

BLACK RAIN

by

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A BLACK SCREEN:

Various voices: "Big six"... "That's six the hard way"...
"Seven or eleven"... "Play two"...

FADE IN:

EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

One of the pristine blocks of brownstones where even the garbage seems gift wrapped. The VOICES continue over as we move in on a particular building where a DOORMAN is holding open the door for a dowager and her poodle.

The voices continue: "Hit me"... "Double down"... "Let it ride"... "Hit me"... "Anymore for the come out"...
"Card"...

In contrast to the outside of this sedate, quiet brownstone, we go inside to find...

INT. BROWNSTONE APARTMENT

... a miniature Las Vegas, complete with music, drinks, tuxedoed dealers and croupiers: roulette, craps, Black Jack. Wall to wall people. The fact that casino gambling happens to be illegal in New York doesn't stop these Connecticut slummers, hollow-cheek nightlifers, and junior wiseguys from having a good time.

AT THE CARD TABLE

NICK CONKLIN, holding a dollar cigar, is trying to pull a winning hand. In his late thirties, Nick has the sort of quiet good looks that takes an extra glance to appreciate.

His Moe Ginsburg rent-a-tux is too tight, his ruffled shirt, out of date; Nick could care less.

Two other players are still in the game. One of them is a lithe DEBUTANTE surrounded by an entourage of giggling friends and tuxedoed men. The pot is huge.

Nick flips two one hundred dollar chips onto the pot.

NICK

One, and one on top.

DEALER

House sees.

PLAYER ONE

(hesitates)

I'm out.

Disgusted, he throws down his cards.

It's down to Nick and the debutante. The cocky deb gives Nick a long look, confident she can win.

DEBUTANTE

(her eyes still on
Nick)

I see the deuce, and one to chase
them home.

She throws her chips on the pot. Nick hesitates, then decides to match it.

NICK

Call.

DEBUTANTE

(showing her hand)

Ladies, aces wired. Sorry sport.

Nick turns over his cards, Jacks and tens, not good enough to win. Elated, the deb gets up from the table and joins her giggling friends. Nick walks over to her.

NICK

Very nice, Barbie.

(pointing toward her
boyfriend)

Now, I'd take Ken over there and go
home.

DEBUTANTE

Why's that?

NICK

It's time. That's all.

BOYFRIEND

The lady wants to play. Someone should teach you to be a better loser, loser.

NICK

Listen, Ken --

BOYFRIEND

My name is not Ken --

NICK

-- I'm offering you the benefit of my experience.

DEBUTANTE

Looks like you have a lot of experience in places like this. It was nice of them to relax the dress code for you.

That draws a laugh from her friends. The entourage heads for the bar.

CHARLIE SKLOARIS, twenty-three, steps in front of the debutante, blocking her path.

She steps to the side. Charlie steps with her. Charlie's pushing it, he's always pushing it. She's not amused. Finally, Charlie lets her pass. He comes up to Nick.

CHARLIE

Typical New York woman, big attitude, small apartment, no tits.

Only two things count to Charlie: his job and his women, but not necessarily in that order.

CHARLIE

I think she got to you, pappy.

NICK

(checking his watch)
You want a popsicle, go to Good Humor. And don't call me 'pappy.'

CHARLIE

(glancing at the door)
Still, you gotta wonder how she'd look in handcuffs.

Nick, wary, eyes this kid. Charlie shrugs, spreads his arms defensively. The SOUND of pounding on the front door.

THE DOOR

splinters. The bouncer steps back as four helmeted emergency service officers -- the first members of the raiding party -- rush in.

Pandemonium. People rush for the exit -- any exit.

AT THE BAR

Nick and Charlie hold up their glasses.

NICK

(calmly)

Alley oop.

They down their drinks, then set them down.

Charlie pulls out the Binaca, offering Nick a spritz, but Nick is already pulling out his POLICE BADGE and hanging it around his neck. Charlie quickly follows suit.

A HALF DOZEN COPS

line the patrons up against the wall. The Asst. D.A., PATTY ZACHARA, climbs onto the crap table. A petite, nervous woman, Patty has dressed in a Chanel suit for the occasion.

ZACHARA

Settle down. Hey, quiet... Please.

Not a prayer.

NICK

SHUT THE HELL UP, GODDAMNIT!

That quiets them.

NICK

My name is Conklin. Let's do this fast so I can go home.

Zachara, annoyed, looks at Nick.

NICK

(softer)

It's all yours.

ZACHARA

(reads)

Under section 216 of the New York State Penal code, I serve notice that this premise and it's occupants...

NICK

catches the Debutante's eye across the room. She smiles at him, he was right. He shrugs, spreads his hands. That's life.

A well groomed middle aged man, who we'll come to know as CAVELLO, suddenly bolts from the crowd lined up against the wall.

Charlie spins around to stop him --

CHARLIE

Whoa -- where do you think you're going, hotdog.

Cavello butts him with his head, sending Charlie to the floor. Then, crosses his arms in front of his face and plunges through the WINDOW.

Nick, not missing a beat, gives a small sigh as he follows.

NICK

(sighs)
Fabulous...

He takes off after him.

EXT. STREET UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

Nick, short of breath, chases Cavello down the residential street, past the dog-walkers, past the doormen, past the fur-coated women climbing out of taxies... Unfortunately, Cavello has a good half block on him.

From nowhere, Charlie blasts past leaving Nick a half block behind, silently cursing his age.

AT THE CORNER

a limo jerks to a halt, and Cavello jumps in. The limo streaks away.

CHARLIE

turns to see Nick, hands on knees, gasping for air.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - TWO EIGHT PRECINCT - NIGHT

Now in their street clothes, Charlie and Nick stand in front of the mirrors. Charlie is working his brush and hair dryer as if his life depended on it. Nick, in contrast, shoves his hair back with his fingers and glowers at himself in the mirror.

CHARLIE

(over the dryer)
... It's not like you were slow or anything... I think you did just fine. I think you did great.

NICK

Thanks.

Nick turns to leave.

CHARLIE

Hey, hey, where you goin'?

NICK

Home.

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nick strides out the door. Charlie hurries after him.

CHARLIE

Wait up. You know the guy who did the Weismuller through the window --

NICK

-- Cavello. Ronnie Cavello.

Charlie trails Nick to his motorcycle: a Harley hog complete with wide gleaming fenders and twin tanks. The bike is held together with tape and baling wire.

CHARLIE

You know him?

Nick tries to kick-start this behemoth, but it's not easy.

NICK

He works for Frank Abolofia.
Atlantic City. Casinos.

CHARLIE

So why dive through the glass for a nickel and dime bust?

Charlie puts his foot up on Nick's fender to tie his shoe. Nick, spotting an ankle holster peeking from Charlie's sock, grabs Charlie's foot. Charlie teeters.

NICK

What's this?

CHARLIE

Let go...

Nick pulls out a Beretta 32.

CHARLIE

Back-up.

NICK

Get rid of it.

CHARLIE

Why?

NICK

It's not regulation. And the only way you're gonna stop anybody with it is to show it to him, and while he's laughing, you can shove it down his throat.

CHARLIE

(looking at Nick's
bike)

I'll get rid of it when you get rid of the egg-beater.

The Harley comes to life spitting a cloud of blue smoke. Nick puts on his paint-flecked helmet, slides down some ski goggles.

CHARLIE

Nick, let's go hunting. Bag Cavello.

NICK

Charlie...

Nick pops the bike into gear.

NICK

... You still got shaving cream on your ear.

Nick rolls out and disappears in a haze of blue smoke.

EXT. BELT PARKWAY - VERRAZANO BRIDGE - NIGHT

WE FIND Nick, a lonely, solitary figure bobbing in and out of the lights and shadows. The SOUND of wind whips through his helmet; cold air stings his cheeks... The tail lights of Nick's bike disappear into the night.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - STATEN ISLAND - NIGHT

Civil service heaven. Nick hits the cut switch and glides past the manicured lawns and well kept houses of this development. A basketball net in every driveway, a Buick or Chrysler in every garage.

One house sticks out. The lawn is brown, paint is peeling off the garage door and newspapers are scattered on the driveway. Nick glides once around the cul de sac looking at the house. His house. It's as inviting as an open grave. He shoots away.

INT. EL GRECO DINER - STATEN ISLAND - NIGHT

A hanger sized roadhouse, wall to wall red velvet.

Nick's the sole figure at the counter, coffee and the Daily News in front of him. A NURSE walks in and sits down a half dozen seats away. Nick look up.

NICK

Short shift?

CONNIE

Yeah... I came to save you. If you're hopeless, I'll pull the plug.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick and Connie are in bed. They're both looking up at the ceiling. They've just made love.

CONNIE

It's getting too cold even for me, Nick.

NICK

Connie...

CONNIE

All right, how's the new partner?

NICK

High spirits, desire, commitment.

CONNIE

You'll take care of that.

NICK

Give me a break, would you?

CONNIE

If you give me one.

Nick kisses her. The first suggestion of real affection. The SOUND of someone KNOCKING on the door. Reluctantly, they stop. Connie gets up and puts on her robe.

NICK

Are you expecting anyone?

CONNIE

I wasn't expecting you.

She disappears down the hallway. We HEAR the door open, then telling someone to wait.

CONNIE

(poking her head in
the room)

Imagine a small, greasy Boy Scout.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNIE'S APARTMENT

Nick, wearing only his pants, is doing a slow burn. Charlie is holding his hands up defensively.

CHARLIE

... I found the goombah... Cavello.
He's --

NICK

-- I should tear your head off.

CHARLIE

Whoa, I knew you were going to say that. I absolutely anticipated that, Nick. But I said to myself, Charlie, Charlie, we can move up on this, so go find Nicklaus... He'll be pissed for a moment, but then it'll dawn on him --

NICK

-- Hey, I got a better chance of being hit by a bus than moving up.

Charlie looks away momentarily, letting it slide. He knows he's on sensitive ground.

CHARLIE

... Look... they told me at the Greek's you were here. I'm sorry, I never imagined...

CHARLIE

(buddy buddy)
I like her. She's nice.
(lowering his voice)
For her age.

The bedroom door opens. Connie enters, dumps Nick's clothes on the couch, tosses his gun on top of the pile. Without a word, she goes back inside and slams the door

behind her.

Nick, pissed, slowly turns to face Charlie. Charlie shrugs. Nick's got nothing better to do than go.

CUT TO:

INT. LIME HOUSE - CHINATOWN - NIGHT

The Lime House is a little piece of Italy in the heart of Chinatown, and tonight, it's packed. Any selection on the jukebox that isn't Frank Sinatra is Jerry Vale. Behind the bar are two fat BROTHERS. One pours drinks, the other dishes out Scungilli. It's three a.m. It's always three a.m. at the Lime House.

AT THE BACK TABLE

Our man CAVELLO is unloading steaming Scungilli onto an already heaping plate in front of an imperious looking JAPANESE MAN. The Japanese Man, in his mid-fifties, wears a gray suit, and not a strand of his jet black hair is out of place.

A Japanese TRANSLATOR, doing his best to translate Cavello's heavily accented English, sits between them.

AT THE BAR

Charlie is looking straight ahead, afraid Cavello might peg him. Nick is at ease.

CHARLIE

What are they doing now?

NICK

Eating Scungilli, just like the last time you asked.

CHARLIE

Who do you think the Jap is?

NICK

Maybe Cavello's buying a Subaru. How would I know?

CHARLIE

I don't blame you for being sore. It'll pass when we bag him.

Charlie, trying to relax, gestures toward his foot.

CHARLIE

Whatdaya think? 'Bostonians'.
Eighty-five bucks.

(lowering his voice)

Girls go for shoes. Second place

they look.
(off Nick's
reaction)
Hey, I read it in a magazine.

Nick's attention is drawn to a trio walking in the door.

NICK
(dead serious)
Charlie, don't do anything. Promise
me?

CHARLIE
What?

WHAT THEY SEE: TWO BODYGUARDS are making a quick sweep of the bar. FRANK ABOLOFIA, s stocky man with silver grey hair, sweeps in behind them. Abolofia has mitts like a meat packer and a fifty dollar manicure. A heavyweight Mafioso.

NICK
Frank Abolofia.

CHARLIE
The Wolf?

Abolofia walks to Cavello's table. All rise and shake hands. The two hitters take seats at the bar. The two brothers scramble to serve their distinguished guests.

NICK
(in a whisper)
Some party.

CHARLIE
Maybe we should do something?

NICK
Charlie, take your gum, stick it
under your ass and keep it warm.

Nick turns away, resumes his drink.

NICK'S POV IN THE MIRROR BEHIND THE BAR: two new Japanese men step in the door. Early twenties, spiky hair, dark Versace suits.

NUMBER ONE

wears tortoise shell shades. He coolly checks out the room then nods to --

NUMBER TWO

who pulls a Spas 12, automatic shotgun from under his coat, and spits out three rounds. A window shatters.

Everyone hits the floor.

NUMBER ONE

slowly walks toward Cavello's table.

NUMBER TWO

covers the floor. Abolofia's bodyguards show their empty hands.

NICK AND CHARLIE

on the floor. They don't have the artillery for this guy either.

AT THE TABLE

Our Japanese businessman knows these people. He eyes them contemptuously.

Abolofia has put enough people in this situation to be philosophical about it. He stops chewing. A tiny hand motion to his bodyguards is enough to stop any precipitous action.

NUMBER ONE

(in Japanese)

Give it to me.

The Japanese businessman looking straight ahead. A long, silent pause... Then, still not facing him:

BUSINESSMAN

(in Japanese)

Go to hell.

Number One slips his fingers beneath his shades, massaging his eyes. IN A FLASH, he pulls a shuto from under his coat. The 18 inch blade gleams like a neon tube.

He presses the tip of the blade against the businessman's throat.

CHARLIE

his hand close around the grip of the Beretta. He unsnaps the ankle holster. The SNAP can be heard across the room. Nick's hand closes around Charlie's and squeezes till the knuckles turn white.

CHARLIE

(in a whisper)

What are you doing?

NICK

Saving your life.

NUMBER TWO

levels the scattergun at Nick and Charlie.

AT THE TABLE - NUMBER ONE

calmly holds the blade at the man's throat as he reaches into the man's jacket and removes a small, rectangular, plastic-wrapped parcel.

He feels its weight, then flips it to NUMBER TWO.

Abolofia, realizing that whatever is going on doesn't affect him or his, resumes eating.

ABOLOFIA

You people are wild... Wild.

NUMBER ONE backs the blade off. The man raises his napkin to the small wound. A droplet of blood has stained his shirt collar. NUMBER ONE turns around as if to leave.

What happens next could be a whim, an after thought. Number One spins around and THRUSTS the blade deep into the man's chest. He withdraws it with a half twist, and in the same motion fatally slashes the translator's throat before the old man's body hits the floor.

Blood pours from the businessman's mouth onto his Scungilli, spreading across the white cloth and onto the floor.

CAVELLO

reaches for a gun under his coat. But NUMBER TWO pumps two rounds into his face. At this range, there's not much left.

