

DEATH WISH

by

Wendell Mayes

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FADE IN:

UNDER TITLES: INT. NEW YORK CITY SUPERMARKET - DAY

Busy lines at the checkout counters - aisles alive with shoppers and carts. A uniformed security guard stands watchfully near one of the entrance-exit doors. He's a sharp-eyed black man, knows his job well, what to look for and how to be unobtrusive about it.

The automatic IN door springs open and a young man (maybe twenty) breezes in with a swagger. He's freaky. A lop-sided grin hangs on his mouth and he seems to be walking to a beat of music in his head.

The security guard's eyes follow the freak. The freak swings into an aisle, bumps against a woman shopper. No apology. He schlepps on.

The security guard moves quietly into the aisle and tails the freak. At the beer refrigerator the freak snaps open a door, takes out a six-pack, sees a loose can of beer and removes that too. He glances about, considering whether to shove it in his belt underneath his shirt. The guard comes into view. The freak tosses the can back into the refrigerator and, carrying the six-pack, cats off toward the checkout. The guard follows - not fast but fast enough.

At one checkout counter there is no line at this moment. A shopper is pushing his cart quickly toward this advantage, but the freak beats him and grins triumphantly over his shoulder.

At the counter, the pretty woman checker is putting the last of the purchases of a customer into one of two big double paper bags. The customer is a nicely dressed lady with a likable face and is clearly known by the checker since there is pleasantries between them.

A younger woman stands beside the customer. This pair of comfortably middle-class people are mother and daughter - ESTHER and CAROL BENJAMIN. Being married,

CONTINUED:

Carol has added another name - Tobey. She's twenty-five with a frail, soft beauty..

The checker makes change from a twenty for Esther as the freak shuffles impatiently. Taking a thick, black pencil, the checker scrawls an address and an apartment number on the grocery bags and calls to a counter boy who deposits the bags on a to-be-delivered rack. Esther and Carol move on to the exit.

The freak extends a greasy, upturned hand to the checker with a collection of change in it. As the checker takes the money, the freak makes a cunnilingus signal with his tongue. The checker angrily rings up the money and catches the security officer's eye - who starts toward the counter. Grinning his loose-lipped grin, the freak hastens on, slowing as he passes the to-be-delivered rack, reading the address on Mrs. Benjamin's grocery bags.

UNDER TITLES: EXT. A NEW YORK STREET

It is not the best or the worst of New York streets. Esther and Carol are walking briskly along, chatting, pausing now and then to window shop. Some distance behind them we can see the freak. He has been joined by two compatriots. They guzzle beer from cans as they mooch through the pedestrian traffic.

Esther and Carol turn into a residential street - brownstones, apartment buildings with canopied entrances. At one of the apartment house entrances a doorman touches his cap and opens the door for Esther and Carol.

The freak and his buddies pass by on the other side of the street.

The last credits run off.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - DAY

PAUL BENJAMIN, with a friend named SAM, comes from a cafe to the curb to ambush a taxi. Paul is in his

CONTINUED:

forties, a conservatively dressed man - a plain man with a good lived-in face and friendly eyes. Sam is about the same age, more mod in the way he wears his clothes and dresses his hair.

A bus passes close to them, leaving a grey cloud of exhaust fumes in the air. Sam covers his mouth and nose with his hand.

SAM

Jesus.

Paul has nailed a cab. He opens the door for Sam and crawls in behind him.

IN THE TAXI

PAUL

(to the driver)

One-fifty East Forty-second.

Sam exhales heavily and lights a cigarette.

SAM

Jesus, you don't dare breathe anything that hasn't been filtered through a cigarette.

Paul glances at him with patient humor.

The following dialogue should be played not with just angles on the two men inside the cab, but as voices-over shots of the cab as it jolts and jerks its way through the crushing traffic and voices-over shots of the passing scenes of New York as viewed through the windows of the moving vehicle.

What we see should illustrate the ugliness of the city, its overcrowding, its loss of morality and peace and order - the skin flicks, the whores on the corners, the massage parlors - police cars whining by on emergency calls - police frisking two blacks who have been made to lean against a wall which is a monument to paint spray cans - a fight bursting from a saloon - pedestrians walking around a man who has fallen on the sidewalk - a woman on a corner weeping aloud and no one wonders at her plight.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

How's the house-buying adventure going?

SAM

Nothing yet. We spent the weekend looking in Westchester.

PAUL

Maybe you ought to try looking further out?

SAM

I can't stand a long commute. Maybe we'll just rent a house -- Leonia, Fort Lee... any place to get out of Manhattan. You and Esther ought to do the same thing. Why go on living in the war zone?

PAUL

We tried it once. I told you. I love New York.

SAM

I'd like to hear you explain why.

PAUL

If you need it explained, you won't understand it anyway. You're not a New Yorker, Sam. You didn't grow up here.

SAM

By God, my kids aren't going to grow up here either. You know what I do in the morning? I give them each two bucks before they start to school. I tell 'em, 'Look.. if some punk hoodlum stops you, give him the money - don't argue.' That's a helluva way to send kids off to school. Christ, what am I doing here?

PAUL

Making a living and reciting the standard catechism of complaints. It just isn't as bad as all that.

CONTINUED:

SAM

As bad as all what? We write off our freedom of movement after sundown. There were sixty-three homicides last week. That's more than London has in a whole goddamn year.

PAUL

Well - -

SAM

You know what's going to happen? Manhattan's going to become an enclave. They'll seal it off at sundown.. close the tunnels and the George Washington Bridge. Nobody comes in or goes out till daylight. At daylight they'll send dead wagons through the streets to pick up the bodies before the decent people come in from the suburbs to work.

PAUL

By decent people, you mean people with enough money to live outside the city, don't you? Right?

SAM

You're such a damned bleeding heart, Paul.

PAUL

I bleed a little bit for the people in my city, yeah.

SAM

What this city needs is more cops than people. It needs an army marching in the streets.

PAUL

Now you're really talking about a loss of freedom. To say nothing of taxes nobody could pay.

SAM

Well.. what do we do? Man formed his villages to protect himself from the saber-toothed tigers. The system's busted. The tigers are in the streets.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Sam, the criminal elements in New York are miniscule compared to the law-abiding people.

SAM

Then what do us law-abiding people do about those miniscule bastards?

Their voices are gradually being drowned out by a wailing police siren.

PAUL

We work for prison reform, better opportunities, better education, more jobs for the under-privileged - - -

SAM

The under-privileged are beating our God-damned brains out. Stick 'em in concentration camps. That's what I say.

PAUL

That's idiotic. We have to make the system work, Sam, not destroy it.

SAM

Oh, well, shit - I don't know...

The last shot is of their cab stalled in cross-city traffic.

CUT TO:

A COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

The machines are humming, clicking, calculating, calibrating. Several accountants other than Paul are at the desks feeding information into, and collection information from, the brain. One side of the room is glassed in, and through the glass we can see a big office with numerous clerks at work, and with private office doors leading off.

Paul is making notes from the stacker in front of him, as Sam enters from the main office. He stops beside Paul.

SAM

(whispering)
I've gone to war.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

(busy)
With the tigers?

SAM

With computers first. Tigers
next.

He shows Paul a small book.

SAM (cont'd)

(reading title aloud)
"The Guerrilla Handbook for
Computer Haters." Fantastic.
I just started my campaign.
Made out my check to Con Ed
for two cents less than the
bill, and cut two extra holes
in the computer card. I told
Marjorie from now on postage
stamps go on sideways. It
screws up their magnetized
scanners. Want to read it?

CONTINUED:

PAUL
I don't have time for things
like that, Sam.

SAM
It's action, man. The popular
front against the goddamn
technology. We're striking
back.

PAUL
You'll just get your lights
turned off.

Paul has gathered his notes and goes into the main
office. Camera stays with Paul.

In the main office, he crosses to a secretary's desk.

PAUL
(to secretary)
Mr. Ives free?

SECRETARY
(on inter-office phone)
Mr. Benjamin.. Mr. Ives.
(to Paul)
He's free.

Paul enters Ives's office.

INT. HENRY IVES OFFICE

It's the boss's office, and HENRY IVES is a grey-haired
man with sharp eyes behind rimless glasses.

Paul plunges right into business even as he enters.

PAUL
I think the Jainchill bunch may
be cooking their books on the
proposed merger with Amercon
Company.

IVES
Much?

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I don't know, but I have some figures here that are worth showing to Amercon. They may want to send someone to Arizona to do an audit on Jainchill's Tucson subsidiary.

IVES

I'll call George Eng and advise him on that. Thanks, Paul.

Without further ado, Paul strides from the office. Paul's a busy CPA.

INT. MAIN OFFICE

Paul is hurrying toward his own office where his name is on the door and a Secretary sits at her desk outside the office.

PAUL

(passing his
secretary)

Thelma, get my wife for me, will you, please.

He enters his office. As THELMA reaches for the phone, it rings. She picks it up.

THELMA

(into phone)

Mr. Benjamin's office.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE

Not so splendid as Ives's office, but well appointed. Paul hustles to his desk. The intercom buzzes. He snaps it open.

PAUL

(to intercom)

My wife?

THELMA'S VOICE

No sir. It's your son-in-law.

Paul shifts papers about on the desk as he picks up the phone.

CONTINUED:

PAUL
Hello, Jack.

INT. AN OFFICE

JACK TOBEY - about thirty, with stylish moustache and hair,
is on the phone. He's disturbed.

JACK
Pop? That you, Pop?

PAUL
(filtered)
Well, yes.. who do you think
it is?

JACK
Look, Pop, we've got trouble.

PAUL
(filtered)
Trouble? You and Carol?
Don't tell me about it.

JACK
Pop, it's Mom and Carol. They're
taking them to Emergency Receiving
at the Roosevelt Hospital.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE

Paul on the phone.

PAUL
Taking them-- What? -- What is it?

JACK
(filtered)
I don't know, except the police
just called me. Mom and Carol
got beat up in your apartment.
Somebody broke in.

PAUL
My God - - What---?

CONTINUED:

JACK
(filtered)
Pop, I don't know any more than
that. I'm in my office. I'm
going to the hospital. Meet me
there.

PAUL
All right...Yes, yes, I'll be
there.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST FORTY-SECOND STREET

Paul runs from the entrance of his office building to the curb and tries to wave down a cab. After several unsuccessful attempts, he dashes to the corner and down the steps of the Lexington Avenue Subway. A crowd is coming up the steps, and Paul must press his way close to the railing. In his anxiety, he shoulders a few people.

PAUL
I'm sorry - - excuse me ---
pardon -- sorry - - -

All of his life he has been polite and considerate, and the habit remains with him even now.

INT. SUBWAY PASSAGE

Its walls are a hideous, many-hued scrawl of paint-sprayed graffiti. Fishing tokens from his pocket, Paul races through the passage. A train is discharging passengers as he slams through the turnstile. Again he bumps into another person - a black man.

BLACK MAN
Hey, man -- !

PAUL
I'm sorry - excuse me - -

He makes it into the train as the doors start to close.

INT. MOVING SUBWAY TRAIN

The car is crowded. Paul holds to a strap near the door and mops his face with his handkerchief. His eyes fall upon the ad cards above the window in front of him. Graffiti is here, too, inked in between the printed lines and pictures on the cards: KILL COP PIGS - KILL NIGGERS - FUCK WHITE HONKYS - SPICS SUCK - LINDSAY SUCKS - BLACK POWER WILL KILL - FUCK BLACK POWER - KILL SPICS AND JEWS - KILL WOPS AND COPS.

These inscriptions are ordinary to New York and to Paul, but in the circumstance he closes his eyes with disgust and turns his face away.

FIFTY-SEVENTH STREET SUBWAY STATION

The train jolts to a stop and Paul is the first out the door, running.

EXT. FIFTY-SEVENTH STREET

Paul pants up the stairs of the subway exit and starts walking fast along the street close to the curb, signaling to cabs as he goes. Finally, he ambushes a taxi,

PAUL

Roosevelt Hospital. Hurry,
please.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL

Jack Tobey is standing with a tall, dignified black policeman. There are about fifteen people sitting in the room - some ill - some just waiting for news about loved ones. One man sits with his eyes closed, in pain from a blood-soaked arm and hand.

Paul pushes through the swinging doors and Jack goes quickly to meet him. The black officer follows but halts discreetly a few feet away from the two men. His name is JOE CHARLES.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

God, I had a time getting here.
How are they? Are they all right?

JACK

I don't know. I've just been
here a few minutes. They won't
let us in there. They said a doctor
would come out and talk to us.

PAUL

Don't you know anything? They
weren't cut or stabbed, were they?

CHARLES.

No sir - just beat up.

JACK

This is Officer Joe Charles. He
came in the ambulance with Mom and
Carol.

CHARLES

(extends his hand)

How do, Mr. Benjamin.

Paul doesn't immediately see the extended hand.

PAUL

Can you tell me what - oh, sorry,
I'm--

(he briefly shakes
the hand)

CHARLES

That's okay. I was telling Mr.
Tobey here we didn't want to
question Mrs. Tobey too much.
She's pretty shaken up.

PAUL

Well, will they be all right? I
mean, you were in the ambulance
with them.

CHARLES

I would hesitate to say, Mr.
Benjamin. Superficial wounds or
bruises can look worse than they
are. I think your daughter's
probably okay, but your wife was
unconscious when we got her here,
so I would hesitate to say. I've
told Mr. Tobey as much as I know
about what happened, and I'll

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES (cont'd)
have to be getting back to my partner now. Joe Charles is my name again. If there's anything I can do, you can ask for me at the Twentieth Precinct. I hope things turn out all right.

JACK
You've been very kind, officer. Thanks.

Charles exits.

JACK (cont'd)
We might as well sit down, Pop.

As they move to a bench:

PAUL
What'd he tell you?

JACK
Not much.

PAUL
Well, what?

JACK
They beat them both up.

PAUL
Who? Why? You're a lawyer. Think like one. Testify like a witness. Tell me!

JACK
Pop, I'm just as rattled as you are.

PAUL
Well - ?

JACK
Two men - maybe three. He said Carol wasn't making much sense. She opened the door because she thought it was a grocery delivery boy from the supermarket. And they wanted money, and they beat them up.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

They must have screamed. Didn't somebody help them?

JACK

The whole thing probably didn't last more than a couple of minutes. Carol called the police after they ran out.

PAUL

Then they can't be badly hurt, can they? I mean, in just a couple of minutes - can they?

JACK

Pop - Pop.. Mom might be. That officer didn't tell you, but he told me. I mean, she got the worst of it. That's what he said.

PAUL

Oh, my God. Well, my God, when are we going to know? You sure they know we're out here?

JACK

The nurses know. I spoke to one of them.

PAUL

Somebody ought to come out here. There's a man over there bleeding, and nobody comes out.

A Nurse enters at this moment and goes to the man with the injured arm, leads him away.

PAUL (cont'd)

Nurse? Look, we're waiting for somebody to tell us about my daughter and my wife.

NURSE

A doctor will see you after he's made his examination.

PAUL

But we've been waiting a long time.

CONTINUED:

The nurse and her patient are gone.

JACK

It hasn't been long, Pop.. just
three or four minutes.

A young doctor enters.

DOCTOR

Mr. Tobey?

JACK

Yes.

DOCTOR

Your wife's all right. We've
sedated her and put her to bed.

PAUL

The other one? Benjamin? My
wife? Her mother?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. She died a few
minutes ago.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP OF PAUL - DAY

His face is set in leaden shock - a man trying to absorb
an awful truth that he doesn't want to believe. The
sound in the b.g. is the voice of an Episcopalian minister
reading a burial service.

ANOTHER ANGLE

It is a grave-site in a Long Island cemetery. There are
perhaps thirty people gathered here.

The minister quietly intones the old service as the camera
discovers Mr. Ives, Thelma, Sam (and his wife, Adele) among
the mourners.

Jack stands with his arm about Carol. Carol wears dark
glasses, but they do not completely obscure the bruises
about her eyes - and her mouth and jaw are still swollen.
She is not weeping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Minister ends the prayer, and there is that moment where everyone knows the service is finished and yet no one moves. Paul turns to Jack and Carol.

PAUL

Well, I guess - - -

Jack nods and guides Carol away toward the waiting car. Ives, Sam and Adele nudge toward Paul.

IVES

Paul, don't come to the office till you feel like it. Take all the time you want, Paul.

Paul nods and Ives pats his arm and moves away.

SAM

Now look, old buddy, don't hole up. You feel like company, call Adele and me and come to dinner. Anytime.

ADELE

Please, Paul. Please, do.

Paul manages a wan smile.

PAUL

Thanks. I will.

They leave Paul and he looks toward the cars. Jack is standing by a funeral service limousine, waiting for Paul. Paul seems a little lost and Jack signals to him. Paul starts walking toward Jack, stops and looks back at the suspended coffin, walks on.

