

"SO PROUDLY WE HAIL"

Written by

Lionel Chetwynd

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THIRD DRAFT: April 13, 1989

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In Germany they came
first for the Communists,
and I didn't speak up
because I wasn't a
Communist. Then they
came for the Jews, and I
didn't speak up because
I wasn't a Jew. Then they
came for the trade
unionists, and I didn't
speak up because I wasn't
a trade unionist. Then they
came for the Catholics, and
I didn't speak up because
I was a Protestant. Then
they came for me, and by
that time, nobody was left
to speak up.

-Martin Neimoller
Protestant Clergyman
(Dachau 1944)

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SO PROUDLY WE HAIL
Act One

FADE IN:

|. EXT: INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - LATE EVE

Approaching a large road sign that reads JUNCTION - 1 MILE. Beneath that is an arrow that splits into two directions: to the left is I-110, to the right is MEXICAN BORDER. Now, an aging pick-up rattles down the right-hand, turns toward the Border as darkness closes in.

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Z. SAME: INT: PICK-UP - LATE EVE

Three youths are squeezed into the cabin, all dressed more-or-less alike: torn, musty jeans that may never have been washed, T-shirts bearing symbols of heavy metal bands -- THE GRATEFUL DEAD, SUICIDAL TENDENCIES -- big-buckled belts, hair slicked back with Vaseline. At the wheel is BILLY KENNER, late teens, possibly twenty, a young man with a smile so charming it shines through his otherwise drab appearance; in the middle is HALLY WILSON, a year or two younger than Billy, a gentle young man who always has a newspaper or magazine near at hand. Timid by nature, he tends to keep close to Billy, his mentor and protector; in the window seat is ROCCO INUCCI, twenty-one, an angry young man with a perpetual scowl on his face. Now, as the pick-up leaves the lights of the city behind, Rocco takes a marijauna cigarette from an inside pocket, rolls it through his mouth, soaking it in spit to make a tighter smoke. Billy glances over, shakes his head.

*

BILLY

Stow the joint. We're almost at the border.

ROCCO

(Defensive, challenging)
Gettin' over's easy. Comin' back, that's what you oughta sweat.

BILLY

I got it covered. Three pounds of high grade weehawken dope in the gas tank. Not enough to get found, more'n what we need to get set up in L.A. Just don't stink up the interior. Makes the guards suspicious...

(Turns off the Freeway)
...here we go, brothers.

He follows the signs to Mexico as Rocco pockets the joint.

*

3 CU: FRONT DOOR OF OFFICE SHACK - NIGHT

A typical roadside business specializing in Mexican car Insurance. Its signs urge: GET MEXICAN INSURANCE HERE. NO ENTRY TO MEXICO WITHOUT INSURANCE! BEST RATES!! OPEN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY!!! But just under that a hand-scrawled sign tells us CLOSED FOR DINNER. BACK BY ELEVEN.

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WIDEN TO INCLUDE:

4. SAME: EXT. OFFICE SHACK - NIGHT

Billy stands at the open door of the truck, angry. Hally characteristically reacts nervously.

HALLY

So what's up...so what're we gonna do?
Huh, Billy?

Billy scuffs the ground, annoyed, surveys the the small town.

BILLY

Wait'll this guy opens up. Meantime,
we get some eats.

They head for a bar/restaurant a few hundred yards away.

5. INT: BAR/RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A hangout for locals rather than a comfort stop for tourists passing through to Mexico. Dimly-lit, the emphasis is on fast-poured liquor to tough workingmen who favor Ranger T-shirts (Skull-and-crossed-bones with the legend DEATH FROM ABOVE) and baseball caps with badges. Not hospitable to strangers, the entry of our three attracts attention. Billy approaches the bar, the other two linger by the shadowy door,

BILLY

Got any sandwiches...hot dogs...?
Stuff like that.

The BARTENDER -- whose sweatshirt has an Eagle and the information YEA THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DEATH I WILL FEAR NO EVIL FOR I AM THE MEANEST SON-OF-A-BITCH IN THE VALLEY -- doesn't look up from rinsing glasses as he answers.

BARTENDER

Kitchen's closed.

BILLY

Okay. Three beers.

S CONT'D

BARTENDER

I.D.

BILLY

C'mon. Gimme a break.

BARTENDER

I am. I'm givin' you thirty seconds to get your under-age ass outta here before I grind it up for tomorrow's daily special.

(Cold, mean smile)

Monday's meat loaf day.

Rocco steps forward, his habitual anger fortified by derision.

ROCCO

We got the money. Uncap the beers, buddy, while we still feel like payin' for 'em.

The Bartender straightens up, grins.

BARTENDER

Gee-zus! That sounded like a threat.
(Then, into the dark interior of the bar)

That sound like a threat to you, Jimmy boy?

A voice growls, and a large man in a booth stands, saunters to the front; these tough, bearded workingmen are not to be taken lightly. The one oddity is a young man at the end of the bar: HENRY ERNST, early twenties, clean-shaven, good-looking, blond hair neatly trimmed to a short length, clothes all black to match the laced boots and leather belt; the general impression is one of a very poised young man on the way up. Now, he shifts on his barstool, makes eye contact with Jimmy as the man advances to the front nods approval almost imperceptibly.

JIMMY

I don't know. The boy says he's got the cash. Let's see the cash, baby-face.

Billy, street-smartest of the bunch, senses what's coming. He turns to the door, muttering to the others,

BILLY

C'mon. Outta here and history.

ROCCO

(Resisting)

The hell with it. The hell with you!
I wanna beer!

HALLY

Please, Rocco...c'mon...

5 CONT'D

JIMMY

(Now really derisive)

Rocco!? Hey, you hear that name!?

Rocco!? What kinda foreign name is that crap?

6 He moves menacingly toward Rocco. Billy's already halfway out the door, but seeing the imminent danger to his friend, steps back quickly, intervenes between Jimmy and Rocco.

BILLY

Cool it, Rocco...we got nothin' to prove here...

JIMMY

Sure you do. You gotta prove you got the money.

Through all this, Henry Ernst watches with growing interest. Billy grabs Rocco, turns to the exit, pushes him outside. Henry turns to the Bartender, grins; then, thoughtfully,

HENRY

7 They're not who I was waiting for...but they might be useful. Just cool 'em out a little...

(Then, to the bartender)

Better call my Cousin...

6 SAME: EXT: BAR - NIGHT

The boys are at the truck, but too late; Jimmy's outside, along with two heavies. Henry exits a few beats behind them, leans against the wall, watches with interest as the toughs circle the three youths. The fight doesn't take long; in a few moments the three teenagers are on the ground, beaten and bruised; as we hear sirens approach, Jimmy and his friends rifle their victims' pockets then disappear into the night. As a Sherrif's car arrives, lot Henry pushes himself away from the wall, strolls toward it.

6A. EXT: DARTWOOD COLLEGE - WAGNER HOUSE - MORN *

To ESTABLISH. CAMERA PANS from college entrance gates and sign to houses across the street and centers on one particular house to ESTABLISH the Wagner/Copeland home. *

7. INT: KITCHEN OF PLEASANT HOUSE - MORN *

A television ideal of the two-career couple as JAMES WAGNER and ANGIE COPELAND prepare breakfast together; he's fortyish an attractive man of precise movement and habits who favors the New England intellectual tweed look. Angie is about the same age, usually with a soft smile that hints at an easy-

7 cont'd

going nature, a woman alert not to challenge the men around her too overtly. She wears a fitted dress, a touch of formality that doesn't dilute her gentle sexuality. The house is of modest size, but is well "lived-in" -- books everywhere, photographs stuck all about the place, notes on the refrigerator door, etc. There are no signs of children or their artwork. In the midst of methodically setting the breakfast table, Wagner pauses as he gets a quick view of.

7041D

himself in a shiny chrome toaster. He frowns, bends over to examine the image carefully, touching the lines around his mouth, examining the hint of grey at the temples, as if suddenly reminded of the slow victory of age. Now, b.g., Angie turns toward him, and he quickly straightens up in the pretense that his behavior is normal. He smiles quickly. If she noticed his private manner, she makes nothing of it, merely smiling back; now, she pours the coffee and they sit down to their healthy breakfast of high-fiber cereal, skim milk, and fresh fruit. He tosses aside the morning paper.

ANGIE

Nothing interesting?

WAGNER

Néver on Mondays. Just football and who said what on the Sunday news shows.

(Shrugs, grins)

Which is almost the same as last week since the reporters and their guests are ~~also~~ almost the same as last week.

(Deep breath)

The only thing good about Monday is bedtime.

ANGIE

Which will be delayed tonight...

(He looks up quizzically)

...dinner at the Jamison's.

*

*

(He groans)

It won't be that bad. McVittie will be there. That's ~~good~~ *he is interesting*.

*

*

WAGNER

Perfect. A Monday night dinner with the movers and shakers.

ANGIE

(Easy grin)

Everyone has bosses, James...anyway, maybe by tonight you'll've heard from Jonas King. If he accepts your article, you'll have a wonderful evening.

*

*

WAGNER

...If...God, I don't see how he can turn me down. Not again. And it's just the kind of break I really need right now...

ANGIE

Well, I have good feelings about this one...

*

WAGNER

(Brightens at her encouragement)

Free for lunch?

7 CONT'D

ANGIE
Sorry. Student tutorials...

WAGNER
(Just a mutter)
...Mondays...!...

A moment's eye contact as she smiles at his heavy mood. It's infectious, and he joins in; they share a chuckle, then a laugh; this seems a good relationship, conducted in short-hand and subtext by two adults comfortable with one another.

8 OMIT

9. INT: SMALL TOWN SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The SERGEANT lounges at his desk also reading his morning paper. He looks up, beams broadly at the sight of Henry.

SERGEANT
Hey, Buddy!! Whaddya say?

HENRY
Not a lot...those guys I was waiting
for last night never showed...

SERGEANT
So I heard. Whatcha gonna do?

HENRY
More'n one way to skin a cat...
(The Sergeant grins, nods)
Anything on those drifters from last
night?

SERGEANT
'S far as we can tell, they kept their
noses clean so far. No record nowhere.
(Reaches in his drawer, takes
out a manilla envelope)
This here's what we got. Names and
stuff. Figured you or your uncle'd
want some hardcopy stuff.
(Beat)
Wanna see 'em? They're in the tank.

HENRY
No. Not right away, anyhow. Let 'em
stew for a bit. Get nervous...
(Turn to the door)
I'll be by later this aft...

10. OMIT

11. SAME: INT: LECTURE ROOM - DAY

A large steeply raked amphitheatre filled for an apparently popular class. At the front, Wagner -- or, as we now see, Professor James Wagner -- holds forth, pacing as he speaks, head down, occasionally looking up for emphasis; clearly, he's mastered the technique of keeping a full class interested and amused with as much style as content. It's mid-scene, just as he reaches the dramatic peak of his presentation.

WAGNER

...so in a real sense, iconography, or symbols, are at the heart, the very core of human communication. Now, I respect Margaret Meade --

(Turns, winks at them)

-- hey, any lady who'd travel twenty thousand miles to get native peoples to explain sex can't be that wrong --

(Laughter)

-- which is not a sexist remark since we know how far most men would go to talk about sex, right? If you have any doubts, watch TV beer commercials. Y'know, the ones where four guys -- no women, mind you, just guys -- get off alone and decide "it just doesn't get any better". Frankly, I prefer women.

(Pause for the laughter to subside; then, formal, academic)

Think about how I've been able to make you laugh by using symbols, icons, familiar thoughts: Ms. Meade, Beer commercials, men talking sex, women studying it. To say anthropology is the study of a people's symbols is a defensible position -- an incomplete one, perhaps -- but defensible.

(Checks his pocketwatch)

All right...for next session, I want you to watch Jimmy Swaggert on Sunday. Listen to how he uses icons in order to sway the faithful. I don't mean religious symbols so much as everyday ideas that he links to biblical images in order to make his opinions sound like the word of God. Ask yourself does the statement of one particular side of the abortion issue "ring out like the Moses on Sinai" while the opposition sound like "temple money-changers"?

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*

And the class over, students gather round him.

*

12. SAME: BUILDING ANNEX - DAY

The teachers office building; the entrance has cubby-hole mail slots from which Wagner extracts a letter. The letterhead is NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY Wagner inhales deeply, opens the letter as a younger man exits an office down the hall, heads in our direction. Wagner's face falls as he scans the contents of the letter; he crumples it, stuffs it in his jacket pocket, then hurries down the hall passing the other man, FRANCIS CROSBY, as he goes. *

CROSBY

Morning..

But there is no answer; Crosby frowns, interested, is about to resume on his way, then, pauses, glances back as Wagner enters his office slamming the door loudly behind him. Crosby's interest is up; he turns back to his own office, re-enters.

13. INT: WAGNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Wagner strides angrily to the telephone, takes out the letter, irons it under his palm, visibly trying to control his anger. With shaking hand, he dials a number, pauses until

V.O.TELEPHONE

New England Anthropological Society
Publications... *

WAGNER

(Angrily)
Jonas King!!

A beat as we hear a connection made, a ring, and then,

SECRETARY (V.O.TELEPHONE)

Doctor King's Office...

WAGNER

This is--

But he freezes, unable to get his name out. He squeezes the phone tightly, clenches his jaw, then almost involuntarily slams the phone down. He turns from the phone, goes to a kitchenette area near the window, opens a door under the sink, finds a bottle of Cognac. As he pours a glass.

14. SAME: INT: HALLWAY OUTSIDE WAGNER'S OFFICE - DAY *

Crosby heard the snippet of conversation as he lounged by his open door; he enters his office, goes to the phone, dials a number. A beat, and then,

CROSBY

Good morning. Doctor King please...

15. INT. COUNTY LOCK-UP - DAY

Shadows lengthen with the afternoon; Billy, Rocco and Hally lounge in the holding tank, their bruises and cuts from the night before unattended as if they are forgotten by the world. Now, the off-screen sound of locks being withdrawn and doors opening; a beat and the Sergeant appears.

SERGEANT

You got a visitor. And if you got any sense, you're gonna listen up good to him.

And he exits; the visitor hangs back where the boys can't see him, forcing them to press up against the bars to see down the hallway. Finally, Henry Ernst emerges, keeping his distance from the bars, preferring to lean on the far wall, remote, almost as if viewing barred zoo animals.

HENRY

How'd y'ever manage to get into so much trouble in so little time?

Rocco and Hally look to Billy, their natural leader.

BILLY

Just three lucky guys.

HENRY

I thought your friend was the one with the smart-ass mouth. Figured you for a little brighter than him.

ROCCO

Screw you!

(To Billy)

Tell him to screw himself, Billy.

BILLY

My friend thinks I should shine you. Whadda you think?

HENRY

You're broke. In a strange town. No friends. No past. No future. Who else you got to talk to?

ROCCO

Did he just call me dumb, Billy?

Billy's patience is wearing thin; he flares at Rocco.

BILLY

Well, is he wrong!?! Look where the hell we are, will ya!?! If we had any brains, would we be here!?!
(Silence; he turns back to Ernst)

Quit jerkin' around. Get to the point.

HENRY

I think I can get you out of here.

BILLY

Oh, great! We get mugged and robbed,
and he's gonna do us the big favor
of getting us out!?! What about the
guys that beat us up!?! Robbed us!?! *

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off
of m... *

HENRY

(Mock regret)

Disappeared with the wind.

(Pause; slick smile)

Look, you're booked on disturbing the
peace. And just your luck, my cousin's
the local sheriff. As a favor to me, he
might ask the judge to release you on
my recognizance...

(Grins)

Cousin Ian trusts me...

BUT NOT SHOWN *

The boys stare at Henry for a beat.

HALLY

Why would you wanna do us a favor? *

But Henry ignores Hally; he knows where the power lies. He
looks directly at Billy, holding him in eye-contact. *

BILLY

My man asks a good question. You
Get us out of here, then what? *

HENRY

We go back to L.A.. Then we talk. *
If you don't like what you hear,
you go your way. No questions asked
no markers given.

And he and Billy remain, eyes locked, the other two watching,
waiting for Billy's decision.

16. INT: DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Pre-dinner drinks with the College President JAMISON and his
wife TRUDY. Present are Wagner and Angie who in public tends
to fuss protectively over Wagner; Francis Crosby; and Phillip
McVittie, a distinguished man in a fine suit, crisp white
shirt and college tie. Fiftyish, he's a taciturn man whose
presence seems to intimidate. They cluster around the wetbar
of a spacious living room whose diamond-paned bay windows
offer a sweeping view of the campus. Jamison purs and serves,
handing Angie a glass of wine and Wagner a brandy-and-soda.

JAMISON

Hope the brandy's to your taste.
Nowadays liquor seems to sit on the
shelf much longer than it used to.

WAGNER

Yes. I hardly use it myself any more.
(Then, a little grim)
Some days just seem to call for it.

*

MCVITTIE

...difficult day in class?

WAGNER

No. Actually--

Jamison steps in to avoid any appearance of disharmony on the campus; so, quickly, to McVittie,

JAMISON

Freshen your Ginger Ale, Phillip?

MCVITTIE

(Slight Scots burr)
Thank you...very thoughtful, Doctor.

JAMISON

Tending to the Senior Trustee's needs
is a college president's first job.
(Raises his glass)
Cheers!

*

*

CROSBY

(After the toast and drink)
Doctor Wagner was, I think, about to
describe a difficult day.

WAGNER

(Surprised, uncomfortable)
Oh...not really. Nothing actually.
(Dismissive laugh)
Just that today left me with a taste
for a little brandy.

MCVITTIE

(Humorless)
And why might that be?

Silence, the atmosphere strained, Jamison uncertain of what to expect from McVittie. Wagner tries a dismissive smile.

WAGNER

Oh...nothing particularly important.

The opening Crosby's been waiting for; with a barely credible friendly arm around Wagner's shoulder he feigns sympathy.

CROSBY

I think you're taking it damned well!
I think Jonas King's a rank bastard!

McVittie responds to Crosby's bait, asks without emotion,



*

MCVITTIE

Jonas King, Professor Crosby?

CROSBY

Editor of the New England Journal of Anthropology. Doctor Wagner learned only today that King's rejected another of his papers. It's a personal vendetta that keeps you out, James. We all know it. And we're all on your side.

WAGNER

(After a surprised beat)

Bad news travels fast.

CROSBY

Yes...spoke with him today on routine business...he actually told me.

Wagner stares at Crosby in mixed surprise and homicidal rage; He inhales deeply, smiles, takes a long draught of the brandy; Jamison hates this, looks at Trudy who responds immediately.

