

RICOCHET

Draft by
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FIRST DRAFT
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EXT. WATTS BASKETBALL COURT, 1983 - DAY

FEET enter the patched asphalt of a schoolyard court.

To mock - heroic FANFARE, two YOUNG MEN sit on a bench and change from STREET SHOES to sport ones. LACES are tightened... not on megabuck Yuppie footwear here -just well worn serious court shoes.

Now KNEE, ANKLE and ELBOW BRACES get put on, adjusted: MINERAL ICE gets slapped on. A BAND - AID goes over last weekend's barely healed SCRAPE.

A BOTTLE OF ADVIL gets opened. We FOLLOW the pills to the mouth of NICK STYLES. At 22 he's old enough to realize that he needs more prep to play this game the way he used to -and he's young enough to still pull it off.

A GIGGLE makes him turn.

BEYOND THE SCHOOLYARD FENCE

Several CO-EDS are there, books spread out on a table beside their lunches. The prettiest one, ALICE, grins at Nick.

ALICE

Honey, you're either too old for
this game or you're one hell of a
hypochondriac.

BACK TO SCENE

Now we see more than just the legs of Nick's partner, LARRY -who pauses in mid - elbow wrap, equally stung.

NICK

We're neither. We just believe in
planning ahead.

Saying, this, he jerks a thumb at -

THE OTHER END OF THE COURT

Where Nick and Larry's OPPONENTS come out.

ODESSA is mean; R.C.is GIGANTIC.

BACK TO SCENE

The co-eds react to the formidable competition as Nick and Larry move to meet them.

QUICK CUT TO:

THE GAME - IN MID PLAY

Fast, brutal, and unrelenting. Odessa and R.C. are winning 20-18 because there ain't no ref to call their fouls.

NICK

drives in for a layup but Odessa SLAMS him with an elbow. Nick falls, nose bloody. Larry comes over but Nick, not really in pain, waves him off, looks up.

NICK

I'd call that a foul, Odessa.

ODESSA

You want to play ref, get your stripe shirt. You want to play me, you get on up.

Nick gets up. The game resumes.

LARRY

in position, ready for a pass - R.C. CROWDS him, all but squashing him against the fence.

THE CO-EDS

shake their heads sadly.

ON THE COURT

Larry extracts his torn shirt from the fence. Nick consults with him.

LARRY

(breathless)

Maybe we should sink to their level.

NICK

(also panting)

We'd need a Goddamn elevator. Just stop playing like a white boy.

LARRY

Soon as you do.

Nick grins.

RESUME GAME

Now there's drive and intent from Nick and Larry - a single minded choreography that's nothing short of telepathy as each is where he has to be for his partner.

NICK

scores - LANDS with his elbow in Odessa's face.

LARRY

DRIVES in - R.C. tries to crowd him - Larry passes in a blur to Nick, who SCORES - R.C. tries to turn and TUMBLES with a crash into the fence, his weight TEARING a section LOOSE.

QUICK CUTS - SEVERAL BASKETS

culminating in Nick and Larry CHEERING themselves while their opponents steam.

FIFTY DOLLARS

in tens and twenties gets peeled off into Nick's hand. WIDEN to reveal the four players.

ODESSA

Nice comeback, P.K.

NICK

Comeback? I never left.

ODESSA

(the last 20)

Enjoy it, son. You won't see many dead Presidents in that shit job you got.

LARRY

I'll get the car.

(pointedly)

Don't want to be late for the shit job.

R.C. makes a point of standing in front of Larry. Larry shoves past him.

Odessa takes out some DISTINCTIVE EUROPEAN CIGARETTES - Ovals or Sobranis. Offers one to R.C., then Nick.

NICK

(a glance at the girls)

Nah. I'm in training.

Odessa grins. CAMERA and Nick's EYES follow Odessa and R.C. as they move out the fence towards a gleaming PORSCHE. Nick presses his face against the fence, curious.

NICK

New car, Odessa?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

ODESSA
(lighting up)
New to me.

Nick looks closer.

THE STEERING COLUMN - HIS POV

The ignition switch is popped away from the column and the wires hang down a millimeter apart, waiting to be joined and sparked.

BACK TO SCENE

NICK
(casual)
Trouble with the ignition?

ODESSA
I turn on so many ladies I got nothin'
left for my wheels. Same time next
Saturday?

Nick looks carefully at the car again, a chill abruptly in the air. Suddenly more than a fence is between him and Odessa.

NICK
No, Odessa, I think our playing days
are over.

ODESSA
Just on the asphalt, P.K.; just
on the asphalt.

He drives away with R.C. Nick sighs, moves to the bench -and is pleased to see Alice there, holding his plain brogans.

ALICE
(about the shoes)
You must have bought these in the
dark.

NICK
They're classics.
(off her books)
Like Moby Dick.

ALICE
Oh, you saw that.

NICK
I see everything - Alice Reneaux.

She REACTS, then realizes her name is written on her book covers.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK(cont'd)

When you do your book report, compare Ishamael's sexless embrace of the black harpooner Queequeg in the boarding house bed to the final glimpse of Ahab grappling with the white whale. Got me a "A".

ALICE

Another English major, huh?

NICK

Now it's law school. Nights at UCLA.

A HONK from the other girls in their car.

NEW ANGLE

Alice signals them: A minute. Nick picks up her books, heads that way.

NICK

(off her car decal, a scowl)

USC? Really. But I like your mascot. The... Trojan.

ALICE

We need more lawyers like we need more big, white, Moby, Dicks.

Was that entendre on purpose? Nick looks at the prim, wholesome girl with fresher eyes.

NICK

Nah, law's just a pit stop. I'm gonna be the first black President... unless Jesse beats me to the punch.

ALICE

We got it all figured out, huh?

Nick - taking off his shirt to mop up - nods. (In the car, big REACTIONS from the other girls; as his face is hidden Alice turns and gives them a nasty look which she instantly hides when he re-emerges.)

NICK

(without a break)

Congress, Governor, then Pennsylvania Avenue. Only thing I don't have yet is a First Lady.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK (Cont'd)
But I'm scheduling interviews. How
about Saturday at 8:00?

ALICE
(moving towards the car)
Sorry, I'm busy. Anyway I got a
better offer to be the Queen of Sheba.
I'm on my way to pick out a crown
right now.

The sound of TIRES makes her turn. And then she REACTS to
WIDER - TOWARDS THE STREET

revealing Larry, who has arrived as promised with the car - a
police car. Larry - already back in uniform - tosses Nick his
blues.

ALICE
(astonished)
Y-you're a cop?

NICK
Uh-huh.

He slips on his shirt and as he does he takes his pad and a pencil
from the pocket.

NICK
And by the way, you're parked
illegally.

Saying this, he pulls his book from his trouser pocket and begins
to scribble her a ticket. As she watches, astonished, he checks
the car's license number, jots it down, and tears off her copy
and hands it to her.

NICK
If you want that fixed, I'm available
for pleading and begging Saturday
at 8:00.

He gets in with Nick, drives away. She's pissed - and then starts
to LAUGH.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - NIGHT

TIGHT on a BANNER: "FESTIVAL OF SAN GENNERO - BENEFIT OF ST.
MICHAEL'S PARISH."

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BENEATH this are STATUES of the Saint in question and the Blessed Virgin. The CAMERA CRANES over revelers as they throw MONEY on the two shrines, promenade and party. CHILDREN ride a carousel; TEEN-AGERS play rigged ARCADE GAMES.

A portly CAMERA BUG loaded with equipment angrily steamrollers other PEOPLE as he tries to get a shot of his equally portly KID on a mechanical PONY.

We PAN past strolling lovers, happy families, beatific PRIESTS, move along the boardwalk towards

INT. ITALIAN AMERICAN SPORTING CLUB - NIGHT

PULLBACK from the inside of the door; through the opaque GLASS we can read the name BACKWARDS and we SEE the movement of the crowd outside and HEAR the carnival SOUNDS.

But in here, the only sport is high stakes POKER, played by FOUR GOODFELLOWS who handle their cards while they plan extortion and Union takeovers. They're in their 40's and fifties, but one -CAMINELLI - is younger, leaner - and hungrier.

DEALER

Texas Hold'em. Ante up.

The ante - a hundred dollars. All in.

DEALER

Burning a card. Angie, you need a hearing aid?

ANGIE

Fifty.

DEALER

Caminelli, you gonna fuck that Queen or bet her?

Caminelli - distractedly looking at his watch - REACTS.

CAMINELLI

Bet her, fuck you. Raise fifty.

Laughter. He glances at his watch again.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIER - BEHIND ARCADES AND SPORTING CLUB - NIGHT

A CAR PULLS up, the CROWD NOISES muffling its arrival. Two MEN get out, wait. BLAKE, early 20's, wears dark, cheap clothing that's somehow compulsively neat.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

KIM, younger, a fey James Dean wanna be, sucks in air, fidgets, energized.

KIM

What a night. Smell that air. Great, huh? Great night for great things. Your night, Blake. It's gonna make you. A superstar. All the way. And I get to see it.

Blake looks at him with chilly and domineering disdain.

BLAKE

What do I have to do to shut you up? Tie you up and gag you?

KIM

(weird little laugh)
Any time.

Blake scowls at him, checks his watch. Then he sees

A YOUNG BLACK MAN

Who could just be strolling... or just cruising. A moment's cool regard.

BACK TO SCENE

Blake simmers for a moment. Then -

BLAKE

What the fuck do you want? A swimming lesson? Fuck off!

The guy leaves. Blake watches him until he's gone, agitated.

CUT TO:

ENTRANCE TO PIER - NIGHT

Nick and Larry's PATROL CAR rolls down the ramp into the riot and color of the carnival. Nick's driving.

LARRY

Now what? You gonna win a teddy bear for that girl you met today?

NICK

Better yet, I'm gonna be her Teddy bear.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK (Cont'd)

(about the Pier)

Thought we'd do a little trolling off the pier. This kind of thing, it's like a shipwreck in the ocean: Attracts all kinds of fish. Little fish, like those Homeboys over there; Bigger fish, like those two, you just know they're looking for a car to slim jim... and maybe we'll even find a shark or two: The Mob boys got a little coffee club down here.

LARRY

You're a regular Jacques Cousteau.

CUT TO:

BLAKE AND KIM

Blake checks his watch again. Time. He reaches into the car, takes out a suspicious CANVAS BUNDLE, tucks it under his arm and CROSSES quickly towards the rear of the sporting club.

Kim hastens to follow, then passes Blake and UNLOCKS the rear door with a key. Blake SCOWLS at this.

BLAKE

Asshole. Why don't you just fucking announce us?

He suddenly BREAKS the glass with his elbow. Grabs the key from the door.

BLAKE

This job can put me in the big time.

With a sick smile he shoves the key into Kim's mouth.

BLAKE

Try not to fuck it up. Wait by the car.

He goes inside. Kim returns to the car, stands guard.

ON THE PIER

Nick and Larry move through the crowd. They pause to give the would be CAR THIEVES a cold look: It works: They suddenly decide to leave the pier.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

Suddenly a STUFFED ANIMAL gets tossed into Nick's arms. He REACTS, alert - GRINS as he sees GINO, the pitchman at a GAME BOOTH.

GINO

(maybe only half kidding)
You harassing us again Styles? You're a racist, pal. Always lookin' for trouble just 'cause we're Italian.

NICK

("shocked")
Gino, you - you're Italian?
(indicating the crowd)
Them, too? And all this time I thought you were Iranian.
(to Larry)
I guess we're not gonna get any tabooli tonight.

LARRY

(to Nick)
Maybe they can do a falafel pizza.

CUT TO:

INT. SPORTING CLUB - NIGHT

DEALER

Burning a card.

CAMINELLI

(almost too quickly)
I'm out.
(getting up)
Gotta drain the lizard.

DEALER

You need some tweezers to find it?

Laughter. The game continues. We stay with Caminelli.

INT. BATHROOM

Inside, he sucks in his breath - waiting. Suddenly remembers to lock the door.

EXT. BATHROOM DOOR

PAN from the bathroom door to the ROOM DOOR as it opens and Blake steps quickly in, dropping the canvas that covers his SAWED OFF SHOTGUN.

THE THREE CARDPLAYERS

Go for their guns... a beat too late.

WIDER

BLAM! BLAM! The first two are CUT DOWN by Blake.

CAMINELLI

In the bathroom, WINCING at each shot -

CAMINELLI
(under his breath)
One - two -

OUTSIDE ON THE PIER - NIGHT

The crowd's SHOUTS at the fight DROWN out the noise.

NICK - checking the I.D. of a DRUNK - cocks his head. Did he hear something?

INT. SPORTING CLUB - NIGHT

The DEALER has turned the card table on end and taken cover behind it to return SHOTS. Blake DUCKS, FIRES right through the green felt.

A moment later the body topples to the floor.

THE BATHROOM

CAMINELLI
- three.

Reaching a decision, he LISTENS for footsteps passing by -suddenly LUNGES out of the bathroom, FIRING.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Blake in a CROUCH by the door, GRINS as the bullets go over his head. He SLAMS UP with the shotgun butt, knocking the pistol away.

BLAKE
Caminelli, this wasn't part of the
plan.

Caminelli squirms on the floor.

CAMINELLI
I - I just wanted it to look good
- you know, like I put up a fight-

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

Tsk, tsk. I'm afraid in addition
to that fifty grand, this is going
to cost you an arm and a leg.

And he AIMS at Caminelli's ARM! Paniced, Caminelli GRABS the
barrel - they STRUGGLE -

EXT. SPORTING CLUB WINDOW

The GLASS and half the WINDOW FRAME are BLASTED away.

OUTSIDE ON THE PIER

That, they heard! The two officers whirl, draw pistols.

NICK

Everybody get down!

As they turn they SEE glass tinkle from the building.

LARRY

(quickly, to Nick)
I'll take the back.

Nick nods. They both seperate, running.

IN THE SPORTING CLUB

Blake KICKS Caminelli in the head, re-aims the shotgun. BLAM.
Arm. BLAM. Leg.

EXT. REAR OF BUILDING

Kim, HEARING the continuing SHOTS, wondering what's going wrong
-then a PISTOL BARREL appears at the open car window.

LARRY

Hands on your head, sweetheart.
Dos - i - do right on out -

Panicked, Kim LUNGES at the door - the gun DISCHARGES into the
AIR-

INSIDE

Blake HEARS the shot out back, makes a U-turn for the front -takes
a split second to peer through the front door - the shotgun hidden
by his long coat, he darts out the front door.

EXT. SPORTING CLUB

Blake hasn't taken three steps from the building when he FREEZES,
seeing -

NICK - HIS P.O.V. - GUN RAISED

NICK

Ever have one of those days? No
Tabooli, now this. Drop it.

Blake hesitates - the BARREL of the hidden shotgun MOVES a bit
-

NICK

Sawed off Remington 12 gauge Defender,
30 pound slide? By the time you
pump it you'll have three holes in
your heart and I'll be eating donuts.
Put it down.

Blake is fucked - he starts to loosen his grip when

NEW ANGLE

The LADIES ROOM DOOR of the PUBLIC RESTROOMS adjacent to the
Sporting Club suddenly OPENS with a BANG and a TEEN-AGED GIRL
steps out, momentarily BETWEEN the armed men. Before she realize
what's happened Blake has VAULTED the rail of the restroom
building and GRABBED her.

NICK

his aim ruined, he darts sideways, tries to get closer - but

BLAKE

has shoved the gun barrel under the girl's chin and -perversely
-PUMPED the slide with the girl's other hand in his own.

BLAKE

Now you drop yours, Mr. Donut, or
she's going to need a bag over her
head when her boyfriend fucks what's
left of her.

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR OF BUILDING - NIGHT

where Larry and Kim CRASH into some trashcans as Kim tries to
escape the unarmed officer. Kim pulls a knife. Larry kicks
it away, knocks Kim onto his face. Takes out handcuffs...

CUT TO:

EXT. PIER - LONG PANNING SHOT

The hushed crowd has taken cover, but the few PEOPLE we see as
they peer out are like the Dodge City residents watching a High
Noon confrontation...

