

CHICAGO 1919

By

Seanne N. Murray
Greg Lawson
Robb Edward Morris

Based On True Events

WGA #1903220

seanne_murray@me.com
1 (201) 681 9229

FADE IN:

TEXT OVER BLACK:

"One feels his two-ness — An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." -W.E.B. DuBois

EXT. ROOFTOP/STREET - HOWARD THEATER - DAY

SUPER: Washington, D.C. JULY 24, 1919

Mayhem in the streets!

BLACKS and WHITES attack each other with bats and pipes.

A WHITE GUNMAN wildly shoots Blacks at random.

A BLACK MAN rushes him from behind and bashes his head with a brick.

ON THE ROOFTOP

A BLACK SNIPER trains his rifle on the streets below.

SNIPER P.O.V. - A YOUNG WHITE MAN chases a BLACK TEEN.

SNIPER

I see you.

BANG!

The Sniper pulls the trigger. A second later, a pink mist explodes from the White Man's head.

ON THE STREET

Blood gushes from the White Man's head and soaks a strewn WASHINGTON POST newspaper.

"Negroes Attack Girl. White Men Vainly Pursue." reads the headline.

A WHITE STREETCAR CONDUCTOR holding a gun stops it in the middle of T Street and walks toward a BLACK PASSENGER in the back of the car.

CONDUCTOR

Stay away from our women you
fucking coon!

The Conductor raises and points the gun at the man.

Blood splatters the Black Passenger's face and several others near him.

The Conductor collapses from the Sniper's bullet that punctured his skull.

The Black Passenger jumps off the car amid terrified screams.

He looks in the direction of the Sniper who salutes him.

As he runs away, he tramples over more White people than Black dead in the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - DAY

PULL BACK from the running feet on the D.C. street that become the running feet of 17-year old EUGENE WILLIAMS (Black).

SUPER: Chicago, ILL. South Side "Black Belt". July 26, 1919

Eugene grips a baseball as he streaks through the neighborhood. He's lean with a six pack rippling through his bright red shirt.

The kid CAN RUN! He exudes athleticism and confidence.

Eugene zooms by a brownstone office building with a modest sign that reads THE CHICAGO DEFENDER.

Seconds later, a pickup truck pulls in front of the building with a new THE CHICAGO DEFENDER sign in the back bed.

INT. THE CHICAGO DEFENDER OFFICES - DAY

MR. MARCUS PRICE (Black, mid 40's) is a picture of intelligent elegance as he walks through the small offices of the busy newspaper.

REPORTERS and SECRETARIES greet him with nods and hellos. He's the boss, and they respect him.

ANDREW HIGGINS (Black, 25), approaches him with a newspaper in his hand.

ANDREW

Mr. Price, did you read the story
on the Washington D.C. riots?

MR. PRICE
I did. Great work, as usual.

ANDREW
I had an excellent mentor.

MR. PRICE
That may be, but flattery was not
on the syllabus.

Andrew chuckles.

ANDREW
Your two o'clock's in your office.

MR. PRICE
Thank you, Andrew.

CARL SANDLER (White, 42), a bespeckled news man, catches up
to Mr. Price.

CARL SANDLER
Marcus! You got a minute?

MR. PRICE
Carl. Is your paper telling the
truth now?

CARL SANDLER
You can count on it. I was
wondering if I could ask you a few
questions.

MR. PRICE
What answers do you need?

CARL SANDLER
The black belt holds at least
125,000 people now, which is double
the number from five years ago when
the war started. What's the general
sentiment in the black belt now
that the soldiers are back?

MR. PRICE
Why don't you ask a soldier?

INT. MR. PRICE'S OFFICE - DAY

SERGEANT TODD BANES (Black, late 20's) is decked in a
Doughboy army uniform.

He stands and removes his cap when Mr. Price lets Carl into his private office.

MR. PRICE
Sergeant Todd Banes, this is Carl Sandler from the Daily News.

CARL SANDLER
Pleased to meet you, Sergeant Banes. How long were you overseas?

SERGEANT BANES
Nine months, sir.

CARL SANDLER
You don't have to call me sir. Carl 'll do.

MR. PRICE
Carl needs a statement from the returning black soldiers for his paper.

Carl pulls a pen and pad from his breast pocket.

The Sergeant hesitates.

MR. PRICE (CONT'D)
Go ahead, son.

SERGEANT BANES
We made the supreme sacrifice for old glory, the flag and the land we love. Because it stands for our freedom too. Now all we ask is that our country pay it back. And live up to the claims of the Constitution and the Declaration Of Independence.

CARL SANDLER
Succinct and potent.

MR. PRICE
I couldn't have said it better.

EXT. THE CHICAGO DEFENDER OFFICE - DAY

WILLIE PARKS (Black, 40's) supervises TWO BLACK WORKERS replacing the old Defender sign with the new one.

Mr. Price emerges from the building.

MR. PRICE
The new sign looks excellent,
Willie.

WILLIE
Thank you, Mr. Price. You want me
to hail you a cab?

MR. PRICE
No, thank you. It's a nice day. I
think I'll walk a while.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - DAY

MONTAGE - Accompanied by V.O.:

Mr. Price strolls through various neighborhoods in the Black Belt, DISSOLVING in and out of the economically mixed areas.

The streets are filled with Black owned businesses - dress shops, grocery stores, barbershops, restaurants, a funeral home, bakeries, banks, a church...

MR. PRICE (V.O.)
The founding father of Chicago,
Jean du Sable, was a Black man. By
1919, an estimated 500,000 Negro
Americans had migrated from the
South to the industrial Northeast
and Midwest. We came in search of a
better life. To escape the noose
and the laws of Jim Crow. This
influx, combined with limited
employment and the empowerment of
returning Negro soldiers, led to
resentment among whites,
particularly the Irish.

INT. PRICE HOME - DAY

Mr. Price sits with his family at the breakfast table.

ROSLYN PRICE (Black, 35) is beautiful with bright, positive eyes. She exudes upper class.

The Price parents dote on their two boys while they regale them with adolescent animation.

JOHN PRICE (Black, 13) is a fidgety, adorable kid who can hardly sit still.

ROBERT PRICE (Black, 17), is handsome like his father, athletic, and cool in his spirit. An inherited intelligence inhabits his aura.

MR. PRICE (V.O.)

Following the war, a series of race riots broke-out across the nation in what became known as the Red Summer. My wife and I were raising two boys. Being a teenager is challenging enough. There's school, baseball, and girls to think about. But the Red Summer in Chicago, 1919, changed all of that.

EXT. HENRY'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

Eugene tosses a ball in the air as he jaunts past Henry's Barber shop on the corner of Wabash Ave and 60th street in the black belt.

He dips his head at passing black SOLDIERS in their WWI military DOUGHBOY UNIFORMS.

EUGENE

Welcome home, brothers in arms.

DOUGHBOY

Thank you, young brother. It's good to be back.

HENRY (Black, 60), the owner of the Barber shop, stands in the doorway.

HENRY

Eugene, get on up in here, boy. Walking around with a nappy head like that.

EUGENE

I'm coming in tomorrow, I'll be back.

HENRY

Na, na. Come on. I'm mo git chu right now. That's embarrassing.

INT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Eugene takes a seat in the first chair. Henry drapes an apron over him.

A BLACK & WHITE PHOTO of a young Henry in a Buffalo Soldier Uniform stands in prominent display near his station.

Four BARBERS cut CUSTOMER'S hair and listen in on the talk.

MR. PIP (Black, 60's) tosses gab to no one in particular.

MR. PIP

Dem boys in D.C. done gone crazy.

HENRY

What they done now?

MR. PIP

Said somethin' in the Post about a Negro attacking a White woman.

HENRY

They always tryin' to pull that.

MR. PIP

Ain't give no names. No dates. Locations.

HENRY

Mr. Pip, you and me both know ain't no black man attacked a white woman. How many times they gone spit that lie?

MR. PIP

It's a damn shame, ain't it.

HENRY

(to Eugene)

Eh, don't chu go messin' with no white women. You hear me? Don't even look at'em.

EUGENE

You ain't gotta worry about me. Only thing I'm thinkin' about is the diamonds in the outfield of the big leagues.

HENRY

Atta boy.

EUGENE

You know I can run, right?

HENRY

I seen you streakin' up and down the street.

EUGENE

I'm faster than the spots on a cheetah.

HENRY

You better be humpin' like that when the lynch mob comin' atcha.

EUGENE

Please, I ain't worried.

EXT. STOCKYARD - BRIDGEPORT - IRISH NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

European Immigrants and Black and White American men are side by side, jockeying for position at the slaughterhouse.

A FOREMAN stands on a wooden crate and speaks over the sounds of pig squeals, cows mooing and the horrific screams of animal slaughter.

FOREMAN

I've only got five jobs left for the day.

The Foreman scans the crowd. He picks a LARGE AFRICAN MALE. The crowd grumbles and shouts.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

Knock it off! You know how this goes. Anyone from Lithuania who also speaks English?

A couple hands go up.

He points to a FORMIDABLE-LOOKING MAN near the middle of the pack who makes his way through the horde.

An angry IRISHMAN, one of several in the crowd, speaks up in protest.

IRISHMAN

What's going on? You've picked every sasanach, chalky and mother's bastard you could find, but the Irish, we're not good enough?

FOREMAN

Calm, down. There are plenty Irish working.

IRISHMAN

The hell you say. I promise ya,
hire us or we'll burn the yard to
the ground and feast on the spoils.
Meat as hard to come by as it is!

The crowd is completely riled up at the Irishman's speech.
The Irishman pushes the Foreman off the crate and all hell
breaks loose.

The Irish begin punching and stomping as many non-Irish
immigrants and Blacks as possible.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Eugene ambles down the street, tossing a ball, lost in
thought.

A ROCK WHIZZING TOWARD HIM suddenly snaps him to attention
and he dodges it.

VOICE (O.S.)

Watch your step, boy!

Eugene lurches back, realizing he accidentally stepped into a
bordering Irish neighborhood.

AIDEN DALEY (Irish, 17), a stout lad with slits for eyes
stands on his front porch.

Next to him is SHAWN CALLAHAN (Irish, 19), a slender bloke
with red hair and an Irish lilt.

Aiden steps out into the middle of the street.

AIDEN

You crossed the line. This is
Bridgeport. Irish only, no niggers
allowed.

Eugene steps forward and draws an imaginary line in the
street with his foot.

EUGENE

What? You mean this line?

Aiden throws another rock. Eugene dodges it easily and
laughs.

REBECCA CALLAHAN, 40's, is weathered and beaten down from the
hard life of an Irish immigrant.

She's still attractive in a no-nonsense way.

She steps out onto her porch a few doors down with her nine-year-old son, CONNER.

REBECCA

Aiden Gallagher Daley, leave that boy alone! His people fought in the war for you. Shawney, you know better.

Shawn lowers his head and moves towards his home porch.

Aiden hisses at her in Irish Gaelic.

AIDEN

Mallacht na baintrí ort!
(Translation: A widow's curse upon you!) Niggers ain't done nothing for me and mine, but take our jobs and try to rape our women.

Shawn moves to defend his Mam.

SHAWN

Watch your mouth!

REBECCA

Pay him no mind, Shawney. Go ndéana an diabhal dréimire do chnámh do dhroma!
(Translation: That the Devil will make a ladder out of your spine!)

Aiden chuckles and turns back to Eugene.

AIDEN

Come around here again, and it won't end well for ya. And ain't no bleedin' deadly gonna save ya.

REBECCA

You go on now, Eugene, but come see me if them Hamburg Boys look to bother ya.

Eugene nods and takes off running with unparalleled speed - his shirt a red blur.

EUGENE

(to himself)
Faster than the spots on a cheetah.

Aiden spits aggressively.

REBECCA

You got something to say, Aiden?

AIDEN

You're a traitor to your race. You call yourself Irish?

REBECCA

You're a bully, like yer father, and I'm not scared of neither one of ya.

AIDEN

You should be, slag. You can only live off of your dead husbands reputation for so long.