The killers slowly back out the door, covering the room with the scattergun. The minute the door shuts, Nick leaps up, pulling his shield and revolver.

NICK

(shouting)

Police officers. Everybody stay put.

(to Charlie)

Get back up.

Abolofia's eyebrows rise at this development.

Nick bolts out the door leaving Charlie in charge. He's never been in charge before.

CHARLIE

(nervously showing

shield)
Police.

EXT. THE LIME HOUSE - NIGHT

A Lincoln tears around the corner to pick the killers up.

Nick flies out the Lime House door and hits the ground.

Number Two pumps out shells as fast as he can squeeze the trigger. He's wild. The front windows of the Lime House shatter.

The LIMO DRIVER jerks to a halt. Number Two tosses the package to him.

Nick empties his revolver. Number Two goes down.

The driver floors the accelerator, leaving Number One to take off on foot. Nick follows, reloading as he runs.

INT. THE LIME HOUSE

Everyone's frozen on the floor.

CHARLIE

Call 911. Tell them an officer
needs assistance. Say ten thirteen.

Nothing from the owner who looks at Abolofia. Charlie grabs the owner by his collar and shoves him toward the phone.

CHARLIE

Do it, you dumb bastard!

Suddenly Charlie feels something wet at his feet. He looks down to see that he's standing in a pool of blood from the massacre. So much for his new shoes.

He wheels around, then quickly backs out the door.

EXT. STREET - DOWN THE BLOCK FROM THE LIME HOUSE

Deserted. The wail of police sirens in the distance. Charlie has his gun out. He's drenched in sweat. Where is his partner?

CHARLIE

NICK...! Shit... SHIT!!

CUT TO:

ANOTHER STREET - ALLEY - NIGHT

Nick, gun drawn, slowly rounds the corner to the alley: it's the ad hoc drugstore for the night. Drugs going up and down in pails, two dozen junkies buying, shooting, slumped on the ground. Everyone scatters -- the one's that can.

AN ABANDONED PAIL

swings slowly back and forth from three stories up. Nick cautiously moves down the alley, holding the gun in both hands. A Junkie steps out of a doorway, Nick swings his gun and nearly blows him away.

NUMBER ONE

We see his eyes first as he steps out of the darkness at the back of the alley. From now on we'll call him KOBO. His sunglasses are on his forehead; his hands dropped casually at his side. A very cool character.

Kobo slowly raises his hand, and making a gun with his finger, slowly points and "shoots" at Nick... He lowers his hand.

NICK

On the ground, man. NOW!!

Kobo cups his hands around his ear. He doesn't understand English. Nick, keeping his gun fixed, comes up to him and kicks out his legs.

Kobo falls flat on his chest.

Nick pulls out his cuffs. But Kobo lunges for Nick's ankle and yanks it toward him. Nick stumbles backward; Kobo's on his feet. Before Nick can stand, Kobo lands a brutal kick to the side of Nick's head.

Nick gets up, barrels into him. Kobo knees Nick in the solar plexus, then lands two more well placed kicks in Nick's back. It's not that Nick's a bad fighter, it's that this kid is so damn fast.

Nick slowly gets to his feet. KOBO lands two more brutal shots to the side of Nick's head. He's a bloody mess.

TWO POLICE CARS

stop at the end of the alley. FOUR OFFICERS climb out.

CHARLIE

joins the cops as they run down the alley to find Nick getting pummeled.

Charlie shoots at Kobo. Misses. Kobo turns to see the

five cops, guns drawn.

Nick, on one knee, spits out blood and a few teeth.

Kobo calmly slips the shuto out of his coat pocket and drops it next to Nick. The blade gleams in the light. That was next. Nick got lucky.

Kobo towers imperiously above Nick. Their eyes lock. We hold then...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

NICK'S LIVING ROOM - STATEN ISLAND - MORNING

There isn't a stick of furniture, but that's not the half of it. In the middle of the room is a motorcycle on a centerstand. A drop cloth is spread around it, tools neatly aligned. It's a Harley -- but this one is in perfect condition.

A phone RINGS insistently from off screen, then stops.

NICK (O.S.)

Yeah... sure, sure I'll be down.

Nick walks in, naked. Every muscle aches. One side of his face is completely swollen. He has a band-aid over his right eye; some blood caked on his earlobe. He stops to twist a spark plug in with a ratchet, but it snaps.

CUT TO:

INT. EIGHT - THREE PRECINCT - DAY

CAPT. OLIVER, early forties, walks between Charlie and Nick as they head toward the Medical Examiner's room. Oliver doesn't face Nick as he speaks; no love lost between these two.

OLIVER

How big a package we talking about?

NICK

(holding up his
hands)

This by this...

OLIVER

Dope?

NICK

Not in that company.

OLIVER

The old man was a Japanese paper manufacturer. Hotel room and rental car were full of it.

CHARLIE

Full of what?

OLIVER

(annoyed)

Art and stationary paper. Cavello had five hundred thousand in his attache case.

Nick rubs the back of his neck in obvious pain.

OLIVER

One guy do all the damage?

NICK

Yeah.

OLIVER

Thought you knew your way around dark alleys, detective.

Oliver goes through the swinging doors into the Examiner's room. Charlie shoots Nick a look. Nick let's it slide.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINATION ROOM

A TECHIE is showing the night's harvest to Charlie, Nick and Oliver. They're standing over the body of the middle-aged Japanese man.

TECHIE

... The old man's suit was Japanese. The hitter's was Saville row. No I.D. We're doing a peel now.

AT ANOTHER TABLE

Another techie is carefully removing the skin from Number Two's fingertips.

Charlie shuts his eyes and turns away, trying not to throw up.

TECHIE

There's something you got to see.

He whips back the sheet, the body is nude. A towel covers the genitals. Except for the feet, hands, neck, and face, the body is covered with elaborate tattoos: flowers and blood, dragons and snakes.

TECHIE

What's wrong with this picture?

CHARLIE

(nervously)

I got a tattoo. Birdie on the ball.
We all got them when we finished
basic at Camp Lejune.

NICK

Charlie.

TECHIE

I thought you guys were trained
observers?

They look up surprised. The techie picks up a hand. The
third and fourth fingers have been neatly amputated.

TECHIE

Eight fingers.

(ironically)

Hey, it was a trick question.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

ABOLOFIA is seated in chair next to his LAWYER. Nick,
Oliver, and a third detective are grilling him.

ABOLOFIA

He was with a friend, sure. I shake
hands with the guy and a minute
later he's bleeding all over my
socks.

ATTORNEY

Will that do officers? My client
has had a terrible shock.

NICK

Yeah, he's not used to seeing other
people do the killing.

ATTORNEY

I won't tolerate harassment!

OLIVER

What about the package?

ATTORNEY

We know nothing about it.

Silence. Abolofia looks at Nick, then at Oliver.

ABOLOFIA

Hard to believe a trained police

officer could let this kind of thing happen right in front of his face.

NICK

I did make a mistake. I let the wrong guy get hit.

Abolofia doesn't blink an eye, goes for the jugular.

ABOLOFIA

Cheer up, Nick. I'm sure it's easier to pick a dead man's pocket.

Nick springs from his feet. Oliver grabs Nick before he can get close to Abolofia.

ATTORNEY

That's it, we're through!

CUT TO:

KOBO

the Japanese killer who smashed in Nick's face last night. He's sitting in an interrogation room an hour later with a DETECTIVE and a JAPANESE TRANSLATOR. He won't talk.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Nick and Oliver watching through the glass.

OLIVER

Doesn't speak a word of English. And he won't speak Japanese either. No papers. The Japanese embassy is very interested.

NICK

Why?

OLIVER

He's wanted in Japan. They want him first. Then we can have him.

NICK

What?

Oliver nods. That's the way it is.

ON KOBO

he turns and looks at Nick. He can't possibly see him through the one way glass but he knows Nick's there.

ON NICK

looking at him.

ON KOBO

making a cutting mark across his forehead, right where Nick's bandage is. It's uncanny.

CUT TO:

INT. OLIVER'S OFFICE - LATER

Nick is sitting in front of Oliver's desk. The sunlight makes him wince; wincing makes his face hurt.

OLIVER

Japanese embassy talks to state department. State talks to police plaza. They to me and me to you. Shit rolls down hill.

Oliver drops a file folder on the desk. Nick opens it: petty cash, vouchers and plane tickets.

OLIVER

You and Charlie are taking the Jap home, tonight.

NICK

What...? What if I say no?

OLIVER

Check your gun before you leave. They're not allowed in Japan. It's a nice, safe country.

NICK

Why me?

OLIVER

They said send a detective if I could spare one.

(then)

I can always spare you.

Nick bristles at the insult. Oliver's had a hard-on for Nick for years, and Nick's tired of it.

NICK

(soft)

You got something to say to me, Captain?

Oliver doesn't want to get into it.

OLIVER

Yeah. Have a wonderful flight.

CUT TO:

THE ORANGE SUN

on the tail of a Japan Airlines 747. A driving rain storm. The plane taxies down the runway and disappears into the black rain.

INT. AIRLINER

Kobo, handcuffed and shackled, is in the center seat. Nick and Charlie sit on either side. Charlie is holding "Bachelors Japan" in one hand. Nick's in a sour mood.

CHARLIE

... Nick, you're the one that's always saying you never go anywhere.

NICK

I was thinking the Poconos, Charlie. Maybe Vegas.

CHARLIE

What are you missing? Riding your motorcycle to the nurse's house. That shit is sadder than Ethiopia.

NICK

Beats forty hours on a plane.

CHARLIE

They say we got to turn around and come right back. That's what they say. I got a plan.

The last thing Nick wants to hear -- too late.

CHARLIE

I call, right? I say I got the dreaded thirty six-hour Asian shits from some raw clam and we stretch it into three days. You and I become a driving force on the local Geisha scene.

NICK

Not a prayer.

CHARLIE

(grinning)
Hey, come on, big guy like you, cop from New York. You're gonna be the biggest thing to hit town since Godzilla.

Nick can't help but smile at this kid. Charlie looks down at the guide book.

CHARLIE

Says here, it's very impolite to touch someone while you're talking to them...

(nudges Kobo)

Guess that means you can't talk and screw at the same time, huh, hotdog? What's the matter, no -- speaky-the-language? Understand this: You will never ever fuck with my partner again.

Nothing from Kobo who is looking straight ahead. He doesn't understand.

NICK

Shut-up, Charlie.

A beat, then Charlie reads a Japanese phrase from the book. A slight facial response from Kobo. Charlie tries it again. This time Kobo laughs openly.

NICK

What'd you say?

CHARLIE

Where is the subway station, please.

Kobo keeps laughing; it's obviously not what Charlie said.

NICK

Get a new book.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRLINER - LATER

The cabin is now darkened. Kobo and Nick are asleep. Not Charlie, he's still at his book, and listening to U2 on his Walkman. Nick rolls over and opens his eyes to see Charlie watching him. He shuts them hoping to avoid talk. Too late.

CHARLIE

Nick... You up?

NICK

No.

Charlie removes his headphones.

CHARLIE

Nick, have I been a good partner?

NICK

Number five with a bullet.

Nick shuts his eyes.

CHARLIE

I just want you to know... I mean anybody who says you ever took has got to deal with me.

NICK

Go to sleep, Charlie.

CHARLIE

You didn't take, did you...? You hear things.

Nick opens his eyes.

NICK

I worked the three nine in Queens, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(surprised)

I didn't know.

NICK

The lieutenant was on the pad along with the rest of the squad. I was new, didn't know shit. When the feathers flew, I got called in front of the special prosecutor. It's on the top of my personnel file. They think I'm dirty or I cut a deal. Doesn't leave you with a lot of friends either way.

Nick shuts his eyes.

NICK

I might as well have done something. I've been paying for it every goddamn day since I got transferred...

HOLD on Nick then...

CUT TO:

INT. NARITA AIRPORT - JAPAN - DAY

Nick and Charlie, with Kobo between them, are a strange sight in a sea of Japanese faces. Kobo's hands are cuffed behind his back. Nick also has Kobo cuffed to his wrist. The cops are rumped, exhausted, showing two days of stubble. Kobo looks sharp and wide awake.

A pair of attractive teenage girls walks past them.

CHARLIE

Whoa. Nick, we're in paradise.

A PAIR

of white gloved hands belonging to a Tokyo police officer holds up a small, hand letter sign that says: CONKLIN/SKLOARIS. The man holding the sign is NAGASHIMA. Two other police officers in spotless tan uniforms stand at his side.

Nick, holding Kobo by his arm, steps up to the police and show his I.D. Nagashima bows.

NAGASHIMA

Officers Conklin and -- and...
(he can't say
Charlie's name)
... gentlemen, welcome. I am
assistant inspector Nagashima.

They show their I.D.

NICK

You going to take this crap off our
hands?

NAGASHIMA

(confused)
Crap...? Oh, the prisoner. Yes.

He barks some orders to the officers who immediately take Kobo by the arms and put cuffs on him. Nick unfastens his cuff when they're through.

In contrast to Nagashima's gentility, the cops are rough with the prisoner.

CHARLIE

(extends his hand)
Charlie. Kon-ich-iwa.

Nagashima shakes his hand. Bows. Charlie bows back. Nick wouldn't bow if his life depended on it. Nagashima hands Nick an official looking document.

NAGASHIMA

If you will please give this to the
customs inspector he will expedite
-- expedite you. We have a car and
a driver outside.

NICK

Right.

CHARLIE

(bows)
Arigato.

Nick grabs Charlie by the arm and starts for the customs line.

NICK
Givin' you a book is like givin' a baby a gun.

CHARLIE
Hey, when in Rome --

NICK
In Rome, I'll bow.

CUT TO:

INT. CUSTOMS BOOTH - DAY

NICK and CHARLIE make their way through the crowd toward the head of a long line. They dump their bags on the counter. The INSPECTOR, furious that they have taken cuts in line, barks at them in Japanese.

NICK
Inspector Nagashima told me to give you this.

He hands the Inspector the official looking document. The Inspector scans the paper. Hands it back to them.

INSPECTOR
(broken English)
You must get in line behind the rest.

NICK
We're cops. Pol-ice-men.

The Inspector signals a nearby POLICEMAN. The Inspector says something in Japanese. Hands the policeman the document. The policeman shakes his head, amused, points to the end of the line.

NICK
Fellas, get serious.

From off screen someone CALLS OUT:

MAN (O.S.)
Nick!

Nick and Charlie turn to see KOBO, their prisoner, standing on the other side of the thick plastic divider. The handcuffs are off. The three alleged 'policemen' are heading out the door behind him. It was a set-up: Nick

and Charlie have been had.

KOBO

(perfect English)

Thanks for the ride, detective.

He slowly backs away from the glass as if he had all the time in the world, finally disappearing in the crowd.

CUT TO:

NICK AND CHARLIE

trying to shove past the customs inspectors who are wrestling them aside.

NICK

Cops! He's our prisoner!

Two more policemen arrive. Nick and Charlie are thrown up against the wall. Out come the cuffs. SNAP!