TRUDY

I think it's time we moved to the dining room.

MCVITTIE

(Stepping aside)

After you, Missus Wagner.

ANGIE

(Correcting, smiling)

Miss Copeland, actually. Or Professor Copeland if you prefer. I'm in the English department.

MCVITTIE

Oh. I thought you were married. Please forgive me.

ANGIE

(A warm wink)

If I can forgive James...why not you as well?

A beat of dead silence; then McVittie smiles, actually laughs out loud. Jamison exhales in relief, smiles at Trudy who then leads McVittie to the dining room; Angie takes Wagner's arm, pats it maternally, and they follow, bringing up the rear.

17.

EXT: PACIFIC PALLISADES AERIE - EVE

A large house with a Tyrolian touch sits high on the bluffs with a dramatic view of the Pacific below. Henry's Mustang pulls into the driveway followed by the creaky pick-up; the threesome clamber out, follow Henry into the house proper. We see the figure of Alden Ernst watching them from the house.

Henry and the three boys enter from the front door
and cross through toward a backyard patio.

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* 13.

18.

EXT. HOUSE: DUSK

A large patio on the edge of the cliff. Our threesome
are clearly impressed, lingering at the door while Henry
takes four bottles of beer from a fridge.

HENRY
Get comfortable.

Rocco and Hally are about to head for the Patio, but Hally
pauses, looks at Billy who thinks for a beat, then shrugs.

BILLY
(We've come this far...)

And the cross to the Patio where Henry's uncapped the beer.
Hally inspects the label.

HALLY
What is this stuff?

HENRY
Tadcaster Ale. A favorite of the
British working class. Cheers.

*
*

A beat as they all drink from their bottle; then,

BILLY
Okay. So far, loads of fun, Henry.
Trouble is, I think you got us into
this mess. That's what I think. What
I know is that you got us out. And
the beer's great. Now...what's next?

HENRY
(Flopping into a chair)
Don't you ever relax? Why not just
enjoy something simple...like how
about a ringside seat for the sunset?

A beat, but then they do sit. Then, once seated.

Beer

HENRY
Okay...you're only half-right. I did
get you out of it. But you got
yourselves into the slammer. That
didn't need any help from me.

HALLY
Is this like a religion? Once I got
picked up by the Moonies, y'know? It
was weird. I snuck out one night.

HENRY
Hell, no! This is totally the other
side of the street! I work for my
Uncle. In the reclamation business.

18 CONT'D

ROCCO
...the what business...?

HENRY
Reclamation.
(Pause, a sip of beer, then)
We reclaim things. Get back things
that've been lost.

BILLY
~~(Henry)~~
Like what?

HENRY
How about America...or our birth-
right? How about reclaiming every-
thing that's been taken from us in the
last thirty years? Like the jobs you
guys would've had back then but can't
get now because some illegal alien
took it from you?
(Another sip, another smile)
That's what we reclaim. Our homeland.

A beat of silence; then, puzzled but very interested.

HALLY
How d'ya go about work like that?

HENRY
One -- ~~(or, in this case three)~~ -- souls
at a time...

19. INT: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Angie and Wagner in bed, the only illumination a shaft of
moonlight through the net curtains. They're in the midst of
love-making, a rhythmic repetition without particular passion,
the sheets still covering them. A few beats and then Wagner
seems to slow then roll over onto his side where he lies, back
to her, staring out at the darkness. Several beats until,

WAGNER
Sorry...I'm really not all here
tonight.

ANGIE
It's okay...you know it's okay...
(Strokes his brow, his back still
to her)
You know what I think...?...you let
the letter from Jonas King bother you
too much...

He rolls over, stares at her; then, a confessional.

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WAGNER

It nearly killed me. I felt like a failure...an old man...I tried to phone Jonas King, y'know.

(Then, quiet emotion)

Tried, Angie, tried and failed. Hung up before I let go, scared an incident with King would weaken my career even more! That bastard Crosby! He knew this was the last thing McVittie would want to hear about me!

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ANGIE

(Still soothing)

But you explained it perfectly. He understood. You should be flattered at how far Jonas King and his friends go to keep you from the recognition you deserve.

*
*

WAGNER

Recognition, hell! I'm worried about my job! The review committee could revoke my tenure! Then what!? High schools don't have anthropology teachers!

(Pause)

Crosbys' fondest dream...to get me out of the way of his career path.

ANGIE

Stop panicking! You'll publish! And look how impressed McVittie was when you told him that California Think Tank was coming up to interview you tomorrow.

(Chuckle)

Did you see how Crosby blushed when McVittie asked him how many think tanks had contacted him?

Wagner brightens; she knows how to boost his ego, get his attention. Cheered, he shares the laugh.

WAGNER

And when he thought we were married? You handled him brilliantly. Actually made him laugh!

ANGIE

(A grin, a wink, but pointed)

This time...but sooner or later I might not...then you'll have to make up your mind about us.

Immediately he tenses; she softens, ever tolerant, rolls close to him, passing her hand over his body, drawing him to sexual contact; slowly he succumbs -- but with restraint as before.

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20

OMIT

WV
SMITE

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21

SAME: INT: CLUB - NIGHT

Dark, with a long bar and, at the back, a juke box adjacent to a dance floor; the clientele are young, favor black clothing, and sport the short cropped hair. Henry leads the way to a table near the dance floor, gestures to the bartender who immediately opens bottles of English beer. As they cross the room, other patrons acknowledge Henry and his friends with great deference.

*

They approach three young men at the bar: DWAYNE, FRED, and JIMMY, all about twenty and dressed in similar fashion to Henry: black shirt and pants, workingman boots. All sport an arm patch -- four black arcs in a white circle set on a red shield. However, unlike Henry who has short but noticeable hair, this trio have buzz-cuts -- except for Fred who's shaved to the skin. They and Henry exchange ritualistic handshakes.

*

HENRY

Guys, meet my mates: Dwayne, Fred
Jimmy...this is Hal, Bill and Rock.

DWAYNE

Where'd ya find 'em?

HENRY

Same kinda place I found you. *can unnotr*

This draws a roar of laughter from all except our three.

DWAYNE

Whatcha get nabbed for?

Hally and Rocco look uncertainly to Billy, the agreed leader.

BILLY

Disorderly conduct. Nothing exciting.

HENRY

But it might've been, right?

(Stares at Billy)

They were headed for the border.

Rumor is they had a wad of bills thick
enough to choke ten beaners.

(The beer arrives)

Guess they were gonna score some dope.

*

Snap Back

Now all eyes are on Billy. He toughs it out, lifts the beer bottle to his mouth, never breaking eye contact as he speaks.

BILLY

Man's gotta make a buck.

HENRY

Yeah. But he shouldn't have to be forced to deal drugs to do it.

(Pause) *Sighs*

Where's your family from?

BILLY

Iowa.

This amuses Henry and his friends; after the chuckles,

DWAYNE

We're talkin' racially. Where'd your people come from in the first place?

BILLY

Way back? From England, I guess.

HENRY

Y'hear that? He guesses. Makes you wanna cry. A guy like you -- smart, fit, good-looking -- and no racial consciousness. I mean none!

(Then, to Hally)

And you?

GET Angry

HALLY

My Dad's American. But my Mom's family are from Germany.

At this, their eyes light up.

FRED

Germany!?! All riiight!

*

ROCCO

Italy. All my folks're Italian.

B.g., three Army Airborne recruits enter the club, go to the bar. One of the three is Black, and his passage through the tables of dark-clad, head-shaved youths attracts attention.

*

HENRY

(Approving)

Good blood, all of you...y'ever ask yourselves how come guys like you have to run dope over the border to earn the price of a meal? When guys like that...

(Indicates the Soldiers)

...get a free ride from Washington?

*

ROCCO

I tried to join the Army ...bastards
wouldn't have me. Said I wasn't
stable or some crap like that.

Fred and Dwayne exchange looks, stand, saunter over to the
bar; Billy watches carefully, Henry concentrates on Rocco.

HENRY

That's my point, see? Some nigger
like that guy at the bar -- or the
renegade whites that hang out with him
-- they're okay, but a stand-up guy
like you is no good? Now, are you
gonna believe that?

Rocco concentrates for several beats before setting an angry
line to his mouth, shaking his head.

ROCCO

Nah. I knew it was bullshit all
along.

Before anything else can be said, the scuffle breaks out at
the bar. Dwayne has just pushed the Black Soldier away, now
stands eye-to-eye with him, snarling, screaming in his face.

DWAYNE

You don't ever look at me in the eye,
boy!! Never!!!!

The Soldier flares, then stops, knowing he's on enemy turf. The
three back off, retreating to the door.

BLACK SOLDIER

We'll be back...native boy.

They exit to the cheers of the other patrons. Dwayne and Fred
are congratulated as they return to the table; Billy stands.

BILLY

C'mon, guys. This scene ain't for us.

Rocco stiffens, happy with his emerging sense-of-self.

ROCCO

What's your problem, man? I like it
here.

BILLY

'Cause you're makin' like you don't
know what's going on here.

You never heard of
skinheads, you don't know about Nazi
bullshit!?!?

*
*

Before he can answer, Henry speaks, quiet, persuasive.

HENRY
Do you?

BILLY
I know enough!!

HENRY
(Very soft, reasonable)
No offence, bud, but I don't think you do. I think you know what you read in the papers, what you hear on TV. But the truth? That's something else.

(Pause)
Look at yourselves. You'd be doin' time without us. So how come we're suddenly the enemy. How come? Can you answer that? I think you oughta listen. I think you owe me that.

Rocco nods, stares at Billy, hostility building. Hally anxious, needs Billy's leadership but fears offending Rocco.

HENRY
(Warm, sweet, persuasive)
Besides, you need a place to stay to-night. I've got a great set-up at the house. You'll be real comfortable. No motel bedbugs.
(Winks at Hally)
Just like home. A real home.

HALLY
What about it, Billy? It can't hurt, right?

ROCCO
Relax, kid. You can hang in even if Billy splits. I'm your friend, too, right?

Billy stares at them very closely, finally locking eyes with Henry who's paying careful attention to the group dynamic. Billy is snookered. He nods ever-so-slightly, eases back into his chair. Henry grins, slaps him on the back.

HENRY
C'mon! This place needs some life!

He stands, swaggers to the jukebox; all except Billy follow; then, slowly, inevitably even he stands, joins them.

22. EXT: DARTWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

Wagner hurries across campus to his building, pausing to note a late-model sporty car parked in front; his pace quickens.

23. SAME: INT: BUILDING - DAY

As he passes the mail slots seen earlier, hurrying to his office. But as he reaches the door, he stops, something taking his attention -- the door opposite his is open.

24. SAME: WAGNER'S POV: INT: CROSBY'S OFFICE - DAY

In one corner of the room are two comfortable armchairs where Crosby sits across from a very attractive woman in her late twenties. She is SUSAN MCCARRAN, a woman who manages to imply an available sexuality despite her otherwise demure bearing and attire. At the moment, she and Crosby share laughter, but stop when Crosby looks up, sees Wagner in the doorway.

CROSBY

Morning, James! Just entertaining your eleven o'clock appointment.

WAGNER

Very thoughtful...

(Then, to Susan)

Ms. McCarran?

SUSAN

(Standing)

Yes. Doctor Wagner?

And he flashes his most brilliant, most charming smile, crosses to her, extends his hand.

WAGNER

Sorry I'm delayed. I, er...car trouble.

*

SUSAN

Not at all. Professor Crosby took good care of me.

WAGNER

(Text and subtext)

Yes. I'm sure.

(Stands aside)

Please...join me...

SUSAN

(Shakes Crosby's hand)

Thank you so much for your time. And the coffee.

CROSBY

Pleasure...

(Holds up a business card)

Remember, I have your card. When I get to California I'll let you return the hospitality.

24 cont'd

SUSAN

(Warmly)

I'll count on it.

And she turns, follows Wagner to his office. We linger on Crosby whose expression now hardens as he turns the business card over in his hand, studies it carefully.

25. INT: WAGNER'S OFFICE - DAY

As seen before: a large pleasant room, books on every available surface, a writing desk with an aging IBM Selectric II, papers everywhere, etc. The room includes a tutorial corner with comfortable chairs and coffee table where Susan now goes about setting up the interview, placing a tape recorder on the table; she pauses, looks up,

SUSAN

Do you mind?

WAGNER

Sorry? Oh, the tape recorder? No, on the contrary. I'm flattered. People rarely record me -- except students just before finals.

She smiles, sets up the recorder. He waits for the coffee to brew, stares out the window at the sports car. She notices.

SUSAN

I hope it was okay to park there.

WAGNER

Better than okay. A visitor in a car like that helps the image of an anthropology professor. My guests usually show up on motor scooters.

SUSAN

It's just a rental. I thought it would be fun.

WAGNER

(Brings over the coffee)

I admire extravagance. It's my ambition.

(Sits; then interested)

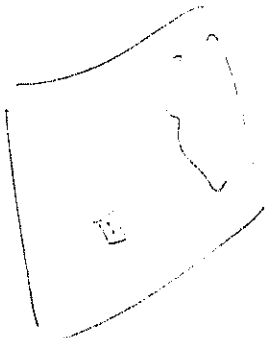
I thought think tanks paid even less than colleges.

SUSAN

Depends. We're part of The Center For A New National Agenda. They seem to have access to major endowment funds.

WAGNER

Another one of my ambitions.



25 CONT'D

SUSAN

(Her own charming smile)

Well, if I find out where the money
comes from...I'll let you in on it.

They share a smile, a moment of eye-contact from which Wagner
retreats quickly, either shy or insecure; she moves past it.

SUSAN

Well...to business. In a few weeks'
time, the Senate Health and Human ser-
vices Committee will conduct hearings
on the welfare program. We intend to
submit a paper pressing for more local
control. We believe that small
communities can do a better job of
determining standards for welfare than
the Federal Government.

*

*

(Flips on the tape recorder)

Now, in the late sixties you published
two articles entitled A New View of
Racial and Cultural Harmony.

*

WAGNER

(Surprised delight)

Those!! God, I thought nobody would
ever notice them!!

She gets him back in eye-contact, holds long enough to add
great sincerity to her next very quiet statement.

SUSAN

They were brilliant.

(A beat more of locked eyes)

They blew me away.

WAGNER

(Suddenly embarrassed)

Well! I..er...I'm, er...

(Pause; then a warm smile)

I'm grateful, is what I am!

SUSAN

(Same quiet admiration)

We're the ones who ought to be
grateful. You're a courageous man.
At a time when academics were supposed
to put their faith in big government
you saw that Americans have cultural
and ethnic histories that are different.
You were years ahead of the rest of us
in seeing that we're not all the same.

*

*

*

*

*

*

(Pause)

We intend to see your message gets
heard. And listened to.

Again, he's held by her eyes. He straightens up, suddenly
more confident, not shrinking from the eye contact as

25 cont'd

WAGNER

Do you, now?

26- OMIT

*

27. MS: DESK WITH COMPUTER FACILITY:

We cannot see the operator, but the ocean view beyond the computer tells us we're back in the Ernst house. The screen reads WELCOME TO THE ARYAN RESURGANCE MOVEMENT ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD. ENTER YOUR NAME AND ID CODES. The operator is deft but our angle is only half the screen, so we only catch half-words and phrases. But, amongst them, we see KENNER, WILLIAM. FAMILY CONTACTED. IOWA KKK AND A.R.M. UNITS INVOLVED. And the keys are hit, the images flash rapidly. We are in the heart of a sophisticated computer data-bank.

*
*
*
*
*
*

28. INT: DORM-LIKE ROOM - DAY

Pleasant, with an ocean view and four very homey single beds. Billy, Rocco, and Hally are up, having washed at an open sink in the corner. Hally flops back on his unmade bed, Rocco takes out a marijauna joint. Billy stares out the window.

*

ROCCO

Is this some deal or what!?

HALLY

He said it'd be like a real home.

The door swings open, Henry enters, the usual warmth gone, replaced by a very serious manner. He sees Rocco's joint, walks over, snatches it from his mouth.

ROCCO

Hey! What the hell're ya doin'!?!

HENRY

Not here. Not in this house.

BILLY

I think this is where he tells us the price of the room.

HENRY

My Uncle wants to meet you. We have a proposition to put to you.

(Tersely)

Make your beds. Clean your finger-nails. Get presentable for God's sakes. I'll be back in five minutes.

And he turns and is gone. They look to Billy; he shrugs, turns to his bed, begins to straighten it.

*
*
*
*

29 ECU: COMPUTER SCREEN:

Again, our angle is only half the screen, but we catch certain words and phrases: WAGNER, JAMES, PROFESSOR/ANTHROPOLOGY, DARTWOOD COLLEGE. NEW INPUT: RELEASE SIGNED...CAN USE A few beats, the sound of keys being struck, then GOOD NEWS THANX.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE:

30 SAME: A WIDER ANGLE: AN OFFICE:

Simple, uncluttered, a wonderful ocean view. There is a sophisticated computer terminal on a table behind the desk, complete with modem. Now, there is a knock at the door; the Man at the desk dims the monitor before,

MAN

Come in.

And the door is thrown open -- to reveal Henry, and, just behind him, Billy, Rocco, and Hally. He opens the door wide in order to admit them as he says,

HENRY

Hi. These are the friends I was telling you about.

(To the others)

This is my Uncle: Alden Ernst.

And, as the three step forward to shake his hand,

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOFADE IN:

31. EXT. ERNST'S PATIO: DAY

A table is set on the terrace that overlooks the bay; a fiftyish grey-haired housekeeper, sets out some plain but wholesome food: turkey sandwiches on white bread, butter, jam, pitchers of milk and lemonade, etc. Her task completed, she smiles at Ernst, nods, then exits. He makes a hands sign, then turns to the boys, explains.

ERNST

Missus Hodges is a deaf mute.

(Then, head bowed, hands clasped)

O, Lord, find us grateful for this simple food with which thou sustaineth us, be at our shoulder as we struggle to send Thy word unto the nations, and spread despair amongst thine enemies. Amen. *

They murmur amen, then follow Ernst's example by spreading napkins on their laps. Henry offers the plate of sandwiches first to his uncle, who selects a modest meal, then passes the plate along. Everything here is picture-book middle class.

ERNST

Henry tells me you got on the wrong side of the Border town law.

The plate of sandwiches goes first to Billy who catches on quickly, as if solid bourgeois behavior was ingrained in him. He takes only one half of a sandwich. Likewise, Rocco, as

BILLY

Made a mistake in the wrong bar was all, sir.

