

TO THE EXTREME

by
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INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

VANILLA ICE (23) sits in front of us, mid-interview. Chiseled jaw. Hair in a pompadour with a streak of blonde in front. Lines shaved through his eyebrows and temple.

He beams with confidence and virility, at the top of his game. But he also looks pained, like he's trying to articulate a complex idea. He takes a second, then:

ICE

We sampled it from them but it's not the same baseline. It goes *DING DING DING DIGA DING DING. DING DING DING DIGA DING DING*. That's the way theirs goes. Ours goes *DING DING DING TING AHH DING DING. DING DING DING TING AHH DING DING*. That little bitty TING. It's not the same!

His mouth widens into a giant grin, like he got away with something big. Before he can say another word --

FLASH CUTS OF

- Parachute pants, glimmering under stage lights...
- an American Music Award, thrust into the air...
- screaming fans climbing over each other onto stage...
- a motorcycle pedal dropping, the asphalt burning by...
- a "#1" pendant dangling from a gold chain...
- a light array firing, illuminating Ice standing defiantly, in a star-spangled red and blue suit...

The image forms the cover art of his first album. The album. You know the one. A title fades up below his feet:

TO THE EXTREME

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Spoonie Gee's SPOONIN' RAP record sits on a dusty shelf. This is, by contrast, simple, unremarkable even. Just a sleeve with a cutout, displaying a clean yellow label.

CLOSE ON the face of ROBBIE VAN WINKLE (12) a skinny, innocent looking white boy staring at it in awe. No Vanilla. No Ice. Not yet.

MIAMI LAKES, FLORIDA
JUNE, 1979

Robbie glances behind him. Coast is clear. Sneaking toward the shelf, he picks up the record gently.

CLOSE ON a needle dropping.

CLOSE ON the vinyl spinning, crackling.

CLOSE ON a giant pair of headphones as Robbie slips them on, the opening bars of SPOONIN' RAP ringing out.

He falls back on the bed, high on the sound. Behind him, out of focus, SOMEONE enters the room, stopping and standing there, eerily quiet.

Oblivious, Robbie shuts his eyes as the music rises. A hand enters frame slowly. Robbie still has no idea.

SLAP! The headphones fly off his head. He jolts upright, staring in horror at --

His big brother KIP (16), who grabs Robbie by the neck and lifts him off the bed, pinning him to the wall.

KIP

I told you to stay out of my room!

Squirming out of his grasp, Robbie bounces off the bed, right into -- THE RECORD PLAYER. It CRASHES to the floor, the record skittering out of it.

KIP (CONT'D)

You little shit!

Robbie crawls to the record, grabbing it instinctively and hugging it to his chest with everything he's got as Kip grips the top of it, trying to rip it away from him.

KIP (CONT'D)

Let go Robbie!

ROBBIE

I just want to listen to it!

KIP

Yeah well it's not yours!

ROBBIE

I DON'T CARE!!

Kip balls his fist and punches Robbie square in the face.

INT. ROBBIE'S KITCHEN - LATER

CLOSE ON a massive black eye. Robbie adjusts a bag of ice over it as Kip shuffles in.

ROBBIE
(standing)
Let me hang with you and your boys.

Kip swings around, ready to hit him again.

KIP
You don't get it do you? Fucking retard.

ROBBIE
Get what?

KIP
It's not your record. It's mine. They're not your boys. They're mine. You're you. I'm me. So back the fuck off, Robbie.

INT./EXT. ROBBIE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Robbie sits on the windowsill glumly, holding the bag of ice to his eye, watching something in the driveway.

Kip and A GROUP OF BLACK AND LATINO TEENAGERS are gathered around a scrap of cardboard, surrounded by dirt bikes, attempting to break dance to SPOONIN' RAP.

CLOSE ON Robbie, full of envy and unrest. Wanting everything his brother has. More.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

The muscular, sinewy body of a white guy break dancing to BDP's THE BRIDGE IS OVER pouring out of a boom box.

As he spins toward us, we recognize him, barely. It's Robbie, now 20. Hair shaggy, in an undershirt and kakis.

DALLAS, TEXAS
MAY, 1987

He's joined by CHILL (21), black, jovial, with a high-top fade and SHAY (19), black and Mexican, short but crazy athletic as they dance on cardboard next to a dumpster.

Robbie does a stabbed windmill into a backspin as Chill and Shay holler. He's gotten GOOD -- way better than Kip.

CHILL

Move out the way. Let a pro get in.

Chill one-ups him with a toprock. They're all GOOD.

SHAY

He topped your ass!

ROBBIE

Nah. Check it.

Robbie jumps back in and does a handglide into a freeze.

CHILL

Get the fuck out with that fake shit --

Robbie strains, his body weight completely suspended on one hand. He spins upward into a handstand, then descends into an inverted chair pose, a move known as --

SHAY

Oh shit! The Icey-Ice!

VOICE (O.C.)

Robbie?

They pay no attention, Robbie continuing with his epic combination. Chill shaking his head, unimpressed.

VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Robbie!

Robbie looks up at Kip (now 24), tucked in red polo, pleated kakis, graduated from rebel to young Republican.

ROBBIE

Jump in, Kip!

KIP

No fucking way.

ROBBIE

Why not?

SHAY

'Cause he's too pussy to battle lil' bro!

Kip scowls at Shay.

KIP

I'm not a fucking kid, alright? Grow up.

(to Robbie)

Customer's looking for you.

Robbie reaches for the boom box and turns down the music.

ROBBIE
Can't you help him?

KIP
Your lunch ended fifteen minutes ago.

SHAY
Okay, officer.

Robbie flips into a standing position.

ROBBIE
Alright y'all...

CHILL
City Lights tonight. Don't forget.

Robbie nods and puts on his own identical red polo shirt, two sizes too large, leaving it untucked.

INT. MINO'S CAR LOT - SHOWROOM FLOOR - DAY

A reluctant SOCCER MOM (40's) holding a BABY, listens as Robbie tells her about a flashy white Camaro Iroc-Z.

ROBBIE
Now this is what I drive. And you and your whole family would look good in it.

SOCCKER MOM
It's a two-door.

ROBBIE
Yeah but there's plenty of room in back.

She shakes her head, her eyes wandering.

SOCCKER MOM
What about that minivan over there?

ROBBIE
Every mom's driving a minivan though.
Don't you want to stand out?

She shoots him a wary look: "Not really."

INT. BRYON'S OFFICE - DAY

Robbie enters a sterile office. Employee of the month plaques on the wall. A nice one of Kip. None of Robbie.

ROBBIE
Wanted to see me?

BRYON MINO (49), stocky, goateed, Robbie's boss and stepdad, sits behind his cheap desk, typing with two index fingers on a giant computer.

BYRON
You close that sale?

ROBBIE
She needed more time to think.

BYRON
I'm sure she did. She came in wanting a family vehicle and you tried to sell her a gangbangers' car.

ROBBIE
Yo, that's *my* car --

BYRON
Is that supposed to reassure me?

Robbie shrugs. Bryon pushes his chair toward his office window, pointing toward the showroom.

BRYON
You should be able to see who's in that showroom and know what they want. That kid right there, fresh out of college?

Byron points to a clueless PREPPY WHITE KID.

BYRON
He's looking for a fisher price "My First Grown-Up car." So show him a Civic. Don't show him a fucking Dodge Viper. How 'bout that guy right there? What do you see?

He points to a well-dressed BLACK MAN. Robbie shrugs.

BYRON (CONT'D)
That's who you should sell a flashy car to...if he could afford it.

Robbie's brow furrows. Not cool with this.

ROBBIE
Why you putting people in boxes man?

BYRON
(ignoring the question)
Look at Kip. He falls in line.
(MORE)

BYRON (CONT'D)

That's why he's crushing it. I'm doing
your mom a solid letting you work here.
Now you do me a favor. Judge the book by
it's cover and sell some fucking cars.

INT. SHOWROOM FLOOR - RECEPTION AREA

Shuffling out of Bryon's office, deflated, Robbie glances
up at the black receptionist, SADIE (22), self-possessed,
sharp-eyed, sitting behind the front desk.

He straightens his posture, musters up some swagger.
Heads toward her. She sees right through it.

SADIE

Byron ripped into you again, huh?

ROBBIE

Nah, I told him what was up.

SADIE

Sure you did.

ROBBIE

Yo, what are you doing tonight?

SADIE

Nothing with you.

ROBBIE

So now it's like that, huh?

SADIE

When hasn't it been?

ROBBIE

Girl, you need to lighten up and roll
with us to City Lights.

SADIE

You have no idea what I need.

(beat)

Good luck getting in.

ROBBIE

Chill dances there. He got the hook-up.

SADIE

From who?

ROBBIE

(no idea)

He's the man. VIP status.

SADIE

Uh huh.

The phone rings. She picks up.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Mino's car lot.

ROBBIE

Come with us.

She waves at Robbie to go away. He doesn't move.

SADIE (ON PHONE)

No sir, you might want to try a certified
Toyota dealership. You too.

She hangs up, glaring at Robbie.

ROBBIE

Come on. It'll be fun.

SADIE

Look, I'm not fucking with you and
scrubby ass little Chill.

ROBBIE

Your loss girl. What can I say.

SADIE

You said too much already.

He shrugs "whatever" as a MONTAGE BEGINS...

-- Robbie drives in his Iroc-Z with his speakers up LOUD,
rapping along to the track PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1...

-- Robbie flips through CD's in a Sam Goody, pulling out
"Yo! Bum Rush The Show by Public Enemy," "Criminal
Minded" by BDP and "Born to Mack" by Too Short...

-- Robbie slides three gray Russell sweatshirts and three
pairs of Dickies across the counter at Sears...

-- Robbie pays for white spray paint at a local art
store, throwing down a handful of crumpled bills...

-- Kneeling in his garage, he "whites out" his dirty
rims, even spray-painting the tread on his tires.

ROBBIE (RAPPING)
(under his breath)
*Robbie's what they call me / rhymes they
come so freely / like I stole 'em out the
sky or from a writer on a movie...*

EXT. ROBBIE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

BETH (46), Robbie's mom, tough faced, fried blonde hair,
pulls up in a minivan, getting out with groceries.

BETH
Why you doing that again, Robbie?

Robbie stops spray painting, glancing up at her.

ROBBIE
'Cause I like it all whited out, ma.

BETH
I don't understand it.

ROBBIE
(shrugging)
Black gets dirty too quick. White stays
clean, even in the mud.

BETH
Well you're gonna get pulled over.

Robbie side-eyes his mom, not liking the implication.

ROBBIE
I'll be fine.

BETH
You should put on a mask or something.
That stuff stinks. And when you're done,
come help me with dinner.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Beth chops carrots on a cutting board as a kettle boils
behind her. She reaches for it. Burns her hand.

BETH
Owe!

Bryon sits across from Kip at the kitchen table, reading
the sports section of the paper. They glance up at her.

BRYON
Need a hand, hun?

BETH
No -- Robbie's suppose to be helping me.

KIP
Good luck with that.

Beth turns the burner off and huffs toward...

INT. HALLWAY

...Robbie's room. A sign reads "UNSTABLE AREA, DO NOT ENTER," on the door. The baseline of I'M BAD by LL Cool J vibrates the family photos in the hall. She enters.

INT. ROBBIE'S ROOM

Messy. Hiphop posters cover the walls. A dusty stack of motocross trophies in the corner.

Robbie looks up at her, midway through putting on a thin gold chain over one of his new gray sweatshirts.

BETH
It's too loud.

ROBBIE
What?

BETH
Can you turn it down, please?

He nods, lowering the volume on his boom box.

BETH (CONT'D)
I asked you to help me with dinner.

ROBBIE
I would but I gotta jet.

BETH
Where you going?

ROBBIE
Just...out, ma.

Beth crosses her arms.

BETH
Why you doing this, Robbie?

ROBBIE

Doing what?

BETH

Avoiding us. Spending all your time at clubs in the worst part of town with...
(pointing to an NWA poster)
...these people.

ROBBIE

Easy, Cube and Dre? I wish.

BETH

You understand what I'm saying.

ROBBIE

Not really.

BETH

When you did motocross, I was scared you were gonna break your neck. But at least it was constructive. This is just...

ROBBIE

I'm fine, ma. Trust me.

Headlights through Robbie's window. The sound of a car pulling up. More thick base. A horn honks.

Robbie smiles and kisses Beth on the forehead, hurrying out before she can get in another word.

EXT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

WE DESCEND from a neon Marquee reading "CITY LIGHTS // TALENT SHOW TUESDAYS" down to a LONG LINE OF PEOPLE, mostly black, dressed in the freshest 80's fashions.

The most attractive faces are up front, the quality of the line diminishing the farther back we go, until we land on: Robbie and Shay at the very end. Chumps.

Chill joins them, flustered.

CHILL

Bum-ass bouncer doesn't believe I danced here, man.

ROBBIE

This is a bad look.

SHAY

Ay! There goes Sadie right there!

Robbie whips around, following Shay's gaze toward the front of the line, where Sadie and TWO GIRLFRIENDS exit a cab, the BOUNCER unhooking a velvet rope for them.

ROBBIE

Man she said she wasn't coming tonight!
Don't let her see us --

SHAY

Sadie! Sadie!

ROBBIE

(eyes widening)
What the fuck, Shay!

Sadie squints at them, recognizing Robbie.

SHAY

(far off)
Tell him we're with you!

SADIE'S GIRLFRIEND

Awe hell no!

Sadie shakes her head, sauntering inside with the girls.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - LATER

Robbie, Chill and Shay are next up in line. They look Embarrassed. Exhausted. Waiting for hours.

BOUNCER

(to Chill)
Oh there he is. The "dancer."

Chill nods politely, on his best behavior.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)

Whose the white boy?

CHILL

My homie.

BOUNCER

You trying to start a fight? Get the fuck out of here.

CHILL

Come on man, we waited in line. Like you said. Just talk to Tommy --

BOUNCER

I ain't talking to Tommy for you!

Chill nods, apologetic. The bouncer mad dogs him.

CHILL

Alright. Let's go, y'all.

He turns away. Robbie and Shay follow. A flash of pity in the bouncer's eyes: these guys are pathetic. He sighs.

BOUNCER

You're lucky we ain't at capacity.

He unhooks the velvet rope.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Robbie, Chill and Shay enter, looking meek. The Tuesday night talent show is under way. A heavy break beat pounding. Robbie's the only white person there.

On stage MC CONCRETE (25), a poor man's Big Daddy Kane, spits an underwhelming verse.

MC CONCRETE (RAPPING)

*Call me Concrete / Move your feet / You
know how I creep / Between the sheets!*

(beat)

I'm talking 'bout sex, y'all!

The audience roars. Robbie, Chill and Shay cringe.

CHILL

That is some wack ass shit.

SHAY

Why do they love this fool so much?

ROBBIE

Cause he brought his friends. That's why.

They look over at 20 SCRUBBY DUDES, his cheering section.

CHILL

More like paid his friends.

Robbie spots Sadie at the foot of the stage, eating it up. MC Concrete raps right to her.

MC CONCRETE (RAPPING)

*Sex sex sex / I flex flex flex / tap one
bitch / then it's next next next!*

Cheers all around. A fire burns in Robbie's eyes as he stares at Concrete gyrating in front of Sadie.

ROBBIE

Man, this no-talent fool gets the spotlight while we gotta wait at the back of the motherfucking line?

Chill eyes Robbie, then glances at Shay. Whispers something to him. Shay grins, darting off.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Where's he going?

CHILL

Just getting some drinks.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - LATER

A female rapper with cornrows, DA RUGRAT, freestyles.

DA RUGRAT (RAPPING)

*See me at the club / saying you want to
be more than friends / that all depends /
on how much your crusty ass spends!*

The ladies scream as the beat fades and the silken-voiced manager JOHN BUSH (45) steps in front of the crowd.

JOHN BUSH

Da Rugrat, ya'll! Give it up. Da Rugrat.

More drunken cheers. John Bush lifts a notecard up.

JOHN BUSH (CONT'D)

Next up...we got...let's see
here...Robbie Van Winkle? What the fuck
kinda name is that?

Laughter. At the bar, Robbie sits next to Chill and Shay, his eyes wide as saucers. Terrified.

JOHN BUSH (CONT'D)

Oh, I see. Robbie Van Winkle AKA MC
Vanilla. MC Vanilla get your ass up here!

Chill and Shay crack up, drunk. Robbie spins toward them.

ROBBIE

What the fuck did you do?

CHILL

You wanted the spotlight? There it is!

ROBBIE

That's not what I meant!

SHAY
Can't back out now, kid!

INT. STAGE WING - MOMENTS LATER

Robbie timidly approaches the back of the DJ booth. The DJ, EARTHQUAKE (26), tall, imposing, looks down at him.

EARTHQUAKE
You MC Vanilla?

ROBBIE
Yeah, um, my friends were just clowning --
Earthquake ignores him, pointing to his record crate.

EARTHQUAKE
What beat you want?

ROBBIE
Nah, I'm good.

EARTHQUAKE
No you ain't. Pick a record. Or I'll pick one for you.

Robbie hesitates, still uncertain. Glancing at the selection. Recognizing something. A clean yellow label.

ROBBIE
Is that Spoonie Gee?

Earthquake nods, grabbing and loading the record.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
Whoa, hold up, I was just --

EARTHQUAKE
Come on, white boy, you wasting time.

Robbie swallows, in a cold sweat.

INT. STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

He steps into the spotlight, holding a mic. Laughter abounds. The crowd jeering. John Bush squints at him.

JOHN BUSH
Oh shit, I see why they call you Vanilla.

AUDIENCE GUY (O.C.)
Go home white boy!

WHIZZ! A can of beer flies an inch past Robbie's face.

JOHN BUSH

Ay! I'm up here too, alright? No throwing
shit or your ass is getting thrown out!