SHAWN

You need to crack on.

AIDEN

Feck off!

Aiden walks away.

CONNOR

Why is Aiden so mean? And how does Eugene run so fast?

SHAWN

I don't know, Connor. Go on in the house now.

Connor goes inside. Shawn turns to go too. As he does, Rebecca hands him the GUN she'd been holding behind her back.

REBECCA

Put this away somewhere's your brother can't find it.

SHAWN

Yes, mam.

REBECCA

And remember, Shawney. Pride is the sin of the weak. The Irish weren't warmly accepted when we first arrived.

SHAWN

OK.

She grabs him by the jaw.

He stops and looks into her eyes.

REBECCA

You understand me? I don't like
that boy. You're not like him.

SHAWN

Yes, mam.

She kisses him affectionately on the cheek.

REBECCA

You and your brother go get washed
up for supper.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - DAY

Eugene jogs up to Robert and his little brother John who
carries a baseball bat.

Eugene and Robert do a unique handshake while they speak.

ROBERT

Where you been, man?

EUGENE

Had a run-in with one of them Irish
boys.

Eugene does the handshake with John.

ROBERT

Eh, don't be playin' around them.
Them boys is for real.

EUGENE

I kept it friendly. Besides, they
can't catch me.

John chokes up on the bat.

Eugene throws him a soft pitch.

JOHN

Can't no lynch mob catch me
neither. I'm faster than the
stripes on a tiger.

EUGENE

Boy, shut up, I know you ain't
tryin' to steel my line. You ain't
even sayin' right.

The boys laugh.

ROBERT
It's a cheetah.

JOHN
Wait til I get big. I'm mo beat
chu!

John does some fancy footwork with way too much energy,
almost tripping over his own feet.

ROBERT
Why you talkin' about lynch mobs?

JOHN
I heard it at the barbershop.

ROBERT
What I tell you about gettin' into
grown folks business?

JOHN
What was I s'posed to do, cover my
ears and hide in the bathroom?

John does a few practice swings with his bat.

In b.g., Mr. Price approaches.

MR. PRICE
Son, what did you hear?

Mr. Price puts a hand on John's shoulder to calm him down.

JOHN
I heard a mob of white folk dragged
a Negro from his house and strung
him over a bridge.

MR. PRICE
Unfortunately, that's true.

EUGENE
That's messed up.

MR. PRICE
We live in precarious times, but
you boys will be fine as long as
you remember what I told you.

ROBERT
Don't argue with the police. Be
respectful.

EUGENE

And run if you see the mob coming.

JOHN

Why can't we just talk to them,
Pop?

ROBERT

The only thing they understand is
fighting.

MR. PRICE

Listen, it's my job to protect you
and keep you safe. There are those
who see you as less than them. But
you don't have to believe what they
say you are. And you don't have to
become them in order to defeat
them. You're better than that.
Okay?

All the boys nod in agreement.

MR. PRICE (CONT'D)

Good.

Robert and his father share a knowing glance.

Eugene tosses the baseball in the air. Mr. Price catches it
before it hits Eugene's hand and pitches it to John.

John swings super hard and misses. Mr. Price and the boys
laugh.

EUGENE

What chu aiming for, Mississippi?

INT. PRICE HOME - DAY

The Price home is luxurious, beautifully decorated.

John is seated at a baby grand piano, so shiny, you can see
his reflection in it.

PATRICE (Black), a student about John's age, holds a violin
to her chin. Both are under the tutelage of Roslyn Price.

John and Patrice are playing Niccolò Paganini's Concerto no.1
in D major, Opus 6, for violin and piano.

John makes a mistake.

ROSLYN

Again!

John plays a few notes then breaks into a bouncy jazz piece. Roslyn tries not to laugh out loud, but can't help herself.

ROSLYN (CONT'D)

Johnathan Price, if you don't get a hold of yourself...

John laughs and smoothly segues back into Paganini. He's that good. Patrice smiles and joins him.

Robert tumbles down the stairs with a couple of beach towels and his baseball bat.

ROBERT

Mom, I'm gonna meet Eugene and the rest of the guys at the 29th street beach.

ROSLYN

Don't you mean, "Mom, may I please meet my friends at the beach today?"

ROBERT

Yes, that's what I mean.

Roslyn gives Robert the mom death stare. Robert straightens up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Mom, may I please meet my friends at the beach today?

ROSLYN

You may. Church next week, no excuses.

ROBERT

But what if I have a game?

ROSLYN

Beach or no beach? It's your choice.

ROBERT

Alright.

John hops off the piano stool with the biggest grin ever and grabs the beach towels from Robert.

JOHN
I'll carry those!

ROSLYN
You all be safe now and be back in
time for dinner. Oh, and tell
Maryanne I said, hello.

They all laugh as the boys run out the door.

ROSLYN (CONT'D)
Take it from the solo, Patrice.

EXT. BEACH - BLACK SIDE - DAY

The beach is flowing with Black families and teenagers on their own.

Robert sits with MARYANNE TILSON (Black, 17), a statuesque beauty with deep thoughtful eyes and a long braid flowing down her back.

MARYANNE
So, Robert. Are we gonna go for a swim?

ROBERT
Sure.

John is bouncing all over the place, tugging on Robert's arm.

JOHN
Come on then. Let's go!

Robert looks at Maryanne. She smiles and takes John's hand.

MARYANNE
Come on, John.

As they walk away, John looks back at Robert and winks. Robert is not happy.

They move towards their crew on the beach playing a light game of baseball.

Eugene is outplaying everyone, but getting some stiff competition from their street-smart, pretty boy, friend BERNARD (Black, 18).

EXT. BEACH - WHITE SIDE - SAME TIME

An invisible line separates the white side of the beach from the black side.

Rebecca, Shawn, and Connor, wearing a bright red t-shirt, watch Eugene from a distance in obvious awe.

Connor stands up on his toes to see better.

Aiden and some HAMBURG BOYS are pitching and hitting a baseball, until Aiden stops and turns towards Rebecca.

AIDEN

How can you live with yourself
letting your son grow up to be a
nigger lover, Rebecca?

HAMBURG BOY #1

Yeah, you gammy lookin' dog.

Shawn stands up. The Hamburg Boys step up with bats at the ready.

REBECCA

Sit back down, Shawney.

AIDEN

Yeah, sit back down Shawney.

REBECCA

It's Mrs. Callahan for you. And
you'd do well to show some respect.

AIDEN

I don't respect ya. Wouldn't spit
on ya if yer arse was on fire.

REBECCA

I don't allow that language in
front of my children.

AIDEN

But you allow them to worship
monkeys? They should be idolizing
The Sox. Plenty of good Irish
blokes on that team.

CRACK! Eugene hits a home run.

Connor pops up with glee, clapping his hands. Even the Hamburg Boys recognize the sound and instinctively turn towards it to watch the ball soar into the water.

This angers Aiden.

Shawn pushes Connor back down, gently.

CONNOR

Shawney, did you see that? Mam?! I
wanna be like him when I grow up.

REBECCA

Work hard, practice and you will
be.

EXT. BEACH - BLACK SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Eugene perks up when he sees his best friend, Robert. He drops his bat and puts his hands in the air, his shirtless muscles on full display.

EUGENE

Robbay!

They do their handshake. John's included but through it all, he doesn't release Maryanne's hand. The others gather and get shakes in, too.

JOHN

Hey, Eugene.

EUGENE

John John. How's it going little
man?

JOHN

I'm not that little.

BERNARD

You are kinda little.

JOHN

What do you know, Bernard?

BERNARD

I know I'm looking down at you,
little man.

ROBERT

Leave him alone, Bern.

John is disheartened until Maryanne leans down and whispers in his ear.

MARYANNE

You might be little, but you sure
are cute.

She kisses him on the cheek. John grins from ear to ear and pokes his chest out. Bernard chuckles while Robert shakes his head and rolls his eyes.

ROBERT

So, what's up, Gene, you gettin'
in?

EUGENE

The big leagues? Hell yeah.

ROBERT

No fool, the water. Maryanne wants
to swim.

EUGENE

Oh, I don't know about all that. Ma
swing is better than ma stroke.

ROBERT

You ain't gotta do nothin' fancy.
Just grab a piece a wood and float.

MARYANNE

Yeah, come on it'll be fun.

BERNARD

You gone beat your gums or what,
son? Les go!

Bernard, strips off his t-shirt. His body rivals Eugene's. He runs full speed into the water. The others follow him in.

Eugene pauses and takes a long look down the beach.

The other side of the "whites only" invisible line is a mirror image in all ways other than skin color.

He shakes off the thought, runs to the water and jumps onto Roberts back.

MONTAGE:

The Black kids and crew splash and frolic in the water having a fantastic day at the beach doing what kids do.

EXT. BEACH - BLACK SIDE - LATER

The kids have returned to shore.

They're laying on towels, exhausted from swimming most of the day.

Robert and Maryanne's towels are cozied up next to each other. John is bored as the third wheel nearby.

JOHN

What happened to Bernard?

ROBERT

He left.

EXT. WATER - CONTINUOUS

Eugene lays on a driftwood raft and floats in the water. It's quiet and peaceful as he stares up at the clouds lost in a day dream.

A rock whizzes over his head and splashes nearby, snapping him out of his revelry. At first he thinks it came from his friends. He looks over but none of them are looking his way.

Another rock bounces off his pitching arm. That's when he realizes:

HE'S DRIFTED INTO THE WHITE SIDE!

Now rocks are coming more frequently from Whites boys throwing them from the shore.

Eugene begins to paddle in a panic!

EXT. BEACH/WATER - CONTINUOUS

Maryanne taps Robert and points to Aiden and the Hamburg boys throwing rocks at Eugene.

MARYANNE

Get out of the water, Eugene!

Robert and Maryanne run to the edge of the water.

ROBERT

Gene! Duck under the water and swim!

Eugene paddles hard with slow progress. A bigger rock hits his arm, injuring him.

Eugene screams and continues with his good arm.

Rocks are coming faster now.

Rebecca stands, frightened. Shawn looks conflicted.

REBECCA

Stop it! You'll kill that boy!

Robert and John and OTHERS jump into the water, careful to stay on the Black side, vocally urging Eugene to cross the invisible line to safety.

Eugene paddles wildly!

JOHN

Come on, Eugene! We gotchu!

A rock hits Eugene squarely on the forehead. Eugene yells with pain and fear as blood gushes down his face.

Aiden throws another rock. It slams Eugene in the head and knocks him out.

REBECCA

NOO...!!

The Hamburg Athletic Club members cheer.

Aiden throws up his arms and bounces about in a victory dance.

Eugene's grip on the raft loosens and his head drops into the water

ROBERT

Eugene! Eugene...!!

Robert takes off swimming into the deep end.

A few OTHERS follow him.

JOHN

Go Rob! You can get him!

Hamburg boys continue to throw rocks at Eugene's limp body.

Robert swims as fast as he can but can't get there in time.

ROBERT

GENE!!

Connor watches it all in the arms of Rebecca, who attempts to cover his young eyes.

CONNOR
Mam, make them stop!

Shawn looks at his mother before taking off towards the shore. Rebecca grabs him.

REBECCA
No, Shawney! That boy's gone. I
don't want you near that, sharing
the blame!

Finally, Robert gets to Eugene. He turns him over. Eugene's eyes are rolled back into his head. He's dead.

ROBERT
NOO!!!

Tears roll down Robert's face. Other FRIENDS get to Robert and Eugene and help Robert pull his body to shore.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
They killed him, they killed him!

EXT. BEACH - MINUTES LATER

The GROUP stands over Eugene's dead body, SCREAMING and CRYING and CURSING with anger and disbelief!

OFFICER DALEY, (Irish, 40's) a sturdy man with a permanent scowl on his face, approaches:

OFFICER DALEY
Outta my way! Police! Coming
through!

Robert is seething as he points to Aiden.

ROBERT
He did it! It was him.

Officer Daley doesn't look at Aiden.

OFFICER DALEY
I'm sorry your friend drowned.