Hally is about to help himself to a third sandwich when a glance from Billy stops him, none of which is lost on the alert older Ernst; now, the pitcher of milk makes the rounds.

ERNST

It's good to admit mistakes. Healthy. And I trust Henry's taken good care of you.

ROCCO

Are you kidding!?!

(Stops; tries to be polite)

Er, I mean, he's been real good to us.

Billy's stayed alert through all this; now he makes his move.

BILLY

So good, sir, as to make a man wonder.

ERNST

Now what could that mean?

BILLY

In Iowa they say that generosity deserves itself back. I think we're building up a debt here. One I don't know as we can pay off.

ERNST

There's time for that. Henry will discuss that with you, I'm sure. But Iowa. Tell me about Iowa. You're a long way from home.

*
*

Billy pauses, puts down his sandwich, speaks from a new place -- not the streetwise kid so much as a man in reverie.

BILLY

Well, sir, we were farm people 'til farmin' went bad. When the banks moved in, my dad tried to stop 'em. So they put him in jail. My great grandfolks pioneered up that way, no one ever been in jail before.

Ernst leans forward, caring, sympathetic.

ERNST

Must've been hard on you. Rough on the family.

*
*

(Pause; then warm, fatherly)
They say it helps to talk about these things...you can trust us...

Billy hesitates; Ernst smiles, reaches over to him. Slowly, the boy opens up.

BILLY

Mom got sick, went to hospital, ended up in some sorta home. They say she's there forever probably. My sisters are older. They moved to Chicago. I don't know what they're doing there.

ERNST

And your Dad?

BILLY

(Suddenly very direct)
He hung himself in jail.

ERNST

(A beat; then, moved)
That's a tragedy, son. I wish we'd known. We might've been able to help.

BILLY

(Sandwich aside, facing honesty)
Mister Ernst, I sorta figured out who
you are. And your people were there.
They offered to help Mom and Dad.

ERNST

And?

BILLY

My Dad was in World War Two. Said he'd
rather die than make truck with Nazis.

An electric moment as Billy stares right at Ernst; a beat, and
the older man smiles easily, warmly, dispelling anxiety.

ERNST

We're not exactly nazis, son, whatever your
Dad might have thought.

(Beat)

More importantly...what do you think?
Was your Dad right to refuse our help?

*
*
*
*
*

BILLY

It doesn't matter whether he was right
or wrong. Only that he's dead.

And he turns back to his sandwich, eyes down; his two friends
follow suit. The older Ernst seems pleased, nods approvingly
to Henry who takes it as personal encouragement.

32

INT: SKINHEAD CLUB - NIGHT

The harsh, violent sound of an Oi/Punk band favored by the
neo-nazi youth blares from the jukebox. Our group are seated,
Henry singing along with the hymn, as do several others; Hally
hums along, Rocco taps out a rhythm, Billy just watches.

THE HOUR HAS COME, A NEW DAY BREAKS
COME GREET THE DAWN;
WITH IRON WILL, OUR MIGHT WILL MAKE US ONE.
WITH SOULS SO PURE, OUR SPIRIT WAKES
AND SEES THE SIGN
AND SENDS THE WORD, TOMORROW WILL BE MINE.

All applaud save Billy; Henry grins at him, ~~shakes his head.~~

HENRY

You're really having trouble getting
on board the program, aren't you, pal?

BILLY

Just waiting for the bill.

Henry studies Billy's face for a beat, then nods, leans
back in the chair.

HENRY

Okay. I guess it's time. You've probably figured out I don't spend my evenings in a Border cantina. I was there for a reason that night. Waiting to take delivery of an item someone was bringing across from Mexico.

HALLY

Like drugs?

HENRY

No. Not even close. Just a special gift from someone in Europe. For a friend of my Uncle's. To be presented at a big convention we're having in Chicago next month. And it's just something the sender didn't want going through U.S. customs.

(Pause)

Anyway, the guy never showed. We heard from him. Seems he got turned away at the border.

BILLY

Customs?

HENRY

No. Immigration.

(Grin)

Probably didn't look alien enough. Thought I'd have to go down and get it myself, but me and my Uncle are watched all the time. FBI thinks we're un-American if you can believe. Then you guys show up in a beat-up pick-up with enough bucks to choke a wet-back drug dealer. So it seemed to me maybe, in return for a few favors, you might help us out.

BILLY

Go down, make contact, bring it back.

HENRY

Doesn't sound too hard, does it?

(Pause)

The only rule is that you don't open the package. No way. On pain of death, as they woulda said during the war.

*
*

HENRY (CONT'D)

And you never tell anyone
where you're bringing it. Let 'em
confiscate it. But keep our privacy.
(Pause, a wink)
Think of it as a kick in the ~~ass~~ ^{FACE} for the
bankers that took your farm.

BILLY

(Unmoved)

And if we pull it off?

HENRY

You get a choice. We pay you a
hundred bucks for your trouble...

(Pause; then dramatic)

Or you can join up with us. A.R.M.
ARM...The Aryan Resurgence Movement.
(Smiles easily)

Think about it. There's time. The
guy hadda get back to Europe. Won't
hit Tijuana again for three weeks.

HALLY

So whadda we do til then?

HENRY

Stay at the house. Hang out. Learn
about the forces that took Billy's
dad's life.

Abruptly Billy loses the edge of his self-control; the anger
boils up in him, and he grabs across the table at Henry.

BILLY

Damn you, lay off about my old man!!
I told your uncle that to be polite!!
Don't use that stuff to make me wanna
like you!! UNDERSTAND!?!
*RAWH
FOCUS
ON SCAR**

Immediately, the others gather around, led by Dwayne who goes
for Billy; Henry raises his hand and they back off. Billy,
still furious, slowly releases Henry's shirt. The suspense
hangs heavy, the atmosphere charged -- when the street door
opens. The Soldiers have returned, now six in number. As
they stride towards Dwayne, the tension has somewhere to go.

BLACK SOLDIER

We're back. Just like we promised.

And he shoves Dwayne -- while another Soldier pulls the chair
out from behind Billy, who, adrenalin still pumping, he whirls
around, goes to hit him -- when Dwayne grabs his wrist.

*
*

The Soldiers are outnumbered about ten to six, but start taking tunics off, ready to fight. The Skinheads have no use for formalities; Dwayne jumps the nearest soldier before his tunic's off, throws him to the ground. The battle's joined, fists and arms everywhere. The Soldier who accosted Billy turns on him and that simply, Billy's in the fight. It wages for several moments. the better-trained Soldiers getting the upper hand; it is then that Dwayne pulls a knife plunges it at the nearest uniform. He gets a thigh, and the man screams, blood begins spurting. The Soldier next to him reacts quickly,

Quick!! Get him outta here!!

And they gather up their wounded comrade, beat a hasty retreat -- to the delighted amusement of the skinheads.

...run, Sambo, run!!
...You smell the fried chicken (etc)

They begin to return to the bar, Billy nursing his bruised and bleeding knuckles; Henry falls into step beside him.

You did good, pal. You came through in the clutch...

Before Billy can answer, Henry strides ahead; Rocco and Hally who overheard, slap Billy's back, as do other Skinheads. Rocco seems especially buoyed, face flushed with excitement.

That shows 'em we can hold our own!

Unwittingly, Billy seems to have won his first Iron Cross.

Seen through the glass around an ice hockey rink, as Wagner checks a younger man heavily into the boards with an intensity that parallels Billy's release of inner rage moments ago.

Wagner has the skates on and shinnies with the college team at

practice; he's still got some hockey skills and keeps adequate pace with the younger men, especially "in the corners" where skill and finesse give way to hard-hitting and at times violent confrontations. Wagner, refreshed by the body contact, skates off to follow the play. Then the buzzer sounds, and the players leave the ice, exchanging good-natured waves with Wagner who remains behind to skate some more. He circles the rink, faster and faster, pushing himself until he can go no further; finally exhausted, he skates off the ice.

36 INT: LOCKER ROOM - DAY

By now, the team has showered and left. Wagner is alone as he comes from the showers, towel around his waist; he pauses at a full length mirror, studies his body, pokes places where aging continues despite his efforts. He sighs, goes to his locker, opens it, glances around to be sure he's alone, then reaches far in the back for a flask of brandy; he takes a long draught then replaces the flask quickly, shuddering slightly as the brandy hits his system. Then he jumps, startled by a voice.

CROSBY(o.s.)

James!?! You still here, James?!?

WAGNER

Over here...

He drops the towel, reaches for his clothes as Crosby rounds the aisle; flustered by the nakedness and he laughs nervously. Wagner notices his discomfort but makes no move to modesty,

WAGNER

When you come looking for me this early, you must've heard I was fired.

CROSBY

Very unfair, James. Just some important messages.

WAGNER

King said I'd never be published again so they took away my tenure.

CROSBY

God, you're in a cynical mood this morning. Actually, they're all calls from New York. Various television programs...

(Consults a list)

Oprah, Phil, Sixty Minutes--

*

WAGNER

I'm not in the mood for jokes, Crosby!

*

(Then, in the quiet)

*

Get to the point.

CROSBY

But that is the point! Switchboard's been jammed with calls...one actually came through to my office.

(Pause for dramatic effect)

...Horace Gabler of "Seven Days".

(Pause, then a thin smile)

Yes. Even America's most prestigious news magazine is looking for you this morning.

Wagner, grabs the list from Crosby's hand, studies it.

WAGNER

It's a mistake...or a very bad joke.

*

CROSBY

Apparantly not. I took the liberty of asking Gabler what it was about. He said...

(Then, quoting from memory)

"...it's in reference to today's WASHINGTON POST, page three, column eight..."

*

WAGNER

The Post? I haven't spoken to the Post -- or, more to the point, they haven't talked to me -- in years.

A beat to enjoy Wagner's bewilderment, then Crosby reaches inside his topcoat pocket, extracts a newspaper folded to the appropriate page and marked in red.

CROSBY

I, er, ran into town, got a copy. You might want to glance at it before you return the calls.

And he turns and goes, glancing back to watch Wagner's face turn white as he looks at the newspaper.

37. SAME: THE NEWSPAPER:

The large article has a headline: SENATE COMMITTEE HEARS ULTRA-RIGHT WING VIEWS. Then, a subsidiary boldface: NOTED ACADEMIC PROVIDES THEORY FOR ALLEGED NEO-NAZI THINK TANK.

38. EXT: WAGNER/ANGIE HOME - DAY

*

As he rushes from the house, Angie hurrying behind. He reaches the car, enters the passenger door.

*

*

WAGNER

Angie, for God's sakes, hurry! It's the last train for New York till ten!

*

*

ANGIE

You're over-reacting, James. Really.

WAGNER

Then you're not thinking! If THE POST is right, I helped a nazi front! I'm no Nazi!! What this woman's done could finish me!

ANGIE

Then why run to New York?!?

WAGNER

Because I want her before she goes back to California!! Get her face-to-face!! Get a public retraction, an apology! The kind that saves jobs!

Now as she crosses to the Driver's side,

ANGIE

Don't you want me there? For moral support?

He slams his car door abruptly; he wants no more of that.

WAGNER

~~You worry about yourself.~~ I'll be back tomorrow. *WAGNER WAX I'LL HAVE TO GO FOR*

And she sighs, enters the car.

A39

EXT. N.Y. RESTAURANT - DAY

Wagner arrives, exits cab, crosses patio to enter restaurant. *

39

INT: MANHATTAN RESTAURANT - MIDDAY *

A fine Manhattan restaurant; at a corner table is Susan, and she waves at Wagner as he enters; he crosses to her through the busy lunch crowd. She stands to shake hands, but he speaks immediately, spurring it all out as though he'd been rehearsing it all the way in on the train. *

WAGNER

Look, when you walked in my office, I took you at face value. Had I known who you were, I'd've never agreed to an interview! As a result, my career may be seriously bruised -- a career that was already very tender. You must delete the excerpts from my articles! And apologize to me publicly.

He remains leaning over the table, aggressive, in her face. She sits, stays perfectly still for as long as it takes for him to become uneasy; only then does she smile, very sweetly,

SUSAN

Fine thank you. And how are you? I hope you had a pleasant train ride in.

And he gathers himself together, sits down.

*

WAGNER

I'm sorry. But my directness is a
measure of how serious this is to me.

*

The waiter arrives, smiles and bends insincerely low.

WAITER

I'm Todd, your luncheon waiter. Can I
bring you something to sip?

SUSAN

White wine.

WAGNER

(Distracted)

I'll, er, oh, the same.

(T... decisive)

Er, on a second thought...a bloody mary.

Susan duly noted his change-of-mind as if filing it away for
later reference. Todd retreats; a beat, and then Susan starts
before he can repeat his memorized speech.

SUSAN

Look, I know you're upset. But get a
little perspective. Every quote, every
excerpt that we used was accurate.
Not a footnote out-of-place.

WAGNER

Impossible! My entire work flies in
the face of neo-Nazi ideology!

SUSAN

No doubt. Who said anything about
Nazis -- neo or any other kind?

WAGNER

(Suddenly off-balance)

Well...this morning's WASHINGTON POST
said quite clearly...

He trails off, unsure of where to go. She shrugs, continues
on, very smoothly.

SUSAN

Surely you're experienced enough to
know that the media in this country
labels anything they don't agree with
as extreme right wing.

WAGNER

Be serious. Nobody invents a charge
like that. There must be some basis
for it.

SUSAN

(Dismissive shrug)

Some overlapping donors. We reach out wherever possible for endowment funds. Sometimes we get gifts from people who also support ultra-right-wing groups.

WAGNER

Then there is something to it! Sleep with dogs, you get fleas.

SUSAN

(Sharply)

Guilt by association! That's McCarthyism whether it comes from the right or the left! What you said, you said, and that's what we quoted!

WAGNER

Out of context!!

SUSAN

(Very simply)

Then go on "Seven Days" and explain yourself to Gabler.

WAGNER

(Puzzled)

I'll repudiate you. You know that.

SUSAN

You can repudiate me all you like. But not my scholarship. I quoted you word-for-word.

WAGNER

(After a beat to study her)

Are you a racist? A neo-nazi?

SUSAN

Of course not! I'm trying to improve the system! I'm the victim here. Like anyone who disagrees with the great American press! Or its single-point-of-view staffers.

(Then, leaning forward, intense)

Maybe if you thought a little more like them, you'd get the recognition that they're keeping from you.

WAGNER

I think my problems are more personality conflicts. I never quite got on the right side of the high mucky-mucks of the world of Anthropology.

*

SUSAN

All the more reason to go on "Seven Days". Go over their heads...

(Pointed pause)

Take the message to the people. You're man enough to do it. I believe in you. And it'll impress the people at Dartwood.

(Pause, then a soft smile)

~~Help your career, I imagine.~~

She holds him in eye-contact, raises her glass in silent toast.

40. INT: WAGNER'S COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY

Filled with a TV crew: camera, sound, segment producer, and, sitting across from Wagner, HORACE GABLER, sixty, flint-eyed, an unforgiving man in the Mike Wallace/Sam Donaldson style; the cameraman peers through the lens, as audio tape rolls. A beat and he gives a thumbs-up to Gabler, who shifts in his chair, smiles sweetly, kicks in.

GABLER

Professor Wagner...you've been used as a basis for some views that most Americans find pretty frightening. What have you got to say for yourself?

WAGNER

In the articles from which I was quoted my position was -- and is -- that a good welfare system aims to help individuals. Not groups. It doesn't pretend that we're all the same culturally and racially. In the sixties that was an orthodox left-leaning position!

41. INT: WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

FLASH FORWARD: WAGNER ON TELEVISION: THE INTERVIEW AS AIRED: *

We move from the office to the television broadcast of the interview as it will be actually broadcast after editing.

As seen on television in Wagner house. Wagner and Angie watch. *

GABLER

What have you got to say for yourself?

WAGNER

My position...

(Intercut Gabler listening while)

...doesn't pretend that we're all the same culturally and racially.

42. SAME: WAGNER'S OFFICE: THE ACTUAL INTERVIEW: AS BEFORE:

Back to the office interview as the next question is asked.

42 CONT'D

GABLER

Be specific. How does race affect social programs?

WAGNER

Because with the best of intention, we have allowed the rise of a Black underclass by pretending inner city Blacks could fit into the mold of middle-class white people. Instead of looking to individual needs, we tried to make them fit a preconceived notion of what it means to be an American.

GABLER

And you think this is impossible?

WAGNER

At present. The Black family structure is different than the white. Jews and Southeast Asians came to America with a strong sense of family, the basic capitalistic unit. They knew what they wanted and went after it in true-blue American dream fashion. A model American success story. That is why they succeeded -- by single-mindedness and a close-knit community. The Blacks came here and had these values taken from them by slave-owners.

43

INT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

FLASH FORWARD: SAME: THE INTERVIEW AS AIRED:

The response as aired after editing, on tv as Wagner and Angie are watching.

WAGNER

We have allowed the rise of a Black underclass in this country by pretending we could make them fit...the Black is different than the white.

GABLER(v.o.dub)

And the Jews?

WAGNER

The Jews succeeded because they knew what they wanted and they went after it. They were single-minded and close-knit.

44.

SAME: THE OFFICE INTERVIEW:

GABLER

What does your philosophy mean for the average white American?

WAGNER

Like all Americans, whites should look to their own community who think and behave as they do. In a free society, that is how individual groups empower themselves, stand up for what they believe. As for Blacks, if twenty-five years of affirmative action hasn't solved the problem, then they must ask why of the political system and demand change!

GABLER

Thank you, Professor...

And he unclips his mike, stands. Wagner follows suit as the cameraman and sound man begin to wrap up.

WAGNER

I hope everyone sees this. I hope it clears it up.

GABLER

Oh, you'll get a huge audience. People love anything to do with Nazis...

(Then, quickly, catching himself)
Not you, of course. Just in general.

45 INT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

SAME: THE INTERVIEW AS AIRED: EXT: CAMPUS - DAY

A long shot of Wagner crossing campus, Angie on his arm. This is watched by Wagner and Angie on television.

WAGNER(v.o.)

...whites should look to their community who think and behave as they do...stand up for what they believe...as for Blacks, if twenty-five years of affirmative action hasn't solved the problem ask why.

45A The on-screen image cuts to Gabler in front of a Graphic festooned with a swastika. He's winding up the piece.

GABLER

So you be the judge; is James Wagner a dangerous racist, a nazi, or merely an academic whose work is being co-opted to a dark cause for which he has no taste? It's hard to say. Much of the time he uses so many words one has to sift through them, as we did, to find the gist. But one item of note: his students tell us that amongst other assignments, Wagner has them watch television evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggert. Anthropology? Again, you be the judge. More in a minute.

