

THE APPARATUS

Original Screenplay

by

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THE APPARATUS
PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

EXT. THE RAMA CORPORATION FACTORY - NIGHT

A great FOREBODING structure surrounded by a high electrified fence topped with barbed wire.

INT. THE FENCE LINE, RAMA CORP. - NIGHT

Strict security measures are being enforced. Heavily ARMED GUARDS in khaki uniforms are stationed at the solitary point of entry--checking the identity of all that come and go.

STEADI-CAM SHOT - TRUCKING BEHIND one particular MAN. We can't see his face but he's well built, apparently in his early thirties--and he's walking toward the security gate--getting ready to leave the premises. CAMERA FOLLOWS, keeping him in MEDIUM SHOT. The man pauses at the guard station. He reaches into his back pants pocket, removes an ALLIGATOR WALLET, takes out a PLASTIC IDENTITY PASS and presents it to one of the UNIFORMED OFFICIALS. The pass is placed into a machine.

INT. GUARD STATION - NIGHT

ANGLE ON TV MONITOR

As the name "Anthony Porcelli" is printed out on the screen followed by "Authorization 1217."

BACK TO STEADI-CAM SHOT

OVER THE SHOULDER of the man just identified to us as "Porcelli." His pass is removed from the machine and returned to him without a word from the guards. CAMERA AGAIN FOLLOWS as the man exits the grounds of the Rama Corporation without further interference.

DISSOLVE TO:

MATCHING STEADI-CAM SHOT

FOLLOWING the man down a nearby street. From the cars and signposts, we realize we are in an Italian city. The man heads down the steps into a subway--joining scores of other workers who are going home for the evening. It is the Rome equivalent of "Rush Hour."

DISSOLVE TO:

MATCHING STEADI-CAM SHOT - UNDERGROUND SUBWAY PLATFORM

AGAIN FOLLOWING the man as he elbows his way through the mob moving toward the edge of the platform. A train has just pulled out jammed full of humanity. Another train is due momentarily.

CAMERA DROPS LOW as the man we're following is bumped by another fellow. There's a bit of scuffling in the crowd during which we see someone picking our man's pocket--stealing the ALIGATOR WALLET.

STEADI-CAM CONTINUES TO FOLLOW our man who is still unaware that he has been robbed. He moves closer to the edge of the platform.

CAMERA PANS UP to the platform to REVEAL the train barreling out the tunnel at breakneck speed--sweeping into the station.

CAMERA WHIP PANS BACK through the crowd--coming to rest just behind the young man whose wallet has just been lifted. Now as the train pulls in--a HAND ENTERS FRAME and violently SHOVES our man forward--off the platform and onto the tracks --into the path of the train. All we see of the assailant is this left hand--but we will recognize it when we see it again by the LARGE ODD-SHAPED PINKY RING.

ANGLE ON TRACKS

As the body of the victim falls in front of the train. The collision sends him flying ten feet forward--landing face down on the third rail, sizzling in a shower of sparks before the train runs over him--crushing and mutilating him. The SCREAMS of the onlookers mix with the screech of the train as it grinds to a stop. (Note: We have never seen the face of the victim. And now what is left of him will be barely identifiable.)

Over the mixture of screams we end our prologue and

DISSOLVE QUICKLY TO:

CLOSE SHOT - THE WORD "CONTROL"

filling the screen. PULL BACK to REVEAL it's part of a sign: "PASSPORT CONTROL" located at the immigration checkpoint at

ROME AIRPORT - DAY

Outside we hear the screams of jet aircraft landing and taking off. Lines of TRAVELERS are going through the checkpoint. Among them an attractive American couple, STEVE POWELL and VALERIE --who seem to be enjoying each other's company.

OFFICIAL

Purpose of your visit?

VALERIE

We came here on our honeymoon six years ago.

STEVE

We're back to celebrate our divorce.

OFFICIAL

I don't understand? This is the new practice in America? Celebrating divorces?

STEVE

It could catch on.

OFFICIAL

One minute please.

He takes Steve's passport and lays it face down on some mechanical device. Steve looks rather concerned.

VALERIE

I told you not to clown around with the man.

CLOSE-UP FACE OF PASSPORT - STEVE'S PICTURE

CLOSE-UP SAME IMAGE

as it is broken up into micro-dots and put through a computer readout.

TV MONITORS--as Steve's likeness is flashed on a dozen screens, the portions of the face are automatically enlarged. Over this we hear TWO DISEMBODIED VOICES.

VOICE

A primary subject--

2ND VOICE

Determine his vulnerability quotient...

BACK TO IMMIGRATION STATION

Steve and Valerie still waiting.

STEVE

Any problem?

OFFICIAL

None at all.

(returns the passports)

Welcome to Rome.

CUT TO:

EXT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL, VIA VENETO - DAY

As a taxi brings Steve and Valerie to this most elegant of hotels.

INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL, REGISTRATION DESK - DAY

ASST. MANAGER

Oh, yes,--Powell. You requested room
427--the corner room--twin beds.

ANGLE ON VALERIE

Looking at Steve quizzically, wondering if he's really going to keep faith with their "arrangement."

CUT TO:

INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL SUITE - DAY

PULLING BACK from those two beds--side by side--but separated. Steve tips the bellman who departs. Valerie begins to unpack.

VALERIE

You could've got two separate rooms.

STEVE

We couldn't afford it. Besides, this was our room.

VALERIE

I remember it as bigger. I bet they subdivided the place up.

STEVE

Nothing's the way you remember it.

They begin to help each other unpack.

VALERIE

So? Are we really going to be able to go through with this?

STEVE

It's a way of finding out if it's really over.

VALERIE

Why couldn't we have had one of those nasty divorces?

STEVE

Maybe if we'd had two separate lawyers--instead of one nice guy.

VALERIE

I think the problem is us. It always was. We got along too well.

STEVE

You think if we'd fought more...?

VALERIE

Over what?

STEVE

If we'd had kids, we could've fought over the kids. Not to mention a long bitter custody battle when we split.

VALERIE

I would've let you keep the kids.

STEVE

Nothing doing. I was going to keep the house, if we'd ever had a house. We didn't have enough things, that was the trouble.

She goes to the window, draws the curtains and reveals a splendid view of the City of Rome. She opens the door to the terrace and steps out. In a moment Steve joins her there.

VALERIE

So what do we have to show for six years? Our marriage was like this
(more)

VALERIE (cont'd)
hotel room. Check in. Check out.
And once you're gone, it's like
you were never there.

STEVE
I think we shocked that guy at
immigration. No wonder he took
pictures of my passport.

She reaches into her handbag and takes out a few snapshots.

INSERT SHOT - THE PHOTOS

Pictures taken six years ago in Rome. Steve and Valerie on
their honeymoon. A young couple in love.

TWO SHOT

She passes him the few pictures.

STEVE
How about we try this restaurant
tonight. The little place in
Travesere?

CUT TO:

EXT. WHAT USED TO BE THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It's been torn down to make way for a new building.

CAMERA PANNING to Steve and Valerie--looking on with
disappointment.

STEVE
I thought this was supposed to be
the Eternal City?

VALERIE
How about the place across the
street?

They cross to a modern looking and quite expensive
restaurant nearby.

INT. THAT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

As they order

STEVE
Dinner's yours tonight.

VALERIE

You don't have to remind me whose turn it is.

(a beat)

Are you depressed?

STEVE

I was thinking--well, is it possible that we're just not very interesting people. I mean, do you think our friends would tell us?

VALERIE

What do you expect them to say? You're uninteresting? And still remain friends!

STEVE

Didn't anybody ever say anything behind my back--after I was gone? Like, "You're lucky to be rid of him. He was a bore."

VALERIE

No. You hardly came up.

STEVE

Great.

VALERIE

Are you going to order?

STEVE

What's the most expensive thing on the menu?

At that moment, there's a violent outburst from the couple we've noticed at the very next table. He's a STOCKY AMERICAN, about forty. She's an extremely sensuous ITALIAN GIRL in her mid-twenties. They are both dressed "upscale" to say the least.

GINA

Don't speak to me like that.

NEVILLE

I'll talk to you any damned way I please,

She throws her drink in his face. He slaps her hard across the mouth. She jumps up and runs out of the restaurant. He grabs a napkin to dry the front of his wine stained suit and chases after her.

ANGLE ON STEVE AND VALERIE - THEIR REACTION

VALERIE

Well, she had good aim.

STEVE

And she can certainly take a punch.
Seriously, you think I ought to do
anything? He might kill her.

ANGLE WIDENS

as Gina and Neville return to the restaurant with arms lovingly wrapped around one another. They kiss before reseating themselves, as the waiter cleans up the mess. Gina looks over at Steve and Valerie apologetically. Their tables adjoin one another

GINA

Sorry if I got any on you.

STEVE

Not a drop. You were right on target.

Neville starts to laugh. His white shirt is stained red and it's still soaking wet. And he's enjoying it.

NEVILLE

Sometimes she throws the silver-ware. I'm sure you know how it is.

VALERIE

Oh, sure.

NEVILLE

Why don't you join us? I'm going to order another bottle. To drink this time.

STEVE

It's not necessary.

NEVILLE

Please. I insist.

He gets up and physically moves their chairs over to his table where the tablecloth has just been changed. He signals for two more glasses.

NEVILLE

They're used to us here. They charge us for what we break. I'm Neville, and my opponent here is Gina.

STEVE

Steve and Valerie Powell, Wilmet, Illinois.

NEVILLE

I haven't been back in the States in four years. I buy and sell antiques.

STEVE

Really? Valerie does interior design. I'm in electronics. TV, video repairs, that kind of thing.

GINA

(leaning close to Steve)

Do you think I will have a black eye?

NEVILLE

Don't show her any sympathy, Steve. Last time I visited Rome she broke a \$1,700 figurine over my head at the flea market.

VALERIE

Expensive games you play.

NEVILLE

(toasts)

To games--we play.

All four of them drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JACKIE O'S DISCO, ROME - MONTAGE

The two couples now out on the dance floor, surrounded by "the beautiful people" of Rome. Gina is a sensational dancer. Steve can't take his eyes off her. A fact that Neville is quite aware of. Now Steve and Gina are dancing together, while Neville and Valerie watch from a corner table.

NEVILLE

(to Valerie)

Your husband seems to like--to dance.

VALERIE

My ex-husband.

NEVILLE

Is that so? You seem to be such good friends.

VALERIE

That's the trouble. We always were.

NEVILLE

I think Gina finds him attractive.

VALERIE

How do you feel about that?

NEVILLE

(drinking)

After a few more of these, I won't feel anything.

TIGHT ON GINA AND STEVE

Slow dancing now. Valerie continues watching from across the club--trying to keep up with Neville in the drinking department.

GINA

Can't we get out of here?

STEVE

What about your friend?

GINA

Neville will see Valerie back to her hotel safely. I'm sure she can take care of herself.

(a beat)

I thought you said you two had an understanding?

STEVE

We do. But we never put it to the test.

GINA

Well, tonight you find out if you're really divorced or not. I know a little hotel near here. It's not much--but room service is open all night. We could order up a bottle of wine.

STEVE
We just say goodnight to them and
leave together?

GINA
It's not difficult.

She leads the way back to where Valerie and Neville are
waiting and drinking.

VALERIE
(to Steve)
I've never seen you do some of
those steps before.

STEVE
She was leading.

GINA
We'll be going on now, Steve and I.
Steve reaches in his pocket for money.

STEVE
For the bill.

NEVILLE
No. It's my treat. The entire
evening is on me.

STEVE
(to Valerie)
Are you all right?

VALERIE
Just getting my second wind. Neville
knows some great after hours clubs
he's going to show me.

STEVE
He is?

Valerie gets up and kisses Steve on the cheek.

VALERIE
(whispers)
Don't let this one get away.

STEVE
I don't believe we're doing this.

VALERIE
I've fixed you up with eligible
women before.

STEVE

This is definitely more than a date.

GINA

Are we going?

STEVE

Sure.

(to Neville)

Thanks. You're quite a host.

(to Valerie)

Good night. I'll phone you...

Then Steve turns to catch up with Gina who is nearly to the exit. In a moment they are gone.

CAMERA PANS BACK to Valerie who now appears very upset.

NEVILLE

What's the matter?

VALERIE

I'm fine.

NEVILLE

Don't worry. It won't be a lasting attachment. He'll be back before morning.

VALERIE

Who is she?

NEVILLE

Who knows? I only see her on business trips when I'm here. And sometimes I've taken her on a weekend--when I wanted to splurge.

VALERIE

You mean she's...a...

NEVILLE

Well, what did you think she was?

Now Valerie starts to laugh.

NEVILLE

Are you going to tell him?

VALERIE

Not me. Not if he doesn't find out for himself.

NEVILLE

I promise he won't. Like I said
before, "My treat."

As Neville lifts his champagne to drink, CAMERA MOVES IN FOR EXTREME CLOSE-UP of his left hand holding the glass. For the first time we notice his PINKY RING. We have seen the hand with the ring on it before. It was the hand that pushed the victim in front of the train in our Prologue. The affable Mr. Neville is a murderer.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP

Red wine being poured into two wine glasses.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP GINA'S SENUOUS LIPS

drinking...

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP STEVE'S MOUTH

As he too drinks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP BOTH MOUTHS

As they come together in a long sensuos kiss.

(All this is in limbo. The backgrounds are a blur. We hardly know where we are--just a softly lit room--somewhere.

CLOSE-UP GINA'S HANDS

unbuttoning Steve's shirt--running her hands over his chest. Her mouth ENTERS THE SHOT as she licks his nipple then his chest and stomach, as his fingers become entwined in her hair.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - A PAIR OF EYES SHUT TIGHT--FAST ASLEEP

Now the lids begin to tremble, the eyes slowly open, blink, and close again. CAMERA SLOWLY BEGINS to PULL BACK RISING UPWARD directly over the bed.

CAMERA SLOWLY REVEALS Steve Powell awakening in bed in a strange room.

The rays of the sun are shining in through the slats of battered Venetian blinds, striking him in the eyes, forcing him to awaken well before he had intended to do so. CAMERA REMAINS POISED ABOVE Steve so that we see him only from his shoulders up, but we assume naked under the sheet.

He reaches out beside him as if expecting to feel someone else in the bed. Nobody's there. Steve sits up.

STEVE'S POV

PANNING ACROSS the room to the open door leading to the bathroom which seems quite empty. CAMERA PANNING BACK to a chair near the foot of the bed. We see Steve's clothes from the night before tossed aimlessly on the chair, some of them dangling onto the floor--but we don't see any articles that might belong to a woman.

We also notice a TRAY holding an ice bucket, an empty wine bottle and a couple of empty wine glasses.

BACK TO STEVE

ANGLE IS WIDE ENOUGH to REVEAL that while he is naked from the waist up, there is something very strange strapped to his chest. It's a box a couple of inches square--a BLACK BOX held in place by a BLACK BAND which runs around Steve's chest. The box seems very plain--it's flat and compact. It has the look of a piece of medical equipment that might be hooked to a patient. And it seems to fit so comfortably that Steve wasn't even aware of it for the first few moments after awakening.

But now he's startled.

He reaches around, trying to find a buckle in back. As he does so, CAMERA QUICKLY CIRCLES the bed in a 360 degree arc holding Steve in a MEDIUM SHOT but close enough to reveal that there is no clasp, no obvious way of removing this APPARATUS.

Then, as the CAMERA completes its circle, he jumps up out of the bed. CAMERA FOLLOWS him into the bathroom.

INT. LARGE BATHROOM, HOTEL ROOM - DAY

as Steve flips on the lights. He's naked and we see reflections of him in the multi-mirrored walls of the bathroom. It's one of those rooms where the mirrors reflect into mirrors creating images into infinity.

And Steve turns now and can see how the band fully encircles him.

CAMERA CONTINUES TO FOLLOW as Steve crosses to the chair where his clothes have been casually tossed. He reaches into his jacket, locates his passport and wallet, opens the billfold. His money is still there. He hasn't been robbed.

Puzzled, he crosses to the dresser where the two wine glasses stand. He examines the one without lipstick.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - THE GLASS

There's some kind of grainy residue at the bottom. Steve's finger enters the glass and feels it.

WIDER SHOT

Steve withdraws his finger, rubbing the grains between his thumb and forefinger. He reaches into his pants pocket and locates a Swiss army knife. He flips open one of the blades and tries to insert it under the strap that binds him-- trying to sever the strap without cutting himself.

CLOSE-UP

as the blade of the Swiss army knife simply snaps.

ANGLE ON STEVE - HIS REACTION

At that moment, the telephone begins to ring. CAMERA SWISH PANS to the telephone beside the bed.

LOW ANGLE ACROSS THE TELEPHONE

as Steve rushes across the room, grabbing the phone.

