

Greelight

FADE IN:

SOUNDS OF BASKETBALL BOUNCING.

EXT. NEWARK STREET CORNER - DAY

We see the underside of the bouncing ball, as if we're under glass looking up, watching it hit against the ground.

We see the undersides of FEET DANCING, as if we're under glass looking up.

We see the undersides of two feet and legs sitting on a milk crate, hands holding a cell phone.

Pan out and up to see:

CELL, Black teen, sits on the milk crate staring at the phone, in front of a graffiti-covered brick wall, with overflowing trash cans nearby.

DANCER, Puerto Rican teen, listening to air pods, wordlessly dances and contorts to sounds that we can't hear.

We switch to Dancer's POV and SLOW MOTION as the SOUNDS OF A BOUNCING BALL are replaced with MUSIC WHOSE BEAT MATCHES BOUNCING BALL.

We watch from Dancer's POV as the dance moves unfold, occasionally catching glimpses of CELL sitting on the crate and BALLER, Asian teen, bouncing the ball on the sidewalk. Behind back, through legs.

BACK TO REGULAR MOTION AND POV. Cell's knee twitches.

DANCER

Anything?

CELL

Mina said 3 pm. We got another 90 seconds. She's precise. Always.

Dancer and Baller exchange looks as we switch to SLOW MOTION and BALLER's POV. MUSIC SWITCHES BACK TO BOUNCING BALL SOUNDS.

BEEP. Back to regular POV. They all freeze as a message appears on Cell's phone. Cell taps the phone.

Cell's face changes.

CELL (CONT'D)

It's go time. It's on.

BALLER
You sure? Mina said...

CELL
Mina said she'd send a signal. She sent it. We gotta go.

DANCER
Let me see.

Cell shows the phone.

DANCER (CONT'D)
Greelight? What does that mean?

CELL
It's a typo. She forgot the 'n.' We gotta-

DANCER
Mina's precise. Like you said. In everything. One time, she cut up this guy with a machete and she cut an "M" into-

CELL
It's the sign! She means greenlight!

BALLER
But how do you know?

CELL
What else could it mean?

BALLER
I don't know. Mina's Jamaican. Maybe it means something in Jamaican.

CELL
Jamaicans speak English!

DANCER
Patois. They speak patios. It's a form of English, not the same.

CELL
Well, this is a form of English, greelight. In English, greenlight.

DANCER
I don't know.

CELL

We said we'd do it. Now we got to.
Or else Mina said she'd take
everything we got. Leave us with
nothing.

BALLER

What we got now?

Beat.

BALLER (CONT'D)

That's why we're doing it. We earn
enough money to pay what he owes to
the court, your dad comes home.

DANCER

It's not the court. It's family
services.

CELL

Doesn't matter. We're friends,
right? This is what friends do.

DANCER

I can take care of my family
myself.

CELL

Your dad is like our family, too.
And neither of you can do this
without me.

BALLER

Why you acting like a savior? Like
we're the ones who mess shit up?

CELL

I'm not trying to be a savior-

BALLER

We got your sister off that social
media thing, right? We got that
truant officer off your case,
right?

CELL

Yes, but-

BALLER

You don't need to save us.

CELL

I'm not trying to save you! I'm trying to help. This was your idea, but I'm the one who Mina trusts cuz I worked in her cousin's store. That's all I'm saying.

BALLER

Do you trust her? She called this low risk.

CELL

(shrugs)

It's how we make the most money.

DANCER

You don't need to do it.

BALLER

Yes, we do. Your dad was the only dad any of us had.

Beat.

DANCER

Why don't you text her back and-

CELL

She told us to never text back. And what am I supposed to say, "could you please explain what greelight means?" That's crazy. It's clear.

BALLER

It's not clear. I'm down to do this, but I need to know if it's the signal or not.

CELL

We can't text her back.

Dancer sees MICHAEL, 20s, Black, walking towards them with colorful attire and carrying a guitar.

DANCER

Look! It's Michael. I think he's Jamaican. We can ask him.

CELL

I don't know...

DANCER

Ay, Michael, you Jamaican, right?

MICHAEL
 You think all islands the same?
 Fool, I'm Trini, proud!

Cell, Dancer, and Baller look at each other.

CELL
 It's close.

DANCER
 Hey, what does greelight mean?

MICHAEL
 Greenlight?

DANCER
 No, no, greelight. No 'n.'

Michael's eyes go wide. He TALKS RAPILY IN PATOIS as he backs up, and then runs away.

BALLER
 What the hell?

DANCER
 Oh shit, that's not good.

CELL
 What does that mean?

BALLER
 I think it means we're cooked.
 That's gotta be the signal.

CELL
 But what if it's not? Maybe it
 means something else?

DANCER
 So, now you don't want to do it?

CELL
 Th whole thing is crazy. Getting
 someone out of prison by doing
 something that can get us put into
 prison. But I agreed. Cuz we're
 friends. And we told Mina. I was
 working at the store when she cut
 that dude. Saw the blood. We can't
 back out.

Baller starts bouncing ball rapidly. We watch from various angles.

CELL (CONT'D)
Chill, chill with the ball.

BALLER
I dribble when I'm nervous.

Baller dribbles quickly, as Cell's knee jerks up and down.
Dancer dances, as if exercising demons, then stops.

CELL
We're out of time. We gotta decide.

BALLER
What's it gonna be?

DANCER
Vote? Majority rules?

CELL
No. We all in, or we all out.

DANCER
Ok.

BALLER
Ok.

CELL
Ok, as in yes?

DANCER
No. Ok as in we all decide
together.

BALLER
Ok. I mean, right.

CELL
Right.

They look nervously at each other, then at the phone.

BALLER
You make the call.

CELL
Me?

BALLER
You didn't want to do it. We did.
You agreed. Cuz we're friends. You
make the call.

BEEP. They all freeze. Cell taps the phone. They lean in to read the text.

ALL

Ooohhhh.

They all lean back, look at each other.

CELL

Damn.

Shit.

BALLER

DANCER

Wait, is that supposed to be an
'h'?

THE END.