

FADE IN:

1 EXT. AIRPORT - NOON**1**

THOMAS a 21-year-old black man stands on the curb of the airport with a backpack and carry-on bag. He's average height with a broad stocky build. He wears a suit without a tie its wrinkles show that he's been wearing it all day. He holds his phone in his hand and is constantly looking at his watch. A WHITE TESLA MODEL X pulls up blasting rap music. It stops just past Thomas. He walks towards the car and reaches for the door but the car moves forward a few feet and stops. He reaches again and the car jerks forward away from him again. He throws his hands up.

THOMAS
Come on bro!

The passenger side window rolls down and smoke pours out.

ALEX (O.S.)
What's up Big Tom! Get in.

Thomas stares at the car not moving an inch. After a moment he reaches for the car door and it pulls forward again. Alex LAUGHS.

2 INT. CAR - NOON**2**

Thomas sits in the front passenger seat. The interior of the car is completely white. ALEX a 23-year-old white man drives. Alex is handsome with long blonde hair, he's in great shape and is well over 6 feet tall. He wears a black t-shirt that has the movie cover for "Juice" on it. His eyes are red and barely open.

ALEX
You hitting this?

He asks as he extends a joint to Thomas.

THOMAS
Ah you know I can't, got to go see the dean. I don't want to smell like it either.

ALEX
Don't trip you know he probably smokes too...Why so serious?

THOMAS

My bad, I was just in thought. I'm not sure what this meeting is about.

ALEX

They probably want to give you like a citizen of the year award or something since graduation is so close. You made it this far, what bad can happen? Nothing's stopping you from walking across that stage. When does your mom arrive?

THOMAS

I'm not sure.

ALEX

Ask her to bring me one of those bomb cakes she used to bring to our games.

THOMAS

(laughing)
Coach would be so mad.

ALEX

(laughing)
Every time.
(cont)
How'd the interview go?

THOMAS

Bro it went great! In fact.

Thomas reaches out and grabs the joint from Alex.

ALEX

Oh yeah? It went like that!

THOMAS

As soon my degree is official, so is my job offer! Exactly what I dreamed of. This job is the same program that produced 3 of the companies' last 4 CEO's.

ALEX

So what you're saying is?

ALEX/THOMAS

(singing in unison)

Money, money, money, money, money,
money, MONNAAY!

3 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - AFTERNOON 3

Thomas jogs across the campus. The campus is meticulously maintained. He runs past 19th-century buildings, lush green lawns, fountains, and exquisite landscaping. He reaches a building with large columns and he runs up a large flight of stairs in the front.

4 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - AFTERNOON 4

Thomas rushes into the lobby, it has marble floors, a large rotunda, and the walls are littered with photos and paintings of white men. There's also an announcement board with multiple posters that read "GRADUATES: REMEMBER TO PAY YOUR TECHNOLOGY FEE BY TONIGHT." Thomas's running catches the attention of the CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER. The officer is a white man in his 50's. His uniform and equipment belt look nearly identical to the local police including both a TASER and GUN. The officer reaches out and grabs Thomas's backpack as he hurries past.

CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER
Hey, where are you off to in such a rush?

Thomas being yanked back by his backpack nearly causes him to fall.

CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER
Are you sure you're in the right place son?

The officer keeps hold of Thomas by his shoulder and backpack. Thomas reaches into his back pocket.

CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER
(With his hand over his holstered gun)
Whoa! Watch yourself!

Thomas slowly pulls his wallet out of his pocket. Opens it and reveals his student ID.

THOMAS
I'm on the way to see the Dean.

5 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON 5

Thomas sits in the Dean's office. As he waits he peers around the room. One of the walls is filled with more photos and paintings of white men dressed in suits. Next to the window, there's a Ukrainian flag, a rainbow flag, and a black lives matter flag. Behind a large mahogany desk the is wall covered in books. On the desk sits "Their Eyes Were Watching God" by Zora Neale Hurston. The DEAN walks in the room. He's a white man in his 50's wearing an expensive 3 piece suit with Italian loafers.

DEAN

Thomas! My guy. I didn't expect to see you again so soon. That was a great fundraiser last week.

THOMAS

Yes, we were able to raise quite a bit of money.

