to address Devon.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
Mr. Marshall, can you tell me where you were on the night of the murder?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, I was right there and I seen it all.

PROSECUTOR
Can you be a little more specific, please? Where exactly were you and what were you doing?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, well I was right across the street just hangin and then Pow! Pow! He shot my boy.

PROSECUTOR
You mean Isaiah Washington?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, dats right.

Devon points at Maurice

DEVON MARSHALL (CONT'D)
He shot Isaiah.

PROSECUTOR
Let the record show that Mr. Marshall is pointing at the defendant.

The Prosecutor walks back to his desk.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
No further questions, your honor.

The Public Defender rises and walks towards the witness stand.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
So Mr Marshall, can you tell me
what your relationship is the
victim in this case?

DEVON MARSHALL
I'm not related to him.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Let me rephrase that. How did you
know Isaiah Washington?

DEVON MARSHALL
Oh, we was friends.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Friends? Weren't you more than
friends, sir?

DEVON MARSHALL
Well, we used to hang out.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Mr Marshall, isn't it correct that
the two of you are in the Aces
together?

The jury looks shocked to hear this only now.

DEVON MARSHALL
Well, I kinda stepped away from the
Aces, you see.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
You stepped away? Weren't you
picked up with Isaiah Washington by
the police just a month ago for
suspicion of burglary?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah but we wasn't convicted at
that and anyway, I'm not in the
Aces no more so.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
But you were 30 days ago, but now
you're not.

DEVON MARSHALL
Correct.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
OK, I'm glad we have that straight.

The public defender looks over at the jury with a raised
eyebrow, conveying his disbelief in his statement.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)
So you say you witnessed the whole thing? The shooting.

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, Like I said.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Mr. Marshall, you testified you were right across the street when the shooting took place. Is that correct?

DEVON MARSHALL
Dats right.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
When you say right across the street, do you mean directly across? Were you on the opposite corner, directly across from the corner the murder took place?

DEVON MARSHALL
Well, not directly but...

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Not directly. How far up the street would you say.

DEVON MARSHALL
Well, I was, a, maybe just up the street.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Just up the street. Are you sure about that.

PROSECUTOR
Objection, your honor.
Argumentative.

JUDGE PRESTON
Sustained.

The public defender returns to his desk and picks up three papers and turns, handing one to the prosecutor and then walks towards the judge to hand one to him.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Your honor, I would like to submit into the record this affidavit from the bar owner at Kelly's Bar, located at the opposite end of the street from the shooting, stating that Mr. Marshal was drinking in his bar from approximately 7:00 PM until approximately 10 PM that night.

The public defender walks back to the witness stand.

PROSECUTOR
Mr. Marshall you were in Kelly's
Bar that night, weren't you?

DEVON MARSHALL
Well, yeah, I was but...

PROSECUTOR
Would you like to tell us again
where you were at the time of the
shooting? You were in the bar,
weren't you?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, I mean no. I was but

PROSECUTOR
You were in the bar drinking all
night but what?

DEVON MARSHALL
I stepped out. Yeah, I stepped out
to get some air.

PROSECUTOR
Oh, you stepped out did you? For
some air. What time was that.

DEVON MARSHALL
I guess just before he got shot.

PROSECUTOR
You guess or you know?

DEVON MARSHALL
I did, yeah.

PROSECUTOR
So you just happened to step
outside the bar right when the
shooting occurred?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, dats right. I stepped out and
then Pow! Pow!

PROSECUTOR
Right as you stepped out you heard
the shots?

DEVON MARSHALL
Yeah, like that.

PROSECUTOR
And from there just outside the bar
you witnessed the shooting?

DEVON MARSHALL

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

And from there, just outside the bar, you were able to identify the defendant, Maurice Johnson, as the shooter.

DEVON MARSHALL

Yes.

The public defender walks to his desk and picks up three paper copies and hands one to the Prosecutor and walks one to the judge.

