

THE NINJA

Screenplay

by

W.D. Richter

From the Novel

by

Eric Van Lustbader

Revised First Draft
February 28, 1961

THE NINJA

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST (KUMAMOTO 1931) - DAWN

A mud wall surrounds an old compound. Several small farm buildings, a warehouse, isolated, blackened with age, timbers ending under the weight of a crumbling tile roof. The structure seems suspended in a misty, timeless veil of grey-green air that rises eerily from a close by pond.

A LEGEND IS SUPERIMPOSED:

YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE JAPAN

A holy landscape. Or the devil's own residence on earth. THE CAMERA HAS BEEN MOVING SLOWLY ACROSS THIS VISTA AND NOW REVEALS A DIRT ROAD THAT LEADS AWAY FROM THE WAREHOUSE. An automobile is approaching, climbing this narrow path from a small, lifeless village a half mile below.

The car comes as close as it can, just to the edge of the pond, stops. A young Japanese in Western clothing gets out. This is DAIGO KASHIBA at the age of thirty-four. He carries an attaché case, moves forward through tall grass and brush without making the slightest sound.

The warehouse door, padlocked, its surface faded and scarred. An ideogram hand-painted years ago in black ink sits squarely on center: a circle enclosing nine black diamonds. Kuji-kiri. The Chinese word for nine-hands cutting.

Daigo ignores the padlock, instead moves a nondescript wooden pin near the base of the door. This is the real locking mechanism. He enters...

INT. NINE HANDS CUTTING - DAWN

Now abandoned, more than a decade ago this warehouse was a Huma Ninja ryu. Huma Ninja. Demon wind. Daigo pries a plank free from the floor, draws out a small chest. Satisfied it has remained inviolate all these years, he turns now to his attaché case, removes two candles. He lights one, drips its wax onto the floor, sets the other candle upright in the thickening puddle. Daigo lights the second candle with the first, drops more liquid wax onto the floor, plants the first candle here, some eighteen inches from its counterpart.

A CROW high in the rafters watches as Daigo lifts a framed photograph from his attaché case, props it between the two candles, creating an altar of some sort, a Buddhist shrine dedicated to the memory of the man in the photograph: MASANOBU KASHIBA...Daigo's father.

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

CLOSE ON the tip of a sharp steel needle turning in a lathe. A tool is brought to bear against the needle, honing it to a remarkable tolerance. The needle glistens, seems sinister, deadly. THE FACE of the person working the lathe is visible under a hot light in the background, a blur. THE FOCUS SHIFTS, and NICHOLAS LINNEAR is seen clearly as he uses calipers, takes a precise measurement. Nicholas, like Daigo, is thirty-four. His concentration breaks, and he seems to stare off into space...

WE BEGIN TO HEAR A RADIO broadcasting music, foreign and unsatisfying to most Western ears, a Japanese Nōh play called HAGORAMO. A singer, some stringed instruments, simple drumming.

CORPORAL'S VOICE

You mind if I change this stuff,
Colonel?

LT. COL. LINNEAR'S VOICE

You gotta try to understand their
music if you ever hope to under-
stand their minds and their souls,
Corporal. You play any musical
instruments?

CORPORAL'S VOICE

No, sir. I'm tone deaf.

Permission is apparently granted because a tuning dial starts flipping...

EXT. BAD ROAD (TOKYO 1946) - DAY

(BLACK AND WHITE)

JEEP TIRES travel a rutted surface. The image is faint, gradually becoming distinct as RED TITLES begin. The sound track grows more complex, and we're starting to sense the RADIO is in this jeep. STATIC. A NEWS STATION, a G.I. announcer doing his best on Armed Services Radio...

RADIO

Speaking this morning from
Supreme Command Headquarters in
Tokyo, General Douglas MacArthur
said he was "anxiously expecting
the Emperor and the government of
Japan to present to him and to the
world this month, at the very
latest, the draft of a new and
enlightened democratic constitution
for Japan. A constitution that will,
for all time, sever the shackles of
feudalism and steer the country away
from its tragic authoritarian roots."

TITLES CONCLUDE.

INT. ARMY JEEP (TOKYO 1946) - DAY

(B & W)

THE RADIO BLEEDING THROUGH. It's an early portable sitting on the seat of this covered vehicle. The day is somber, and outside the jeep's windows there's much evidence of a conquered city. Several buildings stand in ruin. The AMERICAN PRESENCE seems everywhere, indeed TWO MILITARY POLICE ON MOTORCYCLES escort the jeep.

LT. COL. DENNIS LINNEAR drives while his driver, a YOUNG CORPORAL, sits relegated to the navigator's seat, a map spread across his lap.

RADIO

General MacArthur went on to say that he felt more strongly than ever as Supreme Commander of the Occupying Allied Powers, that Japan, for its own good, must be completely disarmed and demilitarized.