STEVE

Yes?

There's no reply from the other end of the line.

STEVE (cont'd)

Hello. Gina, is that you? What the hell is the idea?

Then Steve is surprised to hear Neville's voice.

NEVILLE'S VOICE

Don't touch it. Keep your hands away from it.

STEVE

Is that Neville? Put Gina on the phone.

NEVILLE'S VOICE

Steve, you can't get it off. All you can do is cause yourself to die.

STEVE

If this is some kind of shakedown, just tell me what the fucking deal is!

NEVILLE'S VOICE

You'd better meet me at some public place. How about the Forum. Enter on Via Dei Fiori Imperial' walk to the Temple of Venus.

STEVE

I'm not going anyplace with this on. And, if Gina isn't back here in ten minutes? I'll call the cops. How's that?

NEVILLE'S VOICE

The girl has on further association with us. Take a taxi from the hotel. Don't speak to anyone.

STEVE

Where's my wife?

NEVILLE'S VOICE

I thought she wasn't your wife anymore.

STEVE

Don't jerk me around, Neville! Where's Valerie?

NEVILLE'S VOICE

Valerie is still with me. Meet us there in thirty minutes.

There's a CLICK as the phone is hung up. Steve quickly dials the front desk.

STEVE

Hello. This is Room 523. Is there a number for the police? No nothing's missing from the room.

(a beat)

No. Forget it. Get me the Excelsior Hotel.

There's a pause, then an OPERATOR'S VOICE

OPERATOR'S VOICE

Excelsior.

STEVE

Ring 427.

There's the SOUND of the room being rung and no answer.

INT. ROOM 427, EXCELSIOR HOTEL - DAY

Valerie is in the room dressed in nightgown and robe. She's been there most of the night waiting for Steve to return. He's pissed off to say the least and staring restlessly out the window at the city. The phone in the room is definitely NOT RINGING.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP STEVE

On the phone trying to reach her. The extension seems to be ringing but we know Steve's being deceived.

OPERATOR

I'm sorry, but no one is answering.

Desperate, Steve slams down the receiver.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Steve, now almost dressed, buttoning his shirt. The black box causes almost no bulge.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

As Steve summons a rickety bird cage elevator, gets in and descends.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

On the next floor below, the elevator stops to admit TWO WOMEN, a rather plain young girl wearing quite a lot of makeup and her mother who is trying very hard not to look

like her mother. They are both Americans complete with cameras and guidebooks, etc.

DAUGHTER

How can something like that just happen overnight? You wake up and it's just there!

MOTHER

Now don't over react, dear. No one will notice.

DAUGHTER

I don't want you to take any pictures of me like this.

MOTHER

But you can't even see it.

Steve realizes that the two women are talking about something other than a black box. A pimple or a cold sore which the poor daughter discovered this morning on her upper lip.

MOTHER

It's probably these rich foods--

And then their words trail off as they notice that Steve has been staring at them. The elevator reaches the lobby.

INT. SHABBY LOBBY OF THIRD RATE HOTEL - DAY

Steve heads across the lobby with CAMERA TRUCKING alongside him when a HAND ENTERS FRAME and grabs him by the arm. He whirls. A TALL MAN is standing there grinning at him. He looks much like a seedy Matrioanni. He is MANETTI, house detective.

MANETTI

You're the gentleman from 523?

STEVE

What about it?

MANETTI

You call down about police. A problem maybe?

STEVE

No, nothing.

MANETTI

I am Manetti, hotel security. You have a guest last night in your room?

STEVE

We checked in together.

MANETTI

But the room is registered only to you, Mr. "Clarkson."

STEVE

She seemed to know her way around this hotel. Tall, dark hair, very full mouth. Said her name was Gina.

MANETTI

They come and they go, these girls. We try to pretend they don't exist.

STEVE

She existed all right.

Steve starts to walk away, Manetti calls after him.

MANETTI

Are you checking out, "Mr. Clarkson?"

ANGLE ON STEVE

He ignores from Manetti and exits through the revolving doors leading to the street.

EXT. ROME STREET - DAY

In front of the shabby hotel, as Steve jumps into a taxi.

DRIVER

Where to?

STEVE

The Forum--Via Dei Fiori Imperial.

VARIOUS SHOTS

The taxi carrying Steve weaving through the streets of Rome.

EXT. THE RUINS OF THE FORUM

As the taxi drops him off. He looks at his watch. He seems to be right on time.

TRUCKING SHOT

Steve crossing from the sidewalk through the entry gate. He buys a ticket and begins to descend the steps leading down into the skeleton of what was once an ancient Roman street but what is now only a maze of shattered pillars and crumbled edifices.

STEVE'S POV

Up ahead a FIGURE pops out from behind a pillar. A man. Then he backs up and raises a home video camera and points it at and a woman and a child step out from behind the pillar into view. More tourists.

WIDER SHOT

Steve ducking out of the way so he doesn't get into the picture. In a moment the tourists are gone, heading toward the next point of interest.

Steve continues walking, looking for the contact, the man he's supposed to meet. A multi-lingual sign directs him toward the Temple of Venus.

MORE TRUCKING SHOTS

carrying Steve through these ruins.

A scrawny cat slithers out from beneath some crumbled portion of the ruin. It looks at Steve and then follows at his heels.

TIGHTER ANGLE ON STEVE

absentmindedly raising his hand and rubbing his shirt above where the apparatus is strapped. Then a VOICE rings out over his shoulder.

NEVILLE'S VOICE

I warned you not to touch it.

Steve turns, CAMERA TURNING with him to reveal Neville, now looking tired and haggard, in the same clothes he wore last night.

STEVE

Where's Valerie?

NEVILLE

I'm afraid I misled you about that.
She's been safely back at the
Excelsior since one a.m..

Steve's hands inadvertently go to that object under his shirt.

STEVE

Neville, what the hell is this all about?

NEVILLE

Don't touch that! You could make it go off.

STEVE

Go off?

NEVILLE

I had nothing against you personally.
I had to do this.

With that, Neville pulls his tie aside, unbuttons his wine-stained shirt and pulls it open to reveal an exact duplicate of the black box that Steve is wearing.

Neville has an "APPARATUS" strapped to his chest.

STEVE

How long have you had that on?

NEVILLE

You mustn't ask me questions. You've been selected--like I was.

STEVE

You said "go off" before. What did you mean?

NEVILLE

You're going to have to do follow their instructions. You can't refuse.

STEVE

You maybe. Not me.

NEVILLE

(starting to lose control)

You'll go where they tell you to go. Kill who they tell you to kill.

STEVE

Make sense! Kill who?

NEVILLE

I don't know. Strangers. I had to kill strangers.

Suddenly there's a beeping sound coming from the Neville's chest from under his shirt. The buttons are still open. Neville pulls the shirt open again to reveal strange blinking lights coming on out of the black box. It is being illuminated from within and beginning to glow with increasing force.

NEVILLE

I've taken too long. Talked too much. I've got to go.

Steve rushes forward and grabs Neville's arm.

STEVE

What's happening to you?

NEVILLE

Don't you understand? We belong to them.

Neville wrenches his arm away from Steve and begins to run.

FAST TRUCKING SHOT

as Steve runs after Neville--catches him.

NEVILLE

It's burning me. Let go.

Neville is now in mortal agony. He wants to clutch at his chest but he's afraid to touch the damn thing.

Summoning all of his strength, he pulls free and punches Steve--hard.

Steve's unprepared for the blow. He goes down on one knee.

Neville runs again--like a man pursued by the devil.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Neville zigzagging through the ruins of the Forum.

ANGLE ON STEVE

Getting to his feet and giving chase.

TRUCKING SHOT

Steve gaining on him. Neville is some 30 yards away.

ANGLE ON NEVILLE

He can't run any further. He's out of breath. He stops, turns and looks back tearfully shaking his head.

The thing strapped to his chest is beginning to pulsate and give out with strange noises--shrill, piercing noises that almost shatter the man's eardrums. He begins to scream.

ANGLE ON STEVE

stopping dead in his tracks, startled by the hideous sounds emanating from the apparatus. It's as if he senses that it's dangerous to go any closer. As the noise of the apparatus rises to deafening proportions, Steve is forced to cover his ears.

ANGLE OVER STEVE'S SHOULDER - FAVORING NEVILLE

as the apparatus detonates blowing the unfortunate Neville into a thousand tiny pieces--bits of flesh and blood splattering everywhere.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Blood splattering the pillars of the ancient Forum.

REACTION SHOT - STEVE

He's seen a man blown to bits before his eyes. He looks down at his own clothing and sees spots of blood that have splattered him.

Then he advances toward the gruesome remains.

ANGLE ON THE GROUND

where Neville once stood. There's almost nothing left. A burnt out portion of a shoe. The mangled remains of a wristwatch. The frame of a pair of eyeglasses that the man carried in his pocket, and a buckle of a belt, and ashes, and charred bones, and smoldering flesh, and maybe just a hint of the cranium of the victim. All else has been incinerated in a momentary flash of flame.

ANGLE ON STEVE

Trembling with fear and anger.

All at once there are SCREAMS OF LAUGHTER from behind Steve. He whirls.

HIS POV

A school bus has parked nearby. A dozen girls in public school uniforms are running through the ruins now, playing hide-and-go-seek, giggling hysterically as their teacher struggles to regain control of them.

ANGLE ON STEVE

He looks at the school girls, then back at the charred remains. There's almost nothing there for anyone to see or find. He hears a SHRIEK and turns.

HIS POV

The scrawny stray cat hisses as it cowers behind a broken pillar, the only other eyewitness to the incineration of a human being.

WIDE ANGLE ON STEVE

moving away from the scene of Neville's death. Moving back toward the public thoroughfare. While the cat crosses over and examines the scant remains of poor Neville. Soon, an

army of other cats emerge from the ruins and gather around ...hungrily.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE FORUM

As Steve reaches the corner, there's a telephone booth and the phone begins to ring. He realizes that it is no coincidence and he crosses to the phone booth, lifting the receiver. The VOICE ON THE LINE is resonant and almost inhuman. It could well belong to a computer.

CONTROL'S VOICE

Mr. Powell?

STEVE

Yes.

CONTROL'S VOICE

Did you find demonstration impressive?

STEVE

You didn't have to do that to him.

CONTROL'S VOICE

But you are taking us seriously now.

STEVE

Why did you pick me?

CONTROL'S VOICE

"Through obedience comes power." That credo of ancient Rome made the empire great. Absolute obedience.

STEVE

Forget the fucking history lesson. Why don't you blow me up and get it over with?

CONTROL'S VOICE

You don't mean that, Mr. Powell. Now reach under the telephone instrument, there you'll find a small key--along with an envelope.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP

beneath the pay telephone. Steve's fingers feel around. There taped securely in place is the key and that envelope.

ANGLE ON STEVE

as he pries the two articles loose.

STEVE

I've got them.

CONTROL'S VOICE

Proceed to the Banc Nationale at the address on the envelope. There's a completed signature card inside. Present the key and the card to the safety deposit officer who already anticipates your arrival. Remember, we are always with you.

STEVE

Suppose I refuse? Do I die right now?

There is no reply. The phone clicks and Steve is talking to a dead line. He stares at the address on the envelope, then clutches the key in his hand and steps out of the phone booth.

ANGLE ON STEVE

staring at the two objects as he stands on the corner. Then a VOICE calls out:

NEW VOICE

Taxicab?

ANGLE WIDENS

to reveal a cab has pulled over to the curb and is waiting for Steve.

STEVE

(suspiciously)

How did you know I want a cab?

DRIVER

What else you wait at taxi stand for?
Getting in, or what?

STEVE

(flashing envelope)

Go to this address.

The cab pulls away.

EXT. BANC NATIONALE

On a busy street in downtown Rome in the business district. Steve pays the cab driver and enters the great marble palace that is now a bank.

INT. THE BANK - SAFE DEPOSITORY

We watch from a distance as Steve presents the completed signature card to the SOLITARY CLERK at the depository who smiles at him knowingly and then leads him directly into the vault.

STEVE

You know, back in the States we have to sign the signature card in the presence of a bank official.

CLERK

But you did sign it.

STEVE

If you say so.

INT. HUGE VAULT

as this BANK CLERK twists the key in one of the boxes, inserts Steve's personal key and withdraws a long, thick deposit box. Steve proceeds to a private cubicle to open the box.

INT. SAFE DEPOSIT CUBICLE

as Steve sets the steel box down on the table before him, sits down in the chair and slowly opens the lid.

ANGLE OVER STEVE'S SHOULDER

revealing the contents. A letter of instructions, a small 5x7 photograph, and a .38 caliber Walther automatic pistol.

CLOSE-UP

Steve's reaction.

WIDER ANGLE

as Steve removes the articles from the steel box. First the letter, then the photo, then finally the gun which has an icy cold feel to it. Steve sets it down on the table as quickly as possible. Steve studies the photograph of the man.

INSERT SHOT - THE PHOTO

A KOREAN GENTLEMAN, in his early thirties wearing a business suit. The picture taken of the man getting out of a car unposed as if snapped by a hidden camera.

CAMERA PANS to the sealed instructions as Steve's fingers rip open the envelope. He reads softly to himself.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

reading the instructions.

STEVE

"Subject exits Hassler Hotel 6:45 p.m.
shoot at close range. Leave in green
Fiat license 4796 parked opposite
hotel. Do not discard weapon.
Replace instructions in box before
leaving."

Without warning the door behind Steve opens and somebody starts to come into the cubicle. Steve uses his body to cover the gun that lies visible on the table. Then we realize it's only a WOMAN, wealthy, heavysset, overdressed, carrying a safety deposit box in her hand who has inadvertently stepped into the wrong cubicle. She begins making apologies profusely in Italian.

STEVE

Forget it.

But the woman continues apologizing until finally one of the clerks in the bank pulls her away, apologizes himself and closes the door.

Steve relaxes now, picks up the gun and shoves it inside his jacket, making sure first that the safety is on. After all, he wouldn't want to blow a hole in himself. He once again picks up the photograph of the oriental. The man he is supposed to murder. He stuffs it into his breast pocket and exits the cubicle.

INT. HUGE VAULT

As the safety deposit box is reinserted in the slot and the key is turned and then returned to Steve by the same clerk.

CLERK

Always a pleasure to see you, Mr.
Porcelli.

(Note: the audience may recall the man pushed in front of the train in the prologue as being called "Porcelli.")

STEVE

I've been here before?

CLERK

Oh, yes.

STEVE

Positive it wasn't somebody else?

CLERK

Mr. Porcelli, we're careful about that. We wouldn't let anybody in your box.

Steve studies the clerk's face. Is this man in on it? Is he one of them?

Then all at once Steve reaches out fast with his right hand, abruptly pressing it against the center of the clerk's chest --in the exact spot where a device would be strapped if this man was wearing one of the apparatus.

He obviously isn't and is indeed startled at this physical assault. Steve still has his hand pressed on the man's chest.

CLERK

I beg your pardon.

STEVE

I was looking for something.

(a beat)

You wouldn't have any idea what?

CLERK

(getting the wrong idea)

Well, we could have a drink together later. Rome can be a lonely city, without a friend.

STEVE

You wouldn't like me. I'm too wired.

INT. THE BANK - DAY

as Steve emerges from the safety deposit area and crosses the main floor of the bank looking around to see if he's being watched.

STEVE'S POV

Dozens of people scurrying through the bank taking care of their day's business. No one seems to be looking at him.

ANGLE ON STEVE

as he exits the bank without being followed.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE, PLAZA NAVONA - DAY

A baroque and ancient square boasting three beautiful fountains. The restaurant is nearly empty at this time of day--as Steve arrives.

STEVE
Got a public telephone?

WAITER
Will you be dining with us?

STEVE
Just bring me a carafe of your white wine.

WAITER
The phone's way back inside, boss.
I bring the wine.

Steve follows directions, goes inside the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The tables unoccupied. Steve makes his way to a public telephone. It's located in front of a huge mural of a great chariot race. We note that the head of the winning horse is lopped off as he crosses the finish line--to be sacrificed to the gods. Steve looks at the mural incredulously as he dials.

STEVE
(into phone)
Excelsior? This is Steven Powell.
Will you ring my room, 506.

As he talks, he continues to stare at the bizarre mural of the horse's decapitation.

STEVE
Didn't pay to be a winner.

CUT TO:

INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL - STEVE'S SUITE - DAY

Valerie answers.

WE CROSS CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THEM

VALERIE
Hello?

STEVE

You're there! Thank God.

VALERIE

I've been here all this time
waiting for you to show up.

STEVE

The switchboard said you were out.

VALERIE

I'll bet. Well, you must be having
fun.

STEVE

Listen, Val, I did something stupid,
and...

VALERIE

When you decide to come on back--
we'll talk about it.