NICK

What's going on? We're the good guys!

CUT TO:

INT. TOKYO POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Fifty identical desks. Fifty identical phones. Fifty identically dressed men in white shirts and ties working under the fluorescent lights of this large open room.

We GLIDE PAST the rows of desk to find INSPECTOR OHASHI, mid forties, sitting behind a perfectly arranged desk. Ohashi prides himself on order.

Nick and Charlie are standing in front of him.

NICK

Get me something like an Identi-Kit and I'll give you a description.

Ohashi remains poker faced. He continues to arrange papers and apply his hanko (personal seal) to the bottom of a stack of official papers.

CHARLIE

There must be some witnesses from the airport?

Still nothing from the good inspector.

NICK

What is it, tea time?

Still nothing from Ohashi. Finally:

OHASHI

(quiet rage)

You lost a man we wanted for some time. It was very incompetent on your part, officer.

NICK

Incompetent is letting people waltz through a secure area wearing your uniforms, carrying official documents.

Ohashi bows slightly, we're not sure why.

NICK

I want a gun.

OHASHI

It is not allowed.

NICK

We're police officers.

OHASHI

You're foreigners.

NICK

Work with me. I want your best detective.

Pause. Ohashi returns to his papers. Nick can't believe it.

NICK

Hey, inspector, I don't intend to take the rap for this.

OHASHI

(not looking up)

Do you know what this is?

Ohashi holds up the document that was handed to Nick at the airport.

OHASHI

It's a laundry list. Go home, detective.

Nick studies him for a beat, then turns away. To Charlie:

NICK

Let's go.

CHARLIE

Nick, we can't just --

NICK

I said let's go, Charlie.

Reluctantly they head towards the door, passing long rows of bureaucrats, telephones ringing off the hook. Nick stops at the door, spots a fuse box nearby. He glances back to make sure no one is looking.

Nick pulls out his handcuffs. Charlie can't figure out what the hell he's doing. Nick attaches one cuff to the main lever then yanks it down.

The lights go out. The fan's stop; so do the typewriters; so does the air conditioning. Dead silence.

Nick attaches the other cuff to a pipe, snaps it shut. Now it's impossible to left the main lever.

From the far end of the room:

OHASHI

What are you doing?!

Nick drops the key down the water fountain drain.

NICK

Your best detective, Ohashi.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nick and Charlie cross the street. Charlie's trying to read the name from the piece of paper Ohashi has given them.

CHARLIE

... Detective Ich-iro Matsu-moto.
Hey, we're getting Mr. Moto on our side.

NICK

Let's grab some food.

CHARLIE

First decent idea you've had.

Charlie pulls out his 'Footloose in Tokyo' book, flips through the pages.

CHARLIE

Food... Food, here we go. Tokyo offers a wide variety of food. It's best to sample the local specialties, including sashimi, soba, and world renown Kobe beef...

Nick goes into a restaurant. Charlie drops the book, disgusted with Nick's choice. Charlie reluctantly follows him in. REVEAL it's a Shakey's Pizza restaurant.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING PROJECT - SHIN OKUBO - DAY

Rows of post-modern buildings of odd shaped windows and brightly painted concrete walls. Nick and Charlie are searching for the Japanese cop's building. They can't speak the language; they can't read the signs; and half the buildings don't have numbers. It's a nightmare.

CHARLIE

This should be it...

NICK

You said that in the last two places.

Charlie holds out the paper to a passing man.

CHARLIE

Kore? Doku? Kore doku?

The man gestures toward the building Charlie was pointing to.

NICK

Okay, you were right.

Charlie grins, satisfied.

INT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - CORRIDOR - DAY

The boys are knocking on a door. Nick turns the handle. It's unlocked.

THE APARTMENT

A four tatami room. An unholy mess: Food packages, beer bottles, stacks of papers and file folders. Framed pictures of long dead relatives hang on the wall.

CHARLIE

This the right place?

NICK

I hope not.

A WOMAN now appears at the door. Middle aged, wizened face, in a full traditional Kimono.

CHARLIE

Konichiwa. Ichiro Matsumoto?

The woman babbles bird-like in rapid Japanese. She bows. They're in the right place.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET - MINIMAI MURAMATSU - NIGHT

The jammed streets are barely wide enough to get a motorcycle down. It's a bad neighborhood, one of the poorest in Tokyo.

We spot the small kimono clad WOMAN, clip-clopping on wooden geta, leading Nick and Charlie through this labyrinth.

CHARLIE

(looking around)
Getting very weird.

NICK

I'd feel better if we had some heat.

CHARLIE

Maybe we should bail?

Seeing they've stopped, the woman gestures for them to hurry up, then disappears around the corner.

NICK

(looking at the maze
of streets)
Think we could find our way back?

CUT TO:

A GARISH PINK SIGN - PINK SARON BAR

A poor man's idea of a bar. The woman points inside, chirps away in Japanese, bows, then hurries off leaving Nick and Charlie on their own.

INSIDE PINK SARON

Nick and Charlie disappear into darkness as the woven flaps shut behind them. A vintage wurlitzer juke box glows across the room. An Enka plays. (Haunting Japanese blues.)

MAN'S VOICE (FROM THE DARKNESS)

Big shots from New York. I like
your style!

ICHIRO MATSUMOTO steps into a pool of light just inches from them. He is a short overweight man looking every minute of his fifty-five years. His white short sleeve

shirt is too tight; his narrow tie spotted in the middle; his collar soaked in sweat. He's not drunk yet, but he's been at it a while. Call him Ich.

ICH

(bowing)

Detective Ichiro Matsumoto. I'm the man you're looking for.

This is Ohashi's best man? Well, at least he speaks English.

ICH

The man you are looking for, Kobo, was a member of the Samaguchi-gummi. A Yakuza.

Ich nods, offers them what's left of his Sapporo beer. They shake their heads. Ich finishes it.

NICK

Where do we start looking for this guy?

ICH

Where would you look for the mafia?

CHARLIE

The back room at Lombardi's after the Columbus Day Parade. Under the bed. In the mayor's office. Everywhere.

Ich heads for the door without saying a word.

NICK

Where're you going, Ichiro?

ICH

(stops, faces them)

The mayor's office, under the bed, the back room at Lombardi's.

(tucking in his shirt tail)

And call me Ich.

CUT TO:

INT. ICHIBANKAN BAR BUILDING - KABUKI CHO - NIGHT

Imagine an ultra modern indoor shopping mall, except there aren't any stores. The only product sold here is pleasure: Bars, hostess clubs, Turkish baths. A post-modern red light district with music piped in and automated doormen.

INT. LAS VEGAS WELCOME CLUB

Hip, younger Japanese are wedged together at the long chrome bar. The GUYS sport leather jackets and Raybans. The GIRLS are decked out in fifties American party dresses and short cropped hair. Jerry Lee Lewis wails in the background.

Nick, Ich and Charlie are at one end of the long bar. Ich is drinking them both under the table.

ICH

(singing)

"Goodness, gracious, great balls of fire."

(raising glass for toast)

To the killer. Jerry Lee Lewis.

NICK

(checking his watch)

Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, Dinky Doo
And The Don't's. Let's book,
Charlie. If he starts on Motown,
we'll be here all night.

ICH

No, this is the place for the young Yakuza.

NICK

That's what you said in the last three piss pots.

Ich sets down his drink, pours more sake for Nick and Charlie then for himself. He's having a great time.

ICH

I love you people. The music, the clothes, the movies... Japanese respect only what is Japanese.

Nick glances at Charlie.

NICK

It's incredible. Hit him or something.

CHARLIE

I don't think he'd feel it.

ICH

(beginning to slur his words)

Americans change everything. When I was young the city was wood and paper... I was ten when the bombers

came. I lived underground for three days. When I came up, the city was gone... A ball of fire.

Nick gets to his feet. Ich grabs him by the arm, stopping him.

ICH

It began to rain, Nick. You know what color the rain was?

Ich doesn't give him a chance to answer.

ICH

Black... It was black from the ash. Very impressive. You Americans, you could make black rain.

Ich polishes off his drink. An awkward silence. Charlie, wanting to lighten the mood --

CHARLIE

(leaning close)

Say Ich, between friends, where can I grab some squish around here?

Nick sighs, digs in his pocket for some yen for the bill.

ICH

Squid?

CHARLIE

Pussy, ass, soft personnel.

Ich looks up to see a picturesque, blood-haired American WOMEN in a tight silk blouse and skirt. She works here and has obviously heard Charlie.

ICH

Ah, Joyce...
(in Japanese)
How are you tonight?

JOYCE

(in Japanese)
Hello, Ich. Johnny Walker?

Ich nods. Joyce's Japanese is impeccable. She's a part-time bartender, translator, model. One of Japan's western wanderers. She's sliding past thirty, but only her weary eyes give it away. She is about to pour Ich another drink.

NICK

Don't give him any more.

JOYCE

He gets as much as he wants.

Charlie extends his hand to Joyce. She ignores it.

CHARLIE

Hello hello, Charlie Skloaris. New
York City.

She refills Ich's glass.

CHARLIE

My partner and I are cops.
(lowering his voice)
We're on a very big assignment here.
(nothing from Joyce)
When do you get off?

JOYCE

Right when you're being tucked into
bed.

Cold.

ICH

You should be nicer to my American
friends, Joyce.

JOYCE

They wouldn't appreciate it, Ich.
Trust me.

She says something in Japanese to Ich as she eyes the
cops. Then, she walks off.

ICH

Joyce can be nice.

CHARLIE

(brightening)
What'd she say?

ICH

(big smile)
That I should let you pay for the
drinks.
(raising his glass)
Kampai.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICHIBANKAN BAR BUILDING - NIGHT

Charlie and Nick are trying to help a besotted Ich find a
taxi, but no one will take him. Ich is shouting half
English, half Japanese phrases.

ICH

... We got to keep looking. Track him down! Great balls of fire!

NICK

(frustrated, to a cabbie)

What's the problem here?

The cabbie ignores them.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You don't speak the language. I'll drop him off.

They turn to see Joyce standing behind them.

ICH

Ah, Joyce...

The rest is slurred Japanese. Joyce speaks to a cabbie in Japanese. The rear door swings open. She helps Ich in. Joyce climbs in.

ICH

(out the window)

See you tomorrow!

The taxi pulls away. Nick and Charlie watch it go.

NICK

Not a prayer.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - FOUR A.M.

An early morning wind jostles the red paper lantern and plucks at the tails of dragon-like banners hanging outside the shops. Nick and Charlie are walking down this narrow sidestreet on the way back to their hotel.

CHARLIE

... He's a sorry old guy, but I like him.

NICK

He couldn't find his ass with both hands.

A brand new Kawasaki 1000 motorcycle with windshield and full farings gleams under a street light.

CHARLIE

Now that's the kind of motorcycle I want to see you on.

NICK

(muttering)
Sure, a rice burning crotch
rocket...

CHARLIE

Nick, how we gonna bag this guy
without any help? Maybe I should
work on that girl Joyce, she speaks
the language.

Nick glances over at his partner, smiles. But before he
can respond --

The DULL ROAR of a half dozen motorcycles in the distance
breaks the pre-dawn stillness.

TWENTY BOSOZOKU (BIKERS)

on their multi-cylinder high tech street bombers, creep
around the corner and slowly ride toward Nick and Charlie.

We get a better look at them: turbo punk Elvis-samurai
hybrids -- some wearing a slipper under their headbands,
courtesy of their girlfriends; some in leopard skin pants.
And tattoos...

They head straight for Nick and Charlie, then, at the last
moment, split and float away IN SLOW MOTION, as if the
cops didn't exist.

Suddenly, the street is empty again. Silent except for
the SOUND of the wind beating against paper lanterns,
rustling the wind chimes...

Hold on Nick and Charlie standing in the middle of the
street, realizing just how far away from home they are.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL - THE NEXT MORNING

A rocket shaped building: a mixture of Dutch Gable and
Japanese Minka roof. The mid-day sun beats down on a
particular room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Nick and Charlie are sacked out. They never bothered to
pull the curtains. THE SOUND OF KNOCKING at the door.

ICH (O.S.)

Nick!

NICK

Give us a break...

ICH (O.S.)

It's Ichiro. Ich.

NICK

Leave the rice cake outside and go home!

But Ich persists.

AT THE DOOR

As Nick opens up. Ich bows. He's now clean shaven and has put on a clean shirt.

ICH

There's been a murder. Yakuza. You should come.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINTING PLANT - DAY

The murder scene. NO SOUND.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

A BODY FROM THE WAIST DOWN in the claws of six foot working robotic. The tattooed covered legs swing back and forth like a pendulum.

THE TORSO is wedged in between two enormous printing rollers.

THE HEAD is resting in the middle of a conveyer belt. It's been drenched in black printer's ink which has begun to congeal.

WE SLOWLY TRACK PAST Ich, Charlie, and Nick, watching. Charlie has the dry heaves.

REAL SOUND as we reveal the full crime scene. Instead of the usual cigar smoke, camera flashes and radio chatter, there is order and quiet. A slow underwater dance.

INSPECTOR OHASHI

quietly gives an order. Someone turns off the robotic. The severed legs stop swinging.

Nick, Charlie and Ich walk over to Ohashi. Ich bows deeply. Ohashi doesn't acknowledge any of them, talks to a man holding a tape measurer.

NICK

Could you fill me in?

OHASHI

Why don't you ask your chief
detective?

Ich looks down at the floor.

NICK

Because I want you to tell me.

OHASHI

The young are eating the old,
something that usually doesn't
happen here.

NICK

Can we skip the poetry, inspector?

Ohashi pauses. Ich looks at Nick as if to warn him he
can't speak to Ohashi that way.

OHASHI

There's a war, detective, between
two rival groups. The man who
escaped, Kobo, leads the younger
group. They did this.

ICH

Kobo's a wild boy. He was a
lieutenant in the Sammaguchi-gummi.

OHASHI

(in Japanese)

Excellent, Officer Matsumoto. How
is your investigation going?

ICH

(in Japanese)

Well, sir. Thank you for giving me
the opportunity to work with these
distinguished gentlemen.

He bows. It's pathetic.

POLICE LIEUTENANT

Looking for clues in the bottom of a
sake bottle, Matsumoto?

Laughter all around.

OHASHI

He's an officer of great
distinction.

Another sarcastic dig. Ich stoically stands and takes it.

CHARLIE

Hey, Ich has been helpful.

OHASHI

(ignoring him, to
Nick)

Have you changed your mind and
decided to go home, detective?

NICK

Not until one of us bags Kobo.
(looking at the
corpse)

And it doesn't look like you're
doing so hot.

Ohashi coolly flicks the ashes of his cigarette and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINTING PLANT - DAY

Ich, Nick, and Charlie are threading their way through the
crowd toward the subway entrance.

TWO BIKERS, their hair slicked back, watch the trio from
the top of two different subway entrances.

