

FNSE

Episode 101

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INSERT: Drake's *Laugh Now, Cry Later* music video, only instead of Champagne Papi, FOUR GUYS have been superimposed over his face for a PARTY PROMO. It's like deep fake porn, only with Drake's lifestyle shots.

This July 3rd. For One Night Only...

Come party with the hottest promoters in Atlanta...

MICKEY, 24, Black, is Drake, driving in the Gatsby Mercedes concept car with the pretty girl. He has a million dollar smile and 10 million dollar ideas. He's our unofficial leader.

At club Libra...

KEEM, 24, Black, Nigerian, conservative, is Drake, hitting the jumper over Kevin Durant. He has one of those old serious faces. Like a Black person from England or a 1930s cartoon villain.

With a very special surprise...

KID, 21, Black, is Drake, pushing a shopping cart of clothes through the Nike store with an adoring companion. He's a young, ambitious, fashion designer/culture guru with a social justice streak. Our Vinny Chase, only no one knows it yet.

DALTON, 24, Black, is Drake, underwater shadow boxing a la Muhammad Ali, only he inexplicably has a blunt in his mouth. Dalton's an off beat party boy/artist on an "alkaline" diet.

The guys are now edited into the NBA draft scene, all wearing Atlanta Hawks caps. Mickey raises a glass of red wine.

MICKEY

(to camera)

There's a lot of parties in the city tonight. Choose wisely.

They toast.

KEEM (V.O.)

I can't believe we bought all this editing equipment for one promo.

INT. KIDS AGAINST CUBICLES CRIB - DAY

Keem, Kid, and Dalton from the promo are crowded around a computer in their brand new "editing bay" as Mickey stands behind them. We're in a nice bachelor pad conspicuously missing all of its "nice stuff."

MICKEY

We'll just make a new one for every party like professionals. The equipment's gonna pay for itself.

KID

Oh, for sure. It's a no-brainer.

Keem rolls his eyes. Kid always agrees with Mickey. TWO KOREAN GROUPIES enter from the kitchen and sit on Dalton's lap, holding a lit blunt for him as he mans the computer, editing. One has too many piercings. The other has that inexplicable curly afro certain Asian hip-hop heads get.

KID (CONT'D)

(to Mickey)

Should we add some visuals to show the party's for the 4th?

MICKEY

Great idea.

(to Dalton)

Add fireworks throughout, please. Just like beautiful, silent bursts.

DALTON

I got you.

Dalton goes to work. Korean Fro offers the blunt to a stressed out Keem. He declines.

KEEM

This better work, Mick...

MICKEY

Of course it's gonna work.

Everyone watches the promo. SLOW-MO NIGHTCLUB footage of the guys in VIP now, popping bottles. They're surrounded by ATTRACTIVE WOMEN as DANCERS twerk for everyone. A beautiful "burst of fireworks" inexplicably fills the screen.

KOREAN FRO

(in Korean, subtitled)

I love America.

MUSIC BUILDS: *Laugh Now, Cry Later* by Drake

FNSE

EXT. CLUB LIBRA - ATLANTA, GA - NIGHT

Laugh Now, Cry Later continues over an EPIC DRONE SHOT of a nightclub with a line so long it feels like Covid never happened. Spotlights in the parking lot. A huge marquee sign for tonight's party. It worked.

ATLANTA. JULY 3RD.

Kid grips a megaphone playing auctioneer to the line of CUSTOMERS, dapping up EVERY LOCAL YOUTH. He wears modified Margiela boots everyone gawks at. A modern day Dapper Dan.

KID

(into megaphone)

Welcome to night one of our first annual "Not My Independence Day Weekend Extravaganza!" Remember, White Independence Day is basically Black Halloween. Now we got the skip line going for fifty cash. Ladies, if your man has you waiting in line, that is *not* your man!

ZOE and EJA, 20s, Black, model/influencers, pass Kid. Eja's "model/basic," but wears it well. Zoe does everything a little left-handed despite being one of the beautiful ones. They walk up to the front of the line where Keem works the register, angrily thumbing through a stack of cash like a Nigerian Scrooge McDuck.

ZOE

Hey, I'm Zoe. This is my girl Eja. We're just in town for the week.

KEEM

Nice to meet you both. It's fifty each tonight.

Zoe and Eja exchange a look. Kid approaches.

KID

Yo, they're good.
(to Zoe and Eja)
I'm Kid. This is my party.

EJA

(feeling him)
Nice to meet you, Kid.

KEEM

Our party. Sorry, ladies. Nobody gets in free.

Kid shoots Keem a look, he doesn't budge. Kid digs in his pockets. Keem's unimpressed. He knows how broke he is.

ZOE
We're good, thanks.

Zoe hands over a crisp \$100 for both her and Eja.

KEEM
You ladies have a wonderful night.

Keem holds Zoe's bill overhead examining it for authenticity as they head inside.

KID
You should low heat that fabric...

ZOE
(stops walking)
Sorry, what?

KID
Your blouse. It's not a t-shirt.
You gotta low heat that in the
dryer to protect it.
(off Zoe, winning smile)
I'm a designer.

ZOE
(mildly annoyed)
Thanks...?

She heads inside with Eja.

EXT./INT. CLUB LIBRA - ATLANTA, GA - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA follows them toward the bar. It's packed. Ominous fog, dark. WE LAND ON Dalton at the lighting board, flanked by TWO MORE NEW AGE GROUPIES with pretty faces and underarm hair.

