

DIESHOT

(AKA "Freedom Of The Press")

By Joe Eszterhas

FIRST DRAFT

October 14, 1981

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A summer night in 1982. Soggy, sweat-smothered. A city like Pittsburgh -- blue-collar, ethnic.

A battered old Plymouth pulls into an alley. A black man gets out of the car. EDDIE HARRIS is 31, cool. He glances around. He walks toward an abandoned tenement.

EXT. STEEL MILL - NIGHT

Blast furnaces. The orange glow in the sky. The smell of the mill. Acrid. Sweaty.

QUINN: 59, big, rawboned, in shirtsleeves, surrounded by reporters, TV cameras.

QUINN

I'm gonna continue to represent the interests of the people. The real people of this city. Not the suburbanites. The people in the mills. In the inner city. The old neighborhoods.

INT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

Pitch black.

Eddie Harris, gasoline can in hand, douses the floor. He hears something. He freezes. Turns. A rat.

INT. CITY CLUB - NIGHT

Behind the ornate dais RAY McELROY, 43, smooth, razor-cut, three-piece tropical suit. He doesn't sweat. He never sweats.

McELROY

Our crime rate is spiraling. Our police department is undermanned. Our policemen are underpaid. Enough welfare programs. Enough giveaways. Let's put this city back on track.

INT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

A match thrown to the floor. The room blazes. Eddie Harris runs down a flight of stairs.

INT. CITY CLUB - NIGHT

McELROY

When is the last time you've gone downtown? No one goes downtown anymore. Our inner city is a war zone. Let's clean it up.

INT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

Another match. Another room. Another blaze.

EXT. STEEL MILL - NIGHT

QUINN

I'm not concerned about dressing this city up in the latest fashions. I'm concerned about helping the people of this city... survive.

EXT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

Eddie Harris comes out of the abandoned building. He glances around. He walks to his Plymouth.

A gradual hurricane-like roar... and the building bursts into flame.

INT. NEWS, CITY ROOM - NIGHT

Utter silence, except for the pecking of a single typewriter. Tomorrow's newspaper is thrown on a desk by a copyboy.

CLOSEUP - PAPER

The banner headline: Union Boss City's Slumking. Another headline: Tommy Romano's Grip On The Inner City. A three-column photo of Romano. And the byline: Copy-right, 1982 The News -- by John T. Caldwell.

CALDWELL types, alone in the glare of bright lights, surrounded by video computer terminals. His back to the newspaper on his desk. An unfiltered Lucky on his lip. A half-eaten cheeseburger near him, a bag of potato chips, four empty coffee cups. He is 34, lean, intense.

ANOTHER REPORTER

I'll buy you a drink, Jack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(types)
What for?

ANOTHER REPORTER
What do you mean 'what for'?

CALDWELL
(types)
It's just another goddamn story.

A beat. The Reporter walks away. Caldwell types.

He turns slowly. He glances at the paper on his desk.
A tight, thin smile.

INT. CITY ROOM - LATER

Walking out of the room. The paper under his arm. His
suitcase over his shoulder.

CHARLIE MARSDEN sits at the City Desk: mid-50s, the
night managing editor.

MARSDEN
(on the telephone)
Just the cutline, we'll run the
art.

Hangs up, turns to an assistant.

MARSDEN
(continuing)
Send a photographer down there.

CALDWELL
(watching him)
What's goin' on?

MARSDEN
Triple-alarm.

CALDWELL
(slight grin)
See you.

Walks away.

MARSDEN
(calls after him)
Good story.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
You miss it, don't you, Charlie?

MARSDEN
Fuck you.

Caldwell -- the tight, thin smile -- he walks out.

INT. HEADLINER BAR - NIGHT

Old front pages decorate the walls.

Caldwell at the bar, alone, a Lucky in hand, a shot and a beer in front of him.

CORY sits down next to him: 28, well-dressed, attractive.

Nothing is said a moment; not a look exchanged.

CORY
Did you eat?

CALDWELL
Yeah.

CORY
What?

CALDWELL
Cheeseburger. Bag of chips.

CORY
Delicious.

A beat. She reaches for the paper, looks at it, sees Ramone's photo.

CORY
(continuing)
I almost feel sorry for him.

CALDWELL
Me too.

CORY
You don't have any feelings.

He leans over. He kisses her lips briefly, softly.

CALDWELL
Right.

INT. HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

In bed, naked. A Lucky in his hand. He holds her.

CORY
Will you stay?

He says nothing.

CORY
(continuing)
I'd like you to stay.

CALDWELL
Why?

CORY
I like to see you... in the morning.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
Okay.

CORY
(smiles)
Really?

CALDWELL
Really.

CORY
Promise?

CALDWELL
Promise.

He kisses her.

INT. HER BEDROOM - LATER

Dawn. First light.

He's getting dressed. He glances at her in the mirror.
She sleeps, her back to him.

He starts out.

CORY
(her back to him)
You promised.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
It's morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORY
(her back to him)
You use people.

CALDWELL
I try not to.

CORY
(her back to him)
You lie, too.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
Only when I have to.

He hesitates, starts out.

CALDWELL
(continuing; without
looking at her)
I'm sorry.

INT. CALDWELL'S APARTMENT - DAWN

He walks in. The place has been turned upside down.

A long moment. He looks at it.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Caldwell, Quinn, and FRANCIS DODD, with a MODERATOR.
Francis Dodd: mid-60s, silver-haired, patrician.

DODD
It's a question of priorities.
I'm not denying the squalor created
by slum landlords.

QUINN
You're just suggesting we ignore
it.

DODD
I'm saying this city needs new
life. New hotels, tourist dollars,
a convention center.

Caldwell sits there, looks bored.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINN

You do, Francis. You and the other bankers, the mill-owners, the guys on the Growth Association. What these people in Jack's stories need is low income housing that'll put the Tommy Romanos out of business.

INT. DIRECTOR'S BOOTH - DAY

Cory, at the monitors, watching.

DODD

(to Quinn)

You're campaigning.

QUINN

I'm stating facts.

DODD

(to Moderator)

This was supposed to be a discussion, not a campaign appearance.

THE MODERATOR

(to Caldwell)

Jack, I'd like to get you into this.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

No thanks.

Cory smiles.

EXT. TV STATION - DAY

Walking out -- Caldwell, Quinn, and Cory.

QUINN

(to Cory)

How'd I do?

CORY

You were fine.

QUINN

(big smile; to Caldwell)

Huh? Was I good?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(surly)

You picked up a lot of votes, Pete.

He walks away from them. Quinn goes after him.

QUINN

I'll give you a ride.

CALDWELL

I'll walk.

QUINN

(pissed)

For Christ's sake, Jack.

Caldwell looks at him.

QUINN

(continuing)

Come on.

INT. QUINN'S LIMO - DAY

as it moves through traffic.

Caldwell in the back with Cory and Quinn.

Quinn opens a bar, pours coffee, hands a plastic cup to Caldwell.

CALDWELL

(tasting it)

You're the goddamn mayor, Pete.
You drive around in a hundred
thousand dollar car. You still
drink shitbean coffee.

QUINN

(grins)

Your story's gonna help me.

CALDWELL

(sharp)

I didn't write it to help you..

QUINN

It's gonna help me anyway.

Caldwell says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINN

(continuing; to Cory)

What's the matter with him?

CORY

It's his time of the month.

QUINN

(grins; to Caldwell)

That right?

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

I don't like limos.

QUINN

I don't either.

The limo stops. Caldwell starts getting out.

CALDWELL

You ride 'em enough.

QUINN

(smiles)

I still drink shitbean coffee.

Caldwell -- the thin, tight smile -- and he walks into the News building.

INT. NEWS

He gets out of the elevator, heads down a corridor. A group of KIDS is led by an older WOMAN. He turns quickly away. Too late.

THE WOMAN

This is Jack Caldwell. He's our investigative reporter. You see his name on the front page.

ONE OF THE KIDS

Can I have your autograph?

He shoots the Woman an evil glance, starts signing.

ONE OF THE KIDS

(continuing)

Did you know you were gonna be a investigation reporter when you grew up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(signing autographs)
Uh-huh.

THE KID
How come?

CALDWELL
'Cause I liked playing marbles.

THE KID
Marbles?

CALDWELL
What do you play?

THE KID
Star Wars.

CALDWELL
(deadpan)
I don't play Star Wars.

INT. MANAGING EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

He walks in.

Standing there -- GUTHRIE, the managing editor, a big man in his 60s; KEITH THOMPSON, the city editor, young and ambitious; and Charlie Marsden. They are looking at an assortment of tape recorders.

CALDWELL
(looking at tape
recorders)
What the hell is this -- a
department store?

THOMPSON
(picks a tape
recorder up)
Did you see this thing? Three
inches. Two hour capacity. Voice
activated. We're getting some
for cityside.

CALDWELL
What are you gonna do -- play with
'em, Keith?

GUTHRIE
(grins)
We'll get you one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
I'm a reporter, Gus, I'm not
Geraldo Rivera.

They sit down.

GUTHRIE
(to Caldwell)
Keith has some ideas the city desk
thinks you might want to pursue.

Caldwell nods, shows no reaction.

A momentary pause; Thompson is hesitant.

THOMPSON
There've been three escapes from
the county jail. The Sheriff --

CALDWELL
(interrupting)
Give it to one of your J-school
hotshots.

A beat; they look at him.

GUTHRIE
(to Thompson)
What else?

THOMPSON
One of the Rembrandts at the
museum --

CALDWELL
Fuck 'em.

THOMPSON
(a little pissed)
It could be a forgery.

CALDWELL
I hope it is, Keith.

A long, uncomfortable pause.

MARSDEN
How about these tenement fires?

CALDWELL
How about 'em?

MARSDEN
We've had a whole bunch of 'em.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
Vacant.

MARSDEN
Yeah.

CALDWELL
You want me to write about empty
tenements burning down, Charlie?

Another uncomfortable pause.

GUTHRIE
What are you going to work on?

CALDWELL
I'll let you know, Gus.

He gets up, starts heading out.

MARTIN BURTON opens the door: mid-40s, the editor and
publisher of the News, attractive, down to earth. He
has that morning's paper in his hands.

BURTON
(to Caldwell)
Great story. One of these days
we're gonna get you that Pulitzer.

CALDWELL
Thanks, Marty.

He keeps going out the door.

BURTON
What's next?

CALDWELL
Rembrandt. He escaped from the
County Jail.

Burton looks at him, then at the men in the room.

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

He gets out of his car -- a nicely-kept 1968 Mustang --
in front of the headquarters of the International Brother-
hood of Sanitation Workers, Local 92.

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS.

He walks in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A receptionist sitting there immediately picks up the phone.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Nice day, isn't it?

He sweeps by her.

INT. TOMMY ROMANO'S OFFICE

Caldwell walks in, closes the door, locks it.

As soon as he sees him, TOMMY ROMANO, a big man in his late-50s, gets up from behind his desk, comes toward him angrily.

ROMANO

Get the hell outa here!

Caldwell punches him in the belly, grabs him by his lapels, pushes him up against the wall.

CALDWELL

(low)

I'll tell you what you do, friend.
You don't like my story, you sue
me for libel. You stay the fuck
out of my personal life.

He suddenly lets Romano go, starts walking out.

ROMANO

You're crazy. You don't do this
to me.

Caldwell shows no reaction, opens the door.

INT. OUTER OFFICE

The receptionist stands there.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Smile.

He walks out.

INT. FRANCIS DODD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A cocktail party with the city's political heavies. Fancy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Caldwell walks in. He looks tired. He glances around, sees a roomful of chit-chatters.

He goes to the bar.

A BLACK BARTENDER

Yes, sir.

CALDWELL

How about a cold beer?

A BLACK BARTENDER

We don't have beer, sir.
Champagne?

CALDWELL

(disgusted)
Crow. Rocks.

A BLACK BARTENDER

Yes sir.

INT. COCKTAIL PARTY - LATER

Quinn with Caldwell, Martin Burton, Francis Dodd, and three or four other people.

One of them is SAM LASKO -- 60s, strong, attractive.

QUINN

(to Dodd and Burton;
grins)

I know you guys are pissed off at me. You get used to running this city from the Union Club. You miss that, don't you?

DODD

(smiles)
I certainly do.
(some laughs)
Don't you, Martin?

BURTON

God no.

More laughs.

QUINN

(to Caldwell)
Jack knows I'm right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON

Reporters always know they're right.
That's what keeps them going.

CALDWELL

It sure isn't the salary, Marty.

BURTON

Jack doesn't like money. He likes
by-lines.

More laughs.

DODD

(to Burton)

You mean he can't be paid off?

(to Caldwell)

Is that what they taught you in
journalism school?

CALDWELL

I didn't go to journalism school.

BURTON

He came to work as a copyboy when
he was 16.

