

TENT CITY

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CLOSE ON:

A SLEEK WHITE HILL. A dark horizon. Sliding down, down the hill to a darkened valley with a grove of strange green tree trunks. Up, up the trunks to reveal

The six stamens and one pistil of a perfect lily flower. A sparkling mist envelops the flower.

Nearby, another perfect flower. And a third. Gently sprayed with the mist. A fourth flower surfaces; this one with frayed, darkened, petals. Scissors appear, hugging the stem near the flower, then moving lower to near the main trunk.

Snip. The imperfect flower falls.

The remaining lily plant is added to a bouquet of equally stunning flowers, wrapped in cellophane, and carried through a hallway to the front of a little flower shop.

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. - FLOWER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The bouquet is placed on a display table on an L.A. sidewalk. Behind the bouquet, planted on the concrete a few yards away, is a bearded, slightly dusty man, SONNY (40s), writing in a journal, guarding some trash bags full of cans. Forgettable.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Twenty-five dollars, please.

Sonny looks up. His piercing blue eyes, intensely focused. The hands of a man in a SLICK SUIT (30s) thumb through a pleasantly plump wallet.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Just a- Hey, do you have ribbon?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Sure.

PENNY (20s), with curves for days, turns. The man brushes one hand against her bum and deliberately pushes the flowers to the ground with the other hand. They scatter.

Sonny jumps up, eyes ablaze.

Penny gathers the flowers.

PENNY

(embarrassed)

Oh, shit! I'm so sorry!

SLICK SUIT  
Damn. They're all mussed up.

PENNY  
Do want me to put together another?

SLICK SUIT  
Lady, I gotta go!

PENNY  
Oh, uh, maybe a discount?

SLICK SUIT  
Fine. How about five?

PENNY  
Uh, I, that's-

SONNY  
(huffy)  
Oh no!

The man picks up the flowers, placing \$5 on the counter.

SLICK SUIT  
Nice ass, by the way.

He turns to head up the sidewalk. Sonny stands in his path.

SLICK SUIT  
Move.

SONNY  
You scammed her. Pay up.

SLICK SUIT  
Says who?

SONNY  
(quietly)  
Hm... How about, who was it,  
Menendez? Jorge?

SLICK SUIT  
What the-?

SONNY  
(still quiet)  
Maybe Milena Basmajian.

SLICK SUIT  
How do you...?

SONNY

(strange intensity)

Now if you don't want me to share  
what I know with the right people-

(beat)

Then give her the twenty.

Holding Sonny's gaze, he pulls out a \$20 and holds it out.  
The girl snatches it. He leans in closer to Sonny.

SLICK SUIT

If I weren't wearing my Brooks  
Brothers right now, I'd have  
cleaned the sidewalk with your ass.

SONNY

(in his face)

That seems counter-productive.

Slick Suit trudges towards downtown with his flowers.

SLICK SUIT

(muttering)

Can't blame a guy for trying.

SONNY

Uh, yeah, you can!

(turning to Penny)

Miss Penny, you okay?

PENNY

The guy's a player. Buys flowers  
for a different girl every week. I  
see him in the cafe by my condo.

SONNY

No one should be so exploited.

PENNY

(smiling)

Thanks for what you did.

Sonny grins at her, like a goof.

PENNY

Listen, I'm really sorry, but-

SONNY

I gotta move on. I know.

Sonny gathers his things.

PENNY

The owner, he-

SONNY

S'okay. I'm a man who knows his place. And I was just on my way.

Sonny digs through his pockets. He finds two quarters.

Penny watches as he places the fifty cents on the table and then grabs a single white carnation from the bin. He hands Penny the carnation. She takes it, smiling cautiously.

SONNY

Be good.

Sonny takes off down the sidewalk, leaving Penny to her work.

One block away is an unassuming door with lettering. Sonny stops. After a second, POPS (60s), a lanky greying black man, exits and fist bumps Sonny. He takes one of the garbage bags. Together they turn, heading toward the outskirts of D.T.L.A.

As they leave, the door closes behind Pops. On the door a sign reads, "ADDICTION CARE CENTER LOS ANGELES."

EXT. THE INDUSTRIAL EDGE OF D.T.L.A. - DAY

Sonny and Pops amble along, in the harrowing heat of California August, carrying moderately full trash bags. Sonny picks up an empty can and tosses it into his bag.

SONNY

(singsong)

See an empty, pick it up...

SONNY

(singsong)

All the day you'll have...  
beer dripping down your back!

POPS

(singsong)

All the day you'll have...  
beer dripping down your back!

Sonny is dirty, but fit. He does not seem to be wanting for food, as much as for a shower. His frame is solid; his muscles, strong.

Pops is missing a few teeth from his stellar smile, his cheeks are sunken, but his eyes sparkle.

EXT. ABANDONED BLOCK - DAY

D.T.L.A. looms behind a row of dusty, rusty industrial lots.

Tents line the sidewalks, along with some RVs. Inside some of the lots, makeshift homes have been set up either in dust-caked vehicles lined with weeds or sun-bleached tents with mismatched tarps.

One lot has a rugged little tomato garden. Another has a thriving lemon tree in a pot. A gaggle of "homeless people" populate the area.

Back at the corner, a shiny new hybrid pulls onto the street, slowly rolling to a stop in the middle.

A firecracker Real Estate agent, ALLY (40s), gets out. She BEEPS the locks, and scans the scene. She's well-put-together, but wears the casual indifference that comes from confidence and subsequent success.

The locals eye her back. Narrow gazes. Skeptical looks. A few WHISTLES from a few HOMIES.

HOMIE 1  
(to Ally)  
Yo, mama. You get lost?

Ally is unfazed.

HOMIE 2  
Hey lady, take me with you. I keep  
you real nice and warm.

ALLY  
(bellowing)  
Okay, everybody listen!

They eye her skeptically.

ALLY  
I represent the owner of these lots  
- all of 'em. And I'm here to let  
you know that the whole block is  
going to be sold! Both sides.

Murmurs among the crowd.

ALLY  
You all have twenty-four hours to  
vacate. If you want your things,  
you must take them now. Otherwise,  
they will be appropriated.

Looks of disbelief, shock surround her. A few SLURS get thrown her way from the crowd.

BACK BY THE CORNER

Sonny and Pops appear. Their whistling stops.

SONNY

What's this now?

They hurry toward the crowd.

WITH THE CROWD

ALLY

But I've been the agent of record  
for these properties for the last  
five years.

Sonny moves slowly to the front, and hides behind JANEY  
(50s), a rough, leathery, aged betty. He whispers in her ear.

ALLY

And I'm the one who's kept them  
safe for you for this long!

JANEY

(to Ally)  
Who's the new owner?

ALLY

That's not your concern.

Sonny whispers into Janey's ear again.

JANEY

(to Ally)  
We can go to department of records  
on our own, so why don't you just  
tell us now?

ALLY

(eyeing Sonny)  
West Corp.

Sonny closes his eyes. Opening them, he looks around at all  
the lots. All of them, taking in the prospect.

ALLY

Does that mean anything to you?

Sonny whispers in Janey's ear one more time.

JANEY

I've been squatting here for eight  
years. Maybe it's time I paid rent!

JANEY (CONT'D)  
 (realizing what she said)  
 Wait, what... the hell, Sonny?!

Sonny shushes her.

Ally moves through the crowd to Sonny.

ALLY  
 Who are you?

Sonny huffs. He's been made. He stands up tall, facing Ally.

SONNY  
 (stern)  
 Let's talk.

He heads through a nearby gate toward an R.V., his. Ally, incredulous, follows him, at a safe distance. Once they get to the R.V., Sonny turns.

ALLY  
 Who do you think-

SONNY  
 (stern whispering)  
 That is a scared pack of dogs and if I say the right words, they might just bite. So stay quiet and listen. And if you say anything to anyone about me, I will sic the whole dirty lot of 'em on you.

She keeps her mouth shut, and gestures, "Okay."

SONNY  
 (whispering)  
 What you're doing is illegal.

ALLY  
 (whispering)  
 Pardon me?! Trespassing on a lot you do not own is illegal.

They continue to whisper.

SONNY  
 It's squatting. And through adverse possession,  
 (he gestures to his RV)  
 those of us who've set up a home on a lot, the law is on our side.



ALLY  
 (sarcasm)  
 Oh, really?

SONNY  
 You have to present an order to pay  
 rent and give us three days to do  
 so, because under California law,  
 we are tenants.

ALLY  
 I'm doing you a favor by giving you  
 twenty-four hours to vacate. And it  
 saves me the unnecessary paperwork.

Sonny points to Pops.

SONNY  
 Pops has been living in that lot  
 for twelve years. Janey has been  
 living next door for eight years.

Ally purses her lips.

SONNY  
 So, if you or anyone plans to steal  
 our property from our homes, we'll  
 call the cops.

ALLY  
 You're gonna call the cops on me?

SONNY  
 (firm)  
 Law's on my side.

Ally is bemused. Sonny, stalwart.

Ally eyes the door to Sonny's R.V.

SONNY  
 Sure, you did us all a favor by  
 holding these back, but now you've  
 got tenants.

ALLY  
 Fascinating.

She darts up the R.V. steps and slips inside.

SONNY  
 Wait! No! Stop!

He follows frantically.

INT. SONNY'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Ally stares, amazed, at stacks and stacks of books.

Philosophy, Forbes magazines, business texts, classic novels, and real estate law. Sorted, organized. Not even dusty.

SONNY (O.C.)

And now, you're trespassing.

ALLY

(reading titles)

This is an impressive collection.

Concurrent to his exhaustive library, his trailer is clean, well-sorted, and well-stocked: new boxes of trash bags, folded piles of clothes, shelves made from crates. Crammed full, but organized. And only room for one bed - no seats.

A food shelf holds assorted water bottles, cans of tuna, beans, boxes of pasta, and a basket of potatoes.

ALLY

You eat well.

SONNY

(wry)

I have a healthy sense of self-preservation.

Ally opens a little box of trinkets - rings, bouncy balls.

Sonny wilts at each discovery she makes, as if he's being filleted by her brashness.

She picks up a 8-cup French Press and raises her eyebrows.

SONNY

The ability to make coffee is what makes a house a home.

She puts it back down.

SONNY

(quietly)

You're still trespassing.

ALLY

You're the one who's trespassing-

SONNY

Squatting.

ALLY

You may have been living here for more than five years but the deed is in someone else's name and that someone else wants their money.

SONNY

We aren't vermin. We consider this block our home. The people, our neighbors. And you owe us three days to pay rent or five days to collect our things and vacate.

ALLY

(as if it's fair)

I gave everyone twenty-four hours.  
(narrowing her eyes)  
And what's your deal? Are you some sort of undercover-

SONNY

I'm just a guy-

ALLY

That's not likely. What are you doing here? You obviously have more potential than ...this. Surely you can find work.

SONNY

What makes you think I don't work?

ALLY

Because you're-

SONNY

Homeless?

ALLY

Well.

SONNY

You're standing in my home.

ALLY

I think there's more here...

SONNY

So what? You're the angel who's gonna pull me out of my own personal hell?

Irked, she makes for the exit. Sonny steps in front of her.

ALLY

You're in my way. I thought you wanted me to stop trespassing.

SONNY

You treat us like squatters, not trespassers, and we won't be trouble.

ALLY

Threats won't help your case.

Sonny sighs and steps aside. Ally flies down the stairs.

EXT. SONNY'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Ally lands on the ground. She sees Pops, fuming.

POPS

Who are YOU to barge into--

ALLY

I represent a very powerful-

POPS

I don't give a flying fu-

SONNY (O.C.)

Hey! Keep it civil.

Ally squints at Sonny, then the crowd.

ALLY

(to the crowd)

Alright! You all have seventy-two hours! But not a second more!

As she heads to her car, the crowd parts, reluctantly. After she drives away, the crowd turns to Sonny and Pops.

An older man, DUKE (60s), wrinkled, leathered, tattooed, steps forward along with a tough Latina, HAMMIE (30s), gorgeously round, adorned with an ancient pair of glasses.

DUKE

Sonny, man, what's the plan?

HAMMIE

Yeah, what are we gonna do about these snakes trying to evict us?

SONNY

Okay, here's the deal. Those of us who've lived in the lots five years or longer, it's a California law, they can't just take our stuff and make us leave. They have to serve us with notice to pay rent.

DUKE

How do you know that, man?

HAMMIE

But we can't pay rent!

SONNY

I know. That's not the point. The point is, we should have time. They can't come and take our stuff and kick us out in one day. They have to give us at least three days, depending on the property. And if we CAN pay rent, we are technically able to stay even longer.

JANEY

But we can't pay!

SONNY

Guys! We probably are going to have to pack up and move. All of us! They've got a bee in their bonnet and they're going to get us out one way or another. Hopefully my conversation with lady-bitch bought us a few days. But I do suggest you all start packing and thinking of a new place to go.

The crowd disperses mumbling and grumbling. Pops turns to Sonny, wringing his hands.

POPS

I hate moving. Stresses me out.

SONNY

I'll help you. No worries.

POPS

I knew this would happen some day. This is why we need our own land. We got to be on our own land.

SONNY

Come on, help me see if this old piece of junk still runs. And we have to get some more bags.

They head toward Sonny's R.V.

RON GEORGE (V.O.)

They're like pigeons. They sit on whatever's not protected.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Ally sits calmly at a sleek conference table listening to RON GEORGE (50s), a pasty grey-haired errand-boy-in-a-suit.

RON GEORGE

You get some of them out, more move in. You get them out of one lot, they congregate in another lot.

ALLY

What's the problem? The lot sells, you start building, they leave. They can't stay when the back hoes start digging. Literally.

RON GEORGE

They drive down property values just by existing. Can't they head over to skid row? Isn't that where they're all supposed to congregate?

ALLY

(subtly sardonic)  
No room I guess.

RON GEORGE

Why don't they all go get jobs? I wouldn't want to live like that.

ALLY

Anyway! I went by. Told them they have seventy-two hours to vacate.

RON GEORGE

Thank you, but that was unnecessary. I'm going to go by tomorrow to clean it all up.

Ally makes a note on her papers.

RON GEORGE  
So shall we sign?

ALLY  
Yeah. Also, sorry to tell you, Lot  
Sixty-eight is no longer available.

RON GEORGE  
What?! I thought all the owners  
were on board with the plan?

ALLY  
One bailed. Sold prematurely. New  
owner isn't on board.

RON GEORGE  
When the hell did this happen?

ALLY  
Does it matter?

RON GEORGE  
Fine. But which one is sixty-eight?

She pushes the papers over.

ALLY  
Corner. Won't interfere.

RON GEORGE  
Better not, or you'll be hearing  
from Ms. West.

He starts signing papers.

ALLY  
She doesn't scare me.

RON GEORGE  
She should. She'll be the first  
female mayor someday.

ALLY  
First female puppet.

RON GEORGE  
Geez, who pissed in your coffee  
this morning. You're a pill today.

ALLY  
(smiling)  
No piss. Just vinegar.

RON GEORGE

Uh huh. Listen, maybe we put 'em  
all on a bus to Santa Monica. Let  
the hippies deal with 'em.

ALLY

(sardonic)

You're full of ideas.