DALTON
(loudly, over the music)
This lighting board's old as hell
but I rigged it to get a kinetic
vibe. I wonder if anyone here has
epilepsy.

Dalton does the "kinetic" effect. There's nothing festive about it. PAN OVER to reveal a frustrated Mickey.

MICKEY

(loudly)

Can we get more color, though? It feels sad in here.

DALTON

Tonight's aesthetic is "Life of Pablo" tour. Reds and blues in the palette are way too obvious.

GROUPIES

Exactly / Facts.

MICKEY

Nigga, just fix the lights, please.

Mickey walks off in frustration.

DALTON

(to Mickey)

Since when're you in charge?

We PAN OVER to reveal a BLACK DUDE, 30s, wearing a flamethrower apparatus nearby.

BLACK DUDE

I think it looks dope in here.

DALTON / GROUPIES

Right? / Facts.

Dalton sniffs "nasal spray," sees Black Dude watching.

DALTON

You tryna turn up, bro?

He offers the bottle.

BLACK DUDE

Off nasal spray?

DALTON

That's not nasal spray.

CAMERA CATCHES BACK UP to Mickey, summoned to VIP by a CONCERNED WAITRESS.

WAITRESS

Lucky said you promised him the best table in the house. He's livid.

Mickey looks up to find LUCKY and his CREW OF UNHAPPY GANG MEMBERS standing around a cramped, bathroom-adjacent VIP section. Lucky's blonde dreads and diamond tennis bracelets almost make you think he's not a shooter. He's a shooter.

MICKEY

Fuck.

Mickey tries to hide. Lucky immediately sees him. Mickey smiles and heads over.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Everything cool, Luck?

LUCKY

This table's trash. I want that one.

Everyone looks at the other table to find ANOTHER GROUP already there. Also gang members.

MICKEY

(bullshitting)

Actually, this is considered the best table in the club cause it's VIP, but private.

LUCKY

You moving them niggas or am I doing it?

Waitress looks to Mickey, not envying him.

INT. CLUB LIBRA - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

We CRASH INTO the kitchen as Mickey walks with purpose, Waitress following.

WAITRESS

Not to question your decision, but can you tell Keem this was your idea so he doesn't fire me for giving away free liquor?

MICKEY

No need.

Mickey grabs three empty bottles of 1942 out of the recycling bin and starts filling them with bottom shelf El Jimador Silver like a chemist filling a buret.

WAITRESS

Lucky's gonna shoot the club up if he finds out.

MICKY

Exactly. So unless you're tryna get shot, don't tell a fuckin' soul.

Kid pokes his head in.

KID

Yo, Mick. Showtime.

WAITRESS

(into him)

Hey, Kid.

KID

(winning smile)

Hey.

She's smitten. Everyone is. Mickey hands her the bottles.

MICKY

Reseal 'em and bring 'em out to our favorite drug dealers, please.

CAMERA stays with Mickey as he RE-ENTERS THE PARTY with his protege, Kid. Lights are dim now. DJ brings down the music. A spotlight illuminates the stage as Mickey takes it, our MC.

MICKY (CONT'D)

(into mic)

Y'all already know my lil' brother from another here, Kid. He's our host for a very special portion of the night. Show him some love.

Applause. Mickey pulls Kid into the spotlight. He's clearly going out of his way to make him a thing. We clock Keem, not into it.

KID

It's firework season but Kids Against Cubicles thinks different. So without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, we bring you ... "Fire Nigga!"

DJ drops *Light It Up* by Young Thug, and the aforementioned Black Dude, AKA "FIRE NIGGA," takes the stage, with his flame thrower. He looks like a deer in headlights. Incredibly high off "nasal spray."

ANGLE ON DALTON:

DALTON
(guilty/concerned)
Shit.

CROWD/YOUNG THUG
(singing)
Light it up! Light it up! Light it
up! Light it up!

Fire Nigga shoots flames straight into the air and THE ROOF IMMEDIATELY CATCHES FIRE. Sprinklers go off. The PRETTIEST GIRL IN THE ROOM screams in hysteria, covering her pink wig. Lucky's crew of goons is getting soaked.

HARD CUT TO:

INSERT: A FOX NEWS PROMO featuring a conservative-haired FEMALE REPORTER.

CONSERVATIVE-HAIRED REPORTER
Flamethrowers, underage drinking,
and a nightclub ablaze. They call
themselves "Kids Against Cubicles,"
local party promoters who've become
"Too hot for Hot-lanta," *literally*,
after their "Not Our Independence
Day" party was cut short by an
improvised fire show from H-E-
double-hockey-sticks.
(big smile)
All that and more, up next on Fox
5.

INT. KIDS AGAINST CUBICLES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

We're in the bachelor pad from the opening. Keem, Kid, and Dalton sit on a sad leather couch, watching TV the morning after a failed night.

KEEM
Jesus. My dad might see this shit.

KID
I doubt we made "Good Morning
Nigeria."

ON TV:

INCREDIBLY WHITE FOX NEWS REPORTER
(reading)
I'm told the pyrotechnician, "Fire-
(MORE)

INCREDIBLY WHITE FOX NEWS REPORTER
 (can't say that word)
 Sorry "Fire N-Word," apparently his
 actual stage name is "Fire--
 (almost said it again)
 "Fire N-word" --

Mickey enters, turns off the television.

KEEM
 I think they were gonna interview
 your man "Fire Nigga" next.

No one notices how guilty Dalton looks.