THE CAMERA HOUND

hastily fumbles a new 8mm videotape into his machine - aims -shit, the lens cap is on! Okay, got it -

THROUGH HIS VIEWFINDER

we SEE Nick slowly hold his gun up, higher - higher - with his other hand he reaches for his belt - drops that first. His gear drops to the floor with a CLINK.

BLAKE

The gun, Officer. Not the nightstick.

NICK

Hey, I'm with you. I just figure you're a thorough guy.

He unbuttons his shirt... slips it off his free shoulder until it dangles from the still high gun hand.

NICK

What if I had a back up piece hidden on me somewhere? You'd really feel stupid. You don't want to get caught with your pants down... so I will.

He loosens his belt... lets them FALL.

BLAKE

Edging with his hostage towards the short stairs, rattled by Nick's calm/crazy demeanor.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick kicks away his trousers. He's down to his Calvin's.

NICK

See? The only weapon I have left is harmless - unless you're a pretty girl... and speaking of girls... you want to let her go?

And now he DROPS his pistol with a THUD.

THE "AUDIENCE"

reacts with an intake of breath -

BACK TO SCENE

BLAKE

Sure. After I kill you.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

And Blake AIMS - but the SHOT that rings out is not from his gun, from but the hidden .25 BARETTA that Nick whips out from the small of his back.

As Blake topples, HOWLING, a BULLET in his KNEE, the girl breaks free.

BOTTOM OF THE REST ROOM STAIRS

Nick tries to side-step the falling killer but with a savage HOWL Blake lunges out and grabs his legs. Both men SPILL ONTO

THE PIER DECK

where the IMPACT makes Nick lose the pistol. Blake's hand flashes to his boot and pulls out a butterfly KNIFE. Nick reacts just in time, chops it out of his hand - then with a technique worthy of Odessa he ELBOWS Blake in the face and SMASHES the man into the banister. As Blakes sinks to the floor like melted butter, Nick collects the two weapons and turns in time to see Larry rushing in. The half-naked Nick grins, sheepish, holds up the two formerly hidden weapons.

NICK

(on Larry's LOOK)

Looks like a Baretta in the Butt
beats a butterfly in the boot.

CUT TO:

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - TIGHT ON A TV (BURN-IN) - DAY

A NEWSCASTER is in MID-SPEECH -

NEWSCASTER

- reputed mob figure Danny "the
Iceman" Caminelli is in critical
condition after four hours of surgery.

SLIDE of Caminelli -

NEWSCASTER(cont'd)

- while his attacker is in police
custody after this incredible
confrontation captured by a local
amateur photographer.

FOOTAGE BEGINS - the Handcam video of the previous scene.
Suddenly the footage FREEZES.

REVERSE ANGLE

DISTRICT ATTORNEY PRISCILLA BRIMLEIGH is identified for us by the nameplate on her desk and the BACKWARDS LETTERING on her door. Now, she fiddles with the video controls: We're watching a TAPE.

In her late 40's, her clothes are sleek and her style is blunt. She's good looking, too, but that's just another card she plays when the betting gets rough.

Also here are Police Chief FLOYD, who's always uptight and temporarily mortified... and Councilman EUBIE FARRIS, a seasoned political pro.

FLOYD

(as the tape PLAYS again)
Idiot rookie, nine months on the force. Endangering civilians... He should've waited for back-up -

BRIMLEIGH

Stop bitching, Elliot. You're just jealous because you can see the kid still has his dick while yours is on display at the local ACLU office.

FLOYD

Mrs. Brimleigh, do you think I'm going to stand for this?

BRIMLEIGH

Only if you like your job. Floyd, you've been pissing away our resources on hare-brained ideas like that Goddamn tank you bought, and that day-glo body armor -

FLOYD

(defensive)
-it wasn't day-glo, it was fluorescent-

BRIMLEIGH

- and meanwhile there isn't a neighborhood in this city that hasn't gotten worse. This city is screaming for cops on the beat instead of stupid stunts. Now this kid's the first piece of positive publicity your department has had in three years and you're gonna milk it like a cow.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BRIMLEIGH (Cont'd)
This kid's brave, resourceful, good
looking... I'm only glad he's too
young to run for my job.

FARRIS
Yet, Mrs. Brimleigh. Yet.

It's the first thing he's said and it has weight. As they all
ponder that, the door opens.

SECRETARY
Mrs. Brimleigh, Officer Styles is
here.

BRIMLEIGH
Send him right in.

And with a devilish grin, The D.A. hits the "play" button again.

NEW ANGLE

A nervous Nick in a freshly pressed uniform steps into the office.
He groans inwardly as he sees the tape.

NICK
Uh... you wanted to see me, Mrs...
(unsure of protocol)
Mrs. District Attorney?

BRIMLEIGH
Don't be so formal, officer. Just
call me what you all call me down
in the locker room.

Long pause. She's testing him, and he picks up on it.

NICK
Guy'd look pretty stupid calling
the DA Priscilla the Hun to her face.

BRIMLEIGH
(with a grin)
He might look pretty honest, too.
(indicating Floyd)
This is your boss, you proably only
know him from that retouched photo
on your station wall -Councilman
Farris - the best man in City
government - after me, of course.

NICK
Uh - Glad to meet you.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

FARRIS

Not yet. But you will be.

NICK

(off video tape)

Uh - Mrs. Brimleigh, could you maybe switch to Judge Wapner or Wheel of Fortune? That's kind of embarrassing. But I can explain how it happened

-

BRIMLEIGH

I don't want excuses. I want an instant replay.

NICK

Ma'am?

BRIMLEIGH

You did it for that hoodlum, now do it for me. Get out of those clothes.

NICK

Uh - Excuse me?

The D.A. grins, pleased with her little joke.

BRIMLEIGH (cont'd)

I mean get out of that uniform and into some civvies! Chief Floyd has just promoted you to Detective! Right, Floyd?

FLOYD

(gritting through his teeth)

Right... Priscilla.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Blake, his leg in a cast, is handcuffed to a bed in the city ward. A NURSE comes over to give him his meds. He's almost totally unresponsive, in a zombie-like trance, almost in shock: He has never tasted defeat and it is devastating.

Blankly, he swallows a pill. Dribbles a bit as he drinks. The nurse leaves.

NEARBY

An older man, a CHARITY WORKER, sees this. Rolling a book cart, he comes over and sits beside him.

CHARITY WORKER

Young fella.

No reaction. He POKES him. Blake REACTS with some of his old fire. Calms when he sees the harmlessness of the man beside him.

CHARITY WORKER

Look at you, lying there like a lump on a log and your whole life is in front of you! So what if you've made a few mistakes... you know, I robbed a newstand in '39, yes, me! So you can still go back and make things right again! Don't you have anything to live for?

Silence from Blake. The man shrugs and the cart squeaks on.

But suddenly Blake snaps out of it - as much from the man's innocent pep talk as from -

THE WARD TV

where the AMATEUR VIDEO of his capture is again PLAYING.

2ND NEWSCASTER'S VOICE

- "the Iceman" Caminelli remains in guarded condition and District Attorney Priscilla Brimleigh says he will still face racketeering charges after his recovery. His assailant, recovering from his own wound, will be indicted next week. Meanwhile Officer Styles was cited this morning at City Hall.

PICTURE CHANGES to CITY HALL EXTERIOR, obviously right after the meeting in the D.A.'s office.

With Brimleigh and Farris in the B.G., Floyd stands next to Nick for photographs.

FLOYD

(all but choking on the words)

- I'm proud to shake this young officer's hand and even prouder to give him his a detective's badge.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

FLOYD (Cont'd)
Officer Styles - Sergeant Styles
- I know this is just the beginning
for you.

APPLAUSE.

REVERSE ON BLAKE

He REACTS... SEETHES as he watches -

NICK'S VOICE
Thank you, Chief Floyd. I hope I
can live up to your standards...
and I promise to keep my clothes
on for my next arrest.

BLAKE
(suddenly turning)
Hey! You! Bookman!

THE WARD - WIDER

The charity worker rolls his cart back.

BLAKE
(ingenuously)
You know what? I just thought of
something I can change. A life.
(glancing at the screen)
An entire life. An entire future.
And it's all in my hands.

CHARITY WORKER
Wonderful. Would you like something
uplifting to read? Maybe
motivational?

BLAKE
Something heavy.

The Charity Worker holds up a thin volume.

CHARITY WORKER
How about Checkov... Anna Karenina?

BLAKE
(eyeing it)
Not heavy enough.

CHARITY WORKER
Well, it was his first book. Okay,
War and Peace?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

Perfect. And I'll take that big bible, too.

CHARITY WORKER

(touched)
God bless you.

He gives him the books, rolls away.

BLAKE - CLOSER

One hand still cuffed, he uses the other to unwrap his knee. It's swollen hideously, STITCHES still raw and fresh, the bullet hole SCABBED.

Blake puts the two volumes on either side of his knee, then wraps his bandage back around both them and his leg.

He sits up straight and swings his legs over the side of the bed.

ANGLE ON THE WARD

The other patients stare at him with amazement.

BLAKE

With the book weights attached to his ankle he tries to do a leg lift. The broken cartilage in his knee CRACKS in protest. His face twists with agony and determination. Inch by painful inch the leg straightens.

Pus and watery blood squirts from the knee through the bullet hole that Nick placed there.

GUY IN NEXT BED

the green effluvia SPLATTERS his sheets and he GROANS in DISGUST.

RESUME BLAKE

As white as the sheets that cover his bed, he goes for a second rep, his cold eyes ZOOMING in on

THE TV VIDEO IMAGE

- of NICK acknowledging the first - but not the last -applause of his career.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK HOUSE - WATTS - NIGHT

Several stories high, once a respectable apartment building, now it's seemingly abandoned, tucked behind some neglected shrubbery and flower beds, the windows boarded up, the front entrance a FIRE DOOR with a slit in it. Nick and Larry, dressed convincingly like addicts, SHIVER in the pre-dawn chill.

We hear the soft CRACKLE of a walkie-talkie. They look down the street.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THEIR P.O.V.

An LAPD armored TRUCK is parked down the block. Behind it WE SEE a SQUAD of FLAK - JACKETED COPS... and an EYEWITNESS NEWS VAN... a TV CREW... and CHIEF FLOYD, checking his appearance in a MIRROR.

RESUME SCENE

LARRY

Christ. The T.V.'s here!

NICK

Goddamn Floyd. He think's he's Kojack. Only Kojack wouldn't be caught dead in that toupee.

LARRY

He's still jealous of all your air time.

NICK

(with a fungoo gesture)
Hey, you speak Italian?

LARRY

I thought that was Iranian.

RADIO VOICE

Styles. Doyle. You're on. The password is Conrad.

Nick KNOCKS and the slit in the iron door opens with a light CLANG.

NICK

Uh, 'guy sent us here, said we could get
(sniffling)
well?

GUARD

What guy, dickhead?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

Uh... uh...

Larry looks at him, nervous. Could he have forgotten so soon? But Nick is going Stanislavski.

NICK

Carmine? No, wait... Cohen?

Now Nick fumbles his wad of Department money. A big wad. The door is already CLICKING OPEN when he says -

NICK

Conrad, yeah, it's Conrad, and
(drawing pistol)
you're under arrest, you impatient
asshole!

LARRY

(rushing in)
FREEZE! Police!

THE OTHER POLICEMEN

charge forward, the CAMERAS and their LIGHTS right behind them.

INT. ROCK HOUSE - STEADICAM SHOT

Nick and Larry fling their first two arrests down to the floor for others to cuff and continue the point men's rush. Nick WHEELS, gun up at a CRY, but it's a BABY in the arms of a STONED YOUNG MOTHER - and thus distracted he doesn't see the GUY with a KNIFE behind him.

LARRY

Nick, look out - !

Nick whirls, too late, but Larry KICKS the guy in the midriff then SLAMS him against the wall. Larry's HAND gets slashed then the man is disarmed.

NICK

Whoa -

They press on and as Nick KICKS another dealer in the ass, pressing him floorward a FIGURE looms up with a gun -

NICK

DROP IT!

But he doesn't and Nick FIRES - the guy FIRES and hits the WOODWORK an inch from Nick, SPLINTERS ripping Nick's head - Nick's second SHOT takes the guy DOWN. LIGHTS and CAMERAS are all over the officers.

CHIEF FLOYD

trying to press between the TV crew which is totally uninterested in him -

FLOYD

I'd like to say, gentlemen, that we're cracking down, hard on these sort of - ah, gentlemen, if I could have your attention...?

NICK AND LARRY - VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V.

Hanging on to each other, checking each other's wounds as a medic runs up -

LARRY

What, you had to get even?

NICK

You'd hold it over me, that's all.

The SWAT CAPTAIN moves through the room, waves the CAMERAS off.

SWAT CAPTAIN

How about some arresting room, gentlemen, ladies?

(to Nick)

Styles, do you get a commission from Fotomat, or what?

NICK

Not my idea, sir, I assure you.

The Captain grunts. Nick, embarrassed, steps out of the LIGHT... and REACTS to something in the room.

AN ASHTRAY

WIDEN as Nick approaches it. TAKES something from it.

It's a BALKAN SOBRANI cigarette. As Nick holds it, the long ASH FALLS from the end.

As Nick looks at it thoughtfully, then at the surroundings, we

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - DAY

A PRISON BUS rolls towards it. The GATE OPENS.

INT. PRISON COURTYARD - UP ANGLE ON WALL GUARDS - DAY

Watching, rifles held ready...

COURTYARD - DOWN ANGLE

The bus STOPS. Waiting for it is the WARDEN and four VERY LARGE GUARDS.

THE BUS DOOR

Two GUARDS bring out their cuffed and manacled PRISONER.

It is Blake... he is the only passenger on the bus.

He's roughly pushed in front of the Warden. As the Warden stares him down we SEE that Blake has CHANGED. His hair is short, his arms carry NEW TATTOOS. He is pumped up, harder looking. A SCAR he didn't have before shows on his pale CHEEK.

WARDEN

Mr. Blake. I've been expecting you.

BLAKE

Yeah? Then where's the cake?

WARDEN

(unamused)

I knew you'd end up here sooner or later. See, I've been following your career behind bars these past three years, and I knew you were the kind they always send to me.

(opening a file, flipping pages)

Incorrigible. Dangerous. Pyschopathic. Obsessive. Attacked a prisoner. Attacked a prisoner. Attacked a guard. Etcetera, Etcetera.

(slamming file)

Yup. My kind, all right. The kind I break.

(to the guards)

Put him in with Chewalski.

(to Blake)

You remember Chewalski, the Health Club strangler? He was making headlines around the time you got arrested on... what was it..?

"America's Funniest Home Videos"?

Suddenly Blake DARKENS, a nerve struck - he YANKS his chains TAUT

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

WARDEN

(pleased to get a
reaction)

Anyway, as I recall... you seem like
Chewalski's type. You'll make great
roomies.

(turning)

Get this shit out of my sight.

Blake is dragged away.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDORS - TRAVELING SHOT - DAY

Blake is marched through the corridors. The wide berth other
prisoners give him and the BUZZ of whispered dialogue shows his
reputation precedes him.

KIM passes him in the corridor: He's wearing a Trusty's BLUE
SMOCK and pushing the prison PHARMACY CART.

KIM - BLAKE'S POV

as they make eye contact -

BACK TO SCENE

Blake's nod is barely noticable... then the group turns a corner
and we're at

CHEWALSKI'S CELL - DAY

With sadistic grins, the GUARDS open the cell. CHEWALSKI turns
from the MUSCLEMAN MAGAZINE he is reading. He is a GIGANTIC,
SCARY WEIRDO.

Blake is shoved inside and the door CLOSED. Blake - used to
the drill - calmly presses his hands against the door so that
they can be unlocked through the bars.

GUARD

Brought you a present, Chewalski.
Ain't he cute?

Chewalski SMILES, revealing swastika'd TEETH - CHARGES towards
Blake.

