

Vigilante Project Pilot "The Guitar Hero"

By

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Based on the Comic Book Series
Vigilante Project

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FADE IN

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT (2001)

YOUNG ALVIN GENTRY, a 10 year old African American boy wearing Star Wars pajamas, creeps down the hallway in a sort of combat crawl. He moves quietly, listening to the sounds of his parents' argument in progress.

AISHA
(off-screen)
Just tell him you were sick.

GARY
(off-screen)
He knows I wasn't sick.

AISHA
(off-screen)
How?

GARY
(off-screen)
He came looking for me at the clubhouse. Now drop it.

AISHA
(off-screen)
But we...

GARY
(off-screen)
I said drop it!

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty beer cans and a near empty bottle of liquor litter the living room.

AISHA, a beautiful African American woman wearing nursing scrubs paces nervously. Gary, a light skinned black man sits drinking from a liquor bottle in a recliner. Gary wears jeans, motorcycle boots, and a motorcycle club vest with a skull on back. He notices her pacing.

GARY
Stop that.

AISHA
I'm sorry Gar' but we can't make it without you working. Tell him
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AISHA (cont'd)
you'll start going to meetings.
Tell him--

GARY
He won't listen. He thinks I'm a
drunk and maybe I am. Now just
leave me alone.

AISHA
Then I'll call him. Or I'll talk to
Sheila. She'll understand. Where's
the phone?

Aisha walks over to the table where the cordless home phone
sits. She picks it up and starts dialing.

GARY
(off-screen)
Put down the phone.

AISHA
(off-screen)
You need this job! We're late on
rent, I've got to pay the light
bill by the 19th or--

Gary rises and heads for Aisha, who now has the phone to her
ear. WE SEE his club logo, a fearsome skull on back of his
vest.

GARY
I said put it down!

AISHA
No!

He grabs for the phone and Aisha pulls it away. There's a
short battle for the phone before Gary stops and slaps her,
knocking her to the floor.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alvin bites his lip to stay silent. He's saddened by what he
sees but this is nothing new.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Aisha sits holding her face where she was just slapped. Gary picks up the phone, turns it off, and tosses it on a table.

AISHA
(quietly)
That's the third job in a year.

GARY
Don't you think I know that!?

Gary paces.

GARY
You're just gonna have to work a few extra shifts until I find something else.

AISHA
But there are no extra shifts. They cut back on overtime, remember? Besides, I can't go back to work with more bruises on my face. What am I supposed to say!?

GARY
Then you should have kept your mouth shut like I told you!

There's a long pause. Aisha wipes a tear away and suddenly something clicks within her. She takes a deep breath.

AISHA
I've been good to you Gary. Too good. But this shit has gone on long enough.

She rises to her feet as she speaks.

AISHA
I'm supposed to work extra shifts. I'm supposed to keep my mouth shut. I'm supposed to cook, clean, fuck, take care of the house, take care of the kids...

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Seeing his mother rise to her feet, a wide-eyed Alvin is taken aback.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Now fully on her feet with her fists clenched, Aisha looks at her husband with disdain. Gary is surprised at her confidence. His brow furrows as he considers his next move. This has never happened before.

AISHA

And what are you supposed to do
Gary? I mean besides sittin' around
here drinking up all my money.

Gary surprise quickly turns to anger.

GARY

Watch yourself! I'm the man of
this...

AISHA

No, *I'm* the man of this house! *I*
pay the rent, *I* keep the lights on,
I put food--

Gary is on her quickly. In a split second he has her by the ponytail and is nose to nose, yelling into her face.

GARY

Who the fuck do you think you're
talking to!? Huh!? Who do you think
you are?

He throws her dismissively across the room. Aisha slams against a wall and crumples to the floor near the coffee table.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alvin stifles a gasp and rises up on his hands when she hits the wall. His eyes are bulging.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary paces.

GARY
(to himself)
Stupid bitch. This is--

Aisha shakes her head, undaunted. She can't believe it.

AISHA
*I'm stupid? You get too drunk to
show up for work, and I'm stupid?*

He looks over his shoulder at his newly defiant wife still on the ground.

AISHA
Go ahead. Hit me. You still won't
have a job. You still be--

GARY
I think you forgot who the fuck
you're dealing with.

Gary moves toward her again. Aisha positions herself behind the coffee table.

AISHA
No I know *exactly* who I'm dealing
with. A drunk ass, no good nigga
with no job. But no more!

Gary advances but Aisha shoves the coffee table at her husband, hitting him in the shins and knocking him down, flat on his face.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alvin covers his mouth to keep his gasp from escaping.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Enraged Gary lunges at Aisha, clawing and grabbing at her. Aisha backs away. Alvin watches, horrified.

GARY
You're dead bitch!

(CONTINUED)

AISHA
I've had enough of your shit Gary!

Aisha backs up against a recliner. She's pulled her cell phone from her pocket and is dialing furiously. Gary smacks the cell phone from her hand and Aisha raises her arms to defend herself as Gary punches at her face.

AISHA
(yelling)
HELP!

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alvin stands quickly, unsure what to do.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They continue to struggle. Aisha slaps and scratches in defense. Gary punches and misses, but then lands a glancing blow.

AISHA
Somebody help me!

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Young Alvin sprints the opposite way down the hallway.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

In a small bedroom that he shares with his baby sister, Alvin looks around, frantically searching for something that could help his mother. He sees a baseball bat, a t-ball trophy, and finally his gaze falls on his guitar.

AISHA
(off-screen)
Get off of me! Help!

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Gary rears back to deliver the next blow, something catches Aisha's eye and a look of fear spreads on her bloody face.

(CONTINUED)

AISHA
(gasping)
No baby!

SHOCK CUT TO:

END OF TEASER

EXT. COPIES AND MORE - MORNING (PRESENT DAY)

Alvin Gentry, an attractive, athletic African American man in his early twenties emerges from work. He wears his khaki colored cargo pants and an NYU purple hooded sweatshirt. Alvin puts his ear bud headphones in his ears, and heads for the subway.

Alvin's expression and gaze is that of someone much older than his 23 years would suggest. His life experience has aged him, but his body is that of a middleweight boxer in his prime. He looks to be deep in thought and it appears that he hasn't slept much lately.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - MORNING

Alvin exits the subway. All around him, vendors and business owners prepare to start their day.

He looks up and across the street, squinting in the early morning sunlight. Across the street is St. Jude's Catholic Church. Alvin considers it for a second, and then cuts across the street to the church.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

It is an old Catholic church with traditional architecture and decor. FATHER CARLOS "CHARLIE" CONTRERAS, a Hispanic man in his early 60s stands at the pulpit. Despite his age, we see that Father Contreras still has dark hair with only a bit of gray in the temples, and some white in his goatee. He appears to be in good physical shape, but mentally he is worn out.

CONTRERAS
May almighty God bless you...

Contreras looks out at the small gathering of weekday morning worshipers. He pauses when he sees Alvin, who sits blankly in the back row.

(CONTINUED)

CONTRERAS

In the name of the Father, and of
the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The congregation all do the sign of the cross, except Alvin, who sits staring at the priest in the pulpit. Contreras extends his hands in the form of a blessing over the half empty church.

CONTRERAS

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by
your life.

Mass concludes and the organ plays. Everyone stands and starts to mill about. Contreras steps down from the pulpit and parishioners gather around him to shake hands and interact. Alvin stands, puts on his hood and heads for the exit. Contreras watches as Alvin leaves but is snapped out of it when his boss MONSIGNOR TORRES, a much older Latino man in glasses steps forward. With him is LUKE HOBBS, a thin white male in his thirties. Luke looks frazzled, like someone coming off a narcotic.

