The Sreenplay Act 3 of 'Live\_by\_Night\_Novel\_docx':

[Act 3-Scene 1]:

INT. INSTITUTION - JOE'S CELL - DAY

The harsh fluorescent lights above flicker, blending the sterile walls into a bleak atmosphere, amplifying JOE COUGHLIN's (30s, rugged with a haunted look) isolation. He sits on the edge of a cot, the weight of the world pressing heavily on his shoulders. He's lost in thought, staring at nothing, lost in the echoes of his tormented memories.

JOE’S VISION

The memories cascade over him:

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

LUSH SUMMER EVENING. The sound of LAUGHTER spills from a small gathering. LORETTA FIGGIS (mid-20s, vibrant and full of life) dances awkwardly in the kitchen, a playful smile lighting her features.

JOE watches from the doorway, soaking in her charm, the memory bittersweet.

LORETTA

(laughing)

Come on, Joe! Dance!

He stumbles forward, awkward and shy, and she teases him, her laughter ringing like a beautiful melody that fills the room.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INSTITUTION - JOE'S CELL - DAY

Joe's face contorts with the pain of loss. He can almost smell her perfume - something sweet and warm - filling the sterile air of the cell, a stark contrast to his present reality.

JOE

(whispers to himself)

Why did you leave me, Loretta?

A flicker of guilt washes over Joe's expression as he battles with the weight of responsibility for her death.

JOE’S VISION CONTINUES

EXT. BACKYARD UNDER STARS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The two sit under a blanket of stars, holding hands. Loretta dreams aloud.

LORETTA

One day, we'll have our own place. A garden with roses.

JOE

(smiling)

And I'll dance awkwardly in the kitchen every night.

They share a joyous laugh, his heart swelling with hope for the future.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INSTITUTION - JOE'S CELL - DAY

A cloud of profound sorrow sweeps through him. Joe swallows hard, wrestling against the memories, trying to ground himself. He looks around, the sterile walls closing in, every corner a reminder of his isolation and guilt.

JOE

(determined)

I can’t let this destroy me.

He stands up, pacing the small area, his thoughts racing like the tide of the sea, ebbing and flowing between grief and resolve.

JOE’S VISION CONTD.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Joe finds himself at Loretta's bedside, her body lifeless. The scent of fresh flowers fights against the sterile smell of antiseptic. His heart breaks as he grasps her cold hand.

JOE

(sobbing)

I'm so sorry, Loretta. I should have protected you.

The muffled sounds of the world outside the memory press at him, blending grief with guilt.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INSTITUTION - JOE'S CELL - DAY

Heavy, laden silence fills the cell. Joe grips the edge of the cot, his knuckles white, fighting the ache for a semblance of control.

JOE

(to himself)

I have to remember... I have to move on.

Suddenly, he hears the echo of distant CHAINED FOOTSTEPS coming down the corridor. Joe steels himself, the shadows of the past colliding with the reality of his present.

JOE

(whispers)

Don’t let them see your pain.

The door creaks open, a GUARD (50s, gruff) stands there, looking down at him.

GUARD

It’s time, Coughlin. You're needed.

Joe nods, feeling the anger build within him, but also the desire to not be consumed by it.

JOE

(taking a deep breath)

Let’s do this.

As the guard steps back, Joe walks out of the cell, the heavy metallic door slamming shut behind him with a finality that echoes like the toll of a death knell.

FADE TO BLACK.

END SCENE.

[Act 3-Scene 2]:

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The cavernous space of the warehouse is dimly lit by flickering overhead lights, casting long shadows against the peeling walls. The air is thick with tension, a tangible sense of impending violence that hangs like smoke.

JOE COUGHLIN (30s, rugged and haunted, dressed in dark clothing) paces the area, his footsteps echoing off the concrete floor. His brow is furrowed, a deep contemplative look in his eyes filled with grief and determination.

JOE (V.O.)

(soft and introspective)

My father always said... to stand tall, to face what comes your way without flinching. But how do you stand tall when the weight of the world is the only thing holding you down?

Suddenly, the warehouse doors CRASH open, and several FIGURES enter—DONNIE (30s, muscular, tattoos peeking from beneath his shirt), ESTEBAN (20s, wiry, always looking for trouble), and a few THUGS, faces worn and hardened by a life of crime. They exude menace.

DONNIE

(voice low)

Coughlin. You’ve got a fancy little operation here.

Joe stands tall, his anxiety barely masked by defiance, trying to mask the swell of panic inside him.

JOE

What do you want, Donnie?

ESTEBAN

(mockingly)

What do we want? Maybe a little chat. Maybe a fight. How about both?

DONNIE

(grinning)

I think it’s time a little blood got spilled tonight.

JOE

(steadfast)

I’m not here for games. You’re not scaring me.

As tensions mount, Joe's thoughts drift to his father. A distant memory of TOM COUGHLIN (50s, strong, yet tender) surfaces—a teaching moment from his childhood.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A YOUNGER JOE stands beside his father, who is tending to a small garden. TOM turns to him, warm and eager.

TOM

(voice compassionate)

You face them, Joe. You don’t run. Because there’s nothing to prove to them. Just yourself.

BACK TO SCENE

A flicker of pain crosses Joe's face as the memory fades. He swallows hard, returning to the present, his anxiety mixing with a growing fire of vengeance.

JOE

You think you can walk in here, scare me, and walk out again?

DONNIE

(smiling)

That’s the plan.

Esteban approaches Joe, invading his personal space.

ESTEBAN

(real close)

Your father didn't raise you to be weak, did he?

JOE

(steadying himself)

He raised me to be better than this.

A beat. The air is thick with unspoken words and unresolved grief. Donnie cracks his knuckles.

DONNIE

What’s stopping me from tearing you apart right here?

Joe takes a trembling breath, channeling the spirit of his father.

JOE

Nothing. But I’ll make sure if I go down, I take you with me.

At that moment, the door to the warehouse creaks open again. DION BARTOLO (40s, shrewd and calculating, dressed in a tailored suit) enters, his presence commanding.

DION

(tone confident)

You’re going to want to rethink that, Donnie.

CONFRONTATION SEQUENCE.

The mood shifts as Joe glances at Dion, his tension slightly easing. Dion's gaze darts between Joe and the thugs, assessing the situation.

DION

(voice firm)

This confrontation ends here. We don't have time for child’s play or vendettas.

DONNIE

(sneering)

What’s it to you, Bartolo?

DION

(cool, collected)

You know what’s about to happen here is going to have consequences. So back off.

JOE

(to Dion)

What are you doing here?

DION

(eyes sharp)

I’m here to ensure that my investment—your life—doesn’t go to waste.

Joe grapples with mixed emotions, anger shifting to gratitude towards Dion.

DONNIE

(cocking a gun)

You think you can save him?

DION

Look. Let’s just agree that Joe is off-limits tonight. You have to honor that.

Esteban laughs, but Joe can see cracks in the thug’s confidence.

JOE

You think this is over? You think I’m just going to walk away?

DION

(eyes intense)

You don’t have to fight every battle, Joe. Some fights are quieter than you think.

Silence falls. Joe and Donnie lock eyes, a spark of recognition passing between them—an acknowledgment of shared scars and the brutal paths they tread.

DION (CONT'D)

What will it be, Coughlin?

JOE

(voice low, resolute)

I take the stand my father would’ve taken. I don’t hide.

As tensions unravel, the atmosphere thickens with possibility. Joe inches towards a choice.

FADE OUT.

TEXT ON SCREEN: "What will be the outcome from this confrontation?"