The sound of Robbie's HEARTBEAT and HEAVY BREATHING as he
stares, deer in the headlights. His eyes dart from --

-- Chill and Shay, rolling with laughter at the bar, to

-- MC Concrete, talking shit to his friends, to

-- Sadie, staring up at him. Not laughing at all.
Wondering how he's gonna get out of this alive.

Robbie's face hardens. Determination in his eyes. We saw
this in '79. But it's fiercer now. Dangerous even.

JOHN BUSH (CONT'D)

Now let's try to keep it together, and
give a warm City Lights welcome to
Dallas' own...MC Vanilla.

The opening bars of SPOONIN' RAP hit. Robbie bobs his
head, getting into it. On the first beat of the verse, a
switch flips. He jumps in, no fucks given.

ROBBIE (RAPPING)

*On 'til the break of dawn / MC Vanilla
does transform / comin' out of my shell /
I'm making you yell / while I'm looking
in the crowd / wondering if you can tell
/ that something is off / why is Concrete
so soft / He tried to pour it on / but
his rhymes got lost / With his sex sex
sex / he can flex flex flex / up his own
asshole / he's got no real soul / 'cause
even a whiteboy / puts on a better show --*

The crowd stirs, not expecting this. Robbie leans down,
rapping right to MC Concrete:

ROBBIE (RAPPING) (CONT'D)

*-- You say you're creeping in the sheets
/ but you can't ride a beat / and you
paid your friends to be here / just so
you could compete --*

A collective gasp. Nailed it. Concrete's face drops.

ROBBIE (RAPPING) (CONT'D)
*-- So make fun of my name / Doesn't feel
 like defeat / 'cause I'm still from the
 street / where I piss on Concrete!*

The crowd explodes, despite themselves.

In a VIP booth at the far end of the bar, TOMMY QUON (35), Chinese American, dapper, in a tailored gray suit, stares at Robbie, not sure what to make of him.

ROBBIE (RAPPING) (CONT'D)
*You heard me bust a rhyme / You know I
 ride a beat / but none of y'all can fuck
 with how I move my feet --*

Robbie drops the mic and flips into a break dancing combination. The one we saw him practicing. His adrenaline pumping, he hits it flawlessly.

AUDIENCE GIRL
 Oh shit! Go whiteboy, go whiteboy, go!

The crowd starts chanting those infamous five words...

ENTIRE CROWD
 Go whiteboy, go whiteboy, go!

Sadie gazes up at him. A giant grin on her face. Chill and Shay stare, mouths agape, blindsided.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Robbie lies asleep, dead to the world, the roar of the crowd still reverberating like a dream.

WE ROTATE around him, from horizontal to vertical: he's sitting against a wall in a break room, passed out.

KIP (O.C.)
 Jesus. Wake the fuck up, Robbie. This is embarrassing.

He blinks awake, wincing, hungover. Kip glowers at him.

INT. MINO'S CAR LOT - SHOWROOM FLOOR - DAY

Robbie speaks to a BORING GUY IN KHAKIS (40's) sizing up a Toyota Corolla. Bryon watches him through his blinds.

ROBBIE
(robotic)
It'll get you from point A to B with the
highest savings. It's best in its class.

GUY IN KHAKIS
Let me think about it...

The guy walks away, uninterested. As he exits the
dealership, he bumps past someone entering.

A familiar face: it's Tommy Quon. In his suit, he looks
like a high roller, especially here. Bryon takes note as
Tommy's eyes land on Robbie, who approaches dutifully.

ROBBIE
Anything catch your eye?

TOMMY
You did actually.

ROBBIE
(hesitating)
What do you mean?

TOMMY
At City Lights. Your performance -- I've
never seen anything like it.

ROBBIE
(quietly)
Um...thanks...

Byron approaches them, smiling widely at Tommy.

BYRON
Robbie answering all of your questions?

TOMMY
Yes. He is.

BRYON
Good. Let us know if there's anything
else we can do.

Byron gives Robbie a look, "Don't fuck this up," then
walks away. When he's gone...

TOMMY
Why don't we meet tomorrow. At ten AM.

ROBBIE
Don't take this the wrong way, but who
are you, exactly?

Tommy nods, fair question, then gives Robbie a card. It reads simply: "Tommy Quon."

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
This doesn't tell me much.

TOMMY
Tomorrow. Ten O'clock.

ROBBIE
Look, man, I got work --

TOMMY
You'll figure something out.

He pats Robbie on the shoulder and walks away. Robbie glances at the card again, confused.

SADIE (O.S.)
You know who that was?

Robbie looks up at Sadie as she approaches him.

ROBBIE
He said he saw me at the club.

SADIE
He owns the club. I can't believe he came in here...What did he want?

ROBBIE
To meet with me. Tomorrow morning.

SADIE
He's gonna sign you!

ROBBIE
If I took off Bryon would lose his mind.

SADIE
Hold up. Can I speak to MC Vanilla, please? The dude who turned a crowd of bloodthirsty motherfuckers into his personal fan club in five minutes?

Robbie blushes. Sadie persists.

SADIE (CONT'D)
You better find a way. Trust me, Robbie. This shit won't come knocking twice.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Robbie eats dinner with Beth, Bryon and Kip.

ROBBIE

Hey, so, um, I was wondering if I could
get the morning off tomorrow...

Byron freezes, mid-bite, staring at Robbie.

BYRON

Why would I give you the morning off?

ROBBIE

I got a meeting.

BYRON

A meeting, huh? With who?

ROBBIE

That guy in the suit. Asian dude.

BYRON

The one you couldn't close?

ROBBIE

Yeah. No. I mean, he's actually the owner
of a club I performed at --

BYRON

You *performed* at?

KIP

He's got a little dance routine. I've
seen him "practicing" by the dumpsters.

ROBBIE

Yeah, well, he wants to talk to me about
that. And, you know...rapping.

BETH

(sickened)

Oh, Robbie...

ROBBIE

It's just a few hours...Please?

BYRON

Absolutely not. It's President's Day
weekend, for Christ's sake! End of
discussion.

Robbie nods, despondent, then pushes his chair back,
heading to his room, slamming his door.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Robbie breakdances with Chill and Shay at their spot.

CHILL

Look, Tommy's an important man. A
businessman. And time waits for no man.

SHAY

That's a metaphor.

ROBBIE

For real, what am I supposed to do?

Chill glances across the lot at a Ross Dress for Less.

CHILL

Give me like thirty bucks.

ROBBIE

Why do I gotta give you money?

CHILL

Trust me! I got you, homie.

Robbie shakes his head. Takes out a money clip.

ROBBIE

Just keep it low key.

INT. MINO'S CAR LOT - DAY

Chill walks in wearing a cheap beige suit and an ascot. Robbie sees him, catching his drift, hurrying over. He glances at a tag on Chill's lapel, rips it off quickly.

ROBBIE

Can I help you, sir?

CHILL

(loudly)

I have a great deal of money! And I would
like to test out your finest automobile!

Byron watches from his office window.

CHILL (CONT'D)

Show me a Mercedes Benz! Chop chop!

ROBBIE

(hiding his frustration)

Absolutely, sir.

INT. BRYON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Robbie enters, heading to a pegboard and grabbing a labelled set of Benz keys.

BYRON
Five hundred series?

ROBBIE
Yup.

Bryon glances out of his window again at Chill, who has his hand on his chin in an exaggerated thinker's pose.

BYRON
He looks familiar. Has he come by before?

Robbie meets Byron's eyes, silent for a beat, then --

ROBBIE
(matter of fact)
They all look the same to me.

Bryon nods, "Good point" as Robbie heads for the door.

INT./EXT. BENZ - DAY

Chill drives the Benz, grinning wildly. Robbie sits shotgun. They're pushing 80 down a residential street.

ROBBIE
Man I said low-key!

CHILL
Look, if you want to meet Tommy Quon in a busted ass Jetta that's your prerogative.

They hit a bump, sparks flying.

ROBBIE
Slow the fuck down!

CHILL
Relax! This shit's got like, five hundred horsepower. And check it!

Chill flips a switch and the convertible top goes down.

EXT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - DAY

They pull up and break hard in front of the club, Robbie's hair windswept into the pompadour we'll come to know as his trademark. He glances in the mirror.

ROBBIE

Look at my fucking hair man! I gotta meet Tommy like this?

CHILL

Looks kinda dope, you ask me.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - DAY

Robbie enters, looking around. Barely seems like the same place. The daylight reveals how dusty and beat up it is.

John Bush, the talent show host, sits at the bar, reading a paper. He glances up at him, grinning.

JOHN BUSH

Well look who it is. The funky white boy. Get a haircut?

ROBBIE

(sheepishly)

Tommy wanted to meet --

JOHN BUSH

Of course he did. Let me take you back...

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE

Tommy sits at his desk, doing paperwork. John enters, leading Robbie in. He stops short, taking in the decor: a shrine to Elvis, full of an absurd amount of memorabilia.

JOHN BUSH

Welcome to Graceland.

TOMMY

(to Robbie)

He loves giving me shit...

John smiles warmly and exits. Robbie continues to scan the walls: Elvis posters, framed album covers, press photos, movie props, a signed guitar...

ROBBIE

I guess I don't need to ask you who your favorite artist is.

TOMMY

You a fan?

ROBBIE

Honestly, Mr. Quon?

TOMMY

It's Tommy. Please. Take a seat.

Robbie nods, sitting in a plush blue suede chair.

ROBBIE

I never really vibed with his sound.

TOMMY

Why not?

ROBBIE

It's just a little too...

Robbie hesitates.

TOMMY

Rockabilly?

ROBBIE

White.

(beat)

I guess that's funny coming from me.

TOMMY

No, you're right...in retrospect. He influenced generations of white musicians, really the entirety of contemporary rock today. But if you were in the audience the first time he performed at the Overton Park Orchestra Shell in Memphis on July 30th, 1954...

Tommy points to something on his wall...a framed B&W photo of Elvis on a shabby stage, sweating, hips swaying.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

...you know what you would have seen?

Robbie shakes his head, not sure where this is going.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

An unknown nineteen year-old white boy strutting and singing like Ivory Joe Hunter, Arthur Crudup and Fats Domino.

ROBBIE

Who were they?

TOMMY
They were black.

A silent beat.

ROBBIE
You saying he stole their sound?

TOMMY
Some thought so. But Elvis wasn't doing black culture. He wasn't doing white culture. He was doing American culture. It wasn't a race thing.

ROBBIE
What do you mean?

TOMMY
He was a poor southern kid. He listened to the music of his class. It didn't matter that it was black. It was what he knew. Even if no one in white America could understand it. Actually, their lack of understanding, their discomfort, made him a novelty. Then a staple. Then the most famous musician in the world.

Robbie adjusts in his chair uncomfortably.

ROBBIE
So what...you want me to wear a jumpsuit?

Tommy laughs.

TOMMY
I want you to be true to yourself. Even when everyone tells you you're acting like someone else.

Robbie's moved by this. He's never heard someone put it in these terms before.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You keep doing what you did Tuesday night. On stage. On a record. And I sort out the rest. How's that sound?

Robbie looks at him for a moment, then grins.

EXT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - DAY

Tommy opens the door and sees Robbie out.

TOMMY
Oh, Robbie, your name. MC Vanilla?

ROBBIE
What about it?

TOMMY
Too many "MC's" out there. We need something original.

ROBBIE
Like what?

INT./EXT. BENZ - DAY

Chill sits with Robbie in the parked Benz.

CHILL
Vanilla Ice?

ROBBIE
Yeah.

CHILL
Sounds like a motherfucking popsicle!

ROBBIE
He said it was 'cause I'm smooth as Vanilla. Cool as Ice.

CHILL
And you bought that shit?

ROBBIE
Fuck you, man. I just got signed. Show some love! Come on.

CHILL
Look, Tommy Quon can call you MC Purple Freeze Pop as long as we can call you rich! Let's celebrate. Cruise the strip.

ROBBIE
Alright, but we gotta make it quick.

INT. MINO'S CAR LOT - DAY

Sadie sits at reception, looking worried, watching Byron tear into Robbie through his office window.

INT. BYRON'S OFFICE

BYRON

What test drive takes three hours?!

ROBBIE

He couldn't make up his mind --

BYRON

Bullshit! You went to your lil' meeting, didn't you? After I told you not to!

Robbie considers covering but then shrugs, "Fuck it."

ROBBIE

I'm sorry, Byron. I couldn't pass it up.

BYRON

Well, I'm docking your paycheck.

ROBBIE

Fine.

BYRON

Plus a fee for the sales you lost us!

ROBBIE

Yo man, that's not fair --

BYRON

You have to learn there are consequences to your actions. You can't just do what you want all the time. This is real life.

Robbie glances out the window at the showroom floor. Sees Sadie eyeing them. Turns back to Byron. Can't stay quiet.

ROBBIE

Nah, it ain't.

BYRON

Excuse me?

ROBBIE

This is your life. It ain't mine.

BYRON

What's that suppose to mean?

ROBBIE

Means don't worry about taking anything out of my paycheck. You can keep it.

BYRON

Oh, so, what, you're quitting now?

Robbie stands, heading for the door.

BRYON

You think your mom's gonna support you?
You think I am? You're a high school
dropout. What are you gonna do, Robbie?

Bryon follows Robbie as he walks out, shouting after him.

BYRON

Seriously? What are you gonna do?!

Robbie doesn't turn back, walking toward Sadie, with the hint of a smile as we hear the opening bars of one of his earliest songs, called "Ice is Workin' It".

EXT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

WE DECEND ON the marquee again, which now reads: "TONIGHT MC HAMMER" and below that: "w/ VANILLA ICE."

SEPTEMBER, 1988

There's a line double the length of the one we saw before, THREE BOUNCERS vetting people at the door.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB

Robbie's onstage, wearing a Russell sweatshirt and three gold chains, his hair gelled up into a pompadour, performing the song, totally in his element.

Chill and Shay dance with him, DJ Earthquake on the turntables, the CROWD packed wall-to-wall.

From here on out, we'll refer to Robbie as "Ice."

ICE (RAPPING)

*The Ice rhymers is back and living large /
and when I'm at a show, you better wear
camouflage / 'Cause there were plenty who
thought I couldn't swing this / But now
what I get from the crowd is just a
pumped fist --*

The crowd hollers, pumping their fists in unison as Ice goes into a heavy part of his dance routine, giving it everything he's got, Chill and Shay in time with him.

Tommy watches from his private booth, smiling proudly.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Ice enters, pulling off his sweatshirt. Sadie stands from a makeup chair, wrapping her arms around him.

SADIE

That was amazing baby.

He smiles and kisses her, picking her up and sitting her on the counter against the mirror. They make out.

KNOCK KNOCK! Sadie glances at the door.

SADIE (CONT'D)

We're busy!

KNOCK KNOCK! Ice backs away from Sadie, who looks at him longingly. He turns, throwing open the door.

ICE

Yo, she said --

Ice stops cold. MC HAMMER (26), stands there in full concert gear, Cazal safety goggle sunglasses, yellow blazer and parachute pants. Iconic.

HAMMER

Just wanted say your set was slammin'.

ICE

(stammering)

Oh, shit. Well...thank you, Hammer.

HAMMER

Usually when I come to town, I don't watch the opener, but I heard about you around the way. And the rumors are true.

ICE

Yo...that means the world to me --

HAMMER

Gotta get on stage. Hit up my table after the show.

Ice nods, beside himself.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - ON STAGE - NIGHT

Hammer performs on stage, crowded with EIGHT BACKUP DANCERS, singing an early hit, LET'S GET IT STARTED.

HAMMER (RAPPING)

*They say "Hammer how you doing" / I got
it like that / My posse's ever rolling /
We keep it intact...*

Ice and Sadie watch from the front row, mesmerized.

INT. VIP BOOTH - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Cristal pouring into a wine glass. Hammer hands it to Ice, who sits across from him.

HAMMER

There you go man. Cheers.

Hammer's ENTOURAGE swarms around him, TWENTY GUYS deep, but they're respecting his space. Letting them converse.

ICE

Show was insane man. I hope I can reach that level...

HAMMER

When's the album coming out?

ICE

We're writing. Trying to get it right.

HAMMER

Can I be real with you? Don't worry about getting it right. Worry about getting it out. Everything's available. Take what you need. Rap over a track, it's yours.

ICE

Word?

HAMMER

Word to the mother.

ICE

(curious)

What's that mean?

HAMMER

Word to the motherland. Africa.

Ice nods, liking the sound of this, taking note.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Standing in a vocal booth, Ice listens to the chorus of PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC by Wild Cherry on headphones.

Behind a glass partition, Tommy sits next to DJ Earthquake, who is producing. A timid, skinny black kid, MARIO (19), his intern, sits next to them.

WILD CHERRY (SINGING)

*Play that funky music white boy / Play
that funky music right / Play that funky
music white boy / lay down and boogie...*

Ice shakes his head, pulling off his headphones.

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)

What's the problem?

ICE

Why's it gotta be about me being white?

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)

'Cause it's catchy as hell.

TOMMY

You can do what you want on the B-Side.

ICE

It's just hard to rhyme to...

Earthquake lets go of the talk button and says something to Tommy off mic. Tommy gets back on the intercom.

TOMMY (INTERCOM)

Mario can come up with some lyrics for you if that'll help --

ICE

Nah. I write my own shit.

Ice turns and heads for the door.

TOMMY (INTERCOM)

Where you going?

ICE

My office.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Sitting on the toilet, Ice writes lyrics furiously on a scrap of toilet paper.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

In the booth again, he holds the toilet paper, headphones on. Earthquake starts the beat up. Ice gets into it.

ICE (RAPPING)
*I'm back and I'm ringin' the bell / A
 rockin' on the mic while the fly girls
 yell / In ecstasy in the back of me /
 Well that's my DJ cuttin' all them Z's --*

Earthquake bobs his head. Tommy gives him a thumbs up.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Ice sits in the studio with Earthquake, Tommy and Mario, eating Chinese takeout for lunch.