MICKEY
 Okay. Last night was a dub. Time to
 move on and come up with a plan.

KEEM
 Mick, rent's due, we still owe Dee
 Money half the deposit for
 tonight's party, we're broke, and
 we just set a club on fire.

Again no one notices Dalton starting to look like 'Sue' from
 SNL who "can't keep a secret."

KID
 (re: his phone)
 We're also getting *destroyed* in
 these comments...

Mickey looks at Kid's phone. There's a blue check on his
 @KidsCloset account. It's a mix of rare fashion finds and
 Kid's unique designs he sells on IG.

MICKEY
 Oh, shit. You got a blue check?

KID
 Crazy, right? I applied for
 verification. Had to hound some
 people but it finally came through.

Mickey throws his arm around Kid.

MICKEY
 (to Keem and Dalton)
 See that? The young face of Kids
 Against Cubicles is out here making
 real moves. Take notes.

Keem bites his tongue. Dalton's focused on the two Korean Groupies from the opening, entering from his bedroom. They give him a kiss and leave the house without a word.

KEEM

Those chicks were here this whole time?

DALTON

I introduced them to Brenton Wood. What we did was bigger than sex.

KEEM

Maybe you should shoot them a text saying they should hit up an Urgent Care back in Seoul.

DALTON

You can't get sick when you're alkaline. Plus STD's only flow between bad energy sources.

(to Kid)

They say anything about the party's atmosphere in the comments?

KID

(reading)

Someone said, "Them sprinklers trashed my shoes, shirt, and my girl purse. Somebody owe me a hundred dollars."

MICKEY

Guys, we need a plan for tonight.

KEEM

The plan is no party! We gotta keep a roof over our heads. Where else is Dalton gonna risk his life with women who can't speak English?

MICKEY

We're close to creating a lane as the best promoters in the city. If we push through this we could be pulling in 60k a week soon.

KEEM

Mick, this was supposed to be temporary. Parties are a horrible way to make money except for like 1% of promoters.

MICKEY

So let's become the 1%. We're so close. Look how many people we brought out last night.

KID

(to Keem)

I can probably sell off some clothes to cover part of the deposit. Maybe that can help finesse the Dee Money situation.

KEEM

You know you don't have to always take his side, right?

KID

I just think it's a good idea.

KEEM

I don't like this. It's dangerous. We're robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Keem looks to Dalton.

DALTON

I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see money's not the answer. Love is.

Dalton sips a green drink from a mason jar. He's not the ally Keem needs right now.

MICKEY

If tonight's a bust I'll sell my car to cover our rent and expenses this month.

Mickey offers his hand for Keem to shake. It's a godfather offer. Dalton and Kid defer to Keem.

KEEM

Fine.

They shake. Mickey hops to his feet, energized.

MICKEY

Let's go!

KEEM

I want the title in hand. I'm selling that car if this doesn't work, Mick. No bullshit.

A HUGE BOOM outside sets off a car alarm, startling everyone.

DALTON
Niggas love fireworks.

INT. COMMERCIAL SOUND STAGE - DAY

A commercial set buzzes with CREW for a Southeast Airlines ad. Mickey and Kid arrive. Mickey's in a Lacoste polo with a tennis cap turned backwards. More "classic" than usual.

KID
Aight. I just gotta sell some shit
off to this dude I know from the
internet. He's a weirdo from LA but
we can obviously use all the cash
we can get right now.

MICKEY
Word. I'm finna get these Hollywood
folks hyped on the function. They
love spending money and I'm
obviously great with White people.

KID
Cause you went to private school?

MICKEY
Cause I *sold* gas at private school.
That shit sets you apart.

Mickey quickly scans the room like a textbook social climber.

ANGLE ON: A SET PA delivering lunches. He follows him to the first AD. AD sends PA with a lunch over to the DIRECTOR, who's busy arguing with the real boss, the PRODUCER. JEREMY DANIELS, 40, White (think Harry Bernstein).

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Jackpot.

Mickey adjusts his collar.

PARKER (O.S.)
Kid!

PARKER, 21, White, approaches. The culture vulture. We notice he's rich by his "Union" Jordans and general confidence.

KID
Parker. What up. This is my boy
Mickey.

MICKEY
(correcting)
Business partner. Nice to meet you,
bro. What're you wearing, Paco
Rabanne? Smells nice.

He hands over a business card with just his IG handle:
@KingMickeyATL.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Mansion Elan tonight. DM me for
table service. People calling us
the kings of this club shit.

PARKER
Oh, I'm there. Which is exactly why
I need a Kid one of a kind piece.
Something I can pull off, though.

MICKEY
You mean cause you're white...

PARKER
Exactly.

Kid opens a duffle full of custom clothes he designed and
hands Parker a 1 of 1 custom jacket.

KID
Try this. John Elliot jacket I got
off Poshmark. Copped an old Kapital
tee off Grailed and added smileys
to the elbows. Took a fragment/LV
bandana and lined the pockets...

MICKEY
(overselling)
Bro, this shit is *fire*. Classic
with a tiny bit of swag. It's
almost like he designed it for you.

PARKER
I love it! How much?

KID
I can probably do that one for...

Kid notices Mickey's mouthing...

MICKEY
A thousand.

KID
Three bills?

PARKER

Done. What else you got?

Parker digs in the bag as Kid notices Zoe Gabon (from the opening) arrives to set.

KID

That chick's in your commercial?
She was at our party last night.

