CITY OF HOPE

Original Screenplay by
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COPY

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1 BLACK SCREEN

Opening credits flash. We hear a ROCK BAND tuning up, then the DRUM intro to the OPENING SONG-

2 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

We're up several stories on a building under construction, still in the skeleton stage. VARIOUS TIGHT SHOTS of men and machines at work-

POUNDING MACHINE - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

We are at the business end of a piledriver- WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

3 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

CU EYEBALL - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Just one eye, wincing at the concussion of the huge machine-

YOYO
(off) What about the Saints, Nick? Do you like the Saints?

WIDER - NICK - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

We PULL BACK SLOWLY to see two guys sitting on a pile of plywood ignoring the work around them, going over the football cards together. NICK is around 30, YOYO, the shop steward on this job, a bit older. Nick has a killer headache and is rubbing his eyes, his hardhat resting on his lap-

YOYO
Nick?

NICK
Huh?

YOYO
The Saints.

3 cont.

RIGGS
(off) Nick!

NICK
I hate the fucking Saints. Whatever I think they're gonna do, they do the exact opposite.

YOYO
An inconsistent group of people.

NICK
The Cowboys I got in my pocket. They're always the same.

YOYO
They suck.

RIGGS
(off) Nick!

NICK
You got anything, Yoyo?

YOYO
But to what degree do they suck? There are many levels-

NICK
Yoyo, have you got anything for my fuckin head?

RIGGS
(off) Nick!

YOYO
Anything of a pharmaceutical nature? I'm not carrying that sort of item anymore, Nicky. Talk to Stavros.

NICK
If I buy from Stavros, I bet with Stavros-

RIGGS, the foreman, in his late thirties, appears behind them-

RIGGS
Look, I don't expect you guys to work, but could you park your butts somewheres out of the way? We got equipment moving through here-

Nick and Yoyo stand as a pair of WORKERS appear to lift sheets of plywood off of the pile-

3 cont.

NICK
You know what my head feels like this morning, Riggs?

RIGGS
You want to take a sick day, Nicky? Be my guest.

NICK
If you don't want me here why don't you just fire me?

RIGGS
I can't fire you.

NICK
You mean you don't have the balls to fire me.

RIGGS
Out of respect for your father-

NICK
Who you don't have the balls to stand up to. Fuckin Riggs, I swear, you won't fire me- I quit.

YOYO
Don't put it that way, Nicky. As your union representative-

NICK
That's it- I fuckin quit. I'm outa here.

He starts to stride away and we TRACK with him. Yoyo follows a few steps, upset, calling-

YOYO
You're not really gonna bet with Stavros, are you Nick? Guy's a fuckin pirate-

But Nick is gone, stepping onto an open freight elevator just as it heads down through the floors. We TIGHTEN on Nick's face as we bring the sound LEVEL of the PILEDRIVER, JACKHAMMERS and TRACK MUSIC UP. We step off the lift with him then HOLD as he sees something and ducks back beyond a girder. JOE and WYNN pass in front of us and we TRACK along to hear their conversation. Joe is in his sixties, Nick's father and the owner of this construction outfit. Wynn is in his early forties, Black, a city councilman with a direct style-

3 cont.

JOE
Look, I'm sure you got some people could handle the job, but my hands are tied. I deal with the union. You go find Yoyo, he's the shop steward on this job-

WYNN
I already talked to the man over him-

JOE
What, Belcher at the Local? What did he say?

WYNN
He said talk to you. That if you made a stand then maybe his membership would accept.

JOE
Right- what that means is his guys walk for two weeks, till I kiss their ass and hand them all kinds of concessions, then maybe, maybe- they take in a handful of your people, on top of them I already got on the job, which includes four or five guys only sit and read the paper all day. I made a bid on this job-

WYNN
You're saying no.

JOE
Maybe some other job, something for the city, but not this one. I'm out on a limb on this one- no way I can bring your people on and still make my bid.

Joe sees something down on the yard and stops in his tracks-

JOE
What's he doing?

WYNN
So we're good enough to pay rent for your apartments but not good enough to build them-

JOE
(distracted) Excuse me- (yells up) Riggs!

RIGGS
(off) Yo!

3 cont.

We SHIFT AROUND behind Joe to see out on the yard. Nick is making tracks, nearly to the lunch wagon parked by the road-

JOE
Where the hell is Nicky going?

4 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE ROAD - DAY

We TRACK AROUND with Nick up to the counter of the lunch wagon. STAVROS, unshaven and grumpy in the morning, is messing with the tank of red and orange water-

NICK
Stavros-

STAVROS
Late breakfast?

NICK
I need some crank.

STAVROS
What am I, a drugstore?

NICK
Yes. You are a fucking drugstore. I need enough for a day or two.

STAVROS
(reaching under the counter) Have you had anything to eat today? I got juices, I got papaya drink, Yoo-Hoo-

NICK
Coke, Stavros-

STAVROS
The papaya drink is good, it's ten percent real juice-

NICK
Just give me the fucking drugs, for Chrissake!

As Stavros hands Nick a plastic bag rolled around some pills a beat-up American-made sedan with raw primer on the driver's side skids up alongside. Nick's asshole buddies BOBBY and ZIP are inside, high already-

BOBBY
Yo, Nicky, you having breakfast or scoring coke?

4 cont.

STAVROS
Hey, tell the whole world, why don't you?

ZIP
He must be buying drugs. Breakfast here could kill you. You want a beer, Nick?

Nick opens the passenger door to get in-

NICK
Sounds good.

ZIP
You gonna play hooky?

NICK
I quit.

BOBBY
Awright!

STAVROS
Hey Nick, you owe me-

NICK
(slams door) Put it on my tab.

STAVROS
You don't have a tab-

NICK
Start one.

Zip stomps the pedal and they peel out of the lot. We PAN to to watch them go then HOLD as the camera brings us to Joe, in the distance by the skeleton of the building, watching after the car, puzzled-

5 INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

MERENGUE MUSIC blasts from a box in the corner of the shop. YVONNE, very blond, very well-dressed, stands uncomfortably in the middle of a very busy, very dirty and disorganized auto repair shop. She stands a few feet away from a red BMW, and it looks uncomfortable in this joint. Various alleged MECHANICS look up from their work to check her out. Nick is there, still in his work clothes, idly walking around the BMW as if he's going to buy himself one. VINNIE, a round, nervous kid, shuffles past Yvonne toward the office. As he does we PAN to see through the interior window of the office.

5 cont.

CARL, the manager, and TURKEY, another mechanic, sit talking with Bobby and Zip. Yvonne looks in at them, then turns away-

6 INT. AUTO REPAIR OFFICE - DAY

Carl sitting in a swivel chair, smiling out the window as Vinnie hurries in-

CARL
You know who that is? She's married to the Assistant to the District Attorney. Little shit named Zimmer.

BOBBY
They got a beautiful car.

CARL
I used to fuck her.

BOBBY
Really?

CARL
Yeah, really. In high school. Yvonne Plasky. I bet she shit a brick when they towed her car in here. She's gonna look in- when I point at her you guys laugh like I'm telling you something really hot-

7 INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - YVONNE - DAY

She turns to the window just as the guys inside start to laugh. Carl is talking to them with a grin on his face. She turns away again-

8 INT. AUTO REPAIR OFFICE - DAY

CARL
Vinnie, go out there and sit in the front seat and eat your breakfast.

We hear the SCREECH of brakes as a car pulls up outside-

VINNIE
But I'm all dirty-

8 cont.

CARL
That's the point, dipshit. Move it. She wants to know if her car done say you got to ask me, only you're on your break now. (to guys) Kid's stupid. What're you laughing at, Turkey? Get back on that Buick.

Vinnie grabs his lunch and hurries out while Turkey saunters lazily past Bobby and Zip-

ZIP
Yo, Turk- steal any good cars lately?

CARL
All right you two- business.

ZIP
Tonight's the night.

BOBBY
We just need the wheels, Carl. They still available?

Carl rises and walks with a notable limp to the window-

CARL
(nods out to Nick) That asshole in on it?

ZIP
Not so far.

BOBBY
You got a problem with Nick?

Nick turns from talking with Vinnie in the BMW to see Carl. Deadpan, he toasts him with his can of beer-

CARL
I got a problem with his whole fuckin family. What's he doing out of work?

ZIP
Only fuck I know dumb enough to quit a no-show job.

CARL
(to Bobby, indicating Zip) You keep this guy on a leash. Vinnie's got the keys- (calls at the door) Vinnie!

8 cont.

BOBBY
When we're on the job we're cold, man. We're talking icewater-

ZIP
We're pros, dude.

CARL
You fuck this up and my name gets into it I'll have you converted into building materials. You understand me? (calls) Vinnie, you fat fuckin hemmorhoid, get in here!

9 EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

LEVONNE, a Black man in his late thirties, is taping notices to the front window of a storefront community action center in the Black and Hispanic section of town. He sees JEANETTE, a strong looking Black woman, hurrying to work. We COUNTERTRACK to keep him in the foreground of the shot as she passes-

LEVONNE
Hey there. Big and beautiful.

JEANETTE
Don't start up with me, Levonne.

LEVONNE
Honey, I finish what I start.

JEANETTE
You best reel that thing of yours back in before somebody out here steps on it.

WYNN nods to Jeanette as he passes her in the opposite direction. He looks like a campaign ad with his jacket slung over his shoulder-

WYNN
Levonne-

LEVONNE
Look who come off the hill to mingle with us common folk- Professor Oreo. (calls inside) Yo! Malik! We got a royal visit, man.

MALIK, serious in shades and a black suit, steps out to fix Wynn with his deadpan stare-

9 cont.

LEVONNE
You on an errand for City Hall?

WYNN
I wondered if you could help me bring some people in for the council meeting tonight. There's a bond issue for the schools-

MALIK
The white man's school.

WYNN
Our kids go to them.

LEVONNE
You got no kids, Wynn.

WYNN
Black people's children go to-

LEVONNE
Ohhhh. We're talking about Black people. You should make that shit clear.

MALIK
You playing the white man's game don't come down here looking for support, brother.

WYNN
Look, there's not enough of us in this city to fight among ourselves. I have a little bit of power on the Council-

LEVONNE
You believe that? You got shit, Wynn-

MALIK
You got the crumbs off the white man's table-

A car HONKS from the curb. Wynn sees it, waves, sighs-

WYNN
Look, I've got to run. You don't have to back me or what I say, just come tonight and bring some people so they know we're still alive.

LEVONNE
(smiles) Nice of you to visit, Wynn. Don't be a stranger.

10 INT. WYNN'S CAR - DAY

Wynn's wife REESHA is driving-

REESHA
Any luck?

WYNN
Not with those two. I'll hit the projects next.

REESHA
(cautious) Wynn? Have you thought any more about Franklin?

WYNN
What can I do for Franklin?

REESHA
You talk to people all day, business people, shop owners-

WYNN
And you want me to ask them for a job for my brother-in-law. How's that gonna look?

REESHA
They do it all the time.

WYNN
That's cause they're corrupt nepotistic sleazebags. Remember?

REESHA
He's a Black man, he lives in your district, he's had some bad breaks-

WYNN
Grand theft is not a bad break- drop me off here. (relents) I promise, if anything comes up for him, I'll do what I can.

REESHA
That's all I'm asking. (kisses him) Hang tough-

WYNN
You too, baby-

11 EXT. STREET - TV REPAIR SHOP - DAY

SALSA MUSIC blasts from a RADIO OFFSCREEN as Wynn steps out and moves past ASTEROID, a Tourettesian street-crazy who looks through the window of an appliance shop at a bank of TV monitors all playing a MAD ANTHONY commercial. Though we can't hear the TVs, Asteroid mimes Mad Anthony's moves and words in perfect synch-

ASTEROID
Mad Anthony here, the lowest man in town, and this time I've really gone off the deep end! Everything, and I mean everything on our shelves has been marked down to rock bottom prices! All your electronic and computer-age needs under one-

Wynn continues but we are swept in the opposite direction by a moving diatribe by JOANN and CONNIE, a pair of neighborhood mothers in their thirties who are hounding two cops, RIZZO and BAUER. Rizzo is young and tempermental, Bauer a weary veteran. We TRACK along as the cops try to disengage from the women-

JOANN
It's the Spanish. It hasn't been the same since they showed up-

CONNIE
You walk by there, they make this noise with their teeth, this sucking noise-

JOANN
I was raised on this block, now I wouldn't walk here alone-

CONNIE
I'm a married woman with children, means nothing to them-

JOANN
(points to Asteroid) And these people, out on the streets-

CONNIE
Step out your front door, it's a lunatic asylum-

JOANN
Needles in the sandboxes in the park, crack vials-

CONNIE
No respect, no sense of responsibility-

11 cont.

JOANN
It's the Welfare. I mean why work, the government takes care of you-

CONNIE
I used to feel bad for the children, but they're the worst-

JOANN
Thirteen years old with a baby on their hip-

BAUER
Do you ladies have a complaint?

CONNIE
Complaint? Have you been listening?

BAUER
A specific complaint. A criminal charge.

JOANN
See Connie, they don't care-

CONNIE
They don't care-

JOANN
You got to be gang-raped and roasted at the stake before they'll lift a finger.

CONNIE
If it was your kids had to live out here on these streets-

SLAM! We have FOLLOWED Bauer INTO the CAR and he shuts the door on the women, who are still talking outside. Rizzo slides in next to him-

BAUER
Jesus Christ.

RIZZO
In stereo. The skinny one is like my mother's cousin. Bitch on wheels.

12 INT. PATROL CAR - DAY

They pull away from the curb and into the street-

BAUER
They got a point, maybe, but it's not our fault.

RIZZO
Let's go by DeLillo's.

BAUER
Will you quit with that? It's over.

RIZZO
Never. I'm not giving up on it.

BAUER
(sees) Aww- just what I need. O'Brien.

Bauer pulls the car alongside the car of O'Brien, a plainclothes detective driving in the opposite direction. They lower their windows to talk-

O'BRIEN
Morning, gentlemen.

BAUER
Bill.

O'BRIEN
Got your tickets to the Mayor's dinner Friday?

BAUER
Hundred bucks a pop? Forget it.

O'BRIEN
(hands wads of tickets through window to Rizzo) I'll see you there, won't I Mike? You fellas want to push these around your beat. And if you make that kid Ramierez I want you to run him in.

BAUER
We ran him in yesterday.

O'BRIEN
So run him in again.

RIZZO
What for?

12 cont.

O'BRIEN
Suspicion of being on my shit list. (to Bauer) Make it a priority, Tom. (smiles) Have a good one.

O'Brien steps away and they pull back onto the street-

RIZZO
What's your problem with O'Brien?

BAUER
He's an asswipe.

RIZZO
So?

BAUER
He's not a detective, he's a fuckin politician.

RIZZO
Everybody is a politician.

BAUER
I'm not. Why you think I'm still in uniform at my age?

RIZZO
Cause you're stupid.

BAUER
Cause I won't kick back to the pols everytime I turn around. Hundred bucks a pop, Christ-

RIZZO
We're passing DeLillo's-

BAUER
Forget about her, kid. She's history-

Rizzo watches as they pass by DeLillo's restaurant. Nick, Bobby and Zip stand in front of it-

13 EXT. DELILLO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

We see the reflection of the patrol car passing. The boys have their noses pressed against the front window, looking in-

NICK
It doesn't work that way. Food is only half the story.

13 cont.

BOBBY
Maybe you should start small, Nick, open a lunch wagon next to Stavros-

ZIP
Nicky's Food-O-Rama.

NICK
A restaurant's gotta have personality.

ZIP
And very hot waitresses.

CU NICK

Looking in-

NICK
Yeah. That can be part of it.

NICK'S POV THROUGH WINDOW

ANGELA, a woman a few years older than Nick, is hurrying in taking her coat off-

NICK
(off) Your staff is very important.

14 INT. DELILLO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Johnny Roselli is SINGING in Italian over the SOUND SYSTEM. We FOLLOW Angela through the lunch rush in the semi-classy Italian restaurant. We trade off and FOLLOW her friend DAWN as they cross-

ANGELA
Sorry, I had a class-

DAWN
You've got six and nine- I started them for you-

Dawn crosses with a tray of drinks to the power table, well-dressed men doing business. The D.A., his assistant ZIMMER, and two real-estate developers, SIMMS and WALLACE. Dawn sets the drinks around-

D.A.
(rising and shaking hands) Well, it's been great to see you folks again. I'm sure Larry can iron out the details with you.

14 cont.

SIMMS
Take it easy, Alex.

The D.A. splits. We HOLD on the table, TRACKING AROUND as Zimmer dismisses Dawn and leans into the deal-

DAWN
I'll send your waitress.

ZIMMER
Thanks doll.

SIMMS
So what are these details? He talked about racquetball.

ZIMMER
The District Attorney would be happy to have your backing, but we need to get more specific about the parameters.

SIMMS
We're discussing certain properties on L Street-

ZIMMER
I recall the previous conversation.

SIMMS
L Street has to come down for Galaxy Towers to go up. If those buildings aren't clear in the next week the New York money walks, the Japanese walk, the whole thing falls apart. If we get past that, we'll need major juice on the Development Package when it comes up at council.