Earthquake plays a rare 70's disco song, STRUT YOUR STUFF by The Live Band, on the hunt for samples.

ICE
 ...Nah.

Earthquake changes it to SPACE LADY by Fruit.

ICE (CONT'D)
 I don't think so.

Earthquake changes it to ROCK ME AMADEUS by Falco.

ICE (CONT'D)
 Hell no!

Earthquake gives up, flips it over to the radio.

ANNOUNCER (ON THE RADIO)
 ...You're listening to Rock 100.5! Here's another rock block, coming at ya!

TOMMY
 We've heard so many good tracks. Just pick one and run with it.

ICE
 When I hear it, I'll know, alright?

On the radio, the opening bars to "UNDER PRESSURE" by Queen and David Bowie ring out. Ice doesn't notice.

EARTHQUAKE
 (listening intently)
 Yo, guys...

TOMMY

I respect your process, but it's costing us studio time. And we can't luxuriate --

ICE

Yo, I'm just trying to make dope shit --

EARTHQUAKE

Guys!

They look at Earthquake, who points to his speaker. Ice listens. So does Tommy. They glance at each other.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Silence in the vocal booth. Headphones on.

ICE

Play it.

He holds up a napkin with new, handwritten lyrics.

ICE (A CAPELLA) (CONT'D)

*Alright stop / Collaborate and listen /
Ice is back with a brand new invention /
Something, grabs ahold of me tightly /
flows like a harpoon daily and nightly /
Will it ever stop, yo, I don't know /
Turn off the lights, and I'll glow / To
the extreme, I rock a mic like a vandal /
light up a stage / cut a chump like a
mango --*

Ice stops, pulls off his headphones. Looks at Earthquake.

ICE (CONT'D)

Why'd you stop it?

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)

You really want to rap about mangos?

ICE

(considering)

Nah. I'm more of a grapefruit guy.

Mario, the assistant, says something. Earthquake goes off the intercom, listening, then hits the talk button again.

MARIO (ON INTERCOM)

How 'bout, "Wax a chump like a candle."

ICE
 (shrugging)
 Let's try it.

Earthquake backs the track up. Runs it. Ice jumps in.

ICE (A CAPELLA) (CONT'D)
*To the extreme, I rock a mic like a
 vandal / Light up a stage / wax a chump
 like a candle!*

And there it is. Just like that. The song that'll change everything. But first...

INT. CITY LIGHTS CLUB - NIGHT

Ice dances with Chill and Shay on stage to his song HOOKED. THE CROWD goes wild. A little too wild. A SHORT GUY (20's) gets pushed to the floor.

SHORT GUY
 Get the fuck off me!

The SHORT GUY'S FRIEND tries to help him up, yelling at the offender, a tatted up dude named CHAUNCEY (20's).

SHORT GUY'S FRIEND
 Yo, fuck you, Chauncey!

Ice glances at Earthquake, who cuts the music.

ICE (ON MIC)
 Everybody in the back, take it from
 Iceman and chill the fuck out. We're here
 to have a good time.

The ruckus continues, escalating quickly.

CHAUNCEY
 Shut the fuck up, white boy!

The crowd boos Chauncey.

GUY IN CROWD
 He can rap better than your wack-ass!

Ice looks down at Sadie. She glances at him, worried.

ICE (ON MIC)
 You know what? I was gonna do this last,
 but here's a new one for y'all. B-side on
 my first single. It's called Ice, Ice --

TWO SHOTS ring out! Chauncey falls to the ground!
Screams! Everyone flees. SHORT GUY holds a smoking gun.

Ice jumps down into the audience, grabbing Sadie and
sprinting off as Chauncey pulls out a 9MM and FIRES BACK.

INT. ICE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ice lies with Sadie on his couch in his new studio
apartment, both staring into space, traumatized.

ICE
Shit just escalated so fast...

SADIE
Yeah...I know it's the hood, but I never
get use to it.

ICE
And I was just about to...

He trails off. Sadie looks him in the eye, compassionate.

SADIE
What is it? You can tell me.

ICE
...It's nothing. I was just about to do
that new B-side is all. That shit's fire.

Her face drops. She pulls away from him, sitting up.

SADIE
You're worried about your B-side?

ICE
(obviously)
Well, yeah.

SADIE
Three people got shot tonight. Three
black people.

ICE
I know. I wish they could have heard my
track, at least --

SADIE
What the fuck?

Sadie stands abruptly, like something bit her.

ICE

Yo, what's your problem?

SADIE

You come to our neighborhood, go to our club, only because we let you, then when we get shot in front of you, you worry about gracing us with your new single?

ICE

Whoa, what is this "we" shit? The only "we" should be "us." It's not your club. It's Tommy's. And you didn't let me do anything. I earned it. Straight up fact.

Sadie puts on her jacket, her skin crawling.

ICE (CONT'D)

Sadie, come on --

Ice reaches for her wrist and she shakes him off her.

SADIE

Do you even know why you want to rap?

ICE

'Cause I'm good at it.

SADIE

You think it's a competition. A way to prove to everybody that you're more than some regular white dude from a regular white family. But it's not about that.

ICE

What's it about then, Ms. Hip-hop?

She stares through him, shaking her head.

ICE (CONT'D)

Come on! What's it about?

SADIE

If I have to tell you, you'll never really know.

Sadie marches out, slamming the door behind her. He jumps up, throwing the door back open, calling down the stairs.

ICE

Sadie! What the fuck?! Sadie!

No response. Just her footsteps. She's already gone.

INT. CITY LIGHTS NIGHT CLUB - DAY

Ice enters, looking sleepless, Shay and Chill behind him, all of them staring, baffled, at...

THREE LARGE WORKERS carrying out parts of Tommy's office: Elvis posters, records, his signed guitar...

ICE

What the hell's going on Tommy?

TOMMY

Well, I got some good news and bad news...Good news is, your tracks are amazing and we have enough for an album.

ICE

What's the bad news?

TOMMY

I had to sell the club.

Their eyes widen collectively.

CHILL

You telling us we're out of a job!?

SHAY

Oh, come on T, I just bought a Five-O!

ICE

The club, is like, your life --

TOMMY

That shooting brought some heat. We're not exactly up on all our codes. And people are asking questions now. So it's time to cut our losses.

Ice looks despondent, the reality setting in.

ICE

I guess we ain't performing no more.

TOMMY

(smiling confidently)
I didn't say that.

INT/EXT. TOUR VAN - NIGHT

Chill, Shay and Earthquake sit wedged into the back of a packed Ecoline van, Tommy at the wheel and Ice sitting shotgun. They look roadworn and miserable.

**LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
FEBRUARY, 1989
VANILLA ICE'S FIRST TOUR**

EXT. MAJIC TIMES STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

The van pulls into a desolate parking lot in front of a strip club. The marquee reads: "Tonight! Ventriloquist Comedy by Boy Wonder! Also: Vanilla Ice Rap Music".

INT. MAJIC TIMES STRIP CLUB - STAGE - NIGHT

Ice performs PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC. For a song that didn't suit him, he's killing it live. It comes to an end and he catches his breath, then:

ICE (ON MIC)
Yo, I just want to say a shout out to my crew. These are my boys, Chill, Shay, and DJ Earthquake on the decks. We're the Vanilla Ice Posse. VIP!

SIX PEOPLE look on, all over 50. Crickets.

INT. MAJIC TIMES STRIP CLUB - BAR - NIGHT

Ice and the VIP sip drinks at the bar, watching...

...BOY WONDER (48), a chubby, bald ventriloquist on stage with his dummy, dressed like Batman's sidekick Robin. The crowd has grown to a whopping TWENTY ELDERLY PEOPLE.

BOY WONDER
How about that opening act, huh? What's next, a black golfer?

Chill and Shay laugh drunkenly. Ice skulks behind them, despondent. Tommy puts a hand on his shoulder.

TOMMY
It'll get better. Trust me.

ICE
Sure doesn't look like it.

TOMMY
Just give it time.

INT. WAGH RADIO STATION - DAY

Promo posters for De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, etc. around a sign that reads "92.3 - Home of the Real".

DJ DARRYL JAYE (45) lounges in his booth behind a studio mic. Tommy sits across from him, both of them listening to PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC on vinyl.

**COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
MARCH, 1990**

Before the song finishes, Darryl stops the record.

DARRYL

The white boy thing is funny but it's nothing new. I mean, Beastie Boys?

TOMMY

Yeah, but they're all about New York City. Ice is from your backyard.

DARRYL

He's from Georgia?

TOMMY

No. Miami. And Dallas.

DARRYL

Which is it?

TOMMY

Both.

DARRYL

Rappers are like sports teams. They only rep one city.

TOMMY

Bottom line -- no one sounds like Ice.

DARRYL

You know I always love seeing you, Tommy. But I'm gonna have to pass. I'm sorry.

Tommy stares at him. A hint of desperation behind his cool veneer. But he holds it down, smiling respectfully.

TOMMY

Well, I appreciate you taking the time.

DARRYL

Don't even worry about it.

Daryl pulls the record off the player and hands it to Tommy as he stands to leave.

TOMMY

Keep it.

Daryl nods and watches him go, wishing he could help.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

Ice reclines in a lounge chair. Shay and Chill ride alligator floats in the pool, sipping Bud Lights.

SHAY

Yo, what was dude's name?

CHILL

Patrice! Motherfucker said it was Haitian or some shit! I thought it was Irish!

As both of them laugh, we hear the unexpected SQUALK of a police siren. Everyone freezes, glancing toward the gate as TWO WHITE COPS (30's) enter, staring down at them.

COP 1

Get out of the pool.

ICE

Yo, what's this about, officer?

The cops glance at Ice, sitting up in his chair.

COP 2

Sorry for the disturbance, sir. We'll handle it from here.

Ice stares at him, pure "WTF" on his face.

COP 1

(to Chill and Shay)

Get out. Now.

SHAY

Alright, no problem.

Chill and Shay climb out, grabbing their towels.

COP 1

Against the wall.

CHILL

Wait? For real?

COP 1
Do I look like I'm joking?

They line up against the wall. The officers kick their legs into a spread, searching their swim trunks.

CHILL
Yo, we ain't got nothing on us --

SHAY
We're in swim trunks, dude --

COP 1
I'm not your dude. Keep your mouth shut.

ICE
Whoa, whoa. Excuse me, officers?
The cops glance at Ice again, standing now.

ICE (CONT'D)
Those are my friends.

CHILL
Yo, Ice, just let 'em do their thing --

COP 1
(to Chill)
What did I just say? Huh?
Chill goes silent.

ICE
They didn't do nothing wrong. We're all guests here. The only disturbance is you!

CHILL
Robbie! You're not helping --
The first cop grabs Chill and slams him against the wall.

COP 1
You better listen to me, boy!

CHILL
Okay, okay! Sorry!

Chill goes silent. The cops finish their search, ears perking at the odd sound of water trickling. The cops glance behind them, then freeze, watching as...

...ICE faces them, peeing into the pool.

COP 1

Whoa! What do you think you're doing?!

COP 2

Sir, stop that right now!

ICE

Fuck you, pig motherfuckers!

Chill and Shay hang their heads. They're fucked.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Silence. The three of them sit behind bars in a holding tank. They've been there for hours.

CHA-CHINK! The cell door opens. They look up. Tommy stands next to a BALIFF, a grim look on his face.

EXT/INT. TOUR VAN - DAY

Ice rides shotgun, Chill and Shay in back. Tommy drives, gripping the wheel, in full angry dad mode.

TOMMY

Do you know how much you cost us? Out of our tour budget?

ICE

Yo, I was just trying to make things even. Those pigs didn't even look at me, Tommy. Like I wasn't there.

CHILL

(leaning forward)

You should have kept it that way!

Ice glares at Chill. They've already argued about this.

ICE

And let 'em take my boys down? Hell nah!

CHILL

Motherfucker, you took us down!

They all start shouting over each other. Tommy jumps in.

TOMMY

Enough! Jesus Christ. We're not doing this. That's not why we're out here.

ICE

Why are we out here, Tommy?

TOMMY

To make fans. To build your career.

ICE

Let's keep it real for once, man. Nobody knows who the fuck we are.

TOMMY

It doesn't happen overnight --

ICE

It's been a fucking year! You said the venues would get better. They haven't. You said we'd be on the radio. We ain't!

TOMMY

(simmering)

I have been to every rap station this side of the Mississippi. I've put every dime I have into this album. I'm busting my ass. For you.

ICE

Well maybe it ain't enough.

Tommy goes beet red. He veers off the highway, pulling over. The engine humming in thick silence.

TOMMY

I think you're wrong. But if you want to end it right here, then you say it. Because I'm not going to.

Ice inhales, then stops himself. Not ready to let go. Tommy waits another moment, looking in the rearview. Chill and Shay stare at their laps.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Alright then.

He pulls back onto the road.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Ice lies in bed in a towel, fresh out of the shower, on the phone, listening as an answering machine picks up.

SADIE (O.S.)

It's Sadie. Here it comes. Wait for it...

BEEP. Ice takes a breath. Goes for it.

ICE

Yo, I've been thinking about what you said. I don't remember much of it, but the stuff I do remember is pretty deep to me. So just, yeah...give me a call and we can talk about that stuff...Peace.

He hangs up, turns on the TV, channel surfing. The nostalgic sound of the MTV News lead in. On screen is KURT LODER (30's), head MTV News Anchor.

KURT LODER (ON TV)

Hip-hop artist MC Hammer continues to climb the billboard charts with his hit "U Can't Touch This." Fans can't seem to touch it enough; the single cracked the top ten earlier this week, becoming one of the highest ranking songs in the genre. Hammer promises a followup that he says will hit number one, which would be a first in rap history...

Ice rubs his forehead, frustrated.

EXT. SANDY'S YAUGHT CLUB - DAY

Tommy pulls the van into the empty parking lot of a dingy Tiki bar, next to a Denny's off the interstate.

He gets out, the crew following as the BAR MANAGER (50), beer gut, trucker hat, steps outside, approaching.

BAR MANAGER

Can I help you boys?

TOMMY

Here for the gig...

BAR MANAGER

Oh, we cancelled you. Three days ago.

TOMMY

What?

BAR MANAGER

Having trouble understanding my english?

TOMMY

(unfazed)

I was born in Mississippi.

BAR MANAGER

You didn't meet the minimum. Ten tickets.

EARTHQUAKE

Man, we're almost ten. Just count us.

BAR MANAGER

Sure, if you want to pay to play here...

Ice clenches his jaw. Tommy checks his watch, thinking.

TOMMY

Alright, if we can get to Coasters in Atlanta by eleven, they'll probably let us play a late set --

ICE

Goddamn it Tommy. That's far as fuck!

TOMMY

Not if we make good time.

ICE

Fuck that! I'm sick of this. I'm done!

CHILL

Whoa. Ice. Hold up, man.

ICE

I ain't holding up for shit! All we do is go from shitty club to shitty club. This isn't what you promised, Tommy.

CHILL

Man, we're getting paid! To rap! You could be selling cars right now. So let's just get in the van --

ICE

Hell no! I'm not coming! Nuh uh! No way I'm getting back in that van!

INT./EXT. TOUR VAN - NIGHT

Ice sits shotgun. Silent. Pouting. Tommy drives. The rest of the VIP napping in back. Desolate two lane highway.

TOMMY

By the way...Coasters? Great buffet.

Ice shakes his head. Doesn't respond. Tommy gives up, turning on the radio, flipping through channels.

INT. WAGH RADIO STATION - NIGHT

Darryl the DJ leans toward his mic while changing out records on two turntables.

DARRYL
That was "Ego Trippin'" off Critical
Beatdown, a personal favorite.

He drops the needle onto De La's 3 FEET HIGH AND RISING.

DARRYL (CONT'D)
Now here comes a joint from...

The record skips. His brow furrows as he pulls it off the turntable, eying A LARGE SCRATCH down the vinyl.

DARRYL (CONT'D)
...around the way...

Reaching furiously for the nearest record, he picks up
PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC by Vanilla Ice, frowning.

Then he gets an idea, FLIPPING THE RECORD over, reading
the B-Side with a curious look on his face.

DARRYL (CONT'D)
...This is something brand new...

CLOSE ON the needle drop. The record crackles as...

...WE DESCEND toward the spinning label. The words are
rotating, but we can read them, loud and clear...

INT./ EXT. TOUR VAN - NIGHT

...Tommy drives in silence. Ice's head dips as he nods
off. On the radio, the opening bars of ICE ICE BABY.

Tommy squints. Is he hearing things? He fumbles for the
volume. Turns it up. Then stares ahead, breathless.

Ice's eyes open. He lifts his head. Listening. Confused.

ICE
Why'd you put this on?

TOMMY
(quietly)
It's the radio.

In the back of the van, Chill stirs from sleep, waking
and listening, equally confused.

ICE
They're playing the B-side?

Tommy shrugs, clueless. Chill leans forward, sticking his head between them.

CHILL
Yo...that's you...

Ice looks at him, nodding, still processing. Chill whips back toward Shay, smacking his chest.

CHILL (CONT'D)
Ay, wake up!

Shay and Earthquake stir, sitting up.

SHAY
What the fuck?

CHILL
This motherfucker's on the radio!

SHAY
For real?

EARTHQUAKE
Serious?

CHILL
Listen!

Chill reaches out and cranks the volume.

SHAY
Oh, shit!

Ice grins widely, his adrenaline surging.

ICE
Ay! We on the motherfucking RADIO!

They all start screaming as the van breezes down the desolate highway, taking us into a MONTAGE...

INT. COLLEGE WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

...A radio plays ICE ICE BABY. A WHITE FOOTBALL PLAYER spotting his BUDDY reaches back, turning the volume up...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

...A boombox plays ICE ICE BABY from a lifeguard stand. A group of WHITE BIKINI GIRLS AND SURFER BROS dance...