MONSIGNOR TORRES

Father Contreras, this is Luke
Hobbes. He's going to be joining
your substance abuse group on
Tuesdays...

Contreras glances again toward the door. Alvin is gone so he turns his attention to Luke, reaching out to shake his hand.

CONTRERAS

Welcome Luke.

INT. CONTRERAS' OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Later, Contreras enters and removes his vestments. The office is small and quaint. It's basically a desk and two chairs. Opposite Contreras' side of the desk are two chairs in a cramped sitting space.

The office has the expected religious symbols and art work, but on a nearby shelf Contreras has pictures from his life before the priesthood. There are decades-old wedding pictures featuring a young Contreras and a beautiful young woman. There is a team photo of a minor league baseball team and one of Contreras himself playing baseball. At the end of the shelf are more recent pictures of Contreras coaching softball. Finally, there's another picture of a young Contreras, a second young, Puerto Rican man, and a pretty black woman.

(CONTINUED)

Contreras stops and looks at that photo. Afterward, a somewhat paranoid Contreras walks to the window and peeks out through the blinds.

Satisfied, he fixes his cassock, grabs his rosary and Bible, and heads for the confessional.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Alvin rides the subway quietly, listening to music on his headphones. He absentmindedly turns a blue business card over and over in his hand.

Alvin watches as a distracted MOTHER and her two kids get on. The SON is the older of the two. He helps the DAUGHTER get into her seat. When she drops her drink, the daughter begins to cry and the mother rushes to clean up the spill as best she can. Seeing his sister upset, the son gives her his drink and she quiets down.

INT. MMA GYM - DAY

Alvin enters a vast, state of the art MMA gym. A few people work out all over.

COACH, a red-headed Scotsman kneels, working with a fighter named BYRON on ground and pound technique. Byron straddles a long heavy bag and rains punches and elbows on the bag. When he sees Alvin, Coach smiles broadly and stands up, laughing.

COACH

Ho-ly shit!

Alvin returns his smile and the two cross toward each other in the center of the gym.

ALVIN

What's up Lee?

They embrace.

COACH

Fuck me man, I didn't think I'd be seeing you any time soon.

ALVIN

Yeah, well, I didn't either.

COACH

So, are you just visiting?

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN
That depends. Do I still have a
locker?

INT. MMA GYM - DAY

In the cage Alvin works combinations on the mitts with Coach. He goes hard and after a moment he waves the Coach off.

ALVIN
I need a breather.

COACH
C'mon Alvin! What the fuck?

Alvin smiles as he catches his breath.

ALVIN
I'm out of shape, that's what.

Coach starts slapping Alvin's arms with the pads.

COACH
Nah! How long has it been?

Alvin's face grows somber. He knows exactly how long it's been.

ALVIN
197 days.

Coach is a little shocked.

COACH
Oh.

Coach nods and Byron, the fighter from earlier enters the cage warming up.

ALVIN
What's this?

COACH
We always finish with sparring.
What's the problem?

ALVIN
I don't know. I don't think I'm
ready for this.

(CONTINUED)

COACH

Sure you are.

Alvin starts to exit, but Coach stops him, grabbing his arm. He leans in, speaking sternly but quietly, so no one else can hear.

COACH

You should be in the goddamned UFC by now. Now I don't know how you're feeling and frankly I hope I never do, but you came in today because you want to move on. So let's move the fuck on.

Alvin weighs it for a second.

ALVIN

Who is he?

COACH

He's a Taekwondo guy so watch his kicks, but take it easy on him. He's new and you're just getting back in the swing of things. Work your stand-up.

ALVIN

All right.

INT. MMA GYM - DAY

The bell sounds and Alvin goes head to head with the fighter. They feel each other out and Byron lands a good kick to the ribs. Alvin lands a solid punch of his own. They go back and forth until the bell.

Back in his corner, Alvin takes a small drink of water from Coach.

COACH

What's going on in there?

ALVIN

What do you mean?

COACH

You're holding back. Not letting it flow. What're you thinking about in there?

(CONTINUED)

Alvin paces, shaking his head. There's an emotional war waging inside him, and it's almost too much to handle. Coach slaps him across the face to get his attention.

COACH

Snap out of it. Stop thinking. Feel it. Just let go.

Alvin looks away, unresponsive. Coach goes to slap him again. This time Alvin blocks, catching his wrist. Alvin stares daggers at Coach, his emotions boiling just below the surface.

COACH

Let. Go.

The bell sounds.

ALVIN

You want me to let go?

COACH

I do.

ALVIN

You want to see me let go?

Across the cage Byron grows impatient.

BYRON

We gonna do this or what?

Alvin charges across the cage. Byron reacts and moves to meet him. Alvin dominates, pummeling his opponent with fast, hard combinations, knocking Byron to the ground. Once down, Alvin leaps on top of him, raining down punches and elbows.

COACH

All right, stand up!

Coach enters crossing the cage to stop it. But Alvin doesn't stop. As Byron tries to get away, Alvin attacks and locks on an Anaconda choke.

COACH

Hey! I told you, he's no grappler!
Just--

Byron starts tapping immediately. Coach gets close enough and tries to intervene.

COACH

Let him go.

Alvin doesn't.

COACH

He's tapping! Let him go.

Alvin releases the hold. He stands up and glares at the coach. They standoff.

COACH

What the fuck are you thinking!?

Alvin turns suddenly and quickly exits the cage.

COACH

What? Now you're leaving!?

Alvin heads for the locker room.

COACH

Fine! Don't come back until you deal with your shit!

END ACT ONE

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Alvin paces outside the church, unsure if he should go in or not. After a moment he stops, climbs the steps, and enters.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Alvin enters the church. It's quiet. He looks around nervously, taking everything in. He appears to be deep in thought as he walks through the foyer and into the sanctuary. He is noticeably uncomfortable.

Monsignor Torres appears, startling Alvin.

MONSIGNOR TORRES

Can I help you?

ALVIN

I was looking for Father... Contreras?

MONSIGNOR TORRES

Of course. This way.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - DAY

Inside the dark confessional Contreras wraps up with an OLDER WOMAN. He looks bored.

OLDER WOMAN
...and I took the Lord's name in
vain three times.

CONTRERAS
Say three Hail Mary's and two Our
Fathers. Go with God my child.

He lazily gives the sign of the cross and the Older Woman exits.

INT. CONFESSION AREA - DAY

Monsignor Torres brings Alvin to the confessional in back of the church.

MONSIGNOR TORRES
He'll be with you soon.

ALVIN
Thanks.

They watch as the Older Woman exits, and then Alvin enters the confessional.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - DAY

It's dark. Alvin starts to kneel, then opts to sit. The window slides open and the young man peers quizzically through the privacy lattice trying to see the man on the other side.

On the other side, a seemingly bored Father Contreras, waits for Alvin to begin his confession.

After a few more seconds of silence, the priest clears his throat, calling Alvin to attention.

ALVIN
Uh... Bless me Father for I have
sinned.

A long pause. Father Contreras waits a bit before leading.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER CONTRERAS

And how long since your last confession?

ALVIN

Well, I've never confessed before. I'm not even Catholic.

Contreras leans in toward the privacy window and listens intently.

CONTRERAS

Not Catholic? Then why--

ALVIN

No. I just... I need somebody to talk to.

CONTRERAS

Are you seeking forgiveness for something you've done?

Alvin pauses.

ALVIN

Everything I say here is confidential right?

Contreras perks up, intrigued.