STEVE

I can't. Listen to me. Neville is
dead--

(suddenly he winces
in pain)

Oh, don't. Oh, God don't.

Something is happening to him now! He claws at his shirt,
pulling it open.

We can see that the black box on his chest is no longer
black. It's glowing a strange amber, pulsating, and it's
inflicting pain.

STEVE

It burns. Oh, Jesus...

VALERIE

What's happening to you? Steve,
I can't hear you. Answer me!

STEVE

I can't. I can't talk.

VALERIE

Steve! Don't do this! How did Neville
die--and what has it got to do with you?
God, you didn't kill him over that girl?

Steve is writhing now. We can see smoke, and we can hear
the sizzle as the box burns his chest.

VALERIE

I'll call the police!

STEVE

No. Don't!

Steve slams the telephone back on the receiver.

CLOSE-UP - VALERIE

on the other end of the line as it disconnects. Valerie is justifiably alarmed. She turns to the huge open windows that look out on the city. CAMERA DOLLIES FORWARD to shift focus to

VIEW OF THE SPRAWLING CITY - ROME

Steve is out there somewhere, and in trouble, and she doesn't know how to help him. The SOUNDS of the city crowd into the room now, the ROAR of a great city in turmoil overwhelm her.

INT. REAR OF RESTAURANT - DAY

Steve with both hands clasped against the box on his chest. Then he pulls his hands away because they're steaming hot, like they've been placed on the top of a hot stove.

The waiter crosses the empty restaurant with the carafe of wine on a tray.

WAITER

I got your wine.

STEVE

Just charge me for it.

Steve reaches into his pocket and hands over some Italian currency.

WAITER

Boss-- You smell something burning?

STEVE

This is a restaurant, isn't it?

WAITER

Sure, but the kitchen, she's closed.

Steve has already started for the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. HASSLER HOTEL, ROME - EARLY EVENING

CAMERA PANNING to top of the "Spanish steps" to reveal Steve. He's cold sober now. His chest is still sore. His hand deep in the pocket of his jacket. The gun is in there. He crosses the street now to the Hassler Hotel.

EXT. THE CORNER

Steve nears the hotel entrance, stopping a few yards from the doorman. He turns toward the opposite corner and looks where the Fiat is supposed to be parked. No green Fiat yet.

It's just before cocktail hour and guests are arriving at the Hassler for drinks. Many beautiful women pass by but Steve's oblivious to them. That's the last thing he has on his mind right now. A GREEN VEHICLE passes the corner, but it's a VAN, not a Fiat.

He checks the time on his watch. He looks up. CAMERA PANS to include opposite corner again. The green Fiat is now there--vacant. Waiting to be used for his getaway.

STEVE'S POV - ENTRANCE TO HASSLER

No one comes out. Steve is relieved. A limousine pulls up. A group of beautiful women amble out and, at that moment, the short stocky Korean emerges wearing a double-breasted suit and carrying an attache case. He's just any businessman on his way to some conference. He crosses down the steps, waves the doorman aside to indicate that he doesn't need a taxi, he will walk..

CLOSE-UP STEVE'S REACTION

THIS IS THE MAN.

FLASH CUT:

THE PHOTOGRAPH - IT'S HIM ALL RIGHT!

CUT BACK TO:

MED. SHOT - DAY

The Korean coming down the street toward Steve totally oblivious of any danger. He's never seen Steve before and he has no reason to fear him.

Steve steps out and blocks the man, who smiles quizzically. Steve pulls out something. It's not the gun, it's THAT PHOTOGRAPH. The Korean sees it and looks alarmed. He yells something. Steve doesn't know what he's saying. Steve shouts back:

STEVE

Someone gave me your picture.
Someone wants you dead.

The Koreadoesn't understand a word of English, but there's panic in his face. His arm whips across Steve's shoulder-- a karate chop, knocking Steve off his feet. Steve hits the pavement.

STEVE'S POV

as the Korean reaches for a gun. He fumbles it.

ANGLE ON STEVE

Seeing the man grab the gun, Steve instinctively pulls out the Walther automatic that he's carrying.

LOW ANGLE SHOT - THE KOREAN - SLOW MOTION - A DREAMLIKE EFFECT

starting to aim the gun.

ANGLE ON STEVE

firing first.

WIDER SHOT

The Korean is struck in the face. The impact of the bullet sends him flying backward, crashing through a store front window of a PERFUME SHOP ON THE STREET LEVEL of the hotel.

ANGLE ON STEVE

He's already up on his feet. He's heading toward the parked car, then all at once a sting of pain. The box is heating up on his chest.

STEVE

What?

He looks back.

STEVE'S POV

The gun. Steve has dropped the Walther automatic against orders.

ANGLE ON STEVE

He runs back, grabs up the gun, rushes to the parked car.

WIDER SHOT ON THE HASSLER HOTEL

Emerging guests react to the dead body lying halfway through the display window of the hotel's shop and the fleeing gunman. CAMERA MOVES IN for CLOSE-UP of one of these

witnesses--a tall man. ALSO A KOREAN. The tall Korean rushes to the shop window where his "associate" dead amid shattered bottles of expensive perfume, creating an unbelievably unbearable smell.

ANGLE ON STEVE

pulling open the door to the Fiat.

HIS POV

The keys are in the ignition.

ANGLE ON STEVE

jumping behind the wheel.

ANGLE ON THE TALL KOREAN

running toward the Fiat--drawing a gun--too late to fire--as Steve pulls away into dense traffic.

ANGLE ON THE DEAD KOREAN

lying dead amongst the shattered perfume display.

CAMERA PANNING to reveal the crowd, the doorman, and now several UNIFORMED POLICEMEN who have come to the scene. The doorman is giving them the make and license number of the car in which Steve made his escape. Then a DETECTIVE comes running out of the lobby of the hotel, examining the corpse --wiping away chips of glass that cover it. The Tall Korean returns to stare at the corpse of his business associate. The detective seems to know him.

DETECTIVE

Well, Mr. Chu, it appears that being an industrial spy has become a hazardous profession.

TALL KOREAN

Our family is enaged in import and export of fine furs. Nothing more.

DETECTIVE

Of course not, and I suppose you nEver got a look at your brother's killer?

TALL KOREAN

It is my misfortune--that I see nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FIAT

Steve driving through the dense downtown Rome traffic.

He looks down at the seat beside him.

CLOSE-UP ON THE PASSENGER SEAT

A KEY. A room key with a tag bearing the name of a hotel. Simply that and nothing more.

WIDER SHOT - INSIDE FIAT

as Steve picks up this hotel key. Then he hears the sound of police sirens. He pulls the car over to the curb. He gets out, abandoning it.

EXT. NEARBY STREET

He crosses to the corner, pauses to examine the hotel key.

CLOSE-UP THE KEY

CAMERA MOVING IN on the inscription on the tag: "HOTEL BIENVENUTO."

CUT TO:

THE SIZZLING NEON SIGN OF THE HOTEL BIENVENUTO - NIGHT

a sharp contrast to the Hassler where the murder took place.

The Bienvenuto is a "dive" located in a most undesirable area.

INT. LOBBY OF BIENVENUTO HOTEL - NIGHT

As Steve enters. There are seedy criminal types dozing around the lobby, as DESK CLERK staring into space. Nobody seems to look at anybody else. It's as if there is an agreement here that no one will acknowledge anyone else. Steve checks the room key. His room is on the fourth floor and there's no elevator. He takes the stairs.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

as Steve finds room 407. He inserts the key in the lock. It fits. He steps right in.

INT. ROOM 407 - NIGHT

A small, box with plaster peeling off the walls. There's a bed, a night stand, a lamp with a torn shade, and a view of an alley.

Steve crosses to the closet and pulls open the door. CAMERA MOVES IN TO REVEAL the dark, dusty closet with but two wire hangers, and a complete change of clothes. Khaki pants, a matching windbreaker, and shirt. It looks like a uniform a factory worker might wear on the job. Steve ditches his torn jacket, tries the windbreaker on. It fits.

CAMERA PULLS BACK as Steve moves to the next door and pushes it open. It's the bathroom. He flips on the light and the bare bulb comes on.

STEVE'S POV

The bathroom. Faucets rusted, the tub cracked.

CAMERA PANNING TO TOILET SEAT

balanced precariously on the toilet top ready to topple off if one were to sit down. But a soiled strip across the seat has the nerve to read "sanitized."

INT. SEEDY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

There's a knock at the door. Steve turns, reaches for the gun, takes it out, holds it under the windbreaker as he slowly opens the door and steps back. It's a sleazy little BELLMAN with a basket of fruit, a bottle of champagne and some flowers. All on a rickety cart too large to wheel into the room.

It's quite innocuous. The beautiful flowers, expensive champagne, and the fresh fruit so bright and colorful against the drab surroundings of this sleazy room.

STEVE

Who's that from?

BELLMAN

(in Italian)

Look at the card.

STEVE'S POV

There is a card in there amongst the floral display.

WIDER SHOT

as Steve gives the bellman a tip.

The bellman catches a brief glimpse of the gun. He seems more impressed with that than he is with the tip, and he exits. Steve crosses over to the flowers and the fruit. He picks the card out, opens the envelope.

INSERT CARD IN STEVE'S HAND: It's not a card at all. It's A TICKET TO A MUSEUM in Rome and a stub entitling the bearer to a headset for the audio guided tour.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

STEVE

"Culture."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Steve just finishing a complete change of clothes--into the khaki shirt and slacks.

The shirt remains unbuttoned as he drops down on the bed, staring up at the cracked ceiling. All the events of the day close in on him. He stares down at the black box and the burned flesh surrounding it. He runs his fingers around the area that has been seared by the heat emanating from that box.

The he reaches out to the basket of fruit that has been so recently delivered. He breaks the cellophane that covers it and picks up an apple, bites into it.

CLOSER SHOT - STEVE

He is repelled.

HIS POV

The apple in his hand with a big chunk bitten out of it. Inside the apple, wiggling around in spasmodic motions is a worm.

A PARASITE!

Not unlike the box that clings to Steve's chest sucking the very will out of him, dragging him down, insidiously consum-

ing him from within, just as this worm consumes the flesh of the apple from within.

WIDER ANGLE

as Steve angrily throws the rotten apple against the wall.

ANGLE ON THE WALL

as it makes contact and squishes, the juice running down the wall.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT - THE ROOM

seemingly closing in around Steve who seems a dwarfed figure in the far corner on the mattress.

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING UP HIGHER AND HIGHER (OPTICAL EFFECT) until the room which Steve inhabits looks like a small box.

It starts to look like the kind of box a rat is kept in--in some type of laboratory experiment.

An experiment in which a buzzer or some electrical charge controls the animal and sometimes drives it insane.

As we watch, the room begins to (optically) turn. It pivots and slowly begins to move in a circular pattern as CAMERA DRAWS FURTHER AND FURTHER away from it.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

CLOSE-UP STEVE'S EYES

They are closed. The lids quiver as if he's having a nightmare. (It's deliberately a match to the earlier shot when Steve awoke after Gina's departure.)

Then Steve awakens in a burst of pain. He grabs at the apparatus on his chest. It's pulsating again giving off high pitched beeps and pain at the same time. Then it stops.

He sinks back onto the threadbare pillow again. He's about to surrender to sleep--when THERE'S ANOTHER JAB OF PAIN. Again he's jerked awake by it and then again it's gone.

STEVE

What is it?

He gets up and walks to the window, looks out into the alley.

THE ALLEY BELOW

A fleeting shadow moving across the far wall as if someone has been down there and has just ducked out of sight.

BACK TO STEVE

He stumbles back to the bed and falls in an almost fetal position.

Again the high-pitched hum accompanied by the jab of an electrical shock. Steve rolls over on his back as CAMERA RAISES UP straight above him. As he SCREAMS and SCREAMS and SCREAMS again.

His tormentors will not allow him to rest.

STEVE
(screaming)
No more, no more!

He lifts the Walther pistol--points it at his own head. An alternative! No! He's not ready to die yet. Instead, Steve stuffs the gun in his khaki jacket and runs out of the room.

INT. SEEDY HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A SHABBY WOMAN and a DESPERATE LOOKING MAN are just going into one of the rooms. They are startled by Steve, wide-eyed and his hair disheveled running down the corridor.

ANGLE ON THE STAIRS

Steve racing down the steep staircase and through the dingy lobby below. He's got to get out into the fresh air.

EXT. HOTEL

as Steve stumbles outside--drinks in the cool night breeze.

If he can't sleep, he'll walk.

TRUCKING SHOT

Steve moving down the back streets of this rather sordid section of Rome.

STEVE'S POV - THE NIGHTMARE WORLD

The underside of the city. Evil looking streets, crooked and twisting. The facades of collapsing buildings. The faces of the derelicts. And on the corners, the prostitutes.

Streetwalkers waiting for cars to pull up and drivers to proposition them.

CLOSE-UP STEVE'S FACE

TRUCKING SHOT as he moves along oblivious to what the women say. Moving in the night, his arms clenched across his chest protectively hiding the device that makes him different from all other men.

Steve's exhausted.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON STEVE

as he stumbles against a car, holds on to its hood for support and then looks through the windshield.

HIS POV

A man and woman making love in the front seat.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

He recoils.

HIS POV - MOMENTARY ILLUSION

It's Steve himself and Gina making violent love in that car--then:

ANGLE ON THE ACTUAL COUPLE

as they stare up curiously. It's a prostitute and her mark, one infuriated, the other humiliated at being caught in the act.

ANGLE ON STEVE

tripping off the curb nearly being run over by a speeding motorist who curses at him in Italian. Steve stumbles down a twisting alley.

He finds himself not far from his former hotel, the elegant Excelsior where he and Valerie had checked in together only a day ago. Before he committed murder, before he became a slave to an unknown master. He looks across the street at that glimmering luxury hotel.

HIS POV - WINDOW TO HIS SUITE

The lights are on. It looks so comforting. Valerie is up there. Her shadow visible on the curtain.

INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Valerie is seated on the bed looking despondent. She hasn't had a moment's rest. She's in the midst of a phone call to the States. The Italian TV is on carrying news of the murder of the Korean, which Valerie ignores. She doesn't realize Steve was involved in this.

VALERIE

(into phone)

But I have been waiting in the room all day and he hasn't called back. He said this man Neville was dead. I think he meant..."murdered." If they had a fight over this girl-- it's partly my fault. I let it happen. I knew they were violent people. Mother, can you speak up-- it's a bad connection No. I've got to find him myself.

EXT. STREET ACROSS FROM EXCELSIOR - NIGHT

Steve watching his hotel window, wanting desperately to contact Valerie. Then he sees something else.

ANGLE ACROSS THE STREET

Coming out of a cafe is a beautiful young woman in dark glasses. Her hair is pinned up in an exotic style and she's impeccably dressed. She's on the arm of a tall, elegantly thin GENTLEMAN in a light dinner jacket and she's being very attentive to him.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

STEVE

Gina...

Then he takes off in a dead run.

ANGLE ON STEVE

running through traffic.

ANGLE ON GINA AND HER ESCORT

as he opens the door for her, helping her into the front seat of his Ferrari. Then he crosses to the driver's seat

and gets in and immediately flips on the tape deck. The strain of an opera by Verdi comes on at high volume.

ANGLE ON STEVE

dodging the traffic, trying to reach the car.

CLOSE-UP GINA

Those large pouty lips whisper something to her escort which is drowned out by the opera.

ANGLE ON THE FERRARI

as it zooms away from the curb pausing to make a further turn onto the main thoroughfare. The Verdi music remains loud and in counterpoint to what is happening.

Steve runs up beside the Ferrari.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP GINA - FEATURING HER HUGE SUNGLASSES

We see his reflection in them as he runs up. CAMERA TILTS DOWN to her long manicured fingers touching the control which rolls the window up.

ANGLE ON STEVE

reaching the closed window, shouting through:

STEVE

Gina. Don't look away. You know
who I am! Neville's dead!

Gina turns away, ignoring him. It's as if he doesn't exist. Her dapper escort turns the Verdi music up louder to drown Steve out. He steps on the gas. The car pulls off.

ANGLE ON STEVE

grabbing at the passing Ferrari but there's no way he can stop it. He tries running after it shouting through the glass but Gina will not acknowledge his presence. She's beautiful and she's icy cold and a thousand miles away.

STEVE'S POV

The Ferrari heads off into the distance. He tries to catch a glimpse of the license number but another vehicle pulls behind it blocking his view. The Verdi aria is replaced now by heavy traffic noise.

ANGLE ON STEVE

finding himself alone in the center of the street. Cars behind him are honking violently.

Then he notes a POLICEMAN coming his direction.

That's the last thing he wants, a run in with the law. He gets back on the sidewalk, tries to mingle with the passing pedestrians.

