

(Name of Project)
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HIDDEN RAGE
by
Robert Kramer

FADE IN:

INT. JOSHUA'S MIND

Empty space.

JOSHUA'S back.

Surrounded by light, the walls, ceiling and floors are indistinguishable. Joshua's head hangs, staring at his feet.

Slowly he raises his head and reveals his face. A sly grin and piercing eyes. He slowly raises his arm. In his hand--
a pistol.

BANG, a white explosion of light obscures all images.

INT. EUCLID HIGHSCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Inside a circle of high school STUDENTS.

They yell, scream, jeer and cheer. HILLARY, a plain looking 15 year old, is slightly behind the first line of cheering students.

JOSHUA, a 120 pound freshman boy, 15 years old, lays on the floor wrapped in the fetal position.

His arms curl around his skull providing a shell of flesh to cushion the stomps raining down on him like mortar shells.

A boot slams into his rib cage.

Again and again he gets blasted, the hollow thud resounding over the howls of the on-lookers.

The cheering crowd grows louder when blood trickles from Joshua's nose.

HILLARY
Come on you Baby. Fight!

BOY1
Get that loser! Yeah!

BOY2
Fight you freak!

The circle grows closer to the action creating a sense of claustrophobia. They can smell the blood.

Joshua stays on the floor curled in his protective ball.

MELVIN, a tall, muscular kid, reaches down and grabs Joshua by the shirt trying to pick him up, but failing.

MELVIN
Get up and fight! C'mon, give me some action.

Joshua stays curled up as Melvin sets up to kick a field goal.

TONY, 28, a burned-out security guard, and KEITH, 31, a fresh faced guard, explode through the crowd at full sprint. They take Melvin off of his feet and face first into a wall.

MELVIN (CONT'D)
Gawddammit.

Melvin struggles with the guards. He is completely unable to move in their vice like grasp. His squirms only make the guards dig their fingers deeper into the flesh of his arms.

MELVIN (CONT'D)
Yeah, you better not let go or I'm gonna get you too, police academy drop outs.

KEITH
Is that right?

They let Melvin push off of the wall a tiny bit then slam him back face first again. There is no doubt that Keith and Tony are in control.

TONY
You shouldn't struggle so much. We really don't wanna hurt you.

Tony's voice oozes sarcasm as he gets out his handcuffs. Melvin's eyes widen when he hears the metallic clinking, then he narrows his focus again.

MELVIN

You better shackle me up cause I'm gonna smoke you wanna-be's.

KEITH

I'm shaking.

MELVIN

You wanna-be-cop motherOOWWW--

Tony cranks Melvin arm.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Wait till I see you on the street.
BLAM, BLAM! Two dead rent-a-cops.

KEITH

I'm real scared now. You scared Tony?

TONY

Petrified.

The handcuffs are on and they pull Melvin off of the wall. Keith starts to walk him down the hall.

TONY (CONT'D)

You got him?

KEITH

No problem.

Melvin walks with his head up, proud of his accomplishment.

Tony turns around and sees Joshua still on the floor, curled up, and the crowd still around laughing and pointing at him.

TONY

All right! Shows over, let's go to class! Come on, move! Let's go.

The crowd slowly disperses.

TONY (CONT'D)

I said move!

The crowd rapidly disintegrates.

Tony reaches down to help Joshua up.

TONY (CONT'D)
You alright?

Joshua slaps his hand away.

JOSHUA
I'm fine. Leave me alone.

TONY
Let me look at that cut.

Tony puts his hand on Joshua's shoulder. He shrugs it off.

JOSHUA
I'm fine. Just let me go.

TONY
Okay okay. You need to get to the
nurse to have that looked at.

He gathers Joshua's scattered books, hands them to him, and watches as the boy limps off.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

TWENTY STUDENTS all in neat rows of desks. Joshua is one of them. He sits in the back corner by the window staring outside, his longing to be out of the building plain on his face.

The TEACHER reads aloud from Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.

TEACHER
One pound of flesh. What is he talking
about?

Silence.

A GIRL passes a BOY a note.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Joshua, what is Shakespeare talking
about? A pound of flesh.

Josh mumbles without even turning his head.

JOSHUA

I dunno.

He continues to stare out the window.

TEACHER

Come on Josh, what pound of flesh is
Shylock going to take?

Josh whips his head to stare at the teacher. Anger flashes
across his eyes.

JOSHUA

Can't you hear? I...Don't...Know.

All of the Students in the class snicker. A ROWDY BOY speaks
out.

ROWDY BOY

Freak.

TEACHER

Knock it off. Josh, see me after
class.

Josh sinks into his seat, folding his arms in defiance as the
Teacher glares at him. He won't meet her eyes as he focuses
outside once again.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - LATER

The bell rings and all of the students sprint for the door.
Joshua makes his way behind the chaos.

Until the teacher's hand lands on his shoulder.

TEACHER

Let's have a talk.

Josh looks at his feet.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Is there something going on?

He shakes his head no.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Why don't you stick up for yourself
when people pick on you like that?

Josh meets the Teacher's eyes.

JOSHUA

It wouldn't do any good.

TEACHER

You can't just let them walk on you forever. You're going to have to take a stand sometime.

JOSHUA

You don't understand.

TEACHER

Everybody gets picked on sometime. It's how you handle it that puts an end to it or lets it go on. Next time don't let them get away with it.

JOSHUA

Yeah, okay.

TEACHER

Okay.

Josh starts to leave.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

And Josh, if you ever need to talk to somebody.

Josh leaves without acknowledging the offer.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Joshua strolls inside and looks to make sure that no one else is in there.

He wanders over to the sink.

Standing for a moment, he turns on the cold water and looks at himself in the mirror.

He fills his hands with cold H2O and ducks his head down to rinse his face.

He looks up into the mirror and written across it in red are the words "You're dead".

In the reflection he sees Melvin standing at the door to the bathroom with something in his hand.

He raises a gun, barrel aimed at the back of Josh's head.

BANG. Melvin shoots.

Josh spins around scanning the bathroom.

Nobody.

He searches his body for holes.

Nothing.

No Melvin, no blood. Just water dripping from his face.

He dries off and leaves.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - DAY

Joshua mopes in and drops his bag on the floor.

He spots a videotape on the table with his name on it.

He feeds it to the VCR and stands staring at the idiot box.

His MOTHER appears on screen.

MOTHER

Hi honey. I hope you had a good day at school. I'm going to be working late again tonight so don't wait up. Dinner is in the freezer. Just pop it in the microwave and you're all set. Okay, gotta go. See you in the morning.

Joshua rewinds the tape to the beginning and plays it again.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Hi honey. I hope you had a good day at school--

He rewinds and plays

MOTHER (CONT'D)

a good day at school--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

a good day at school--

Joshua ejects the tape and throws it across the room. It shatters on the wall.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER

Joshua and STEPHEN, 15, stare intently at the video images flashing on the television in front of them.

Their thumbs and fingers work rapidly pressing button after button on their controllers.

A final flash and Joshua leaps to his feet, thrusting his arms up in triumph.

JOSHUA
Winner and still champion.

STEPHEN
I'll get you next time. And your little dog too.

JOSHUA
No way. I rule at this game. Man I wish I could do that for real sometime.

He pretends he's holding a rifle and looking down the sights. He takes aim on Stephen and squeezes the imaginary trigger.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
Gotcha.

STEPHEN
Let's play something else.

JOSHUA
What about Grand Theft Auto.

STEPHEN
I don't like that game.

JOSHUA
Come on. It's awesome, you can beat people up, steal cars, run people over. You can do anything you want.

STEPHEN
Let's watch a movie instead.

Joshua shrugs.

JOSHUA
Okay. What do you wanna watch?

STEPHEN
I don't know.

JOSHUA
Wait. I've got the best movie.

He holds up V for Vendetta.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
Ever seen it?

Stephen shakes his head no.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
I'll put it in.

STEPHEN
Okay.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joshua lays on the couch, half-empty bowls of chips are spread across the coffee table.

The television flickers, illuminating his face. His eyes are glazed over but still glued to the set.

The front door opens and Josh doesn't even stir as his Mother walks in.

MOTHER
Are you still up?

No response.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
It's after eleven. You should be in bed.

JOSHUA
I'm not tired.

MOTHER
What are you watching?

JOSHUA
Mary Poppins.

An explosion sounds from the television.

MOTHER
How was school?

JOSHUA
Fine.

MOTHER
Anything exciting happen?

JOSHUA
The usual.

MOTHER
I'm sorry I had to work so late again.

JOSHUA
It's okay.

MOTHER
I wish I didn't have to but--

JOSHUA
It's okay.

MOTHER
You know I have to keep a roof over
our heads.

JOSHUA
Mom, it's fine.

MOTHER
This is the best school district in
the state. It costs a lot of money to
live in this city so you can go there.

JOSHUA
Then let's move.

MOTHER
You know a good education is the most
important--

JOSHUA
Thing you can do for your future.

MOTHER
Okay, well, it's time for bed.

JOSHUA
When this is over.

She starts to say something then stops and walks off.

The television flickers on Joshua's face.

INT. TONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tony strolls in to his one bedroom apartment. It is sparsely decorated and barely furnished. The predominant feature is a reclining chair and a television.

Tony walks to the kitchen and grabs a frozen dinner from the freezer. He tosses it into the microwave and turns it on.

He walks over to the answering machine, no messages.

He checks his mail, all bills.

He sits in his recliner and turns on the TV.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Joshua stumbles into the kitchen and grabs a Pepsi out of the fridge. On the table sits a brand new pair of tennis shoes and a video tape. Josh looks at the tape with scorn and picks up the shoes.

He looks them over carefully, every stitch. Caressing them he takes off his old shoes and puts the new ones on.

He walks around the table in them then takes them off again.

He carries them to his room.

INT. BEDROOM

Josh sets the shoes on his dresser like a display and leaves.

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

Tony and FRANK, a old NY city detective, stand watching the students come in.

A car backfires and Tony leaps. A GROUP of punks in the parking lot whoop and cheer.

FRANK

Aw man. You're a wreck. What did you think someone was shooting at you?

TONY

I'm on my last nerve here. I don't know how much more of this place I can take.

FRANK

Why don't you come work for me?

TONY

You know if I can make a difference in just one kid's life then this is where I want to be.

FRANK

Then I know one kid whose life you should be making a difference in.

TONY

You know I had to leave, man. That whole thing was bad news.

FRANK

You know, it's never too late to be a father. But first you gotta want to be.

TONY

There's so many kids who need a consistent male role model here.

FRANK

Take care of your own family then you can try to be a father to some of these kids. Then you can come work for me.

TONY

I'll think about it.

INT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

Joshua waits in line to pass through the metal detectors. He carries a saxophone case with him. As he passes through he puts his instrument case on a table.

Keith opens it and glances at the saxophone inside before closing it and handing back to Joshua.

INT. JOSHUA'S LOCKER - DAY

Joshua stands at his locker after the hallway has cleared. He pulls a small pistol out of a hiding place in his saxophone case and puts it into his pocket.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Joshua walks down the hall carrying his books. ERIK, the star running back of the football team, bumps into him, knocking his books out of his hands.

All of the STUDENTS in the hall laugh.

Tony happens on the scene and approaches Erik.

TONY
Pick them up.

ERIK
It was an accident.

TONY
So pick them up and apologize.

ERIK
I'm not apologizing to that freak.

Joshua does his best to dissolve into the background.

TONY
Pick up the books.

Erik picks them up, strolls over to Tony and drops them at his feet. The two of them stare at each other, a clear challenge passes between their eyes.