CONTRERAS

Of course.

Alvin nods to himself silently, considering how much he should reveal.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DETECTIVE HOPKINS, a no-nonsense, Auburn haired detective in her forties, stands arms akimbo, looking into an examination room. With her is Alvin's mother Aisha, her best friend GWEN, and Alvin himself.

On the table is a small body under a sheet. Tears stream down Aisha's face. Hopkins knocks twice on the window and a MEDICAL EXAMINER (M.E.) comes over to the body.

ALVIN (V.O.)

Eight months ago, my kid sister was kidnapped.

(CONTINUED)

All is silent. Hopkins nods and the M.E. pulls back the sheet. Alvin's mother Aisha wails and collapses into Gwen's arms.

ALVIN (V.O.)

She was held for almost 5 months,
raped... repeatedly, and eventually
killed.

Hopkins says something to Alvin. He peels off from his Mother and steps up to the glass. He stares silently at his sister on the table.

INT. CHURCH CONFSSIONAL - DAY

Contreras looks horrified, yet intrigued.

FATHER CONTRERAS

I'm so sorry.

ALVIN

Yeah, me too.

Alvin wipes a tear from his eye.

CONTRERAS

And the police?

Alvin sighs as he reaches into his pocket and pulls out the card again and takes a look at it. WE SEE that it is the card of a grief recovery and bereavement counselor. Alvin shakes his head at the notion and starts fiddling with the card again as he talks.

ALVIN

The police are worthless. No
suspects. No DNA. I even brought
them a clue I found, but they don't
care. They're not even looking for
the guy.

Alvin pauses. Contreras shifts in his seat, continuing to listen.

ALVIN

So I'm gonna find him.

CONTRERAS

And then?

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN

I don't know. I-I've been so crazy lately.

CONTRERAS

I see.

ALVIN

No, you don't. She was locked away somewhere hoping, wishing, praying for someone... for *me*, to find her. And I was just sitting at home, going to school, like nothing happened...

CONTRERAS

You didn't know.

ALVIN

While some asshole was...

Alvin stifles his cry, then bites his lip in a losing effort to be strong. A tear falls from his tightly shut eyes and Alvin shakes his head.

ALVIN

I'm gonna find whoever did this and I'm...

Alvin clenches his fists as he continues to struggle. Unsure what to do, Alvin pounds his fist into his palm. After a moment he finds his resolve, pounding his fist again. Softer this time, more controlled.

CONTRERAS

Vengeance is mine says the Lord. When we take things into our own hands, it rarely solves the problem.

Alvin scoffs as he wipes the tears from his face.

ALVIN

Oh, well this wouldn't be the first time that I had to take matters into my own hands.

CONTRERAS

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

There is a long pause and then suddenly Alvin speaks.

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN

I was always the one who took care
of my sister.

CONTRERAS

Why is that?

ALVIN

My Mom was always gone. Double
shifts, two jobs, whatever. So I
was responsible for her.

CONTRERAS

Responsible how?

INT. ALVIN'S MOTHER'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING - 2002

A pre-teen Alvin stands at the door saying goodbye to his
Mother Aisha. An 18 month Alicia plays nearby on the living
room rug. Aisha is hurried. She quickly bends down to kiss
him.

AISHA

Now don't open th--

ALVIN

(finishing her sentence)
the door for anybody.

Aisha is impressed.

AISHA

Okay, what's next?

ALVIN

Take out the trash so that it
doesn't stink.

Aisha smiles. Then Alvin pauses, giving Aisha a moment to
interject.

AISHA

Make sh--

ALVIN

(reciting)

Make sure that the door is locked
after I take the trash out. At 8
o'clock, change her diaper, put on
her pajamas, and give her the
yellow sippy cup.

Aisha is proud.

(CONTINUED)

AISHA

Dinner--

ALVIN

--is in the microwave. All I have
to do is press start.

This is old hat for Alvin and seeing this his mother realizes just how often she is gone. Aisha takes a moment to set down her purse and keys. She gets down to Alvin's level and holds his face tenderly in her hands.

AISHA

It's not always gonna be like this
baby. We just have to catch up a
little bit more and I won't have to
work as much. You understand?

ALVIN

Yes Mama.

AISHA

Til then, you have to be the man of
the house. I know you can do it.
You're strong, damned strong, but
now I need you to be strong for
your sister. You're the only Daddy
she's got.

INT. ALVIN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Alvin tucks Alicia in her crib, kisses her, turns out the light, and grabs the dirty clothes and diaper as he leaves the room.

Alvin walks down the hallway, making his way to the dining room. He throws Alicia's dirty clothes into the laundry room as he walks past.

INT. ALVIN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT - 2010

Eight year old Alicia finishes brushing her teeth. Alvin peeks into the bathroom.

ALVIN

Almost finished?

Alicia spits.

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA

Done.

She wipes her mouth on the towel and turns off the light.

INT. ALVIN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 2010

Alicia hops into her bed. Alvin tucks her in, kisses her, grabs her dirty clothes off the floor, and turns out the light as he leaves the room.

ALVIN

Good night Li-li.

ALICIA

Good night Chipmunk.

Alvin walks down the hallway, making his way to the dining room. He throws Alicia's dirty clothes into the laundry room as he walks past.

INT. ALVIN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - AFTERNOON - 2012
(LAST YEAR)

Alicia wears a long sleeve t-shirt and jeans, and wears a backpack. She grabs her toothbrush from the holder and shoves it in the pocket of her jeans. Alvin calls out from the other room.

ALVIN

(off-screen)

You almost finished?

Alicia walks down the hallway, making her way to the dining room. She throws jean shorts and a checkered shirt into the laundry room as she walks past.

ALICIA

Done.

INT. CHURCH CONFESSIONAL - MORNING

CONTRERAS

That's a lot of responsibility for
a 5th grader.

Another long pause.

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN

In high school the kids joked that she was my daughter. While everybody else was going to the mall after school, I was picking my sister up from 2nd grade.

CONTRERAS

That had to be difficult.

ALVIN

Yeah, try picking up chicks with a booster seat in the back of your ride. Being her personal taxi was half the reason my Mom got me the car.

Alvin takes a deep breath.

ALVIN

I was really just counting down the days until I could go away to college and have a life of my own. Like a prison sentence.

CONTRERAS

So are you in school now?

ALVIN

Yep. NYU. I got an apartment off campus and everything.

CONTRERAS

Congratulations.

Contreras pauses wondering just who he is dealing with.

CONTRERAS

So how exactly did your sister go missing? Was this some sort of sex trafficking ring?

Alvin takes another deep breath.

EXT. LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Alvin sits atop his 1988 Toyota Supra playing on his cell phone. With the targa top removed, his feet dangle into the interior of the vehicle.

The bell rings and Alvin turns to look in the direction of the school.

EXT. LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON (2013)

Alicia GENTRY emerges. She is tall and athletic like her brother, but she is also is very pretty. Alicia appears older than her 12 years would suggest. She wears denim shorts cut high exposing her legs, and a spaghetti strap tank top beneath loose, button-down checkered shirt that hangs off the shoulder.

Other young boys check her out, but a look from Alvin quickly discourages them.

Alicia reaches the car and starts to get in. Alvin is not amused.

ALVIN
What is that!?

ALICIA
What is what?

ALVIN
That outfit! Those booty shorts and the bra you've got showing.

ALICIA
It's not a bra! It's a tank top.

ALVIN
I looks like a bra. What happened to the Gentry dress code!?

ALICIA
Whatever. Let's go. People are looking.

ALVIN
Fine. But you're gonna change.