ZIMMER
He's the District Attorney, fellas, this stuff's all municipal-

SIMMS
Who's municipal? It comes down from Baci. The second most indictable Mayor in the state. You must have a file like a phone book on the guy.

ZIMMER
The District Attorney is very concerned about municipal corruption. But to take on a machine like Baci's- I'm not sure what the incentive would be.

14 cont.

Simms looks to Wallace. Wallace writes a figure on a slip of paper. Simms slides it face down to Zimmer-

SIMMS
If your man tries for Senate next year he'll need a lot of resources. Any effort on his part to improve the climate in this city--

Zimmer looks at the number, crosses it out, writes another below it-

ZIMMER
We're moving mountains here, fellas, and you give me a week.

Simms shows the number to Wallace-

ZIMMER
But we're always interested in support from the business sector.

Wallace nods-

SIMMS
I think you can count on us.

Angela arrives behind Zimmer with her pad as Simms crumples the slip of paper-

ANGELA
Hi, I'm Angela. You gentlemen know what you want?

15 INT. MAD ANTHONY'S - DAY

We START on a TV MONITOR, playing the Mad Anthony commercial we've seen before-

ANTHONY
(on TV) -laser printers, hardware, software, cordless phones and microwaves! We've got NEC, RCA, LXI, JVC, Panasonic, Magnavox, Vivitar, Quasar, Paltex, Casio and Teledyne, Toshiba, Yoshida, Hitachi, Horita, Otari, Yamaha, Aiwa, Seiko, Onkyo, Sanyo, Sony, Ikegami and Mitsubishi!

We PAN up to see the real MAD ANTHONY and Wynn, Anthony half watching himself on dozens of TV monitors as we TRACK along an aisle with them in a huge appliance outlet-

15 cont.

ANTHONY
You want me to give your program free computers? You understand I don't get them for free from the manufacturer-

WYNN
The program isn't funded to make purchases of more than-

ANTHONY
If these are people without money then they're not likely to be my customers, right?

WYNN
Look, you're a member of this community, you do business here, you hire local people-

ANTHONY
I wish I could hire local people. I haven't had a night watchman for two weeks. You advertise minimum wage, you know who shows up? Deviants show up, mentally disturbed people, blind people-

WYNN
You need a security guard?

ANTHONY
You got somebody?

WYNN
I might have-

ANTHONY
This is a friend of yours?

WYNN
He's my wife's brother.

ANTHONY
(laughs) Gettin the old freeze out, huh? No tickee, no nookie. Sure, send him over.

WYNN
He has a record.

As they pass by a pair of Black adolescent boys we HOLD on TITO and DESMOND, staring longingly at the video games section-

15 cont.

TITO
This one is the ultimate, man. This one makes Nintendo look pathetic.

DESMOND
I never played Nintendo.

TITO
Where you been raised, boy? You got a TV don't you?

DESMOND
We got a TV-

TITO
VCR?

DESMOND
No.

TITO
Shit, man, don't be invitin me over to your house, be lookin at some Mr. Rogers network dog-dukey.

Wynn and Anthony cross with the boys again and we FOLLOW them toward the door-

ANTHONY
You need anything else- stereo, VCR, CD player, dehumidifier-

WYNN
Thank you, no. Listen, about Franklin-

ANTHONY
Hey, he's paid his debt, right? You're my representative on the council- someday I got a matter that needs representing- Quid Pro Quo. Am I right?

He pats Wynn on the arm and winks. Wynn looks miserable-

16 INT. CITY HALL CORRIDOR - DAY

Zimmer strolls in the corridors of an old city hall with PAULY RINALDI (Joe's brother) and MAYOR BACI, a sharply-dressed shrewd operator. Pauly looks worried. As they walk the mayor greets various CITIZENS-

16 cont.

PAULY
It's bullshit. You don't have a thing.

ZIMMER
We've got the dumpster contract thing. We've got the kickbacks on the elderly lunch program. We've got eight major no-show jobholders donating a full quarter of their generous salaries to your political action fund-

PAULY
(to Baci) He's blowin smoke, Mayor.

ZIMMER
These are just the things that fell into our lap. I hate to think what a serious investigation would turn up.

MAYOR BACI
So your guy wants to bust my balls. (to citizen) Hey, Phil, how's it going?

ZIMMER
Not at all, Mr. Mayor. The District Attorney is well aware that in municipal government there are many gray areas-

MAYOR BACI
Mrs. Spivak- say hello to your mother for me. God bless you. (to Zimmer) So what's he want?

ZIMMER
The apartment buildings we discussed before? On L Street?

MAYOR BACI
That's your brother, Pauly. What's up?

PAULY
He's been putting the usual pressure on. But he won't go for the other thing.

MAYOR BACI
He won't go for it? He's a virgin all of a sudden? He forgets how he owns those fucking buildings?

16 cont.

ZIMMER
Gentlemen- this is a conversation I should not be hearing. All you need to understand is that the success of the Development Package that's been proposed by certain very good friends of the District Attorney has become essential to your political future. We're down to the wire on this, fellas, we need results. I will leave the details in your capable hands.

We TRACK BACK ahead of Zimmer down the stairs, seeing Mayor Baci rip into Pauly in the background, then PAN as Zimmer passes us and see O'Brien coming up the stairs toward him. We trade and TRACK ahead of O'Brien up the stairs again-

O'BRIEN
Larry-

ZIMMER
Bill-

O'BRIEN
(joking) This a social visit or are we under arrest?

ZIMMER
(finger to his lips) Shhhhh.

O'BRIEN
I hear your man's making a run on the Senate.

ZIMMER
Only a rumor, Bill. Only a rumor.

O'BRIEN
Well, if there's anything I can do to help-

ZIMMER
I'll keep that in mind. Take care, Bill.

Zimmer is gone down the stairs. O'Brien continues up past Pauly and the mayor, still arguing in hushed tones-

MAYOR BACI
I pay you what, forty-five grand a year, you can't deliver your own brother?

PAULY
I talked to him-

16 cont.

MAYOR BACI
Lean on him, Pauly.

PAULY
With what? Joey's hooked up with the Old Man now, he's got his own thing going for him, he doesn't need us to breathe like in the early days--

O'Brien, very interested, is out of earshot now. He runs into GUS, a no-show building inspector, walking out of an office in a bad mood-

O'BRIEN
Yo, Gus. What'd they do, close the dog track?

GUS
They made a mistake on my check. Left off the overtime.

O'BRIEN
You don't put in time, Gus, how can you put in overtime?

GUS
I'm gonna condemn your fuckin house.

O'BRIEN
Have a good one, pal.

17 EXT. STREET CORNER - LATE AFTERNOON

Obviously the hangout for the young and the shiftless, lots of kid's cars parked and cruising by. We FOLLOW Zip, pitching to a trio of TEENAGE BOYS as they stroll-

ZIP
This is more than a guitar, this is a pre-CBS Strat with a Kahler whammy, stacked single coil, full MIDI rack kit and Mesa-Boogie amps that're fuckin cherry- never been over 30 DB's, the guy played like folk music on it or something-

They bring us to Bobby and Nick, sitting on the hood of Bobby's car, and we HOLD. Nick drains another can of beer-

BOBBY
Man, you're suckin it down today-

17 cont.

NICK
Nutrition. Man cannot live by narcotics alone.

BOBBY
You should take it easy.

NICK
I'm a free man today, Bobby. Shit is gonna happen. Important stuff. I can feel it.

BOBBY
Right. (sees) Hey- it's Mr. Goodwrench and his faithful companion Jimmy. What happened to the face, Jim?

Vinnie, still in his mechanic overalls from Carl's shop, comes by with JIMMY, a skinny kid whose face has been messed up in a fight-

VINNIE
Fuckin boogs got him last night, down on M street by the tracks-

ZIP
(returning, checking Jimmy's face) For a small fee I could get my hands on some steroids, Jimmy. Beef you up in a couple weeks for a rematch-

VINNIE
Fuck that shit! We're going down there and kick some ass tonight!

BOBBY
(to Zip) Have I seen this on Wrestlemania?

VINNIE
Chickenshit-

ZIP
We'd love to join you fellas, really, but we got a gig tonight. Later-

As they pass out of earshot Nick tosses his empty can at Vinnie-

NICK
This Bud's for you-

BOBBY
What a dick, huh?

17 cont.

NICK
What is he- nineteen?

BOBBY
Eighteen. He dropped out this year.

NICK
That's how old my brother was when he died.

An awkward pause, MUSIC blasting on the radio as Nick broods-

ZIP
So did Bobby tell you we're gonna cut a demo? Top of the line production, the works-

NICK
Yeah? On whose nickel?

Bobby and Zip look at each other-

BOBBY
That was something we wanted to talk to you about, Nick-

18 INT. BOBBY'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Bobby driving, Nick beside him, Zip leaning forward from the rear-

NICK
Fucking Carl. He'll roll over on you guys in a minute.

ZIP
Carl is big time, now, Nicky. The guy is connected. You know that big fire at the plant, took half the waterfront down, nobody got a scratch? That was Carl. He's not just a loan shark-

BOBBY
We done a couple things with him turned out good. And this is very serious money, Nick- with this one we retire and go back to the music full time. We figured since you're our friend, and you're not on the tit anymore- well, if you want in-

18 cont.

ZIP
It's a Declaration of Independance, Nick. This is fuck-you money we're talkin- isn't there anybody you want to say fuck you to?

19 EXT. RINALDI HOUSE - EVENING

An expensive semi-suburban house with a lawn. A party is going on inside. Bobby's car SCREECHES up in front, blasting ROCK AND ROLL. Nick stumbles out, calls back in through the window-

NICK
I'll be right back. Ten minutes max-

We FOLLOW Nick across the lawn and INTO the HOUSE. Lots of GUESTS crowd the living room, standing in cocktail party formation, with MUSIC of the Jerry Vale persuasion playing in the background. Mr. Anthony turns from a conversation as Nick works through the people-

ANTHONY
Hey, Nicky, how's it going?

NICK
Fine, Mr. Anthony. Good to see you-

Nick squirms his way over to his sister LAURIE, a year or so younger than him, guarding the cheese dip-

LAURIE
You're in big trouble, pal.

NICK
Where's the old man?

LAURIE
(points) In there with Uncle Pauly. You really quit this time?

NICK
Yeah. Where's Mom?

LAURIE
In the kitchen supervising the galley slaves. Are you on something?

Nick takes her arm and we FOLLOW as he uses her as a shield to pass through the less crowded dining room-

NICK
C'mon, we gotta talk-

19 cont.

LAURIE
Nicky!

NICK
You ditch me now I tell Mom you spent a weekend with a married man.

LAURIE
That was a year ago-

We see Joe, buttonholed in a corner by Pauly, at the same time Nick does. Nick veers away from him and we TRACK over to him. He sees Nick escaping-

PAULY
My hands are tied on this, Joe. If you don't come through, the whole thing comes down on my head.

JOE
I raised the rent to the legal ceiling, I had the heat off for three weeks in March, the buildings stink from garbage I don't pick up- Pauly, these people are not leaving. They have nowhere to go.

PAULY
You know what you can do.

JOE
(tightens) No fuckin way. Don't mention that again, understand me? Look, have something to drink, I got to find my kid-

We FOLLOW Joe as he breaks away and moves into the kitchen. Laurie is there watching MRS. RAMIREZ and two other HISPANIC WOMEN put together big plates of antipasto. Mrs. Ramirez is a young grandmother in her late thirties with a thick Puerto Rican accent-

LAURIE
So when did you learn to make Italian food?

MRS. RAMIREZ
Italian food, Jewish food, Chinese food, Yuppie food-

JOE
Where is he?

19 cont.

LAURIE
Nick? With Mom somewhere. Maybe out back-

We HOLD in the kitchen as Joe hurries out the back door-

MRS. RAMIREZ
The only kind of food I don't make is Japanese. Those people eat some strange things-

Nick and PINA, his mother, appear through a side door. Pina is very attractive, decked out for the party, and no pushover-

PINA
Nick, I will never say no to you. But I'm not going behind your father's back. You go to him, have it out, whatever, then you come to me.

NICK
Okay, I'll talk to him.

PINA
First. You talk to him first, then you come to me for money. (looks at him closely, concerned) Are you getting enough sleep, Nicky? You look drawn-

LAURIE
He's on drugs, Mom.

NICK
Shut up, Laurie.

PINA
I have guests. I'll send your father out- try to be nice.

Pina goes back into the party. Nick slumps against the counter-

LAURIE
What happened to last week's paycheck?

NICK
The Saints took it.

LAURIE
Saints. This is baseball?

NICK
(scornful) Christ. Saints- baseball. Football.

19 cont.

LAURIE
I'm a cultural illiterate, I'm sorry. This is money you owe, I take it?

NICK
For two thousand dollars I'm a free man.

LAURIE
(sighs) I've got maybe fifty- my bag is in the TV room, help yourself-

NICK
I'm naming my first kid after you, boy or girl- it's like fake alligator, dark brown- ?

LAURIE
You bet this on sports, you die.

NICK
(kisses her, rushing out) You're my hero.

Laurie shakes her head and looks to Mrs. Ramirez-

LAURIE
I'm a jerk, right?

MRS. RAMIREZ
My son does the same to me. (shrugs) Is family.

20 INT. RINALDI TV ROOM - EVENING

Nick pulls bills from Laurie's wallet, then slips it back into her bag. On his way from the room he stops at a wall covered with framed photos of the family-

PHOTOS

We PAN with Nick's gaze across several photos of TONY, his dead brother-- Tony in a high school basketball uniform, Tony in a hard hat in front of a building site, Tony in Viet Nam era infantry uniform-

CU NICK

Looking at the photos, brooding-

JOE
(off) So what's the story?

20 cont.

We SHIFT to see that Joe has come in behind Nick-

NICK
No story. I just quit.

JOE
You got another job?

NICK
No.

JOE
Then how can you quit a good set-up like you got?

NICK
I'm bored outa my skull over there. Sittin around-

JOE
Who says you got to sit around? Hey- if it's more responsibility you want, I can-

NICK
No! I don't want you settin shit up for me. I don't want to be a part of it anymore, that's all.

JOE
Part of what? Nick, I'm a builder. I make things where there was nothing before. Is there something wrong with that?

NICK
You kiss up to Baci and every other scumbag downtown with a nickle in their pocket! The outfit says put three guys on the payroll you won't ever see, you do it! They say roll over and die, you fuckin do it-

JOE
You think I like to take that shit offa them? Nick, I've always tried to do right by you, by your mother and Laurie and Tony-

NICK
Yeah, you did a job on him, alright.

20 cont.

JOE
Your brother died in the war. What could I do about that?

NICK
What could you do? You could of stood up for him instead of throwin him in-

JOE
I would have killed for that kid!

NICK
Right. Well don't do me any favors like you did for Tony.

A tense silence between them, broken as Anthony blows in, bringing us straight over to the TV set-

ANTHONY
Joe! Joey, what is this, an antique? What do you get on this thing- Milton Berle, Sid Caesar? I got to fix you up with some new equipment, introduce you to the state of the art- what do say, Nick?

He turns and we PAN. Joe is looking out the door. Nick has gone-

21 EXT. RINALDI HOUSE - EVENING

Nick slides into the car with Bobby and Zip-

NICK
I'm in guys. Let's fuckin do it.

22 EXT. BUSY STREET - NIGHT

Reesha and her brother FRANKLIN, self-conscious in a new security-guard outfit, walk along a street busy with people going into restaurants and clubs-

REESHA
He went through a lot of trouble-

FRANKLIN
They give me a gun from Toys 'R Us here-

REESHA
What do you expect?

22 cont.

FRANKLIN
Look at this outfit-

REESHA
You look handsome in a uniform.

FRANKLIN
Anybody I know sees me in this·I'm moving to Canada.

REESHA
Franklin, it's a start-

FRANKLIN
Might's well have a sign on my back says "I make chump change".

REESHA
It'll keep the parole off your back.

FRANKLIN
It don't even fit, Reesha. My prison clothes looked better than this-

We trade and TRACK in the opposite direction as they pass Tito and Desmond, hacking around. Tito checks Reesha out-

TITO
Not bad. Too old, but not bad.

DESMOND
Her boyfriend think it's Halloween.

TITO
(to another woman) Yo birdlegs! Come back here, darlin, I got some for you... Stuck up bitch.

DESMOND
Look at that one.

TITO
Them aint real, Desmond. Woman over thirty carry her tits up there, that's plastic. Miracle of science man, foam-fuckin-rubber-

PADDY and FUENTES, a pair of uniformed cops, rush the boys from the curb, hustling them up against them wall and positioning them to frisk-

PADDY
Hit the bricks, fellas! Move it!

22 cont.

FUENTES
Hands out at your sides! Let's go!

TITO
Whoa man, what we do?!

PADDY
That's for us to figure out, homeboy. Spread em wide-

FUENTES
Empty your pockets!

DESMOND
How can I hold the wall and empty my pockets at the same time?

PADDY
(in his face) Did we ask for your opinion, punk? Keep your yap shut!

FUENTES
Where'd you hide it?

DESMOND
Hide what?

FUENTES
Don't be smart with me, you know what. This one's clean, Paddy-

PADDY
(pulls Tito upright) What are you two faggots doing down here?