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, I submit this field report showing the measurements of the distance from the front of Kelly's Bar to the location where Mr Washington was shot.

The public defender walks back to the witness stand.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Mr Marshal, do you know how far it is from the front of the bar to where Mr Washington was shot?

Devon's look changes as he knows he is in trouble.

DEVON MARSHALL

Well, I'm not really sure how far...

PROSECUTOR

345 feet! It's 345 feet from the front of that bar to where the shooting occurred, Mr. Marshall. That's more than a football field's length away. It was night, it was raining, and the street light over the corner of the shooting was out. Oh, and you had been drinking for 3 hours. But you could make out the shooter was Maurice Johnson?

DEVON MARSHALL

A, well, I said what I said.

The Public Defender hesitates, then looks at the jury before turning to the judge and returning to his desk.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

No further questions, your honor.

The judge turns to the witness.

JUDGE PRESTON
The witness is dismissed.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Back at his desk, Detective Brennen, stares at the photo Hector brought in with the date and time in the reflection.

His partner walks by him and sees he is looking at that photo again and sits down at his desk directly across from him.

DETECTIVE PARTNER
What, still with that picture? You gotta let it go. You got the shooter.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Yeah, probably.

DETECTIVE PARTNER
Come On!

The Detective Partner leans in across the desks.

DETECTIVE PARTNER (CONT'D)
What are you gettin' soft on me in your old age? Ha

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Screw you! Your head's gettin' soft. It's just without the gun we don't want this turnin' on us.

DETECTIVE PARTNER
Come on. One drug dealer shoots another drug dealer dead and goes to prison. It's a home run.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Yeah maybe.

DETECTIVE PARTNER
Maybe, ahh.

The detective partner returns to what he was doing as Detective Brennen ponders the picture.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Maybe.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

It's the defense's turn to call witnesses, and first up is Maurice's girlfriend, Latoya. Then Maurice's Mother.

The public defender leans over and takes with Maurice.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Look, we're up next and all we have
is your girlfriend's word and your
Mother's.

MAURICE
I don't want my Mother up there, no
way.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
I understand that but the judge
threw out the picture and this is
all we have.

MAURICE
No way. You can't put my Mother up
there. No.

Judge Preston enters the court.

THE BAILIFF
All Rise!

The Public Defender and Maurice stand up along with the rest
of the courtroom.

MAURICE
No way

JUDGE PRESTON
Be seated. Defense, call your first
witness.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
The defense calls Latoya Williams
to the stand.

Maurice turns and looks at Latoya, then at his Mother sitting
beside her, squeezing her hand. She rises slowly.

JUDGE PRESTON
Ms Williams.

Latoya walks through the gallery and to the witness stand.

COURT CLERK
State your name.

LATOYA
Latoya Williams

COURT CLERK
Raise your right hand. Do you
solemnly swear to tell the truth,
the whole truth and nothing but the
truth, so help you God?

LATOYA
I do.

The court clerk motions for Latoya to sit down and she does. She looks over at Maurice and he looks back, sadly.

The Public Defender walks over to Latoya.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Ms. Williams, how do you know the defendant?

LATOYA
He's my boyfriend.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
And for how long have you been dating?

LATOYA
Just over two years.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
And who do you live with, Ms Williams?

LATOYA
Well, I live at Ms Johnsons apartment.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
That's Maurice's Mother's apartment, correct?

LATOYA
Yes.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
And what's the address of that apartment?

LATOYA
That's 66 Avenue A, apartment 1015.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Maurice lives there as well, correct?

The women on the jury are surprised that they live together.

Latoya recognizes that it is not openly approved of and is a bit embarrassed to say it.

LATOYA
Well, yes. But, but we have separate bedrooms you see.

Maurice's Mother is also a bit embarrassed at this being said in court and looks away from the jury.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
I see. So, on the night of the shooting, were you home at the apartment?

LATOYA
Yes. Yes, I was.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
And who else was home with you.