Ron signs papers, sliding each one to Ally who also signs.

EXT. MISC D.T.L.A. SIDE STREET - DAY

Sonny and Pops, carrying boxes of garbage bags, turn a corner  
and see

A young African American mama, SAMANTHA (late 20s), leaning  
against a building, tears on her cheeks. Her children, GEORGE  
(4) and CASSIE (2), laugh as they kick rocks around.

SONNY

Hold up, what do we have here?

Samantha wipes her cheek, looks away. Sonny opens his arms  
for a hug. She melts into big fat sobs in his arms.

Pops kicks around rocks with the kids.

GEORGE

(to Pops)

What happened to your teeth?

POPS

Knocked 'em out playing pro ball!

The kids' eyes widen in amazement.

Samantha calms down, as Sonny helps her sit on the sidewalk.

SONNY

Now, what's going on?

Samantha dries her cheeks and looks at him sideways.

SAMANTHA

You're Sonny, ain't you.

SONNY

Guilty.

SAMANTHA

I heard a you.



He smiles and squeezes her arm.

SAMANTHA  
(huffing)  
I got nowhere to go.

Samantha puts her head in her hands.

SONNY  
You don't have to tell me what  
happened. But maybe I can help you  
find a place to stay?

SAMANTHA  
Yeah, right.

SONNY  
Hey, you said you heard a me!

SAMANTHA  
I already tried. They all wanna  
take my kids. "Just to make sure  
they safe." But I know. They gonna  
put 'em in the system. And I don't  
want 'em in the system.

SONNY  
A family's got to stick together.  
And, I know a place you can go.

SAMANTHA  
Shit. Really?

SONNY  
If it ain't true, I'll, uh, I'll  
pay for a night in a hotel!

SAMANTHA  
Ha! You'll pay?

SONNY  
Hey! I got a reputation!

Samantha clams up. She nods, okay.

EXT. P.A.T.H. BONNIE BRAE VILLAGE - DAY

Pops and Sonny walk out of the building - a shelter for  
families. A look of satisfaction on Sonny's face.

George runs out and attacks Sonny and Pops with hugs. Then  
runs back inside.

EXT. SONNY'S TRAILER - DAY

In the shade, Sonny talks with BO'SHAWN (20s), an African American lad with earnest eyes. Bo'Shawn hands Sonny a couple papers. Sonny flips through them.

SONNY

Nice work, Bo.

BO'SHAWN

Thanks. Library paid off.

SONNY

S'good. A few more, we got a deal.

BO'SHAWN

Thanks man.

Fist bump. Bo'Shawn darts away, into the sunlight. Sonny follows him out to the street.

EXT. ABANDONED BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Many of the tents are gone, evidence of their onetime presence left on the sidewalk.

People use crates, boxes, and shopping carts and work together to get packed up.

At the end of the street, several large tow trucks turn the corner. Rumble. RUMBLE. RUMBLE!

Everyone looks up and watches the parade roll to a stop - tow trucks, a shiny lux car, and a couple of trucks with more large Fences (bodyguards/workers) behind that.

Ron George gets out of the lux car.

RON GEORGE

Friends! The time has come! I see you've been packing. That's great.

HAMMIE

The lady said we had three days!

RON GEORGE

She was mistaken. And she's also no longer the agent on record. I am. And I'm here to tidy up these lots for their new owner. So we'll be hauling "trash" away, and towing any "abandoned" vehicles.

RON GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(he grimaces)  
Best of luck!

He gestures to the drivers who back their tow trucks into each lot with an R.V. The Fences start loading anything that's not in someone's hands into the truck. BEEP BEEP BEEP! The sounds of large vehicles reversing is almost deafening.

POPS  
Like I said, Sonny! You can't  
reason with suits!

Ron leans against his car and tap-tap-taps on his phone.

RON GEORGE  
(to himself)  
Monkey see, monkey say.

POPS  
(to Ron George)  
The fuck you say to me? You no  
balls, pansy-assed, corporate rat  
monkey-suit!

RON GEORGE  
Sorry. Can't hear you over the  
sound of these guys working. Maybe  
you should consider that.

Sonny watches his friends' things being loaded into trucks.

All the cardboard, all the tents, all the tarps.

He eyes Ron with exasperation. Then approaches him, kinda sideways, without looking Ron in the eye.

SONNY  
You legally cannot evict us.

Ron keeps playing his game, but decides to play Sonny too.

RON GEORGE  
Evict. Interesting choice of words.  
That would imply someone had  
established a residence at this  
location. Which no one has done.

Sonny gestures to a hardy little tomato garden in Duke's lot.

SONNY  
There's gardens, chairs, stone  
pathways.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Through the law of adverse possession, Duke has taken ownership of this property after the previous owner neglected it.

RON GEORGE

Cute. The homeless guy thinks he knows real estate law.

Sonny heaves a sigh.

HAMMIE (O.S.)

Sonny! What're we gonna do?

RON GEORGE

Yeah Sonny! What are you going to do? Quote textbooks at me?

Sonny pulls out a burner phone.

SONNY

(to the phone)

Hello, nine-one-one, there is someone on my property, stealing my things, right now.

Ron watches and waits.

SONNY

Yeah, College and Alhambra.

(beat)

Okay, thank you.

RON GEORGE

And what do you think the police will do when they get here.

SONNY

Serve the people.

RON GEORGE

Look around and tell me, who is disturbing the peace?

Sonny sees his neighbors, his friends, fighting for their things. The children are in tears. It doesn't look peaceful.

HAMMIE (O.C.)

Go back to Mexico you effing immigrant!

An obviously large Hispanic FENCE shrugs back.

FENCE 1  
Hey, at least I'm working, right?

HAMMIE  
Who says I don't? You don't know me!

FENCE 1  
You don't know me!

Hammie savagely swings at the Fence. They get into it.

POPS (O.S.)  
Don't fucking take it out of my hands! This is MINE dammit!

Pops has got his hands on one end of a cot and another of the Fences has his hands on the other end.

SONNY  
Pops! Stop!

POPS  
He is stealing my shit out of my own damn hands! I been here more than five years. You can't take it.

FENCE 2  
I can take whatever's not locked down.

POPS  
The fuck you can! This is my shit!

He yanks as hard as he can and the Fence stumbles.

Ron George is done. He addresses some Fences nearby.

RON GEORGE  
Boys, can you deal with him before we lock the gates?

Ron slips into his shiny black car. The Fences approach Sonny menacingly. Sonny raises his hands in false surrender.

The Fences give each other a bemused look.

Sonny's hands curl into fists.

Duke comes flying in with a left hook to the Fence's jaw.

THEY FIGHT.

Pops hurries in.

Sonny gets in the scuffle too.

Duke takes several rough hits to his sides and organs. Then a knock-out punch to the head. He falls, limp.

Sonny and Pops crawl to Duke. Pops cradles Duke in his lap.

POPS  
No, no, no, no, no.

FENCE 1  
You got all your stuff?

FENCE 2  
'Cause we're closing the gate.

They turn to lock the gate.

SONNY  
How is he, Pops?

POPS  
He's not moving.

Bo'Shawn attacks the Fence, but soon the fight turns and the Fence is on top of him bashing him in the face.

POLICE pull apart Bo'Shawn, the Fence, and anyone else in a scuffle, handcuffing them all, leaning them against the cars.

Sonny, not cuffed, approaches Bo'Shawn.

BO'SHAWN  
Sonny! I can't go in again!

POLICEMAN 2  
Shut up!

The policeman cracks Bo'Shawn in the head. He rolls over into the dirt and groans.

Sonny backs away and heads to Duke, checking his neck.

SONNY  
He's got a pulse. There's still  
hope. Let's go.

Sonny gathers up Duke in his arms, stands and looks around.

His neighbor's homes are now only dust and dirt.

Tow trucks pull R.V.'s into the street.

Including Sonny's R.V. Damn.

SONNY

(to Pops)

Duke doesn't have much time. S'go.

As he carries Duke toward the end of the block, Sonny observes his friends either disperse or get chauffeured away in police cars.

The shiny bright hybrid rolls up to the corner.

Ally gets out, and runs to Sonny.

ALLY

I told him seventy-two hours! I'm so sorry! I just heard.

Sonny looks at her like she's speaking Martian.

She sees Duke.

ALLY

Let's get him to the hospital!

SONNY

We'll get your fancy car dirty.

ALLY

(hesitant)

I'll just get it detailed.

SONNY

(rolling his eyes)

Well, Pops is coming too.

ALLY

Fine.

The two men lug the unconscious Duke into Ally's pristine hybrid. They shut the doors. She jumps back in and zips away.

EXT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - E.R. ENTRANCE - LATER

Ally rolls up, parks. The men get out.

ALLY

Wait!

She pulls out some paper and a pen and writes something down.

ALLY

They wanted this lot too.

She hands him the paper.

SONNY  
They didn't get it?

ALLY  
(handing him the paper)  
It wasn't for sale.

SONNY  
Why are you telling me?

ALLY  
You might know how it could be put  
to use. For a short while.

Sonny looks at the paper.

SONNY  
How short of a while?

Ally squinches her face.

ALLY  
A few weeks?

Sonny grunts. He scoops up the unconscious Duke and heads  
inside with Pops.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY - NIGHT

NURSES YELLING, PATIENTS GROANING, MACHINES BEEPING.

Into this craziness, Sonny carries Duke with Pops following.

A gruff, matronly E.R. NURSE meets them.

E.R. NURSE  
What happened?

SONNY  
He got hit pretty hard.

E.R. NURSE  
With what?

POPS  
A fist.

The nurse looks at Pops.

E.R. NURSE  
(to Sonny)  
You sure this ain't an overdose?



SONNY

Don't you see the blood?

She moves in for a closer look and sees the blood drying under Duke's nose, the cuts above his eye, and his split lip.

E.R. NURSE

Okay, yep. Put him down here.

She pulls over a gurney. They lay him down.

E.R. NURSE

What about you boys. Sustain any injuries?

Sonny and Pops look at each other and shake their scratched and bleeding faces, no, at the nurse.

SONNY

Ma'am, we're just concerned for our friend.

E.R. NURSE

I got it. Okay.

She turns away, then turns back.

E.R. NURSE

You know I can't treat him until I get paperwork started.

SONNY

(huffing)

If his injuries are life-threatening, you can treat him right away.

E.R. NURSE

(surprised)

Uh, yeah, that's right. Okay. You gonna wait?

POPS

We ain't leaving.

E.R. NURSE

He got any family?

Sonny digs through Duke's pockets.

POPS

Hey man, what're you doin'?

SONNY

I carried him in here. I can go through his pockets.

Sonny finds a ratty slice of paper, and peers at it.

SONNY

Bingo. You can take him.

The nurse wheels Duke away.

POPS

Is that-?

SONNY

Family.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Sonny and Pops plop their dirty bums onto the sterile chairs.

Sonny turns face to face with a Hand Sanitizer station.

It reads: "STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS."

Sonny squirts a dollop into his hand and watches it slide around, interacting with the dirt.

POPS

This is why! This is why I keep telling you we need our own land. Start a tent city.

SONNY

That isn't gonna change how we're treated. 'We all live together' means we drag each other down.

POPS

(nudging Sonny)  
Iron sharpens iron, man.

SONNY

Don't need a tent city for that. We're already looking out for each other anyway. If we hadn't grabbed Duke, he mighta died out there.

POPS

That's my point. If he were on his own, he'd be dead in an alley.

POPS (CONT'D)

If we're all on one lot together, I heard the city recognizes it as official or somethin' and they don't make us move.

SONNY

The city does what lines the pockets of its leaders. A tent city wouldn't line anyone's pockets.

Pops sulks. Sonny reflects.

DONNA (O.S.)

Sonny?

Sonny looks up at a woman, DONNA (late 20s), a young man, and two young children, still in PJs, staring back at him.

DONNA

Did you say my dad was here?

At that moment the nurse approaches.

E.R. NURSE

Boys, your friend is awake.

She sees the family. Eyes them.

E.R. NURSE

You his family?

POPS

We're his family.

E.R. NURSE

You know what I mean.

POPS

Why should it matter? She hasn't seen him in fifteen years and now she shows up and gets priority?

E.R. NURSE

It ain't gonna be like that. Whoever wants to come, come!

DONNA

(to the young man)  
Stay here with the children.

He nods. Donna, Pops, and Sonny follow the E.R. Nurse.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

They walk up to Duke's area. The Nurse stops before going in.

E.R. NURSE  
So, he's awake, but he's critical.

DONNA  
What happened?

The nurse looks at Sonny.

SONNY  
He was in a fight. Got hit pretty  
hard all over.

Donna nods, understanding.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DUKE'S NOOK

The nurse pulls back the curtain and lets them in - Pops,  
Sonny, Donna. Duke looks up, he grunts from the pain.

DUKE  
Hey guys. Some shit-storm huh?  
(seeing Donna)  
Wait, did we die and hit heaven?  
Who's the angel?

DONNA  
Daddy?

To Duke, Donna is practically an angel.

DUKE  
Donna?

Donna goes to him. She hesitates before touching him because  
he's so dirty, but goes ahead. She embraces him.

DONNA  
Oh Daddy. We've been trying to find  
you for years.

DUKE  
Really. We?

DONNA  
I have kids now. A girl and a boy.  
They look so much like you.

DUKE

(to Sonny and Pops)  
You hear that? I'm a grandpa! I  
gotta change my ways!

Sonny and Pops smile and nod, sadly.

DUKE

(to Donna)  
When can I see them?

DONNA

They're here. Just down the hall.  
I'll go get 'em. Be right back.

She goes.

DUKE

(to Pops and Sonny)  
Did I at least knock one of them  
out too?

POPS

(lying)  
Yeah, man. You got 'em good. They  
took off runnin'. Well done.

DUKE

Fuckers.

POPS

Fuckers.

DUKE

You get all our stuff moved?

POPS

(lying again)  
Yeah, yeah. We got it all.

DUKE

Damn. So, what's the story. How  
long do I have here? This is a  
pretty comfy bed.

Duke coughs. Sonny puts his hand gently on Duke's shoulder.

SONNY

As long as you like, Duke.

DUKE

(nodding, grim)  
Fancy that.

Donna returns with the kids and her husband.

DONNA  
Jayce, Jenna, this is your  
grandfather.

The kids seem shy, but curious.

DUKE  
God love 'em. They're beautiful.  
(from his soul, through  
watery eyes)  
Donna. I'm so sorry.

DONNA  
(crying)  
Oh Daddy, me too. We could've tried  
harder.

DUKE  
(me too)  
Yeah.

They smile at each other, tenderly.

Sonny ushers Pops out of the nook. Once they're in the hall,  
two uniforms approach. They freeze.

POLICEMAN 1  
(to Sonny)  
Good evening, sir. We understand  
you were with the gentleman in the  
bed when he was attacked?

POPS  
Attacked. Yeah. Hate crime.

POLICEMAN 1  
Uh huh. Well, stick around for a  
few more minutes, we might want to  
ask some more questions if the  
family decides to press charges.

POPS  
The family?!

SONNY  
POPS!

The police officers squint at Pops as Sonny ushers him away.