ALICIA
Fine. I needed to go home anyway. I need to get my music for tomorrow.

Alvin drops down into his car as Alicia gets in and closes the door.

INT. ALVIN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Alvin looks over at his sister and shakes his head disapprovingly before starting the car and driving off.

INT. ALVIN'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON (2012)

Inside his Mom's house Alvin waits for his sister.

ALVIN
You almost finished?

After a moment Alicia answers.

ALICIA
(off-screen)
Done.

Alicia enters. She has changed into jeans, and a green, long sleeve t-shirt. She wears a backpack and her toothbrush is in her pocket. She pushes the sleeves up to her elbows. Alvin stands.

ALVIN
Good. Let's go.

ALICIA
Actually...

Alicia stops at the couch.

ALICIA
I was hoping that you'd let me stay here tonight.

ALVIN
No.

He heads for the door.

ALVIN
I've got a fight tomorrow. I am sleeping in my own bed tonight. Let's go.

ALICIA
But I hate your futon!

ALVIN
Fine. *I'll* sleep on the futon.

ALICIA
No! I want to be... by myself.

Alvin is growing impatient.

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN
Absolutely not.

ALICIA
Why not!? I'm almost 13! You were taking care of me alone at 13.

ALVIN
Try ten. Look, I know that you want to stay up all night talking to your little boyfriend, but that ain't happening. Not tonight.

Alicia folds her arms, plops down on the sofa, and pouts.

ALICIA
He's not little.

ALVIN
Whatever. You have a cell phone! Talk to him at my place.

ALICIA
I need privacy.

ALVIN
For what!?

Alicia doesn't answer. After a moment Alvin chuckles.

ALVIN
You're lucky I don't meet this fool and scare his ass away. When you hit high school I'm gonna meet all your boyfriends. That shit's required.

ALICIA
You're not my Dad!

ALVIN
Might as well be.

Alicia pouts. Then she gets an idea.

ALICIA
What about my homework? I need to use the computer.

ALVIN
Use mine.

ALICIA

That thing's ancient! It takes forever to--

ALVIN

This isn't a debate Li-li. I have to weigh-in and then we can get dinner. Grab your crap and let's go.

Defeated, Alicia grabs her backpack and heads for the door.

EXT. LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

The next morning Alvin drops Alicia at school. Dressed modestly, she waves goodbye and Alvin waves back.

ALVIN (V.O.)

That was the last time that I'd see her alive.

END OF ACT TWO

INT. CHURCH CONFESSIONAL - LATE MORNING

CONTRERAS

How did you find out she was missing?

ALVIN

I was hanging with Rebecca. We had just--

CONTRERAS

Rebecca? Is that your girlfriend?

Alvin smiles as he remembers.

ALVIN

She's... a friend.

CONTRERAS

With benefits I imagine.

Alvin laughs.

ALVIN

I can't believe you just said that.

Contreras smiles. He is eating this up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTRERAS

I hear a lot of confessions.

ALVIN

I guess.

Alvin chuckles once more and then pauses.

ALVIN

You know how they say people bond over tragedy? That night... I was with Rebecca when I got the call. We got pretty serious after that.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Alvin and REBECCA, a pretty blonde woman lie sleeping in bed. Alvin's phone rings and he sits up in bed. He answers.

ALVIN

Mom, what's wrong??

EXT. NEW JERSEY REST STOP - EARLY MORNING

At a rest stop in New Jersey a BUM sits with his back against a large dumpster, drinking booze from a paper bag. A blue van pulls into the parking lot, makes a sweeping arc, and then backs up to the dumpster.

ALVIN (V.O.)

We organized search parties, we offered a reward. Mom was on the news a couple times. After a few weeks, they told us that she was dead and to move on with our lives so we did. And then...

The doors open and a body wrapped in a tarp is dumped from the back. It lands with a large boom, startling the bum.

EXT. NEW JERSEY REST STOP - AFTERNOON

The area has been taped off by police and the bum is speaking to Detective Hopkins, giving his statement.

HOPKINS

What make and model?

(CONTINUED)

BUM

I don't know. It was blue!

HOPKINS

Did you get a look at the driver?

BUM

How many more times I gotta tell you? I was behind the dumpster minding my own business when BOOM! A big noise and then a blue van driving away. I didn't know it was a body.

INT. CHURCH CONFSSIONAL - DAY

Alvin is stoic. He stares blankly as he recalls the events.

ALVIN

And then, a different call.

EXT. CORONER'S OFFICE - EVENING

A light snow falls as Hopkins' Crown Victoria pulls up to the Coroner's Office. Alvin stands, arms folded next to his Supra waiting as Hopkins parks the car, his mother's already tear stained face, looks out through the back seat window.

Hopkins, Alvin's Mother, and her best friend Gwen climb out of the car.

There's a bit of a pause as Alvin joins and hugs his Mom. "Aunt" Gwen rubs his back as they hug. This would be a perfect opportunity for Hopkins to say something compassionate but she doesn't. Rather, she's cold.

HOPKINS

If you're gonna pass out, just let me know. I have smelling salts in the glove box.

AISHA

Um... okay.

Hopkins realizes her mistake and tries to say something appropriate.

HOPKINS

This isn't going to be easy for you, but we need a positive I.D. before we can start gathering

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOPKINS (cont'd)
evidence to catch whoever did this.
So take a deep breath...

Aisha, Gwen, and Hopkins all take a deep breath.

HOPKINS
... and let's get this over with.

Hopkins holds the door open as they enter the building.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE HALLWAY - EVENING

At the coroner's office Alvin, his mother Aisha, and Gwen walk down the hallway. They stand at the Exam Room window with Detective Hopkins.

Through the window they see a MEDICAL EXAMINER who is working on a body at a table on the far end of the room.

Hopkins knocks on the window.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE EXAM ROOM - EVENING

The knock gets the M.E.'s attention and he quickly crosses over to the table nearest the window. Hopkins nods and the M.E. pulls back the sheet.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE HALLWAY - EVENING

The group watches as the sheet peels back to reveal Alicia. Alvin's mother Aisha wails and collapses into Gwen's arms. Alvin hugs them both. Aisha turns and hugs him, sobbing.

After a moment Hopkins clears her throat. Without much compassion Hopkins speaks.

HOPKINS
I'm sorry but we still need an
official identification from a
family member.

Alvin steps up to the glass. After a moment he hangs his head.

ALVIN
Yeah, that's her.

INT. CHURCH CONFSSIONAL - DAY

Alvin wipes his tears.

ALVIN

And now you're all caught up.

CONTRERAS

Okay. Why are you here today?

ALVIN

The detective said that I should talk to somebody, and I am *done* with shrinks.

Alvin puts the card back in his pocket. Contreras realizes who he's talking to.

CONTRERAS

Are you that young man sitting in the back room this morning?

ALVIN

Yeah, that was me. I've been here a few times... Watching you.

Contreras becomes noticeably uncomfortable.

CONTRERAS

Why me?

ALVIN

My girl told me that I should talk to you. She was in your class at Our Lady down the street. Said you were... helpful.

Contreras relaxes.

CONTRERAS

So you've spoken with a therapist before?

ALVIN

Once or twice.

Alvin sighs. He's really bothered.

ALVIN

I've been trying to get back to normal but everything I touch turns to sh... poop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTRERAS

What do you mean?

ALVIN

The last two days have been insane. I can't sleep. I'm pissing everybody off. I can't stop drinking. I just... I need answers man.

CONTRERAS

You said that you're upsetting everyone around you. How?