CUT TO:

MOVING LIMOUSINE

It speeds along an expressway.

INT. MOVING LIMOUSINE

Carol sits numbly between Jack and Paul. Jack glances at her with plain worry. Paul is watching the passing traffic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

What'd you say the minister's name was?

JACK

Carter.

PAUL

Where'd you say you got him?

JACK

Friend of mine at the office arranged for him.

PAUL

I thought he spoke very well. You know... didn't over-do. Very good. I wish it could've been a minister who knew Esther, but then we just didn't know a minister. Well - - -

JACK

You're coming home with us, aren't you, Pop?

PAUL

No. It's time I was going back to the apartment. I have to, sometime.

JACK

You're welcome to stay with us as long as you want.

PAUL

No, I'll go home. Carol's got to rest, and I'm just under foot. You okay, baby?

Carol nods minutely. Jack watches her with a concerned frown.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S STREET - DAY

The limousine draws up in front of Paul's apartment house and the doorman opens the door of the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL
(half out of the car)
You get a lot of rest, baby. Hear?

JACK
She'll rest. Call us tonight, Pop.

PAUL
Sure. I'll call.

He steps from the limousine, watches it drive away, turns to the apartment door. The doorman opens it.

DOORMAN
Terrible thing, Mr. Benjamin.
I'm awful sorry.

PAUL
(mumbles)
Very kind.

DOORMAN
People do things like that to
other people, it's awful.

Paul nods uncomfortably and enters the building.

INT. LOBBY

Paul goes slowly to the elevators and pushes the button. In a moment an elevator door opens, but Paul doesn't enter, and the door closes. He returns to street entrance.

EXT. STREET

Paul comes through the door.

PAUL
Harry?

DOORMAN
Yes sir?

PAUL
This is a dumb question I guess.
I mean, I've only lived here for
eight years - but where is our
local police station?

CONTINUED:

DOORMAN
Twentieth Precinct station is
right off Broadway, two blocks
up, Mr. Benjamin.

PAUL
Thanks.

He sets off along the street.

CUT TO:

INT. 20TH PRECINCT STATION

Paul enters the grimy station and approaches the Desk
Sergeant.

SERGEANT
Yes? Help you?

PAUL
Officer Joe Charles.. How can
I reach him?

SERGEANT
What's your business?

PAUL
My name's Paul Benjamin. My
wife and daughter were attacked,
oh, several days ago now, and
Officer Charles was one of the
policemen on the scene. He said
I could call him if - - I'd like
to talk to him, please.

SERGEANT
(picks up the phone)
Addie, is Joe Charles still back
there, or has he gone on duty?...
.....Yeah, tell him Mr. - ?

PAUL
Benjamin.

SERGEANT
(into phone)
Mr. Benjamin'd like to see him....
'kay.

(to Paul)
Have a seat. He'll be right out.

CONTINUED:

Paul sits on a bench with his head down, hands between his knees.

SERGEANT
Your wife and daughter okay?

PAUL
No. My wife died.

SERGEANT
Oh. That's a bad thing.

PAUL
Yes.

A silence. Joe Charles enters from one of the doors behind the Sergeant. He's in uniform but is not wearing his cap.

CHARLES
Mr. Benjamin? You wanted to see me?

PAUL
Yes, Officer. I wanted to ask if you had any information on the men who got into my apartment. I haven't heard anything since I talked to you at the hospital.

CHARLES
I expect there isn't anything to tell you yet, Mr. Benjamin, but if you'll come with me, I'll take you to the detective in charge of the case.

Paul follows him, and as they go:

CHARLES (cont'd)
I heard your wife died. I'm sorry, Mr. Benjamin.

INT. A CORRIDOR IN POLICE STATION

Charles and Paul enter the corridor and walk its length to a specific door. As they walk, there is police business in the hallway - a man in handcuffs being escorted to some destination -- uniformed officers and policewomen moving from one place to another.

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

The detectives are very busy, Mr. Benjamin. They've got a big work load and they don't have time for, well.. comfort calls. That's why I say they probably haven't anything to tell you yet or you'd have heard.

PAUL

I understand.

The sign on the door reads: "LT. MALCOLM BRIGGS". Charles knocks. A "Come!" from behind it.

INT. MALCOLM BRIGGS OFFICE

BRIGGS is in his late thirties, a trim man with a smooth face; an educated, soft-sell detective. His eyes seem friendly and his mouth has pleasant corners.

CHARLES

Lieutenant, this is Mr. Paul Benjamin.. Case 884. His wife and his daughter were assaulted. I told him you'd be glad to talk to him.

BRIGGS

(extends his hand)

Sure, Mr. Benjamin. If I can help.

CHARLES

I'm going on duty, Mr. Benjamin. I'll leave you now.

PAUL

Thank you very much, officer.

CHARLES

Not at all, Mr. Benjamin.

He exits.

BRIGGS

Sit down, Mr. Benjamin. Like some coffee?

CONTINUED:

He gestures to a glass pot on an electric plate.

PAUL

No.. no thanks, Lieutenant. I suppose I should have called on the phone, but my apartment's just a couple of blocks away and I - - walked over.

BRIGGS

Sure. Gave you something to do. Thing like this happens to a person, they feel they should do something even if it's no more than coming to the police station. It helps.

PAUL

Has anything developed, Lieutenant?

BRIGGS

We don't have anything strong enough to call it a lead -- no. The security officer and the checker at the super-market remember a character who left right behind Mrs. Benjamin and your daughter. He could have gotten your apartment number from the address on the grocery bags. They haven't been able to pick his face out of the mug books, so we're stymied there. We have discovered how they got into your apartment house. No big thing about it -- they just kicked a basement door in. How's your daughter, Mr. Benjamin?

PAUL

She's still in a kind of shock. The doctor has her on sedatives, but she was able to go to the cemetery today.

BRIGGS

Has she talked to you about what happened?

PAUL

I haven't pressed her to.

CONTINUED:

BRIGGS

She gave us so little information, you know. I wish we could persuade her to look at the mug books, Mr. Benjamin.

PAUL

Did she refuse?

BRIGGS

Not exactly. She just turns it off -- and her husband wants us to wait for a while. The fact is, the sooner she looks at the pictures, the better chance she has of remembering one or two of the faces.

PAUL

I'll see what I can do.

BRIGGS

I'd appreciate it.

PAUL

Lieutenant, is there a chance of apprehending these men that killed my wife?

BRIGGS

A chance, sure.

PAUL

But not much of a chance, right?

BRIGGS

The day your wife was killed there were eleven other people killed in Manhattan -- four of them in this precinct. Except for a couple of domestic quarrel murders they were all just as mindless.. and as crazy as your wife's death. We've made a few arrests, but we're not even sure we can make those stick. I'd be less than honest if I gave you a lot of hope, Mr. Benjamin.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I was afraid that was the way
it was going to be.

Briggs rises and offers his hand.

BRIGGS

If anything breaks, I'll call
you first, Mr. Benjamin.

CUT TO:

EXT. A STREET

Paul comes slowly along the street. It opens into Riverside Drive. He crosses the Drive and enters the park. He's wandering - not wanting to go back to his apartment.

He pauses at the sight of an empty beer can beside the path, bends and picks it up, moves on. He stoops again to gather a paper cup and a piece of newspaper. Approaching an overflowing litter basket, he stuffs his collection into it and looks off across the park.

Newspapers are blowing across the grass, empty cans and paper containers are everywhere.

"What's the use?" is in Paul's face. He continues through the park to the railing above the river. As he watches the traffic on the river, he intuitively realizes he's being watched. Scarcely turning his head, he brings into view two thin, bearded youths. They are not on the path but off in shrubbery and are partially concealed by the branches - and they are looking at him from out of still, slack faces.

Paul glances up the path and finds it deserted. He is quite alone here except for the two young men in the shadows. Fear gathers in Paul's eyes. Trying to be casual, he strolls on beside the railing above the river. A secret glance over his shoulder tells him the two men are moving through the trees in the same direction he is moving. he begins to walk faster.

Two other men and a woman appear from steps which lead up from the lower park and walk ahead of Paul. They are neatly dressed people and of his generation.

He slows his pace and stays a polite distance behind them. Looking boldly now into the trees beside the path, he sees no one. He pauses and makes a more thorough inspection of the park. Nowhere can he see the two youths who frightened him. Using the back of his hand to wipe the moisture from his upper lip, he walks on.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER STREET

Paul is coming up the street from Riverside Drive. He hesitates in front of a small neighborhood bar, decides to go in.

INT. BAR

It's dark except for the bar lights, and the man behind the bar is at the far end quietly talking to two customers he probably knows well.

Paul sits at the bar and the bartender promptly arrives to serve him.

PAUL

Scotch and soda, please.

He places a bill on the bar as the bartender mixes the drink.

BARTENDER

Ninety out of five.

The bartender makes change for Paul and goes back to the customers at the far end again. He doesn't speak loudly but what he says is heard by Paul.

BARTENDER

Naw, I tell the guys that work for me - If they stick you up, give 'em the money.. the hell with it. I mean, you can't expect a guy working for a wage to risk his life for your dough, y'know what I mean? But this is my place, and it's my money, and it's my life, right? So some punk-ass junkie throws down a Saturday Night Special on me, he better not blink twice, or I'll blow his goddamn head off.

CONTINUED:

He reaches under the bar and produces a heavy, black revolver - lets it lie in the palm of his hand.

BARTENDER
That ain't no Saturday Night Special,
right? Magnum - hundred bucks. Makes
a hole as big as your fist.

CLOSE UP - PAUL

He is staring at the gun.

CLOSE SHOT - THE GUN

Its oily, lethal surface gleams in the bar lights.

CLOSE UP - PAUL

--watching the gun with fascination.

BARTENDER'S VOICE (over)
I practice with it over in Jersey.
I'm ready. Let 'em come.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

It's dark. The door opens and Paul enters, turns on a light and closes the door. He stands there for a long moment, simply looking about the living room. It's a pleasant room, good furniture, conservative, lived-in.

Paul moves to the sofa and sitting stiffly, continues to study the room, visualizing the ugly thing that happened here. Suddenly he crumples, buries his face in his hands and weeps.

The phone rings, and continues to ring, until Paul puts himself together and goes to answer it.

PAUL
(into phone)
Hello?

CONTINUED:

JACK'S VOICE
(filtered)
Just checking in, Pop. You okay?

PAUL
(into phone)
Yes, I'm okay.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

It's on the East Side - high, modern, small.

JACK
(into phone)
Pretty gloomy there, huh, Pop?

(SCENE INTERCUTS BETWEEN JACK AND PAUL)

PAUL
Yeah - gloomy.

JACK
I wish I could help.

PAUL
Thanks, Jack. I'll be all right.

JACK
I don't want to throw advice around..
You'll get enough of that - but you
ought to think about moving.

PAUL
I'll probably think about it. How's
Carol?

JACK
Asleep. She took a couple of pills
the doctor prescribed.

PAUL
Jack, I saw the detective in charge
of the case. He'd like her to look at
the pictures of criminals they have
there.

JACK
Yes, I know.. but not yet, Pop.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

She'll have to sometime, and he says the sooner the better.

JACK

Let's wait awhile, Pop - just a few days. She's not up to it, Pop.

PAUL

Is there something you're not telling me? Is she hurt worse than they thought?

JACK

I don't think it's that, Pop. It's just shock.. you know.. It'll work its way out.

PAUL

Now listen.. you tell me if there's anything wrong. She's my kid, you know. She was mine before she was yours.

JACK

She'll be okay. Don't worry about it. You think about yourself and what you're going to do.

PAUL

I'm okay.

JACK

All right, Pop. Try to get some sleep. We'll talk tomorrow.

PAUL

All right. You look after her, Jack.

JACK

Oh Jesus, of course I will. I am.

PAUL

Okay.

JACK

Goodnight, Pop.

Jack hangs up and crosses to a bedroom door which stands ajar. He carefully pushes it open to look into the darkness of the room.

INT. THE BEDROOM

Carole is lying on her back, eyes wide open.

Jack comes to beside the bed.

JACK

Thought you were asleep - ?

She does not respond in any manner. He sits on the bed.

JACK

Carol?

An agony works into her face; not grief, not tears -- agony - a strange distortion of her features.

JACK

Carol?

He places a hand on her cheek. She grabs it and hangs on to it.

CLOSE UP - JACK

There is a deep and frightened concern in his face.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

He is seated at the kitchen table staring at two eggs and toast on a plate. He unenthusiastically sprinkles a little salt and pepper on the eggs and stares at them again. Giving up the whole idea of eating, he rises and dumps the eggs and toast into the garbage disposal and revs it.

Going to the refrigerator, he pours a glass of milk and takes it with him into the living room.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

He sits on the sofa, sips a little of the milk, places the glass on the coffee table and lies down to look at the ceiling. We can't know what he's thinking, but there seems to be a puzzling in his face, a reaching for an answer to a dark question. He shakes his head as if answering the question in the negative - and abruptly sits up.

CONTINUED:

To distract himself, he picks up the remote control and snaps on the television set.

INSERT - TELEVISION SCREEN

Paul has come into the middle of a late-late showing of "HIGH NOON." It is the moment when the four desperadoes are walking boldly down the street and one stops to break a shop window and snatch a woman's hat which he ties to his gun-belt. The scene cuts to Gary Cooper, alone, gun in hand, moving stealthily in the shadows.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He changes stations with the remote control.

INSERT - TELEVISION SCREEN

It's a talk show. An interviewer has a guest.

INTERVIEWER

We're talking to retired Inspector Allen Stein of the New York Police, who has recently published a book about some of the more famous criminal cases he's worked on through the years.
(holding up book)

It's called "MURDER ONE, TWO, THREE." Quite a fascinating study of police work. Inspector, in these perilous days in our city, what advice can you give to the ordinary, honest citizen -- to protect himself.. I mean, when he's walking down the street?

INSPECTOR

Well, just be careful what streets you walk on and at what hour. If it's dark and you see the street's deserted, stay off of it. Stay out of the parks at night. Walk near the curb, away from doorways. If you get accosted, give the guy what he wants. Don't fight -- don't yell. That's the way you get killed.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He switches stations again.

INSERT - TELEVISION SCREEN

"HIGH NOON" again. Cooper is in the loft of the barn, desperate, trapped. A desperado enters the barn and begins to fire into the loft. Cooper drops him with two hard shots.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He snaps the set off and tosses the remote on the coffee table. He rises heavily, goes to the main door, puts the chain on, turns the security latch and, from a corner, brings the heavy, iron Fox Lock bar and sets it into the fitting on the door panel.

Having secured his apartment for the night, he turns off the light and moves aimlessly to a window where he opens the drapes. The pale light from the street below illuminates Paul's still, sad face.

HIS P.O.V.

The street lies silently empty. Then a man and woman come into view, walking on the far side of the street.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He starts to close the drapes, but something he sees in the street stops him.

HIS P.O.V.

In the street three figures are running, bent and close to the parked cars, concealed from and closing upon the man and woman on the sidewalk.

ANGLE ON PAUL

PAUL
(shouting)
Look out! Look out!

CONTINUED:

The window is of the type that is opened with a crank in one corner. He struggles with crank, forgetting to unlock the window. Remembering the lock, he throws it and cranks again.

HIS P.O.V.

Through the opening window, he can see that the man and woman on the street are being assaulted. The woman is screaming as the thugs beat the man. One of them kicks her in the stomach, and she falls between cars.

ANGLE ON PAUL

Leaning out the window, he bellows:

PAUL.

Help, help! Police, police!

He runs to the phone and dials the emergency number, as the screams of the woman rise from the street.

VOICE ON PHONE

(filtered)

Police emergency.

PAUL

(into phone)

There's a mugging. West Seventy-third Street. Three Hundred block.

VOICE ON PHONE

Your name, please.

PAUL

Paul Benjamin

VOICE ON PHONE

Your address and phone number, please.

PAUL

For God's sake, some people are being killed down here! Will you do something?!

VOICE ON PHONE

You'll have to give me your address and phone number, please.

PAUL

Three-forty-two West Seventy-third.
Phone Susquehanna four.. nine-five-oh-one.

CONTINUED:

VOICE ON PHONE

Are you a witness to this mugging,
Mr. Benjamin?

PAUL

From eight floors up, I'm a witness.
Goddamn you, will you report it now?

VOICE ON PHONE

Take it easy, mister. A car's on its
way.

Paul hangs up and rushes back to the window.

HIS P.O.V.

The man is sitting on the sidewalk holding his head. The woman is kneeling beside him, weeping. Their attackers have disappeared.