46. SAME: THE ACTUAL INTERVIEW: AS BEFORE:

As sound and Camera prepare to leave the office.

GABLER

We'll need a few color shots...you know...something of you walking across campus...that sort of thing.

Angie materializes from the crowd of students at the door, links her arm in his; he may not be entirely comfortable with her proprietary air, but makes no move to resist.

47. ECU: VIDEO TERMINAL DISPLAY

As seen earlier in Ernst's office. A few keys are hit, and a message materializes: PRO:ERNST EX:STOCKMAN-MEXICAN HOLIDAY PLANS CONFIRMED AT COLLATERAL DATES. A beat before we see the reply COURIER ARRANGED; then the screen falls black.

48. EXT. ERNST HOUSE - MORN

The boys wait by the aging pick-up as Henry arrives from the Insurance store, exits the Mustang, hands them two envelopes.

HENRY

That's the insurance...and that...
(Hands over the second envelope)
...you give the man once you make contact. Be cool. Pull this off and there's a real future for you with us.

They stare after him.

ROCCO

Easy money. I dunno why they need us.

BILLY

Figure it out. It's something they gotta hide. We're new. We can never be traced to them. So we cover for 'em make a few bucks doin' it.

HALLY

And if he lied and it is drugs?

BILLY

(A wink, a ruffle of the hair)
Then we turn 'em in...

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEFADE IN:

49.

EXT. DARTWOOD COLLEGE - ANGIE'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

*

Wagner at the wheel, Angie by his side; he parks the car in front of the President's house, turns off the ignition, sits there for a beat, staring out; then, with great anxiety,

WAGNER

Okay. Get ready for a disaster. McVittie shows up once every two years at best. This is his second trip in a month. I'm in trouble.

ANGIE

Don't anticipate. That's your greatest weakness, anticipating. This visit may have nothing to do with you.

WAGNER

The interview aired last night, Angie! You think a sudden call to drinks today is coincidence?! Don't be naive!

ANGIE

(Stung, stiffening)

I'll be whatever makes me comfortable! As you like to remind me, I'm not your wife! So don't dismiss me like one! I'm just trying to offer you as much good cheer as I can! — *Shirley*

WAGNER

Fine! Appreciated! Now be realistic! You saw the way they edited my interview! They edit for ratings not truth! Even I wondered if I'd said half those things! I sounded like a Fascist! And I'm sure McVittie's gonna love that!

ANGIE

Then stop media-chasing! That won't save your job! Just concentrate on your teaching! You can have a fine life and a solid career without getting your face on television!

WAGNER

So those are the choices?! Obscurity or being misrepresented?!

And she gets out of the car, slams the door, waits for him on the sidewalk; he sighs, but then gets out, joins her.

50.

INT: PRESIDENT'S HOUSE - LATE AFT

They enter and Trudy ushers them into the reception room where McVittie already stands with Jamison. The President looks up at the entrance, beams broadly,

JAMISON

Ah!! Our latest Campus celebrity.
(Crosses to the bar)
Wine for Angie, but Brandy for you,
correct?

WAGNER

(Surprised at his warmth)
Er, yes. Please.

Jamison busies himself; McVittie speaks in his Scots burr.

MCVITTIE,

Pleased t'see you again, Professor.
(Pause, then pointed)
A great deal seems to have happened in
a very short period of time, d'you not
think?

WAGNER

Yes. A very great deal...much of it
quite surprising and mostly not what
it seems.

MCVITTIE

Indeed.
(Jamison serves the scotch;
McVittie lifts his glass)
Cheers.
(They drink; then)
Professor, I'll not beat about the
bush. I have no taste for fascists or
nazis, or anybody driven by hate.
D'you follow me?

WAGNER

Perfectly. In a civilized society
people like that--

MCVITTIE

(Puts his hand up to stop him)
Please! I believe in academic
freedom. And in freedom of speech.
(Then, much more ominous)
Though I'd keep in mind that certain
things smell of high immorality. And
at that point, not even your tenure is
sacred. Dartwood has a reputation to
protect.

*

Angie would prefer that Wagner let it go. But he can't.

SC CONT'D

WAGNER

Mister McVittie...I'm no nazi.

JAMISON

(Jumping in)

My goodness, James, we trust you!
We're all confident that in time your
true position will become clear.

*

WAGNER

All of you? I don't think so. Not
all of you.

(Looks hard at McVittie)

Mister McVittie didn't come all the
way back here for any other reason
than to declare himself.

(Loaded silent beat before)

Am I right, Mister McVittie? You do
think I'm a fanatic, don't you?

MCVITTIE

I know what I saw on television. I
also know how those fellows can twist
things around. Only time will reveal
what you really are. Who you really
are. And I'm a patient man.

WAGNER

Well let me save you the wait! I'm a
liberal democrat. But I see many pro-
blems in this country, real problems,
the same ones the radical right-wing
sees. Their solution is separatism,
racism. Mine is a government policy
fitted to the needs of different types
of people. Agreeing with someone about
the problem doesn't mean you come to
the same solution. I'm no nazi, but
you should've heard my phone today!
The whole country wants me to speak.
A sudden curiosity, a well-educated
fanatic! Well, Mister McVittie, if I
were you, and I thought a nazi was on
my payroll, I'd bounce him faster than
you could imagine!

MCVITTIE

Would you, now? Hardly a liberal
democrat thing to do.

Jamison moves right in, picks up on what interests him.

JAMISON

Phone calls, you say? Invitations?
Nothing vulgar, I hope.

WAGNER

Depends what you mean by vulgar.

JAMISON

Geraldo, that type of thing. I'd watch that. But you know, if you can keep this thing on the right level -- Gabler, high-minded stuff -- I think it might serve us all quite well. A little celebrity helps the fund-raisers, James. A fact of modern American life.

Wagner stares at him for a beat, amazed at Jamison's cynicism; then, quite puzzled,

WAGNER

I expected to be read the Riot Act. *[SOUND EFFECT]*

JAMISON

Look...I mean what I say. Properly dealt with, this is a boon. As I say...as long you stay high-minded.

WAGNER

Well...so far, I've done phone interviews with TIME, NEWSWEEK, even VANITY FAIR. And the Harvard Political Union wants me there next week. Hopefully, a chance to explain things -- like how television shows are edited.

*

And Jamison's delighted; the doorbell rings, Trudy exits.

JAMISON

A few added guests for drinks. Mainly people anxious to meet the Professor.
(Smiles at him)
Harvard, you say? My, my...

57. EXT: TIAJUANA CANTINA - LATE AFT

Outside a humble Mexican workingman's cantina, the three boys sit in the pickup, waiting; the heat is oppressive, the flies buzz everywhere. Billy dozes, Hally reads his ever-present newspaper, Rocco just stares out at the third world; finally, impatient, *

ROCCO

Jesus! Can't we get outta here!?!

BILLY

(Very calm)
Safety first. They said six o'clock, we enter at six. Watch who comes and goes in between...

Rocco seems ready to challenge him, but decides not to, swats a fly instead. He takes out a joint, lights it.

52. INT: JAMISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

By now, the place is almost mobbed, and most of the guests are gathered around Wagner, clearly the center of attraction. Our angle favors Angie who holds back, standing a few feet behind him listening as he fields the small talk.

WOMAN

I must say, you looked perfectly at home in front of the camera. Is Gabler as young as he seems?

WAGNER

Depends on how young you think he really is!

(Lots of sycophantish laughter)
What I can tell you is that what ends up on the air isn't always exactly what you say in the interview.

JAMISON

Come, come, dear boy. You're the only one who seems worried by all that. Good, healthy academic debate with the whole country watching! That's what it's all about! We know what you believe. Just get out there and explain it to others and all will be well!

MAN

Everyone knows these guys edit. So people don't listen so much as look. And you came off fine. Though Public radio took a swipe at you.

WAGNER

I heard it. I'm doing a rebuttal next week some time.

WOMAN

Nothing like a national audience!

Clearly, now he's off the hook, Wagner is beginning to relish the attention; Angie just turns, fades to the edge of the party; she starts as Crosby suddenly materializes beside her. He speaks without taking his eyes off Wagner.

CROSBY

Quite the man of the hour, isn't he?

ANGIE

It's about time...I'm thrilled for him.

CROSBY

Just hope he's not a passing media star of the moment getting his Andy Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame.

52 CONT'D

Now, a booming voice as Jamison crosses to the knot around Wagner, bringing a heavy-set man with him.

JAMISON

James, this is Butch Miller, president of the Alumni association.

(To Miller as they shake hands)

Professor Wagner's due to speak at Harvard, Butch. Isn't that fine recognition?

CROSBY

(For Angie's ears only)

Harvard? Where does it all end?

53

INT: MEXICAN CANTINA - DAY

The boys enter, sit near the door, order beers, settle back to wait. The Cantina caters to Mexican workingmen and is filled. Two other non-Hispanics enter from the interior bar, and like our three, they stand out in the crowd; the charade pointless, they cross to our table. The two men are: STOCKMAN, a trim fifty-five, close-cropped grey hair, trim athletic build; and TERENCE, thirty, more skinhead-like in his appearance but dressed awkwardly in a business suit. *

STOCKMAN

There seems little point in pretending to be passing laborers.

BILLY

Smart. You don't fit in.

STOCKMAN

No, thank goodness. But I believe we're here on the same mission..

BILLY

We're Henry's messengers, if that's what you're asking.

STOCKMAN

And his friends, I trust.

HALLY

Are you kidding? Henry's the greatest. *

STOCKMAN

You understand that we have something for his uncle -- nothing illegal, just something best delivered by hand.

ROCCO

Mailmen got hands.

53 CONT'D

STOCKMAN

(Tolerant smile)

Charming suggestion. But Mister Ernst holds views the American government seems anxious to suppress. We fear that every piece of his mail is opened, every telephone call transcribed, every parcel examined. This is simply a personal gift. For someone at the upcoming Chicago convention.

BILLY

We get the point. You can trust us. The sooner you hand it over, the quicker we can get it to Ernst. We want to leave in the morning.

Stockman stares at them for a beat, then makes his decision.

STOCKMAN

Come. The item is in our car trunk.

Billy thinks for a beat, then shrugs; there's nothing to lose. He nods, and they follow Stockman out of the Cantina.

ALTER ANGLE TO:

54. SAME: A DIFFERENT POV: FROM THE CORNER OF THE CANTINA:

An Hispanic man in workingman's clothes sits alone at a corner window table. Now, as the others exit, we realize that the Man is watching them carefully; as they exit, he stands, leans against the wall, allowing a good view of the parking lot.

55. SAME: HIS POV: EXT: PARKING LOT: THROUGH THE WINDOW - DAY

*

Billy et al are lead to a small rented car; Stockman glances around -- the Mexican pulling back into the shadows -- then opens the trunk. Terence leans in, withdraws a small parcel, a twelve inch square cube wrapped in brown paper and secured with string and sealing wax on every opening. They hand it to Billy who heads to the pick-up; the workingman waits until the vehicles have left, then drops some coins on the table, exits.

56. INT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Empty for a beat until we hear the key in the lock and Wagner and Angie enter; he's full of energy, though not so Angie.

WAGNER

Now! That's what I call a good party!

ANGIE

I suppose. Frankly, I felt a little left out.

WAGNER

(Genuinely solicitous)

I'm sorry! I should've paid you more attention!

ANGIE

Not your fault. You're the man of the hour, ~~it seems~~. You certainly didn't need me to look out for you.

And she crosses to a sideboard, prepares him a scotch-and-soda as he replies with expansive warmth..

WAGNER

I always need you, Angie. You know that...

(Grins)

But I haven't had that much attention since I was High School Valedictorian.

(Pause)

And nobody seemed to think any the worse for the way Gabler edited the interview.

She returns with the drink which he accepts off-handedly, as if an old habit.

ANGIE

They're blinded by having seen you on Teevee. You're a star to them.

WAGNER

(Laughs)

Don't be so cynical!! Celebrate the fact I finally have an audience. I'm glad that Susan McCarran woman talked me into doing Gabler's show...

(She tenses; he doesn't notice)

Y'know I think I will accept that invitation to speak at the Harvard Political Union.

(Suddenly puts the drink down)

Actually...believe it or not, a nightcap isn't exactly what I want...

(Reaches out, takes her arms)

...I think you're what I want...

ANGIE

Oh, James...I'm so tired...

But his spirits are up; he takes her in his arms, kisses her; her body responds, but her eyes remain open. She's not enjoying this at all, but seems ready to let it happen.

57.

EXT: BORDER CROSSING POINT - DAY

We watch from a distance as the truck, waiting in line, now

moves from second position to first. The Customs Officer looks inside the truck, then pauses as someone exits the building, says a few words in his ear. The Officer nods, turns to Billy, points to an inspection bay a few yards ahead on the right. Billy tries to protest, but pulls into the spot indicated, then he and the boys exit the truck; a Customs officer directs them to the interior of the building, then immediately reaches under the seat, finds the brown paper parcel, returns to the building.

58. INT: BUILDING - DAY

As Billy is led to an inspection area. The Parcel is there, and a Customs Officer places it into an X-ray machine similar to those used at airports. We are on the other side of the machine, and so cannot see the image; nor can Hally or Rocco. Billy, of course, can see the image, and frowns, obviously puzzled; the Customs Officer is also plainly mystified.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
You any idea what that is?

BILLY
(Frowns)
Just what it looks like. Hey, you want it, it's yours. I'm just doing a favor for a friend.

The Officer glances across the room; a senior Officer shakes his head almost imperceptibly, goes back to his newspaper.

OFFICER
No. You can be on your way.

Billy nods, takes the parcel, heads for the exit, the other two falling into step beside him.

HALLY
Whaddidya see!?! What was it!?! *

BILLY
Not a clue. Just some wires and stuff.

ROCCO
What kinda wires?!

Now at the door, Billy stops, turns and looks at him very directly, his voice suddenly very grim, intense,

BILLY
Like I said, I don't know!! And you don't know either! In fact, if Ernst asks whether we had any trouble, we say no. This little event never happened, you understand!?! *

And there's something so grim, so intense in his manner, that

Rocco just shrugs as if not caring; but to make the point, Billy holds him in eye-contact for a few beats before turning and heading for the truck, parcel under his arm. Rocco looks at Hally, shrugs, follows. As they re-enter the truck and get back into the through lane, we see a Mexican Workingman -- the same one from the Cantina -- trudging across the border on foot; now, as the truck pulls out, an aging Chevy pulls up beside the Workingman. He jumps in, and the Chevy takes off, following Billy's truck back into the United States.

59.

INT: STUDENT UNION HALL: HARVARD UNIVERSITY - DAY

*

A full audience faces the podium where Wagner sits amidst some student leaders. The cloth over the podium bears a seal and the legend: HARVARD POLITICAL UNION. There is a line at the mikes, and we come in on a new questioner, a BLACK FEMALE student takes the microphone.

BLACK FEMALE

Are you suggesting that there are people in this country who, because of their race, can't be helped?

WAGNER

No. You may have got that impression from the Gabler interview, but no, that's not my position. All I'm saying is not everyone can be helped by programs based on white middle class values. We're just not all born the same, and we shouldn't pretend we are.

An angry WHITE MALE student takes her place.

WHITE MALE

Why are you beating around the bush? Our system works very well for anyone willing to work and apply themselves. It's time we stopped apologizing for all the values that made this country great, and admitted that this is a white middle class nation--

WAGNER

(Interrupting, defensive)
Oh, come on!! America is a pluralist society! If you're trying--

But he's interrupted by a WHITE FEMALE student whose general demeanor is reminiscent of the sixties. Before Wagner can complete his disclaimer, she's all over him.

WHITE FEMALE

I think it's pretty plain to most of us just where you're coming from! You're a racist!

WAGNER

Please! Give me a break! All I'm trying to do is to use scientific method to analyze our social problems!

WHITE FEMALE

But it all comes down to race, right? . .

WAGNER

No! That's in the eye of the beholder!! You're the one who keeps bringing race into it!

WHITE FEMALE

Exactly the smokescreen we expect from someone who works for nazi think tanks! Well sir, The Progressive Students' Alliance doesn't think you have any place in this University! You shame us by being here! No more Nazis! No More Nazis!! NO MORE NAZIS!!!

Immediately, her chant is taken up by a group of supporters at the back of the hall. The Chairman tries to regain order with the gavel, but the chant NO MORE NAZIS overwhelms and they begin blowing whistles; the angry White Male and his group move toward the chanters. A scuffle breaks out, the campus police move in. The Chairman gives up, pockets the gavel; he and the officers lead Wagner from the stage through a back door.

60.

INT: ERNST'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

He's at his desk, staring down at the brown-paper package. He gazes for several beats, then picks it up, carefully examining every knot in the string, every blob of sealing wax. Then,

ERNST

And there were no questions? No problems?

BILLY

Nah. We just sailed through.

Ernst takes a key from his pocket, goes to the closet, unlocks the door, disappears inside for a moment or two before returning, carefully relocking the door. Then, with a warm smile.

ERNST

You've done us great service, gentlemen. Great service. Now I'd like to see you do something for yourselves. I've kept an eye on you. Henry's told me of your loyalty in that scuffle at the bar ...and I've heard with my own ears about your harsh pasts.

(Pause)

I think it's time you joined us.

*
*
*

60 Line c
Rocco's ready to reply, but waits for Billy to speak first.

BILLY

Well, sir...we appreciate the offer.
But I don't know if we fit...violence
kinda scares me. That fight in the
alley scared me.

ERNST

(The good father)

Of course it did!! You wouldn't bw
the kind of men we're looking for if
it didn't. But the situation will only get
worse if we don't reclaim our country.

ROCCO

It's true, Billy. Guys like us
shouldn't be havin' a hard time.

ERNST

Do you think the mess this country's
in was created by Americans--real
Americans!?! No way! You're a victim
of ZOG - the Zionist Occupied Government.
The people in power are part of a world-
wide conspiracy of Jews and Coloreds! Our
job is to stop them!! And we're not alone.
No, sir! We have allies all over the world
supporting our us in our struggle to break
the grip of the Jews and coloreds and the
mongrols! Making sure that men like your
Dad never again lose the family farm.

BILLY

But Mister Ernst. My Dad told me that
the bank that foreclosed us wasn't
owned by Jews. He said that was just
political b.s.

ERNST

That's the narrow way of looking at it
son! I'm offering you a world view.