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MORNING

WEDNESDAY

Alvin sleeps awkwardly on his cheap futon. A video game controller is not far from his outstretched hand. The TV is on screen saver mode. He's fallen asleep in his clothes, and he hasn't shaved in days.

Alvin's apartment is a small, older, one-bedroom flat. The furnishings are bachelor cheap, and the paint is an odd color from the 1970s.

The place is a mess. Empty take out boxes and liquor bottles litter the living room. A bong sits on the coffee table, with a little weed nearby. It's clear that Alvin has been self medicating and we get the impression that he's had trouble sleeping.

Alvin's cell phone alarm goes off, prompting him to get ready for Political Science class. He sleeps through it at first, and then sits up with a start. He quickly shuts it off and rolls over to sleep some more.

But Alvin can't sleep. After a moment his eyes open, and he's not happy about it. He sits up angrily, frustrated at the lack of sleep.

Alvin takes a long bong rip and holds it in for a while before exhaling slowly and deliberately. He checks the time on his phone, then hops up and heads for the bathroom.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LOBBY - MORNING

Alvin exits the elevator. He's showered, but not shaved. He's dressed for school wearing a purple, NYU hoodie. He carries a backpack. He looks to be deep in thought and it's clear that he hasn't slept much lately. Listening to music in his headphones, he makes his way through the lobby and outside.

EXT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Alvin lives in a predominantly Hispanic part of Sunset Park, Brooklyn. His neighborhood is lower income and looks safe enough during the day, but potentially dangerous at night.

Rebecca kisses her husband BEAU goodbye as he hops in a cab. We see that she has a curvy, athletic body. Beau is a sandy blond haired guy that looks like he just walked out of an Abercrombie catalog.

Alvin notices the kiss, but looks away pretending he didn't. He pulls on his hood and turns up his music.

Rebecca ignores Alvin until the cab drives away. Once gone, she smiles and turns to look for Alvin, but he's gone.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - LATE MORNING

It's a full NYU classroom. PROFESSOR BLACK lectures at the front. Alvin enters the mostly full classroom. He's late but he doesn't seem to care. KAIDEN, Alvin's skinny, Filipino friend, gives Alvin the high sign indicating that he saved him a seat.

PROFESSOR
... but it's OK to ask ourselves
why, and whether it's good for
democracy.

The PROFESSOR pauses.

PROFESSOR
Nice of you to join us Alvin.

Alvin nods and then plops down next to Kaiden.

PROFESSOR
See me after class.

Professor Black continues lecturing.

(CONTINUED)

PROFESSOR

And so the presidential election typically comes down to a few undecided voters in Ohio...

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - LATE MORNING

The last student leaves. Alvin stands with his hands in his pocket, and his hood over his head at the front of the classroom with Professor Black.

PROFESSOR

Take the hood off Alvin.

He does.

PROFESSOR

Alvin, you're a good kid. You're a smart kid. But you can't waltz in here six minutes before class ends and think I'm gonna let that slide.

Alvin stares blankly at his teacher.

PROFESSOR

Look, I know that things have been difficult...

ALVIN

Difficult!?

PROFESSOR

...and I can only imagine what you've been through, but you're going to fail this class if you don't turn things around.

That gets Alvin's attention.

ALVIN

I've got an F!?

PROFESSOR

No, you've got a D and this is the second time you've taken this class. You're headed back to academic probation, and after that, you're out.

Alvin folds his arms. He doesn't like the sound of that.

(CONTINUED)

PROFESSOR

There's a Town Hall meeting next week. 30 points extra credit. That will take your D to a C minus. Then if you pass the final...

ALVIN

I got it.

PROFESSOR

Are you sure?

ALVIN

I got it.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LOBBY - EVENING

Later that day, Alvin enters his building. He passes Rebecca in the laundry room on his way to the elevator. Their eyes meet. She offers a small nod which Alvin returns.

INT. ALVIN'S DINING ROOM AREA - NIGHT

There's a knock at the door. Alvin throws away the last of the trash from the living room on his way to the door. He's straightened up the place for his visitor.

Alvin opens the door and there stands Rebecca with Chinese food takeout.

REBECCA

I thought he'd never leave.

She comes inside and the two kiss passionately.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alvin and Rebecca sit eating Chinese food on Alvin's futon/couch.

After a moment Alvin stands and heads toward the kitchen.

ALVIN

I'm gonna grab a drink. You want one?

REBECCA

Another one!?

He stops.

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN
Yeah, why?

REBECCA
Nothing. It's just that... you're
drinking a lot lately.

ALVIN
And?

Rebecca can't find the words. After a moment Alvin continues into the kitchen.

REBECCA
We have to talk about this
eventually.

ALVIN
No we don't.

Rebecca sets aside her food and gets up to follow Alvin into the kitchen and dining area.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rebecca leans against the cluttered dining room table and looks into the tiny kitchen area as she talks. Alvin fixes himself an *Incredible Hulk* (a cognac drink).

REBECCA
Look, I know that you're going
through a lot but--

Alvin stops and sets the bottle audibly on the counter top.

ALVIN
Why does everybody keep saying
that!? You have no idea what I am
going through.

REBECCA
I know babe. I know. But I'm
concerned.

Alvin scoffs. Then continues mixing his drink and getting ice.

ALVIN
You're concerned? Really?

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

Of course I am, you know that. Baby
I'm--

ALVIN

How *concerned* will you be when he
gets back?

REBECCA

I'm always concerned. You know
that.

ALVIN

Yeah, well, it's like I don't exist
when he's here.

Finished, Alvin brushes past her and heads back to the
living room.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rebecca follows.

REBECCA

This isn't about my ex, it's
about--

ALVIN

He's not your ex until you file the
fucking papers.

Alvin plops down onto the futon.

REBECCA

You know that I'm working on that.
And once they're filed, what then?

ALVIN

I don't give a shit.

REBECCA

What, am I supposed to move in with
my 22 year old boyfriend?

ALVIN

Oh so I'm good enough to fuck, good
enough to laugh with and hang out
with, but not good enough to live
with?

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

So now you want a relationship? Is that what you're saying?

ALVIN

Well I sure as shit don't want to be by myself.

REBECCA

Then tell me that! Tell me how you really feel for a change!

Alvin ignores her, takes a long drink.

REBECCA

You know, you really should talk to someone. Have you gone to see Father Contreras? He can't tell anyone what you say and he...

Alvin reaches for the remote and turns up the television. Rebecca is shocked at his rudeness.

Alvin sets down the remote and takes another drink. Rebecca grabs her jacket and heads for the door.

REBECCA

Keep drinking Alvin. That'll make it all go away.

Alvin ignores her exit and stares straight ahead as the door slams.

END OF ACT THREE

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT DINING AREA - LATE NIGHT

Later, a sleep deprived Alvin sifts through the clutter on his dining room table looking for his outdated laptop computer.

ALVIN (V.O.)

I was bored after she left so I decided to get online.

He grabs it, dusts it off, and opens it. The computer whirs to life.

He logs into an MMA forum and scrolls through some threads. Then, as Alvin heads to Facebook.com, the low battery indicator comes on.

(CONTINUED)

Alvin reaches under the table to grab the power cord. When he raises his head above the table, he freezes when he sees what's on the screen.

On the screen WE SEE Alicia's Facebook page.

ALVIN

You forgot to sign out little sister.

Alvin plugs in the power cord, and settles in. He scrolls down his sister's Facebook timeline. WE SEE condolences after her body was discovered in January, and as Alvin goes back further back, WE SEE the posted prayers and pleas from when she went missing in late September.

Later, now armed with a new drink, WE SEE Alvin scrolling through pictures and even watching a video of his sister in a singing performance.