In the distance a siren whines and comes closer. Some people from the apartment buildings are running to gather about the injured man and woman. The police car bolts up the street and halts, officers leaping from the machine.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He closes the drapes and stands there in the darkness, breathing heavily. He closes his eyes as we do when we're trying to quiet fear and a racing heart.

CUT TO:

INT. A BANK - DAY

Paul is standing in line before a teller's window. His turn comes and he presents a ten-dollar bill.

PAUL

Ten-dollar roll of quarters,
please.

The teller takes a roll from the cash drawer and puts it on ledge before Paul. It makes a solid little "thunk" as it hits the ledge.

PAUL (cont'd)

Thank you.

CONTINUED:

He puts the roll of quarters in his jacket pocket and, keeping his hand in the pocket, leaves the bank.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - PAUL'S OFFICES - DAY

The receptionist is a matronly woman. her face lights up as Paul enters. His hand is still in his pocket on the roll of quarters.

RECEPTIONIST

Why, Mr. Benjamin! Why, we didn't expect you so soon. We were all so frightfully sorry about what happened. It must have been just terrible for you - - -

PAUL

Very kind of you, Mrs. Danziger. I'd appreciate it if you'd let Mr. Ives's and Mr. Kreutzer's secretaries know I'm in, will you?

RECEPTIONIST

Of course. Certainly.

Paul goes on into the main office.

ANGLE ON MAIN OFFICE

As Paul passes through the big office, heads turn to watch him with curiosity. His own secretary, Thelma, sees him coming and rises to meet him.

PAUL

Good morning, Thelma.

THELMA

Good morning, Mr. Benjamin. I was going to call you and see if I could do anything for you today.

PAUL

I just thought I'd come on back to work, Thelma.

CONTINUED:

THELMA

I'm glad you have, Mr. Benjamin,
and I won't make any platitudinous
remarks about it. I'm glad you
have. It's better.

PAUL

Well, I'll get myself organized.

Hand still in his pocket, he enters his office.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE

Alone now, he brings out the roll of quarters, and from another pocket produces a black wool sock. He drops the quarters into the sock and knots the open end. He swings the improvised blackjack against the palm of his hand and is grimly pleased with its weight.

There is a quick rap on the door - the kind that precedes the turning of the knob - and Paul hastily puts the sock in his pocket.

Sam Kreutzer comes in quietly and pauses to study Paul.

PAUL

Well?

SAM

You're tough, Paul. You're a hard guy.

PAUL

Oh, yeah.. I'm tough.

SAM

No, I told Ives you'd be in today.
I said Paul's not a man to leave
the pieces of his life lying around;
he'll start picking them up.

PAUL

I would just say it's a matter of
keeping busy, Sam.

SAM

Same thing.

Another knock on the door and turning of the knob. Ives enters. He strides to Paul with a courtly extension of his hand.

CONTINUED:

IVES

Paul - welcome back. But you could have given yourself a vacation.

SAM

No, he couldn't, boss. See you for lunch, Paul?

PAUL

Sure.

Sam hurries out.

IVES

Let's sit down for a minute, Paul. Paul, I'm going to give you a vacation - if you'll take it.

PAUL

I'd rather not, Mr. Ives.

IVES

There's a bonus in this vacation, Paul. Money as well as a change of scenery. You brought it up yourself.. The Jainchill-Amercon merger - the accounts in Tucson, Arizona. I want you to take the whole thing over. Go to Arizona and shake down their books until Jainchill's true earnings fall out of them. It's a big job, Paul. It'll be good for you. Okay?

PAUL

I'm a little worried about leaving the city right now - because of my daughter. May I give you an answer in a couple of days?

IVES

Of course. Meanwhile, familiarize yourself with the Jainchill corporate structure.

PAUL

I will, sir.

CONTINUED:

Ives rises and moves to the door.

IVES
Beautiful place, Tucson. They
can breathe out there.

He goes. Paul waits a moment before he brings the sock with its roll of quarters from his pocket. He swings it again into the palm of his hand - harder this time - and flexes his fingers with the comforting sense of pain from the blow.

CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dressed in a robe, Carol lies asleep. Jack and Paul are in the open doorway, the dim light from the living room behind them.

PAUL
(a whisper)
She's sleeping too much, Jack.
It isn't normal.

Jack shakes his head in the negative and moves Paul back into the living room, closing the door behind them. The camera moves in to CLOSE on Carol's face. There is visible REM behind her closed eyelids and she moans softly through trembling lips.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Paul carefully watches Jack as the younger man mixes them a drink. Jack is uneasy and nervous under Paul's sharp gaze. He hands Paul the drink.

JACK
Sit down, Pop. I've got a couple of
TV dinners in the oven. Be just a
few minutes.

PAUL
I don't want anything to eat,
Jack. This is all I want.

JACK
I've never seen you drink without
eating.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I'm not hungry. If I eat I get a lot of bile or something. Jack, you'd better take Carol to the doctor again. If you don't, I will.

JACK

Okay, Pop - I did. Today. A psychiatrist.

PAUL

Psychiatrist? What the hell does she need with a shrink? She has a concussion. That's what the trouble is. People with concussion sleep too much. Even I know that.

JACK

She doesn't have a concussion, Pop. She's terribly depressed. She hardly reacts at all when I talk to her. It's like talking to a wall.

PAUL

It's all those damn tranquilizers she's been taking.

JACK

Maybe. Anyway, the doctor said we'd just have to be very calm and understanding until she snaps out of it. He said it'd help if I took her away for a little while - away from New York where it's quiet, on the shore or someplace. I thought I'd take her up to Cape Cod for a week.

PAUL

I'll go with you.

JACK

No, Pop.. and don't get sore. The psychiatrist suggested it might be better if she didn't have any association with anyone that might remind her of that day in your apartment.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

How can I remind her of it?
That's stupid.

JACK

It's your apartment - you're
living there - you remind her
of Mom - -

PAUL

It's stupid.

JACK

Maybe it is and maybe it isn't.
This doctor was pretty level-
headed about it. All he said
was to try it. He thought it
would help. Don't make it
tough for me.

After a moment, Paul nods in agreement.

PAUL

I don't understand how a daughter
seeing her father - somebody who
loves her very much - could upset
her; but if that's the way you
want it, okay. I won't make it
tough for you. I'll make it easy.
Ives wants me to to Tucson, Arizona,
on an accounting job. I'll go.

JACK

How long will you be gone?

PAUL

Oh, several weeks. But you call
me, Jack. You call me at least
every other day and tell me how
Carol is.

JACK

Sure I will, Pop. This'll be good,
Pop - for you and for her. Tucson's
supposed to be a beautiful place.

PAUL

That's what everybody says. I'm
sure it'll make a new man of me.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

It is the same neighborhood bar where Paul saw the proprietor exhibit the gun. Paul is at the bar turning his glass of scotch and soda in his fingers. There is a small scattering of customers about, the proprietor is behind the bar, and the juke-box is playing softly - and the voices of the customers are muted.

Paul looks up at the clock on the wall.

INSERT - CLOCK

it is ten to twelve.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He returns his attention to his glass of whiskey. A little way down the bar a woman rises from a bar stool.

WOMAN

Well, let's go, Harry. I'm tired.

HARRY

You go ahead. I'll be up in a minute.

WOMAN

I'm not even going to walk across the street by myself. Come on.

Harry leaves a tip and they start to go.

HARRY

'Night, Ham.

WOMAN

See you, Ham.

BARTENDER

'Night, Jill - Harry

He takes the empty glasses from the bar to wash them as the couple leaves.

BARTENDER

Last call!

(he moves to Paul)

Another one, Mister? Last call.

CONTINUED:

PAUL

You close this early?

BARTENDER

It used to be early. Now it's late. Used to have people in here till four in the morning -- lot of people. Not worth staying open any more. Another one?

PAUL

No, thanks. I'll just finish this.

BARTENDER

You live close-by?

PAUL

Around the corner - Seventy-third.

BARTENDER

Mugging on Seventy-third last night. That's the reason I've got no business tonight. Woman was killed in her apartment over there last week. Three junkies broke in and beat her up. You hear about it?

PAUL

Yes.. I heard about it.

BARTENDER

Something.

He starts to walk away.

PAUL

Bartender? Mind if I ask you a question?

The bartender comes back to Paul. Paul keeps his voice low.

PAUL (cont'd)

I was in here yesterday afternoon and you were showing some of your friends a gun you keep behind the bar.

BARTENDER

(suspicious)

Yeah?

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Well, how do you get a gun..
legally, I mean?

BARTENDER

You get a police permit first..
Then you can buy the gun. That
what you're asking me?

PAUL

How do you get the police permit?

BARTENDER

You thinking of buying a gun?

PAUL

I imagine a lot of people are.

BARTENDER

Yeah. You're not the first one
that's asked me how to do it.
Well, unless you got a legit reason
like mine - a business - or you're
a Mafia hood and can pay ten or
twelve thousand to the right people,
you can't get a permit. That's New
York for you - right? It's against
the law to even have a gun in your
house - right? But the Constitution
says the people shall have the right
to keep and to bear arms - right?
But not in New York. We're
unconstitutional - right?

PAUL

I guess there's a good reason for
the law.

BARTENDER

Yeah - maybe once... When it was a
good city. Not any more. We're
down the tubes if we don't do something.

PAUL

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARTENDER

I read in a magazine, a guy's got the answer but won't nobody do it. Like in the olden days.. diseases, the plague and small-pox.. diseases like that kept the criminals thinned out 'cause the criminals came from the poor people, and that's where the diseases killed the most. Well, this guy says we got a ready-made disease - Dope - Heroin. We got maybe three, four hundred thousand junkies in New York, and that's where the crime comes from - these junkies robbing and killing to get money to feed the monkey on their backs. Right? This guy says make the drugs free.. any corner drugstore, a junkie just walks in, gets a fix. Right? So he don't have any reason to rob for money to get the stuff. Right? But here's the kicker: Give 'em all the junk they want and they'll begin to die like flies somebody squirted with DDT. 'Cause the junk kills. Right? Pretty soon - no more junkies - no more crime. Like that.

(he snaps his fingers
for emphasis)

You don't like the idea, huh?

PAUL

Do you?

BARTENDER

No. But we got to do something.

A customer calls him from the other end of the bar, and he moves away. Paul finishes his drink, leaves a tip and exits.

EXT. STREET

Paul comes from the bar and walks along the quiet street. He's not alone -- a few people -- a car passes. He turns a corner and is startled by the unexpected presence of a man leaning against the side of the building a few feet from the corner. Paul hesitates and angles across the walk to the curb. As he passes the man, he watches him from the corners of his eyes.

ANGLE - ON MAN AGAINST BUILDING

He's a tall, black man. He lights a cigarette and in the flare of the match we can see his wide grin. He has recognized Paul's fear.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He walks on, keeping close to the curb, not daring to look back. He puts his hand in his jacket pocket where the loaded sock lies hidden. A police car slides past. Two men and a woman come from an apartment house and enter a taxi. Paul looks over his shoulder.

PAUL'S P.O.V.

The man at the corner is still there against the building.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He turns a corner again, swinging wide by the curb. It is his street -- and deserted. He hurries along beside the parked cars. It happens -- a hard, whispered voice:

VOICE

Hold it, sonofabitch.

Paul stops.

VOICE (cont'd)

Turn around, sonofabitch.

Paul is immobilized, bending slightly forward, shoulders hunched as if expecting a blow.

There is the sharp click of an opening knife. The pitch of the voice rises, cracking a little from its own fear.

CONTINUED:

VOICE (cont'd)

Motherfuck, I said turn around and
hand me the money.

Paul turns slowly -- but as he turns, a rage tears across his face and his turn becomes swift, his hand ripping from his pocket, his arm blindly swinging the heavy sock. The sock connects with the face behind him -- a young face -- and with a cry, its body reels against a parked car and falls.

Paul is too surprised with his success to do more than look down at the scrambling body as it struggles to its feet and lurches off at a run into the street. He watches it go until it disappears around the corner. With the sock dangling from his fingers and with shock in his face, Paul walks on toward his apartment building.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

He enters and flips on the light, double-locks the door. He takes the sock from his pocket and dumbly drops it on the coffee table. He crosses the living room, pushes through the kitchen door.

INT. THE KITCHEN

He turns on the lights here, and moving as an automaton, he takes a bottle of liquor from a cabinet, drinks from the bottle, caps it and puts it back in its place. From the same cabinet, he removes a can of pork and beans, slips the can into the electric opener and watches it spin. With the open can in his hand, he snatches a spoon from a drawer, and sitting at the kitchen table, begins to hungrily shovel the beans into his mouth. He eats like a man starved, and as he chews and gulps the cold food, a great delight works its way into his stunned face. Finally, he laughs aloud -- a roaring, happy laugh of relieved fears and tensions.

He slams the can and the spoon on the table and rushes into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

He snatches up the loaded sock, admires it for a moment as he smiles -- then swings it again and again with all his might against the cushioned back of a chair. The sock bursts and quarters fly jingling about the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUCSON AIRPORT - DAY

With the establishing desert beyond it, a jet-liner is coming in to land.

CUT TO:

INT. TUCSON TERMINAL

Paul, with attache case in hand, is hurrying from the landed plane into the terminal. On the message board he sees his name among others.

INSERT: BOARD

It reads: "P. BENJAMIN CALL OPERATOR 4, YARMOUTH, MASS."

ANGLE - ON PAUL

Across him we notice a lanky fellow who is wearing a golf cap and who is watching Paul. The man is about Paul's age, with a tanned face and quizzical eyes behind yellow-tinted sunglasses. His name is AMES WILLIAMSON.

Paul moves toward a bank of phone booths, enters one and closes the door. Through the glass of the door we can see Williamson take a few steps in Paul's direction and stop to wait until Paul comes from the booth.

PAUL

(into phone)

My name is Paul Benjamin. I have a message to call Operator Four in Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

OPERATOR'S VOICE

(filtered)

Just a moment, sir.

INT. - A BEACH COTTAGE

We are looking out through an open door upon a sunlighted scene on the shore. Carol is a small figure seated in the sand with her back turned, her hair falling loose down her back. She will remain motionless, looking out to sea.

CONTINUED:

A phone rings in the cottage. From the porch - unseen until the ring - Jack hurries inside and picks up the phone. Jack is in the f.g., Carol in the b.g., through the dialogue.

SCENE INTERCUT BETWEEN JACK AND PAUL

JACK
(into phone)
Hello.... Yes, Jack Tobey...
Hello?..... Pop?

PAUL
(filtered)
Hello, Jack. Something wrong?

There is something wrong no matter what Jack says to Paul.
We must find it in the actor's attitude.

JACK
No, Pop.. everything's fine. I
just wanted to catch you there
at the airport while Carol's out
on the beach..... It's easier to
talk when she's not right beside
me.

PAUL
Well, how is she? You say
everything's fine?

JACK
Well.. I should say everything's
better. She's not sleeping so much,
and we've cut down on the tranquilizers.

PAUL
Is she eating?

JACK
Oh yes, she's eating.. not three
squares, but that's improving, too.

PAUL
That makes me feel better.

JACK
She's coming around, Pop. We may
stay here for a little longer than
I'd planned...

CONTINUED:

PAUL
(sharply)
Why?

JACK
Well, you know.. it's quiet and
the weather's good, and I think
the more of it Carol gets the
quicker she'll shape up. Don't
worry now, Pop. Just make good
use of your own break out there.

PAUL
When'll you call again?

JACK
Oh.. how about Friday? Okay?
Nine o'clock in the evening, your
time.

PAUL
I'll be waiting.

JACK
El Capitan Inn, right?

PAUL
That's right. Give Carol my love..
that is, if you think it's all right
to mention her father's name.

JACK
Don't feel like that, Pop. We're
doing the best thing.

PAUL
All right, Jack. Goodbye till
Friday.

JACK
'Bye, Pop.

WE STAY WITH JACK -- He hangs up slowly and turns to the
doorway to look out at Carol's still figure on the beach.

CLOSE-UP - JACK

In his face we can see the lies he has told Paul.

TUCSON AIR TERMINAL

Paul is walking away from the bank of telephones.

WILLIAMSON

Paul Benjamin?

PAUL

Yes?

WILLIAMSON

I'm Ames Williamson - with
Jainchill.

They shake hands.

WILLIAMSON (cont'd)

Just thought I'd meet your plane.

PAUL

I didn't expect to be met. How'd
you know me?

Williamson speaks in a level, Western manner.

WILLIAMSON

You look sort of like a New York
C.P.A.

PAUL

How's that?

WILLIAMSON

Kind of pale and full of knots from
listening to computer music. Come
on.. I'll take you to pick up your
luggage. Welcome to Tucson.

PAUL

Thanks.

They walk.

WILLIAMSON

I guess Amercon figures we're
cooking our books, huh?