A GREEN VAN passes him going in the opposite direction. It seems like we've seen this van before--or one like it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEGANT RESTAURANT - DAY

The same place where Valerie and Steve first met Gina and Neville. Valerie is back here trying to track Steve down. She's asking questions of the MAITRE D'.

VALERIE

You must remember the couple. They fought. She threw her wine at him. You had to change the tablecloth.

MAITRE D'

Oh, yes.

VALERIE

They must come here often. You seemed to know them.

MAITRE D'

I am not acquainted with them. But of course if he pay by credit card--

VALERIE

No, I remember. He used cash. He had lots of cash.

MAITRE D'

Then I cannot help you.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE NEIGHBORING HOTELS - DAY

Valerie showing a snapshot of Steve to doormen and concierges who shake their heads. They have not seen this man.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TAXI STAND - DAY

A line up of a half dozen cabs. The drivers lounge around smoking--while Valerie moves from one to another, showing her snapshot. One of the cab drivers seems to remember something.

CABBIE

I pick him up at "Jackie O". Him
I remember. But the girl he's with
I remember better.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, SHABBY HOTEL - DAY

Where Steve spent the night with Gina.

Valerie enters and crosses to the front desk, questioning the clerk in elementary Italian. Again taking out a snapshot of herself with Steve and showing it to the clerk.

CAMERA ANGLE WIDENS to reveal Manetti watching her, then coming over, peering over her shoulder at the photo.

MANETTI

Charming couple.

VALERIE

My ex-husband. Have you seen him?

MANETTI

You generally misplace ex-husbands?

VALERIE

(to clerk)

Did a Steven Powell check in here?

CLERK

Not registered.

MANETTI

May I be of assistance? Carlos Manetti.
Hotel security.

VALERIE

Steve and I had an argument last night
--about twelve o'clock. He didn't
come back to our room.

MANETTI

So you are checking out all the hotels?

VALERIE

A cab driver suggested I try here.

MANETTI

There's always vacancies here. They don't use the rooms for too long.

VALERIE

You do know something.

MANETTI

Yes, your husband slept here. He got robbed.

VALERIE

He wasn't hurt?

MANETTI

He looked unhappy but not hurt.

VALERIE

Were the police called?

MANETTI

In these cases, the men usually don't want to file the complaint.

VALERIE

These cases? You enjoy playing with words, don't you?

MANETTI

I always say, you got to look out who you let in our room.

VALERIE

I know about her. Her name's Gina.

MANETTI

I know about her too. This hotel is my responsibility. I don't want the same thing to happen again. So I do some checking up on. To make sure this girl, she doesn't come back here again.

VALERIE

Then you found out who she was?

MANETTI

That didn't take long. I know where to ask.

He starts to walk away now--knowing that he's got her interest. She follows him.

VALERIE

Excuse me, I didn't quite get your name.

MANETTI

Manetti. Remember I didn't say nothing about this woman. You drag this out of me.

VALERIE

What else can I drag out of you, Mr. Manetti? The girl's name? Or do you have her address as well?

MANETTI

You don't want to know all that.

VALERIE

Did you talk to Gina? Did you try to get back what she took?

MANETTI

Like I say, I don't make trouble for her unless she comes back to my hotel.

VALERIE

Where could we find her?

MANETTI

Curious, or jealous? Or what?

VALERIE

You understand me perfectly, Mr. Manetti.

She fishes around in her handbag and comes up with a wad of money which she stuffs into Mr. Manetti's pocket.

VALERIE (cont'd)

You do accept American currency?

MANETTI

I believe I can help you out.

VALERIE

You could just give me the address, Mr. Manetti. That would save you so much trouble.

MANETTI

I like to come along and watch. It's a long time since I watch two women roll on the ground, pulling hair and scratching the eyes out. It appeals to my--sense of humor.

VALERIE

Yes, I couldn't miss your sense of humor.

MANETTI

Excuse me one moment.

He crosses to the front desk--out of her earshot.

DESK CLERK

She's a good looking one.

MANETTI

What do you want to bet I have her in my bed before dinner time?

DESK CLERK

I never bet against you, Manetti.

MANETTI

She's mad. She needs somebody to cheer her up. Isn't that what I get paid for?

DESK CLERK

Sure. Keep the tourists happy.

Now Manetti rejoins Valerie--and they exit the hotel together.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

MANETTI

No need for the cab. It's a nice day. We walk!

VALERIE

You're certain she'll be home?

MANETTI

They sleep in the day. They need rest, these girls. They're busy in the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROME STREETS - DAY

Steve winding his way through quiet side streets. Very few persons around.

He looks over his shoulder and sees he's being followed. It's the tall Korean who witnessed Steve's escape from the Hassler.

REVERSE ANGLE

as the street in front of him is suddenly blocked by a dark sedan which screeches to a stop directly beside him. The door is swung open.

LOW ANGLE

Another KOREAN leaping out and seizing Steve, pulling him forward as the tall Korean who has been following him rushes forward, shoving him from behind, scooping him off his feet.

INT. BACK OF THE DARK SEDAN

as Steve topples to the floor of the car as the two Koreans jump back in. The driver steps on the gas. In just a few moments, Steve had been abducted right off the streets of Rome.

Steve looks up at them, tries to rise and is shoved back down. A gun is pointed at his temple. He is relieved of his Walther automatic.

STEVE

You've got the wrong guy.

He doesn't get to say anything else because the barrel of the gun is brought down across his forehead and he blacks out.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - DAY

as Steve is dragged in and tossed into a hardback wooden chair. His Korean captors encircle him. He's rapidly regaining consciousness.

TALL KOREAN

We can cause considerable hurt and will not hesitate to do so.

2ND KOREAN

Our brother comes to Rome to purchase prototype of new technology. But you kill him! On orders from what group?

He places a knife at Steve's throat--while his associate goes through Steve's pocket and comes up with the ticket to the museum.

2ND KOREAN

Museum ticket. You meet someone?
Your contact?

Steve reaches down and unbuttons his shirt, revealing the apparatus strapped to his chest.

STEVE

Ever see one before?

TALL KOREAN

Homing device. Your friends know
your whereabouts.

STEVE

It has some other functions.

TALL KOREAN

Now you will stand and remove box.

STEVE

It doesn't come off.

The tall Korean levels his gun and flips off the safety.

1ST KOREAN

Remove instantly.

STEVE

I can't!

The 2nd Korean motions for his cohort to cover Steve, then he crosses over, rips Steve's shirt and looks at the apparatus close up.

TIGHT SHOT - THE APPARATUS

It is still, quiet, no beeps, no signals, no heat--any threat whatsoever.

STEVE

Don't touch that!

The tall Korean simply smirks at him, then reaches out and places his hand on the black box. Nothing happens.

He now attempts to rip the device off Steve's chest. The box comes to life suddenly--turns burning hot. The tall Korean SCREAMS. Steve is being scorched too.

STEVE

Let go of it.

In desperation, the tall Korean shoves his knife into a groove in the apparatus to pry it off, and sparks fly. Now the Korean won't let go, or else he can't. He struggles with the box with both hands. The box turns red hot. The other Korean seizes Steve from behind, also grabs the box, trying to twist it off. Steve's chest is burning--he's in agony.

STEVE

You're killing me!

In desperation, Steve lashes out--kicking the tall Korean in the balls. He leaps on the second Korean whose hands are burning--banging his head against the concrete floor again and again.

Steve grabs the fallen knife just as the tall Korean jumps on him. The half-melted knife goes into the man's chest up to the hilt.

Steve crawls over the bodies inspecting what he's done. My God! He's killed two more human beings with his own hands. He had to. They were killing him by trying to remove the box.

Steve reaches down on the floor for the MUSEUM TICKET.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

He sees something else.

STEVE'S POV

Steve's Walther automatic lying where the Korean dropped it.

BACK TO STEVE

as he leans over and retrieves his gun. He knows he'll need it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROME STREET

Steve jumping into a taxicab. It pulls away from the curb passing A GREEN VAN which cruises slowly along.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MUSEUM

The cab pulling up. Steve paying the driver.

ANGLE ON THE STEPS OF THE MUSEUM

as Steve climbs to the entrance. Tours are in progress. Tourists are taking pictures of their spouses on the steps.

INT. MUSEUM

Steve presents his ticket and is admitted.

Then he remembers the stub. He crosses to the counter where the headsets are dispensed. He exchanges his stub for a battery-operated headset which will give him a comprehensive guided tour of the art work in the museum.

ANGLE ON THE MAIN GALLERY

as Steve proceeds along looking at some of the greatest religious art ever created. He places the headset over his ears and continues walking. On the soundtrack we hear the beginning of the guided tour. Steve switches the channel to English and begins to get the lowdown on all these great works.

(On the track we hear quotes from art experts regarding the art of these great Italian renaissance artists who lived and worked under the total control of Vatican authority.)

CLOSE-UP STEVE

His reaction as all at once the guided tour recording is overridden by static. Then a familiar voice is heard.

The voice that Steve recognizes from the telephone. The voice of his CONTROL MASTER.

CONTROL

You had no choice, Mr. Powell. In a few more seconds we'd have been forced to detonate. You did well.

STEVE

(whispered)

You wanted those guys to find me. So you forced me out into the streets last night. You used me to kill them too.

CONTROL

You've nearly earned your freedom. When you return your headset you will receive a packet in exchange. It contains a security badge that will admit you through the gate at number 19 Garibaldi Place. Proceed to the third floor. You'll not be interfered with. A sound proof laboratory is located in chamber eleven. Enter somewhere between 3:30 and 3:45. Two men and a woman will be on duty. Execute them at close range.

STEVE

No!

CONTROL

Do not remove the headset.

A group of AMERICAN TOURISTS have come up beside Steve. They're staring at a Michelangelo statue. Listening to a detailed description of the statue on their head sets. Steve is also staring at that exquisite piece of art--while listening to words of great horror.

CONTROL

When you have completed your initial task, we will phone with specific instructions as to the items to be removed.

STEVE

Why do I have to be the one?

CONTROL

A fair question. We placed several associates at immigration who selected your passport photo from thousands of visitors to the country. You bear an acceptable resemblance to the man whose badge you'll be wearing when you perform these final executions.

STEVE

(yells)

No more killing! No more! I'm not doing it again!

People in the gallery turn around to look at him including the UNIFORMED GUARD.

CONTROL

We'd hardly wish to damage any of these great works of art, Steven. If there's to be a disagreement, shall we resolve it elsewhere?

Now the audio description of the Michelangelo sculpture returns on the head set. Control has switched off.

An ITALIAN GUARD puts his hand on his shoulder firmly.

MUSEUM GUARD

Silence!

Steve exits from the gallery.

INT. MUSEUM LOBBY

As Steve walks toward the street. A buzzer goes off! He's converged upon by TWO SECURITY MEN.

SECURITY MAN

A moment!

The exit from the gallery is blocked.

2ND SECURITY MAN

The headset.

CAMERA FOLLOWS as Steve crosses the lobby to the counter where the headsets are to be returned. He hands it to the INNOCENT LOOKING TEENAGE GIRL behind the counter and she immediately hands him back the square brown envelope.

STEVE

I don't want that.

The girl doesn't seem to speak any English, just keeps extending the envelope at him, and finally he takes it, and numbly walks across the marble floor to the exit.

EXT. MUSEUM

Steve coming down the steps, sitting down on the steps and tearing open the envelope.

HIS POV

An ELECTRICALLY CODED SECURITY BADGE which bears the name "Anthony Porcelli." (The same name the clerk at the bank called him. "Porcelli." The name of the victim who was pushed in front of the train. A man whose face we never saw--but who was the size and age of Steve.) The picture is that of a man who does bear a slight resemblance to Steve.

It's obviously not him but one would have to look twice to note the difference.

The badge bears the insignia of the Rama Corp. and the address at Garibaldi Place.

ANGLE ON STEVE

as he checks his wrist watch.

INSERT THE WRIST WATCH. It is only noon. Steve has over three hours before he is to arrive at the designated spot.

ANGLE ON STEVE (SHOCK CUT)

Steve is startled by a BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT.

STEVE
(blurts out)
No-- don't!

Then he realizes he's panicked over nothing. For a moment he thought he's been detonated! It's only a TOURIST flashing a Polaroid camera trying to take a snapshot of his pretty young WIFE.

TOURIST
Mister, you walked right into our picture!

WIFE
He jumped a mile. I think you scared him.

STEVE
I'm a little shell shocked, that's all.

TOURIST
Well, you may as well keep the picture. It's of you!

The tourist gives Steve the Polaroid shot as he and his wife reposition themselves elsewhere. Steve looks at the rapidly developing photo in his hand.

INSERT: THE POLAROID PICTURE, fading into sharpness. There's Steve looking scared, at the foot of the steps. And behind him--at the corner--just passing by--is that same GREEN VAN he's noticed before.

CLOSE-UP - STEVE

as the pieces fall together.

He looks around. No sign now of the van. He joins the passing throng of pedestrians crossing to the opposite side of the street--where he ducks into the nearest shop--ROME'S MUSIC CITY.

INT. MUSIC CITY - DAY

Records--hard rock compact disc music blasting over state-of-the-art speakers. The music is deafening. Steve remains by the front window, behind a life size display cutout of Huey Lewis--looking out--WAITING. The store is full of punked out young people drinking in the pounding music.

STEVE'S POV - THE STREET - DAY

He doesn't have to wait long. The green van appears again. It pauses on the corner. There is a small antenna rising from the roof. It rotates to the right, then the left, as if it's trying to zero in on something.

CLOSE-UP - STEVE

Watching with morbid fascination. Inside this van are the people that have done this to him. The music in the shop never lets up. One record overlapping the other as a DJ keeps the "energy" going.

STEVE'S POV OUT THE WINDOW

The rear door of the van opens. TWO MEN get out. Men in dark suits with sunglasses. They begin looking around as if they've lost something.

CLOSE-UP - STEVE

He can see that they're suddenly disoriented. He wonders why.

INT. GREEN VAN - DAY

Again we see only the complex control panel with hundreds of dials and a half dozen computer screens which pick up strange images--not pictures--but designs. Not unlike a radar screen of the future. Picking up the body heat from human subjects and turning them into INFRARED IMAGES. They seem to be negative polarity, and they are going haywire. The SOUND that's being picked up is not music. Instead it is a deafening static that is transformed into bizarre visual images that jam the normal picture on the screen. We HEAR VOICES--but not the familiar voice of "Control."

VOICE

System overloaded. Possible ruptured circuit.

SECOND VOICE

Bring in other units. Locate "Control,"
notify him that subject is out of contact.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Steve turns from the window and looks back at the DJ in the booth. The music is indeed deafening.

MULTIPLE CUTS

The speakers, the amplifiers. We note that there's one only a few inches from Steve's chest.

MULTIPLE MATCHED CUTS:

THE DISTORTED COMPUTER IMAGES AS TRANSFORMED TO THE VARIOUS MONITOR SCREENS.

BACK TO CLOSE-UP STEVE

As he realizes this may be what's confusing them. The overload of sound. He walks closer to the nearby amplifier, leans up against it--feeling the pounding of it vibrating against the apparatus on his chest. He's found the flaw in the damned thing. It can't handle all this sound information. Steve turns and looks at the other side of the store.

HIS POV

The hardware section--radios, stereos--tape decks, ghetto blasters for sale.

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR DOOR, MUSIC CITY - DAY

leading onto a side street. Steve is already crossing this street, carrying a newly bought ghetto blaster which dangles over his shoulder so that the speaker hangs just at the center of Steve's chest! Right up against the apparatus. Steve has the music turned up so loud that passersby turn and look at him with hostility.

TRUCKING SHOT - STEVE

Looking back over his shoulder. No van is following. He goes through a narrow back alley. The ghetto blaster still pounding.

HIS POV (STEADI-CAM SHOT)

Running through twisting alleys. Then up ahead a flash of green. The van--just passing--still searching.

ANGLE ON STEVE - BACKTRACKING

HIS POV

Going in the direction he came from (steadi-cam). In the far distance he sees the green van. BUT IT CAN'T BE THE SAME ONE. This one is parked with its occupants standing around it in confusion. Different men than we saw earlier.

CLOSE-UP - STEVE

STEVE

Shit. There's more.

He's caught in that alley. The enemy is on both sides. The sound of the hard rock music from his ghetto blaster echoes off the walls of the buildings above. VOICES SHOUT out the windows in Italian--to be quiet. Steve starts trying doors, hoping one will be open so he can get inside one of the buildings. One door is metallic and leads into a huge old building with no visible windows. It's like a fire door to a theater. There's enough space for Steve to wedge his fingers into. He pulls the door open, runs in, closes it again. The loud music from Steve's ghetto blaster vanishes.