As Pops and Sonny walk to the waiting area, Sonny looks back.  
Donna's Husband exits the nook and speaks with the officers.  
He shakes his head no. The officers nod and walk away.

Sonny turns and continues ushering Pops down the hall.

POPS

Man, I want to say goodbye. This is bullshit. I'm his family. I get to say goodbye.

SONNY

Pops, you're gonna get kicked out of here if you get fussy.

POPS

It's not fair.

Sonny puts his arm around Pops. They sit.

SONNY

When was the last time you talked to Damien?

POPS

S'not the same thing. Duke is clean. He coulda called her.

SONNY

So when you're clean, you call Damien.

POPS

Yeah.

SONNY

So get clean.

Pops wipes his dirty face on his dirty sleeve.

POPS

Let's go back. The universe owes me a goodbye.

Pops gets up and walks back. Sonny stays.

SONNY

(to himself)

Universe doesn't owe you anything.

Finally, he follows Pops back.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DUKE'S NOOK

Pops and Sonny walk in. The children are giggling. Duke is laughing, and coughing. Duke looks up and realizes.

DUKE  
Must be bad. Everybody's here.

SONNY  
You're a rich man, Duke.

DUKE  
(smiles, understands)  
I'm a rich man, Sonny.

He lays back in his bed. Pops grabs Duke's other hand.  
Squeezing tight. Sonny puts a hand on Pops' shoulder.

Then he starts coughing again. This time worse. BEEPS.

Flashing lights! Nurses run in, checking screens and gauges.

NOISE. CHAOS.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Sonny and Pops sit on a bus-stop bench. Quiet. Contemplative.

POPS  
Everyone is entitled to a safe  
place. Every person. Every little  
baby. Every dirty old man. We're  
all entitled to one safe space.

SONNY  
Pfft. No one is entitled to  
anything. Just air. We're entitled  
to breath. Anything else is bonus.

POPS  
Mama's breast milk.

SONNY  
Bonus.

POPS  
Sister's hugs.

SONNY  
Bonus.

POPS  
Papa's love.

SONNY  
Definitely bonus.

A bus pulls up. The bus leaves. They continue to sit.



SONNY

Even a baby's gotta cry to let his  
mama know he's hungry. We're born  
into conflict. Community doesn't  
help. Makes it easier to get hurt.

A female SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER (20s), armed with a clip  
board, nervously approaches them.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER

Excuse me, gentlemen. Sorry to  
interrupt your conversation.

Pops jumps up, and bows deeply.

POPS

Begging your pardon, madam. Wouldst  
thou carest for a seat?

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER

Excuse me?

SONNY

He's giving you crap for calling  
him a gentleman.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER

Aha. Funny. Well, I'm just out here  
making sure everyone has a place to  
sleep tonight.

SONNY

Yeah, sure, we got a place to  
sleep.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER

With a bed?

SONNY

Yup.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER

And a roof?

SONNY

Definitely a roof. You know, with  
all this rain.

He looks to the sky. The sky laughs back.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER

Okay. Well, I have this list here  
of shelters in the downtown core if  
you're interested in any of them.

POPS  
Man, you don't know nothing.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER  
I'm sorry?

POPS  
You out here handing out lists like  
you're some damn good samaritan and  
you don't know the first thing  
'bout how the system works.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER  
I, they, I-

POPS  
It's eleven at night. Shelters  
close the doors between five and  
seven. And you got to get in line  
before three for most of them.

SONNY  
Nobody takes walk-ins.

The social work volunteer is dumbfounded. She had no idea.

POPS  
And even if we did get in, everyone  
is snoring or coughing.

SONNY  
No sleep.

POPS  
Damn mattresses are full of bugs.

SONNY  
No better than what we've got.

POPS  
And we gotta pay five dollars!

SONNY  
That's breakfast.

POPS  
And they're always full.

SONNY  
Last time he stayed in a shelter-

POPS  
Last time I stayed in a shelter-

SONNY  
Was nineteen-eighty-two.

POPS  
Was nineteen-eighty-two.

SONNY  
The L.A. Dodgers were-

POPS  
Were the reigning World Series  
champions.

The social work volunteer's jaw gapes.

SONNY  
(assuring her)  
We're gonna be fine.

POPS  
Besides, they won't take me 'cause  
I'm not clean.

SONNY  
Oh, come on.

POPS  
She don't care. She's just handing  
out lists.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER  
I'm sorry, I- Don't they have  
showers?

POPS  
I'm an addict! Beside shelter  
showers are disgusting.

SOCIAL WORK VOLUNTEER  
Do you need help, getting clean?

POPS  
SHUT UP WITH YOUR FUCKIN' HELP!

She stumbles backwards and turns and scoots away.

POPS  
If you had socks, I'd take some  
damn socks!

She disappears around a corner.

POPS  
Fuckin' do-gooders.

They sit for a second.

SONNY

Come on. Let's go see that lot the lady wrote down. Maybe it's our new home.

They hop up and head off.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF DTLA - EARLY MORNING

Sonny and Pops walk down a sidewalk, looking at addresses.

It's an industrial area. Lots of well-used buildings. Workers. Trucks. They happen upon an empty lot with an unlocked gate, a SALE sign on the gate.

The sign on the gate reads: "Allison Martin, Frankson Group".

INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER OFFICE - MORNING

Ron George slightly cowers in front of a well-coiffed, tailored-suit of a woman, JANETTE WEST (40s). She flips through a folder of papers.

JANETTE

Which corner parcel?

RON GEORGE

Ally said it was for a client.

Janette flips through more pages. She picks up her phone, punches a button, waits.

JANETTE

(to the phone)

Karl, I just learned that your agent Ally kept one of those parcels I wanted for herself.

(smiles)

That's a very good idea. Thank you.

Janet puts down her phone.

JANETTE

That's taken care of. Now about that Sonny character you mentioned.

RON GEORGE

Seemed to know his stuff.

JANETTE

Let's just effectively communicate our preferences. Clear?

RON GEORGE

'Course.

JANETTE

Good. Now! I need to get ready for my press conference tomorrow.

She grabs her iPad. Then waves Ron toward the door.

JANETTE

Thank you.

RON GEORGE

Yes, ma'am.

Ron scurries out.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF D.T.L.A. - ALLY'S EMPTY LOT - AFTERNOON

In the hot sun, Sonny, Pops, and a few others set up tents, real ones, makeshift ones. A fire burns in an old oil drum.

Hammie approaches with a grim look. Sonny keeps working.

HAMMIE

Eh, Sonny. How long we got here?

SONNY

A few weeks, hopefully.

HAMMIE

Then we gotta move again?

SONNY

E'yup. Better'n havin' nowhere.

Hammie scuffs away.

HAMMIE

(to Sonny)

Sure would be nice to have someplace permanent though.

Sonny watches her go, and sees the rest of his friends building their places to sleep. They share tools. They share beers. They laugh together. They are indeed community.

Sonny sees Pops laughing with some slender gaunt fellows. He grabs some nearby trash bags.

SONNY

Hey Pops! Let's go collecting!

EXT. D.T.L.A. - ABANDONED BLOCK - DAY

Sonny and Pops turn the corner to their old block and see-

Security guards standing at the gates of each of the lots. One turns toward them with an even gaze, then speaks into a walkie talkie.

Sonny and Pops spin on their heels and disappear around the corner.

EXT. EMPTY LOT LAND - SIDE STREET - DAY

Pops and Sonny hurry down a side street and happen upon some friends. THEO (20s) jumps up.

THEO

Sonny! Pops! You gots ta go!

POPS

The fuck?

THEO

Yo, some of them think it's all Sonny's fault we got kicked out. After Duke got busted up.

POPS

Bullshit!

THEO

I know man. But they angry!

SONNY

They were gonna kick us ALL out regardless of what we did or did not do. It's not our fault.

THEO

You got her riled up.

SONNY

She was just doin' her job. We can't stay if we can't pay rent anyway. We don't own it.

THEO

Yeah, well. The police wouldn't a shown up if you hadn't called 'em.

SONNY

Shit.

THEO

Now you see.

Sonny nods. He looks long and hard at Pops. It clicks.

SONNY

Listen. We're gonna start a tent city. You know what that is?

THEO

Like, a community.

SONNY

Right. Our own community. On our own land. You want in?

THEO

Naw man. I got my own plans.

Pops looks at Theo's trash bag.

POPS

I see how it is. Your trash bag of dreams and you got plans.

THEO

You best believe. You gonna see.  
(a beat)

Just like that rich white lady, Janette something-or-other. She makin' things better. Takin' these shit lots and puttin' in Affordable Housing.

Sonny face gets whiter.

THEO

She holdin' a conference today about the whole thing. That's my dream. Making shit better.

POPS

So, polishing turds?

THEO

Fuck you.

Sonny nods at Pops to follow him.

EXT. D.T.L.A. - LIBRARY - DAY

Sonny and Pops roll up to a crowd of people, cameras, security, speakers, and microphones around a stage.

Janette is center-stage, addressing the crowd.

JANETTE

I believe L.A. is worth fighting for! The people of L.A. are worth fighting for! The children of L.A. are worth fighting for!

Sonny stares at her intently. Then shuts his eyes tight.

JANETTE

And that's why West Corp is working with Grove Corporation to build this athletic complex in the downtown core, to provide a safe space for this neighborhood's children to play!

CHEERS from the crowd. Sonny looks around with mild disgust.

JANETTE

The complex will be named for my dear departed husband - the William J. West Complex. He was so fond of children, hoping one day that we would have many of our own.

More CHEERS from the crowd. More sour looks from Sonny.

JANETTE

I feel a responsibility to never stop fighting for the city of Los Angeles. And that's why today, I am also announcing my plans to run in the next mayoral election. It's about time this city had a woman running things, am I right?

From the back of crowd, a Security Officer listens to his wire. And then turns and scans the crowd. When he sees Sonny, he locks on and begins to approach. More CHEERS.

Sonny sees the Security Officer approaching.

SONNY

(to Pops)

Let's go. I heard enough.

They quickly escape the crowds.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF DTLA - ALLY'S EMPTY LOT - AFTERNOON

Sonny and Pops' bags have gotten more full.



POPS

So if we do a tent city, what're we gonna call it? Pops' Playground?

SONNY

That's creepy.

POPS

How about Duke-somethin'.

SONNY

Maybe.

They approach the gate to Ally's lot, and the crowd blocking it. But the gates are closed and the lot is empty.

The SALE sign has a big fat SOLD on it and the Security Guards, large and mean, eye Sonny as he nears.

POPS

What happened?

SONNY

Too damn good to be true.

One Security Guard listens to something in his earbud.

SECURITY GUARD 1

(to Sonny)

You Sonny?

Sonny freezes. Hesitates.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Definitely him.

Security Guard 1 swings a huge right hook into Sonny's face, sending Sonny spinning into the dirt.

Security Guard 2 lands a solid front kick to Sonny's gut.

Pops runs in and tries to pull Sonny away; but he's flicked away like a fly by the Security Guards.

Security Guard 1 throws Sonny like a rag doll against the sign on the fence.

Sonny sees his own blood dripping down over Ally's name. He sees her workplace: "Frankson Group," and the address.

POPS

(to the crowd)

It's Sonny, y'all! HELP ME!

The crowd gets in the Guards' way. Pops gets Sonny under his arms and scurries away. The crowd disperses as soon as Sonny's free.

Once it's quiet again, the Guards take their position. One pulls his wire to his mouth.

SECURITY GUARD 1  
Yeah, he got the message.

And then he cracks his neck.

INT. FRANKSON GROUP REAL ESTATE AGENCY - MORNING

Sonny, bloody and dirty, bursts out of the elevator doors and marches straight to the front desk; Pops follows. The waft of Sonny's scent hits the Receptionist like a slap.

SONNY  
I'd like to see Ally.

RECEPTIONIST  
(disdain)  
She's not here.

SONNY  
You certain?

RECEPTIONIST  
(impatient)  
It's her day off.

SONNY  
Okay.

He turns as if to leave, then turns again and sweeps right past the receptionist and moves briskly down the row of desks looking quickly at each of the empty ones.

The Receptionist looks back at Pops, unsure whether to watch him or follow Sonny. She decides-

RECEPTIONIST  
(jumping up)  
Excuse me! SIR!

Sonny finds Ally's desk and rummages through it quickly, ignoring the appalled stares from Ally's co-workers.

RECEPTIONIST  
Sir. You are trespassing and if you don't leave-

Sonny sees what he needs, repeats it under his breath, then pops up, raising his empty hands.

SONNY

You'll call security?

Sonny hurries past the Receptionist again, and sweeps up Pops, heading together toward the exit.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, yes.

SONNY

Don't worry, I'm already gone.

RECEPTIONIST

Please.

Sonny and Pops scoot into the elevator. Just before the doors close, Sonny tips his invisible hat at the Receptionist.

She shudders and heads back to her desk.

EXT. BURBANK SUBDIVISION - DAY

Sonny and Pops walk purposefully up a hill of big beautiful Burbank homes.

Sonny's still got a few cuts and scrapes. Most of the blood has been wiped away.

SONNY

Eleven-fifty-five. Eleven-fifty...

He peers at the addresses as he hurries past. Then stops. He's found it. A beautiful large Adobe stunner. Laborers work on the landscaping and exteriors. Sonny and Pops walk up the drive.

The workers look at each other wondering if they should say something. They don't.

INT. BURBANK SUBDIVISION - ALLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Ally sits in an easy chair in an otherwise empty living room.

A modem and router buzz quietly on the floor in a corner.

Ally flips through apps on her iPad Mini and sips wine.

An INSISTENT BANG BANG BANG triggers her to jump. Then she relaxes slightly, and approaches the front door. She opens it to reveal Sonny and Pops.

ALLY

What in the hell-?

SONNY

The lot you sent me to- We moved in. Set up tents. And now it's sold. They locked it up.

ALLY

I bought it. It should be fine.

Pops raises his eyebrows at that comment.

SONNY

We were just there. Big SOLD sign on the gate. Big lock on the chain. Big fists on the guard out front.

ALLY

Hold on.

She grabs her phone and dials.

ALLY

(to phone)

Hey. Is Harper there? ... He did? What did he say? ... And I just bought a freakin' house! ... Yeah, no. I'll, uh, be by tomorrow. ... Yeah, no. Thank you. ... Yeah. Bye.

She hangs up.

ALLY

(hanging her head)

Shit.

They chew on the silence. Sonny looks away. Pops waits.

ALLY

I have been fired. For helping you.

SONNY

Looks like you've got nothing left to lose. Which is convenient 'cause we're here to ask for more help.

Ally considers Sonny's wounds. She waves them in.

As she closes the door behind them, Pops whistles at the beautiful, but still unfurnished, space.

POPS

All this for just you?

SONNY

We actually want you to help us with something a bit more permanent - a Tent City.

ALLY

Sorry, what?

POPS

A tent city! You ain't heard-

SONNY

It's a permanent community of tent-dwellers that is sanctioned by a city so there's a safe place for people in... life transitions... to sleep, cook, and keep their stuff safe while they go find work.

Ally huffs. She doesn't like being presumed upon.

SONNY

Surely you know of, or could help us find, a lot somewhere in the city that we could secure. You may have lost your job but you still have access to all the listings.