ROBERT
He didn't drown!

OFFICER DALEY
Best back away now.

Robert sees Rebecca, Shawn and Connor.

ROBERT
Tell him Shawn! He didn't drown, he
was killed!

REBECCA
Brannigan Daley! Aiden did this!

OFFICER DALEY
File a report, Rebecca.

REBECCA
Whatta ya think I'm doing?!

OFFICER DALEY
Put a plug in her Shawn 'fore I do!

Shawn grabs her.

SHAWN
We gotta get Connor out of here.

OFFICER DALEY
Now feck off! The lot of ya! 'fore
ya wind up like your darky there in
the Michigan!

Officer Daley tries to move Robert aside but he stands firm.

ROBERT
I'm not moving until you arrest
him!

Officer Daley reaches for his cuffs.

AIDEN
Where's ya home run nigger now? He
could run, but he sure as shite
couldn't swim.

Robert screams and lunges at Aiden.

Officer Daley grabs him and takes him to the ground.

OFFICER DALEY
I've had enough of you!

ROBERT
Let me go! I didn't do anything!

OFFICER DALEY
You're interfering with police
business!

Officer Daley tries to handcuff the struggling Robert.

A BLACK BOY throws a rock and smacks a WHITE BOY in the face.

SUDDENLY THE BEACH EXPLODES IN MAYHEM with Rocks flying from both sides!

Rebecca, Shawn and Connor scramble from the shore.

Families, Black and White, scoop up their young and run!
Women and children scream and scatter in all directions.

Maryanne runs to safety with her girlfriends.

Whites throw rocks. Blacks throw rocks back in a stampede of confusion.

Officer Daley pulls Robert up, trying to hold him still.

ROBERT
Let go of me!

Robert squirms from Officer Daley's grip.

OFFICER DALEY
Get back here!

Robert runs to John and yanks him!

ROBERT
C'mon!

Robert and John sprint through the crowd beneath a storm of flying stones.

AIDEN
Yeah, Blackie! You better run!

Officer Daley grabs another BLACK BOY, the same age as John.

He slams him to the ground and digs his knee into his back.

OFFICER DALEY
Look at the shite you've started!

Officer Daley cuffs the boy, then pulls out his billy club.

OFFICER DALEY (CONT'D)
I'll beat ya smart!

Officer Daley begins to beat the Boy severely! The Boy
SQUEALS in agony!

BLACK BOY
Stop, please...stop...!!

John pauses to stare back through the mayhem. Officer Daley's arm moves up and down smashing the boy's head with his club.

ROBERT

John! Come on!!

John quickly catches up to his brother and they both run off. Robert looks behind him.

Other WHITE MEN and Hamburg Boys join Officer Daley in beating and kicking the Boy until his body thrashes about with no more screams.

INT. PRICE HOME - DUSK

John is curled up on his mother's lap, unusually still. He allows her to comfort him.

Robert sits alone with his head in his hands.

Andrew Higgins from The Defender is on the phone gathering facts.

Other NEWSMEN quietly discuss and compare notes.

Maryanne is with her PARENTS, GRAHAM & ETHEL TILSON (Black, mid 40's). Their heads are bowed in prayer and they're huddled together, hugging Maryanne.

GRAHAM TILSON

Deliver us, oh Lord, out of the
hand of the wicked. Out of the hand
of the unrighteous and cruel man.

Mr. Price moves towards Robert and places a hand on his shoulder.

MR. PRICE

You okay, son?

Robert raises his head. His eyes are swollen with anger and regret.

ROBERT

He didn't do anything, Pop. They
killed him. Like it was a game.

MR. PRICE

I'm sorry you had to see that.

ROBERT

I let him die.

MR. PRICE
It's not your fault, son.

ROBERT
I didn't try to save him. Until it
was too late.

ROSLYN
You did all you could do, Robert.

ROBERT
You didn't see him though. He was
so scared. He died screaming and
afraid.

Andrew comes over.

ANDREW
Mr. Price, we should get their
detailed account while it's still
fresh.

MR. PRICE
Boys, I know this is hard, but
we're gonna need you two to tell us
exactly what happened so people
will know the truth. Can you do
that?

A LOUD CRASH CRACKS in the near distance, startling everyone.

John sits up with fear in his eyes.

JOHN
They're coming.

They all look to Mr. Price for reassurance.

Roslyn rises and pulls a WINCHESTER Rifle from a closet. She
cocks it, checks for bullets, and snaps it back.

ROSLYN
If they come, we'll see to it.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - DAY

A GROUP OF WHITE MEN attack BLACKS in the street. The Blacks
fight back but they're outnumbered.

SUPER: DAY 2 - July 28, 1919

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

Mobs of White men burn homes in the "Black Belt" with people still inside while Police stand by and do nothing.

SUPER: DAY 3 - July 29, 1919

INT. PRICE HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A Chicago Defender newspaper sits on the dining table.

"Riot Sweeps Chicago" reads the headline.

SUPER: DAY 4 - July 30, 1919

Mr. Price scans notes in front of his typewriter.

The phone rings.

MR. PRICE
Chicago Defender, what'ya got?

BLACK AND WHITE FAMILIES are scattered throughout the house including Rebecca and Connor, but not Shawn.

Maryanne is with her parents.

Newsmen from The Defender and The Daily News quietly talk and look over their notes.

THREE LOUD KNOCKS at the front door capture everyone's attention.

Mr. Price leaps up and grabs his rifle. He uses the barrel to carefully pull back the curtain on a window next to the front door.

Outside, FOUR BLACK DOUGHBOYS stand guard with shotguns.

Carl Sandler is at the door, typewriter in hand. He's clearly agitated. Mr. Price lets him in.

MR. PRICE (CONT'D)
What's wrong, Carl?

CARL SANDLER
Mayor Thompson is refusing to reach out to Governor Lowden to call in the National Guard.

MR. PRICE
You look surprised.

CARL SANDLER
I'm not, but I hate political
agendas. Especially in times of
crisis.

INT. HAMBURG ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

Twenty teenage boys are in the clubhouse - a plain room with
beat-up furniture and aged gym equipment.

Baseball bats, a pile of bricks, plus rope and chains are
piled by the door.

Aiden is at the front of the room with a bat over his
shoulder. Shawn Callahan hovers in the back.

ALL
String 'em up! String 'em up!

AIDEN
Those niggers strolling the streets
in uniform like we owe them
something, like Chicago belongs to
them. Not anymore. My Da says some
of ours are surroundin' the "Black
Belt" tonight and he's got a
special mission for us.

ALL
Kill dem Niggers!

Aiden notices Shawn.

AIDEN
Hold on. We've got a nigger spy in
our midst.

The boys turn to face Shawn. Aiden steps from the front and
saunters toward him. The others follow.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Whatta ya you doing here, boyo? And
if you haven't got a good answer,
we'll string your arse up just as
fast as a squealing nigger, Irish
or not.

The boys surround Shawn.

SHAWN

I, uh. I don't know. I just don't understand why my mam insists on helping them. I don't think my Dad would've approved.

AIDEN

Conflicting allegiances? Is that what we're talking?

SHAWN

I guess you could say that.

Aiden looks him over with a critical eye.

AIDEN

Alright. Come with us tonight and we'll see.

SHAWN

Well I don't--

AIDEN

It isn't a choice Shawney. Come with us, or I'll be sure to send flowers to your hoor mother when you come up missing.

Aiden gets right in Shawn's face daring him to do or say something in retort.

SHAWN

OK.

Aiden raises his fist and bat and struts around triumphant as the whole room erupts in cheers.

He snaps his fingers and one of the boys brings over some shoe black.

AIDEN

Put this on yer bake. We're going to visit Poland and Lithuania tonight.

A war call.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

All those ready to take our city back say, aye!

ALL

Aye!

AIDEN

We roll out at Midnight.

Aiden and the rest of the boys start making themselves up in "Blackface".

INT. PRICE LIVING ROOM - DUSK

The living room looks like a newspaper headquarters, reporters taking turns on the phone, others typing frantically.

CARL SANDLER

They're blocking off the whole Black Belt. I saw it with my own eyes.

MR. PRICE

They're out for blood. This is exactly why the NAACP is for straight Americanism, not color hyphenation.

Mr. Price motions to another reporter.

MR. PRICE (CONT'D)

Get headquarters on the phone right now.

Robert, his teenage Black friends, and John, are huddled in a corner. Roslyn pokes her head out of the kitchen and motions to John.

ROSLYN

John, come in here and help me bring some food out.

Rebecca stands up.

REBECCA

Mrs. Price, if you don't mind I'd like to help. I don't know what to do with myself just sitting around.

ROSLYN

That'd be lovely Mrs. Callahan.

REBECCA

Rebecca's fine. I haven't really been Mrs. Callahan in a long time. I'm sure my Danny wouldn't mind me saying so, God rest him.

John begins to move back to his brother, but reconsiders and makes a beeline to Connor and sits down.

INT. PRICE HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Roslyn and Rebecca prepare the food.

ROSLYN
You're worried about your boys?

REBECCA
I am, especially Shawney. He misses his father and he's looking for bonding in all the wrong places. Hanging around Aiden and them Hamburg boys and they're rotten to the core.

Rebecca pauses to consider the challenging stakes of Mrs. Price.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Forgive my rattling on, ma'am. It must be worse for you then?

Roslyn lets out a heavy sigh.

ROSLYN
Yes. The boys are smart and responsible, but they're still Black boys. We left the south to get away from this but I guess hate doesn't recognize state lines.

REBECCA
We can only hope that a mother's fear is enough to keep them alive.

ROSLYN
Amen, sister.

Rebecca does the Catholic four point cross, and kisses her knuckles.

They both pickup trays of food and head into the living room.

EXT. POLISH/LITHUANIAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

JOEY MADIGAN, (Irish, early 20's) a leader of a faction of the Ragen's Colts, waits with his crew in a darkened area just outside the "Back Of The Yards" neighborhood populated by Polish and Lithuanian immigrants.

Joey's checking a box of firebombs when Aiden and the Hamburg Boys show up. The Ragen's Colts step forward with Joey. They're all in blackface also.

JOEY
Which one ya's Aiden Daley?

Aiden steps forward cockily.

AIDEN
I am.

JOEY
Alright. Apparently the Sasanach and the Pollocks think they can stand around holdin' their bolox while the rest of us throw shite to the wind. Not on Ragen's Colts watch. Tonight we're firing these fuckers up.

Joey sets firebombs on the ground and hands Aiden a box of matches. Aiden turns to his boys.

AIDEN
Light 'em up, lads!

JOEY
I think I'm gonna like you, Daley.

Aiden pulls Shawn aside and hands him a firebomb.

AIDEN
You get the honor of throwing the first bomb. Shawney.

EXT. POLISH AND LITHUANIAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Ragen's Colts and The Hamburg Boys creep into a quiet neighborhood. Joey tosses a firebomb through the window of a home. It goes up in flames.

JOEY
Die, Whitey!

Aiden looks at Shawn.

AIDEN
Throw it.

Shawn reluctantly tosses the bomb. It strikes the side of a home that erupts in flames.

The rest of Ragen's Colts and The Hamburg Boys follow Joey's lead creating mayhem and hysteria.

People emerge from their homes in a panic.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Don't y'all crackers even think
about coming into the Black Belt!

JOEY
Let's go!

The two factions take off, leaving the area in shambles.

As they begin to run off, PAVEL (50), a strong stocky POLISH MAN, grabs Shawn by the arm with a powerful vice grip.

Pavel speaks English with a thick Polish accent.

PAVEL
Why do you attack our homes? We've
done nothing to your people.

SHAWN
Let go of me!

Shawn tries to struggle free, but can't.

Aiden charges him with a knife, but Pavel is swift and strong and swings Shawn in front of the knife as he punches Aiden in the face, knocking him to the ground.

Aiden is almost knocked unconscious. Shawn stumbles away holding his back.

Pavel remains fight ready when he notices the boot black on his knuckles. He looks at Aiden slowly getting up and sees white skin where the boot black used to be.