CAMERA PANS up the alley as two of the men in sunglasses cast a quick glance into the now vacant alley as they rush past in their frantic search.

INT. LONG CORRIDOR INSIDE BUILDING

Steve running through this narrow passageway--music still turned up loud--speaker still pressing against the sensor of the apparatus. Steve reaches the end of the corridor. There's a door there. Steve just runs through without losing his momentum. CAMERA RACES through with him--into:

INT. ORCHESTRA FLOOR - THE ROME OPERA HOUSE - DAY

The place is packed. The matinee performance of Don Giovanni is in progress. The opera stars are in the midst of their romantic area, as Steve runs into the side aisle. The ghetto blaster slung on his shoulder is screaming out hard rock at a deafening decibel! All eyes turn toward him. The opera singers are stunned into silence. The musicians in the pit stop playing and leap to their feet. This is sacrilege. Steve stands frozen--as immobile as the crowd is

in disbelief. But he can't turn his tape off because that's all that's jamming the transmissions from the apparatus.

Steve runs up the aisle to the rear of the opera house.

TIGHT ON STEVE

as he stops short. He sees someone in particular. FALCONI, slender, slick looking, well-manicured--seated in a box just above. It's the same man who was in the Ferarri with "Gina." Who played opera on his car stereo. Who drove away while Steve pounded on the windows of the car. Falconi recognizes Steve too--and ducks out of the box through red velvet curtains.

ANGLE ON STEVE

spotting side stairs leading up to the boxes. He's seized at that moment by TWO AUDIENCE MEMBERS but he knocks them aside and makes the stairs before anybody else can reach him. The opera performance has come to a standstil.

INT. UPPER LEVEL, OPERA HOUSE - DAY

Steve arrives on the landing above in time to see HIS QUARRY run toward the upper fire exit.

Steve's music tape abruptly ends. Steve breaks stride only a moment to flip the tape, push the "play" button, and rock music again screams forth. Steve pulls a fire axe off the wall, where it hangs next to an extinguisher, and pursues his man out the fire exit.

In a moment, the adjacent foyer is flooded with ushers and security men. But Steve is gone--and the offending music is gone with him.

EXT. SIDE OF OLD OPERA HOUSE - DAY

Steve barricades the doors with the axe handle so he can't be followed. A rickety series of rusty metal ladders leads up to the roof. Steve chases the running man up two more levels before catching him. Falconi makes no effort to defend himself when Steve grabs hold.

FALCONI

What you want? You crazy!! First
you attack my car--now you desecrate
the music of Verdi!

STEVE

Shut up!

FALCONI

I don't want your woman! She's crazy
anyhow! But leave me my music.

Steve presses the speaker of his ghetto blaster tight
against the black box on his chest. He turns the volume up
even louder to block out what he intends to say.

FALCONI

(wincing)

You torture me with that sound.

STEVE

You don't know what fucking torture is.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: as Steve leans close to the fallen
Falconi and whispers in his ear.

STEVE

Gina's real name. Where she lives.
Tell me.

Falconi nods his head several times. Then whispers into
Steve's ear. We can't hear what he says. The rock music
blots it all out.

CAMERA TILTS DOWN to the alley three floors below with
police, ushers and irate patrons shouting obscenities at him
for ruining the performance.

BACK TO STEVE: distracted by the shouts from the crowd
below. Falconi takes the opportunity to try to seize the
ghetto blaster and toss it off. Falconi and Steve struggle.
Steve swings the ghetto blaster around catching the unfor-
tunate opera lover on the side of the head, knocking him
cold.

Steve vanishes over the roof, with his music, leaving the
fallen Falconi behind...unconscious.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF ROME, NARROW WINDING STREET - DAY

Old buildings that date to pre-WWII that have been
renovated. Valerie and Manetti pause in front of one such
building.

VALERIA

Now that you've given me a walking
tour of the city--

MANETTI

Don't be mad with Manetti. I like
to be seen walking with the beautiful
ladies. But--we're here.

VALERIE

Shall we go in?

MANETTI

You don't have a gun or knife in your purse?

VALERIE

A nail file.

MANETTI

You're lucky I'm along. This girl is a tough one. Some women can be tougher than men.

INT. THE BUILDING

as Manetti leads her inside and up the narrow winding staircase heading toward the third floor.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON VALERIE AND MANETTI

ascending to the apartment allegedly occupied by the call girl.

They reach the door to the girls apartment. Manetti knocks on the door. There's no answer. He knocks again. He exchanges a look with Valerie and he shrugs.

MANETTI

We try another time. Maybe it's best off. You really love this guy, don't you?

Valerie reaches out and tries the doorknob. Oddly enough the door is unlocked. She pushes it open a crack. Manetti shrugs. It's not his doing now. He sticks his head in the door.

MANETTI

Hey, Gina. It's me. Manetti!
From the hotel?
(looks back at Valerie)
Maybe she is occupied.

VALERIE

We could get in line.

MANETTI

Hey, Gina. We're gonna come in, okay?
(looks back at Valerie;
smiles)
She doesn't say no.

Manetti pushes the door to the apartment open wider and enters.

MANETTI

If you see anything that belongs
to your husband, just grab it and
we go!

VALERIE

You mean steal it back?

INT. GINA'S APARTMENT

There are women's clothes all over the place. It looks like the girl spends all of her money on dresses and hasn't any place to hang them up. CAMERA TRUCKS FORWARD with Valerie and Manetti.

VALERIE

Either this girl's a terrible slob
or the place has just been searched.

All at once, someone steps out of the bedroom into view. It is Gina wearing a white negligee that is stained with blood. Her face is bloody too as if she has been beaten and she's staggering.

ANGLE ON MANETTI AND VALERIE

as their attention is drawn solely to her.

MANETTI

Gina--what happened? You pick on
the wrong guy for a change?

SHOCK CUT:

AS FROM BEHIND THEM AN ASSASSIN thrusts forward, driving his STILETTO into Manetti's back--he is gravely wounded but holds himself up--placing himself between the killer and Valerie.

MANETTI

Quick--run out!

VALERIE

No.

MANETTI

You can't help me. Go quick.

He tries to block the killer's knife thrust at Valerie and is stabbed again himself. He falls.

Then Valerie starts to run. The front door is now blocked. She heads further into the apartment right into the screaming Gina who seizes Valerie frantically as a drowning woman might grasp at any rescuer. Gina is screaming almost incoherently.

GINA
(screaming)
I put something in his drink, that's
all!

VALERIE
Where's Steve??

The assassin is coming toward them. They are backed to the wall.

GINA
I don't know who came in afterward.
Don't do anything to me!

The Gina pushes past Valerie and tries to run. The killer catches her without difficulty. Cuts her throat quickly with expertise.

While Gina lies on the floor writhing, the killer advances on Valerie. He's got her. He raises the knife again.

Then Manetti jumps up--half dead--driven by sheer will power he makes the heroic effort to save Valerie. But he's too weak. This time the killer makes sure he's dead.

ANGLE ON VALERIE

picking up a lamp. Instead of backing away, she rushes forward, pulverizes the killer with a blow across the shoulders. He turns from Manetti's corpse.

MED. SHOT - THE ROOM

The assassin is only momentarily stunned. Valerie picks up a heavy ashtray, tossing it with excellent aim so it bounces off the skull of the oncoming killer. It only stops him for a second. He keeps coming. Valerie backs into Gina's bedroom.

INT. GINA'S BEDROOM

Disheveled, the bedcovers soaked in blood. This is where Gina was severely beaten prior to the arrival of Manetti and Valerie.

Valerie lifts a large fishbowl from its stand and tosses it at her attacker. It shatters. Glass and water splattering everywhere.

ANGLE ON THE FLOOR

Tropical fish gyrating, pulsating in the throes of death. CAMERA PANNING UP through the doorway to see Gina lying in the next room still writhing and kicking as the life drains out of her. And the feet of the killer as he enters the bedroom, wiping his knife clean on one of Gina's expensive dresses and tossing the garment aside like a rag.

CLOSE UP VALERIE

She knows what's coming but she's not going to die without a fight.

WIDER ANGLE

as Valerie suddenly rushes forward. Her fists flailing. The killer backs up to get a better angle to slash, and Valerie is all over him, clawing at his eyes, pulling his hair.

The killer lunges downward with the knife. He misses Valerie, penetrates her Louis Vuitton handbag which still hangs across her shoulder, slicing it down the center.

Then pulling the knife out and raising it to strike again just as Valerie grabs a statuette, a miniature of Michelangelo's David. Grasping it by the head and shoulders she uses it as a weapon of defense.

She strikes the assassin in the center of the chest, hitting something other than flesh. BAM! The killer reacts-- because something inside his shirt begins to glow and pulsate.

CUT TO:

INT. THE VAN - DAY

TIGHT ON CONTROL PANEL which monitors the assassin's behavior. The images start to go haywire. With each blow the graphics distort madly.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

As she strikes the blow, Valerie can see the outline of a square box illuminated inside the man's shirt.

And the killer seems startled and afraid.

ANOTHER CLOSE-UP MONITOR SCREEN INSIDE VAN

Images perverted, twisted. The sound of feedback is shrill and deafening.

CLOSE-UP VALERIE

as she attacks again, slamming the statuette against the man's chest and that box beneath his shirt.

There's a burst of flame. The man's shirt is charred. The fabric burns away. Valerie SCREAMS as her hand is itself badly seared by the heat.

She now can see the object strapped to his chest because the shirt which was covering it has incinerated itself. The box keeps glowing in a reddish-yellow and increasing beeps like a machine suddenly out of control.

The killer seems to recover for a moment and raises the knife again and starts forward.

She changes hands--swings the statuette with her left. BAM! as it makes contact and shatters into splinters of plaster. The box glows again but this time purple. More flame shoots out burning the chest of the assassin. He SCREAMS. The box begins to give off a scream itself. A terrible SCREECH that almost shatters the ear drums.

CLOSE-UP VALERIE

covering her ears, throwing herself into the corner.

ANGLE ON THE ASSASSIN

disoriented, backing away, then running toward the window, smashing through the glass out onto the fire escape.

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING

The killer, cut from his penetration of the glass window, the box still screaming and glowing as the assassin frantically makes his way down the fire escape, dropping into the alley below, scattering a pack of stray dogs as he runs off up the alley and disappears.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

TIGHT ON VALERIE

standing at the shattered window as if waiting for the killer to return. There's a ferocity and anger in her face.

Then she realizes that her right hand is burned. She runs back to Manetti's body, drops down beside him, taking him in her arms.

VALERIE

Mr. Manetti. I'm going to get
an ambulance...

(she realizes he's dead)

You could've got out--saved yourself--

Just then a HAND ENTERS FRAME clasping around her mouth, cutting off her scream, holding her immobile.

Has the killer come back, or an accomplice?

Valerie struggles until whirling around she sees herself in the mirror and recognizes the man who has seized her.

IT IS STEVEN.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as she stops struggling, turns and faces him. He holds his finger to his lips, motioning her to be silent. Then he kisses her reassuringly on the mouth.

Then strangely, he switches on the ghetto blaster that is slung from his shoulder and plays it full blast.

Again she starts to speak. Steven gently places his fingers on her lips, silencing her.

He finds a notepad and pen, returns and kneels beside Valerie--printing a quick message on the pad.

CLOSE-UP THE PAGE

The words: "BUGGED."

ANGLE ON VALERIE AND STEVE

She looks at the words and nods. He writes again.

INSERT THE PAD: the words: "I'M SORRY."

BACK TO TIGHT TWO SHOT

She looks at him. Perhaps those two short words are all that need to be said, explanations can come later. He leans over and kisses her cheek, caresses her burned hand. He looks at the clock.

INSERT THE CLOCK: it is 1:15. Just 2 hours and 15 minutes before Steve is to fulfill his instructions to kill three more human beings.

BACK TO STEVE AND VALERIE

He presses his hands on her shoulders as if to indicate that she should stay where she is, not move. She kneels back on the floor beside Manetti's body, holding the corpse's hand tenderly. He turned out to be a good fellow after all.

Steve also looks at Manetti, suddenly understanding that he gave his life for Valerie. Then Steve and begins to search the apartment. Obviously the killer had been searching it. He locates some of the dead girl's handbags and begins to dump out the contents. Then goes to the drawers.

Always he tries to be as quiet as possible. While keeping the ghetto blaster pressed tight against the center of his chest. Meanwhile, Valerie writes a word on the pad and holds it up for him to see with a question mark beside it.

INSERT THE PAD: The word: POLICE?

ANGLE ON STEVE

As he shakes his head. Just as she expected. He's in this deeply, involved somehow. They are beyond the help of the authorities.

MED. SHOT - THE ROOM

Steve crosses to the window for a moment and peers out into the street.

STEVE'S POV

The busy thoroughfare. Many cars coming and going and then, from around the corner, just visible for a few seconds, a green van. Then a second green van--then a third. They're encircling the area--looking, closing in on him. He's got to act quickly.

ANGLE ON THE DEAD GIRL'S ROOM

Steve sees something stuffed behind a cushion on the sofa. A plastic shopping bag. He dumps it out on the couch. It contains money. Quite a lot of money. And a red leather date book. Larger than a small pocket phone book, this is a miniature ledger. Steve flips it open and begins flipping through the pages.

HIS POV - THE DAILY DIARY - NAMES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

CAMERA PANS from the flipping pages to the corpse of the girl. Gina was a busy young lady, very successful in her chosen profession. Always in demand. CAMERA RISING from her corpse to Valerie's face, watching Steve, surprised at the change that's come over him. He's a different person.

ANGLE ON STEVE

Finding what he's looking for.

INSERT: THE DIARY--Under "N", the name "Neville" and under it is Steve's name and the words in Italian "Paid by H. Matlon."

TWO SHOT

Valerie crosses to Steve's side and peers down at the entry in the book.

INSERT - THE BOOK AGAIN: as Steve looks under "M"--and finds Matlon and an address.

TWO SHOT

as Steve tears the page out. Then he pauses to unbutton his shirt to show Valerie the device he now wears on his chest. She has to know. When she sees the apparatus she recoils in horror. She's seen it on the killer. And now there it is on the man she still loves. CAMERA MOVES IN on her reaction.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRS IN APARTMENT BUILDING

as Steve and Valerie descend. She's still in shock. He's still holding the ghetto blaster close to his chest.

EXT. STREET

Steve hails a taxicab. He and Valerie get in, duck down as a green van passes.

INT. CAB

Steve shows the page from the diary to the driver instead of speaking, pointing out Matlon's address.

EXT. ROME STREET - DAY

The cab passing. CAMERA PANNING DOWN other streets which converge on the Via Veneto to catch a glimpse of still another green van searching.

INT. GREEN VAN - MONITOR SCREEN - DAY

We can still see the distortion and hear the static still caused by the "overload." The technicians struggle to correct the problem. Then the images fade. The screen blanks.

TECHNICIAN

We've lost him again. He's out of range.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME OF HOWARD MATLON, PRIVATE VILLA IN ROME - DAY

A circular driveway lined with statues leading up to an elegant front entrance. Steve and Valerie sending their cab away. Blasting rock music still surrounds Steve.

STEVE'S POV

Surrounding neighborhood, empty streets, no green vans.

BACK TO STEVE AND VALERIE

Steve is already ringing the doorbell, scribbling another message on the pad he took from Gina's apartment. The door is opened by a MANSERVANT. Steve shoves him the note. The servant looks horrified ...and admits them.

INT. MATLON HOUSE, HUGE MARBLE ENTRY HALL

The manservant hurries to fetch his master. Steve and Valerie walk across the foyer to the open door to an ornate library with high bookshelves. The sound of Steve's rock music now echoes all through the house. It seems much out of place.

ANGLE ON STAIRCASE

as the elegant MR. MATLON comes down the stairs, in a full length silk robe, a puzzled expression on his sensitive face. He hears the blasting music coming from his library and resounding off all the walls. A cacophony of sound such has never been heard in this house during the 500 years it's been standing..

MR. MATLON'S POV (STEADI-CAM)

heading down toward the library door, finally catching sight of Steve and Valerie.

She hurries out into the reception hall cutting Mr. Matlon off before he can enter, keeping him out of earshot of the apparatus. At this distance, she can talk to him without the mechanism picking up their sound, without giving away their precise location.

ANGLE ON MATLON AND VALERIE

MATLON

Be so kind as to identify yourself?

VALERIE

Like the note said, "Gina's friend."
Hasn't she told you about me? She
thought you might like me.

Mr. Matlon smiles slightly at the corner of his thin lips and tightens the exquisite silk bathrobe that he wears.

MATLON

I can assure you I'm not interested
in women.

VALERIE

Then maybe Neville was more your
type?

Matlon casts his attention at Steve who is watching from the library, still keeping the ghetto blaster at full volume.

MATLON

Who is this music lover you've
brought me?