Even later, as the sun is coming up, Alvin sits still at the computer. He drinks from the bottle, finishing its contents. He is clearly inebriated. WE SEE Alvin scrolling through his sister's Facebook messages. Now in September he sees the expected messages after her disappearance, then casual messages about homework and boys mid-month, but in early September something catches his eye.

There's a message dated September 4th from someone named Jenn that starts with WHERE ARE YOU?

Alvin is perplexed. Blurry-eyed he moves closer to the screen. He clicks the message and reads that Alicia and Jenn were supposed to study together but she never showed up. Later that night Alicia replied that her cell battery had died and that she had met an amazing boy at the mall. She promises to tell Jenn all about it the next day at school. Alvin's adrenaline kicks in, and he seems to snap out of his drunkenness.

ALVIN

Wait a minute.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Alvin is on the phone, pacing as he talks. He is frantic and seems rushed.

ALVIN

I need a copy of my phone records from the month of September.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN

As detailed as possible. Phone numbers, dates, times... E-mail is fine.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Alvin enters, carrying a cup of coffee and pulling papers out of his jacket before taking it off.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT DINING AREA - MORNING

He plops down at his table pulling a two-pack of highlighters out of his pants pocket. He removes the highlighter cap with his mouth.

WE SEE Alvin highlight calls starting September 1st. All of the calls are right around 8pm and come from the same phone number which we assume is Alicia's. On September 4th the call is missing. Instead there's a call at 9:06pm from a different number.

Alvin circles that number.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Alvin is on the phone again, pacing as he talks.

ALVIN

I'm sorry Mrs. Harrison but I need to speak with Jenn right now.

Pause.

ALVIN

Fine. I know she's in school but... I'll text her and she can call me back. I just... I need that number.

Pause.

ALVIN

Look, it's about my sister!

Pause.

ALVIN

Okay. We talked every night at 8 to check in. But one night, a couple of weeks before she went missing,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN (cont'd)
she didn't call. I was about to go
looking for her but she called and
told me that her battery died and
she was calling me from Jenn's
phone.

Pause. Alvin cracks a smile. He's excited about this clue.

ALVIN
No, it was an 862 number! But then
last night I was on her Facebook,
and saw that Jenn wasn't with her
that night.

Pause.

ALVIN
Oh we'll definitely get to the
bottom of this. I just want to ask
Jenn some questions before I take
this to the police.

INT. POLICE STATION, SEX CRIMES DIVISION - DAY

Alvin enters the busy police station. He's been here before
and heads straight for Hopkin's old desk, but slows when he
sees a uniformed OFFICER sitting there instead.

ALVIN
I'm looking for Detective Hopkins.

Without looking up the officer answers.

OFFICER
It's Lieutenant Hopkins now.
Promoted and transferred.

ALVIN
Why?

OFFICER
(dryly)
Because of her winning personality.

Alvin considers it for a moment.

ALVIN
Makes sense.

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER
Down the hall, two rights and a
left.

Alvin heads off down the long corridor of the police station with his manila file folder in hand.

INT. POLICE STATION, NARCOTICS DIVISION - DAY

Alvin stands pleading with now Lieutenant Hopkins. In the background dressed in uniform and working at a desk is DETECTIVE MIKE NELSON, a large, strong, barrel-chested southerner with a shaved head and mustache.

ALVIN
But this is new! It's a phone
number that she called me from...

HOPKINS
I assure you we've checked her
phone records, computer records,
and any other communication.

ALVIN
But I--

HOPKINS
Trust us to do our jobs.

Alvin's shoulders slump. He's beaten. Hopkins takes the file folder.

HOPKINS
Detective Rowlands is handling my
old cases. If you head back over to
sex crimes, he'll look into this I
promise.

She drapes an arm around him in an awkward effort to show compassion and begins walking Alvin toward the exit. It doesn't come naturally to her, but Hopkins is trying.

HOPKINS
I think that you need talk to
someone. Have you ever seen a
counselor?

Alvin wriggles under her arm.

ALVIN
Once or twice.

(CONTINUED)

HOPKINS

I think it could help.

She snaps her fingers at Detective Nelson and motions for him to bring her something. He shrugs, not knowing what she wants, but when Hopkins makes the crazy sign behind Alvin's back, Nelson knows exactly what she's asking for.

HOPKINS

There's a great doctor we
recommend. Doctor... doctor...

Nelson delivers a pamphlet and card just in time for Hopkins to read the name.

HOPKINS

... Vithlani. A lot of cops go to
him. You should look him up.

Now at the door Hopkins pulls away and hands Alvin first the file, then baby blue business card and pamphlet.

INT. COPIES AND MORE - NIGHT

That night, Alvin enters in a hurry. The place is like Fed Ex Office offering printing services, computer and internet access, and more. PHIL the manager checks his watch. TIM an employee stands by busying himself with something.

PHIL

I was starting to get worried.
You've got two minutes.

INT. COPIES AND MORE BACKROOM - NIGHT

Alvin rushes in back. He rips off his hoodie revealing his Copies and More polo shirt. He throws the hoodie in a locker, then reaches into his cargo pants pocket. After a quick look around Alvin pulls out a flask and takes a quick swig. Then he places the flask in the locker with his hoodie, slams the door, and closes the pad lock.

Next Alvin crosses to the time clock and punches in. WE SEE that it's exactly 11:00pm. Alvin's other punches show that he is typically a few minutes late, and works the 11pm-7am shift.

Alvin reaches into his pocket for some gum. He pops a stick in his mouth and starts chewing. He heads back to the sales floor.

INT. COPIES AND MORE - LATE NIGHT

Back on the floor, Phil stands with his jacket in one hand, and his other hand on the front door. He's waiting for Alvin.

Alvin emerges chewing gum. He crosses over to Tim. They fist bump.

ALVIN
Sup Tim? What do we got?

Phil checks his watch again. Satisfied he leaves.

PHIL
See you tomorrow.

END OF ACT FOUR

INT. CONFESSION AREA - DAY

A line has formed outside the confessional. Alvin's confession is taking longer than expected.

INT. CHURCH CONFESSIONAL - LATE MORNING

ALVIN
So I got off work, and then I came here.

He pauses, thinking.

ALVIN
I'm going to hire someone to trace that number. Then I can figure out who she was with that night. Whoever it is--

CONTRERAS
So you're dead set on doing this?

ALVIN
Pretty much.

CONTRERAS
But if you don't want me to talk you out of it, why are you here?

ALVIN
I had a religion question, I figured I'd ask a priest and... I picked you.

(CONTINUED)

Contreras appears relieved. Finally they get down to the real issue.

CONTRERAS

Okay. What's your question?

ALVIN

I've heard thou shalt not kill and all, but I can't let this guy get away with it.

CONTRERAS

What do you mean?

ALVIN

If I go all the way with this... If I find who is responsible and I kill him, does that mean I'm going to hell?

Contreras is taken aback.

CONTRERAS

Wow.

ALVIN

What? Isn't that the unforgivable sin or something?

CONTRERAS

All sin is forgivable. Salvation isn't about the sins you commit, it's about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

ALVIN

What does that mean?

INT. CONFESSION AREA - DAY

The line outside the confessional is growing restless. Monsignor Torres notices and approaches the confessional.

INT. CHURCH CONFESSIONAL - LATE MORNING

Contreras massages his temples in frustration.

CONTRERAS

My son, whether we're talking legally, spiritually, or emotionally, murder is a bad idea.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTRERAS (cont'd)
Your hesitation should tell you
that much.