TONY (CONT'D)
(whispers so only Erik can hear.)
You want a piece of me? Do it. I've been waiting a long time to put you in your place boy.

Erik's eyes go a little bit wider. He's not so sure what to think. He looks for an escape, but can't find one passed Tony.

Keith arrives on the scene.

KEITH
Go to class. All of you.

Joshua scurries over and grabs his books.

Keith puts his hand on Tony's shoulder and drags him away.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(to Erik)
You too.
(To Tony)
What was that about? You looked like
you were going to pummel him.

TONY
I was.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tony strolls in silently and he looks and spots 2 closed stalls, next to each other.

He leans on the wall and waits. After a moment a lit cigarette gets passed above the divider from one stall to another.

He pounds on the door to the stall.

TONY
Put it out.

The cigarette hisses in the toilet. DEONTE, a 19 year old sophomore, strolls out. Out of the other stall comes GREG, a huge senior.

TONY (CONT'D)
Aw man. Not you guys.

DEONTE
Wuz up man.

He shakes Tony's hand.

TONY
You've worked too hard to blow it this
late in the game.

DEONTE

You gonna write me up?

TONY

If I do you're gonna get expelled,
again. Give me your cigarettes.

DEONTE

Come on man.

Tony puts his hand out.

DEONTE (CONT'D)

I don't have any.

TONY

You gotta give me somethin'.

Deonte looks at Greg. Greg takes out the cigarette pack and hands it to Tony.

TONY (CONT'D)

The lighter too.

Deonte hands Tony the lighter.

TONY (CONT'D)

You know Johnston's dyin' to get you
outta here. Don't give it to him. Now
get back to class.

They start to leave.

GREG

Good lookin' out.

TONY

You're a senior, you know they could
keep you from walkin' at graduation
for this?

GREG

It's just a smoke man.

TONY

Get outta here before I change my
mind.

Deonte and Greg leave. Tony crumples up the cigarettes and tosses them in the garbage. He puts the lighter in his pocket and walks out.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Johnston sits in front of a bay of monitors and watches as Deonte and Greg exit the bathroom. Tony comes out after them.

INT. MR. JOHNSTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Johnston sits behind his desk as Tony walks in.

TONY

You wanted to see me?

MR. JOHNSTON

You're not wearing your hat.

TONY

What?

MR. JOHNSTON

Your hat. Put it back on.

TONY

That thing is ugly.

MR. JOHNSTON

It's part of your uniform. If you don't respect your position how are students supposed to.

TONY

I've got no problem with the students.

MR. JOHNSTON

No? Erik was in my office.

TONY

So.

MR. JOHNSTON

He said you threatened him.

Tony stares, silent.

MR. JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

You need to get it together or get out. Do you understand?

Tony stares silent still.

MR. JOHNSTON (CONT'D)
Now, leave the referrals for Deonte
and Greg on my desk and get out.

TONY
I don't have any referrals.

MR. JOHNSTON
Didn't you catch them in the bathroom
a few minutes ago?

TONY
Takin' a leak.

MR. JOHNSTON
Don't lie to me.

TONY
I'm tellin' you they weren't doing
anything wrong.

MR. JOHNSTON
Get out.

Tony starts to leave.

MR. JOHNSTON (CONT'D)
And put your hat on!

Tony puts his hat on sideways and walks out.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony sits at a table full of students. It's a table of FREAKS
and OUTCASTS.

He shakes hands with a few as he gets up and goes to another
table. This one is full of GANG BANGERS.

He breaks into a rap as he approaches. The Gang Bangers start
joining in, some bang out a beat on the table while others
rap along.

Mr. Johnston looks on from a distance with a frown and folded
arms.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Joshua sits in front of a computer screen. Students fill all
of the other terminals. Hillary sits a few seats away.

A pop-up appears on his screen, "Click Me" it reads.

Joshua clicks on it and a picture of an obese man, with Hillary's head pasted on top, in a swimsuit appears.

The whole lab starts to chuckle and turn to look at Hillary.

She tries to sink into her seat and disappear.

Joshua stands up, irate.

JOSHUA

Why are you laughing? What did she
ever do to any of you?

GIRLS

Josh and Hillary sitting in a tree...

Hillary lurches to her feet.

HILLARY

I don't need you're help. You're such
a freak!

She bolts from the room, tears streaming down her cheeks.

A wadded up ball of paper bounces off of Joshua's head and the room erupts in laughter.

Josh leaves.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Two punks SPIT and MARKO stand in the bathroom smoking a joint. Joshua walks in and heads towards the toilet.

SPIT

Hey man, wanna hit?

Joshua keeps walking by but Marko blocks his way.

MARKO

He asked you a question.

JOSHUA

No.

MARKO

No what?

JOSHUA

I don't do drugs.

Marko laughs.

MARKO

Check this guy out. What're you some kind of geek?

He pushes Josh. Spit laughs. Josh slowly, discretely, slides his hand towards his pocket.

Spit pulls out a pistol and points it at Joshua's face.

SPIT

What do you think of this then?

Josh looks at the gun, then looks at Spit, then back at the gun.

He raises his hand and brushes the gun aside.

JOSHUA

Get that out of my face.

Josh walks past them into a stall and closes the door.

Spit and Marko laugh.

Josh pulls a small pistol from his pocket. He holds it for a while thinking about it.

Spit and Marko bang on the stall door.

MARKO

Hurry up man.

Joshua throws the door open and stares at them. He shoves his way between them and out the door. Spit and Marko laugh as he goes.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Josh and Stephen walk in together.

STEPHEN

You wanna come to my game tonight?

JOSHUA

That's okay.

STEPHEN

Come on. What else do you have to do?

Josh shrugs.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

We'll pick you up at 5:30.

They grab trays and get into line to get their food.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Keith patrols the bathroom when he notices some new graffiti.

"You're dead. You're all gonna die. I'm gonna blow your heads off and this place is going to explode."

Keith opens his radio mic.

KEITH

Keith to Tony.

INT. MR. JOHNSTON'S OFFICE

Keith and Tony stand across from Mr. Johnston.

MR. JOHNSTON

This is not a credible threat.

KEITH

We should evacuate the building until we know for sure.

TONY

We should search all of the kids too.

MR. JOHNSTON

Let's not get carried away here.

TONY

We have to take this seriously.

MR. JOHNSTON

I am. But there's a lot to consider here. Get on the cameras and track down all of the students who have gone in there today. Then compare handwriting.

KEITH

You know how many kids have probably--

MR. JOHNSTON

Just do it.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Marko sits across from Tony and Keith. There's a tape on the desk.

MARKO

I didn't do nothin'.

KEITH

We've got you on tape.

MARKO

It's not me.

TONY

Your handwriting matches perfectly.

MARKO

When did you go to handwriting school?

KEITH

You're not real smart are you?

TONY

You can go to jail for this.

MARKO

It was just a joke man. I didn't mean nothin'.

INT. STADIUM - NIGHT

Josh sits with STEPHEN'S MOTHER and FATHER in the stands as a soccer game rages on the field below.

STEPHEN'S FATHER

So, Josh, how's your mother?

JOSHUA

Good.

STEPHEN'S FATHER

Still putting in crazy hours?

JOSHUA

Yeah.

STEPHEN'S FATHER

How're you?

JOSHUA

Fine, I guess.

STEPHEN'S FATHER

What do you do on the weekends? Any big plans?

JOSHUA

I'm just gonna hang out.

STEPHEN'S FATHER

By yourself?

Josh shrugs.

INT. FIRING RANGE - NIGHT

Tony and Keith stand in line next to each other. They fire off round after round.

KEITH

So what's up with you?

He fires off a few shots.

TONY

I'm just sick of it all. You know, Erik was a freshman when I started working here. He was a good kid then. Now look at him. He picks on that little guy, Josh, all the time.

KEITH

It happens man. Not everyone grows up the way they should. Some of these kids don't even know their fathers or mothers. That's life.

Keith empties his clip.

TONY

I gave my notice.

Tony slides a full clip into his gun. Keith loads a new clip.

KEITH

What? You can't leave me alone with those idiots we work with. We're the only ones who do anything.

TONY

I hate some of these kids. They're just kids and I hate'em.

Tony fires a round, BLAM.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hate'em.

He fires another.

TONY (CONT'D)

Little punks think the world owes'em somthin'. No respect either.

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM.

TONY (CONT'D)

You gotta give respect to get respect and one thing they don't know how to do is give respect. I'm grown! I'm a man!

KEITH

You can't go with me still there. Who am I gonna to talk to?

Keith fires off a few rounds.

TONY

Sometimes I think about teaching them a lesson, ya know. Treatin'em like the adult they wanna be. Not havin' to take any of their smart-mouthed crap. Like this afternoon. I'd love to just beat the snot out of that self-righteous punk.

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM, BLAM.

Tony drops his clip from his pistol and starts to put more bullets in it.

Tony stops loading the clip.

TONY (CONT'D)

Like I remember this kid. Before you worked here.

Keith fires.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hard core punk. Didn't give anyone any crap. He just would mind his own business.

Keith fires again.

TONY (CONT'D)

Then one day, this other kid, king of the hill type, takes the glasses off of a kid who's got cerebral palsy and throws'em into a toilet.

Keith fires twice.

TONY (CONT'D)

Well, the punk sees this and he walks up to this king of the hill without a word and hits'em. He beats the piss outta him. Then this punk kid reaches into the toilet and gets the other kid's glasses for him. Got suspended for ten days for it too. All this because he couldn't stand to see that kind of injustice. If only more kids would take a stand against that kinda crap.

Keith empties off the last few rounds of his clip and reels his target in. The shots are grouped perfectly.

KEITH

They're lucky we don't carry these.

TONY

He didn't complain once about getting punished for it either. Just took it. I tell you what, I bent over backwards to protect that kid anytime he messed up after that. I respect that.

KEITH

There should be more people in this world like that. But, what can you do?

TONY

Me, I'm done.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh sits in front of his XBOX. On the screen it asks for "opponent name"

Joshua glances at a list on the floor in front of him. Erik is the name at the top.

He enters "Erik" into the game.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Josh crosses off the fourth name on the list. The top three already have marks through them.

He enters the fifth name "Hillary" into the game.

His Mother comes in the front door.

Josh glances her way.

MOTHER

Hey honey.

She messes up his hair.

JOSHUA

I went to Stephen's game tonight. It was great. With 30 seconds left Stephen got the ball--

MOTHER

That's great sweetie, I want to hear all about it. But I'm exhausted, we'll talk in the morning. Okay?

JOSHUA

Yeah, sure. In the morning.

Josh turns back to his game, disappointment across his face.

His Mother wanders down the hall.

She stops as she passes Josh's room and sees the shoes sitting on his dresser on display.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tony and Frank sit across from each other eating greasy food.

FRANK

So you think about my offer?

TONY

Yeah, I think I'm ready. I put in my notice.

FRANK

Now you have to take care of your responsibility with Michael.

TONY

What do you mean?

FRANK

If you come work for me you need to set things straight with your family first.

TONY

I haven't seen them in years.

FRANK

I know. Now, that's not why you called me out here at one in the morning.

Tony sighs.

TONY

I just feel so alone, man. I don't know what it is, but lately I've been really pressed by this feeling.

FRANK

You need to get things right with your life and with God. Stop counting on what you can do and start counting on what He can do.

TONY

It's not that easy.

FRANK

That's why it's called faith. You used to have it. How long has it been since you prayed?

TONY

Since Alex died.