DODD

(to Burton)

You mean you taught him honesty,
Martin?

More laughs.

QUINN

(to Caldwell)

He's just pissed off because of
what we did to him on TV.

CALDWELL

I didn't do anything, Pete. You
did.

BURTON

(to Caldwell)

You maintained your objectivity.

CALDWELL

(looks at Dodd)

I tried like hell, Marty.

More laughs.

INT. COCKTAIL PARTY - LATER

A drink in hand, he wanders around. He sees Ray McElroy, Quinn's opponent, talking to Cory.

He walks up to them.

CALDWELL

(to Cory)

You giving away campaign secrets?

McELROY

I read your story. Terrific. If you believe what you read in the paper.

CALDWELL

I don't, Ray.

McELROY

(smiles)

You don't?

CALDWELL

Not the political stuff.

McELROY

(laughs)

Self-righteousness. I love it. You'll lose it, though. You guys always do. You'll do some story, it'll blow right in your face. You won't have that chip on your shoulder anymore.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I hope you get your ass kicked, Ray.

Some other people are trying to draw McElroy away.

McELROY

(smiles)

I'm on your side. I hope it doesn't happen.

McElroy leaves with the others. Caldwell is left there with Cory.

CALDWELL

Let's get out of here.

CORY

I can't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You're pissed off at me.

CORY

No. You're selfish. You're a
bastard. Sometimes I hate you.
No, I'm not pissed off at you.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Well, I'm glad you're not pissed
off at me. Let's get out of here.

CORY

I have to work the room.

She moves to a group of people. He watches her.

Martin Burton comes up to him.

BURTON

I hear you're going to check out
those arsons.

CALDWELL

(eyes on Cory)

Where'd you hear that?

BURTON

It sounds like a good story.

CALDWELL

(eyes on Cory)

What do you care about tenements,
Marty?

He watches Cory laugh with someone. Burton follows his
look, then looks back at Jack, grins.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

He drives through the city streets. Hot summer night.
Lots of people out.

He has a police RADIO turned on. He listens to the
ROUTINE CALLS, then he hears --

THE POLICE RADIO

1412 Grove -- need assistance.

He seems troubled by that. More ROUTINE CALLS, and then
he hears --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE POLICE RADIO
1412 Grove. Triple alarm. Need
assistance.

He hesitates, then makes a fast and sudden U-turn.

EXT. GROVE STREET - NIGHT

In the inner city. A vacant tenement is burning. Fire trucks all over the street.

He stops the Mustang, gets out, shoulders his way through a small crowd of hooting street people.

He walks slowly toward the building. Stares at it.

A FIRE CAPTAIN sees him.

THE FIRE CAPTAIN
(grins)
You back on the police beat?

CALDWELL
(after a long beat)
I used to live here.

He watches as parts of the burning building start to collapse.

INT. HIS APARTMENT - NIGHT

He sits at the kitchen table. Five or six photos are spread out in front of him. They are old, some of them faded.

All the photos show him as a child -- with his father. He is a skinny, gawky child, staring unsmiling at the camera. His father is a big, burly man.

The b.g. for the photos is the tenement at 1412 Grove Street.

He stares at the photos, then reaches for the shoebox on the table, digs into it for more of them.

At the bottom of the shoebox he finds three marbles and one of a pair of dice.

He takes the marbles out of the box, then the die. He puts the marbles on the table. One marble is black, another white.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The third marble is a cat's eye, bigger than the others. It has been filed down on one side.

He takes the die and very delicately places it on top of the filed-down cat's eye.

He looks at his arrangement.

INT. NEWS, CAFETERIA - MORNING

He stands in the cafeteria line, pays, then turns -- sees Charlie Marsden sitting, drinking coffee. He sits down with him.

CALDWELL

How's your prostate?

MARSDEN

You want to massage it for me?

He sees the cheeseburgers on Caldwell's plate.

MARSDEN

(continuing)

How can you eat that shit for breakfast?

CALDWELL

You sit on your ass too much, Charlie, you oughta go back out on the street.

MARSDEN

I'm an editor. You can have the street.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You used to love it. You were the best, Charlie. I watched you.

MARSDEN

(after a beat)

I got tired.

CALDWELL

I'm gonna check out those tenements.

MARSDEN

(after a beat)

One day you say -- Fuck it, it costs too much. It isn't worth it.

Caldwell looks at him.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

In front of the burned-out tenement on Grove Street, he watches the still-smoldering fire.

EXT. TENEMENT - LATER

Walking in front of the ruins of the burned-out building.
With SAL CROCI: 40s, dapper, tough, a detective.

CROCI

This whole town's burning down,
Jack, who gives a shit. It's old.
Let it burn. It'll look better if
they start all over again.

CALDWELL

When did the fires start?

CROCI

I don't know. Eight or ten in the
past year. I'll get you a list.

CALDWELL

Same pattern?

CROCI

What pattern? This isn't like
homicide. Gasoline, matches.
Party time.

(a beat)

Nobody dead. Nobody hurt. All
vacant. You hard up for a story?

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I don't know. Maybe.

CROCI

(after a beat)

You go into Tommy Romano's office
and you play with him. Jesus, Jack.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Did he file a complaint?

Croci looks at him. The look says: be careful.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

What's he gonna do, Sal, hit me?

INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

He has a map of the city spread out on his desk. Next to it is a piece of typewritten paper with a list of addresses.

He has been marking the map with red Xs. He finishes, looks at the map.

Some of the red Xs are removed from each other, four or five are grouped very close together.

INT. CITY HALL OF RECORDS - DAY

He is paging through large-sized legal title books.

He writes a name and address down on a legal pad: Albert Bodnar, 2912 Franklin Avenue. Next to it he writes -- Uninsured.

He continues paging through the title book.

On the legal pad, he writes: Harlac Inc., 2231 Bridge Avenue. Next to it he writes -- Transatlantic Insurance.

He continues paging.

INT. CITY HALL OF RECORDS - LATER

He closes the title book.

He looks at his legal pad.

Ten names and addresses. Eight of the ten are owned by Harlac Incorporated. He underlines the Harlacs in red -- underlines the insurance company -- all Transatlantic.

INT. LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS STREET - DAY

He gets out of the Mustang, sees the address -- 2912.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

He knocks on the door of the house, which has seen better times. No answer. He knocks again.

A man comes to the door in a T-shirt, bottle of beer in his hands. He is in his late 50s.

CALDWELL

Mr. Bodnar?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BODNAR

Yeah?

CALDWELL

My name's Jack Caldwell. I'm a reporter for the News.

BODNAR

Yeah?

CALDWELL

I'd like to talk to you.

BODNAR

Talk.

CALDWELL

That building you owned, the tenement?

BODNAR

It burned down.

CALDWELL

You didn't have any insurance on it.

BODNAR

You think I'd be living in this dump if I had insurance on it?

CALDWELL

Why didn't you?

BODNAR

'Cause the damn insurance company cancelled it on me, that's why. One payment -- I was late with one payment -- the bastards.

CALDWELL

I'm sorry to hear that, Mr. Bodnar. Can you just tell me what insurance company it was?

BODNAR

Transatlantic.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Thanks.

EXT. UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

He rings the doorbell of a prosperous-looking home.

A WOMAN in her mid-30s answers it.

CALDWELL
Mrs. Elmsdorf?

WOMAN (MRS. ELMSDORF)
Yes.

CALDWELL
I'm Jack Caldwell from the News.
I'm looking for Howard Elmsdorf.

MRS. ELMSDORF
That's my father-in-law.

CALDWELL
Can I talk to him?

MRS. ELMSDORF
He's dead.

Her husband, in his late 30s, comes to the door.

ELMSDORF
Can I help you?

EXT. HOME, SWIMMING POOL - DAY

He and ELMSDORF and his wife sit by the pool.

ELMSDORF
We picked the place up in dad's
will. To tell you the truth, the
place was a headache. We were
really happy when it burned.

Elmsdorf smiles.

CALDWELL
How much did you get?

ELMSDORF
Why?

CALDWELL
(smiles)
It's just routine. I'm doing a
story about insurance company
settlements.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELMSDORF

(after a beat)

\$470,000.

(a beat; different
tone)

Look, I don't know what kind of story you're really doing, but I've been all through this with the Transatlantic people. I didn't have anything to do with that fire. I own three drugstores. We didn't need the money. Whoever did burn it down, though, I'd like to buy him a drink.

His wife starts to giggle. Caldwell looks at her.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

Old and faded, in a run down section near the downtown area.

INT. BUILDING

He walks in, looks at the directory. Mostly dentists, fly-by-night outfits. Then he spots what he's looking for: Harlac Incorporated, 301.

INT. ELEVATOR

Old and rickety, out of the 30s. It slowly makes its way up.

INT. THIRD FLOOR

He gets out of the elevator, walks down the corridor, passes an old BLACK MAN on his hands and knees, cleaning the floor.

He goes to 302. It is locked. He knocks. No answer.

THE BLACK MAN

They ain't in there. Ain't never been nobody ever gone in there.

Caldwell goes to him.

CALDWELL

You clean in there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE BLACK MAN
No sir, I got my orders.

CALDWELL
(after a beat; smiles)
Got a pass key?

THE BLACK MAN
Ain't never used it.

Caldwell takes his wallet out. The Black Man watches him. He takes a ten dollar bill out.

CALDWELL
Want to use it?

The Black Man hesitates. Caldwell takes out another ten.

INT. HARLAC INC. OFFICE

He goes in.

The office is bare. Nothing but an old desk and a chair and a telephone on the desk. Totally bare walls.

He goes to the desk, runs his finger atop it. Thick dust.

He stands there a beat and then the TELEPHONE RINGS, very loudly, startling him. He looks at it, hesitates. It RINGS AGAIN. AND AGAIN.

He picks it up.

CALDWELL
Hello?

He hears the CLICK, then the DIAL TONE. He stands there a long beat, then hangs the phone up.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Quinn sits behind his big desk, Cory in front of him. He looks tired. A scotch bottle is on his desk -- a drink in front of him.

CORY
Low key. You're the incumbent.
You're confident. Look responsibly
dull. Trustworthy. Wear your blue
pinstripe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINN
It's at the cleaners.

Caldwell walks in.

QUINN
(continuing; grins;
to Caldwell)
You want to rewrite a speech for
me?

CORY
He'd take the best parts out.

CALDWELL
Just the bullshit.

QUINN
(grins)
I wouldn't have a speech left.

Quinn gets up, stretches, starts gathering his things to
go.

QUINN
(continuing)
If you really cared, Jackie, you'd
come help me win this thing.

CALDWELL
(smiles)
You don't need any help, Pete.

Quinn takes a final slug of his drink.

QUINN
They've got a lot of money. This
time they want blood.

CALDWELL
You've got your record.

QUINN
(wryly)
Yeah, I've got that.

He starts walking out.

QUINN
(continuing; to Cory)
I'll wear the gray one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORY
It's rumpled.

So am I. QUINN

He walks out.

CALDWELL

You hungry?

No. CORY

CALDWELL
I'll cook. I'm a terrific cook.
(he smiles)
I am.

She looks at him, smiles.

INT. CALDWELL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He is cooking an omelette.

She sort of wanders around the little place.

CORY
Don't make it greasy.

CALDWELL
I never make it greasy.

CORY
You always make it greasy.

She goes to a framed print on the wall, sees the frame is cracked.

CORY
(continuing)
What happened to this?

CALDWELL
(cooking)
It broke.

Really? CORY

Yup. CALDWELL

She sees another damaged print.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORY

How about this one?

CALDWELL

That broke, too. They fall off the walls. One night they got tired of hanging up there and they jumped. I don't know why. I thought they were happy up there.

She sees, on another part of the wall, pinned up, five photos of Caldwell as a child with his father, standing in front of the Grove Street tenement.

CORY

What are these?

CALDWELL

(cooking)

Pictures.

CORY

I thought they were carvings.

CALDWELL

They're pictures. Take my word for it.

He brings her a plate with some of the omelette to taste.

CORY

(seriously)

Do you ever level?

CALDWELL

Sure.

CORY

With who?

CALDWELL

With me.

He forks some omelette. She tastes it.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

How is it?

CORY

Greasy.

He smiles.

INT. HIS BEDROOM - NIGHT

They are lying in bed, side by side. He has his arm around her.

CALDWELL

I missed you.

She says nothing.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

How's the campaign?

CORY

Hell with the campaign.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

How's Pete?

CORY

Tired. Worried.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

He's always tired and worried. I used to see him drink with my old man when I was a kid. He was tired and worried. He was born tired and worried.

CORY

You must have been some kid.

CALDWELL

Not me. Everybody thought I was gonna wind up at the mill. Then my old man died. Pete said, 'You gotta make somethin' outa yourself, Jackie.'

He laughs.

CORY

You did okay.