NEW ANGLE

Blake sidesteps him, ELBOWS his kidney... DUCKS the big man's
swing, POUNDS at his groin, and then when he folds, his FACE.
Knee kick, head butt, and then a SLAM into concrete wall.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

Chewalski DROPS. The guards watch, amazed, as Blake climbs up and takes Chewalski's bunk.

CLOSER

With the back of his hand, Blake sweeps Chewalski's belongings from the little shelf on the wall. With distaste, he RIPS DOWN posed shots of musclemen.

Then, slowly, methodically, he takes out his own belongings: Self - help books. Exercise books. Motivational books. The two (they really exist) GETTING EVEN books. And then -- a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING which he AFFIXES to the wall:

INSERT - THE CLIPPING

"DECORATED COP STYLES TO JOIN D.A.'S OFFICE".

BACK TO SCENE

Blake STARES at the clipping.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - VENICE WALK STREET - DAY

An UNMARKED CAR pulls up in front of a beautiful 30's bungalow on a rise a dozen blocks from the ocean. America's dream house. The AM RADIO crackles as an unmarked POLICE SEDAN pulls up, Larry at the wheel, a weary Nick beside him. They're listening with growing dismay to -

A.M. RADIO VOICE

(teary)

- and Dr. Fiscus, I know I'm being paranoid, I mean, this maniac is in custody, but they keep saying he might get acquitted or there could be like a mistrial, and every time I see him on TV I think, maybe there's more like him out there, and I'm even afraid to order a pizza because then I'm inviting a stranger to my house!

DR. FISCUS

(maddeningly calm)

Debbie, remember how you felt when you learned that Santa Claus wasn't real?

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

DR. FISCUS (Cont'd)

Well, there's a similiar feeling of betrayal when we realize that our police and our system of law and order can't protect us in today's harsh world. There's a pendulum effect when we realize they're not supermen but just ordinary and flawed people. But your over reaction tells me something else. Was your puberty difficult, or -

Nick clicks it off with a groan.

NICK

Well, I feel better. I'm not a fuck up, I'm just ordinary and flawed.

A weary Nick gets out of the passenger seat, loosens his tie. Leans across the roof to face Larry, also in civvies, but detective's BADGE on his pocket.

LARRY

Give yourself a break, come on, it's been three months in that courtroom. You're doing great.

NICK

Yeah? My heart stopped when Josephson asked for a mistrial today. Next time we won't be so lucky.

LARRY

There won't be a next time. I'm gonna find that missing witness.

NICK

Maybe I should go out with you -I still have some contacts on the street

-

LARRY

Nick, you want to help? Get some sleep! I don't need your body out there, I need your brain in court! Stop trying to be superman!

NICK

You mean Santa Claus.

Nick waves goodbye, balances armloads of files as he struggles to the door. He can't even get out his key, RINGS the doorbell with his elbow. We HEAR FOOTSTEPS.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2)

WOMAN'S VOICE

(though the door)
Who is it?

NICK

It's one tired and lonely Assistant District Attorney who's had one shitty day. There better be a gorgeous woman in a fabulous nightgown waiting for me in there.

Alice opens the door - in SWEATS - but in her arms is indeed a gorgeous woman in a nightie, albeit one that is only eight month old.

ALICE

Here she is...

And as Nick embraces his family we

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON SHOP - DAY

As several prisoners watch for guards, others use STRAPPING TAPE to ARMOR two MEN with PADDING made from phone books, NEWSPAPERS, and other junk. It's a grudge match prison DUEL to the death between Blake (with only Kim for a rooting section) and Chewalski, backed up by a cheering section of the ARYAN NATION gang, led by a brooding scary JESSE.

NEW ANGLE

at a SIGNAL, they go at it with long home-made knives. It's savage and medieval. Blake's ARM gets SLASHED.

THE ARYANS

cheer Chewalski, one of theirs -

KIM AND A TINY HANDFUL

by their look, the prison's "outsiders" - are Blake's only rooters.

KIM

Come on, Blake - Blake, Blake, he's our man - if he can't do it, no one can -

RESUME FIGHT

It ends in an unexpected instant when Blake slips his blade through a gap in his opponent's padding, right into the HEART.

CHEWALSKI

drops like a tree.

WIDER

Blake turns, spent, sees a DOZEN other Aryans ringing him. Jesse steps forward.

JESSE

There's still fifty of us in here with you, Blake. Including guys you don't even know. You still have to sleep. You still have to turn your back to pee... you still have to bend over to pick up the soap in the shower.

BLAKE

What's your point?

JESSE

A man needs friends to make a life here.

BLAKE

I'm not interested in life here.

JESSE

That can be arranged.

BLAKE

Asshole - I'm talking about life... elsewhere...?

JESSE

Ah. A dreamer.

BLAKE

Then dream along with me... brother?

Jesse's startled at his easy "victory" - and intrigued. Now, with great CEREMONY he and Blake SPIT on their palms and SLAP hands and the other inmates show relief at the truce.

NEW ANGLE

Kim runs over to succor Blake.

KIM

You were incredible, Blake, you were
this amazing Occidental Samurai,
I mean, you're the real Aryan -
(reacting)
Oh, my God, you're bleeding -here,
let me -

Kim RIPS a piece of his shirt, starts to tie it on the wound.

BLAKE

(pulling away)
Fuck the Nurse Nancy shit. You want
to do something for me?

He bends over - FLIPS Chewalski onto his back. And RIPS away
a NEWSPAPER HEADLINE from where his knife struck home. He hands
it to Kim.

BLAKE

Clean this up and save it for me.

It's a picture of Nick, with the headline, PROSECUTION RESTS TODAY
IN NIGHT SLASHER TRIAL - CONTROVERSIAL CASE DRAWS TO CLOSE.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Nick, cleary tired, faces the jury box.

NICK

We have all gotten to know each other
over these long months. And maybe...
maybe we're getting a little tired
of each other. Tired of seeing the
faces here instead of the faces of
our families and friends. Tired
of having to hear descriptions of
degredation and torture and murder.
Tired of having to look at photographs
of violated and brutalized bodies.
We want it to end. We want to get
out and breathe clean air and see
a blue sky and feel decent again.

Now, even as his words seem to drag them all down, he summons new
energy.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

I understand that. I feel that way myself. But I know it's a trap. Because the horror in this room can make us take a short cut to get out in the sunlight again.

He turns, POINTS to the Manson like DEFENDENT.

NICK(cont'd)

And that's what Roger Dwayne Feltzer is counting on... that's what his defense attorney is betting on... Our exhaustion. Our weariness. Because it might make you twelve people rush to judgement... to compromise on the charges against his client. And while you're in the jury room he will come to me and try and get me to compromise... to cut a deal... because he knows that I'm as burned out as you are. And I have to admit... that I might do it. Because like you I'm at the end.

(back to the jury)

That's why I need you to be strong in there. I need to know that you're holding out so that I can hold out. I need you to stay in that cramped little room with the bad coffee and the take out food until you have returned a verdict of First Degree Murder on each and every count. Because that's the only verdict that can make Earl Talbot Feltzer pay for the nine lives he snuffed out...

(pause)

And it's the only verdict that will let you - and me - sleep...

(wistful)

...when we finally get to go home.

On that unexpected low key statement, he turns to the Judge.

NICK

Your Honor. The defense...

(with meaning)

...rests.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

- where the doors EXPLODES OUTWARD and a jubilant PROSECUTION TEAM rushes into the corridor, Nick at the center, hanging on to Larry. Reporters and photographers edge in, flashbulbs popping.

LARRY

You did it, man. You did it.

NICK

Yeah, I got up in front of a jury and talked my ass off. You're the one who found the missing witness.

They embrace. Then Eubie Farris seperates them.

FARRIS

We need to talk.

LARRY

(as Nick scowls)

It's okay, I gotta go. Connie makes me see her once a month.

NICK

(as Eubie nudges him off)

And I want to see this mythical woman before the Goddamn wedding - our place, dinner, tomorrow.

CAMERA follows Nick and Farris as they head away from the courthouse.

FARRIS

Nick, it's time for you to think about your future.

NICK

Well, I thought tonight I'd kiss the baby, make love to my wife. Maybe tomorrow after my oat bran I'll lock up more bad guys.

FARRIS

I think it's time you started to think about Networking.

NICK

Thanks, we already got cable.

FARRIS

I'm talking about the Tower Club, wiseass.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

I know what you're talking about.
A bunch of ward heelers sitting around
a smoke filled room looking for ways
to give city jobs to their in-laws.
Pasadena, Eubie. Maybe when I'm
sixty and fit your member profile.

They're across the street now, the TRAFFIC having stopped for
Farris' almost mystically powerful raised hand. Farris leads
Nick into MC DOUGALL'S, a politico haunt.

INSIDE

Farris nods familiarly to the MAITRE' D, who leads the two men
towards a private room. Nick, distracted by the conversation,
isn't really paying attention.

FARRIS

Forget that old fart shit. The Towers
club has been the backbone of black
politics in this city for fifty years.
And you're right, lately we were
getting tired, outdated. A joke.
We're gonna change that now. That's
why we need young blood.

NICK

Are you vampires or Democrats?

FARRIS

You decide.

And he opens a door, revealing -

INT. MC DOUGAL'S BACK ROOM - DAY

A LUNCHEON of the TOWER CLUB, their name inspired by the large
RENDERING of the SOUTH CENTRAL TWIN TOWERS on the wall. Everyone
STANDS and rushes the new arrivals. FLASHBULBS pop.

FARRIS

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to
present our newest member, Assistant
District Attorney Nick Styles.

NICK

(aside to Farris, pissed)
I don't remember joining, Farris.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

FARRIS

(also aside)
Okay, then resign. Right now. We
have enough good people in office.
We'll live through the embarrassment
of you dissing us in the newspapers.

Nick realizes he's been had.

NICK

Farris, you're scum.
(thinking about it)
Smooth scum.

And, resigned - he shakes hands.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INFIRMARY - DAY

WIDEN from a TELEVISION where a NEWSCASTER is standing in front of
L.A.'s famous TWIN TOWERS, the fantasy handiwork of a 30's
craftsman.

KIM, in his blue smock, is doing OFFICE work. Blake, a GUARD
nearby, is getting STITCHES removed from an ugly slash on his arm.

Blake is oblivious to the medic's work - instead concentrating on
the BROADCAST:

THIRD NEWSCASTER

(on TV)

--days of glory behind them, some
people feel the Twin Towers are an
eyesore, a dangerous jumble of rusting
jagged steel and broken glass. But
L.A. Assistant District Attorney
Nicholas Styles has a different
idea...

SHOT CHANGES (either to STOCK of Nick and Eubie or else CAMERA
adjusts to show them on-site revealing an ARTIST'S RENDERING,
etc.)

THIRD NEWSCASTER

(on TV)

Together with City Councilman Eubie
Farris, Mr. Styles has announced
his plans for a Community Center
at the base of the restored Twin
Towers... and already local and state
authorities have promised to match
any private funds which these two
can raise.

KIM

at a file drawer, he looks over at Blake, can't get his attention. Finally he does. Blake just NODS, looks back at the TV.

THIRD NEWSCASTER'S VOICE

The popular Assistant District Attorney has already demonstrated he can round up criminals... now he's going to try and round up the big bucks.

KIM - CLOSER

Keeping his hands in the drawer out of the sight of the guard and the Doctor, he REMOVES DENTAL X-RAYS from a file marked "BLAKE, EARL TALBOT" and switches them with ones in another file we may or may not feature.

BACK TO SCENE

Kim closes the drawer, gives Blake a big look. The doctor checks his handiwork, puts a bandage over it.

DOCTOR

(to the guard)

He can go back to the yard.

(to Blake, sarcastic)

Try not to "fall down" anymore.

BLAKE

Don't worry, Doctor, I'm going to be taking every precaution.

(a glance at the TV)

I have things to live for.

THIRD NEWSCASTER

(on TV)

Here at Watts Towers, I'm Edward Ross.

CUT TO:

INT. WATTS CHURCH - DAY

The BAPTISM of Nick and Alice's 2ND DAUGHTER. Doing the honors? The REVEREND ARTHUR STYLES, 60, the origin of Nick's childhood moniker, P.K. (For Preacher's kid.)

REV. STYLES

- in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, I baptize thee Monica Allison Styles.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

As Nick's MOM and Dad coo over the baby and the big sister holds her for the first time, FARRIS taps his watch. Alice catches the gesture, annoyed. Nick turns on the charm.

NICK

Honey, it's a meeting with the bank
- about the community youth center.

ALICE

(nodding to baby)
How about this community youth?

REV. STYLES

(aside)
Son, are you about to leave tread
marks on the floor of my church again?

NICK

Dad, you're misinformed. The Jews
do guilt. Not us.
(as Farris signals)
I gotta run.

MRS. STYLES

Nick, what about dinner tonight?

ALICE

Mom, I'll bring the kids...
(as Nick splits)
And a Polaroid of Nick.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INFIRMARY - DAY

Kim - in civilian clothes - is cleaning out his desk while a GUARD waits. Blake - in a blue smock and - presumably, Kim's old job - is fixing the infirmary Xerox Machine.

KIM

This boy I know from West L.A. says
the parole officer there is a real
pushover. Maybe I can work longer
hours and get a really nice place...

(lowering voice)

For when you...get out?

(normal tone)

You're Earl Talbot Blake, you can't
be in some awful dump...

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

GUARD

(sarcastic)
You got a bus to catch - honey.
Or are you staying?

KIM

Blake, I gotta go. Blake?

Blake - with the machine now WORKING - doesn't even respond.
Resigned to being ignored, Kim just touches Blake's shoulder.

KIM

Goodbye, Blake. I'll be there when
you need me... I promise.

Kim leaves with the guard. Blake never acknowledges him, never turns - just keeps looking down at the TRAY of the Xerox machine as it pumps out COPIES, each FLASH of the green LIGHT illuminating Blake's face as the CAMERA PUSHES in close on him.

THE OUT TRAY OF THE MACHINE - HIS POV - CAMERA PUSH

revealing that he is Xeroxing a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING of NICK, Farris and others, which he is ENLARGING so that with each COPY the other people are blown out of the shot and Nick's face gets LARGER and LARGER...

CUT TO:

INT. FIVE STORY ROCK HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick climbs up the narrow stairs of the same building he raided four years ago. His policeman's eyes take in the CANVAS ESCAPE CHUTE hanging through the stairwell from the roof. GLARING GUARDS and DEALERS on every floor show it's back in business - bigger than ever.

INT. STAIRWELL - NEXT TO LAST FLOOR - NIGHT

One big HOOD tries to block his way. He tries to pass. The hood SWINGS - and then Nick CHOPS him down with several blows, drops him on the next landing.

NICK

Sorry. But I have an appointment.

He continues on up to

THE TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

where he is ushered into the inner sanctum of the Big Man himself... none other than his childhood friend, Odessa, even now lighting one of his trademark Sobranis.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

(looking around)
Done a lot of remodeling, Odessa.
Seems like every time we close you
down you upgrade the place.

ODESSA

You got a lot of balls coming here,
P.K. Let's hope you leave with 'em.

Nick takes a deep breath. This is his toughest jury to date.

NICK

You... gentlemen seem to know
everything that goes on in South
Central. So you know about the
Children's Center.

R.C.

Yeah, that thing by Watts Tower.
(on Odessa's nasty look)
I saw the commercial Magic Johnson
did, okay?

NICK

Magic's not the only one supporting
it. The Towers used to mean this
neighborhood was reaching for the
sky. It's going to mean that again.

ODESSA

What's that got to do with us?

NICK

It's going to be off limits to you
and everyone like you, Odessa. You
don't deal there, you don't recruit
there, you don't claim turf there.

ODESSA

Why should I do that?

NICK

For your mama, asshole.

Boiling, Odessa waves back his guards.

ODESSA

What about my mama, mother fucker?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2)

NICK

She died praying with my Daddy for your soul. Just like she prayed when you buried your twelve year old brother after that drive by. We all seen it -our little brothers, sisters, cousins, cut down by gangstas too busy to see where they're shooting - and if they live through that they get recruited into the teen gangs you all graduated from. You all feel good about the blood of all those children? Make you feel tough, like real men?