FRANK

It's hard to lose a child. Especially at 3 years old. You couldn't cure his Leukemia no matter how hard you tried.

TONY

Or prayed.

Tony wipes at a tear of frustration and grief.

TONY (CONT'D)

How can you trust a God who lets that kinda stuff happen?

FRANK

Let's ask him, together.

TONY

Here?

FRANK

Why not?

TONY

I don't think so. I should go.

FRANK

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to--

TONY

Yeah, I'll see ya later.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Josh stumbles into the kitchen. His Mother sits at the table drinking coffee and doing paperwork.

She glances at Joshua's feet and sees he's wearing his old shoes.

MOTHER

Did you like the shoes that I bought you?

JOSHUA

Yeah, they're great! I've been wanting a pair.

MOTHER

Do they fit?

JOSHUA

They're perfect.

MOTHER

Then why aren't you wearing them?

Josh looks stunned.

JOSHUA

I didn't want... I...

MOTHER

I know that you'll take good care of them. And shoes get dirty, don't worry about that.

JOSHUA

It's just that--

MOTHER

Go put them on. I want to see you in them.

JOSHUA

Okay.

He runs out of the kitchen and is back in a flash in his new shoes.

MOTHER

They look great on you.

Josh smiles.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Come on, I'll drop you off at school.

Josh starts to take his shoes off.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Josh stops.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Wear your new shoes. That's why I
bought them.

JOSHUA
But--

MOTHER
Wear them.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua sits at a table by himself, no food in front of him.
Stephen walks over with a tray and sits across from him.

STEPHEN
Hungry?

He shakes his head no.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
You okay?

JOSHUA
Good game last night.

STEPHEN
Thanks.

JOSHUA
I wish I could do that.

STEPHEN
I'll teach you how to play.

JOSHUA
That's okay.

STEPHEN
Come on. It'll be fun.

JOSHUA
I don't know. Maybe. I'm just not good
at sports.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

Joshua stands awkwardly, in his gym uniform, off in a corner by himself. He plays with a Hackey Sack all alone and he's really good at it.

The sack gets away from him and rolls over by a group of GIRLS. The girls are giggling and peeking his way as they whisper to one another conspiratorially.

Josh slinks over to retrieve his sack.

One of the girls picks it up and throws it to the other end of the gym by a group of BOYS playing Basketball.

One of the boys picks it up, looks at Josh, and pockets it.

The Girls all laugh and Joshua slinks back to his corner and sits on the floor, not attempting to retrieve his sack.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Tony patrols through a crowd of students rushing to their classes. All of the sudden he breaks into a moonwalk followed by classic Michael Jackson moves.

Students stop and start to watch.

He starts into pop-locking and the crowd cheers. Some students start pounding a beat on the lockers.

Suddenly Tony starts in to riverdance and the crowd bursts out in laughter.

MR. JOHNSTON, the school principle, starts to break up the crowd.

MR. JOHNSTON

What's going on here?

TONY

You kids get to class. I don't know how many times I have to tell you...

MR. JOHNSTON

You, my office. Now.

Tony smiles and dances his way behind Mr. Johnston.

INT. MR. JOHNSTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Johnston sits with his hands folded on his desk. Tony sits reclined across from him.

MR. JOHNSTON

I've had enough of your antics. What do you think this is? A dance hall?

TONY

The best way to get cooperation is to get them to like you.

MR. JOHNSTON

You're not paid to be their friend.

TONY

You'd rather I treated'em like prisoners?

MR. JOHNSTON

Yes.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Students pour out of every exit. Josh and Stephen walk out together.

STEPHEN

What are you doing tomorrow?

JOSHUA

Nothing.

STEPHEN

It's Saturday.

JOSHUA

I know.

STEPHEN

I'm coming over. We'll kick the ball around or something.

Josh shrugs.

JOSHUA

Whatever.

STEPHEN
See you tomorrow.

Stephen runs off to catch his bus.

Josh wanders off across the practice fields.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELDS - DAY

Josh kicks at the dirt of the baseball diamond as he crosses it.

JOSHUA
Goal!

He raises his arms in victory until--

He gets tackled from behind. He can't see whose on top of him as his face gets shoved into the dirt.

He tries to get up but his face gets slammed back down.

Hands pull at his feet, removing his new shoes.

Then the weight holding him down is gone. Tears break free from the corners of his eyes as he sees the back of his ASSAILANT running away.

Josh looks at his shoeless feet and gnashes his teeth as tears leave trails down his dirt covered face.

INT. JOSHUA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Josh sits in front of his computer looking at a web site that has figures of two liter bottles and various other things.

EXT. JOSHUA'S BACKYARD - DAY

Josh sets up a two liter bottle that's filled with a semi-transparent liquid.

Stephen appears by his side with a soccer ball.

STEPHEN
Whatcha doin?

JOSHUA
Hey, what's up.

STEPHEN
Nothin'. What's that?

JOSHUA
Two liter bomb.

STEPHEN
What?

JOSHUA
It's a bomb. I learned how to make it
online.

STEPHEN
Why do you want to make bombs?

Josh shrugs.

JOSHUA
It's cool.

STEPHEN
I don't know.

JOSHUA
Watch. Come on.

He bolts around a corner and Stephen follows.

They peak around at the bomb.

Josh pulls out a lighter and ignites a long fuse.

They stare as the fuse gets shorter and shorter until--

BOOM!

The windows shake and car alarms go off.

The boys are knocked off of their feet. Joshua starts
laughing and Stephen joins in.

STEPHEN
That was loud.

They run over and see a small crater where the bottle had
been.

They hear a siren in the distance.

JOSHUA
Let's get outta here.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - DAY

They run into Josh's house and turn off all the lights.

STEPHEN
Where's your Mom?

JOSHUA
She had to work again. Come on, I'll
kick your but at Marine Sniper.

STEPHEN
You're a marked man today.

Stephen aims a pretend rifle at Josh.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - LATER

Stephen stands up and stretches while Josh still stares intently at the TV. His thumbs frantically thrashing buttons on his controller.

STEPHEN
I gotta get home. What are you doing
tomorrow?

Josh shrugs.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
You wanna come to church with me?

Josh stops playing the game for a split second then resumes.

JOSHUA
Na. I think I'll sleep in.

STEPHEN
If you change your mind give me a
call.

Joshua shrugs.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
See ya.

JOSHUA
Later.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh's Mother comes in and finds Josh asleep at the kitchen table.

An full plate of cold food sits across from him.

She gently wakes him up.

MOTHER
Hey buddy. Was that for me?

Josh nods.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I was out late again.

JOSHUA
You're always out late.

MOTHER
I know it's not easy, but it won't be forever.

She notices a bruise under his eye.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
What happened to your face?

JOSHUA
Nothing.

MOTHER
That is not nothing.

JOSHUA
I got hit with a ball in gym.

MOTHER
Are you okay.

JOSHUA
Fine.

MOTHER
How'd the new shoes work out? Are they calling you the next Michael Jordan yet?

JOSHUA

The shoes are great mom.

MOTHER

I'm glad.

JOSHUA

Can we do something tomorrow. Just the two of us.

MOTHER

Honey, I've got a big meeting tomorrow.

JOSHUA

It's Sunday.

MOTHER

I know, but you know I have to work both jobs just to make ends meet.

JOSHUA

I just thought...

MOTHER

I'll tell you what. I'll schedule you in for next weekend. Okay?

JOSHUA

Yeah. That's great.

MOTHER

Let's get some sleep.

Joshua slips out of the chair and shuffles down the hall. His Mother ruffles his hair as he passes.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Joshua sits in a chair. He looks right into the camera.

JOSHUA

Alright Mom, I'm off. Love you.

Josh leans forwards and turns off a camcorder.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

It's the SENIORS last day and the entire SENIOR CLASS runs through the halls yelling and carrying on.

They spray whipped cream on everybody and everything.

Tony and Keith, in the main hallway, try to maintain a slight bit of control over the disaster.

KEITH
They're nuts.

Tony nods.

TONY
There's definitely something wrong
with them.

KEITH
They're supposed to be the leaders of
tomorrow?

TONY
Maybe they'll fight wars with whipped
cream.

Keith laughs.

KEITH
That would make it all worth while.

Keith sees Erik coming down the hall.

Erik spots them and heads their way shaking a can of whipped cream.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Here comes your friend.

Tony turns and sees Erik coming their way.

Erik starts to hesitate in his approach.

Behind Tony's back Keith points at him and mouths to Erik to cream him.

Erik gets right in front of Tony and stops. Their eyes meet.

Tony lets out a sigh.

TONY
Be gentle.

Erik smiles broadly and empties his can on Tony's head and face.

The other Seniors witness this and they come over and contribute.

Keith tries to get away, but slips on the whipped cream and falls.

The two are covered in whipped cream as they grab onto their assailants and return the favor.

Joshua watches from his locker with envy as laughter erupts from the foray.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Tony and Keith stand in front of Mr. Johnston.

MR. JOHNSTON

Your job is to maintain safety and control for everyone in the building, not contribute to the problems. I will not tolerate this kind of behavior. You two are sad examples of Security Officers. One more mess up like that and you're both gone.

TONY

I've only got a few days left anyway.

MR. JOHNSTON

Don't be smart. I'll bring you up on charges if you disrupt school activities again. Get back to work.

INT. GYMNASIUM BOYS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Everyone changes into their gym clothes and out of their street clothes. Joshua sits in a bathroom stall with his feet up on the toilet and the door locked, still in his street clothes.

Everyone leaves, except for Josh. He creeps to his locker and starts to change clothes.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Tony and Keith change out of their destroyed uniforms.

KEITH

I can't believe you let Erik do that to you. Yesterday you wanted to take him outside and play kickball.

Keith kicks in the air like he's kicking a field goal.

TONY

It's still in him, somewhere. I could see it in his eyes. The good kid.

KEITH

Yeah, but you let him cream you.

TONY

I know, I know.

KEITH

Did you see the look on the Boss' face when he saw us.

TONY

Yeah.

They laugh.

KEITH

Too bad you're leaving. Not every job has these kinds of fringe benefits.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua walks away from the lunch line. He carries a tray full of food.

Melvin walks by and snatches some french fries off of Josh's tray.

Joshua stares at him.

MELVIN

You got a problem?

JOSHUA

Put them back.

He shoves the fries into his mouth.

MELVIN

Put what back?

He grabs some more fries.

MELVIN

You got something you want to say?

Joshua drops his tray on the floor.

The plate shatters and food flies everywhere.

All the KIDS in the cafeteria start to laugh and applaud.

Joshua pulls a pistol out of his waist band and fires a shot into Melvin's gut.

He looks shocked as he falls to the floor.

The other students start to scream and run.

Some hide under the tables and some freeze in place.

The area around Josh is completely empty.

He is the only one standing in the entire cafeteria. About 100 STUDENTS remain in the room in various states of panic.

They huddle like frightened rabbits in clusters around the tables and walls.

Joshua looks around slowly. His power dawning on him and a grin creasing the corner of his mouth.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Tony strolls down the hallway towards the cafeteria. A loud BANG shatters the silence.

An ocean of students pours out of the cafeteria. All of them in a panic. Most of them run straight out of the building. Tony swims upstream into the cafeteria to see what happened.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

He rushes through the entrance at full sprint.

TONY'S POV

Joshua stands in the center of the room all alone. All of the other students hide on the floor lining the walls and tables, as far away as possible.

Joshua sees Tony enter.

He raises the gun and fires.

The screen flashes white.

FADE TO:

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Johnston, Keith, and two other guards, BILL and ALICE, are all gathered in the office. They hear a loud BANG.