PAVEL
What is on your face? I know you!

Aiden brandishes his knife, but more neighbors converge and so he runs.

INT. PRICE HOME - NIGHT

Reporters scramble as news comes in quickly. Carl Sandler is on the phone writing profusely. He hangs up looking distressed.

MR. PRICE
What now, Carl?

CARL SANDLER
Conflicting reports, but it looks
like some Blacks may have attacked
Polish and Lithuanian homes in the
Back Of The Yards area.

ROSLYN
Oh no. That's just going to make
things worse.

Rebecca walks up with Connor.

REBECCA
Thank you for your hospitality,
Roslyn. I need to get this wee one
home to bed.

Mrs. Price hugs Rebecca warmly. As they do, Rebecca whispers
in her ear.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Do you think it's true about what
happened in The Yards?

ROSLYN
I'm not so sure.

REBECCA
Me neither.

They separate from their hug.

ROSLYN
Thank you for coming and helping
out, Rebecca.

REBECCA
Of course. You let me know if
there's anything else I can do.

ROSLYN
We appreciate that. Bye Connor.

CONNOR
Bye, Mrs. Price. I'm really sorry
about Eugene. I liked him a lot.

Rebecca and Conner head for the door.

Mr. Price corners Carl.

MR. PRICE
What did you mean about conflicting
reports?

CARL SANDLER

Some people report that they were
Black, but there's some tough
Polish guy who insists they were
whites in blackface.

EXT. REBECCA'S HOME - NIGHT

Rebecca and Connor pull up in an automobile. She parks the car awkwardly and abruptly when she sees someone lying on her porch.

REBECCA

Stay in the car, Connor.

CONNOR

What's happening, mam?

She exits the car with her gun drawn.

REBECCA

I don't know who you are, and I
don't want to hurt ya, but I'm
gonna have to ask you to get down
off my porch.

The figure puts a hand up and speaks weakly but she can't hear him. She moves a little closer and speaks more sternly.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I say there, I'm asking ya to
leave! Don't make me ask again.

The figure speaks again. This time she recognizes him.

SHAWN

It's me mam. It's Shawn.

Rebecca runs to him.

REBECCA

Shawney? What's happened to ya?

She almost slips in the pool of blood covering the porch.

She kneels down and sees his face covered in shoe black.

He grabs on to her with bloodstained hands.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Oh, Shawney. What have ya done son?
Who did this to ya?

He weezes and tries to catch air.

SHAWN

I'm sorry, mam. I've made a grave mistake.

She calls out to the car.

REBECCA

Connor!

Connor jumps out and runs to the porch.

The two of them help get Shawn into the house.

INT. REBECCA'S HOME - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca turns on a lamp. She and Connor lay Shawn on the couch against the wall.

A trail of blood streaks the floor.

Rebecca tilts him slightly to find the wound. Blood oozes from a stab that punctured a lung. His breathing is labored.

She's distraught but steels herself, knowing the situation is dire.

Shawn gasps for air with increasing urgency!

SHAWN

Mam...I..can't...breathe...

REBECCA

Shh shh, Shawney. Don't try to speak.

CONNOR,

Is he going to be ok, mam?

REBECCA

He'll be fine. Bring me some towels and a bucket so I can clean his face.

Connor comes back with the towels. Rebecca holds Shawn's head and wipes the shoe black from his face.

She sings an Irish hymn as she cleans him. Shawn breathes extremely quickly with his eyes wide and fixed on his mother.

Connor stands next to them feeling helpless, tears rolling down his face.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Go on to your room, boyo.

Connor reluctantly walks away.

A moment later, Shawn takes his last breath. Rebecca continues singing and wiping his face as tears drop quietly from her eyes.

INT. PRICE BOYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robert and his FRIENDS have convened in his room.

FRIEND #1
It's bad out there. A lotta people
are gettin' hurt.

FRIEND #2
Robert, we've gotta do something.

ROBERT
Pop says we should stay inside and
focus on gettin' the news out.

BERNARD
We can't just sit here. I'm on the
streets all the time. A lot of them
boys hang out in the stockyards
late at night drinking hooch.

ROBERT
Yeah, I know. It's just over in
Bridgeport. Me and Eugene used to
see them there.

The room gets quiet for a moment at the mention of Eugene's name.

BERNARD
Say the word and I'll put it out.

Robert nods his head.

Bernard gets up to go.

ROBERT
Keep this between us. Maryanne
doesn't need to know, and John
definitely don't need to know.

BERNARD
Tomorrow night?

ROBERT
Tomorrow night.

EXT. PRICE BOYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

John stands outside of the door listening. When the talking stops, he quietly sneaks back downstairs.

Once he gets a few steps down, he sits. His mother comes and sits next to him.

ROSLYN
What are you thinking about?

JOHN
Just wondering if this is how Jean
Du Sable imagined things would turn
out when he came here.

ROSLYN
Probably not, considering how
prosperous he was at the time.

JOHN
You think he'd be disappointed?

ROSLYN
Yes, I think he would be. We all
are.

She turns towards him and lovingly cradles his cheeks.

JOHN
Why are you looking at me like
that, Mom?

ROSLYN
Don't ever stop dreaming, John. And
when you get the chance, explore,
see the world. You understand me?

JOHN
Yeah, Mom, I understand. You know I
want to travel.

She pulls him close and hugs him. John pretends to be annoyed.

ROSLYN
You understand me, right baby?

JOHN
Mom! Yes, I understand.

INT. HAMBURG ATHLETIC CLUB - NIGHT

Aiden and the Hamburg Boys wipe the shoe black off their faces, giddy with excitement. Aiden quietly takes it all in.

HAMBURG BOY #1

Whoo! We showed 'em, didn't we?!
You see the way them houses
crackled? They'll be on those
niggers by first light.

HAMBURG BOY #2

And them Ragan's Colts, they're a
solid lot.

Aiden takes a sip of hooch, returns the lid and tosses the flask to the next boy.

AIDEN

Enjoy it boys! We've got more work
to do though. Tomorrow night we go
nigger huntin'.

The whole room erupts in cheers.

INT. PRICE PARENT'S BEDROOM - LATER

ROSLYN

Let's let the boys sleep in
tomorrow. They've been through
enough.

MR. PRICE

Yes. It's been a long day, and
it'll likely get worse before it
gets better.

Mr. and Mrs. Price share a private moment, their arms around each other, silently hugging. Mr. Price only lets worry creep into his eyes when his wife can't see them.

INT. OFFICER DALEY HOME - MORNING

SUPER: DAY 5 - July 31, 1919

The Daley home is simple and clean.

Officer Daley looks out of his window drinking coffee as he watches a CORONER'S VEHICLE across the street at Rebecca's place.

Rebecca and Connor stand on the porch watching TWO MEN IN WHITE load in a body covered by a sheet.

Rebecca instinctively looks up and catches Officer Daley's eye as they close the back of the vehicle and drive away.

He turns from the window and joins his son, Aiden, at the kitchen table.

A plate of food is set before each.

OFFICER DALEY

Dear Lord, we mourn an empty seat
at our table. Be with the one we
are without today, and help us to
trust in Your timing and purpose.

He pauses to swallow the lump in his throat.

OFFICER DALEY (CONT'D)

We pray Your blessing over our
Elizabeth, and us, and the space in
between now and when we see her
next. Until then, may this food
bless our bodies, and give us
strength to endure the days ahead.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

AIDEN

Amen.

Aiden stares at his food.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

I miss mam.

Officer Daley regards his son before picking up his fork.

OFFICER DALEY

Eat your breakfast, Aiden. We've
got another big day today. Speaking
of which, how did it go last night?

Officer Daley is quietly seething.

AIDEN

It went off without a hitch, those
Pollocks didn't know what hit 'em.

OFFICER DALEY

Without a hitch, did it?

AIDEN

Yeah, Da. Why?

Before Aiden knows it, his father rises and smacks him across the forehead with a blackjack, knocking him to the floor. He stands over Aiden enraged.

OFFICER DALEY
Tell me you didn't involve the
Callahan boy in this?

AIDEN
What?!

He wacks Aiden in the arm with the blackjack.

OFFICER DALEY
Shaughnessey Callahan? They just
carted him away in a death wagon.
Know anything about that?

AIDEN
No!

OFFICER DALEY
Don't lie to me, lad, or I'll serve
ya a proper lickin'!

Aiden puts his hands up to protect himself.

AIDEN
He showed up when we were about to
go out. What'd you want me to do,
let him walk away?

Officer Daley picks him up off the floor and slams him against the wall. Aiden has a red mark the shape of the blackjack in the middle of his forehead.

OFFICER DALEY
Tell me what happened.

AIDEN
We got in a row with that massive
Pollock, Pavel. I went to stick him
but he moved Shawn in front of my
knife. It's his fault!

OFFICER DALEY
Jesus, boyo. You may have really
fucked us. She might be a nuisance,
but she's still a Callahan and
she's protected. Who else knows
about this?

AIDEN
No one. It was a shindy.

OFFICER DALEY

Ya better pray it stays that way.
If his folk get word of this,
you're as good as dead, and
there'll be nothin' I can do for
ya.

AIDEN

Sorry, Da.

OFFICER DALEY

You don't kill yer own. Cause he'll
just rise up and bite you in the
arse. I'm warning ya, boyo,
straighten up yer act. Save yer
back stabbin' for the blacks.

INT. PRICE HOME - DAY

Roslyn is giving a music lesson to John when a knock rattles
the door.

She peeks cautiously out of the window.

It's Maryanne and her father, Graham.

ROSLYN

Graham, Maryanne, come on in.

GRAHAM TILSON

Roslyn, good to see you. The Misses
says hello. Is Marcus in the back?

ROSLYN

Yes, he's back there. Go on
through.

Graham heads to the back.

MARYANNE

Is Robert here?

ROSLYN

He's upstairs. Is everything OK?

MARYANNE

I just need to speak with him.

ROSLYN

John.

John startles her, already at her side.

JOHN
Yes, Mom?

ROSLYN
Would you go let your brother know
that Maryanne is here, please.

JOHN
Sure. Hi, Maryanne.

John runs up the stairs.

INT. PRICE BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

John busts into the bedroom.

JOHN
Maryanne is here.

He makes kissing noises, laughs and runs back down the stairs.

EXT. PRICE HOME PORCH - DAY

Maryanne stands over Robert sitting on a step.

MARYANNE
Why didn't you tell me?

ROBERT
I didn't want you to worry.

MARYANNE
Oh, you'd rather I find out after
you get hurt or killed like Eugene
or that Callahan boy?

ROBERT
Callahan boy?

MARYANNE
Yeah, Miss Rebecca's oldest son.

ROBERT
What are you talking about?

MARYANNE
You didn't hear? He was stabbed and
killed sometime last night.

ROBERT

Oh my God, What happened? How's his Mom?

MARYANNE

I don't know. That's why you can't do this. You know what they'll do if they catch you. I'll never see you again.

ROBERT

We'll be alright. I can't sit still and let them get away with what they did.

Teary eyed, Maryanne takes Roberts hand.

MARYANNE

I'm scared, Robert.

ROBERT

Me too, but something has to be done. I need you to make up an excuse not to come to our house tomorrow night.

At that moment, a group of Doughboys walk by with their rifles patrolling the street.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - DAY

SUPER: Edge of the Black Belt.

A line of Doughboys led by Sergeant Banes (soldier in the beginning) stands face to face with WHITE CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS.

A throng of WHITE MEN CARRYING WEAPONS stand behind the Police.

On the buildings above, DOUGHBOY SNIPERS are partially seen.

SERGEANT BANES

What's your business here, sir?

The Police Officer answers him smugly.

POLICE OFFICER #1

We're here on a protection detail.

SERGEANT BANES

Protection detail? How are you the protection detail, when you're the ones we need protection from?

POLICE OFFICER#2

Don't go gettin' high and mighty, you uppity nigger. We could just as soon walk away and leave you to the wolves.

He points behind him and grins.

DOUGHBOY #1 raises his hand.

