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Left Out In The Cold

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Left Out In The Cold is a film about two mothers on the hunt to find justice after their sons were brutally murdered. Both cases are based in the Bronx, remain unsolved, and have been classified as “cold cases,” meaning they no longer have any leads.

In 2016, New York City alone had over 17,000 homicides. The clearance rate dropped to below 60%, which has resulted in more than 7,000 open cases. No one wants to snitch or report crimes in fear of retaliation, which has resulted in a huge reason these cases, remain stagnant.

Although, there has been chatter as to who committed the crimes, no one has come forward with a name for either case. These neighborhoods live by the oath “snitches get stitches” and thousands of families are denied justice for the crimes committed against their loved ones.

My film focuses on two mothers Yamilet Gambaro and Glenda Soto. They do not know each other but these women share the same pain. Yamilet’s 17-year-old son Joshua Baez was stabbed in the heart on his way home on April 7, 2012. In October of the same year, she moved to Florida to get her two younger sons away from the violence in their neighborhood. Glenda Soto lost her 20-year-old son Freddy Collazo just last year in February when he was shot in the face outside of his cousin’s house in the Bronx. For Glenda, the pain is still raw meanwhile for Yamilet, although five years have passed, she is still searching for answers.

Because Yamilet is now living in Florida it limits her ability to be on top of her son’s case making it very difficult to advocate for her son. Glenda is in the earlier process and trying to figure out how to navigate the system. Both women continue to hit a wall.

Throughout the film we will follow Glenda as she describes her son growing up and the grueling moment she got that call. She also speaks with the officer in charge of Freddy’s case in hopes of finding new evidence. As for Yamilet, the viewer will see how moving to Florida has changed her life for the better but how it restricts her from being persistent on her son’s case. We will follow her as she reaches out to the assigned detective who she hasn’t spoken to in five years and as she returns to the Bronx to meet with him face to face after all this time.

Act I
Act one opens up with shots of a quiet afternoon in New Jersey, with cars driving passed Maple Grove Park cemetery where Freddy is buried. We meet Glenda and her oldest Aracelis as they walk to his tombstone. We will see a shot of them holding
hands and praying right before Glenda describes how important it is for her to find justice as she’s sitting down on the grass by his grave.

We will then see a rainy, afternoon in the Bronx to provide context where everything will take place. From there, a baby picture of Freddy smiling will show as Glenda begins to give us a sense of who her son was as a kid. We will see more shots of the Bronx along with information on how Glenda is like many others who are searching for answers, transitioning to Yamilet’s story.

The viewer will see pictures of Joshua as a baby while Yamilet begins to talk about the struggles she faces a young mother and how her son was with her every step of the way. She describes how difficult it is for her to grasp the fact that someone took his life. From there, a News 12 the Bronx clip from 2012 will provide the viewer with context about how he was murdered.

**Act II**

Act II begins with Yamilet at her house in Florida washing dishes. She explains how her distance limits her access to her son’s case. She also talks about how frustrating it has been for her that she hasn’t received a call from the assigned detective in five years. She possess’ strength in this scene by explaining how it is time to make some noise. She is confident that several people in the neighborhood know who killed her son but are afraid of retaliation. But hopefully, by making the community aware that she is still actively searching, someone will come forward with a name.

For Glenda in the Bronx, it’s been almost two years since Freddy’s murder. The cops have a potential witness—Freddy’s cousin, who is in prison for an unrelated crime. Glenda calls Detective Cepada in hopes of finding new information. He explains to her that the cousin is still unwilling to talk even if that means reducing his sentence. He is facing eight years in prison but can possibly do less time if he gives the name of who murdered Freddy. Detective Cepada says the cousin is still insisting he is not a rat and will not take a plea deal. He tells Glenda the feds are moving him further up north away from his family in hopes it will urge him to talk.

The “no snitching” rule is a big problem. It leaves the victim’s families with unresolved pain. Jaiden Collaza, Freddy’s younger brother talks about his anger towards his cousin. He’s angry that his brother died and his cousin doesn’t want to confess who did it. His sister Aracelis explains that although her brother was murdered, his memory will never die.

Glenda and Aracelis describe when they got both got the call that Freddy was murdered. Glenda talks about her setting up a table in her living room and talking to her son right before he died. She never imagined that would be the last time she would see him. She says she got a call from a lady saying she had to come to the hospital as soon as possible because her son had just been shot. She says she took long getting there because she didn’t want to hear the bad news. When she arrived Freddy’s dad shouted, “He’s dead.” She couldn’t believe it. Aracelis says when she
got a text from her mom asking for her dad’s number she knew something was wrong. But when her mom got home and broke the news to her, never in her wildest dreams did she think it was that severe. She says she screamed, “No, No,” and fell to the floor in disbelief.

**Act III**

Act III begins with a scene of Yamilet opening up a poster. She holds up a poster of Joshua that says, “We love you.” She opens with a powerful message about she never would have imagined herself holding up a poster of him on it. She always envisioned having him here. Christopher, Joshua’s younger brother, holds up the blanket Joshua used growing up. Christopher says he sleeps with it every night and how it brings him comfort. Pictures of Joshua and his family appear as Christopher talks about how important it is to find justice. He says he’s unsure of what he would do if every confronted by the person who killed his brother, but that is hurts him to know his killer is just walking around after taking someone’s life.

Later, a scene opens up with Yamilet in Florida feeding her one-year-son Javian. She expresses how the cops dropped the ball on her son’s case. She calls Detective Rentis who she has not spoken to in five years. During their phone call, Yamilet tells Detective Rentis it has been a long time since he has reached out her. She asks him if he remembers Joshua Baez. Caught off guard, he tells her he will call her back in a few hours. Yamilet agrees to him calling her back but knows he will not return the phone call. She hangs up and slams her phone on the table. She expresses this is why she doesn’t call because they always give her the same excuse.

Frustrated with the way she was treated, Yamilet returns to the Bronx after five years since her son was murdered. Next, we see shots of people waiting the bus in the Bronx and shots of the 43rd precinct. Yamilet walks inside and asks to see Rentis. She never told him she was coming to the Bronx to meet with him face to face. She is told to wait a few minutes because his shift hasn’t started.

Cameras aren’t permitted inside the precinct but Yamilet’s mic is still on. Shots of her kneeling at his tombstone, touching a picture of his face all appear while her and Detective Rentis discuss why it has been so long since he’s called. She explains to him that she understands the police have millions of homicides but this is her homicide, this is her son, and this is whom she came to talk to him about today.

Next, the viewer will see shots of the street where Joshua was murdered along with cars driving by on a quiet night on Ellis Avenue. Then Yamilet opens the scenes as she vividly describes step by step what exactly happened the night her son was stabbed. She shows where there were traces of blood. We follow her as she shows where her son’s body fell and how was face down for hours. People passed him by and refused to call for help because they thought he was a drunk Mexican. Assuming someone would eventually call 911, people walked by like nothing. Yamilet says
Joshua would still be alive if someone would’ve picked up the phone as soon as they spotted him. She says he was stabbed in the heart by four people and that according to his autopsy he was fighting for his life. He had defensive wounds on his hands that prove Joshua fought until his last breath.

Act III ends with a montage of the both Joshua and Freddy. After being taken on this emotional journey, the viewer will see these young men the way their mothers saw them. While pictures of Joshua and Freddy as babies, growing up, and with family and friends are playing we will hear Yamilet talk about what are her plans going forward. She is planning on creating events in the community in Joshua’s name. She says now that time has passed she feels someone will have a change of heart and may come forward with a name. Glenda says as long as she has air in her lungs to breathe she will never stop searching for justice.