

A person wearing a dark hoodie is shown from the chest up. The lighting is dramatic, with the right side of their face (viewer's left) in deep shadow, while the left side (viewer's right) is softly lit, highlighting their eyes and mouth. The background is a solid dark color.

# HUSTLE

STREET POWER

JONATHAN  
COPELAND

# **Hustle: Street Power**

By  
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*I would like to dedicate this book to God, my son, my mama, and my wife. They are the main reason that I was able to finish this book and also have the ability to start on my second book. I would like to thank my boy LT, Glen, the Bon-a-view Fam, cousin Fred, cousin Moosh, and all the people through my whole existing life that didn't believe in me or anything that I have done, or said that I couldn't do anything. Thank you for the haterade that you drank and burped in my face to keep me moving forward to show people that you can do anything when you have Big Man upstairs guiding you.*



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# Chapter 1



Life was a lot different now. Nice Davidson and his mother, Cynthia, were now into their seventh year without his dad, Elmo. He was a businessman, and although his business was in the streets, he wanted more than that for his family. He made sure that Cynthia was able to finish school and become a registered nurse. He inspired his son to make good grades so that he would not have to follow in his footsteps. He bought them anything that their hearts desired.

Then, in the blink of an eye, it was all over. The ambulance sirens seemed to hang in the air for days, the tears never dried up, and life moved on.

*Another Saturday morning sitting on this bed, do I really want to go to work?*

A knock on the door jolts Nice back to reality, “Who is it?”

The door cracks opens and his mom sticks her silk wrapped head into his room. He could see her nursing pants hanging through the bottom of the door. He knew that she wanted to make sure that he was not going to fall back to sleep.

She was almost ready to go work, “It’s yo’ momma, get up before you late.” She stopped and did a double take, “You look upset.”

“Yeah, I’m tryna decide if I’m going to work today,” he replies. “I’m tired of cooking and cleaning for those stupid people and not getting any money.”

“You know you have to work in to order to help me.”

“I know, ma.”

“Alright, now get up and get some breakfast in before you leave. You know I love you,” she reminds him as she shuts the door.

Nice smells a whiff of biscuits before his mind wanders.



*I remember when life was easy, no worries. Now I'm 17 and working to help my mom with the bills since everything is gone. I used to be able to get anything I wanted, but I know that my dad would have made me get a job by now anyway. I wonder if he knows that I think about him. Hope he's proud of me. He won't be if I stay home when I could be making money.*

Nice pulls himself off the bed and heads to the bathroom down the hall. He takes a look into the mirror as he wets his facecloth under the faucet. He takes a deep breath as he takes in the picture of his dad hanging in the upper right corner of the mirror, "Dad, I know that you were teaching me responsibility at a young age to prepare me for these hard times, but isn't there more that I can do? I don't want to keep working at a restaurant, but I know that mama is all I got, and I want to keep her stress free. Help us through these hard times," Nice asked.

Nice decided to continue to go to work, but makes a plan to look for better opportunities with higher wages. As he finishes in the bathroom he hears the front door slam as his mom leaves for work. He heads back to his room to get dressed. After pulling on his brown slacks and green work shirt, he brushes his hair and checks his waves before he slides his feet into his black and white Jordan 13s. He heads into the kitchen and grabs a couple of biscuits. He makes sure the stove and all the lights are off and then he heads out the door.

As Nice walks down the sidewalk on his way to work, he sees his best friend, K, pulling up to the curb in his new all black '87 Cutlass with eighteen-inch rims. His dreads swing back and forth as he bumps to the music blasting from his stereo. K and Nice have been friends forever and went to school together. Their parents knew each other back when Nice's dad was still alive; they were hustlers too. They had birthed a hustler when they had K.

"Yo Nice, what's good son?"

“What up with you, K?”

“So what’s good, you on the way to yo’ suck ass job dis morning, huh?” K taunts. He knew Nice was always upset about going in.

“Man shut up, you know I got to work and make money to help my mom. Don’t start with me this morning,” Nice warns.

K laughed, “Calm down super soldier. Ain’t tryna get you all riled up, but you know what I mean. Come out here and make this money with me e’ryday, and stop worrying bout money and school.”

Nice thought about it for a minute, “Nigga, I see you in school all the time.”

“Yeah cuz that’s where the bitches be at son, I gotta handle my business with my business,” K laughed, “Feel me?”