PARKER

Zoe Gabon. Yeah. So hot. And only
like 32k followers, so she's still
approachable. That's the sweet spot
right before she's getting flown
out by athletes and rappers.
(kinda racist)
I don't have to tell you guys this.

Kid's losing patience with this guy. Mickey isn't.

MICKEY

Kid makes really dope designs for
ladies, too. Maybe she can wear his
stuff in the commercial.

KID

That's not how it works, Mick.
(to Parker)
Sorry...

PARKER

All good. It's not my call but I'm
happy to do whatever I can to help
get your stuff some recognition.

MICKEY

Fantastic. Appreciate you, Conner.

PARKER

Parker.

MICKEY

Way to stick up for yourself, bro.

Someone signals to Parker off screen.

PARKER

Guys, gimme one sec.

He goes.

KID

You can't just dress a performer on the spot. They have a whole wardrobe department and unions and shit. It's bad form.

MICKEY

Fuck form. He's on your dick right now. Have him put some shit on shorty and get this clout. Plus we get a reason to talk to her. Nigga, look how soft her skin is...

ANGLE ON: Zoe looking over her lines with her manager LOUISE, 40s, white.

Parker returns with his boss, Jeremy.

PARKER

Guys, this is my boss. Jeremy, this is Kid. He's cool as fuck, right?

Kid smiles politely, annoyed. Jeremy sees it.

MICKEY

Michael Williams. Kid's business partner.

He drops him a card.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

DM me for table service tonight.
(privately)
Just don't tell Parker what I charge.
(winks)
It's uncouth.

Jeremy looks at the card in confusion.

JEREMY DANIELS

Nice to meet you guys.

Mickey's already grabbing headsets.

JEREMY DANIELS (CONT'D)

(re: headsets)
Wanna listen in?

MICKEY

(handing one to Kid)
We'd love to.

FIRST AD (O.S.)
Quiet on the set please. Roll
sound!

The DIRECTOR, white, 50s, takes his seat at the monitor. Kid puts on the headset, a little excited.

DIRECTOR
Annnnd action!

ON THE MONITOR the camera dollies down the "airplane aisle," landing on Zoe, last row. She smiles and sips champagne.

ZOE
(to camera)
Southeast Airlines. Fly high class,
even with low cash.

KID
Wait, what!?

DIRECTOR
Cut!

Director gives the guys dirty looks on his way in to Zoe.

PARKER
You can't talk while we're
recording sound, dude.
(to everyone)
They're not in the business. Sorry!

Parker's so embarrassed he doesn't notice Jeremy looks more curious than upset.

KID
My bad, but what the fuck was that?
No one here saw "Selma?"

PARKER
Dude, it's a Southeast commercial.
It ain't art.

MICKEY
To be fair, neither was "Selma."

Director's back and ready for another take.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
(to Kid, privately)
Bro, fuck activism right now.
There's business in here. Be smart.
I gotta take a piss real quick.
(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Invite anyone to the function who
looks like they'll spend money.

Mickey hurries off towards the RESTROOM.

FIRST AD (O.S.)
Quiet on the set please! Roll
Sound!

DIRECTOR
Action!

ON THE MONITOR as camera dollies again, landing on Zoe.

ZOE
(to camera)
Southeast Airlines. I guess sitting
in the back ain't so bad after all.

KID
Yoooo!

DIRECTOR
Cut!
(to Kid, furious)
Sorry, *who* are you?

KID
A Black person. Trust me, this
ain't it.

PARKER
I'm so sorry. He was just leaving.

A mortified Parker escorts Kid out. Jeremy watches.

KID
(calling out to Zoe)
Shorty, Rosa Parks is spinning in
her grave right now! Please don't
play yourself like this for no
commercial!

Director's phone's ringing.

DIRECTOR
(to AD)
Let's just take a quick five.

Zoe watches Kid, knowing he's right. Mickey, off near the
restroom, goes unnoticed during the melee.

He notices the empty, unattended Southeast airplane set as everyone walks off stage. His wheels spinning...

CUT TO:

INSERT: A promo shot on an iPhone. Mickey walks the aisles of the empty plane, holding a bottle of champagne like a rich kid headed to Fyre Fest.

MICKEY

(to camera)

Come party with the hottest niggas
in town tonight at Mansion. And oh
yeah - we rented out a plane to fly
25 special guests to a private
after party in Miami.

Mickey kicks his feet up like he owns the plane.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

(to camera)

There's a ton of 4th of July
parties in the city tonight.
(raised bottle)
Choose wisely.

He sips champagne, stops recording, and spit-takes.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

What the fuck is this,
Martinelli's?

EXT./INT. MICKEY'S PORSCHE - LATER

CLOSE ON: The classic Porsche emblem on the hood. Mickey's behind the wheel of his most prized possession while Kid watches the video on his phone.

KID

I can't believe you did this.

MICKEY

Genius, right? Best part is it was
free as fuck. Suck on that, Keem.
(then)
You repost it yet?

KID

What're we gonna do when people
realize we lied about the plane?

MICKY

Relax. We're gonna shut the city down tonight. Then with all the bread we make we'll pay 25 people to say Miami happened. Harmless finesse.

(a lightbulb)

Should we change our name to Finesse Boyz?

(another lightbulb)

Is it an acronym?? F-N-S-E.

(searching)

Four niggas stacking... enormous amounts of paper.

(nah)

We'll figure it out.

Mickey takes in the night. Really savoring the drive. Feeling expansive. This is why he does this shit.