As soon as Ich, Nick and Charlie go down the steps, they
climb off their bikes and follow.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Nick, Ich and Charlie are riding the people mover that
stretches the length of this endless tunnel. They're
sandwiched between the legions of SALARYMEN (white collar
workers) who all wear identical blue suits and white
shirts.

Nick looks over at Ich, who is still suffering in silence
from the recent humiliation.

NICK

You know, Inspector, you take shit
once, you take shit forever.

ICH

(beat)

I don't deserve Ohashi's respect.

NICK

Why the hell not?

ICH

I don't, that's all.

Ich looks away, obviously uncomfortable.

CHARLIE

You cool, Ich?

ICH

Cool?

CHARLIE

You all right? You okay?

Ich nods.

CHARLIE

What does Ichiro mean, anyway?

ICH

(smiling)

What does Charlie mean?

CHARLIE

Hey, all right.

Charlie slaps Ich on the back.

NICK smiles at Charlie's remark. He can't help but like this wide-eyed goofy kid.

Something makes Nick's smile fade.

NICK'S POV

KOBO, their escaped prisoner, hurrying in the opposite direction. His Kamali suit looks like it just came from the cleaners.

NICK

Charlie!

Charlie spots him. In a flash, the two men jump the railing and charge after him, leaving Ich in their wake.

Ich can't possibly make it over the side. He furiously shoves his way through the Salarymen, trying to get to the end of the walkway.

CHASE SEQUENCE

-- Nick barreling through the mass of faceless Salarymen.

-- Kobo, hurrying ahead, occasionally glancing back.

-- Charlie catching up to Nick. They've lost him. They spin around. A half dozen tunnels spin out in all directions.

-- Nick and Charlie spotting Kobo. He's waiting for them near the turnstile.

Nick suddenly realizes it's a set-up. Before he can say

anything, Charlie sprints ahead, recklessly shoving people out of the way.

NICK

(calling after him)
It's a set-up...! Charlie!

Charlie hasn't heard him.

AT THE TURNSTILE

Kobo hands a ticket to the turnstile guard and disappears onto the platform. Charlie doesn't have a ticket. The guard points to the automatic ticket machine. Screw it. Charlie leaps over the turnstile.

The GUARD blows his shrill whistle to signal the subway police.

THE PLATFORM

Charlie pushes through the crowd -- a wall of blank faces. Kobo is gone.

NICK

shoving through the crowd. He spots Charlie. Shouts at him to wait. Charlie can't hear his partner.

THE SUBWAY

pulls in. An immaculately uniformed CONDUCTOR blows his whistle and waves his white-gloved hands to keep the crowd back.

A LEATHER JACKETED BOY shoves Charlie from behind; he stumbles forward toward the track. Someone catches him at the last moment. Charlie turns around to see it's Kobo.

Kobo smiles, it's all a big joke.

What follows happens in a flash:

ON NICK

NICK

Charlie!

Nick is close enough to see, too far to do anything. He's blocked by TWO MORE LEATHER BOYS. He tries to shove past, but they grab him.

KOBO

holding Charlie by his coat lapels. An express train tears into the station. Kobo casually glances at

NICK

trying to struggle free.

KOBO

his eyes still on Nick, drops Charlie in front of the speeding express as if he were a sack of laundry.

NICK

NICK

NO!!

A woman SCREAMS.

The train barrels through the station.

Kobo starts toward Nick. He's next.

A pair of SUBWAY POLICEMEN burst through the crowd searching for Charlie because he vaulted the turnstile.

NICK

manages to break free of the leatherboys holding him. They flee into the crowd as the police close in.

ACROSS THE PLATFORM - KOBO

slips into the wave of commuters being shoved into a train by white-gloved MEN. It's their job to shove commuters into the already packed cars.

Nick goes for Kobo, but the crowd closes in front of him. He can't get through.

THE SUBWAY DOORS

slam shut. The train pulls out leaving Nick standing on the empty platform.

THE LAST CAR

streaks past him. Kobo stands in the rear window, getting smaller and smaller until the train disappears down the tracks.

ICH

Nick!

Ich, out of breath, is standing on the platform. Nick looks at him with disgust -- where the hell was he.

STAY on Nick, his head bowed, being surrounded by the sea of blue-suited commuters.

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

NICK'S FACE against a white wall. That's all we see.
Ohashi's voice OFF SCREEN.

OHASHI (O.S.)

... You ignored me. I don't care
about what you want. Get on a
plane, detective Conklin. Go home.

We HEAR a door open and SLAM shut off screen. Hold on
Nick, frozen in place, then:

CUT TO:

INT. CENTRAL SECTION - TOKYO POLICE H.Q. - DAY

Again, the fifty desks, fifty faceless men working.
Typewriters CLACKING, phones RINGING. We MOVE down the
rows to find Nick sitting behind one of the desks. He's
on the phone to New York.

OLIVER (V.O.) (PHONE)

It's not your job.

NICK

He was my partner.

OLIVER (V.O.) (PHONE)

They're blaming it on you. Christ,
Conklin, you didn't even tell me you
lost the prisoner!

NICK

I planned on catching him, Captain.

OLIVER (V.O.) (PHONE)

How? You don't know the place. You
don't know the language. Get on the
plane.

NICK

He killed a police officer.

OLIVER (V.O.) (PHONE)

Your plane's at nine a.m. Be on it.
That's orders. Period.

Oliver hangs up. A moment of long distance hum cross
talk. Nick doesn't move. Pull back through the rows of
cops busily working... SOUND FADES.

Charlie Parker's alto sax FADE UP as we --

CUT TO:

EXT. SHINJUKU - NIGHT

The MUSIC continues. The sax screams as the melody is abandoned.

Nick is drunk. Roaring angry drunk. He doesn't know where he is. He doesn't care. He plows down the street, occasionally grabbing a passerby, then letting them go.

Nick begins to laugh. A couple is staring at him, Nick yells at them, but we DON'T HEAR HIM. He stumbles on... drop back to find.

ICH

following in his wake. He bows and apologizes to the offended.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS WELCOME BAR - NIGHT

Nick is thrown onto the street. He tries to reenter and is thrown out again. We spot JOYCE inside watching; she turns back to her customers.

EXT. GINZA - NIGHT

Nick is hassling a news vendor who pointedly ignores him and continues selling his papers. Ich appears and apologizes to the news vendor.

EXT. STREET - TWO A.M.

Nick's sitting on the curb, his head in his hands. People step around him.

Across the street, out of Nick's sight, Ich is watching his partner, feeling every barb of Nick's shame.

Charlie Parker continues over the slow...

DISSOLVE TO:

NICK --

asleep, the futon tangled around him. He opens his eyes. A woman is making tea in the kitchenette. This is the kimonoed woman who led Nick and Charlie to Ich the other night.

A RADIO is on softly in the background. The Charlie Parker tune we've been listening to over the previous cuts ends, and the announcer comes on:

RADIO

... That was the Bird, from the Blue Note years. 1230 hours and 72 degrees in central Osaka. This is specialist Doug Dale, Tapestries in Jazz, on the Far East Network, armed forces radio...

Nick slowly sits up to see

ICH

seated at a low table looking at him from across the room.

Nick spots his clothes and luggage stacked in the corner. Nick now realizes he's in Ich's apartment. It's spotless. Everything is now in its proper place.

NICK

What happened?

ICH

They made you leave your hotel...
(looks away)
... you caused a disturbance.

Nick's eyes fall on Charlie's things: his sports clothes, his tour book, his shoes which Ich has stacked on the table.

ICH

It may be too soon to talk about it.
When someone we care for dies we...
(beat)
... keep something of their's. A tie, a pen.

NICK

Why weren't you at the platform?

ICH

I couldn't keep up. My shame is complete.

Nick slowly shuts his eyes, his head pounding.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC BATH - DAY

The neighborhood bathhouse. Thick with steam and neighborhood kids.

Nick walks toward the huge pool of water. Ich is beside him. Nick's about to climb in when Ich stops him, hands him a pail and a washcloth and points to the faucets along

the wall where a dozen men squat on small stools as they wash themselves.

CUT TO:

NICK

as he pours a pail of water over his head, it runs down his face in slow motion.

CUT TO:

THE POOL

Nick soaking, on one side. Ich is soaking nearby.

ICH

You must leave?

NICK

Yeah...

ICH

I'll get him for you, Nick.

Nick looks at this thick bellied, alcoholic cop. Not a very reassuring thought.

TWO MEN carrying plastic pails cross in front of the tub. Young, muscular Yakuza, their bodies covered with exquisite tattoos. They stare openly at Nick. One makes a joke. Both laugh obscenely as they slip into the hot tub.

NICK

Yakuza?

Ich nods. Nick eyes them for a long beat, then climbs out of the tub.

CUT TO:

NICK

Nick tossing two bags into a taxi in front of Ich's apartment building.

ICH

Ich watching Nick through the window from inside his apartment. He glances back and sees Charlie's "Members Only" coat hanging on a hook.

When he turns back, Nick's taxi has disappeared.

EXT. NARITA AIRPORT

The brightest object in the frame is a yellow forklift carrying a jostling aluminum coffin toward the open belly of the cargo plane. Nick watches it from the edge of the tarmac.

AIRPORT CHECK IN GATE

Nick hands the clerk his ticket.

NICK

... Smoking.

CLERK

Aisle or window?

Nick spots a folded newspaper someone has left on the counter. He can't read it, of course, but there's a picture of the subway platform where Charlie was killed, swarming with police. Nick continues to stare at the paper.

CLERK

Aisle or window, sir?

NICK

(looks up)

I want to cash it in. Yen.

CUT TO:

ICH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nick steps in, drops the two suitcases.

NICK

Ichiro?

The woman steps out of the kitchen, babbles something in Japanese. Nick doesn't have a clue.

CUT TO:

INT. LAS VEGAS WELCOME BAR - AFTERNOON

Only a handful of patrons. Joyce is straightening bottles behind the bar.

NICK (O.S.)

What's tricks?

She looks up, surprised to see Nick standing in front of her.

JOYCE

Ich said you left.

NICK

There was a change in plans.

Beat.

JOYCE

I'm sorry about your friend.

Nick's surprised at how fast she heard.

JOYCE

Dead gaiijin's are big news.

NICK

Gaiijin?

JOYCE

An outside person. A foreigner. A barbarian. You, me.

(beat)

More you.

NICK

I could use some help. Show me around. I'll pay you for your time.

JOYCE

I don't give tours.

Nick smiles.

NICK

You can count on the truth from people who don't like you.

JOYCE

You have a helluva way of asking for help.

NICK

You have a helluva way of answering.

Draw.

JOYCE

Look, you need Ich. I've been here five years and I still can't read all the street signs.

NICK

Maybe I'm a quicker learner.

JOYCE

I don't think so.

From OFF SCREEN:

ICH (O.S.)

Nicklaus-san.

Nick turns to see Ich, leaning against the door frame. He's already had a few drinks too many. He's delighted to see Nick.

ICH

I've continued working on the case!

NICK

I can see that.

Ich ambles into the room, slips down into a chair. He spills the contents of the large manila envelope he's been carrying onto the table: a wallet, a set of keys, playing cards, etc.

ICH

(signaling to Joyce)

Joyce... A drink please.

(to Nick)

Kobo has disappeared. My superiors don't trust me.

Nick walks over to the table and looks at the items.

ICH

Kobo's. Taken off him when he was arrested in New York.

Nick sits down. Joyce gives Ich his scotch.

ICH

I knew you'd come back. You feel you have a debt you can never pay. But you will, even if it costs you your life. Giri. Honor.

Nick picks up various items off the table.

NICK

How'd you get this?

ICH

I stole them.

Ich drapes his arm over Nick's shoulder.

ICH

Partners, Nicklaus-san?

Ich reaches for his drink. Nick gets there first. He holds it up as if he were proposing a toast, then purposefully spills his drink out.

NICK

Partners.

Ich has just had his last drink on duty.

CUT TO:

THE TABLE - LATER

All the contents of the envelope are spread out on the table: credit cards, matchbooks from New York City, choice clipping from Screw magazine, sugarless gum, cuff links...

Nick's holding up a series of photos.

CLOSE ON PHOTO

of a naked women and Kobo screwing on a Tatami mat. Another photo. Then another. Each photo is more pornographic than the next.

Joyce picks them up as Nick sets them down.

JOYCE

Busy man.

Nick holds out several of the same girl in various poses.

NICK

Know her?

ICH

(shaking his head)

We can ask someone I used to work with. A criminal. Someone I pay money to...

NICK

A snitch?

CUT TO:

INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - DAY

The largest in Tokyo. Endless rows of men sitting in front of the machines (horizontal pinball games) furiously punching the flippers. The NOISE from the metal balls is deafening.

A MAN

in a Hawaiian shirt, his arms covered with tattoos, is starting a new game.

Ich moves up to the vacant machine beside him, puts in his change. Ich doesn't face the man as they speak in Japanese. The man in the Hawaiian shirt walks off.

ON NICK

as the man in the Hawaiian shirt walks past him. This is the snitch. Nick glances back at Ich. Ich nods -- they're in business.

CUT TO:

A CRAMPED ROOM - REAR OF PACHINKO PARLOR

We HEAR the clattering of the machines outside. The man in the Hawaiian shirt, mid-fifties and badly in need of a shower, is sitting on the floor studying the photos. Ich and Nick tower above him.

The man says something to Nick in Japanese, then continues to study the photos.

NICK

What's he saying?

ICH

(looking up)

He says they're very nice. He wants to know if you have anymore.

Nick sighs.

ICH

I'll ask him again.

Ich asks in Japanese. The man shrugs.

NICK

My turn.

He grabs the man by his shirt collar and shoves him against the wall. The photos spill to the floor.

NICK

Who is she?

He bangs the man's head back against the wall. The man starts babbling in Japanese.

Ich, horrified, tries to pull Nick off him.

ICH

Nick, stop.

Nick bangs the snitches head against the wall again. Ich gets Nick away. The man is terrified.

ICH

This man must be treated with respect.

Ich bows to the man, apologizes in Japanese.

NICK

Aw, for Christ's sake.

They continue speaking in Japanese. They bow to one another again. Ich gives the man a glass of water, then motions for him to sit down.

Nick, impatient, starts for the guy again. Ich stops him. The snitch holds up one of the photos, and starts babbling.

NICK

(to Ich)

Now we're making progress.

CUT TO:

INT. SEIBU DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

CLOSE ON A SALESGIRL behind the cosmetic counter. She is wearing the store uniform: blue and white dress and white gloves. A doll. We shouldn't recognize her at first. Then --

INSERT A PHOTO

one of Kobo's porno pics. It's the same face.

REVEAL NICK

holding the photo, standing in the crowded store. Ich is beside him.

NICK

That's Kobo's girl? He's sure?

Ich glances back at the man in the Hawaiian shirt standing by the door. The man nods.

ICH

He's sure.

They watch the girl help a customer choose an eyeliner.

ICH

Nick, no one's seen Kobo in three days. He might not even be in Tokyo.

NICK

Only one way to find out... Get her up in the morning and put her to bed at night.