(Pause; then, dramatically)

Because you boys have earned the right
to be part of this. You have earned
the right to join our crusade.

BILLY

I don't want to hurt no one.

*
*

HENRY

We don't want to hurt anyone either!

BILLY

Like at the bar the other night?

HENRY

Those niggers should've known better than to come in that bar! Hell, there isn't a white man alive who doesn't know he can't go into Harlem or Watts at night! Shouldn't we be allowed a place of our own!?!

ROCCO

It's true, y'know. Everybody oughta have a place of their own.

Ernst leans over the desk, eyes ablaze, persuasive.

ERNST

We didn't invent violence, Bill. The coloreds did. And violence worked for them. Everytime the coloreds threaten violence, they get exactly what they want. White working kids had to organize for their own self defence. It's academic. Listen, white people are on the way out if they don't do something to protect themselves. The ZOG won't. Our movement's come a long way. So far, in fact, I've been invited to appear on Television next week.

(Pause for dramatic effect)

On a program called "NightPulse", you've heard of it.

HENRY

America's biggest news show. And next Tuesday I'll be on it. Just think about it - us in New York. Just think about my uncle in New York. All those Hymies and Sambos on every street corner. Jew York's a war zone.

(Pause, then quietly)

So my group, the youth wing of ARM, is forming a special squad to protect him. Only the best of us, the ones who've been tested.

But Billy's warning sensors go up at this; so, very wary,

HALLY

You want us to go?

HENRY

You won't be alone.

(To Billy)

I thought you'd be grateful.

ROCCO

Well, we are. I am.

The tension between Billy and Rocco has Hally nervous, as if his parents were squabbling. Ernst sees this, covers the strain with a laugh; he rounds the desk, crosses to them, drapes his arm around Billy's shoulder.

ERNST

Relax, Hank. Give these boys a chance to think it over. Don't want anyone rushing into this unless they're sure.

And on that paternal note,

61. INT: CAMBRIDGE HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

As Wagner enters, the Concierge catches his eye, says a few words, then points to the lobby bar. *

62. SAME: INT: HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

He waits for his eyes to accustom to the dimness, then sees Susan at a corner table; he crosses to her, stands there. *

WAGNER

I'm not sure you're quite the person I want to see right now.

SUSAN

(Cheerful smile)

Anything specific? Or am I generally unsuitable. *

WAGNER

Susan, it took me many years to get a speaking date at Harvard. And thanks to your liberal use of some of my old papers, and Gabler's creative editing, I was booted out of the place before they even heard what I really believe. It was a circus. A pathetic circus. *

SUSAN

I know. I saw. *

WAGNER

You were there?!? *

SUSAN

Of course. ^{I was} I really do admire you, James. ~~I was in the back, out of the way, paying attention.~~

(Pause, leans in, takes his hand)
What happened to you was an outrage.

TIP OF
TO
FIND
HER.

WAGNER

I probably asked for it. Once the POST called your group neo-nazi, I should've known I'd be in for it.

SUSAN

Will you understand we're not neo-nazis! But in America, what you are is too often what other people say you are. ~~They called you a nazi tonight.~~

WAGNER

~~Yes...I suppose.~~ But I'm not.

SUSAN

~~It doesn't matter.~~ There are people in this country who won't listen to anyone that disagrees with them. You're not the first person radicals booed off a campus. Ask Jeanne Kirkpatrick. Kissinger. You're in good company!

WAGNER

Well, that's a dreary thought... freedom of speech is dead is it?

She reaches behind her, produces a copy of TIME magazine -- open to a page with his picture and an article.

WAGNER

I saw it. Sufficiently vague to keep people wondering what I believe..

SUSAN

All the more reason to keep at it! You have to be heard. With your own voice, speaking your own ideas.

(Pause for dramatic effect)

There's still a village pump in this country. It's called Television.

(Pause)

In point of fact "NightPulse" is devoting next Tuesday's program to this whole issue...and they've asked my advice on participants.

WAGNER

NightPulse!?! And you suggested me?
(She nods)

But why would they want me? Because they think I'll spout polite nazism? Because I'm slowly getting the image of a genteel living room racist?

(Pauses to consider it)

Is it worth that to get the public eye?

AD
SCENE 1-10

62 CONT'D

SUSAN

Depends on how you use it! NightPulse is unedited. You're right there, able to be heard for what you are. Leave no doubts about what you stand for.

WAGNER

(Intrigued)

That could be quite a splash -- a good break, I mean. And if I handle it properly...

(A beat to think; then)

I might really get a few ideas across this time.

Self
Deception

SUSAN

You're bound to!! You've been ignored because your ideas were unique! People only considered Blacks. Social scientists that specialized in Black studies were all the rage. But now, with the neo-nazis scaring them, they've got to notice you!

WAGNER

Hold on! My theories on culture and race apply to Blacks and Whites! I'm not a racist!

SUSAN

Of course not! That's why you've been ignored. Not enough Black bias. But the pendulum's swinging. Your day is here...

(She signals for the waitress)
I think you should do NightPulse.

*

(Pause; provocative smile; puts her hand on his)
You're a great man, James...be proud of what you believe, who you are.

SUSAN

White wine, please.

WAGNER

Er...just a beer, please...a light beer, actually...

(Then, as the waitress retreats)
You're very persuasive.

*

SUSAN

You're pretty impressive yourself. Remember that. There's a lot of people who'd prefer you to stay nice and bland, in the background.

WAGNER

What are you talking about?

SUSAN

Just an observation. You've settled for where you are in life. You should reach for more. Realize your potential. And there's bound to be people around you who'll be uneasy about that. Don't let them influence you.

And they remain eyes locked for several beats.

WAGNER

We all have people we listen to...
(Then, pointed)
Even you, I expect.

SUSAN

No. Nobody special.
(Then, with eye contact, subtext)
I like where this conversation could lead. Unfortunately, I'm off to New York after our little drink. I hope to meet you there on Tuesday. We can talk more about it.
(Pause)
If you like.

And he need not answer. The drinks arrive. He leans back in the chair, gazes at her, a serene smile on his face.

*
*
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*
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*

And she lifts her glass in a toast; he responds, unable to take his eyes off her.

63.

INT: ERNST DORMITORY - DAY

As the boys discuss the offer. Hally is beside himself.

HALLY

C'mon, Billy! What can be bad!?! If we don't like it, we can always quit!
(Rolls back on the bed, excited)
Billy, I never even been on a plane before! And New York for God's sakes! One of the places I only read about! Billy, this is too good to say no!

ROCCO

What the hell, Billy...we can handle ourselves. So far, this has been an easy ride. There's nothin' to lose.

BILLY

Look, it's okay to have a little fun. But joining up is a big step! These guys are nazis, man! They're into Hitler. Crap like that!

HALLY

I didn't see no Hitler stuff around. Just ordinary people.

ROCCO

Yeah...who put us up, fed us...hell, we almost owe it to 'em!

(Then, resolution)

Hell, I don't care what you do, Billy! I'm gonna give it a try!

(Winks at Hally)

And I'll look after you, kid.

HALLY

Billy?

But before he has to answer, the door opens, Henry enters.

HENRY

Ernst wants you.

(They stand; he points at Billy)
Just you...

64. INT: HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Wagner exits the elevator, passes a seated man whose face is obscured by a newspaper. Wagner crosses to his room, fumbles with the key. In that moment, the man folds the newspaper, stands, crosses to Wagner. He is the Mexican from the Tiajuana cantina and later at the border. He is FRANK ALONSO.

ALONSO

Professor Wagner?

Wagner turns, a little intimidated, glancing up and down the hall to see if they're alone. They are.

WAGNER

Er...yes...

ALONSO

(Flashing a wallet badge)
Frank Alonso, FBI. Got a moment...?

65 EXT: ROSE GARDEN - ERNST HOUSE - DAY

Ernst is in the garden as Billy and Henry enter, the latter drifts to the side; Billy stands awkwardly. Ernst beams at him.

ERNST

Bill, I can see you're a sensitive young man...a leader. You're a natural. I can see it in the way the others look to you, the way you helped Henry and the others at the bar that night. You belong with us.

BILLY

I dunno, Mr. Ernst.

ERNST

What don't you know?

BILLY

The guy in Mexico said the Government's always checking you out. So I can see why you'd want some fresh faces that the cops never seen before.

ERNST

There's no doubt we've a sharp one here, Henry. ...he understands our problems...

(Then to Billy, as they start walking toward the house)

The fact that none of you has a record is one reason we want you in the inner circle right away. We have to show our best face in New York. You've been tested. You handled the Mexico assignment just first-rate!

65A INT: ERNST OFFICE - DAY

As they enter:

HENRY

Look around you, Bill. What else have you got going for yourself? Don't you owe us a chance to show you what we're really all about?

BILLY

(With pride)

Me and my friends make out okay.

ERNST

Okay? Is that all? I'm offering you more than okay! I'm offering you the world!

65A Cont d.

ERNST (Con'td)

(Dramatic pause)

If not for yourself, then think of the
others. They deserve the opportunity
and they won't take it without you.

(MORE)

*
*

ERNST (Contd)

(Then, fatherly)

And if it doesn't work for you after a fair try...then no harm, no foul. We go our separate ways...

*

A beat as Billy tries to make some decision; Ernst walks around the desk, and, at his charismatic best, offers his hand. Billy is carried along. He shakes his hand, nods.

BILLY

It's a big step, but I guess we owe you a try... *

And over Billy's head, Ernst winks at Henry; the phone rings, Henry's cue to get Billy out of there; that done, Ernst answers the phone.

ERNST

Did it go as you promised?

*

66. INT: HOTEL BAR - PUBLIC PHONE

Susan is on the phone.

SUSAN

Of course...he's all mine. It's in his eyes. I can deliver him wherever you want...

ERNST (V.O.)

Excellent.

*
*

FADE OUT

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

(7. FADE IN:

INT: WAGNER'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alonso stands looking out the window, while Wagner can be seen through the open bathroom door, splashing water on his face; he enters the bedroom, towel still in hand.

WAGNER

If you were me, and I were you, would you want a lawyer present before you spoke to me?

ALONSO

No, Professor, you don't need a lawyer. I'm just looking for a little help.

WAGNER

I'm a child of the 'sixties. I don't think academics should socialize with government agents.

ALONSO

Then don't. I'll get straight to the point. I'm attached to a unit whose job is keeping an eye on neo-nazis.

WAGNER

Why? Is it against the law?

ALONSO

No. Americans can belong to any group they like. My job deals with those that might be violating federal law. And their front groups.

WAGNER

Doesn't fit anyone or anything I know.

ALONSO

Well how about the Center For a New National Agenda? What about them?

WAGNER

They interviewed me. I know some newspapers label them nazis, but I've seen no evidence of it. My only contact has been a Susan McCarran. I've listened carefully, but she doesn't sound like a nazi to me.

ALONSO

What if I told you we believed they were an out-and-out nazi front group?

67 CONT'D

WAGNER

I'd want evidence. I don't consider the FBI a reliable source.

ALONSO

Hard evidence is difficult to pin on these guys. Or girl, in this case.

WAGNER

Hard evidence of what?

*

ALONSO

Money-laundering. I think they use her to move illegal funds. But I can't prove the direct link to Ernst.

*

*

*

WAGNER

Well I'm no help, Mister Alonso. As far as I can see Susan McCarran puts out position papers, nothing more. What's the danger in that!?

*

*

*

*

ALONSO

I'd say anything that makes nazi garbage reasonable is very dangerous. They're a growth Industry professor. They're even gearing up for their first major national convention since the 'thirties. Chicago. Next month. She'll be there doing "research". If I could prove she's on Ernst's payroll, it might help put a stop to him.

*

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*

WAGNER

Is she on Ernst's payroll?

ALONSO

I think so.

*

WAGNER

Does this count as entrapment, Mister Alonso!? Or just your run-of-the-mill witch hunt? Because let me tell you, Mister Alonso, I...

*

(Searches for the word)

*

...admire...Susan McCarran

*

*

ALONSO

(He shrugs, stands)

This isn't getting me anywhere, is it Professor? I'm sorry I bothered you. It's up to you whether you tell anyone of our little encounter here tonight. I'd recommend you keep it to yourself.

*

*

(Hands him a business card)

You never know when you might need me. On a confidential basis.

And he exits; finally alone, Wagner falls back on the bed, kicks back.

68.

INT. SKINHEAD CLUB - NIGHT

A sign that reads CLOSED FOR PRIVATE PARTY; RE-OPEN TUESDAY is on outside of Exit door. A man closes door, locks it, moves away past:

68A.

MS: BILLY, ROCCO, & HALLY

The three in line, facing the camera, sheets wrapped around their necks as a hand holding clippers appears in frame. Billy is first; the clippers hit the back of his head, buzz forward in USMC fashion. He's left with a half-inch.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE:

69.

SAME: BACK AREA: BEHIND CURTAIN - NIGHT

We're in the back of the club and a black-uniformed man performs the tonsorial duties. Billy is now done, and Rocco is being shorn as the door opens and Henry enters carrying several hangars of dry-cleaning. He pauses for a beat, then nods approvingly at Billy as he lays down the dry-cleaning.

HENRY

Nice haircut. Looks sharp.

(Billy nods, keeping reserve)

I gotta check things out. Be right back.

He exits; Billy removes the plastic covers from the dry cleaning. It's three identical "uniforms": black shirts with shoulder patches, black pants, black Sam Brown belts, etc. Now, Rocco is done and the Barber wraps up his scissors, etc., as Rocco crosses, examines the uniforms.

ROCCO

Jeez! Get off on this! Sharp, dude!

Hally, uncertain, looks to Billy for a reaction; Billy seems hesitant, waits for the Barber to exit before he grins at Hally, winks.

BILLY

It's a free trip, right, Hally?

HALLY

You're okay with it now, right, Billy?
And we can always quit, right?

BILLY

You bet...it's still a free country...

70

SAME: INT: MAIN AREA OF CLUB - NIGHT

In the side-vestibule for the evening; American flags -- *
 dozens and dozens of them, all full-sized -- are draped from *
 the walls. Over an open area in the front are draped more *
 banners, including their own Aryan Resurgence Movement symbol *
 seen on the shoulder patches of Dwayne and the others; chairs *
 are arranged in regular rows, and about a hundred young men in
 the black uniforms and with the near-shaved heads sit almost
 rigidly at attention, facing the dance floor area and the
 table in its center. On the table is a shallow dish, a large
 Bible, a Cross, and particularly fearsome American Eagle. On
 the whole, semi-impressive, but rather amateurish, and nothing
 that's likely to terrify us. But it is odd. There are a
 number of young girls there, most of them dressed in short
 leather miniskirts and fish-net panty-hose. Now, the lights
 are dimmed, and from the rear area Henry strides out, faces
 the group. He raises his arm in the familiar Heil Hitler
 salute, shouts

HENRY

Hail the new Dawn!!

The audience stands, raises their arm, replies

ALL

Hail the Dawn!! America Awake!!

The arms are lowered; Henry nods to a technician, and after a
 few beats, we hear a scratchy recording. *
 They all join in the chorus, giving us the opportunity to
 pan the faces, to study these youngsters. There's nothing
 aside from dress and haircut to mark them as different -- just
 plain American kids caught up in a fascination with horror.

ALL (SINGING)

The hour has come, a new day breaks,
 Come greet the dawn;
 With iron will,
 Our might will make us one
 With souls so pure, our spirit wakes;
 And sees the sign
 And sends the word
 Tomorrow will be mine!
 Tomorrow will be mine!

Then, another exchange of "Hail the Dawn" salutes between *
 Henry and the audience, after which they sit. Henry turns, *
 faces the side door; it's opened, and our three inductees *
 enter, pausing to look at the impressive display of flags, *
 etc. Now, a little cowed by this, they walk slowly to the
 table, stand before the dish. Henry then takes a small needle *
 pricks his own finger, squeezes a drop of blood into the bot-
 tom of the basin already stained with the remains of prior
 ceremonies. He looks at the three new boys; Rocco goes first,
 extends his index finger; Henry pierces it, places it in the
 bowl, mixing it into the blood; then Hally; finally, Billy.
 Henry then takes the Bible, and each place a hand upon it.

70 OUT'S

HENRY

You wish now to walk amongst us?

THREESOME

We do.

HENRY

And on pain of death you swear that you are worthy of us, that you are racially pure, Aryan and Christian?

THREESOME

We do.

HENRY

And that you are committing your mind, body, soul, and your sacred honor to this cause: to ridding our beloved country of mongrolizing races, of non-Christians, of all enemies of pure nordic man? That you will marry only within our race so that your children will be pure and worthy of the great legacy that we shall leave them?

THREESOME

We do.

Dwayne, holding a large American flag, goose steps forward to Henry who takes the corner (stained from prior ceremonies) and dips it into the bloody basin as each of the three raise their right hand; Henry then uses the blood-soaked corner of the flag to make a cross of blood on each palm. This done, Dwayne marches the flag to the back of the hall; everyone turns, faces it, raises their arm in the Heil Hitler salute -- then sings our national anthem, THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER, or possible reprieve of TOMORROW WILL BE MINE.

71.

SAME: A DIFFERENT ANGLE: THE BACK OF THE HALL

DAVIS stands at the back with the functionaries.

*
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*

DAVIS

(to functionary)

Yeah, that's right...We're off to New York ...Nightpulse...Can you believe it? It's gonna be a great night for us.

*
*
*
*

As Davis continues, Ernst looms behind him out of sight.

*

DAVIS (Cont'd)

That professor the McCarran girl found for us...He's gotta be worth his weight in gold. And she's got him tied up and ready for delivery.

*
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71 cont'd

Davis has been so wrapped up in the sound of his own voice, that he doesn't notice Ernst who has moved to the bar behind him. Suddenly seeing Ernst, he changes his tune, but he doesn't miss a beat. Ernst coolly covers his impatience with this pretender to the throne.

DAVIS

(continuing; covering)

Ah, Alden! What a night, huh? You must be very proud of your nephew.

71 Ernst d.
Ernst just looks at Davis. The group turns its attention to the boss.

65.

ERNST

More than you know. We need him.
It's because of what he does in the way
of recruiting the young that we're able
to chase down the bigger prizes...

DAVIS

(eagerly; his chance to shine)
Exactly! Like Professor wagner. So,
when do we sign him up? I mean formally?