TITO
Man, this is a free fuckin country-

PADDY
Where'd you hear that one? You keep your shit down south of L Street from now on, hear? I'm gonna point you in the right direction-

Paddy spins Desmond around by the shoulders and gives him a small shove-

PADDY
Now move. Faster!

We HOLD on the cops as they move to their patrol car on the curb, watching the boys walk away-

22 cont.

FUENTES
I don't think those were the ones, Paddy.

PADDY
They were up to something down here. Didn't have a nickle between em.

We FOLLOW them INTO the PATROL CAR-

FUENTES
Maybe we stepped on em a little hard.

Paddy pulls the car out into traffic-

PADDY
They're probly up there laughin at us right now. If you can't get respect, you settle for fear.

FUENTES
The ones we want are older.

PADDY
I've seen that kid I had before. He's headed for the dirt farm. (sees) Oh God! Look at that-

FUENTES
Beautiful. Must be fifteen, sixteen-

PADDY
They keep makin new ones every year, don't they? American cars went to shit after the Mustang in '65, but fine-looking snatch, they keep stamping it out. Regular production line. Oh Lord- oh Lord- Mama! Come sit on my face with that thing!

FUENTES
Gross mother- (sees) Whoops! Look who we got-

PADDY
El Senor Ramirez. A credit to his race.

FUENTES
Fuck you, Paddy.

23 EXT/INT ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

We FOLLOW RAMIREZ, a kid in his late teens, INTO a ROCK CLUB blasting with LIVE MUSIC. He walks through the milling CUSTOMERS to the bar, passing Zip, Bobby and Nick at the front. We HOLD with them-

ZIP
My fuckin luck we get a girl in the band, turns out to be a lesbian.

BOBBY
She is not.

ZIP
I asked her out, she said no way.

BOBBY
This town is full of girls who won't go out with you-

ZIP
Lesbians, every one of em. It's like from flouride in the water supply-

Nick watches Angela and Dawn walk in-

NICK
Who is that? I know that girl.

ZIP
It's just some lesbian, Nick.

NICK
I want to know that girl.

ZIP
(gets up) I got business, guys-

BOBBY
We're up in five, Zip.

ZIP
I'll be there. (to Nick) He's like a mother to me.

We FOLLOW Zip down the bar till he sits in next to Ramirez-

ZIP
Hey, Chato, que pasa, Buddy? What's in the pantry?

RAMIREZ
Blow. Extra strong.

23 cont.

ZIP
Could be shit, could be the Stairway to Heaven. Why don't we retire to my office for a sample?

They stand and head for the men's room, Zip clapping Ramirez on the back-

ZIP
I hear you're a father, man. That's all right- another little Ramirez in the world-

We trade and FOLLOW Riggs, carrying a drink, moving in the other direction. He intercepts Nick on the way to introduce himself to Angela. The band onstage FINISHES PLAYING. Riggs has had a few-

RIGGS
Hey, Nicky-

NICK
Lewis-

RIGGS
I want you to know there's no hard feelings.

NICK
Sure.

RIGGS
Your father's been so square with me, I feel a certain amount of loyalty-

NICK
Right.

RIGGS
He's like your brother was- you need him, he's right there for you.

NICK
And I'm the only washout in the family.

RIGGS
I didn't mean it that way-

NICK
Look, I'm not in the mood for war stories about my brother right now, okay?

23 cont.

RIGGS
Yeah. Well- thanks for quitting. It takes a big load off my back-

NICK
Any time.

Nick continues on, sees CARL at the bar. Nick frowns, digs a wad of bills out of his pocket and presses them into Carl's palm as they pass. Carl traps his hand for a moment so he can smirk up close-

CARL
(smiles) I hear you quit your job, Nick.

NICK
What's it to you?

CARL
This is only the vig for one month. You lose your job when you're into me for two grand, I got a reason to be concerned. Who's this from, your Mommy?

NICK
I hope you die.

Nick just glares at him and moves off to sit at the edge of the stage just as Zip arrives from the bathroom, flying. He steps up with Bobby, Liz and the other PLAYERS who are tuning their instruments and picks up his guitar, singing to the tune of Guantanamera-

ZIP
Yo soy un hombre sincero
Yo soy un pin-che droguero!

BOBBY
You too fucked up to play, Pancho?

ZIP
No, jefe- I am el Numero Uno!

BOBBY
That thing the right key?

ZIP
We'll find out. Let's boogie!

They jump into their OPENING SONG, fast and loud. We TRACK IN TIGHT on Nick's face, looking out over the crowd. He looks wasted and confused. He covers his ears with his hands-

24 INT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

ANGELA - NICK'S POV

Laughing with Dawn in SLO-MO as the MUSIC FADES to SILENCE. They turn to look past Nick to the band-

25 INT. CITY COUNCIL ROOM - NIGHT

A meeting in progress. The mayor sits at a long table flanked by nine council members, four table microphones shared between them. They face a few dozen CITIZENS sitting in folding chairs, with the elderly being the best represented faction. We FOLLOW Pauly, entering the meeting from the rear, as he hurries up the aisle and past Joann, who is adressing the meeting at the stand-up microphone facing the council table-

JOANN
This used to be a city where the children would inherit their parents' houses. You got married, you lived upstairs, it wasn't easy but you shut up and you did it, and a couple years later God willing there's children and you took over the payments-

Pauly hooks around behind the council members and leans in next to the mayor, who covers his microphone with his hand-

JOANN
That's not going to happen with these taxes the way they are today. Do you know how much our bill went up after the last assessment? Five times. And for what? To raise the salary of people who can't even teach our children how to read?

NIDIA
(a councilwoman, on her microphone) I think that's very unfair to our teachers.

PAULY
I tried him again.

MAYOR BACI
And?

PAULY
He jumped down my throat. It's not gonna happen.

MAYOR BACI
That's what he thinks.

MAYOR BACI
(over microphone) You'll have your turn to speak, Nidia.

We FOLLOW Pauly away from the mayor behind the council members, HOLDING when he passes Wynn, who sits by NIDIA TORRES and PETER CRANE-

25 cont.

JOANN
All I'm saying is this bond issue is an insult to the working people who built this city. Thank you.

There is APPLAUSE as she steps away from the mike. Connie is already there to take her place-

MAYOR BACI
Any other comment before we hear from the Council? Mrs. Gianfreddo-

CONNIE
I'd like to comment on this issue of quality in our schools.

CU WYNN

Looking out over the citizens-

CONNIE
(off) I send my children to St. Agnes and it costs and arm and a leg, not to mention ironing the damn uniforms every night-

AUDIENCE - WYNN'S POV

We PAN to check out the audience. Not many Black faces. Reesha gives Wynn a little wave from the second row-

CONNIE
-but I wouldn't have them in these public schools. I was born and bred in this town, and when I went to J Street the teachers got a fraction of what they do today-

25 cont.

COUNCIL

We shoot from behind the council desk as Wynn, Nidia and Peter lean back to whisper a conference, Connie haranguing in the background- NIDIA
Not much of a turnout for our side.

WYNN
Just the Death to Taxes posse.

PETER
Listen guys, I'm going to have to break rank on this one.

NIDIA
Why?

PETER
Because I've got Crespi breathing down my neck in November and I don't want him to beat me on the head with this tax thing. So we'll lose 7 to 2 instead of 6 to 3 like we always do.

WYNN
There's a principal involved-

PETER
I don't have your ethnic thing going in my district, Wynn. I can't afford to go down with the ship. Sorry.

CONNIE
-with none of this computer technology or psychological counseling nonsense you have today, but we learned. Your multiplication tables, handwriting, grammar, the capitals of all the States, U.S. History in the original version- just the basic meat and potatoes curricular activities. I mean, I'm not saying cut sports out or anything that builds up loyalty to your peer group, but some of these other things. I mean English as a Second Language? Now maybe I missed something, but where I grew up English was the first language! (APPLAUSE)

CONNIE
And has reading changed that much in twenty-five years? If these teachers got report cards you'd have to give them an F in every department. The idea of increasing our taxes so these people can move into some luxury condo apartment makes me physically ill. That's all I got to say.

APPLAUSE and WHISTLING from the audience-

26 INT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

APPLAUSE. Bobby and Zip's band have just finished their set. We FOLLOW Nick across in front of the stage as Bobby speaks over a microphone-

26 cont.

BOBBY
Thank you. In a few minutes we'll have Cheese in the Mail do a set for you, then we'll be back around midnight. Thank you for coming-

Nick bends down to talk to Angela, alone at her table for a moment-

NICK
I like you.

ANGELA
What?

NICK
I don't even know you, but I'm positive that I like you.

ANGELA
Oh.

NICK
I recognize you. You were a senior when I was in ninth.

ANGELA
Yeah, right- you had that brother ahead of me- played basketball-

NICK
Tony.

ANGELA
Tony Rinaldi. Major heartthrob. He went over there and--

NICK
Yeah.

ANGELA
Yeah. That was so sad.

NICK
And you went out with that creep, that whositz- Michael Rizzo.

ANGELA
We got married.

NICK
Awww. Really? I walked right into that, didn't I?

26 cont.

ANGELA
Was he a creep in high school already? I don't remember.

NICK
You're not with him anymore?

ANGELA
Free woman.

NICK
Great. Well, I'm Nick and I like you, and I got to go here, help my friends pick up some equipment, I'm like their designated driver, right, but I'd like to see you again.

ANGELA
You didn't see me this time.

NICK
Huh?

ANGELA
Nice to meet you.

NICK
I like you.

ANGELA
You said that. You don't <u>know</u> me.

NICK
Yes I do. You're something great.

ANGELA
Well, I'm glad you think so.

Bobby passes by with Zip-

BOBBY
Yo, Nicky. Game time.

NICK
I will see you again. Believe this.

We HOLD on Angela as Nick exits with the others. Dawn returns, watching him go, and sits-

DAWN
Who's that?

ANGELA
Some drunk.

26 cont.

DAWN
Very cute drunk. Very cute.

ANGELA
He said I'm something great.

DAWN
I'd ask for a second opinion on that.

27 EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Desmond and Tito walk down a lit road in the park, still furious at being rousted by the cops. Tito carries a stick and hacks at the branches above as they walk-

TITO
White faggot motherfuckers! They don't got a gun I fuck them up good-

DESMOND
Fuckers-

TITO
We didn't do shit, man, they treat us like that. Cracker-ass bastards-

DESMOND
Bastards-

TITO
We gonna do the time, man, we might's well do the crime. Dickless cocksuckers-

DESMOND
We fuck em up good-

LES, a White college professor in his forties, comes jogging toward them-

TITO
Lookit this faggot-ass motherfucker-

Tito steps aside as if to let Les run between them, then steps back and lowers his shoulder to close the gap at the last moment- WHAM! Les collides with them and falls-

LES
Hey!

TITO
Where the fuck you running, white boy?

27 cont.

Les starts to get up. WHAP! Tito hits him in the face with the stick, startling Desmond-

LES
Hey, cut it out!

TITO
Shut the fuck up, faggot! Hold on to him, Desmond!

Desmond, unsure of himself, tries to hold Les from behind as he stands. Tito gets in a few quick punches to the face, but Les breaks away, managing to run with Desmond dragging on him like a desperate tackler. He gets free and we FOLLOW him running into the woods-

TITO
Come back here, faggot!

Les crashes down a hillside and out onto another road below, past a parked patrol car. He skids to a stop and runs to the window, out of breath and bleeding from the mouth. Paddy and Fuentes are inside-

PADDY
Jesus, what happened to you?

LES
Two kids--- jumped me-- up there-

FUENTES
Just now?

LES
I-- got away---

PADDY
Hop in the back, pal. We'll find them for you.

Les gets in the rear and the patrol car pulls out, top flashing-

28 INT. CITY COUNCIL ROOM - WYNN - NIGHT

Wynn speaks over a microphone to the gathered taxpayers-

WYNN
All the other problems we've been hearing about tonight- the unemployment, drugs, street crime- those will always be highest where people have the least education. So you can pay now or you can pay later. If you had a brain tumor you wouldn't shop around for the cheapest surgeon, you'd look for the best. That's what we're voting on tonight- do we want the best for our children, or do we sell out their future for a few tax dollars? Thank you.

We HOLD on Wynn as he sits back, resigned-

MAYOR BACI
(off) I think we're ready for the vote now, folks. All in favor of the motion to implement Bond Issue C as a method to raise additional revenue for city schools, raise their hands-

Wynn raises his hand-

MAYOR BACI
(off) All opposed. The motion fails, seven votes to two.

There is more APPLAUSE and WHISTLING-

CU REESHA

Sitting amont the clapping people with folded arms, feeling bad for Wynn-

29 EXT. STREET - NEAR PARK - NIGHT

We are a ways up the street from the patrol car, watching as Paddy bulldogs Desmond across the street, the boy's arms pinned behind his back, and throws him against the car. Hard words are spoken as he frisks him. A large white PANEL TRUCK cruises past and we PAN to watch it-

30 INT. PANEL TRUCK - NIGHT

Nick driving, Bobby in the passenger seat and Zip leaning over their shoulders-

BOBBY
We can't go sell em on the street ourselves. Take a left here. Carl is giving us forty-percent wholesale value.

NICK
The guy is slime.

ZIP
You owe him money, right? We split this score, you can get him off your back.

BOBBY
Pull up to the loading dock.

31 EXT. LOADING AREA - MAD ANTHONY'S - NIGHT

The truck backs up to the loading dock. Headlights flick off. We TRACK IN as Bobby and Zip step out-

BOBBY
We'll go around. The key only works on the front.

NICK
You got a key?

BOBBY
I told you, this is simple. Like jerking off.

ZIP
Jerking off? What's that?

BOBBY
(slaps Zip's head) C'mon, Moe.

ZIP
Nyuk, nyuk-

They pass us and we HOLD on Nick, watching out the open passenger window. He is nervous, not totally sure what he's doing here-

NICK
Oh Christ.

32 INT. MAD ANTHONY'S - NIGHT

Security lights on at low-level. We face the glass front entrance doors. Franklin steps out from behind the camera, arms out like a Western gunslinger. He whirls to face us, quick-drawing the gun and bringing it up into a three-point cop stance. He relaxes, speaks to his imaginary opponent-

FRANKLIN
You're dead, sucker.

He cuts to the right, down an aisle of appliances. We HOLD the frame. Zip and Bobby enter, walking straight toward us-

ZIP
"-we'll beat the best price in town or you get it free. Mad Anthony is the lowest."

BOBBY
We want the Mitsubishi's, JVC, Panasonic- top dollar stuff only. And nothing bulky.

Franklin leaps out behind them, gun drawn-

FRANKLIN
Freeze!

Bobby jumps in fright but Zip is too stoned to react much. He starts to kneel down on the ground-

BOBBY
Oh shit! Oh shit! What are you doing here?

FRANKLIN
What the fuck you mean? What are you doing here? (to Zip) Hold it, fucker! What you trying?

ZIP
I'm getting down on the ground.

FRANKLIN
I told you to freeze, man!

ZIP
What is this, Simon Says?

FRANKLIN
Shut the fuck up and get down on the ground-

ZIP
I was doing that-

32 cont.

FRANKLIN
You too!

BOBBY
(gets down) Just relax, man. Don't shoot that thing-

ZIP
Look, we haven't stolen anything-

BOBBY
We could work a deal on this- how bout a hundred bucks?

ZIP
We don't have a hundred, Bobby.

BOBBY
Shut up! We'll give you whatever we got, and then later-

FRANKLIN
You don't shut up I'monna shoot your dick off!

ZIP
The deal thing's not gonna work, Bob-

BOBBY
You stupid sack of shit, Zip, you said there wasn't gonna <u>be</u> anybody!

FRANKLIN
Y'all are the worst thieves I ever seen! I got to call the cops now-

ZIP
Shouldn't we have our hands behind our necks?

BOBBY
Listen, do me a favor, shoot <u>his</u> dick off. I'll vouch for you in court-

33 EXT. MAD ANTHONY'S - NICK - NIGHT

Nick, worried about the delay, comes around the corner to see what's up. He looks in the window- there is Franklin with the boys laying on the ground at his feet. Franklin looks out the window, sees- we PAN to watch Nick sprint off into the night-

34 EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Closed up, nothing happening inside. We see the STREET REFLECTED in the glass of the front window. A car pulls up in the street- SMASH! The window SHATTERS as something is thrown through it. We PAN to see Vinnie, Jimmy and some of the kids who were with them before, throwing bottles by the car-

VINNIE
Fuck youuuuuuu!

They hop in the car and PEEL AWAY. The street is empty for a moment. Then Nick comes running through in the foreground, looking back over his shoulder, sliding slightly on the broken glass but paying little attention to it as he runs OFF-

35 INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Hard flourescent light bathes the busy nighttime station house. We start TRACKING with Les, still in his jogging clothes, holding a gauze pad to his lip as THOMAS, a juvenile-affairs officer leads him across the floor-

THOMAS
The light is better, you've calmed down- we need to be positive-

LES
I was in the car when they caught them.

They come to Desmond and Tito, sitting despondently by an unmanned desk-

THOMAS
One more time, then. Are these the boys?