MICKY (CONT'D)

Nice night. Should we cop cigars?

Mickey catches Kid looking at Zoe's page.

MICKY (CONT'D)

You invite her to the function?

KID

Not yet.

MICKY

What's her handle? I'll do it.

KID

Chill. I'll hit her. Damn.

Kid hits the follow button on her account.

MICKY

You should'a gone harder on Hunter to get your clothes in the commercial. Could'a gave him a discount for it. It's basic shit.

KID

I'm not Donny, Mick. Everyone can't be a come up.

Mickey backs off. We see this means something to them.

KID (CONT'D)

You ever worry you're not gonna make it?

(MORE)

KID (CONT'D)

Like you'll never actually level up
and do some shit that truly
matters?

Mickey's struck by that.

MICKEY

Bro, you're the future. Like, real
talk. You're an amazing designer,
people fuck with you, you got
integrity... too much for my taste,
but like, that shit's admirable. To
some people.

Kid laughs.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

If anybody's gonna make it, it's
you. I'll personally make sure it
happens.

Kid smiles. Appreciates his unofficial big bro.

KID

Thanks, man.

A HUGE BOOM off screen startles them. Kid shakes his head.

MICKEY

Black people love fireworks...

INT. THE MANSION ELAN - NIGHT

Empty nightclub pre-opening. BARBACKS stock bars. BUSSERS
wipe tables. The back wall behind the bar is full of photos
of the owner with famous rappers and drug dealers from Gucci
Mane to Frank Lucas. Dalton's at the lighting board, prepping
for tonight. Keem's at the main bar with DEE MONEY (Dierdra),
40, Nigerian, ex-drug dealer turned house flipper/club owner
from the photos. She puffs a Black & Mild throughout.

DEE MONEY

You're putting me in a fucked up
position, Keem. Y'all set a club on
fire last night. You know I'm
hanging onto my insurance by a
thread.

KEEM

I know it's a lot to ask but we
really feel good about tonight. All
the internet is talking about is
this party.

(MORE)

KEEM (CONT'D)
The last thing you want is
thousands of angry people outside a
closed venue.

Dee Money's on the fence. Keem's so trustworthy though.

DEE MONEY
If y'all do anything to jeopardize
my place I'm shutting you down and
keeping the deposit.

KEEM
Deal.
(then, with caution)
But since we're taking a harsh
penalty if we fuck up, how 'bout
you take ten percent of the door
and give us ten percent of the bar?
(off Dee)
We can run the registers and the
VIP line. All you have to do is
handle security and collect a ton
of money at 3am. It's a win/win.

Keem offers his hand and a smile. Dee shakes it, grudgingly.

DEE MONEY
Don't fuck me, Keem.

Suddenly the room shifts to pink neon lighting. They both
look over to Dalton.

KEEM
What the fuck does pink have to do
with the 4th of July?

DALTON
You stick to overcharging ladies at
the door and let me worry about
keeping 'em in the party.

DEE MONEY
When're you gonna stop fucking
around with The Peanuts Gang?

KEEM
I've known these guys since
college. They're like family.

DEE MONEY
That don't mean you gotta run with
them forever.

She goes. That hits home for Keem. Keem spots FOUR NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS, 10, Black, playing with fireworks in the PARKING LOT. The leader, LADARIUS is trying to snatch a lighter from his #2, KAI.

LADARIUS
You don't even know what you doing!

KAI
(blocking him)
Stop wasting our shit. You know how much fireworks cost??

Child #3, FAT BABY, watches Pornhub on his phone while Child #4, LIL MAN brushes off his sneakers with a toothbrush.

KEEM
(to Dalton)
These kids remind you of anybody?

Dalton comes over and takes a look. They're clearly a funhouse mirror version of our guys.

DALTON
I'm not great with kid faces.

A DISTANT EXPLOSION from down the block startles everyone.

KEEM
It's like the Gaza Strip out here.

INT. KIDS AGAINST CUBICLES CRIB - MICKEY'S ROOM - LATER

Mickey digs through a drawer, finds a \$100 bill marked "EMERGENCY ONLY" in red sharpie. He notices his old senior yearbook. He flips through to find he and his classmate DONNY (more on him later) wearing uniforms, two of only A HANDFUL OF BLACK KIDS in a sea of SUPER RICH WHITE KIDS. We see Donny was voted "most likely to become mayor if he cut them dreads." A knock at his door:

KID (O.S.)
Quick toast before this Uber comes!

Mickey takes the "EMERGENCY ONLY" \$100 and tucks it inside his sock. He says a quick prayer. He's not as confident about tonight as he lets on.

INT. KIDS AGAINST CUBICLES CRIB - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mickey pours shots for everyone. They all look fly. No indication of how broke and desperate they actually are.

MICKEY

(a toast)

I know we got a lot on the line
right now, and I just wanna say
thank you for letting me put us on
my back tonight. I promise I don't
take this shit lightly. I'm gonna
do whatever it takes to keep the
gang thriving. Let's get it!

They all cheers to the night. Even Keem is hopeful.

EXT. ATLANTA ROAD - LATER

The main road has been reduced to one lane as a sign warns
drivers to "slow down for construction." The guys get out of
their Uber and walk the rest of the way.

KEEM

Of all the nights to work on this
shitty ass block they pick the 4th?

KID

This is how they do us. They'd
never inconvenience Buckhead like
this on a holiday.

Keem gets a FaceTime from PASTOR TROY, the rapper.