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUMMERVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

...A stereo plays ICE ICE BABY in a white girl's (16) bedroom. She's with 4 WHITE FRIENDS at a sleepover. All of them giggling and rapping along...

EXT. PARK - DAY

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

...A radio plays ICE ICE BABY at a cookout. A BLACK GUY ON THE GRILL shakes his head dismissively and switches stations, blasting FIGHT THE POWER by Public Enemy.

CHUCK D (RAPPING)

*Elvis was a hero to most but he never
meant shit to me / he was straight up
racist and lame --*

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

MIAMI, FLORIDA

...A PA system picks up right where we left off, playing ICE ICE BABY on the set of a music video.

Ice, Shay and Chill dance to the track dressed in suits with collarless shirts, no ties. Tommy sits in video village with the DIRECTOR and CREW.

We cut to the video for ICE ICE BABY, recreated shot-for-shot. Ice dances on this rooftop, then --

-- Ice raps against the city skyline, wearing a University of Miami sweatshirt and a gold chain, then --

-- Ice drives through the hood in Shay's white 5.0 with the top down, his hair blowing.

EXT. STRAUSS SQUARE ARENA - DAY**DALLAS, TEXAS**

Ice and the VIP dance to the last verse of ICE ICE BABY on an impressively large stage under a sign that reads: "KJMX103 Summer Jam." Tommy watches from the wings.

Ice's family, Kip, Byron and Beth stand in a GIANT CROWD, staring, dumbfounded, unable to process how this could have happened to little Robbie. The song comes to an end.

ICE (RAPPING)

*Yo man, let's get out of here...Word to
your mother...*

END MONTAGE

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE - CBS BUILDING - DAY

CHARLES KOPPELMAN (50), thin, white, bald, part CEO, part hapless uncle, sits behind a luxurious teak desk, a view of the Sunset Strip behind him.

LOS ANGELES

MARCH, 1990

Tommy, Ice, Chill and Shay sit across from him, looking defiant and out of place. Charles clears his throat.

CHARLES

I just listened over and over again to "Ice Ice Baby." I probably listened to it about fifteen or twenty times. And it kept feeling great.

ICE

Well, I'm glad you approve.

Charles can see Ice is not feeling him. At all.

CHARLES

Let's cut to the chase. We're gonna help you cross over.

ICE

What does that mean?

CHARLES

It means unlike a lot of other hip-hop acts, you've got real star appeal.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

If we can market you across every demographic, we can introduce rap music to people that have never really listened to it before.

ICE

Those don't sound like my people.

CHARLES

Look, there's a lot of money to be made. But it's not on the streets. It's in suburban homes all across the country.

INT. LOBBY - CBS BUILDING - DAY

Ice and the VIP gather, having a post-mortem talk.

ICE

Who the fuck is this guy, Tommy?

CHILL

Yeah what does Orville Redenbacher know about hiphop?

Chill and Shay snicker. Tommy looks Ice in the eye.

TOMMY

Look, this is a good deal.

Chill shakes his head. Ice looks incredulous.

ICE

We could have gone with Atlantic. Columbia. Def Jam. Who the fuck is SBK? I never heard of them --

TOMMY

Charles Koppelman knows what he's doing. And he's making us Top Priority. That's huge. It means serious, quantifiable P&A.

Ice, Chill and Shay stare at him, clueless.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Print and Advertising. It means our record's not going to sit at the bottom of the pile. SBK's going to put in ten times more on publicity than other labels and get "Ice Ice Baby" on the radio --

ICE

We're already on the radio!

TOMMY
The national radio.

Ice shifts uncomfortably.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Look, I know this wave of attention feels good. But we're only on rotation in the south. Charles will get us airplay on the east and west coast. That's not easy.

ICE
I don't know man. All that shit about crossing over. Suburban homes? Sounds soft to me. I'm not a sellout.

CHILL
Damn straight, son.

TOMMY
No one's asking you to be.

ICE
Then end of discussion.

Tommy looks despondent, then remembers something.

TOMMY
Oh, I forget to mention -- this is the highest upfront payout of any label.

ICE
How much?

TOMMY
Five hundred thousand.

A collective hush falls over them.

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON the tip of a pen. "Robbie Van Winkle" scrawled in cursive. Ice finishes signing and Charles shakes his hand, both of them holding Cuban cigars like made men.

ICE
Yo, I thought you only smoked cigars after having a baby.

CHARLES
Well we're having one...an "Ice Ice Baby."

ICE

Okay, pops...

Charles smiles, taking this as a compliment.

CHARLES

This is going to be a historic moment for hip-hop. And, um, the community...

He motions to Chill and Shay, who stand nearby, doing their best to not show how they feel about this.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

And you... You know who I'm looking at?

ICE

Who?

CHARLES

The new face of hip hop.

Charles pulls Ice in as A PHOTOGRAPHER shoots them.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You boys rest up. 'Cause in a week, you're going on tour.

ICE

(confused)

Yo, we were just on tour.

CHARLES

Not like this.

INT. ARENA STAGE - NIGHT

A massive stage. Big as it gets. Ice and the VIP wear white and blue sequined parachute pants and blazers.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

APRIL, 1990

The song ends and an AUDIENCE OF 18,000 goes wild.

ICE

Yo, New York! Thanks for all the love. I want to give props to the VIP and to the headliner, my mentor, Mc Hammer! Word to your mother!

INT. STAGE WING - MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

MC Hammer stands watching with his two main backup dancers, ALONZO (27) and RALPH (26), in matching suits.

ALONZO

Man, they look like the bargain basement version of us.

RALPH

You know they jacking our style, right?

HAMMER

It's not a competition. There's room for everybody.

His eyes tell us he's thinking the exact opposite.

INT. ARENA STAGE - MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Hammer performs U CAN'T TOUCH THIS on stage, killing it with his signature dance moves. His crew has grown. TWENTY DANCERS accompany him, all in perfect rhythm.

HAMMER (RAPPING)

You'll probably get hyped boy 'cause you know / You can't touch this!

INT. ICE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Ice, Chill and Shay change out of their concert gear. A KNOCK on the door.

ICE

It's open --

Tommy enters with MONTE LIPMAN (25), a high-strung neo-con in large tortoise shell eyeglasses and a boxy suit.

TOMMY

Ice -- this is Monte Lipman. Charles' right hand man.

CHILL

S'up Wallstreet?

SHAY

How's the DOW doing? Buy, sell, buy!

MONTE

Funny, guys. Love it.

(to Ice)

That was a great show. Just awesome.

Monte sniffs. Could be a cold, might be something else?

ICE

Thanks, Monte. Appreciate you coming out.

TOMMY

Monte has some news from Charles.

MONTE

Great news actually. We're gonna
repackage the album, add four new tracks.

ICE

(bewildered)

Whoa, what do you mean repackage? And
what new tracks?

MONTE

Here's the deal fellas. At ten songs,
it's not quite an LP. In our market
research, we need at least fourteen
tracks to give fans their money's worth.

ICE

Well that's all we recorded...

MONTE

That's why we've got a studio lined up,
right here in midtown. And a week to kill
before your next show.

ICE

(grimacing)

Wait a minute -- you want me to write
four new tracks in a week?

MONTE

No. Of course not. We're going to
introduce you to a three-time Grammy
winning songwriter --

ICE

(recoiling)

Hell nah. I write my own shit. If I don't
then it ain't Ice. Tommy, tell him...

Tommy remains silent. Ice looks worried.

MONTE

No offense, but you want to play in the majors? This is how you do it. And we don't have a lot of time here.

Monte and Tommy stare at Ice, the pressure unbelievable.

MONTE (CONT'D)

Trust me, this guy's a musical genius.
Real hip. You will not be sorry.

INT. SIR STUDIOS - NIGHT

Ice in a recording booth. Lights dimmed, unnecessary candles everywhere. A laughably bad slow-jam rings out. He looks unsure, but it's too late to turn back.

ICE (RAPPING)

*In my dreams, I vision myself at the
ocean / beautiful girls rub me down with
some lotion...*

Monte watches through glass, bobbing his head. He nudges LARRY THE SONGWRITER (65) bald, pervy goatee, tinted shades, who mouths the verse that Ice raps. Some genius.

ICE (RAPPING) (CONT'D)

*Even though you know I blow as cold as an
ice cube / let me tell you how it is to
make love on an inner tube --*

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE - CBS BUILDING - DAY

Charles listens to the song on his CD player.

CHARLES

This is really sexy stuff.

Ice sits across from him, smiling humbly.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Great job, Monte.

Ice's smile fades as Monte nods proudly.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Love the lyrics. Tell Larry he outdid himself. That dirty old man.

(to Ice)

You happy?

Ice hesitates.

ICE

Well I don't normally operate this way --

CHARLES

Now you do. The ladies are gonna eat this up. You know that, don't you?

Ice glances uneasily at his boys; Chill unreadable, Shay grinning. He tries to be a team player.

ICE

(quietly)

I guess it turned out pretty good.

CHARLES

Exceptional. And we have everything we need to release the album.

A sigh of relief from Tommy and Monte, who smile widely, patting each other on the back.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Now let's talk about the title.

Ice squints at Charles. The room goes quiet.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

"Hooked" isn't for a wide audience.

ICE

Why not? I think it's dope.

CHARLES

That's the problem -- drug connotations.

ICE

No, man, dope, like, slammin'. And it's not about drugs, it's about --

CHARLES

We're running test groups to see which of your lyrics your fans respond to the most. We'll base the title on that.

ICE

Hold up man. You saying I don't even get to name my own album?

CHARLES

No, I'm saying you already have.

INT. TOWER RECORDS - DAY

We see the title TO THE EXTREME emblazoned above Ice standing defiantly in a star-spangled red and blue suit. A Tower Records CLERK (23) stocks a shelf with the album.

**LOS ANGELES
SEPTEMBER, 1990**

The clerk heads to the front door, where CUSTOMERS gather outside. He unlocks it and they swarm toward the record.

INT. CHESS KING CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Ice walks out of a dressing room in a comically oversized patchwork denim jacket and jeans.

He joins Chill in a bucket hat and leather sweatsuit and Shay in massive overalls, one strap unbuckled.

ICE

Yo, you think we better off?

SHAY

Damn straight. We look fresh as hell.

ICE

No, I mean...the album's out, but it's not my title. And we got a full set list but not all of 'em are my songs.

SHAY

'Course they are. Far as anybody knows.

CHILL

Nah, he means for real. No fake shit.

SHAY

What's the difference? And how the hell else could we afford gear like this. I mean, look at us...

They stare at themselves in a large mirror. They look ridiculous. Even by early 90's standards.

ICE

I just wish I didn't have to compromise. I've always been 110 percent original. I don't follow trends, I set 'em.

CHILL

That's right.

ICE
I gotta remind 'em. That this ain't about
Monte. Or Charles. Or Tommy.

SHAY
How the fuck you gonna do that?

INT. ICE'S HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ice's song, HAVIN' A RONI plays at full blast.

He sits on the counter holding hair clippers, shirt off,
using two mirrors to shave block letters that spell "ICE"
into the back of his head.

As he brings the clippers around, he accidentally buzzes
a vertical line into his left eyebrow.

ICE
Fuck!

He stares at it, getting an idea, shaving another line
next to it. Another. Then he shaves a line into the side
of his head. Zigzagging it.

INT. ICE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a suitcase by the bed. Ice unzips it. It's full
of Aqua Net. He pulls out two cans, raising them and...

...FIRING, filling the room with a giant chemical cloud
that WHITES OUT our frame. As the fog clears, we reveal a
made over Vanilla Ice, in a shining gold suit.

ICE
Yup, yup.

INT. ARENA STAGE - NIGHT

Showtime. Ice dances to GO ILL with the VIP in front of a
MASSIVE AUDIENCE that rivals MSG. Killing it.

THE FORUM

A girl in the front row, LAURA (20), teased blonde hair,
black miniskirt, white LA Gear hi-tops, screams at him.

LAURA
You're so fucking hot! You look so cool!!

This gets his attention. He grins at her, then reaches down impulsively, grabbing her and lifting her on stage.

ICE
Yo, come up here girl!

She grinds against him as --

-- THREE OTHER GIRLS in the audience bum rush the stage. FOUR GUYS follow, along with EVERYONE ELSE nearby.

SIX SECURITY GUARDS try to corral them, but there's no stopping the full on stampede. Ice is jolted away from Laura as the crowd tears at his suit and chains.

ICE (CONT'D)
Yo! Watch it!

He pushes them back, reaching out, grabbing Laura's hand and bolting off stage. The house lights fire on.

INT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Ice pulls Laura into a shadowy spot under a flight of steel stairs, turning back to watch the crowd violently grabbing instruments, set lists, each other.

ICE
Fuck, we better get out of here --

As he glances at Laura she dives toward him, kissing him furiously. Audience members dash down the stairs, tearing past them, raiding the stage wings.

CHILL (O.S.)
Yo -- Ice! Ice!

Ice pulls away from Laura, eyes darting to Chill and Shay, their suits torn, beaconing for him down the hall. He grins at Laura and takes her hand.

ICE
Come on --

They take off.

INT. CHINA CLUB - NIGHT

VIP Booth. Ice has his arm around Laura next to his crew, who all have NEW GIRLS with them. In full Rat Pack mode.

SHAY

Yo, you see the two dudes fighting over the kick drum?!

CHILL

Who comes to a show loving an artist so much they want to tear him apart?

Laughter. A shadow falls over them. Ice looks up. Tommy appears with Monte, both inexplicably glowing.

ICE

Tommy! Monte! Pour a drink.

TOMMY

Oh, we will. But first, Monte's got something important he wanted to say.

ICE

What, we recording new tracks again?

More laughter. Monte cuts through it.

MONTE

"Ice Ice Baby" just went to number one.

The laughter stops.

ICE

Say what?

MONTE

We have the number one single in America.

Gasps all around.

TOMMY

No rap song's ever gone to number one on the pop charts. Even "You Can't Touch This" capped out at number eight.

ICE

What are you saying?

TOMMY

We just made music history.

They all stare at each other in utter silence, shocked.

HARD CUT TO:

Ice and the VIP SCREAMING at the top of their lungs. Earthquake shakes up a bottle of champagne and sprays them down. Shay starts a chant --

SHAY

We're number one! We're number one!

They all join in. Losing their shit.

Across the club, MC Hammer enters with his crew in tow, watching the revelry. Alonzo whispers to him, telling him what's up. He listens with an unreadable expression.

MOMENTS LATER

They've gassed themselves but are still running on fumes. Ice's face is flushed. Blissed out. Someone taps him on the shoulder and he turns to face...

...Hammer. Sober. Calm.

ICE

Yo! Hammer!

HAMMER

I don't want to interrupt. Just had to say congratulations.

ICE

Awe, like I tell everyone, you've been a mentor to me...

Hammer waves away the praise.

HAMMER

This is your moment. And it puts hiphop in the spotlight. Which is important for all of us.

ICE

Couldn't have done it without you!

HAMMER

No, my man. You did it yourself. When I saw you back at City Lights, I knew you had it. You worked hard. You deserve it.

Ice raises his hand and Hammer daps him up, then heads back to Alonzo and Ralph.

ICE

(calling out)

Ay yo -- I touched this!

Hammer freezes. Then turns back around slowly.

HAMMER

What was that?

ICE
 You said, "Can't touch this," but I did.
 I'm not number eight, seven, six, five,
 four...(spacing out)...three, two..."

Ice beams at Hammer drunkenly, raising his index finger.

ICE (CONT'D)
 Number one, baby. Word to your mother!

The VIP chants again as Hammer stares for a long moment.

HAMMER
 Well enjoy it...
 (quietly)
 ...while it lasts.

Hammer exits. Ice watches him go with a tinge of concern,
 then shrugs it off and goes back to partying.

INT. ICE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON Ice's sleeping face. He wakes, cringing,
 hangover of the century. Laura, Chill, Shay, Earthquake
 and a dozen HALF-NAKED BODIES lay all around him.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Wearing a hoodie, wrinkled Skidz and sunglasses, Ice
 stumbles down the hall, exiting through a side door.

EXT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - DAY

He shuffles toward Sunset Blvd, passing the hotel
 entrance, where a CROWD OF FIFTY is gathered, staring
 into the lobby. Ice taps a YOUNG WOMAN on the shoulder.

ICE
 Excuse me...what are y'all waiting for?

She turns around, her eyes widening insanely.

YOUNG WOMAN
 Oh my God!!!

The entire crowd whips toward him, revealing signs,
 albums, posters, all with Ice's face on them.

RANDOM DUDE
 It's him!

Ice backs away as they lurch forward. He turns, dashing to the side entrance and bursting through the door. They give chase like a pack of wild dogs.

INT. LOBBY

Ice barely dodges a WAITER pushing a cart full of food.

WAITER

Hey! You almost --

The waiter turns, freezing as the crowd plows into him, the cart toppling and plates flying everywhere.

INT. ELEVATOR

Ice tumbles into the elevator as the crowd nears, the doors shutting them out in the nick of time.

He collapses, sliding to the floor, then glancing up at an RICH OLD WOMAN in a mink coat, staring, mortified.

ICE

(trying to explain)

Fans.

INT. TOMMY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

A POV through the 10th story window of the crowd below, now DOUBLE THE SIZE, waiting at the hotel entrance. Chill stares down at them, concerned.

CHILL

Goddamn. Shit just keeps growing.

Ice sits on a plush hotel chair. Wiped out. Shay lounges on the hotel bed, not worried at all.

The sound of the hotel door unlocking. Ice and Chill tense up. Tommy enters. They sigh in relief.

ICE

Thank God...

A giant black guy, BIG E (32), follows him inside. He looks like a former linebacker who now eats for sport.

TOMMY

Ice, this is Big E. He's gonna head up security.

ICE

Yo, good to meet you. Seriously.

Ice daps up Big-E, who motions to the window.

BIG-E

I see I got here just in time.

ICE

Thought they were gonna tear me apart.