LATOYA
It was Momma, me, and Maurice. Oh, and Terrell, that's Maurice's baby brother.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Are you saying Maurice was there all night?

LATOYA
Oh. No. It was just me, Momma and Terrell til Maurice came home.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
OK, so at what time did Maurice come home that night.

LATOYA
Yes, well, like I told the police, Maurice came home just before ten o'clock that night.

Latoya turns to the jury.

LATOYA (CONT'D)
So he could not have shot him.

PROSECUTOR
Objection, your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
Ms Williams. Please, just address the lawyer.

LATOYA
Yes, sir...your honor, sir.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Ms Williams, how can you be certain that it was just before ten o'clock when the defendant came home.

Latoya's demeanor changes to more upbeat as she realizes it's her turn to tell her defense of Maurice.

LATOYA

Well, Momma and I were sitting in the living room watching the TV and we were watching the end of the Sonny & Cher Show.

Latoya turns to the jury again.

LATOYA (CONT'D)

Momma and I love that show, Sonny is so funny, and Cher is just so beautiful, and she sings...

Maurice drops his head to the table and the Public Defender steps up to Latoya before the judge can intervene.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Ms. Williams

LATOYA

Oh, yes. Well, Maurice came home before the end of the show, that's when Sonny & Cher sing together, so like 5 minutes to ten.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

OK, so your testimony is that Maurice came come at approximately five minutes to ten o'clock that night.

LATOYA

Yes, that right.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

And how long was he home for then?

LATOYA

Oh, he was in for the night.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

So he came home at five minutes to ten and he never left again that night?

LATOYA

Yes, that's correct.

The Public Defender turns to the judge while walking back to his desk.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

No further questions, your honor.

Judge Preston looks towards the Prosecutor. The Prosector rises and walks towards the witness stand.

PROSECUTOR
So, Ms Williams, you and the
defendant are dating, correct?

LATOYA
Yes, that's right.

PROSECUTOR
And not only are you dating, but
you live together, correct?

LATOYA
Yes, but like I said, we have
separate...

PROSECUTOR
So you're "dating" and live
together. Are you aware of what the
defendant does when he leaves the
apartment?

LATOYA
Well, he's looking for work but
it's been hard...

PROSECUTOR
Looking for work. Do you know how
many times the defendant has been
arrested Ms Williams?

The Public Defender stands up.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Objection, you honor. My client has
been arrested but has never been
convicted of a crime.

JUDGE PRESTON
Sustained.

PROSECUTOR
Ms Williams, the defendant doesn't
work, are you aware of how he makes
money?

The public Defender stands.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Objection, your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
I'll allow it. Answer the question.

LATOYA
Well, he works some odd jobs...

PROSECUTOR

Odd jobs! Are you telling us that you are unaware that the defendant is a member of a street gang known for selling drugs on the Lower East Side?

LATOYA

I don't ask Maurice his business, he's a very private man and I ...

PROSECUTOR

He's a private man? You two live together and you're telling us you have no idea what he does to bring in money?

The public Defender stands.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Objection, Your honor. He's badgering the witness.

The judge turns to the Prosecutor.

JUDGE PRESTON

Do you have any further questions?

PROSECUTOR

Yes, your honor. Just one more question for this witness.

The Prosecutor walks right up to the witness stand.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)

Ms. Williams, did the defendant, your boyfriend and live-in lover, tell you to lie to cover for him!?

The Public Defender jumps up to object as the Judge, startled at the question, bangs his gavel.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Objection! Your honor!

Latoya is startled at the insinuation.

LATOYA

I am not lying! He was home! He didn't shoot that man!

JUDGE PRESTON

Sustained! Counselor!

The Prosecutor retreats to his desk, knowing he got his insinuation into the jury.

PROSECUTOR

No further questions, your honor.

The Judge turns to Latoya.

JUDGE PRESTON
You may step down.

A confused Latoya steps down and walks back to the gallery, passing a dejected and hopeless Maurice.

Latoya, whispering as she passes Maurice.