The entire regiment grips their rifles simultaneously.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

When that hand goes up, Snipers cock and aim.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - STREET - CONTINUOUS

DOUGHBOY#1

Present, arms!

Every Doughboy on the line cocks and points their rifles at the Police and the throng.

SERGEANT BANES

You were saying?

INT. PRICE HOME - EARLY EVENING

The house is busy again with families and the hustle and bustle of the two newspapers and their reporters.

Henry, from the Barbershop, stands near the window with a shotgun.

The phone rings, a CHICAGO DEFENDER REPORTER answers it. Mr. Price looks over quizzically.

CHICAGO DEFENDER REPORTER

It's Provident Hospital.

EXT. PROVIDENT HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Scores of BLACK AND WHITE POLICE OFFICERS fight off an ANGRY WHITE MOB that has come to assault INJURED BLACK PATIENTS.

INT. PRICE HOME - EARLY EVENING

Reporters furiously type. Mr. Price slams his hand on the table and the entire house goes quiet.

HENRY

Well you got everybody's attention.
Might as well say what you gotta
say.

ROSLYN

Honey?

MR. PRICE

I feel like we're not doing enough.

HENRY

And you'd be right about that. I
was born on a plantation. When the
war broke out and the Blue Coats
came through, my daddy grabbed a
gun and shot cracka boss man dead.
I ain't tryin' to be no meek
inherit the earf shit. Black folk
always sitting around meekin', and
bein' noble and wise while whitey
kickin' the shit out us. I'm sick
of it! These crackers need to
inherit somma this Buffalo Soldier
ass whuppin!

Some of the crowd murmurs in agreement.

MR. PRICE

Calm down, Henry.

HENRY

Calm down, hell! You see me
standing here with a gun, not a
typewriter. Go on with that shit.

MR. PRICE

Fair enough, fair enough.

Robert, John and the rest of Robert's friends are sitting in
a corner listening to Henry, completely enthralled.

Roslyn walks over.

ROSLYN

Why don't you boys go on up to your
room. Grown folks are talking.

JOHN

Aw mom.

ROSLYN

Don't aw mom me, Johnathan Sable
Price. Upstairs! All of you.

Robert, John and the boys head upstairs.

INT. PRICE BOYS' BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

The house is quiet. Everyone has left except the boys in the bedroom. John is asleep under the covers.

Robert and his friends are spread out on the floor. The boys get up quietly, fully clothed and grip the bats they've brought with them.

Robert trips and knocks his foot against his bat. It rolls against the floor simultaneously with the sound of the 12th bell chime.

Robert balances himself and grabs the bat. They all hold still, looking at John for movement.

Still sleeping.

Quietly the boys climb out of the window.

When the last one is gone, John peels the covers back fully clothed and grabs his own bat.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

Robert and his crew walk briskly towards the Stockyard.

Suddenly, they hear heavy breathing and feet running up behind them. They all turn with bats ready.

It's John.

JOHN

Faster than the spots on a cheetah.

Robert is annoyed.

ROBERT

You can't come with us, John. Go home.

JOHN

But why?

ROBERT

Because it's too dangerous.

JOHN

If it's dangerous for me, then why isn't dangerous for you?

ROBERT

Cause I'm the older brother and it's my job to protect you.

JOHN

Well, I want to protect you too!

John crosses his arms and stands firm.

BERNARD

Forget it man, let's go. He's safe here with us now.

Robert is exasperated.

ROBERT

Alright. John you stay behind me! When I move you move. You understand?

JOHN

Yes, SIR!

John salutes him, giddy with excitement to be with his brother and the crew.

EXT. STOCK YARD - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

The boys use their forearms to block the smells of manure and blood from the slaughter houses.

They hear the sounds of running, an occasional scream, and sounds of cheering off in the distance. The sound of a single gun shot reverberates. They pause a moment then walk on cautiously.

JOHN

I wanna go home, Rob.

ROBERT

It's too late. You gotta keep up.

They stop again when they see three stray dogs eating something on the ground.

BERNARD

What is that?

Robert turns on a flashlight. The dogs growl and bare their teeth.

They're EATING A BLACK MAN with bulging eyes and his arms chained behind his back. He's shirtless and his entrails are exposed and partially eaten.

The WHOLE GROUP reacts.

WHOLE GROUP

Oh!

ROBERT

Don't look, John.

He covers his brother's eyes.

One of the boys throws up, then another, then John, adding to the melee of bodily fluids.

Robert stars at the carnage and wills himself to not vomit.

JOHN

Robert, I wanna go home, let's go home now, can we?

The boys gather up next to Robert, waiting for his direction.

Robert's resolve visibly begins to crack.

ROBERT

Guys, I think we should head back.

KABOOM!!!!

A huge explosion is heard in the distance, balls of fire burst up into the sky. Another explosion, closer and louder than the first, erupts.

They hear a voice in the dark.

AIDEN (O.S)

Hey lil' niggers! Come on out boys.
We ain't gonna hurt cha'.

Robert and his crew take off running.

INT. PRICE HOME KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

Mr. Price is having a snack. Roslyn comes into the kitchen.

ROSLYN

Did the boys say goodnight?

MR. PRICE

I don't know. It was pretty busy here tonight.

ROSLYN

They must be exhausted.

EXT. STOCK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Robert tries one, two, three doors, all locked.

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Hey nigger, nigger!

Robert checks another door. Locked. Then he sees a warehouse with a bright red double door. He tries the handle and miraculously it slides open.

He holds it open and ushers the other boys inside.

AIDEN (O.S.)

Come on out now and play nice.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Robert pulls the door shut as quietly as possible and inserts the door lever locking them in.

They're in a warehouse filled with metal hooks, rods, chains and other tools of the stockyard trade. They move further in, cautiously.

They find a corner and sit on some boxes, John next to Robert, sweating from the get away. John breaks the uncomfortable silence.

JOHN

I think I usta see that man at the barbershop. Pretty sure that was him. He was always reading The Defender out loud.

A high pile of boxes tumbles to the floor, spilling out various metal objects.

They all leap up startled.

ROBERT

Who's there!?

The boys, eyes peeled, are ready for anything. Out stumbles SANTO, (50's), an Italian immigrant with dark skin and a thick Italian accent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Stay right there! Don't you move.

Santo puts his hands in the air, feebly.

SANTO
It's OK, boys, I'm just an old man.
Santo is my name.

Robert signals Bernard to go pat him down. He does.

BERNARD
He's clean.

ROBERT
What are you doing here?

SANTO
Just like you, young man, I'm here
for a safe place.

EXT. STOCK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Aiden and his boys are checking doors trying to find Robert and his crew.

AIDEN
Check every door! They're here
somewhere.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

Santo sits on the ground under the moonlight watching the boys stare at him. The chaos outside is growing louder.

JOHN
La cos, La coaster nostril?

Santos chuckles.

SANTO
La Cosa Nostra.

ROBERT
What is it?

SANTO

An honored society. Men of respect.
A group of families that protect
and preserve our way of life.

BERNARD

Protection from what?

SANTO

La Polizia. They take advantage of
the people in some places.

ROBERT

Sounds like Chicago.

FRIEND #1

The Hamburg boys, they're like Cosa
Notsra.

SANTO

No, they are absolutely not like
us.

FRIEND #2

Where you from?

SANTO

Genoa, Italy.

BERNARD

Never heard of it.

SANTO

It is the birthplace of Paganini,
the famous composer. Do you know
him?

JOHN

I do. The other day I was playing
his Concerto no. 1 in D major, Opus
6.

SANTO

Really?

JOHN

Yeah.

SANTO

That's remarkable!

JOHN

Why is that remarkable?

SANTO
Because you're so young and
you're...

JOHN
What?

SANTO
Nothing.

JOHN
Oh, black people can't play
Paganini?

SANTO
No! Yes! Of course! Of course! I
never said that.

ROBERT
What's it like there?

SANTO
Oh, my friend....

kisses his fingers.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Like nothing you've ever seen. It's
on the sea, the most beautiful
turquoise waters. It smells like
salt and flowers.

The boys lean in.

SANTO (CONT'D)
The cathedrals are hundreds of
years old and the streets are made
of cobblestones. There are
Pillazzos with paintings by
Michelangelo and exquisite
restaurants where you can eat roast
rabbit with brown sauce and red
wine.

JOHN
Roast rabbit?

SANTO
Mmmm, cosi delizioso!

JOHN
I'm goin' to Genoa.

SANTO

You should, my friend. And don't forget the women. Belle donne! The women there are some of the most beautiful women in the world!

FRIEND #1

Okay, now I'm goin'.

FRIEND #2

Shit, me too!

BERNARD

Yeah, but they white women.

SANTO

No, my friend, the women in Italy are brown.

BANG!

A firebomb crashes through a window.

AIDEN (O.S.)

We know you're in there!

The flames rise quickly. The boys all start coughing from all of the smoke. Robert grabs John's hand.

ROBERT

Don't let go of my hand!

JOHN

I won't.

INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

Rebecca's home has been turned into a triage.

The furniture is pushed aside to make room for the wounded, mostly Black women and children.

A crucifix hangs on a wall, tilted from the commotion.

Rebecca opens her door to some young Black men carrying an older wounded Black man.

REBECCA

Bring 'em in right here. Lay him on that blanket.

The white blanket gets soaked with blood.

Conner comes in.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Honey, go get those bandages in the kitchen.

CONNOR
OK, Mam!

He runs to the kitchen.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

Aiden and the Hamburg Boys watch the warehouse start to go up in flames. The Hamburg Boys cheer while Aiden stands fixed waiting to see if anyone emerges.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Robert shouts through the chaos.

ROBERT
Get down underneath the smoke!

A bunch of rats run by startling the boys. Bernard looks around for Santo.

BERNARD
Where did Santo go? There must be a way out.

Through the smoke they hear Santo calling.

SANTO
Boys over here! Follow my voice!
Come this way.

The voice is coming from the back side of the warehouse. The boys scramble that way and see Santo holding open a folded piece of siding in the back of the building.

The boys quickly make their way out, coughing but safe. They're unseen by Aiden and The Hamburg boys.

ROBERT
Thanks, Santo.

SANTO
Like La Cosa Nostra. You boys stick together, no matter what.

JOHN
What about you?

SANTO
I'm going back to Genoa.

JOHN
I'll see you there.

EXT. BACK OF WAREHOUSE - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

The boys gather themselves and make sure they're all together.

ROBERT
We need to get to Mrs. Callahan's house. It's not far from here. Anyone we see on the way that needs help, we help. Got it?

BERNARD
What about them?

ROBERT
If we see any Hamberg boys, we run.

The boys take off like lightning, sticking to the side streets and alleys.

They move slowly, in complete silence, using hand signals, Robert leading the way.

The neighborhood is filled with smoke and people running through the streets. Sirens blare unceasingly.

Whites are blowing horns, overturning cars, pulling people out, yanking them from streetcars.

MAN'S VOICE(O.S.)
We're sick a you monkeys!

A single gunshot blasts through the air. A woman screams.

The police are onlookers, lined up in full regalia, watching but doing nothing.

ROBERT
Bern, you're in charge of those guys. I gotta look after my brother.

BERNARD
Got it.

A few White boys smash a window and run out with loot.

Storefronts and homes are burned to the ground or have gaping broken windows. Front yards are filled with glass and debris.

The boys see a BLACK UNIFORMED SOLDIER strung to a telephone pole with a chain. His army uniform shirt is ripped and hanging around his waist.

His face has been beaten beyond recognition. His exposed ribs look like the meat of a pig from the slaughter house.

The boys are disgusted, holding back the urge to vomit again.

ROBERT
Let's keep moving.

In the distance, they hear a blood-curdling scream.

This time, they run toward it, still careful to move as silently and orderly as possible.

INT. PRICE BOYS' BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

SUPER: DAY 6 - August 1, 1919

Mrs. Price knocks on the boys bedroom door. There's no answer. She knocks again.

ROSLYN
Boys it's time to get up now.
Breakfast is ready.