MR. JOHNSTON

What was that?!

Another BANG.

The four security guards rush to the next room where there's a wall of monitors.

SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM

The monitors show every inch of the school building from the inside and out.

They start to scan the monitors to see what's going on.

Students leave the building as quickly as they can on most of the screens.

Some are getting trampled by other students. Others are climbing out of windows. It's like watching lemmings rushing to a cliff.

Bill spots Joshua in the cafeteria with a gun.

BILL

There. In the cafeteria.

MR. JOHNSTON

Not here. Not here.

ALICE

What do we do?

MR. JOHNSTON

I don't know... Call the police.

KEITH
Tony's down there.

MR. JOHNSTON
What?

KEITH
Tony's down there. Look.

MR. JOHNSTON
What's he doing?

KEITH
(like he's explaining to a
child)
Sitting. It looks like he's been shot.
See the trail of blood. And that kid
there has a gun in his hand.

MR. JOHNSTON
Why isn't he wearing his hat?

Keith calls Tony on their radios.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Stephen and a few other Students have formed a circle,
holding hands, and are reciting The Lord's Prayer.

GROUP
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Joshua spots them and walks nearer.

JOSHUA
What are you doing?

Stephen looks up.

STEPHEN
Praying for you.

JOSHUA
Well you can stop. I don't need your
pity.

STEPHEN
It's not pity. It's hope.

GROUP
Deliver us from evil.

JOSHUA
Stop.

GROUP AND STEPHEN
Glory for ever and ever. Amen. Our
Father, who art in heaven...

JOSHUA
I said stop.

GROUP AND STEPHEN
Hallowed be thy name.

Joshua raises his gun and points it at Stephen.

JOSHUA
I thought you were my friend.

Stephen looks at him, eye to eye.

STEPHEN
I am.

Bang!

Stephen flies backward and lands on the floor unconscious.
The circle stops praying to look. A PRETTY GIRL immediately
rushes to check on Stephen.

The others hesitantly start praying again.

JOSHUA
Whatever.

He spins and walks away.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Tony sits against a wall, a trail of blood across the floor
where he's dragged himself. Blood leaks from his arm.

KEITH
(over the radio)
Keith to Tony.

TONY
(into his radio)
Go ahead.

KEITH
You alright.

TONY
For now. You watching this?

KEITH
Yeah. The police are on their way.

TONY
Super.

KEITH
Is anyone else hurt?

TONY
It looks like one kid shot in the gut.
He's still breathing. Another one got
shot but I can't tell how he's doing.

KEITH
Don't let him shoot anyone else, okay?

TONY
Sure. No Problem.

Joshua turns to face Tony.

JOSHUA
No one else comes down or your dead.

TONY
Yeah yeah yeah.

JOSHUA
I mean it.

TONY
I think I've figured that out already.
You know, the shooting and all.

Tony gets back on the radio.

TONY (CONT'D)
(into his radio)
Hey.
(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

This kid says no one else comes down here or he's going to start shooting again.

ADAM

(over the radio)

Tell him to give up before the police get here and splatter his brains all over the floor.

Tony turns his radio off.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Johnston, Keith and BRIAN, a young clean cut, rookie, security guard, watch the monitor closely. Bill has left to help students out of the building. Alice comes into the room.

ALICE

The SWAT team is on its way.

MR. JOHNSTON

Do they want us to do anything?

ALICE

Wait for them to get here.

MR. JOHNSTON

Okay. Good.

Keith leaves the room. No one notices.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua stalks around looking at all of the kids cowering in front of him.

TONY

What are you doing?

JOSHUA

What?

He spins on his heels and faces Tony.

TONY

What are you trying to prove?

JOSHUA

Nothing.

TONY

Nothing? You're shooting people for nothing. What are you some sort of moron?

JOSHUA

Shut up.

TONY

Only an idiot would shoot people for nothing. Are you an idiot?

JOSHUA

I said Shut up!

TONY

Or what. You're going to shoot me.

JOSHUA

Leave me alone.

That phrase strikes a chord in Tony and he realizes who this kid is.

TONY

You're the kid from the other day. The one who got beat up right?

JOSHUA

I get beat up everyday.

TONY

You're doing this because you got beat up?

JOSHUA

Maybe.

TONY

You're really a mess. You know that?

JOSHUA

You don't know me.

TONY

Kid, I know more than you can imagine.

Some kids, DEREK and MILTON start to get up.

Joshua sees them.

JOSHUA

Sit down.

MILTON

We got nothin' to do with dis.

DEREK

We're outta here.

JOSHUA

I said sit down.

TONY

Guys sit back down. I don't want anyone else gettin' shot.

MILTON

Screw this man. He don't know me. What's he gonna shoot me for.

DEREK

It ain't like we never been shot before. Fire away cracker.

Joshua shoots him in the foot.

He cries out in pain and falls to the floor clutching his foot.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Awww! I ain't ever gonna live this down. Shot by a freaky cracker.

JOSHUA

I'm not a freak.

DEREK

Bite me.

TONY

You never listen.

MILTON

Whatever man. Why don't you do your job and protect us from this loser.

(to Joshua)

We'll get you later. Damn. If I had my gat...

He makes a gun with his fingers and shoots at Josh.

The two of them sit back down and wait.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Johnston, Alice and Brian all watch in horror as Josh shoots Derek.

MR. JOHNSTON

Who is this kid? Anyone know his name?

ALICE

Sorry boss.

BRIAN

Me neither.

MR. JOHNSTON

Well, find out.

Brian and Alice leave the office in a hurry.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua spots something on Melvin that catches his attention. He strides over and then squats over the inert Melvin and unlaces his shoes. He pulls them off and puts them on his own feet.

Tony clicks on his radio.

TONY

Tony to Keith.

KEITH

(on radio)

Yeah, I'm here.

TONY

SWAT team here yet?

KEITH

(on radio)

Not yet. You know their going to kill that kid.

TONY

I know.

Joshua turns to Tony.

JOSHUA
Don't do that.

TONY
(to Joshua)
What?

JOSHUA
Talk to people on your radio.

TONY
Why not?

JOSHUA
Cause I said so.

TONY
Not good enough.

JOSHUA
If you do it again I'll shoot you.

TONY
Cause I said so, or, I'll shoot you. I
can see you've really thought this
through.

JOSHUA
Shut up.

TONY
You're a regular tough guy.

JOSHUA
Shut up.

TONY
Or what, you'll shoot me? Or maybe you
want to take my shoes.

JOSHUA
Stop it! He deserves what he got.
They're my shoes anyway.

TONY
Grow up. You want to be treated like
an adult, act like one. This is stupid
and you know it.

JOSHUA
This is vengeance.

TONY
For what?

JOSHUA
For years of pain. For every time one
of them called me a name.

TONY
You're going to kill people because
they called you names?

JOSHUA
That's exactly why. Do you know what a
it's like to have to go someplace for
years where everybody, and I mean
everybody, picks on you and laughs at
you. I can't even quit. I'm required
to be here by law.

TONY
Everyone has at least one friend.

JOSHUA
I thought I had a friend.

TONY
What happened?

JOSHUA
I was wrong. No one wants to be
friends with someone like me. They
just want to be part of the crowd so
they pick on the freak too.

TONY
What about family?

JOSHUA
None of your business.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Keith is outside with Bill as the SWAT team rolls up in their
van.

A news truck also rolls up. The side of the van reads 'News at 6 on 6'. Shortly after Channels 3, 5, and 8 all roll up and start setting up relay antennas.

KEITH

Not now.

(to Bill)

Keep those jerks away from the building.

BILL

Sure thing.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

A PREPPY GIRL sits in a corner near Erik.

ERIK

I wish I had a gun. I'd show this loser a thing or two.

The Preppy Girl opens her purse and looks inside. A revolver sits nestled amongst makeup.

The Girl slowly draws the pistol out and slides it to Erik.

Shock and uncertainty mix on Erik's face. He's almost afraid to touch the gun.

PREPPY GIRL

Take it.

ERIK

Where'd you get that?

PREPPY GIRL

My dad gave it to me after I got in a fight last year.

ERIK

You're kidding, right? One fight?

PREPPY GIRL

You want it?

ERIK

Uh, yeah. Sure.

He picks up the gun.

Keith's voice comes over Tony's radio.

KEITH
(on radio)
SWAT team's here. And you're not going
to believe who else.

TONY
Who?

KEITH
(on radio)
Your wife.

TONY
Damn.

JOSHUA
What did he say?

TONY
My wife is here.

JOSHUA
Why is your wife here?

TONY
She has impeccable timing.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

The news crews all gear up.

They approach the building and Bill stops them.

BILL
You can't go in there.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
Why not?

BILL
We have a situation.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
That's why we're here.

BILL
That's why you're going to stay right
here too. You don't go in, sorry.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Erik stands up and starts to approach Josh and Tony from behind. He has the revolver raised and pointed at Joshua.

DEREK
Yeah, get that loser.

Joshua hears this and spins around pointing his gun at Erik.
A long silence as they size each other up. Erik looks scared.

TONY
Erik, don't.

JOSHUA
(to Tony)
Stay out of this.

ERIK
(to Joshua)
Put the gun down.

Joshua starts to step towards Erik.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I said put the gun down.

JOSHUA
(to Erik)
What's my name?

ERIK
What?

JOSHUA
My name, what is it? If you know my name I'll put the gun down.

ERIK
What are you talking about?

JOSHUA
What's my name?

ERIK
I don't know.

JOSHUA

You picked on me all the time, you even knocked my books out of my hands just the other day. And you don't know my name.

ERIK

What are you talking about?

JOSHUA

You wouldn't apologize to me even after you said it was an accident. I guess I just don't count right?

ERIK

Oh man, get over it.

JOSHUA

To you I didn't even exist. I exist now though don't I.

Josh keeps walking towards Erik.

ERIK

Stop or I'll shoot.

JOSHUA

You're a graduating senior, star football player. Everybody loves you. I've got nothing to lose.

ERIK

I--

Josh places his forehead on the barrel of Erik's gun and sets his gun against Erik's temple.

JOSHUA

Fire. I bet my gun will go off at almost the same time. How much of a hero are you willing to be? You going to sacrifice yourself for your classmates. Your friends... I would.

ERIK

You don't have any friends.

JOSHUA

And obviously neither do you.

Josh pulls back the hammer on his pistol.

TONY
 (to Joshua)
 Kid, don't.

Erik passes out.

Josh slowly reaches down and takes the revolver out of Erik's frozen hand.

Josh puts the revolver in his waistband.

JOSHUA
 You should have pulled the trigger.

The whole cafeteria is completely silent, stunned.

A few NERDS chuckle.

DEREK
 (in awe)
 That boy is whack.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Adrian gets out of her news van, Channel 6. She is followed closely by ED, her camera man. Keith intercepts them as they head towards the building.

KEITH
 Where do you think you're going?

ADRIAN
 Inside.

KEITH
 We've got a situation going on in there.

ADRIAN
 I know that. That's why we're here.

KEITH
 That's why you're leaving.

ADRIAN
 We're not leaving until we get the story that we came for. Where's Tony?

KEITH

Inside.

ADRIAN

Well tell him to come out here. I want to talk to him.

KEITH

That would be a little difficult right now.

ADRIAN

Why? What's he doing?...He's not...Oh God, he's not the shooter, is he? Please tell me he's not the shooter.

KEITH

He's not the shooter. But, he has been shot.

Concern passes across Adrian's face.

ADRIAN

Is he dead?