MICKEY

Why's Pastor Troy FaceTiming you?

KEEM

(on FaceTime)

What's the word, OG?

On Keem's phone, Pastor Troy's home getting his scalp oiled
by Conservative Haired News Reporter from Fox. She's in for
the night. Her hair's in two french braids.

PASTOR TROY

(on FaceTime)

Maaaaan, your folks wouldn't let me
in last night. They told you?

KEEM

Bro, swear to God I had no idea.

PASTOR TROY

Don't say the lord's name in vein,
Keem. But what the fuck do I look
like standing outside making calls
like a bitch?

The guys all exchange looks like, "Whoa."

KEEM

We're actually having another party tonight at Mansion. Pull up.

PASTOR TROY

Y'all gon' have me outside again?

KEEM

I got you.

PASTOR TROY

Okay. I'ma see you later then. You boys be blessed.

The guys politely ad-lib goodbyes.

MICKEY

Yo, what the fuck?

KEEM

I know. I'm just tryna keep the relationship warm cause I promised my mom front row seats to his church when she visits from Nigeria.

DALTON

It's not even a real church. It's a bullshit ass concept from a hood nigga acting like he got saved.

KID

Yo...

Kid nods up ahead to a PARKING LOT FULL OF COLLEGE KIDS and 20 SOMETHINGS. The turnout is bananas.

MICKEY

Who told y'all we were good?! It's not even ten thirty yet.

LaDarius and Crew are surprisingly holding down the parking lot like little community police officers.

LADARIUS (LITTLE MICKEY)

(to the crowd)

No funny business and no partying in this line. We see you over there, Kylie.

ANGLE ON: A WHITE GIRL WITH CORNBROWS in line with a bottle of dirty Sprite.

KID
(to Keem)
What's with the children running
our line right now?

Ladarius approaches the guys.

LADARIUS (LITTLE MICKEY)
Y'all Kids Against Cubicles?

DALTON
Maybe, why?

LADARIUS (LITTLE MICKEY)
You owe us for holding down all
these people, bruh.

KEEM
No, we don't. Just cause you wash
someone's windows while they're in
the gas station doesn't mean they
have to pay for it.

KAI (LITTLE KEEM)
But we just saved you money on
security and kept this crowd in
order. That's worth something.

Keem's slightly taken aback.

KEEM
What's your name?

KAI (LITTLE KEEM)
Olukayode. People call me Kai.

KEEM
(stunned)
The fuck...

MICKEY
Look, y'all keep holding us down
and you get a hundred cash at the
end of the night.

LADARIUS (LITTLE MICKEY)
Thousand.

FAT BABY (LITTLE DALTON)
Fuck money. Get us some chicks our
age.

Keem looks to Dalton, wondering if he sees it.

DALTON
(not seeing it)
What?

MICKEY
Two hundred. But if shit goes down
on your watch you get nothing.

LaDarius looks to his boys. They're super excited about it.

LADARIUS (LITTLE MICKEY)
Just don't try no funny shit.

MICKEY
You too, nigga.

The kids go back to holding down the line.

KEEM
Am I the only one wondering if God
sent these children to show us
we're on the wrong path?

Suddenly, a BOTTLE SHATTERS OFF SCREEN.

MICKEY
What the fuck was that?

A series of EARTH-SHATTERINGLY LOUD BOOMS.

KID
Fireworks or shots fired?

Dalton closes his eyes and lifts his arms towards the
heavens. Nothing happens.

DALTON
(opens eyes)
I *knew* it wasn't my time to go!

INSANELY LOUD BOOMS continue. EVERYONE now runs, panicked.

SOMEONE OFF SCREEN
They shootin'!

CLOSE ON: The PRETTIEST GIRL IN THE PARKING LOT screams in
hysteria as she sprints in perfect form with her wig in hand.
Kid and Keem take off. Mickey doesn't. All he sees is
financial fallout.

MICKEY
(to anyone that'll listen)
Y'all know niggas love fireworks!

EXT. THE MANSION ELAN - PARKING LOT - LATER

POLICE everywhere. Crowd's growing restless. The guys all stand around. Mickey reads a note attached to a broken bottle of the cheap tequila he switched out on Lucky.

INSERT NOTE: *"Next time I won't miss."* - Lucky. There's also a drawing of a four leaf clover.

Keem rejoins.

KEEM

We're fucked. Dee Money's keeping the deposit. Tomorrow's the 5th and we still haven't paid rent.
(re: Mickey's note)
What's that?

MICKEY

Nothing.

KEEM

Well... two dubs back to back. Time to sell that Porsche.

Mickey spots Pastor Troy arriving. His wheels turning.

MICKEY

You think Troy would give us the church?

KEEM

You're serious?

MICKEY

All we gotta do is migrate this crowd to a new spot and we can save the night. What do we have to lose?

Off the guys, desperate.

EXT. PASTOR TROY'S CHURCH - PARKING LOT - LATER

1:30am. We're outside an old abandoned church in East Atlanta. It worked. A CROWD grows impatient. We notice a marquee quoting Proverbs 31:10 as AN OLD BLACK SECURITY GUARD with attitude for no reason steps outside.

SECURITY GUARD

(to crowd)

We way the fuck over capacity.
Ain't nobody else getting in here.

RANDOM PERSON (O.S.)
Somebody owe my babysitter some
money!

Crowd's pissed. We notice Parker in the front of the line
with a group of WHITE CREW MEMBERS from set.