“Yeah, yeah nigga, but stay up. I’m late.”

K and Nice dap up.

“Pimp you always late, I’ll get at you afta work,” he hollered as he sped off, tire tracks smoking.

Nice continued on his way and makes it to the casual dining restaurant, BigTime Dining. He dreaded coming to this restaurant and bar, but he had to make do with what he had right now. He thought about quitting, actually he thought about it quite a lot, but he did not want to leave without having another job lined up. He drew up all his strength, reached for the door, and walked in.

His boss immediately jumps down his throat, “Dammit Nice, you’re late again!”

“Get off my back man! I’m here,” Nice replies. “I had to help my mom with some things.”

His boss shook his head with disbelief, “Right, you had to help your mom. Every day it’s the same thing, get in the kitchen!”

Nice grinned at the man and walked into the kitchen where he spotted Nookie, one of the waitresses. He did not go any farther as he gazed at her intently. She attended

River High with him, but this is where he was able to get the most face time with her. Her curvaceous body, half hidden under her work apron, still beckoned to him. He always seemed to catch her looking at him, even if she would not admit it.

Something about Nice made her look up, “Can I help you, Nice? Damn, all up in my face,” she exclaimed in disgust.

“You caught my attention beautiful,” he answered, not swayed by her false demeanor.

“I’m always catching yo’ attention, you need to get back there and cook some food,” Nookie told him, but she could not keep from smiling.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m going.”

Nice walked to the back of the kitchen. James, the line supervisor, was already in action making the orders as they arrived.

“Yo Nice, it’s about time you got yo’ ass back here. We could use some help, and stop getting all puppy eyed wit Nookie, e’rybody know y’all want each other.”

Nice stretched, “I’m here, I’m here. Damn, e’rybody a lil testy today, ain’t they?”

James let him know how the day was going, “Dude, the boss been on some otha shit man; it’s hell back here.”

“Got you, got you. Well shit, I’m ready to burn,” Nice answers as he started pulling tickets.

Three hours rolled by before Nice walked out the kitchen to get something to drink, “Yo Nookie, Nookie.” He grabbed her as she walked by.

Nookie was caught off guard, “What boy?”

“Yo, ain’t that Ghost and Crane walking in ova dere by da door?”

Puzzled, she replies, “Yeah, dat’s dem. Why you so interested?”

Nice dismissed her question, “Look, make sure you get their table and let me know when you do, so I can take the food up there to them.”

“Nigga, you not taking my table to get da tip. Is you crazy?”

Nice shuts her down quickly, “Aw shut up, ain’t nobody tryna take none of yo’ funky ass money. I’m just tryna get close to the man so I can holla at him, damn!”

“Sorry Nice, I got you,” she apologized.

“Thank you, sweetheart.”

Nookie smiled with a gleam of wanting in her eyes.

Nice gets the ticket for Ghost and Crane’s table and starts making the food. Nice walks up the stairs to the second level dining area and approaches Ghost and Crane with the meal.

“Thanks, lil nigga,” Ghost said as Nice set the plates on the table. “Ey, hold up. Ain’t you K boy?”

“Yeah, dat’s my nigga.”

Ghost nodded, “Sit down real quick. Let me holla at you.”

Crane flashed his gun and put it in his lap as Nice slid into the seat beside him. Nice smirked at him, daring him to do something stupid.

“Whoa Crane,” Ghost exclaimed, “He good. So Nice, hold up, hold up. Crane, don’t dis lil nigga look familiar, son? I know dis lil nigga.”

“Yeah,” he agreed. “He kinda do look familiar, but if he look at me with that face like that again nobody gonna be able to remember it,” Crane sneered.

Ghost lit up with recognition, “Yo, you’re Elmo’s son aren’t you?”

“Yeah, so?” Nice questioned. “What’s that got to do with anything?”

Ghost explained, “Man, yo’ pops was dat nigga for real, hardest nigga I eva met.”

During the conversation the boss walked up the stairs and sees Nice sitting with some customers.

“What the hell you doin? I don’t pay you to sit and talk,” he yelled, in an attempt to embarrass him.

Ghost rose from his seat, “Ey we having a discussion, so you can excuse him for a moment, ain’t dat right?”

The boss apologized, shaking with fright, “Oh sorry, Ghost, didn’t see you sitting dere. Yeah, dat’s fine.” He scurries back downstairs.