VALERIE

Shall we say I have him along for
protection.

MATLON

What led you to believe you'd be
in danger?

VALERIE

You hired Gina and Neville to set
somebody up.

MATLON

Let's say, there was a person we wished to embarrass. You must realize in business we sometime resort to extreme measures in order to best deal with our competitors.

VALERIE

Oh, yes. I'm a businesswoman myself.

MATLON

And very successful I am sure.

VALERIE

That's why Gina asked me to speak in her behalf. She feels she was dreadfully underpaid for her services.

Matlon grabs Valerie's wrist. She winces from the pain. That's the hand that she burned when she struck the apparatus.

MATLON

Gina told you nothing. Gina's dead.

VALERIE

Alright! Why does the man who stabbed her wear a small black box on his chest?

MATLON

Why don't you ask him for yourself?

Valerie turns, trying to pull away from Matlon, shifting her glance quickly enough to catch sight of that same tall gaunt man with the stiletto knife coming around from behind the staircase. He's come up out of the basement. He's got the knife ready to strike.

She struggles with Matlon, trying to get him to release her, but he holds her tight, and the man with the knife advances toward her.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The volume of the rock music rises as Steve appears in the doorway, his gun pointed.

ANGLE ON THE MAN WITH THE KNIFE

as he turns, raises the knife to throw it.

WIDE SHOT THE ENTRY HALL

as Steve fires off one shot directly at the man's chest.
The shot hits home, striking the box.

The man with the knife detonates.

He blows apart into a thousand pieces.

Parts of him splattering the white walls on all sides.

The chandelier hanging above is shattered by the force of the explosion.

INT. THE VAN - MONITOR SCREEN

The assassin's screen--multiple designs like we've never seen before as the subject is terminated by outside forces. An alarm goes off. The technicians zero in on the locale of the detonation.

TECHNICIAN

Detonation. Grid 17 area 112.

Now Control's Voice is heard on the sound track. Once again he's back in command.

CONTROL'S VOICE

"Matlon."

CUT TO:

INT. HALL, MATLON MANSION - DAY

A rain of glass tumbling down on Valerie, Matlon and Steve, and on the pile of seared flesh and bone which once was the knife-wielding killer.

It's all over in a flash. The white walls now run red with blood.

CLOSE-UP MATLON

looking on, his mouth hanging open, terrified.

ANGLE ON STEVE

coming closer, placing his finger to his lips, ordering Matlon to be silent. (The rock music never stops.)

Matlon has let go of Valerie's wrist. She is rubbing it, trying to make the pain go away. She steps aside to allow Steve to come closer. He points the gun at Matlon at point blank range.

Then Steve reaches out and pulls Matlon's robe wide open so his bare chest is visible.

Steve wants to see if Matlon is wearing one of the devices.

TIGHTER ANGLE

Matlon's chest. No apparatus. Nothing strapped on.

But the center of Matlon's chest is covered with scar tissue, the kind that comes from having suffered severe burns.

There is the outline of the apparatus which this man obviously wore some time in the past.

He no longer wears it now. He has been freed of that obligation.

Matlon looks down at the scars on his own chest. His fingers reach up and touch them.

And Matlon begins to weep, to shake his head, and to sob like an infant. He's a broken man.

He no longer needs to wear the apparatus because he has no willpower of his own. It's all been taken from him.

He no longer requires an electronic gadget to coerce him into obedience. He is forever a slave.

STEVE

They'll have picked up the detonation.
They'll be here soon. So talk fast.
Is it safe to remove it now?

MATLON

The vans still aren't within radius,
but it can still self-detonate.

VALERIE

Who are they? Why do they do this?

MATLON

(softly)

Simply businessmen who trade in
secrets. Bigger than any government,
any country. But they have conscription
as any government would. They call
those they need into service and their
army is a disciplined one.

STEVE

Give me some names.

MATLON

You can't defeat them. Follow
their orders.

STEVE

Like you did?

Valerie has gone to the phone and dialed .

VALERIE

Police.

MATLON

No police!

Matlon tries to seize the phone. Valerie loses her temper
and whacks Matlon across the side of the head with the
phone. He crumbles.

STEVE

You are tough!

VALERIE

And sentimental! At least we don't
have to be quiet anymore. I love you!

STEVE

Like a best friend?

VALERIE

Like this.

She kisses him. And not like a friend.

There's a voice on the other end of the phone now.

VALERIE

Yes--police? Speak English?

Perhaps calling the police is the best thing. And suddenly
Steve clutches his chest. He SCREAMS. The pain has come
back. The intense burning pain. He drops the ghetto
blaster and it shatters on the tile floor.

STEVE

God-- they've zeroed in on me again.
They've got me.

ANGLE ON VALERIE

turning and watching him as he falls to the floor writhing
in agony. The police are still on the telephone, speaking
Italian--

Valerie suddenly sets the phone back on its hook. It's too late--

And then she hears the sound of an engine. A car. She runs to the window.

HER POV THROUGH THE WINDOW

The circular driveway, a green van pulling up into sight.

ANGLE ON STEVE

writhing in pain on the floor.

STEVE

Out the back way. Get out, Val.
I'm their's again.

She runs to him but he recoils from her.

STEVE

Don't touch me. They could kill
you if you touch me. Get out! Go
to the American Embassy. Make an
excuse. Wait there.

She starts to run. She still has the gun in her hand.
Steve shouts after her.

STEVE

Put the gun down. I'll need it. I
have to do what they want.

She crouches and lies the gun on the floor and heads around
the staircase.

INT. THE KITCHEN OF MANSION

as she darts through the enormous darkened kitchen toward
the back door, unbolts it. Back in the distance she hears
the sound of Steve screaming in pain.

EXT. FRONT OF MANSION

The green van sitting quietly in place. No one visible
inside for the windows are clouded and the front window is
one-way glass. You can't see the driver. CAMERA MOVES
TIGHT TO the window of the van.

INT. THE VAN

CONTROL

I will take personal control now.

CLOSE-UP on LONG, DELICATE HANDS at complex computerized controls dealing out inhuman pain. A carefully manicured finger touches a dial. We see the result as pain registers graphically on those monitor screens. Bizarre images. Pain visualized so we can almost feel it ourselves.

ANGLE ON STEVE

writhing as a spasm of fire flashes through his chest and then it subsides. He catches his breath, starts to get to his feet.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP THE HAND

elevating still another control. More images flash above.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON STEVE

thrown back against the wall with all the force of being struck by a blow in the chest. He SCREAMS, claws at the air and falls again.

They're playing with him, punishing him, teaching him a lesson he must never forget. CAMERA PANS to the unfortunate Mr. Matlon, the side of his head bloodied where Valerie struck him as he crawls down the stairs, looking through the railing very much like a man inside a prison cell. His eyes are on Steve.

Steve looks up at Matlon who seems to be watching with intense sympathy.

MATLON

Yes, I still remember. At night I
wake up screaming because I still
feel it on me! My body can't forget.

Steve screams again in pain.

MATLON

They're teaching you a lesson.
Learn it well.

(he looks at the clock
on the wall)

There's still time. You know what
you have to do. Go there. Be
precise. Show them that you're
willing. Show them that you'll be
useful to them.

STEVE

(gasps)

Yes. All right, Matlon, you're right...
It was a stupid try.

Suddenly there's no more pain. Steve gets to his feet hesitantly as if he's expecting another blow to be struck but nothing happens. He crosses and picks up the gun which Valerie has left behind for him.

STEVE

Garibaldi Place. Kill everybody
in that room. Yes! Yes!

Steve still has the gun clenched in his hand. He feels another jolt, another electrical surge. The box is pulsating and starts to give off with a totally new high pitched sound now.

STEVE

You want something else. What is it?

INT. VAN MONITOR SCREEN

Through graphics we can now decipher the "heat" signals that show Matlon's position in relation to Steve.

MATLON'S VOICE

They can tell you're holding the gun
in your hand. They can feel it.

STEVE'S VOICE

What do they want?

MATLON'S VOICE

Can't you figure that out? I'm of
no further use.

STEVE'S VOICE

I can't.

MATLON'S VOICE

What choice is there?

STEVE'S VOICE

Run, Matlon. Get out of here
before I have to...

We see the graphic images move around encoded on the screen as Steve and Matlon are altering positions.

INT. THE MANSION - DAY

Matlon standing some ten feet in front of Steve.

MATLON

I have nowhere to run to. Go on.
It's all right.

STEVE

No.

He feels another jolting pain. It runs straight down his arm, straight down the arm that holds the pistol.

STEVE .

I'm not moving my arm.

His arm is rising, trembling as bit by bit the gun is pointed at Matlon.

MATLON

Go on. The pain will go away once you've done it.

STEVE

Shut up! They can tell where you are from your voice.

MATLON

Yes, they can hear me. I apologize for my failure, for my incompetence. I apologize...

He doesn't say anymore because Steve's finger pulls that trigger involuntarily. The apparatus has control of his hand. The apparatus is aiming the weapon guided by the sound of Matlon's voice. The gun goes off once, then again, and Matlon is struck at point blank range and killed instantly.

INT. MONITOR SCREEN IN VAN

Graphic image of Matlon--falling to the floor.

PANNING TO CONTROL'S HANDS as he lights a long custom made cigarette--taken from an antique gold case.

ANGLE ON MATLON LYING ON THE TILE

That same effete smile at the corner of his lips. All this opulence, all these worldly possessions and the man did not own his own soul.

LOW ANGLE LOOKING UP AT STEVE

His arm now falls loosely to the side, no longer under the control of the outside force. It hangs there lifelessly,

limply, as Steve looks down at the victim he had not intended to kill.

Then Steve turns and looks at the antique clock at the wall behind him. Time is running out. He must get to the factory and carry out his orders. He reaches into his pocket until he finds the badge with the photo--the photograph of a man that looks somewhat similar to himself. He attaches the badge to the lapel of the khaki uniform jacket. He's ready. He crosses to the front door.

EXT. THE BUILDING

as Steve comes out. Strangely the green van is gone. Steve slowly walks down the circular driveway toward the street.

STEVE'S POV

In the distance, a block away, the green van is parked at the curb. There's no escaping it.

TRUCKING SHOT STEVE

as he starts to walk through the dark streets.

ANGLE ON THE GREEN VAN

in the distance, trailing him far behind. It's always there, there's no outdistancing it, no escaping it again.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RAMA CORPORATION FACTORY - GARIBALDI PLACE - DAY

We have seen this place before in our prologue. The great foreboding structure surrounded by a high electrified fence with barbed wire running along the top. Militaristic guards patrol within.

ANGLE ON THE DRIVE-IN GATE - DAY

There is a careful inspection of each person and vehicle who approaches but there's also a pedestrian gate which adjoins it and there we see men dressed in khaki clothes similar to the outfit which Steve is wearing. They all have photo identification badges. As they pass in from the street, they cross under a bright light. They are examined visually by heavily armed guards and then are allowed to pass.

It is obvious that this is a change of shifts there are so many people arriving at the same time.

It is necessary for Steve to join this influx, to take his place in the line.

ANGLE ON STEVE

approaching.

HIS POV

The lineup of employees in their khaki pants and jackets with their electronically coded security badges plainly visible.

As they enter, they pass beneath video cameras which can scan and scrutinize them.

Steve wonders if he will pass muster.

He also notices how heavily armed the guards are. Besides their pistols they also have automatic weapons slung on their shoulders and GRENADES AT THEIR BELTS. This looks more like an anti-terrorist force than any ordinary guard at the gate.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Steve on the line. None of the employees talk to one another. They are strangely silent as they await their turn to pass through security and report for work.

CLOSE-UP STOIC FACE OF THE RAMA SECURITY GUARDS

Their job is to be ever watchful, nothing more. No greeting, no welcome, no smile, no chitchat to pass the day. Several of them stand there only inches away from the arriving employees while others remain in the glass booth staring out from behind bulletproof windows.

One of the employees is stopped, visually cross checked and then allowed to pass.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

He swallows hard. He makes sure that his shirt is buttoned so that no portion of the apparatus is visible.

Now Steve's time has come. He steps into the light. The scan television camera passes his face and then moves backward again for a second look.

The guard takes note of Steve's security badge number, looks at him, doesn't seem to notice the difference between the photograph and the man himself.

Steve is about to step forward and enter when there's a rap on the bulletproof glass. One of the officers inside wants a further look. A few more buttons are pushed on a computer in there.

INT. GUARD BOOTH

A picture appears on a monitor in there. A face similar to Steve's. The name "Anthony Porcelli" clearance 12 appears.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

suddenly frightened. He senses that if he were to be stopped here that the apparatus would simply detonate and blow him to pieces along with the guards.

He feels heat. The apparatus is warming up.

Through his shirt, we see the faint glow that always comes when the apparatus gets upset.

Finally, after an infinite amount of seconds. the head guard nods.

HEAD GUARD

Move on, Porcelli.

As Steve steps out of the light following the others up ahead into the courtyard of the top security complex.

He has passed his first test, now he must find the room on the third floor research laboratory, and three more lives must be forfeited.

EXT. COURTYARD, RAMA CORPORATION GROUNDS - DAY

A strange fog-like presence hovers over the place. People do not talk, they do not pause, they simply travel from one building to another, all dressed alike, all knowing exactly what has to be done, and mingling amongst them the heavily armed security force.

TRUCKING SHOT - STEVE

heading toward the building marked Laboratory I, a four story building. Steve looks up.

HIS POV

The lights on the third floor of the laboratory building. His destination. He can see shadows--silhouettes moving around in there. People living out their last moments on earth.

ANGLE ON ENTRANCE TO LABORATORY BUILDING

as Steve reaches out, touches the door. It will not open. Steve is not prepared for this. He pushes again. The door still will not unlock. No provision has been made for his gaining entrance.

He wonders if there's something they forgot to tell him. He's about to step away when there's a buzz and the door opens automatically. It's as if some scanning apparatus took cognizance of Steve's electronic badge and that something on the badge triggered the door to finally unlock.

Steve walks down the corridor toward the elevator.

HIS POV

At the other end of the hall, a few men and women in laboratory uniforms are conversing but no one pays any attention to him.

ANGLE ON STEVE

as he reaches the elevator. Once again there's no button to push. He looks around and finally stands straight in front of the elevator as he did in front of the doors and allows the badge to trigger the elevator to slide open and admit him.

INT. ELEVATOR

There seems to be no way of designating which floor you wish to arrive at. Steve stands there, not sure what to do next. Then finally, he speaks.

STEVE

Three?

And he's guessed right, the elevator door slides closed at the verbal command.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

watching the indicator. It's a very short trip.

CLOSE-UP INDICATOR IN ELEVATOR

One, two, three. The elevator doors do not open.

ANGLE ON STEVE

as he stands straight against the doors. Once again keeping the badge full front. Again this triggers the doors to slide back, releasing him from the confines of the elevator

which is of spartan design. No embellishments, just cold steel.

THE THIRD FLOOR

Very much like the elevator, simply a long corridor, almost like a huge metal tube with doors. The ceiling concave, the floors made of a metal webbing. There are ventilation slits in the walls and indirect lighting. It's like being in another world. Steve looks to the right and then the left. He mustn't be confused. He mustn't go stumbling around trying to find the entrance to the laboratory, chamber 11. Finally he makes a decision. He moves off to his left.

TRUCKING SHOT

Steve moving down the corridor. The doors do not have numbers and there are so many of them. Which is chamber 11?

Steve looks back toward the elevator. A television camera is trained on him. His actions are being monitored. Now, not only is he under the control of the apparatus on his chest but he is being seen by the security forces that protect this establishment. He's a man caught between two electronic worlds, a pawn in a technological war from which human flesh and blood is the most expendable element of all.

Steve proceeds down the corridor when all at once a door at the other end of the hall slides open. A MAN pokes his head out into the corridor.

LANNING

Oh, there you are, Porcelli. If you're getting coffee, bring me a cup.

Then the man is gone. In the distance he has taken Steve for the man he's supposed to be.

The reference to the coffee puzzles Steve. Then as he takes one more step, a door behind him slides open automatically to reveal a small kitchen with all the amenities including a hot plate with two coffee urns one reading "decaf."

Here among the bizarre and unusual is something so ordinary, so commonplace, and seen in every office, every working place. Steve quickly pours a cup of coffee and carries it in his hand as he starts down the corridor in the direction of chamber 11.

STEVE'S POV MOVING DOWN THE CORRIDOR

Chamber 11 looms ahead. The door has been left open. All he need do is step inside. His hand goes into the pocket of his jacket, it's gripping the gun.

TRUCKING SHOT - STEVE

One hand clutching the gun in his pocket, the other carrying the plastic coffee up. Then he rounds the corner and steps inside the laboratory.