She knocks again, and then opens the door.

Her face registers shock and she screams!

ROSLYN (CONT'D)
Marcus!

The sound of running up the stairs and then Mr. Price bursts through the doorway.

MR. PRICE
What happened?

ROSLYN
They're gone.

MR. PRICE
Gone?

ROSLYN

Where are they? What have they
done?

She collapses into Mr. Price's arms.

EXT. - STREETS OF SOUTH SIDE CHICAGO - EARLY MORNING

THREE WHITE BOYS pummel a BLACK STOCKYARD WORKER to his knees
with bricks.

Robert moves his finger in a circle, signaling to the boys to
form a circle around the gruesome scenario.

STOCKYARD WORKER

AHHHHHH!!!!

Screams of unbearable pain fill the air.

Two of the white boys hold the man down. One has his legs
while the other holds his hands above his head.

The third one, a Hamburg boy, jams his knee into the man's
stomach, rips shirt open and begins carving a line in his
chest with a jagged knife.

Quietly, Robert's crew moves in.

CUTTING BOY

Hold his legs down! Hold 'em! You
like that boy? Somethin' to
remember us by, motherfucker. Tell
your friends this is our territory.

Cutting Boy carves an "H" while the man screams.

CUTTING BOY (CONT'D)

Shut the feck up, you monkey piece
of shite!

ROBERT(O.S.)

Let him go!

Startled, Cutting Boy stands up to see that they're
surrounded. The others continue to hold the man down.

CUTTING BOY

We got some more monkey's that need
cuttin' into?

Cutting Boy spins around, seeing they're outnumbered, and
signals to the other two to let up on the man.

The man gets up the best he can and hobbles away.

The White boys are in the center of a circle.

WHITE BOY #1
Watchu' niggers gone do now?

ROBERT
We want you out of the Black Belt.
Turn around and don't look back.

Cutting Boy laughs hysterically. He looks at the other two who, a bit nervously, join him in the laughter.

CUTTING BOY
Tell ya what. You get the feck out
of here and I won't cut yer bollox
off.

Robert looks unshakeable for the first time.

ROBERT
Get 'em, boys.

They attack the three boys, handily beating up the two who were holding the man.

Cutting Boy charges at Robert with the bloody knife.

CUTTING BOY
What, y'all think you're defenders
now?

ROBERT
Yeah, defenders, I like that. This
is our neighborhood. We're taking
it back!

Robert swings his bat, sweeping Cutting Boy's legs out from under him. The knife scatters.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Go on, get up outta here!

The Hamberg boys run as fast as they can.

The newly dubbed "Defenders" high five each other.

Robert remains serious.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Let's go! We've got more people to
help.

Bernard picks up the knife, studying it.

BERNARD

I say we stick around and give the
rest a them White boys a taste of
their own medicine.

ROBERT

Come on, man. That's not our style.
We're better than that.

BERNARD

Hmmph. You might be better than
that.

Bernard wipes the blood on his pants and puts the knife under
his belt.

INT. PRICE BEDROOM - MORNING

Mr. Price is dressed in all black. He's strapped, two pistols
on his waist band, looking more like a vigilante than a
reporter.

Roslyn hands him the Winchester.

ROSLYN

Go find our boys.

MR. PRICE

I will. Call Henry, tell him to
bring guns and call my staff and
make sure they keep the paper
running.

He kisses her on her forehead and leaves the room.

INT. REBECCA CALLAHAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Robert and his boys arrive at Rebecca's house. They come in,
line up, and sit on the floor, exhausted.

Throngs of the hiding and wounded fill the space. People are
coming and going.

The front door is guarded by TWO MENACING-LOOKING WHITE MEN
WITH SHOTGUNS.

Rebecca is tired, functioning purely on adrenaline.

ROBERT

I was sorry to hear about Shawn,
Mrs. Callahan.

REBECCA

He's with God now. Yer kind words
are much appreciated. Are ya
hungry?

BERNARD

Starving!

REBECCA

Connor, get these hungry lads some
potato soup.

JOHN

I'll help.

John and Connor run off to the kitchen.

INT. REBECCA'S KITCHEN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

John and Connor spoon soup into bowls while they talk.

JOHN

Your brother was kinda like a
father to you?

CONNOR

In a way, he was. I'm the man of
the house now. I've gotta look
after my mam.

JOHN

I can't imagine life without my
brother.

CONNOR

Me neither.

JOHN

Hey, I wanna show you something
Eugene taught me.

Connor's eyes light up a bit as John shows him the handshake
they used to do. The two boys practice it together.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You got it?

Connor hugs John really quickly, wipes a tear from his face
and hurries out with a tray of soup.

INT. REBECCA'S HOME - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Connor comes out with a tray of soup with John right behind him. They pass the bowls around.

The boys dive in with ferocious appetites. After a few bites, Robert remembers his manners.

ROBERT

I just want you to know how
grateful we are for all that you're
doing for us and the community.

REBECCA

I know yer family would do the same
for me. Bring more blankets please!

Rebecca yells out to know one in particular.

Someone swiftly arrives with the fulfilled request.

EXT. TROLLEY TRACKS - DAY

P.O.V. of someone hidden in the shadows.

About 50 yards away, a WHITE PERPETRATOR is shaking a BLACK WOMAN wearing a blue dress with a white collar. She has a long braid down her back like Maryanne's.

BLACK WOMAN

Stop it! Please stop! Let me go!

BY THE COMMOTION

A SMALL CROWD of White Folk stands near and watches him pin the woman down, shove her face into the sidewalk and point a gun at her head.

She reaches for something. We HEAR THE FAINT SOUND OF A BABY crying.

The Perpetrator hikes her dress up and sticks the gun between her legs.

WHITE PERPETRATOR

Ain't no new niggers coming to the
South Side today!

He pulls the trigger.

A few people in the crowd chuckle. The Perp stands and riles up the Crowd.

WHITE PERPETRATOR (CONT'D)
No new niggers! No new niggers!

The crowd joins in.

THE CROWD
No new niggers! No new niggers!

WHITE MAN
No new nig---

BANG!

His head EXPLODES!

A gunshot to the temple.

The crowd disperses screaming and ducking for cover.

INT. PRICE HOME - DAY

Carl Sandler puts the phone down and shakes his head no.

ROSLYN
Where are they?

CARL SANDLER
Robert and John were there but they
left. Still in one piece. That's
good news. Marcus 'll find them.

The multiple typewriters that had suspended to hear the
report, furiously return to clicking.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - DAY

The Defenders, rested and fed, have picked up more volunteers
along the way. They are now thirty strong and back on the
pavement.

The streets are bloodier now.

The horrors of a war are littered about - dead bodies, mostly
Black. Some bludgeoned to death. Others with bullet holes to
the head.

The few lucky ones who are merely wounded, lay still,
whimpering, hiding. Some underneath the dead.

Whenever they come upon the living wounded, Robert gives the
order.

ROBERT
Pick 'em up, boys.

Two Defenders at a time leave the group to take them to Rebecca's house for help.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - DAY

The Defenders follow Robert.

They walk lockstep, one in front of the other, monitoring for any disturbances like a tactical team.

AIDEN (O.S.)
Hey jigaboos, it's playtime.

Seemingly, out of nowhere, the Defenders are face to face with a group of Hamburg thugs, fewer in number, about 15, bats, knives and bricks in hand.

Aiden leads the small group.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
You're in the wrong part of town.

Aiden swings his bat in a circle and lands it in his palm repeatedly.

The Defenders hold their positions, bats over shoulders. A few have knives tucked into their waistbands.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
You should know by now what'll
happen to ya if you come 'round
here?

ROBERT
I'm gonna give you one chance to be
on your way.

Aiden cackles condescendingly.

AIDEN
You're givin me a chance? Ha! Look
around ya. You don't control a
fecking thing, chalk boyo. We're
gonna cut your guts out, tie 'em
around yer bollox and watch ya
squeal like the swine ya are.

Aiden swings his bat around, lands it in his palm and stops.

For a fleeting moment, a silence descends between them. And then...

The Hamburg boys and the Defenders run at each other and CLASH HEAD-ON LIKE TITANS!

The Hamburg boys are outnumbered and out-skilled. They use knives, jabbing and slicing, catching the arms of some of the Defenders,

The Defenders are skilled with the bats. They quickly disarm most of the Hamburg Boys, but Bernard gets sliced in the face.

BERNARD
Muthafucka!

HAMBURG BOY
Come on boyo. Ain't so handsome now
are ya?

Bernard throws his bat to the ground.

BERNARD
Let's make it a fair fight then.

The Hamburg Boy drops his knife.

Bernard gets in a boxing stance and the Hamburg Boy charges him. Bernard removes the knife he has tucked in his pants and stabs him in the abdomen.

The boy drops to the ground. Bernard picks up his bat and spits the blood spilling down his face.

Robert looks at Bernard incredulously.

ROBERT
What are you doing? We're not like
them.

BERNARD
I do what I do. You do what you do.
I'm not Mr. Price's son. I'm
Henry's.

Aiden and Robert lock eyes, the leaders on each side.

AIDEN
Gather up, lads.

The Hamburg boys, defeated, slink away dragging the stabbed boy with them. Aiden looks back at Robert.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
See ya 'round, boyo. I guarantee
it.

After a pause, John shouts after them.

JOHN
We're the Defenders!

The Defenders all laugh heartily.

Bernard bumps into Robert as he passes him.

BERNARD
Your kid brother's got more heart
than you do.

EXT. PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL - DAY

While on patrol, the boys come upon a "Whites Only" swimming pool, empty, and glistening in the sunlight.

SUPER: DAY 7 - August 2, 1919

John looks at Robert.

JOHN
Can we?

BERNARD
For the record, I think this is a
horrible idea.

The other boys, chomping at the bit, wait for Robert's response. He thinks for a moment, then the kid in him wins out.

Robert sprints toward the pool, shedding his clothes on the way and is the first to jump in.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Welp.

The other boys, all except Bernard, follow suit, leaving a pile of clothes along the way before diving and cannonballing into the pool.

The boys rough house and play in the water while Bernard watches from poolside in a "Whites Only" a pool chair.

TIME ELAPSES.

Robert and John get out and lay in the sun to dry off.

JOHN

What do you think Mom and Dad are
doing right now?

ROBERT

Worrying to death.

JOHN

You think it'll be over soon?

KABOOM!

The sound of a huge nearby explosion startles everyone back
to reality.

They all jump out of pool and grab their clothes and weapons
as quickly as possible.

Giant flames fill the air.

INT. HAMBURG ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

The Hamburg boys have assembled and increased their ranks.

AIDEN

It's time to end this.

Aiden's father, Officer Daley, is in the back listening.

HAMBURG BOY

Let's get that nigger lover,
Rebecca for one.

HAMBURG BOY #2

She's still a bit of a looker.
Might be worth a seein' too.

AIDEN

Dad?

Officer Daley answers from the back of the room.

OFFICER DALEY

God bless ya my dearest Elizabeth.
Forgive me, I've raised a fecking
langer!

Aiden is completely demoralized by his Dad's words.

His troops look to him for guidance.

For a moment, Aiden is lost. All the bluster and bravado has
left him and there stands just a wee sad little lad.

He quickly shakes it off. He looks squarely at his father who shakes his head in disgust.

AIDEN

You lads, you're on Halsted Street.
Take care of it. A few of you pay a
visit to the parents house.

He hands his LIEUTENANT a piece of paper with an address on it.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

And I'll go see about the little
black lassie.

HAMBURG BOY #3

What about gunnas?

Aiden looks at his Dad, who shakes his head no, but opens up a trunk sitting next to him.

AIDEN

We haven't got gunnas. But plenty a
blackjacks though. Pick 'em up on
the way out. I want those pox
bottles put down like dogs.

The crowd cheers, then move towards the door, picking up weapons and going to their assignments.

Aiden's Lieutenant pulls him aside.

LIEUTENANT

Don't worry about gunnas. We know
where to get 'em.

AIDEN

Fair play.

Aiden goes to his father.

