

CITY OF HOPE

Original Screenplay by
John Sayles

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1 INT. ROCK CLUB - DAY

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-

POUNING 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-

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 PILEDRIIVER, 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!

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 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 hemorrhoid, 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-

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-

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 friggin lunatic asylum-

JOANN

Needles in the sandboxes in the park, those 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 kids, 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 you wouldn't be sitting here on your ass doing nothing-

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-

JOANN

Look at this. There's your tax money right there.

CONNIE

Why do we bother.

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 Ramirez I want you to run him in.

BAUER

We ran him in yesterday.

O'BRIEN

So run him in again.

RIZZO

What for?

cont.

O'BRIEN

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

O'Brien drives off 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-

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-

Revised 6/23/90
(white)

16 cont.

MAYOR BACI

Lean on him, Pauly.

PAULY

With what? Joey's hooked up with Kerrigan 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 Independence,
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-

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?

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!

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. (over mike) Ladies and gentlemen - get ready for PURE HELL!

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 addressing 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) My husband and I send our children to St. Agnes' and it costs an 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-

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 know 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 roused 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 be 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 his 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 nightttime 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 met 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 words.

NICK

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

ANGELA

(pissed) Who the fuck did you go out with in high school? Huh?

NICK

(quietly) Mary Ellen Battaglia.

ANGELA

Mary Ellen Battaglia! Mary Ellen Battaglia needed an instruction manual to chew gum.

NICK

She had other things-

3. 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 son. *

NICK

Yeah? Great.

ANGELA

My mother takes him 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) Jesse, my son,
has this disease. Congenital. It makes
him 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.

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 by some kids 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.

4 cont.

RIZZO

I used to come in here and shoot pigeons up on the fourth 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) Yc, Tommy! 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-

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 Kerrigan 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-

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. KERRIGAN'S YARD - DAY

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

KERRIGAN

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-

KERRIGAN

You want me to get Baci off your back.

49 cont.

JOE

He's hurting your investment-

KERRIGAN

We invested in you, Joe.

JOE

He's using my family against me-

KERRIGAN

(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?

KERRIGAN

What would a regular bank do?

JOE

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

KERRIGAN

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-

KERRIGAN

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 son Jesse up by the arms, helping him 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 Jesse) 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, agrophobic, 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 want, 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 USA Today 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-

38 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, Pina. They haven't found him yet. *

PINA

He didn't do it-

JOE

Yes he did.

PINA

I'll get Bart 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 one, of my kids over to the bastards, they're not gonna get another one.

PINA

Joe. What did you do?

9 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

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

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

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

ANGELA

I have to be careful when's he's got a cold. He'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 women 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 Jesse'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

He'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 slum?

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-

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 fourth
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) Boy.

BAUER

How old?

*

67 cont.

RIZZO

Two. *

BAUER *

Huh. Two-year-old son, 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 lowest! Who the fuck are
you?

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 apartamento 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. Donnelly- 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 been? 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 - AFTERNOON *

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 addresses 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 you 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- you. 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 nearby 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-conscious 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 right. 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-

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 fire last night which left several of our people homeless and resulted in the death of a young woman and her three-month old baby. The city's response to this was pitiful!

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 life 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 out 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-