PAUL

Why, no.. not that I know of. This
is just routine.

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMSON

(he grins)

Well, we're trying to put our best foot forward, you know. We want the merger. The books might be cooked a little.

PAUL

Your candor is somewhat surprising, Mr. Williamson.

WILLIAMSON

Ames - - Paul. I hope it'll all be friendly when your adding machine starts breaking us down.

He grins at Paul, and Paul finds that he likes the man as they stride along through the terminal.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUCSON AIRPORT PARKING LOT

Paul and Williamson are approaching a sleek El Dorado Cadillac. Williamson carries Paul's bag.

WILLIAMSON

Here we are.

He opens a rear door and tosses the bag on the rear seat.

WILLIAMSON

Hop in.

He walks around to the driver's seat, leaving Paul to open the door to the front seat.

INT. THE CADILLAC

Williamson starts the motor and tools the shining machine through the parking area.

PAUL

I'll have to get some sunglasses. That sun is bright out here.

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMSON

Here.

He opens the glove compartment and takes out a pair of dark glasses.

INSERT: GLOVE COMPARTMENT

A small blue steel automatic lies snugly in the compartment. Williamson's hand closes the compartment door.

ANGLE - ON PAUL AND WILLIAMSON

Paul has seen the hidden gun. He glances curiously at the other man before putting on the glasses.

PAUL

Thanks. Uh.. do you need that?

WILLIAMSON

What?

PAUL

The gun.

WILLIAMSON

Need it? No, never have. Just a habit. Lot of us out here have the habit.

PAUL

Is it that easy to get a permit?

WILLIAMSON

We don't need permits. We're kind of primitive in Arizona. There won't be any gun control laws here - not if we can help it. We like our guns. By comparison - to New York, back East - this is a very safe place to live, Paul. We have our crimes and criminals. Those are everywhere - but we're not afraid to walk on the streets and our parks are to enjoy, not get mugged in.

PAUL

Because of the guns - or because you don't have the problems we have?

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMSON

We have the same problems,
Paul - just smaller proportions.
We have crime and we have fear..
but it doesn't get out of hand
because we also have something
else: We believe in an old
American social custom called
self-defense.

He smiles at Paul and accelerates the car.

ANGLE ON CADILLAC

It grooves into the speedway which leads from the airport to
the city.

WILLIAMSON (over)

Well, we'll get you established
in your motel, and I'll have a
company car for you in the morning,
and you can come out to the plant
and start computing our crooked
books, okay?

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP - PAUL - NIGHT

His head rests on a pillow. His shirt is open at the throat.
Perspiration beads his upper lip and forehead as he dreams
badly. He awakes with a start. Camera pulls back.

Paul sits up on the side of his bed in the big motel room.
He shakes off the dream and recognizes where he is. He remains
seated for a long moment, holding his head in his hands. Now he
rises, goes into the bathroom, and we can watch him through the
door as he bathes his face in cold water. He comes from the
bathroom toweling his face, tosses the towel on the bed, takes
his jacket from a chair and leaves the room.

EXT. MOTEL BALCONY

It is above a pleasant garden with a fountain. Paul draws on
his jacket, walks along the balcony and descends into the garden.
He passes through the garden to the street. He goes along the
sidewalk to a corner and turns into a long, well lighted mall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are people strolling here, looking into the windows of the closed shops. Some children go by on bikes. It is, as Williamson said, safe.

Paul meanders through the mall looking more into the faces of the people than into the shop windows. The faces are secure, and quiet laughter may be heard from passing couples.

Paul pauses in front of the open door of a bar from which soft music emanates. It is inviting with its candles on small tables and the murmur of voices from its customers.

Paul idles on through the mall and is drawn to a sporting goods window. This window is barred because under the spotlights lies an assortment of, among other sporting equipment, guns - shotguns, rifles with telescopic sights, and handguns.

PAUL'S P.O.V.

The camera moves among the revolvers and automatics. The light traces their polished barrels and grips, flashes on pearl handles and gleams on slick holsters.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

--repelled and yet fascinated by the display of weaponry; he is frowning, and his lips are tight as he studies the guns.

ANOTHER ANGLE

He starts to move on, hesitates and returns to the window, as we do when we're loath to leave an admired object we should like to own.

CUT TO:

INT. AN OFFICE - DAY

It is a small ground-floor office whose windows look out upon a compound of flat-topped factory buildings and beyond them, the desert.

Paul is hard at work with a sophisticated computing machine, making notes from its tabulations, consulting open ledgers, gulping coffee from a white mug.

Williamson enters and stands quietly watching Paul. Paul knows he's there but doesn't let it distract him from the pursuit of the result to a calculation. He reaches the conclusion and enters a few quick figures into his notes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

You're trying to show an increase in assets by reporting the subsidiaries at book value, instead of the original cost.

WILLIAMSON

(amiably)

Can't blame us for trying. It's not exactly dishonest.

PAUL

It's not exactly honest.

Williamson smiles.

WILLIAMSON

It's also after seven o'clock. How long you plan to punch that thing? Guard tells me you were here till after midnight last night. You have a deadline on this?

PAUL

No.

WILLIAMSON

Why don't you take time to enjoy our city? This is a resort town, you know. Swimming pools, golf, great scenery...

PAUL

This is the way I work.

He continues to make notes. Williamson studies him through the ever-present yellow tinted glasses.

WILLIAMSON

What's gaining on you?

Paul looks at him questioningly.

WILLIAMSON (cont'd)

Fellow once said - I forget who - he never looked back because something might be gaining on him. When I met you at the airport, you made me think of that.

A little silence. Paul stares at Williamson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMSON

None of my business. I know.

PAUL

Why your interest?

WILLIAMSON

Let's just say I don't want you to make any mistakes in this audit. You're going at it too fast.

PAUL

I'm like a bank. I don't make mistakes.

WILLIAMSON

Do tell. Well, I was going to invite you to have dinner with me at my club, but I don't think you'd be very good company.

PAUL

I'm sorry. I probably wouldn't.

He turns to his notes again.

WILLIAMSON

I just thought you might be amused... Being from New York, maybe you've never seen a club like this. It's a gun club. We shoot guns.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

With a still, hard interest in his face, he turns to look at Williamson.

CUT TO:

INT. A DARK INDOOR GUN RANGE - NIGHT

The door to the range opens. Williamson and Paul enter from the lighted hallway. Williamson snaps on the range lights and closes the sound-proofed door. Both men carry brandy snifters and are smoking cigars.

Paul holds by the door, surveying the gun range. Williamson, as he talks, goes to a locker and begins to lay out an assortment of handguns on the tables at the firing line.

ANGLE - OVER PAUL

We look the length of the range. It is a long, unlighted target chamber with sound-proofed walls. At its end bright spotlights illuminate the targets which hang from an overhead electric trolley, and can be swiftly brought to the firing line for replacement or examination by pressing a switch.

Because of the arrangement of target lights and dimmer lights behind the firing line, it is a place of intermittent brightness and darkness, and the effect is ominous... and dangerous.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

He reflects our own trepidation about this quiet place that seems to be alive and waiting for the crash of guns.

WILLIAMSON'S VOICE

(over all the above)

There's been so damn much hoopla for years from the gun control people, that half the nation's gotten itself brainwashed into being scared of even holding a gun - you know.. like it was a rattlesnake and might bite you. A gun's a tool, like a hammer or an ax. It wasn't so many years ago we couldn't live without these tools. My grandfather needed a gun the way he needed a hammer and an ax. It put food on the table and kept foxes out of the chicken coop... rustlers off the range.. and bandits out of the bank. How long since you've had a pistol in your hand, Paul? World War Two, I'll bet.

PAUL

Yes. Basic training.

WILLIAMSON

You weren't in combat, huh?

PAUL

They didn't put accountants in combat. They needed me to keep the score.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMSON

Remember how you rated in target shooting?

PAUL

Not exactly. I think I was adequate.

Having arranged a row of old and new guns, Williamson begins to load them - first, an ancient percussion pistol with silver inlaid grip.

WILLIAMSON

What're you thinking, Paul? We're gun nuts in Arizona?

PAUL

I was just admiring your collection.

WILLIAMSON

Just wondered if you agreed with what the knee-jerk liberals say about us.. that the guns are an extension of our penises? That we get orgasms from firing guns.

PAUL

What do you get?

WILLIAMSON

Uh-huh. That's what I thought.

PAUL

I'm serious. What do you get?

WILLIAMSON

It takes us out of ourselves. It's like golf or tennis.

PAUL

Is the psychology the same? Just a game?

Williamson hands Paul a pair of ear-muffs.

WILLIAMSON

Better use these. To answer your question - no. A gun's for killing. If we shoot well, it pleases us that we'd be competent if we had to kill.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

In the pause, with his face partially in shadow, we know from his eyes that he is absorbed in this culture of the gun.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Williamson hands Paul the percussion pistol.

WILLIAMSON

Percussion. 1842. Use it on the big target. Couldn't possibly hit the little ones. Watch the kick. You'll think your arm's coming off. Ear-muffs.

Paul and Williamson fasten the muffs on their ears, and Paul steps to the firing line. He examines the gun for a long moment before he raises it and levels its long barrel down the dark corridor toward the brilliantly lighted targets.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

He is not afraid of the gun. He means to do well by it if he can.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He fires. Flame rockets from the old pistol, and his arm is flung high from its kick.

ANGLE - ON WILLIAMSON AND PAUL

Williamson grins and pushes one of Paul's ear-muffs away from his ear.

WILLIAMSON

You hit. Damn close to center. See it?

Paul is truly gratified.

PAUL

Yeah. I see it.

WILLIAMSON

See what you can do with this one. Hogleg Colt, they called it. Gunfighter's gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's a pearl-handled, single-action revolver with an intricate filigree of brass inlaid on the barrel and chamber.

Paul takes the gun and holds it in both hands.

PAUL
Gunfighter's?

WILLIAMSON
Four notches on the grip.

Paul feels the notches with his thumb and smiles at them.

WILLIAMSON
They're for real.

Paul steps to the firing line, pulls the muffs close to his ears, levels the old killing Hogleg, and aiming carefully, pulls the trigger time after time.

CUT TO:

PAUL - DAY

He is firing another gun, a smaller revolver with a five-inch barrel, but also with a pearl grip.

Paul is somewhere on the desert. It's hot and he isn't wearing his jacket or tie. He is working hard at learning the use of the gun.

CLOSE SHOT - HIS TARGETS

A row of empty beer cans lined up on a fallen giant cactus. The bullets rip into the cactus, ricochet off into the empty spaces. Only one can leaps into the air from a succession of five shots.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

Disappointed at his marksmanship, he moves to his car where a dozen boxes of cartridges are stacked on its hood, along with an open leather box with a hinged lid in which his gun was packaged.

He dumps the empty shells and loads the pistol with new ammunition. He steps back to his firing position, aims carefully and fires again, slowly, deliberately.

CLOSE SHOT - HIS TARGETS

Two cans fly with two shots.

CLOSE SHOT - PAUL

He is pleased with his effort. He aims and continues to fire until the gun is empty. Again he ejects the shells and loads the gun, patiently resumes his practice.

ANGLE ON PAUL - A LONG SHOT

He's a small figure on the great desert, methodically banging away with his new gun.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

He is packing his valise. He tucks his bathroom slippers into the sides of the bag, picks up the leather gun box, opens it to look at the pistol.

INSERT: PISTOL IN BOX

It lies there prettily, jewel-like, in its nest of green felt.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He snaps the box shut, places it in the bag, fits two boxes of cartridges beside it and covers the cache with his bathrobe.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK AIRPORT BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT

Jack Tobey is waiting on the platform with a few other people where the buses arrive from Kennedy Airport. He looks tired and unhappy.

An airport bus swings into the terminal alley, and in a few moments wheezes to stop in a slot. A Baggage Attendant hurries in to open the bus's baggage compartment as the bus door opens and the passengers begin to dismount.

Jack moves forward to the gate where the passengers come to the platform.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He steps from the bus with his briefcase -- sees Jack waiting, and lifts his hand in greeting.

ANGLE ON JACK

He manages a wan smile and returns the greeting with a limp gesture.

ANGLE ON PAUL

He surrenders a claim check, receives his valise from the Baggage Attendant and moves through the gate toward Jack. They shake hands.

JACK

Welcome home, Pop. Good trip?

PAUL

Yes, all right. Well, I half-way expected Carol to be with you, but I guess that was too much to expect.

JACK

Yeah, it was, Pop. Here.. let me have your bag.

PAUL

Wait a minute.. What is it, Jack?

JACK

She's in the hospital.

PAUL

You said on the phone she was a lot better when you came back from the shore.

JACK

I didn't see any reason to get you all disturbed on a long-distance phone.

PAUL

I see.

JACK

Don't do a chilly number on me, Pop. There wasn't anything you could do. They haven't even let me see her for two days. Let's get a cab, Pop.

PAUL

Tell me now!

His voice has risen. People about them glance curiously in their direction.

JACK

Let's get a cup of coffee. Okay?

He leads the way inside the terminal.

CUT TO.

INT. THE TERMINAL

Paul is stonily waiting at a table as Jack brings two cups of coffee from the counter of the snack bar. He continues to wait stonily for Jack to start explaining.

JACK

It wasn't working at Cape Cod.
It just wasn't working at all.
I took her to the doctor just as soon as we got back. He put her in the hospital for observation. They tried insulin shock yesterday. She's not responding, Pop. Do you want the technical jargon? I can reel out yards of it.. Catatonia.. Dementia praecox.. Passive schizoid paranoia.. They've been slinging Freudian argot around like sticks of wood. It boils down to the fact that she had an experience she couldn't face, and she's running away from it, inside herself.

PAUL

You haven't handled this right. I'm going to take charge of this.

JACK

Oh, Christ, Pop - -

Tears well in his eyes.

PAUL

I'll get other doctors. Who are these damned doctors you have?

JACK

They're good doctors, Pop - -
(he's losing his
voice to grief)
Pop, she's almost a goddamned vegetable - !

He shades his eyes with one hand, struggling to contain his tears.

CLOSE-UP PAUL

The absolute realization of what Jack has described freezes the life in Paul's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late and the Doorman is not on duty. A taxi eases to the curb and Paul steps out with his valise and briefcase. He pays the Cabbie, and the vehicle moves on.

Paul does not go immediately into the apartment house; he watches the cab go until it disappears around a corner. He looks up and down the quiet street. There is no one to be seen on its sidewalks.

Now he picks up his bag and enters the building.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM

We see the lights come on in the hallway before we see Paul. He enters the bedroom with the valise and briefcase - tosses them on the bed. He turns on a bed lamp and in its shaded glow, opens the valise, lifts out the bathrobe, and exposes the gun case and cartridge boxes. He opens the gun case, removes the gun and loads it. Placing the pistol on the bed table under the light, he goes to the closet and takes a light raincoat from its hanger. He puts the coat on and picks up the gun, puts it into the pocket of the coat. (It is the type of slit pocket which permits the hand to go inside the coat and reach a jacket pocket without opening the coat.)

Paul moves to a mirror and, with his hand in the pocket and on the gun, brings the gun forward through the front of the coat, pointing it at himself in the mirror. Satisfied with the arrangement, he slips the pistol into his jacket pocket under the coat.

He turns off the bed lamp and exits.

EXT. PAUL'S STREET

Paul comes from the apartment house, pauses to again survey the street. It remains empty. He starts walking toward Riverside Drive - slowly.

Two young men - hippie types - turn into the street from around the first corner. They are hurrying.

Paul stops when he sees them, then goes forward. His hand is moving under the raincoat where the gun is concealed.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

His face is set in frightened determination.

ANGLE - ON PAUL AND YOUNG MEN

They pass Paul.

FIRST YOUTH

Man, that was a bummer, man.
Worst fucking movie I ever saw.

SECOND YOUTH

Yeah. Real downer.

Paul halts and looks after them. They keep on going, oblivious to the man watching them.

Paul begins his prowling again.

ANGLE - ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE

Paul crosses the Drive and stands at the railing of the park. The branches of the trees in the park move in the wind from the river and cast weaving shadows along the deserted paths beneath the occasional lamp-posts.

He enters the park.

ANGLES - IN PARK

Paul comes into the park on a winding path, fearful, trying to watch for movement in all directions without being obvious about it.

ANGLE - ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE

A thin male figure, wearing jeans and a windbreaker, and with long hair flowing from under a floppy hat, runs across the Drive to the park railing. Camera holds on his back as he looks into the park.

Over his shoulder, Paul may be seen off in the trees passing under a lamp.

The man in the windbreaker vaults over the railing and darts away into the darkness of the park.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He arrives at the path above the river and stops here, appearing to be idly viewing the Jersey lights, but his every sense is alerted, waiting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man in the windbreaker appears from the trees some fifty yards from Paul and, like Paul, stands gazing out over the river.