CALDWELL

When I die they're gonna put on the stone -- Copyright, 19 whatever, the News, by John T. Caldwell.

She laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORY

How's your story?

CALDWELL

What story?

CORY

There's always a story.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

Hell with the story.

He kisses her.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

He sits at the kitchen table, wearing an old robe, sipping a hot cup of coffee, smoking a Lucky, the phone to his ear.

CALDWELL

(on the phone)

Whitsy -- Jack Caldwell. I need the corporate officers of something called Harlac, they've got an office on Bridge Avenue.

(a beat)

I spell your name right every time I get half a chance to stick it into a story, don't I?

(a beat; he smiles)

I don't want you to appreciate it, Whitsy, I want you to help me out.

Cory sticks her head out the bedroom door. She looks half asleep. He waves his coffee cup. She makes a face, disappears again.

CALDWELL

(continuing; on phone)

Yeah.

(he listens)

Even if they're a fuckin' private corporation, don't they have to list their officers when they register?

(he listens)

If they're registered in Delaware, they gotta list 'em there, don't they?

(a beat)

Thanks, Whitsy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pushes the hang up button, dials again. As he does, we hear the SHOWER STARTING in the bathroom.

CALDWELL
(continuing; on phone)
For the State Corporation Registry
in Wilmington, Delaware.

He jots a number down, hits the hang up button, starts dialing again.

CALDWELL
(continuing;
yelling to Cory)
You want some company in there?

CORY
No.

He smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

We hear the SHOWER in the b.g.

CALDWELL
(on the phone)
Berman. Sanford Berman. I'm the
deputy chief of our State Office,
but you can call me Whitsy.
(he smiles)
A routine record check, that's all.
(a beat)
In the Bahamas?
(a beat)
I see. What's your name again?
(a beat)
Stark. Joseph.

He writes it down.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Well thanks a lot, Joe.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Cory, dressed, comes out of the bedroom, pours herself a cup of coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(on phone)

My name is Stark. Joseph Stark.
I'm with the State Corporation
Registry Office in Wilmington,
Delaware.

(a beat)

Harlac. H-A-R-L-A-C.

Cory watches him, he looks at her.

CALDWELL

(continuing; on
the phone)

What do you mean you don't reveal
that information?

(a beat)

That's one helluva law, friend.
One helluva law.

He hangs up, sits there. Cory watches him.

CORY

(after a beat)

I didn't know your name was Joseph
Stark.

CALDWEEL

(after a beat;
smiles)

It's really Sanford Berman, but
you can call me Whitsy.

CORY

(seriously)

You're really awful.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I get the facts, ma'am, I get the
facts.

CORY

It's dishonest.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Politics is dishonest. Journalism
is factual.

He turns to the phone, starts dialing again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hears HER GOING OUT.

CALDWELL
(continuing; on phone)
Yeah, this is Jack Caldwell from
the News --

INT. OUTER OFFICE, HIGH-RISE COMPLEX - MORNING

He sits in front of the RECEPTIONIST. The logo in the wall behind her says Transatlantic Insurance.

THE RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Moore will see you now.

INT. MOORE'S OFFICE - MORNING

He walks in. MOORE is in his 40s, a soft man.

MOORE
(getting up;
shaking hands)
Mr. Caldwell.

CALDWELL
Mr. Moore.

MOORE
Sit down.

Caldwell sits down.

MOORE
(continuing)
What can I do for you?

CALDWELL
Those downtown tenement fires, Mr. Moore. You carried the policies on all those buildings.

MOORE
Yes. Unfortunately. No great mystery, though. Those policies go back many years. We underbid our competitors --
(he smiles)
-- to our present distress. If they keep their payments up, even if they're abandoned, we're stuck.

CALDWELL
Eight of those tenements were owned by Harlac Incorporated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOORE

That's right.

CALDWELL

What is Harlac, Mr. Moore?

MOORE

It's a private corporation.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

What I'd like to do, Mr. Moore --
I'd like to talk to somebody at
Harlac. I thought maybe you could
help me.

MOORE

I can't do that. Our records are
confidential.

A pause.

CALDWELL

I don't get it. You're paying a
lot of money out to those guys,
but you won't help me.

MOORE

We insure many Harlac properties.
We've had a long-standing
relationship with them. If you're
implying Harlac had something to do
with those fires, our investigators
ruled that out before we awarded
them their settlements.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

How about if I talk to your
investigators?

MOORE

(smiles)

I'm sorry. That's against company
policy.

A long pause.

CALDWELL

(low)

You cut 'em the checks and they cut
you in on a piece of the money, is
that it, Mr. Moore?

MOORE

(stands up)

Get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I'm not gonna write that. I'm just gonna write that you've paid 'em a couple million dollars and you won't reveal who they are. The facts, Mr. Moore -- people will come to their own conclusions.

Moore stands there.

CALDWELL

(continuing; smiles)

You got kids, Mr. Moore?

Moore nods.

CALDWELL

(continuing; gets up)

I hope their friends don't read that story.

He gets up, starts walking out.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

Call me, Mr. Moore.

INT. CITY HALL OF RECORDS - DAY

He is going through property books. He turns the pages, then he finds something.

He puts his finger on it -- it says 123 Jay Avenue -- behind it are the words Harlac Inc. and Transatlantic Insurance.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

He steps in front of a vacant tenement, looks it over. He slowly drives the Mustang into an alley next to the tenement -- winos crouch in the alley with their bottles.

He stops for a moment, looks at a side door to the place, sees that facing the door is a flophouse hotel.

A wino watches the Mustang. He suddenly throws a bottle at it. It SHATTERS against the wall. Caldwell looks at the man -- that tight, thin smile -- and drives out of the alley.

INT. NEWS, MANAGING EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Guthrie with Keith Thompson, Charlie Marsden, and Caldwell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

It's the only tenement Harlac owns down there that hasn't gone up. We can sit in the flophouse across the alley.

GUTHRIE

You can sit there for a whole year.

McELROY

(low-key)

The polls show us six points behind. When we started this campaign, we were thirteenth points behind. I think the people are listening to what we're saying --

Caldwell watches McElroy. The LIBRARIAN hands him a file.

LIBRARIAN

He's an attorney.

INT. MUNICIPAL COURT CORRIDOR - DAY

A mob scene of attorneys, clients, and cops.

COLEMAN JOHNSON -- black, in his 40's -- walks down the corridor with two young women, obvious hookers.

Caldwell walks up to him.

CALDWELL

Mr. Johnson, I'm Jack Caldwell from the News.

Johnson and the hookers keep walking down the corridor -- Caldwell stays in step.

JOHNSON

You want to do a story about these ladies gettin' their rights violated?

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I want to talk to you about Harlac.

JOHNSON

(very calm)

They were walkin' down Broadway, and the policemen --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

What is Harlac, Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON

Just some folks investing in things.

CALDWELL

What's your connection to Harlac?

JOHNSON

I'm legal counsel.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You do criminal work.

JOHNSON

I do a little white folks' work,
too.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You had some tenements that burned
down.

JOHNSON

We were insured.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Did Harlac set those fires?

JOHNSON

(looks at him, smiles)

No.

CALDWELL

You think I could talk to some of
the company officers about that?

Johnson stops at a courtroom door, looks at him.

JOHNSON

You got a tough job, don't you?
Pokin' around, other folks' business.
A dangerous job. I wish I could
help you.

Johnson opens the courtroom door -- the hookers go in.

Caldwell stops him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

Anybody use that company office?

JOHNSON

Nothin' there but dust. It's for
the I.R.S.

He walks into the courtroom.

INT. FLOPHOUSE HOTEL - LATE AT NIGHT

A third floor room of the flophouse, facing the alley
and the side door of the tenement -- Caldwell and
CONWAY, a young photographer in his early 20's. It
is hot. They are sweating.

The room is a corner room -- another window fronts the
street. The street is in the inner city -- winos,
junkies, hookers.

Conway has several cameras trained on the alley and the
side door of the tenement.

CONWAY

What if nothing happens.

Caldwell says nothing, watches the alley.

CONWAY

(continuing)

How long are we gonna sit here?

CALDWELL

What did you do before we hired you?

CONWAY

I took wedding pictures.

Caldwell gives him a look.

A wino comes stumbling down the alley. They watch him.
He stumbles against the side door of the tenement.

CALDWELL

Take his picture.

CONWAY

What for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(hard)

Take it.

Conway snaps several pictures. The wino stumbles away from the side door, down the alley.

Conway looks at Caldwell, smiles.

INT. CITY ARCHIVES - MORNING

Caldwell walks in. An effeminate CLERK sits there, reading a body-building magazine.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You learning anything?

CLERK

(officious)

Can I help you?

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I'm checking some tenements. They're owned by a company called Harlac. I want to find the previous owners.

CLERK

(officious)

Land or property previously?

CALDWELL

I don't know.

CLERK

How far back?

CALDWELL

I don't know.

CLERK

You'll be here all day.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I'll keep you company.

INT. CITY ARCHIVES - DAY

Caldwell, sorting through the land parcel certificates.

INT. CITY ARCHIVES - LATER

Land title certificates all around him, he is sorting through another stack. He makes notes on his legal pad.

INT. CITY ARCHIVES - DUSK

CLERK

Ten minutes.

CALDWELL

(writing something)

Can't we spend the night?

The Clerk gives him an ugly look, walks away.

Caldwell smiles -- we see the name "Arthur Lewis" last on a list of names on his legal pad.

INT. CITY ROOM - NIGHT

A large pile of city directories is on Caldwell's desk. He is going through one of them. All the other reporters in the room are gone.

He crosses a name off his list. We see that every name on his list but one -- Arthur Lewis -- has been crossed off.

Charlie Marsden comes up to him.

MARSDEN

Go home, will you?

CALDWELL

I am home.

(a beat)

Eight separate land or property owners, Charlie, seven of them dead or no record.

MARSDEN

How far back?

CALDWELL

1948.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSDEN

(slight grin)

People die. They move to California.
Anybody's got any brains, they go to
California.

(a beat)

Get the hell outa here, will you?

Marsden walks away.

Caldwell sits there, lost in his thoughts. He takes
something out of his pocket, plays with it in his hand,
then puts it down on the desk.

We see the three marbles and the die.

INT. FLOPHOUSE - LATE AT NIGHT

Caldwell and Conway, watching the alley.

CONWAY

You really get off on this, don't
you?

CALDWELL

I bet you took good wedding pictures.

CONWAY

I did.

CALDWELL

I bet you did.

A battered Plymouth drives into the alley. They watch
it. The Plymouth slows down by the side door of the
tenement, then speeds up again.

Caldwell goes to the window facing the street, watches
the Plymouth as it heads away down the street.

CONWAY

I wonder why they picked me for
this job.

CALDWELL

(watching Plymouth)

They wanted to test my patience.

INT. NURSING HOME - MORNING

A nurse leads Caldwell down a corridor to a room.

Lying on the bed is a very frail, old man in his 80's.

CALDWELL

Mr. Lewis? I'm Jack Caldwell.

I'm a reporter for the News.

Lewis gestures weakly to the nurse that she should leave the room.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

I'm interested in that land you used to own -- on St. Clair?

Lewis shows no reaction.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

122 St. Clair. Do you remember, Mr. Lewis?

Lewis shows no reaction.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

You sold it to a company called Harlac.

Lewis shows no reaction.

CALDWELL

(continuing; almost giving up)

Do you remember who contacted you?

Lewis shows no reaction; a long pause. Caldwell is about to leave when Lewis crooks his finger at him to come closer.

LEWIS

(whispering)

Erskine. Robert Erskine.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You're a helluva man, Mr. Lewis.

INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

He is typing.

The Librarian comes up to him, a file in her hands.

LIBRARIAN

Robert C. Erskine?

CALDWELL

(typing)

Yeah?

LIBRARIAN

Another attorney.

CALDWELL

(typing)

Beautiful.

LIBRARIAN

January 13, 1955. Deceased.

He stops typing, looks at her.

CALDWELL

Shit.

She puts the file down, leaves.

He sits there.

He reaches for the phone suddenly, dials.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB PATIO - DAY

Caldwell sits with Sam Lasko, the man we glimpsed at Francis Dodd's cocktail party. Lasko is in his 60's, tanned, fit.

LASKO

He was a corporate attorney. A good one. It was a real tragedy, you know. He went in for appendicitis. The anesthetic killed him. Anaphylactic shock.

CALDWELL

Were you a friend of his, Mr. Lasko?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LASKO

He asked me to make out his will,
as you know, but I didn't really
know him personally very well.
He was a bachelor, kept to himself.

CALDWELL

No survivors?

LASKO

(smiles)

As I remember he left everything
to his church. A waste of good
money.

CALDWELL

You didn't ever hear him mention
something called Harlac, did you?

LASKO

Harlac?