LATOYA
(whispering) I'm sorry.

As Latoya sits down in the gallery, Judge Preston motions to the Public Defender.

JUDGE PRESTON
Call your next witness.

Maurice looks his lawyer.

MAURICE
Don't do it.

The Public Defender looks back at him and hesitates.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Do not call her.

Still hesitating, The Judge is getting impatient.

JUDGE PRESTON
Counselor, let's go.

The Public Defender stands up.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Your honor the defense calls Mrs. Jackson to the stand.

Maurice is mad as hell.

MAURICE
What the hell did I tell you?

Judge Preston looks up at the defense table.

JUDGE PRESTON
Is there a problem here?

PUBLIC DEFENDER
No, your honor.

The public defender turns back to Maurice.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)
(Whispering) We don't have a choice.

Maurice's Mother walks to the witness stand. Just as she puts her hand on the bible, Detective Brennen bursts through the courtroom doors and walks to the front of the gallery.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
Your honor.

JUDGE PRESTON
We're in the middle of a trial
here, detective.

The detective is now at the front of the gallery opening.

DETECTIVE BRENNEN
I have some new evidence that I
need to share.

The judge is visibly frustrated with this disruption. He turns to the Bailiff.

JUDGE PRESTON
Fine. Bailiff, lead the jury out of
the room. Mrs. Johnson, please
return to your seat.

The judge points to the Detective.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
You and counselors, in my chambers.

Everyone is puzzled as the Judge, Counselors and detective walk to the judge's chambers on the side of the courtroom.

As Mrs. Jackson sits back down in the gallery, Hector, Latoya, and Maurice look at each other in disbelief, not knowing what other evidence they have against Maurice.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

MOMENTS LATER

The courtroom is now settled down and quiet. Hector, Latoya, and Mrs. Johnson are nervously sitting and waiting for everyone to emerge from the judge's chambers.

Hector looks down at his watch. Maurice has his head down on the table, waiting.

Suddenly, the door swings open on the judge's chambers, and the counselors, followed by Detective Brennen and then Judge Preston, walk out and take their seats. The detective takes a seat in the gallery.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
Bailiff, bring the jury back in.

The Bailiff opens the jury door and brings them back into the courtroom. The judge looks at the two counselors and the detective with a look of frustration.

Maurice leans over to his lawyer, who looks back with a shocked look on his face.

MAURICE
What else they find? What?

The Public Defender hesitates, then leans into Maurice.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
(Whispering) I believe this is your
lucky day.

Judge Preston looks at the defense table.

JUDGE PRESTON
Will the defendant please rise

MAURICE
(Whispering) What the hell.

The Public Defender grabs Maurice's arm to settle him down As they both stand.

Judge Preston turns to address the jury.

JUDGE PRESTON
Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I
will preface my next statement by
saying to you that some times. VERY
RARELY...

The judge stares at Maurice, as Maurice's eyes open wide as he fears what's coming next, then back to the jury.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
A piece of evidence comes forward
in the middle of a trial.

The judge now looking directly at Maurice.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
Mr. Johnson, it appears that the
gun used in this murder has been
recovered.

An audible gasp is heard from the gallery as Maurice drops his head in despair.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
The gun was recovered and the
ballistics match that of the
bullets pulled from the victim.

Hector, Latoya, and Mrs. Johnson are visibly upset, with Latoya and his mother in tears. Maurice continues to look down, shaking his head slightly.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
After the match was made, the
person who was found with this gun
confessed to the murder.

The gallery erupts with chatter as this news settles in. Maurice raises his head in disbelief and turns to his lawyer, then to the judge.

Judge Preston bangs his gavel.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
Order, order here. Due to this turn
of events, I have no other choice
but to dismiss this case.

Shock and joy rolls over the gallery, and the judge bangs his gavel again. Maurice hugs his lawyer.

JUDGE PRESTON (CONT'D)
Order, order! Mr. Johnson,
following some paperwork, you are
to be released from custody. Case
dismissed.