They fall silent, none of them so far gone into Hell not to remember guilt. He presses home.

NICK (cont'd)

I know I ain't gonna change you, Odessa. You're gonna steal and cheat till you drop. But you're not gonna steal and cheat our babies out of their childhoods any more. The Center is Holy Ground, you got that?

ODESSA

What do I get out of this deal?

NICK

You get to live through tonight, Odessa,

He reveals a HAND GRENADE. Silence.

Nick moves closer, holds the grenade in front of Odessa. Whispers, just loud enough for his former friend to hear.

NICK (cont'd)

And you get to feel good for a change, when you go to your Mama's grave like always on Mother's day.

Odessa stands. And shakes hands with Nick.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick comes out to a very nervous Larry by the car.

NICK

He went for it.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

Larry exhales, relieved.

LARRY

You know you're taking a big chance dealing with this bastard, Nick. Word gets out, it could blow you out of the D.A.'s office.

Nick takes out a celebratory cigar.

NICK

No. Taking a chance is living in this neighborhood. It can be a real hell.

LARRY

And you just made a deal with the devil.

NICK

You never know. Maybe I can get him to put in air conditioning.

And he lights the CIGAR with the hand grenade - it's a CIGARETTE LIGHTER.

CUT TO:

INT. BLAKE'S CELL - PRISON - DAY

A neatly dressed Blake combs his hair in the mirror. A GUARD opens the cell.

GUARD

Parole Board is ready, asshole. Hope you remembered to floss.

BLAKE

I did - with your wife's pubic hair.

Blake goes out. CAMERA PANS back to his cell and we SEE to our SHOCK that the walls are COVERED with CLIPPINGS, ARTICLES, XEROXES and bizarre COLLAGES of - NICK STYLES', POLICE AND D.A. CAREER.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON OFFICE AREA - NEAR PAROLE HEARING ROOM -DAY

Blake, under guard, is taken past CONVICT WORKERS who are installing panelling in the offices with POWER TOOLS while they're watched by ARMED GUARDS.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

The workers are JESSE and two other ARYANS. They exchange careful EYE CONTACT with Blake.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON PAROLE BOARD ROOM - DAY

Blake and his LAWYER sit across from the six-person PAROLE BOARD.

LAWYER

(in mid-bullshit)

- and while there is no denying my client's violent younger years, I would point out his disadvantaged upbringing... and the fact that the victims of his violent act were in general other criminals. Since then, Mr. Blake-has worked hard at reforming himself.

PAROLE BOARD MEMBER

(unimpressed)

Is brutally attacking his fellow inmates part of that reforming process?

(checking file)

Since his incarceration he has been in a dozen seperate incidents of violence.

BLAKE'S LAWYER

All in self-defense and all against the notorious Aryan Brotherhood.

(playing for the bleachers)

A vicious, racist anti-Semitic right wing group associated with the Klu Klux Klan.

FEMALE PAROLE BOARD MEMBER

(supportive, a real bleeding heart)

I'd like to hear from Mr. Blake himself, if he truly thinks he can make a meaningful contribution to society.

PAROLE BOARD CHAIRMAN

Well put, Rhoda. Mr. Blake, what will you do if you get out of prison?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

I guess first thing, I'd go over
to your house.

PAROLE BOARD CHAIRMAN

To thank me, I suppose?

BLAKE

No, to fuck your wife. And your
daughter. Hell, maybe your dog.

The board is dumfounded. (The lawyer is dying.)

PAROLE BOARD CHAIRMAN

I don't think this is funny.

BLAKE

Then you'll probably hate this.

Blake WHIPS out a PRISON ZIP GUN and SHOOTs the chairman right
in the FOREHEAD.

As the man DROPS onto the table, flipping it, the GUARD in the
room steps forward, drawing his gun. Blake KARATES him across
the bridge of the nose, instantly killing him. Blake grabs the
pistol from the dead hand.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

The Aryan brothers whirl and brutally KILL the guards here with
the TABLE SAW and ELECTRIC DRILLS they're using.

It's all over in SECONDS. Jesse opens the board room door, sees
Blake holding the cowering board at gunpoint.

NEW ANGLE

BLAKE

Check the hall.

The other convicts obey, carefully peering out at

CORRIDOR - HIS POV THROUGH PARTLY OPEN DOOR

In the rest of the prison offices, the quick melee has gone
UNHEARD.

BACK TO SCENE

Blake holds the gun on his prisoners, just like he held a gun once
before.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

The last time I had a gun in my hand,
a young man took off all his clothes
for me. It was so unforgettable,
I'd like you all to try it.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - PUBLIC AREA - DAY

The LAWYER shows his pass to the guard.

LAWYER

S...six to exit, please.

We WIDEN and see that the six are this scared man - Blake, who holds a hidden GUN on him - Jesse and the Aryan brothers - and the sole WOMAN on the parole board, also with a gun in her back. The prisoners are wearing the civilian clothes they took from the board's male members.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

The Parole Board moves towards its little van. Closer... closer... they're going to make it. But then someone gets out of the other VEHICLE in the courtyard. It's a BOOKMOBILE STEP VAN, and the man is the OLD MAN WHO GAVE BLAKE BOOKS IN THE HOSPITAL.

CHARITY WORKER - CLOSE SHOT

He starts to RECOGNIZE Blake -

BLAKE

also recognizes the man -

THE CHARITY WORKER

his smile FADES when he figures out, hell, this is a break! He starts to SCREAM -

WIDER

BLAKE SHOOTS him, point blank!

BLAKE

(as the man DROPS, to
the others)

We're made!

Blake FIRES upwards -

WALL GUARDS - UP ANGLE

Blake's SHOT drops one man - the other AIMS his rifle, gets off a SHOT -

THE COURTYARD

one of the convicts DIES. Jesse FIRES upwards beside Blake and the second wall guard DIES.

A COURTYARD DOOR

where more GUARDS burst out, but check their fire as they SEE

THE CONVICTS

edging towards the bookmobile with the WOMAN JUROR and the LAWYER hostage -

ANOTHER GUARD

hidden till now, he steps into the sunlight with a clear shot -FIRES -

ANOTHER ARYAN

goes down - Blake WHIRLS, KILLS the new guard, but exposes his flank - the woman seizes the moment to bolt -

THE GUARDS.

hesitate, the woman in the way -

BLAKE AND JESSE

BLAST AWAY -

THE GUARDS

take cover - one is HIT - so is the WOMAN -

BLAKE AND JESSE

DIVE into the bookmobile's rear - Jesse takes the wheel and it LURCHES FORWARD -

HIGH ANGLE

it ROARS for the gate, BOOKS piling out the rear -

PASSENGER SIDE

As the wheels whirl up dust and Jesse SWERVES, Blake leans out the window at the lawyer, just now struggling to his feet.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

By the way - you're fired.

He SHOTS him.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

the bookmobile CRASHES the gate and ESCAPES as the guards vault over the fallen BOOKCASES and FIRE futilely after it.

CUT TO:

EXT. A LONELY ROAD - NIGHT

Where the bookmobile step van is hidden in foliage that also shields a SEDAN driven by Kim.

Standing beside the latter, Jesse and Blake change into the clothes Kim has brought, Jesse goes over their plan:

JESSE

You got one week to take care of your fucking mysterious shit in LA, Blake. Friday the 12th we meet at the White Nation Bookstore in Glendale. They'll have passports, cash and tickets out of the country.

BLAKE

Friday the 12th? That can't be right, Jesse. I already have your passport... right here.

JESSE

Huh?

And then Blake BLOWS OFF JESSE'S FACE with a SHOTGUN hidden under the sedan seat.

NEW ANGLE

Jesse's body falls with a rustle into the bushes. As the body TWITCHES Blake takes a pistol and SHOTS the dead man's KNEE.

BLAKE

You never know when you'll get an anal retentive coroner.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

KIM

(both nauseous and
fascinated)

God, that's brilliant, Blake. You're amazing. I mean, there's hard men and there's smart men, but you're both in one incredible package.

BLAKE

One.. last... touch.

CAMERA PUSHES TO Blake as he reaches up and YANKS OUT HIS OWN EARRING, tearing his earlobe, which begins to BLEED.

Kim looks at him, amazed.

KIM

Wow. Awesome.

BLAKE

You can't die without bleeding a little...

He bends close to Jesse's gruesome head and SCREWS the earring onto the remaining ear. (The CAMERA merifully CROPS most of the gore.)

WIDER

Blake DRAGS the brutalized body to the bookmobile, puts it behind the wheel. RIPS cloth from the abandoned clothing and puts a strip in the gas tank... LIGHTS IT. As the cloth burns, he releases the emergency brake of the van.

It rolls over the edge of the cliff.

CLIFF - FROM BELOW - NIGHT

The Bookmobile BOUNCES, FLIPS - EXPLODES.

UP ABOVE

As the FLAMES light the sky and EMBERS drift over him, Blake looks thoughtfully down at the burning wreck.

BLAKE

I always wanted a Viking Funeral.

Blake puts his arm around Kim and they get in the sedan. It drives away, gets lost in the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Nick comes out of the building, secretary RITA in tow and Farris at his elbow.

NICK

(dictating on the run)

-- "and I'm happy to make this contribution to your fine organization, yadda, yadda, yadda... send them uh, fifty bucks - what was this again?"

RITA

(deadpan)

It's your mother's Meals on Wheels program at your Father's church.

NICK

Really?

(pause)

Make it a hundred. What else?

RITA

The Dr. Ficus Crisis Hotline -

NICK

Ficus? That clown on the radio?

FARRIS

A very respected author and shrink.

(aside)

Plus that clinic of his is Priscilla the Hun's favorite charity -

NICK

(to Rita)

Two hundred.

RITA

(exiting)

I'll get these out right after lunch.

A reporter (FARUCCHI) approaches Nick. Ferris goes on automatic pilot.

NICK

Farucci, don't even ask about the Harrington thing. It's still in Grand Jury -

FARUCCHI

Relax, this is a golden oldie. Remember Earl Talbot Blake?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

(sarcastic)
No, the name escapes me.

FARUCCI

Good choice of words.

On Nick's look the reporter hands over the late edition. Startled, Nick REACTS to the story about the jailbreak.

FARUCCI

He busted out from his parole hearing with some of the Aryan Brotherhood. They double crossed him and took him skydiving in a truck. If it wasn't for his teeth and the hole you put in his knee, they never would have I.D.'d the body.

Farris takes the paper from Nick, interested. The reporter takes out a tape recorder, turns it ON.

FARUCCI

He was your first home run, Mr. Styles. Any comment?

NICK

The Aryan Brotherhood killed him? Well, like my Preacher Daddy likes to say... I guess there's a little good in everybody.

FARUCCI

(amused)
Cold, Styles.

NICK

And bold.
(as the reporter leaves)
The Watts Center wants your check, Farucci!

FARRIS

(checking watch)
And the Tower Club wants your body, Mr. D.A.

NICK

Mr. Assistant D.A.

FARRIS

This week.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2)

He hustles Nick along. A HOMELESS MAN in sloppy coat, flimsy gloves and floppy hat stumbles into their path, gesturing for a handout.

FARRIS
(edging past him)
Get a job.

Nick winces, slips the guy five bucks and follows Farris. CAMERA PUSHES to the homeless guy.

It's BLAKE, who now pockets the bill, moves around the corner.

BLAKE - NEW ANGLE - DAY

Still watching Nick and Farris as they cross the street to Mc Dougall's, he discards the sloppy clothes, flinging them without charity on other homeless people, who BICKER for the leavings.

Now revealed in more presentable clothing, he adjusts sunglasses and a generic ball cap... moves quickly to follow Nick and Farris.

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

INT. MC DOUGALL'S BACK ROOM - DAY

Nick, Farris and other members of the Tower Club are brainstorming. SKETCHES of a FAMILY CENTER built behind Watts Towers get passed around.

FIRST MEMBER
A telethon? That's for a disease,
guys -

NICK
It works for PBS. In fact, the local
PBS outlet's gonna give us the air
time.

SECOND MEMBER
And who pays for the studio?

NICK
We'll do a remote. From my Dad's
church.

FARRIS
We're not working in the dark, here:
The Community in Miami did exactly
the same thing.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

FARRIS (Cont'd)
Raised almost a million for their
Family Center. We just got back
from seeing it. Hell of an operation.

The pretty WAITRESS pauses as she brings drinks... looks at Nick.

WAITRESS
Don't you have a TV show or something?

LAUGHTER from everyone else.

NICK
Not... exactly. I'm just on the
news sometimes.

FARRIS
Every chance he gets...

WAITRESS
I knew I recognized you, you're like
the Mayor or something?

BIG laughs and REACTIONS.

NICK
Farris, you oughta hire this lady.
She's got bigger plans for me than
you do.

FARRIS
Wanna bet?

CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE ACROSS THE ROOM until we're through the
alcove and in the SHADOWS of the REAR of the MAIN ROOM.

BLAKE is there, nursing a scotch, a NEWSPAPER partly covering
the SENSITIVE DIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE and cassette recorder he
has AIMED AT NICK.

NICK'S VOICE
(to the waitress)
I'm the Assistant District Attorney,
so you have to follow my orders.

WAITRESS' VOICE
You got it, Mr. D.A. Anybody up
for the house special?

NICK
Nah, just bring everyone another
round.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2)

Blake starts to laugh... tries to stifle it. We don't know what's so funny.

Yet.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATTS CHURCH - NIGHT

SPOTLIGHTS and BANNERS announce tonight's telethon.

INT. WATTS CHURCH - NIGHT

The TELETHON for the FAMILY CENTER is in full progress. CHOIR singing - VOLUNTEERS at a bank of phones - and up in front of the church, even REDD FOXX as the M.C.

FOXX

-- and you folks were real brave
to come out to this neighborhood
tonight, 'cause there's something
real scary out on those streets...
malathion!

THE AUDIENCE

LAUGHTER. We see Nick on an aisle between Farris and Alice, Larry and Larry's wife CONNIE beside them.

BACK TO SCENE

FOXX

After this turnout, we gotta have
another telethon for a really worthy
cause - we're gonna raise money to
stamp out telethons!

(over LAUGHTER)

Now, before you bust a gut laughing
at these fine jokes let me turn the
mike back to a great man, and may
I add, a very close personal friend,
your own Reverend Arthur Styles...

More APPLAUSE as Reverend Styles mounts the podium and takes the mike.

REV. STYLES

Thank you, Redd. You know, I've
known Redd for what, 30 years now?
And he's still telling the same
jokes...

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

The audience ROARS at the clergyman trading rim shots with the comic.

REVEREND STYLES (cont'd)

But now I have the honor of introducing the man whose tireless dedication to family, community and duty has inspired us all... he's the one who showed us we could make our dreams into reality... my son, Nick Styles.

Nick goes to the pulpit amid cheers and the waving of home-made signs (STYLES FOR MAYOR!) The crowd quiets down.

NICK

You know, when I was out there on that street playing stickball I used to get annoyed when the other kids called me P.K. - for "Preacher's Kid". I thought it was a wisecrack. It wasn't until I got older that I realized it was a badge of honor.

APPROVAL from the crowd.

NICK

Dad, you've made me real proud. Everything I am, everything I will be, I owe to you and Mom.

Father and son embrace. The crowd loves it.

FARRIS AND ALICE

FARRIS

God, this is great. You can't buy this.

ALICE

(annoyed)
Eubie, wake up. This is real.

FARRIS

Yeah? Even better.

A pretty CHARITY WORKER comes over from her station at the phones, taps Alice on the shoulder.

CHARITY WORKER

Telephone for you, Mrs. Styles.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

Alice looks startled - starts to move.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOME - NIGHT (INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

With a CRYING 2 1/2 year old and a whimpering 5 year old behind her, the BABYSITTER is at the phone, using a FLASHLIGHT to see in the dark room.

BABYSITTER

Mrs. Styles, I'm sorry to bother you, but the power went out. The girls are pretty scared.

ALICE - IN CHURCH - INTERCUT - NIGHT

Behind her, the telethon CONTINUES, as Nick UNVEILS a MODEL of the proposed family center, complete with model TWIN TOWERS at the center of it. Alice has to SHOUT over the OOOH'S and AHHH's.