CALDWELL

It's a company. Harlac Incorporated.

LASKO

(after a beat)

If he did, I don't remember it.
But it was a long time ago. What
kind of story are you writing?

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I'm not. Right now I don't have
a story.

LASKO

Well, good luck. I like your work.

Caldwell gets up to leave.

CALDWELL

Didn't I see you at Francis Dodd's
house?

LASKO

I play tennis with him. He cheats.

(he smiles)

Off the record.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I'm not writing a tennis story.

INT. A GHETTO BAR - LATE AT NIGHT

Seedy, a sense of menace. A sea of black faces. Caldwell walks in. They eye him. He sees a young BLACK MAN sitting at the bar. He sits down next to him and orders a drink. He sits there calmly, says nothing, sips his drink.

CALDWELL

(to the black man)

What's the word, Duane?

DUANE

Can't hear no word.

Caldwell smiles, takes a twenty out of his pocket, puts it on the bar.

DUANE

(continuing)

Can't hear nothin'.

Another twenty goes on the bar.

DUANE

(continuing)

What you're lookin' for is an amateur, man. Ain't no more torches no more -- everybody's doin' it -- a lot of little matchsticks out there, lightin' things up.

Duane takes the money, pockets it.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

I paid you money to hear that?

A beat; he gets up.

CALDWELL

Don't stick it in your arm, Duane.

DUANE

You don't give a fuck where I stick it.

Caldwell smiles, walks out of the bar.

EXT. THE GHETTO BAR - NIGHT

He goes to his Mustang. As he is ready to get in --

A VOICE

Hey, man --

He turns. He sees the black man standing there. We see it is Eddie Harris, the man who torched the tenement in the first scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They look at each other a beat.

CALDWELL
How you doin'.

HARRIS
You got any fuckin' money, man?

Caldwell looks at him -- a long beat -- he is deciding what to do.

CALDWELL
I don't think so.

Harris pulls a gun, sticks it to his throat.

CALDWELL
Maybe I do.

He reaches for his wallet.

As he does, Harris slugs him viciously across the face with the gun. Then again across the top of the head. Caldwell goes down. Harris hits him again.

Some people come out of the bar. Harris runs.

INT. CORRIDOR TO CORY'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Caldwell stands at the door with his back to us, hunched over. He knocks. She opens it, sees him.

CORY
(in shock)
God.

He staggers in.

INT. BATHROOM

He staggers into the bathroom. She is right behind him.

He turns the water on, throws cold water on his face.

He looks into the mirror. His face against the harsh lighting of the bathroom -- bloody, badly swollen.

CORY
(upset)
What happen --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(putting more water
on his face)
I don't want to talk --

CORY
(upset)
God, Jack --

CALDWELL
(very loud)
I don't want to talk about it!

A long beat, then --

MAN'S VOICE
Cory?

Caldwell freezes, looks at her in the mirror.

A pause; she looks at him, then averts her eyes, and then Pete Quinn comes to the bathroom door in a robe.

He looks at Quinn in the mirror a long beat, then leans down, puts more water on his face. He towels his face off.

Quinn steps to him, touches him --

QUINN
Jack --

CALDWELL
(exploding)
Get your fuckin' hands off me!

A beat --

CALDWELL
(continuing; to Cory)
I thought we --
(he stops)
Is that a part of your job, Cory?

CORY
(low)
You don't have a right.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
Yeah, I don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts to move out of the bathroom. Quinn stands there.

QUINN

Listen --

CALDWELL

(evenly)

Get out of my way, Pete.

A beat, then Quinn gets out of his way.

Caldwell leaves.

INT. PARKING LOT, BROTHERHOOD OF SANITATION WORKERS -
MORNING

Tommy Romano gets out of his Cadillac. A driver opens the door for him.

Caldwell suddenly stands there, his face bandaged, his eye badly bruised and swollen.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

How you doin', Tommy?

The driver reaches under his sportcoat immediately. Romano restrains him, smiles.

ROMANO

What happened to you?

CALDWELL

I think it's some sort of virus.

Romano starts walking with the driver toward the building. Caldwell walks with them.

ROMANO

Does it hurt?

CALDWELL

Yeah.

ROMANO

(smiles)

Take some aspirin. Rest. It's all you can do with a virus.

CALDWELL

You ever hear of a company called Harlac?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Romano stops, grins.

ROMANO

What is this? An interview? Why should I have heard of 'em.

CALDWELL

They own a lot of property. So do you.

ROMANO

Never heard of 'em.

He gets to the door, stops, looks at Caldwell's face.

ROMANO

(continuing)

I hope I don't catch it.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Me too.

Romano walks in with his driver. The driver gives Caldwell a smirk.

INT. ROOM - DETECTIVE BUREAU - DAY

Caldwell sits there, going through mug shots of black men.

CROCI

(behind him)

They all look alike, remember?

Caldwell looks at him.

Croci looks closely at his face.

CROCI

(continuing)

I like it. You look great.

(he smiles)

Nobody plays with Tommy Romano.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

You goddamn ginnies. You get an over-inflated view of your own importance.

Croci smiles.

INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

He walks in. Guthrie, Keith Thompson, and Charlie Marsden sit behind the city desk talking to Martin Burton.

Caldwell walks by them calmly, smiles. They all stare at his face.

Burton follows him back to his desk. Before Burton can say anything --

CALDWELL

I slept on it wrong, okay?

BURTON

(eyes his face)

Why don't you take a couple days off?

CALDWELL

I come in here on my days off.
You know that.

He reaches for the telephone, starts dialing. Burton looks at him.

INT. FLOPHOUSE HOTEL - NIGHT

Caldwell and Conway, watching the alley.

Caldwell is smoking, drinking coffee.

CONWAY

What time is it?

CALDWELL

(looks at watch)

Three-fifty.

CONWAY

Christ.

A car pulls into the alley slowly. They watch it. It is the same battered Plymouth they saw a few days ago.

It makes a slow pass down the alley, then turns into the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Caldwell goes to the other window, watches it. The Plymouth parks on the street. Eddie Harris gets out. Caldwell recognizes him. He smiles.

CALDWELL

You better have film in that thing.

Harris, a satchel slung over his shoulder, walks into the alley.

We hear the SOUND of Conway's CAMERA.

Harris goes to the side door of the tenement, forces it. We hear the SOUND of Conway's CAMERA.

INT. ABANDONED TENEMENT - NIGHT

Harris pours the gasoline.

INT. FLOPHOUSE - NIGHT

They watch the tenement.

CONWAY

We should call the cops.

Caldwell gives him a look like he's nuts.

CONWAY

(continuing)

He's gonna burn the place down.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

I hope so.

INT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

Harris throws a match onto the floor. It blazes.

INT. FLOPHOUSE

They can see the fire starting in the building. Conway snaps his pictures.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Harris comes out of the burning building into the alley. He glances around. We hear the SOUND of Conway's CAMERA.

Harris walks down the alley. We hear the SOUND of Conway's CAMERA.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Harris walks to his Plymouth, gets in.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

Caldwell sits in his car, watches him.

The Plymouth pulls out.

Caldwell waits -- then pulls out at a distance behind it with his lights off.

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN AREA

The Plymouth moving down the street; the Mustang, its lights on now, at some distance behind it.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

Caldwell watches the Plymouth, at some distance ahead of him.

The Plymouth turns into another street.

So does Caldwell -- then he glances into his rear view mirror.

He sees, at a distance behind him, another car, its lights on.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Plymouth turns again.

The Mustang, a distance behind, turns too.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

Caldwell watches his rear-view mirror. Here they come. The headlights behind him, turning too.

He is following Harris; is someone following him?

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

He watches as, ahead, the Plymouth pulls into a small residential street in a lower middle-class neighborhood.

He shuts his headlights off, looks in his rear-view mirror. The headlights are still behind him.

He pulls into the small street, his lights off.

He sees, up ahead in a driveway, Harris getting out of the Plymouth and going to the front door of a house.

He pulls over, watches Harris walk in the door.

He looks in his rear-view mirror, sees nothing.

He waits a moment, then turns and moves slowly back up the street. He looks closely at the parked cars. They are all empty and look like they've been there awhile.

He looks stumped, then drives away.

INT. DETECTIVE BUREAU - DAY

A closeup of a photo of Eddie Harris coming out of the burning tenement. It has been cropped so that all anyone can see is Harris' face.

Croci and Caldwell sit in the room.

CROCI

(looking at a film)

Edward Gary Harris. Breaking and entering. Armed robbery. He's out on parole.

He glances at another paper in his file.

CROCI

(continuing)

Probation says...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROCI (CONT'D)

(he smiles)

Model citizen, employed. What do you want with this model citizen?

CALDWELL

I want to give him the spade of the month award, Sal -- come on, where does he work?

CROCI

(big smile)

He's a garbage man. He works for Tommy Romano.

EXT. EDDIE HARRIS' HOUSE - DAY

Caldwell walks up to the front door, a briefcase in his hand. He knocks.

Harris opens the door. As soon as he does, Caldwell swings the briefcase into his face.

Harris reels against the wall. Caldwell hits him again with the briefcase in the face.

He kicks Harris hard in the groin. Harris slumps to the floor in pain.

CALDWELL

Hello, Eddie.

INT. HARRIS' KITCHEN - DAY

They sit at a kitchen table. Harris, glassy-eyed, still in pain, looks at him.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

You got any booze in here, Eddie?
You need a drink.

Harris shakes his head, watches him suspiciously.

Caldwell clicks open the briefcase. He starts passing large-sized glossy photos to Harris. The photos show Harris entering the tenement, the tenement going up in flames, then Harris leaving. Harris looks at the photos, shows no reaction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(continuing)

You go up again, friend, it's gonna be ten years.

Harris shows no reaction.

Caldwell takes the small three-inch tape recorder we saw earlier out of the briefcase, puts it down in front of them, but doesn't turn it on.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

Give me a name. I'll forget about the pictures. I'll keep you out of it.

Harris gives him a look that says: bullshit.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

You got no place to turn, Eddie.

Harris says nothing. A pause.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

Tell me about Romano.

HARRIS

(after a long beat)

I don't even know Romano.

CALDWELL

You work for him.

HARRIS

I'm in the union. He hires cons.

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

I give you my word -- I'll keep you out of it.

HARRIS

(after a long beat)

Johnson. Coleman Johnson.

Caldwell looks at him a long beat, then turns the tape recorder on.

INT. COLEMAN JOHNSON'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

A storefront office in the ghetto.

Caldwell walks in. Johnson sits there, alone.

JOHNSON

Mr. Caldwell.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

Eddie. Three years ago. Breaking
and entering. You were his attorney.

JOHNSON

(after a beat)

I've got a lot of clients.

CALDWELL

You paid him a thousand dollars
for every tenement he burned. You
had him burn a couple that weren't
yours just so it'd look good.

JOHNSON

(after a beat)

You're crazy, mister.

CALDWELL

I'm gonna run that story right
next to his affidavit, right next
to the pictures we've got showing
him burning the tenement down.

JOHNSON

I don't know what you're talking
about.

CALDWELL

(after a beat,
smiles)

You got a middle initial, Mr. Johnson?
I want to get your name right.

EXT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Johnson comes out of his office in a hurry, goes to
his Lincoln Continental, gets in.

INT. MUSTANG - AFTERNOON

Caldwell watches him. He smiles.

The Lincoln pulls out; Caldwell follows it at a distance.

INT. MUSTANG - AFTERNOON

Caldwell, following the Lincoln at a distance on a busy street.

He passes a McElroy for Mayor sound truck.

As he follows Johnson, he hears McElroy's tape-recorded voice.

McELROY'S VOICE

We have to build this city up again.
We have to make it safe. And if I'm
elected, I promise you that's what
I'll do.

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Johnson gets out of the Lincoln, goes into the restaurant.

INT. MUSTANG - AFTERNOON

Caldwell watches him.

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Caldwell walks in. It is dark, shadowy.

He goes to a cigarette machine near the door, puts in some change.

As he does, he glances around quickly.

He sees, at a table in the back, Coleman Johnson sitting with... Sam Lasko.

INT. CITY ROOM - AFTERNOON

He is going through photos of Sam Lasko.

We see -- photo #1 -- Lasko, in a tux, at the dedication of the Art Museum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Photo #2 -- Lasko and Francis Dodd, winners in a seniors' tennis tourney.

Photo #3 -- Lasko accepting a humanitarian award from the NCCJ.

Caldwell goes through other photos. He stops, looks at one.

The photo is old and yellowed. It shows a young Sam Lasko, his arm around a young Pete Quinn, whose hands are raised in victory.

INT. GUTHRIE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Guthrie, Thompson, Charlie Marsden, and Caldwell.

GUTHRIE

So he had a conversation with Johnson, so what? That doesn't tie him in.

THOMPSON

He's an important man in this town.