CUT TO:

INT. SOBA RESTAURANT - DAY

NICK

is struggling with his chopsticks and bowl of noodles. From O.S. A LOUD SLURPING SOUND. The sound stops, then starts again. Nick can't eat. He sets his bowl down and looks over at

ICH

slurping his noodles. It is considered polite to slurp soba noodles as loud as possible.

Ich stops. Looks at Nick, then resumes his slurping.

NICK

Think you could keep it to a dull roar?

They're sitting by the window across from the Seibu department store watching the entrance.

ICH

It's good manners.

Nick nods. Picks up his bowl. Again the LOUD slurping off screen. Nick starts to eat the noodles. He can't continue with Ich slurping. He sets the bowl down.

Ich grins, resumes slurping and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - SIX P.M.

The SALESGIRLS are lined up at the door bowing and thanking the last customers for shopping in their store. Standard practice.

The GIRL whom Nick and Ich have been watching comes out wearing her uniform and heads down the street.

NICK AND ICH

waiting in the restaurant, get up to follow.

CUT TO:

THE GIRL

stepping out of the laundry carrying her wash. She walks past a doorway where...

NICK is standing.

ICH now walks past his partner picking up the tail. No acknowledgement between them.

EXT. STREET CAR STATION

There are dozens of street cars waiting to pull out. The girl is on one of them. Ich has lost her. Nick and Ich hurry from car to car.

ICH

You said you could keep up with her!
'No problem, Nick-san.'

NICK

(cutting Ich off)
No. Don't say anything. Don't do anything, and for Christ's sake, don't apologize!

ICH

Nick...

Nick hurries toward another car to check it out.

NICK

What'd I tell you?

ICH

There she is!

They spot the girl sitting in the window of one of the street cars, about to turn onto the main street.

The two cops race for the car. Nick leaps on. Ich is a few steps behind. Nick sticks out his hand, pulls Ich up. They stand looking at one another, both breathing hard, both out of shape.

CUT TO:

NIGHTCLUB DISTRICT - NIGHT

Narrow streets with exploding neon ideograph signs as far as the eye can see.

We spot our girl hurrying down the street. Nick, a half block behind, is bumping into people, trying not to lose her.

She crosses the street and Ich picks her up. Nick drops off.

ON A SIDE STREET

around the corner the girl disappears into a three story

apartment building above an electronics store.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GIRL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

We're watching our girl inside her apartment. She flips off the TV and climbs into bed.

CUT TO:

A STOREROOM - NIGHT

We've been watching the girl from a window across the street. It's a storeroom full of shipping crates, not much else. Ich is sitting on the floor, legs crossed, back erect, watching Nick. Nick glances over. Ich continues to watch him. Nick returns to the window.

ICH

You dislike me.

Nick keeps looking out the window.

NICK

Did I say that?

ICH

You toler -- yes, tolerate me.

NICK

Are we getting married?

Pause.

ICH

I'm a joke. They sent you to me to make a fool of you.

Nick looks over at Ich. Ich is looking away. Nick looks out the window, then back at his partner.

NICK

You're doing fine, Ich. Now drop it, okay?

ICH

Sure.

The girl switches off her light across the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE STOREROOM - MORNING

Ich is sleeping on his back looking like a grounded whale.

Nick, exhausted, is sitting by the window his head resting against the sill.

NICK'S POV OF THE STREET

as the girl, dressed in her store uniform, comes out of the apartment and heads for work.

NICK

nudges the sleeping Ich with his foot. Ich opens his eyes.

NICK

Let's book.

Ich is groggy, nonplused.

NICK

Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - GIRL'S APARTMENT BUILDING

Ich, tucking in his shirt, comes down the hall to see --

Nick, on his knees, examining the lock on the girl's apartment door. He slides his NYPD card into the jam and lightly raps the knob plate.

ICH

You can't do this.

Nick uses his sleeve to wipe prints off the knob and jam.

NICK

Call a cop.

The door swings open. Nick walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRL'S APARTMENT

A cheesebox with a few vintage pieces of American deco furniture.

Ich, very uptight, stands at the door while Nick goes over the place.

Nick opens the closet. It's packed with expensive dresses, pants, sweaters...

ICH

Nick...

NICK

(facing him)

If you're gonna give me a hard time,
wait outside.

Nick goes through her chest of drawers: on the top, a lot
of high quality lingerie.

INSERT PHOTO: The girl and Kobo posing in a vintage
Corvette.

Nick replaces the picture, and carefully rearranges the
drawer so it appears untouched. He pulls open another
drawer. Then another. Under the jeans and Mickey Mouse
T-shirts, he finds:

A BANK STACK OF U.S. CURRENCY

in hundreds. The bottom of the drawer is lined with
stacks. Nick holds them up for Ich to see.

NICK

Not too shabby for a perfume pusher.

Ich, shocked, tries to play it cool.

ICH

Too bad it's not in yen.

Nick shoves the drawer shut.

CUT TO:

THE GIRL - DUSK - TWO DAYS LATER

The GIRL buys fruit from a stand as NICK watches from one
end of the block; ICH, listening to his transistor radio,
waits at the other.

THE GIRL

suddenly turns and finds herself facing

NICK

a few yards away. Nick smiles, then walks into the
store, hoping he hasn't been made.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GIRL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rain pours down.

INT. STOREROOM - NIGHT

Nick, leaning against the wall, watches the girl's apartment across the street. The girl walks in, turns on her light, then disappears into the bathroom.

Ich walks in, exhausted, soaked to the skin. He tosses his cap in the corner. Struck out again.

ICH

Work, lunch, groceries, laundry...
Fabulous...

NICK

(looking back out
the window)
Four goddamn days. This is going
nowhere...

A KNOCK at the door.

JOYCE (O.S.)

It's me.

Ich opens the door. Joyce, dressed for work, is carrying two odons (box dinners). Joyce and Ich exchange greetings in Japanese.

JOYCE

What's the latest?

Nick shrugs.

ICH

We'll get him, Joyce.

Joyce peeks out the window. The girl is getting undressed.

JOYCE

She ever pull down her shades?

NICK

(right back at her)
Sure, but then I just pull out the
photos.

Ich opens one of the box dinners and sets it on the ledge in front of Nick.

ICH

(enthusiastically)
Chikuwa, Hampen, Kobu, Konnayaku,
Ganmodoki --

NICK

Ichiro --

ICH

(realizing)
Broiled fish paste cake, Kelp roll,
soybean curd, devils tongue --

NICK

Smells like Bayonne at low tide.

Joyce hands Ich a flask of hot sake in tinfoil.

NICK

Whoa whoa...

Nick grabs the flask. Dumps it out the window.

JOYCE

Don't be an ass.

NICK

He's on duty.

JOYCE

I paid for that.

Nick tosses a few thousand yen on the table. Then,
spotting something out the window.

NICK

Alley oop!

Nick grabs his coat and goes out the door. Joyce slips
Ich another flask of sake.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - GINZA DISTRICT - NIGHT

It's our GIRL standing alone on the corner of the street
but you wouldn't know it at first. She's wearing tight
leather pants, red leather jacket, earrings, bright red
lipstick, and she's dumped the pony-tail, allowing her
hair to fall to her waist.

NICK AND ICH

watching in a doorway down the block. Nick's shivering,
his hands thrust in his army surplus jacket. Ich doesn't
mind the cold. He's had his sake.

THREE BOSOZOKU

riding their bikes come around the corner drive past her,
then circle back.

One of the RIDERS stops to talk to her, then drives off.
She hurries off in the opposite direction.

ICH

Yakuza.

NICK

Good. Very good...

CUT TO:

A SUBWAY STATION

The girl waits until the last minute, then after glancing back, steps in the car. The train pulls out. The cars race past until we see --

Nick and Ich standing inside of the last car. It disappears into the tunnel.

CUT TO:

THE SHINZOA DISTRICT - NIGHT

The girl, on the move, pushing through the crowd. Drop back to find Ich twenty yards behind. She crosses the street. Nick, pretending to be looking in a store window, picks her up.

AROUND THE CORNER

Nick has lost her. It's a cul de sac with a dozen buildings. He's standing in the middle of the street. Ich catches up to him.

NICK

She disappeared... shit!

ICH

You were too far behind.

Nick does a double-take.

ICH

(recalling Nick's words)

Don't say anything more. Don't do anything. And, for Christ's sake, don't apologize!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - SHINZOA DISTRICT - NIGHT - LATER

NICK

dropping another cigarette butt to the ground. There's a small pile at his feet. He's leaning against the wall watching one end of the block. TRACK over to reveal Ich, his back to Nick's, watching the other end.

Ich glances back at Nick. Nick ignores him. Ich turns back.

ICH

Nicklaus-san!

Nick turns to see the GIRL walk out of a bath house. She's wearing her ponytail again, with a black dress. She climbs into a taxi.

CUT TO:

EXT. PINK SARON HOSTESS CLUB - NIGHT

The girl climbs out of the taxi and goes inside.

Nick and Ich are watching from across the street.

INT. HOSTESS CLUB

Packed with Salarymen from the nearby brewery and hostesses in silk dresses selling cheap champagne at expensive prices.

NICK AND ICH

Walk in. Everything seems normal.

The BOUNCER in a white tux, stops them. This is not a place frequented by Gaiijin.

Ich beseeches the Bouncer to let his good friend in, promising that his friend will spend lots of money.

Nick, thinking he's in, takes a step forward. The Bouncer shoves him back.

NICK

Hey, no hands, huh?

He bats his hands away. Ich grabs Nick by the shoulders, preventing a fight.

ICH

You can't come in. They don't want --

NICK

Gaiijin.

ICH

I'll check it out.

Nick, unsure, turns to go, but before he does:

NICK

If I smell one drop of Scotch on
your breath, my friend --

ICH

You can trust me.

Nick hesitates, he's not so sure, then shoves the door
open.

EXT. HOSTESS CLUB

Nick waiting under the pink neon sign.

INT. HOSTESS CLUB - LATER

Ich is sitting at the crowded bar. A HOSTESS has her arm
around his neck. He checks out the room, searching for
the girl. He notices two THUGS standing outside a sliding
door. Ich finishes his drink.

ICH

(in Japanese)

Let me up.

HOSTESS

(shoving him down)

Sit, sweetie.

(to bartender)

Another Seagrams!

Ich relents. Then, spotting something across the room:

WHAT HE SEES: A rice paper door slides open, momentarily
revealing a DOZEN men with close cropped hair sitting on
tatami mats, playing poker. Some have their coats off,
revealing arms covered with tattoos. Yakuza.

A hostess, serving drinks, steps but leaving the door
partially open.

The hostess slides the door open to the adjacent room, but
Ich CANNOT see inside. She slides it shut.

Ich's hostess wants him to buy another drink, but Ich
shakes his head, gets to his feet, and pretending to be
drunk, stumbles toward the sliding doors.

Ich bumps into a table; slaps a stranger on the shoulder;
then starts singing along with Frank Sinatra on the
stereo. He's a little too loud, a little off key.

The bodyguards eye Ich suspiciously. He stumbles past
them, then grabs the sliding door and yanks it open.

INSIDE THE ROOM

A low table. Kobo is at one end. An older, distinguished, silver-haired man in his seventies whom we will come to know as SUGAI is at the other. Ich can't believe his eyes: Sugai is the head of the largest Yakuza syndicate in Japan.

A half dozen LIEUTENANTS sit on either side of the table. Half are older, dressed in conservative suits; the other half are younger wearing \$700 Issy Miyake jackets.

SUGAI AND KOBO

are having a heated discussion. The GIRL Ich and Nick have been following walks over to Kobo and sits beside him. This makes Sugai even more irate. He's on his feet, red faced and screaming.

FOUR GUARDS

seeing Ich, pull out their Beretta's. Two more grab him and fling him head first against the wall.

ICH

(drunken, in Japanese)

I have to piss, gentlemen... I'm so sorry but I have to --

The bodyguards hurry him towards the door.

EXT. HOSTESS CLUB

Nick checks his watch, it's been an hour - where the hell is Ich?

Ich comes stumbling up the steps, still affecting his drunken, pigeon-toed walk. Nick, of course, thinks Ich has gotten drunk again. Two of the bodyguards are watching from inside.

NICK

I don't believe it...

(grabs him)

Son-of-a-bitch --

Ich, knowing they're being watched, grabs Nick by the sleeve and drags him off still pretending to be drunk.

ICH

(under his breath)

I'm not drunk...

NICK

We're through. I mean it. This is the end of the line, Matsumoto.

ICH

Nick --

NICK

Shut-up.

No longer fearing he's being watched, Ich abruptly stops his affected walk, and sounding very sober --

ICH

You shut-up!

(then)

Kobo is inside. He's with Sugai,
the head of the Summaguchi-clan.

ACROSS THE STREET

Ich is dialing on the police call box as he fills Nick in on Sugai.

ICH

... A Godfather. His man was killed
at the printing plant.

NICK

I want to yank Kobo.

ICH

Not without a small army, Nicklaus-
san.

Ich quickly speaks on the police phone, then hangs up, pleased with himself.

NICK

Ich, my name is Nick. Not Nicklaus,
not Nicklaus-san, not Nick-san.
Nick.

ICH

San is an honorable title.

Ich realizes it's better to drop it.

CUT TO:

THE HOSTESS CLUB - MINUTES LATER

Drunken Salarymen spill out the door.

ICH AND NICK

are standing across the street waiting for the cops to arrive.

Nick freezes.

THE GIRL

they've been following steps out and lights a cigarette. TIME SLOWS. She looks up and spots the two men through the traffic. Nick turns away, afraid he's been made. When he looks back, she's gone back inside.

NICK

Shit...

Nick races across the street toward the club. Horns **BLARE**.

ICH

(doesn't understand)

Nick?!

IN FRONT OF THE CLUB

Nick reaches the curb just as the front doors to the club BURST OPEN. He's too late. Three bodyguards burst out, checking the street. A red and white Debonnaire pulls up.

Sugai, surrounded by a half-dozen additional bodyguards, comes out and slips into the car. It tears off down the street.

SIRENS AND POLICE CARS

from either end of the street peel around the corner. It's a madhouse. The remaining lieutenants and bodyguards fan out, trying to elude arrest.

Nick hurries down the steps.

INSIDE THE CLUB

The patrons are still in place, but the two side rooms are empty.

Nick spots KOBO going out the rear entrance. He starts after him but is confronted by the bouncer who stopped him earlier. Nick connects to the guy's jaw before his adversary can raise his hands. The bouncer staggers back. Nick flies out the rear door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF CLUB - NIGHT

Several lieutenants and bodyguards toss their guns -- possession is a felony in Japan -- as the police close in.

INT. HOSTESS CLUB - NIGHT

Ich hurries in, but Nick's long gone.

EXT. REAR OF HOSTESS CLUB - NEARBY STREETS - NIGHT

SILENCE. The narrow streets are deserted. Nick slowly makes his way down the street. The SOUND of a GUNSHOT. Nick ducks for cover -- it's a car BACKFIRING. He continues on.