BIG-E

Well you don't have to worry no more. I got your back at all times. Anyone steps up, I'll crack 'em. Male or female --

Tommy holds up a cautionary hand.

TOMMY

Hopefully it doesn't comes to that.

BIG-E

Crazy comes in all shapes and sizes.

Ice sees the barrel of a gun sticking out of his jacket.

ICE

You strapped?

Big-E nods, pulling a .357 Magnum from a shoulder holster. Chill stares at it warily. Shay smiles.

SHAY

Oh, snap. That Dirty Harry's gun?

BIG-E

Yeah. Try to fuck with the Iceman, you better believe I'll make somebody's day.

Ice shakes his head, unsure, then glances at Tommy.

ICE

All these crowds? Reminds me of Disneyland. I don't want to cop a theme park feel. Know what I'm saying?

CHILL

Hell yeah.

ICE

This ain't the Mickey Mouse club. We from the streets. Rough, rugged and raw. We gotta make that clear.

Tommy nods in understanding, thinking of something.

TOMMY

I've been going through offers with Charles and we may have just the thing.

ICE

Yeah?

TOMMY

New Line Cinema got in touch with a movie they want to integrate you into.

ICE

Yo, I never acted before.

TOMMY

Not a problem. They want you to write a new single for the soundtrack and rap it in the film. The set would be locked down. Private. No crowds. Just you, making a statement. About where you're from. The way you want.

Ice glances at Chill and Shay, gauging their reactions.

CHILL

Movies could be dope. I heard Ice-T's up on some new Godfather shit in NYC.

SHAY

And JB told me Cube's working on a flick right now with his boys. In his old hood.

ICE

Is it gonna be like that?

TOMMY

(smiling)

Even better.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

A 35mm camera on a crane swoops across a night club stage as Ice, Chill and Shay dance.

**SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
OCTOBER 31ST, 1990**

A commotion in the AUDIENCE. Ice and the VIP stop, looking on. The moment feels eerily like the shooting at City Lights. Is this a biopic?

WE PULL OUT to reveal stunt men in muppet-like costumes dressed as LEONARDO, MICHELANGELO, DONATELLO and RAFAEL. Yup. THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES. Not a biopic.

They fight TOKKA, a giant turtle and RAHZAR, a gray werewolf on the dance floor. The vibe is like hyper-violent children's theatre.

LEONARDO

(acting in the scene)

Man, could this get any worse?!

Ice begins dancing again. Shay smiles, into it. Chill isn't at all. He goes through the motions with dead eyes.

ICE (RAPPING)

*Go Ninja, Go Ninja, Go! Go Ninja, Go
Ninja, Go! Ninja! Ninja! Rap!*

INT. CRAFT SERVICE TABLE - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

A lavish snack spread. Ice sips a Perrier. Shay eats a fancy muffin. Chill sits in silence, looking despondent.

ICE

Ay yo. You feeling alright?

CHILL

Nah, man. Not really.

SHAY

How you gonna say that in front of a table full of all these snacks?

Chill shakes his head. Stands, agitated.

CHILL

I gotta ask, what the fuck we doing here?

ICE

Grinding.

SHAY

Making a blockbuster, son!

CHILL

Yeah but, this feel real to you?

ICE

It's not suppose to be real. It's a movie. We're getting paid.

CHILL

Just didn't think it'd be like this.

ICE

Like what?

The actors playing the Turtles pass by, their costumed heads in their hands. They're all blonde surfer bros.

LEONARDO

Ice dude! Happy birthday! And on halloween -- were you born in a costume?

ICE

Only my birthday suit.

The Turtles guffaw. Chill shakes his head.

DONATELLO

Got any sick B-day plans, bro?

ICE

Oh, you know, just killing it on a major motion picture...

RAFAEL

Yeah, you are! That song was righteous!

ICE

Thanks! Hey, cowabunga dudes!

The Turtles high-five him, wave "Shaka" signs and shuffle off. Ice turns back to Chill, who stares at him woefully.

CHILL

Like that.

ICE

Remember when you asked me "who gets paid to rap?" We do. More than Hammer. More than Cube. More than anybody!

CHILL

Yo, I asked you that when we were on the road. Not fucking with no Ninja Turtles sequel. No "Secret of the Ooze" --

ICE

You'd rather be dancing in empty strip clubs in Chattanooga? Everyone's gonna see this!

CHILL

That's the problem!

An overworked ASSISTANT DIRECTOR hurries up to them.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Hey guys, we've got gear wrapping out.
Can we move this onto stage B?

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - DAY

Ice and Chill head down a large, industrial hall, walking past CREW PEOPLE, trying to seem cordial, both fuming.

ICE

Man, why the fuck are you even here?

CHILL

I've been asking myself that every day.

Shay tries to catch up, hands full of snacks.

ICE

Really? 'Cause I can hire anybody,
anybody, to do what you're doing right
now. And they'd be happy to do it.

CHILL

I should have never tricked your step-
daddy into letting you outta work. Should
have known you'd sell the fuck out!

ICE

Fuck you!

CHILL

Nah, fuck you, fuck Charles, fuck Monte
and fuck Tommy! They supermarket sweepin'
your ass! They don't give a fuck about
where that leaves you, me, any of us!
Let's see where they are when you're
getting hated on by everybody!

Ice throws open two large doors, revealing...

INT. STAGE B

...a giant soundstage full of the ENTIRE CAST AND CREW.
An elaborate mix of birthday and halloween decorations.

ENTIRE CAST AND CREW

Happy birthday!

Chill freezes. Ice startles, then his face lights up.

ICE
Damn! You got me!

Everybody laughs, cheering. Beth, his mom, steps forward, along with Bryon and Kip.

ICE (CONT'D)
What are you guys doing here?!

Beth hurries over, hugging and kissing him on the cheek.

BETH
We wouldn't miss this, baby!

Bryon pats him on the back.

BRYON
We're so proud of you, Robbie!

ROBBIE
It's "Ice" now, Bryon.

Laughter all around.

BRYON
Right, sorry. Ice.

Tommy, Charles and Monte appear, singing "Happy Birthday". The crew joins in. Tommy slides forward a director's chair that reads "Vanilla Ice".

ICE
You guys!

Ice takes a seat as MASTER SPLINTER, the wise rat, pushes a cart toward him that holds a giant Vanilla Ice Cream cake with the TO THE EXTREME cover painted in frosting.

MASTER SPLINTER
The path that leads to what we truly desire is long and difficult, but only by following that path, do we achieve --

ICE
(cutting him off)
Thank y'all so much!

Ice blows out his 23 candles. Huge applause.

CHARLES
I have an announcement! We all know "Ice Ice Baby" is still at the top of the charts, six weeks in a row.
(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

And now, "To The Extreme" is not only triple platinum, it's also the number one album in the country!

Explosive cheers! Charles raises a thick gold chain with a pendant reading "#1" and places it around Ice's neck.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Everyone loves you, kid...

Ice beams, his gaze shifting to the back of the room, where Chill stands alone. He locks eyes with Ice for a moment, hurt, then exits quietly.

ICE

Yo, let's celebrate!

Ice's IT'S A PARTY drops as a surreal MONTAGE begins...

-- Ice dances drunkenly with three of the turtles...

-- Beth gyrates against Splinter. Byron and Kip cringe...

-- The guys playing Tokka and Rahzar hold their masks in their hands, taking bumps in the corner with Monte...

-- Tommy stick fights with Donatello while Charles takes on-the-fly bets from the grip crew...

-- Shay makes out with APRIL O'NEIL...

-- Ice looks hammered, taking it all in. Fully in it.

END MONTAGE

INT. ELEVATORS - FOUR SEASONS - DAY

The elevator opens and Big E steps out, making sure the coast is clear. Then Ice emerges, in sunglasses, hood up.

INT. GIFT SHOP - FOUR SEASONS - DAY

Putting down a pack of Aspirin next to a bottle of Dayquil and two Evians, Ice looks up at the GIFT SHOP CLERK, who squints, recognizing him immediately.

GIFT SHOP CLERK

Hey, aren't you Vani --

Big E holds up a giant hand, motioning for him to stop. The clerk goes silent. Ice glances out of the door at someone standing at the reception desk. It's Chill.

INT. LOBBY - FOUR SEASONS - DAY

Chill exits with a suitcase as Ice hurries after him.

ICE
Yo, Chill! Hold up!

EXT. FOUR SEASONS - DAY

Ice catches up to him, waiting at the curb for his cab.

ICE
What are you doing, man? Flight's not
'til Saturday.

CHILL
(quietly)
Catching an early one.

ICE
What do you mean?

Chill avoids his eyes. Ice puts it together.

ICE (CONT'D)
Are you fucking serious? You quitting
'cause of one little fight?

The cab pulls up and Chill hops in with no explanation.
As he goes to close the door, Ice grabs it, stopping him.

ICE (CONT'D)
Album went to number one last night!

CHILL
Move out the way, man.

ICE
You're walking out on the winning team --
we're living the dream!

Chill shakes his head, then meets Ice's eyes.

CHILL
Not mine.

Chill slams his door. The cab pulls out, leaving Ice on
the curb, watching with a deeply pained look in his eyes.

INT. STAGE - STARPLEX PAVILION - NIGHT

Ice dances on stage in a platinum suit, parachute pants to beat Hammer's, costume glowing, nuclear.

CLOSE ON his face. He looks hollowed out. Exhausted.

**DALLAS, TEXAS
NOVEMBER, 1990
VANILLA ICE'S FIRST HEADLINING TOUR**

Shay dances next to him. So does a new dancer, HI-TEC (21) replacing Chill, a total pro. But it's not the same.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Ice, Shay and Hi-Tec walk toward their dressing rooms, Shay patting Hi-Tec on the back.

SHAY
You killed it, son! Welcome to the VIP!

HI-TEC
You know how we do!

Ice watches this exchange, feeling outside of it. Shay and Hi-Tec push open a door to their dressing room, heading in. Ice grabs Shay's shoulder.

ICE
Yo, Shay, can I talk to you for a sec?

SHAY
Of course. S'up?

ICE
Thanks for staying loyal, man.

SHAY
Wouldn't have it any other way! You know I love touring.

ICE
Me too. And Chill's gonna miss out. On all of it. So fuck him.

Shay shifts uncomfortably.

SHAY
He'll be alright.

ICE
You talk to him?

SHAY

Of course, man. It's Chill.

Ice looks stung. Tries to hide it. Shay daps him up.

SHAY (CONT'D)

I'll see you at the after party, homie.

He disappears into the dressing room, leaving Ice alone in the hall, not feeling himself, not sure what to do.

INT. ICE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Luxurious. Private. Ice enters and heads to the vanity mirror where a STYLIST and MAKEUP ARTIST await.

STYLIST

Great show.

ICE

(solemn)

Thanks.

Sitting in a chair next to them is KEN PERKINS (32), black, academic, in wireframe glasses and a tweed blazer.

ICE (CONT'D)

Do I know you?

KEN

Ken Perkins, Dallas Morning News. Tommy scheduled an interview about a month ago.

Ice shakes his hand, trying to muster the energy.

ICE

S'up Ken.

The stylist helps Ice change out of his concert gear. He slips on his old Miami University sweatshirt.

KEN

Been looking forward to this.

Ice takes a seat in his "Vanilla Ice" director's chair as the Makeup Artist helps him remove his stage makeup.

ICE

Hit me. Ask, and you shall receive.

KEN

Alright. Maybe you could start by telling me about your origins. Where you from?

Ice points to the logo on his sweatshirt.

ICE
Miami. Represent.

Ken narrows his gaze.

KEN
I thought you grew up here in Dallas?

ICE
Well, yeah, I lived in both places.

KEN
When were you in Miami?

ICE
When I was a kid.

KEN
What years?

ICE
I think 'til I was about fifteen.

KEN
You think? You're not sure?

Ice shoots him a wary look.

ICE
Who are you man, Encyclopedia Brown?

KEN
Just trying to figure out your timeline.

ICE
We moved around a lot. I mostly grew up
on the streets. That's something I
address on my album --

Ken is completely uninterested in his album.

KEN
So in Miami, you were classmates with
Luther Campbell from 2 Live Crew?

ICE
What? Where did you get that?

KEN
Your bio.

ICE

What bio?

KEN

The one I got from your label. I looked into some of the facts and funny thing...Luther Campbell was born in 1960. You were born in '67. Means he graduated before you were a freshman.

ICE

Yeah, he wasn't there when I was. Maybe they messed up some of the details. I can set the record straight though.

KEN

Alright. As a teenager, you won a motocross championship, then you were stabbed in a gang related incident...

ICE

Yeah. I mean I don't like talking it up --

KEN

Was that in Miami?

ICE

Yup yup.

KEN

Huh.

Perkins writes something down. Ice stares at him.

ICE

What?

KEN

Well, again according to your bio, you had already moved to Dallas.

INT. CHARLE'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON the front page of the Dallas Morning Newspaper. Headline: "VANILLA ICE'S FACADE IS MELTING." Charles reads the paper, across from Ice, Tommy, Monte.

ICE

This dude wasn't like other reporters, man, he wasn't asking me about the album at all. He was just out for the kill...

CHARLES

Well there's always going to be a bad apple in the bunch. You're number one now. You're a prime suspect to be picked on. That's all there is to it.

MONTE

I mean if they can't see you're from the streets, then they're blind.

ICE

He kept quoting my bio. Said he got it from you.

CHARLES

We didn't issue a bio.

ICE

Then who did?

Charles and Monte look at each other blankly, then at Tommy, who drops his eyes to his lap.

TOMMY

I, uh, sent out a blurb. Nothing fancy. Just something to wet the appetite --

ICE

(incensed)

You kidding me, Tommy? You know how this looks, right? Like I made up my past. They're comparing me to Milli Vanilli!

CHARLES

You're not running for office. Tommy was working in your best interest. This is entertainment. It's how we sell records.

ICE

Yeah but people don't think I'm from where I'm from --

MONTE

You think Ice Cube lives in Compton? He moved to Burbank five years ago. I saw him at CoCo's eating a fruit salad.

ICE

My whole family read that article. My mom. My hometown thinks I'm a liar --

CHARLES

Look, you exaggerated a couple of facts. So what? Give it a couple of weeks.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

In one ear out the other. I'd be worried if they had something bigger. But they don't. So relax. Worst of it's over.

Ice stares at Charles, then nods, trying to relax as we hear the sounds of an MTV NEWS LEAD IN.

INT. MTV NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Kurt Loder sits at his MTV news desk, reporting.

KURT LODER

This week a scandal broke out about a white rapper from Suburban Miami Lakes, Florida, who calls himself Vanilla Ice.

A SHOT of Ice dancing to ICE ICE BABY in concert.

JOHN NORRIS (V.O.)

Like other rappers, Vanilla Ice includes samples and re-recorded versions of other songs for background beats on his debut album "To The Extreme." In fact Ice's pop hit "Ice Ice Baby" has a rhythm track that's almost identical to the 1982 Queen and David Bowie hit "Under Pressure."

A CLIP of a music video with a SUPER: "Under Pressure -- Queen/David Bowie" comparing the identical baseline.

JOHN NORRIS (V.O.)

Recently when MC Hammer used the baseline from "Super Freak" in his number one single "You Can't Touch This," he gave half of the writing credit to Rick James. But for "Ice Ice Baby," Ice only gives credit to himself and his DJ Earthquake.

A SHOT of Ice getting grilled in an interview. This is familiar -- it's the same shot that opened the movie.

ICE

It doesn't sound anything like "Under Pressure." Only thing that sounds like "Under Pressure" is the hook. We sampled it from them but it's not the same baseline. It goes *DING DING DING DIGA DING DING. DING DING DING DIGA DING DING.* That's the way there's goes. Ours goes *DING DING DING TING AHH DING DING. DING DING DING TING AHH DING DING.* That little bitty "ting." It's not the same!

Another comparison of the videos for ICE ICE BABY and UNDER PRESSURE. Their baselines are the same. Clearly.

NORRIS (V.O.)

But what if he were asked to fork over royalties to the "Under Pressure" composers? Say, through their attorneys? Would the Iceman comply?

BACK TO Ice in his interview, smiling widely.

ICE

Of course!

INT. BOARD ROOM - COHEN AND LORUSSO LAW OFFICES - DAY

CLOSE ON Ice, crushed. He sits with Tommy in a boardroom opposite FOUR IMPOSING LAWYERS (60's).

Tommy signs paperwork, then pushes it to Ice, who also signs, sliding it to the lawyers.

EXT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Big E opens the lobby doors, escorting Ice and Tommy out, both of them in sunglasses, keeping their heads down. REPORTERS and PAPARAZZI swarm around them.

REPORTER 1

Tommy! Do Queen and David Bowie now own the rights to "Ice Ice Baby?"

TOMMY

They're receiving songwriting credit, but it's Ice's song. He came up with it. And no one can take that away from him.

REPORTER 2

Can you comment on the rumor that David Bowie doesn't want to be associated with Vanilla Ice?

Tommy's face darkens but he keeps an even tone.

TOMMY

Ziggy Stardust is highly overrated!

INT./EXT. PRIVATE CAR - DAY

Tommy and Ice sit in the backseat. A deathly silence between them. Finally --

TOMMY
I think that went well...

Ice doesn't reply. The car slows to a stop.

ICE
(confused)
Why we stopping?

TOMMY
Made a res for you at The Palm. You need
some time to yourself.

Ice nods begrudgingly and gets out.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Hey, I know it feels awful now. But we're
still on top and we're gonna stay there.

ICE
Whatever.

INT. THE PALM RESTAURANT - DAY

Ice eats chicken strips in a private booth, sunglasses still on. Big E sits next to him, chomping on a double cheeseburger. A WAITER passes.

BIG E
Can I get another order of curly fries?

The waiter nods and hurries toward the kitchen, passing the front entrance as a GIANT BLACK GUY walks in, over 6'7", scanning the place.