CALDWELL

(pissed)
What the hell does that mean?

GUTHRIE

It means we should be careful.

MARSDEN

(to Guthrie)
We're always careful.

Martin Burton comes in.

GUTHRIE

I asked Marty to sit in.

BURTON

(to Caldwell, smiles)
I hear you've got a story.

CALDWELL

It scares the shit out of these guys.

GUTHRIE

(to Caldwell)
You don't have a story. Not about Sam Lasko. You don't have a tie.

(CONTINUEUD)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
I'll get the tie.

BURTON
(after a beat)
You get it, we'll run it. We
don't back off.

INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - DAY

On the top floor of the First National Bank building
overlooking the city.

Caldwell and Francis Dodd, eating lunch, in a very
fancy room.

DODD
(pouring wine)
I don't suppose this is a social
visit.

CALDWELL
Sam Lasko. He's a friend of yours,
isn't he?

DODD
I play tennis with him.

CALDWELL
(smiles)
I hear you cheat.

DODD
(smiles)
I usually beat Sam. He doesn't
like to lose.

CALDWELL
Did he ever mention something to
you called Harlac?

DODD
(smiles)
Are you trying to tie Sam into
Harlac?

CALDWELL
(surprised)
You know about Harlac.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DODD

(smiles)

I'm a banker. I make it my business to know things like Harlac. I know they've bought up a fair percentage of land and property going back many years, but I've never been able to discover who they are. I've had my suspicions, of course.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Oh yeah?

DODD

Confidentially, I wouldn't be surprised if it's a dummy front for Tommy Romano. He wheels and deals with union funds -- if he can hide behind Harlac, he arouses less suspicion.

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

What about Lasko?

DODD

He's a self-made millionaire. The best probate lawyer in this state.

(a beat)

I haven't really known Sam that long. You're asking the wrong man.

CALDWELL

Who should I ask?

DODD

Pete Quinn.

EXT. FACTORY GATE - NIGHT

Pete Quinn, shaking hands with millworkers. He is in his shirtsleeves, sweating. Plainclothes cops are around, TV cameras.

Cory stands at a distance next to a nondescript blue Dodge, watching Quinn. Caldwell walks up to her, stands next to her, watches Quinn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(after a long beat;
watching Quinn)
You gonna win?

CORY
(watching Quinn)
I think so.

CALDWELL
(watching Quinn)
I'll vote for him.

She looks at him.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
I always vote for him.

CORY
(after a long beat)
I'd like to see you.

CALDWELL
(after a long beat)
What for?

CORY
Why does everything have to be
clear-cut to you?

Quinn starts heading their way.

CALDWELL
That's when it's real.

Quinn comes up to the car -- a beat, then --

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Can I talk to you?

QUINN
Sure.

He starts getting into the Dodge.

CALDWELL
(glances at Cory)
Alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORY
(after a beat)
I'll get a ride.

She walks away. Quinn goes to the driver's side of the Dodge.

INT. DODGE - NIGHT

Quinn drives; Caldwell sits next to him.

CALDWELL
Where's your limo?

QUINN
I don't use it when I'm campaigning.

CALDWELL
You're a real man of the people,
Pete.

Quinn turns to him.

QUINN
Jack, listen --

CALDWELL
I don't want to hear it.

QUINN
Goddmanit, Jack, you're like my
own kid --

CALDWELL
(hard)
I don't want to hear it, Pete.

QUINN
(after a long beat)
What do you want to hear?

CALDWELL
Harlac.

QUINN
(surprised)
What?

CALDWELL
You ever hear about something
called Harlac?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

QUINN

No.

CALDWELL

Sam Lasko. He's a friend of yours.

QUINN

(after a beat)

He used to be. A long time ago,
when I was in council. He used
to contribute to my campaign.
Not anymore.

CALDWELL

Why not?

QUINN

Maybe he got too rich. Maybe he
started hanging around with people
like Francis Dodd. I don't know.

CALDWELL

Is he clean?

QUINN

(after a long beat,
turns, smiles)

Who's clean, Jackie?

CALDWELL

You know what I mean.

QUINN

(after a beat)

He used to be.

(a beat)

What are you after?

CALDWELL

The dieshot.

Quinn turns into a shopping center -- sees the lights,
the "Quinn for Mayor" placards, a crowd of people.

QUINN

(smiles)

The dieshot.

He stops the car, starts getting out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

QUINN

(continuing)

I never liked that game. You
got no control.

He puts on a big grin, turns to the crowd. They cheer.
He starts pumping hands.

Caldwell watches him.

EXT. SAM LASKO'S HOME - DAY

He rings the doorbell. A large, ornate English tudor.

A butler answers.

CALDWELL

Mr. Lasko is expecting me.

INT. LASKO'S HOME

The butler leads him in.

Lasko is feeding tropical fish in a huge aquarium.

LASKO

Do you know anything about the
behavior pattern of tropical fish,
Mr. Caldwell? They react unpredictably.
People are predictable. These
fish are instructive.

CALDWELL

Where'd you learn about them, Mr.
Lasko, in the Bahamas?

He smiles; Lasko looks surprised.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

Do you know Coleman Johnson, Mr.
Lasko?

LASKO

(after a beat)

I don't think so.

CALDWELL

You had a drink with him. Two
days ago. At the Chart Room.

(CONTINUE

CONTINUED:

Lasko looks at him a beat, then sits down.

LASKO

I don't remember.

Caldwell sits down facing him.

CALDWELL

Do you have any partners in Harlac,
Mr. Lasko, or are you the sole
owner?

LASKO

(after a beat)

I've never heard of... Harlac.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

I'm a good reporter, Mr. Lasko.
I'm going to get ahold of your
bank records, your IRS returns.
I don't think you want to deny
it. It'll look worse if you
deny it.

LASKO

(after a beat)

I've never heard of... Harlac.

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

You're going to lose all your
rich friends, Mr. Lasko. You're
not going to get any more banquets
and awards.

Lasko stares at him, says nothing.

Caldwell gets up -- that tight, thin smile -- and starts
to walk out.

Lasko watches him -- then, as Caldwell gets to the door --

LASKO

I didn't have anything to do with
those fires.

CALDWELL

(turns)

I didn't say anything about fires.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LASKO
(after a beat)
I know you didn't.
(a beat)
Sit down. Please.

Caldwell walks back, sits down.

Lasko gets up, goes to his aquarium, looks at the fish.

LASKO
(continuing; watch-
ing the fish)
I formed Harlac in 1948. I didn't
want people to know the extent of
my holdings. That's not a crime.

CALDWELL
Arson is. So is insurance fraud.

LASKO
(looks at him)
I didn't have anything to do with
those fires.

CALDWELL
You took the insurance money. Your
attorney hired the torch.
(a beat)
I don't believe you, Mr. Lasko.

He turns, starts walking out, then turns back.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
I used to live in one of your
tenements.
(he smiles)
I hated living there.

EXT. CITY DUMP - DAY

Eddie Harris is shoveling at a dump site.

He sees Caldwell getting out of his Mustang.

He goes over to him, looks around.

HARRIS
What are you doin' here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
I wanted to tell you somethin',
Eddie.

Harris looks at him.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
I'm gonna have to use your name,
Eddie.

HARRIS
(shocked)
You -- what? You gave me your
word.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
Get out of town, Eddie.
(a beat)
Go to California.

HARRIS
I'm on parole.
(a beat)
You suckered me.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
I can't help you, Eddie.

He walks back to his Mustang. Harris stands there,
watching him.

INT. HEADLINER BAR - NIGHT

On the bar, in closeup, the next morning's paper --
The headline: The Company That Torched Its Tenements.
Another headline: Prominent Attorney Owns Harlac.
Another headline: Arsonist paid \$1,800 per fire.
All over the front page are the photos of Eddie Harris
putting the tenement on fire.

On the TV behind the bar, the eleven o'clock news --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANCHORMAN

The News reports in a copyrighted
story tonight by John T. Caldwell --

Caldwell and Charlie Marsden, drinking --

CALDWELL

(to the bartender)

Turn it off, will you, Tony?

The bartender grins, turns the sound off.

Marsden reaches for the paper, looks at it.

MARSDEN

We blew the election right off
the front page.

Caldwell says nothing, watches the muted set. It
shows Pete Quinn campaigning.

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

I don't get it, though. Lasko
suddenly starts building tenements
all over that neighborhood in 1949
-- why then? Why all of a sudden?

MARSDEN

I had a girl who used to live down
there -- hunky girl with big tits,
big goddamn knock your eyes out
tits -- Jesus. It was all residential.

CALDWELL

Yeah?

MARSDEN

(smiles)

I oughta know, I was down there
enough.

Caldwell smiles.

MARSDEN

(continuing;
different tone)

How'd you get this guy Harris to pop?

CALDWELL

(looks at him)

I talked to him, Charlie.

MARSDEN

I used to have those kinds of talks.

(he smiles)

I left like hell afterwards sometimes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Caldwell looks at him.

EXT. BODNAR'S HOUSE - DAY

He knocks on the door. Bodnar comes out.

CALDWELL

I'd like to ask you a couple more questions, Mr. Bodner. Did you read the paper this morning?

BODNAR

I don't read the papers. I get enough bad news.

CALDWELL

You built your tenement in 1949.

BODNAR

So?

CALDWELL

Why didn't you build it before?

BODNAR

I couldn't get the money.

(a beat)

I couldn't have built it, anyway.

CALDWELL

Why not?

BODNAR

The Zoning Commission. They wouldn't allow any tenements in there.

CALDWELL

Did anybody ever try to buy that land from you?

BODNAR

Some attorney came smelling around. I wouldn't give him the time of day.

CALDWELL

When was that?

BODNAR

(smiles)

About a year before the Zoning Commission changed their mind.

INT. CITY RECORD ROOM - DAY

Caldwell and a CLERK.

CALDWELL

I'd like the Zoning Commission
hearings for 1949.

CLERK

Aisle 3, Section 2

INT. CITY RECORD ROOM

He finds Aisle 3, Section 2. He looks at the thick
bound volumes. They're marked -- 1947, 1950, and
then 1951. Missing are 1948 and 1949.

He stands there.

INT. NEWS MORGUE - DAY

He stands next to a LIBRARIAN, who is looking at a file.

LIBRARIAN

Zoning Commission. Here it is.
19--

(a beat)

We don't have them for 1948 and 1949.

CALDWELL

What do you mean we don't have them?

LIBRARIAN

I'm always telling you people to
return the clips.

He stands there a moment, then, on the public address,
he hears --

PUBLIC ADDRESS

Jack Caldwell, City Room please.
Jack Caldwell, City Room.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Caldwell, walking with Sal Croci down a dirt road that
leads to the riverbank. We see other policemen around.

CROCI

Two shots. .45 revolver. The
heart and the liver. Neat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

When?

CROCI

Last night.

They get to a covered-up body. Croci takes the cover off the head. Caldwell sees Eddie Harris' face. He stares at it.

CROCI

(continuing)

Good story, huh, Jack?

INT. MARTIN BURTON'S OFFICE - THE NEWS

Guthrie, Thompson, Charlie Marsden, and Caldwell, with Martin Burton. Caldwell looks drained.

CALDWELL

(to Guthrie)

I don't want to do the story,
Gus. Have the police beat do it.

BURTON

I agree. We'll play it, but treat
it like a regular police story.

GUTHRIE

Marty, we've got every TV and radio
station in town wanting a reaction
from us.

BURTON

We'll give 'em a reaction. We didn't
kill the goddamn guy.

THOMPSON

(after a beat)

We should've kept his name out of it.

MARSDEN

We couldn't have gone after Sam
Lasko with a blind source.

BURTON

It's a police problem, it isn't ours.
(a long beat,
to Caldwell)

He knew we were going to name him.

Caldwell says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON

Didn't he?

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

He knew.

GUTHRIE

I wish we had it on tape.

CALDWELL

I don't use tapes, Gus. You've got my word.

BURTON

That's good enough for me.

INT. NEWS, CORRIDOR - DAY

He comes out of the meeting, goes to a water fountain, drinks water. A lot of it. Looks like he's going to be sick.

MARSDEN

(next to him,
low)

Go home. Get drunk. Get laid.

CALDWELL

(drinking more
water)

You want me to celebrate, Charlie?

MARSDEN

It happens. You get snake-eyes.
You roll again. Or you walk away.

Caldwell turns to him.

CALDWELL

You did.

MARSDEN

You're not ready.

INT. CALDWELL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He lies on the couch in the darkness, a nearly empty bottle of Old Crow next to him. He is smoking, a drink in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door opens. Cory comes in. She stands there, watches him.

CORY

I thought... maybe you'd need...

He says nothing.

CORY

(continuing)

Let me help you.

He says nothing.

CORY

(continuing;

after a long beat)

It wasn't your... You didn't know...