Nick's POV of a woman giving a man a blow-job in a narrow alley. The man's face is hidden by the shadow.

Nick continues on.

JAPANESE MAN (FROM THE DARKNESS)

People like Charlie are a dime a dozen.

Nick turns back to see Kobo as he steps into the light.

Kobo tosses a handful of change at Nick.

KOBO

Keep the change.

NICK

I'm taking you back.

The girl takes off down the block.

KOBO

Here I am.

From across the street, a dozen bodyguards appear from various doorways and alleys.

KOBO

Charlie was a rookie...

Kobo traces his finger across the spot where he cut Nick in New York.

KOBO

... But you can take care of yourself. You're 'the biggest thing to hit this town since Godzilla.'

Nick glances at the guards, then back at Kobo. He is unarmed. To make a move would be suicide. More POLICE SIRENS in the b.g. closing in.

KOBO

What's the matter. I'm right in front of you, Nick.

(takes a step closer)

But I was right in front of you when you let Charlie die.

Kobo takes a step forward. His face is inches from Nick's.

KOBO

Walk away again. Maybe you'll get used to it.

Nick doesn't budge.

A LONG BEAT, then... Nick turns and slowly walk off. After a dozen yards Nick looks back.

The street is empty, except for a street sweeper pushing his wet broom down the block.

EXT. HOSTESS CLUB - NIGHT

A half dozen bodyguards are being frisked, then shoved into police cars.

Ohashi is talking to the enraged nightclub owner. Nick steps up to him. Ich hurries over.

ICH

Nick!

NICK

(to Ohashi)

A few minutes faster, we might've nailed him.

Ohashi doesn't say a word, hands Nick a document.

NICK

What's this?

OHASHI

Your visa has expired. Be on a plane in twenty-four hours or you will be deported.

NICK

While you were hanging out at the visa office, we found the son-of-a-bitch.

OHASHI

Look.

Ohashi directs Nick's attention across the street where a SURVEILLANCE VAN is parked. The rear doors are open revealing a van full of surveillance equipment and cops.

OHASHI

You ruined an on-going investigation

that could have gotten us more than one runner.

(to Ich, in Japanese)

I want a full report in the morning, officer.

Ich bows as Ohashi walks off.

NICK

Maybe if you'd work with us --

Ohashi ignores him, continues walking toward his waiting car.

NICK

(shouting)

Hey...!

(Ohashi keeps walking)

HEY, I'M TALKING TO YOU, INSPECTOR!

OHASHI

(his back toward Nick)

Twenty-four hours, detective.

Ohashi slips into his car. Nick storms up to the car and slams his fist on the window.

NICK

Ohashi!

Ohashi faces straight ahead, ignoring Nick. Nick takes the extradition paper and spikes it on the car antenna.

Ich grabs Nick by his arm, pulling him back from the car. The car pulls away.

ICH

Nick, stop!

Nick whirls, and before he realizes what he's doing, punches Ich below his left eye. Ich stumbles back over the curb and lands on his ass.

NICK

Damnit, Ichiro, I'm tired of people telling me what I can and can't do. No one ever solved anything sitting on their ass.

Nick, beside himself with frustration, watches Ohashi's car disappear down the block.

ON ICH

looking up at

NICK

who walks off without looking back at his partner.

CUT TO:

INT. ICH'S BATHROOM - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Nick, standing beside the tub, dumps a pail of hot water over his head, rinsing himself off. He grabs a towel and walks out of the room.

INT. ICH'S APARTMENT

Ich, holding an ice pack to his face, is lying on a tatami mat against the wall looking up at the ceiling. An open bottle of Seagrams beside him.

Nick stretches out on another tatami on the opposite side of the room and looks up at the ceiling, too.

NICK

The ice help?

Nothing from Ich.

NICK

Where does this Sugai live?

ICH

(cold)

A resort city, Beppu.

NICK

I want to go talk to him.

ICH

What...? Why?

NICK

Because he knows how to get to our man.

ICH

He'll never speak to a Gaiijin.

NICK

I'll be a nice Gaiijin.

Nick gets up and goes to the closet. He slides open the door. All of his and Charlie's clothes have been neatly hung up.

He shoves Charlie's jacket aside. Something's wrong with the way it hangs. He pulls the jacket out, runs his hand

over the coat, feeling something heavy in the lining.

Nick rips the lining open. Charlie's .32 Beretta and a spare clip tumble out.

NICK

The little bastard. God bless him.

Ich takes a drink from his bottle.

ICH

It's very small.

NICK

Big enough.

ICH

It's illegal, Nick.

NICK

It's a new deal.
(putting it in his
waist band)
... coming with me tomorrow?

ICH

Sugai's not going to be impressed
with your gun, Nick.
(beat)
No. I won't put myself in danger
for you anymore.

Nick picks up the liquor cap which rolled across the floor. He tosses it to Ich. Ich reaches for it, but misses.

NICK

Sure, pal. You've got better things
to do.

Nick walks out shutting the door behind him. Stay on Ich watching the door, then --

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS BAR - CLOSING TIME

The last customers find their way to the street, some with a little encouragement from a BOUNCER.

Joyce steps out. Nick comes up to her.

NICK

You know where I can get a decent
cup of coffee this time of night?
I'm buying.

JOYCE

Somebody must be suffering
somewhere, you're being so nice.

Joyce takes off down the street. Nick watches her for a beat.

NICK

I need your help, Joyce.

JOYCE

Where's Ich?

NICK

Unavailable.

CUT TO:

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

On the stage, a young professional looking man is singing along to "SUMMERTIME" blasting from the stereo. The Japanese way of letting it all hang out.

We find Joyce and Nick at a corner table having a drink.

JOYCE

I've heard of Sugai. I've also
heard of the emperor. They're both
national treasures. One's a hood.

NICK

I need someone to translate for me.

JOYCE

My Japanese isn't that hot...
Besides, you'll never get in.

NICK

It's my last shot. I have to be on
a plane home tomorrow night.

JOYCE

And I'm supposed to care?

NICK

You could fake it.

Joyce finishes her drink, sets it down.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The neon flickers on the rain slicked pavement. Nick and Joyce walk down the deserted street. She's carrying an umbrella.

JOYCE

You're wrong to sell Ich short.

NICK

He drinks.

JOYCE

He's got a reason.

Nick shrugs, everyone's got a reason.

JOYCE

His son hooked up with some bikers.
Yakuza kids. A cop shot him running
from a robbery.

Nick looks over for the first time.

JOYCE

A father doesn't out live that kind
of thing here, much less a police
officer...

Pause.

NICK

Where's the wife?

JOYCE

You met her.

Nick looks surprised.

JOYCE

The woman in the apartment. She
won't speak to him. But she won't
leave either. Japan... Nice, huh?

Before Nick can respond, something catches his eye: What
he sees --

A MAN

partially shadowed, standing in the alley.

Nick grabs his gun. The man steps out zipping up his
trousers. It's a drunken Salaryman. Nick lowers his gun.
The Salaryman staggers down the street singing to himself.

JOYCE

Not wound too tight...

CUT TO:

EXT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A three story modern building on a quiet street. She's searching for her keys.

JOYCE

I'd invite you up but I know you'd hate the incense.

(as if to explain)

I chant.

NICK

What do you chant?

JOYCE

'Nam oyo ranged kyo.' You think it's dumb of course.

NICK

Not if it works.

(holding the door
open for her)

I'll meet you at the train?

JOYCE

I don't remember saying yes.

NICK

I don't remember you saying no.

Joyce smiles, heads inside.

CUT TO:

INT. ICH'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Ich is sleeping.

Nick slips into his leather motorcycle jacket. He drops Charlie's gun into his pocket. He glances down at Ich, seeing if he's awake. He's not. Nick walks out.

Ich opens his eyes. He's been awake the whole time.

CUT TO:

THE YANAKA CEMETERY - DAY

Ich, wearing a blue suit, is pouring water over a simple stone with a wooden dipper. Next, he places incense in a holder and folds his hands in prayer.

The photo on the stone is of a young man wearing a school uniform. Ich's son.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BULLET TRAIN - DAY

It's bull's-eye nose cone scuds across the endless rice paddies west of Tokyo. Women in straw hats stand in the knee deep water pruning the rice by hand. Old Japan rubbing shoulders with the new.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

CLOSE ON NICK looking out the window as the countryside shoots past at 140 mph. From O.S. several children chanting: "Harrow, Harrow."

Nick looks over to see three uniformed school children thrusting their notebooks and pens at him.

JOYCE

is sitting across from Nick.

JOYCE

They want your autograph.

NICK

Who am I supposed to be?

JOYCE

This little guy thinks you're Robert Redford... the other one thinks you're Charles Bronson...

NICK

Tell them I'm not.

She does, but the kids insist.

JOYCE

They'll never go away.

Nick, reluctantly signs. Joyce takes one of the kid's notebooks before passing it back.

JOYCE

Mick Jagger?

Joyce smiles, surprised at his choice. Then, she looks up shocked to see --

ICH

carrying a gift wrapped package under his arm. He's wearing his hat, blue suit and tie.

Ich sits ACROSS the aisle from Nick and Joyce. He doesn't say a word. Faces straight ahead.

Nick looks at Joyce, then back at Ich.

NICK

I'm sorry, Ichiro. I lost it last night. I shouldn't have hit you.

Still nothing from Ich.

NICK

What's in the box?

ICH

(still not facing him)

For Sugai. Caviar, French cheese, ham... If you come to apologize for interrupting his meeting, Sugai may feel obligated to see you.

NICK

So I bring some cheese?

JOYCE

Gifts are expected here.

Nick nods, looks back out the window. He'll never understand this country. He looks back to see --

Joyce looking annoyed at him. Nick gets the message.

NICK

Hey, Ich... Thanks. I'm glad you're here. I mean it.

Ich still won't acknowledge Nick.

EXT. BULLET TRAIN

The Bullet Train disappearing into the foothills.

EXT. BEPPU - DAWN

Plumes of white steam spindle skyward from every street corner. If you didn't know it was steam, you'd think the city was on fire. Beppu is a resort famous for its geothermal baths.

EXT. SUGAI'S HOUSE

The only traditional house we'll see in our story. It's surrounded by a pool of blood red steaming water from the hot springs.

AT THE GATE

CLOSE ON A 1000 yen bill as it is dropped on the ground.

A pair of dice rolls over it. A handful of GUARDS wearing suits and ties are playing craps.

OUTSIDE THE GATE

Ich is sitting on the ground leaning against the wall, sound asleep. Nick is standing nearby. He checks his watch. Tired of waiting, he walks over to --

JOYCE

reading the Manichi Daily.

NICK

(impatiently)

They took the gift an hour ago.

The phone rings inside the gate. A guard picks it up.

JOYCE

(certain it's bad news)

All's not lost. There's a famous temple here. We could chant.

The guard hangs up, calls out to Joyce. Joyce responds in Japanese. The guard opens the gate.

NICK

We're in?

JOYCE

The cheese...

INT. A ROOM IN SUGAI'S HOUSE

A vast, austere, traditional room with sliding rice paper doors and tatami mats on the floor.

Ich and Joyce, drinking tea, are sitting with their feet beneath them in the traditional manor.

Nick, smoking, is in a semi-sprawl; using his tea cup as an ashtray.

A LIEUTENANT enters. He says something and beckons. They all rise. He says something else.

JOYCE

(to Nick)

Just you.

INT. ANOTHER ROOM - SUGAI'S HOUSE

Nick enters, ducking his head in the low doorway. the

shoji slides shut behind him.

The furnishings are minimal but elegant. There's a butsudon, a tokonoma, and a low, long table in the middle of the room. No chairs. Nick sits on the floor.

A door slides open at the far end of the room. Sugai, wearing a kimono over western style suit, walks in. Nick stands up to shake his hand. Sugai ignores it, and sits in the traditional position: feet tucked beneath him.

SUGAI

I'll spare you the ritual.

He tosses him a palm sized bundle. Nick catches it. Inside, are brand new greenbacks: hundreds.

NICK

This supposed to impress me?

He sets it down.

SUGAI

Pick it up. Look at it.

Nick hesitates, then picks it up again. He runs his fingers over the face of the bill and snaps the paper.

SUGAI

Seven years work by the finest engraver. Mass produced, sequentially numbered. The best there has ever been, Mr. Conklin.

NICK

I'm impressed. But let's use the short form. I'm looking for --

SUGAI

-- Kobo... I know. He killed two of my partners. One in New York, one at the printing plant.

Sugai fills a cup of tea for Nick and hands it to him.

NICK

I don't drink tea.

Sugai hands it to him anyway.

SUGAI

I took Kobo from the street. I gave him a home, a future... But my ways were too slow for him... I served seven years in prison for my boss when I was a young man. Kobo wouldn't serve seven minutes for his

Oyabun.

(sipping his tea)
He was supposed to take over this
syndicate when I retired.

NICK

I want him.

SUGAI

He'll be dealt with.

Sugai sets a plastic wrapped object on a table before
Nick. Nick recognizes it from the restaurant massacre in
New York.

CLOSE UP: Nick's fingers tear at the plastic. A block of
black iridescent polymer. The negative image of a \$100.00
bill. A printing plate.

SUGAI

Our associates in New York were
close to closing a deal with us.

NICK

The families who control the
casinos?

SUGAI

Yes. Unlike our syndicates, your
criminals don't understand the words
'honor' and 'duty'... We can't
afford not to deal with them.

Sugai takes the plate back.

SUGAI

Imagine if your families could pay
their gambling and drug debts with
perfect counterfeit bought for cents
on the dollar.

NICK

The Feds would be onto you in a
month.

SUGAI

Not with these bills. And even if
it only took them six months, do you
know what our profit margin would
be?

Nick looks at a child playing near one of the hot pools in
Sugai's garden.

NICK

Why tell me this?

SUGAI

The other plate is currently in New York, in the hands of Kobo's man. Find it for me.

NICK

You trust me?

SUGAI

I'll pay you.

Nick laughs at Sugai's audaciousness.

NICK

(indicating the counterfeit bills)

With these?

SUGAI

Swiss bank deposit. Gold bullion. Whatever you want. You know the city and the police.

NICK

If I say no?

SUGAI

You're smarter than Kobo. You know the price of deceit. Think about it.

NICK

I don't have to.

Sugai cools. Without a word he gets to his feet and starts toward the door.

NICK

I have ten hours to grab my man.

ON SUGAI

still walking with his back to Nick.

NICK (O.S.)

You won't get hurt.

Sugai turns to see Nick, across the room, pointing the Beretta at his head.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - SUGAI'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The room where Ich and Joyce are waiting. Sugai enters. Their surprise turns to shock when they see Nick behind him holding a gun to the old man's head.

ICH

No...

NICK

Let's go. Him first.

ICH

Nick, you can't do this.

NICK

It's done.

(to Joyce)

You don't have to come.

She hasn't moved a muscle.