PARKER
(to security)
Guys, I'm friends with Kid. He
designed my jacket. This is
ridiculous.
(to friends, dialing)
I'm just gonna call him.

INT. PASTOR TROY'S CHURCH - SAME

The party's jumping. Bottles of red wine are passed around.
Smoke fills the chapel. We weave between sweaty dance
partners in a high energy moment landing on a banner that
says, "Discipling the Next Generation to Be the Church!"

INT. PASTOR TROY'S CHURCH - HALLWAY - SAME

Kid exits the bathroom, seeing a call from Parker. He looks
over his shoulder. No Parker. He hits "decline."

ZOE (O.S.)
Yo...

Kid looks up to see Zoe waiting in line.

KID
Yo... You made it.

ZOE
Yeah. Thanks for being "angry Black
guy" at my shoot, by the way. It's
wild how tone deaf these companies
get while literally posting "Black
Lives Matter" on social media.

KID
They're just finally realizing pop
culture's been Black culture this
whole time, even if they keep
fuckin' it up. I'm actually low key
optimistic about it.

ZOE

Yeah, well, I respect what you did.
Most people would've just tried to
get their clothing line noticed.

KID

You know my line?

ZOE

I might'a glanced at your page.

Kid smiles. There's energy between them.

KID

What're you doing tomorrow? We
should link up.

ZOE

Tomorrow. Classy. I actually have
to head back to LA tomorrow.

KID

I hate LA. Everyone's on bullshit
tryna finesse people. I have family
staying there right now.

ZOE

Yeah, well LA's a great place for
designers. You should consider it.

KID

Atlanta's a great place for Black
people. I'm tryna blow up here,
stay here, and die here. I don't
need LA to put me on.

It's her turn for the bathroom.

ZOE

I'm never really in Atlanta but if
I am for some reason, I'll DM you.
You do the same if you ever get
over your irrational LA hate.

She heads into the restroom. He watches her go.

INT. PASTOR TROY'S CHURCH - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The guys are all in Pastor Troy's office as he counts an
enormous pile of earnings. Kid returns, takes his seat.

MICKEY

Bro, good looks on the venue. You really helped us out.

PASTOR TROY

Don't even trip. Y'all finessed the hell outta this one. It's crazy in there.

Pastor Troy slides them a really small amount of cash.

KID

(slight beat)

What's this?

PASTOR TROY

Twelve hundred.

KEEM

Troy, we just watched you count over twenty thousand dollars.

PASTOR TROY

And this is payment for your promotional services! Been praying for a night like this...

Kid eyes Troy's cash. Troy places a gun on the desk while loading his safe.

PASTOR TROY (CONT'D)

I wasn't always a pastor, young blood.

TWO GIRLS IN CLUB DRESSES look in from the hallway.

GIRL #1

Troy, you ready?

PASTOR TROY

I'ma come out right now.

The girls go.

PASTOR TROY (CONT'D)

Finna do a little bible study over some eggs.

KID

At 2am?

PASTOR TROY

Jesus don't have a bedtime, nigga.

Pastor Troy double locks his huge pile of cash into his safe and grabs his gun.

PASTOR TROY (CONT'D)
Cut the lights off when y'all
leave. Bill already high.

He goes, brushing his beard. The guys sit in defeat. Dalton gets a text.

DALTON
(reading)
Y'all mind if I roll to breakfast
with Troy? Apparently those chicks
asked about me.
(reading more)
Actually, they asked about Kid.
They felt shallow anyway.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Give us the money and nobody gets
killed!

FOUR CHILDREN improperly wearing discarded N95 masks stand in the doorway. One holds a HUGE illegal firework/bomb, threatening to light it.

MICKEY
Ladarius?

LADARIUS (LITTLE MICKEY)
This ain't Ladarius, nigga!

DALTON
It's him. He has a nose like Don
Cheadle.

Ladarius pulls the mask over his nose.

KAI (LITTLE KEEM)
Just toss the money in the hallway!

KEEM
(personally offended)
You don't have to be like them,
Kai. You're better than this.

Kai lights the flame, brings it closer to the explosive. The guys toss their cash into the hallway. Mickey hesitates.

KID
It's over, bro. Just toss it.

Mickey grudgingly tosses his cash. The kids run off excitedly. Mickey, devastated, reaches down into his sock and fishes out his sweaty "emergency only" \$100.

INSERT: A FOX NEWS PROMO featuring the same super white, conservative-haired reporter now back to her TV persona.

CONSERVATIVE-HAIRED REPORTER

Gunshots, a church scandal, and a city at a crossroads. Kids Against Cubicles was at it again, one night after burning down a nightclub, in what many are calling an ongoing turf war among desperate urban youth. All that and more, coming up on Fox 5.

INT. KIDS AGAINST CUBICLES CRIB - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Kid and Keem are on the couch, depressed, watching the broadcast which now features a commercial for an "all natural" testosterone enhancer. Mickey storms into the living room, blows past the guys, and OPENS THE FRONT DOOR to spot a TOW TRUCK DRIVER leaving with his Porsche.

MICKEY

Y'all ain't hear my shit getting repo'd??

Mickey steps out onto the PORCH. Too late. Truck's down the block. He heads back inside.

KEEM

How the fuck are we supposed to sell a car you don't even own?!

MICKEY

I thought I had more time 'til they took it.

KEEM

What the fuck is wrong with you? You act like you're in charge ever since Donny went to jail but you don't know shit about leadership! All you care about is finding new ways to avoid growing up!