DEAN

You know I always believe when you have a chance to help you've got to help.

THOMAS

Is that Zora Neale Hurston that you're reading?

DEAN

Yes, I'm enjoying the read and learning about her story. Did you know that she lied about her age to enroll in high school at the age of 26?

THOMAS

Yes, I'm familiar with her story. Before he passed my dad used to take me every year to the Eatonville Festival which celebrates her.

DEAN

Talk about perseverance and doing whatever it takes to get ahead. Life was so hard for black people. I've been doing some other readings too. I'm awake.

The Dean points to a section on the bookshelf, we see amongst other books "Native Son" "Between the World and Me" and the "New Jim Crowe."

DEAN

Anyways, Thomas, I've got some-inconvenient news. I wish we got this information to you sooner but you've lost eligibility for your grant.

THOMAS

What? That can't be. Graduation is only like two weeks away.

DEAN

I know we had an administrative oversight, but your household income now exceeds the eligibility.

THOMAS

So that means?

DEAN

It means that to graduate in addition to the technology fee you'll have to pay this semester's tuition in full by Monday.

THOMAS

By Monday! Where am I supposed to get that so soon? What if I can't get it by then?

DEAN

You won't graduate and all your classes for this semester will be dropped.

THOMAS

But I have a job lined up that depends on me graduating.

DEAN

Just get your parents to write a check.

THOMAS

My mom remarried and her husband acts like I don't exist. He's never given me a dime. I can make payments starting in June I'll have a job then.

DEAN

It doesn't work that way.

THOMAS

You have to help me, I can't lose out on this job.

DEAN

Just take the summer work and save and pay for it in the fall.

THOMAS

Without a degree, no job will pay me enough to save enough. And I have to graduate now, or I'll lose my job which is designed to fast-track me to a future executive. It was a miracle I got in this time, they're not going to accept a 5th-year senior. You have to help me, please!

DEAN

I'm sure you'll figure it out.

THOMAS

You have to be able to help me somehow. Didn't you just say that when you have a chance to help you have to help.

DEAN

Yeah but Tommy that was charity this is business. You're a resourceful young man, I'm sure you'll figure it out. Remember to go by the library and pay your technology fee also. Thanks for your time I have another appointment. Oh, on your way out I do have something that will make you feel better. We had some leftovers from our Save the Slugs benefit last night.

The Dean presses the button on his DESK PHONE and speaks into it.

DEAN

(cont)

Jenn, on his way out let Tommy Boy eat some of the cake from last night.

6 INT. LIBRARY - THE NEXT DAY

6

Alex and Thomas stand in a long line of students that stretches from the information desk down a hall and out the door. Thomas is the only black student seen. In front of them two white female students are having a conversation.

SARAH

Did you hear that Priscilla's car got broken into last night? The 4th one this month.

CLAIRE

Yeah I heard she left her laptop on the seat.

SARAH

Well it was in her bag.

CLAIRE

That pretty pink Gucci one?

SARAH

No this is the Fendi one she just got it for Christmas.

CLAIRE

Sucks, but I guarantee her parents had it insured. She'll have another by Memorial Day.

SARAH

I don't feel safe. I bet it's that homeless black guy that sleeps outside Robinson Hall.

CLAIRE

Just don't leave anything in your car, it will be okay. No one's been harmed, just a few broken windows.

SARAH

We work hard for our things why do they

(She turns, looks at Thomas)

think they can just take it.

CLAIRE

You've never had a job.

SARAH
You know what I mean.

CLAIRE
You don't know it was one of them.
I heard a tall white guy was seen
running away.

SARAH
He was probably just going for a
jog. Some of them just don't know
how to control themselves. I'm so
glad they hired the new armed
police, the old security only had
tasers. We need real protection.

CLAIRE
Protection for us, or our stuff?
How much is a life worth?

SARAH
I don't know, but not more than my
graduation Birken.

CLAIRE
Well I never said that.

They both erupt in LAUGHTER. Thomas and Alex unable to hear
the girls' conversation.

ALEX
Did it look like one of those girls
pointed at me?

THOMAS
I recognized the look it was aimed
at the one black guy here.

ALEX
Okay cool.