Paul waits. The other man strolls closer and stops, ignoring Paul. Paul remains tensely still. Again the other moves. He will be passing behind Paul. As he does, Paul turns. The man has a gun in his hand -- and it's pointing at Paul.

The thief's face is drug-lined and ravaged.

THIEF

You got money, man? You hear me, goddammit.. You got money?

PAUL

No.

THIEF

Shit, I'll kill you. Gimme the money, or I'll rip you off.

He steps closer to Paul.

PAUL

Take it easy. Here.. I'll give it to you.

Paul opens his raincoat and his gun flames three times, fast. The thief stumbles backward and falls awkwardly, his hands going wide to break the fall, his pistol rattling across the sidewalk. He is looking up at Paul with a horrible grimace of surprise.

Paul thrusts his gun forward and fires point-blank into the face.

CLOSE-UP - PAUL

As he looks down at the man he has shot, he feels faint. His breath is so fast, it puffs out his cheeks.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He lurches away along the path and breaks into a stumbling run.

ANGLES - ON PAUL

--as he runs through the park, looking back for pursuers who aren't there.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

The door is flung open by Paul. He almost falls into the room, crashes the door behind him, throws its locks.

He staggers toward the sofa, bumps into a chair with his hip and falls to his knees beside the sofa, his upper body sprawled on its cushions. For a long moment he lies there, trying to get his breath. He turns to sit with his back against the edge of the sofa. He wraps his arms about his knees and begins to tremble with a hard chill of shock.

He manages to rise and makes his way into the kitchen, where he locates the bottle of whiskey and tips its neck into his mouth.

As the heat of the liquor floods into his stomach, his quaking body gradually regains its balance. He tears paper towels from the roller above the sink and mops his wet face.

Now he opens a drawer and takes from it a thin wire baking-tester. From another drawer, he gathers a clean dish towel. In a cabinet he finds a small can of oil and a bottle of cleaning fluid.

With this collection, he sits at the table, brings the gun from his pocket, empties the used and unused shells from its chamber. He tears a small piece of cloth from the dish towel, wraps it around the baking-tester, dips it into the cleaning fluid and begins to clean the barrel of the pistol. He does it with frowning, studied care.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - MORNING

There are four police patrol cars and an ambulance lined up on the Drive. A black, unmarked vehicle arrives and parks beside them. Two plainclothes Officers step from the black car. One of them is Inspector Frank Ochoa - a short, heavy-shouldered man with shoe-button eyes and thick, aggressive nose.

They walk quickly into the park.

ANGLE - ON LT. BRIGGS AND OTHERS

He's leaning against the park railing above the river, making notes in a small, folding notebook. About him there is the usual police activity at a scene of violence. A body is being placed in an ambulance litter; uniformed men stand about waiting for instruction; a police photographer is making pictures of chalk marks on the pavement of the pathway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a crowd of onlookers, among them a man dressed in grey sweatshirt and pants, who is the center of attraction for a small group of the curious. He's obviously describing his adventures of the morning.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ON BRIGGS

Inspector Ochoa arrives and moves quickly to Briggs.

OCHOA
What've you got, Briggs?

BRIGGS
Hello, Inspector. Oh, we got a guy with some holes in him. Fellow over there in the sweat-suit was jogging through the park about daylight and found the body on the path here. Ties in with a half-a-dozen calls last night about midnight, reporting what sounded like gunfire in the neighborhood.

OCHOA
Got a make on him?

BRIGGS
He was carrying identification in his wallet. Thomas Leroy Marston. Had a parole card. We got a check on the radio. He'd served forty-two months of a five-year hitch for grand larceny. Drug addict. Likely popping horse again. Punctures in both arms.

Briggs takes a bulky handkerchief from his pocket and opens it to reveal a snub-nosed revolver.

BRIGGS (cont'd)
Found this in the grass over there. Not the gun that did the shooting. Hasn't been fired. The deceased was wearing a gun clip on his belt. This was probably his.

OCHOA
If his wallet was on him, he wasn't robbed. Money in it?

BRIGGS
Three bucks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The stretcher is being rolled away. They consider it as it passes.

BRIGGS

Peculiar. I don't know what this thing was. What would you say if I suggested he might have tried a heist and got executed for his efforts - ?

OCHOA

You said.. executed.

BRIGGS

Two in the chest, one in the gut, and one through the eye. The one through the eye was fired from inches away. Powder-burned his face. As if the shooter stepped in and finished him off. Cold turkey.

CUT TO:

INT. A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Paul and Jack are walking through the corridor. They push through swinging doors above which a sign reads: IN-PATIENT PSYCHIATRY DEPARTMENT.

ANOTHER ANGLE

They enter the corridor of the psychiatry unit, in which there is no traffic, except for an occasional nurse or attendant. Jack approaches the nurse's desk.

JACK

I'm James Tobey. I'd like to see my wife. This is her father.

The nurse seems to study them for a moment before she presses a button on the desk. Somewhere a bell rings softly, and an attendant comes from a room down the corridor and arrives at the desk.

NURSE

These gentlemen are here to see Mrs. Tobey, room 42-C.

The attendant also reads their faces before he nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ATTENDANT

This way, please.

He leads them past the desk into an adjoining corridor. At a closed door which is numbered 42-C he pauses.

ATTENDANT (cont'd)

Just a moment, please.

He enters the room, closing the door behind him.

JACK

You're going to hate this, Pop.

The attendant opens the door.

ATTENDANT

Don't try to force the patient to talk to you.

(looks at his watch)

You have five minutes.

He steps aside, and Paul enters with Jack.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

The Venetian blinds are half-closed. The room is in semi-darkness. Carol is sitting on the side of the bed, with her back to the door. She's wearing a hospital gown. Her long hair is lank and straggly.

Jack holds just inside the door and lets Paul move forward.

Paul circles the bed and stands in front of Carol. We don't see her face; only Paul's face as he looks at his daughter. Into his face there comes an almost unbearable grief, which he barely contains with gritted teeth and trembling head.

He gently moves his hand to comb his fingers through her hair.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY

Jack and Paul are seated on a bench in the corner of the lobby, through which doctors, nurses and hospital visitors move in a never-ending stream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

What happens if you don't
sign the papers?

JACK

I guess they'll keep her in
the hospital here until the
insurance runs out, and that
won't be long.

PAUL

If she's committed.. what then?

JACK

I've a policy that covers it,
up to six hundred a month.
They've recommended a sanitarium
out in New Jersey. It's more than
that, but I can swing it. It's
not the money, Pop.

PAUL

This commitment.. is it a one-way
thing?

JACK

Nobody can answer that. Sometimes
a few months of therapy will bring
them out - sometimes it won't....
Oh God, I don't want to throw her
into some damned institution. I
love her, Pop. I'll take her home.
I'll take care of her. Will you
help me - take care of her, I mean?

PAUL

Yes.. But how long would we last
doing that?

JACK

We could get a private nurse.

PAUL

We couldn't live that way. And what
good would it do her?

JACK

(after a moment)

You know what they are, Pop? They're
statistics on a police blotter.. Mom
and Carol. Victims... Along with
thousands of other people. And we
don't have any retribution, and we can't
stop it from happening to thousands of
other people. There's nothing we can
do but cut and run.

The camera closes upon the secret in Paul's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. A STREET - NIGHT

Shades of "Clockwork Orange" - three freak muggers are beating an elderly black man. Blood streams from his broken nose as he feebly tries to protect himself with his hands and arms. The attackers are silent, coldly intent upon their work. The black man falls and they begin that delight of muggers, the stomping.

FIRST MUGGER
Let's make space.

SECOND MUGGER
Let's kill the motherfuck.

FIRST MUGGER
I said split, man.

Leaving their victim, they run away down the dark street.

ANGLE - ON RUNNING MUGGERS

They slow to a fast walk, looking back toward their victim.

They enter the circle of light from a street lamp, and into the shot another figure moves to block their way, gun extended. At the first shot the lead mugger grabs at his face with his hands and falls. The two remaining muggers break and run.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

Aiming carefully, he fires twice.

ANGLE - ON RUNNING MUGGERS

One of them tumbles over his feet and bounces off a parked car. The other dodges into the street and races away to safety.

ANGLE - ON FALLEN BLACK MAN

He has raised himself on one elbow and watches the action on the street with wide, scared eyes.

HIS P.O.V.

We see Paul moving quickly. He stands above the first mugger and fires a shot into that one's head. He runs to the second mugger who is trying to hoist himself up by holding to the car.

ANGLE - ON SECOND MUGGER

He throws his hands high.

SECOND MUGGER

I give up, man. I give up.
Don't shoot.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He points the gun and pulls the trigger.

ANGLE - ON FALLEN BLACK MAN

--watching the killing of the mugger.

HIS P.O.V.

Paul stands for a moment above the second dead hoodlum before he pockets his gun and hurries off into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SAME STREET - NIGHT

Police cars block the street. Red flares burn. Police patrol the edges of a gathering crowd. The bodies of the dead muggers are being loaded into an ambulance.

The black man who was battered by the muggers is sitting on the stoop of a brownstone, and a white-suited young doctor is patching the cuts on his face, as a plainclothes detective questions him.

Inspector Ochoa stands by, listening to the interrogation.

DETECTIVE

Can't you describe the man who
did the shooting?

The black man shakes his head negatively.

DETECTIVE (cont'd)

Was he a white man or a black man?

BLACK MAN

I just don't know.

DETECTIVE

Oh, come on... they were under that
street light. You must have some
idea what he looked like - ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK MAN

I wasn't seeing too good. I had
blood in my eyes.

DETECTIVE

Well, was he tall, short, thin, fat?

OCHOA

Forget it, Hank.

The detective rises and stands beside Ochoa.

OCHOA (cont'd)

Ride the ambulance to the morgue.
When they get the slugs out of these
bodies, run 'em to the lab for a
ballistics, and tell ballistics to
try a check against the bullets that
killed that parolee in Riverside Park.

The detective climbs into the ambulance. Ochoa squats in
front of the black man.

OCHOA (cont'd)

You saw him pretty good, didn't you - ?

The black man shakes his head again.

OCHOA

Bullshit.

CLOSE-UP - THE BLACK MAN

A tiny grin touches his raw, split lips, and the light catches
the hard resistance in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Paul is at the table cleaning the gun again.

CUT TO:

INSERT: A NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

It reads: NEW YORK'S VIGILANTE. The sub-headline reads:
EX-CONVICT, TWO MUGGERS SHOT TO DEATH.

The newspaper is removed and change is dropped in its place
atop the stack of papers.

ANGLE - ON SAM KREUTZER

He is moving away from a news-stand, reading the paper as
he goes.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul is behind the desk. Sam is marching up and down in
the office, waving the newspaper with the headline.

SAM

Paul, it was inevitable a
guy like this had to come
along. You know what I'd
bet? I'd bet this guy's a
cop himself. I'll bet he's
a cop fed up with revolving-
door courts and the goddamned
red-tape, and the goddamned
Supreme Court.

Paul is still and unresponding, watching Sam through rimless
reading glasses.

SAM (cont'd)

Well, if it is, we need a lot
more like him. Summary justice.
Kill 'em on the spot. Pretty
soon the shoe'll be on the other
foot, and the muggers'll be the
ones staying in after dark.

PAUL

Why expect the police to do it?
Why not you, Sam? Why don't you
do it?

SAM

You got to be kidding...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

No, I'm not. Why expect the police to do something you wouldn't do yourself?

SAM

Jesus.. I'd think that you, of all people, would have stopped being logical and reasonable about the crime problems in this miserable city.

PAUL

No problem was ever solved without logic and reason. We'd be damn poor accountants if we didn't subscribe to that. Ives is waiting for me.

He rises with notes in hand and moves to the door. Sam moves beside him, and they go out together. As they go:

SAM

Are you coming to our cocktail party next week?

PAUL

I'll try to.

SAM

Do more than try, Paul. You've got a lot of friends. You ought to start seeing them again.

INT. IVES' OFFICE

Ives is at his desk with a copy of the same paper Sam was reading, spread on the desk. Paul enters.

IVES

Morning, Paul.

PAUL

Good morning, sir.

Paul sits beside Ives' desk and starts arranging his notes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IVES

This vigilante - if that's what he is... Interesting. Oh, I don't mean he's interesting. Likely some psychopath the police'll have jailed in short time. I mean my reactions to it are interesting. To me, anyway. What did you feel?

PAUL

I don't know that I have any feeling about it.

IVES

I was quite horrified to find that I was pleased by these murders. I felt a certain gratification. I've been trying to analyze it. It's the phantasy of it, I think.

PAUL

Phantasy?

IVES

The cartoon syndrome I suppose we all grow up with. You know - the Lone Ranger sort of thing.. and we don't really lose it. This vigilante, so-called, touches me. I put myself in his place with a secret pleasure. I would, in fact, like to do what he's done - or phantasize that I would.

PAUL

Like to do it - or feel that you should do it?

IVES

Oh, not should.
(he thinks this over
for a moment)

That's a very odd question: Should. Yes, there very well may be people who'll respond to this thing in that way. What he's done is right. They should do it, too. God forbid. Consider the innocent people who might be killed.

PAUL

Those are dying every day, Mr. Ives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ives connects and doesn't answer immediately.

IVES

Yes. But, Paul, even under the circumstances, would you advocate.. well - vigilantism?

PAUL

(smiles)

The cartoon syndrome might prompt me to say yes.

IVES

Hi-ho, Silver - and away we go, exactly. I do hope the authorities apprehend this person before he does any more of this. It's very upsetting. Now -- do you have the audit complete?

PAUL

Finished this morning.

The sound cuts out as they begin their business discussion, and the wheel-clicking roar of a subway train comes gradually into the silence.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNEL - A SUBWAY TRAIN

--as it rushes through.

ANGLE - ON SUBWAY TRAIN

--as it rolls to a stop at a station. The platform is deserted until a few people step from the train. Then, from the stairs two young men in dark jeans and windbreakers race to make the train before the doors close.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN

The two young men catch the door as it's closing and force their way into the car. In the bright lights we observe them closely. From the way they carry themselves, the way they look about at the passengers, we know that they are on the prowl, looking for a mark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dissatisfied with the number of people in the car, they throw the doors open to enter the next car.

INT. SECOND SUBWAY CAR

In this car they see a subway guard in the adjoining car, on his round through the train. They sit quickly. One grabs a newspaper from the seat and pretends to read it. The patrolman passes through the car, gives them a cursory glance as he goes.

When he has gone, they case the passengers here at this late hour - an elderly man and woman, a dozing workman with his lunch box, a foursome of young people. Too many people.

They rise and walk on through to the following car. It's the last car on the train.

INT. THIRD SUBWAY CAR

There are four people here. One is a black man, dead asleep with his head resting against a window. A black couple - the man big and capable. The fourth passenger is Paul Benjamin. He has a grocery bag on his lap. He's wearing the raincoat and a hat which is pulled low on his forehead. And we note that he also is wearing gloves.

The muggers take the scene in and decide to sit this one out.

The train stops at a station. The black couple leaves the train and two white men get on. The train moves. The two white men remain by the door, talking, waiting for the next station.

At the station they get off. The door closes. The train starts.

One mugger rises and moves to the end door to look through the train for the guard. He's not to be seen. The mugger nods to his pal. That one slides a switchblade knife from his pocket and starts toward the unsuspecting Paul.

ANGLE - ON CAR

We view the car through the door windows from the adjoining car. The roar of the moving train will smother all sound.

The lookout mugger is in the foreground of his car, keeping watch for the guard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind him the man with the knife approaches Paul - and now, because our view is blocked by the lookout mugger, we do not clearly see what happens. We do see the mugger who was bent upon robbing Paul stagger across the car and fall into a seat. The lookout mugger turns and starts toward Paul.

Our view is opened. Paul is on his feet, gun in hand, the grocery bag spilled on the floor.

The lookout mugger takes a few steps backward, turns and runs toward our point of view. Behind him, Paul opens fire.

The mugger grabs at the door and falls. Paul rushes to him and fires again. He retraces his steps and again fires his gun at the first mugger who is slumped in a seat.

IN PAUL'S CAR

He pockets the gun and looks toward the sleeping black who sleeps on.

The train pulls into a station. There are two men and two women waiting to get on. The door opens. Paul puts his hand to his hat, concealing his face as he brushes past them.

The foursome enters the car and one of the women begins to scream when she sees the body of the mugger on the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Microphones are set up at the Commissioner's desk. A crowd of reporters, both television and newspaper, is milling about in the room. Television cameras are being adjusted, lights are being tested - and in the foreground a television news reporter stands before a working camera with a hand microphone.