Nice comments in frustration, “Man, dat dude is always in my fucking ear, just blah, blah, blah, fuck him.”

“Yo, if you have any more problems with him let me know,” Ghost responds. “But anyway, I took ova for your father when he died.”

Angered, Nice jumped up, “Oh you did, huh? And you didn’t know that my mom and I ain’t got shit?”

Crane quickly grabs his arm and jerks him back down into the booth, “Shut the fuck up and listen to da man, lil boy,” Crane snarls.

Nice jerks his arm away and mean mugs Crane then Ghost.

“You feel better now? You got it out yo system?” Ghost taunts as he laughs. “Look dude, yeah I shoulda came to y’all but hey, betta late than neva.”

“Yeah, I guess so. So what you want, man? I do need to get back to work.”

“Look, have K bring you to my place. He know where I’m at, alright?”

“I got you,” Nice replies as he glares at Crane. “Can I go back to work now, or you still want me to keep you warm and toasty?”

Crane looks at Ghost, shakes his head in disbelief, and looks back at Nice. Crane replies, “Yeah, yo’ lil punk ass can go, lil nigga.”

Nice gets up and walks away from the table. Meanwhile, Ghost and Crane continue talking.

“Yo, you think it’s wise to be fooling with that lil nigga? If he is anything like his daddy, I mean, hey, he might come out to kill us cuz we ain’t give up no money,” Crane notes, a little worried.

“Man, that lil nigga has potential and he’s known in school and shit. We can be running the school to make some money. We gonna do it smart, ganja only, it works out for e’rybody trust me,” Ghost explains reassuringly.

Crane looks at Ghost and shakes his head, still unsure, “I got you, boss. Let’s get outta here, man. I’m full.”

Ghost glares, “Can I eat? Damn.”

As Nice comes down the stairs, heading back to the kitchen, Nookie runs over to find out what went down, “So, um, what did you need to talk to Ghost about?”

“Nunya,” he replies shortly.

Confused and annoyed, Nookie asks, “Nunya?”

“None of yo’ damn business, girl. Mind yo’ business.”

“Don’t be getting smart, dumb ass,” she yells, frustrated that she did not get a real answer. “I just don’t want you to get caught up in no shit; dat man is bad news and you know that.”

Nice laughs, “Thank you, mama, and when I get home imma start on my homework.”

Nookie walks away mumbling, “Aww, forget it, Nice.”

Nice finally makes his way back into the kitchen to finish up his work. “My bad James, man, I was up there talking to Ghost and Crane,” Nice begins.

“Damn son, you gonna go out make some money for yo’self, huh? Tryna be a big dog? Cuz you know what he does right?”

Nice nods, “Yeah man, I know what he do. Why e’rybody assuming that I’m gonna walk in my daddy footsteps? I’m in school and I’m doing well, if I must add. I’m working at this suck ass job, but hey, it’s a paycheck and I’m helping my mother, so why would I need all that?”

James smirks at Nice, skeptical of the young man’s true intentions.

“You think I’m stupid. You really think I’m stupid, pimp,” anger creeps into Nice’s voice.

James explains, “That’s easy money and yes, yo’ pops was a big drug lord, so why wouldn’t you follow in his footsteps?”

“Um, let’s think about that for a minute,” Nice responds harshly, “He got into a big shoot out, and now he not here with me. How does that sound? Da nigga dead, son, he dead, and I’m not going out like dat son, feel me?”

“So I see you do have a brain,” James pushes him, “Plus, you got too much to live for man and you got yo’ momma.”

He nods in agreement, “Yep, man, you got that right.”

The work day comes to an end. Nice clocks out and he stops to see Nookie as he gets ready to leave, “Yo Nookie, what you doin afta work?”

Nookie still a little salty, replies, “Nunya, remember dat?”

“Nookie, Nookie, I was just playing with you, girl. Imma let you know wassup; just come chill with me afta you get off so we can talk.”

Nookie exhales, “Sorry, Nice, but my man wouldn’t want me doing that now, would he? And plus he coming to get me afta work, so you shit outta luck. I’ll give u a rain check.”

“Yeah, I got you. Dissin’ me like dat. Yo’ man a busta anyway, you’ll see.”

Nice walks out the door smiling at Nookie. She smiles right back at him. In the back of her mind she knew that he was telling the truth.

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