ALICE

Oh, no. Did you call the power company?

BABYSITTER

Yes, they said they'd send someone right over.

ALICE

Right over? You're dealing with the City, honey, that could mean tomorrow. Okay, I'll come right back. Meanwhile, there's candles in the top cabinet in the kitchen and a flashlight in the right hand

-

BABYSITTER

Wait a minute, there's the door.

Phone still at her ear, the sitter opens the door.

It's BLAKE, in a complete DWP getup, tool belt, helmet and all. He SMILES.

BLAKE

Trouble?

Relieved, the sitter speaks into the phone.

BABYSITTER

Everything's okay, Mrs. Styles!

CUT TO:

CHURCH - RESUME TELETHON - NIGHT

CLOSE on a somewhat primitive DOLLAR BOARD, where numbers change slowly - too slowly - towards the 100 THOUSAND DOLLAR GOAL.

But now in addition to the RINGING PHONES, there is a parade of LOCAL NEIGHBORS and SHOPKEEPERS and MERCHANTS who come in, like REGGIE, the burly BARTENDER who waves CASH.

REGGIE

From my customers down the block,
watching this here on the bar TV...
\$150!

(applause)

Plus \$200 from my own pocket...

(more applause)

Plus \$200 from my partner, only he
don't know about it yet!

APPLAUSE and LAUGHTER. Now as the choir SINGS, GIRL SCOUTS pass the hat.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

VERY TIGHT ON BLAKE as he LIGHTS A MATCH just under his chin, the FLAME creating SINISTER SHADOWS on his face.

CAMERA ADJUSTS as he lights a CANDLE.

Blake, and the little girls are at the kitchen table. CANDLES are everywhere, but the one Blake has just lit is one of many birthday candles jammed into a TWINKIE. LISA, the oldest girl, looks at Blake.

LISA

Is it really your birthday, Mr. Power Man?

The sitter is at the kitchen counter, pouring milk and making coffee. Blake gives her a big wink. She grins back.

BLAKE

Oh, yes it is. And I was afraid
I was going to have a very sad
birthday when I saw all those awful
sad faces in here. What happened
to all those frowns, huh?

(chucking Monica's chin)

Huh, pumpkin?

MONICA

We turned those frowns upside down!

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

That's right, sweetheart. Now see how pretty it is in here? Now, before I turn the lights on, isn't there something we're supposed to do at birthday parties?

LISA

Make a wish!

MONICA

Blow out the candles!

BLAKE

Right! Who wants to help me... what you both do? Okay! One -two - three!

They blow out the candles on the twinkies. The girls applaud. Blake smiles distantly.

LISA

We hope you get your wish, Mr. Power Man.

BLAKE

Oh, I'm getting it, sweetheart. I'm getting it tonight.

The sitter brings over milk for the girls. Blake follows her back to the counter, where she hands him coffee.

BABYSITTER

You're really great with kids.

BLAKE

(taking the mug)

Thanks. You just have to get into their little heads.

(looking off)

Those chocolate and icing covered little heads.

The sitter looks off, dismayed at the mess - and as she does, Blake drops a TABLET in

THE SITTER'S COFFEE MUG

BACK TO SCENE

SITTER

(to Blake)
I'll hose 'em down and get 'em in
bed. You okay?

BLAKE

Five minutes at the main panel and
you'll be lit up like Broadway.

SITTER

I think it's in the basement.

He nods, heads that way. She approaches the girls.

BABYSITTER

You know, those things are all
disgusting chemicals, additives and
preservatives.

ON THEM

Adorable with faces of food.

BACK TO SCENE

BABYSITTER

Gimme one of them.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - UP ANGLE

Blake's FLASHLIGHT illuminates his way downstairs. He goes over
to the panel, but doesn't open it. Instead, he takes out a WALKIE
TALKIE.

BLAKE

Kim. You there?

CUT TO:

EXT. POWER POLE - NIGHT (INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

Kim is up on the pole, also in DWP gear. Nick's HOUSE is visible
in the B.G.

KIM

No, I went cruising in the bars.
This is a brilliant mind fuck, Blake.
I mean genius, absolute genius.
You want the power back on now?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

Not yet. Watch the street. Look like a lineman... or in your case, line person.

IN THE BASEMENT

Blake disconnects, looks at his watch. Behind schedule! He moves to a workbench. He quickly takes a little Sony Watchman from his belt, sets it up...

ANGLE OVER HIS SHOULDER

He tunes in the TELETHON, where the CAMERA picks up a MESSENGER as he nervously crosses the podium towards Redd Foxx.

BLAKE

Right on time...

CUT TO:

THE CHURCH - RESUME TELETHON

where Foxx looks dubiously at the messenger.

FOXX

Son, if this is from the IRS, you gonna have my foot in your butt.

LAUGHTER. The messenger looks nervously at the red lights of the cameras.

MESSENGER

No it's not for you, Mr. Foxx. It's for...

(reading)

Nick Styles.

NICK - IN THE AUDIENCE

surprised, he responds as Foxx waves him up -

FOXX

Well I ain't gonna read nobody else's mail, I already got enough federal offenses. Get on up here, Nick...

(to the messenger)

Don't look at me, boy, this man here's got your tip!

LAUGHTER. Goaded by Foxx, Nick takes out five bucks - Foxx grabs Nick's wallet and adds another five.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

As the messenger leaves, Nick opens the envelope... REACTS along with the AUDIENCE at the sight of TWENTY 500 DOLLAR BILLS.

NICK
(disbelieving)
This is... this is ten thousand
dollars...

NICK'S PARENTS

MRS. STYLES
Hallelujah!

REV. STYLES
(sotto)
Jesus H. Christ - !

BACK TO SCENE

Reggie the bartender stands up.

REGGIE
Read the letter, Nick!

Others JOIN IN. Nick waves for silence, reads ALOUD:

NICK
"I am sending this to help your fine
cause not because it is fine, or
noble or important - though of course
it is. But my motivation is personal,
because of the Man who has spearheaded
the Watts Community Center plan...
Assistant District Attorney Nick
Styles... Seven years ago, Fate
allowed me to meet this very special
young man..."

A little embarrassed, Nick breaks off... but the crowd eggs him on.

NICK(cont'd)
In the wink of an eye one evening,
he changed my life... my future...
my destiny... and now, finally, I
have the chance to pay him back."

Nick's face clouds a little. Who was this mysterious person?

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE on the babysitter's COFFEE CUP as it dangles, then spills, then FALLS.

WIDEN. She has just passed out on the SOFA. Near her, the little girls sleep, curled up like bunnies.

CAMERA PUSHES to the basement DOOR, DESCENDS as we continue to HEAR

NICK'S VOICE

How do you let someone know that they've never left your thoughts in all that time? How do you do to them what they've done to you? Tonight, your telethon has given me the chance of a lifetime..."

ON BLAKE - IN BASEMENT

a few feet from the television, swaying eerily as he watches and RECITES AHEAD OF NICK -

BLAKE

"I have never forgotten Assistant District Attorney Nick Styles..."

NICK

(on TV)

"I have never forgotten Assistant District Attorney Nick Styles..."

BLAKE

"And after tonight I know he will never forget me..."

NICK

"And after tonight I know he will never forget me."

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH TELETHON - RESUME NICK

Silence here, the audience quietly absorbing the seemingly heartfelt letter. Nick turns it over.

NICK

It's... not signed, ladies and gentlemen...

Nick looks at the money, shrugs, turns it over to a CHARITY WORKER.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

We'll just have to thank this
wonderful person in our prayers...
because unless I'm mistaken...

He looks at the board. The numbers roll.

NICK

Yes, that ten thousand dollars has
put us over the top, ALL RIGHT!
(over CHEERS)

And your hundred thousand dollars
is going to be matched, first with
city, then State and Federal funds...
and that 400 thousand dollars will
be the down payment on a two million
dollar complex that will be a safe
haven for our children for generations
to come!

WILD APPLAUSE and CHEERS. The CHOIR SINGS. BALLOONS are
RELEASED. People DANCE.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nick comes down from the podium, embraces Alice, then his friends.

A Charity worker puts the CASH in a BANK DEPOSIT BAG along with
the CHECKS and PLEDGES and hands the bag to FARRIS.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Blake comes back upstairs. He looks off into the

THE LIVING ROOM - HIS POV

The sitter is UNCONSCIOUS, her spilled coke by her empty hand.
The little girls are asleep nearby.

BACK TO SCENE

Blake starts towards them - stops. He's looking at -

A WALL OF FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS

many of them the SAME SHOTS he collected in his prison cell.

BACK TO SCENE

he looks at them - runs his hand over them, almost lovingly.
Then he turns.

ON THE THREE GIRLS

CAMERA PANS up from them to Blake, hovering over them. He slowly unbuckles the DWP belt, tosses it onto an easy chair.

And then, just as we grow sick at what he might do to the cute teen-ager and cuter babies...

He picks up the little girls, one in each arm... and goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH/STREET - NIGHT

The last of the volunteers, TV crew and audience LEAVES. Nick and Alice embrace the Reverend and Mrs.

Styles while Larry, Connie and Farris look on.

REVEREND FARRIS

G'night, son... Did I say I was I was mighty proud of you?

NICK

Yeah, Dad, on television.

MRS. STYLES

(hugging him)

I'll say it in private.

Everybody AD LIBS "goodnights," etc.

FARRIS

(holds up canvas bag)

I'm gonna stop at the bank on the way home and toss this baby into the night deposit. Well done, everybody.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS Farris as he gets into his car.

INT. FARRIS'S CAR - NIGHT

Farris starts the engine, puts the car into gear and DRIVES. We hear the car RADIO.

RADIO VOICE

... and a standing ovation for comedian Redd Foxx at tonight's telethon at the Central Avenue Baptist Church.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

RADIO VOICE (Cont'd)
Over a hundred thousand dollars was raised for the Watts Tower Community Center, the project spearheaded by Assistant District Attorney Nicholas Styles, who observers say is a likely candidate himself for higher office in next fall's city elections -

FARRIS
City? Try State, asshole.

He turns off the radio and starts humming HAIL TO THE CHIEF.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Farris' car pulls up to the curb and parks in front of a bank. He gets out and approaches the night deposit slot when a slim young MAN approaches him.

MAN
Got a match?

FARRIS
Yeah, I think so... just a minute...

As Farris starts to rifle through his pockets, we SEE that the man is Kim! And behind him from out of the darkness comes --

Blake, who CHLOROFORMS Farris!

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick and Alice come in. Darkness.

NICK
Hello?

Nick tries the lights. They work! They see the groggy sitter on the sofa.

BABYSITTER
Mrs. Styles, you're home already?

ALICE
It's 2:00 AM, Debbie. Did the girls go to sleep all right?

Pause.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BABYSITTER

I... don't remember. The DWP guy
was here, and then...

That's enough. Two nervous parents are already going up the stairs.

UPSTAIRS - OUTSIDE THE GIRLS' ROOM

Nick and Alice open the door and find them... sleeping like angels, their Smurfs in their arms.

CUT TO:

EXT. MC DOUGAL'S - EARLY MORNING - DAY

Closed, quiet.

INT. MC DOUGAL'S BACK ROOM - DAY

A bored CLEANING WOMAN rolls her bucket past the tables and the upturned chairs. Passing the big picture of the Watts Towers, she flicks the frame with her duster... and then she backs into something, turns and SCREAMS.

HER P.O.V.

A pair of FEET DANGLE from the chandelier.

INT. STYLES BEDROOM - MORNING

PAN from a DESK here with BLUEPRINTS of the Tower Center... then a TRAIL of CLOTHING takes us to the bed and murmurs of ecstasy as Nick and Alice make love.

ALICE

You know, the day we met you said
you'd be Governor by now. What gives?

NICK

You're holding me back, that's what.

ALICE

Holding you back, hell. But honey,
now I'm gonna hold you down...

The love play is interrupted by a phone call. Nick takes it.

NICK

Yeah, Larry...
(pause)

Oh, Sweet Jesus.

CUT TO:

INT. MC DOUGALL'S BACK ROOM - DAY

Nick and Alice come in just as Farris' body - clad in PANTIES and a GIRDLE - is cut down from the chandelier. Larry, in charge, supervises a forensics team. Nick is speechless.

NICK

I don't believe this... it's insane...
insane...

LARRY

Wait until you see this.

Larry pulls out a few MAGAZINES from Farris' BRIEFCASE. Nick REACTS.

THE MAGAZINES

They're CHILD PORN.

RESUME

Nick and Alice can't believe it.

ALICE

This is impossible, Larry.

NICK

She's right. We knew this guy, you
knew this guy -

LARRY

You'd better look at the suicide
note, partner.

He hands it over, already wrapped in plastic. Nick reads it with a chill:

NICK

"I cannot forgive myself for what
we did -" -we? - "we did to those
innocent children in Florida last
month... if we build the Children's
Center here I will not-" (hesitates,
softer) "-not be able to resist
temptation again.... it's better
this way..." Christ!!

LARRY

It gets worse, Nick.

NICK

It can't get worse -

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

LARRY

Yeah?

(showing the bank bag)
All that's in here is your pledge
cards and checks from last night.
Then ten grand and more? It's
missing.

CUT TO:

EXT. MC DOUGALL'S - DAY

Nick and Alice fight their way through the press to their car.
Already the questions are coming:

REPORTER #1

Mr. Styles, how close were you to
Mr. Farris?

REPORTER #2

Did you know he was a child molester?

REPORTER #3

What happened in Florida, Mr. Styles?
Weren't you there together?

REPORTER #1

Is it true that the funds from your
Children's Center are missing? Mr.
Styles? Mr. Styles?

CAMERA PANS their car away - and we SEE a highly amused Blake
watching from a car, Kim beside him.

CUT TO:

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY

The same room where Nick got "discovered" seven years ago. This
time it's different. Brimleigh - with a dour AIDE named KILEY
and OTHERS - grills Nick.

BRIMLEIGH

Was Farris ever out of your sight
when you went to Florida?

NICK

No.

Click click click. Nick looks with annoyance and foreboding
at the COURT STENOGRAPHER taking it all down on the little
machine.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BRIMLEIGH

Then what the hell was he talking about in that suicide note?

NICK

How the hell should I know? Maybe he didn't write it!

KILEY

Come on, Styles, forensics verified it was his handwriting...

NICK

Maybe somebody made him write it, Kiley, you ever think of that?

KILEY

We're looking for facts, not fantasy-

BRIMLEIGH

Nick, nobody's enjoying this.

NICK

No, Priscilla, I think you're wrong. Somewhere somebody is enjoying this, because things like this don't just happen. Somebody's laughing, I can hear it in my blood.

KILEY

When you and Farris went to Florida, did you use any city funds?

NICK

(pissed)
You know I didn't! Every minute I've put into the Tower Center was on my own time... weekends, vacations! Everybody knows it was my pet project

BRIMLEIGH

And it's gonna be the newspaper's pet project, too, Nick. There's the afternoon paper.

She plops it down and Nick shudders.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

There's a picture of Nick and Farris with little kids on their laps at the Florida center. The headline reads: DA AND CHILD MOLESTER IN MIAMI ON CITY FUNDS?

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

The bastards... that's from the Miami papers - it's a perfectly innocent picture -

BRIMLEIGH

Not any more, it ain't. You wanted to be in the limelight, Styles? Well, now it's a hot seat. Okay. Any idea who sent in that ten grand last night?

NICK

Of course not!

KILEY

No? That letter seemed awfully... personal... like the writer actually knew you -

NICK

(steamed, to the room)
I thought you knew me, too.

He gets up, pissed. Brimleigh rises to intercept him at the door.

CLOSER

BRIMLEIGH

Styles, I didn't bullshit you from day one and I won't start now. I found you on the Goddamn Eyewitness news and got you your shield and you've been on the roller coaster ever since. We've taken turns riding each other's coattails and we've been there for each other. Maybe we really like each other, maybe we don't. But whatever good we've done is going down the shitter if you're perceived as dirty and if you are the rest of this department is going to stay clean. If you can't take the shots to the kishkas in this room you sure won't be able to take them in front of the press - or in front of a judge.