LES
Yes. I'm positive.

THOMAS
Okay, I'll take you to Detective Riley, he'll record your statement.

As they move away we HOLD on Desmond and Tito-

TITO
Faggot.

DESMOND
Man, what'd you have to hit him for?

TITO
Cause he's a white motherfuckin faggot.

35 cont.

DESMOND
How you know that?

TITO
Man, they ask us, we say he wanted to suck our dicks and we was tryin to get away.

DESMOND
What's that gonna do?

TITO
They drop the case. Bein a faggot's against the law, so we walk. Say he put his hands on you.

DESMOND
Naw, man! Fuck. Say he put em on you. Didn't nobody touch me.

TITO
(shrugs) No skin off my butt.

BOBBY
(off) This is a gross misfeasance of justice here!

The boys look toward the noise and we PAN AWAY to see Zip and Bobby escorted in cuffs by a pair of COPS, Franklin self-consciously bringing up the rear. The cops aren't buying any stories-

BOBBY
We walk by, the door is wide open-

ZIP
So what would you do? We figure there's a 24-hour sale going on-

BOBBY
We stick our nose in the door two fuckin centimeters and fuckin Rambo here comes down on us, yelling out racial epitaphs, waving his piece around-

ZIP
This man is dangerous, officers. He nearly shot my friend's private organs off-

FRANKLIN
The gun got no bullets in it, sucker.

35 cont.

ZIP
(turns, shocked) No bullets?

FRANKLIN
It's plastic.

ZIP
You know how embarrassing that is? You hear that Bob?

They have led us to Malik and Levonne, who stands arguing with STROCZYK, a phlegmatic desk officer. We HOLD with them as the others exit, Franklin hanging back to stare at Malik-

STROCZYK
What makes you think it was racially motivated?

LEVONNE
Because it was our window.

MALIK
Brother Franklin.

FRANKLIN
Tyrone?

MALIK
Malik.

STROCZYK
Does the sign out front have any specific reference to race?

LEVONNE
People know what we do at the center.

FRANKLIN
Tyrone!

MALIK
Malik.

FRANKLIN
(amazed) Man, look at you!

MALIK
(indicates the uniform) Look at you, brother.

STROCZYK
So you think it was somebody you know?

35 cont.

LEVONNE
Man, I knew you people would pull this shit-

FRANKLIN
Well, I been incarcerated, see. Pretty sorry, huh? Man, what happened to you?

MALIK
I've surrendered myself to the will of Allah.

FRANKLIN
Oh.

STROCZYK
(sighs) I've got a plate glass window, no witnesses, time approximately 11 pm, nothing stolen, cost of replacement undetermined. There's no line on the form for motivation, racial or otherwise-

MALIK
Knowledge is power, brother. I try to spread the knowledge. And what about you?

FRANKLIN
I've surrendered myself to the will of Mad Anthony.

We FOLLOW as Asteroid is escorted past by another COP, Asteroid chanting a loud mantra-like rap-

ASTEROID
Toshiba, Yoshida, Hitachi, Horita-
Toshiba, Yoshida, Hitachi, Horita-

We HOLD as he nears Tito and Desmond, talking with Thomas at the desk now-

TITO
Dude was a faggot, man. He got what he asked for.

THOMAS
Even if that was the case, which I doubt, it's not against the law to be a homosexual.

DESMOND
Yes it is.

35 cont.

THOMAS
So you approached this man-

TITO
The fucker approached us-

LEVONNE
(arriving) What's the story here?

TITO
They saying assault. Man, some faggot come up to us in the park-

THOMAS
This isn't any of your business, Levonne.

LEVONNE
I'm making it my business.

TITO
He put his hand on Desmond.

Desmond shoots a dirty look at Tito-

LEVONNE
Is that true?

THOMAS
Levonne-

LEVONNE
Is that true?

DESMOND
He tried to- you know-

TITO
Yeah, but I popped him one so's he run on away from us. Self-defense.

LEVONNE
You boys don't say another thing till I get you some legal help down here. Not one word.

DESMOND
Yes sir.

THOMAS
Levonne, this isn't a murder case-

But we are off with Levonne over toward a bank of pay phones. He crosses with Jeanette, wandering in looking lost and worried-

35 cont.

LEVONNE
Yo Jeanette. You okay?

JEANETTE
They got my boy here-

LEVONNE
(points) He one of those?

JEANETTE
Oh Lord. Did he do bad?

LEVONNE
You just keep him quiet there till I get a lawyer.

Franklin steps between them on his way out and we FOLLOW him to the door. As he passes the SECURITY GUARD, the guard, a young Black man, calls and lifts Franklin's plastic pistol with his little finger-

GUARD
Brother-

Franklin turns-

GUARD
Don't forget your weapon. It's a jungle out there.

36 EXT. STREET NEAR ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

Nick is walking on a residential street near the rock club. It is very late, quiet. He sees Angela across the street, staring into the engine of her car, hood raised. We FOLLOW him across to her-

NICK
Hi.

ANGELA
Hi. Your friends in the band never came back.

NICK
Yeah. They got tied up. Motor problems?

ANGELA
It's like totally dead. You know much about cars?

36 cont.

NICK
Not a thing. Do you?

ANGELA
No.

NICK
Then why are you looking in the engine?

ANGELA
(smiles) That's what people do, right? (closes the hood)

NICK
Well you shouldn't be out alone here at night. I'll walk you home.

ANGELA
That's alright. I can manage.

NICK
I'm serious, it's dangerous. Look, I'll walk on the other side of the street if you want. Which way we going?

Angela laughs as he starts across the street, waves him back-

ANGELA
Don't be dramatic. I'm on Lincoln between J and K.

They walk silently for a moment-

NICK
So. Are you happy?

ANGELA
What kind of question is that?

NICK
An important question.

ANGELA
You mean am I happy right now?

NICK
With your life. Are you happy with your life?

ANGELA
I'm not gonna tell you that. What about you?

36 cont.

NICK
No. I am not happy. Maybe if I had somebody like you to be with I would be.

ANGELA
Are you always like this?

NICK
No. Usually I ask the normal bullshit- what do you do, how much does your apartment rent for- I don't have time for that stuff.

ANGELA
You on a deadline or something?

NICK
You ever been in a car accident? Things like slow down, get real clear? Important shit is coming down in my life, all at once. Like I saw you tonight.

ANGELA
Hey, I'm not that great.

NICK
Yes you are. Tell me the worst thing about yourself. The worst.

ANGELA
I put up with jerks in my life for too long.

Nick steps ahead of Angela to get a good look at her-

NICK
Is that me? I'm a jerk?

ANGELA
I didn't say that.

NICK
Thank you.

ANGELA
The jury is still out.

NICK
Do I like turn your stomach to look at or something?

ANGELA
No-

36 cont.

NICK
I'm neutral? Attractive?

ANGELA
You're a good-looking guy. And you know it, too. Big deal.

NICK
I think you look fantastic.

ANGELA
Uh-huh.

NICK
And if you're not married or involved with somebody, it's cause nobody's figured out what you're worth.

Angela walks in silence a moment, tears forming in her eyes-

NICK
Hey, what's the matter?

ANGELA
You can't say things like that.

NICK
Why not?

ANGELA
Cause you just <u>met</u> me, that's why not. I was married eight fucking years, my husband never said one thing that nice. I don't even know you, so it's just <u>words</u>.

NICK
I'm sorry. (makes a face) You were married eight years to Michael Rizzo?

ANGELA
(pissed) Who the fuck did <u>you</u> go out with in high school? Huh?

NICK
(quietly) Mary Ellen Battaglia.

ANGELA
Mary Ellen Bat<u>tag</u>lia! Mary Ellen Battaglia needed an instruction manual to chew <u>gum</u>.

NICK
She had other things-

36 cont.

ANGELA
Yeah, she had tits in the third grade. Her major fucking accomplishment in life-

NICK
Well I didn't live with her for eight years.

ANGELA
It was like I was with the Moonies or something, all right? That was my life, I couldn't imagine anything else.

Another silence. Nick is sensing he might have been right about this woman and it scares him a bit-

NICK
Did you have kids?

ANGELA
I have a daughter.

NICK
Yeah? Great.

ANGELA
My mother takes her a lot of the time. I'm going back to school, I work at a restaurant-

NICK
DeLillo's.

ANGELA
Have you been following me?

NICK
Hey, I saw you in there once. It's a public place.

ANGELA
(looks directly at him) Megan, my daughter, has this disease. Congenital. It makes her like spastic. They call it 'severely involved' now.

NICK
(nods, thinks) And what do you do to have fun?

36 cont.

ANGELA
Fun? I'll tell you, Nick, it's like you asked me am I happy? That's not something I can think about a whole lot right now.

NICK
(smiles) You said my name.

ANGELA
What?

NICK
Nick. You said Nick. I love that, you saying my name.

ANGELA
You are a strange motherfucker. Maybe I should have you walk on the other side of the street like you said-

NICK
Listen, I could get my sister to babysit, she owes me, she's always borrowing money from me, and we could-

ANGELA
Whoa, slow down. Cool your jets.

NICK
I want you- I want you to take me seriously.

ANGELA
You don't take yourself seriously. Those friends of yours-

NICK
Yeah, I know. But they're not bad guys, really. They're loyal.

ANGELA
Dogs are loyal.

A PATROL CAR cruises by on the street close to them. Neither seems to glad to see it. They wait till it's gone to speak-

ANGELA
Well- this is my block. Thanks.

36 cont.

NICK
You know when you're a kid, a teenager, and it's Saturday night and you go out and every place you walk into you feel like this is it, there's gonna be somebody great in here, and I'm gonna meet her and my life is gonna be different after tonight-

ANGELA
I married out of high school. That's a pretty dim memory-

NICK
But you know the feeling?

ANGELA
I know the feeling.

NICK
It's been a very wild day for me. A lot of shit has gone down- but I've had that feeling, right here- (touches his chest) -and I haven't had it in a long time, cause it never happens, you know, you never meet that girl or she's not the right one. Then I see you.

ANGELA
You're gonna make me cry again, damn it. I'm really tired.

NICK
Angela Sabino. Angela. That's how it sounds. So what if I call you up?

ANGELA
(shrugs) Worse things could happen.

NICK
(smiles) Goodnight, Angela.

ANGELA
Good night, Nick.

Angela walks to her apartment. We HOLD on Nick, watching her, and-

FADE OUT.

37 EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING

Outside Nick's apartment. A LOUD BANGING of metal as GARBAGEMEN slam empty cans down in the street. Nick comes out, scoops a newspaper off the stoop, steps down and we TRACK with him along the sidewalk. He scans the paper-

ECU PAPER - NICK'S POV

We PAN to scan the headlines on the second page, past ASSAULT ON MADISON STATE PROFESSOR to APPLIANCE STORE ROBBERY-

RIZZO
(off) You did it, didn't you?

STREET

Nick starts as he finds Rizzo, in uniform, walking next to him. Bauer cruises in the patrol car in the BG, shadowing them-

NICK
What?

RIZZO
No bullshit, Rinaldi. You did it.

NICK
Did what?

RIZZO
Don't hand me that.

NICK
What if I did?

RIZZO
You're fucking with me now. Don't fuck with me. You did it. Didn't you, you fuck? I saw you with her.

NICK
You don't own her. If you ever did, then you don't any more.

RIZZO
You stay away from her.

NICK
No- you stay away from me. You got your uniform, your fuckin badge-

RIZZO
This uniform is the only thing between you and the hospital right now, pal. If I was off-duty I'd bury you.

37 cont.

NICK
Yeah? What time do you get off?

Bauer HONKS from the street-

RIZZO
You're history, Rinaldi. You're dead.

We FOLLOW Rizzo as he stomps to the patrol car and slams inside-

38 INT. PATROL CAR - DAY

BAUER
You're out of line, Mike.

RIZZO
It's none of your business.

BAUER
You ride with me that makes it my business. You settle your personal shit on your own time.

RIZZO
Fine. No problem. Just butt out.

Silence. Bauer drives for a moment-

BAUER
You're gonna get yourself in trouble-

RIZZO
Shut the fuck up about it.

BAUER
(sighs, sees) Somebody popped the window out here last night-

We see the community center through their windshield, somebody covering the broken storefront window, Wynn standing by watching-

BAUER
They're gonna be all over us in the papers.

39 EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Wynn pauses to watch the WORKMAN tack the last bit of cardboard over the shattered window. We FOLLOW Wynn INTO the CENTER. Levonne, Malik, KYLE and several other BLACK community LEADERS are already talking. Kyle is a conservatively dressed reporter, getting a quote from Malik. Levonne is sweeping up glass fragments into a pile-

MALIK
-part of a systematic campaign to undermine Black Manhood in this country. You stand up for yourself, the white boy's gonna cut you down. These young brothers are being sacrificed into the jaws of the racist conspiracy.

KYLE
That's three pages worth- I'll have to do some editing-

MALIK
We had Dwight Rollins, unarmed, shot by racist police this April, Hollis Washington beaten to death while in custody--

LEVONNE
Ask the Great White Hope here what he thinks.

WYNN
Somebody busted your window?

KYLE
Morning, Wynn. What do you plan to do about this park thing?

WYNN
Park thing?

LEVONNE
Two young Black men approached in the park by a white homosexual, they give him what for, next thing they run in by the cops for assault.

WYNN
Last night?

KYLE
What are you going to do about it?

WYNN
Well- I'll go to the police and-

39 cont.

MALIK
Go straight to the enemy. This man got nothing to say for the Black Nation. Man just a stooge in the system-

WYNN
Half of everything you say is true, Malik. But the other half is pure shit. That's off the record, Kyle-

LEVONNE
Fuckin politicians. Off the fuckin record- what do you plan to do for the young brothers?

WYNN
First I'm going to investigate the charges-

MALIK
You saying the brothers are lying? Is that what?

WYNN
(sighs, to Kyle) `Councilman Himes promised to make a thorough investigation of the incident'. Period.

Wynn walks out, stepping around the pile of glass-

LEVONNE
Politicians. Shit.

40 INT. HALLWAY - MADISON STATE BUILDING

We are TRACKING BACK with Les, face cut and bruised, and DEAN MILFORD, as they walk down the hallway passing a few students-

MILFORD
I'm not going to tell you what to do about this, Les- I just want you to know the pressure we're under here. First thing this morning I get a call from somebody from the P Street Community Center-

LES
I'm not backing down on this. Those kids are dangerous.

40 cont.

MILFORD
I understand that. But the homosexual thing complicates it. We have a very tenuous relationship with the city as it is-

LES
What homosexual thing?

MILFORD
They didn't tell you? (he looks at Les to see if he's faking) The boys said you made advances-

LES
Goddammit!

MILFORD
There was a follow-up call from the police, suggesting that in light of the circumstances-

LES
That's a lie!

We TRADE as they cross paths with Reesha and SUZANNE, another fellow teacher, on their way to class-

REESHA
Hi, Les.

LES
Hi.

Reesha waits a bit before speaking again, looking back at Les-

REESHA
God- what happened to him?

SUZANNE
I saw an article in the paper this morning. It said he was mugged in the park last night.

REESHA
Oh God. Did it say what race?

SUZANNE
Huh?

REESHA
What race the kids were? Black or White?

40 cont.

SUZANNE
Black.

REESHA
Great.

SUZANNE
That doesn't have anything to do with you.

REESHA
You know better than that, Suzanne.

We TRADE again as Angela and KATHY, a school friend, sweep us back in the other direction, Angela speed-rapping-

ANGELA
I mean he's younger but not that much younger, like I was a senior when he was in ninth grade but by now that's not such a big deal, right, and he's good-looking and everything so I don't think much about it and then I get out to my car and it's dead, you turn the key and there's not a sound, that piece of shit Michael left me, I hate to even look at the thing, and then he shows up, this guy Nick, and he seems like lost or something. Listen to me talking about this- am I stupid or what?

We HOLD as they pass Les and the Dean, arguing in front of the Dean's office-

MILFORD
Of course it is, if you say so, Les-

LES
I'm not a homosexual-

MILFORD
I know that, but we have a public profile-

LES
And if I was, so what? What does this school stand for?

Milford looks around cautiously as more students begin to pass-

MILFORD
Let's do this inside, okay?

41 INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

O'Brien stands by the door as Bobby and Zip sit facing him. Asteroid is facing into the corner, mumbling something incomprehensible-

O'BRIEN
We got prints on the van, fellas.

ZIP
Outstanding.

BOBBY
An ever-tightening net of circumstantial evidence.

O'BRIEN
Who was the third guy?

BOBBY
You got the prints, you tell us.

O'BRIEN
You give me a name, I'll put a word in with the court. You guys hang with Nick Rinaldi, don't you?

BOBBY
Nick who?

ZIP
It's no use, Bobby. He's too fuckin smart for us. We give up- (points to Asteroid) -it was him.

BOBBY
Yo! Asteroid! Say "I did it!"

ASTEROID
I did it!

BOBBY
No, I did it!

ASTEROID
No I did it!

O'Brien scowls, exits, Asteroid coming over to yell after him-

ASTEROID
I did it, I did it, I did it!