KEITH

He's not dead, yet.

Her angry facade returns as ice re-forms in her veins.

ADRIAN

Serves him right.

KEITH

Look, what do you want to know? I'll tell you whatever you want as long as you go away.

ADRIAN

I want to get pictures too.

KEITH

Absolutely not.

ADRIAN

I want to talk to the kid then.

KEITH

I don't think he's in the talking mood.

ADRIAN
What can I have?

KEITH
You're lookin' at it.

Bill ushers all of the other reporters to a designated spot, away from the school.

STUDENTS still file out of the school building.

Some of the students jump from the second floor.

Others hang ropes made of shirts out of the third floor windows and climb down.

Four police cruisers pull up and the OFFICERS start helping the students get away from the building.

INT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Members of the SWAT team rush inside the building.

GREEN LEADER and FIVE SWAT members rush down one hall and BLUE LEADER and FIVE others rush down a parallel hall.

The Commander and Negotiator, JOE and AARON, rush into the security office camera room.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM

They start looking at the monitors, assessing the situation.

JOE
What's the story?

MR. JOHNSTON
This kid here, walks into the cafeteria and just starts shooting everybody.

JOE
How many injured?

MR. JOHNSTON
Three students and one of ours.

JOE
We've got a man down there?

MR. JOHNSTON

Tony.

JOE

How's he holding up?

MR. JOHNSTON

All right.

AARON

What do we know about the kid?

MR. JOHNSTON

Nothing yet.

JOE

Hold on.

Joe opens his mic and talks into his radio.

JOE (CONT'D)

Red Leader to Green Leader.

GREEN LEADER

(on radio)

This is Green Leader, go ahead.

JOE

Are you in position?

GREEN LEADER

(on radio)

That's affirmative. We have visual of the boy.

JOE

Good. Stand by. Red Leader to Blue Leader.

BLUE LEADER

(on radio)

This is Blue Leader.

JOE

What's your position?

BLUE LEADER

(on radio)

We're falling in place now. We've got a shot.

JOE

Hold there. Wait for my command.

Joe gets off his radio as Alice and Brian re-enter the room in a hurry.

ALICE

We got it boss.

AARON

What?

ALICE

The kid, name's Joshua Morgan. He's 15, just ending his freshman year.

BRIAN

I'll say he's ending it.

Mr. Johnston gives Brian a withering look.

ALICE

Kid gets good grades, A's and B's. Not seeing the school shrink, nothing. Seems normal.

AARON

They always are. What about his family?

ALICE

Mother has custody, don't know where the father is. Only child. Mother works at an insurance firm downtown.

AARON

Let's get her down here.

BRIAN

I'm on it.

Brian leaves the room.

AARON

What about our guy? Tony.

MR. JOHNSTON

He's quitting. This is his last week.

AARON

Does he have any family?

MR. JOHNSTON
A wife and a son.

AARON
Where's his wife?

MR. JOHNSTON
Outside.

AARON
Bring her in. He's going to need all
the support he can get.

MR. JOHNSTON
I don't think that's--

AARON
Bring her in.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Keith and Adrian are having a staring contest. PARENTS start
to arrive by the car full, screeching into the parking lot.

KEITH
I told you, you can't go inside.

ADRIAN
I told you, it's freedom of the press.

KEITH
Not if it endangers people.

ADRIAN
Don't worry about me. I can take care
of myself.

KEITH
It's not you I'm worried about.

Johnston's voice comes over the radio.

MR. JOHNSTON
(on radio)
Keith, this is Mr. Johnston.

KEITH
Go ahead.

MR. JOHNSTON
(on radio)
Is Adrian still out there.

KEITH
She sure is.

MR. JOHNSTON
(on radio)
You want to bring her in here.

KEITH
Not really.

MR. JOHNSTON
(on radio)
Do it anyway.

KEITH
Are you sure?

MR. JOHNSTON
(on radio)
Bring her in.

KEITH
You're the boss.
(to Adrian)
Okay, let's go in.

Adrian flashes Keith a winning smile.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Aaron and Joe examine the monitors closely.

JOE
How many kids down there?

MR. JOHNSTON
Somewhere around 70.

JOE
Do you think Tony can get the kid to
let any go?

MR. JOHNSTON
Don't know. Kid shot one who was
trying to leave before.

JOE
Let me have your radio.

Mr. Johnston hands him the radio.

JOE (CONT'D)
Joe to Tony.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony sits as before. Joshua carefully monitors the hostages.
Joe comes over Tony's radio.

JOE
(on radio)
Joe to Tony.

TONY
Go ahead.

JOE
(on radio)
This is Captain Joe O'Reilly with the
SWAT team. How are you holding up?

TONY
I'm okay. A little sore.

JOE
(on radio)
Can the kid hear me?

TONY
No, I've got my ear piece in.

JOE
(on radio)
Listen, do you think you can get him
to let some kids go.

TONY
How do I do that?

JOE
(on radio)
You have to get him to like you. Show
him that you have some things in
common.

TONY

This kid is a mess. We have lots in
common.

JOE

(on radio)

We've got our negotiator here. Do you
think you can get him down to talk to
the kid?

TONY

I'll try. Hold on.

(to Joshua)

Hey kid.

JOSHUA

My names Joshua.

TONY

Right, sorry, the SWAT teams here.
They want to send a negotiator down to
talk to you.

JOSHUA

Yeah sure, a negotiator with a gun.
Tell them no way.

TONY

(to Joe)

He says no.

JOE

(on radio)

Try again.

TONY

(to Joshua)

They said he'll be unarmed.

JOSHUA

I've seen the movies. They always say
that, then they come down and start
shooting. No way. Anyone comes down I
don't say and I'm going to start
splattering brains on the wall.

TONY

Okay okay.

(to Joe)

Kid says no.

JOE
(on radio)
It looks like you're it then.

TONY
Guess so.

JOE
(on radio)
Just get him to trust you.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Keith arrives with Adrian and Ed in tow. Joe and Aaron look up as they arrive. Joe notices the camera and microphone.

JOE
What's this?

KEITH
This is Tony's wife, Adrian.

JOE
What's with the camera?

KEITH
She's a reporter.

ADRIAN
Hi. Adrian Alexander. Channel six news at six.

Joe looks accusingly at Mr. Johnston.

JOE
You didn't tell me his wife was Adrian Alexander.

MR. JOHNSTON
I didn't think it mattered.

JOE
Well it does. It matters a lot.

Joe looks at Keith.

JOE (CONT'D)
Get them out of here.

ADRIAN

You can't just kick me out. I need to get this story.

JOE

Get her out of here, now.

Tony, seen on the monitors, stands up and starts walking towards Joshua.

AARON

Something's happening down there.

All eyes turn towards the monitors.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony walks slowly towards the unconscious Stephen. He takes off his shirt, wads it up and presses it against the kid's wound. He takes the kid's hand and places it on the shirt to hold it there.

Tony starts towards Joshua.

TONY

Hey kid.

Joshua looks at him.

TONY (CONT'D)

I'm talking to you.

JOSHUA

I heard you.

TONY

Well answer then.

(to himself)

What am I, Rodney Dangerfield?

Joshua looks irritated.

JOSHUA

What do you want?

TONY

The SWAT team is here.

JOSHUA

I know.

TONY

I don't think you get it. The SWAT team is here.

JOSHUA

So what.

TONY

So they're going to shoot you.

JOSHUA

Not if I have them.

He motions to all of the students cowering along the walls.

TONY

You ever hear of snipers. Look at all these windows. Pull the shades so they can't see you.

Joshua looks stunned and he stands there frozen momentarily.

TONY (CONT'D)

You don't have all that much time here kid.

Joshua looks around and spots a FRIGHTENED BOY about his same age.

JOSHUA

You, go pull all the shades down on the windows.

The Frightened Boy gets up and starts to pull the shades.

TONY

You might want to shut those doors back there too. The less ways they can get in the better.

Josh spots another SCARED STUDENT.

JOSHUA

You, go close those doors.

The Student closes the doors.

TONY

Now lock'em. Put chairs in between the panic bars so they can't open'em from the outside.

The Student does so.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Everyone is gathered around the screens watching intently.

Joe's radio bursts with traffic.

GREEN LEADER

(on radio)

This is Green Leader, we lost visual.

BLUE LEADER

(on radio)

This is Blue Leader, we lost our shot.

JOE

Blue Leader, Green Leader, stand by in your positions.

JOE (CONT'D)

(to Adam)

What's he doing?

MR. JOHNSTON

He's helping him, that idiot. He has no idea what he's doing.

KEITH

He's establishing trust.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony is side by side with Joshua now. He points to the windows with his good arm, blood on the sleeve of his undershirt shows where the bullet entered his other arm.

TONY

They can still come crashing through those. Turn some of these tables on their ends and lean'em against the windows.

Josh looks around and points at a FOOTBALL PLAYER.

JOSHUA

Do it.

The Football Player starts to flip the tables and block the windows.

The Students in the cafeteria are starting to look around wildly. They are confused that their security guard is helping their captor.

Tony points to the two surveillance cameras in the corners.

TONY

Now. Take those out.

Joshua takes aim.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

All eyes are glued to the sets.

Joshua shoots out one of the two cameras and a screen goes black.

MR. JOHNSTON

He's crippling us.

He takes aim at the other camera. BANG. It goes black too.

AARON

That kid's a good shot.

MR. JOHNSTON

Tony, you idiot. Now we can't see anything.

KEITH

Now the kid has two less bullets to shoot people with.

Everyone in the room turns to look at him.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua and Tony stand in the center of their now fortified room.

TONY

Get everyone over by those doors you just blocked so you can see them. You don't want anymore surprises.

JOSHUA

Okay. Everybody move! Over there! Go Go Go. Move it, move it. Let's go, Now!

All of the students slowly make their way over towards the blocked doors.

Tony sits down backwards in one of the cafeteria chairs, staring.

Joshua looks at him.

TONY

Pull up a seat. We've got some time now. They have to figure out what to do next.

JOSHUA

Why are you helping me?

TONY

Maybe I don't want to see you get shot.

Joshua looks ashamed.

JOSHUA

I've got nothing against you. You just surprised me. I only wanted to pay them back.

He motions towards the students.

TONY

Is your life that horrible?

JOSHUA

What do you care?

TONY

You're not the only one who gets picked on.

JOSHUA

You don't know what it's like. Everyday I have to come to this hell hole. I can't quit because the state says I have to be here until I'm 16. Plus, it would kill my Mother if I dropped out.

TONY

But shooting people?

JOSHUA

Let them be scared of me for a changed. They think because I'm different I deserve to get kicked around. I never asked them to pay attention to me. Why can't they just treat me like they want to be treated? All I've ever asked for was to be left alone.

TONY

Well, you'll have a lot of time to yourself when this is over.

JOSHUA

I won't be around that long.

TONY

What're you gonna shoot yourself?

JOSHUA

That's the plan.

TONY

Don't throw your life away over this garbage.

Tony motions at the huddled mass of students.

JOSHUA

I've got nothing left to live for.

TONY

Live to prove'em wrong. Don't let'em break you. Don't let'em win... Not like that.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Everyone looks dejected since they can no longer see what's happening. Aaron turns to Adrian.

AARON

What can you tell me about your husband?

ADRIAN

I don't have a husband.

MR. JOHNSTON
(whispers in Aaron's ear)
He abandoned her a few years ago.

AARON
Ex-husband?

ADRIAN
What do you want to know?

AARON
Well, he's our insider now. I need to know what kind of man he is, psychologically.