REPORTER

We're here in Police Commissioner Norton Dryer's office, waiting for a scheduled press conference with Commissioner Dryer. Last night -- or early this morning, rather -- there was another double killing, which appears to be the work of the person the New York news media has dubbed the Vigilante. Two men, (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER (cont'd)
both with criminal records and known to be drug addicts, were shot to death on a subway train in upper Manhattan at about one-thirty A.M. The police have not verified that it was the work of the Vigilante, but we expect that verification to come from the Commissioner himself - - -

ANOTHER ANGLE - IN ROOM

COMMISSIONER DRYER, a stout, white-haired man, wearing horn-rimmed glasses, enters the room, followed by Frank Ochoa. The conference grows quiet as Dryer and Ochoa sit at the desk before the microphones.

DRYER
(testing the mikes)
All right? Okay?

A technician moves quickly in to push a mike closer to the Commissioner.

DRYER
All right?

He evidently gets an okay signal from off-camera, for he takes a folded paper from his jacket pocket and proceeds to read from it. His delivery is flat, monotone.

DRYER (cont'd)
With me is Inspector Frank Ochoa who has been placed in command of the police detail assigned to what we're all calling The Vigilante Murders. It has been confirmed by our ballistics laboratory that the same gun, a thirty-two pistol which was used in the previous three homicides, was used last night in the shooting aboard a subway train in which two men were killed. Both of these men were armed with knives, and we surmise that they were shot while attempting to rob the man who shot them. I know this person has captured the imagination of many people in our city. I want to say
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRYER (cont'd)
to our citizens that murder is
no answer to the crime in our
city. Crime is a police responsibility.
It is not the responsibility of our
citizens to take the law in their own
hands. It is their responsibility to
cooperate with police. If this person
is listening to my voice, I urge him,
in the name of law and order, to desist
from his one-man crusade and turn himself
into the police. He'll be given fair
treatment.

The Commissioner folds his speech and looks about for
questions.

VOICE O.S.
Inspector Ochoa, do you have any
leads to the Vigilante's identification?

OCHOA
No comment on that at this time.

VOICE O.S.
Were there any witnesses to the
shooting last night?

OCHOA
Not to the shooting.

VOICE O.S.
But the Vigilante was seen, wasn't he?

OCHOA
He was seen.

VOICE O.S.
Can you give us a description?

OCHOA
Not at this time.

VOICE O.S.
Can you tell us if he was a white
man or a black man?

OCHOA
(a beat)
White.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE O.S.

Commissioner Dryer, since the Vigilante is, in fact, defending himself, even if you apprehend him, could he be prosecuted for murder?

DRYER

Look.. I've called this murder, and it is murder. He doesn't just defend himself; he makes it a point to leave them dead. Each one of the deceased has been found to have a bullet through his head, fired at close range.

VOICE O.S.

Inspector Ochoa, in Brazil there's believed to be a secret police organization which kills known criminals without benefit of trial. Do you think it's possible the Vigilante might be an American policeman stealing a page from Brazil's book?

OCHOA

I wouldn't rule out anything at this time, but I don't think it's likely. The caliber of the gun used doesn't point to it. A thirty-two doesn't have much hitting power. A policeman would give himself more of an edge than that -- a thirty-eight or a forty-five.

VOICE O.S.

Do you think this man's crazy?

OCHOA

Well, he's got a wire down all right, but I don't believe we're looking for a raving maniac. I'd like to emphasize that he can't keep this up. He walks around waiting for something to happen, and when it does he takes his chances. He's accidentally succeeded three times. Finally, he's going to get himself killed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE O.S.

Commissioner, it's rumored the rate of street muggings has dropped since the Vigilante became headline news. Is that true?

DRYER

Not true.

VOICE O.S.

If it were true, would you announce it, sir? Or would you be afraid that would stimulate imitators of the Vigilante?

DRYER

(he's sour on this)
I don't have to worry about that. What this nut's doing is just a drop in the bucket.

VOICE O.S.

But would you announce it, sir, if the mugging rate did fall?

DRYER

I'm not going to get into these hypothetical questions.....

He's clearly angry now. The sound cuts out, leaving the Commissioner to silently mouth his objections. And into this silence comes the sound of falling rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RAIN ON A WINDOW

The window is a tall, arched, barred window, the kind found in older Catholic institutions.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Paul is standing with his back to the window, in a long, gloomy reception room where a nun sits at the reception desk quietly working on her files.

A door behind the desk opens and Jack comes out with another nun. They converse (unheard by us) for a moment, before Jack shakes the nun's hand and walks the long length of the room to Paul.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

She's got a nice room, Pop. And the nurse took me through the kitchen and all the facilities. It's okay. She'll be all right.

PAUL

It's a damn prison. I didn't know it'd be like this.

JACK

In a way it is. They have all kinds of mental cases here. But she's not in that section of it.

PAUL

It's a tomb.

JACK

No, Pop, it's not a tomb. It's a place to get well.

PAUL

Let's get out of here.

They start toward the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. A RAILROAD COMMUTER STATION - DAY

A taxi arrives at the deserted station, and Paul and Jack jump out and hurry into the shelter of the open-air station. They stand near the tracks - two unhappy men waiting for a train to the city on a rainy day. They look at their watches and pull their raincoats closer about their throats as the wet wind blows through the station.

JACK

If we'd had the brains to live out here in the country, we wouldn't be here for the reason we are. We'd just be going in to the city to work. And Mom and Carol would be safe - waiting for us to come home from work.

Paul is silent.

JACK (cont'd)

I've been remembering something that happened a couple of years ago. It was about eleven at night, and I was coming from the delicatessen

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK (cont'd)

with some cold beer and some snacks. Some people had dropped in and we didn't have much in the refrigerator. I ran into a teenage girl outside of Bryant Park. She was a wreck. She'd been gang-raped right there in the park. I gave her carfare and told her to have her parents call the police when she got home. I'll bet she never did.

PAUL

Why wouldn't she?

JACK

She was kind of flippy about it. Probably being gang-raped wasn't her idea of a fate worse than death. She was sore at them, but not really mad. You know what I mean?

PAUL

I can't say that I do.

JACK

What I guess I'm getting at is that so many of these things simply aren't taken seriously any more. At least, they're taken for granted. You know what she said to me? She said she should have known better than to go into the park at that hour of the night. She seemed to think it was her own fault. She wouldn't have been raped if she hadn't gone there. It's a weird time we live in, Pop.

PAUL

Maybe there's a way to change it.

JACK

(deprecating)

How, Pop? How?

PAUL

This Vigilante. Maybe he's doing us all a favor.

JACK

He's killing people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Sam Kreutzer made a remark that people built villages to protect themselves from the tigers. But the village system doesn't work any more. The tigers are in the streets. We have to kill the tigers.

JACK

You mean people like you and me should do what this Vigilante's doing? Pop.. we're civilized.

PAUL

We're not being civilized. We're being supine.

JACK

Well, the point is that to do what this Vigilante's doing, you have to be willing to die, if necessary. If you don't fight back, you've got a chance to get off with a couple of black eyes or a lump on the head. Most people get off with just about that. It's like the girl who got raped. That's all she got. You've got to be insane to be like this Vigilante. You've got to have a death wish.

PAUL

Suppose he isn't insane - ?

JACK

As a lawyer, I can tell you no jury would ever convict him of anything else.

PAUL

It's occurred to me he might be trying to demonstrate an old social custom called self-defense. If our paid servants can't defend us, we have to do it for ourselves.

JACK

If that's what's in his mind, he's crazier than I might have imagined. We're not pioneers any more.

PAUL

What are we?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
What do you mean?

PAUL
Have we lost all character?
Are we just a nation of flab
trying to hide from itself?
I don't believe that. Do you?

JACK
I don't know.

PAUL
Come on, Jack. You and Carol
were activists. You were
demonstrators in college.. You
even got arrested a couple of
times. The last thing either
one of you is, is apathetic.

JACK
Pop, I'll tell you something...
I've had a vasectomy. Carol and
I decided we wouldn't have any
children. We don't think there's
much of a future for children.

(It must be understood that Paul is at all times only inches
away from the breaking point, and what Jack has just said
strikes hard at the precarious balance. Paul turns and
lurches a few steps away from Jack, a half-suppressed cry
bursting spontaneously from his throat.)

JACK
Hey?!

Paul quickly regains control, but keeps his back to his
son-in-law.

PAUL
It's all right.

JACK
Pop?

PAUL
It's all right, goddammit. You
hear? It's all right.

JACK
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A train is coming in from around a curve.

JACK

Our train.

Paul snatches his handkerchief from his pocket and half covers his face as he turns. Avoiding Jack's compassionate eyes, he waits for the train to rattle into the station.

CUT TO:

INT. A POLICE STATION - DAY

The young detective named HANK is hurrying down a hallway with a bag of groceries in one hand. A limp stalk of celery protrudes from the bag. He opens a door which is identified as "F. OCHOA".

INT. OCHOA'S OFFICE

Ochoa is at the desk. The detective deposits the bag of groceries on the desk.

HANK

Lab can't get anything but smudges off this stuff we picked up in the subway train. No clear prints.

Ochoa pulls the bag to him and dumps its contents on the desk. There's a box of cornflakes, a box of detergent and the bunch of celery.

OCHOA

Wasn't there a cash register slip in the bag?

HANK

Yessir. Here.

He fishes the short slip from his pocket, hands it to Ochoa.

OCHOA

(studying the slip)
There's nothing more harmless than a guy with a bag of groceries. It's a good invitation for a mugger. The Vigilante'd probably been carrying that damn bag around for hours. Here.. this is an A & P store. Number one hundred and four. Find out where it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands the slip to the young detective who puzzles with it.

OCHOA
What's the matter?

HANK
How do you want us to follow up?
Ask the checkers if they remember
who bought this particular bag of
groceries?

OCHOA
What else?

HANK
In a supermarket?

OCHOA
It'll be a waste of time, but do
it anyway. You never know.

HANK
Yes sir.

CUT TO:

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE - HELL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's raining. The pross van is moving slowly along the street, near curb. We catch the NYPD on its side. An officer in the seat by the driver is looking glumly out of the window at the wet, almost deserted sidewalks.

INT. A CORNER CAFE

It's a coffee-break, get-out-of-the-rain joint for prostitutes and pimps. The place is crowded with the girls, pimps, drifters and welfare characters.

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE

The pross van is approaching the cafe.

INT. CAFE

The angle is on a table of prostitutes and a couple of pimps. One of the girls idly looks through the wet window at the passing pross van.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL

There goes the pussy posse.

PIMP

They won't catch nothing but
wet ass.

The laughter is general in the vicinity of the table, as the camera begins to move... It slowly swings about the steamy cafe until it finds Paul Benjamin at the counter. He's wearing his raincoat and hat, finishing a cup of coffee. He rises, and carrying a folded umbrella, goes to the cashier's desk with his check.

He takes his wallet from his jacket and opens it without caution. It appears to be well-stuffed. He extracts a ten dollar bill, receives change from the cashier.

The fat wallet has not gone unnoticed in this den of thieves. A lean, black man in fancy dress covertly eyes Paul.

Paul goes to the door, steps outside and opens the umbrella. The lean, black man rises, drops some change at the cashier's desk as he passes. He nods to another black man at the counter. This one moves to the cashier's desk, pays quickly and follows the first black outside.

EXT. THE CAFE

The two black men pull on plastic slickers and start walking.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

Umbrella sheltering him from the rain, he walks rapidly along Eighth Avenue. At an Eighth Avenue subway entrance he goes down the steps.

INT. SUBWAY CORRIDOR

It's a long corridor that leads to the trains. Paul arrives at the bottom of the steps, pauses to look back, walks on.

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE

The two black men come to the subway entrance, look down it, set off at a run on the wet street. They run for one block to another subway entrance and dart down its dimly lighted stairs.

INT. SUBWAY CORRIDOR

Paul has folded his umbrella as he walks. His right hand, as always, is in the slit pocket of the raincoat. He passes the second subway entrance. The two black men step from the stairs, case the empty subway corridor and move after Paul.

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE

The angle is on the street and a subway entrance. The cross van is mumbling along the street, approaching the entrance.

We hear a succession of muffled gunshots. A few moments later the black man in fancy dress bursts from the subway entrance, sprawls on the sidewalk. He scrambles to his feet, lurches into the street and falls in the path of the cross van. The van stops, lights on the crumpled figure. Officers leap from the van and bend over the man.

CLOSE SHOT - BLACK MAN

Blood trickles from his nostrils as he gasps for breath and claws at the bloody pavement in a dying effort to rise.

ANGLE - ON OFFICERS

One draws his gun and rushes to the subway entrance, runs down the stairs. The other officer leaps to the van and grabs the radio mike through the window.

INT. SUBWAY CORRIDOR

The officer with the drawn gun plunges into the corridor from the stairs.

We can hear the sound of a subway train arriving at the station, which is unseen at the base of another flight of steps at the end of the corridor.

The officer runs to the body of the second black man which lies in a heap against the corridor wall. He checks the body for life, finds none. Seeing no one else in the corridor, the officer races toward the steps which lead down to the station. Passengers from the train are coming up the steps. The policeman shoves through them.

ANGLE - ON SUBWAY STATION

Seeing that the train is pulling out, the officer dashes back up the stairs to the corridor where the body lies.

ANGLE - ON SUBWAY TRAIN

--as it pulls out of the station. Through the moving windows we catch a glimpse of Paul in a seat by a window.

CUT TO:

EXT. A HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A police ambulance and three police cars are in the driveway as Frank Ochoa's black car wheels in and Ochoa, with Hank, steps from the car. They hurry into the hospital.

INT. EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Uniformed policemen, including the cop from the press van, are gathered about a long, narrow window which looks into an emergency operating room.

Through the window, the operating team may be seen working on a brown body.

Ochoa and Hank enter the emergency department and push through the uniformed men to window.

OCHOA

Who rode the ambulance with him?

PROSS COP

I did.

OCHOA

Was he talking?

PROSS COP

He said he cut whoever it was that shot him.

(opens his notebook)

Exact words: "I cut that motherfucker. I hit him."

ANGLE - ON OPERATING TEAM THROUGH WINDOW

A doctor steps back from the table and unclips his mask. He looks at the window and shakes his head. He goes to a hand washbowl and rinses something in his hand, folds a towel over the object. Now he comes from the operating room.

DOCTOR

Can't save him. Too much internal bleeding. One slug chewed up the liver. Here...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He opens the towel on the palm of his hand.

INSERT: TOWEL

Two bullets lie against the white cloth.

CLOSE SHOT - OCHOA AND HANK

--as they look at the bullets on the towel.

HANK
Thirty-twos.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

It's still raining. Paul, umbrella raised, comes hurrying along the street.

The doorman swings open the door to the apartment house.

DOORMAN
Evening, Mr. Benjamin.

Paul nods and moves into the lobby.

INT. THE LOBBY

Paul lowers the umbrella, crosses to the elevators, presses a button. As he waits for the elevator, he looks down at the floor by his feet.

INSERT: FLOOR

A few drops of blood splash onto the floor.

ANGLE -- ON PAUL

The elevator arrives. Paul looks over his shoulder at the glass entrance doors. The doorman is in evidence, back turned to the doors.

Paul gets his handkerchief out and quickly mops the blood from the floor before he steps onto the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

Paul enters, hurries through the darkness to the bathroom.

INT. THE BATHROOM

He snaps on the lights, gets his raincoat off, then his jacket. His shirt is wet with blood on the left side, from the collar down to his waist.

Paul jerks open the door to the shower stall and turns on the water. He steps into the stall, shirt, shoes and all, and lets the water pour over his head as he removes the shirt. With back half-turned to the camera, he soaps his wound which lies high in the muscles of his left breast.

ANOTHER ANGLE

An angle which conceals the wound from the camera. Paul steps from the shower and presses a bath towel against the wound. He jerks open the medicine cabinet, finds an anti-septic and pours it into the wound. The burning is painful.

Holding the towel against his chest, he pulls a drawer open in the bathroom chest and after some searching and throwing out of useless objects, he finds gauze and adhesive. Using one hand and his teeth to get the box of gauze open, he sets about making a bandage.

CUT TO:

A TELEVISION SET

The eleven o'clock news is coming on.

NEWSCASTER

Good evening. On this rainy night in New York City the mysterious Vigilante is in the news again. A little more than two hours ago, in an Eighth Avenue Subway underpass, two men were shot....

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He is seated on the sofa, anxiously listening to the news. He wears a bathrobe which is open enough for us to see the edges of a bandage above his left breast. A bottle of whiskey is on the coffee table, and he holds a glass in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEWSCASTER'S VOICE (over)
One died on the spot. The other managed to reach the street before he collapsed. He died shortly afterward in the hospital.....

Paul is plainly relieved.