INT. CHAMBER 11 LABORATORY - NIGHT

As Steve steps through the door, it automatically slides shut behind him. He stands there poised for a moment.

OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT

Steve looking around the laboratory.

Everything state-of-the-art in addition to equipment so advanced we've not seen it before.

Just as described in his instructions, there are THREE PERSONS, two men and a woman. At the moment, their attention is on their computations. They don't look up. They pay no immediate attention to Steve's arrival except for the one man who ordered the coffee.

LANNING

I hope you remembered the sugar.

He holds his hand out without even looking at Steve. Steve crosses and places the cup in Lanning's hand.

There's a large blackboard in the far corner bearing complex calculations. Steve positions himself in front of it, takes the gun out and cocks it.

The click of the weapons startles the three technicians. Now they look up. The woman, DR. LOMBARDI, is fortyish and not unattractive.

MS. LOMBARDI

You're not Porcelli.

LANNING

(calmly)

I suppose he isn't and he's forgotten the sugar.

DR. KURTZ

You may have gotten in here but you will not get out so easily.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

He's perspiring heavily. He doesn't want to kill these people.

WIDER SHOT

The three prisoners, their hands raised. CAMERA PANNING to the telephone, then back to the prisoners again.

LANNING

Tell us what you want.

STEVE

I won't know until after I've killed you.

MS. LOMBARDI

You can't do it.

STEVE

I've done it five times before.

LANNING

This must be the assassin that terminated the Koreans. What they came to Rome to steal, this chap intends to kill for.

DR. KURTZ

They'll hear shots.

STEVE

The room is soundproof.

Lanning makes a move to the right, trying to spread out to separate the targets. It's definitely an aggressive move.

STEVE

(shouts)

Get back over there. Cluster!

Lanning shrugs and complies.

LANNING

Well, what's holding you up?

Steve still hesitates to fire and then he winces. Grasps at his chest. He has received an electrical jab. He's being prodded onward--gently influenced to pull the trigger.

INT. THE VAN - MONITOR SCREEN

The images of the three people at gun point represented by graphics.

INT. THE LAB

Steve pulls up his shirt so the three others can see the box, the softly glowing box.

STEVE

This is what's making me do it.
This is why I haven't got any choice

The scientists are stunned into silence at the sight of the apparatus. Then they exchange glances and then look back at the box again. It's as if they know what it is but all amazed to see it on this stranger.

STEVE

You know exactly what it is, don't you?

MS. LOMBARDI

Then they've made it work. It's in practical operation.

LANNING

How many others are there like this?

STEVE

You're asking the wrong man.

DR. KURTZ

They're so far ahead of us.

STEVE

(furious)

Is that what you're working on here?
Is this your goal? To strap this on people and make them kill. Is that what this whole research center is about?

MS. LOMBARDI

Don't you know where you are? The Rama Corporation is a NATO war college. In years to come the apparatus you wear will be worn not only by terrorists and saboteurs, but by armies of men. You should know from your own country's Vietnam experience that fighting men in conventional warfare need motivation. They can no longer be counted on to carry out orders without a higher degree of outside control.

STEVE

You bastards could've just as easily put this box on me. You're the same as they are!

LANNING

Young man, try to understand, once strategic nuclear weapons are removed from Europe, this device will provide us with conventional forces that will follow any order. Fight to the death.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

He reacts as the box emits a HIGH SHRIEK and gives off a jolt of electricity that shuts Steve up and knocks him back against the blackboard. A stronger jolt follows.

Then Steve notices that his hand is starting to shake. The hand which holds the gun is going into another spasm of involuntary motion. It's sweeping back and forth like some kind of divining rod between the points where the prisoners stand.

Their voices have been heard and now the outside control is zeroing in on them.

It won't be necessary for Steve to pull the trigger. Control will do it for him.

His arm, his hand, his trigger finger are no longer under his own command.

CLOSE-UP - COMPUTER SCREEN

The three intended victims--their outlines induced by their body heat growing sharper--more intense.

ANGLE ON THE PRISONERS

Fearful for their lives and yet marveling at what they're seeing. The actual, practical operation of the very thing they've been experimenting on.

DR. KURTZ

It's brilliant. More sophisticated than I could have imagined.

LANNING

(shouts)

Be still.

CLOSE-UP STEVE'S HAND

The wavering back and forth stops. The gun hand suddenly moves directly forward, pointing like an arrow. CAMERA MOVES AWAY FROM THE GUN TO THE WINDOW, PEERING OUT INTO THE NIGHT, OVER THE HIGH GATE, CATCHING A VIEW ON A DISTANT

STREET CORNER OF A GREEN VAN JUST SWEEPING AROUND THE CORNER.

CUT TO;

INT. VAN - THE CONTROL PANEL

THE HANDS monitor everything that Steve is experiencing and who even now are controlling the gun that he holds.

1ST VOICE

He resists.

CONTROL'S VOICE

Fire for him.

Buttons are pushed. The image on the monitor turns red. A technician's hand flips more levers.

MS. LOMBARDI'S VOICE

Don't shoot. Please don't.

Nothing happens. No gunshots.

1ST VOICE

Remarkable. He's blocking command.

CONTROL'S VOICE

Override his resistance.

A special switch is thrown overriding all others. A new vibrating design appears on the screen. Then the control unit can hear the blast of gunfire. Three shots in rapid succession followed by hideous screams.

And the sounds of bodies falling. Laboratory equipment smashing as three scientists are executed. The silhouettes of the falling bodies visible on the screen as heat induced graphic images.

CONTROL'S VOICE

The initial stage is completed.
Execute the telephone call.

CAMERA PANS AWAY from the control panel to a table. An ordinary white telephone is being dialed.

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Steve standing with the smoking gun in his hand, looking drained. The telephone begins to ring. Steve crosses and picks it up.

STEVE

Yes?

CONTROL

Check the bodies, make certain each is dead.

STEVE

You pulled the trigger for me, don't you know?

CONTROL

Set down the telephone, walk to the bodies.

Steve puts down the telephone. CAMERA REMAINS on the telephone as it sits on the laboratory table awaiting his return. He ENTERS FRAME again and picks up the phone.

STEVE

The elderly fat one is still breathing. But he's unconscious.

CONTROL

Place the gun to his forehead and complete the execution.

STEVE

He'll be dead in a few minutes anyway.

CONTROL

Must we debate every command? You're almost finished now. Why must you always make it so difficult for yourself?

STEVE

All right.

Once again he lays the telephone down, EXITS the FRAME. In a moment we hear a gunshot, then absolute silence. Steve returns to the telephone. Steve picks up the phone again.

STEVE

(flatly)

I killed him...

CONTROL

Now, go to the tall Scandinavian. He should have a key chain with three keys on it. Remove it and proceed to the gray metal desk directly opposite where you're standing.

CAMERA PANS TO THE DESK and back to the telephone.

CONTROL

Unlock the bottom drawer, remove the aluminum attache case, bring it back to the telephone.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET

Opposite the security establishment, the green van once against circling the block.

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY

Steve crossing to the desk, carrying a long key chain with three keys in his hand that he's removed from one of the victims. He crouches, unlocks the bottom drawer, takes out the large aluminum attache case and carries it back to the laboratory table and sets it down by the phone.

CONTROL

Find the proper key and unlock it.

Steve fiddles with the other two keys, finds the correct one, raises the lid.

INT. ATTACHE CASE

It contains a stack of extremely small printed circuits, very complex. Plus notebooks and diagrams of prototypes of similar "black box control units."

CONTROL

Describe the contents.

STEVE

Diagrams. Small printed circuitry. A work book full of notes, facts and figures. Couldn't read it if I wanted to. And a letter addressed to the Commander in Chief of Combined NATO Forces.

CONTROL

Fine. Close the lid, lock it, and carry it with you to the elevator. Walk calmly, don't run. No one will attempt to detain you. We'll be waiting outside the main security gate.

STEVE

To remove the apparatus?

CONTROL

To remove it, certainly.

STEVE

Expect me to believe that?

CONTROL

You've must learn to have more
faith in people, Steven.

Then control hangs up and Steve is left alone staring at the open attache case. He slams it shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMA CORPORATION, COURTYARD - DAY

The armed guards are continually making their rounds, all of them armed with automatic weapons and all of them carrying grenades on their belts lest their be any assault from the outside. CAMERA TILTS up to the illuminated windows above in the laboratory. We no longer see any silhouettes moving around in there. The three scientists who worked there are victims now.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

Steve, carrying the attache case, walking up the hallway to the elevator. Standing full front so his automated badge can activate the elevator and cause the doors to open. He steps inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET ADJOINING COMPOUND

The green van once again passing into view and then vanishing.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMA CORPORATION INNER COURTYARD - DAY

as Steve steps out of the laboratory building into the courtyard. MANY TECHNICIANS are coming and going, this place seems to be in operation 24 hours a day.

No one pays attention to Steve. He walks, carrying the attache case across the court, moving slowly to the same

exact place where he entered. But he will have to pass through similar scrutiny before being allowed to vacate the premises.

TRUCKING SHOT

CLOSE ON HIS ATTACHE CASE that he carries. We also see the key ring rolled up and clutched in his hand.

The gun is safely hidden away out of sight again as it was when he came in.

ANGLE ON THE GUARDS

at the gate. Two of them await Steve's approach. A third one stays behind the wall of bulletproof glass. The television cameras monitor Steve and zoom in on him.

1ST GUARD

I'll check his pass.

CAMERA MOVES FORWARD along with the guard as he approaches Steve.

1ST GUARD

Porcelli? Leaving so soon?

STEVE

I have a delivery to make.

1ST GUARD

So I noticed. You require a special pass for that attache case? What's in it?

STEVE

I'm sorry. To answer you would violate security.

The guard steps still closer. He's almost nose-to-nose with Steve.

1ST GUARD

Where's your special pass. The blue pass!

STEVE

I don't have one.

1ST GUARD

(quietly)

Now you do.

The CAMERA MOVES DOWN QUICKLY as the guard slips a blue pass out of his own pocket and presses it into Steve's hand. It's all filled out, stamped and authorized.

1ST GUARD

Now show it to me so they can see it.

The guard steps back as Steve extends the pass that he's only just received.

Obviously the guard is in on this. He's a co-conspirator. He now pretends to accept the pass from Steve and carry it over under the overhead light to check it out.

This is how Steve got in so easily and how he will now leave without harassment. There's a man on the inside. Someone at the gate to make sure that his identity card would not be scrutinized too thoroughly.

1ST GUARD

All right, proceed, Porcelli.

STEVE

Do I get the pass back?

1ST GUARD

Don't ask stupid questions. Just walk! No matter what's said, keep walking. I'll take care of the rest.

TRUCKING SHOT - STEVE

as he continues to walk, now passing the other security guard and the officer in charge who is behind the glass wall. He's walking straight into the eye of the television camera.

2ND GUARD

Hold on. Let's check the contents of that.

1ST GUARD

He has a blue pass signed by Lanning.

The first guard proceeds to show the second fellow the fake pass which seems to be all right. The pass is placed in a slot and automatically reaches the hands of the captain of the guards behind the glass.

CAPTAIN OF GUARDS

One minute. Porcelli is carrying classified material.

Steve freezes in his tracks. The captain of the guards continues.

CAPTAIN OF GUARDS

One of you will escort him to his motor vehicle.

1ST GUARD

I'll do it.

Now the guard in collusion with Steve walks directly behind him as they both exit the top security compound together.

TRUCKING SHOT - THE TWO OF THEM

walking side-by-side as they cross the street toward the employee parking area.

STEVE

I don't suppose you'll be returning to work.

GUARD

That wouldn't be a good idea. Not with three dead bodies up there in the laboratory. Head through the parking lot. We can exit on the far side.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT - THE EMPLOYEE PARKING LOT - DAY

as Steve and the uniformed guard cross the lot. The guard shows Steve a doorway in the gate that opens and they exit onto a narrow street that runs parallel to the parking facility.

STEVE

How long before they find them?

GUARD

They're due for pickup at eleven p.m. for their flight to the Berlin conference. I can carry the attache case now.

STEVE

My orders are to hand deliver it.

GUARD

Surrender the attache case now or you'll be detonated instantly.

Steve backs several steps away.

STEVE

I don't think so. You blow me away, you never find out what's in this case. You'll never find out how far along they are. How long it's going to take them to catch up.

The guard goes for his sidearm, the pistol and holster at his belt. But before he can get it out, Steve has rushed forward using the attache case as a weapon, smashing the man across the face, once and then again a second time. The guard falls backward on the pavement.

At that same moment, Steve receives a jolt through the box that he wears on his chest. It knocks him up against the gate, takes his breath away. He has the attache case in one hand and the gun that he's used to kill with clutched in the other. He points the gun but not at the injured guard. He's pointing it AT THE BOX on his chest.

STEVE

This weapon still has two bullets and it's pointed at the apparatus. I have the power to detonate myself so I don't want to feel anymore little jabs. I just want to deliver your property and see that you keep your end of the bargain.

WIDER SHOT

as the guard struggles to his feet furious now. He's going to have a go at Steve and then realizes Steve holds gun at the apparatus.

STEVE

You've seen these things go off. I wouldn't stand so close if I were you.

The guard stops in his tracks. There is a moment of silence.

STEVE

Well, no more shock treatment. I guess that means they want to go by my rules for a change.

The guard turns and looks back up the street. At that moment the green van pulls into sight and stops. The guard looks at it and back at Steve.

1ST GUARD

All right, then, follow me to
my car.

The guard leads him a few steps toward a parked car.

STEVE

I'll get in back if you don't mind.

Steve still keeps his gun pointed at his own chest and he
clutches the attache case in his other hand.

INT. THE VEHICLE

The guard gets behind the wheel, pulls off his military cap,
starts the ignition. Steve's right behind him, in the back
seat.

STEVE

You know, it's nice to see some-
one else shaking for a change.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

As the guard drives away in his civilian vehicle with Steve
in the back seat.

CAMERA PANS back across the enclosed parking lot toward the
distant factory compound visible over the high barb wire
fence.

CUT TO:

INT. THIRD FLOOR LABORATORY - DAY

CAMERA PANNING ACROSS the lab to the blackboard which we saw
very clearly when Steve entered.

Many of the equations have been wiped away by an erasure,
instead there are crudely written instructions in chalk.

"SCREAM, FALL, PLAY DEAD." CAMERA PANS away from the
blackboard to the three scientists crouched on the floor
very much unhurt.

Steve hasn't killed them at all. Instead they cooperated by
screaming by falling and now by keeping silent. Dr.
Lombardi's been looking at his watch and all of a sudden he
jumps up.

MS. LOMBARDI

Sound the alarm.

LANNING

Don't be a fool, he's on our side.

DR. KURTZ

Lanning's right. Our only chance is to keep on playing dead to give him as much as opportunity as possible. He's all we've got.

MS. LOMBARDI

We must notify security.

LANNING

There are people on the inside. They'll know and our friend will be dead within minutes.

DR. KURTZ

Besides, the attache case is empty. We still have all the circuits and the log book.

Indeed we see that Steve has left the contents behind with the scientists. He's bargaining on pure bluff.

MS. LOMBARDI

So what do you suggest we do?

LANNING

When was the last time we played poker?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROME STREETS - NIGHT

The guard driving his car through the quiet streets followed a short distance behind by a green van.

ANGLE ON STEVE

In the backseat looking out the rear window and seeing the green van tailing close behind. He waves out the window at it.

EXT. MEAT MARKET - NIGHT

This is a district which houses the slaughter houses and great meat storage warehouses for Rome. Meat packing plants abound. Men in white butcher aprons wheeling carcasses from one end of the street to the other. These men work at night while others sleep.

The guard pulls his car to a stop gets out and beckons that Steve follow him.

Steve complies carrying the attache case firmly in one hand and the gun pressed inside his jacket up against the black box.

They enter a huge refrigerated meat warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A massive enclosure. The place is quite bare and freezing cold. There are huge hooks hanging everywhere from the ceiling on chains but no carcasses. The place is for all intent and purpose abandoned, yet ice cold. A person's breath oxidizes when they speak or breathe.

There's a catwalk running around the upper portion and high up on a platform, far away, are SEVERAL MEN. "Phantoms." They seem to be wearing protective padded suits and helmets. Even their faces are covered by visors so we cannot discern their identity.

They have carefully protected themselves from the debris of an explosion should Steve decide to self-detonate.

Steve is led inside by the uniformed guard. A fleet of green vans is parked in a far corner of the warehouse. Now, the van that has tracked and followed Steve pulls in and parks beside the other identical vans.

1ST GUARD

(shouts)

He made me bring him here. He threatened to self-detonate.

A VOICE from above comes down. It is the familiar voice of the CONTROL MASTER.

CONTROL

You acted correctly. Now bring us the attache case.