AN EVEN LARGER BLACK GUY enters behind him. Then FIVE OTHERS. All dressed in black from head to toe.

Big E stares at them, frozen. Ice sees his expression but doesn't look, not wanting to be spotted.

ICE
Yo -- Paparazzi?

BIG E
Uhh...

The long shadows of the men fall over Ice's table. He turns, confused, coming face to face with their leader. It's SUGE KNIGHT (26), bald, bearded, menacing as hell.

A concerned MANAGER (60's) heads their way.

MANAGER

Can I help you, gentlemen?

Suge's men cut him off, backing him toward the entrance.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Excuse me! What do you think you're --

They muscle him outside. The others flank the booth. One of them puts a hard hand on Big E's shoulder.

SUGE'S THUG

Get up.

Big E doesn't move.

SUGE'S THUG (CONT'D)

Don't make us get you up.

BIG E

What do you want?

SUGE'S THUG

A word with your boy. That's all.

Big E shoots Ice a helpless look, then stands as two more of the men escort him outside. Suge slides into his spot, sitting across from Ice.

ICE

You guys fans?

They all snicker at this. Everyone but Suge. He stares through Ice. It's terrifying.

ICE (CONT'D)

(voice shaking)

Look, I'm...I'm just trying to eat, so --

Suge reaches out, grabs Ice's plate and pulls it over to his side of the table slowly. Ice doesn't stop him. Suge picks up a chicken strip, chomping down on it.

Ice watches him eat the rest of his meal in silence. When he's done, he licks the grease off his giant fingers, then stands, walking out. His thugs follow.

A moment later, the manager hurries back inside, flustered, beelining toward a bartender.

MANAGER

Johnny, call the police!

Big E stumbles in behind him, his shirt mussed, collar torn, lip bleeding. He heads toward Ice.

ICE
(tiny)
...Who the fuck was that?

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Tommy sits with Ice, Monte and Charles. Big E stands by the door in a new shirt, his face cleaned up.

TOMMY
(sighing)
It was Suge Knight.

ICE
Who is Suge Knight?

TOMMY
Just a thug from Compton.

MONTE
Al Capone wannabe. Been trying to muscle his way into the business for years. I wouldn't give it a second thought.

ICE
These guys made Big E look like Gary Coleman. Busted his lip. Tell 'em E!

Big E averts his gaze, ashamed.

ICE (CONT'D)
Can't we press charges?

TOMMY
We get the cops involved, he'll harass us more, not less. Thug mentality. I dealt with this at City Lights. I'll make sure he's not a problem. Alright?

Ice stares at Tommy, unsatisfied. Charles shifts impatiently in his chair, checking his watch.

CHARLES
Guys, I've got a five thirty...

MONTE
(nodding)
We should move this along.

ICE
Move what along?

Monte stands, sauntering over to a large pad of paper on an easel, flipping it to reveal an elaborate flow chart.

MONTE
We've got awards season coming up and you're a front runner for Best New Artist at the Grammy's, the AMA's and the Billboard Music Awards. We're going to campaign aggressively for noms.

Tommy nods. Monte points to a new part of the chart.

MONTE (CONT'D)
We set up performances at the award shows and on late night, everyone but Arsenio. Tough nut. But we'll crack him.

Ice nods, feeling a little better. Monte keeps flowing.

MONTE (CONT'D)
Next, we've got an Avon book deal in the works for your autobiography.

ICE
Whoa. How am I going to write a book?

TOMMY
I'm almost done with it.

ICE
What? When the fuck did you do that?

TOMMY
Nights and weekends.

Ice stares at him, incredulous.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(reassuring)
You can give it a proof read.

CHARLES
Alright, let's get to the part I like...

Charles hits an intercom button on his phone.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
...Erin.

EMILY (ON INTERCOM)
It's Emily.

CHARLES

Right. Emily. Bring it in.

His sprightly assistant EMILY (23) enters with a Christmas present. Red wrapping paper, green bow. She smiles at Ice and hands it to him. He takes it, confused.

EMILY

Open it!

Ice unwraps it, revealing a Vanilla Ice doll in a pink and purple box, that reads "Postcard and Fan Club Info Inside!" It's a Ken doll, bearing his face and name.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(rehearsed)

Move over Cabbage Patch kids! Forget the Transformers! 'Cause this holiday season, Santa's got a new number one request!

A long pause as Ice processes whatever the hell this is.

ICE

I don't know what to say.

Charles nods, mistaking his response for gratitude.

CHARLES

We knew you'd be thrilled.

INT. ICE'S HOTEL ROOM

Ice lies in bed, replaying the days weird, awful events in his sleepless mind. He grabs his wallet off the nightstand and removes a paper scrap, debating something.

Picking up the phone, he dials a number on the paper. An answering machine plays an almost forgotten voice.

SADIE (O.S.)

It's Sadie. Here it comes. Wait for it...

BEEP! Ice inhales, then stops himself, not sure what to say. He hangs up, burying his head in his pillow.

INT. SHRINE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

WE CRANE ACROSS the audience of a live awards show, packed with the biggest stars of the era: JANET JACKSON, BELL BIV DEVOE, BON JOVI, MÖTLEY CRÜE, EN VOGUE...

**AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS
JANUARY, 1991**

A young KEENAN IVORY WAYANS (33) hosts.

KEENAN

Alright -- he went from motorcycles to music but he never stopped racing. Because his album zoomed to quadruple platinum in just two months. He crossed the finish line when he became the first rapper ever to hit number one on the pop singles charts. Here is the cool, the cold, the very hot, Vanilla Ice!

The curtain rises on a second stage revealing Ice and the VIP in sequined American flag outfits with a live band.

ICE (RAPPING)

The VIP is cold baby! Woof! Woof!

ICE ICE BABY drops. The crowd goes wild.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Ice and the VIP hurry off stage, covered in sweat, high on adrenaline, cheers still echoing down the hall.

They hurry toward their dressing rooms, burning past MC Hammer, in line with FIFTEEN OTHER DANCERS.

Ice pauses, turns back and approaches Hammer.

ICE

Yo, Hammer! See that shit?! Nothing left to dance on! We burned that stage down!

HAMMER

Look, uh, we're trying to get ready so --

ICE

Oh, my B. See y'all after the show.

Ice struts away. Hammer can't shake something.

HAMMER

(calling out)

You know, you're not saying it right.

Ice stops, turns back, not sure what he means.

HAMMER (CONT'D)

It's "Word to the mother."

ICE
(grinning)
Yeah, I know. I just spun it. Thought
it'd be funny. Like. Ironic.

HAMMER
Yeah, well, it's not.

ICE
Alright, man. That's your opinion.

HAMMER
Nah, that's a fact.

ICE
You can believe that all you want --

HAMMER
And you can kiss my black ass.

Hammer's dancers let out deep, guttural laughs. Long time coming. Ice reddens, embarrassed. He tries to respond, but their laughter resounds, shutting him down.

INT. SHRINE AUDITORIUM - LATER

ON A GIANT SCREEN on stage, nominees are presented...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Mariah Carey!

A CLIP from her video, EMOTIONS. Over it, we see MARIAH (23) live in the audience. She winks coquettishly at us.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Wilson Phillips!

A CLIP from HOLD ON. Over it, we see the THREE PHILLIPS SISTERS (20's) smiling, holding hands in the audience.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And Vanilla Ice!

A CLIP from ICE ICE BABY. Over it, we see Ice, miserable, still sulking from his encounter with Hammer.

On stage, DAVID CASSIDY (35) and LAUREN MORGAN (26) present the award, both sporting unironic mullets.

DAVID CASSIDY
And the winner for Favorite Pop/Rock New Artist is...

David opens the envelope.

DAVID CASSIDY (CONT'D)
...Vanilla Ice!

In the audience, Ice stands, surprised, not ready for this. Tommy and the VIP jump up, jostling him forward.

MOMENTS LATER

Ice steps up to the podium and David hands him the award. He leans toward the mic, no speech prepared.

ICE
Aww yeah! Yeah...Tommy, where you at man?

Ice grabs Tommy and pulls him forward, arm around him.

ICE (CONT'D)
I'd like to thank my manager here, Tommy Quon. SBK records, everybody, and uh...

Ice locks eyes with Hammer in the crowd.

ICE (CONT'D)
...Word to your mother!

Hammer shakes his head and gets up, excusing himself.

ICE (CONT'D)
And the people who try to hold me down
and talk bad about me...

As Hammer walks out, Ice raises his voice louder.

ICE (CONT'D)
Kiss my white butt! Word to your mother!

Screams and cheers as Hammer disappears. Ice nods, affirmed, undefeated, thrusting his award into the air.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

IN SLOW-MOTION wind blows through Ice's hair, the roar of the crowd echoing in his ears. He's floating in orbit, eyes closed, arms out, suspended.

WIDEN OUT to reveal that he's standing up through the sunroof of a limo, weaving through the Hollywood Hills. Someone tugs at him from below and he drops back down...

INT./ EXT. LIMO

...sitting next to Tommy, Shay, Hi-Tec and the band THE BANGLES. All drunk, high, laughing, ecstatic. Hi-Tec passes Ice a coke-lined mirror.

ICE

Nah, I'm cool...

HI-TEC

Come on! Get loose! We're celebrating!

ICE

Alright, fuck it...

He does a bump. Tommy holds a giant cellphone.

TOMMY (ON PHONE)

Uh huh! Yup, I'm with him right now! I'll tell him! Alright, you too!

He hangs up, looking at Ice gleefully.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Guess who wants you on his show tomorrow?

ICE

Who?

Tommy grins coyly.

ICE (CONT'D)

Who?!

INT. TALK SHOW STAGE - DAY

The iconic "Hoo Hoo Hoo" chant of an AUDIENCE OF THREE HUNDRED on a blue and purple talk show set.

THE ARSENIO HALL SHOW

Ice sits on a couch, pumping his fist in the air next to ARSENIO HALL (35), lean, dapper, in his prime. He waits patiently for the audience to settle.

ARSENIO

So I hear last night, you made a statement that they had to bleep out, at least on the west coast, and the statement was...uh...

(reading)

"Those that try to hold the Iceman down can kiss my white...A double S."

ICE

Yup, yup.

ARSENIO

Now you've got time to expound on that.

Light laughs from the crowd.

ICE

Well I basically said it because, the people who said "white boy can't make it in rap music", well kiss my white...you know the rest. It's like, "Ha! Right in your face!"

ARSENIO

So this is a white rapper being suppressed kind of revenge?

Laughter from the crowd. Ice keeps his composure.

ICE

Something like that...

ARSENIO

You've been embroiled in a lot of controversy. The press has been really hard on you lately, saying that you lie about your background --

ICE

That's old news though.

ARSENIO

Well I haven't interviewed you, so it's new news for my audience...

The audience cheers. Ice starts to sweat, nodding, despite himself, no longer sure if this was a good idea.

ARSENIO (CONT'D)

What do you have to say to the press and the way they've been after you?

ICE

Well you know there's always going to be a bad apple in the bunch. Ever since my record went number one, I'm a prime suspect to be picked on and they're picking on me. But if you can't see that I'm from the streets then you're blind.

Applause for Ice. But Arsenio's not buying any of it.

ARSENIO

KRS-ONE said you present "a distorted mutation of rap." What does that mean?

ICE

I have no idea. I read the same article. But they also said that I'm bringing rap music to an audience that has never heard it before. You know, rap music is here to stay. No matter what color it is. I'm not the Elvis of rap, that's another thing...

The audience laughs.

ARSENIO

...I'm Vanilla Ice.

Cheers. Arsenio nods, careful about his next question.

ARSENIO (CONT'D)

I guess you and Hammer have been having some problems too.

Ice freezes, not prepared for this.

ARSENIO (CONT'D)

Hammer took you on the road and now you've been quoted saying things about him. How did that battle come about and when did the friendship break off?

ICE

There's no battle. We're still friends. As far as I'm concerned I've never said anything bad about Hammer --

ARSENIO

You talked about opening for Hammer but you getting more screams and applause...

ICE

Is that saying anything bad about Hammer?

ARSENIO

How about you being sexier than Hammer, you dancing better than Hammer --

ICE

I never said that.

ARSENIO

So the press is twisting things you said?

ICE (CONT'D)

Yeah. Exactly. I have nothing bad to say about him. I'm not against anybody.

ARSENIO

Well Hammer will be happy to hear that. I talked to him last night. He just says that, brother, he was hurt by it all.

A STAGE MANAGER motions to wrap it up.

ARSENIO (CONT'D)

This is Vanilla Ice. The album is called "To The Extreme."

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Ice rips off his jacket like he's suffocating, throwing it across the room, almost hitting his stylist.

STYLIST

Whoa!

He grabs the sides of the vanity, his arms shaking, rattling the contents on the table like he's going to tear it off the wall. Tommy enters.

TOMMY

Well that was exciting --

ICE

That was a fucking nightmare, Tommy!

Tommy glances at the stylist and makeup artist, both terrified. He nods for them to exit and they hurry out.

TOMMY

So things got a little contentious --

Ice spins toward Tommy.

ICE

Were you watching the same interview, man? Arsenio just bled me out on live TV!

TOMMY

Look, I'm just saying it was in good spirits. This is gonna be great for us --

ICE

Can't you see it!? I'm a fucking joke!

TOMMY

It's just showbiz! The fans know that!
You were cool as a cucumber. And funny.
And so what, Arsenio drew a little blood.
You'll walk it off --

Ice turns and storms out...

EXT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

...hurrying toward a limo outside of Arsenio's building.
The DRIVER opens the back door and Ice dives inside as
Tommy catches up, smiling, acting like everything's cool.

TOMMY

Hey! Go easy tonight, alright? Remember,
tomorrow morning we've got a --

Ice grabs the door and slams it in Tommy's face.

INT. ICE'S HOTEL SUITE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bursting in, Ice hears the phone ringing. He picks up.

TOMMY (O.S.)

(right where he left off)
-- big day and you really need your rest.

ICE

Back up off me man!

Ice slams the phone down, then dials reception.

RECEPTION (O.S.)

How can we help, Mr. Montoya?

ICE

Hold all my calls.

He hangs up, turning toward...Big E, carrying a box.

BIG E

Tommy said you gotta sign these...

Ice tears it open. It's full of books with the title:
"Ice by Ice: The Vanilla Ice Story in His Own Words."

He storms into his bedroom and slams the door.

INT. ICE'S HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on his bed, Ice reels, trying to get his mind off everything. He grabs the remote, turning on the TV.

On screen, it's SNL. KEVIN BACON impersonates VANILLA ICE on CHRIS ROCK'S fake black power talk show Nat X.

KEVIN BACON AS ICE

I'm from the streets.

Bacon wears a sad version of Ice's sequined American Flag suit. Rock wears a Daishiki and a giant afro.

NAT X

What street?! Sesame street?!

Huge laughs. Ice turns the TV off. Closes his eyes. Breathes deeply. Searching for any remaining calm. The sound of his door opening. Big E's footsteps.

ICE

(eyes closed)

Yo, Big, I just need some peace and qu --

Without warning, Ice is dragged violently off the bed!

INT. ICE'S HOTEL SUITE

He flails, disoriented, just before A MASSIVE HAND wrings his neck, pinning him against the wall. A face comes into focus. It's Suge Knight.

SUGE

Happy to see me?

Behind him, two of Suge's thugs beats Big E mercilessly with the butt of his own .357 Magnum.

ICE

(panicked)

What -- what do you want?

Suge nods toward the far corner of the room.

SUGE

Remember him?

Ice's eyes dart to a timid, skinny black kid hugging the wall, staring at the floor. He looks familiar.

ICE
(baffled)
...That's...the intern?

SUGE
His name is Mario. AKA Chocolate. AKA the
motherfucker who wrote "Ice Ice Baby."

ICE
What?!

Suge picks Ice up by his neck. He gasps, choking horribly
as Suge hauls him onto the balcony...

EXT. ICE'S HOTEL BALCONY

...and over the railing, hanging him 10 stories above
Sunset by his left leg.

ICE
Please! Don't!

SUGE
Who wrote "Ice Ice Baby"?

ICE
Fuck! Help! Help!

Suge loosens his grip, letting Ice slide a foot closer to
oblivion before catching him by the ankle.

SUGE
I ain't asking again.

ICE
The intern! Mario! Chocolate! Whatever
the fuck! Just pull me up!

INT. ICE'S HOTEL SUITE

CLOSE ON Ice's shaking hand, signing "Robert Van Winkle,"
on a wrinkled contract. Suge snatches it from him.

SUGE
Fuck with us at all, get your people
involved, you'll wish I dropped your ass.

Ice nods, petrified.

SUGE (CONT'D)
Nice doing business with you.

Suge, Mario and his thugs file out of the room, slamming the door behind them.

WIDE ON the hotel suite. Everything trashed, furniture broken, pictures shattered on the floor. Big E sits half-conscious in a pool of his own blood.

EXT. FRONT GATE - ICE'S MIAMI ESTATE - DAY

Eight GIANT SECURITY GUARDS with exposed machine guns and three DOBERMANS flank the gate of a sprawling estate.

**MIAMI, FLORIDA
APRIL, 1991**

A black Mercedes minivan pulls up. A guard approaches, hand firmly on his gun.

The window rolls down: It's Tommy. Sleepless. Impatient.

GUARD

ID please.

TOMMY

(sighing)

Seriously? You know who I am.

GUARD

ID or get the fuck out of here.

Tommy hands him his ID. He takes it to the other guards, who all inspect it, scratching their heads. A loud BEEP.

ICE (ON INTERCOM)

It's alright, fellas. Let him through.

TOMMY

About time!

The guard returns and hands him back his ID. A Yin Yang symbol on the gate parts and Tommy drives through.

INT. ICE'S MIAMI ESTATE - DAY

The front door creaks open, unlocked. Tommy sticks his head inside cautiously.

TOMMY

Hello?