OFFICER DALEY

I don't agree with everything your
doing, but I gotta admit you've got
oysters.

Aiden is still boiling.

AIDEN

Then why would you embarrass me
like that?

OFFICER DALEY
Because attacking the bitch
Callahan is foolhardy son. I
already warned ya.

AIDEN
Are you scared, Officer Daley?

Officer Daley turns red with anger, but then he chuckles.

OFFICER DALEY
If you weren't such a gobshite, I
might have to end ya myself.

He turns and walks away.

INT. PRICE LIVING ROOM - DAY

From inside the house, they hear the violence getting near.
Explosions, people screaming, cheering.

Henry is at his post by the window when a brick crashes
through it.

Everyone goes silent. The reporters stop typing. Henry does a
quick peek through the window. No door guards during the day.

A truck load of Hamburg boys has just pulled up. One of them
holds a fire bomb preparing to throw it.

HENRY
Oh, hell naw.

Henry fires the shotgun at the assailant who drops the bomb.
It explodes and engulfs him in flames causing him to scream
in excruciating pain.

Henry continues firing on the truck. He has to reload. As he
does, the Hamburg boys fire into the house.

Carl has a gun.

CARL SANDLER
Everybody get down!

HENRY
I hope you know how to use that. I
ain't takin' no friendly fire
today.

Roslyn racks a shotgun and joins Henry and Carl by the
window. Reporters grab rifles, pistols and shotguns.

Suddenly, a litany of gun fire cuts through the home.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - DAY

The Defenders are on patrol. They behave more like a well-tuned army now.

Some civilians runs by.

Robert signals to move forward. They move military style, one going before another and signaling for the next when they know it's safe.

They come across a DEAD BLACK MAN, blood pouring from the top of his skull. His eyes are open.

The hammer used to crush his skull is still wedged inside.

Unflinchingly, the boys move forward. Robert looks at John.

ROBERT
You alright?

John nods his head, eyes forward, pretending to be unafraid.

INT. PRICE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Everybody in the home is firing back at the Hamburg Boys. The house is in shambles but they're holding them off.

Henry looks over at Carl who is clearly out of his element.

HENRY
Now ain't this more fun than a
typing assignment?

CARL SANDLER
No. Not really.

INT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - DAY

The Defenders, in the clear for now, stop to catch their breath.

Traumatized like war veterans, they're silent. Each in their own worlds.

Bernard, with the cut above his eye caked with blood, breaks the silence.

BERNARD

We gotta kill these oh fay's so
they get the message straight and
clear.

Some of the boys grumble in agreement.

ROBERT

We don't kill if we don't have to.
We help where we can, and protect
people, all people.

JOHN

Like La Cosa Nostra.

Robert nods at John.

BERNARD

Am I the only one who's seen what
we've seen? Eugene? That soldier's
face! We're here right now, on the
South Side of Chicago. This ain't
no fuckin' Italy.

ROBERT

Killing them's not gonna make it
better for us.

BERNARD

The fewer of them there are, the
less we gotta worry about.

ROBERT

You wanna sink to their level? Have
blood on your hands?

BERNARD

We already got blood on our hands.
Every time we let this happen.
Every time we sit back and don't do
shit about it. I want them to know
they can't get away anymore without
consequences.

ROBERT

So what are we gonna do then,
Bernard?

Bernard turns towards Robert like a dark mirror of Aiden.

BERNARD

I know what I'm gonna do. The
question is, what are you going to
do? Negro.

(MORE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)
When you gone stop lettin' yo daddy
do the thinkin' for you? Step up?

Robert balls his fists and gets in a boxers stance.

ROBERT
How about now? Winner makes the
decision.

Bernard looks at the rest of the boys.

BERNARD
You serious?

ROBERT
As a rock attack...Negro.

Bernard gets into a boxing stance.

BERNARD
Alright then. I like this. It's
about time.

The boys surround them, some on TEAM ROBERT, the others on
TEAM BERNARD.

They dance around a bit, Bernard throws the first punch.
Robert swerves, untouched.

Cheers erupt!

Robert throws a jab at Bernard, also missing.

JOHN
You got him, Robert.

Robert lands a hook to Bernard's kidney's. Bernard loses his
footing and topples a bit, but doesn't hit the ground.

Robert lands two punches to his chest, then goes for his
bloody eye, missing it by inches.

TEAM BERNARD
Come on man! Get 'em!

Bernard lands two punches to Robert's chest. They're on equal
footing blow for blow, neither is winning, each team cheering
for their leader.

They grapple, trying to throw the other off balance.

Bernard grabs Robert by the collar and head butts him.

Robert, dazed, buckles to the ground and bleeds from his nose.

Bernard grabs his bat and holds it against Robert's neck, pinning him to the ground.

John jumps to his rescue, but Bernard pushes him off like a rag doll.

Bernard straddles the defeated Robert and taps the end of his bat to his chest.

BERNARD

I'm the boss now. Now, we go.

John runs over to his brother to help him up. Robert, embarrassed, pushes him off.

The Defenders, now lead by Bernard, head off.

INT. PRICE HOME - EARLY EVENING

The house is a mess, but the shooting has stopped and the Hamburg Boys have left.

Roslyn leads the cleanup. Everyone is chipping in.

HENRY

Just so you know, there's two dead
whities on the front lawn and one
of 'em's blacker than me.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

Car loads of White men race down the streets shooting indiscriminately.

People drop to the ground, White, Black, men, women and children, wounded and dead. The only sounds are gunshots and screams.

EXT. REBECCA CALLAHAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The two guards are gone.

Rebecca's ushering people into her home when TWO HAMBURG BOYS arrive and stand boldly at the bottom of the front steps.

HAMBURG BOY #1

Whatcha helping these niggers for?

HAMBURG BOY #2
You a nigga lover or somethin'?

REBECCA
I'm a people lover, you eejits! Go
on then. Scat! There's nothing for
you here.

HAMBURG BOY #2
I think I see a little somethin' I
like.

Hamburg Boy #1 lasciviously looks Rebecca up and down.

HAMBURG BOY #1
Aye. I could do with a bit a sour
tart.

Click Clack!

The cock of the rifle turns their heads.

Mr. Price stands a few feet away pointing his Winchester.

MR. PRICE
That's enough boys. Move on.

HAMBURG BOY #1
Ain't you two a dandy pair-up.

The Hamburg boys start to back away.

HAMBURG BOY #2
Just as well, it's probably
infested with cockroaches.

They turn and run, whooping and hollering.

REBECCA
Mr. Price. I took you to be a man
of words, not weapons.

MR. PRICE
Woeful times demand wayward
measures, Mrs. Callahan.

He regards her downtrodden state.

MR. PRICE (CONT'D)
My condolences for your boy, Shawn.

A darkened sorrow envelops her countenance. She struggles to
gather herself.

Conner steps out from behind her holding her gun.

CONNER

Mam, is every thing alright?

Rebecca looks down at her little brave boy and pulls him in close.

REBECCA

We have a new man of the house.

MR. PRICE

I see. Have you seen my boys?

REBECCA

They came through fer a wee stint
but were eager to get back in it. I
made sure they were fed first.

MR. PRICE

Thank you, kindly.

A VOICE (O,S.)

Mrs. Callahan, may I have a word?

They turn to the voice. It's Pavel, the Polish man.

REBECCA

Pavel...of course, lad.

MR. PRICE

I'll continue my search unless you
need me.

REBECCA

No we're fine. Pavel's here now.

CONNER

And me.

REBECCA

And my Conner.

MR. PRICE

Then good night.

REBECCA

Good night, Mr. Price. God speed.

He turns and leaves.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

What is it, Pavel?

PAVEL
It's about Danny.

INT. PRICE HOME - NIGHT

Maryanne painfully walks through whats left of the front door.

She looks almost lifeless, beaten, disheveled. There's blood on the front of her dress and caked down her legs.

Roslyn sees her and gasps! Henry and all the reporters stop and stare.

ROSLYN
Maryanne! What happened dear girl?

Maryanne collapses into Roslyn, crying uncontrollably. Roslyn holds her and notices her beautiful braid has been crudely cut off.

ROSLYN (CONT'D)
What did they do to you?

Maryanne speaks through tears and tremendous agony.

MARYANNE
Those Hamburg boys came to our house. They started shooting. They broke in and killed my parents. Then they...

She sobs loudly.

MARYANNE (CONT'D)
...took turns, all of them.

Roslyn hugs Maryanne tighter as tears roll down her face.

ROSLYN
Oh no, no no. Dear Lord.

Everyone in the room is stunned into silence.

Henry is fuming with fury in his eyes! He grabs a box of shells and a shotgun.

HENRY
Fuck this!

He storms out of the house on a mission of retribution.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - NIGHT

The south side of Chicago looks like a war zone.

The Defenders patrol a relatively calm street. Fires rage in the near distance, creating an ash fog floating in and out of the lamp light.

A lone figure emerges from the mist and confronts them in the middle of the street.

JOHN

Pop!

BERNARD

Mr. Price. You look like you mean business.

Ten feet separates them.

MR. PRICE

You boys alright?

ROBERT

Mmmm hmmm.

MR. PRICE

It's time to come home.

ROBERT

We can't do that.

MR. PRICE

Your mother's worried.

ROBERT

People are dying out here.

MR. PRICE

That's my point.

ROBERT

We've seen black men beaten and stabbed. Hanging from poles with their guts sliced open. How are we supposed to ignore that?

MR. PRICE

It's not your fight.

ROBERT

Somebody has to protect us.

MR. PRICE
That's for soldiers. Police.
Adults.

JOHN
We're The Defenders!

Mr. Price looks at his little son with sadness and pride.

ROBERT
We can't unsee what we saw, Pop.

MR. PRICE
This is not what I taught you.

ROBERT
You've always taught us to fight.
Sometimes it means using a pen or
publishing a paper. Sometimes it
means running away when it's your
only choice. Right now it means
patrolling the streets with bats
and bricks to protect the ones that
are weaker than us. We've always
been fighters. We've always been
defenders. Because we learned it
from you.

Father and son are a mirror image with their weapons held
across their chest.

MR. PRICE
There's not much I can say to that
with a shotgun in my hands. But
you, young man, are coming with me.

He grabs John and pulls him away in protest.

After a few feet, John manages to wiggle out of his jacket
and run back to the pack, leaving his father holding the
garment.

Mr. Price slowly walks back to the boys and drapes the jacket
over John's narrow shoulders. He affectionately rubs his
son's head before looking firmly at Robert.

MR. PRICE (CONT'D)
Bring him home.

Mr. Price turns and walks away, swallowed by shadows.

An eerie quiet comes over the street.

A light wind begins to blow, dispersing the smoke like a localized vacuum, creating a black hole in the middle of the mist.

Suddenly, two Hamburg boys run through it, paying more attention to what they're running from instead of what they're running into:

The Defenders.

Bernard bats one of them in the diaphragm, completely knocking the breath out of him.

The boy collapses and passes out.

Robert nails the other one in the shin with his bat, causing him to fall flat on his face, knocking him out cold.

Two motionless Hamburg boys lay crumpled at their feet.

BERNARD

We should string one of them up
like they do to us!

Team Bernard cheers.

ROBERT

We're not doing that. If you don't
like seeing it with us, why would
you want to keep it going?

BERNARD

You're not in charge anymore. What
I say is law.

ROBERT

Well then you'll have a few less
soldiers.

BERNARD

Fine. We'll take him as a hostage
and give Aiden something to think
about.

Aiden's eerie whistle reverberates off of nearby buildings.

The entirety of the Hamburg Boys converge from shadows, fog, street corners and assemble before The Defenders with Aiden at the helm.

Aiden puts up a hand signaling for the Hamburg Boys to stand still.

The Hamburg Athletic Club has more than doubled in size, 60 strong versus 30 Defenders. They're in complete order, mimicking the formation of the Defenders.

They look clean. White shirts rolled up to the elbows.

Length perfectly matched, tucked in. Crisp jeans, brown shoes, light grey page boys.