Ally raises her eyebrows, turns away, and comes face to face with her smallish self in her big empty house.

POPS

Hey, you even got more time on ya hands now.

SONNY

Pops, shhh.

Ally stiffens.

ALLY

Okay. Come with me.

She grabs her phone and keys and heads for the door.

EXT. BURBANK COMMUNITY TENNIS COURTS - DAY

Ally, Sonny, and Pops approach the local courts where several grown men bat their balls around.

ALLY

You're gonna meet my friend, Jed.  
He's a screenwriter. And he's also  
spent some time... sleeping rough.

They approach JED SPARKES (40s). Jed is built like a Cub Scout who gave up. He's boyish, but a bit of a hot mess with his perma-scruff, out-dated clothes, and a paunch.

ALLY

Jed! Hey. I want you to meet some  
new friends.

Jed looks up, simultaneously delighted and disgusted.

JED

Ally! Hey. Be right over.

Jed grabs a towel and dries off his sweat. As he gets closer, he narrows his eyes at Sonny.

Sonny narrows his eyes at Jed.

JED

(to Sonny)

Wow. Sorry. I just, you remind me  
of someone I knew when I was...

SONNY

(cagey)

Huh. Funny.

ALLY

Jed, this is Sonny, and Pops. Sonny  
and Pops, Jed.

JED

Sonny! Dude! You helped me get off  
the streets!

SONNY

Nice to see you again. Doing well?

They shake hands. Jed shakes Pops hand.

JED

Yeah, man. Real well. On hiatus  
right now... Yeah, doing well.  
(to Ally)

JED (CONT'D)

This is the guy who helped me turn everything around.

(to Sonny)

Dude. If you ever need anything, I will help.

Ally gives Sonny a curious look.

EXT. BURBANK COMMUNITY TENNIS COURTS - MOMENTS LATER

Jed, Ally, Sonny, and Pops sit on benches near the courts.

SONNY

So that's why a Tent City. It's an in between. A safety net and a trampoline. Could be the key to helping people permanently.

JED

Yeah, man. I've read about it working in Portland.

ALLY

In those other cities, were they on public property, or private?

JED

Depends, I guess. Bit of both. Either the city leases the land for free or an owner donates it.

POPS

The city? That's crazy.

SONNY

What do you think it would take?

JED

Okay, so... What should we do, hm? Probably visit some working tent cities. Get a meeting at the Coalition... Maybe look around for some lots... What else?

ALLY

If I run across a lot that could work, I'll, uh, I'll let you know.

SONNY

Thank you.

POPS  
 (to Jed)  
 You sure you in?

JED  
 Hey man! It's way more interesting  
 than tennis.

POPS  
 Eh. We just entertainment to you.

JED  
 Uh, um... Research?

Pops looks at Sonny. Sonny nods. Pops shrugs.

POPS  
 Okay, fine.

SONNY  
 Before anything else, we need to  
 help a few friends get resettled.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LA - SKID ROW - DAY

Rows and rows of tents, tarps, cardboard sleeping mats, and  
 crowds of dirty, downtrodden people.

At the end of a long row of tattered tents, Pops and Sonny  
 help Janey set up her tent.

SONNY  
 So you're sure you're sure?

JANEY  
 (brusk)  
 I got friends here.

SONNY  
 We're your friends too.

JANEY  
 Just can't walk so far!! Gotta stay  
 close to food.

SONNY  
 Okay, my dear. Okay. We'll let you  
 know as soon as we have something  
 permanent.

Janey nods, grimly.



SONNY

We've got some help now. Shouldn't  
be too long.

Janey keeps working. Sonny and Pops walk away, slowly.

POPS

Why'd we need 'em? They just gonna  
see us as needy. Just use us.

SONNY

Why does it matter if we get what  
we want in the end?

POPS

Because. It matters.

Quiet for a second.

SONNY

Well, Jed's gonna take us to check  
out a spot in the valley. Do you  
want to go? Or do you want to stay?

POPS

Shoot, I'll come. But only because  
it was my idea in the first place.

Sonny rolls his eyes at Pops.

EXT. CHATSWORTH TENT CITY - DAY

Jed, Sonny, and Pops pull up to a sandy lot populated by  
tents, sheds, trailers, and a few RVs.

A colorful sign at the front greets them: "CHATSWORTH  
COMMUNITY WELCOMES YOU - We'll Help You Stay Or Go"

As they walk through the gate, the locals look up and greet  
them with hesitant smiles.

Out of the nearest shed comes a tall solidly-built guy, with  
way too much hair, JOEY (40s).

JOEY

You dudes need something?

JED

(gesturing to Sonny and  
Pops)

These guys live in D.T.L.A. and  
they're looking for info about  
starting a community like this one.

POPS  
(my idea)  
A tent city.

JOEY  
Yeah, okay. Cool. Let's walk  
around.

They follow him, checking out the different shacks and tents.

JOEY  
We've been here about five years.  
Started after we were kicked out of  
an old K-mart lot back in the day.  
We had built such a close  
community, we didn't want to lose  
that. We needed each other.

SONNY  
But who owns the property?

JOEY  
Officially, a non-profit company.

SONNY  
So no one can evict you.

JOEY  
Not the whole group. But the  
community can evict one member if  
they aren't abiding by the rules.

JED  
What're the rules?

JOEY  
One, take care of yourself. Two,  
take care of others. And three,  
take care of this place. Everything  
pretty much falls under those three  
easy-to-remember rules. Violence?  
Not gonna fly. That's not taking  
care of others. Drugs, no go.  
That's not taking care of yourself.

Pops nods. They walk in silence for a bit.

JOEY  
Listen, Chatsworth isn't L.A. but I  
could walk you through what we did  
to make it happen.

SONNY  
 (to Jed)  
 We've got time?

JED  
 We've got about an hour before we  
 need to get back for our meeting at  
 the Coalition.

SONNY  
 (to Joey)  
 You've got time?

JOEY  
 (with a grin)  
 I got all the time in the world!  
 I'm homeless, right?

Sonny and Pops chuckle at his joke. He's allowed to say it.

JOEY  
 Let's hit up the admin shack.

They turn and walk back.

INT. HOLLYWOOD OFFICE BUILDING - SMALL SIMPLE OFFICE - DAY

A sign reads: "LA Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness"

Jed, Sonny, Pops, and Ally file into the office of GRACE  
 DWYER (50s), a stout but strong little fiery woman, who loves  
 everyone with a savage love.

GRACE  
 (handing out hugs)  
 Ally, love. Jed, you look healthy.  
 Who are these handsome friends?

Sonny and Pops grin, a little embarrassed.

ALLY  
 (gesturing)  
 Sonny. Pops.

Sonny nods. Pops waves.

GRACE  
 Hello, I'm so pleased to meet you.

ALLY  
 Sonny and Pops used to live down at  
 the site of the new Athletic  
 Complex that West Corp is building.

GRACE

Ah. I see.

ALLY

Grace, we were wondering if you could help Sonny and Pops figure out how to get a tent city going.

SONNY

Something legal.

POPS

Something safe.

GRACE

Well, I have been waiting for someone to come to me about this. There are groups all around the valleys and in San Diego, Portland, Seattle, but nothing yet in L.A. and now I am just so excited.

ALLY

So you think a tent city really helps, huh?

SONNY

(to Ally)

We didn't convince you yet?

ALLY

(to Sonny)

I'm asking her.

GRACE

Oh my yes. We officially call them authorized encampments, and when you combine them with the establishment of safe, legal, practices, methods, they can be effective transitional spaces.

ALLY

Awesome.

POPS

Told you.

GRACE

I've got all the papers here somewhere.

She mouses around on her computer.

GRACE

Ah yes, there it is. Let me print this off and get you set up in our little conference room. Mr. Sonny, are you literate? Mr. Pops?

Ally glances at Sonny and tries to hide a knowing grin.

SONNY

(resigned)

Yes.

GRACE

Sorry to have to ask but not everyone I help is, so I've just gotten used to asking.

SONNY

No worries.

GRACE

So let's get you set up in the conference room. And once that's done, we can move forward with finding land and seeking city council and mayoral approval.

SONNY

Mayoral approval? How likely or unlikely is that?

GRACE

I haven't a clue. We've not tried before. But! We can hope!

Sonny purses his bearded lips.

INT. HOLLYWOOD OFFICE BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Various forms are spread all over the table. Pops sits back and watches, munching through tiny bags of potato chips.

JED

Sonny, my friend. You gonna start filling some of these out?

Sonny stares at the papers.

JED

Far be it from me to encourage anyone to sign something they haven't read, but five times might be enough.

ALLY

Maybe you can start by putting down  
your name?

SONNY

Why can't it be Pops?

Pops looks up, confused.

JED

Sonny. Not to be indiscrete, but  
you know perfectly well why it  
can't be Pops.

POPS

(grinning)  
Life choices.

JED

Come on. The first one's easy. Just  
your name.

SONNY

(sitting back)  
I, uh, I don't remember my name.

Jed and Ally share a glance. What?

JED

So your name isn't Sonny.

SONNY

That's what I'm called.

ALLY

But that's not your name?

SONNY

I do not remember my name.

Ally looks to Pops.

POPS

I've been calling him Sonny since I  
met him. I don't know what his real  
name is any more than he does.

ALLY

And I suppose you don't have any  
I.D. either.

Sonny throws up his hands.

SONNY

And why can't it be one of you?

Ally and Jed share another glance.

POPS

Quit looking at each other like that.

ALLY

Like what?

POPS

Like you on one team and we on the other. We all human.

ALLY

We are on your team, Pops.

JED

We're here to help you!

SONNY

You're here because she asked you.

ALLY

That's not fair, Jed's been helping the homeless for as long as I've known him. Every so often.

SONNY

And how long is that.

JED

You know, since we met.

SONNY

How'd you meet?

JED

(with a glance to Ally)  
At a Bereaved Spouses meeting.

This hits Sonny hard.

SONNY

Shit.

(jumping up)  
Come on Pops. Let's go.

Pops jumps up.

POPS

Can we get some more chips on the way out? Wait, aren't you going to fill out those forms?

SONNY

We'll figure out another way.

POPS

Sonny, man. We need this!

SONNY

No. We don't. We can do this on our own. We don't need to be crashing their dates while we're on our own search for a home.

JED

Man, you've got it all wrong.

Pops gathers the forms.

POPS

We'll take these.

ALLY

Don't go. We'll figure it out.

SONNY

We will. Thank you for your help thus far. Thank you. We're out.

Sonny and Pops exit the conference room.

Jed and Ally, sit for a beat.

ALLY

Let's give them a minute.

JED

I don't think they're coming back.

A beat.

ALLY

Ugh. These guys. Why can't they just make it easy!

JED

I've got a theory.

ALLY

Hm?



JED  
(shrugs)  
A hunch. Wanna head to the library?

ALLY  
What are you thinking?

JED  
I think he knows his name. And if  
he doesn't, I do.

Ally furrows her brows.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Sonny strides angrily. Pops follows, trying to keep up.

Hollywood is not their turf. Every once in a while they see someone they recognize. And they nod. But that's it.

POPS  
So what's the plan?

SONNY  
Find a different non-profit? Or  
maybe Hammie can sign those forms.

POPS  
Naw, man. I meant tonight. Where we  
gonna sleep?

SONNY  
Park bench.

POPS  
Fuck that. I know a James who hangs  
out around here. He runs with a  
good crew. They'll keep us safe.

SONNY  
No new people. Park bench.

POPS  
Park benches are for dopes who  
ain't got no one watching their  
back. It ain't for us.

SONNY  
We'll watch each other's back. Park  
bench.

POPS  
 Why you so hell bent on avoiding  
 the entire human race, man?

SONNY  
 Fine. Let's find James. But he  
 better not be dealing.

Pops nods. They walk in silence for a second.

POPS  
 Hey, you know I got your back and  
 that's it. We family.

Pops holds out his fist. Sonny bumps it.

INT. LOS ANGELES LIBRARY PUBLIC RECORDS - NIGHT

Jed and Ally search through public records.

JED  
 How long has he been homeless?

ALLY  
 At least five or six years?

JED  
 Let's look for missing persons  
 notices. Starting ten years ago.

They search. Clickity click click.

JED  
 So I take it you're not seeing  
 anyone?

ALLY  
 Married to my work. At least I was.

JED  
 I know what that's like-

Jed squinches up his face for a sec.

JED  
 So, uh, is he right? Is there  
 something here?

ALLY  
 No, Jed. It's not like that.  
 (a beat)  
 I just have a healthy sense of self-  
 preservation.

ALLY (CONT'D)

Helping two homeless men I don't quite know seemed a tad reckless. So I brought in a big strong man like you to help me.

JED

Geez.

ALLY

Eh-yup.

Awkward. Clickity, click, click.

ALLY

Got something. I think. Does this look like him?

Jed jumps up and looks at Ally's screen.

An image shows a clean-shaven man, maybe a younger Sonny?

The title of the article reads: "West Family Mourns the Loss of William, Husband, Father, Friend."

ALLY

The West Family! Ha! Surely they'd know if he were still alive.

JED

Clean-shaven. It's hard to tell.

ALLY

Let's look for more photos of William West.

Jed types it in and hit enter. Bam. He did it.

JED

There he is.

ALLY

Oh, god.

On the screen: A page full of photos of a Younger Sonny, and one with a beard.

JED

It's totally him.

ALLY

Sonny is Janette West's dead husband.

JED  
 Sonny could be very, very wealthy!

ALLY  
 Sonny is a father.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CITY STREETS - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Sonny BELCHES obnoxiously. He and Pops have found some friends and are laughing and drinking with them.

POPS  
 So then Duke says, "You don't know how big it is," and he reaches into his pants...

Pops puts down his beer, and reaches into his own pants.

FRIENDS  
 No, no, no!

And Pops pulls out nothing, but his raised middle finger.

POPS  
 And pulls out a spoon. An effing metal spoon that he stole from the kitchen on Alhambra.

Laughter all around. Pops sits down again.

POPS  
 He was a good dude. To Duke!

They raise their beers.

EVERYONE  
 To Duke!

They drink. A somber silence, broken only by the noise of the streets of Hollywood. One of the group, JAMES (60s), his face crisscrossed with age and sun, addresses Sonny.

JAMES  
 So how did you end up out here?

SONNY  
 Took a wrong turn.

JAMES  
 I know that's right.

Laughter. A voice echos down the alley:

ALLY (O.S.)  
Sonny! Pops!

SONNY  
Shit.

POPS  
The hell?

They look down the alley.

SONNY  
Maybe if we shut up and don't move  
they won't find us.

Pops takes his cue from Sonny and clams up.

JAMES  
Someone knows you.

POPS  
(quiet)  
Just some do-gooders.

JAMES  
Someone knows you and wants to help  
you and you're avoiding them.

SONNY  
What's the problem?

JAMES  
Pardon me for asking but don't you  
want to get off the streets?

Pops and Sonny look at each other. Pops jumps up.

POPS  
Ally! Jed!

JAMES  
Attaboy.

SONNY  
Pops, quit it!

ALLY (O.S.)  
Pops!? Where are you?

POPS  
Follow the sound of my voice!