ERNST

(sharply)

Never! The whole point of this exercise,
Davis, is that the man doesn't really
know what's going on. If he did, he'd be
of no use to us, would he? The Jew press
would crucify him!...and the less he
knows about Miss McCarran's connection to
us, the better! One!!!...we need Wagner
to make soft-in-the-head liberals take us
seriously. Then we let the press and the
TV guys...everyone, go after us...from Rather
on up. We'll rake in new members every time
one of those tee-vee idiots gives us air
time. Understand?...Gentlemen, Chicago
is only three weeks away. No mistakes!
Things couldn't be going better for us.

72
SAME: A DIFFERENT ANGLE: NEAR THE BAR:

Billy is at the bar, taking a beer and receiving congratul-
ations. A pudgy GIRL in mini-and-fishnet reaches up, kisses
him flat and hard on the mouth.

GIRL

Honey, you look sooo good in the
outfit!! As soon as you're back from
New York, you've gotta complete part
two of the initiation.

BILLY

(A little puzzled)
Part two? Nobody said--

GIRL

Of course they didn't!! It's real
private!! It takes place in my bed!!

And that brings gales of laughter. Billy joins in, happy to
be liked and part of something; he turns to the bar, then
stops suddenly as something catches his eye -- his own image
in the mirror. He stares at himself. He looks good in the

72 CONT'D

all-black outfit. He likes what he sees. He stands a little taller. He squares his shoulders. Billy's found a home.

73

INT: PROFESSORS' WING OF COLLEGE BUILDING - DAY

Wagner goes to his cubby-hole for mail. It's loaded, more mail than can be imagined: magazines with his name or picture on the cover, a bag on the floor for overflow which he picks up as if now routine, goes down the hall, starts to enter his office. He notices Angie and Crosby, locked deep in conversation, approaching in the hallway. Then Wagner goes into his office, closing the door behind him.

*
*
*
*

74

SAME: INT: OFFICE - DAY

He drops the mail on the table, goes to the coffee-maker begins his morning brewing. A beat, and then a knock, and Angie enters immediately, putting on her best smile, crossing to him, leaning up for a kiss which he gives in perfunctory fashion.

*
*
*
*

ANGIE

Hi. Wondered where you were.

WAGNER

Came from the airport. I would've called. You didn't have to come down.

ANGIE

Had to turn some grades in.

She begins to put the pile of mail in order; he bristles.

WAGNER

It's all right, Angie!
(Then, backing off the sharpness)
I can look after it myself.

ANGIE

Sorry! Just helping. I care, James!

WAGNER

(Sharply)
Let's not lie to each other, Angie. I saw you come in with Crosby! What in the world would you be talking to him about!?! Me!?!
(

ANGIE

Don't be paranoid! We were talking about you, but totally innocently! I bumped into him! He asked about you! At least he was someone to talk to about what's going on.

WAGNER

You can always talk to me!

ANGIE

You!?! On the road all the time, staying out overnight, coming straight here from the airport! James, you're not around enough to talk to!

WAGNER

So I'm getting a bit of attention! Does that threaten you, Angie?!?

ANGIE

It's not the attention itself. It's the kind of attention that worries me.

WAGNER

Oh, God. I was told to expect this.

ANGIE

You're being used, James!

WAGNER

Dammit, how can you say that?! I know exactly what I'm doing!

ANGIE

Okay, okay. Just explain it to me. Please James, just explain it to me so I can understand. Please.

WAGNER

Look, I've spent my life teaching! For whatever reason, I've been pushed aside, kept down! Suddenly, a fever grips the country. Wild things -- the Klan, the Neo-nazis, horrible things that people need help understanding! And I'm the man to do it! I have an important role to play! I'm through being the overlooked sad semi-failure with which you're so damned comfortable!

ANGIE

But if they think you're one of them?! Look what happened on "Seven Days"! By the time Gabler was through editing you, even I was confused!

74 COST'S

WAGNER

Well, no more! Tomorrow night, I'll be on NightPulse! You'll hear me directly! Everyone will! Un-edited, my own words, my own ideas!

ANGIE

(After a beat to absorb this)
Who else is on the show?

WAGNER

Ernst himself! I can face the devil!

ANGIE

Are you sure--

WAGNER

(Interrupting, excited)
I'm certain!! I can handle the people! Easily!

(Then, omnipotent)
Susan's right! I've been kept back too long. And Angie, what if one or two people do get confused by what I'm saying? It's worth the risk to be heard, to be part of the debate!!

ANGIE

But your professional standing--

WAGNER

(Interrupting)
What professional standing!?! I can't beg my way into the Journal!

ANGIE

But Ernst is a ~~professional~~ at this!

WAGNER

(Even louder)
Stop treating me like a child!! You're just scared that if I start making progress, you won't be able to control me any more!! I won't be like one of your freshman students hanging on your every word!!

(Then, an angry mutter)
Once an English teacher, always an English teacher...

That stings her. She turns to the door, opens it to exit; Crosby's door is open. Given the volume of their voices, he's surely heard the whole thing; he stands, smiles awkwardly, closes his door. Angie leaves, slamming Wagner's door; he exhales in relief, goes to his mail, starts sorting it.

75. INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Near a departure gate for the red-eye to New York. Billy, Hally, Rocco, Dwayne, Henry, etc., in jeans and T-shirts are in the waiting area while Ernst and Davis process the tickets; nearby, a man reads a newspaper with an article leader featuring Wagner's name. Something catches Dwayne's eye, and he jabs Henry in the ribs, directs his attention. Two men are near the gate, saying goodbye to each other. The assumption is that they're homosexuals from their dress, style, and physical affection. Now, as one is about to go to the ticket desk, he stoops, and kisses the other. It's a brave display of homosexual love. The non-passenger turns toward the exit, pausing to enter the rest room. Dwayne glares, his fury suddenly engaged. He jerks his head at our threesome, indicates they should follow him. Billy hesitates, reluctant.

BILLY

Hey...what's the big deal?

DWAYNE

No big deal. Just havin' some fun.
You can be the lookout. Hit the door
if anyone shows up.

And Dwayne, Rocco, and then a hesitant but curious Hally follows. Billy lingers at the door.

76. SAME: INT: WASHROOM - NIGHT.

Brightly-lit and tiled. The homosexual is at the sink, combing his hair. There's no talk, no foreplay. Dwayne strides over, grabs the man, and before he can even register shock, punches him in the face. He then grabs him and runs his head against the wall. Rocco and Hally need do very little besides watch. The man's head and face are reduced to a bloody pulp in seconds. He crumples to the floor, lifeless. Dwayne stands over him, kicks the inert form in the ribs.

DWAYNE

Don't faggots make you sick?

But the only thing that makes Hally sick is what he's seen. Completely white, he runs to a bathroom stall, vomits off-screen. Dwayne roars with laughter, looks at Rocco.

DWAYNE

C'mon...help me with the queer...
Make him comfortable 'til he comes to.

And they drag him into a stall, close the door behind him. Dwayne, as if experienced at this, goes to the sinks, runs water in all of them, splashing it onto the floor, making the blood run, causing it to disappear.

FADE OUT:

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVEFADE IN:

77. CU: NEWSPROGRAM LOGO: "NIGHTPULSE":

A rolling graphic of the title "NightPulse" accompanied by

MODERATOR (V.O.)
This is...NightPulse!

*

CROSS FADE TO:

78. SAME: TELEVISION IMAGE: SKINHEADS PLAYING TO THE CAMERA:

File footage of a group of skinheads throwing Heil Hitler salutes and otherwise reacting to a newscamera pointed in their direction. Their hair is close-cropped, their clothes a far cry from the carefully tailored black-and-leather of Henry. These wear loose blue jeans rolled high above workingmen's boots, T-shirts with heavy metal band logos etc. Along with this image,

MODERATOR (V.O.)
Tonight, a close look at what some
call a new phenomenon, and others say
has always been with us...

*

DISSOLVE TO:

79. SAME: MODERATOR:

At a desk with monitors behind him, addressing the camera.

MODERATOR
Some call it a neo-nazi movement,
others a rebirth of racial conscious-
ness. To one set of eyes, it's a
retreat into a Hitlerian nightmare.
To others, it's the only hope for an
America that seems unable to cope with
its racial history -- or present.
Tonight, we bring together different
voices...

80. SAME: INT: TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Now, off the live feed into a wide shot of the studio. Ernst is in one corner facing a camera, Wagner several yards away, Henry in yet another corner, etc. In this manner, the program can create the illusion that these people are in different parts of the country, and have them on monitors rather than on a panel where they would face one another. The MODERATOR turns first to Henry.

80 CONT'D

MODERATOR

My first question is for Henry Ernst, leader of the Youth wing of a group that styles itself the Aryan Resurgence Movement...Mister Ernst, why skinhead? Your haircut seems rather coventional to me.

HENRY

The haircut business is a media invention, a typical scare tactic. Some of us have short hair to show solidarity. Frankly, we're now against it.

MODERATOR

Why is that?

HENRY

Because you've got your Jews in the Anti-Defamation League, and your coloreds in Klanwatch trying to monitor us. Why make it easy? Our policy is to look like everyone else. That way, nobody will have any idea just how many we are. And when we rise up, our numbers will blow 'em away.

The Moderator turns to Ernst.

MODERATOR

Mister Alden Ernst is head of the National White Rights Party...Mister Ernst, if your cause is legitimate, if all you seek is your rights under law, why does Henry talk about going underground? Disguising your numbers? Until, in his words, you "...rise up"?

*

ERNST

Our young people think it'll take a revolution for us to get our rights. White people in this country aren't treated equally with Coloreds.

MODERATOR

Why the word Coloreds? Why not Blacks?

ERNST

Because that's what they are. It includes Blacks, Latin Americans -- most of whom are half-breed Indians -- Asians, Orientals, all that kind of thing. The races that have taken this country over, bankrupted the white working class by making them pay for welfare systems that let Coloreds live off the fat of the land.

MODERATOR

But those programs aren't just for minorities. All poor people benefit from them.

ERNST

But not the same way. Like Professor Wagner's articles show, different races have different cultures. Our welfare system is designed to help the Coloreds, not the whites.

The Moderator turns to Wagner.

81

SAME: INT: VISITORS' VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

A small room off the Control room equipped with a monitor for output and a large window looking out on the studio floor. Susan sits apart from Billy and the others. Now, as the Moderator turns to Wagner, she leans forward, intense.

MODERATOR

Is that true, Professor? Is that what you teach?

WAGNER

I think it's true that different cultural experiences require different responses from government. Hispanic Americans are culturally different from, for example, Vietnamese immigrants, who in turn see life and society very differently from American Blacks. My belief is that government programs haven't worked because they failed to accept that reality. But that's a long way from Mister Ernst's racism.

*

Ernst jumps in immediately, challenges Wagner.

ERNST

Really? You're saying the same thing we are.

WAGNER

(Defensive)

I don't see where. I'm against racism--

ERNST

So are we. But we are in favor of Racial awareness. People should be proud of their heritage, and the government shouldn't try to pretend that we're all the same.

82

INT: JAMISON HOUSE - TV ROOM - NIGHT

*

Jamison and Trudy watching the program, a frown deepening on Jamison's face as the Moderator sits back, enjoying this, letting it go. Wagner is on the defensive.

*

WAGNER

Agreed. But that doesn't mean the races can't live together. You're preaching separatism. I'm asking for sensitivity.

ERNST

So are we. Professor, you ought to listen to what we're really saying instead of what the controlled press and media tell you we're saying. There's no difference between you and the platform of Darryle Blake!

MODERATOR

(Jumping in to explain)

That's Darryle Blake, formerly a member of the American Nazi Party and an officer in the Ku Klux Klan. Mr. Blake was recently elected to the Georgia State Senate on a White Supremist platform.

83

INT: MCVITTIE'S STUDY - NIGHT

As he, too, watches, pulling his bathrobe tightly around himself, taking notes as Henry jumps in the debate.

HENRY

There you go again!! Who said it was a White Supremist platform?! Every-time someone tries to speak up for white rights, you press people call them racists!

84

INT: ANGIE/WAGNER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Angie. seated, watching the television program, very anxious.

ERNST

Exactly! In fact, I'm willing to wager that State Senator Blake is no more a racist than Professor Wagner!

MODERATOR

Would you take that bet, Professor?

WAGNER

That's ridiculous!! I wish I knew how to prove it!!

84 CONT'D

ERNST

Simple! At our National Convention in Chicago! Senator Blake will be there! I challenge the Professor to come to Chicago, face the Senator on the platform, exchange their views!

84 A

TV PRODUCER

(In the control booth)

What is this guy doing?!

*
*
*

84 B

WAGNER

Look, I don't know about--

ERNST

(Interrupting)

And I'll go you one better!! Why doesn't NightPulse bring the cameras? Televisé it! See if we're really racists -- or just ordinary citizens trying to say politically what a leading academic has been saying for years!! What do you say, professor!?!

WAGNER

I can't commit...

Trails off, unsure of where to go. Angie groans.

ANGIE

Don't, James, don't...

85

INT: VISITORS' BOOTH - NIGHT

Susan leans forward, very intense, waiting, eyes shining.

MODERATOR

It's short notice...but I think we'd be willing to try and make it work.

ERNST

I think you owe it to us, Professor. Come to Chicago. Get to the bottom of it, to the truth. Isn't that what teaching's all about? Truth? Well, here's the chance of a lifetime! With all of America watching!

The Moderator knows a good television thing when he sees one.

MODERATOR

Well, Professor...what do you say? Seems like a fair challenge...

TV PRODUCER

(In control booth)

Go for it!

*
*
*

35 CONTD Wagner squirms for several beats, unsure; then,

WAGNER

Well...I'm certainly willing to
discuss the possibility...

And Susan whoops with the joy of a victory.

86

INT: ANGIE/WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

She buries her head in her hands; screen folds to "Nightpulse" logo.

*
*

87.

INT: STUDIO - NIGHT

As the show ends, and Susan hurries across the floor to Wagner, embraces him impulsively, kisses his cheek.

SUSAN

You were brilliant! I'm so proud of you!!

Ernst and Henry loiter b.g., watching carefully but keeping their distance; Billy and the others are nearby. Hally sits in a floor manager's chair, finds a newspaper in the side pocket, begins his usual leafing, reading aimlessly. Now, f.g., a PA crosses to Wagner, hands him a slip of paper.

PA

A phone message came in during the show...from a Doctor Jonas King of the New England Anthropological Journal...he wants to know whether you could meet him tomorrow. At his office...

*

WAGNER

(Face lighting up)

King? Wants to see me...?...

SUSAN

See!! I told you they couldn't ignore you forever!!! First the popular press, now this!!

(Grasps his arm)

And still just at the beginning!!

She takes his arm, and they start walking away toward the exit doors.

*
*

88

OMIT

89 OMIT *

90 OMIT *

91. INT. STUDIO - NIGHT *

Wagner and Susan as they walk. *

SUSAN
Time for a drink?

WAGNER
Actually...I'm a little drained. Not
sure quite what to make of all this.
(Pause)
I'm at the Hotel Metro. Where are you?

SUSAN
A friend's apartment on West seventy-
second.

(Pause)
Why don't you join me? Spend the
night. Share a bed.

That gets him completely off-balance; he stares at her, unable
to react. *

WAGNER
Look...I...er...

She laughs lightly, reaches up, touches his face.

SUSAN
Come, come, James. Surely it's
crossed your mind! And it seems to me
that since we both fancy ourselves
intellectuals -- and talkers -- a few
frank words are a lot sexier than some
elaborate chase-and-seduction game.

At first he's taken aback, but then a smile comes to his face -- but only for a beat. He coughs, smiles, explains,

WAGNER

There's a woman I live with. In some ways I'm a little old-fashioned.

She nods, stares at him for several beats; then, a soft smile.

SUSAN

Lucky woman.

Well...I'm available to you whenever you get the urge. Maybe in Chicago.

(Winks)

They say that far from home doesn't count.

And she reaches up, kisses him firmly then leaves quickly. He stands and watches, a small smile of satisfaction on his face. He looks up. Ernst and his body-guard head for the doorway. Ernst pauses to smile in Wagner's direction, nod his head. Nothing more. But Wagner's eye strays to Billy; the boy looks back, and for the briefest moment, the two seem locked in deep communion.

91A SAME: A DIFFERENT ANGLE:

With Ernst, Henry and the others, as Billy looks back at Wagner. Wagner exits. Hally is still in the chair, staring at the newspaper.

ERNST

(To Henry)

It just gets better. Now he's gonna help us get national coverage for the convention...

And he grips his own hands in sheer elation. Henry grins, turns to the others.

HENRY

C'mon. Time to hit the streets of Jew York...and watch out for the old man.

And they form a phalanx around him -- all except for Hally who remains rooted in the chair. Billy calls to him.

BILLY

Hally! C'mon! Show's on the road!

HALLY

Huh, Oh...sure.

And he drops the newspaper, moves toward them.

91B INTERCUT: SAME: THE NEWSPAPER:

A small column in a tabloid; the headline reads: MAN FOUND BEATEN TO DEATH IN LOS ANGELES INT'L AIRPORT WASHROOM.

92 OMIT

93 INT: OFFICE OF JONAS KING - DAY

As Wagner enters from the entryway into the office we see a brass plaque: PUBLICATIONS OFFICE OF THE NEW ENGLAND ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY. Cluttered, walls filled with impressive plaques and various tributes. JONAS KING is no absent-minded professor -- he wears finest wool-and-silk suits, stiff-collared British shirts, his silver hair perfectly coiffed. Now, as Wagner is shown into his office, he stands, cordial -- though not bombastic -- crosses to him, shakes his hand.

*

KING

James! It's been too long!

WAGNER

(Wary)

That's been my opinion for some time.

KING

Ouch! But perhaps I had that coming.
Coffee?

93 cont s

WAGNER

No thanks.

(Checks his watch)

Truth is, my flight home leaves in a little under two hours. Only burning curiosity made me detour here.

KING

I'm sure you can guess.

WAGNER

(Standing a little on his pride)

You've systematically excluded me from this journal for years, Jonas. I never knew why.

*

*

KING

You know your problem, James? You take everything so damned personally. You weren't systematically excluded. It's simply that your ideas were out-of-step with the times.

WAGNER

I've always chased truth. Not flavor-of-the-day popularity.

KING

There you go. Personal, judgemental. We were looking for broader ways to understand the society we'd built, and you wouldn't move with the times. But I'm not interested in the academic arguments. The simple fact is that you've attracted a lot of attention.

*

WAGNER

(With a cold, cold, smile)

Don't tell me! Now I'm the new flavor-of-the-day? Is that it?

KING

Maybe of the week. It's very simple. You know that academic journals get the bulk of their income from selling reprints. And we have thousands of requests for the articles Susan McCarran cited before the Senate.