MICKEY

I'm sorry, bro. Chill. I'll figure it out. I always do.

KEEM

Like you figured it out for Donny?

Keem just crossed the line no one crosses. An awkward silence as they both glance at Kid, who looks down. His phone rings. A number he hasn't saved.

KID

(defeated sigh into phone)

Hello?

EXT. URTH CAFE - LOS ANGELES, CA

Jeremy's approaching Urth Cafe in Beverly Hills. Intercut:

JEREMY DANIELS

Kid. It's Jeremy Daniels. Parker's boss from the commercial. How's it going?

The guys all watch Kid, curious. He puts the call on **speaker**.

KID

(confused)

Good. How are you?

JEREMY DANIELS

Good. Hey, I just wanted to say thanks for stopping us from getting dragged on Black Twitter the other day. Heard you loud and clear. We gotta do better. The team's heading back to the drawing board next week to work on new ideas.

Mickey's wheels start turning.

KID

Good, cause honestly, crazy racist ass shit like that--

Mickey springs to his feet, seeing opportunity.

MICKEY

--Mr. Daniels, Michael Williams here, Kendall's partner from set. We're jumping on a conference call, but has Kendall had a chance to bring you up to speed on the exciting work we do at our agency?

JEREMY DANIELS

You guys have an ad agency?

MICKEY

Marketing's kind of our super power. We help brands connect with Black consumers. We'd love to throw our name in the hat for the Southeast project. It's obvious we can identify a problem, but solutions are where we shine.

The guys all look at Mickey like he's insane.

JEREMY DANIELS

(confused but interested)

What's the company called?

Mickey searches the room for ideas. Kid springs to his feet, remembering their convo from yesterday.

KID

The finesse agency.

MICKEY

"F-N-S-E!" We find, nurture, strategize and... execute ideas that engage the young Black demo. Which we all know has real spending power...

JEREMY DANIELS

Interesting.

MICKEY

We're actually in LA next week if you wanna hear some pitches.

More disbelief.

JEREMY DANIELS

I'll make something work. Have your office call mine.

MICKEY

Looking forward to it. Cheers.

JEREMY DANIELS

Cheers.

Mickey hangs up.

KEEM

What the fuck was that? Dude's just gonna look you up and realize you're not a real company.

MICKEY

Not if we flip Kid's IG account with that beautiful blue check into our business page. We can switch up captions and make it all look like branding with high engagement. We can even spin the Libra fire into "noisy" branding.

(to Kid)

Learning more about marketing would help your fashion career.

KID

It's actually a really good idea.

Keem eye-rolls at Kid's blind admiration.

KEEM

Not for me, it isn't. I'm going to business school like I should've done right after undergrad.

MICKEY

Okay, but how you paying for it? And how you gonna pay off all that debt whenever you graduate? We could go to LA, start a business right now, and solve all our problems. You could be *teaching* at a business school in five years.

Keem can't help but entertain the thought.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

They just repo'd my car. They're gonna throw us out our crib. This nigga Lucky's looking for us...

KEEM

Wait, why?

MICKEY

(ignoring)

LA could be a fresh start. We wouldn't even have to work nights anymore. All we gotta do is sell this guy some commercial ideas Black people would like. How fuckin' easy is that?

Dalton bursts in with the aloof purpose of Cosmo Kramer.

DALTON
 Anybody see my nasal spray?
 (off their no's)
 It really *is* just nasal spray...
 plus ketamine.
 (weighing on him)
 ...That Fire Nigga tried the other
 night.
 (off their silence)
 Most people wouldn't have said
 shit.

Kid's phone rings again. He answers, heading outside.

KID
 (into phone)
 Hello?

INT. CALIFORNIA PENITENTIARY - SAME

BIG DON (from Mickey's yearbook photo), 26, dreads, is on an illegal cellphone, wearing a California Department of Corrections jumpsuit. Everything about him feels reasonable compared to Mickey. Except his situation. Intercut:

BIG DON
 (into phone)
 Only thing worse than not looking
 after your little brother is having
 him look after you, but I
 appreciate the love.

KID
 What love?

BIG DON
 The hundred you threw on my books.

KID
 (a little guilty)
 I didn't put money on your books
 yet. But I was planning on it.

Kid looks back into the house.

KID (CONT'D)
 Maybe Mickey did. Hold on...

BIG DON
 Wait, you're with Mickey right now?

KID
He's been letting me crash. Yeah.
We actually might be coming out to
LA soon. I can visit finally.

Big Don shuts his eyes with dread.

BIG DON
Look, I haven't told you everything
cause I can't really get into it
from here, but you can't trust
Mickey.

Kid's stomach drops. A HUGE BOOM from Don's side of the call
startles Kid.

KID
What the fuck was that?

BIG DON
You know niggas love fireworks.

An INMATE carrying a yoga mat pokes his head inside Don's
cell. Don gives him the one second gesture, grabs his mat.

BIG DON (CONT'D)
Whatever you do, just be careful,
alright? Mickey plays nice, but
he's only really looking out for
himself.
(off Kid's silence)
Hello?

KID
Yeah. I'm here. I got you.

BIG DON
Word. Love you, boy.

KID
Love you, too.

Kid hangs up. Big Don's words echo as Mickey steps outside
onto the porch holding a half-smoked cigar.

MICKEY
So, I have a slightly crazy idea to
get us to Cali. Wanna hear it?

Off Mickey's sly smile.

Cue: *Identity Theft* by Kodak Black