Ally and Jed appear at the corner. They come running, but  
stop quickly when they see the rest of the men.

JAMES  
Hey darlin'. You need something?

ALLY  
Don't you darlin' me.

JAMES  
Whookay.

SONNY  
We aren't going to change our  
minds.

POPS  
We aren't?

ALLY  
Not like you changed your name?

Sonny freezes. Pops shifts his eyes from her to him and back.  
The whole group fidgets uncomfortably. What is going on?

SONNY  
What's the problem with Sonny?

Pops watches uncomfortably.

ALLY  
It's not William.

Sonny is frozen.

ALLY  
William James West.

The group bursts into uproarious laughter. Including a  
slightly nervous Sonny.

JAMES  
Sweetheart, William West is dead as  
a doornail.

ALLY  
According to public records.

Sonny closes his eyes. Then stands and walks by Ally and Jed,  
nodding at them to join him.

SONNY  
(over his shoulder)  
Pops, you stay. I'll be right back.

Pops watches them go, unhappy.

INT. 101 COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Sonny shifts in his seat, sips his lemonade, and again.

SONNY

You know before we got evicted, I had a routine that actually did involve some moderate hygiene.

JED

So, "Sonny," what's the truth?

Sonny embraces the charge from this question; but he's calculated in his answer.

SONNY

I don't remember.

JED

How long have you been on the streets?

SONNY

At least five years. Maybe.

JED

Was it Spring when you first hit the streets?

SONNY

Sure. Spring.

JED

William West went missing in the Spring.

SONNY

(smirking)  
Legendary Real Estate tycoon.

JED

Husband of Janette West.

Sonny avoids their gaze.

ALLY

Father of Julienne West.

Sonny meets their gaze.

ALLY

You didn't know.

SONNY

I- I ignore the gossip rags.

JED

Janette was just eight weeks along  
when 'William' went missing.

Sonny sits with this for a second.

ALLY

Sonny, tell us the truth. Are you-  
(whispers)  
William West?

SONNY

(persistent, whispering)  
William West is dead.

ALLY

Shit, Sonny! Tell us the truth!

JED

Hey man, we can't help you if you  
don't trust us.

SONNY

Yeah, let's trust each other.

Sonny turns, looks out the window. There's Pops, looking in.

SONNY

Shit.

ALLY

Jed, go get him.

Jed jumps up to go fetch Pops.

SONNY

(to Ally)  
You have him well-trained.

ALLY

Shut it. He likes being helpful.

SONNY

He likes you.

ALLY

Yeah. What a jerk.

Sonny smirks.

Jed leads Pops in.



JED  
 (to a waitress)  
 Hey, another coffee please.

The waitress nods.

Jed and Pops sit.

ALLY  
 Okay Pops. What's the truth? Is  
 this guy William West or what?

POPS  
 Man! Hell if I know.

Sonny gestures, "see?"

POPS  
 But I do know this. He wasn't  
 homeless when he was mugged.

SONNY  
 You told me-

POPS  
 I know what I told you!

The waitress places a coffee on the table and hurries away.

JED  
 So, what's the truth, Pops?

Pops scratches his head. He clears his throat.

POPS  
 (to Sonny)  
 You were just some guy. You had a  
 backpack, a map, a phone. You  
 looked like you were heading to the  
 train station.

SONNY  
 (bemused)  
 I thought you found me after I was  
 mugged.

POPS  
 Saw the whole thing. Chased 'em  
 away!

SONNY  
 (to Jed and Ally)  
 There you go. I'm just some guy who  
 was going on a train.

POPS

You didn't remember who you were.  
You needed help. So I helped.

ALLY

And you thought a life on the  
streets was the best way forward?

SONNY

He did the best he knew! I'd been  
knocked out and I needed someone.

JED

(sarcasm?)

Oh, right! Amnesia! Convenient.

ALLY

And you didn't take him to the  
hospital because...?

Pops shrugs.

ALLY

(to Sonny)

Let us take you in to confirm it.  
See if you really are William West.

SONNY

No! Not happening.

ALLY

Why not?! Imagine what you could do  
for your community in D.T.L.A. if  
you really are him!

JED

He is him.

SONNY

I'm not!

ALLY

Imagine your reach! Your resources!

SONNY

(jumping up)

You don't know what the fuck you're  
talking about!

Sonny runs outside.

Jed leans back in his seat. Pops sips his coffee.

EXT. 101 COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Sonny escapes across the parking lot, muttering to himself.

SONNY  
(under his breath)  
Can't do it. Can't.

He looks every bit the part of a crazy bearded homeless man. Ally comes out the side door and hurries to him.

ALLY  
Sonny. Wait. What's wrong?

SONNY  
You! You come to our street, you come with trucks, you- you- you TEASE me with that new lot, you send me Jed. It's YOU! Selfish, insensitive, button-pushing-

ALLY  
I have been generous with you at every turn! I gave you extra time to get your shit together. I let you use that lot. At the expense of my job, and possibly my career. I brought you Jed because he knows how to help people like you.

SONNY  
People like me. Uh huh.

ALLY  
People. Like. You. Don't be modest. And now I'm trying to help restore you to your former life- a life where you had resources, family, a career, a child, and you are treating it like a prison sentence!

SONNY  
(punch to the gut)  
That's because it is.

A breath. What?

SONNY  
Shit.

ALLY  
It is?  
(realization)  
You remember everything, don't you?

Sonny hesitates, then barely nods yes.

ALLY

Sonny, what did you do?

Sonny breaks down, sobbing. Ally awkwardly puts her arms around him, even though he stinks, even though he's dirty. He shakes with sorrow, and even fear. She holds him.

Jed and Pops come out, curious.

POPS

Sonny! You okay man?

Sonny looks up, wiping away his tears.

SONNY

I didn't plan on getting mugged. On getting knocked out. That was... serendipity. I woke up in Pops' tent. He took care of me.

Sonny and Pops look at each other and nod appreciatively.

JED

(to Sonny)

Okay so, what's your name?

Sonny looks around.

SONNY

(the words feel funny in his mouth)

I am indeed William James West.

POPS

Sonofabitch.

JED

No shit.

SONNY

(to Pops)

But my friends call me Sonny.

Jed shifts his weight a little.

POPS

How much do you remember?

SONNY

(narrowing his eyes)

Not much. I- It took me a while to remember who I was.

Pops seems relieved.

ALLY  
 Why didn't you go back to your  
 family? What did you do?

Sonny sighs a big sigh. And is that a slight glance at Jed?

SONNY  
 (pleading?)  
 I'd rather not say. Just yet.

Jed, steely, nods.

ALLY  
 So what now? I mean, are there  
 warrants out for you?

SONNY  
 Dunno about warrants, but uh- But I  
 have an idea. Did I correctly hear  
 you say that I ... have a child?

ALLY  
 (nods)  
 Julienne.

Sonny nods, accepting this new information.

SONNY  
 I know where we need to go.

INT. JANETTE'S BEAUTIFUL BURBANK HOME - MORNING

Janette, wearing silk pajamas and a face full of make-up,  
 stares into a mirror and puts in earrings. She picks up her  
 mug and pads down the hallway, stopping at a bedroom door.

INT. JANETTE'S BEAUTIFUL BURBANK HOME - CHILD'S BEDROOM

Janette slowly opens the door.

A little girl, JULIENNE (5), opens her bright blue eyes.

Janette opens the curtains, then sits on Julienne's bed and  
 strokes her hair, lovingly.

JULIENNE  
 Mmph. Time to get up?

JANETTE  
 Yes, my darling, it is.

JULIENNE  
Did you make waffles?

JANETTE  
Oh silly girl. Maybe tomorrow.  
Today we have something to do. Now  
hurry up and get dressed.

JULIENNE  
Aw! Okay, mama.

Janet kisses her forehead, then leaves the room.

EXT. EMPTY RESIDENTIAL LOT - MORNING

Jed pulls up with Sonny and Pops. Ally pulls up behind them.

They all have coffees. Sonny and Pops sip very carefully.

This lot, overrun with flowering weeds, contains the remains  
of a foundation, a solid fence. But no for sale sign.

JED  
I cannot effing believe this.

ALLY  
And it's still in your name?

SONNY  
It was in my will. To go to any  
children when they came of age in  
the event of my death. She couldn't  
sell it. But she controls it until-

Ally gently places a hand on his shoulder.

ALLY  
You'll meet her soon.

Sonny frowns.

JED  
So legally who owns it now?

SONNY  
Before I "died", I did. On paper.

They share a funny look.

ALLY  
So you just need to claim it.

POPS

There's a seven-eleven on the corner. Planet Fitness on the other one. A bus stop down the block.

JED

Pops, people can't live in tents on residential property.

POPS

You mean to tell me you can't just go into your backyard and stay in a tent for a night?

JED

One night's totally okay. That's a recreational activity. But using it as a permanent home, no está bien.

POPS

Damn.

They stare at the lot.

SONNY

But, you know, the reason why we wanted this property was not because of it's residential value.

ALLY

Then what was it?

SONNY

Because of the annexed property on the back we suspected the previous owners didn't know about.

JED

Annexed?

SONNY

Three times the size of this on the other side of the residential line.

ALLY

The other side is mixed-use.

SONNY

Exactly.

ALLY

Oooh. So they didn't know how much the total parcel was worth.

SONNY  
 (grim)  
 They didn't.

Jed hangs his head.

SONNY  
 But it'll be perfect for-

POPS  
 For a tent city.

JED  
 For a tent city.

ALLY  
 Why don't we go take a look?

They hop in the car and drive away. Moments later, a town car drives down the street, toward the lot.

INT./EXT. TOWN CAR / EMPTY RESIDENTIAL LOT - CONTINUOUS

In the back, Janette looks out one window. Julianne looks out the other. As they approach the lot-

JULIENNE  
 Look, Mama. Daddy's lot is growing new flowers.

JANETTE  
 That's lovely, darling.

Janette smiles a pained smile.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - DAY

An old chain link fence surrounds the rundown lot of about two acres of weeds. Can't quite see to the back. A few concrete slabs where buildings used to stand dot the field.

It's actually a great place to assemble a tent city, which we now see has already begun. Some tents dot one side of the lot. A few sheds and shelters are being built by some of Sonny's homeless friends from D.T.L.A.

SUPER: SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Hammie stands near the front gate with a clipboard.

A passenger van pulls into the lot. The passengers unload. The driver, Jed, gets out to help. Sonny follows.

Jed and Sonny approach Hammie.



JED

So, Hammie. How many more?

HAMMIE

Uh yeah, these eight make a total of forty-two. I think we can handle eighteen more without getting too overwhelmed. Eventually, once we're more organized, maybe a hundred or even two. Hopefully by the Spring.

JED

That makes sense.

They watch the busy-ness for a second. The wind picks up and some shelters blow over and some wind screens fall down.

HAMMIE

I'm gonna go see if I can find some junk to jimmy together and make some better wind screens.

SONNY

Thanks, Hammie. Good work.

Hammie runs off.

JED

(to Sonny)

You know, you still need to fill out the papers with the city. So, you know, we've still gotta go back to the Coalition.

SONNY

And I'm still gonna find someone else to do that. Maybe Hammie!

JED

If you don't claim the property, Janette's gonna find out and evict everyone. So, why don't you just come forward? Save time.

SONNY

Too much to lose, man.

JED

Come on. Do you even know if you have warrants or not?

Sonny furrows his brow.

SONNY  
Hey, let's talk.

INT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - SONNY'S TENT - DAY

SONNY  
(sighing)  
Jed. There's nothing I can say...

JED  
You know, when I first saw you on the streets, I knew you looked familiar. But I was sure you were dead. But then you helped me get off the streets. And I thought, nah. Couldn't be the same guy.

Sonny looks away. He knows what's coming.

JED  
Then, when we discovered those articles. The photos. I knew.

SONNY  
I'm so sorry. For everything.

JED  
Were you really headed out of town because of what you did to us?

SONNY  
You and every other shady deal.

JED  
(shakes his head)  
Class act.

SONNY  
I'm so sorry for what we- what I did to you. Can you forgive me?

JED  
(big sigh)  
Long time ago. After Helena died. I was very, very angry. Promised I'd pummel you to a bloody pulp if I ever found you. And then I did find you. And you helped me. After I got off the street, had some counseling, I forgave you. It wasn't easy. But I, uh, make a choice each day to forgive you.

Sonny nods gratefully.

SONNY

You're not helping your case for me to come forward with my identity.

JED

(light chuckle)

Crap. You're right.

(insistent)

But, you understand why I find it a little hard to trust you that everyone here is gonna be okay unless you come clear.

Sonny considers this.

SONNY

I do. Even with that... We've got a lot of work to do to make this place viable. Just putting us all together doesn't mean everything automatically... is safe.

Jed nods.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - EARLY MORNING

A rare frost covers shaded surfaces. A chilly morning.

A SHRIEK is heard from one end of the lot. Commotion.

A MAN'S VOICE

Help! Help! Help me!

People are groggy, but they hurry as best they can to the sound of the voice.

A MAN'S VOICE

Help, please! My brother! Oh no!

Sonny comes running.

Everyone arrives at DRAKE and JAKE's tent. Sonny opens the door. JAKE (20s), wiry and supple, kneels over the dead body of his twin brother, DRAKE.

JAKE

Oh no, oh no!

Sonny peers in.

Drake's lips are blue. He is not moving. Sonny reaches in. A shock through his system as he touches the cold Drake.

He pulls his arm out and shakes his head somberly at the crowd. Jake gathers up his dead bother and rocks him.

JAKE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

The crowd gathers around. Nothing to say, but not wanting Jake to be alone.

INT. BURBANK SUBDIVISION - ALLY'S HOUSE - MORNING

The gas fireplace whispers with quiet strength, warming the empty room. At the breakfast bar, Ally sips a steaming cup of tea, while scrolling on her phone. It RINGS.

ALLY

Hello? ... Oh no. ... I'm so sorry.  
Yeah. I'll come over.

She drops her head into her hands.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - MORNING

Drake's body is loaded into a specialty service van. The van pulls away. Jake looks after it shaking and sobbing. Hammie puts his arm around him. Jake leans in, sobbing.

Ally pulls up in her car just in time to see it drive away. Jed greets her.

JED

Not the best of news.

ALLY

Jed, it's horrifying!

JED

And, I heard of two more deaths on skid row this morning because of high winds last night. People don't realize how dangerous that can be.

ALLY

Especially in L.A. It's unexpected.

JED

It's warmer downtown for some reason. The winds here in the valley are stronger.

JED (CONT'D)

These people don't have enough to deal with it. We need to get them hats, gloves, blankets. That's why I called you down. I want you to help me convince Sonny to come with me to ask for help.

ALLY

Me? Convince Sonny?

JED

Yes you! And also to convince him to get a bit cleaned up first too?

Ally looks skeptical.

SONNY (O.S.)

You wanna use me as a prop!

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - SONNY'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ally and Jed have cornered Sonny. Jed looks to Ally.

ALLY

You're a compelling speaker.

SONNY

Fine. Thank you. But shouldn't I look the part?

ALLY

Sonny. People give to success.

SONNY

So I need to look like I'm not homeless, even though you're bringing me because I am homeless.