His voice echoes through a large foyer. Roman-inspired design straight out of Scarface. A TV blares nearby.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Tommy enters, carrying a briefcase, following the sound to...Ice, lounging on an Eames chair, remote in hand, watching "At the Movies" on a giant screen.

TOMMY

Would it kill you to return my calls --

Ice raises a hand, shushing him. On TV, Siskel and Ebert discuss a movie on their seminal show.

SISKEL (ON TV)

I only smiled at some of the silly prat falls. After that, Ninja Turtles II was really depressing to sit through.

EBERT (ON TV)

I think there's something going on with these Turtles that's telling us an alarming truth about our society.

Ice hits pause on his remote, sitting in silence.

TOMMY

So critics hated it. Big surprise.

ICE

You know, I've finally had some time to think and one thing keeps hitting me. Through all of this shit, you haven't protected me. Not from the critics, not from the label, not from this shitty movie and damn sure not from Suge Knight.

Tommy opens his briefcase and pulls out a folder, tossing it on Ice's lap. He stares at it for a second, then flops it opens. Inside: Suge's wrinkled contract.

ICE (CONT'D)

(eyes bugging)

How'd you get this?

TOMMY

Did you read it?

ICE

When?! When I was pleading for my life?

TOMMY

Well, it was written by someone...law adjacent, let's put it that way. It not only wouldn't hold up in court, it isn't even spell checked --

Ice stands, all the fear rushing back.

ICE

I'm dead. He's gonna fucking kill me --

TOMMY

Settle down.

ICE

Don't fucking tell me to settle down --

TOMMY

I talked to him.

ICE

(freezing)

When?

TOMMY

On Tuesday. At The Palm, funny enough.
And Mario Lavelle Johnson AKA Chocolate
AKA our former intern now owns ten
percent of "Ice Ice Baby".

ICE

What are you talking about?

TOMMY

We drafted up the right paperwork. And I
signed over ten of my points to him.

ICE

You just said you didn't have to?

TOMMY

And you've got an armed militia at your
gate. You've been holed up like Howard
Hughes. I'm worried about you.

Ice stares at Tommy, still in disbelief.

ICE

So...Suge's cool?

TOMMY

Oh, he's more than cool. He just won the
lottery. He's starting a label with my
money. Even tried to poach you from SBK.

Ice takes this in, then sighs in extreme relief.

ICE
I don't know what to say, man.
(beat)
Thank you.

TOMMY
(waving it off)
We'll make it back. But we've gotta get
down to business.

Ice nods obediently.

ICE
What do we got?

TOMMY
Universal sent over a script.

ICE
(smirking)
What, they making a Care Bears Two?

Tommy shakes his head. Sick of this.

TOMMY
Siskel & Ebert forgot to mention Turtles
opened at number one. It's tracking to be
one of the highest March debuts ever.

ICE
Yeah but it's not me; it's not Ice.

TOMMY
I get it, alright? No more kids stuff.
This is a serious role. Like you wanted.
Rough, rugged and raw.

ICE
Sorry, but, I ain't doing another movie.
Nothing you say is gonna change that.

TOMMY
They're offering a million dollars.

Ice stares at Tommy.

INT. ZIEGFELD THEATRE - NIGHT

The sound of ominous 80's synth pads on a black screen.
"UNIVERSAL PICTURES presents" fades up, followed by "a
KOPPELMAN / BANDIER-CARNEGIE production..."

The synth gains momentum as we cut to a CLOSE-UP of super model NAOMI CAMPBELL (21) holding a microphone.

NAOMI CAMPBELL

Wooooo!

A hard street beat drops. A card that reads "VANILLA ICE" in neon orange and green fills the entire screen.

APPLAUSE and SCREAMS as we cut to the film's title, "cool AS iCE" in those exact funky cAPS.

NAOMI CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

(lip-syncing)

Got to get loose!

In the audience, Ice sits in a baggy black satin suit next to Tommy. The house is packed. Tommy raises a hand and they dap it up, grinning, beyond excited.

NEW YORK CITY

OCTOBER, 1991

"cool AS iCE" PREMIERE

On screen, a striking, slow-motion MONTAGE begins...

-- A MAN'S BLACK BOOTS walk through water

-- DANCERS fill a smokey industrial warehouse

-- A RASTA DUDE tosses his dreadlocks back

-- Naomi Campbell gyrates in front of an industrial fan

We now cut to Ice, spotlit, wearing an orange windbreaker and a backwards starter cap, tag still on. He's holding a mic and drops a hard verse, rapping as credits appear.

ICE (RAPPING)

*Face the music I'm right behind / With a
posse a mic and a funky rhyme / Doesn't
take a lot of time for me to climb --*

The verse is one of his best. Combined with the chiaroscuro imagery, it's electrifying. Dancers break in an orgiastic frenzy. Ice seems unstoppable. He's back.

ICE (CONT'D)

*A lesson well taught here's some more
advice / I don't sweat it on a mic 'cause
I'm cool as Ice.*

In the audience: SCREAMS. ADULATION. Tommy's blown away.

TOMMY

Holy shit! It hasn't even started yet!

ICE

Yeah, it's a dope intro, but...

Ice hesitates. Tommy can see something's wrong. Ice leans toward him, whispering in his ear.

ICE (CONT'D)

...I don't know about the rest of it.

Tommy pulls away, staring at Ice, baffled.

TOMMY

What are you talking about?!

INT. ZIEGFELD THEATRE - LATER

We're fifteen minutes into the movie: KATHY and her conservatively dressed boyfriend NICK (20's), stand on the front steps of a suburban home across from Ice.

Kathy grabs Nick's hand, pulling him toward the house.

KATHY

Come on. We're wasting his time.

ICE

You're not wasting my time. I'm just coolin'.

KATHY

Then you're wasting our time.

Their delivery and timing are comically bad. This could be a John Waters film, if it were intentional.

ICE

Alright, I get it. Check this though, you need me, I'll be right over there.

NICK

She won't.

ICE

Yeah, we'll see about that.

Ice shuffles toward the curb, stopping, turning back.

ICE (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, Kat. Words of wisdom. Drop that zero and get with the hero.

Groans from the audience. In just a few short minutes, the atmosphere has shifted from exhilarating to bleak.

Ice eyes Tommy, worried. Tommy motions, "It'll be okay."

INT. ZIEGFELD THEATRE - LATER

We're an hour into the movie now. On screen, Ice lounges on a stack of 2x4's at a deserted construction site. Kat sits on his neon yellow Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle.

KAT

Where are you from?

ICE

It ain't where you're from it's where you're at anyway. And right now, I'm here with you, Kat.

KAT

So what's important to you?

ICE

If you ain't true to yourself, then you ain't true to nobody. Live your life as someone else, and you ain't really living. Straight up fact.

Now Ice chases Kat through the frame of an unfinished house, playing a sexy game of tag. Kat grabs him, kissing him as the camera spins around them, Michael Bay style.

A slow-jam begins. Ice raps on the soundtrack in what is undoubtedly the worst song he ever made.

ICE (RAPPING) (CONT'D)

*Love at first sight / I recite feelings
in my heart I hope that we will never
part...*

Now Kat teaches Ice how to ride a white horse in a field. We have no idea why.

Unapologetic laughter from the audience. Tommy himself lets out an involuntary snicker, then turns to Ice.

TOMMY

(trying to hold it in)
Sorry...

Ice sinks down in his seat.

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Monte holds up a copy of the "Washington Post," reading to Tommy and Charles. Ice isn't there...thankfully.

MONTE

(reading)

Having established that he can't rap or dance, Vanilla Ice now adds acting to his resume. And judging by the thin crowds at screenings of his feature film debut, it might have been called "Cold as Ice."

He puts down the paper.

CHARLES

How's it grossing?

MONTE

It opened nine spots below "Ernest Scared Stupid."

CHARLES

We should have put him in that instead.

(beat)

What about the album?

MONTE

It's gonna drop off the top 200 Friday.

CHARLES

And Extremely Live?

MONTE

Extremely dead. Not charting at all.

Charles shakes his head and stands, staring out of his panoramic window. A moment of silence.

CHARLES

Nobody sells seven million records then just falls off the face of the earth.

(beat)

We gotta stop the bleeding, get him back on tour again. How fast can he turn around a new album?

TOMMY

Can I be frank? He's been in overdrive for a while now and...he's tired. Especially after the last tour, the Suge situation, the movie. I don't want to burn him out entirely. We keep bending him, he might break.

CHARLES

I didn't ask how he felt about it, Tommy.

MONTE

We've got a narrow window of time here --

CHARLES

(firm)

He needs to stay in the spotlight.

TOMMY

Forgive me, but don't you think he might be just a little...overexposed already?

MONTE

What are you talking about?

Tommy motions out of the window to what Charles is looking at: a massive "cool AS iCE" billboard on Sunset.

TOMMY

People can only take so much.

CHARLES

You begged us for Top Priority. We gave it to you. And it wasn't cheap.

TOMMY

Look, I'm grateful. But now that we've got everyone's attention, would it hurt to be a little more...discriminating?

CHARLES

Where I'm from, we don't bow down to each other and back away. This is the west, for Christ's sake.

TOMMY

(quietly)

Not what I meant.

CHARLES

I'm gonna ask again -- How fast can he turn around a new album?

INT. RECORDING BOOTH - ICE'S HOME STUDIO - DAY

CLOSE ON a line of cocaine on a flattened music stand. A nostril vacuums it up. Ice swings his head back.

ICE

Woooo! Okay!

He steps up to a mic, putting his headphones on. He's lost weight, his cheeks hollow, skin pale and blemished.

**MIAMI, FLORIDA
TWO YEARS LATER**

Earthquake sits behind a window at a mixing board.

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
Alright, let's run it back again...

Ice nods spastically, with drug-addled enthusiasm. He waits for the beat to drop in his headphones. Then --

ICE (RAPPING)
*Suckers frontin' / wantin' me to fade /
Thought I was outta here fools I ain't
goin' away / Back with the track that'll
keep my bank phat, huh! / Vanilla got the
flavor for the funky format -- Goddamnit!*

Ice tears off his headphones. Earthquake stops the track.

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
You alright?

Ice nods, putting his headphones back on, hopping from foot to foot like a boxer before a match.

ICE
Fine man! Come on, let's go!

Earthquake stares at him warily, running the track again.

ICE (RAPPING) (CONT'D)
*Suckers frontin' / wantin' me to fade --
(stopping cold)
Can you turn the fucking treble down,
man? You know I hate that tin can sound!*

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
Yo, it's all the way down. Like I said.

ICE
Yeah, why can't I fucking hear myself?!

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
I don't know what to tell you.

ICE
How am I suppose to rap if I can't
fucking hear myself?

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
Your monitor's on. Checked your headset.

ICE
Stop fucking with me man!

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
(quietly)
I'm not fucking with you.

ICE
Yeah you are! You fucking up my sound!

Earthquake shakes his head. He's had it.

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
I'm gonna let you cool out.

He stands.

ICE
Where you going?!

EARTHQUAKE (ON INTERCOM)
I'll see you tomorrow.

ICE
Sit the fuck down!

Earthquake heads to the studio door. Ice hurries out of the recording booth...

INT. HALLWAY

...cutting Earthquake off as he exits.

EARTHQUAKE
Move out the way, homie --

ICE
I ain't your homie, I'm your boss. Get back in the studio.

EARTHQUAKE
Yo, you better let me through --

Ice gets right in Earthquake's grill.

ICE
Or what, motherfucker?

Earthquake grabs him and slams him against the wall!

EARTHQUAKE

Listen, homie. Chill bounced. Shay's dancing for Hammer. And Tommy ain't even checking up on us no more. But no matter what bullshit you try to pull on me, I ain't walking. 'Cause I got a family to feed now. So we're gonna make a fuckin' album. You understand?

Ice nods. No choice. Quake lets go, smoothing out Ice's shirt for him.

EARTHQUAKE (CONT'D)

Like I said...I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. ICE'S HOME STUDIO

Ice enters, huffing to the mixing board. Pressing buttons. We hear the track. It's way too base heavy.

CLOSE ON a nob: "TREBLE". Quake was right: it's all the way down. Ice cranks on it anyway, breaking it off.

ICE

Goddamn it!

He tosses the nob, turns off the music, flops down in Earthquake's chair. High. Alone. Not sure what to do.

His eyes fix on a phone on the table. He contemplates.

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE

CLOSE ON a landline ringing. Answering machine picks up.

SADIE (O.S.)

It's Sadie. Here it comes. Wait for it...

BEEP. Ragged breathing. Could be a stalker. Then --

ICE (O.S.)

Hey, Sadie. It's Ice. I mean...Robbie.

INT. ICE'S HOME STUDIO

Ice on the phone, sweating, tongue-tied.

ICE

I know it's weird, me calling out of the blue. But I thought I'd just see how you were doing. Been a minute.

(MORE)

ICE (CONT'D)

(beat)

You see Jurassic Park? It's pretty good.
Kinda long but, um, anyway --

Someone picks up the phone.

SADIE (O.S.)

Robbie?

He goes silent, stunned.

ICE

(quietly)

You picked up.

SADIE (O.S.)

How have you been?

ICE

Good. You?

SADIE (O.S.)

Great. Really great.

ICE

That's...that's...good to hear.

SADIE (O.S.)

I've heard a lot about you. I mean, it's
hard not to...I'm happy you called.

ICE

(innocently)

You are?

SADIE

Of course.

He tries to hold himself together.

ICE

You know, um, it'd be great to see you...

SADIE

Where are you?

ICE

Miami.

SADIE

Well I'm in Dallas.

ICE

I can be there in three hours.

Sadie lets out a light laugh.

SADIE
What? Are you serious?

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON Ice's finger, pressing the doorbell. He steps back, holding a bouquet of roses, wearing his hallmark American flag suit, now far too big for his skinny frame.

He looks like the ghost of his former self, out of time and place, stage ready in the middle of the suburbs.

The door opens. It's Sadie. She's barely aged, skin glowing, more beautiful than he remembers. He goes weak.

ICE
Damn...You look great.

SADIE
(smiling)
And you look -- you headed to a concert or something?

ICE
(embarrassed)
No...I just thought I'd, you know, break out the good suit.

She glances down at the roses, her smile fading.

SADIE
Those for me?

ICE
Yeah. Just a little gift...

He hands them to her.

SADIE
Thanks. Come in.

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ice steps inside and Sadie closes the door behind him.

SADIE
Let me put these in some water...

She veers toward the kitchen as he waits in the foyer, observing the sweet, modest interior. Road not taken.

ICE
Nice house.

SADIE (O.S.)
Oh please, I bet you live in a palace.

ICE
Not a palace, exactly, but...

Sadie returns.

ICE (CONT'D)
...it's a whole operation. Just a big
headache. I wouldn't mind a place like
this. Especially if it was just me.

She stares at him, not sure how to respond.

DARLA (O.S.)
Mommy?

Ice's eyes snap to DARLA (3), adorable pink dress,
braided hair, standing in the doorway to the living room.

SADIE
Hey, baby.

DARLA
Who is he?

SADIE
This is Robbie. He's an old friend.
Robbie, this is Darla. My daughter.

Ice turns back to Sadie, confused.

SADIE (CONT'D)
Sweetie, why don't you go get your daddy?

Darla nods and dashes out. Ice tries to play it cool.

ICE
You're...married?

SADIE
No. But it's basically the same.

ICE
(quietly)
Damn.

SADIE

Sorry I didn't tell you over the phone. I thought about it. And I figured it's better we all talk in person.

Ice shakes his head, confused.

ICE

What do you mean?

Footsteps. Someone enters. Ice turns and freezes.

It's Chill. In old jeans and a t-shirt. Darla clinging to his leg. In his arms, he holds A BABY. Chill nods warmly.

CHILL

Robbie. Good to see you...

Ice stares. No words.

EXT. SADIE'S HOUSE - DAY

The door flies open. Ice storms out, trudging across the lawn, no idea where he's headed. Chill hurries after him.

CHILL

Ice! Hold up! Come on -- Robbie!

Ice spins around, facing him.

ICE

Soon as you got back you went straight after my girl?!

CHILL

Whoa! It ain't like that, man.

ICE

Then what's it like?!

CHILL

She asked me out. And I even said no at first. Out of respect. But then I thought, what was I even protecting? You were off touring the world. You had moved on. And I needed to. So did she.

ICE

So y'all moved on together. Bet that felt real good. Sticking it to me --

CHILL

Yo...that's the last thing we wanted.
That's why it took so long to tell you.

ICE

Oh is that why?

CHILL

Look. We owe you a lot. And no matter
what went down, we're grateful.

Ice stares at Chill. Enraged. Hurt.

CHILL (CONT'D)

(softly)

Yo, can we just sit for a minute? I know
Sadie wants to talk to you. Catch up. I
do too. We, uh...we miss you man.

In Ice's eyes we catch a glimpse of a deep sadness. He
misses them too, more than he can say.

INT. SADIE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ice, Sadie and Chill hang in the dining room after
dinner, dirty plates still on the table, kids asleep.
It's like old times. Almost.

CHILL

I don't think Arsenio had any right to
put you on blast like that.

ICE

I can't believe you watched.

CHILL

The whole country watched.

ICE

I just mean...why bother? If I was y'all,
with a setup like this, kids like those,
shit...I'd want to forget about me as
soon as possible.

CHILL

That ain't never gonna happen.

ICE

Why not?

SADIE

'Cause you're our boy.

Sadie glances at Chill and he nods in agreement.

CHILL
Always gonna be.

Ice stares at them in silence, humbled.

CHILL (CONT'D)
(shifting gears)
So what's up now, man? You writing?

ICE
We're on the hook with SBK. Way past due.
But I'm not feeling it. Just blocked up.

SADIE
What'd you do last time? Seemed to work
pretty well...

ICE
I just wrote about how we were living.

SADIE
Why not do that again?

ROBBIE
Honestly...I don't really know if I like
how I'm living anymore.
(to Chill)
I mean...the label, Charles, Monte...you
were right. About all of it.