WAGNER

The ultimate irony. I'm going to make you even richer!

93 cont'd

KING

Not necessarily. It was a long time ago, James. Late 'sixties, early 'seventies. The copyright you assigned us ran out months ago.

(Pause)

We need you to renew it for us. In return, we'll publish the article you submitted last month. The one we rejected.

(Wagner just stares at him, not responding; King squirms, adds)
I'll even make it the lead item. Top slot on the cover. Feature you in the letter from the editor column.

Wagner smiles at this; it broadens to a grin, builds to a chuckle, even a laugh. King clenches his jaw, turns to the window stares out, unable to deal with Wagner's enjoyment.

94.

INT: ANGIE/WAGNER HOUSE - DAY

The front hall; the door is unlocked, and Wagner bounds in, energy high -- then stops suddenly, frowns at what he sees: Angie sits in the armchair, two suitcases at her feet, her coat folded over them. He stares at her for several beats, then walks over to the sideboard, pours himself some Cognac, speaks without turning, his back still to her.

WAGNER

I always wondered what would happen if I clambered out of my pit of obscurity

(Turns to look at her)

~~This is a great reaction to my sudden fame.~~

ANGIE

~~Maybe notoriety's a better word. And that's not what I'm reacting to.~~

WAGNER

~~Convince me.~~ *Wagner*

ANGIE

It's just that all that's been going on made me realize something about you. You don't really feel. I don't think you were always that way. Maybe it became a defence when your career floundered. But you have all these ideas, all this charm, all this energy. But you don't think about what your ideas mean.

(Pause)

And it's the same way with you and me. We live together...but you never think about what that really means.

94 CONT'D

WAGNER

(Angry, defensive)

You'd be surprised! I've been completely faithful to you since the day we moved in together! And don't think there haven't been opportunities!!

ANGIE

(Nods, smiles tolerantly)

Of course you have. You have a perfect sense of the mechanics. I know you've been faithful...

(Pause, then genuinely asking)

But why, James, why? Because you love me? Or because that's the rules? Why are you letting yourself be used by these crazy people? Because you have something you believe in passionately? Or because you think it's finally your turn to be important? Do you want the world to understand something you've seen? Or is it just some career step to you? Do you--

WAGNER

(Shouting, interrupting)

Stop it!!

The silence rings. Outside, we hear a car; the doorbell rings; she stands, suddenly very weary, picks up her coat.

ANGIE

I don't want any part of this, James. You're playing with a terrible fire.

WAGNER

(Still yelling, defensive)

You're scared I'll outgrow you!! All I'm doing is telling the truth as I see it!!

She picks up her suitcase.

ANGIE

"A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can
invent"

(Pause, smiles softly)

William Blake...once an English
teacher, always an English teacher...

The doorbell rings again; she crosses, opens the door. It's a taxi driver. She indicates the suitcases which he gathers up, takes to the car; she remains sillouhettted in the door-frame. Wagner seems to want to talk to her, to say something, but falters, unable to. She turns, exits to the taxi. He stands there, downs the scotch in one go, refills his glass. The telephone rings. He answers.

94 cont'd

WAGNER

Wagner...yes, of course, sir. Be right there...

He hangs up, his frown deepening; then he reaches into his pocket, finds a breath-spray to use before exiting. *

95.

INT: JAMISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jamison behind his desk, McVittie at the window; Wagner sits across the desk reading a letter. This done, he looks up.

WAGNER

I don't understand. I thought you believed in academic freedom.

JAMISON

Oh, dear me, of course we do!

WAGNER

(Holds up the letter)
Then why this? Asking me to sign an undated letter of resignation isn't exactly a vote of confidence.

MCVITTIE

We warned you at the start, Professor. Some things are so base that even academic freedom can't hide them.

WAGNER

And if I refuse to sign?

JAMISON

Then things might become very ugly, James. Bring all sorts of scandal to Dartwood...and to yourself. *

McVittie turns to stare out the window.

MCVITTIE

That's not necessary, though. As I said, I'm a patient man. I'll be watching the television program from Chicago. I'll not make up my mind until then.

(Turns to look at him)

And I swear, if it's reasonable to believe that you're a nazi, then I'll not rest until you're gone from this school.

Wagner stares at them for several beats as he grasps what's going on; then,

95 cont'd

WAGNER

So academic freedom is a cherished value -- as long as it keeps the alumni gifts rolling in.

(Pause; then, bitter)

If I were Black...and saying things that made whites uncomfortable... would you still hand me this letter?

There is no answer to that. Jamison turns to look at McVittie, but the latter just keeps his back to the room, staring out the window. Wagner grabs a pen from Jamison's desk, scrawls a signature on the bottom, lets the letter flutter into Jamison's lap.

WAGNER

Fire me when it suits you.

And he turns and is gone.

FADE OUT.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

96.

FADE IN:

INT: HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

The Functions Bulletin Board of this once-grand and now aging hotel welcomes THE AMERICAN WHITE RIGHTS' MOVEMENT NATIONAL CONVENTION. It adds WELCOME TO NIGHTPULSE STAFF AND CREW. Now, we see Wagner arrive, a Bellman take his baggage and direct him to the check-in counter. He's second in line, and waits patiently for his turn. Then, a tap on the shoulder and a familiar voice cause Wagner to whirl around quickly.

CROSBY

Afternoon, James. Pleasant trip?

WAGNER

Crosby!?! What are you doing here!?!

CROSBY

(Smug smile)

Looking after business. Covering the convention. Didn't Jonas tell you? Since they've agreed to run you on the top of the summer issue, they commissioned me to do a rebuttal piece.

WAGNER

What rebuttal!?! You don't even know what I'm going to write or say!!

CROSBY

Well...you know...an objective view from a colleague. Jamison liked the idea enormously. So did McVittie. Give Dartwood a balanced image.

He grabs Crosby's shoulder, grips it tightly 'till the man winces. Wagner's tone turns grim.

WAGNER

So the bastards set me up. Scared I'll say something unpopular...

(Cold grin)

But they chose a weak weapon, Crosby. You don't have the raw brains to debate me in print. So just keep away from me, keep out of my sight! I can't stomach you!

And now it's his turn to check in; he releases Crosby, shoving him backward into the arms of the next-in-line.

97.

INT: HOTEL ROOM: UPPER FLOOR - DAY

Billy lies on the bed watching television, surrounded by the remnants of a room service lunch; the door opens, Hally enters, goes straight to the window, stares out, nervous, muscles twitching, etc. Billy frowns, sits up.

BILLY

Jeez, Hally, what's going down with you? Ever since New York you've been, like wild or something. Y'even stopped readin' your newspapers.

Hally turns, swallows, goes to speak, can't, takes a deep breath, then another, tries to speak again, still can't, then starts hyperventilating. Billy tries to sit him down, to calm him, but to no avail; finally he shakes him hard, slaps him.

BILLY

Pull it together, will ya, Hally?!
You're freakin' ~~us all~~ out!!

Hally turns, looks up at him, eyes red, very wide. Finally,

HALLY

Billy...we killed a guy...

BILLY

Whadda ya talkin' about? Whaddya saying?

HALLY

The airport. Back in L.A. The
guy died. I read it in the newspaper.
They found the guy dead.

*

Billy shakes his head, denial his first line of defence.

BILLY

Stop talking stupid, Hally. Just
'cause you read in a newspaper--

But Hally shouts loudly at him, the emotion finally bursting.

HALLY

Billy, I know!!! For sure!! I was
there!! You were lookout and I was
inside! Rocco and Dwayne beat the guy
to death! Just 'cause he was a homo!!

Suddenly, the bathroom door opens -- and Rocco steps out.

ROCCO

So whadda ya gonna do about it, Hally?

This is almost too much for Hally to bear. Eyes brimming with tears, he turns to Billy for help as he always does. Billy pats him on the shoulder, speaks quietly to Rocco.

77 CONT'D

BILLY

Nothin', Rocco. He's not gonna do nothin'. He just needed to talk about it, right, Hally...?

(Hally nods, can't speak)
He's not doin' nothin', Rocco.

ROCCO

That's good. Real good. Because he was in the room. And they got death in California. So, kid, if you got half a head, you keep real quiet.

'Cause I'll
kill you right here before I'd go to San Quentin to die. You got it?

*

Hally manages a nod. Rocco continues to stare at Hally. Obviously, he doubts the kid's strength. So, to Billy.

ROCCO

Make sure he understands, Billy. Make sure.

And he turns, storms from the room. Hally is in total panic.

HALLY

Billy, we oughta go to the police!

BILLY

Do you think they'd listen to us!?! Now? After joining up?

(Tries to calm him)

No...we gotta figure this out alone. Together. I won't let you down!

HALLY

Billy, I been thinkin'. In the papers and stuff, that Professor, the Wagner guy, he says he ain't one of them! I figured we could go to him, he'd help!

(Billy just dismisses that idea with a wave of the hand)

But he's a teacher, Billy! We gotta go somewhere! Let's try him, Billy!

Billy thinks about it for a beat, then shakes his head.

BILLY

Too risky...

HALLY

(Total panic)

Then whadda we gonna do!?!

Billy straightens him up, holds, looks directly into his eyes.

97 CONT'D

BILLY

Listen, Hally, listen carefully.
 You've gotta get outta here. I got
 some money still. Later, when every-
 one's busy, you're goin' to the Bus
 Terminal. Take the bus to L.A. Go to
 the halfway house there, you got it?
 I'll find you there. Later.

HALLY

Come with me, Billy?

*

BILLY

You crazy? They'll freak. I gotta
 stay and cover for you. You split.
 I'll meet you there. Just keep shut
 about the airport. You got it, Hally?

Hally nods; Billy slips off his boot, takes the remaining
 money from his sock, begins counting some out for Hally.

98.

INT: A DIFFERENT HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Wagner tips the Bellman, closes the door, turns to unpack; im-
 mediately, there's a knock at the door. He goes, opens it; no
 one there. Puzzled, he closes it but the knocking resumes.

WAGNER

Hello!?!

SUSAN(o.s.)

James? Over here!

Another knock; he realizes that it's coming from the locked
 door to the adjoining room. He walks to it.

WAGNER

Susan?

SUSAN(o.s.)

Yes! The other side of this door!
 Adjoining rooms...my very own idea!!
 (As he opens his door)
 I hope you think it was a good idea!

WAGNER

Yes! I suppose--

But he stops as the door swings open. Susan wears nothing but
 the flimsiest of robes that leaves little to the imagination.
 He stares at her. She smiles softly, provocatively.

SUSAN

Unless, of course, you've brought your
 lady with you.

He continues to stare at her; then, a small smile.

98 cont'd

WAGNER

No. I don't have a lady any more. At
 least, not the one I used to have.

That's all the invitation she needs; she reaches up just as she did outside the television studio and kisses him. Hard.

99.

INT: HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Crowded, people milling about and we're not quite sure what's of interest -- until we see Hally appear not from an elevator but from a door to a stairwell. He carries a small overnight bag. He glances around, hurries to the front door, exits. Then, from the shadows, we see both Rocco and Dwayne emerge.

ROCCO

That's his duffle. He's splitting.

DWAYNE

I'd better talk him out of it...

(Rocco is about to follow him
 but Dwayne stops him forcefully)
 With you, it's personal. Better leave
 him to me.

Rocco stares at him for a beat, then backs down, nods. His journey to the other side is complete. Dwayne winks approval, turns and follows Hally.

100.

INT: HOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Wagner and Susan in the immediate afterglow of sex, sprawled, quiet, regaining their breath; it was obviously more intense than with Angie. Susan reaches out, strokes his thigh.

SUSAN

You bring a lot of unusual energy to your work, Professor.

WAGNER

Well...when you're the work--

(He grins)

Why not skip the post-game analysis?

She likes his honesty, throws her head back, laughs; then,

SUSAN

Okay...what do you want to talk about?
 What's really on your mind?

He gets up off the bed, pulls a sheet around himself, goes to the chair so that he may face her.

100 CONT'D

WAGNER

The debate tonight. Darryle Blake.
What he's likely to say...

(Pause, then grimly)

Tonight's my chance to prove I'm different than he is without -- repeat, without -- backing down on what I really believe.

SUSAN

I've heard him speak. He comes across as pretty reasonable. I wouldn't go head-to-head with him. Concentrate on your own ideas. Avoid debating.

WAGNER

Too risky! People might not see what I really stand for...

(Thinks for a beat; then)

Maybe catch him on some Nazi dogma. Is he one of the crazies who says there never was a holocaust?

She stiffens at this; her voice takes on a sharper edge, a quicker rhythm.

SUSAN

I'd keep away from that. They have a lot of information on the holocaust.

WAGNER

But do they deny it?

SUSAN

Not exactly. Just the numbers.

(Pause, then calculated)

But James...atrocities happen in every war. Why get hung up on details?

WAGNER

The holocaust was more than an ordinary atrocity!

But before he can continue, and rather than answer, she picks up the telephone, turns to him brightly, a whole new subject.

SUSAN

I'm starved! What would you like from room service?

WAGNER

(Off-stride by this)

Uh...just coffee...

She picks up phone, but before she can dial,

100 CONT'D

WAGNER

Don't misunderstand this question...but why are you here?

SUSAN

Here!?! It's part of my work. We monitor these groups as a matter of routine.

WAGNER

But hasn't it crossed your mind that maybe the reason people label your foundation as neo-nazi is because you're always around these people?

SUSAN

How else can I keep tabs on them? This is my work, James.

(Then, deep, provocative)

Besides...you were going to be here, weren't you?

(Picks up the phone)

Look, it's made me an expert on this bunch. And if I were you, I'd keep off the holocaust. You might be on soft ground.

And she turns her attention to the telephone; Wagner stares at her, clearly questioning her advice.

101.

INT: ERNST'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

He, Davis (from the ceremony in L.A.), and Henry, all dressed in their best civilian clothing. Ernst is consulting his laptop computer. A knock at the door. Henry goes to answer it.

HENRY

Where's Hal?

BILLY

(Quickly)

Hally had to go to the drugstore.

But Ernst has no time for this, hurries over, urges them into the room, a large well-furnished suite with kitchen, etc.

ERNST

How are you boys doing? Like your room?

ROCCO

Yes, sir!

ERNST

Good. We're off to the Airport to greet Senator Blake. Now, here's the thing. That box you brought back from Mexico, you remember?

ROCCO

Sure. The little one.

101 OUT 1A

ERNST

(Laughs)

In size, maybe. But it's a gift for the Senator. He's a collector. Of Third Reich memorabilia, do you understand what I mean by that?

BILLY

Blake saves German stuff?

*

ERNST

Collects. He collects relics from World War Two. Specializes in items from the German side.

(Then, happy-go-lucky)

Nothing to be surprised about!

Thousands of Americans have the same hobby! There's stores in every city!!

(Then, a conspiratorial wink)

Some people collect Confederate souvenirs. Doesn't make 'em slave owners.

ROCCO

No problem for us. What's the deal?

At Ernst's signal, Henry opens a small door in the credenza to reveal the box from Mexico and a Luger pistol next to it.

ERNST

You keep an eye out while we're gone. That box must be protected at all costs. The weapon is for protection. Mauser nine mill, best handgun ever made. You do know how to use it. In a revolutionary movement, even assassination is sometimes necessary. And the Senator's present is very special...Do you understand?

*

*

(They nod assent; Ernst beams)

I knew you kids were special when I first laid eyes on you...

(To Davis)

Nothing like instinct. Mine were a hundred percent on these young men!

(Then, as he leads the others to the door)

Make yourself at home. It's a great suite! The T.V.'s got sixty channels!

And they're gone, the two boys left alone. Rocco saunters over to the kitchen, jerks his head at the television set.

ROCCO

Find somethin' good. I'll check for brews.

Billy takes the couch, uses the remote control device to turn on the TV and idly flick through the channels. B.g., Rocco takes two beers from the kitchen fridge, re-enters the room.

101 CONT'D

Billy flicks past re-runs, etc.; Rocco tosses him a beer, takes a long swig of his own. Billy rests for a beat on an animal program. Rocco takes another long swig,

ROCCO
You like that crap?

BILLY
(Sadly)
Sorta...it reminds me of the farm...

But that increases his sadness. He goes back to flicking, passing quickly by a news channel that has a graphic in the upper right-hand corner behind the newscaster. It's a photograph of Hally taken from a driver's license. Billy flicks past before he realizes what it is, then goes back, urgently trying to find the channel. He gets back just in time for the end of the piece.

102.

NEWSCASTER
...the only identification on the body was a fragment of a driver's license with the young man's picture. He appears to have been beaten to death.

103.

Billy immediately jumps up, dashes for the door.

BILLY
Rocco!! C'mon!! It's Hally!!

But Rocco reaches out, grabs Billy, restrains him.

ROCCO
Yeah. I saw.

BILLY
So we gotta--
(Trails off, stares at Rocco in horror)
Rocco...not you...you couldn'ta done nothin' to Hally...Rocco...????

Rocco shrugs, totally unfeeling.

ROCCO
Not me. But somebody hadda do it. The kid was trying to run.

BILLY
Trying to get away! He meant no harm!

ROCCO
Get away from what? He took a vow, Billy. A blood oath! Understand!?!

BILLY

Some stupid garbage in a teenage club
in L.A. You'd let 'em kill
Hally for that?!?! *

ROCCO

(Supercool)

Yeah. You'd better believe it. I'm
committed, Billy. And so are you.

BILLY

Whadda ya talkin' about?!?

ROCCO

Just what I said. You're committed.
Ever since the fag in the airport
there's been no turnin' back. You try
what Hally tried...and I'll kill you
myself. I mean it, Billy. It's like
Ernst says...we're a revolutionary
movement! Sometimes, assassination is
the only way!!

And he crushes the empty beer can, turns to the kitchen to get another; Billy stares at his back, trembling with fear and indecision. And then he acts, silently slipping over to the credenza, removing the Luger pistol. Rocco is kneeling down at the refrigerator, trying to get a beer from the back. Billy creeps up on him, Pistol in hand. He raises it. Rocco senses that he's there, wheels around -- and Billy brings the butt down onto Rocco's head with a harsh crack. Unlike the movies, it doesn't knock Rocco out -- he reaches up, woozy, tries to struggle. Billy hits him again with the pistol. Then again. Finally, Rocco crumples to the floor, traces of blood on his skull. Billy dashes to the credenza, grabs the small parcel, bolts from the room.

104.