ALLY

Pretty much.

SONNY

(sighing)

Fine. But I'm not shaving my beard.

INT. BURBANK SUBDIVISION - ALLY'S HOUSE - DAY

In the empty living room, Jed paces. Ally comes down the hallway in a huff.

ALLY

He still won't shave.

JED

Doesn't want to be recognized.

Sonny appears. He's clean. Well-dressed. His beard, while still there, is combed. It's Hipster Sonny!

Ally looks at him like he's a cute puppy.

ALLY

Aw! It works!

JED

Well enough. Ready?

INT. BURBANK COMMUNITY CHURCH - DAY

Sonny and Jed sit across from PASTOR KARLA (50s), a woman of great practicality.

PASTOR KARLA

So what do you need?

SONNY

Well, it's late Fall. And it's getting colder. We need hats and gloves and blankets for nighttime.

PASTOR KARLA

I see.

SONNY

Perhaps your community would be willing to collect any extras they have? Tents, cardboard, wood, garbage bags, hand-warmers, socks?

PASTOR KARLA

We'd love to help you all, but we usually do a coat and clothing drive every year at Christmas time and so that's what we usually do.

SONNY

So you can't find some more for us?

PASTOR KARLA

It's challenging. People usually save everything for that.

SONNY

Where does that go?

PASTOR KARLA

We give it to the city programmer  
and she divvies it up as needed.

Sonny nods.

PASTOR KARLA

Listen, I'm just warning you that  
you might not get much from our  
community. I'll post a notice and  
make an announcement and leave a  
box in the lobby. You come back in  
two weeks and see what we have.

SONNY

You don't have anything now?

PASTOR KARLA

Nothing now. I'm so sorry. I wish  
we did. I wish we had a stash. But  
we don't have a ton of space to  
store things, ya know?

SONNY

Uh huh. How about, could some of us  
use your bathrooms?

PASTOR KARLA

I, uh. You have to understand that  
sort of thing puts strain on our  
janitorial services and budget for  
toilet paper. We can't really  
afford that.

SONNY

I see.

PASTOR KARLA

On Sunday. Your community members  
can come on Sunday, when the rest  
of us are here. And use the  
facilities then. When the doors are  
open. Good?

SONNY

Better than nothing.

Pastor Karla smiles. She gave her inch. Well done her.

INT. BURBANK METHODIST CHURCH - OFFICE - DAY

Sonny and Ally sit across from PASTOR DAVID (50s), a man who  
knows his limits and respects the limits of others.

PASTOR DAVID

But don't you think that giving people these things will keep them on the street longer?

SONNY

Drake would like a little longer.

PASTOR DAVID

Pardon me?

ALLY

(to Sonny)

I think the Pastor is asking about shelters, programs.

PASTOR DAVID

Yes. Shouldn't we be helping support the programs that get people off the street instead of enabling them to stay longer?

SONNY

With all respect, sir. Shelters aren't the best solution.

PASTOR DAVID

Explain.

SONNY

Here's the thing. There's no community in shelters. Everyone there is just focused on survival. In a tent city, there's security. There's someone to watch your stuff when you go apply for jobs. So you feel more like a man walking along the street with just your self and not all your belongings. You're not enabling the homeless to stay on the street. You're enabling them to stay safe, so they have another day to fight to get off the street.

PASTOR DAVID

I see.

SONNY

Please. Cardboard, wood, garbage bags, blankets, socks. Lots and lots of socks.

PASTOR DAVID

Okay. We'll do what we can.



EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - DAY

As Ally, Jed, and Sonny pull into the lot, Hammie runs up.

HAMMIE

Sonny! Sonny, come, come, come!

SONNY

What's up?

HAMMIE

Janey.

SONNY

Oh no.

Sonny hurriedly follows Hammie.

ALLY

What's wrong?

SONNY

Janey can be a bit abrasive when-

ALLY

What? When what?

Sonny continues following Hammie. They go through the fence in the back of the lot all the way to the residential side. The noise increases. Janey is YELLING at someone.

JANEY (O.S.)

You are a ROTTEN, ROTTEN child.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MOM (O.S.)

GIVE ME BACK MY CHILD!

Sonny and Hammie reach the noise. Ally and Jed close behind.

Janey's arms are wrapped around a screaming four-year-old.

JANEY

This child is rotten! Rotten!

NEIGHBOURHOOD MOM

Give her back to me! Please!

JANEY

You know what we do with rotten apples?

NEIGHBOURHOOD MOM

Stop, stop, Please!

JANEY

We throw them away! We put them in  
the dirt.

Janey begins to grab handfuls of dirt and smash it all over  
the child, who is hyperventilating at this point.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILD

Mommy! Mommy!

JANEY

Stop! Yelling!

Sonny wraps his arms around Janey and strokes her hair, like  
a father.

SONNY

Good girl. Good Janey.

Janey quiets, but doesn't let go of the child.

SONNY

Good girl, my precious Janey.

The mother makes a move for her child. Sonny stops her with  
one finger.

SONNY

Good girl, my love, my Janey.

Janey collapses into Sonny. The child is free. She runs to  
her mommy.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MOM

Oh baby, baby. My baby.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILD

Mommy. Mommy.

SONNY

Janey, my love, my Janey. I have  
you now. I have you, my darling.

Sonny keeps one hand on Janey, rocking her. With the other  
hand, he pulls out his phone, tap, tap, tap, and then hands  
it to Hammie.

On the screen: "social services."

Hammie taps it, and waits, the phone to her ear.

HAMMIE

Hey. Yeah we've got a situation.

She waits. The crowd watches as Sonny rocks Janey.

SONNY

Okay, Janey, my precious girl. It's okay. Gonna be okay.

The mom gets up with her child in her arms, and marches away.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MOM

You all cannot stay.

HAMMIE

I'm so sorry. The fence isn't repaired yet.

Another NEIGHBOR speaks.

NEIGHBOR

You all gotta go. Take your junk, your drugs and just leave!

JED

Hey, listen! These aren't drunken bums with needles shoved in their arms slobbering in a corner. We got people working graveyard shifts, we got kids, we got families too!

Sonny rocks Janey, gently stroking her hair. Janey MOANS.

The neighbor grunts and struts away.

SONNY

Jed. Check on Pops for me, will ya?

Jed nods and heads into the camp.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - DAY

Sonny zips up Janey's tent. Jed waits outside.

JED

How is Janey?

SONNY

Sleeping. Thankful for the drugs right now I guess.

JED

Not the right ones.

SONNY

No, not the right ones.

JED  
She needs help.

SONNY  
Professional help.

JED  
Hammie's got someone coming by that  
can help us navigate that.

SONNY  
Good. We're at the point were we  
need some pros.

They sit on that truth for a moment.

SONNY  
How's Pops?

JED  
Couldn't find him.

Sonny rubs his temples.

SONNY  
Shit.

HAMMIE (O.S.)  
Sonny! The guy's here!

INT. SONNY'S TENT - DAY

Sonny, Jed, Hammie, and ROGER (40s), a pencil-thin man with kind eyes, sit around a little makeshift coffee table. Sonny hosts with ease.

SONNY  
Okay! Would you like tea? Coffee?

ROGER  
You can do that?

SONNY  
I'm not uncivilized.

ROGER  
Oh, uh. No, thank you.

HAMMIE

Listen, professional "homeless" people, you understand, we want a normal life just like everybody else. So we surround ourselves with as much normalcy as we can muster.

ROGER

Aha.

SONNY

So I have a battery-powered electric burner. I can boil water.

ROGER

Pretty cool.

Sonny smiles. Weird.

HAMMIE

Okay, so here's the thing. We do have addicts here.

ROGER

And we have programs that can help.

SONNY

But, many of them need twenty-four-hour care.

ROGER

So, rehab.

SONNY

Ultimately. But it takes them trusting a friend who tells them they're ready, to decide to do rehab. And if we leave them for too long, they will find their drug.

ROGER

And for that we need resources.

SONNY

Right. So, say you have the resources you need, do you have the programs in place?

ROGER

(smiles)

How do you know so much about this?

POPS (O.C.)

Sonny! Sonny, you little shit, were  
are you?

Pops bursts into Sonny's tent and sees the meeting.

POPS

I guess I shoulda made a friggin'  
appoinmen- Mister big wheeler and  
dealer. You movin' up in the world,  
Sonny? Got no time for Pops, eh?  
Well, I got no time for you!

And he storms off. Sonny jumps up.

SONNY

Pops! Hey!

INT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - POPS' TENT - DAY

Pops appears to be sleeping soundly. Behind him Sonny  
watches. Then he departs.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - POPS' TENT - CONTINUOUS

Sonny looks sheepishly at Roger.

SONNY

I've been so busy lately. It's been  
hard to keep track of him.

Roger and Jed nod solemnly. Hammie shakes her head.

ROGER

Well, I'll see what I can find, but  
you know. I can't make promises. We  
do have programs for emergency  
needs, so call us if you have that.

SONNY

When we have that.

ROGER

Yeah. Well. I'll let you know if  
funding comes in for a new  
permanent placement. But otherwise-

SONNY

When funding comes in.

ROGER

Okay! When. I like that hopeful  
attitude.

Sonny reaches for Roger's hand. They shake. Roger walks away.

SONNY

Speaking of hope...

Jed turns and sees a van from Burbank Methodist Church turning into the lot. They walk toward it. The van comes to a stop. The DRIVER hops out, flips open the back, and unloads boxes of socks, blankets, and other donations. Sonny and Jed dive right in to help unload.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Janette's on her cell, looking out at the twinkling city.

JANETTE

I love you too, Julienne. Now brush  
your teeth. Listen to Miss Nancy.

Ron George skulks in. She holds up a finger. He waits.

JANETTE

Good girl. G'night. I love you too.

Janette hangs up and looks at Ron, awaiting his news.

RON GEORGE

(diving in)

A bunch of bums have taken over one  
of your commercial lots in Burbank.

Janette squints at him, lost in thought.

RON GEORGE

What should I do?

JANETTE

Let's pay them a visit.

RON GEORGE

You?? Literally?

Off Janette's stare.

RON GEORGE

I'll call the car.

INT. BURBANK SUBDIVISION - ALLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ally, Jed, and Sonny sit around Ally's kitchen counter drinking beers. Sonny looks at the roaring fireplace.

SONNY

It's almost as if no one is going to have to sleep outside tonight.

ALLY

Would you rather not come here to shower?

SONNY

No, no. Thank you. I appreciate it.

ALLY

Okay.

SONNY

Do you?

ALLY

Hm?

SONNY

Appreciate what you have?

Jed studies his beer intently.

ALLY

Of course I do.

SONNY

This big ole space. No one to share it with. Not even a coffee pot.

ALLY

What are you getting at?

SONNY

You have this huge space and just five miles up the road people are freezing to death outside. And five miles south. And east, and west. And that's just L.A.

ALLY

I am trying to help.

SONNY

Fifty people could sleep in here!



ALLY  
For how long?

SONNY  
For as long as it takes!

ALLY  
You are one to talk.

SONNY  
I'm the homeless guy, of course I'm talkin'!

ALLY  
You do not have to be homeless. You have assets. And let's not pretend that you don't have a bank account full of liquid cash either.

SONNY  
What do you know about my bank account?

ALLY  
All that cash and you're not using a lick of it to help anyone.

JED  
Ally. Come on.

ALLY  
No, no! I want to know! Where does he get off telling me I'm being selfish with my own living space when he's got probably got hundreds or thousands of dollars sitting in an account and he can't use it because he won't cop up to being who he really is!?

SONNY  
I am being who I really am.

Jed and Ally, huh?

SONNY  
It's who I was that isn't me.

ALLY  
You know what I mean.

SONNY  
I can't leave. I am doing more good as Sonny than I ever did-

SONNY (CONT'D)  
 (clearing his throat)  
 Just... I can't.

Jed's PHONE BUZZES. Sonny's PHONE BUZZES.

ALLY  
 What's happening?

JED  
 (at Sonny)  
 It's Janette.

SONNY  
 Shit.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - NIGHT

Ally pulls up in her Prius. Jed pulls up in his Escape. Sonny slips out the back and stays near the back of the crowd.

JANETTE (O.S.)  
 Who said you could live here!?

None of the community will talk to her. Jed and Ally walk up.

JANETTE  
 Why this lot?! You all do realize  
 you're going to have to leave. Talk  
 to me, goddammit!

Hammie looks to Sonny. Sonny waves Hammie forward.

HAMMIE  
 We know you're the one who forced  
 us out downtown. Why would we talk  
 to you?

JANETTE  
 Because I own this lot too!

Murmurs among the crowd.

HAMMIE  
 We are here legally.

JANETTE  
 This lot belonged to my late  
 husband, William. And when he died,  
 it became mine.

More murmurs from the crowd.

HAMMIE

This lot is ours! I've got the papers from the Coalition. As soon as I sign them, then we're just waiting on mayoral approval.

JANETTE

Fine. I'll be kind. I'll give you twenty-four hours. Does that sound fair? Twenty-four hours before I call the police to arrest you ALL for trespassing!

HAMMIE

You're lying!

CROWD

You're a bitch! A lying bitch!

JANETTE

I might be a bitch! But I'm a bitch who gets shit done! And you can quote me on that.

HAMMIE

(sarcasm)

Ladies and gentleman, the future mayor of Los Angeles.

Janette and her fences get into the lux SUV and tear away.

CROWD

Where's Sonny? Is this true? Can she evict us again?! I thought this was our new home! What's going on?

Sonny steps forward.

SONNY

Everyone, I'm one hundred percent certain that we're here legally. Janette West is wrong. So don't worry. We're going to make sure no one comes to kick you out!

CROWD

She said William West owned the lot! Are you William West? Who are you really?!

SONNY

(laughing)

Friends! William West is dead!

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm Sonny - the Sonny you all know.  
So trust me. She can't evict us.

CROWD

So if you own property how come you  
homeless?

Chuckles and yeahs.

SONNY

It's complicated.

Mumbling, the crowds head back to their homes.

INT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - SONNY'S TENT - NIGHT

Jed, Ally, and Sonny circle to discuss, in whispers.

JED

If you came forward, you might even  
stop her from running for Mayor,  
from passing laws that don't serve  
your friends. Maybe even jail.

ALLY

Why does Sonny coming forward send  
Janette West to jail?

No comment from Jed and Sonny.

ALLY

Okay, fine. If you have information  
that could tie Janette West's  
hands, but you won't come forward  
for fear of jail, then you're just  
as bad.

Sonny sighs.

ALLY

You talk all the time about  
responsibility versus entitlement.  
What do you think you're entitled  
to here? Secrecy? No one is  
entitled to secrecy if they've done  
something illegal.

Sonny crosses his arms.

ALLY

I know what you're thinking.

SONNY

Do you? You who have a big empty home? You who's been "helping" for weeks and who won't even open up your home for a few sleeping bags?

ALLY

I wanna focus my efforts on the most impactful thing.

SONNY

Berating me!?

ALLY

Getting you to embrace who you are! The resources you have. The fullness of the possibility of what you can accomplish. Not hiding!

Sonny is silent at that. It is true. He always hides.

ALLY

Take responsibility for all of who you are, Sonny. That's the only way to actually stand for something.