The judge bangs his gavel to end the case as Maurice hugs Hector, Latoya, and his Mother.

Maurice turns to his lawyer, who is packing his briefcase.

MAURICE
Who? Who did they get.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Jarvel Moses.

MAURICE
Jamo. But how?

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Somebody called in a tip and once
they had the ballistics he
confessed. Proudly, it seems.

Maurice looks at his lawyer with a puzzled look. Then he looks at Latoya, who smiles back at him in tears.

Maurice's Mother is visibly exhausted by all this.

LATOYA
Oh my god! I'm gonna take Momma
home. I'll see you there.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Maurice exits the police station, Hector is waiting for him. He lights a cigarette and stares at Hector.

MAURICE
Why would you wait for me?

HECTOR
Come on.

Hector turns and signals for Maurice to follow him.

MAURICE
I'm goin' home.

HECTOR
Come.

Maurice shakes his head in disbelief. He hesitates and then steps off the stairs to follow Hector.

CROSS FADE

EXT. BACK ALLEY BEHIND THE STORE - NIGHT

Hector and Maurice walk down the alley; they reach the store and begin up the stairs to the first landing. Maurice goes towards the store door, but Hector turns to go up the stairs.

MAURICE
Yo, where you going?

HECTOR
Follow me.

Maurice, confused, looks up the stairs. Hector stops a few steps up and turns halfway towards Maurice.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Come on.

Hector turns back around and starts to walk up the stairs again. Maurice reluctantly follows. Music and voices can be heard as they get close to the gallery door. Hector puts his hand on the door and looks back as Maurice catches up. He opens the door and walks into a festive open house.

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Hector steps into the gallery, and Maurice follows behind him. Maurice is still confused about why they are going here and why so many people are in the gallery.

He walks in and realizes his pictures are on the walls. He looks back at Hector with a blank look of disbelief. A guest reaches and shakes Maurice's hand, asking Hector.

GALLERY GUEST
SO! Is this the new photographer?
Nice work! Very nice.

In the distance, Maria is at the front counter. Still not happy about any of this.

Fedora walks right up to Maurice.

FEDORA
So, you Maurice. Hmm. I sell one of
your pictures already

Maurice looks back, surprised.

FEDORA (CONT'D)
You're welcome.

Fedora walks away.

CROSS FADE

INT. ART GALLERY - MOMENTS LATER

Hector signals Maurice to follow him out the back door.

EXT. BACK ALLEY STAIRWAY ON SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Hector exits onto the back landing, and Maurice follows him. Hector leans on the railing and lights up a cigar.

Maurice walks over to Hector and grabs a cigar out of his shirt pocket. Hector, surprised, smiles and lights his cigar.

Maurice starts to cough and Hector smiles back at him.

MAURICE
Good God!

Hector looks down at his cigar in his hand.

HECTOR
Si, God is good.

They both laugh

Maurice stops laughing and looks at Hector.

MAURICE
Why?

HECTOR
Why is God good?

MAURICE
No. Why you bother with me?

Hector takes a drag on his cigar and exhales up into the sky.

HECTOR
I didn't want to. (Beat)
But...something said I should. I
should care.

A long pause as they both just stare at each other and Maurice nods his head slightly while puffing his cigar.

MAURICE
We shootin' tomorrow.

HECTOR
Si, we shoot.

Just then, Maurice spots Latoya walking down the alley and towards them.

MAURICE
Oh, shit...

Hector turns around and they are now both looking down at her as she spots them.

LATOYA
Oh! Oh! How nice! You two just
havin' a party out here while I run
all over the city wonderin' what
the hell is goin' on, where you at!
Neither one of ya'll think to call
me, find me? Big joke, right?...

Latoya goes on and on as she starts to make her way up the stairs; Hector and Maurice look on, laughing.

CRANE SHOT

The camera cranes upward and away, showing the alley, buildings, and street view as it continues up into the sky.

ROLL CREDITS.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.