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

I told him I wouldn't use his name.

It was the only way I could get what I wanted.

(a long beat)

If it happened tomorrow, I'd do it again.

CORY

You wouldn't.

He says nothing.

CORY

(continuing)

You couldn't. You're better than that.

CALDWELL

I'm good at what I do. That's as good as I am.

CORY

(emotionally)

You're better than that.

He looks at her. Her eyes glisten.

CALDWELL

Nobody is.

(a long beat)

I don't need any help.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL (CONT'D)

(a beat)

I don't need anything from you,
Cory.

She looks at him, tears in her eyes.

INT. DINER - MORNING

A greasy spoon. Croci sits in a booth, sipping coffee,
eating donuts.

Caldwell sits down with him.

CROCI

(smiles)

You goin' to the funeral?

CALDWELL

(ignoring it)

What did Lasko say?

CROCI

(smiles)

You gonna send the guy flowers?

Caldwell suddenly smashes the table with his fist --
everyone in the place looks at him. He looks like he
is going to lose control, then he recovers.

CALDWELL

What did Lasko say?

CROCI

(eating a donut)

Lasko never heard of Eddie Harris.
The lawyer doesn't remember him.

CALDWELL

(intensely)

Bullshit.

CROCI

(smiles)

Maybe.

CALDWELL

Harris was the key. Lasko's off the
hook.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROCI

(eating a donut)

We checked Lasko's bank accounts,
He's worth seven million dollars --
without the three he got from the
insurance company. If you had
seven million dollars, would you
take a chance on hiring some scumbag
to get you three more?

Caldwell says nothing.

CROCI

(continuing;
offers a donut)

These things are good, you want one?

Caldwell says nothing.

CROCI

(continuing;
eating another donut)

What's the matter, Jack? Aren't you
hungry?

CALDWELL

(hard)

I'm gonna kill him, Sal.

EXT. BODNAR'S HOUSE - DAY

Bodnar is mowing the lawn; Caldwell talks to him over
the LOUD NOISE of the lawn mower.

CALDWELL

Did you ever go down to those
zoning commission hearings?

Bodnar says nothing.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

When they told you you could build
your tenement.

BODNAR

That was 33 years ago.

(a beat)

Yeah, I guess I was down there.

CALDWELL

How many guys were on the commission?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BODNAR

Five.

CALDWELL

Did they vote on it?

BODNAR

Three to two.

CALDWELL

Do you remember their names?

BODNAR

(laughs)

What do you think I am, one of those
memory assholes on the Carson show?

He shuts the lawn mower off; looks at Caldwell.

BODNAR

(continuing)

What difference does it make?

INT. NEWS, MICROFILM ROOM - DAY

Caldwell, alone in the little room, turns on the
microfilm machine.

He looks at the two boxes of microfilm in his hand.

The lettering on one of them says -- "The News -- 1949".

INT. MICROFILM ROOM (LATER)

Caldwell sits at the microfilm machine.

CLOSE-UP - MICROFILM

We see a date -- January 12, 1949 -- on the front page
of the News. The headline says: "Truman Claims Red
Chinese Threaten Korea".

INT. MICROFILM ROOM

Caldwell turns the handle on the machine. He examines
that page, then turns it again. He examines the next
page, then turns it again.

CLOSE-UP - MICROFILM

Dates flash in front of us --

March 16, 1949

May 4, 1949

September 7, 1949

INT. MICROFILM ROOM - NIGHT

It is dark outside. He sits at the machine, turns the handle, then turns it again.

Charlie Marsden comes into the room.'

MARSDEN

What are you still doing here?
It's 1:30.

CALDWELL

(eyes on machine)
I'm reading the newspaper, Charlie.
You got more bylines than I do.

MARSDEN

I never kept count.

CALDWELL

(eyes on machine)
Sure you did.

Marsden grins.

CLOSE-UP - MICROFILM

We see a date -- October 11, 1949.

INT. MICROFILM ROOM

Caldwell, alone, turns the handle on the machine. He stops.

CLOSE-UP - MICROFILM

We see a small headline on an inside page: "Zoning Commission Approves Tenement Housing".

INT. MICROFILM ROOM

He reads the story; we don't see what it says.

He leans back, stares at the machine. He looks stunned.

He turns the machine off and sits there, staring at the turned-off machine.

INT. CITY ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

He is the only person in the large, brightly-lighted city room. He sits at his desk, his feet up, staring into space, smoking.

The next morning's newspaper is on his desk -- We glimpse the headlines: "Dead Heat in Mayoral Race... No Leads in Harris Slaying".

He reaches for the telephone suddenly, dials.

CALDWELL

(on phone,
his voice dead)

Can I see you?

(a beat)

I know what time it is.

EXT. QUINN'S HOME - NIGHT

He rings the doorbell.

Quinn opens the door, wearing a robe. They look at each other a long beat.

INT. QUINN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Quinn leads him in.

QUINN

You want a drink?

CALDWELL

No.

QUINN

Well, I do.

Quinn pours himself a drink, Caldwell watches him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

You know what it is.

QUINN

(after a beat)

I knew when you asked me about Sam Lasko.

(a beat)

I'll deny it.

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

It won't wash, Pete.

QUINN

It's gonna have to.

CALDWELL

Lasko started buying properties in 1948. The year that you got on the Zoning Commission. The next year you broke a tie vote -- you gave him his tenements. The year after that he started financing your council campaigns.

(a beat)

I've got my story, Pete.

QUINN

(after a long beat)

You gonna write it?

CALDWELL

He set Harlac up in the Bahamas so nobody could tie you to him.

QUINN

I'm denying it.

CALDWELL

(emotionally)

God damn it, Pete.

Quinn looks at him. A long pause, Quinn gets up, paces around.

QUINN

(low)

I've been a good mayor. I care about this town. You ask the people in the old neighborhoods. They'll tell you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINN (CONT'D)

(a beat)

You think McElroy cares?

Caldwell says nothing.

QUINN

(continuing;

low)

Christ, Jack. You gonna do this
to me?

CALDWELL

(emotionally)

Why? Why?

QUINN

(smiles)

Jackie... My old man worked at the
mill. Just like yours. I had
dreams. I was a wet-ear young
lawyer with a lot of dreams and
no money.

CALDWELL

So you took.

(a beat, bitterly)

When did you stop taking?

QUINN

All I needed was enough to get
elected to council.

A long pause.

QUINN

(continuing;

quietly)

You owe me.

CALDWELL

(emotionally)

Don't tell me that!

A pause.

QUINN

(quietly)

I helped you. You didn't have anybody.
All my life I've helped you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)
I've got to write it. I don't have
a choice. Don't you understand?

QUINN

(after a long beat,
quietly)
What if you're being used?

CALDWELL

(evenly)
Nobody uses me. You don't either,
Pete.

QUINN

Sit on it. Three days. After the
vote.

CALDWELL

I can't.

QUINN

What is it? Is it Cory?

CALDWELL

(emotionally)
It's not my decision.

QUINN

(smiles)
Whose is it? Marty Burton's?
(a long beat,
different tone)
Aw, Jackie.
(a beat)
We've been like family.

CALDWELL

(evenly)
I don't have any family.

INT. BURTON'S OFFICE - THE NEWS - DAY

Burton, Guthrie, Charlie Marsden, Thompson, and Caldwell.
They are reading the pages of Caldwell's story, passing
them to each other.

Caldwell sits there, expressionless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Burton is the last to read it. He finishes, puts the pages down. Nothing is said a moment.

BURTON
That's the election.

MARSDEN
I'm not sure we should run it.

GUTHRIE
Come on, Charlie.

MARSDEN
A story like this -- now? At the tail end of the campaign? It's gonna look like we're railroading him.

GUTHRIE
(angry)
We'd run the same story on McElroy!

CALDWELL
(to Burton)
Would we, Marty?

BURTON
Absolutely.

CALDWELL
But you like it, don't you.

BURTON
Yeah, I like it. I don't like Quinn, that's no secret. But I like it because it's a helluva story.

THOMPSON
We'd get less flak if we held it.

BURTON
We can't. We've got a public trust. That's what we're all about.

(a beat,
to Caldwell,
he smiles)
I think you just won your Pulitzer.

Caldwell gets up, heads out.

CALDWELL
I don't want it.

BURTON
Yes you do. So do I.

INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

He walks back to his desk, sees Cory sitting there.

CALDWELL
It's too late, Cory.

CORY
What does it matter?

CALDWELL
We're running it tonight, Cory.

CORY
(emotionally)
What does it matter what he did 33
years ago?

CALDWELL
Can I quote you on that, Cory?
Cory Daniels, the administrative
assistant to Mayor Quinn, said,
'What does it matter what he did
33 years ago?'

He smiles.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Did he send you here, Cory?
That button doesn't push anymore.

CORY
(after a long beat)
I thought I loved you.

They look at each other a long beat, then she turns
and walks out of the City Room. He watches her walk
away.

INT. PRESS ROOM - NIGHT

The deafening ROAR of the presses. Caldwell stands
there, watching them.

A pressman brings him a paper. He looks at it, his
face a stricken mask.

We see the headlines -- "Quinn Tied To Harlac Tenements
-- The secondary headlines: "Mayor's Vote Approved
Tenements; Lasko Financed Council Campaigns".

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

QUINN
(in front of
reporters and
cameras)

The News story is groundless and
based on inference. I deny it
categorically.

INT. MARTIN BURTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Burton and Caldwell, in front of reporters and cameras.

A REPORTER
Mr. Burton, you endorsed McElroy
last week. Did you assign Caldwell
to find something on Mayor Quinn?

BURTON
(smiles)
Look, we don't assign Jack anything.
He finds his own stories. I didn't
even know anything about this story
until he showed it to me this morning.

ANOTHER REPORTER
(to Caldwell)
Is that true?

CALDWELL
Yes it is.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

QUINN
(to reporters)
I didn't know Lasko or Harlac had
any interest in building tenements
when I cast that vote.

Some titters.

A REPORTER
You mean your vote was coincidental?

QUINN
That's right.

More titters. Quinn looks grim.

INT. BURTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A REPORTER
(to Caldwell)
How did you get the story?

CALDWELL
I was working on Lasko's connection
to Harlac. One thing led to another.
I didn't know where it was going to
lead.

INT. McELROY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

McELROY
(low-key, to
reporters)
Well, I don't really know the facts
of this story. I'm shocked, of course,
I think we all are. I do know that
Jack Caldwell is a fine reporter and
a man of integrity.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

He is lying on the couch, staring at the soundless TV
set in the room. He looks terrible.

He sees himself on the TV set. He turns the set up
with the remote device, lies there on the couch.

CALDWELL (V.O.)
(on the TV set)
-- on Lasko's connection to Harlac.
One thing led to another. I didn't
know where it was going to lead.

He hits the remote button to another channel.

McELROY
(in front of supporters)
We've got to clean this city up!
We've got to be proud of it again!

LOUD CHEERS.

Caldwell hears a KNOCK on the door, ignores it.

McELROY
(continuing;
in front of supporters)
We've got to clean city hall up!
We've got to be proud of it again!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TUMULTUOUS CHEERS.

The KNOCKING at his door continues; Caldwell goes to the door, opens it.

Charlie Marsden stands there.

MARSDEN
You all right?

CALDWELL
Yeah.

MARSDEN
You don't look all right.

CALDWELL
I just didn't feel like coming in,
Charlie.

MARSDEN
(grins)
You always feel like coming in.

Caldwell says nothing.

MARSDEN
(continuing;
grins)
Let's get the hell outa here and
get a drink. It's good for you,
for Christ's sake --

CALDWELL
(evenly)
Leave me alone, Charlie.

MARSDEN
(after a beat,
concerned)
Okay.

INT. CALDWELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He lies on the couch, staring at the TV set. The Tonight Show. The sound has been turned off.

The PHONE RINGS. He lets it keep RINGING, staring at the set as the soundless Carson laughs.

INT. CALDWELL'S APARTMENT - LATE AT NIGHT

He lies on the couch, staring at the TV set. The station has gone off the air. He stares at the station's test pattern.

INT. CALDWELL'S APARTMENT - MORNING

He lies on the couch, staring at the soundless TV set -- Captain Kangaroo.

The PHONE RINGS. He lets it RING. it RINGS again and again.

He gets off the couch, goes to the phone, tears it out of the wall.

INT. CALDWELL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

He sits at the kitchen table, unshaven, haggard, drinking coffee, smoking, eyes on the soundless TV set, which shows an anchorman.

He looks at the die and the three marbles on the table in front of him.

He sets the configuration up:

Places the die carefully atop the filed down cat's eye.

Places the black marble a few inches in front of the cat's eye.

Places the white marble a few inches in front of the black one.

He peers down to the table, his eyes behind the white marble.

He shoots it with his finger.

