The refined\_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, consumed by 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. Suddenly, in a fierce moment of clarity, he reaches for a PHOTO of Loretta tucked under his mattress. With trembling hands, he decides to BURN the photo, the flames licking at it, consuming the past as a visceral symbol of moving forward, of letting go.

JOE

(out loud)

For you, Loretta! I promise to live fully in your honor.

As the photo crumbles to ash, he feels a rush of sadness and anger, but also a strange sense of freedom. The door creaks open, a GUARD (50s, gruff) stands there, looking down at him.

GUARD

It’s time, Coughlin. You're needed.

JOE

(steeling himself)

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.

[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, a LOUD CRASH cuts through the warehouse—something heavy crashing to the floor nearby, causing Joe to jolt. The sound activates his survival instincts, interrupting his thoughts, and he flashes back to a memory of his father, TOM COUGHLIN (50s, strong, yet tender).

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

Joe's focus sharpens. As he turns in response to the noise, he subconsciously shifts his stance, preparing himself to confront the danger.

JOE

(steadfast)

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

As tensions mount, Joe recalls the weight he carries from his father’s death, and an emotional depth floods his voice.

JOE

(voice thick with emotion)

Your threats mean nothing compared to the ones I carry from my father’s death.

The atmosphere tightens with the intensity of his declaration. Another LOUD CRASH reverberates from the back of the warehouse, jolting Joe back to the present.

JOE

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

DONNIE

(smiling)

That’s the plan.

Amidst the growing chaos, Donnie, ESTEBAN, and a few THUGS step forward, the menace palpable. The closer they approach, the more Joe feels the weight of his father’s teachings settle upon him.

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

Nothing. But if you do, trust that I’ll take you with me.

Joe’s voice embodies the spirit of revenge, and the emotional weight of his father’s memory infuses him with resolve. Suddenly, 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, who exudes control and confidence. Joe’s tension slightly eases; Dion’s presence is a beacon in the storm. Dion's authoritative stance further amplifies Joe's resolve not to back down.

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.

Donnie's confidence visibly wanes; Joe grapples with mixed emotions, anger shifting to gratitude towards Dion. Joe’s stance solidifies as he channels the strength of his father.

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.

Silence falls. Joe and Donnie lock eyes, a spark of recognition passing between them—an acknowledgment of their dangerous paths and shared scars.

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 toward a choice, channeling the spirit of his father.

FADE OUT.

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