ADRIAN
He's a coward.

AARON
Could you be more specific.

ADRIAN
After our oldest son died Tony ran away. He went AWOL from the Army and abandoned me and Michael. I hadn't seen or heard from him in three years. Until today.

Alice, still watching the active monitors, notices some more news trucks arrive.

ALICE
Hey boss. We got more company.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

News trucks set up all over the parking lot and lawn of the school.

Large antennas protrude from the tops of vans and reporters fight for the best shots in front of the building.

Mr. Johnston strides out of the school. REPORTERS swarm around him like flies on manure.

MR. JOHNSTON
Excuse me.

The buzz of reporters talking is non-stop.

MR. JOHNSTON (CONT'D)
Could I have your attention please.

The swarm quiets.

MR. JOHNSTON (CONT'D)
I am Mr. Johnston, the principle here.
We have a situation right now.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
Mr. Johnston, how did the boy get into
the building with a gun?

MR. JOHNSTON
I'm afraid even the best measures
can't prevent--

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
But don't you have metal detectors
here?

MR. JOHNSTON
Yes, um yes we do, but we--

CHANNEL 8 REPORTER
How many students have been wounded?

MR. JOHNSTON
Right now we believe there may be
three or more students injured in--

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
What are you doing to rectify the
situation?

MR. JOHNSTON
The SWAT team is here doing their best
to end this peacefully. We also have
one of our men inside with the boy--

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
We've heard that he's been shot as
well. Is that true?

MR. JOHNSTON
Well... yes you see he--

The reporters all turn away from Mr. Johnston and start
talking to their cameras.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER

So the situation here is grim to say the least. A boy, with a gun, a school full of helpless children, a wounded man on the inside, and a SWAT team afraid to do anything. We'll keep you updated.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Alice, Joe, Aaron, Adrian, Keith and Ed are left inside.

JOE

I wish he'd have left at least one camera up. I'd give anything to be able to see what's going on in there.

ADRIAN

I can do it.

JOE

Do what?

ADRIAN

I can give you eyes, inside.

JOE

What are you talking about?

ADRIAN

Let me go down there to talk to them. I'll take my camera. You can watch from my van out back.

AARON

That's not a half bad idea.

JOE

The question is, will the kid shoot you if you come down?

AARON

Maybe Tony can convince him.

ADRIAN

He better or I'll kill him myself.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony and Josh sit in silence. Joe comes over Tony's radio.

JOE
(on radio)
Joe to Tony.

TONY
Go ahead.

JOE
(on radio)
We've got your wife here. She wants to
come down.

TONY
Absolutely not. Do not send her down
here.

JOE
Ask the kid if he wants to talk to a
reporter.

TONY
No. Get her outta here.

JOE
Do as your told.

Tony looks at Joshua.

TONY
You wanna talk to a reporter?

JOSHUA
Is this a trick?

TONY
Could be. They say my wife is looking
for a story. She wants to come down
and talk to you.

JOSHUA
Your wife's a reporter?

TONY
Yup.

JOSHUA
Well, if its a trick then you'll know
and you can tell me, right?

TONY
Sure thing. If it's not her I'll let
you know.

Tony talks on his radio.

TONY (CONT'D)
Okay, he says she can come down. But
no tricks.

JOE
No tricks.

Tony looks at Josh.

TONY
They're on they're way.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Joe looks at Adrian and Ed. He takes off his bulletproof vest
and hands it to them. Aaron does the same.

JOE
Put these on.

ADRIAN
We don't need--

JOE
Put it on or you don't go.

ADRIAN
Yeah, alright.

Adrian puts on the vest. It is much too large.

JOE
Now, what we need is a shot of all the
kids trapped down there and where they
are. We also need to see where Joshua
and Tony are.

ED
No Problem.

JOE
Once you get those shots get out of
there.

ADRIAN
But what about my story?

JOE
You get your story in as long as it
takes to get those shots or we'll send
people in to get you.

ADRIAN
Could you make it any more difficult?

JOE
One more thing.

Adrian looks at him.

JOE (CONT'D)
This kid is not stable.

ADRIAN
Neither is Tony.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony and Josh wait for Adrian to come down.

TONY
Now ya know this may be a trick.

JOSHUA
You said it was your wife, right?

TONY
Yup.

JOSHUA
So you're going to tell me if it's her
or not, right?

TONY
Sure kid, but you gotta listen to what
I tell ya, okay?

JOSHUA
Okay.

After a brief pause they hear FOOTSTEPS, high heeled
footsteps, coming down the stairs to the cafeteria.

Adrian emerges in the entrance with Ed in tow.

Adrian's eyes meet Tony's.

TONY
That's not her.

JOSHUA
What?

TONY
That's not her.

ADRIAN
Tony, what are you doing?

TONY
Kid. That's not her. It's a trick.

JOSHUA
I don't see any--

TONY
Get them out of here. Now!

ADRIAN
You haven't seen me in three years and
this is how you treat me? Now? You
will not do this to me.

TONY
Get'em out!

ADRIAN
This is my story! You can't make me
leave! It's Pulitzer prize material!
You at least owe me that much.

JOSHUA
Put the camera down.

Ed looks at Josh then at Adrian, who is only focused on Tony.

Ed shrugs and sets the camera on the table, still transmitting. Adrian still stares intently at Tony. She doesn't even realize that anyone else is in the room, her eyes burn holes through him.

TONY
Turn around.

Ed turns around but Adrian doesn't hear the command.

JOSHUA

Turn around.

TONY

Turn around dammit!

Adrian slowly turns around.

TONY (CONT'D)

Take off your vests and set them on
the floor. Slowly.

Ed and Adrian slowly take off their vests and set them on the
floor.

JOSHUA

You sure it's not them?

TONY

Look kid, I think I oughta know what
my wife looks like and that's not her.

JOSHUA

She sure acts like she knows you.

TONY

My wife wouldn't be dumb enough to put
herself in danger when she's got a kid
at home.

Adrian's face gets flushed.

ADRIAN

Like you care.

JOSHUA

All right. Get out of here.

Ed starts to walk but Adrian still stands there looking at
Tony.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

I said leave.

Adrian stays where she is.

ADRIAN

I'm not leaving.

TONY

The heck your not.

ADRIAN
I'm staying here and getting this
story.

JOSHUA
You want me to shoot her?

Tony gives Josh a withering glare.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
I didn't think so.

Tony glances at the vests.

TONY
Put one of those on.

JOSHUA
Why?

TONY
So they can't shoot you as easily.

JOSHUA
I'm not afraid to die.

TONY
Put it on.

Josh does as he's told. He walks over and puts on a vest.
It's too big and he swims in it.

TONY (CONT'D)
(to Adrian)
You too.

ADRIAN
I don't have to listen to you.

TONY
If you're stayin' put it on.

ADRIAN
You just made me take it off.

TONY
Woman, I'm tellin' you.

JOSHUA
I knew it was her.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

The Reporter for Channel 5 interviews a CRYING GIRL.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
What was it like inside?

CRYING GIRL
I... can't...

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
Did you see the shooter?

CRYING GIRL
I... saw...

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
How many students have you seen that
have been shot?

CRYING GIRL
I... saw...

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
What are the chances of the students
left inside?

CRYING GIRL
I... really...

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
We've heard that there is blood
everywhere. Is that true?

CRYING GIRL
I... don't...

The reporter turns to his camera.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
And there you have it. The horror of a
victim who narrowly escapes with her
life after she sees her friends
ruthlessly slaughtered. The Police
helpless to do anything but watch.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE CAMERA ROOM - DAY

Ed arrives alone. Keith is the only one still in there.

ED
Where's everyone else?

KEITH
Your truck. Watching.

ED
I hope that guy knows what he's doing.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Joe, Aaron, Alice and Adam gather around the live feed monitor from the camera.

AARON
We're back on.

JOE
He's got all the kids over to one side. He's making it easy on us.
(beat)
You see what those idiots are reporting out there.

AARON
I heard them.

JOE
They think we're fools.

AARON
I wish I could get into that kid's head.

JOE
You and me both. You and me both.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua paces up and down the floor while Tony sits. Adrian sits looking at Josh.

ADRIAN
So what is it you want out of this now?

JOSHUA
I want everyone to see what happens--

TONY
Yeah yeah, look over there.

Tony points at the camera.

ADRIAN
They're watchin'. The whole world's
watchin'. What do you want them to
see?

JOSHUA
I... I don't know.

ADRIAN
Do you know what's going on outside?

JOSHUA
I don't care.

ADRIAN
Parents are scared to death that their
child will be next. The SWAT team is
waiting to kill you and the reporters,
like me, are in their glory.

JOSHUA
So what? Maybe they'll see why this
kind of thing happens for once.

ADRIAN
All they see is a messed up kid who's
taken other kids hostage. Again.

JOSHUA
I didn't plan on taking hostages.

ADRIAN
What did you plan on doing?

JOSHUA
Shooting.

TONY
You did that too.

Tony motions at the inert form of Melvin, who is fortunately
still breathing.

ADRIAN

Do you mind? I'm trying to do an interview here.

Tony rolls his eyes.

TONY

You haven't killed anyone yet. We both know you could've.

JOSHUA

So what?

TONY

Sometimes we get into situations that get out of our control. We wish we could fix them but we can't because things have gone too far to fix.

ADRIAN

That's when you should ask for help.

Tony nods.

TONY

But that's sometimes easier said than done.

JOSHUA

Tell me about it. Like what? I should just give up. Turn my guns over and walk out.

TONY

It's a thought.

JOSHUA

Then what? I go to jail for the rest of my life? No, I'm going to make a point... a difference.

TONY

To who kid?

JOSHUA

To all those other kids who get picked on everyday. Maybe some of the popular people will see this and think twice about what they're doing.

TONY

All they're going to see is a freak who couldn't take it anymore so he offed himself and a few others along the way.

JOSHUA

I'm not a freak. That doesn't give them the right to treat me like that anyway.

TONY

Yeah, sure. In an ideal world it wouldn't matter what you looked like or who you knew or how you acted. None of that would matter, but it does.

ADRIAN

Real inspirational.

TONY

I didn't ask you.

JOSHUA

They have no right to judge.

TONY

Judging is human nature.

Adrian chuckles to herself.

ADRIAN

(to Tony)

You know, maybe you're not the best one to be giving advice.

TONY

(to Adrian)

Stay out of this, will you.

JOSHUA

God's the only one who has the right to judge.

TONY

You believe in God?

JOSHUA

Don't you?

TONY
Sometimes I wonder.

Adrian snorts scornfully.

JOSHUA
Me too. You think God could forgive
this?

TONY
This is a sin like everything else.
It's what keeps us separated from God.
But remember, just because God
forgives us doesn't mean we won't have
consequences. Look at Adam and Eve,
Moses, David... they all sinned and
were forgiven, but still suffered the
consequences of their actions.

JOSHUA
But, can he overlook this?

TONY
He probably already has.

Adrian shakes her head.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Joe and Aaron watch the events in the cafeteria closely.
Keith, Adrian and Ed enter.

JOE
It doesn't look like we're getting
anywhere here. We should move in.

AARON
Give it time. Maybe he'll get tired of
sitting there waiting.

JOE
What if he shoots more kids. We can't
afford to wait. Not to mention the
wounded ones. And the media's eating
us alive.

AARON
I think moving in now would be a
disaster. There's only one way in and
he's waiting for it.
(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

We should at least hold off until his Mother gets here. She could talk to him.

JOE

Where is she anyway?

ALICE

Brian went to her work downtown to get her.