NICK

You'd really let it go that far?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BRIMLEIGH
If I try and stop it it's the same
as saying you're guilty.

NICK
What are friends for?

BRIMLEIGH
For telling you the truth!

Pause.

BRIMLEIGH
Get out of here. Get some rest.
And think of something!

Pissed, Nick barges out of the room. Larry is waiting in the lobby.

LARRY
What happened?

NICK
Just a lynching, Come on. I feel
like going on a real bender.

They exit, Nick's last remark overheard by some REPORTERS.

CUT TO:

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick's idea of a bender is a couple of beers in the front seat of Larry's car.

NICK
(sipping)
I could always advertise on
television. Lawyers can do that,
now.
(rapid "radio" tone)
"Nicholas Styles, automobile liability
our speciality. We take Mastercharge
and Visa, se habla Espanol."

LARRY
You're not gonna lose your job.
Hell, you made Priscilla the Hun
with that Slasher case. Won her
election for her.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

Ancient history. Now she thinks
I'm a loose cannon.

LARRY

I always thought you were a man of
high calibre.

NICK

(groaning, getting out)
You get that one from Redd Foxx?

LARRY

Hey. You forget this shit when you
go in that door. Put on some music,
make love to your wife. But no more
girls!

Nick laughs, slams the door. Waves as Larry drives away.
Suddenly HEADLIGHTS pin Nick in their glare.

His P.O.V. - DOWN THE STREET

A car comes ROARING towards him.

NICK

DIVES out of the way as the car SKIDS to a halt. He's already on
his feet, a day of frustration making him combative.

NICK

You asshole! Are you trying to kill
somebody?

Suddenly he's looking down a GUN BARREL.

BLAKE

Exactly, Nick. Exactly.

NEW ANGLE

Nick is speechless - looking at a dead man.

NICK

Jesus Christ.

BLAKE

Almost.

He CRACKS the gun barrel across Nick's forehead. Nick crumples.
Kim jumps out and helps Blake get Nick in the car.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

KIM

Fuck, the look on his face was
priceless, I bet he shit his pants,
I can't wait to look -

As they drive away --

ALICE

Attracted by the earlier SKID, she looks out the window, the
children at the dining room table behind her... and sees...
nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. A SEEDY LOFT - DAY

Where Nick is tied to a bed, slowly coming around. Blake sits
quietly nearby. Kim is busy at a table in the B.G.

BLAKE

Hello, Nick.

NICK

Blake. You son of a bitch.

BLAKE

After all these years, the first
thing you do is insult my mother?
Did I insult you? Did I talk about
how you've let yourself go? I can
still remember your lean brown body
in your little jockey shorts... but
now? Ten years of two martini lunches
on the city payroll!

NICK

You killed Farris, didn't you?

BLAKE

You killed my life.

NICK

So now we're even, is that it, you
fuck?

BLAKE

We're not even close: I'd have to
kill a hundred politicians to be
even - and then I'd probably get
a medal!

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE (Cont'd)
But let's not talk about killing.
Let's talk about arm wrestling.

NICK
What?

BLAKE
Arm wrestling. You put up your arm,
there, and if you beat me, I'll let
you go.

NICK
Sure you will.

BLAKE
What have you got to lose?

Nick looks at him, sure he's crazy, but wondering if maybe he's
so crazy that he's going to keep his word. Finally Nick nods.
Blake loosens the ropes on Nick's right arm, pushes a table over.
They hold hands.

BLAKE
Strange.

NICK
No shit.

They start to wrestle. They're pretty evenly matched. A thin
patina of SWEAT breaks out on both their faces. Their VEINS
show on their arms.

BLAKE
(nonchalant, folksy)
I mean, there we were... both of
us at the beginning of our careers.
And then one of us took off, lit
up the sky like a meteor. Why?
Because he met the other. I've
followed your career, you know.
All the arrests, the courtrooms...
those two adorable little girls...

Nick isn't sure if this is psychological warfare. He tries to
ignore it.

BLAKE(cont'd)
The Night Strangler trial... talk
about your mental cases! And yet
after all we've meant to each other,
this moment now... is the only time
we've touched.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2)

Nick looks at him, amazed - and that's when Kim passes Blake the SYRINGE, which Blake PLUNGES into Nick's PUMPED UP VEIN.

NEW ANGLE

Nick HOWLS and his arm folds over like jelly.

BLAKE

You lose.

NICK

(panicked, feeling it)
Poison...?!

KIM

(giggling)
Not at these prices, Mister D.A.
That was the best shit Telethon money
could buy.

Nick fights to get up - fights the WAVE of feeling racing up his body - fights dismay as it overpowers him.

BLAKE

Oooh, that's right. It feels good,
doesn't it? Look at him, Kim, he's
upset because it feels good.

He moves close, whispers, his lips almost on Nick's face.

BLAKE

You're going to get even more upset,
Nick. Because I'm going to make
you feel even better.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - DAY

PULLBACK from a nursery school bus as the girls get in it. We find a very distraught Alice with Larry.

LARRY

(in mid-speech)
- I checked all the hospital emergency
rooms, gave them his description,
even got the stats on every John
Doe they had. Came up empty. So
at least he didn't have an accident.
And he didn't call anybody at the
D.A.'s office or his parents -

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

ALICE

You didn't tell them he was missing
- ?

LARRY

Of course not, I was very casual
about it.

ALICE

What if it was somebody with a grudge,
somebody he locked up?

LARRY

I already checked on that. Nobody
new is on the streets. Anyway the
only real psychopath was Blake and
he's dead.

ALICE

Maybe it wasn't someone you sent
to prison, maybe it was their friend,
a brother - Larry, you have to declare
him missing, and get the police,
the FBI, everybody out there looking
for him -

LARRY

Alice, I love him too, but I can't
do that unless he's gone for 48
hours... that's the law!

ALICE

It's a Goddamn stupid law!

(calmer)

I'm sorry, I don't know what I'm
saying.

LARRY

You're right, it's stupid. Anyway,
between us...? Half the cops in
this town are already looking for
him. He's got friends, Alice. Okay?

ALICE

Okay.

He holds her hand for a moment. She hangs on him, then manages a
smile.

LARRY

What you doing in here on your ass?
Get out there and find your partner!

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - (2)

He grins, heads for the door.

CUT TO:

THE SEEDY LOFT - DAY

Nick, in a drugged stupor, tries to look out the window to get some bearings.

HIS P.O.V.

The blinds are shuttered but he catches a glimpse of a SIGN:
KWAN LEE IMPORTS, INC.

BACK TO SCENE - CLOSE ON NICK'S HANDS

Carefully, he works one of his ropes against a bed spring. It parts!

WIDER

Almost losing his balance, he gets up, looks around the room. His eyes focus on

A BROOM

standing in the corner.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick STUMBLES over to it, wraps it in a blanket and BREAKS it over his knee. Now he's got a weapon - of sorts. Seeing DOUBLE, he STAGGERS towards the door.

Kim stands guard. WHACK! He's down. Nick tries to run for the exit but his feet are like rubber.

Suddenly Blake LOOMS up. Nick HITS him with the staff. AGAIN. Blake REELS but waits - TWISTS the shaft away. POUNDS away at Nick's MIDDLE.

BLAKE

Don't... make me... mark...
your...face, Nick.

Weak, dizzy, Nick sinks to his knees. RETCHES. Blake, mouth bleeding, quickly takes out another syringe, shoots him up again.

NICK

God, no, not again! Goddamn you!
You sick mother fucker, I hope you
rot in hell!

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

I already did, Nick, for ten years.

As the drug takes hold, he grabs Nick by the hair. But not violently. Gently. Which somehow, is worse.

BLAKE

Well, look at you. Are you happy now? You're a mess.

(as if to a puppy)

Come on now, you goose. Let's clean up.

NEW ANGLE

Blake drags him toward the bathroom. As they arrive at the door, Kim appears, dazed, bleeding, heading the same way.

Blake SMACKS him across the face.

BLAKE

You can pee in the kitchen sink.

IN THE BATHROOM

Blake takes Nick into the shower, turns it ON. WATER rains down on both of them. Blake begins to WASH HIM, pulling off both their shirts.

BLAKE

There, that's better. Ouch, somebody's going to have some sore ribs. At least the bruises don't show on you, Nick! Me, I get purple if I bump a card table.

Blake turns off the water, pulls him out of the shower. Dries his hair.

BLAKE

Look at that, towel dry and it's perfect. Now you look like the man on TV again. Such a handsome face. Such noble bearing. Don't you agree, Wanda?

Nick, dazed, REACTS to the new name. Looks up at

BATHROOM DOOR - NEW ANGLE

Revealing a SPECTACULARLY BUILT exotic HOOKER. She eyes Nick appreciatively.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

WANDA

Yeah, he's real pretty. But all
this S & M shit is gonna cost you
an extra fifty.

And as she slips out of her skimpy dress, we

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Larry is there - and so is a 50 - ish PSYCHIATRIST, DR. DONALD
FISCUS.

DR. FISCUS

Did your husband show any signs of
unusual stress lately?

ALICE

No...

DR. FISCUS

No? His closest associate hangs
himself in a bra and girdle and he
didn't react?

ALICE

I meant until then.

DR. FISCUS

Before then he never had any signs
of exhaustion? Odd. I thought the
DA's office was a difficult job...
and adding that fund raising program
must have been an added burden.

ALICE

Don't I know you from somewhere?

DR. FISCUS

(modest, offhand)

You probably recognize my voice from
my radio appearances. Dr. Donald
Ficus?

ALICE

(to Larry)

You bring me a pyschiatrist from
talk radio? This is help, Larry?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

LARRY

Dr. Ficus does a lot of work for the Department and the City.

(sotto)

Look, the D.A. loves him, what could I do. Anyway, we're stressed out, maybe it'll help...

ALICE

Sure? Why not? Hey, Doc, why don't you bring along the Horoscope lady who's on in the morning before you? Hey, why don't you land the traffic helicopter on the front lawn?

DR. FISCUS

That's very healthy, Alice. Letting out your anger. But some of us can't do that, and instead we just need to get away from everything.

ALICE

Oh, you mean like Nick? My husband isn't a ten year old child, Dr. Ficus! A grown man doesn't run away from home!

DR. FISCUS

Of course not, Mrs. Styles, but isn't there a little child inside all of us..?

She GROANS.

CUT TO:

INT. LOFT - DAY

As a giggling Kim aims a VIDEO CAMERA, Wanda mounts a bound and protesting Nick.

NICK

Please... Please...

WANDA

I love it when they beg.

NICK

You don't understand... I want you to set me free.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

WANDA

You got it, honey. Your mouth says
no but your little friend says yes...
not that he's that little...

Also watching, amused, is a BLACK MAN around Nick's general height and build. Letting the camera run, Kim hands him Nick's clothing and CASH from the bank bag.

As the man EXITS, Blake goes to a CARD TABLE where he has an AUDIO TAPE DECK and SPLICER. He begins to play with the tape he made in the bar of Nick and the waitress.

WAITRESS' VOICE

("wow"-y and fluttery)
...don't you have a TV showwww...?

CUT TO:

INT. CAR RENTAL OFFICE - NIGHT

WIDEN from a DRIVER'S LICENSE: "Nick Styles." The BLACK MAN we saw at the loft, now in Nick's clothing, hands a WAD of CASH to the rental CLERK.

CLERK

Okay, Mr. Styles. You can pick up
your car outside. It's a real beauty,
exactly what you ordered.

EXT. CAR RENTAL OFFICE -NIGHT

A just-buffed PORSCHE TWINKLES in the moonlight. Nick's imposter gets behind the wheel and REVS the motor.

As he drives it off the lot the stunned rental agent REACTS as the car deliberately SIDE SWIPES several parked cars.

CUT TO:

INT. LOFT - NIGHT

Nick is AWAKENED by another INJECTION. He GAGS, retches - REACTS as Blake cuts his bonds. Nick tries to get up... falls to the floor.

NICK

Go ahead, you cracker bastard.
Stop... doing it by inches. Get
it over with. Kill me.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

Oh, no, Nick. I'm going to do something far worse: I'm going to let you live.

As Nick passes out, not understanding, we

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

The first workers arrive to unlock the building and shoo away the homeless. But one HUDDLED FIGURE in a blanket doesn't move.

WORKER

Come on, buddy, let's go...

Suddenly the worker REACTS, recognizing the dazed man.

It's Deputy Assistant District Attorney Nicholas Styles, covered with filth and his own vomit.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

As Alice cradles Nick's head against her breast and the EMERGENCY ROOM DOCTORS work on Nick, he babbles his story to Larry, Dr. Fiscus, and Kiley.

NICK

They had me tied to a bed frame the whole time - every door and window was locked and chained - they kept me drugged so I couldn't even see let alone escape -

KILEY

How many of "them" were there?

NICK

Blake, Kim and -
(a guilty glance at Alice)
- uh, one or two others that just stayed for a minute -

LARRY

Nick, it couldn't have been Blake. He was killed by the Aryan Nation after they busted out of prison -

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK

I'm telling you, he's alive, he's here, and he wants revenge because I sent him up! That's why he killed Farris! That's why he's trying to destroy my reputation -

ANGLE ON ONE OF THE DOCTORS

cleaning up Nick's bruised arm, he notices the NEEDLE MARKS. He silently gets Ficus' and Kiley's attention, points them out.

Ficus nods, sagely, gives the doctor a big look.

E.R. DOCTOR

Mr. Styles, we're going to need a blood sample so we can run some tests...

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

(distracted)

Fine, whatever -

He hardly notices the jab of the needle taking the blood. Meanwhile Ficus adds his two cents.

DR. FICUS

Mr. Styles, this Blake was your first major arrest, wasn't he? It's understandable in the face of all your recent problems that he would manifest himself in your subconscious as an almost Jungian archetype of the negative forces in your life. It's interesting that the name "Blake" is actually an anagram for "Bleak"-

NICK

Kiss my Oedipus Complex, Doc, okay?
Somebody give me some trousers.
Larry, we're going to Chinatown.

Still a little groggy, he accepts Larry's arm for support and exits into the

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

where a group of REPORTERS surges forward -

REPORTERS

(ad-lib)

Mr. Styles, can you comment on the rumors about your disappearance...?
Mr. Styles, does this have any connection to the death of your associate Eubie Farris? Mr. Styles-

LARRY

Out of here, now, you're interfering with an investigation-

NICK

Larry? Let 'em come along.
(confident)
I want them to eat their words.

CUT TO:

INT. SEEDY CHINATOWN LOFT - DAY

CLOSE ON THE DOOR as it is KICKED OPEN. Nick runs in, Alice and Larry right behind him, then Ficus, then the PRESS.

Nick's grin of vindication FADES as he REACTS to

THE LOFT - REVERSE ANGLE

The place is empty. And it's not that seedy, either: It's been cleaned up enough to look like a place where someone has had a very wild 48 hour-long party.

LARRY

Where're the ropes? The padlocks on the doors?

NICK

They moved them! They fixed up the place - they even painted it, I bet it's still wet...

He touches the wall. It isn't.

NICK

Okay, so they used quick drying paint...

Nick breaks off. He realizes he sounds like a lunatic; looks at the others.

LARRY

has just found some Larry DELIVERY SLIPS for food and liquor -all signed by " Nick Styles."

LARRY

Nick... did you order pizzas and liquor while you were here?

NICK

Of course not!

KILEY

That does look a lot like your signature.

(explaining)

I've been going over your expense accounts so I've seen it a lot.

NICK

Anybody can forge a signature, Kiley. Blake was doing something on a table... maybe he was practicing my handwriting -

Of course, the card table is gone. But then Nick notices

THE VIDEO CAMERA

still where it was.

BACK TO SCENE

He quickly and guiltily crosses to it, opens it. No tape. He shuts the machine as quickly as he opened it, turns to see their skeptical expressions.

NICK

I'm telling you, they changed everything to make me look crazy!

ALICE

(sotto)

I hate to tell you, Honey... but it's working.

