Book Outline Rough Draft – “The Hood”

1. “The Creed of Law”
2. Detail the culture, community, and creed that shape Lawrence, aka “Law.” Readers see Law’s world… his friends, his habits, his Chicago neighborhood.
3. Loyalty is the undertone of most of Law’s behaviors. His firsthand experience taught him that when loyalty is broken, people either end up in jail like his father, Bill (aka Rogue), or dead like his brother, John.
4. At the same time, like most teenagers, Law thinks he’s invincible. He thinks he’s smarter than his father and brother were and is willing to play the game of life.
5. “Deeper Than That”
6. Law’s mom, Sheila, is a God-fearing hardworking nurse. Law was 11 and already introduced to his ‘hood creed by the time Sheila “found the Lord.”
7. However, she’s spent the past five years trying to teach him that life is deeper than what he’s come to know.
8. The two have ongoing debates on whether a ‘hood creed can be true loyalty to black people if it’s underlined outcome is hate.
9. “I Hate U”
10. Bill asks to see Law before his 17th birthday. He’s been trying in his own way to parent him from prison.
11. Sheila’s brother is stern and has been reinforcement in Law’s life. There are glimmers of hope for Law from those who try to fill-in the parenting gaps, but it’s not the same.
12. During the visit, Bill confronts Law about his behaviors that mirror what landed him behind bars. (“I hate you, Rogue…” “No, son. You hate yourself. It’s like you’re a student at Hate University.”)
13. “Warning Shots”
14. Law’s sitting on the porch with friends. They know he’s not as streetwise as he thinks, but he’s learning.
15. A cousin says Law’s at a crossroads. Either he goes deeper and up the ranks with more risks, or he retreats.
16. Does Law heed the warning or stay the course?
17. “Far from the Tree”
18. Law displays behaviors too close to his father’s past. (“Apples don’t fall too far from the tree.”)
19. A near-death encounter pushes his mom to her last resort.
20. Law is sent to live with relatives in rural Tennessee. (Old lynching tree territory.)
21. “Too Big for Your Britches”
22. Law reluctantly moves to Tennessee to save his own life.
23. He quickly experiences culture shock but plans to lay low just for a while until he can return home.
24. Another cousin takes Law under his wing. (Flipped image of the other cousin.)
25. “The Hood Has Two Faces”
26. Relatives warn Law to leave some of his “city ways” back home. They reveal that they live just 25-miles shy of a town historically known for lynching, and still home to Confederate flag-flying Klansmen in the 21st century.
27. A local news tragedy sparks debate on race relations.
28. Law is confronted by the deadly combination of loyalty and hate from another “hood;” the one worn by the KKK.
29. “What’s the Difference?”
30. Law finds himself angry and offended.
31. He’s questioned about why he’s mad when he’s on the receiving end of loyalty and hate from racist whites in Tennessee, when he often used the same deadly combo against other blacks in Chicago.
32. His internal conflict that has been slowly emerging finally comes to a head.

IX.

X.

* Reminisce
* Different environments can lead to different perspectives.
* Someone has to be the catalyst for change. Someone has to break the cycle in our community.