CHILL
(quietly)
Yeah. I know.

ICE
And it's a new game now. The Chronic?
Doggystyle? Regulators? That shit's mind
blowing.

Sadie leans toward Ice, meets his eyes.

SADIE
You know what I think? It's easy to get
lost worrying about someone else's name.
Or someone else's life. Just get back to
what matters to you. And nobody else.

CHILL
You said it yourself. You don't follow
trends. You set 'em.

Ice takes this in. Synapses firing.

CHILL (CONT'D)
 So some new rappers blew your mind. Now
 you blow theirs.

ICE
 (quietly)
 Yeah...that's got a ring to it...

The intro of an intense Gangster rap track takes us to...

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

...A MUSIC VIDEO MONTAGE of

- The grill of a Cadillac, bouncing on hydraulics.
- IMPOSING SHADOWS, shrouded in smoke.
- A DOZEN BLACK EXTRAS huddled around a trash can fire.

The images are bleak, grimy, hard as hell. A window into urban blight, life on the streets.

GANGSTERS (SINGING)
 Roll 'em up! Roll up the Hooty Mac! Roll
 'em up!

-- We focus on a SILHOUETTED MAN, dreadlocks, goatee, in a Phoenix Suns jersey. He steps out of the shadows. It's...Ice. Almost unrecognizable. A title card fades up:

Vanilla Ice
"Roll 'Em Up"
Mind Blowin'
SBK Records

He lifts a 40 oz in a paper bag, waving it around.

ICE (RAPPING)
I need some herbs and spices / So I can
feel as nice as / The breeze, coolin'
like a summer tree / Cause it's the I-C-E

INT. ICE'S FLORIDA ESTATE - DAY

The music video continues on Ice's TV as we pull back into his smoke-filled living room...

MIAMI, FLORIDA
MARCH, 1994

...where Ice, same new look, shoots craps with the random extras we just saw. He shakes a pair of dice in his hand.

RANDOM EXTRA

Shake 'em up, shake 'em up, shake 'em!

Ice tosses the dice, hitting a seven. Everyone hollers.

ICE

That's right motherfuckers! I got the hot hand! Y'all want to double down?

Ice takes a huge rip off a blunt, dapping up his new crew. The sound of COUGHING behind him. Everyone turns, glancing at...Tommy in the doorway.

ICE (CONT'D)

Yo! Tommy! What you doing here?

Tommy tries to catch his breath, the smoke unbearable.

TOMMY

We had a meeting.

ICE

Oh fuck, seriously?

Tommy nods. Ice hands his cash to an extra.

ICE (CONT'D)

Yo, hold this. And I know exactly how much that is, so don't try nothin'...

INT. ICE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Tommy sits in a breakfast nook, sipping a glass of water. Eyes glazed. Contact high. Ice lounges across from him.

TOMMY

How do you deal with all that smoke?

ICE

It's just my lifestyle, man.

TOMMY

(dryly)

Uh huh.

ICE

You'll see, soon as we hit the road!

Tommy doesn't respond.

ICE (CONT'D)

I'm getting cagey in this motherfucker.
And I got some dope ideas for the tour --

TOMMY

That's actually what I wanted to talk to
you about...

ICE

Nothing too fancy. I'm keeping it street-
level. But I do want to be held up like
Simba in The Lion King --

TOMMY

...There's not going to be a tour.

Ice grins and leans back like Tommy's messing with him.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I'm not joking. We can't book you.

ICE

Of course you can. It's the I-C-E --

TOMMY

We tried. Believe me. Started with some
of your old venues. The Forum. MSG. But
the projections weren't good so we scaled
down. It didn't matter. No one's biting.

ICE

(bewildered)

What do you mean, no one?

TOMMY

I mean we couldn't book you at Knott's
Berry Farm.

ICE

My shit's been on MTV all week!

TOMMY

They have a package deal with SBK. No
one's actually requesting it.

ICE

So what are you saying?

TOMMY

I'm saying Mind Blowin's...blown. We've
got to put it to bed.

ICE

I'm making the dopest shit in my whole career. We're just getting started!

TOMMY

I know it's hard to hear. But the label can't push it anymore then they have.

ICE

Then why are they even repping me?

TOMMY

Well that's another thing.

Ice's eyes widen, panic growing.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

It was a three album contract. This was the third.

ICE

It's my second album!

TOMMY

Extremely Live was your second album.

ICE

So what, they're straight dropping us?

Tommy nods. Ice fidgets, agitated, shaking his head.

ICE (CONT'D)

Man, I hated those motherfuckers anyway. I knew from day one they were only looking out for themselves. Let's call Jimmy at Interscope, Lyor at Def Jam!

TOMMY

Already did.

ICE

And?

Tommy shakes his head, "No."

ICE (CONT'D)

Alright, fuck it, call Suge at Death Row!

TOMMY

His slate's full. He had a message though. He said: "Thanks for the label."

ICE

So what are we gonna do?

TOMMY

Well, I'd advise you take a good look at your expenses and try to cut them down. Especially, you know...the drugs.

ICE

What the fuck are you talking about, Tommy? Why you saying this shit!?

TOMMY

(pained)

Look, for a moment, it was in the cards for us. But that moment...is...gone. Which is why I need to step away for a while. Tend to some other interests.

ICE

Are you serious right now? After all the shit we've been through? You're ending it? Just like that?

TOMMY

I think it's healthy we try to reprioritize. Rather than delude ourselves any further.

ICE

Muthafucka you the one that's deluded!

TOMMY

Excuse me?!

ICE

You don't know shit! You had one idea! Make me rap Elvis! That ain't me! I was real, and you let those SBK fuckheads take away my street cred!

TOMMY

You could have gotten off the ride whenever you wanted. But you were having too much fun.

Ice stops. Pissed. He takes a beat.

ICE

Then say it. 'Cause I'm not going to.

Tommy stares at Ice, silent. Ice nods smugly.

ICE (CONT'D)

You can't, can you?

TOMMY
(quietly)
I named you. I wrote your life story.
Literally. When I look at you, I still
see infinite potential. But the world
doesn't anymore. So I'll say it. Even
though it hurts me. As much as it does
you. I need to move on. I'm sorry.

Ice looks like he's been punched in the gut.

EXT. ICE'S MIAMI ESTATE - DAY

Tommy hurries out. Ice follows, calling after him.

ICE
Come on man! Don't do this!

Tommy doesn't turn back, making his way to his minivan.
Ice stares at him, eyes full of anguish. Lost.

ICE (CONT'D)
Tommy!

INT./EXT. TOMMY'S MINIVAN

Tommy drives, glancing in his rearview at Ice on his
lawn. Then he tilts his mirror up so he's out of view.

INT./EXT. ICE'S DALLAS ESTATE - DAY

FLASH CUTS OF

- A line of coke as the tip of a dollar vacuums it up.
- Three ecstasy pills popped into a mouth.
- A syringe spurting. The plunger dropping.
- A pupil dilating.

Ice lies back on a rattan recliner in the sun, higher
than he's ever been. RANDOM PEOPLE passing by.

WE WIDEN OUT to reveal that he's shirtless, in swim
trunks on an upscale balcony overlooking a lake. His
dreads are gone. Hair buzzcut like he's in bootcamp.

Half-naked PARTIERS, all white frat types, surround him.

DALLAS, TEXAS

JULY 4TH, 1994

A shadow falls over Ice. He glances up, squinting. The silhouette of a blonde woman, backlit by the sun.

LAURA

Hey, Ice.

ICE

Oh...Hey...

She takes a seat next to him.

LAURA

Remember me?

Ice stares at her, clueless.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Laura.

ICE

Yeah...Laura...

LAURA

We met in LA.

ICE

...Right...

LAURA

At the Forum? You pulled me on stage.

A flash of recognition. Ice remembering.

ICE

Right! Then the crowd went nuts?

LAURA

Yeah! That was wild!

ICE

Crazy night...

LAURA

(embarrassed)

No kidding.

ICE

I tried getting back to my hotel room the next day. But it got fucking mobbed.

LAURA

Management had to sneak us out. Past,
like, a thousand fans.

ICE

You know, I looked for your number, but --

LAURA

I left it! Housekeeping must have thrown
it out. They had a lot to clean up.

ICE

I was hoping to see you again.

LAURA

Well...here I am.

She smiles at him. He grins back.

ICE

Yeah...funny...

A sunburned PARTY BRO in a starter cap runs up to Ice,
holding up a giant bag of coke.

PARTY BRO

Yo, Ice! Check it!!

ICE

Just in time. Need a little pick me up.
(to Laura)
Want to join?

Laura stares at him for a beat, then lifts a pendant from
a chain around her neck.

ICE (CONT'D)

What's that?

LAURA

My one year.

He leans in, getting a closer look. It's an AA medallion.
The inscription reads: "To thine own self be true."

PARTY BRO

Come on, bro! Let's hit this!

Ice nods, standing, following the party bro inside. Laura
watches him go, worried.

EXT. ICE'S DALLAS ESTATE - LATER

Ice holds a mic, wobbling on his feet next to a FAT WHITE DJ (20's). Partiers surround them.

ICE

Y'all motherfuckers having a good time?!

Drunken screams and cheers.

ICE (CONT'D)

Just wanted to say, I haven't felt this much love in a while. Thank y'all for...

Ice stares at the sea of white faces. Total strangers.

ICE (CONT'D)

...for coming out...

The mic falls on the table, feedback whining as Ice shuffles off. The DJ picks it up.

DJ

Alright, let's keep this bitch going!

INT. ICE'S HALLWAY

Ice stumbles down a dark hall, way too high, his world spinning. He stops at his open bedroom door...

INT. ICE'S BEDROOM

...peering at a HALF-DOZEN PARTIERS inside. They all go quiet, staring at him. He looks worse than before. His face ashen, in a cold sweat.

ICE

How'd you get in here?

BEDROOM BRO

Door was unlocked...

ICE

Well none of y'all should be here...

Ice sees something, lurching toward a shelf full of memorabilia and awards, looking at an empty spot.

ICE (CONT'D)

Yo, where's my record?

No one responds.

ICE (CONT'D)
My Spoonie Gee record was right here.

Silence.

ICE (CONT'D)
Seriously. Who the fuck took it?

BEDROOM BRO
Hey, man. Chill out --

ICE
Where the fuck is it?!

BEDROOM BRO
Nobody took anything, bro!

ICE
It's not yours, motherfucker!

Ice pushes the bro hard into a wall. The partiers GASP.

BEDROOM BRO
You're fucking crazy, man!

Ice sways, face contorted with rage, speech slurring.

ICE
Give it the fuck back right now!! You
hear me? It's mine! Give it ba...b...

His knees buckle, eyes rolling as he collapses.

INT./EXT. BACK OF AN AMBULANCE - DAY

Two PARAMEDICS push Ice into an ambulance on a stretcher.
Unconscious. Oxygen mask. Heart monitor flatlining.

One of them charges a defibrillator as the other slams
the doors. A siren wails and the ambulance tears off,
leaving a mass of rattled partiers on the curb.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Ice's eyes as they flutter and open. Something
in his hands. He glances down at a cardboard sleeve.
Clean yellow label. It's "Spoonin Rap."

LAURA (O.S.)
(quietly)
It was on your record player.

Ice looks up at Laura, sitting next to his bed. He tries to speak. Can't at first. Then, in a whisper --

ICE
How long was I...

LAURA
About eight hours.

ICE
Damn.
(beat)
What, um...what are you doing here?

LAURA
Just making sure you woke up.

ICE
Why?

Saddened by the question, she motions to the empty room.

LAURA
'Cause no one else did?

ICE
Well I'm awake. You can leave if you want to.

LAURA
Yeah. I can, can't I?

She doesn't move. They stare at each other silently for a long moment. The faint sound of strings fades up, playing "Canon in D Major"...

EXT. FAIRCHILD BOTANICAL GARDENS - DAY

...taking us to a wedding in progress. About a HUNDRED GUESTS are gathered around a quaint gazebo.

MIAMI, FLORIDA JUNE, 1997

In the audience, too many familiar faces to count. Chill, Sadie, Shay, Earthquake, John Bush, Big-E (with a cane)...and Tommy, all worn a bit with age but happy.

They watch as Laura walks down the aisle, radiant in her dress, sized to fit a baby bump. She approaches...

...Ice standing at the alter with Beth, Kip, Bryon. He's looking good: filled out, clean shaven, clean, period. He gazes at her like he doesn't deserve what he has.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Everyone dances, laughing, joking around. Ice and Laura in the middle of it. The song comes to an end. A pause, then...ICE ICE BABY drops. The crowd screams.

Ice shakes his head at Earthquake sitting in the DJ booth, 20 pounds heavier, who shrugs innocently.

John Bush appears, hair gray, handing Ice a mic, echoing the first time they all came together a decade ago.

JOHN BUSH
Rock the mic, Vanilla Ice...

Ice raises the mic to his mouth as the verse hits.

ICE (RAPPING)
Alright, stop!

Everyone cheers. The song continues but he doesn't.

ICE (CONT'D)
No seriously, stop. It's 1997, y'all!
Time to move on!

Laughter all around. Ice hands the mic back to John Bush.

JOHN BUSH
Can't say I blame you...

SHAY
I was ready to bust it! Bad back and all!

CHILL
Motherfucker, you're only 32!

Laura sees something across the hall then points it out to Ice. It's Tommy, exiting the party quietly.

ICE
Be right back.

EXT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Tommy stands on the patio alone, lighting a cigarette.

ICE (O.S.)
How do you deal with all that smoke?

Tommy turns, facing Ice as he steps outside.

TOMMY
It's just my lifestyle, man.

Ice laughs. Tommy offers him one. He waves "No thanks."

ICE
When'd you start?

TOMMY
Couple years ago. Reminded me of touring.
Smokey theaters. The way it got into your
hair. All your clothes...

Ice thinks about it, remembering.

ICE
Maybe I will take one.

Tommy nods, handing him the pack. Ice lights up.

ICE (CONT'D)
Don't tell Laura, though. She thinks
everything's gonna mess up the baby.

TOMMY
Sounds like a good mom.

ICE
Damn straight.

Ice takes a drag, looking at his cigarette.

ICE (CONT'D)
Goddamn, that's good. I'd be lying if I
said I didn't miss it.

Tommy stares off into the darkness.

TOMMY
Yeah. Me too.

Ice eyes Tommy, in a far off place. He knows that look.

ICE
Man...I reminisce a lot. Especially since
we started planning the wedding. And I
don't know about any of it now. All I
know is it felt good. You thinking I had
something. That I could be something.
(MORE)

ICE (CONT'D)

I believed that too. But the more I think about it, it's only 'cause you did. And I didn't want to let you down.

Tommy nods, taking this in, then meets Ice's eyes.

TOMMY

You know, when I met you, I was running a nightclub in the lowest income neighborhood in the city. I had a label with no stars. No real potential. And I was flat broke. Just...winging it.

ICE

Wait...What?

TOMMY

City Lights never turned a profit. Overhead was so high. Security alone.

ICE

Damn. I had no idea.

TOMMY

How could you have? You were a car salesman. An assistant car salesman.

Ice nods. Good point.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I guess I'm saying, I never thought we'd go as far as we did. I wished for it. But if I'm being honest, really honest?...I can't believe we pulled any of it off.

Ice smiles. Agreeing.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I mean, it may not have lasted very long, and maybe that's on me. But at the end of the day...it happened.

They both take a drag, thinking about it, grateful.

INT. ICE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON an adorable, grumbling baby, KEELEE BREEZE (3 months). Ice holds her gently, calming her down.

DALLAS, TEXAS

APRIL, 2000

VH1 BEHIND THE MUSIC INTERVIEW

Laura sits next to him, holding their other daughter, DUSTI RAIN (2). They're a picturesque family, almost too picturesque, as though someone posed them this way...

Across from them sits an INTERVIEWER (30's) next to a CAMERA CREW (40's). Lights. Grip stands. The whole nine.

INTERVIEWER

Laura, how's Ice as a dad?

LAURA

Amazing. He loves our girls. We want to have kids running all around the house.

INTERVIEWER

(to Ice)

And what's your take on fatherhood?

ICE

You know, I'm going to give my daughters everything that I never had growing up. And I'm not going to expose them to all the crap that I was exposed to. 'Cause that can ruin somebody. I'm going to let them learn from all my experiences and lead them in the right direction.

INTERVIEWER

What direction is that?

ICE

Life isn't about material things. It's about your click at home, this little itty-bitty crowd of people you hang out with every day. That's what life's about. All the rest of this...

(motioning to the camera crew)

...is entertainment.

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever miss the old days?

ICE

I'm so on the other side of those days. I'm way beyond it. Way beyond it...

He stares off, distant, just like Tommy at the wedding.

FLASH CUTS OF

-- Ice on stage, dancing, sweat pouring down his face...

-- An audience of thousands screaming into the ether...

-- a light array firing, illuminating him standing defiantly in a star-spangled red and blue suit...

AND WE'RE BACK

To Ice, almost in tears now, remembering those insane, unimaginable highs that he'll never experience again.

ICE (CONT'D)
(anguished)
...I'm much happier today.

INT. ICE'S ATTIC - DAY

Ice sits on the floor, sorting through a pile of old trinkets, tossing them into various boxes.

His daughter Dusti helps out, picking up a cracked snow globe and handing it to him.

DUSTI
What's that, daddy?

ICE
It's all just junk, baby. That's why we're putting it away.

Dusti continues rummaging, finding something else of interest. An old CD case. She hands it to him.

Ice stops cold, starrng down at TO THE EXTREME. His face on the faded cover. Smug. Indomitable.

DUSTI
Daddy...is that you?

He looks at her, not sure what to say. Makes up his mind.

ICE
Nah.

Dusti nods and goes back to rummaging. Ice tosses the CD into a box as though it were nothing at all.

FADE OUT.

THE END.