42 INT. CARL'S AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

MUSIC blasts from the workers' RADIOS, welding torches HISS, somebody BANGS dents out of a fender. Carl crosses the shop toward us, passing Vinnie looking into the engine of Angela's car. Carl is cut off as O'Brien pulls into the FG in a shiny, expensive car. Carl leans down to talk through the passenger window-

CARL
O.B. Long time no see. Engine problems?

O'BRIEN
You're the one with the problem, Carl. Get in.

Carl sighs, slides into the car-

43 INT. O'BRIEN'S CAR/AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

Carl and O'Brien both roll up their windows. The MUSIC and NOISE FADE-

CARL
This is a nice rig you got, O'Brien. You're doing all right for yourself.

O'BRIEN
I could be doing better.

CARL
I hate to see a man unsatisfied with his station in life. What's the beef?

O'BRIEN
Mad Anthony's. Last night.

CARL
Can't help you. How much they clear?

O'BRIEN
Nada. Your little friends Bobby and Zip tripped over their dicks. You should know better.

CARL
Got nothin to do with me.

O'BRIEN
They talked.

43 cont.

CARL
I don't fall for that shit. You should know better.

O'BRIEN
I got Leo Snider at Rahway coming up for review. He says if I help him he'll put your ass away for me. The vending machine hijack, Lehman's furs, the fire on the waterfront-

CARL
Why not throw in the Kennedy assassination?

O'BRIEN
I hate to be the one to break this, but a lot of people don't like you, Carl. The minute it looks like you might be pulled off the scene for a while- hey, we'll have to make the snitches take tickets like in a deli.

CARL
What do you want?

O'BRIEN
Suspect number three. Somebody left a hot van out back at Anthony's, and the security dick said he saw a third outside but couldn't make him. I figure it's somebody on the inside, gave you the key.

CARL
That's all?

O'BRIEN
And a player to be named at a future date.

CARL
Nick Rinaldi.

O'BRIEN
(smiles) This is very good news. We should talk like this more often.

CARL
Tell Snider to eat shit and die.

O'BRIEN
You sound bitter, Carl. I hate to see a man unhappy with his station in life.

43 cont.

Carl gives O'Brien a parting glare, then we FOLLOW him out of the car. He slams the door and O'Brien backs away. Carl passes Vinnie at Angela's car-

VINNIE
Somebody pulled the distributor head off this. Nothing to it.

CARL
Whose car?

VINNIE
(shrugs) Some girl. The hook brung it in.

CARL
Tell her we're replacing the ignition system.

VINNIE
Carl? When you gonna give me something?

44 INT. L STREET PROJECT APARTMENT - DAY

Bauer and Rizzo are on their way out of a mattress-on-the-floor apartment setup in an abandoned building. A teenaged girl, ISABEL, stands sullenly watching them with an INFANT BABY in her arms-

BAUER
You tell your boyfriend Ramirez he can come in or we can bring him in. The second way isn't going to be fun.

RIZZO
This is a condemned building, Miss. I give you two days- two days, I come back here, you'd better be gone-

We FOLLOW them out the door of the apartment and down the stairs-

RIZZO
Jesus, what a pit.

BAUER
That baby's gonna get sick.

44 cont.

RIZZO
I used to come in here and shoot pigeons up on the fifth floor. Hundreds of them, they come in through the broken windows. Good for the reflexes.

BAUER
You should slow those reflexes down a little bit.

RIZZO
Can you imagine living in a place like this?

BAUER
My father lived here, he was a kid. Different building on the same spot. Probably the same kind of dump.

RIZZO
But he got himself out, right?

BAUER
He ran numbers till his cousin got him on the job. Then you guineas moved in and the place went to hell.

RIZZO
Funny guy.

They step out onto the street and we trade to TRACK with Wynn as he crosses their path, going to the inhabited building next door. Jeanette sits on the stoop, watching the street. We hear RAP MUSIC coming out the ground floor window-

WYNN
Excuse me, do you know a boy named Desmond Price, lives in this building?

JEANETTE
He already talked to the police, the social worker, the news-

WYNN
I'm your councilman in this district-

JEANETTE
Yeah, I seen your picture. I'm Desmond's mother.

WYNN
Could I talk with him? He's not at school-

44 cont.

JEANETTE
You think my boy lied?

WYNN
No, but-

JEANETTE
You think he lied.

WYNN
I don't know, I wasn't there. Sometimes, under pressure from the police, kids can say-

JEANETTE
(calls) Desmond! Get out here!

The MUSIC cuts OFF-

JEANETTE
My son's not a liar.

WYNN
I want to be able to help clear this thing up.

Desmond comes out, sleepy-eyed-

JEANETTE
Sit.

Desmond sits on the stoop between Jeanette and Wynn-

JEANETTE
Talk to the man.

WYNN
Hi, Desmond. My name is Wynston Himes, I'm your-

DESMOND
I seen your picture.

WYNN
Right. Can you tell me what happened last night?

Desmond looks to Jeanette-

JEANETTE
Tell the man what you told me.

44 cont.

DESMOND
Me and my friend Tito was hangin out at the park, not doin nothin, sittin on this bench and this dude in sweats sit down by us and starts talking that he give us money if we let him- you know-

WYNN
What words did he say?

DESMOND
Suck us off. Then he reach for me- he didn't touch me, see, don't nobody touch me- but he was gonna and that's when Tito went off on the man, pops him in the face onetwothree and we run off.

WYNN
And that's it?

DESMOND
Then the cops catch us and run us in. Near broke Tito's arm in two, bendin it behind his back.

WYNN
This is the truth? You're not saying this to stay out of trouble?

JEANETTE
My son doesn't lie, Mister. And he's not going to any family court.

WYNN
(standing) I'll try to make sure that doesn't happen. Thank you for talking with me. If anybody from the newspapers comes by-

JEANETTE
We talked with a man from the Black Courier this morning.

WYNN
Oh.

DESMOND
Them faggots always after you up to the park. Be happening all the time, Mister.

JEANETTE
Get back in your room, Desmond.

45 INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

Zimmer is in gym clothes, humping up a stair-climbing machine, as O'Brien stands beside him in his street clothes-

O'BRIEN
His son was the third party in a robbery attempt last night. The other two got caught and he got away. He hasn't been ID'ed yet.

ZIMMER
Hard evidence?

O'BRIEN
I could nail him to the wall.

Zimmer looks at the print-out on the machine in front of him-

ZIMMER
Look at that- my heart rate. I croak on this damn thing they'll be able to make a print-out of it.

O'BRIEN
Anyhow- you interested?

ZIMMER
I appreciate it, Bill. Things turn out right, we won't forget you.

46 INT. CITY HALL, HALLWAY - DAY

We FOLLOW Zimmer and Mayor Baci down the hall-

ZIMMER
We could do this through our own office, of course-

MAYOR BACI
I can handle it.

ZIMMER
We have a timetable on this, Mayor. The Japanese want it cleared by the weekend. If the Japanese pull their money out-

MAYOR BACI
I can handle it.

46 cont.

ZIMMER
Right. It's your turf. Rinaldi's practically a brother- all you goombahs are practically brothers, right? We just need those buildings cleared.

Zimmer peels off and we FOLLOW Mayor Baci as he continues down the hall, approaching Pauly, who is trapped against a wall by Joann and Connie-

JOANN
There are no streetlights out there. It's like the Dark Ages, the Mid-Evil Times-

CONNIE
You heard that professor got mugged last night?

JOANN
A supposedly intelligent person-

CONNIE
I wouldn't go out in that park in a Sherman tank after dark-

MAYOR BACI
(passing) Pauly. Inside.

JOANN
I feel like I'm living in a Charles Bronson movie. There's animals out there-

PAULY
Excuse me, ladies-

MAYOR BACI
(off) Now, Pauly.

PAULY
Fiscal crisis. Excuse me.

We HOLD with the women as Pauly slips by them-

JOANN
They don't listen.

CONNIE
They never listen.

47 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

WORKERS are leaving the site, joking with each other. Joe appears, concerned, moving against the flow. We FOLLOW until he comes to Riggs, Yoyo and Gus the housing inspector by the crane-

JOE
What's the fuckin story here?

GUS
You're shut down, Joe.

JOE
For what?

GUS
You got a septic clearance that isn't up to spec.

JOE
I got a green light on that months ago.

GUS
Not on paper.

JOE
You know where it came from.

GUS
Then I suggest you go back to where it came from and talk to them. What the fuck you think I'm out here for?

Gus tears a form off his clipboard, hands it to Joe and walks away-

JOE
Septic clearance my ass.

YOYO
We're still on the clock, Joe.

JOE
Well call Belcher and get off it. This could take a week.

YOYO
Belcher says no breaks from the local. The contract stands.

JOE
What the fuck is that?

47 cont.

YOYO
Your juice has been cut off, Joe. Whatever problems you got downtown, you clean em up, we can cut you some slack. (claps Joe on the back) Don't take it personal. (calls) Yo! Jimmy! Wait up!

Yoyo hurries off to join a group of workers-

RIGGS
Sorry, Joe-

JOE
Did Nicky come back today?

RIGGS
No-

PAULY
(off) Joe!

We SHIFT as they turn, to include Pauly in the BG, standing at the edge of the site by Joe's car. We FOLLOW Joe over toward him-

PAULY
Joe, we gotta talk. We got problems-

JOE
That two-bit crook you work for has got problems, starting right now-

PAULY
We got a situation, Joey-

JOE
Get in. I got to stop by the apartments on the way downtown. Is Baci in his office?

We FOLLOW as they slam INTO the CAR-

JOE
Fucking Gus shut me down! It's Baci, right? It's this fucking L Street deal-

Joe pulls the car out onto the street and drives-

PAULY
We got worse problems than that, Joe. Nicky is in trouble.

47 cont.

JOE
Trouble.

PAULY
He and Bobby Krausse and that kid Zip tried to do Anthony's warehouse last night.

JOE
He's in jail?

PAULY
He got away. But they know he was in on it.

JOE
That doesn't make sense. Why would Nicky need to do a robbery? Was anybody hurt?

PAULY
No. No guns. The things is, though, the DA's office is butting into it. The guy's bucking for Senate, right, they figure he goes after Nick, respected family, juice with the people downtown, it shows he's impartial, right? Incorruptable, all that shit. They want to bury him, Joe. They got a stolen van, Anthony's place- no mercy. I asked the mayor, as a personal favor, to hold them off and he's made an effort- but I got to tell you, I don't think his heart is in it.

Joe sees where this is leading-

JOE
And what would it take to put his heart back into it?

PAULY
What we talked about with L Street. Tonight.

JOE
Shit. This is my kid. You're using my kid against me like this? Your nephew?

PAULY
It's grand larceny, Joe. Nicky put us here- not me.

They have pulled up in front of the L Street apartments-

47 cont.

PAULY
Joe, look at this place- it's a dump.

JOE
It wouldn't be if your outfit didn't have my hands tied-

PAULY
It's coming down anyway. Sooner or later. They're not asking for you to do the thing itself, Joe- they just need to be sure once it's done you don't go fixing the place back up.

JOE
(thinks) Where is Nick?

PAULY
They haven't found him yet. I put the word out- kid gloves.

JOE
I'm gonna have to go to the Old Man on this- (sees) What the fuck-

We FOLLOW as Joe pushes out of the car and onto the sidewalk where Gus stands in front of Jeanette's building, clipboard in hand, filling out a form. VALDEZ, the super, stands beside him and Jeanette watches from the stoop. Gus doesn't look up-

GUS
Hello, Joe, whatta you know?

JOE
What's this?

GUS
We got six, seven violations and I haven't been to the basement yet. Gonna pay some fines on these, Joe.

JOE
You fuck.

GUS
And just yesterday it was all up to code. Things fall apart quick, don't they?

48 INT. DELILLO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Nick steps in, looking around for Angela. He crosses to Dawn, bringing empty plates back to the kitchen-

NICK
Hi.

DAWN
Hi.

NICK
I'm Nick. I was-

DAWN
Yeah, she's in the annex. I'll tell her.

Dawn heads for the kitchen. Nick stands uneasily in the middle of the floor till Yoyo and some of the workers from the site burst in-

YOYO
Yo, Nicky! You a busboy here or what?

NICK
What are you guys doing out?

YOYO
The city shut us down.

NICK
What for?

YOYO
What do you care? You quit. (steps closer) Nicky, the cops come by right after your old man left the site. You in trouble?

NICK
I might be.

YOYO
You need a few bills to get you through?

NICK
Nah. Thanks.

We FOLLOW Yoyo as he moves to join his friends at the bar-

YOYO
They had a real hard-on for you, Nick. I wouldn't go back to your place for a while. Take it light-

48 cont.

We HOLD and MOVE IN as he passes Mayor Baci and Wynn in a booth, ignoring their lunches, testing each other's will-

MAYOR BACI
What brings revenue to this city, what brings life to this city, is good for everybody.

WYNN
Right. The trickle-down theory. But things only seem to trickle down so far-

MAYOR BACI
You don't expect developers to build if they can't make a profit-

WYNN
And you don't expect people to watch their neighborhood plowed under without lifting a finger.

MAYOR BACI
The development creates jobs. With jobs people can afford higher rents-

WYNN
Those jobs are gonna go to the people on L Street? Tell me another one.

MAYOR BACI
(sighs) I was hoping we could cut some kind of a deal on this.

WYNN
(suspicious) You mean like a personal deal?

MAYOR BACI
I hear you got your brother-in-law on Mad Anthony's payroll.

WYNN
What's that supposed to mean?

MAYOR BACI
(shrugs) I understand what it's like- new guy on the council, you're the last one at the banquet. People expect you to deliver. Okay- I've got housing inspectors, I've got teachers'aides at the school-

48 cont.

WYNN
(angry) You keep pushing for Galaxy Towers the way it's set up now, we'll fight you on the blighting classification, we'll fight you on the evictions, we'll fight you on the demolition and construction- every little step of the way! We'll make the L Street apartments a symbol for everything that's fucked-up about this city.

MAYOR BACI
They can't be a symbol if they aren't there.

They lock eyes. Angela breaks the trance, setting drinks down, then we FOLLOW her over to where Nick waits, checking the door nervously-

ANGELA
Nick-

NICK
I wanted to see you again-

ANGELA
There are telephones you know-

NICK
I figured if you were busy there was no way you could call me back- I'm not in my apartment much. (he shoots another look to the doorway) I'm kind of on the run these days.

49 EXT. OLD MAN'S YARD - DAY

We're in the back yard of a nice suburban house. Joe follows as the Old Man, a tough Irishman around seventy, prunes his garden-

OLD MAN
Sounds like they got you by the short ones, Joe.

JOE
I was wondering- since your people have fronted me the money on this thing-

OLD MAN
You want me to get Baci off your back.

49 cont.

JOE
He's hurting your investment-

OLD MAN
We invested in you, Joe.

JOE
He's using my family against me-

OLD MAN
(evenly) You think he didn't check with us before he made a move?

Joe realizes he's trapped-

JOE
And if I blow my bid on the office building? If I can't make the payments?

OLD MAN
What would a regular bank do?

JOE
You're not a regular bank. I've been carrying your guys on my payroll-

OLD MAN
We appreciate that, Joe. You'd still get to put up buildings- you just wouldn't be your own boss. Maybe you never were, really.

JOE
(shakes his head) I borrowed from you to get something of my own- without Baci, my brother-

OLD MAN
That's not how our society works, Joe. You got something good, first everybody on top of you gets a taste, then you share what's left with everybody below you. We're social animals, human beings. Not dogs. (claps him on the back) You'll do what you have to. And the people who know, the people who count, they'll understand, Joe. They'll respect you for it.

50 EXT. MADISON STATE CAMPUS, PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Reesha walks toward us through cars in the faculty section of the lot, slowing as she approaches CHRISTINE, another academic, waiting by an old Toyota-

REESHA
Hi.

CHRISTINE
Hi.

REESHA
I heard about Les. That's so awful.

CHRISTINE
Yeah.

REESHA
How are you holding up?

CHRISTINE
(shrugs) Maybe I'll get some sleep tonight.

REESHA
Well, it's over now.

CHRISTINE
(gives her a look) I wish that was true.

REESHA
Take care-

CHRISTINE
You too.

We TRACK as Reesha continues, turning back to look just as Les joins Christine in the BG, then TIGHTENING as she slides into the passenger seat next to Wynn, waiting at the wheel-

REESHA
Hi, baby.

WYNN
How'd it go today?

REESHA
Les Pullman was mugged last night-

WYNN
I know. It's going to get worse, too.

Wynn pulls the car out and heads out of the lot-

50 cont.

REESHA
How could it get worse?

WYNN
The two kids who beat him up say he was coming on to them.

REESHA
Les isn't gay.

WYNN
How do we know that?

REESHA
Because he isn't.

WYNN
Levonne Willis is stirring the pot. He's worked up a meeting at the Community Center tomorrow night- the whole point is just to nail me to the wall in public.

REESHA
Don't be paranoid. Do you know who these boys are?

WYNN
I talked to one of them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

REESHA
Do you think he was telling the truth?

WYNN
Levonne's going to have me up in front of every heavy hitter in the Community, the Black press, everybody, and he's going to ask me that same question. What do you think I better answer?

REESHA
Do you think they're telling the truth?