The white marble hits the black marble.

The black marble ricochets into the cat's eye.

The die falls.

The gets a "1" -- snake-eye.

On the silent TV, he suddenly sees Ray McElroy, smiling, his arms raised in victory. On the TV screen, the flashing letters "McElroy Elected".

He looks at McElroy a long beat and then he looks down at the table, at the die, at the snake-eye.

INT. QUINN'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Caldwell walks in. He gets the looks. He goes up to Cory.

CALDWELL
I want to see him, Cory.

CORY
He's busy.

CALDWELL
Cory -- I've got to see him.

She looks at him, sees the almost desperate urgency.

INT. QUINN'S OFFICE - Day

Caldwell walks in. Quinn sits at his desk.

QUINN
(very cold)
What do you want, Jack?
You want to help me pack?

CALDWELL
(emotionally)
Pete --

A long beat.

QUINN
(quietly)
You did what you had to do.

Caldwell sits down.

CALDWELL
(emotionally)
I'm sorry.

Quinn smiles. A long beat.

QUINN
The Zoning Commission thing, I think
maybe I could've beaten that.
(a beat)
The arsons. That guy getting killed.
The headlines. It was a web. I got
caught in it. I couldn't beat that.

CALDWELL
(after a long beat)
What are you gonna do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINN
I don't know. Sit in the sun
someplace.
(a beat)
I don't know, Jack.

A pause.

CALDWELL
(emotionally)
I don't know what to say to you.

A pause.

QUINN
(smiles)
Jesus. It isn't easy to get into
this goddamn office, but it's even
harder to leave it.

A pause -- Quinn gets up, offers Caldwell his hand.
Caldwell shakes it, starts out.

QUINN
(continuing;
smiles)
The dieshot.

Caldwell turns back to him

QUINN
(continuing;
seriously)
I told you. You've got no control.

Caldwell looks at him a beat, then turns to go out the
door.

QUINN
(continuing)
Jackie.
(emotionally)
Take care of yourself, Jackie.

INT. OUTER OFFICE

Caldwell closes Quinn's door, stands there a moment,
shaken. He looks at Cory, sitting at her desk. They
look at each other. He almost starts to walk over to
her. Then he suddenly turns, walks away.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

Caldwell sees Sal Croci near the blind man's coffee stand. He goes up to him.

CROCI

(so others can't hear)
I tried to call you. I'm gonna go see Romano today.

CALDWELL

Romano? What for?

CROCI

(smiles)
Harris had his phone number on the back of his driver's license.

CALDWELL

He was in the union.

CROCI

(smiles)
His home number. Unlisted.

That surprises Caldwell.

CALDWELL

Go after Lasko.

CROCI

(smiles)
I don't have to go after him. He's gonna take a lie test. He volunteered.

Jack looks at him.

EXT. CITY HALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cory gets into her car, starts it up.

CALDWELL

(standing next to
the car)
Can we go someplace?

He startles her.

CALDWELL

(continuing)
I just want to talk to you.

CORY

Why? What can you say to me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

You think I wanted to do it?
You think I wanted to write that
story? It's like a cop, Cory.
They get paid off once -- just one
time -- that's it. It's over.

CORY

(after a long beat)

Do you know what you do, Jack?
You force yourself into people's
lives -- you scrape their lives
for what you can -- and then you
walk away and scrape somebody
else. They bleed. Do you ever
think about that?

CALDWELL

Yeah, I think about it.

CORY

No, you don't. I used to think
you did. I was wrong.

She pulls away -- he stands there.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Sam Lasko, taking a lie test. Sal Croci is in the room
with him, along with another policeman.

Caldwell watches them through a small window in another
room.

Croci comes into the other room.

CROCI

He passed. He never heard of Eddie
Harris.

CALDWELL

Bullshit.

CROCI

He never hired anybody to burn his
tenements.

CALDWELL

(louder)

Bullshit, Sal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROCI

(after a beat)

Johnson passed his, too. He hadn't
seen Eddie Harris since the last
time he saw him in court.

CALDWELL

(upset)

They beat the fuckin' test. You
can beat those things.

CROCI

(after a beat)

One guy -- yeah. Maybe. Two guys?
(he shakes his head)
You want odds?

Caldwell looks at him.

INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

Caldwell walks in. Charlie Marsden sitting at the city
desk, sees him.

MARSDEN

Marty wants to see you.

CALDWELL

What for?

MARSDEN

How should I know?

INT. BURTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Caldwell walks in.

BURTON

(smiles)

Sit down, Jack.

Caldwell sits down.

BURTON

(continuing)

How are you?

CALDWELL

Okay.

BURTON

That's not what I hear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

I'm okay, Marty.

BURTON

No, you're not.

(a beat)

When's the last time you took
your vacation?

CALDWELL

I don't know.

BURTON

You can burn yourself out, Jack.

(a beat)

Give yourself a break, will you?
Get away from it.

CALDWELL

I can't.

BURTON

You wrote your story. Find something
else, Jack.

CALDWELL

(after a long beat)

What if I was wrong, Marty?

BURTON

What do you mean?

CALDWELL

Lasko passed his lie test. So did
Johnson.

BURTON

So what. They're attorneys. If they
can't lie, nobody can.

CALDWELL

What if Harris lied to me, Marty?
What if he set me up?

BURTON

Why would he lie to you?

(a beat;

he smiles)

Nobody can set you up. You're too
good.

Caldwell says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON

(continuing)

You know what it is? It's guilt, Jack. Let it go. Find another story.

INT. UNION HALL - NIGHT

A meeting of the Brotherhood of Sanitation Workers, Local 92.

Caldwell walks in -- the men are in groups, waiting for the meeting to start. He gets some looks. They know he doesn't belong here.

Tommy Romano is talking to two other MEN at the front of the room. The two look like goons.

Caldwell walks up to Romano.

ROMANO

What are you doin' here, Caldwell?
This meeting's closed.

CALDWELL

What was your phone number doing in
Eddie Harris' wallet, Tommy?

The two goons eye him.

ROMANO

(grins)

I don't know. I think somebody
wrote it in there. I think
somebody's trying to set me up.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

That's good. I like that.

ROMANO

(smiles)

What's the matter? Don't you believe
me?

(to the other two)

The guy doesn't believe me. He comes
in here, a closed meeting, and he
calls me a liar. How do you like
that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONE OF THE GOONS
(to Caldwell)
Let's go.

They start to lead him out of the hall.

ROMANO
(straight)
I needed somebody to paint my
garage. I put an ad in the
newsletter. He answered it.

Caldwell looks at him.

ROMANO
(continuing;
smiles)
How do you like that one? Do you
believe that?

INT. COLEMAN JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Caldwell walks in. Johnson sits there.

JOHNSON
(furious)
Get out of here!

CALDWELL
Who knew about Harlac?

JOHNSON
(furious)
You sonofabitch!
(a long beat; he
controls himself)
You know what you've done to me?
I've worked hard at what I do. I've
got a wife, two kids. You put my
name in your headlines -- you hook
it up with arson, a murder. Do you
know what you've done to my family?

CALDWELL
(emotionally)
Just tell me if anybody knew about
Harlac.

JOHNSON
Why -- you think you were wrong?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(a cruel smile)

You gonna write another story?
How you gonna erase those headlines?
How you gonna get that look outa my
kids' eyes?

(a long beat,
then low)

Get out of here, mister.

EXT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

He walks out of Johnson's office, his face a mask. He starts crossing the busy street to get to his car.

When he is in the middle of the street -- a blue Chevrolet rears at him at a high speed.

He sees the car at the last split second, hurls himself out of the way to the pavement -- out of the car's way by inches.

He gets off the pavement, watches the car ROAR away.

INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

He sits at his desk, his feet up, staring into space as, all around him, other reporters are writing their stories. He is jiggling something in his hands.

Charlie Marsden talks to a reporter nearby. He watches him.

As Marsden leaves the reporter --

CALDWELL

Hey, Charlie.

Marsden comes to him.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

How come you wanted me to do the story?

MARSDEN

What story?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

The tenements. You wanted me to do it.

MARSDEN

It was a good story.

CALDWELL

But how come you wanted me to do it, Charlie?

MARSDEN

(after a beat)

What the hell's wrong with you?

CALDWELL

(after a beat)

Forget it, Charlie.

Marsden gives him a look, walks away.

Caldwell, his feet still up on the desk, turns. He sees a wastebasket.

A beat, and then he tosses the three marbles and the die into the wastebasket. One by one. Slowly. Without expression.

EXT. SAM LASKO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Caldwell rings the doorbell.

The BUTLER answers it.

CALDWELL

I'd like to see Mr. Lasko.

BUTLER

Is he expecting you?

Caldwell pushes him out of the way, goes in.

BUTLER

(loud)

You can't just --

INT. LASKO'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lasko sits in the living room. He sees Caldwell. The butler is behind him, raising hell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LASKO
(to the butler)
It's all right, Peter.

The butler still isn't convinced; Lasko gestures for him to leave.

Caldwell stands there, looks at Lasko.

LASKO
(continuing;
smiles)
As far as I know, no one knew
about my connection to Harlac
outside of my attorney.

A long beat.

LASKO
(continuing;
smiles)
Somebody went to a lot of trouble
to frame me.

CALDWELL
Why would somebody frame you?

A long pause; Lasko smiles.

LASKO
Look at it this way. Nothing's going
to happen to me. Your torch is dead.
Whoever hired him had to kill him.
His lies were good enough for you,
but they wouldn't have stood up in
court.
(a beat)
What did I lose? My reputation? Yes,
I've lost that, thanks to you.
(a beat)
But think about it. Who lost the most?

Caldwell looks at him.

EXT. LASKO'S HOME - NIGHT

He gets into the Mustang; the butler watches him.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

He drives through the city streets, lost in his thoughts. The POLICE RADIO in the car crackles routine calls.

He glances into his rear-view mirror, sees a car behind him, disregards it, makes a turn.

He glances into the mirror -- the car has turned with him.

He speeds up. The car speeds up.

Then he suddenly makes a wild U-turn -- the car is a white LTD -- goes by him.

He makes another U-turn, after the LTD. The LTD speeds up. He speeds after it.

He gets behind the LTD -- sees one shape behind the steering wheel.

He tries to pull alongside it, to drive it off the road.

The LTD races -- cuts in and out of traffic, into the opposing lanes and back, Caldwell behind him.

Faster. Faster.

And then Caldwell suddenly steps on the brake, stops the Mustang wildly, hurls himself out of it into the road.

We see: the back of the Mustang is in flames.

He crawls away from it.

The Mustang EXPLODES.

EXT. STREET (LATER)

Firetrucks, police cars. He is talking to a POLICEMAN.

Sal Croci comes up to him.

CROCI

What the hell happened?

POLICEMAN

He was going 90 miles an hour,
lieutenant --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(to Croci)
Somebody's trying to kill me.

EXT. QUINN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He stands at the door. Quinn opens it.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
Can I come in?

QUINN
It's late, Jack.

CALDWELL
(after a beat)
Who wanted to get you?

Quinn says nothing.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Somebody knew.

Quinn says nothing.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Somebody knew about you and the
Zoning Commission. About Lasko
and Harlac.

Quinn says nothing.

CALDWELL
(continuing;
different tone)
I think somebody's trying to kill
me, Pete.

QUINN
Then back off. It isn't worth it.
It's over. I lost.

CALDWELL
(intensely)
Who wanted to get you? Romano?

QUINN
(smiles)
A whole lot of people. You're
in over your head, Jack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(hard)
I'm not gonna be used.

QUINN

Everybody uses everybody else.
That's politics.
(he smiles)
That's journalism.

CALDWELL

(emotionally)
Why won't you help me?

QUINN

(after a beat)
I am, Jackie. Back off.

INT. POLICE GARAGE - MORNING

Caldwell, looking at the burned-out Mustang, with Sal Croci -- we see police mechanics around the car.

CROCI

You had a leak in your fuel tank.
It's an old car, it happens all
the time. You get it up to ninety
miles an hour it's gonna go. It
was an accident, Jack.

Caldwell looks at him.

INT. MARTIN BURTON'S OFFICE - MORNING

Caldwell sits there with Charlie Marsden, Guthrie,
Keith Thompson. There is a funeral pall in the room.

Martin Burton comes in.

BURTON

(smiles)
This better be important. I've got
a helluva schedule today.

He looks at them -- no one says anything, notices the
pall in the room.

CALDWELL

(in a rush)
Harris lied to me. Lasko didn't
hire him. Lasko didn't kill him.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL (CONT'D)

Somebody hired Harris to set Lasko up. Somebody knew about Lasko and Harlac, about Lasko and Quinn. They knew if I went after Harlac it'd lead me to Quinn.

Burton looks at Jack -- then glances at the others. No reaction on their faces.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

Somebody's trying to kill me.