A UNIFORMED COP comes in and whispers to Larry, who REACTS.

NICK

(paranoid)

What? What'd he say?

LARRY

The guy who rented you the Porsche is outside. And he's pissed.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

As all REACT we

CUT TO:

EXT. SEEDY CHINATOWN LOFT - DAY

The press relishing it, Nick looks dumbfounded at the DENTED UP PORSCHE parked in front of the building. Meanwhile the car rental guy circunavigates the car, MOANING at each dent and scratch.

CAR RENTAL GUY

Oh, shit. Jesus. God-damn it!

(whirling on Nick)

You'll pay for this, you son of a bitch! I shoulda realized this would happen when you paid in cash!

(to the cops)

Two thousand dollars up front, and it won't cover half of this damage!

NICK

He's lying!

CAR RENTAL GUY

You're the liar, Mister law and order - you were this far away from me-

NICK

Bullshit! That wasn't me - Or do we all look alike to you?

Nick dives for the guy - Larry and other cops pull them apart...

...and the TV CAMERAS get it all.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lisa and Monica are coloring books on the floor. Behind them, Nick - in a bathrobe - wearily comes down the steps, cleaned up but still nervous.

LISA

Daddy, you're on TV again.

NICK

Great, honey...

He stops in mid-step. Looks over at

THE BROADCAST

showing him attacking the car rental guy! Picture CUTS to a newscaster in the same location later.

FOURTH NEWSCASTER

(super incriminating
tone)

Police say they could find no evidence to support Assistant District Attorney Styles allegations of abduction, bondage and forced drug abuse. Meanwhile, prison authorities confirm the death last week of the man Styles claims to have seen alive yesterday on the streets of LA... a city where citizens are beginning to wonder about not only law enforcement... but the people who we trust with it. This is Harold Wel -

CLICK. Nick BANGS the off button, whirls on the girls, his bare feet RUMPLING their comics and breaking their crayons.

NICK

Turn that off! Don't be watching me on TV, you got me right here in real life!

They look up at him, scared. He calms, bends to smooth out their books.

NICK

I... I'm sorry, I'm just tired and cranky. Come here.

He moves to the sofa, the girls on his lap.

NICK

You know, the Smurfs are on TV, and they're pretend, right? Well, all that stuff about your Daddy being a bad daddy, that's pretend, too. I'm still yours... and... you're still mine.

He fights tears. So does

ALICE

who has come into the room from the kitchen. Now, she comes forward, takes the girls upstairs.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

ALICE

Let's go up to bed and let Daddy
relax down here, okay?

Grateful, Nick puts on the TV.

TV - HIS POINT OF VIEW

He SCANS the channels. On the FIRST CHANNEL, a NEWSCASTER has
a guest: Former POLICE CHIEF FLOYD, now in civvies, with a newer
and better toupee.

FLOYD

(in mid-speech)

-well, we all know that Mr. Styles
was always a little too eager for
publicity even when he was a police
officer. But even he doesn't deserve
this sort of speculation by the
Press... and if I'm elected to the
Congress I will propose a media
control bill that will prevent this
sort of -

CLICK. Now we're on a PANEL DISCUSSION, where an EARNEST and
NERDY YOUNG BLACK MAN is saying:

NERDY MAN

-- believe that Nicholas Styles is
the victim of a conspiracy! We know
who they are, this insidious group
that tears down any African American
politician who dares defy their power!
I am speaking of the Rockefellers
and their Trilateral Commission,
who along with the Zionists have
been putting the AIDS virus in vending
machines all across Amer -

ON NICK

CLICK. He turns off the set, goes over to a cabinet, where he
turns on the STEREO, which is next to a MODEL OF THE TWIN TOWERS.

MUSIC PLAYS - the TAIL END of a COMMERICAL. Nick takes out a
bottle of bourbon, takes a SHOT right from the bottle neck. Then
he hears the phone RING. He crosses to it.

NICK

Hello..?

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - INTERCUT - NIGHT

Brimleigh is on a speaker phone, with Dr. Ficus and Kiley nearby.

BRIMLEIGH

Nick, this is Priscilla.

NICK

(cautious)

Oh. Hi. Any new developments?

BRIMLEIGH

Actually, yes... and they're of... some delicacy. I had Doctor Ficus use his influence to get your file away from the hospital.

FICUS

Nick, you know your blood test showed both cocaine and heroin in your system...

NICK

Well, if that's what it was, that's what it was. I told you they drugged me.

(taking a drink, noticing the clock)

Say, shouldn't you be on the radio soon?

DR. FICUS

(dryly)

The station is right around the corner, thank you for reminding me. Nick, your blood test showed something else too: Evidence of Nongonococcal urethritis.

NICK

What?

BRIMLEIGH

The clap, Nick. You have the clap.

NICK

Jesus Christ!

KILEY

I suppose they gave that to you, too?

NICK

No shit, Sherlock, they did - !

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BRIMLEIGH

Why didn't you mention that?

NICK

Because I was too fucking embarrassed, that's why!

DR. FICUS

Well, to avoid any... further embarrassment, why don't you come down to my office tomorrow? We'll give you 10,000 units of penicillin and sulfa, knock the little buggers right out.

NICK

Great, Fine. I'll be there.

He hangs up.

NICK

The fucking clap. I don't believe it -

He takes another drink, pissed. Turns. FREEZES.

NEW ANGLE

Alice has come down the steps and heard this.

NICK

(weakly)

I... I didn't think I would have to tell you... I wanted to spare you...

ALICE

Why, aren't you thoughtful.

NICK

This woman... they brought her in... Alice, please believe me... I didn't want her... I didn't enjoy it - I fought her with every bone in my body...

ALICE

Well, if you managed to get the clap one bone sure didn't do too much fighting!

With that she turns, runs up the stairs. Nick follows.

THEIR BEDROOM

She SLAMS the door. We HEAR it lock.

NICK

Alice? Alice, baby, please...

(pause)

Shit.

CUT TO:

THE TELEVISION

JIMMY CAGNEY is on top of the NATURAL GAS TANKS in the final scene of WHITE FURY.

CAGNEY

Top of the world, Ma!

He BLOWS HIMSELF UP. As MUSIC COMES UP and the END CREDITS ROLL, we PAN from the SET and HEAR a RADIO.

RADIO VOICE

- but if we can't trust law enforcement officials like this Giles guy -

DR. FICUS' VOICE

Styles -

RADIO VOICE

Whatever, then what's left?

DR. FICUS' VOICE

Well, Juvenal said it best in his Satires: "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" Who will guard the guards? Indeed, it's a question that will always plague democracies, but what's the alternative, right? Dr. Ficus hotline. Next caller, you're on the air.

NICK'S VOICE

Dr. Ficus, nobody seems to know who I am anymore. I see them on the streets, on the TV, hear them on the radio with you, and I don't know who they're talking about. That guy, he's not me... he can't be me.

CAMERA has reached Nick and we realize he is not on the radio, not even on the phone, just half in the bag. (The actual caller on the radio is buried under Nick's louder voice.)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK(cont'd)

I mean, I know who I am. I'm a husband, a father, a provider who...

(pause)

A husband who hasn't had a dinner with my wife at home for six months. I'm a father... who missed the last birthday party. I... I live fifteen miles away from my parents and I haven't been over there in a year. I loan my poor relatives money because it's a cheap way of avoiding them. I cut deals with scum for a living. And I pretend it doesn't rub off on me. I thought I wanted my life back, Doctor. But I don't. I want a new one. Can't anybody understand that?

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CAMERA PANS towards a parked CAR.

In the car, EAVESDROPPING with a DISH ANTENNA device, Blake and Kim share Hagen-Daz.

BLAKE

(quiet, earnest)

I understand it, Nick. I understand it.

As Kim looks at him, puzzled, we

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nick GROANS, sits up with one hell of a headache. Sometime during the night he finished the bottle.

NICK

Hello?

He looks around. Nobody's home. Then he REACTS to a BUZZ. Looks at --

THE T.V.

STATIC fills the screen. But taped to it is a note reading PLAY ME, with an arrow pointing up to the VCR on top of the TV.

Curious, he hits the button. And REACTS to a

VIDEO

of his OWN HOUSE, eerily LIT. CAMERA PANS like a "FRIDAY THE 13TH" P.O.V.

shot, the CAMERA mounts the stairs to the kids' room, where it is SET DOWN on a dresser and we SEE BLAKE enter the shot, GRIN at the camera -take out the DWP AXE and raise it over the sleeping girls, just as he aims a REMOTE at the CAMERA and returns the screen to STATIC!

NICK

Panicked, he runs up the stairs to the --

GIRLS' BEDROOM

Their beds are empty - but there's a note on the door, in a feminine hand: HONEY -TOOK THE KIDS TO BROWNIE PICNIC -HOPE YOU SLEPT IT OFF.

Nick runs back down the stairs, rifles through a drawer and clumsily unlocks a small metal BOX. Inside are his old POLICE REVOLVER and AMMUNITION.

He rushes out of the house, still in his robe and flopping slippers.

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE

he jumps in his car, ROARS AWAY.

CAMERA PANS BACK to the house.

Kim appears, approaches the door with a small VIDEO CASSETTE in his hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

With Alice and other PARENTS watching, a circle of BROWNIES is CLAPPING and SINGING.

LISA AND MONICA

at the edge of the circle, near some BUSHES. CAMERA PUSHES to a FIGURE in the SHADOWS of the FOLIAGE, moving CLOSER.

NICK'S CAR

SLAMS to a halt at the edge of the park. He jumps out, looks at -

HIS DAUGHTERS AND THE FIGURE - LONG SHOT

BACK TO SCENE

Nick races forward... VAULTS over the bushes.

IN THE BROWNIE CIRCLE

SCREAMS of SHOCK and PANIC as Nick and the CLOWN he has jumped roll into the refreshment table.

Nick jumps up, gun in hand. He BLINKS when he sees it's a clown -

NICK

(still unsure)

KEEP 'EM WHERE I CAN SEE 'EM!

He yanks off the man's nose. No, it's not Blake.

ALICE

N..Nick? What are you doing?

NEW ANGLE

Nick turns. Sees the shocked faces. Quickly, he tries to put the gun in his robe pocket, but that only makes the robe OPEN, revealing he's only wearing boxer shorts. He snaps it shut, turns to the group of wailing children and stunned parents.

NICK

Look, everybody, I can explain this.
Really... I can...

He stops. Looks at

THE PARENTS

several of whom are VIDEOTAPING HIM.

BACK TO SCENE

NICK

(he knows he's fucked)
Explain... this...

ALICE AND THE GIRLS

perhaps even more shocked and worried than anyone else.

CUT TO:

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY

Nick sits, forlorn, as Brimleigh reads him the riot act, with Kiley and her STAFF present:

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BRIMLEIGH

You had cocaine and heroin in your system. Your closest associate had 10 thousand dollars in his possession before he died in fucking drag and you have been indentified as having spent several thousand dollars on sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. Worse, among the brownies you traumatized by beating up Bozo were the daughters of the head of Cedar's Sinai, the President of Lockheed, and a Congresswoman from the West Side...

NICK

Was the congresswoman in the Park?

BRIMLEIGH

There?

(exploding)

She sold her videotape of you to Channel nine!

NICK

A videotape is what started this! If you had only seen the one that was on the machine in my house -you'd understand why -

KILEY

We have seen it.

NICK

You have?

KILEY

You left your front door open when you went out Clown rolling.

BRIMLEIGH

Somebody tipped off the local stations. It's already been broadcast. We taped it. You watch it.

She picks up her remote, CLICKS it.

NEW ANGLE - SHOWING HER TV

It's the tape of Nick and the Hooker, as grainy as Rob Lowe's, with black BOXES covering the NC-17 parts... but the soundtrack is the edited soundtrack of Nick and the waitress:

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

NICK'S VOICE

I'm the Assistant District Attorney,
so you have to follow my orders.

WAITRESS' VOICE

You got it, Mr. D.A. Up for the
house special?

Nick jumps up, screaming.

NICK

That's not the tape! As God is my
witness, that isn't the woman who
gave me the clap... I mean, that
is the woman with the clap, but that's
not her voice... and that's...

(realizing he looks
totally nuts)

...not what I said to her?

(losing it)

Christ, can't you understand? It
was Blake! Earl Talbot Blake! He
did it!

They look at him, pityingly.

BRIMLEIGH

Blake is dead, dead, dead.

(pause)

And you're suspended, suspended,
suspended.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Someone puts his arm on Nick's elbow - Nick whirls, ready to
punch someone - but it's Larry.

NICK

Do you think I'm out of my fucking
mind, Larry?

LARRY

No, but still want you to sit down
and take a deep breath before I show
you this.

NICK

(hopeful)

You got something.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

LARRY

I contacted the State Prison, talked to them about Blake. They told me he was at war with the Aryan Brotherhood and then very conveniently they made nice.

NICK

Just in time to break out...

LARRY

(nodding)

But the best part is this:

He takes out a cardboard box with DEPARTMENT OF PRISON labels. Opens it.

LARRY

His personal property.

(holding up a book)

"Revenge."

(another)

"Getting Even, I" and "Getting Even, II." Now - you ready?

NICK

(the suspense is killing him)

I'm gonna kill you -

LARRY

You're gonna kiss me.

He DUMPS OUT THE BOX ON THE DESK.

NEW ANGLE

revealing the COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS Blake compiled over the past decade, along with the XEROX BLOWUPS and WEIRD COLLAGE PASTE UPS that were in his cell.

Stunned, Nick sifts through them.

NICK

My God.

LARRY

I got a tip from one of the local White Supremists.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

LARRY (Cont'd)
Somebody ordered phony passports
and hot tickets out of the country
for two tonight from this bookstore
that's an Aryan Nation front. And
guess who's picking up the tickets?

NICK
If I say Blake you'll call Dr. Fiscus.

LARRY
Close. Blake's little friend--

NICK
Kim.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE NATION BOOKSHOP - NIGHT

As Nick PUNCHES the skinhead proprietor, again and again, driving
him into the wall, making twin portraits of David Duke and Hitler
fall with a CRASH.

SKINHEAD
You can't do this, I got rights you're
a D.A. -

NICK
They fired me. As a private citizen
I can kick anyone's ass I like.

Another punch. The skinhead turns to Larry.

SKINHEAD
You're a cop! Help me!

LARRY
Sorry, I'm off duty.

The guy caves.

SKINHEAD
All right, all right! I've show
you the passports!

NICK
(to Larry, as the guy
gets them)
You'll see the pictures. It'll be
Blake -

The skinhead takes two PASSPORTS out of a drawer, hands them
to Nick who flips them open. His face falls.

THE PASSPORTS

No pictures.

BACK TO SCENE

SKINHEAD

I was gonna take the pictures when
they showed up -

Suddenly a CLATTER at the door. Kim is there. He sees Nick and Larry and BOLTS.

Nick and Larry tear past the skinhead, knocking him aside, and pursue Kim down the block.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS AND ALLEYS - NIGHT

Nick and Larry POUND PAVMENT, breathing like track stars.

LARRY

(panting)
Fast... little... bastard.

NICK

Pace it... pace it.

KIM - THROUGH A PARKING BUILDING - NIGHT

He runs up the ram, APPROACHES CAMERA on the first level, LEAPS DOWN to a DUMPSTER, and then to the street and away.

PAN BACK as Nick and Larry repeat his actions.

KIM

DODGES a CAR, which SWERVES to a HALT - just in time for Nick and Larry to RUN OVER THE HOOD as the driver CURSES them.

CUT TO:

A CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

CRANE UP as Kim runs BEHIND THE FENCE and is hidden from view.

Nick and Larry run into shot.

LARRY

Split up?

NICK

Deja fucking vu, yeah!

They each head around the sides of the site.

NICK

SEES Kim up ahead, very close. Encouraged, he RACES FORWARD - and then he HEARS a SHOT.

He skids to a halt. A SECOND SHOT.

NICK

Christ - no -

He gives up on Kim, runs towards the SOUND.