JOE

That was a long time ago.

Alice gets on her radio.

ALICE

Alice to Brian.

BRIAN

(on radio)
Go ahead.

ALICE

What's the hold up.

BRIAN

(on radio)
The mother is out on sales calls. We don't know where she is. I'm waiting for her to get back to the office.

ALICE

Copy. Over.
(to Joe)
Brian is waiting--

JOE

Yeah, I heard. We've got no choice we've got to move in.

Keith leaves the truck. Outside he watches Adam talk with all the reporters.

Mr. Johnston is in his glory with all the attention. He's oblivious to what is about to happen. His radio is off and he's eating up the cameras.

Keith gets on his radio.

KEITH

Keith to Tony. You better do something. The SWAT team is getting ready to move in.

TONY

(on radio)
Copy. Thanks.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony stares at Josh, assessing him head to toe.

TONY

Hey kid. The SWAT team is getting ready to take you out. We need to buy you some more time.

JOSHUA

I don't need more time. Bring them on. I'm ready.

TONY

Look. I want you to think about your options here a little more. Even if you don't need more time, do it for me. I don't want to see you go out like this.

JOSHUA

What do you care?

Adrian focuses on Tony, waiting for his answer.

TONY

All you have to do is let some of them go.

JOSHUA

No.

TONY

They can't all be that bad.

JOSHUA

Yes. They can.

TONY

Let some of the girls go. And get these kids bleeding all over the floor here out. You don't need to teach them anything more.

JOSHUA

That kid stays until he bleeds to death for all I care.

TONY

Just let some of 'em go. Keep the outside world off guard. They won't know what to think. It's the last thing they expect.

JOSHUA

Alright, whatever, just leave me alone.

Josh looks over at the mass of students. He sees some cheerleaders.

They stay.

He sees some jocks.

They stay too.

He sees the pretty people.

They stay also.

He comes across the overweight and nerds. He pauses long and hard as he notices one of them is Hillary, from the computer lab.

Then he decides.

They go.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

You four. Get up.

Josh motions with his pistol.

An OVERWEIGHT GIRL, NERDY BOY, SWEATY BOY and Hillary get up.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Come over here.

They hesitatingly start to walk towards Joshua.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
I'm not going to hurt you. You get to go home.

They walk a little faster.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
Leave. Get out of my sight before I change my mind. And take Stephen with you.

The group carries Stephen out. He's semi-conscious and moaning. Josh looks on in a moment of regret.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
(To Tony)
I hope you're happy.

TONY
That was the right thing to do.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Aaron watches the screen intently as the others mill about trying to be useful.

AARON
Joe, JOE.

Joe looks over to Aaron.

AARON (CONT'D)
Check this out.

Joe comes over to the monitor as do the others.

They see the four students leaving the cafeteria carrying a wounded kid.

JOE
What is he doing?

AARON
He's letting them go.

JOE

I thought he might be making them run laps. I want to know WHY he's letting them go.

AARON

Can't help you on that one.

Keith comes back inside the truck.

Joe turns to look at him.

JOE

You seem to have the inside scoop on what's going on down there.

KEITH

I just know Tony.

JOE

Well what's going on? The kid let some hostages go.

KEITH

Tony's working.

JOE

What are you talking about. That moron has been helping this kid set up against us.

KEITH

He's established a relationship. Now he can influence the kid's decisions.

AARON

That's basic tactics Joe.

JOE

I know, I know. I just didn't know he did.

KEITH

He was in the military.

JOE

You never told me that. Why didn't you tell me that before.

KEITH

Adrian did. She said he went AWOL
remember, from the Army. Then they
gave him a dishonorable discharge.

JOE

Well what do we do now?

KEITH

Wait and see what happens next.

AARON

I agree. We should wait and see if
this guy can get the kid to give up
before we go in there shooting.

JOE

Yeah, okay. We wait and see. Dammit.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Mr. Johnston is swarmed by the reporters fighting for any
tidbit of information.

A large crowd of PARENTS gathers in the parking lot.

About 20 police officers monitor the parents to keep them
away from the building.

MR. JOHNSTON

I've just received word that Joshua
has released some of the hostages.

The reporters go crazy.

CHANNEL 3 REPOTER

How many?

MR. JOHNSTON

We've heard as many as five.

CHANNEL 3 REPOTER

Five. How many does that leave in
danger?

MR. JOHNSTON

About seventy, but it's a start.

CHANNEL 8 REPOTER

How long have the hostages been down there?

MR. JOHNSTON

About an hour. My men are well trained. Tony is one of my best. If anyone can get the shooter to let everyone go, it's him.

CHANNEL 5 REPOTER

How long has Tony worked for you?

MR. JOHNSTON

This is the end of his fourth year here. I taught him everything he knows about this job.

The reporters all turn back to their cameras.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER

A veteran Guard, a crazy student bent on destruction, and seventy hostages. Hostages who have not had food, water, or contact with the outside world in over an hour. The situation is improving but is it enough. Can a lowly security guard save seventy students from certain death at the hands of a madman. Stay tuned.

The four released students burst out of the building. Paramedics rush over and take Stephen into the back of an ambulance that tears off, sirens wailing.

Channel 5 grabs the Nerdy Boy.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER

Excuse me, kid. What was it like being held hostage by a lunatic?

NERDY BOY

I don't know, it was real quiet.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER

Quiet?

NERDY BOY

Yeah, nobody was talking. Except the guard.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
What was he saying?

NERDY BOY
They were just talking about life and
stuff.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
Did the boy say why he was doing this?

NERDY BOY
He was mad.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
Mad?

NERDY BOY
Yeah, pissed off because people kept
picking on him. That's about it.
Mostly it was quiet.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER
Uhh... thanks.
(to his camera)
There you have it. Tension so thick
the air is still as death. Like the
calm before the storm.

Channel 3 grabs the Overweight Girl.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
Miss, miss, how are you feeling? Are
you hurt?

OVERWEIGHT GIRL
I'm okay.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
Did he threaten you at all?

OVERWEIGHT GIRL
He pretty much threatened everybody as
a group.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
What about you specifically.

OVERWEIGHT GIRL
No, not me specifically. Everyone as a
whole. I told you.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
Why did he let you go?

OVERWEIGHT GIRL
The guard told him too.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
The guard told him too?

OVERWEIGHT GIRL
I already told you that.

The Girl walks away disgusted.

CHANNEL 3 REPORTER
(to her camera)
And there it is, out of the mouths of babes. He threatened everyone. We can feel the terror as it grips this small town.

The Sweaty Boy looks around and sees the Channel 6 truck.

He walks over to the truck and knocks on the door. Keith answers.

KEITH
Can I help you?

SWEATY BOY
I thought they might want to interview me.

KEITH
Why?

SWEATY BOY
I just got out of the cafeteria with that crazy kid.

KEITH
So?

SWEATY BOY
So I can tell them what's going on.

KEITH
Why don't you tell me and I'll tell them. Then, if they want to talk to you they can come get you.

SWEATY BOY

There's about 20 dead students down there, all of them shot right between the eyes. This kid is a master marksman. He's crazy too. He put a gun to his own head and drove our star football player insane.

KEITH

Is that all?

SWEATY BOY

Uh...

KEITH

Look, kid, go home. You're not going to get your fifteen minutes here.

SWEATY BOY

But--

KEITH

Go.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua sits on a table next to Tony.

JOSHUA

Why do you care what happens to me anyway?

Tony just looks at Joshua in silence.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

I mean I did shoot you.

TONY

If you had wanted to kill me I'd already be dead. Where'd you learn to shoot like that.

JOSHUA

My Mother taught me how to shoot.

ADRIAN

Your Mother?

JOSHUA

Yeah. She carries a little 22 for protection.

TONY

Seems like everyone does nowadays.

JOSHUA

She thought it would give me confidence. Knowing how to shoot. Got me lessons in target shooting and stuff.

ADRIAN

Did it work?

JOSHUA

Only when I have a gun in my hand.

TONY

So, that's where you got the pistol.

JOSHUA

My target gun. Man, Mom's going to kill me.

TONY

Not if you're not around for her to kill.

Joshua looks at Tony in silence for a while.

JOSHUA

I guess I forgot about that part... I hate leaving her alone. But she just doesn't understand. I left her a tape saying goodbye.

ADRIAN

You left her a tape?

JOSHUA

She's always busy with work. We leave each other messages on video. It's the only way we really get to see each other. No one understands what it's like being a kid today, not even her.

TONY

Tough?

JOSHUA

You tell me... Do you think they get it?

Josh gestures at the hostages.

TONY

They're kids too. You'd be surprised how similar you are.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Channel 8 grabs the Skinny Girl. As the other released captives find their parents.

CHANNEL 8 REPORTER

Why did he let you go?

HILLARY

The security guard told him too. Like that other girl said.

CHANNEL 8 REPORTER

You mean Tony?

HILLARY

Sure, I guess that's his name.

CHANNEL 8 REPORTER

Do you think there will be any more shooting?

HILLARY

I don't know. Some of those kids can be real jerks.

CHANNEL 8 REPORTER

So you see, our last hope of a peaceful resolution lies with Tony. A security guard, stuck in a situation way over his head.

Hillary shoves her way in front of the camera.

HILLARY

You go Josh. Go get'em.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Aaron and Joe discuss what they should do, in private, as private as they can be in a van full of people anyway. Everybody else intently watches the monitors.

AARON

I don't know. I think he can do it. He got him to let some go already.

JOE

We don't have time to wait. We have wounded students down there.

AARON

I know, but how many more are going to get wounded if we try to rush in?

JOE

Look at all these cameras. How can we not do something? We'll look like a bunch of fools if we sit here and let a kid tell us what to do.

AARON

Think about what all those people watching will think if we go in guns blazing to take out a 15 year old.

JOE

That 15 year old has shot other people's sons and daughters. The public doesn't have any more tolerance for that kind of craziness. They'd be happy if we took him out. And if we hit a few other kids in the process we'll blame it on him. No one will know the difference.

AARON

We'll know.

JOE

And we won't tell anyone.

AARON

It's your call, but I'll tell you right now I think you're wrong if you take the kid out.

JOE
Right, it's my call.

AARON
And don't forget the camera.

JOE
What camera?

AARON
The one in the cafeteria with them.

JOE
Oh.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

The students are still huddled in their area. Some of them are falling asleep, some are playing games. The shock of the situation is wearing off.

TONY
They're starting to come around.

JOSHUA
So what do I do?

TONY
Let some more go. The ones who will give you trouble. Plus, get the wounded ones outta here.

JOSHUA
Okay.

Tony looks at the students sitting there.

He picks out the ones who aren't sheep, all of the students who are acting like this is just another day at school.

He points at them.

TONY
All of you.

The students look up and Tony motions for the groups who are no longer in shock.

TONY (CONT'D)
Get out of here.

The Students look at Josh, then Tony and back to Josh who nods. The students start to get up to leave.

The ones remaining are the students who looked the most scared, and now they're even more scared because there's only about twenty left.

TONY (CONT'D)

And take the injured ones with you.

Milton and Derek get up. Derek limps towards the exit.

DEREK

Damn. 'Bout time. I'll never understand this, man.

MILTON

No joke, like my sage Chris Rock says, a black dude gets mad an he shoots the guy he's mad at. A white dude gets mad an he shoots everybody.

DEREK

Chris Rock didn't say that. Fool.

MILTON

Yes he did.

DEREK

No he didn't.

MILTON

Then who did?

DEREK

I don't know. But it wasn't no Chris Rock.