WYNN
Politically speaking, that doesn't really matter.

REESHA
It matters to me.

51 INT. ANGELA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nick moves around the room, watching as Angela kneels on the floor holding her daughter MEGAN up by the arms, helping her take a few steps-

ANGELA
C'mon, baby. Step with the other one. That's it- that's it-

NICK
I'm ten years older than my brother was when he was killed. He was just a kid- my big famous brother. And I been thinking-- what have I done with those ten years? What have I got to show for that time? Nothing. Nothing.

ANGELA
Okay, we'll just stand for a second. I'm gonna let your weight down a little. (to Nick) What do you think you should have done?

NICK
I don't know-

ANGELA
Have a family? (to Megan) Stay up there. Don't sit.

NICK
No. Not a family.

ANGELA
(ironic) Do something heroic?

NICK
Maybe. Not in the Army though. Not that kind of thing. Something big.

ANGELA
That's the way to do it. Okay- we'll sit down now- bend the knees-

NICK
I want to be my own boss.

ANGELA
Like your father.

NICK
Not like him. Not anything like him.

52 EXT. FACTORY PARKING LOT - DAY

A wide shot of Joe's car sitting alone in the parking lot of an abandoned factory-

53 INT. JOE'S CAR - DAY

Joe sits thinking, troubled. A KNOCK on the window. Carl slides in next to him. Joe gives him an uneasy look-

JOE
So it's you.

CARL
Yeah.

JOE
I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

CARL
People do favors for me, I do favors for them. You know how it works, Joe.

JOE
Why tonight?

CARL
It's the pace we live at. Look, the fire is very minor- we gut two or three floors in the abandoned side, the other side of the firewall, my kid gets in there, makes a few adjustments to the sprinkler system, we get a flood. Water damage. Nobody gets hurt, but nobody moves back in, either.

JOE
I don't like it.

CARL
You're not supposed to like it, Joe. You're supposed to bend over, spread your cheeks and take it like a man. I'm not too fuckin thrilled about it myself. (opens door) Don't organize any block parties down there tonight.

Carl steps out, giving Joe a last look-

CARL
It's life, Joe. Whatta you gonna do?

54 INT. JAIL CELL - LATE EVENING

Bobby and Zip sit in a very small jail cell with Asteroid, who is ping-ponging off the walls and chattering to himself non-stop-

ASTEROID
Help! We need help! Help! We need help clearing our warehouse of these fantastic bargains- we've got great deals on psychosis, neurosis, dementia, amnesia- schizoid, paranoid, psychotropic seizure- hebephrenic, melancholic, agraphobic, alcoholic-manic, depressive, genetically regressive-

He CONTINUES in this vein as Zip and Bobby talk, Bobby a bit unhinged-

BOBBY
You think we could plea bargain?

ZIP
We have to have something they <u>want</u>, Bobby. Besides Nick.

BOBBY
And that's out.

NICK
That's out.

BOBBY
We're gonna do time, then.

ZIP
Yeah.

ASTEROID
Bring on the night. Shut out the light. Bring on the night. Shut out the light-

BOBBY
(looks to Asteroid) Maybe this is Hell.

ZIP
Naw. If it was Hell my mother would be in here with a copy of <u>USA Today</u> reading to us about which foods are mucus-producing when you've got a cold. Compared to my house this is Disneyland.

Asteroid has his shoe off and manages to leap in the air and SMASH! knock out the single overhead bulb in its protective cage. The SCREEN goes DARK-

54 cont.

BOBBY
Aw shit. What he have to do that for?

55 EXT. LES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Les is stretching his hamstrings in the driveway. Christine stands in the front doorway under the light, hugging herself against the chill, watching him-

CHRISTINE
You don't have to do this.

LES
I'm not going to let them run my life. If I back down they win.

CHRISTINE
Who's keeping score?

Les stands, squares himself as if going into battle, then starts to jog-

LES
I'll see you in a bit.

Christine crosses down to the driveway and we HOLD on her, watching, worried-

56 EXT. ANGELA'S STREET - NIGHT

Les jogs towards us, leading us past Angela's building. We HOLD as he passes a parked car, then TRACK IN to see in the window. Rizzo is inside, furious, watching the upstairs windows-

57 EXT. L STREET - NIGHT

Les jogs in the project area. He crosses in front of Jeanette on her stoop and we HOLD on her just a moment till Vinnie, dressed in work clothes and carrying a tool kit, steps out by her. We FOLLOW him as he passes next door, stopping to watch him duck around the side of the building. Ramirez steps out the front, in a hurry, and trots away-

58 INT. RINALDI KITCHEN - NIGHT

Joe sits moping at the kitchen table, his coat still on. Pina enters, surprised to see him-

PINA
How long have you been here?

JOE
I don't know. Not long.

PINA
Are you hungry? Mrs. Ramirez made a casserole- Joe? Is something the matter?

JOE
Nicky's in trouble. He's wanted for a robbery.

PINA
(stunned) Is he alright?

JOE
I don't know. They haven't found him yet.

PINA
He didn't do it-

JOE
Yes he did.

PINA
I'll get Bar on the phone-

JOE
It's gonna take more than a lawyer. I've already put things in motion.

PINA
What does that mean? What did you do?

JOE
It means I handed <u>one</u>, of my kids over to the bastards, they're not gonna get another one.

PINA
Joe. What did you <u>do</u>?

59 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

We are in Les's face now, TRACKING BACK as he pumps, running hard, breathing heavy-

60 INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT - MEGAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Angela props her sleeping daughter up with pillows and cushions. Nick appears in the doorway in the BG. Angela kisses Megan, adjusts a bedside monitor, and we FOLLOW her out into the hallway with Nick-

ANGELA
I have to be careful when's she's got a cold. She's always had a hard time breathing. (sees) You shaved.

NICK
There was a razor in there.

ANGELA
I use that for my legs. You're lucky you got skin left.

NICK
(shrugs) I haven't been to my place today.

ANGELA
You break up with your girlfriend?

NICK
I haven't been with anybody for a while now.

ANGELA
Why not?

NICK
When I really need somebody- zap! It's like all the woman in the world disappear. I swear they smell me a block away and they go hide somewhere.

ANGELA
(smiles) That's how it is with guys when they find out I have a kid. They figure the only thing I got on my mind is roping them into getting married.

NICK
So what is on your mind?

60 cont.

ANGELA
Usually something about how much sleep I can get and still go to class and go to work and do Megan's therapy every night. Very romantic.

NICK
I guess you can get used to anything.

ANGELA
I don't want to get used to it. It sucks.

A silence. They stand looking at each other, out of talk. Nick moves closer, kisses Angela. She gets into it for a moment, then pushes him away gently-

ANGELA
You can't be a creep, okay? You start any bullshit- I don't have the energy.

NICK
I'll do my best.

ANGELA
I'm kind of defensive, huh?

NICK
You're like a Surgeon General's warning with legs.

ANGELA
Sorry. I mean it though, okay?

They start to kiss again. This is definitely happening. We FOLLOW as Angela takes Nick's hand and leads him into the bedroom. They stop and make out against the wall for a beat, then Angela sits on the bed. Nick kneels by her, kissing her legs, her thighs, climbing up on top of her as she lays back. Clothes start coming off-

ANGELA
Do you have anything?

NICK
You're not on anything?

ANGELA
Here-

She reaches in the drawer of the bedside table and fishes her hand around. Boxes of condoms spill out. Nick is a bit shaken-

60 cont.

NICK
Quite a supply.

ANGELA
A girl can dream, can't she? Anyhow-

She offers Nick a box, which he puts aside-

NICK
When we get to that point-

Angela rolls on top of him and they pick up where they left off, Angela more active now. There is a COUGHING NOISE from the baby monitor on the bedside table. Angela stops what she's doing to listen-

NICK
What's the matter?

ANGELA
Shhhh-

She lifts the monitor and listens closely, breathing along with the sound over the box, relieved as it becomes regular-

ANGELA
She's all right. You still up for this?

NICK
(smiles) I could be persuaded.

Angela smiles, starts running her hands over him-

ANGELA
Tell me the part about how I'm terrific again.

61 INT. ANOTHER BEDROOM - CU REESHA - NIGHT

Reesha is breathless, post-orgasmic, seemingly in pain-

REESHA
Ah! Ah! Ah!

She eases up, smiles in relief, and we FOLLOW her down as she hugs Wynn, lying on top of him-

WYNN
You okay?

61 cont.

REESHA
Yeah. When I went off I started to get a foot cramp.

WYNN
A foot cramp?

REESHA
Uh huh. It went away though.

WYNN
"Dear Dr. Ruth- lately my wife has been having orgasms in her toes-"

He reverses position with Reesha, kisses her and slides out of frame-

WYNN
(off) "-is this normal?"

REESHA
Bring me some Kleenex, baby, I don't want to drip. And don't stand by that window. Mrs. Hurley gonna have a stroke she sees your pretty butt moonin out at her.

Wynn slides back on top of her-

REESHA
Did I make you forget?

WYNN
Forget what?

REESHA
All your problems.

WYNN
Sugar, I forgot my name.

62 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Les, sprinting to finish his run. He stops in front of us, panting for breath, bending over to rest his hands on his knees. A fire engine BLASTS its SIREN as it speeds by him-

63 INT. RINALDI KITCHEN - NIGHT

Joe sits with an untouched plate of food in front of him, listening to the SIREN pass by outside, a stricken look on his face-

64 INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SIRENS SCREAMING by. Nick sits up in the bed, uneasy. He slips out carefully so as not to wake Angela, pulls on underpants and a t-shirt. We FOLLOW him to the open rear window. He looks, then climbs out-

65 EXT. ANGELA'S FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Nick steps out, strains to see in the distance, then we HOLD on the spot as he climbs up out of frame. Angela appears at the window, troubled. She looks down- no Nick-

NICK
Damn.

Angela looks up and we TILT UP to find Nick-

ANGELA
(off) If you want to sneak off you can go out the front.

We FOLLOW as Nick climbs back down to her-

NICK
Half the fire engines in the world are down on L Street. I think it's one of my father's buildings.

He climbs back inside. Angela strains to see the fire-

ANGELA
Your father owns a <u>slum</u>?

66 EXT. L STREET APARTMENTS - NIGHT

We START on Jeanette and Desmond in profile, faces bathed in FIRELIGHT. We hear SIRENS, FIREMEN SHOUTING, FIRE CRACKLING, HOSES BLASTING. People run to and fro past Jeanette and Desmond and we FOLLOW Joe past them as he pushes through the gathered RESIDENTS. He leads us to KEVIN DUFFY, the fire captain in charge. He has to shout to be heard over the noise-

66 cont.

JOE
Kevin! You got it under control?

KEVIN
The floors are starting to fall through! It won't spread next door, but you got a flood in that one- your water main went with the sprinkler system!

JOE
Nobody hurt though?

KEVIN
We may have some people on the fifth here!

JOE
But this side's abandoned!

There is a SHRIEK and we PAN with their look- Paddy and Fuentes, doing crowd control, are struggling to hold back Mrs. Ramirez, who is SCREAMING and trying to get past to the burning building-

MRS. RAMIREZ
Sueltenme! Sueltenme! Mi nieta esta arriba! Mi nieta y su madre!

FUENTES
Espere, Senora! Los bomberos van a salvarlas! No puede ayudarlas!

Mrs. Ramirez gives another SHRIEK and covers her face with her hands as she sees- we PAN with her look as FIREMEN hustle bodies out through the crowd. Two haul the badly-burned body of Isabel out, partly covered on a stretcher. Another fireman follows with a bundle he holds close to his body. We TRACK to intersect with the firemen at the rear of a waiting ambulance. Mrs. Ramirez breaks free to follow the man with the bundle-

MRS. RAMIREZ
Mi nieta! Ay la nena!

Nick appears in the crowd of people around the ambulance. He looks from Mrs. Ramirez to the burning building, then looks across the opening the police have cleared-

CROWD - NICK'S POV - NIGHT

Joe stands on the other side of the gap, watching the bodies being loaded, stunned. He sees Nick-

NICK

We TRACK IN TIGHTER-

66 cont.

JOE

We TRACK IN TIGHTER-

JOE
Nick!

NICK

He gives his father a cold look, turns away and pushes off through the crowd-

JOE

He starts to follow but is pushed back with the others by Paddy and Fuentes, who take over the frame-

PADDY
Back it up folks! Give the fellas room to work! Yo! Back it up!

Fuentes sees behind them and tugs Paddy's arm. We SHIFT to include the ambulance in the background, where Ramirez has joined his mother, both weeping as Kevin talks to them-

FUENTES
We still got a want on that kid?

PADDY
(nods) After the funeral.

67 INT. PATROL CAR - DAY

Rizzo driving, Bauer looking over the hit list for today. As they cruise past the L Street apartments Bauer looks out at them-

RIZZO
They probly started it themselves. There was no power over there, they had candles and shit. They probly knocked something over.

BAUER
Arson.

RIZZO
Huh?

BAUER
It was arson. Torch job. Professional.

67 cont.

RIZZO
How do you know that?

BAUER
Cause I live here forty years, that's how. Now I want you to be calm about this, alright? That guy you went off on yesterday made the charts.

RIZZO
Nick Rinaldi? What he do?

BAUER
Robbery suspect. Suspect, right? No guns involved, no priors, no reason to believe he's armed or dangerous. We see him, you stay in the car, I make the collar, right? Right?

RIZZO
Right. Just let me at him in the fuckin car-

BAUER
You're a mess, kid. Where you turning?

RIZZO
The site up here. He's working that job-

BAUER
Ferraro checked it out yesterday. He quit.

RIZZO
Fuckin deadbeat. She takes up with a fuckin deadbeat thief.

BAUER
What's it to you anymore?

RIZZO
It reflects on me. She's my ex-wife, the mother of my child-

BAUER
Child? You never told me you had a kid. Boy or girl?

RIZZO
(tight) Girl.

BAUER
How old?

67 cont.

RIZZO
Three.

BAUER
Huh. Three-year-old daughter, huh? I never knew you had a kid.

RIZZO
(moodily) Well I do.

The patrol car slides past the GUZMAN FUNERAL HOME-

68 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

We look down a row of caskets on display and see Mrs. Ramirez in black, speaking in hushed tones with a solicitous FUNERAL EMPLOYEE, who is showing her a child-sized coffin. Joe steps into the foreground of the shot, watching for a moment, then grabs the passing FUNERAL DIRECTOR by the arm, whispering to him-

JOE
Whatever she wants, you cut your price in half. I'll make up the difference. And don't let her know.

69 INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - LOBBY - DAY

We're in the lobby of a defunct hotel turned homeless shelter, now crowded with last night's BURN-OUT VICTIMS being triaged by a half-dozen SOCIAL WORKERS. We FOLLOW Asteroid, out of the joint this morning, as he zips in and out of the lines of people, unhinged-

ASTEROID
Help! We need help! Help! We've got bargains, we've got deals! All your electronic needs- we've got deals- under one roof. Under one roof. Help! We need help!

He brings us to Jeanette, in line, shuffling a half-dozen forms-

JEANETTE
Man, who the fuck are you?

ASTEROID
I am the <u>lowest</u>! Who the fuck are <u>you</u>?

69 cont.

We HOLD on Jeanette as Asteroid bounces away, reciting his litany. She sees Levonne, holding a toddler in his arms, talking to a woman in the next line-

JEANETTE
Levonne! You working here?

Levonne steps over to her-

LEVONNE
Just came over to check out the show.

JEANETTE
(waves paperwork) I aint seen so much paper in all my life. Every one ask the same damn questions.

LEVONNE
It helps them stall while they figure up a story to tell you.

JEANETTE
You mean we might not get a place?

Asteroid zips past, pulling us away with him-

ASTEROID
Why settle for less when you can have it all? Why settle for less when you can have it all? Money talks- nobody walks. Money talks- money talks- money talks-

He brings us to Wynn, entering the scene. We trade and FOLLOW Wynn up to the tables the social workers have set up. Nidia Torres sits by a Hispanic woman at the head of the line, translating for her-

NIDIA
Hasta que pueden hallarle un nuevo apartimiento tiene que vivir aqui. Me siento mucho pero es el mejor que es disponible a este momento-

WYNN
Nidia-

NIDIA
Hi Wynn.

WYNN
How many people was it?

69 cont.

NIDIA
Thirteen families, a couple singles. Only a few have family they can stay with.

WYNN
How long to rehab the side that didn't burn?

NIDIA
Rinaldi says it's totalled. He's going to knock it down, sell the land. The Development Package-

WYNN
(scowls) Not real subtle, are they?

NIDIA
Que puede hacer? See you later, Wynn.

WYNN
Yeah-

We FOLLOW Wynn as he spots Levonne and works his way through people up to him-

WYNN
Levonne-

LEVONNE
What's this- a photo opportunity?

WYNN
What would you be saying if I didn't come? (looks to kid) Whose is this?

LEVONNE
Mine.

WYNN
(softens) Yeah?

LEVONNE
Felice is working today.

WYNN
Hey there- what's your name?

The little girl hides her head in her father's chest. Levonne and Wynn can't be as nasty as they'd like with her there-

WYNN
She looks like you.

69 cont.