ALVIN
Sure, but I can't spend the rest of
my life knowing that some sickos
got away with raping and killing my
baby sister either.

CONTRERAS
I'd be willing to--

There's a knock at the door.

CONTRERAS
Excuse me one second.

INT. CONFESSION AREA - DAY

Contreras pokes his head out. He's surprised when he sees
the line that has formed. Monsignor Torres looks impatient.

MONSIGNOR TORRES
Is everything all right in there
Carlos?

CONTRERAS
I'm sorry Monsignor but this is a
very unusual confession.

MONSIGNOR TORRES
Someone from *your past*?

Contreras is surprised and somewhat offended by the
suggestion.

CONTRERAS
What? No! No this is different.
Much different.

Contreras steps out standing with his back to the
confessional, talking with Monsignor Torres. The door to
Alvin's side of the confessional opens and he exits, pulling
on his hood.

CONTRERAS
I'll see if I can get him to move
to my office. Can you take over for
me here?

(CONTINUED)

MONSIGNOR TORRES

Of course, but I don't think I'll
need to.

Monsignor Torres gestures toward the door as Alvin slips out
headed for the exit.

Contreras' shoulders slump as the door closes behind Alvin.

EXT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

That night, Alvin leaves the building and heads for the
subway en route to work.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Alvin walks past a new Convenience Store. The store has a
banner stating that it is Now Open and Under New Ownership.

Inside WE SEE two thugs, EDUARDO and CRUZ holding up the
CLERK, a Korean man, has his hands in the air. Eduardo, the
shorter of the two is the boss, while Cruz is the muscle.
Eduardo wears a number 8 Yankees jersey. Cruz wears a tank
top undershirt and khakis showing his bodybuilder like
physique.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The nervous Clerk has his hands up.

EDUARDO

Put your fuckin' hands down. This
ain't a stick up!

He does.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Alvin continues past the store and then stops, realizing
what he saw. After a moment he backtracks and peeks in the
window. Though he can't hear the dialog Alvin can see what's
happening.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

EDUARDO

You know who we are? Who we represent?

CLERK

No.

Eduardo nods and Cruz speaks.

CRUZ

Ochos Locos.

EDUARDO

And we run this fucking neighborhood.

CLERK

Okay...

EDUARDO

So you're the new owner?

CLERK

Yes.

EDUARDO

And nobody told you the rules!?

CLERK

W-what rule?

EDUARDO

If you wanna do business on this street, you gotta pay.

CLERK

But that's extortion.

Eduardo knocks a display off the counter. It crashes to the floor noisily.

EDUARDO

No, that's how we do business in this neighborhood. Whatever you want to call it, it'll be ten percent every Friday, or else.

CLERK

Or else what?

(CONTINUED)

EDUARDO

Or else my friend here gets angry,
and maybe Ortiz Mortuary gets some
new business.

Cruz folds his arms across his chest.

EDUARDO

And what do you know, today's
Friday!

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Outside Alvin has ducked out of view and is calling the
police.

ALVIN

Hello? Yeah this dude is gettin'
robbed right now at the corner of
49th and 8th.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The clerk hands over a wad of cash to Eduardo.

CLERK

That's all I've got.

Eduardo looks at the cash.

EDUARDO

Bullshit, the old Bodega paid like
\$600 a week.

CLERK

They were cash only. We take credit
cards now.

EDUARDO

You got a safe don't you?

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Alvin peeks in again and from ALVIN'S POV we see the boys as
they force the clerk to the back room. Alvin looks around
nervously for the police.

ALVIN

C'mon. C'mon.

(CONTINUED)

Alvin waits another moment and watches as a police car approaches. Alvin quietly celebrates.

ALVIN

Yes!

The cop car makes a turn down another street.

ALVIN

What? No!

Alvin disappointment turns to anger.

ALVIN

Fucking police.

Alvin pulls on his hood and steps inside.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The door alarm chimes loudly and Alvin nearly jumps out of his skin.

Eduardo pokes his head out of the back room.

EDUARDO

We're closed!

ALVIN

Okay. My bad.

He turns to leave. Eduardo returns to the back room.

Alvin stops at the door and opens it, trips the door alarm but then ducks behind the last aisle and creeps along the floor.

Alvin slinks along the racks, slowly and quietly toward the back room.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

In the cramped back room, the Clerk has opened the safe and Eduardo stands holding two stacks of cash.

EDUARDO

Ones and Fives? This is like, 300 bucks.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

It's for change. We just opened.

EDUARDO

No! You're holding out.

Eduardo nods at Cruz who steps in and punches the Clerk hard in the face. Cruz picks him up and punches him in the body.

The Clerk is almost unconscious. Eduardo gives his friend a signal to stop. Cruz drops him and steps aside toward the back door, while Eduardo leans in to interrogate.

EDUARDO

Where you hidin' it?

CLERK

I don't know what you're talking about.

EDUARDO

You sure?

The Clerk begins to cry.

CLERK

I'm not hiding anything.

Eduardo nods at Cruz again. But before he can do anything, Alvin rushes, tackling Cruz through the emergency exit door and into the alley.

EXT. NEW YORK ALLEY - NIGHT

Cruz is up first. He towers over Alvin, who slowly rises to his feet. Eduardo enters the alley, surprised and disgusted at Alvin's presence.

EDUARDO

Who the fuck are you!?

Alvin, not sure what to do next puts his hands up and prepares to defend himself. Cruz swings and Alvin ducks! Eduardo paces and roots on his friend.

EDUARDO

Yeah! Fuck him up!

Alvin takes a Cruz down with a double leg takedown, then after some grappling, Alvin puts Cruz into a rear naked choke. Eduardo is shocked that the bigger Cruz is losing and starts to panic.

(CONTINUED)

EDUARDO
C'mon fool. C'mon!

Eduardo begins looking around for a weapon. As Cruz starts to lose consciousness, Alvin is hit in the head with a brick (thrown by Eduardo) forcing him to release the choke.

EDUARDO
Yeah! How you like that!?

Alvin is stunned. He tries to pull himself up off the ground but stumbles. Seizing the opportunity, Eduardo kicks Alvin in the ribs. Cruz joins in and the two stomp and kick Alvin, who uses his arms to protect his head, and absorbs most of the shots to the body.

The would-be hero crawls away and tries desperately to get to his feet. Alvin makes it to a dumpster and starts to pull himself up but Cruz stomps his head. Alvin's face and arm shatters a bottle on the ground.

Eduardo is amused. He and Cruz step back to rest and admire their work.

EDUARDO
Look at him. Pinche zangano.

With his face pouring blood Alvin makes it to his feet, but soon after loses his balance and falls near the brick. Cruz spits at him on the ground.

Eduardo goes to kick Alvin once more but Alvin traps the thug's kicking leg as he grabs the brick.

Alvin chuckles and then smashes the brick into Eduardo's, spraining, tearing, and hyper-extending the joints and ligaments!

Eduardo buckles and falls to the ground, clutching his knee and crying out in pain. Cruz runs up to attack Alvin who has started to get up.

Alvin intercepts Cruz' attack and unleashes an uppercut that flattens him! Alvin leaps on top of him to ground and pound position. He yells as he savagely beats the bigger man into unconsciousness.

Eduardo has pulled himself up on the dumpster.

Alvin crosses to where Eduardo is and front-kicks him in the stomach. When Eduardo doubles over, Alvin picks up another beer bottle and smashes it on the back of the gangster's head knocking him cold.

(CONTINUED)

Alvin stands over the two fallen thugs, favoring his ribs. He is exhausted, his chest heaving almost hyperventilating. He's overcome with joy, pain, fear, sadness, and elation.