ANGLE - ON TELEVISION SET

(INTERCUTTING - WITH ANGLES ON PAUL)

NEWSCASTER
The men who died have been identified as Joseph Roscoe Adams and Malcolm Reech. Both had long criminal records, and it is assumed by the police they were shot as they attempted to rob the man called the Vigilante. It is believed that in this instance the Vigilante may have been wounded himself. We don't have the details on that....

The actions of the Vigilante, as lawless as they may be, seem to be giving others in New York new attitudes toward crime in the streets. Instead of helplessly allowing themselves to be mugged and robbed, a few are fighting back. Today, in Harlem, a grandmother gave a purse-snatcher a well aimed jab with a hat-pin and sent him racing off without her purse. Mrs. Alma Lee Brown is her name.

SCENE CUTS TO INTERVIEW WITH ALMA LEE BROWN

A severe-faced black woman, she exhibits her hat-pin.

MRS. BROWN
 This man that's shooting these hoodlums, I said if he can do it, I can do it, and I been carrying this hat-pin and I used it today to good effect, it seemed to me.

CUTS - BACK TO NEWSCASTER

He smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEWSCASTER

...But there were more serious instances. A man in Brooklyn was badly cut when he attempted to wrestle a knife from the hands of a mugger... And two muggers were beaten by a crew of construction workers who came to the rescue of an elderly man in midtown Manhattan. Finally, on the lower East Side, an attempted rape and mugging in an alley ended with a shotgun blast from a window above, as the mugger attempted to leave the scene. He fell with shotgun pellets in his chest and face, and is in critical condition in a hospital. The name of the person who fired the gun has been withheld by the police.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

We have been cutting to Paul throughout this, and there is great and deep satisfaction in his attitude.

CUT TO:

A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Frank Ochoa is walking slowly through the winding walks of the campus, in the company of a tweedy individual, a man in his fifties who has a small, modish beard, wears a beret and is eating raw peanuts which he takes, one by one, from the pocket of his jacket, hulls and deposits the hull back in the pocket. His name is DR. PERRINE.

PERRINE

Inspector, I'm not at all sure I can help you. Also, I'm not at all sure I want to help you. He's quite a fellow, this Vigilante.

OCHOA

Christ, I didn't expect that from you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRINE

Why? Psychiatrists are human, too. There's a large reservoir of aggression in all of us. We hate crime, but we don't do anything about it. As a result, we begin to feel we're not merely decent people - we're so decent we're immobilized. The Vigilante stirs up our adrenalin. Even you, a policeman, I'll wager if you told the truth, you have a grudging admiration for what he does. Am I right?

OCHOA

Yeah. But it's only the kind I always feel for a somebody with nerves like steel cables - which this character seems to have.

PERRINE

I don't think he has nerves like steel cables at all. I expect he's scared half to death. It's just that his rage is greater than his fear.

OCHOA

If you can be that positive, then you've been thinking about it.

PERRINE

Yes. I suppose for a criminal specialist it's automatic. I do have some conclusions.. a few.

OCHOA

Anything will help. I need a direction. I don't know what kind of a man I'm looking for. In twenty-eight years being a cop, I've never had a case like this.

PERRINE

Okay.. but I wouldn't put too much faith in a long-distance diagnosis by a psychiatrist who's not seen the patient. I could be a hundred percent wrong.

OCHOA

I'll use it as a shot in the dark. Just explain him in words that I can understand, if you don't mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRINE

I'll try. To start with, he's undoubtedly a man who's been deeply grieved by some violent experience. Either he has, or a loved one has been brutalized by street criminals in the not too distant past. I'd guess in the last three or four months. No later. Also, it's likely that the criminal, or criminals, weren't caught by the police - or if they were caught, they evaded punishment through the red tape of our judicial systems.

OCHOA

You've just narrowed him down to about five thousand people.

PERRINE

I can do better than that. This man has a very peculiar psychopathic personality. He can suppress his inhibitions - that is, guilt, social rules, fear of apprehension, et cetera. But this personality characteristic was probably latent and was triggered by whatever it was that happened to him. Until now, he may very well have been a decent citizen, even a citizen with a good, liberal conscience. He may still go to his job or profession in the daytime. His friends might not recognize any change in him. But he's likely drinking rather heavily, in secret at least. He would need a crutch to hold himself together and help him to sleep. Because of his age, I'd guess it to be liquor instead of drugs.

OCHOA

His age?

PERRINE

Oh, yes. He's a man in his forties or older. He's of our generation. He has to be able to remember better times, when there was more security and there wasn't a mugger or a drug addict on every corner. What he wants essentially is a return to those times. So we come to his motives. Are you with me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OCHOA

I'm getting a sort of description.

PERRINE

He isn't trying to revenge himself. The psychological pattern isn't right for that. I believe that in his mind he's bringing a message to us. He's hoping to persuade us that there is a way to end our dilemma about crime in the streets. His message is very simple - Defend ourselves - Kill them before they kill us.

OCHOA

Then he is a lunatic.

PERRINE

No, Inspector, he's rational..completely. He has divorced himself from all hypocrisy. His message is absolutely basic. If we want to survive, this is what we must do.

OCHOA

You know, you say that as if you believe it.. his message, that is.

PERRINE

No. But then I don't have his peculiar psychopathic personality. I can't divorce myself from hypocrisy.

Perrine smiles slightly and watches for Ochoa's reaction.

Ochoa studies the Doctor for a moment, and then looks away.

OCHOA

That's pretty thick for me, Doc.
But I think I dig it.

CUT TO:

EXT. A POLICE CAR - NIGHT

It is moving slowly through one of the drives in Central Park, its spotlight swinging from side to side, the beam flashing among the trees and up the walkways in the dark park.

ANGLE - ON PAUL BENJAMIN

He is standing behind the thick trunk of an old tree. The beam of the police spotlight dances past the tree.

ANGLE - ON POLICE CAR

--rolling quietly along the drive on its beat. When its taillights are twin red dots in the night, Paul steps into the drive, looks after the car, walks on across the drive, enters a pedestrians' path.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

--as he walks through the darkness, hand in pocket, watching, waiting...

The path brings him to the Mall. He pauses to look down its long, wide length with its rows of empty benches. With an even, measured tread, he begins to walk the Mall, one lone figure, where hundreds of New Yorkers once came to stroll in the night.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Sam enters the busy room with work sheets in his hands. He takes a place near Paul, who is taking read-outs from a machine.

SAM

Hear the news? He got another one in Central Park last night.

PAUL

What?

SAM

The Vigilante. Killed a guy the police had been after for a murder in the Bronx.

Paul doesn't look up from his work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

If the truth were known, I'll bet muggings are down by fifty percent.

PAUL

I doubt it.

SAM

They wouldn't tell us. They're afraid to tell us.

PAUL

You could find out. Take a walk on Columbus Avenue tonight.

SAM

Thanks. I'll wait for the official report.

CUT TO:

INT. OCHOA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ochoa is at his desk, Hank sitting in a chair by the wall. A young POLICEWOMAN is across from Ochoa with papers spread on his desk.

POLICEWOMAN

The homicide records give the next of kin, but don't give the age of the next of kin. We're just guessing at that. Here, for example, the deceased was sixty years old. His brother is listed as the next of kin. We're assuming the brother is middle-aged. He could be seventy.

OCHOA

I'm a little familiar with homicide records, Miss Gimetti. Please continue.

POLICEWOMAN

Yes sir. On the theory that the suspect lives in Manhattan, because that's where all shootings have occurred. On the theory that a member of his family was killed by muggers -- not just mugged, but killed, as you suggested. On the theory that it occurred in the last three months. And on the theory that the suspect is middle-aged and Caucasian, we have reduced the number of suspects to thirty-six men...

CONTINUED:

OCHOA

Jesus, this is a sweet city.

POLICEWOMAN

...listed alphabetically.

She pushes the list across the desk.

OCHOA

Thank you very kindly, Miss Gimetti. And please thank the people for me who worked with you on this.

POLICEWOMAN

Yes sir.

Efficiently, she leaves the office.

Ochoa pokes at the list of names.

OCHOA

This is another waste of time, Hank - but.. you never know. Deal these names out to the boys and let's get a preliminary line on them. Fast - today.

CUT TO:

INT. KREUTZER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
ANGLE - ON PAUL

He is standing in the corner of the Kreutzer's big living room where their anniversary cocktail party is in full swing. He has an empty glass in his hand. The sound of the party is all about him, the hum of conversation, the punctuation of laughter.

Sam nudges into the scene, replaces Paul's empty glass with a full one.

SAM

Why're you standing in corners, Paul? Why don't you circulate?

PAUL

I will, Sam.

SAM

Drink up. Enjoy yourself, Paul.

Sam hustles away on another errand. Paul edges forth into the crowd, pauses on the perimeter of a foursome.

CONTINUED:

WOMAN IN FOURSOME

(speaks with deep-voiced authority)

I don't think we ought to regard this character as a savior, you know, like the boy with his finger stuck in the dike.

MAN IN FOURSOME

Pun.

Laughter.

WOMAN IN FOURSOME

All right, all right. Christ, you're funny. I'm just saying that too damn many people are beginning to idolize this character with the gun.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He's moving. Pauses again near another group.

MAN IN GROUP

(he's a whiner)

...from a practical point of view, these killings are having about as much effect on the total crime picture as sticking a band-aid on a leper.

ANOTHER MAN IN GROUP

You don't know that. It's bound to have some effect. I mean, a mugger's going to think twice about who he hits.

THIRD MAN IN GROUP

Sure.. they're hitting more old ladies, that's all. What d'you think? Hi, Paul.. didn't see you.

Paul shakes his hand.

PAUL

Hello, Harry.

Paul moves on.

FIRST MAN IN GROUP

There's a victim. I'd like to know what he thinks about the Vigilante, but I wouldn't ask him. You know.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

Moving - pausing.

WOMAN IN NEXT GROUP

I think it's a Viet Nam veteran.
They're very bitter. They go to
war, and they come back to another
war. Very bitter.

ANGLE - ON PAUL

Moving - pausing

MAN IN LAST GROUP

I'll tell you one thing.. he's a
racist. You'll notice he kills
more blacks than he does whites.

WOMAN IN GROUP

Oh, for Pete's sake, George. More
blacks are muggers than whites.
What d'you want us to do - increase
the proportion of white muggers, so
we'll have racial equality among
muggers?

NEW ANGLE - ON PAUL

He reaches the other side of the room near sliding windows
which open onto a small terrace. He pushes a door open and
goes out.

EXT. THE TERRACE

Paul goes to the parapet, drains his drink, looks morosely
out over the city. A siren whines below.

PAUL

(a murmur)

Fools.

CUT TO:

INT. OCHOA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lighted only by a desk lamp. Hank sits across from Ochoa
who is studying areport, puffing on a cigar. He puts the
report aside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OCHOA
Nothing in that one.

Hank hands him another page. Ochoa reads it quickly.

OCHOA (cont'd)
This whole damn family's moved
to California.

He balls the page in his fist and throws it away.

ANGLE - ON HANK

From his attitude, we know there is something in this next report that he carefully passes across the desk to the Inspector. He watches Ochoa with narrowed, expectant eyes.

ANGLE - ON OCHOA

He reads the report, takes the cigar from his mouth and puts it in the ashtray without taking his eyes from the page. He looks up at Hank.

ANGLE - ON OCHOA AND HANK

OCHOA
Where was that A & P Supermarket
located? On 74th, off Broadway?

HANK
Right.

OCHOA
People tend to buy groceries in
their own neighborhood. He lives
around the corner, on 73rd Street.
The first shooting was in the park,
near 73rd Street.
(studies report again)
Certified Public Accountant. Age,
forty-nine. Credit rating excellent.
Same job sixteen years. Same
address eight years. World War Two
vet. No police record.

He picks up the cigar and puffs it to life again.

HANK
Good citizen.
(a beat; then)
Surveillance?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ochoa nods.

HANK

Who do you want assigned?

OCHOA

We'll give it a light once-over ourselves. Just to see if it's worth the trouble. I doubt it.

They eye each other for a moment.

OCHOA (cont'd)

What's the matter?

HANK

I don't know.. I feel like I'm on the vice squad again, trying to get some poor queer to make a pass at me so I can take him in.

OCHOA

I don't get the connection.

HANK

I'd like to be doing something more important.

OCHOA

You don't think the Vigilante's important?

HANK

Sure, he's important. He's a priority big enough for thirty police personnel to be assigned full time. I wonder how many were assigned to apprehend the freaked-out creeps who beat this man's wife to death.

OCHOA

Well, we both know there aren't enough police to give all those incidents a lot of time.

HANK

I'm as scared as the next man -- for my wife, my family. I'll tell you something: I wish there were a thousand guys out there shooting the hell out of the junkies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ochoa hangs very still, then hits the desk a hard, sharp blow with his open palm.

OCHOA

What the shit kind of talk is that for a policeman? We've got our goddamn backs to the wall with fucking anarchy on the streets now!

He steams silently for a moment, regains his composure.

OCHOA (cont'd)

I'll forget you said it. You're a good cop - but you're thinking with your stomach. Get your head screwed back on.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL'S STREET - DAY

The angle is on a double-parked police patrol car. In the b.g., Paul's apartment house. We see Paul come from the building; he pauses to exchange a few words with the doorman, walks briskly along the street toward the patrol car.

The door of the car opens and Officer Charles steps out as Paul approaches.

CHARLES

Good morning, Mr. Benjamin.

Paul stops, uncertainty and apprehension in his face.

CHARLES (cont'd)

Joe Charles. Remember me?

PAUL

Of course. Sure.

He extends his hand.

REAR ANGLE - ON OCHOA AND HANK

They are sitting in Ochoa's unmarked car. They are watching Paul and Charles through the windshield. The conversation between those two lasts for a few moments. Charles touches his cap and Paul walks on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hank opens the car door and moves quickly after Paul.

Charles waits until Hank has passed him, crosses to Ochoa's car. He bends to look in the window.

CHARLES

I don't think that man would hurt a fly. He's a sad man, Inspector. You know what he just told me? His daughter's still in trouble from that beating. She's in a hospital. That's real misery.

OCHOA

Yeah. That's hard. Thanks, Charles, for picking him out for us.

Charles walks away to his patrol car, gets in, and it moves away.

ANGLE - ON OCHOA

He's glum and stewing. He starts the car, hesitates, turns the engine off. He gets out of the car.

Angle - ON OCHOA

He crosses to Paul's apartment house and starts to enter.

DOORMAN

Just a moment, sir. You're not a resident. What's your business?

Ochoa takes out his wallet and opens it to show his police identification.

DOORMAN (cont'd)

Who do you wish to see? I'll call up for you.

OCHOA

No you won't.

He stalks into the apartment house.

INT. APARTMENT HOUSE LOBBY

Ochoa goes to an elevator, presses the button and its door opens. He steps in, returns the puzzled, unsure inspection
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

of the doorman (on the street, looking in) with his best flat police stare, until the door closes.

INT. CORRIDOR IN APARTMENT HOUSE

The elevator door slides open, Ochoa steps out. He gets his bearings from the order of numbers on the apartment entrances, and walks quickly along the corridor until he finds the number he wants.

He presses the buzzer and waits; presses it again to be sure there'll be no answer. From his wallet he takes a plastic credit card, expertly wedges into the door crack and, popping the lock open, enters the apartment.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

Ochoa takes but a moment to orient himself. He crosses the living room, enters the short hallway and finds the bedroom.

In the bedroom, he goes immediately to the bed tables on each side of the bed, and searches the drawers. Finding nothing, he begins with the drawers in the broad dressing set. As he carefully searches, he cannot help but see two pictures on the dresser - one of Paul's wife, one of his daughter. Ochoa pauses in his work to give the pictures a moment of attention.

He is thorough but neat in his search, replacing the articles of clothing as he found them.

In the bottom drawer, in a far corner his search is rewarded. From under clothing, he brings out an unopened box of .32 cartridges.

INSERT: BOX OF CARTRIDGES

--for audience identification.

ANGLE - ON OCHOA

He places the box on the dresser top between the two photographs and stands there looking at it. He is not pleased; if anything, he's grimly reflective. He replaces the box of ammunition in the drawer.

CUT TO:

INT. A NEW YORK RESTAURANT - DAY

It is the kind of businessman's place in New York where there is a stand-up bar for quick lunch and a more comfortable area of ancient, heavy tables and white tablecloths for those who can afford more time for the mid-day break.

The angle is on Hank at the stand-up bar. He is munching a sandwich, just another member of the rush group.

The camera moves on to find Paul, Ives and Sam at a table.

Ives is eating with a customary daintiness and an occasional elegant gesture with his fork to punctuate his dialogue.

IVES

In my opinion, we've gone too far with the therapeutic approach to crime. We've gone too far in the baby-bathwater direction...