WITH NICK - NIGHT

He stumbles down a pile of rubble. What he sees makes him moan. CAMERA ADJUSTS as he rushes to Larry's bleeding BODY. The literal SMOKING GUN is by the mortally wounded officer's side.

NICK

Oh, God... no, no.

LARRY

Knew... knew you were telling the truth, partner... I saw him, Nick. I saw...Blake...

He's dead. Nick holds him, getting his blood on his shirt. And then a LAUGH makes him look up at -

BLAKE - ON ALLEY ROOF NEARBY

BLAKE

Like I said. Letting you live was the worst thing I could do.

Kim APPEARS beside him, out of breath.

KIM

Whoa, this is great...!

BACK TO SCENE

With a SCREAM Nick grabs the gun from the ground, AIMS it at Blake. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

BLAKE

Grins.

BLAKE

Tsk, tsk. Now you've got your fingerprints all over the murder weapon.

With theatrical flourish he REMOVES SURGICAL GLOVES.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

BLAKE

Instead of mine.

And he VANISHES. Kim's VOICE CARRIES as they exit.

KIM'S VOICE

Perfection, Blake, you are awesome

BACK TO SCENE

Nick looks at the gun, then at Larry. He starts to SOB... then, hearing SIRENS approaching, he runs away.

We STAY on Larry's body as we HEAR approaching POLICE CARS. TIRES SKID. A SPOTLIGHT illuminates the body...

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick CRASHES into his house, discovers his worried family in front of the TV, dressed for bed.

ALICE

Nick, thank God - we thought -

NICK

I don't have time to explain. Just get dressed! No, don't get dressed, just get coats for the girls! You're all in danger!

Alice looks at him, worried. He forces himself to be calm.

NICK

Not from me! Damn it, Alice, I'm the same man you married!

ALICE

(insecure)

Not lately, honey...

TV VOICE

(suddenly)

We interrupt this program to bring you a News Nine update.

All look at -

TV SET - CLOSE

On screen we SEE a REPORTER and EMERGENCY VEHICLES at the construction site.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

REPORTER

This is Corey Rodriguez with an News Nine Update on suspended Assistant District Attorney Nicholas Styles. According to police authorities, they have just discovered the body of -

BOOM! Nick KICKS the SCREEN IN and it EXPLODES. TILT UP to him.

NICK

I'm innocent, Alice, and I'm perfectly sane! Now get in the car!

They rush for the door.

Nick pauses to grab the girls' Smurfs.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCK HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick escorts his wife and daughters up into the scary stairwells, where he meets Odessa and some gangstas. The two groups eye each other like Cowboys and Indians.

NICK

I know this is going to sound crazy, Alice, but you'll be safe with these people.

Odessa turns to the huge R.C.

ODESSA

R.C., you guard these pretty ladies with your life.

R.C. gallantly picks up the girls. Nick turns to Alice.

NICK

Honey, if you love me, you have to trust me. If you don't love me, then tell me right now because I'm fighting for what used to be my life and you were all of it. I gotta know now because I'm running out of adrenalin and I need you to keep me going.

She looks around at their bizarre location, smiles.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

ALICE

Hell, if a mean and nasty mother like Odessa thinks you still got your marbles, you think your wife could do any less?

He kisses her and R.C. takes them out. Odessa starts to leave. Nick grabs his arm.

NICK

Nothing had better happen to them-

ODESSA

P.K., if you don't trust me, trust my mean streak: Helping you I get to mind fuck the Mayor, the D.A., and the entire police and fire departments.

(looking around)

But I will miss this place... funny, you always said you'd get rid of it.

They all start down the stairs, and halfway up they meet a delegation of the respectable neighborhood types from the Telethon -including REGGIE, the bartender.

REGGIE

We're with you, P.K.

(eying Odessa)

Even if you have shit taste in friends.

ODESSA

I love you too, Reggie, I might even pay my bar bill after this.

CUT TO:

INT. A LEATHER BAR - NIGHT

Blake and Kim. Kim's drinking heavily, flying, Blake is oddly subdued, his eyes on the TV NEWSCAST.

NEWSCASTER

(on bar TV)

- but when police arrived at the former Assistant District Attorney's residence, they found the front door open and no sign of either the accused killer or his family.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

KIM

Another two hours we'll be on our way to New Zealand... a country for White Men! Real Men! And it's all 'cause of Earl Talbot Blake - mind like a steel trap -body like a Greek God - 'c'mon, les' go... we gotta get to that ship -

BLAKE

Take your hands off me and shut up. I want to hear this -

NEWSCASTER

(cocking head; taking a cue)

We have an update on the Nick Styles story... here's Janis Atoya live from South Central Los Angeles.

Picture CHANGES to the exterior of the rock house we've come to know. Another NEWSCASTER is in front of it.

FIFTH NEWSCASTER

This is Janis Atoya with Action News. According to reliable sources, disgraced Assistant District Attorney Nicholas Styles is on the roof of the building behind me, apparently deranged and threatening to jump.

BLAKE

FIFTH NEWSCASTER'S VOICE

Styles, who is wanted for questioning in the murder of Officer Larry Blake-

Astonished, Blake BOLTS from the bar.

Kim, tipsy, curses... then follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATTS NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Blake and Kim arrive in the neighborhood, join the CROWD of people moving towards the SIRENS and LIGHTS down the block.

CAMERA HOLDS on some of Odessa's MEN as they recognize Blake.

ODESSA'S MAN

They're here. Pass the word.

EXT. CRACK HOUSE - NIGHT

A CROWD has formed to watch Nick on the roof, who is RANTING into a megaphone.

Disbelieving, Blake and Kim join it.

ON THE ROOF WITH NICK

CAMERA LOOMS OUT to show us FIREMEN forming up below. We hear SIRENS in the distance.

NICK

You've all been watching the Nick Styles show on TV so I thought you'd like to see it live! Let's see, I ran a child porn ring, I robbed my father's church, I mugged Bozo the fucking clown and, oh, yeah, I killed my partner! Gosh, I'm running out of things to do! Well, I'm not gonna be like one of those asshole comics at the Apollo who don't know how to make an exit! This one's gonna kill you.... well, maybe not you... just me!

And with that he lights a truck flare.

NICK

(doing a good Cagney)
Top of the world, Ma!

Nick THROWS the flare through a broken skylight into -

THE DRUG LAB - TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

Where it LANDS on a table of LIQUID and FLAMES SPREAD.

NICK - ON THE ROOF

he races for the stairwell. He opens it. We SEE a glimpse of the CANVAS ESCAPE CHUTE.

THE BUILDING - LONG SHOT

The top floor EXPLODES in a massive FIREBALL!

THE STREET BELOW - NIGHT

The crowd below is STUNNED - none more than Blake, who literally STAGGERS, partly from the shock wave and partly from confusion.

REAR OF BUILDING

As the building start to BURN and the firemen play their hoses on it, CAMERA ADJUSTS and we see MOVEMENT:

It's the WIND blowing the loose BOTTOM of the escape chute just above the sidewalk.

THE CROWD

They can't believe it. The COPS and FIREMEN move in turn to control the people and the fire.

The REPORTERS AD-LIB Hindenburg like COPY into their MIKES -

REPORTERS

- we've just witnessed a shocking
end to the career of a man who was
once considered a rising star in
Los Angeles politics -

Blake turns away... his face is ASHEN. He grabs on to a light pole for support, then finally stumbles away.

Kim, concerned, follows.

As they pass ANOTHER ODESSA MAN, a SIGNAL is GIVEN -
DOWN THE BLOCK

Quickly, a car CRASHES and blocks a street.

ANOTHER CORNER - NIGHT

A TRUCK "loses" its LOAD, which SPILLS into the street.

OTHER CORNERS - QUICK CUTS - NIGHT

The neighborhood is sealing itself off.

EXT. CROWDED WATTS STREET - NIGHT

Blake and Kim walk along. There's a BUZZ on the streets:

VOICES

Nick Styles, Nick Styles...

One of Nick's COURTROOM SPEECHES emanates from a BOOM BOX surrounded by tough TEEN-AGERS. Blake REACTS. Then he SEES

BUILDINGS - NEW ANGLE

POSTERS of Nick promoting the Twin Towers center have SPROUTED everywhere.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

The TEEN-AGE GANG moves towards Blake and Kim. Dazed, but unintimidated, Blake barges through them, approaches a BAR -which CLOSES and LOCKS right in his face.

BLAKE
(banging the door)
Goddamn it, open up! You hear me?

Pissed, he looks down the block, sees the still illuminated sign: "REGGIE'S".

Goes there.

KIM
Blake, Blake, are you all right?
You look terrible, maybe we should
go to a motel...?

INT. WATTS BAR - NIGHT

Blake comes inside, moving like a zombie. He's not just stunned... he's actually depressed.

There's a BUZZ of voices in the bar:

VOICES
Mumble mumble Nick Styles... Nick
Styles...

REGGIE, the barkeep, comes over.

REGGIE
You look like you just lost your
best friend, pal.

Blake looks up, startled.

BLAKE
Yes... you may be right... I..uh,
I'll have a vodka.

As his drink is poured, a basketball game on TV CONTINUES.

KIM
What's the matter with you?
Everything went like clockwork
everything you planned! It was like
a Sistine Ceiling, the detail -
I was honored to be part of it -
Blake, talk to me -

Suddenly the SOUND of the TV CHANGES. Blake REACTS to his own voice and then looks up to see

THE TV - HIS POV

it's the OLD VIDEO OF HIS SHOOTING AND ARREST BY NICK.

BACK TO SCENE

Blake whirls on Reggie, hauls him over the bar.

BLAKE

Who put that on? What the fuck's happening?

REGGIE

What are you talking about? That's the Laker game!

Blake looks again. (So does Kim, who's back was to the set.) It is the Laker game!

BLAKE

I - I thought -

KIM

Blake. Please, please, come with me. I've given myself to your plan. Give me some quality time?

Another BARTENDER picks up the PAY PHONE in the back of the bar.

BARTENDER

Yo, Reggie's!
(listening)
Yeah, he's here.

He turns, signals.

BARTENDER

You Earl Talbot Blake?

BLAKE

(stunned)
How did you...?

BARTENDER

Big white guy, you the only one we got.

(holding the phone)
You want it or not?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Blake goes to the phone. CAMERA FOLLOWS.

BLAKE

Hello?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

What he HEARS is REDD FOXX'S ROUTINE from the TELETHON. Then...
DIAL TONE. Blake slams it down, unnerved. CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM
back to the bar.

Kim's seat is EMPTY.

Blake looks at the front, where the door still SWINGS.

EXT. WATTS STREET - NIGHT

Empty, now. Blake looks around. Nobody in sight.

BLAKE

Kim? Goddamn it, you little faggot

He starts back into the bar.

But it's LOCKED.

A VOICE

Yo! Yo!

Blake turns.

NEW ANGLE

A HOMELESS MAN is down the block by a PAY PHONE.

HOMELESS MAN

You Earl Talbot Blake? Phone fo'
you!

Blake can't beleive it. But he runs forward, shoves the man
aside.

BLAKE

Who is this? What's going on?

We HEAR the SOUNDTRACK of Nick and the Waitress! And then -

KIM'S VOICE

Blake! Blake! Help me! Help me!

BLAKE

Kim? Where the fuck are you? Where'd
you go?

KIM

I'm down the block, past the gas
station! Hurry, please -

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

DIAL TONE.

Blake comes out of the booth, suspicious. Checks the ammo clip on his pistol.

Runs down the block. CAMERA CRANES UP. NEWSPAPERS blow down the eerily empty street. Up ahead, a TIRE BURNS near the boarded up gas station.

WITH BLAKE

He HEARS a WHIMPER, runs along a CYCLONE FENCE into a DARK AREA. And finds Kim, BOUND AND TIED to the fence.

BLAKE

What the fuck's going on?

KIM

It's Styles, Blake! He grabbed me in the bar, made me call you!

BLAKE

Styles? That's impossible! I killed his life, and he killed himself! You're lying!

KIM

Lying? You stupid macho fuck! I can't believe I've been kissing your ass all these years and you're such a shithead! You didn't kill his life! You didn't fuck his mind! You know what you did, you asshole! YOU PISSED HIM OFF AND NOW YOU'RE FUCKED!

Blake SHOOTS HIM, again and again.

SILENCE as the ECHOES of the SHOTS fade away. Then - ANOTHER SOUND.

Blake WHIRLS, gun held ready.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The SOUND seems to be CIRCLING him. B-BUMP B-BUMP. LEFT. No, on the RIGHT. Now COMING CLOSER. He FOLLOWS it with his GUN, backing away - until he COLLIDES with another fence.

Trapped! B-BUMP all around him. Panicked, he SHOOTS. PSSSSST.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED -

A deflated BASKETBALL rolls to his feet. LIGHTS come up: He's in a schoolyard BASKETBALL COURT and across the court, hand on the light switch, is -- NICK, dressed like he was ten years ago, in sneakers... and leather gloves.

NICK

How about a little one on one, mother fucker?

THE LIGHTS GO OUT. He SHOOTs. Footsteps RUNNING AWAY.

With a mad SCREAM of FURY, Blake FOLLOWS.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - NIGHT

PAN FROM the big SIGN announcing the future community center. Blake runs into shot, screaming.

BLAKE

Styles! Styles, you black bastard, where are you?

NICK

Right where you put me, Blake.

Blake looks up. Nick is halfway up one of the Towers, leaning there casually like a tourist on the Leaning Tower.

NICK

On top of the world. Got it all, Blake.

DOWN BELOW

Blake FIRES. AGAIN. AGAIN.

NICK - UP ABOVE

Easily dodging the wild panic fire which PINGS off the tower. Continuing to taunt Blake.

NICK(cont'd)

Money. Power. Home. Family.
Foreign car. All thanks to you,
babe. Busting you made me... of
course, you already know that.

BLAKE

The gun CLICKS on an empty chamber. Infuriated, Blake FLINGS it away. Puts a hand on the tower.

REACTS as he brings it back, BLEEDING.

Then, with a savage "what-the-fuck" laugh - he CLIMBS.

UP ABOVE

Nick meets him halfway.

THE TWO MEN - CLOSER - NIGHT

They FIGHT on the structure of steel and glass, oblivious of the sharp surfaces that slash and cut them when they don't do it to each other.

hand, then another. Nick swings gracefully with his leather gloves to a new position.

NICK

You know, I should thank you. Going crazy is strangely liberating.

Blake, totally crazed, ignores his pain. Gets in some savage licks. For a moment it looks like he will force Nick over the side of the tower.

NICK

Calm as ice, he GRABS Blake's bloody hand - ARM WRESTLES it away.

NICK

(rising)

You know the ancient Hawaiians used to sacrifice something when they erected a building? yeah, I learned that when we took the kids there last Christmas. See, I make more money than a dumb redneck like you can imagine, so we take vacations like that. Anyway, that's what they did. I think a great project like the Twin Tower Center could use one of those Hawaiian style sacrifices. And - since we don't seem to have a nice juicy pig - You'll have to do.

Blake pounds away at his nemesis but Nick takes it, laughing.

BLAKE

What? What changed you?

NICK

You did, Babe.

And with that Nick FLINGS him to his death below.

LONG SHOT

Blake FALLS, screaming, dropping from the TALLER TOWER right onto the

SPIKE OF THE SHORTER ONE

where he TWITCHES once and then HANGS with THREE FEET of IRON and SPARKLING GLASS which now TWINKLES in the LIGHT OF

A POLICE HELICOPTER - UP ANGLE - NIGHT

Which KEEPS ITS LIGHT on the body as GROUND VEHICLES arrive.

NICK

wearily - and eerily calm - descends the Tower, making a gymnast's exit. He looks off at

A LIMOUSINE

while pulls up. Odessa gets out with Alice and the girls. They look at him, full of trust and love and support.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick starts in that direction - and finds himself facing Brimleigh, getting out of her own limousine. Nick jerks a thumb up at Blake.

NICK

Blake is dead, dead, dead.

(pause)

And I quit, quit, quit. See you on next November's ballot.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT

As Nick gathers his family and walks away and the SPOTLIGHT dances on Blake's BODY, we

FADE OUT.

THE END