SONNY

People are always saying "stand for something," "stand up for what you believe." Well, now we've got a nation of people yelling at each other on social media and nothing's getting done! Well, I'm here, in the trenches, working. Don't you see? Coming forward ties my hands.

ALLY

But it also ties hers!

Sonny hears this. Nods.

SONNY

Huh. Crap, I've got another idea. Jed, can you drive me?

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - FRONT AREA

Sonny climbs into Jed's Escape. They drive away. Ally watches them go. She looks to her car. Then looks back at the community. Someone hands her a disposable cup.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hot chocolate?

She takes it. The person beside her is tall, dark, and statuesque. This is TYREESA (30s).

ALLY  
Hey, you're from the church, right?

TYREESA  
(nodding)  
Tyreesa.

ALLY  
Ally.

TYREESA  
Oh, we all know who you are.

ALLY  
Oh?

TYREESA  
You're his inspiration.

ALLY  
Ha!

TYREESA  
Seriously. He had a reputation  
before you showed up. But after? He  
really kicked it into high gear.

ALLY  
Kicked what?

TYREESA  
Have you seen Janey here tonight?

Ally looks around.

TYREESA  
How about Jake? Or Bo'Shawn?

ALLY  
Where are they?

TYREESA  
Rehab. Transitional housing. Jake  
was in a hotel.

ALLY  
Why a hotel?

TYREESA

So he could get a few days sleep  
and a shower and apply for jobs.

ALLY

And how exactly did Sonny help?

TYREESA

He paid for all of it.

ALLY

The hell?

TYREESA

The checks always cash. He's done  
it for a bunch a people.

ALLY

How does he know they're gonna do  
what he expects them to do?

TYREESA

He knows. Who's gonna take the  
opportunity seriously. Like when  
you took him seriously. He knows  
when each of us is ready to work.

ALLY

Us?

TYREESA

Yeah. Us.  
(winking)  
Okay. I got to hand out more ho-  
cho. You be good.

ALLY

Be good.

Tyreesa leaves. Ally sips her hot chocolate. Pensive.

EXT. OFFICE TOWER - NIGHT

Jed pulls up in his Ford. Sonny gets out.

JED

(thru the window)  
Call me the second you need out.  
I'll be waiting.

Sonny nods and head to the doors. Inside, the Security  
Officer points to the elevators. Sonny continues toward them.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator doors DING and open. Sonny appears and walks out. He looks to the right, then to the left. He heads left.

He heads down darkened hallways looking at door plates.

Finally, at the end of the long hall he see it.

Nameplate: JANETTE WEST, FAIA, PRINCIPAL - WEST CORP

Next to the door a FENCE waits. Sonny approaches the fence, leans in, and whispers something. The Fence nods and steps aside. The door is slightly ajar. Sonny pushes the door open.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sonny slowly pushes the door open.

JANETTE (O.S.)  
Hey! I said not to-

Sonny moves forward slightly, into the light.

SONNY  
Hi Janette.

JANETTE  
My god... Is that? William?

SONNY  
Your one and only.

She rushes toward him. Puts her hands on his face, over his beard. His chest. His neck. He focuses on these touches. It's been a long time. He melts into them, closing his eyes. He loses himself in her touch.

JANETTE  
God. Haven't you shaved even once  
in five years? Where have you been?  
My god, I longed for this day and I  
stopped believing it could happen!

He grasps her hands and gently kisses her fingers.

SONNY  
I've missed you.

JANETTE  
Oh, Will.

Sonny, shudders at the mention of his own name.



SONNY

I- I'm not Will anymore.

JANETTE

What?

SONNY

I- I'm Sonny now.

Janette takes a step back.

JANETTE

You're that- that Sonny?

SONNY

I've come to say, if you don't let the community stay on that lot in Burbank, I will go to the police with what we did.

JANETTE

That's your play? You're going to throw me under the bus.

Sonny gazes flatly at her.

JANETTE

Some homecoming gift.

SONNY

You can't be so cold as to believe what you're doing is right.

JANETTE

Will-

SONNY

Sonny.

JANETTE

Whatever. Understand this. I work for the city and when I'm working for the city, I will do what I can for EVERYONE in the city. But when I am working for MY OWN FAMILY, I will do what is best for us.

SONNY

Julienne.

JANETTE

Yes.

SONNY  
How old is she?

JANETTE  
She's five.

SONNY  
So you were pregnant when I left.

JANETTE  
Eight weeks.

SONNY  
Can I see her?

JANETTE  
Not like this.

Sonny looks down.

JANETTE  
If you drop this act as Sonny the Homeless Ass, then we can talk about it. You come back to being William. We can talk about it.

SONNY  
What we did was wrong.

JANETTE  
There were loopholes.

Sonny sighs.

JANETTE  
Mark me. I can get police down there like that. There's nothing you can do about it.

SONNY  
Besides get you arrested?

JANETTE  
And take me away from our daughter?

SONNY  
If that's what's needed.

Sonny turns and walks toward the door.

JANETTE  
You don't exist, Will! Remember that? You're already dead.

Sonny put his hand on the door handle.

JANETTE (O.S.)  
Hello Commissioner.

Sonny freezes.

JANETTE  
Yes, I know it's late. My  
apologies. I'd like to have some  
trespassers removed from one of my  
properties. Burbank. Yeah. As soon  
as you can. Thank you so much.

She hangs up.

JANETTE  
(to Sonny)  
Better hurry, darling.

Sonny scoots out the door. Janette is left with her emotions.

INT./EXT. JED'S FORD ESCAPE / INTERSTATE 5 - NIGHT

Jed drives. Sonny is tapping on his phone.

JED  
That's really what she said? You're  
already dead. You think she was  
actually threatening to kill you?

SONNY  
Not really sure.

JED  
Maybe we shoulda put a bug on you.

Sonny tap-taps on his phone.

JANETTE (V.O.)  
"God. Haven't you shaved even once  
in ten years? Where have you been?"

Sonny taps again.

JED  
Good thinking.

SONNY  
Jed. She called my bluff. I can't  
pull Janette down too.

JED

Why not?

SONNY

Julienne. She's right. I can't separate them. Janette deserves jail, but Julienne doesn't deserve to grow up without her own mother.

JED

I see.

SONNY

So, I'll do what's necessary to reclaim the land, but quietly, then transfer the rights back to you.

(he lets this land)

Because I know I can trust you to do what's right with it.

(afterthought)

And of course we don't tell the community. They don't need to know.

They drive in silence.

JED

I mean, I might rebuild something on the residential side.

SONNY

(smiling)

Good plan.

JED

But what about right now? She's put an eviction order out on us.

SONNY

Well, we can't transfer the title until morning, so best option right now is to try and convince the cops we're squatters, not trespassers.

JED

Tall order.

SONNY

I know.

They drive on.

JED

She's saving the lot for Julienne.  
She won't be happy, you giving it  
back to me.

SONNY

Just like any father, I want the  
best for my ... daughter. But  
there's not much difference between  
awesome and less awesome.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - FRONT AREA - NIGHT

Jed and Sonny pull into the lot. Vans from the Burbank  
Community Church are still there. Volunteers pour steaming  
coffee from boxes and hand out hot chocolate. Sonny grabs a  
crate and places it in a clearing. He jumps up.

SONNY

(to the crowd)

Hey everyone! I've got an  
announcement.

The community gathers.

SONNY

Unfortunately, Ms. West has indeed  
called in an eviction order for us.  
Illegally, of course! She's still  
under the impression that she owns  
our land. She's still wrong.

CROWD

Who owns it, Sonny?

SONNY

We do! I promise. And tomorrow Jed  
and I are going to file the papers  
to make it official. But tonight,  
we have to stay strong.

(with fervor)

We are not homeless. We've built  
homes here. We are not alone. We've  
built community here. We are not  
hopeless. We lift each other up!

Nods of agreement and appreciate spread throughout the crowd.

SONNY

So when the enforcement arrives, we  
will stand together. If you trust  
me, stand with me and I'll do my  
best to get us through this.

A CHEER sounds from the crowd. Ally approaches.

ALLY  
 (to Sonny)  
 Can we talk?

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - BACK FENCE - NIGHT

Ally and Sonny walk along the fence, in silence. When they are far enough away from the other tents, they stop.

ALLY  
 Sonny, why, when I accused you of not doing enough to help your friends, did you not tell me about Janey, Jake, Tyreesa, and everything you've been doing?

Sonny nods, realizing the truth has finally come out.

SONNY  
 See, the thing is, these guys don't trust a suit. They don't trust a volunteer or a social worker. And frankly, even though you've been helping, they don't even trust you.

Ally squints, skeptically.

SONNY  
 They trust someone who understands them. What they're going through.

ALLY  
 I see.

SONNY  
 When I send them to go apply for jobs and to get some sleep and several days of showers, they are way more motivated then than they are by a shelter staff member who treats them more like paperwork than a person.  
 (hesitation)  
 Now don't get me wrong. There've been some great staff in this city whose hearts are right. But for some reason, I developed a reputation for being able to know when a person is ready to get off the street. So when I tell them they are, they really believe it.

Ally takes this in.

ALLY  
You really are undercover.

SONNY  
Atoning for my sins I guess.

ALLY  
(firmly)  
What sins?

Sonny rubs his temples.

SONNY  
Residential real estate fraud.

ALLY  
(laughing)  
Sorry. That's ironic.

SONNY  
You tell me.

ALLY  
What did you do, specifically?

SONNY  
Simply put, I, we, Janette and I, would convince homeowners to transfer the deed of their home to us, in exchange for us taking care of the mortgage under the guise of helping them pay it off and then transferring the title back. The trick is we found a bunch of loopholes which meant we didn't have to transfer the titles back.

Ally is moderately horrified.

SONNY  
That's actually how I knew Jed...  
And his wife.

ALLY  
Why is he not angry as hell?

SONNY  
Oh you know, we've had our own journey. When he hit the streets right after it happened, I recognized him immediately.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I felt so guilty I helped him get off the streets asap. I'm sure that's why he forgave me once he figured it out. And uh, might have been the start of my reputation...

Ally sighs in understanding.

ALLY

But how do you get access to your account? Like how do you get money?

SONNY

When we first got married, I started a separate savings account for our future children. One that I never told Janette about. It was gonna be a surprise for when she got pregnant. I put money in that account for years. Then when the deals kept getting shadier, I made a few strategic changes to the account. Got some checkbooks. When I was leaving town, I didn't know she was pregnant. I was planning to live on what was in there, until I had a new job, a new life. It's my own money. The checks keep cashing.

ALLY

I knew there was more to you...

SONNY

Most of it bad.

ALLY

Maybe a beautiful mix.

Ally hugs Sonny. He's mostly embarrassed.

ALLY

So tomorrow's the big day?

SONNY

What do you mean?

ALLY

You're going to reveal to everybody who you are! You said you're gonna file the papers. Make it official.

SONNY

Yeah, uh. Quietly. Just the bare minimum.



SONNY (CONT'D)

Whatever's necessary for Jed to take ownership. Then I'm Sonny again. Poof.

ALLY

You still don't see it.

SONNY

See what?

ALLY

Who you really are. How much more you can accomplish.

SONNY

Ally! I did that! I made money. I was the rattiest successful corporate rat out there. What good did it do? Zero. Negative. People died because of me.

ALLY

People die every day.

SONNY

Not on my watch. Not anymore.

ALLY

So you'll give up accessing the power and resources you had because you used it poorly?

SONNY

I still have my money.

ALLY

I'm not just talking about money. I'm talking about relationships. Sway. Respect. White male-ness.

This triggers something in Sonny.

SONNY

I gotta find Pops.

ALLY

You have the ability to give Pops all the help he needs, but not have to be the one to baby-sit him.

SONNY

I made him a promise.

Sonny walks away. Ally rubs her temple in frustration.

INT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - POPS' TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny pokes his head in.

SONNY

Pops? You in here?

Pops relaxes quietly in the corner, eyes closed. A crack pipe lays near his reddened finger tips.

SONNY

Oh no. I'm so sorry.

POPS

(eyes still closed)

I know man. I know. I know what you're gonna say. I just needed it, man. I just needed a little more. I know what you're thinking. I know what Damien would think. I know you think I'm shit, man. I know you can't leave me alone. I know!

SONNY

Pops-

POPS

I know, okay! I know! You don't have to tell me. I know!

SONNY

I'm so sorry. I've been so busy.

POPS

S'not your fault, man.

Sonny climbs in and finds a comfy seat.

POPS

Don't leave me. I need you. I need help. I...

Sonny grabs Pops frail hands.

SONNY

I'm sorry I've been busy. It's been crazy getting all this started. But it's all done now. I just got one more thing to do and then it's done. It's ours. And we can stay here as long as you need til you get clean. Then we'll call Damien.

POPS

My man.

SONNY

He's waiting for that call.

POPS

My boy.

SONNY

He knows you can do it. Get clean.

POPS

He believes in his Pops, don't he.

SONNY

Sure does.

POPS

You believe in me too, don't you.

SONNY

Every damn day. You're gonna get clean. You're gonna go home.

Pops smiles and closes his eyes. Sonny watches him for a moment, then shifts for comfort and closes his eyes too.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - FRONT AREA - EARLY MORNING

SIRENS. Burbank Police cars flank the gate. Cops stand near their vehicles, behind car doors. One with a bull-horn makes an announcement.

POLICE OFFICER 1

(into the bull-horn)

We are here to enforce an eviction order. You are all trespassing and you need to leave in a quick and orderly manner.

Community members boil water, stir oatmeal, drink coffee, and stare back at the officers. A sleepy Hammie and a sleep-deprived Sonny appear.

HAMMIE

(quietly)

So should we leave or should we fight? I was expecting muscle, but police? This is serious.

SONNY

Stall as long as you can.

Sonny pulls out his phone and ducks behind a tent.

HAMMIE

(to the officers)

We aren't trespassing! We know the owner! This is a mixed-use space.

POLICE OFFICER 1

(into the bull-horn)

We are here to enforce an eviction order. You are all trespassing and you need to leave in a quick and orderly manner.

Sonny approaches again, his empty hands raised.

SONNY

Good morning officers. If you'll give me the opportunity, I'd like to explain something.

POLICE OFFICER 1

There's nothing to explain. You're trespassing. You need to leave.

SONNY

We're not actually trespassing. We're squatting. There's a significant difference and the law is on our side.

Some police officers laugh. Some are stone-faced.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Everyone needs to pack up your belongings and leave in an orderly manner.

POPS (O.S.)

Or what?!

Pops staggers angry and wild toward the front gate.

SONNY

Pops, no!

The officers raise their weapons toward Pops.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Or we will have to remove you forcibly!

POPS  
Yeah, you'd like that, wouldn't  
you!? Chance to shoot a black man.

SONNY  
Pops! Get back!

POLICE OFFICER 1  
On the ground! Now!

SONNY  
Pops. Stand down!

POPS  
Naw, man. It's these pigs who  
should stand down! Comin' here,  
tryin' to throw us out of our  
pretty new home.

POLICE OFFICER 1  
On the ground! Get on the ground!

POPS  
On the ground?! I been on the  
ground for fifteen years! And I'm  
done! I wanna see my family again!  
I wanna see my son again! Damien!!