INT SUGAI'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE WAY

Sugai watches calmly as Nick, Ich, and Joyce put their shoes on. Nick keeps the gun on him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUGAI'S COURTYARD

Nick steps out of the house. He now has one end of a wire coat hanger loosely wrapped around Sugai's neck, the other end around his wrist. His gun is pressed just beneath Sugai's ear. If Nick gets shot, so does Sugai.

A handful of guards stand in the courtyard, one is polishing Sugai's Debonnaire car. They spot Nick and Sugai coming, and immediately pull their guns.

NICK

Explain to them. They shoot me,
they kill you.

(Sugai hesitates)

DO IT!

Sugai explains to his lieutenants. They stand helpless as Nick walks Sugai toward the car.

NICK

Grab the keys, Ich, and get inside.

ICH

No.

NICK

Not now, man, okay, not now. Work
with me.

Ich takes the keys from the man polishing the car. He gets inside. Joyce hurries in beside him.

ICH

You don't know what you're doing.

Nick slides Sugai in the back seat, carefully reaches over and shuts the door.

NICK

Start it.

ICH

(terrified)

I can't...

JOYCE

Slide over.

Joyce, furious at Nick, starts the car, gets behind the wheel. Ich gets in on the other side.

She spins the car around. The gate opens. They tear off.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - BEPPU - DAY

The car bursts through the funnels of steam from the hot-springs beneath the street. It tears down the narrow block dodging traffic. Joyce is concentrating hard on the road.

NICK

(to Ich)

Where's somewhere safe?

Nothing from Ich. He's still apoplectic.

JOYCE

(angrily)

You came up with the first part.

CUT TO:

EXT. KUDAN LOVE HOTEL - BEPPU

A four story concrete hotel, strictly for making love. "Love Hotels" exist all over Japan. Each have various themes: western, fifties drive in, Star Wars, etc., each complete with music and lighting effects.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Western style. Plastic five foot cacti in front of the western vista on the walls. A hitching post at the head of the bed. Cowboy hats and boots at the other end.

Sugai hangs up the phone and turns to Nick and Joyce who are sitting nearby. Ich hangs up the extension.

SUGAI

Kobo will meet me here tomorrow.
Ten a.m.

Ich nods, confirming that what Sugai says is true.

NICK

Good.

SUGAI

He'll find out you took me. I'm
unprotected. He'll kill us. All of
us. You don't stand a chance.

Ich, knowing Sugai is right, looks at Nick. Nick flips Ich the gun.

NICK

Not if we're careful.

Ich checks to make sure the gun is loaded, then watches as Nick escorts Joyce out of the room.

CUT TO:

A HOTEL ROOM ACROSS THE HALL

Fifties theme. The front end of a pink chevy curves around the bed. A "Drive-In" movie screen along one wall.

Nick is dropping change into the vintage Wurlitzer. Joyce steps in, leaving the door open.

JOYCE

You're out of your mind. I'm
leaving.

Nick doesn't respond.

JOYCE

You'll get Ich killed.

NICK

No one's keeping him here.

JOYCE

Bullshit, Nick. And don't tell me
this is all just about Charlie.
It's not.

NICK

Why would you care?

That pushes her over the line.

JOYCE

Bastard...

She moves toward him, enraged. Nick grabs her arm.

JOYCE

Let go.

He won't.

JOYCE

You're out of your mind.

He grips her tighter.

CUT TO:

THE ROOM - LATER

Nick and Joyce, only partially undressed, are making love on the floor. The Drifters singing "Under The Boardwalk" can be heard on the Wurlitzer. The fifties decor, the music, it's all pretty incongruous.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOVE HOTEL - DAWN

Nick is putting Joyce in a taxi. He shuts the door.

JOYCE

I still think you're a bastard.

NICK

What if I chant?

JOYCE

Wouldn't help.

(beat)

Watch out for Ich.

He nods. The cab drives off. Nick watches her taxi until it is out of sight, around a corner, then heads inside.

CUT TO:

NICK - LATER

walking into Sugai's room. Sugai's asleep on the bed. Ich is vigilantly sitting awake in the corner, the gun resting on the table in front of him.

NICK

Better wake him up.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOVE HOTEL - LATER

Quiet. The wind twirls a discarded newspaper in the parking lot.

INSIDE THE LOVE HOTEL - HALLWAY

A YOUNG GIGGLING COUPLE step out of a door, arm in arm, and disappear down the hall. STAR WARS MUSIC from one room. HAWAIIAN MUSIC from another.

THE CAMERA FINDS the closed elevator door. It opens, Kobo steps out, followed by a half-dozen more men all carrying Sig-Saur assault rifles -- very heavy artillery.

CUT TO:

SUGAI

wearing his hat and coat is sitting on the couch, his back to us, facing out the window.

Drop down to --

THE ROOM BENEATH HIM

A couple are making love in the Hawaiian theme room.

The door burst open. Two men, cradling Sig-Saur rifles in their arms, step in. They aim at the ceiling, blasting into Sugai's room above.

THE GIRL

starts screaming. The men ignore her and continue to pump bullets into the ceiling.

KOBO AND HIS MEN

stop in front of every door long enough to blast into the room. They make their way down the hall.

A naked man steps into the hallway and is matter-of-factly gunned down.

Kobo and his men stop in front of Sugai's room.

INT. SUGAI'S ROOM

Sugai, wearing his hat, is slumped down on the couch which has been splintered by the bullets from below.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

Kobo signals the men. All six open-up through the door.

INSIDE THE ROOM

The door, what's left of it, is kicked open. The six men step in, shooting in all directions: into the bathroom door, into the closet... Windows shatter, mirrors fall, total destruction. They stop. SILENCE.

Kobo walks up to Sugai who is slumped on the couch. He lifts up his hat. It's a cowboy mannequin wearing Sugai's clothes.

THE ELEVATOR DOOR

opens. A DOZEN of Sugai's men carrying machine pistols come out.

THE OUTSIDE BALCONY

Nick and Ich lie on their bellies, guns out.

INSIDE THE ROOM

Kobo's men turn. Sugai's men open-up. Three of Kobo's hitters go down. The others try to flee into the adjoining room.

Kobo goes for the balcony.

THE BALCONY

as Kobo steps out. He steps right into --

NICK

who slams the side of Kobo's head with the butt of his gun.

THE ROOM

Nick and Ich drag Kobo in by his jacket collar. Sugai, very much alive, walks in from the hallway. Nothing is said. Sugai looks at Kobo for a long beat, then walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. SUGAI'S HOUSE - DAY

KOBO

standing alone in the middle of a tatami room. His face is badly beaten. His hands are bound. Two guards stand near the wall. Nick and Ich stand across the room.

SUGAI

wearing a western suit, is asking Kobo questions in Japanese. Sugai barks at him again. Kobo refuses to answer. Sugai pulls up a shuto -- an 18 inch knife -- from it's scabbard.

SUGAI

(in Japanese)

Contact your associate in New York and tell him to hand my plate over to Abolofia.

Nothing from Kobo.

SUGAI

You have betrayed the syndicate and personally dishonored me. I would rather the deal fell through than...

The guards walk over and turn Kobo around. His back is to Sugai. Sugai runs the sword across the nape of Kobo's neck drawing blood. The guards tighten their grip on Kobo's arms.

NICK

can't believe Sugai's going to kill him. Nick starts to get up, Ich stops him.

Kobo realizes Sugai isn't just threatening him.

KOBO

No... I'll arrange it.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE ROOM - LATER

Kobo is led back into the room by two guards. The guards shove him down to the floor. His hands are still bound.

Nick walks over and stands above him. He doesn't say a word. Just stands above him. Then, Nick pulls spare change from his pocket and slowly drops the coins, one by one, in front of Kobo's face, like Kobo did to him. He walks away.

Sugai steps in.

SUGAI

Abolofia's person has received the plate. It's done.

A door opens at the far end of the room. It's Kobo's girlfriend, the one Nick and Ich had been following.

She starts toward Kobo; a lieutenant intercepts her.

SUGAI

(in Japanese)

I wanted you to see him like this.

GIRL

(in Japanese)

Let him go, father.

ON ICH

realizing she's Sugai's daughter.

GIRL

(in Japanese)

You're too old...

SUGAI

(in Japanese)

That's enough.

Sugai turns away and picks up the sword. The guards clutch Kobo. Sugai's going to kill Kobo after all.

The girl screams at him to stop. Sugai's oblivious.

NICK (O.S.)

That wasn't our deal.

SUGAI

You want him dead too.

NICK

After a court convicts him. He belongs to me.

There's a long pause. Then, something unusual happens. Sugai tells the lieutenant to unfasten Kobo's wrist. When he does, Sugai hands Kobo the sword and demands that he cut off his finger.

This is Yubitsume: the ritual act within the Yakuza of slicing the joint of the little finger to atone for a mistake.

Kobo, not believing in this ancient tradition, refuses. Sugai nods to a guard who places Kobo's finger on the table.

KOBO

stares defiantly at Sugai. He doesn't even wince as the blade slices off his finger. The guard hands Sugai the finger in a handkerchief.

SUGAI

(looking at Nick)

If anything happens to Abolofia or

my plate, detective...

HOLD on Nick then --

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

as it bursts out of a tunnel on it's way to Tokyo.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Kobo is sitting by the window, his hands cuffed in front of him. Another pair of cuffs chain him to the arm rest.

Nick pours a drink from an airline-sized bottle of Scotch. He holds it out to... Ich. It's his first drink in a week.

NICK

Just one, compadre... Kampai.

ICH

Kampai.

They clink glasses. Ich drinks it down.

NICK

It took 12 years to make it, you could take five minutes to drink it.

Ich slows down.

NICK

You did great, Ichiro.

ICH

I called Ohashi, he'll be waiting.
(smiling)
I like him waiting.

Ich gets up.

ICH

Needs ice.

He heads for the bar car, leaving Kobo and Nick alone.

Kobo looks out the window at the people working the rice paddies, then back down the aisle at the Salarymen in their identical suits, then at the women separated from them.

KOBO

Ugly... A couple of thousand years they've been bound by these little

rules. Looking in. Always afraid.
Ugly little lives...

NICK

Save it, I already took the tour.

KOBO

You are a lucky man. Where you come
from a man can stand out. It's
expected. Here a man is made to
look a fool for standing out.

Nick isn't paying much attention.

KOBO

I like your friend, Joyce. You're
lucky.

NICK

Guess I'm on a roll.

KOBO

She's such a long way home for you.

NICK

Time, I've got plenty of.

A raucous SALARYMAN comes down the aisle, singing an Enka,
swaying with the train, bumping into seats. A common
enough sight and ignored by the rest of the passengers.
The Salaryman stumbles and falls across Nick's lap.

NICK

(helping him up)
Hey, hey, come on, blow...

The Salaryman bows deep. Nick ignores it. The man moves
on. Kobo looks out the window, the train begins to SLOW
as it approaches the next station.

KOBO

(matter-of-factly)
This is my stop.

NICK

I'm amused.

KOBO

Don't be.

Nick looks up to see Kobo calmly fingering a lock of blond
hair tied with black ribbon. Joyce's ribbon. Joyce's
hair.

KOBO

I have her.

Nick looks down the car. The drunk Salaryman who stumbled over Nick is quite sober. He made the hand-off to Kobo. Kobo holds out his wrists. Nick hesitates.

KOBO

(matter-of-factly)

I'll kill her.

Nick, reluctantly, unlocks both sets of cuffs. The train pulls into the station.

KOBO

I want the plate from your pal,
Sugai. When you get it, you get
her.

Kobo gets up, starts down the aisle.

NICK

Sugai won't give it to me, you know
that.

KOBO

Then take it from him.

Kobo gets off the train.

NICK

follows him to the door.

THE STATION

Kobo get into a waiting Jaguar. Four guards nearby.

INSIDE THE TRAIN

Nick runs down the length of the car trying to keep the Jaguar in sight as the train pulls out... the car is gone.

NICK

bursts into the packed bar car.

NICK

Ichiro?!

Everyone turns around. No Ich.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - TRAIN STATION - TOKYO

It slows into the station.

INT. TRAIN

Nick shoves past the passengers lined up in the vestibule, ignoring a conductor's angry shouts.

INT. TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

The train stops. Nick flies out and starts running, dodging the crowd.

Three uniformed policemen, including Ohashi's assistant, hurry toward him; they're dismayed to find that Kobo is gone.

NICK

Where's Ohashi?

Instead of offering him help, the policemen grab him and slap a pair of handcuffs on Nick's wrists.

NICK

What the hell are you doing?!

CUT TO:

HOLDING CELL - TOKYO POLICE STATION

Nick, waiting alone in the cell. It's been hours. A door at the end of the hall opens.

Ohashi stops in front of his cell.

OHASHI

Your plane leaves at six. Two officers will escort you.

NICK

For God's sake, Ohashi, I need your help. Let me out of here!

OHASHI

You had my help, detective.

NICK

If anything happens to her while I'm here --

OHASHI

-- Do you know where she is, detective? Do you know how to find her? Even where to start? We will find them.

NICK

I have to get to Sugai.

OHASHI

Goodbye, officer.

Ohashi keeps walking.

NICK

OHASHI!

The LOUD clank of metal on metal. Ohashi's gone.

NICK

(yelling at the top
of his lungs)

OHASHI!!

HOLD on Nick, his fingers squeezing the bars in rage,
then --

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Flood rice paddies stretch to the distance on either side
of the road. We PAN over to Kobo at a phone kiosk outside
a gas station.

KOBO

(in Japanese)
Yes. Do it.

INT. SUGAI'S HOUSE - AT THAT MOMENT

Kobo's girl, Sugai's daughter, hangs up the phone. She's
been on the other end of the line.

INT. SUGAI'S ROOM

The door swings open. Sugai is sitting on the floor. The
girl is carrying a tray of tea. Beneath the tray, we spot
something else -- the butt of a short-bladed tanto.

CUT TO:

EXT. NARITA AIRPORT - TOKYO - DAY

A police car rolls through the service gate. We see Nick
inside the car along with two police guards.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - NARITA AIRPORT

A white room. No chairs. Jet engines can be HEARD
through the walls. Nick is sitting on the floor,
defeated. He doesn't look up when he hears someone enter.

ICH (O.S.)

I'll tell you one thing. You can't solve a thing sitting on your ass.

Nick looks up. Ich is in uniform. A revolver and batton hang from his white web gear. His undershirt bulges through his khaki shirt. He looks ridiculous. Nick has never seen a more beautiful sight.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR

Ich is driving. Nick is seated behind a cage in the back seat. His hands are cuffed. Ich is driving through the freight area towards a perimeter guard.

NICK

I was ready to have your ass for taking off on me.

ICH

I followed them. An hour from the train station.

NICK

How many men?

ICH

I couldn't tell.

NICK

Joyce?

ICH

I don't know.

NICK

We need the plate to negotiate with.

Ich nods.

EXT. AT THE GATE - TOKYO AIRPORT

The car slows. Ich speaks rapidly to the guard showing him his papers. The guard takes a good hard look at Nick. Time stands still... He waves them through. Nick can breath again.

NICK

You know, Ichiro, you just burned your bridges.