They're almost military. They're armed with bats, bricks, blackjacks and knives.

Aiden has everyone's undivided attention.

He speaks to the Hamburg boys standing with him.

AIDEN

Do you believe in the United States
of America?

The boys raise their right hands in the air, holding their weapons.

HAMBURG BOYS

Aye!

AIDEN

Do you believe in the inalienable
rights of White people?

Louder this time.

HAMBURG BOYS

Aye!

AIDEN

Then let's show these boys this
ain't the United Nigger States of
America.

ROBERT

We can end this. Right now. Nobody
else needs to get hurt or die.

Bernard whispers to Robert.

BERNARD

What are you doing? You're making
us look weak.

Aiden falls into fits of laughter.

Then he flips a long black hair braid tied to the back of his hair around to his shoulder.

He grins an evil jackal grin.

AIDEN

You're too fecking hairbrained to understand what you're up against. There's no ending this. That was settled the day one of yers killed my mother.

Both Robert and Bernard stop in their tracks. John speaks up.

JOHN

Isn't that..that isn't Maryanne's braid is it?

AIDEN

I gotta admit, boyo. You've got good taste in nigger bitches.

Robert, Bernard, John and their whole crew are fuming now.

ROBERT

What did you do to her? Did you hurt her?

AIDEN

The first time always hurts! She was tight as drum on both ends at first, but she was right as rain after me and my boys finished with her.

BERNARD

I bet you feel like killing somebody now, huh Robert?

ROBERT

Together?

BERNARD

Together.

JOHN

What are we gonna do?

ROBERT

You're going to stay at the back and if it gets bad, run home faster than a cheetah, you hear me?

JOHN

Yeah.

AIDEN

I was actually surprised. I thought
you monkeyshines fecked like jack
rabbits all day. But she was
untouched, pure as some...muddy
snow!

The Hamburg Boys laugh heartily and high five.

Robert loses it and rushes at Aiden with a war cry.

Everyone follows, kicking off A BATTLE OF GHETTO GLADIATORS!

It's a bloody fight. Teeth are flying.

Heads are being bashed with bricks, bats, and blackjacks.

Aiden stares down Robert on the other side of the fight, then
diverts his eyes as he's attacked and fends off a Defender.

John squares off with a boy of his size, beating him easily,
knocking his weapon out of his hand.

Bats and knives are swinging. Blood spurts into the air. Eyes
are black from blackjacks to the face.

It's almost hard to tell who's who. Everyone is covered in
blood and dirt, a cesspool of violence and rage. The
Defenders, as strong as they are, can't win against the
Hamburg Boys overwhelming them with numbers.

As soon as one Hamburg boy goes down, three others follow,
fresh and ready.

Robert and John are on separate sides of the fight, now.
Robert looks for John, but can't see him through the chaos.

The Defenders are being destroyed. Robert notices Aiden
making his way to John.

ROBERT

John!

John hears his brother and turns.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Spots on a cheetah!

Like a flash he takes off.

The Defenders take off scattering in various directions. Some
Hamburg Boys chase them while others stay and fight.

Aiden takes off in pursuit of John.

Robert and Bernard clash with two burly Hamburg boys. Robert notes the direction John ran in.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

John races through the South Side streets passing houses completely in flames. Other buildings are flattened to the ground.

Aiden, even with his bulk, is fast, empowered by adrenaline and mania. He runs smack into a cop.

AIDEN
Out of my way!

Trying to push by, the cop grabs him by the shoulders, slowing him down.

OFFICER DALEY
Son, wait!

Aiden looks up and sees that it's his father.

AIDEN
Dad?

OFFICER DALEY
Take this gunna on.

He hands Aiden a pistol. Aiden slips it in his waist band.

OFFICER DALEY (CONT.D) (CONT'D)
Alright then, finish this for yer mother.

Aiden runs as fast as he can.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

AT THE FIGHT SITE

Robert takes down his opponents and runs in the direction John did.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

John is lost. He's disoriented, trying to find his way.

He looks for some sign, but the destruction has him confused.

Somewhere along the way, he dropped his bat. He's weaponless.

He picks up a rock, holding it tightly as he crouches down between a couple of dumpsters to hide.

Aiden runs into the area.

AIDEN
Come on out lil' niglet. I promise
I'll let you die easy.

John stays still.

He doesn't blink. He doesn't breathe.

Aiden is getting close.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Where's your big brother now? He
left you high and dry. Just like a
nigger. Is there no loyalty in the
jungle?

Aiden fires a gunshot in the air that startles John.

He drops the rock. Aiden hears the sound and turns to it.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
There you are. Come on out now, I
see ya.

John grabs the rock and steps out from his hiding spot.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
That's a good little lad. Now drop
that rock. You won't be needin'
that.

John holds onto it.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Drop the feckin' rock or I'll burst
ya where ya stand. Besides, what's
a rock got to do with a gunna?

Wide-eyed, John doesn't move. Robert is nearby, almost there, instinctively feeling his brother's presence.

ROBERT
John! John! Can you hear me?

JOHN
I'm right here!

AIDEN
Shut the feck up.

Aiden points the gun at John, but he's looking for where Robert's voice came from.

John throws the rock like a pitcher and nails Aiden in the head.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
You cheeky little gobshite!

Robert runs up, yards away.

He sees Aiden pointing a gun at john.

Aiden pulls the trigger.

TIME SLOWS.

SOUND WARPS.

John drops when the bullet hits his chest.

Robert's mouth forms the scream "NOOOOOO!" as he barrels toward Aiden.

SPEED!

Robert tackles Aiden knocking him to the ground.

The gun flies from his hand.

Robert's on top and filled with rage. He pummels Aiden repeatedly but Aiden manages to throw him off.

They both see the gun and scramble for it.

Robert gets to it first. He grabs it, spins, and wacks Aiden in the face with it.

Blood and teeth spurt from Aiden's mouth as he tumbles to the ground.

Aiden is dazed. He pulls himself up on hands and knees and starts to laugh.

AIDEN
Nice hit, boyo. Not exactly what it was intended for but it was still a good shot.

ROBERT
Get up.

AIDEN

Really? Can't ya just do it while
I'm down here.

ROBERT

I said get up!

Bernard runs up on the scene. He sees John dead on the
ground. He sees Robert pointing a gun at Aiden.

Aiden stands and faces Robert.

AIDEN

Well whataya waitin' fer?

BERNARD

Yeah, Robert. What are you waiting
for? He killed your brother. He
killed your friend. He raped your
girl.

Robert tightens his grip on the gun.

AIDEN

Aye, three for three and that last
hit was a home run. I'll tell ya
boy, your little nigger bitch was
a sweet piece a tart. The darker
the berry...

ROBERT

Shut up!

AIDEN

Feck you!

ROBERT

Shut up!

AIDEN

Feck you! Do it!

Robert moves closer with the gun in the hand of an
outstretched arm. He points the pistol between Aiden's eyes.

His breath quickens. Veins bulge in his face.

ROBERT

No Aiden. Fuck you!

He lowers the gun.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'm better than that.

A lifeless silence falls between them. The two enemies stand and stare at each other.

Then Aiden breaks into a cackle with a gut-wrenching cruelty.

AIDEN

Feck me, boyo! Of all the times to
act the maggot. What's the point in
havin' bullets if ya haven't got
any bollox? Just like a monkey
nig...

BANG!

His HEAD EXPLODES!

He's dead before he hits the ground.

Bernard and Robert are shocked!

Robert looks at the gun in his hand. It never left his side.

They start looking around to see where the shot came from.

They spots a man standing in the 3rd floor window of a nearby building.

The man holds a rifle. He steps forward into the light.

IT'S HENRY!

He salutes the boys and then steps back into the shadows.

Robert remembers.

He drops the gun and runs to his brother dead on the ground.

BERNARD

Robert we gotta go. Police are
coming! Robert!

He runs to Robert and helps him lift John up and run away with the body.

From the opposite direction, Officer Daley approaches. He sees his son lying on the ground with his brains blown out. He runs towards him.

A car speeds up onto the sidewalk and intercepts him, blocking his way.

The two Menacing-Looking Men that guarded Rebecca's door jump out of the car with shotguns followed by Rebecca herself.

She Looks poised, cleaned up, and in command. A Callahan.

REBECCA

You thought there wouldn't be a reckoning, Daley? You had to know this was coming. I know you're the one responsible for my Danny's death.

OFFICER DALEY

Rebecca, look at what they done to my Aiden.

REBECCA

The same thing he did to my Shawney.

OFFICER DALEY

Can we do this another day? I'm beggin' ya.

REBECCA

Today is a good a day as any. You owe me, Daley. I've come to collect.

The two men handcuff Officer Daley and throw him into the car.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I'll send for him. That's more than he deserves.

EXT. SOUTH SIDE STREETS - DAWN

SUPER: DAY 8- August 3, 1919

NATIONAL GUARDSMEN toss bodies into piles on the side of the street, one on top of another.

Black bodies, White bodies, civilians and officers, men, women and children.

Robert carries John's body past the carnage and ruin in a slow, numb saunter. Like a funeral procession, Bernard and a few Defenders follow behind him.

All around them, fires are being distinguished by FIREMEN.

Throngs of curious white folk are held at bay by National Guardsmen, preventing them from entering the black belt.

INT. PRICE HOME - DAY

Henry has dried blood spatter residue on his white shirt.

He and several families, as well as Reporters are waiting with Roslyn.

Maryanne peers through what remains of the front window.

MARYANNE

It's them.

EXT. THE PRICE HOME - DAY

Robert walks down the street carrying his dead brother.

John's lifeless body arches and dangles on either side of Robert's cradling arms. Bernard and the Defenders follow.

The door to the Price house flings open. Roslyn rushes onto the porch gushing excitement.

Then she sees.

It takes a second to register. Then THE HORROR HITS HER at once!

She SCREAMS!

ROSLYN

NOOOOO!!!!

As if someone is tearing flesh from her face! Pain this searing has no warning or reference.

Roslyn crumples to her knees screaming in disbelief.

Robert lays his brother down on the ground.

Mr. Price steps onto the porch.

MR. PRICE

Ohh no...

A wrenching regret overwhelms him.

Roslyn runs to them and grabs John's body.

She cradles and rocks her lifeless child, wailing and quivering with a deluge of tears.

Robert breaks down. Mr. Price takes him in his arms. Robert quakes with an unbearable pain.

Roslyn sobs and convulses as she caresses her dead son's face. Mr. Price leans down and tries to comfort her.

Maryanne comes to Robert and takes his hand. He buries his head in her shoulder and weeps.

Carl, Henry, the reporters and families come down and gather with The Defenders. They all surround the grieving Price family.

As if John's spirit is lifting, WE RISE slowly, higher and higher into the sky until a bird's-eye view reveals the horrifying scope and scale of the Riot in a single devastating frame.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The church is filled to capacity with the overflow outside.

A B&W photo of John is on a stand in front of a casket covered with red roses.

Robert stands alone in the pulpit.

Roslyn, Mr. Price and Maryanne are in the front pew.

Carl Sandler is there. Rebecca and Connor are there. Bernard and the Defenders. It seems the whole Black Belt is in attendance, as well as other races and creeds.

ROBERT

Today we celebrate the life of my little brother, Jonathan Sable Price. He was a little man with a big heart. He could be annoying, and at times he talked too much, like little brothers do. But it always came from a pure place. We share our grief with the family of Eugene Williams, with the Callahan family, and all of our brothers and sisters we lost. We pray for those who've been bred with hatred. We got some healing to do.

BLACK.

TEXT OVER BLACK:

"No one, white or Negro, is wholly free from an inheritance of prejudice in feeling and thinking as to these questions. Mutual understanding and sympathy between the races will be followed by harmony and co-operation. But these can come completely only after the disappearance of prejudice. Thus, the remedy is necessarily slow; and it is all the more important that the civic conscience of the community should be aroused, and that progress should begin in a direction steadily away from the disgrace of 1919."

-Governor Frank Lowden

Blue Ribbon Commission - 1919.

BLACK.