LEVONNE
Yeah. Maybe.

WYNN
I wish you'd reconsider this meeting tonight-

LEVONNE
If you want to go kiss the Man's ass that's your problem-

WYNN
It's off the point, Levonne. This here, this is worth fighting about. We have to choose where we make our stands-

LEVONNE
What do you mean `we'?

Wynn sighs, looks at Levonne, calculating, angry-

WYNN
Okay. It's your ass.

Wynn walks away. Levonne watches him, shifts his daughter in his arms-

70 INT. ELDERLY CENTER LUNCHROOM - DAY

Mayor Baci is walking the rows between the tables, making sure the elderly remember who is godfather of the free Seniors' Lunch Program-

MAYOR BACI
My God, Mrs. Pilchuk, is that all you're eating? Don't forget this is on the city- nobody's gonna hand you a bill. A little more lasagna, go ahead--- Ladies! What's the occasion? The hair dresser must have come by this morning- you look wonderful---- How are you darling, it's good to see you up and about. You've got your color back, that's marvelous-

He sees Joe Rinaldi come in, staring lasers at him. We FOLLOW as he gladhands his way over to Joe-

70 cont.

MAYOR BACI
We had a big one last night, Ernie. You should have been there. The equipment our fellas have got now- not like your day, a bucket and a ladder. How are the fingers? Make a fist- beautiful!

He crosses past so Joe has to follow him further away from the tables to talk-

MAYOR BACI
You come for the lasagna, Joe, or is this official business?

JOE
There are two people dead because of you and me.

MAYOR BACI
They were trespassing. Those are the kind of people accidents happen to.

JOE
You suck.

MAYOR BACI
Things change fast, people get hurt. I'm sorry about that. It was an accident. If everybody stands up like a good soldier we can stay on top of it. (sighs) Look- this is what it should be like, these people here. We take care of our own. That's natural. The next couple years in this town is gonna be one big yard sale, Joe, and then anybody with half a brain makes tracks and lets the Blacks and the Spanish duke it out over whatever's left.

JOE
I want you off my kid. All the way off. Now.

MAYOR BACI
I'll call Walsh, we'll take his name out of the computer. It never happened.

JOE
And the other two?

MAYOR BACI
Anthony is good people. He'll drop charges if I tell him to.

70 cont.

JOE
Tell him to.

Somebody yells 'Surprise!' and we SHIFT with their look to include a CENTER WORKER bringing out a big cake and the seniors CLAPPING for an elderly lady-

MAYOR BACI
Mrs. Donelly- 90 years old. Ninety years ago the Irish ran this town and there were horses shitting on Jefferson Street. My grandfather got here off the boat, they handed him a shovel and a scoop. Now I run the place. America, huh?

71 INT. ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM - DAY

A class of second-graders stand singing "America, the Beautiful" in mostly Hispanic accents. We PAN to see them- Hispanic and Black kids, a few Asians and a pair of White kids. Very innocent and beautiful, if off-key-

LAURIE

In profile, watching. She hears something at the door- there is Nick with his face pressed against the window pane-

HALLWAY

The kids continue to sing as Laurie steps into the hallway, pulling Nick away from the window-

LAURIE
Where have you <u>been</u>? I've been calling your apartment, there were police-

NICK
They came here?

LAURIE
Big show. The kids treated me like a TV star.

NICK
I got some problems-

LAURIE
Being late with the rent is having some problems, Nick. Cops after you for robbery is being seriously fucked up.

71 cont.

NICK
Listen-

LAURIE
No- you listen. You know where Mom was this morning? In church, praying for you. If you turn her into a religious fanatic, Nicky, so help me-

NICK
I need you to do something for me.

LAURIE
Remember we made a deal after Tony died? You and me against the world. Now how come I always help you and I never get anything back?

NICK
I helped you with that marriage deal.

LAURIE
You fucked up my engagement-

NICK
He was an asshole-

LAURIE
He was my asshole!

NICK
Look, I'm gonna turn myself in, but I got some things to straighten out first. There's this girl-

LAURIE
You're facing time in jail and you're worried about a girl?

NICK
This is for real, Laurie. She doesn't know what a fuck-up I am- I figure my only shot is to tell her in person.

LAURIE
And what do you want from me?

NICK
I think Dad might be in trouble.

LAURIE
One of his apartment buildings burned down last night- people were killed- of course he's got trouble.

71 cont.

NICK
I think it's worse than that. Call him up, will you? Be nice to him, talk or something-

LAURIE
Why can't you do that?

NICK
I can't. I doesn't work that way between us.

The kids have started singing `The Star-Spangled Banner'-

NICK
What's that, the Sandinista Choir?

LAURIE
Please don't get hurt, Nick.

NICK
I'm turning myself in, I mean it. I just need to clear some things up-

LAURIE
(sighs) So who's this girl?

72 INT. MADISON STATE CLASSROOM - DAY

TIGHT on Les, sitting alone in an empty classroom, having a silent, heated discussion with himself. He ends with his hand back in a fist, ready to smack an invisible enemy-

ROGER
(off) Les?

Les relaxes, embarrassed to be observed, and we SHIFT to see ROGER, a fellow professor, entering in the background-

ROGER
Preparing a lecture?

LES
Right.

ROGER
Listen, we heard about you getting mugged. I was really sad to hear that.

LES
Thank you.

72 cont.

ROGER
And we heard the rest- the rumor- about the countercharges. I wanted to say that we're really glad you're going to fight this out.

LES
Who's `we'?

ROGER
We. Us. You know- those of us who are gay on the faculty, our friends in the community-

LES
How can everybody have heard about it?

ROGER
Believe me, we're better than Western Union. Anyhow- we- I- think it's great you're taking a stand.

LES
Who says I'm taking a stand? I'm not gay, Roger-

ROGER
We know that. At least we've suspected it for a long time.

LES
(smiles) What if I stonewall and the police and the press and everybody believe the boys? What if it plays right into the hands of the racists and the fag-bashers?

ROGER
Homophobics.

LES
Sorry. But what if that happens?

ROGER
(shrugs) If you just roll over for them, they'll never change.

73 EXT. GOLF COURSE - MORNING

We are at ground level, looking toward a beautiful green knoll. A golf ball plops down in front of us and rolls toward the camera. A cart appears on the knoll, driving toward us. We RISE as Wynn and ERROL, a self-assured Black politician in his 50's drive up. Errol gets out to study his lie. Wynn isn't playing. We TRACK around him to see a pair of White CLUB MEMBERS on the green of the adjacent fairway. They wave and call-

ERROL
Morning, fellas!

Errol smiles and we SHIFT again as he pulls a five iron from his bag and adresses the ball-

ERROL
It was a lot more fun playing here when they were afraid of me. I took them to court.

WYNN
This was restricted?

ERROL
No Blacks, no Jews, no undesirable elements. I'd hang out at the eighteenth green by the clubhouse and just smile and make the old bastards twelve-putt the last hole. Took two years before anybody said hello.

WYNN
Must have been tough to concentrate on your game.

ERROL
(serious) I never played better.

He hits, looks up-to watch the flight of the ball-

ERROL
So you got yourself a nice little mess, Wynn. Makes me glad I'm retired.

They get into the cart and drive-

WYNN
You were operating on a bigger scale.

ERROL
The scale doesn't matter. You always try to gain some ground, no matter what the situation is. Make some good come out of it.

73 cont.

WYNN
I don't see how this can be good for anybody.

ERROL
You think those boys are lying, don't you?

WYNN
Well-

ERROL
You wouldn't be here otherwise.

WYNN
I think it's too big for them to go back on their story now.

The cart slows, stops. Errol gets out to study his shot to the green, Wynn following-

ERROL
Didn't use enough club. I hate it when I do that. Nibble my way up to the green- it's a failure of nerve.

WYNN
Why I should have to take a stance on this thing at all-

ERROL
You're not a policeman.

WYNN
Right.

ERROL
Or a judge.

WYNN
Right.

ERROL
Right.

WYNN
But the moment will come when Levonne Willis puts it to me in front of the whole community- 'Do you think our boys are lying?'

ERROL
Wedge?

73 cont.

WYNN
Huh?

ERROL
You think I can use a wedge from this far out?

WYNN
I don't play.

ERROL
Tennis? Raquetball?

WYNN
I don't play anything.

ERROL
You do have a problem.

Errol pulls a nine iron from his bag-

ERROL
You could say you believe them.

WYNN
If we're going to take power we have to take responsibility too.

Errol smiles at this, hits his shot, watches where it lands-

ERROL
You're absolutely right, Professor.

They get back in the cart and ride-

ERROL
I was one of the first black mayors of a major city in this country. Lots of media pressure, millions of people affected by my decisions- but there was no way I could turn my back on the people who put me in. I brought some of them along with me and some of them messed up- they're only people, they're human. And I let it go by at first because I didn't believe it, then because I didn't want to believe it, and finally because we'd lose more ground by cleaning house in public than by sweeping it under the carpet.

He stops the cart at the green, thinking back-

73 cont.

ERROL
It took twelve years for all that to catch up to me. That's a pretty nice run, the way things go these days.

WYNN
You decided not to run again-

ERROL
There were three Grand Jury indictments hanging over my head. If I stood for another term a lot of people around me would have gone down, and I would have gone down with them.

Errol pulls out his putter, dismounts-

WYNN
So I should lie and hope for twelve good years?

ERROL
This isn't the Old Testament, Wynn. People didn't vote you in so you could test your moral fiber. You want to be a leader? Lead. Take it to the Man every chance you get.

WYNN
This isn't about a fight with White people-

ERROL
It's always about that, Wynn. If it isn't then you're just another ward heeler. You don't defend anything, you attack what's wrong. That's what a leader is.

Errol concentrates, relaxing, and strokes a long putt, smiling as he sees it go in-

WYNN
I worked so hard to get on the damn Council- I never thought about what I'd have to do-

ERROL
Can't expect to know how you're going to play the green when you're still back at the tee, Wynn. You just figure it out when you get there.

74 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - INT. BUILDING - DAY

Nick sits on a stack of insulation at the empty site, looking out the unfaced building to the city, thinking. He hears something, freezes- then turns to see Riggs standing behind him-

RIGGS
I figured you might be here. This was always your favorite hiding spot.

NICK
What do you want?

RIGGS
See if you needed help.

NICK
What you want to help me for?

Riggs shrugs, sits by him-

RIGGS
Your brother must of saved my ass a half dozen times over there. Then your father- when I got back I was pretty messed up. This job-

NICK
You don't owe me nothin.

RIGGS
All right. The offer stands, though. You need money, a go-between- I mean after your friends thrown you in-

NICK
Who said that? The guard saw me-

RIGGS
The cop who came by here just said `His pal threw him in.'

NICK
Carl. Fucking Carl-

He gets up to go-

RIGGS
What are you gonna do Nick?

NICK
I got to find something out. Thanks, man. I owe you one.

We HOLD on Riggs as Nick hurries away-

74 cont.

RIGGS
Right.

75 INT. LES' LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Les and Wynn sit facing each other in Les's living room. The mood is tense-

WYNN
How are your classes this year?

LES
They're fine.

WYNN
Sometimes I really miss it. The classroom. The faculty politics, well- they seem pretty tame now-

LES
I know why you're here, Wynn. Let's get on with it.

WYNN
I understand why you want to hold your ground on this thing.

LES
Oh. Why's that?

WYNN
(cautiously) Because you're telling the truth.

LES
But you're not going to go to bat for me, are you?

WYNN
This isn't just about what I think is right. I have to represent the people in my ward-

LES
If I was Black and they were White, would that stop you?

75 cont.

WYNN
(sighs) Les, there are two possibilities as to what's going to happen. Number one- you drop the charges and a few people at the school, not the ones you respect the most, will whisper that where there's smoke there's fire. That you're gay, that ydu must have made a move on those boys. Number two- you push this thing, and all the same accusations are made in the press and in a court of law, you're labelled both a homosexual and a racist, and finally it comes down to your word against theirs. No matter what the verdict is the same people will think you're guilty. Now I can't stop any of that- all I can promise you is if you drop charges I'll do everything I can to make it a clean break.

LES
(considers for a long moment) This stinks.

WYNN
(nods) To high heaven.

76 EXT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - LATE EVENING

Vinnie comes out from work, carrying a boom-box and humming along with the SONG playing on it. We let him walk out of frame, then PAN to see Nick waiting against the wall. He moves to go inside-

77 INT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP

Carl is leaning on a car, filling out an invoice against the roof. He glances up, seeminly unconcerned as he sees that Nick is standing before them. It is closing time, the shop empty but for the two of them-

CARL
It's the fugitive. You got a problem?

NICK
Yeah- <u>you</u>. You fucking rolled over on me.

77 cont.

CARL
That's not a nice thing to say, Nick. The way I see it, you stuck your nose in where it wasn't invited, your little friends fucked up, and even the dumbshit cops in this town were smart enough to run you down for it.

NICK
Nah. You rolled over on me. They didn't have to whack you with phone books, they didn't have to step on your fingers, they walked in the door and you were ready to spill. You rolled over just like you did on Tony.

CARL
Don't talk to me about that old shit-

NICK
Your best fuckin friend, you threw him in-

CARL
(mad now) You think he was a hero, Tony? Huh? He was a punk. Who do you think was driving the fucking car, huh? Who was driving shitfaced and went up the curb and hit that woman? Who ran away, ran his little All-State ass off and left me there with my leg all fucked up and that woman layin on the ground?

NICK
That's bullshit-

CARL
Ask your Daddy, Nick. Ask him what went down. (opens door of car) Now get out of my way, I'm closing up.

NICK
That fire last night-

CARL
What about the fuckin fire?

NICK
It was you, wasn't it? You did it.

Carl gives him a small, cold smile as he slides into the front seat-

77 cont.

CARL
Like I said- ask your Daddy, Nick.

NICK
You fuckin liar!

Nick grabs the nearest thing available, a long-handled crowbar, and swings full-force at the windshield as Carl ducks. SMASH! We TIGHTEN as Nick goes off, venting his fury on the car, smashing it over and over again with the crowbar, stepping up on the hood to whale away-

78 INT. CAR - CU HAND

We FOLLOW Carl's hand to the glove compartment, opens, comes out with a heavy-looking automatic pistol. We SHIFT to see Carl sit up with the pistol pointed directly into Nick's face as he kneels forward on the hood, coming in after Carl. Nick freezes-

CARL
You finished, Nick? Cause if you're not I'm gonna blow your fuckin brains out.

Nick hurls the crowbar away, slides off the hood, and backs out of the shop, still glaring at Carl-

79 INT. COP BAR - EVENING

Rizzo and a few other OFF-DUTY COPS are standing at the bar, loaded, shouting the instrumental theme song of "Highway Patrol". Bauer sits nearbye reading the paper-

COPS
DUMP DA-DA-DAH, DUMP DA-DA-DAH
DUMP DA-DA-DA-DAH-DAAAAAAH!

They dissolve into cheers and back-slapping. Rizzo is really wasted-

RIZZO
Gentlemen- brothers of the shield- I salute you and I bid you farewell.

BAUER
You can't walk, kid.

RIZZO
Who needs a mother, I got this fuckin guy on my case? 10-4, brothers!

79 cont.

We PAN as he walks unsteadily out, bumping into O'Brien, who enters with a big smile on his face. He calls to the BARTENDER-

O'BRIEN
Jerry! Set em up! A round for these lousy beatwalkers here.

BAUER
You hit the lottery, O'Brien?

O'BRIEN
I'm moving over to the DA's office. Special investigator. Expense account, my own office-

BAUER
That's great to hear. All those years suckin up to the pols, I'd hate to think there's no payoff.

Very quiet all of a sudden. O'Brien gives a cold smile, turns to the bartender-

O'BRIEN
Everybody drinks but him.

80 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Desmond walks with Jeanette. He looks around, self-concious to be with his mother, nervous about his mission. Jeanette stares straight ahead-

DESMOND
I don't see why I got to say all that again.

JEANETTE
People have to hear it with their own ears.

DESMOND
I don't like saying it.

JEANETTE
You got nothing to be ashamed of. Do you?

DESMOND
The part about him trying to touch me-

JEANETTE
(stops) Did he touch you?

80 cont.

DESMOND
No.

JEANETTE
You can tell me. It doesn't mean a thing about you if he did-

DESMOND
No.

JEANETTE
But he did try to?

DESMOND
No. I mean yes.

Doubt creeps in. Jeanette holds him back, looks him long in the face. He can't meet her eye-

JEANETTE
(softly) Desmond, what's the one thing I tell you the most? The one thing?

DESMOND
(mumbles) Be a man.

JEANETTE
What?

DESMOND
(louder) Be a man.

JEANETTE
And how you do that?

DESMOND
Stand up for yourself.

JEANETTE
No. You stand up for what is <u>right</u>. Baby, I'd dive down into hell to keep you safe, but you got to be straight with me. I'm gonna ask you one last time. Okay?

81 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

We FOLLOW Wynn into the jam-packed room. He looks around-

ROOM - WYNN'S POV

Some faces we saw at the shelter, Kyle and a few other reporters, only one White, with their tape recorders. Most of the people look angry and expectant. Reesha sees him, waves- Wynn steps in to the shot-

REESHA
You talked to him?