Burton shows no reaction, neither do the others -- though it is clear they think Caldwell is flipping out.

BURTON

(after a beat)

How do you know somebody's trying to kill you, Jack?

CALDWELL

They blew up my car. I know it wasn't an accident, Marty.

BURTON

Did you have the car checked?

Caldwell nods.

BURTON

(continuing)

What did they say?

CALDWELL

A leak in the fuel tank.

He smiles.

BURTON

(after a pause)

I want you to take a leave. Right away. We'll get you a good psychiatrist.

Caldwell shows no reaction.

BURTON

(continuing)

I'm sorry, Jack. It's for your own good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(after a beat,
a crazy smile)
You wanted me to do this story,
didn't you, Marty?
(then, harshly,
to Marsden)
Why'd you want me to do it, Charlie?

Marsden shows no reaction -- then, after a long beat,
his poker face crumbles.

MARSDEN
(low)
Christ, Jack.

INT. CORY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cory is packing -- Caldwell walks in.

CALDWELL
What are you doing?

CORY
I'm packing.

CALDWELL
(watches her pack)
Where you goin'?

CORY
I don't know. Some place I can
breathe. California, maybe.

CALDWELL
Everybody goes to California.
(a long beat;
she packs)
Everything's fallin' apart, Cory.

She says nothing, continues to pack.

CALDWELL
(continuing;
low)
Don't go.

She says nothing, continues to pack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Did Pete ever have any trouble with
Tommy Romano?

CORY
(after a long beat)
Why?

CALDWELL
I can't tell you why.

She smiles, packs.

CALDWELL
(continuing)
I don't want to tell you why.

CORY
You never want to tell me why.

CALDWELL
(intensely)
I don't want you to get hurt,
Cory!

CORY
(continuing to pack,
after a pause)
About a year ago, Romano came in to
see him.

CALDWELL
About what?

CORY
I don't know. Pete wouldn't tell me.
He was upset. When they left --

CALDWELL
When who left?

CORY
Romano and Francis Dodd.

Caldwell says nothing, a long pause.

CALDWELL
(low)
I don't want you to go.

CORY
(looks at him)
I don't have any reason to stay.

INT. DODD'S OFFICE - DAY

Caldwell goes into the office. Francis Dodd sits there.

DODD

(smiles)

Hello, Jack.

CALDWELL

You knew Sam Lasko was behind Harlac, didn't you, Francis?

DODD

(calm)

No -- I think I told you --

CALDWELL

I know what you told me. You're a banker, Francis. Sure, you knew about Harlac, but you also knew who was behind it. You would've found out. You knew about Pete and the Zoning Commission --

DODD

(calm)

You're not making any sense, Jack --

CALDWELL

You told Romano --

DODD

(smiles)

Romano?

CALDWELL

Yeah, you told him --

DODD

You're having a nervous breakdown, Jack. Why would I tell Romano?

Caldwell looks at him, then looks away toward the window.

He sees, next to the window, a glass-enclosed scale model of the redeveloped downtown area.

Dodd follows his look. Caldwell looks at him -- that tight, thin smile.

INT. CITY RECORD ROOM - DAY

Caldwell going through title books. He writes something down on his legal pad. We see the words: Haycock Realty.

He keeps paging through the book. He writes something down on his legal pad. We see the words: R-o-m-a-n-o.

INT. HAYCOCK REALTY - DAY

HAYCOCK, a lean, wary man in his 40s, sits at his desk.

CALDWELL

I'm doing a story on Mayor McElroy's redevelopment plan. I'm interested in the land where the new Hyatt's going up. You handled that sale, didn't you, Mr. Haycock?

HAYCOCK

That's right.

CALDWELL

But the title's in your name.

HAYCOCK

That's right. Our client preferred it that way. Perfectly legal, you know.

CALDWELL

Who is your client, Mr. Haycock?

HAYCOCK

That's confidential information.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

It's not Tommy Romano, is it?

HAYCOCK

I'm sorry. I can't answer that.

INT. GRAND CONCOURSE - NIGHT

A large old railroad station out of the 1920s -- it has been turned into a restaurant and bar.

The place is jammed -- body-to-body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Caldwell sits in a booth, drinks.

Romano comes in, sits down across from him.

CALDWELL

I figured it out, Tommy.

ROMANO

(smiles)

Tell me.

CALDWELL

You found out about Quinn and Sam Lasko. You found out about Lasko and Harlac. You tried to blackmail Quinn. It didn't work.

A WAITER comes over.

WAITER

(to Romano)

What can I get you, sir?

ROMANO

(calm)

Chivas on the rocks.

The Waiter leaves.

CALDWELL

You hired Harris to torch Lasko's tenements. You told him to put the finger on Harlac. That'd lead to Lasko. And that'd lead to Quinn. You killed Harris before it could get to court.

The Waiter arrives with the drink.

ROMANO

(sips it)

Cheers.

CALDWELL

Quinn got defeated. You're gonna make a lot of money on the Redevelopment Plan. What do you think, Tommy?

Romano smiles. The two goons we saw at the union hall come up to the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMANO

They're gonna join us for a drink.

Caldwell looks at them -- knows what they are there for. He moves over. They sit down.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

I've gotta take a piss.

He makes a move to get out.

ROMANO

Take it right here. We won't mind.

CALDWELL

(after a beat,
smiles)

You're gonna make -- what? Four,
five million dollars, Tommy? The
convention center, the new Hyatt,
it's all your property.

Romano smiles, says nothing.

CALDWELL

(continuing;
smiles, glances
at goons)

Come on, Tommy, you can tell me
the truth.

ROMANO

(after a long
beat, smiles)

Yeah. Except the Hyatt. You're
wrong about that. That isn't mine.

CALDWELL

(smiles)

Whose is it?

ROMANO

End of story, Caldwell.

CALDWELL

Francis Dodd's?

Romano nods to the two men. One of them gets up, motions
Caldwell to get up. Caldwell gets up, looks at Romano.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL

(continuing)

Tommy -- you don't have the brains
to set this one up.

ROMANO

Get him outa here.

One of the goons puts on arm around Caldwell's shoulder.
They start moving him out of the crowded place -- one
of them with his arm around him.

Caldwell suddenly pushes the man, slugs the other one.

SCREAMS. Pandemonium in the crowded place.

Caldwell presses through the crowd, the two goons
after him. One of them takes out a gun. More SCREAMS.
Panic.

Caldwell runs through the renovated railroad depot,
out the side door, the two goons in pursuit.

EXT. GRAND CONCOURSE - NIGHT

He runs up to a taxi cab, opens the door, takes the
driver out, pushes him away. He gets into the cab,
drives off.

He two goons get into a car, go after him.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

He drives the cab wildly, speeding, across a bridge,
cutting into the opposing lane.

The car chasing him is gaining on him.

He makes a sudden, wild turn, heads for -- a tram.

EXT. TRAM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

It is a hillside tram. He leaps out of the cab, runs
for the tram, which is filled with people.

The car chasing him ROARS up to the tram -- the goons
run after him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gets inside the tram just as the door closes.

He goons see the tram moving uphill, run back to their car.

INT. TRAM - NIGHT

Caldwell, inside the tram, watches as the goons get into their car. He sees the car go ROARING around a curve -- up the hillside.

They will be waiting for him when he gets up there.

He moves through the people on the tram, gets to the controls.

He sees the buttons marked "emergency stop" and "open door".

He hits the emergency stop button -- the tram is in darkness, people panicked.

He hits the "open door" button -- the door opens.

He leaps out the door onto the dark hillside.

He makes his way down the hillside in the pitch black.

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT

He comes off the hillside to the riverbank.

He sees a riverfront bar.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

He walks in, looks around -- only three or four people in the place.

He goes to a telephone, puts the money in, dials.

CALDWELL
(on the phone)
Help me.

INT. RIVERFRONT BAR - NIGHT

He watches the street through the window.

He sees Cory's car.

EXT. RIVERFRONT BAR - NIGHT

He gets into the car. She drives. The car moves through traffic.

CALDWELL

Drop me off at Market and Main.

CORY

What's wrong?

CALDWELL

(slight smile)

Everything.

Nothing is said, a long beat.

CALDWELL

(staring ahead)

I used to play this game when I was a kid. You've got a white marble, you go after the black one. You get it -- you still haven't won. You get the black one to hit the cat's eye. You still haven't won. It's the die. The die falls right, dieshot, you've won. It falls wrong, you're dead.

She drives, says nothing, then stops the car at the corner of Market and Main. He sits there a long beat.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

When are you leaving?

CORY

Tomorrow.

A long beat -- he doesn't look at her -- and then he leans over and kisses her quickly, briefly, on the lips, gets out of the car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

He walks down the downtown street -- he gets to the Haycock Realty office. He looks at the place. It is dark.

He walks around to a side door. He looks around. He busts a window. A VERY LOUD BURGLAR ALARM goes off. He ignores it, reaches around, opens the door from the inside.

INT. HAYCOCK REALTY - NIGHT

He is standing next to file cabinets in the darkness.

He opens a cabinet, goes through files.

He finds what he is looking for, looks at it.

He stands there, stunned, the burglar alarm RINGING, deafening.

INT. CHARLIE MARSDEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Pitch black. The door opens. Charlie Marsden comes in.

Caldwell hits him in the stomach, hard. He picks him up, hits him again brutally. He hurls him against the wall, hits him again. He picks him up -- is going to hit him again -- sees that Marsden is crying. He drops him against the wall.

CALDWELL

(very emotionally)

I trusted you.

(a beat)

All these years.

(loud)

All these fuckin' years!

He looks at Marsden. Marsden is crying.

Then he turns from Marsden violently.

CALDWELL

(continuing;

choked up)

I just wanted to be as good as you.

EXT. TRAM - NIGHT

Very late at night. Still. The tram, at the bottom of the hillside, lighted up.

INT. TRAM - NIGHT

Caldwell sits there, smoking.

He hears a car, then a car door. He doesn't react.

He hears steps walking to the tram.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks up. Martin Burton stands there.

Burton looks at him, comes in, sits down.

CALDWELL

(after a long pause)

Why, Marty?

Burton says nothing -- then, his voice drained --

BURTON

Do you know the kind of money you
can make if you own some land and
a hotel buys it?

Caldwell gets up, walks over to the controls. A long
pause.

CALDWELL

(his back to him)

You killed a guy, Marty.

He pushes the controls. The tram starts going up the
hillside.

CALDWELL

(continuing)

You destroyed Lasko, you destroyed
Pete...

BURTON

(quietly)

You did that, Jack.

CALDWELL

I didn't kill Harris.

BURTON

You lied to him. You put him out on
the limb. You didn't care. All you
cared about was your story.

CALDWELL

I didn't kill him.

BURTON

You could've gotten him killed.

CALDWELL

You killed him, Marty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON

(after a long beat)

We had no choice.

CALDWELL

(quietly)

Jesus, Marty. All that shit about the public. All those words.

(a beat)

I believed in that paper. It was the only think I ever believed in.

BURTON

(evenly)

No you didn't. You believed in your bylines.

CALDWELL

(after a long beat,
turns to him,
sees the gun)

What are you gonna do -- kill me, Marty?

BURTON

What can I do? You're on psychiatric leave.

Caldwell says nothing, his back to Burton.

CALDWELL

Why'd you pick me?

BURTON

You're a good reporter.
You always get your story.

The tram approaches the top -- it stops. Burton cocks the hammer.

The door opens.

Sal Croci stands there -- other policemen in the background.

Burton looks at Croci, at Caldwell, the gun still in his hand.

CROCI

Put it down, Mr. Burton.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON

(after a long beat)

I was afraid I'd have to use this thing.

(he smiles)

I'm glad you're here.

He still has the gun in his hand.

CROCI

Give me the gun, Mr. Burton.

A beat, he hesitates, then turns the gun, holds it out to Croci. Croci comes in carefully, takes the gun from him.

BURTON

(to Croci)

He threatened me, I --

CALDWELL

Forget it, Marty.

BURTON

(smiles, to
Caldwell)

Prove it.

Caldwell looks at him a long beat, then takes the tiny tape recorder out of his pocket, hands it to Croci.

CALDWELL

(to Burton)

I'm a good reporter, Marty.
I always get my story.

BURTON

That tape's going to ruin you.

CALDWELL

I don't care, Marty.

INT. CORRIDOR - CORY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She opens the door.

He stands there.

CALDWELL

Can I come with you?

She says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALDWELL
(continuing)
I want to go to California.

CORY
Why?

A long beat --

CALDWELL
You can breathe out there.

A long beat --

CALDWELL
(continuing)
Everybody goes to California.

A long beat --

CALDWELL
(continuing)
God, Cory. Why can't I tell you
that I love you.

That tight, thin smile --

We FREEZE, and then we --

FADE OUT.

THE END