THOMAS
Why you got those scratches on your
hand? Did you, again?

ALEX
It was too easy bro. Quick come up.

THOMAS
I told you to leave people cars
alone.

ALEX

Shhh! What's wrong with you.
Besides I'll give you whatever I
make selling it.

THOMAS

I don't want your dirty money.
Besides it would cover like 5
percent of what I owe.

ALEX

No such thing as dirty money, no
such thing as clean money. It's all
blood money, just different
bleeders.

THOMAS

What about asking your parents,
your mom loved me in high school?

ALEX

Already asked, they don't believe
me when I ask for money anymore.

THOMAS

(sarcastically)
I wonder why.

They get to the front of the line.

LIBRARIAN

Next!

THOMAS

I'd like to pay my technology fee.

He extends his debit card.

LIBRARIAN

(confused)
You go here?

THOMAS

Yes I've been coming to this
library for 4 years.

LIBRARIAN

I think I'd remember one of you in
here. But..

The librarian pauses.

LIBRARIAN

(yells to all the
students)
Our card machine is down, and it
will not be fixed before the
deadline. If you have fees to pay
use the ATM and take out cash.

Alex nudges Thomas.

ALEX
Do you see all that?

Thomas notices on the librarian's desk is a box overflowing
with cash. He turns and notices the dozens of students
waiting both at the Help Desk and the ATM.

ALEX
There's your tuition.

7 INT. DORM ROOM - EVENING

7

Thomas lays with his head across the lap of MARY a
beautiful 21 year old black woman who sits up on his bed.
Alex sits across the room at a desk rolling up a blunt.

ALEX
I'm telling you it's easy money.

MARY
Thomas it's a horrible stupid idea.
What if they kick you out?

THOMAS
If I don't pay they will anyways.

MARY
Go home for the summer, figure it
out for next year.

THOMAS
You know he won't let me stay
there.

ALEX
It'd be so simple, just use the side
door they never lock it. You know
I've brought a young lady or two in
there late night.

MARY
But what if you get caught.

ALEX

I've been caught by security a few times they just kick you out.

MARY

You already know they don't treat you and Alex the same.

Thomas sits up.

THOMAS

You damn right I know. I been taking their shit for four years. For what, to get a job like the one I got.

MARY

How will it look if they catch you, and make an example out of you for stealing from them?

THOMAS

How will it look? Why should I care how it will look? I've been in no trouble since I've gotten year, straight A student, I'm in all the right clubs, I volunteer. The moment I step out those doors consciously and subconsciously do things to try to make my mere existence less threatening to white people. And they still look at like a thug. Maybe I should go ahead and live up to their expectations of me.

8 INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

8

Thomas enters the library through the side back door. He makes his way over to the librarian's counter. He finds the lockbox. To his surprise it's not locked away. He opens it and it's bursting with cash. He stands over the money for a few moments. He paces back and forth. He grabs the box.

(The shot is obstructed concealing if he took the money or not.)

As he is walking away CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER walks into the room. Thomas ducks behind a desk narrowly dodging the FLASHLIGHT of the officer. After not seeing anything the Campus Police officer turns around and heads for the exit. Thomas accidentally knocks over a stack of papers. The Campus Police Officer jumps in the air and spins around towards Thomas who bolts down the hallway. A chase ensues, Thomas sprints through the library, turning corners, leaping over desks, pulling books down behind him hoping to trip up the officer who follows at a steady pace. Thomas enters a group study room and is cornered.

CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER

(With his pistol in one
hand and his flashlight
in another)

Come out now, with your hands up.
You fucking black bastard.

Thomas eyes dart around the room. He spots the exits to a side diagonal from the officer. He takes a book and throws into one corner landing with a THUMP. This draws the attention of the officer to that corner away from Thomas. Seeing a chance for an escape Thomas darts for the exit, leaps over a table and makes it past the Campus Police officer and is just a few steps away from the exit when BANG. The Campus Police Officer pulls the trigger of his gun, shooting Thomas in the back of his head. Thomas falls to the floor instantly. His lifeless body lays on the floor with an ever growing pool of blood from his head.

CAMPUS POLICE OFFICER

I thought he had a gun.

FADE OUT.