WYNN
Uh-huh.

REESHA
Did you believe him?

WYNN
Yes.

REESHA
What are you going to do?

WYNN
(grim) What I have to.

There is a SCREECH of FEEDBACK from a microphone and they look to the front-

FRONT OF ROOM- WYNN AND REESHA'S POV

A few standing microphones are set up in front of the table where Levonne, Malik, a Black CLERGYMAN and two Black PROFESSIONAL WOMEN sit. Levonne is adjusting the microphone-

LEVONNE
If you folks would all grab a seat, we're just waiting on Jeanette Price and her son.

WYNN
(off, shouting) We can start now!

Heads swivel and we PAN to see Wynn stride up in front of the table, taking stage, grabbing the other microphone-

WYNN
It's nice to see all you concerned people here tonight.

The people quiet a bit-

81 cont.

WYNN
I appreciate your support. We have a lot to talk about.

LEVONNE
(calling) Desmond Price and Tito Rollins!

WYNN
(quickly) Two of our young men who were accused of a serious crime. I've had the charges dropped. Their names will not appear on any criminal record.

An enthusiastic rumble-

CU LEVONNE

Confused, he shoots a look over to Malik, watching stoically in his shades-

CU REESHA

Concerned about what she thinks Wynn has had to do to get this done-

WYNN
(off) The root of the problem was another overreaction by the police force.

TABLE - WYNN

Wynn moves closer to press his agenda-

WYNN
At the next council meeting I will present a demand for a Civilian Review Board to investigate the death of Hollis Washington and several other incidents in the past year.

A smattering of APPLAUSE from the audience, calls of approval-

WYNN
More importantly- we had a <u>fire</u> last night which left several of our people homeless. The city's response to this was <u>pit</u>iful!

Response from the audience-

81 cont.

WYNN
Instead of finding temporary shelter and rehabilitating those apartments, the city is pushing through a deal to knock them down and replace them with a high-income condominium and shopping mall!

Angry response-

WYNN
When they needed our rent they jammed us in there and didn't keep the heat on and didn't collect the garbage and didn't provide street lights or police protection or any of the other services we should be able to expect as residents of this city!

CU LEVONNE

Still wary but listening, his hand over his microphone-

CU WYNN

WYNN
But now- now that they can smell a profit- they want to burn us out, to plow us under!

Vociferous response from the crowd-

WYNN
They're trying to drive a wedge through our neighborhood, cut us into pieces till we dry up and blow away! I know what they're thinking- I know what they're thinking! They're thinking we got a bunch of poor people, a bunch of Black people and Hispanic people and people just walked off the boat down there and they can't get it together. (looks to Levonne) They can't work together. Those people don't care, those people don't count, those people don't even vote!

Wynn looks out at the audience, settled into a angry silence-

AUDIENCE - WYNN'S POV

People angry, uncomfortable with the extent to which this might be true, waiting for what comes next-

81 cont.

WYNN

WYNN
I ask you now- are we going to prove them right?

Scattered voices from the audience call out-

AUDIENCE
No!

WYNN
Are we going to lie down and take this?!

LEVONNE AND MALIK

Checking out the mood of the crowd as more voices chime in-

AUDIENCE
No!

WYNN
(off) Are we going to let them push us around, shut us down, burn us out?!

This time Levonne and Malik join in the response-

AUDIENCE
Nooo!

WYNN
Three blocks from here, up on the hill, the mayor and four city councilmen are attending a dinner to raise funds for next November's political campaign. We weren't invited. I think we ought to let the mayor know how left out we feel, don't you?

REESHA

Watching the people shouting around her-

AUDIENCE
Yes!

WYNN - ROOM

WYNN
I think we ought to let him know that if he doesn't get his act together real fast, he's gonna get left out of City Hall next election day! Are you with me?!

81 cont.

AUDIENCE
Yes!

WYNN
Then let's do it!

We FOLLOW as Wynn strides through the crowd out toward the street, Levonne and Malik standing in the background, Levonne bewildered, Malik almost laughing as people start to file out noisily-

82 EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Wynn already starting up the sidewalk, Reesha running to catch up and walk beside him, people bursting out of the center behind them and hurrying to keep up. Wynn looks straight ahead-

WYNN
Is anybody following me?

REESHA
They're all coming, baby. All of em.

WYNN
I hope I got the address right.

REESHA
What are we going to do?

WYNN
We'll figure that out when we get there.

83 EXT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

Angela is waiting outside the door to the club. She looks at her watch. Younger people are starting to file in past her. There is NOISE and we PAN to the street to see Wynn, Reesha and the marchers coming in the opposite direction, walking down the center of the street, partially blocking traffic. A TV NEWS CREW run past Angela, driving her back against the wall, the crew members hastily putting their equipment together as they run. Motorists begin to HONK their HORNS-

84 EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Nick sits on a rickety bench on a small asphalt basketball court inside a chain-link fence, a yellow sodium-vapor light casting its eerie color. He stares at his hand and wrist, cut but not bleeding anymore from the car window glass. We hear that somebody is shooting baskets behind him. Nick looks wasted, pondering the truth about the fire. The ball rolls over and the player comes to get it- it is Franklin, a sweatshirt on over his uniform-

FRANKLIN
Little help-

Nick scoops the ball up and tosses it to him. They don't recognize each other from the robbery at all-

FRANKLIN
Thanks.

NICK
Just get out of work?

FRANKLIN
Just going in.

NICK
Tough gig, night shift.

FRANKLIN
(notices) Your hand's messed up.

NICK
(glances at it, shrugs) My <u>life</u> is messed up. This is nothing.

Nick stands, steps onto the court with Franklin and they trade shots as they talk, Nick keeping his injured hand out of it-

FRANKLIN
(waves the ball) You play?

NICK
Nah. I stink at it. My brother used to try to teach me- he was a real hotshot, All-State guard, big deal-

FRANKLIN
He play around here?

NICK
Sacred Heart. Tony Rinaldi.

84 cont.

FRANKLIN
Tony the Tiger! I played against that dude! Sucker was bad- fire off those Cazzie Russell jumpers- no arc- bambambam! He kill you with that jumpshot. Where'd he play in college?

NICK
Marines got him.

FRANKLIN
Yeah? He go over?

NICK
Uh-huh.

FRANKLIN
I did that. Infantry. (cautious) He make it back okay?

NICK
No.

They shoot a few in silence-

FRANKLIN
Nice ball-handler too. Fast for a white guy.

NICK
Not fast enough. Listen, I got to run. Take it easy.

FRANKLIN
Yeah. You too.

We HOLD on Franklin as he watches Nick leave, then turns and shoots-

FRANKLIN
Tony the Tiger. What a waste.

85 EXT. STREET NEAR BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Nick is in a phone booth a block away, speaking loudly over the phone-

NICK
Angela. Angela Sabino... She might be out front-- just tell her I'm on my way, I got hung up with something-- right, thanks.

85 cont.

He hangs up. We FOLLOW him out of the booth, starting down the sidewalk. Rizzo, still loaded, is coming up in the opposite direction. It takes him a moment to ID Nick. He smiles-

RIZZO
Rinaldi. I got a want on you, punk.

NICK
(passing by) Stick it up your ass.

Rizzo grabs Nick's arm, spinning him around-

RIZZO
I'm not playing with you, asshole!

NICK
You don't have your little cop suit on.
I don't have to listen to your shit-

WHAP! Rizzo hits Nick in the face with his free hand. Nick goes off, grabbing Rizzo's shirtfront and bum-rushing him into a shop window, then whipping him around and sending him sprawling to the ground. He grabs a garbage can, lifts it over his head, hurls it- BLAM! Rizzo pulls a gun and fires up just before it hits him-

RIZZO

Kicking the can away- BLAM! he fires again-

STREET - RIZZO'S POV

Nick is halfway down the block already, running bent over, losing his balance slightly as he ducks into a side street-

RIZZO

Scrambles to his feet and starts pursuing. A patrol car running in the opposite direction SCREECHES up onto the curb in front of him, doors popping open and Paddy and Fuentes leaping out to take aim behind each door-

FUENTES
Freeze!

PADDY
Lay it down, pal! Now!

RIZZO
It's me, you fucks! Mike Rizzo!
You're lettin that cocksucker get away!

Paddy relaxes his gun, turns to Fuentes-

85 cont.

PADDY
It's alright, he's one of ours. (to Rizzo) What's the fireworks for?

RIZZO
(approaches car) I got a suspect just tried to take my head off.

FUENTES
Armed?

RIZZO
He hit me with a fuckin garbage can-

FUENTES
Assault with a deadly trash receptacle-

RIZZO
Fuck you. Let's get him-

We get INTO the CAR with them, Paddy at the wheel, Rizzo in the back seat-

RIZZO
It's this punk Nick Rinaldi we're supposed to pick up-

Paddy and Fuentes shoot a look at each other as they start to turn around-

PADDY
They called the dogs off on that guy, Mike.

RIZZO
What?

PADDY
He got a clean bill this afternoon. Where were you?

FUENTES
Is that piece of yours private or on loan from the job?

RIZZO
It's mine-

PADDY
You been drinking, Mike?

RIZZO
What the fuck-

85 cont.

PADDY
You didn't hit him, did you?

RIZZO
He resisted arrest.

FUENTES
He wasn't wanted. Did you read him the book first?

RIZZO
He's a piece of shit!

PADDY
Did you hit him?

RIZZO
I don't know!

PADDY
Beautiful. This kid made you? He knows who you are?

FUENTES
Paddy-

RIZZO
There's a personal thing involved.

FUENTES
Paddy-

PADDY
I suppose we could say we were there in time to see, and that he went after you-

FUENTES
Paddy, I'm not going for this.

Paddy looks across to him-

PADDY
If this happened to you-

FUENTES
I'd deserve to have my ass kicked off the force.

PADDY
Accidents happen, kid. We have to close ranks, here-

85 cont.

FUENTES
I'm not going for it. Period.

A silence. Rizzo looks from one to the other-

RIZZO
That's it? You're not gonna back me up?

PADDY
(glaring at Fuentes) He's my partner. What am I gonna do? Shoot him?

RIZZO
Paddy, you know me-

PADDY
You'd better hand your piece up here, Mike.

RIZZO
I can't believe this! I can't believe you guys. What if he dies? What happens to me?

PADDY
Mike, do you believe in a Supreme Being?

86 EXT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

We PAN from the passing patrol car to see Angela, still waiting outside the club, getting restless-

87 INT. ELKS CLUB - NIGHT

Lots of dead elk on the walls. Mayor Baci is at a dais, addressing long tables full of POLITICAL SUPPORTERS, mostly men. Pauly sits by the mayor, eyes working the crowd-

MAYOR BACI
I have fought at the municipal level to provide corporate tax incentives to lure industry back to our city. I've fought at the state and federal levels for funds to rebuild our roads, to light our streets-

87 cont.

CU PAULY

Nose up in the air as he sees something-

MAYOR BACI
(off) -to keep our police and firefighting forces up to strength.

BACK OF HALL - PAULY'S POV

The camera crew we saw before hurries in, carrying their equipment-

PAULY

Sensing a publicity coup, he waves them in-

MAYOR BACI
(off) But most importantly, and this is something I take particular pride in-

DAIS - MAYOR BACI

MAYOR BACI
-I have fought against the environmental alarmists and special interest groups that would block important developments like the Galaxy Towers complex which promise to revitalize our economy and put our city back on the map! I intend to keep up this fight, and with your help we will once more be a city with a future, a city on the move, truly- a City of Hope!

APPLAUSE from the gathered boosters, the clapping merging with HUBBUB as something new is added at the back of the hall. Baci frowns, heads begin to turn-

BACK OF HALL - WYNN AND FOLLOWERS

The whole bunch from the community center are crowding into the hall, spilling around the tables of the Mayor's boosters. Wynn steps forward-

WYNN
I've brought some concerned citizens been looking for you, Mr. Mayor!

CU MAYOR BACI

He opens his mouth to order them out, but then the light of the news crew blasts onto him from the side and a microphone is thrust in his face. He shuts his mouth and scowls at Wynn-

87 cont.

WYNN

Not going anywhere-

WYNN
You got a minute?

88 EXT. LES' HOUSE - NIGHT

A house in the heights near the college. Les steps out onto his lawn, swinging his arms to stretch, crossing to the road in front. He stops, wary- Desmond stands on the road waiting for him. Les looks around to see if he has come alone-

LES
How'd you find me here?

DESMOND
Saw your address in the police report.

LES
What do you want?

DESMOND
I want to talk-

LES
Forget it.

DESMOND
C'mon, man-

LES
What? You won, great, you want to rub it in?

DESMOND
I'm sorry we fucked you up.

LES
It's a little late for sorry.

DESMOND
I know you not a faggot.

LES
(sighs) We've got a long way to go, don't we? Look, I've got to run-

He starts away and we FOLLOW as Desmond catches up to him-

88 cont.

DESMOND
You mind if I hang with you a minute?

LES
It's a free country.

DESMOND
Where'd you hear that one?

Les smiles. They jog easily next to each other-

DESMOND
You a teacher, huh? What you teach?

LES
Urban relations.

DESMOND
Yeah? What's that?

They swerve to avoid an oncoming car speeding by, headlights blasting them. We PAN with the car-

89 INT. JOE'S CAR - NIGHT

Joe is at the wheel, sick at heart, driving fast-

90 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Empty, security floodlights washing over the equipment and the skeletal building. Joe's car pulls up, he gets out, walks toward the structure-

JOE, CLOSER

We FOLLOW him to the base of the construction, searching- he hears a NOISE above, frowns-

JOE
(calling up) Who's that? Nick? Are you up there?

No response. He looks around, steps into the shadows of the ground floor, finds a work ladder leading up, climbs-

91 INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE BUILDING - NIGHT

Joe steps up onto the roughed-in second floor, guts of wiring and plumbing and metal cable twisted all around him. He peers through the jumble of materials and equipment. We FOLLOW as he walks cautiously in till he leads us to Nick, sitting back in the dark on a stack of plywood. Joe stops and sits several yards away from him on a bare beam jutting out from a wall-

JOE
Lewis told me you might be here. What are you doing, Nick?

NICK
I needed a place to rest.

JOE
I've been worried about you.

NICK
Worried the cops'd pick me up and you'd look bad in the papers-

JOE
You rob a place that belongs to a family friend, what is that? You need money? You need money you come to me-

NICK
And how do you make your money?

JOE
I don't steal it!

NICK
No?

A silence. Joe is losing whatever composure he had-

JOE
I swore this wasn't gonna happen with you. Not after Tony. I was gonna look out for you-

NICK
Look <u>out</u> for me? How? Chase me into the Marines like you did with him?

JOE
(mad) They were drunk and they stole a car and they hit somebody and left them in the road! He wasn't a hero, Nick. He ran away from it and came to me and wanted me to cover him. I took him to the station-

91 cont.

NICK
Down to your pals-

JOE
They would have found out, Nick. They had the woman in a hospital with a broken back and Carl in the hospital ready to spill his guts. I did the best I could. I got Tony a choice- the service or jail.

NICK
Some fuckin choice.

JOE
You think you get through life without making choices like that?

NICK
You told him to go.

JOE
All my life, I thought I was the one in control. I made sure I had the angles, I had the juice- but I'm not in control of a damn thing. I can't even protect my own kids.

NICK
Did you come here to turn me in?

JOE
Nobody's after you, Nick. I took care of that.

Nick is silent for a moment. He is afraid of what comes next-

NICK
How?

JOE
I talked to some people.

NICK
You did a favor.

JOE
Yeah. A favor.

NICK
You had Carl burn L Street down!

91 cont.

A long look between them. Joe is lost-

JOE
(starts to cry) I let them do it. They were coming after you, Nick. They weren't gonna give you any choices.

NICK
Daddy, those people burned up in there. I saw when they brought them out. A girl and a little baby-

JOE
I let them do it. Jesus Christ, I let them do it.

Nick tries to stands, slips and sits back down-

NICK
Daddy? I'm fucked up here-

Joe looks, moves closer, stops a few feet away. We see now that Nick is holding his side, clothes drenched with blood-

JOE
You're bleeding-

NICK
My life is such a fuckin mess-

JOE
Hold on, I'll get help-

NICK
Don't leave! Christ, you gotta stay with me- I'm scared-

JOE
Oh God. Oh Nick- it's bad-

He moves toward the street-

NICK
Where you going?

JOE
I'm not going- don't worry- just breathe easy, stay still-

We FOLLOW Joe to the edge of the building, looking out past his car and the abandoned crane to the street. A small figure is walking at the edge of the light. Joe shouts-

91 cont.

JOE
Help! Over here! We need help! Help! Over here!

92 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE ROAD - NIGHT

Asteroid is shuffling along, muttering to himself. He perks as he hears Joe calling-

JOE
(distant) Help! Over here in the building! Help! We need help!

Asteroid gets very agitated, cups his hands and faces the building, shouting back-

ASTEROID
Help! Over here! Help! We need help! Over here! Help! We need help!

He continues shouting, over and over, as we TRACK BACK, FASTER AND FASTER, the lights of the city streaming past us as the CLOSING SONG pounds onto the TRACK and we FADE TO CREDITS-