ALVIN
(to himself)
I did it. I did it.

Alvin turns to look into the convenience store. The Clerk stands there watching in disbelief.

Alvin shrugs his shoulders and offers a half smile, clearly proud of himself.

The clerk quickly slams the door shut.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT DINING AREA - NIGHT

Alvin enters and closes the door, holding his ribs. He slams his back against the door. He's in agony. Alvin slides down the door to a sitting position, still holding his ribs. He closes his eyes and remembers.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (2001)

Aisha slaps and scratches at Gary's face. Gary punches and misses, but then lands a glancing blow.

AISHA
Somebody help me!

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Back in his room Alvin looks around frantically, searching for something that could help his mother. He sees a baseball bat, a t-ball trophy, and finally his gaze falls on his guitar.

AISHA
(off-screen)
Get off of me! Help!

Alvin grabs the bat and guitar, but before running out of the room he stops to look in on baby Alicia. She fidgets a bit, but is still sleeping.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Gary rears back to deliver the next blow, Alvin enters the fray. A look of horror spreads on Aisha's bloody face.

AISHA
(gasping)
No baby!

Gary stops and turns to see what's happening. From across the room, Alvin tosses the baseball bat over Gary's head to his mother in the chair. Gary follows the arc of the toss, seeing it land in Aisha's lap.

Behind him, with a look of sheer determination on his face, and with all the strength in his 10 year old body, Young Alvin winds up with the guitar.

YOUNG ALVIN
Leave her alone!

Alvin swings for the fences hitting his stepfather in the head with his guitar. Splinters and pieces fly everywhere. Gary stumbles, regains himself, and is furious.

Gary gathers himself, then glares at Alvin before punching him in the midsection. The punch sends Alvin flying across the room. Behind Gary, Aisha stands with the bat at the ready.

Gary turns to continue his assault on Aisha, but is met with a heavy dose of baseball bat for his trouble. Aisha hits a home run across her husband's temple, and Gary falls to the floor in a heap. A pool forms around Gary's head as he bleeds out on the carpet.

Aisha moves to Young Alvin who is slumped against a wall. She reaches him and seeing his eyes closed she tries to wake him.

AISHA
(pleading)
Wake up baby, wake up.

Alicia begins to cry in the next room.

FADE TO:

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT DINING AREA - NIGHT

Alvin rises from where he sits slumped against the door and heads for the back of the apartment.

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

It's a gruesome scene as Alvin works on his face with tweezers in the mirror. Blood covers the sink and counter area.

A piece of beer bottle pulled from his face falls into the sink.

Alvin picks up his phone and dials. He puts it on speaker and we hear it ringing as he goes back to work on his face.

VOICE ON PHONE

Thank you for calling Copies and More, this is Tim, how can I help you?

Alvin pulls another piece of glass from his face as he talks.

ALVIN

Yo it's Alvin.

TIM (VOICE ON PHONE)

Sup Alvin? You running late?

ALVIN

Yeah man, I'm not coming in tonight. I just got my ass kicked.

TIM (VOICE ON PHONE)

You fighting again?

ALVIN

Nah... at least not in the cage. It was a mugging. Two guys. Cover for me all right?

TIM (VOICE ON PHONE)

Shit brother, are you okay?

Alvin hangs up.

He looks at himself in the mirror. He is in bad shape. But then, a smile spreads across his face.

(CONTINUED)

ALVIN
Better than ever.

Alvin pulls Dr. Vithlani's business card from his pocket. He flicks it, turns it over once more, and then crushes it in his hand before throwing it in the trash.

END OF ACT FIVE

INT. ALVIN'S APARTMENT DINING AREA - LATE NIGHT

Alvin sits at the table in the dark with a towel to his face, and a bowl of ice water.

He checks the towel for more blood and dips his right hand in the bowl of ice water to soothe his knuckles.

Alvin shakes away the pain after opening up a bottled water. He takes a drink, then opens up his ancient laptop, and powers it on. A picture of his sister is now his wallpaper.

He grabs the phone records from atop a pile of papers. A drop of blood lands on it as he reads the phone number. Alvin wipes it away leaving a faint smear.

He searches the phone number and finds nothing.

Alvin searches "private detective trace phone number" and finds some results that suggest and discuss the legality of private detective phone number traces.

He chuckles.

ALVIN
Illegal huh?

Next Alvin goes to Craig's List, searches "Private Detective", and gets a plethora of results.

He clicks on an ad and settles in, putting his hand back in the bowl of ice water. Just then his door unlocks with a click. Alvin quickly closes his laptop, the room's only source of light. Rebecca walks into the now dark room.

She moves toward his counter with a piece of paper in hand.

ALVIN
You know, I never gave you a key.

Rebecca is startled by his unexpected presence, then plays it cool.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

What are you doing here? You're supposed to be at work.

ALVIN

I called in.

Rebecca crosses to the light switch.

REBECCA

Why?

She turns on the light and is shocked when she sees what the light reveals.

REBECCA

Holy shit Alvin! What happened to you!?

Alvin chuckles.

ALVIN

I got in a fight with a beer bottle.

Rebecca rushes to his side, sets the paper down, dips his towel in the ice water bowl and dabs at his face.

REBECCA

What the fuck Alvin? Drinking all the time and now a bar fight?

ALVIN

Something like that.

REBECCA

What's happening to you?

ALVIN

You wouldn't understand.

She stops.

REBECCA

We need to get you to the hospital.

Alvin changes the subject and nods at the paper she brought in.

ALVIN

What's the paper say?

She sighs.

REBECCA
You want me to read it?

ALVIN
No.

Rebecca grabs the paper and starts to read.

REBECCA
Dear Alvin...

ALVIN
Stop.

REBECCA
What?

ALVIN
Just tell me what it says.

Rebecca sets down the paper. Walks over and kisses him.
Alvin winces in pain.

REBECCA
It says that.

She kisses him again.

REBECCA
And that.

She goes to kiss him again and Alvin turns away.

ALVIN
What's it say about your husband?

REBECCA
It says that I filled out my
divorce papers and I'm giving them
to him tomorrow.

ALVIN
Really?

REBECCA
It says that no matter what you're
going through, I'm here for you...

She takes a deep breath.

REBECCA
And that I love you.

Alvin tries to hide his shock. He says nothing. Rebecca is embarrassed but recovers.

REBECCA

And that I know you love me too
even if you can't say it yet.

ALVIN

That paper says a lot.

Rebecca leans in again and gets nose to nose.

REBECCA

Oh it says more.

Alvin smiles.

ALVIN

It does?

Just then Alvin's face begins bleeding more heavily dripping blood onto his shirt. Rebecca notices and is distracted by it but Alvin is clueless.

REBECCA

Yeah.

ALVIN

What's it say?

Rebecca stands up straight and shifts into business mode.

REBECCA

We're going to the hospital. You
need stitches. C'mon, I've gotta
grab my jacket.

Alvin touches his hand to his face and notices the increase in blood. Rebecca heads for the door.

ALVIN

Fine. Just gimme a second.

Rebecca exits. Alvin looks back at his computer, and at the Craig's List ad on the screen. The ad is for a private detective named SEAN MCCARTNEY, whose photo shows a clean cut, slightly overweight Irish man in his 40s. The ad lists his credentials as having years of experience as an NYPD detective and speaks of extreme discretion.

Alvin bookmarks this page creating a new folder called "Vigilante Project".

He closes the browser, and then closes the computer. Alvin rises with a groan, and heads for the door, making sure to grab his purple hoodie on the way.

END TAG