STEVE

Not yet. First send somebody down here who knows how to disconnect this fucker!

CONTROL

You're well aware how easily we can manipulate your hand and the gun in it.

STEVE

I think I'd get one fast shot off under my own power. You don't want all your planning to go to waste.

CONTROL

We have one additional bargaining chip.

ANGLE ON THE PLATFORM ABOVE

Another FIGURE comes out wearing padded, protective clothing and a visor. He drags a prisoner alone. It's a woman. My God, it's Valerie. There's a strip of tape across her mouth so she can't speak. Her hands are secured behind her. She's helpless.

CONTROL

Of course, she's only your ex-wife. Perhaps you'd prefer being rid of her. After all, ex-wives are superfluous.

CLOSE-UP STEVE

His reaction. Then he overcomes his panic. He's got to remain cool.

STEVE

(shouts)

Valerie, listen. Your life means nothing to them. Neither does mine. All I've got is this attache case. They have to learn how much the opposition knows. How much longer they hold a monopoly on this kind of terror. Maybe they want to know badly enough to let us live.

WIDER SHOT - WAREHOUSE

CONTROL

(shouts)

You're really hurting my feelings, Steven, with all this mistrust.

STEVE

I want a technician down here. I want this fucking thing off!

CONTROL

We're certainly willing to show good faith. Our Mr. Emery will be right down. Go along now, Mr. Emery.

One of the men in the protective suits hesitantly starts down hesitantly starts down the metal stairs leading to the floor of the warehouse. His footsteps clank on the metal steps. Steve backs further and further away, drawing the technician closer to him and further away from "Control" and the platform above. Mr. Emery carries with him a small pocket size tool case.

STEVE

Lose the helmet. I'd like to see your face. Take it off.

Mr. Emery slowly removes the protective headgear revealing a rather narrow head, a long sad face and small pig-like eyes.

STEVE

Well, a human being to look at after all. I hope you've got the proper qualifications to remove this.

EMERY

I'm the one that put it on.

STEVE

Well, this is going to be educational. I see you've got your handy little tools.

EMERY

Please stand quite still. You can rest that attache case on the ground.

STEVE

I'll hang on to it. It keeps me balanced.

The technician, Emery, takes out an odd looking miniature tool. He hooks it onto the apparatus, makes an adjustment. The front of the black box pops open.

INSERT SHOT: THE BOX

still secured to Steve's chest. A complex mini mechanism in there. All kinds of crazy looking wires and transistors. On the end of the wires are tiny sensors picking up sound, pulse rate, etc.

The technician makes four quick adjustments. Click, click, click, click

EMERY

It's disarmed now.

STEVE

I want it off me.

Emery reaches into his bag of tricks for still another delicate tool. He hooks it underneath the apparatus. More clicks are heard and suddenly the apparatus seems to slide easily off. The band separates from one side of the black box and the man simply pulls it around from behind Steve's back and holds it in his hands like some ordinary belt. From above, Control calls down:

CONTROL

More secure now?

STEVE

Getting there.

Mr. Emery stands there holding the apparatus in his hand. Steve raises his gun and points it at Emery's face point blank.

STEVE

I'll feel better after I waste one of you assholes. Don't you think I'm entitled to kill a couple of your people? Just to get all of that anger out of my system.

CONTROL

Mr. Emery is a trained and valuable employee.

STEVE

Well, I put a lot of time in on Valerie. I mean breaking her in wasn't easy. I may decide to keep her after all.

Steve turns and looks the unfortunate Mr. Emery in the eye.

STEVE

(whispers)

Now get that fucking padding off. You look like a goddamn goalie in a hockey game.

EMERY

I beg your pardon.

STEVE

I said, strip.

Reluctantly Mr. Emery unzips and discards the heavily padded suit and Steve reaches out and rips Emery's shirt wide open.

STEVE

You're pale, Mr. Emery. And how about that? No chest burns.

EMERY

What do you want?

STEVE

I've been asking that question for days. You know what I want, Mr. Emery? I want you to strap this on yourself.

EMERY

Oh, no.

Steve smacks Emery across the cheek with the gun barrel. It draws a trickle of blood.

STEVE

That was to get your attention. Next, I'll put a bullet in your gut. I'm getting good at that shit.

Emery doesn't wait any longer. He wraps the band and the apparatus around himself, clicks it into place. In a second he's wearing it just as Steve demanded.

STEVE

Bet you never had one of those on before. Sure it's not too tight for you? Now, come here. Give me that little tool.

EMERY

Oh, no, don't.

STEVE

Oh, yes, I've got to activate it. I hope I do this right, Mr. Emery.

EMERY

Not there! To the left, and below.

STEVE

Aw. I would've got it wrong. A little click this way, a little turn that way. Now I think I've got the knack.

EMERY

No, don't! Please!

STEVE

Then why don't you show me? Make it work? Let's see an expert do it.

EMERY

I'll do it, I'll do it.

He makes several more adjustments then flips the front of the black box closed again.

EMERY

It's done.

STEVE

Is it? Let's have a demonstration. Let's see it blink a little bit. Let's see it turn hot.

Steve turns back to the green van and shouts:

STEVE

Come on you bastards in that van. You can hear me through this thing. Burn the sonofabitch for me.

CAMERA RISES up to include the figure on the platform above. CONTROL himself.

CONTROL

The young man demands his revenge. Grant him that.

ANGLE ON EMERY

as the black box suddenly starts to glow red and turn hot. Emery screams, claws at the box, his hands burning, his head shaking, his mouth babbling instead of words.

STEVE

Nice effect, isn't it? All right, turn it off.

Steve grabs Emery and drags him to his feet.

STEVE

Let's take us a walk up the steps. I want to shake the boss's hand personally when I present him with this valuable information.

(waves the attache case)

I'm coming up to greet the V.I.P.s.

ANGLE ON CONTROL AND THE OTHER LEADERS OF THE UNIT

who are holding Valerie firmly in their grasp.

CONTROL

A moment. To be completely fair,
you should be aware of this.

Control reaches over and rips Valerie's blouse open--to
reveal an apparatus strapped across her naked chest.

CLOSE-UP STEVE'S REACTION

to seeing Valerie in that rig. But he maintains his cool.

ANGLE ON CONTROL AND HIS ASSOCIATES

holding Valerie between them--now untying her and removing
the tape from across her mouth.

CONTROL

Tell him exactly how it feels,
my dear.

VALERIE

Steve! They can make it burn me.

CONTROL

Simply "upping the ante," Steven.
To see how advanced a player you've
become. And you with only two
bullets in your gun.

VALERIE

You can't save me--save yourself.

ANGLE ON STEVE

STEVE

It's all right. It doesn't change
a thing.

ANGLE ON CONTROL

Masked by that helmet. That resonant commanding voice never
displaying emotion of any kind. We can see Valerie's
terrified features reflected in Control's glass visor.

CONTROL

Another accurate assessment, Steven.
I'm proud of you. You don't need
to wear any gadgets now. Your
training's complete. You've learned
(more)

CONTROL (cont'd)
 to instinctively act against your own nature. We could've located some mercenary--some trained killer --or a war hero, and put the box on him. What would that prove? But to take a peace-loving civilian and condition him to commit atrocious acts, that is an achievement. Because you see, our future armies will be composed of average men like yourself.

ANGLE ON THE CATWALK ABOVE STEVE

While Steve's being distracted, one of controls cohorts moving silently over the catwalk. He's got a machine pistol in his hand and he's taking aim.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT

Valerie SCREAMS! Steve sees what's happening, ducking as bullets riddle the wall over his head. He can't waste his two shots. Emery tries to bolt free, but Steve grabs his leg and pulls him back down the steps so that the man topples down right in front of Steve keeping him shielded. Steve fires once at the man on the catwalk.

ANGLE ON THE CATWALK

as the man is hit in the face. His glass visor shatters. He tumbles off the catwalk and falls straight down.

He lands on the roof of a green van plunging through the roof into the van itself.

INT. THE GREEN VAN - DAY

As the falling gunman crashes through the roof, he lands on the two men at the control panel, breaking their necks. The control panel starts to spark and fizzle as it short circuits and catches fire.

ANGLE ON STEVE

as more shots narrowly miss him. He catches sight of still another gunman directly above, but he can't afford the bullet.

Two slugs tear through the aluminum attache case and remain imbedded in it. That's all that saves Steve from being killed.

Emery jumps up and runs directly into the line of fire between Steve and the second gunman.

Emery is hit squarely in the chest detonating the black box. Steve sees what's happening, rolls down the stairs, covering his head with the metal attache case. The massive explosion comes with such force that it knocks the metal staircase off the side of the wall.

SLOW MOTION SHOT

The staircase collapsing as the remains of Emery shower the walls of the warehouse in blood.

There's nothing left of him.

REACTION SHOT - VALERIE

She's just seen a detonation and she still has a "live" box strapped above her heaving breasts.

LOW ANGLE SHOT - WAREHOUSE FLOOR

The smoke starts to clear. Steve lies stunned. He looks up in time to see the guard who worked at the security gate at the compound--as he makes a rush for Steve, reaching for the hand grenade that hangs at his belt. Steve fires his last shot at him at point-blank range blowing him away. Steve scrambles around a corner dragging the dead body of the security guard with him. He reaches back and grabs the security guard's gun which has fallen to the floor and has a full load inside it. The walls around Steve splatter with bullets as his adversaries attempt to pick him off.

We don't see Steve now. We just hear his voice from around the corner.

STEVE

(shouts)

Hold it up. Hold the shooting. If you want a deal, you got a deal. I get the ex-wife, you keep the attache case.

A few seconds later, the attache case slides out across the floor into full view.

ANGLE ON THE PLATFORM ABOVE

The men in their protective suits watching. One of them still holding Valerie.

CONTROL

I apologize for the eagerness of my employees. They try too hard to please. We'll be down with the young lady in a jiffy.

LOW ANGLE

The men in the protective suits crossing the long catwalk and going down the other set of stairs since the ones directly below them have been blown to smithereens.

ANGLE ON STEVE

keeping in the shadows. The dead body of the uniformed security guard lies at his feet.

ANGLE ON THE ATTACHE CASE

lying out in full view, but Control and his men will have to come out of cover, step into the light and be fully exposed if they intend to pick up that attache case.

CAMERA PANS across the warehouse for a view of Control and his two fully padded cohorts, three masked figures approaching, dragging the girl along with them.

STEVE

(shouts)

Too bad that padding isn't bulletproof.
Why don't you guys show good faith
and let me get a look at you.

CONTROL

If you saw our faces, we could hardly
let you go. Regard your ignorance as
another advantage.

STEVE

All right, release her. Valerie
listen to me.

VALERIE

Yes.

STEVE

Just start walking toward me. Walk
right toward where that silver case
is lying.

SLOW TRUCKING SHOT VALERIE

as she is released by Control and his men. She starts walking very very slowly. CAMERA DROPPING LOW to shoot ACROSS the attache case which lies in the foreground.

CONTROL

Valerie, pick up the briefcase and
bring it back to us.

STEVE
Nothing doing. Get it yourselves
after she's with me.

VALERIE
What should I do?

STEVE
You do what I tell you to do.
Nothing else! Walk to me!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Valerie steps over the attache case, breaks into a run,
runs around the corner into Steve's arms.

TWO SHOT

Steve and Valerie embracing. She hugs him hard.

STEVE
At last all your jogging is gonna
come in handy. Start trucking!

VALERIE
Just watch me.

STEVE
(shouts)
We're going now! Don't get in our
way.

CONTROL
May I collect my property now?

STEVE
Consider it delivered!

STEVE'S POV

as Control walks forward, leans down and picks up the
attache case.

CONTROL
It's been a pleasure doing business
with you.

TWO SHOT - STEVE AND VALERIE

STEVE
(to her)
Keep backing up. When you get
behind that pillar, take off!

Steve keeps the gun trained back on the others as he and Valerie emerge from behind cover, heading toward the exit from the warehouse. CAMERA TRUCKING ALONG with them.

ANGLE ON CONTROL AND HIS MEN

The attache case is theirs. Control calls out:

CONTROL

You haven't given me the key.

STEVE

(shouts back)

Try it. It's not locked.

Control flips open the lid and looks in. He raises the visor on his protective mask to get a better look. FOR THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME WE SEE HIS FACE. We've seen him before in the Ferrari with Gina and again at the opera house. The music loving mastermind of all this. It is Falconi. (Of course he was with Gina. She worked for him. Of course he was absent from the control van during the chase at the opera--he was present in the audience.)

CONTROL'S POV - INSIDE THE CASE

Of course the printed circuitry is gone. In it's place, a hand grenade hooked to the key chain which is hooked to the lid. By opening the lid, Control has pulled out the pin.

ZOOM IN ON THE DEAD BODY OF THE SECURITY GUARD - ZOOMING IN DIRECTLY ON HIS BELT WHERE ONCE HE WORE A HAND GRENADE. It is gone. (Steve has opened up the attache case and shoved in the hand grenade taken from the belt of the dead security man. He has quickly created a crude booby trap of his own.)

CLOSE-UP STEVE

shouting:

STEVE

Not much of a bomb, but it was
the best I could do.

ANGLE ON FALCONI AND HIS COHORTS

as the hand grenade goes off before they can dump the briefcase. The explosion is quick and intense and it's right on top of them.

It blows Falconi's head off his shoulders. It kills the other two as well. Protective clothes can't help them at such close range. The warehouse catches fire. The fire spreads to the whole fleet of green vans almost instantly.

ANGLE ON STEVE AND VALERIE

running out of the warehouse which is now ablaze. One green van explodes as its gas tank detonates. A chain reaction follows.

EXT. ALLEY, ROME - NIGHT

Steve and Valerie running, CAMERA at their heels. They reach a small square boasting a large fountain topped by the immense figures of slaves of ancient Rome grappling with their chains

STEVE

They won't follow us. There isn't anyone left to follow us!

Her hands go to the black box still strapped to her chest.

VALERIE

Then there's no one to control it, no one to set it off.

STEVE

I've got to remove it. Now.

VALERIE

No. You can't--

STEVE

Someone else could pick up where those bastards left off. We're slaves as long as you've got it on.

It's still pitch dark. The only sound is the water of the fountain. Steve sits her down on the edge of the fountain, fully unbuttons her blouse. Steve reaches in his pocket, finds Mr. Emery's shiny little tool--

STEVE

A souvenir. I saw that sonofabitch disarm the thing. It looked easy.

VALERIE

Sure. Easy as fixing a VCR.

STEVE

He held the tool flat. But he pressed it here and put pressure here at the same time. It's not hurting you, is it? Not getting warm?

VALERIE

Not yet.

STEVE

Think it goes like this. I remember,
I remember.

VALERIE

No-- I think...

STEVE

Don't think. Just shut up.

VALERIE

Yes, sir.

She leans forward and kisses him on the mouth.

STEVE

Encouragement? I love encouragement.

VALERIA

Good.

She kisses him again. He licks his lips, then sets to work disarming the box. She stands quite still while he makes each meticulous move.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

The TECHNICIAN'S HANDS as he deactivated the box.

CUT TO:

STEVE'S HANDS

trying to duplicate that motion. Click, click, click.

MOVING UP TO VALERIE'S FACE

STEVE

So far so good.

VALERIE

More encouragement.

She kisses him again. He responds.

STEVE

Once I get this off--are you going
to go back to being bored with me
again?

VALERIE

If I do, you can strap it back on.

He goes back to work. There's a fourth clicking sound and suddenly the apparatus is loose. It's off of her. She hugs Steve and buries her face in his shoulder sobbing with relief.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Steve quickly moves away from her to the fountain and drops the apparatus into the water. Into the babbling, rushing water of the great fountain dating back some 800 years, with cascades of water covering the device which has now sunk out of sight. Quickly they back away from the fountain.

ANGLE ACROSS THE SQUARE

At that moment, there's an enormous eruption and explosion as the apparatus goes off in the fountain.

SLOW MOTION SHOT

The exquisite and quite ancient fountain with its images of slaves in chains is blown to bits, sections of it sailing across the square shattering windows on all sides.

ANGLE ON STEVE AND VALERIE

In a mixture of fear and relief. Then they glance up at windows surrounding the square.

THEIR POV

as heads begin appearing in these windows all around them. The blast has awakened the entire neighborhood.

ANGLE ON STEVE AND VALERIE

He avoids the accusing glance of the neighbors and shrugs innocently.

STEVE

Little family dispute! We worked
it out!

Steve and Valerie run out of the square disappearing down one of the narrow back street to pick up the pieces of their lives--to return to a world of normalcy.

CAMERA PANS ACROSS the rooftops of the Eternal City of Rome. Like all the violence that preceded it through the centuries, this tale of freedom and absolute enslavement is now ancient history.

FADE OUT.

THE END

The Apparatus