Pops flings his arms to the sky.

POPS (CONT'D)  
I'm coming for you, boy!!

Pops runs toward the officers who promptly fire. BOOM.

Pops is thrust back. He falls to his knees. Then his side.

Sonny hurries to him. Pops gurgles blood.

SONNY  
(tears)  
Pops. No.

Pops weakly looks to Sonny. Fear creeping into his eyes.

POPS  
(as best he can)  
Sonny. I've got a confession.

SONNY  
S'okay.

POPS  
I'm the j- jackass who mugged you.

SONNY

I know.

POPS

I just wanted another hit. When I saw you was William West, I got so scared. Then you said you didn't remember...

SONNY

I remember everything. Even Damien.

Pops, shocked, coughs up blood.

SONNY

I watched him tell you to get clean. So I stayed, and pretended-

POPS

You been lyin' to me all this time.

SONNY

You been lyin' to me too.

Pops hacks again. It's bad. Very bad.

POPS

You kept me alive for as long as you could, Sonny. Thank you.

SONNY

Pops don't.

POPS

Find Damien. Tell him I tried.

Pops passes. Sonny cries on his chest. Frightened, sorrowful tears from the community echo around the empty lot. The bull-horn switch is TURNED ON. Sonny looks up.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Everyone pack your things and leave in an orderly manner.

HAMMIE

How can you be so calloused?!

The police officers cock their guns again.

At that moment, a TV van from the local L.A. News shows up and reporters rush out, but stay a safe distance. Cameras on.

HAMMIE (CONT'D)

You're animals!

Sonny, face damp, takes a last look at Pops and his friends and slowly stands, hands in the air.

POLICE OFFICER 1  
Hands behind your head, sir!

Putting his hands behind his head, Sonny turns to the officers, and their guns.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
(deep breath)  
I am William West!

GASPS! The crowd murmurs. The cameras hum. The police officers keep their guns trained on Sonny.

SONNY  
You're under the assumption that this land belongs to Janette West, of West Corp, because she inherited the property after the death of her husband, William James West. Well, I am him. You can run my prints right now. This land belongs to me.

POLICE OFFICER 1  
You? Do you even have any idea how much this land is worth?

SONNY  
I know what it was worth five years ago, when I bought it.

The officers hesitate.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER OFFICE - DAY

Janette looks up as Ron George enters and turns on her TV.

RON GEORGE  
You want to see this.

ON THE TV

Sonny, hands on his head.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - FRONT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Sonny addresses the TV cameras.

SONNY

Fifteen years ago, I began a series of not only shady but downright illegal real estate transactions. After one especially pernicious deal five years ago, a family ran out of money for medical expenses, and a beloved wife died...

Sonny glances at Jed.

SONNY

I felt so guilty I wanted to disappear. But on my way to the train station, I was mugged.  
 (he looks at Pops)  
 This flawed, kind man, Pops Howard, took care of me. He called me Sonny. And when I saw in the papers that everyone thought I was dead, I thought I'd been given a new life. So I have been living, homeless, in Downtown Los Angeles for the last five years.

Turning to the officers.

SONNY

So technically this lot is mine.  
 (back to the crowd)  
 I'm going to turn myself in for my crimes. I'm sorry for my lies.  
 (looking at Pops)  
 Please forgive me, Pops.

The police officers relax, just a smidge, sharing glances. The community is speechless. Police Officer 1 turns to two officers near him.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Bring him over.

Two officers gently apprehend Sonny, cuff him, and bring him to the police cars, where they take his prints.

Sonny mournfully studies Pops laying in the dirt.

Police Officer 1 turns to another officer.

POLICE OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

Call Ms. West or her attorney. See what you can find out.



INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER OFFICE

On the TV screen: a police office picks up a phone and dials.

Janette sits on her desk, watching the screen.

JANETTE

Thank heaven for little girls.

The PHONE RINGS at her Assistant's desk.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ms. West. The police are on the  
line for you.

Janette picks up the phone.

JANETTE

This is Janette West.

(listening, sighing)

Yes. He's telling the truth.

(sighing again)

I apologize.

She hangs up.

JANETTE

(to the TV, to Sonny)

You'd better not change your mind.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - FRONT GATE - LATER

Sonny leans against the police car, still handcuffed. The police officers confer.

POLICE OFFICER 1

(to another office)

Yeah, she said to let him have it.

POLICE OFFICER 3

Just like that.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Well, it really is him!

POLICE OFFICER 3

What about warrants?

POLICE OFFICER 1

Yeah... About that.

Sonny watches the officers talk. The two officers walk to Sonny and help him up, still cuffed.

POLICE OFFICER 1  
 Apologies for the cuffs. You  
 understand, Mr. West.

Sonny nods. They lead him to the police car. Sonny grabs one  
 last look at Pops before they duck him into the cruiser.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - CORNER OFFICE - DAY

ON THE TV: The police drive away from the lot. The feed cuts  
 back to a news anchor who is shocked.

ANCHOR 1  
 Wow! That was William James West.  
 Presumed dead for five years.  
 Living downtown, among his former  
 associates, but never recognized!  
 West was arrested just minutes ago  
 at a small shanty town in Burbank.

ANCHOR 2  
 I bet he begged for money from his  
 fellow business partners and they  
 never even noticed.

ANCHOR 1  
 I wonder how Janette West is  
 feeling right now, and whether this  
 will affect her bid for mayor.

ANCHOR 2  
 Her presumed dead husband  
 resurfaces in a homeless community?  
 Certainly a smudge on her selfless  
 civil service reputation.

ANCHOR 1  
 Amazing. Is shantytown the right wo-

The TV goes dark.

Janette leans against her desk, remote in hand.

RON GEORGE  
 He took all the blame. Whew! Right?

Janette gives him shade.

JANETTE  
 You'd better be grateful. I've  
 still got a whole bus to throw.

INT. BURBANK POLICE DEPARTMENT - JAIL - DAY

Sonny mourns, head in hands. A guard clomps down the hall and scuffs to a stop at Sonny's cell. CLANG. The door opens.

JAIL GUARD 1  
You've got company.

Sonny looks up.

INT. BURBANK POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Sonny, disgusted, sits across from Ron George.

RON GEORGE  
I have some things for you to sign.

He pushes a folder across the table. Sonny picks up a pen with disdainful practicality and flips open the folder.

RON GEORGE  
So, who's side would you say the  
law is on now?

Sonny signs, fervidly. Finishes. Pushes the folder back.

SONNY  
Still mine, Ronald. Don't forget.

Ron nods, nervously. He knows.

EXT. STORAGE UNIT - DAY

A crowd of Sonny's friends from D.T.L.A. stands back as Ron George unlocks the lock and rolls the door up. He gestures to the crowd to enter at their will. They gracefully ignore him and respectfully begin digging through the piles, searching for their things.

INT. BURBANK POLICE DEPARTMENT - JAIL - DAY

Sonny stewes alone in his cell. A guard approaches.

JAIL GUARD 2  
Someone posted bail for you.

Sonny cocks his head, confused.

EXT. BURBANK POLICE DEPARTMENT - JAIL - DAY

Sonny walks out the door and sees-

Jed, leaning against his Ford Escape, waiting for him. Jed holds out his arms and hugs Sonny. Nothing needs to be said.

INT. JED'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Jed unlocks the door and walks inside. Sonny follows.

JED

We grabbed your things from the lot. I hope that's okay.

SONNY

Sure.

Jed's apartment is small. Cramped. Too many books and not enough seats. He has a sofa, a desk, and a loft bed.

JED

Sorry. It's smaller than your RV.

SONNY

S'fine.

Jed turns lights on and gets Sonny a glass of water.

JED

You take the loft tonight. After we get back.

SONNY

Back from where?

JED

Ally will be by in a bit to tell you about that.

INT. JED'S STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Jed tidies his kitchen. Ally confers with Sonny on the sofa.

ALLY

I think I figured it out. You're not scared of them not trusting you because they'll see you as rich and disconnected. You're scared of them not trusting you because you think they'll think you're evil.

Sonny considers this.

ALLY

Well guess what. I've spoken with a good majority of your friends and the general consensus is favorable.

Sonny scoffs.

ALLY

So here's the deal. You've got a choice. You can stay here tonight with Jed, and idunno, catch up on shows you missed. Or you can come to a gala with me. But the catch is, you'll be going as William "Sonny" West. So you have to be okay with that. What do you think?

JED

It's leftovers here, or a gorgeous steak dinner there.

ALLY

See? Easy decision.

SONNY

(sighs)

They all already know who I am at this point. Why hide anymore.

ALLY

Awesome. Good. Oh. You'll have to shave for me too, m'kay? Jed's got what you need in the bathroom.

Glare from Sonny.

ALLY

I'll be outside waiting with the car. Come down when you're ready. Jed, let's give him some space.

Jed dries his hands and he and Ally leave the apartment.

Sonny looks at the bathroom door, but turns to the desk. Sitting down at Jed's computer, Sonny pulls up Google and searches: "Damien Howard."

On the screen: a LinkedIn profile for Damien Howard shows up. He's a smart professional-looking young man.

Sonny covers his mouth with his hands, wincing.

Sonny then searches "Janette Julienne West" and clicks "Images." Photos of Janette with Julienne at various events show up. Sonny rubs his temples.

INT. JED'S STUDIO APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everything Sonny needs to shave is all laid out. He picks up the beard trimmer. Flips the switch. It hums. As Sonny looks in the mirror, he sees a tux hanging on the door behind him.

EXT. JED'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jed and Ally chat, in front of a limo, and look up to see-  
 Sonny, clean shaven, in his tux, his arresting blue eyes glistening with tearful, slightly fearful, joy.

INT. GRAND HALL - EVENING

Sonny and Ally walk in arm in arm, pass a slick sign stating: "The 45th Annual Humanitarian Awards" into a huge gorgeous room with beautiful dinner tables and well-dressed people.

Sonny sees Hammie, clad in a dress. Janey, in a formal dress, looking lovely. Tyreesa, looking stellar. And other friends.

SONNY  
 (stunned, to Ally)  
 Did you do this?

Ally grins.

INT. GRAND HALL - LATER

The HOSTESS, a classic beauty about 50, takes the stage.

HOSTESS  
 I'm delighted that we've come to the next portion of our evening. We will now announce the winner of the Social Justice Award.

Ally squeezes Sonny's hand. He smiles curiously back at her.

HOSTESS  
 In past years, we've announced our recipient a few weeks ahead of our ceremony, but this year, we were unable to, due to some unusual circumstances.

## HOSTESS (CONT'D)

But we've been told he is here tonight and is ready to come forward. And so, ladies and gentleman, I am so excited to announce this year's winner of the Social Justice Award, William "Sonny" West.

The crowd erupts into APPLAUSE and CHEERS. Sonny doesn't move. Ally nudges him. Sonny swallows. Finally, he gets up and carefully makes his way to the front.

## HOSTESS

Mr. West has been working tirelessly with the homeless community, helping to bring people out of poverty, one life at a time. We are humbled and encouraged by his selflessness and bravery.

As Sonny reaches the stage, a little girl in a sparkly taffeta dress crosses the stage to him with the actual award - a heavy crystal statue. Julianne.

Sonny stops short. Breathless. She doesn't know him, yet.

As she hands him the award, he takes it and puts it on the stage, briefly looks at her in disbelief, then totally lost in the moment, hugs her.

He looks around to where she came from and sees Janette, complacently clapping for him, a brazen smile on her face.

Julianne runs back to her mum.

## JULIENNE

Mommy, who is that man?

## JANETTE

You'll find out soon, my sweet.

Sonny approaches the microphone, and looks out at the hundreds of people celebrating him.

## SONNY

(slow, thoughtful)

What makes a man. A woman. A person. It is not achievement. It is not financial success. It is honesty. It is courage. It is choice. I want to dedicate this honor to all my friends who've challenged me to be the kind of man that my community needs;

SONNY (CONT'D)

who've provoked me to be honest  
about where I fall short; and  
who've gently given me the courage  
to choose generosity. I will  
continue to work toward being the  
man you believe I can be.

UPROARIOUS APPLAUSE from the audience. Sonny gazes gratefully  
down at Ally and Jed.

They beam back their pride in him.

INT./EXT. JED'S FORD ESCAPE / INTERSTATE 5 - NIGHT

Jed drives with Sonny.

JED

Such a good night.

SONNY

Unbelievable.

JED

You talked to Grace?

SONNY

Yeah. She said to come by after the  
whole hullabaloo is over. Might  
have something for me.

JED

See? Ex-cons can still find work.

SONNY

Heh. I already knew that. Helped a  
few out, once upon a time.

He smiles a humble-proud smile; looks out the window.

EXT. EMPTY BUSINESS LOT - FRONT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Jed parks. He and Sonny get out. They see a new sign above  
front entrance. The sign reads: "POP'S PLACE"

Sonny places his hand over his heart and wills his eyes to  
not leak.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Penny is watering potted flowers, when she looks up and sees  
a handsome, cleanly-shaven, casually-dressed Sonny.



PENNY  
 (not recognizing him)  
 Can I help you?

SONNY  
 You doing okay, Miss Penny?

PENNY  
 (amazed)  
 Sonny?

SONNY  
 It's me.

She can't help herself and gives him a big bear hug.

SONNY  
 You think maybe the owners wouldn't  
 mind me buying some flowers?

PENNY  
 (laughing)  
 Of course not!

He digs for some cash, a slightly sad smile on his face.

EXT. JANETTE'S BEAUTIFUL BURBANK HOME - DAY

Sonny gets out of a taxicab, looking up at the large home. Inside, Julianne pulls back the curtain to peek at him. Sonny picks up a bag and heads to the front door. Janette holds it open it for him.

JANETTE  
 (polite)  
 Welcome. I had the guest room made  
 up, if you need it.

SONNY  
 Thank you; but, not just yet.

JULIENNE  
 (hugging Janette's waist)  
 Mommy, is this the man you said was  
 coming to visit me?

JANETTE  
 Yes, darling. This is him.

Janette and Sonny stare at each other.

JULIENNE  
 You have blue eyes, like me.

Sonny's blue eyes well up. He picks up a pot of forget-me-nots out of the bag and holds them out.

SONNY

Do you like flowers?

Julienne takes them, smiling.

JULIENNE

Thank you.

SONNY

They're forget-me-nots. If you're ever feeling sad, or lonely, you can always look at these flowers and remember, you are loved.

She looks up at him with wide saucer eyes.

JANETTE

Come inside.

EXT. BURBANK SUBDIVISION - ALLY'S HOUSE - LATER

Sonny walks the driveway of Ally's house, carrying a lily plant in a pot. Looking in the window on the front, he sees Ally entertaining Tyreesa, Janey, and other women from the homeless community. They laugh together.

Sonny rings the doorbell. Ally opens the door, holding a coffee pot and a smile.

ALLY

Hi, friend!  
(lifting the pot)  
Coffee?

SONNY

(with a wink)  
Now this shack is finally a home.

She welcomes him into her living room full of comfortable, yet practical furniture, and filled with friends.

GROUP

Sonny!

Ally closes the door behind him.

FADE TO BLACK.