Ich is silent for a moment. He hands Nick's Beretta back through the partition. So it goes.

ICH

Rest.

Nick looks for Ich's eyes in the rearview mirror. The little cop keeps driving, his eyes on the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - BEPUKU - DAY

Nick and Ich are standing outside their car. The Police radio crackles from inside.

WHAT THEY SEE:

A large crowd gathered outside of Sugai's estate. Police have cordoned off the area. An empty ambulance is parked out front with various other cars: Debonnaire's, Cadillac's... A boy in shorts is endlessly bouncing a ball against the compound wall. Whatever happened is long over.

Ich flips off the radio.

ICH

Someone attacked him.

NICK

Now we've got nothing to negotiate with.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

The police car streaks across endless fields.

INSIDE THE CAR

Nick is at the wheel. He rubs the sleep from his eyes. Ich is slumped down in the seat watching the road.

Ich pulls out a cigarette. Nick lights it for him.

NICK

Joyce told me about your family.
It's tough...

Ich looks up surprised.

ICH

Thank you.
(beat)
You have one?

NICK

A wife. She left.

ICH

I'm sorry.

NICK

Me too.

Ich glances over at Nick, then back at the road.

Nicks rubs out his cigarette and presses down on the accelerator.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KOBO'S HIDEOUT - DAWN

A small, contemporary house perched on a dry piece of land. A paved road, lined with dense foliage runs on a berm between the flooded rice paddies.

ON NICK AND ICH

sitting in the car watching from a hillside turnoff. There's no easy way in.

NICK

Let's go.

Ich hands Charlie his shuto -- an 18 inch long knife.

NICK

What's that for?

ICH

Luck.

Nick tucks the shuto inside his jacket.

NICK

Thanks.

Nick opens up his door and climbs out.

ICH

You know, Nick, we can't lose.

NICK

(stopping)

Why's that?

ICH

Because we're the biggest things to hit this town since Godzilla.

CUT TO:

THE DIRT ROAD

leading to the house lined with foliage. The rice paddies on either side.

CUT TO:

NICK AND ICH

making their way through the waist high water.

TWO WORKERS

with their hoes make their way into the water. They don't see our cops.

OUR COPS

making their way along the edge of the road. The SOUND of a motorcycle coming.

THE MOTORCYCLE RIDER

slows and drops a gear as he turns off the main road and onto the dirt berm toward the house. He's one of Kobo's Bosozoku -- a long way from the streets of Tokyo.

The rider comes around the bend to see --

A COP

standing in a uniform. Ich. For a moment he doesn't know what to do. Then, he draws a pistol from his belt and accelerates toward Ich.

ICH

stands his ground as the bike closes in. The biker takes aim.

Ich drops off to the side as --

NICK

rises from a ditch and swings a hoe at the rider as he passes, catching the man across the face. The rider drops like a swatted fly. The biker's momentum carries it a few yards before it falls and skids to a halt.

Nick hurries to the bike.

Ich drags the biker off the road, then catches up to his partner.

NICK AND ICH

raise the heavy bike. Nick mounts. He takes the riders helmet and goggles from Ich, and puts them on.

ICH

What are you going to do?

Nick doesn't know exactly. He taps the bike into gear, it torques like a mule. There's a lot more juice here than he's used to.

Nick fishtails for a minute, then gets the hang of it.

Ich heads off taking another route.

INT. HOUSE

KOBO AND SUGAI'S DAUGHTER

are putting the last of their belongings into a suitcase. She hands him the plate -- Sugai's plate.

Kobo kisses her as he slips it into his breast pocket. The SOUND of a motorcycle approaching from outside.

EXT. THE HOUSE

Kobo steps out, and not recognizing Nick, raises his hand to greet what he thinks is one of his men.

ON NICK

bearing down on Kobo.

ON KOBO

as Nick keeps coming. He is unable to see clearly until Nick is almost on top of him.

NICK

dumps the bike at the foot of the stairs and leaps on Kobo.

Nick and Kobo roll off the narrow porch. Nick breaks free. He isn't fighting fair this time. He slams his foot into Kobo's face and ribs. Kobo tries to get up, but Nick knees him in the chin.

A woman cries out in Japanese. Nick turns to see

JOYCE

standing at the top of the steps. A biker is pressing the muzzle of a Sig-Saur assault rifle on her. Kobo's girl is beside them holding a small pistol.

KOBO

gets to his feet. The biker tosses Kobo the rifle. Kobo works the charging lever and holds the weapon at his side. He has all the time in the world.

Kobo whirls and kicks Nick in the groin. Nick falls to his knees in agony.

Kobo towers above Nick as he did in the alley in New York.

KOBO

Still on your knees, Nick?

Kobo walks off, his back to Nick.

KOBO

There's nothing you can do for me anymore. I have the plate. Sugai's dead. No there is something.

He walks up to the steps to Joyce.

KOBO

You can tell me who I should shoot first.

Nick struggles to get to his feet. Kobo turns and faces Nick at the foot of the steps.

ICH

appears behind Kobo and takes him down with an amazing display of baton work that shows a lifetime of training.

He grabs the gun. A biker bursts out of the door. Ich fires, hitting him in the thigh. He drops his gun.

SUGAI'S DAUGHTER

grabs the gun.

NICK

tackles her, and wrestles the gun away. She grabs for it. Nick slugs her.

A GUN BLAST

Ich is hit in the back of his shoulder, falls onto the porch.

KOBO

the shooter, is holding a pistol -- a Glock 17 automatic. He fires at

NICK AND JOYCE

who scramble for cover.

KOBO

continues firing as he climbs onto a motorcycle. He pops the clutch and flies off down the road. Nick fires after him, but Kobo's gone.

NICK

(to Ich)
You all right?

ICH

Yes...

NICK

(to Joyce)
Call for help.

Nick mounts the other bike, and puts the turbo charged rocket into gear.

THE ROAD

Rain pours down as Kobo turns onto the main road. He opens up the throttle, and in less than a second, he's a screaming dot in the distance.

NICK

comes around the same corner. His bike fishtails and slides out from under him.

FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

Kobo tears past a police car. The police car takes off after him.

THE FOOTHILLS

A series of steep switchbacks traverse the steep, densely forested hills.

Kobo's bike flies up the road. The police car can't keep up, begins losing ground.

THE POLICE CAR

going flat out, falling further and further behind. Kobo's going to escape.

SUDDENLY

Nick, bent low, shoots past the cop car. His left arm is scraped and bloody.

ON KOBO

glancing back, to see Nick gaining on him. Kobo's pleased. He gives it more gas.

NICK

pulling eight-five... ninety... one hundred. The rain stings his face. It's hard to keep his eye open.

THE FOOTHILLS

Kobo leaning into one of the steep turns, climbing higher and higher toward the clouds clinging to the top of the peak.

NICK

is gaining on him. He HEARS something coming up behind him.

A BOSOZOKU

the one Ich shot in the leg, is closing fast on his tail.

ON NICK

as the biker draws even.

THE BIKER

pulls out his long knife and slashes at Nick's shoulder.

Nick drops back causing him to miss. The biker drops back. Nick tries to speed up, but the biker sticks with him. He's a good rider, this boy. Very, very good.

The biker moves in again, blade drawn.

NICK SEES

something the biker doesn't.

A TRUCK

coming around the corner.

NICK

swerves to avoid it at the last moment. The biker reacts too late and runs --

INTO THE GLEAMING

radiator of the two ton truck, and disappears beneath its wheels.

ON KOBO

around the bend, glancing back. Empty road. He eases up on the throttle -- a free man... He circles back only to see

NICK

burst around the corner charging toward him at a hundred-and-twenty miles per hour, in the driving rain.

KOBO

waits and waits. Nick draws closer. Then, Kobo tears off back down the mountain, shooting past Nick.

Nick brakes... He slows down, and starts to turn, but the wheels whirl on the gravel and the bike goes into a skid, heading right for the edge of the road.

CUT TO:

NICK'S MOTORCYCLE

flying over the edge of the road, and down the cliff.

CUT TO:

THE EDGE OF THE ROAD

Nick, lying on his stomach at the edge of the cliff, his arm is probably broken.

He tries to get up with a one arm push up. It's hopeless. His head falls into a puddle of water.

The WHINE of an approaching motorcycle. Kobo has come back for him.

Nick, in excruciating pain, struggles for his gun.

KOBO

bearing down on Nick.

NICK

struggling to get his gun. Finally he does. But it's caked in mud. If the barrel is stuffed it will explode. Nick has to take the chance.

ON KOBO

Closer and closer.

NICK

aims as best he can and fires. The mud caked gun explodes

in his hand. Nick screams in agony.

KOBO

pulls his bike up inches in front of Nick's head. Nick seems to be bleeding everywhere: his hand, his nose, his mouth, the side of his head...

Kobo's face and neck is caked in blood from when Nick beat him.

The rain pours down.

He picks up the gun. Points it at Nick, squeezes the trigger.

KOBO

(slowly)

Bang... bang...

He tosses the gun in front of Nick's face.

KOBO

... You're dead.

The sound of approaching Police SIRENS.

Kobo swings the bike around, goes a hundred yards down the road, then swings back.

Kobo guns the engine. He gain speed... thirty, thirty-five.

NICK

struggles to get up. He can't.

KOBO

opening the throttle.

NICK

crawling a few inches, that's it.

KOBO

twenty yards away.

NICK

reaches into his coat and pulls Ich's 18 inch shuto out.

He rolls away at the last moment, slashing Kobo's ankle as he races past.

KOBO

screams in pain. He tries to stop too suddenly. The bike flips over. Kobo flies into the air then hits the pavement on his side and rolls a few yards down the road. He stops on his back. It's lucky he's alive.

The SOUND of fast approaching police SIRENS.

THE PLATE

has fallen out of Kobo's jacket. It rests in the road, halfway between the two men.

KOBO

crawls toward it on his belly.

NICK

mustering all his strength, struggles across the road on all fours.

KOBO

crawling snake-like.

NICK

still moving, his arms and legs feel like lead.

KOBO'S FINGERS

as they reach for the plate.

NICK

grabs Kobo's wrist forcing him to drop the plate. Nick picks up a rock. It looks as if he's going to smash Kobo's head. Instead, he brings it down on the plate, shattering it in a half-dozen pieces.

Nick tosses the pieces in front of Kobo's face.

NICK

Keep the change.

Nick, exhausted, slowly falls onto his back. He looks over at Kobo, their faces are inches apart. Nick makes a slashing mark with his index finger above his eyebrows. The same gesture Kobo made to Nick through the two-way mirror in New York.

Nick passes out. His eyes shut... the screen...

FADES TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN

The SOUND of three police cars screeching to a halt. The SOUNDS of the police SIRENS winding down.

The SIRENS get softer mixing with the SOUND of RINGING phones, CLACKING typewriters, VOICES...

FADE IN:

INT. TOKYO POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Fifty identical desks. Fifty identically dressed men in white shirts and ties work under fluorescent lights.

OHASHI

is at his desk studying a report.

Suddenly, the lights go out. The fan's stop, so do the electric typewriters.

Ohashi looks up to see --

ICH

walking toward him down the long aisle, his left arm is bandaged, his right hand handcuffed to Kobo on crutches.

Ich silently leads the captured man down the long aisle to Ohashi's desk.

ICH

stops in front of the desk and snaps to attention.

ICH

Constable Ichiro Matsumoto presents
captured prisoner Kobo, Chief
Inspector Ohashi.

Ich salutes.

OHASHI

Inspector Ohashi will take charge of
the prisoner.

Ich uncuffs Kobo and steps aside to reveal --

NICK

standing at the far end of the room by the fuse box. He's also bandaged and on crutches.

Nick looks at Ohashi without saying a word, then flips the main switch up. The lights and fans start working.

He turns and walks out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE COURTYARD - A FEW DAYS LATER

A small decoration ceremony.

ON ICHIRO

getting two golden suns pinned to the lapel of his dress uniform.

In the far corner

NICK, JOYCE AND

Ichiro's wife, dressed in a formal kimono, watch the ceremony.

CUT TO:

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - TOKYO - DAY

Joyce and Nick are sitting alone at a table. Nick's left arm in in a sling.

NICK

Can't make you change your mind?

JOYCE

Last time you asked me to come along
I nearly got a hole in my head.

NICK

Might be different in New York.

JOYCE

Maybe. If I come visit, we can find
out.

NICK

I'd like that.

Ich sits down with two fresh bowls of soba noodles. Nick
hesitates.

ICH

You can do it.

Nick picks up his chopsticks with his good hand. He
begins to slurp the noodles.

ICH

Louder, pal, louder.

NICK

Joyce, give the assistant Chief
Inspector a drink, would you?

As Joyce refills all their cups we...

SLOWLY DISSOLVE

TO:

EXT. EIGHT THREE PRECINCT - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

It's raining. A sun shower.

INT. POLICE STATION

Capt. Oliver is standing by the window watching the rain
pour down.

OLIVER

... Remember, counterfeiting is the
Feds. They'll be all over
Abolofia's place. Stick tight.
You I.D. the other plate, he does
real time.

NICK

Right.

Reveal Nick sitting in front of Oliver's desk, his one arm
is still in a sling. Nick gets to his feet.

OLIVER

(still not facing
him)

You know, Nick, if you'd held on to
that plate, you could've been a very
rich man.

Oliver turns to face Nick. Nick just looks at him, then:

NICK

Never crossed my mind.

Oliver nods; he believes him.

OLIVER

Be careful on the run.

CUT TO:

INT. SQUAD BAY - NIGHT

In contrast to the Japanese police station -- it's chaos.
Cops are in every imaginable kind of dress, trash cans
overflow, a handcuffed prisoner screams abuse to anyone
who will listen.

THE RAIDING PARTY

a dozen men in all, are donning flak jackets and windbreakers with POLICE and TREASURY stenciled on the back.

NICK

walks in with two heavy bullet proof vests slung over his shoulder. He squeezes past the raiding party to find

ICH

sitting at a desk, thumbing through a Frommer's guide to New York City. Nick drops one of the vests on the desk. It lands like a ton of bricks. Ich continues to read.

A Sergeant walks in.

SERGEANT

Saddle up. Hard team in the first unit. Conklin, your RMP awaits.

The cops and treasury men, grabbing their gear, head for the door.

Nick is struggling to get into his vest using one arm.

NICK

Sure you want to come? Probably better than the Greyline Tour.

Ich stands up, shoves the guidebook in his back pocket. He helps Nick fasten the strap in back.

ICH

You wouldn't make it without me.

Nick smiles, takes the Frommer's out of Ich's pocket and tosses it into the trash.

Nick hands him a shotgun, takes another one off the rack for himself.

We watch from behind as the two men head down the long hallway toward the exit.

ICH

Think we'll get him, Nick?

NICK

We can't lose.

ICH

How can you be so sure?

Nick opens the door at the far end of the hallway. They

step out into the sunlit rain.

NICK

Cause you're the biggest thing to
hit this town since...

Before Nick can finish his line, the door SLAMS SHUT
behind them.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END