Derek and Milton walk out the exit continuously mumbling to themselves. The rest of the group who has been dismissed also leaves through the exit, some run while others just mosey on out chatting as if nothing happened.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Aaron and Joe watch the monitors along with the rest of the group in the truck.

AARON

He let some more go. You can't go in now.

JOE

Don't tell me what to do. Now is the perfect time to go in. There's less students to get in the way.

AARON

But they're bringing the wounded out. You've got no reason to hurry. We can wait all day. The kid's got to get tired.

JOE

There's no way I'm waiting all day for some punk kid to get tired. We're going to go in and finish this so we can all go home. Plus, I've got better things to do tonight than baby-sit.

AARON

What about his Mother? You should at least wait for her to get here and try to talk him out.

JOE

I'm not waiting any longer. I don't care if the Pope himself is on his way. We're going in.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua and Tony sit looking at the rest of the students. The really scared ones. Adrian is pacing by the door.

TONY

Are you really gonna shoot them? Look at'em.

JOSHUA

What happened between you and her?

He nods towards Adrian who stops pacing and pays attention.

TONY

After a while she couldn't get over everything being my fault.
(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

She was bitter and resentful. She hated me. Still does.

ADRIAN

You left me. With a baby and no support.

TONY

I know.

JOSHUA

My Dad left when I was real little too. My Mom thinks I don't remember him any more but I do. I miss him. Sometimes I just want to hear him say I'm good. That I'm what a man is supposed to be. That I'm growing up like I should. Sometimes I wonder what I did to drive him away.

Adrian steps towards the two then stops herself.

TONY

Don't think it's your fault.

JOSHUA

He left because he couldn't handle me.

TONY

That's his problem, not yours. People are stupid sometimes. Confused.

Tony looks at Adrian out of the corner of his eye.

TONY (CONT'D)

Sometimes running seems like the only way out.

JOSHUA

I miss him.

TONY

You know, he probably misses you too. I'm sure he thinks about you everyday. I'll bet if he could take it all back he would.

JOSHUA

All I want is to hear his voice. I don't even need to see him.

TONY

Look kid, sometimes adults are scared too. Maybe he's scared you won't want to talk to him. There could be lots of reasons. But I know one thing, he's missin' out on a great relationship.

JOSHUA

Yeah right, a relationship with a pathetic loser. I'm sure he's real proud of me now.

TONY

So you screwed up. It happens. Given it's a really big screw up, but I bet if you let everyone go now it won't be so bad.

JOSHUA

They're going to fry me.

TONY

You haven't killed anyone yet. Plus, you're a juvy. The most they can do is put you in a detention home till you're 21 or something.

JOSHUA

That's a long time.

TONY

It's only temporary. There's no changing your mind once you pull that trigger on yourself.

JOSHUA

I'm afraid.

TONY

Only God can take that away.

JOSHUA

Will you come visit me?

Tony nods.

Joshua looks at the students who are huddled and frightened. He walks over towards them.

Adrian wipes at tears in the corners of her eyes.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Joe gets on his radio.

JOE

This is Red leader. Green team and
Blue team you have a green light.
Let's move in.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joshua stands in front of the students. He slowly turns and
faces Tony.

JOSHUA

Can you help me ask God?

Tony nods.

TONY

You gotta give up the guns first.

Joshua pulls the guns out of his waist and starts to walk
towards Tony to hand them to him. Tony get's up and walks
towards Josh.

Windows shatter as canisters of tear gas fly into the room.

Gas and smoke fill the cafeteria and the entrance as more
canisters are pumped into the room.

The student hostages cover their faces and some start to
scream.

Adrian ducks under a table.

Joshua looks around confused.

Tony screams on his radio.

TONY

No! Not now! Wait!

Dark shadowy figures emerge from the entrance to the
cafeteria.

Laser beams pierce the thick white smoke.

Joshua stands in shocked stillness. Guns in his hands.

Laser beams bounce on his figure.

Tony sees this and rushes to get between Josh and the gunmen.

He tackles Joshua to the floor as gunshots echo through the cafeteria.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Everybody waits anxiously as the SWAT team moves in.

They watch on the monitor as the room fills with smoke. Their view is obscured by white.

Shadowy figures and red laser beams move through the dream like smog.

JOE

Take him out.

They hear gunshots from inside the building. Flashes of white light cut through the smoke.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

Mr. Johnston stands surrounded by reporters.

MR. JOHNSTON

I've just been informed that the SWAT team is moving in. We should have a resolution to the situat--

Gunshots are heard from inside the building. Then silence.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Everybody stands watching the monitor as the smoke starts to clear.

There is absolute silence.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

The smoke begins to clear.

The SWAT team starts quickly evacuating the remaining hostages.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL - DAY

The last of the hostages come running out into the sunlight and the arms of their parents.

Cheers go up from the crowd outside the building.

The News crews crush the families, trying to get good shots of the reunions.

INT. CHANNEL6 TRUCK - DAY

Silence.

All eyes glued to the screen.

On the monitor two figures lay on the floor.

The SWAT team surrounds them.

KEITH

Come on.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

The Channel 5 reporter is interviewing Derek and Milton.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER

So, what was it like in there?

DEREK

You see, what happened was, we tried ta bum rush that nigga man.

MILTON

Yeah, an he turns around an is like
BLAM BLAM.

DEREK

We jus got outta his way, but I got hit in the foot. Man, if I'd a had my nine I'd a capped that nigga. POW.

MILTON

Yeah, blow sparks through him.

Milton makes a gun with his fingers and points it at the camera.

The two walk away into the parking lot behind the reporter.

CHANNEL 5 REPORTER

There you have it. Some of the heroes of the day. Trying to rescue their fellow classmates and getting shot at in the process.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tony and Joshua lay on the floor. Josh is primarily covered by Tony's form.

Adrian rushes over. SWAT members fail at holding her back as she breaks free of their grasp.

Joshua slips out from beneath Tony and rolls him over so he is face up.

Adrian cradles Tony's head in her lap.

Tony bleeds from a few bullet holes through his body.

Barely conscious, his eyes flutter, roll back into his head and then come back and focus on Josh.

Joshua is shot in the shoulder in a simliar spot where he shot Tony.

ADRIAN

Tony.

Tony groans in pain.

TONY

Hey kid, you okay.

JOSHUA

This getting shot stuff really hurts. I can barely move my arm.

TONY

You get used to it. I can't even feel it anymore.

Tony weakens as a tear rolls down Joshua cheek.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hey Josh.

JOSHUA

Yeah.

TONY

You made the right decision... I'm proud of you.

Joshua's tears roll as Tony loses consciousness.

JOSHUA

Don't go. Please, don't go.

ADRIAN

Don't you leave me again.

TONY

I'm sorry.

Two members of the SWAT team roughly grab Joshua and drag him away.

The others call for an emergency squad to get down to the cafeteria.

BLUE LEADER

(Into his Radio)

This is Blue Leader, we need a squad down here ASAP.

EXT. HIGHSCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Green Leader escorts a handcuffed Joshua out of the building. Joshua's head hangs and he stares at his feet as the crowd surges towards him.

The news crews swarm like flies around him trying to get close-ups and that just right picture.

Angry parents and students try to get at him to tear him apart.

Derek and Milton stand calmly in the whirlpool of activity.

Their passivity is surreal amidst the chaos.

Joshua looks up and meets Derek's eyes and they lock for an instant. The world pauses around them and Joshua's eyes betray him as he looks away ashamed.

Derek raises his hand and points at Joshua.

DEREK

Take that you crazy white boy. Pray I never see you on the street.

MILTON

Tell him D.

FADE TO:

INT. JOSHUA'S BEDROOM ON VIDEO - DAY

POV VIDEO CAMERA

Joshua sits down on his bed after turning on the video camera.

JOSHUA

Hi Mom. I'll be leaving for school right after I make this tape. I hope you don't think any of what happens today has anything to do with you. You've been great. It's not your fault I'm such a freak. If any one tells you it's your fault just show them this tape. You're not me and you couldn't have known. I'm such a loser Mom. Nobody likes me. The few people who actually talk to me don't understand either. All day long everybody picks on me. I'm going to show them though. They think it's funny, Ha ha. Yeah, I bet they'll think it's funny when I ventilate their bodies. They'll really be laughing at me as I blow their heads off. Mommy and Daddy will wonder why. Why did it have to be my son or daughter, they were perfect. That's why. They think they're perfect. Beautiful. Strong. They don't know what real power is. They're going to learn and I'm going to teach them. Maybe I'll get on the news and everyone will see what happens to perfect people who pick on someone, someone who just wants to be left alone. I'll show them... Alright Mom, I'm off. Love you.

MONTAGE:

INT. TELEVISION - DAY

A Reporter sits behind a large desk.

REPORTER

After a short trial, the results are in.

MONTAGE:

INT. COURTROOM

The PROSECUTOR addresses the JURY.

PROSECUTOR

He went in with the intent of murdering his classmates.

Josh stares into nothingness, his eyes glazed over.

The DEFENSE paces the floor in front of the Jury.

DEFENSE

Now we're not saying that he didn't do it. Everyone knows he did. What we're saying is that he was driven to do it. He was alone, isolated except for when kids would torture him. What did they think was going to happen? Who's the real victim here? If you abuse somebody long enough they're going to eventually defend themselves. This was self defense.

INT. JURYROOM - DAY

The Jury debates the merits of the case.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Silence fills the room.

JUDGE

Madam foreperson. Has the Jury reached a verdict.

FOREMAN

We have.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The Prosecutor emerges from the courthouse.

PROSECUTOR

Today justice has been done. It is a tragedy that children with so much ahead of them commit such heinous acts of violence. But we can have no mercy on them. They must know right from wrong.

INT. JUVENILE PRISON - DAY

Josh huddles in his cell on his cot. A guard pounds on the door.

GUARD

Lunch time.

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA - DAY

Josh sits at a table by himself. Other PRISONERS laugh as one throws a piece of food at him.

END MONTAGE

INT. PRISON VISITING AREA - DAY

Josh enters the visiting room and looks around trying to spot his visitor. He sees him and wanders over to the table.

Josh sits down across from Stephen, but he can't make eye contact.

STEPHEN

Hi.

JOSHUA

Hi.

Silence. Josh stares at the floor.

STEPHEN

How's it going in here?

JOSHUA

I didn't think I'd ever see you again.

STEPHEN

I told you I was your friend.

JOSHUA

I shot you.

STEPHEN

I know. I also know what kind of shot you are. If you wanted me dead, I wouldn't be sitting here.

A tear breaks free from Josh's eye as he looks at Stephen for the first time.

JOSHUA

I... I'm sorry.

STEPHEN

I know. There's someone else here who wants to see you.

JOSHUA

Who.

Stephen turns around and Joshua's eyes land on Tony.

Tony walks up and takes a seat.

STEPHEN

I'll wait outside.

Stephen leaves.

JOSHUA

I'm sorry you got hurt.

TONY

Sometimes God has to shake us to bring us back to himself. I'm back now, this is what it took.

JOSHUA

I don't understand.

TONY

Sometimes we fail in our walk. But God forgives and wants us back. He disciplines us to show us what we're doing is wrong.

JOSHUA
He sure showed me.

TONY
He showed us both.

JOSHUA
Do you think I'm going to be okay in
here?

TONY
There's only one person who can keep
you. You need to pray.

JOSHUA
Can you help me? I don't know how...
what to say?

Tony gets on his knees.

TONY
You need to learn how to kneel first.

Josh falls to his knees as tears stream down his cheeks.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END