INT: HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby bustles as the NightPulse crew set up, laying cable to the ballroom and the debate lecturns. Billy appears from the stairwell, parcel under his arm; he turns to the street, sees Dwayne loitering. He pulls back, panicked, nowhere to go. And then something in the Ballroom catches his eye. It's a lecturn marked PROFESSOR JAMES WAGNER. He stares at it. Now, an ASSISTANT PRODUCER calls out to P.A. nearby. *

ASST PROD

Hey, Alex! Slip Wagner's call sheet
under his door. Room sixteen-ten...

Billy presses back against the wall; the PA enters the elevator as two of Henry's goons pass by.

105

INT: WAGNER'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The blinds still drawn, Wagner and Susan making love. Then, an urgent knocking at the door. Wagner pauses, calls out.

WAGNER

Yes!?! Who is it!?!

BILLY(o.s.)

(Muffled)

A friend of Henry Ernst's. I gotta talk to you...please...

(Wagner shakes his head, is about to call out "later" when)
...please...!!!!...

He looks at Susan who reacts in a businesslike fashion. She disengages, stands, wraps the sheet around herself, crosses to the door to the adjoining room, whispers as she goes. *

SUSAN

Better take care of business. Knock on the door when you're done...

And she slips off to her own room. He grabs his robe, opens the door; Billy pushes right by into the room. Puzzled, Wagner closes the door, follows him inside. Billy is suddenly unsure of himself, proffers his hand. He still carries the box.

BILLY

Hi. I'm Billy Kenner. I work with Henry Ernst. *

WAGNER

What could you possibly want from me?

BILLY

I need help, sir. I need your help. There's terrible things going on here, sir. And I can't get out of the hotel.

(Pause; then, timid)

So I'm risking you're not one of them.

WAGNER

If you mean Ernst, I'm not. But--

BILLY

(Desperate interruption)

I'm scared for my life, sir! If I leave, they'll come after me, kill me!!

WAGNER

Kill you...?!...

8/9/89-lkj

105
Cont.105
Cont

BILLY

Yes, sir!

(gets his breath; his eyes
start to tear; his voice chokes)
They already killed my friend Hally.
He knew who beat this homosexual to
death in an airport. Hally was like
the only family I had left. We were
both from Iowa. And they killed him.

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And he drops to the bed, buries his head in his hands, begins to sob. Wagner gets his concentration, sits next to Billy, puts his arm around his shoulder.

WAGNER

What about proof? Do you have evidence
we could take to the authorities.

Billy looks up, tears streaming down his cheeks, shakes his head. Then he remembers the box. He holds it up.

BILLY

I got this. I took it 'cause it's
real important to them! So I snaked it
when I ran...
(pause)
We brought it in from Mexico for Ernst.
(pushing it toward Wagner)
It's a present for Blake. He saves
Nazi stuff.

*
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*

Gingerly, Wagner takes the parcel, breaks the seals; ever-so-slowly he gets the knots undone, the brown paper off, revealing a simple box. He opens it. He removes the contents, sees what it is, then with a small gasp of horror, drops it on the bed.

106 SAME: THE OBJECT

106

A lampshade made of pieces of a translucent material sewn together with slender thread. Several pieces of the material have numbers tattooed on them. It is the real thing, the ultimate piece of Nazi memorabilia: a lampshade made of human skin.

107 BACK TO BILLY & WAGNER

As they look at the object.

BILLY

What is it?

*
*

WAGNER

A lampshade. A little game the Nazis
played at Auschwitz.
(indicating the lampshade)
When that's what they admire, the killing
of your friend is a minor detail.

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Billy slumps on the bed, stares at Wagner.

8/9/89-lkj

108 SAME: A DIFFERENT POV - WAGNER & BILLY SEEN FROM SUSAN'S ROOM. 108

She has the door open the slightest crack, and peers through, and we record her POV. The lampshade is on the bed, Wagner and Billy staring at it in horror. In our foreground, Susan mobilizes. She gently closes the door all the way, sure that they take no notice, then quickly begins to dress. (And makes an exit.)

108A SAME: INT. WAGNER ROOM - NIGHT 108A

Wagner puts both arms on Billy's shoulders, stares deep into his eyes.

WAGNER

Look. I have some ideas on where to go from here. But I have to slip away. You stay here. Don't move from this room. Don't answer the door.

(pause)

Do you understand?

(Billy nods)

Please. Repeat it to me...

BILLY

You want me to stay here. Not to answer the door.

(pause; then a question)

Or the telephone?

WAGNER

Exactly. Or the telephone. You'll put yourself in terrible danger.

And the boy nods, hangs his head. Wagner mobilizes, and in an instant is gone from the room.

Billy sits motionless on the bed for several beats. then says softly, to himself:

BILLY

I'm sorry, Hally. I'm so sorry.

*

*

Then, suddenly remembering something, he reaches inside his jacket. Slowly he extracts the Mauser pistol and stares at it.

FADE OUT

END ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

96.

FADE IN:

109. INT: HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

NightPulse dominates the lobby, crew rushing everywhere, a mob of onlookers adding to the tense excitement. We see Henry move through the crowd, carefully checking every face, anxiously seeking someone he apparently can't find. Then he freezes as Wagner enters the lobby with Frank Alonso at his side. They hurry to an elevator, watch the frenzy as they await a car. Once their elevator arrives and they've been whisked away, Henry dashes for the next elevator, impatiently pushing the button. Finally, a car arrives. He enters, the doors close.

*

110. INT: WAGNER'S ROOM - NIGHT

*

He and Alonso enter the empty room. Wagner reacts nervously.

WAGNER
Billy!?! BILLY!!

He goes to the adjoining room door, finds it locked.

ALONSO
You got two rooms?

WAGNER
Huh? Oh. No.
(Looks forlornly around the room)
I don't know where he is, Mister
Alonso. I begged him to stay put.

ALONSO
(Shrugs, picks up the lampshade)
Nice, huh?

WAGNER
You knew about it!?!

ALONSO
Got a Customs report when they brought
it across the border.

WAGNER
And you did nothing!?!

ALONSO
Couldn't. This stuff is sick. But
it's not illegal. These guys aren't
stupid, Professor. They know the
exact letter of the law. They manage
to operate right on the edge.
(Shrugs)
But that's the American way I guess.

110 CONT'D

Wagner runs to Susan's door, bangs on it.

ALONSO

If that's Susan McCarran's room,
you're just making a bigger fool of
yourself, Professor. She's Ernst's
mistress. Has been for years...

*
*

WAGNER

(Stunned)

What!? That can't be!! You would've
said something! You never told me!!
Why the hell didn't you tell me!?!

ALONSO

As I remember, you weren't in a lis-
tening mood. Pity. Because she's the
one we want. Ernst, Blake, those guys
are in the open...your sometime lover
is more dangerous. She likes shadows.

*

Wagner stares at him, letting it soak in; then, firm, tough,

WAGNER

Okay. That was then. What do I do
now? How do I make it right?

ALONSO

Go home. Just go home, Professor.
You've done enough damage, if you
don't mind me saying. You closed your
eyes to what you knew stunk like a
cesspool. Those cameras in the lobby?
You got that for 'em.

WAGNER

You want me to back off!?! To let it
go!?! What about the boy? Billy?

ALONSO

I'll get the local police to start a
search of the building. Try to get a
warrant to search Ernst's room.

WAGNER

And Susan!?! Don't you still want
the goods on her? I can help!!

ALONSO

She's wise to you by now. You faced
the facts a little too late, Mister
Wagner. So now you'd better leave it
to the pros. One day she'll slip up.
Bed the wrong guy. A guy sharp enough
to see through her. Meantime...I'd
just as soon you got yourself out of
here.

NO CONT'D

WAGNER

I can't!! It'd be...wrong!!

ALONSO

That's between you and your priest, Professor. But maybe...if you get out of here... NightPulse'll lose it's punch. Maybe they'll focus on the murder of the kid. That'd be one for our side.

And he walks to the telephone, punches out a number; Wagner slumps onto the edge of the bed, stares out, dazed and numb.

III.

INT: ERNST'S SUITE - NIGHT

Desperate hours; Susan stands near the door, BLAKE sits in a chair, Davis finishes bandaging Rocco's head as Ernst paces; at a rhythmic tap at the door Susan opens it, admits Henry.

HENRY

Wagner's back. With some guy I never saw before.

ERNST

Probably police! The boy, Kenner, what about the boy!?

HENRY

No sign of him.

ERNST

(Grim satisfaction)
Find him! Now!

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HENRY

Dwayne. What about Dwayne? I've got him hiding in my room.

ERNST

Wait 'til after the show, then we turn him over to the police. Like any good citizen.

Rocco looks up, stunned.

ROCCO

But he's one of us!! Our own!! You can't turn him in!!

HENRY

The movement's bigger than any individual. A revolutionary cause means sacrifice!

ROCCO

But me!! What about me!?!

Ernst looks at Davis. No words are needed. In an instant, he's taken the remaining bandage, and with Henry's help has Rocco subdued and tied up. Davis then removes a small caliber pistol from his pocket, trains it on Rocco.

ROCCO

(Panicking)

Turn me in, I'll tell 'em everything!!

HENRY

You've got nothing to tell. I was your contact and I had nothing to do with what went down at the airport.

(Shrugs, smiles coldly)

You're no threat to anyone. Anyway, you took a vow! A blood oath! To a revolutionary cause!!

ERNST

You're committed, son!

(MORE)

99A

SUSAN

(Challenging Ernst)

What about Blake's relic! What
do we do if that gets out?

*

ERNST

Nothing! Absolutely nothing! We deny
it! The Big Lie! Say it enough times
people believe it! Go back to basics!
Read some Goebbels, some Mussolini!

SUSAN

But it's a risk to the cause!

ERNST

Listen, McCarran, I am the cause!! So
just don't you argue with me!! You've
been buried in your reports too damned
long! Trust what we know about the
movement! And get on with your job!
That's Wagner! Worry about him!

99b

Susan sets her jaw, accepts the order obediently, answers with
cool composure.

SUSAN

He's soft. A coward. If he did call
the police, my guess is he's on the
next plane out. He'll disappear. Now
he's seen what's going on, he won't
show. Too frightened.

ERNST

(Grimly)

Good. Then we'll have NightPulse to
ourselves.

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112. INT: LOBBY - NIGHT

The excitement is complete. People crush to get inside the ballroom. Dozens of young men in black uniforms wait, each with a large flag standard with a highly-polished American Eagle on the top and fixed with either a Stars-and-Stripes or one of the divisional flags. Now, a uniformed Adult comes to head the flag-carriers.

*

113. INT: BALLROOM - NIGHT

All is now ready, excitement at fever-pitch. The seats are occupied with a turn-away crowd of people from all walks of American life. Behind the lecturns on a raised dias at the front is a twenty-foot likeness of George Washington. The walls and the huge overhead chandelier are covered by draped American flags and other patriotic icons. The NightPulse cameras are set, the Moderator ready to take his place at a central lecturn. Now, to a mighty roar from the crowd, the procession of flags carried by black-shirted youth enters from the lobby, the crowd continuing to cheer until the entire column is positioned around the hall; then, sudden bonechilling silence as the hall goes dark. Then, with great drama, two spotlights brute the entry. Ernst enters, Blake at his side. He lifts his arm in greeting to the assembly. They roar their approval, salute back, begin an ear-splitting rhythmic handclap, chanting all the while "ERNST, ERNST, ERNST!" The parallel to a nazi rally could not be lost on anyone. Ernst and Blake take their time swaggering to the podium, take their place at their lecturns. Wagner's is obviously empty.

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114. INT: WAGNER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Empty. Susan enters from the adjoining door, goes to the closet. Empty. Wagner appears to have gone.

115. INT: HOTEL SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

Empty at first; the door opens, and Billy slips in, crosses to a door on the other side, opens it; it leads onto a catwalk that goes directly across the ceiling of the ballroom to provide maintenance access to the huge chandelier. Billy slips onto the catwalk, closes the door behind him.

116. SAME: ON THE CATWALK

He has a clear view of the ballroom below; he edges along the narrow dangerous way to a platform with a clear view of the dias, but hidden from the crowd by the chandelier. Below, the Moderator walks to the central lecturn.

MODERATOR

Welcome to a special edition of NightPulse. We had hoped to have Professor James Wagner with us this evening, but for the moment, he appears unavailable...

Billy reaches inside his shirt. He takes out the 9mm Mauser.

117. INT: HOTEL SERVICE AREA - NIGHT

Henry walks from door-to-door, checking everywhere. Only broom closets. He moves on toward the next door.

118. INT: LOBBY - NIGHT

The manager's office door opens, and Wagner, a brown paper bag under his arm, slips into the lobby -- just as Susan exits the elevator. She sees him, dashes to intercept him, two black-shirted youths following, their menace obvious. He sprints, reaches the door ahead of them, bursts down the center aisle.

119. SAME: INT: BALLROOM - NIGHT

Wagner marches down the aisle goes directly to the Moderator, whispers a few words, then walks to his podium, paper bag still in hand. He faces the NightPulse camera.

WAGNER

My name is James Wagner, and by trade I teach anthropology. Like most Americans, I'm ambitious, dream of fame, even fortune. Life has not always given me what I thought I deserved. This left a certain bitterness in my heart. A bitterness that I allowed to be used, to be manipulated by forces that are ugly, indecent, grotesque -- forces that have no place in America.

The crowd boos, catcalls. He holds his ground; the Moderator calls for order -- and such is the power of Television that he regains silence in the hall.

120. POV FROM CATWALK:

Billy holds the Luger, waiting to take aim. Meanwhile,

WAGNER

Perhaps this admission will cost me my career. But that means nothing. All that counts is that you...

(Indicates the audience)

...face yourself honestly.

121. SAME: WAGNER AT THE LECTURN

WAGNER

Why are you here? Has the system abused you? Cheated you? It often does. But I swear to you, the hatred that men like Ernst and Blake sell is no answer. No human achieves a peaceful life by clambering over the bones of his victims. Put your faith in what is good and just in America, who we are, what we stand for...and that isn't what Ernst tells you it is...

*

122. INT: HOTEL SERVICE AREA - NIGHT

Where Billy found access to the catwalk. Henry enters, looks around, is about to exit when he notices the door. He crosses to it, goes to open it.

123. SAME: WAGNER AT THE PODIUM:

WAGNER

These men tell you there was no holocaust. That they should not be tainted with the smear of Hitlerism...

(Takes lampshade from the bag)

This is a lampshade made of human skin, an artifact from Hitler's Germany. It was intended as a gift from Ernst to Blake.

*

Immediately, the NightPulse handheld camera moves in, gets a monster close-up. Blake panics, goes to stand to grab the lampshade, but Ernst restrains him, shakes his head, whispers,

*

ERNST

...leave it...deny it...the big lie...

124. SAME: ON THE CATWALK:

Henry is about to leave when he glimpses the shadow of Billy. Now he begins his perilous way toward Billy as the latter clicks the pistol, arming it. Meanwhile, below,

WAGNER

This is the truth of these people. I let myself be used by them hoping to advance my career, hiding behind respectable American institutions, using our basic decency and our frail humanity to turn us against each other. When we pretend this is true science, we embrace the darkest evil of all.

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125. SAME: ON THE DIAS:

WAGNER

But that's how Hitler came to power in Germany. When ordinary, decent people allowed themselves to believe that Nazism, racism, hatred, could make their lives whole. It can't. I was wrong...and so are every one of you.

And he steps down. Ernst immediately jumps up, goes to his podium. The floor manager signals the Moderator who waves him off -- he knows good TV when it's happening.

126. SAME: ON THE CATWALK:

Billy raises the pistol, takes aim at Ernst as he stands.

ERNST

I suppose there's no end to the lies that some people will tell to protect themselves...

Wild applause from the partisans. Billy raises the pistol, draws aim -- just as Henry reaches him and dives to grab his wrist. They struggle on the narrow platform, the chandelier begins to sway slightly. *

127. SAME: THE LECTURN:

As the applause ends, the crowd on its feet. Ernst gets back his swagger, begins to orate in fine fascist fashion.

ERNST

But our cause is beyond the grasp of petty liars like Wagner who sway with the wind--

But he stops as a rustle runs through the crowd -- they've noticed the chandelier. The NightPulse crew throw a spot up to the ceiling, illuminating Billy and Henry as they struggle for the gun. The chandelier begins to sway crazily, the crowd begins to run, fearful it will drop. Ernst panics, screams,

127 CONT'D

The boys lose their balance. They fall, still clutching at each other, tumble the fifty feet to the floor. They land with a sickening thump, lie there, bodies still, inert, eyes still open in the stare of death. They died together. The cameramen rush toward them, the crowd scatters, Wagner charges to the site. Ernst stares coldly, sets his jaw, and then, emotionless, grabs Blake and exits through the back. Susan scurries after them. On the mayhem,

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FADE THROUGH BLACK TO:

128. INT: WAGNER/ANGIE'S HOME - MORN

As we first met them at what seems so long ago, repeating their breakfast preparation ritual. Except this time, Wagner does indeed pick up the newspaper; a beat and he reports,

WAGNER

Final decision in the McCarran case.
Convicted of mail fraud and illegal solicitation..

(Pause; then, wryly)

A hundred dollar fine. Ernst'll pay
that out of petty cash...

ANGIE

Well...you can't slay the dragon with
one blow...

WAGNER

(After a beat, deep sadness)

I didn't want to slay the dragon...but
if I could've saved just Billy...

But he trails off, looks back to the paper.

ANGIE

You noticed him too late, was all. He
was beyond your reach.

WAGNER

Maybe. But others aren't.

129

INT: AMPHITHEATRE CLASSROOM - DAY

Where we first saw Wagner. The class is full. He strides to the front where a map has been drawn down to cover the blackboard. No longer the cheerful lecturer, his manner is subdued, serious, somber; he gets to the front, faces the class.

129 CONT'D

WAGNER

Welcome to the first lecture of a new course never before offered on this campus. As you know, it's entitled "Race, Culture, and Ethics."

(Pause, studies the faces in the class)

The entire course will consist of considering the importance of a statement made almost half-a-century ago.

He turns, walks slowly toward the map, holds the cord that will roll it up like an old-fashioned blind.

WAGNER

Martin Neimoller was a German clergyman. A Protestant who watched the rise of Hitler as though he were audience. In 1944, as a prisoner in the Nazi death camp at Dachau, he wrote the following...

He pulls the string and the map goes up to reveal a paragraph written on the board. As he begins to read,

130. SAME: CU: THE PARAGRAPH ON THE BLACKBOARD:

So that we may follow as he reads it.

WAGNER

In Germany, they came first for the Communists, but I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time, nobody was left to speak up.

FADE OUT.

THE END