Sam is grinning at Paul.

IVES (cont'd)

...The function of punishment is not to reform the criminal; it's to protect society by preventing and deterring crime.

SAM

Wow, the things people are saying these days, they wouldn't have said even two weeks ago.

IVES

Yes, that's true, Sam. The Vigilante has caused a lot of reappraisal. You see, I believe that he's the result of our tolerance of crime. He's reacting, as we all are, to the current extreme views of the courts. In their rush to safeguard the rights of the accused persons, they seem to have forgotten the primary goal of protecting society from those persons. To put it plainly, we have too many people on the streets who should be in the pokey for the rest of their natural lives. It must come full-circle again.

SAM

Hear, hear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

But what do we do in the meantime?

IVES

We endure, Paul.. just as you have.

Paul glances from Ives to Sam. In the set of his mouth and the coldness of his eyes we recognize contempt.

ANGLE - ON HANK

He finishes his sandwich, pays at the cashier's desk, exits.

EXT. STREET

Hank comes from the restaurant, looks up and down the busy street, takes a direction.

Ochoa is waiting for him on the corner. Hank shrugs and makes a gesture of "nothing."

HANK

He'll go back to his office.
Then he'll go home. You can
tell by looking at him. That's
what he does. Home, office, home,
by the clock.

OCHOA

Hang in and see. I may set up a
hassle for him.

HANK

You've been reading characters
longer than I have, but I wouldn't
waste another five seconds on him.

Ochoa contemplates Hank for a moment.

OCHOA

I'm going to do what I think is
necessary. If you don't quit
trying to drag my feet, I'm going
to kick your ass off this detail
and write you up.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Paul is at his desk working with figures and charts. The intercom buzzer sounds.

PAUL
(pressing switch)

Yes?

THELMA'S VOICE
A call for you from a man who says he's an old friend and wonders if you'll recognize his voice. Do you want the call that way, or shall I insist upon his name?

PAUL
No, I'll take it.
(picking up phone)
Hello?

VOICE (filtered)
This Paul Benjamin?

PAUL
Yes. Who's this?

VOICE
Mr. Benjamin, you're under police surveillance. You're being watched.

EXT. A STREET PHONE BOOTH

Ochoa is in the booth, and we see him hang up the receiver.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE

Paul holds the phone for a long moment before he hangs up. The intercom box buzzes.

PAUL
(into box)
Yes, Thelma?

THELMA'S VOICE
Were you cut off at our switchboard?

PAUL
No, Thelma. It's all right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THELMA'S VOICE

Will that be all today, Mr. Benjamin?

PAUL

Yes... yes, that'll be all today.

THELMA'S VOICE

Have a nice weekend, Mr. Benjamin.

PAUL

Same to you, Thelma.

Paul closes the intercom switch and sits there quietly, thinking. He rises, stands at the window for a moment or two, looking out into the growing darkness. His train of thought causes him to turn his attention to a row of filing cabinets. He takes keys from his pocket, goes to the cabinets, unlocks one of them and opens it. He removes his small revolver from his inside jacket pocket, places it in the drawer, closes the drawer and locks it.

CUT TO:

A MID-TOWN BUS STOP - NIGHT

Paul is waiting with a small group of people for an oncoming bus. Covertly, he searches the faces of those about him.

The bus arrives, the passengers embark. Hank appears from nowhere, steps aboard the bus.

From outside the bus we watch Paul and Hank find standing room.

The bus pulls away into the traffic. Half a block away it passes Ochoa's parked car. Ochoa guides his car in the wake of the bus.

CUT TO:

CENTRAL PARK WEST - NIGHT

The bus is gliding swiftly along, uptown, on the wide street. Ochoa's car is prowling along behind it.

ANGLE - ON TWO PARKED POLICE PATROL CARS

The bus passes them. Ochoa's car slows beside the parked cars, stops momentarily. We can see Ochoa's hand signal to the police in the front seat of the first parked patrol car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ochoa drives on. The patrol cars slide away from the curb to follow him.

ANGLE - CN BUS

At 72nd Street the bus draws up to the bus stop. A half-dozen people get off, including Paul and Hank. All wait for the light to cross the street. Paul is again acutely aware of those about him. The light changes - all start across the street, Hank slightly behind Paul.

In the same shot we note the two patrol cars turning behind Ochoa's car into 72nd Street, going west.

ANGLE - ON 72ND STREET

The three cars move half-way along the block and double-park. Ochoa steps from his car and enters the first police car by its rear door.

ANGLE - ON PAUL AND HANK

Hank increases his pace and passes Paul just as they are coming abreast of the parked police car.

Suddenly, the front doors of the police cars fly open and the four uniformed police run to the sidewalk, two in front of Paul, two behind him. Their guns are out.

POLICEMAN

You.. get your hands up.

Paul doesn't react instantly, and is seized by two cops, who press him to the wall of a building.

POLICEMAN

Hands on the wall. Spread your legs.

It's rough and fast. Paul is frightened, but silent. Quickly, an officer goes over Paul with his hands - jacket, hip pockets, legs.

POLICEMAN

Okay. Turn around. Let me see identification.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Paul gets his wallet out and presents it. It is held by one officer under the flashlight of another.

POLICEMAN

Where do you live?

PAUL

West 73rd Street.. Three forty-two.

The light is shined in Paul's face and snapped off. His wallet is returned.

POLICEMAN

Okay, Mr. Benjamin. Sorry to rough you up that way, but we're looking for a man close to your description. He's supposed to be armed, and we couldn't take any chances. I hope you understand. If you want to make a complaint, I'll give you my number.

PAUL

No, I'm not hurt. I know you do what you have to.

POLICEMAN

Thanks. Goodnight, Mr. Benjamin.

Paul walks on. The officer who has done the talking moves to his police car, bends to the window where Ochoa is sitting in the back-seat.

POLICEMAN

Okay?

OCHOA

Yeah. Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul is at the window in the darkened apartment. If it is true, as Dr. Perrine said, that Paul is enthralled by a peculiar madness, we should see that desperation in his face now.... The police are in his way - they are preventing him from his nightly stalk through deserted streets and empty parks.

PAUL'S P.O.V.

In the street below, Ochoa's car draws into a parking space, and Hank comes from a doorway to beside the car.

INT. OCHOA'S CAR

Hank slides in beside him.

HANK

He went in the building about ten minutes ago. Went to the A & P first.

Ochoa nods.

HANK (cont'd)

We going to get relief?

OCHOA

You can, after a while. I'll sit it out.

HANK

You must know something I don't know if you think this guy's the bird.

Ochoa makes no response. Hank lights a cigarette and leans back on the seat.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM

He is taking the box of ammunition from the drawer. He opens it, shakes a few cartridges into his hand, puts them in his pocket and replaces the box in the drawer. He leaves the bedroom.

INT. HALLWAY ON PAUL'S FLOOR

Paul comes from his apartment, hastens down the hallway to the fire stairs, enters.

INT. OCHOA'S CAR

OCHOA

Let's check him. Go to that phone booth on the corner, and call his number.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK
He's up there.

OCHOA
Check him anyway.

Wearily, Hank crawls out of the car.

ANGLE - ON SERVICE ALLEYWAY

It is a narrow alley between two apartment houses. Steps go down to a lower level where there are basement doors into the apartment buildings. There are dim lights above each door.

We see Paul emerge from one of the doors. He comes quickly up the steps and toward the street.

ANGLE - ON OCHOA

We are shooting through the windshield from outside the car.

Ochoa is in the f.g., and through the window on his left we can see the opposite side of the street, where behind the parked cars lies the opening to the service alley. To see the alley, Ochoa would have to turn his head and look over his shoulder.

We see Paul's dark figure come from the alley and hurry away down the street toward Riverside Drive.

ANGLE - ON STREET PHONE BOOTH

Hank pushes the door open, the light goes on. He looks glumly at the phone. Its receiver has been amputated. He takes it calmly. You get used to that in New York. He leaves the booth and goes toward a nearby subway entrance, goes down the stairs.

INT. SUBWAY CONCOURSE

Hank strides to a bank of phone booths, enters the first one. A sign says "OUT OF ORDER". He goes to the next. "OUT OF ORDER". A man is in the next booth. Hank enters the last one of the bank. It has no mouthpiece.

He steps from the booth and waits upon the man in the only viable booth. The man seems to be talking forever. Hank raps on the glass. The man gives him the finger. Hank opens his wallet and presses its police identification against the glass of the door. That gets results. The man hangs up and steps out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

You can have it back in a minute.

He enters the booth, opens the tattered phone book, finds the right number, drops his coin in and dials. He lets the phone ring several times, hangs up, checks the number in the book again, dials again and waits. Getting no answer, he quickly leaves the booth.

HANK

Thanks, pal.

MAN

Up yours.

Hank ignores him and goes at a trot back toward the stairs.

CUT TO:

ANGLE - ON OCHOA

Shooting from behind him in the car, we see Hank running on the sidewalk toward the car. He comes to Ochoa's window.

HANK

No answer. 'Course he could be in the shower or something.

Ochoa starts the car.

OCHOA

Stay here.

Ochoa pulls away from the curb, gunning it. Hank looks after him bewildered.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE TO PAUL'S OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

A taxi draws up. Paul gets out, goes into the building.

From through the glass doors, we watch him stop at the security officer's desk. They exchange a few words, the security man smiles, Paul gets into the elevator.

INT. OCHOA'S CAR

He's driving fast.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE

Paul enters the dark office, doesn't bother with the lights because enough light from the city filters through the window. He opens the filing case, retrieves his revolver, takes a raincoat from the hanger, puts it on and leaves the office.

INT. OCHOA'S CAR

He's driving fast through traffic.

INT. LOBBY OF PAUL'S OFFICE BUILDING

Again, through the glass entrance doors we see Paul come from the elevator, make a gesture of "Goodnight" to the guard, and walk again out on the street.

The camera stays with Paul until he goes down into a subway entrance.

ANGLE - ON STREET IN FRONT OF OFFICE BUILDING

Ochoa's car swings into the No Parking zone. He gets out of the car and the camera pans him into the lobby of Paul's building. He approaches the guard. There is an exchange between them, and Ochoa returns to the street. He stands just outside the entrance, looking futilely up and down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY EXIT - NIGHT

It is situated in an uptown tenement district. The street running away from the subway exit lies dark and empty. Somewhere in the distance a siren wails and dies away.

Paul emerges from the exit, looks about him and begins to walk.

ANGLE - ON HANK

He is waiting across the street from Paul's apartment building as Ochoa drives up and, finding no parking place, double-parks. Hank walks over and gets into the car. Ochoa has his radio turned to police calls, and that incessant chatter will continue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

Where'd you go?

OCHOA

He didn't show here, did he?

Hank shakes his head and puzzles with Ochoa.

HANK

Can I ask a simple question?
Is this Paul Benjamin the bird?

OCHOA

All he had to do was quit. That
would have been the end of it.
That's all we wanted.

HANK

I'm not going to ask any more
questions. I'm not learning
anything.

OCHOA

Sure, he's the bird, for Christ's
sake. And we fell over him. We
stumbled over him like a guy with
two left feet falling in a hole.
But we don't want the bird. The
Police Commissioner doesn't want him,
and the D.A. doesn't want him. Nobody
wants him... We just want him to
quit squirting around with that goddamn
thirty-two pistol.

HANK

You mean the Commissioner and the
D.A. have, like they say, hearts of
gold?

OCHOA

They don't want a martyr on their
hands. There's a certain item of
news they've been sitting on which
has got to pop. Mugging is down by
thirty percent in Manhattan, and by
eighteen percent in the rest of the
city.

HANK

No shit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OCHOA

No shit. But now I've got to pick him up. I tried to scare him off, but the crazy sonofabitch won't scare.

CUT TO:

EXT. A PARK - NIGHT

Paul turns from the street into the narrow park which is situated on heights above the East River. At the edge of the park a long flight of steps goes down to a street below.

He goes slowly down the steps. Half-way down he stops. Two men have appeared at the bottom of the steps and stand watching him.

One of the men calls to him very softly:

MUGGER

Come on down, motherfuck. We're going to take you.

Paul remains still.

MUGGER

(calling softly)

You got to come down, man. You can't go back up.

Paul looks back up the steps. Two men are at the top of the steps.

MUGGER

(he giggles)

Come on down and bring the money, or you going to get shit stomped outta you.

The two men above Paul menacingly begin to descend toward him. He waits.

The two men below start to ascend the steps. Paul goes to meet them.

MUGGER

That's a good little motherfuck. How much money you got, good little motherfuck?

Paul's hand jerks from the pocket of his raincoat and the gun spits three times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One of the men below reels back and falls to the bottom of the steps. The other, the one who has been speaking, bounds over the railing of the steps into the ivy-covered embankment.

Paul runs down the steps to the street.

The fallen mugger is screaming - no words - just a wailing sound of fear and suffering.

The men who were above Paul are racing down the steps. One has a gun in hand. The mugger who jumped into the ivy is shouting:

MUGGER

Kill that cocksucker! Get him!
Kill him!!

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He reaches the street and runs along the sidewalk. Behind him we see the two pursuers leap from the steps and take after him. He turns a corner, runs a little distance and turns.

His pursuers round the corner and Paul opens fire. They take cover behind parked cars.

Paul runs again, panting hard, fumbling in his pocket for new cartridges.

The two men come on again, fast and quiet.

INT. OCHOA'S CAR

Ochoa and Hank are listening intently to a police report.

RADIO

142 and 176 investigate shooting
on street at Avon and Closter...

ANGLE - ON PAUL

He is running in an alleyway which curves through the tall, blank walls of a brewery. An ancient archway provides an opening to another alley. Paul stumbles exhausted into this dark haven. His hands are trembling with fatigue as he punches cartridges into the chamber of the gun.

The figures of his pursuers appear under the archway and come toward him. He steps out with pistol leveled and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

pulls the trigger. It misfires, and at that moment the mugger with the gun begins to shoot. It's an automatic and the shots come fast and heavy.

Paul is hit and flung back.

A police siren is howling close. The muggers turn and race away.

Paul tries to rise and falls. He crawls, dragging himself toward the entrance in the main alley. White headlights and flashing red lights begin to bounce off the walls of the brewery.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN AMBULANCE - NIGHT

--racing through streets of New York, its battery of warning lights whirling, its horn and siren clearing traffic ahead.

INT. MOVING AMBULANCE

The doctor has an oxygen mask over Paul's mouth and nose. Paul is conscious, eyes open.

ANGLE - ON OCHOA

--sitting beside the stretcher where Paul lies as the big van rips its way to the hospital.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL AMBULANCE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

There is a mob of photographers, reporters. Portable television lights are burning, hand-held television cameras are ready.

Ochoa and Hank come from inside the emergency department and are hit with the blaze of lights. Mikes are thrust toward Ochoa, and the television cameramen shove and jockey for positions.

A QUESTION

Inspector, is it true the wounded man is the Vigilante?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE ANSWER

I'm sorry to say he was just another victim of a street crime. He was shot when he tried to resist some muggers. We'll have to wait until the victim is able to talk to us, to learn the facts. But, no.. this man is not the Vigilante. Definitely not.

Ochoa and Hank begin to press their way through the crowd. As they walk:

A QUESTION

Can you tell us why the first reports we received indicated he might be the Vigilante?

THE ANSWER

False reports. Those things happen.

A QUESTION

Then the Vigilante's still out there?

THE ANSWER

That's right. He's still out there.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OCHOA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ochoa enters, turns on the desk lamp and sits. Hank remains in the doorway. Ochoa opens a drawer, takes out a pint of whiskey and two glasses. He pours two drinks.

Hank crosses to the desk and picks up a glass, all the while quizzically watching the Inspector.

Ochoa takes out a cigar, bites the end off and lights it. He picks up his own glass, makes a motion with it toward Hank and they both drink. Hank puts his glass on the desk.

HANK

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OCHOA

Go home.

Hank goes to the door and turns.

HANK

Weird, man.

He closes the door.

Ochoa reaches into his jacket pocket and brings forth an object wrapped in a handkerchief. He places it on the desk and unfolds the cloth. Paul's pearl handled thirty-two pistol lies gleaming in the pool of light.

The Inspector puffs on his cigar and studies the small gun with his hard, shoe-button eyes. He takes it in his hand, flips open the chamber, empties the cartridges on the handkerchief, snaps the chamber shut. He puts the gun down again and sits looking at it. His tough, closed face tells us nothing of his thoughts.

He picks up the gun with his left hand and weighs it on his open palm. He shifts it to his right hand, his fingers closing around the pearl grip. He points the gun at the wall beyond the desk, and for a long moment is motionless. Slowly, his trigger finger moves and the gun's shawled hammer clicks.

STOP FRAME AND FADE.

...E N D...