EXT. RECONSTRUCTION SITE (TOKYO 1946) - DAY

(B & W)

U.S. military vehicles equipped with large ploughs slam into the rubble. JAPANESE LABORERS load debris onto dump trucks, toss combustibles into bonfires that smoke on vacant lots already cleared of their bombed-out buildings. A LEGEND IS SUPERIMPOSED:

TOKYO

THE WINTER OF 1946

Odd bits and pieces...a poster of Hirohito on a partial wall, a Rising Sun painted on the side of a building. There's a sadness in the air, but a grim determination as well to rebuild.

Lt. Col. Linnear's little convoy comes upon the scene, at once snarled in the demolition traffic. The M.P.s hit their sirens, clearing a path. Blank stares from the Japanese laborers as the jeep passes, salutes from several AMERICAN SOLDIERS supervising the cleanup.

(B & W)

INT. ARMY JEEP - DAY

The Colonel returns their salutes halfheartedly, not enjoying the power he wields. He accelerates, pulls between his two motorcycles, shouts...

LT. COL. LINNEAR

That'll do it. We'll take it
from here.

The M.P.s can barely hear above their sirens, but they get the message as the jeep rockets ahead of them, and the Colonel waves them off.

EXT. KANTO DISTRICT - DAY

(B & W)

A steady January rain falls on the plains northeast of Tokyo. The Colonel's jeep speeds along a boggy country lane, muddy roads, rural cottages and carts, only an occasional sign of the Occupying Forces now.

INT. ARMY JEEP - DAY

LT. COL. LINNEAR

Where exactly are we?

The Corporal consults his map.

RADIO

Blaming big business interests along with seven huge family holding companies known collectively as zaibatsu for much of the country's "immoral aggressive expansionism," General MacArthur renewed his vow to vigorously suppress any Japanese institutions in the public or private sector that he deemed "expressive of the spirit of militarism."

The Colonel turns his radio off.

CORPORAL

About two miles outside of Bon-sai Mu-ra. We should be near some big deal shrine, Shinto, I think...

LT. COL. LINNEAR

There.

EXT. KANTO DISTRICT - DAY

(B & W)

The Hikawa Shrine, built in 1180, the oldest and largest Shinto shrine in the area. Nestled in a small forest, its deep black and white lacquer glisten in the rain, majestic, sliding from view now as the jeep moves on.

EXT. BON-SAI MU-RA - DAY

Lt. Colonel Linnear parks at the top of a simple street lined with Japanese cottages. Bon-sai Mu-ra is little more than a provincial village set among gardens.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
You stay here with the jeep. I
don't want a goddamn crowd down
there.

CORPORAL
Yes, sir. Sir...

The Colonel looks back.

CORPORAL
I hope it's a boy.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
Thank you.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

(B & W)

CHIYO LINNEAR, the Colonel's Japanese wife, is giving birth. Several WOMEN assist her, chief among them her sister, TAMI KASHIBA, working easily with the other midwives.

MASANOBU KASHIBA plays with a small child propped on the cold wooden floor of an adjoining room. The baby is Daigo at the age of six months, Masanobu and Tami's son.

A midwife appears to announce IN JAPANESE the birth of Daigo's cousin, NICHOLAS LINNEAR. Masanobu rises, leaves his little son because he has just now seen something through an open doorway. Quickly Masanobu collects his shoes, an umbrella, exits the house.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

(B & W)

Masanobu emerges, opening his large black umbrella, a very Western umbrella. He wears a suit and tie, expensive clothing. He runs toward Lt. Col. Linnear whom he's seen striding unprotected down the muddy street, past rows of delicate bon-sai set upon benches before each house. Masanobu's singular purpose is to provide the Colonel with cover from the rain.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
Where the hell's my wife?

MASANOBU
(pointing)
Please...

The Colonel never gives Masanobu a chance to cover him with the umbrella though the Japanese tries mightily...even subserviently.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
You brought her here? I mean,
Jesus Christ, man...there's a
hospital...

MASANOBU
She would have him no other way.

The Colonel stops, looks at Masanobu who finally manages to raise his umbrella over the American's head.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
"Him?"

MASANOBU
You have a son. Congratulations...

The Colonel smiles like a kid. He wants this child very much. Masanobu extends his hand. The Colonel takes it, and the two men shake, the shake exaggerated, Masanobu capitalizing on this opportunity.

MASANOBU
Have you heard? Can you answer my
concern of the steel reparations, Dennis?

The Colonel regards Masanobu, his guard never really down.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
We're going to dismantle all
steel-making capacity over two
and a half million tons a year.

MASANOBU
But Japan produces eleven million
tons now.

LT. COL. LINNEAR
Before the war she managed with
a million and a half. We're
being very generous, I think.

The two men stare at each other for a moment, Masanobu finally agreeing, bowing his head in deference to the Colonel. The Colonel goes inside, leaves Masanobu standing under his American umbrella in the rain, a look of resolve on his face, nothing humble about the man now.

INT. HIKAWA SHRINE (TOKYO SUBURB 1946) -DAY

(B & W)

Nicholas Linnear, barely a month old, undergoes a Shinto rite of purity called Oharai, a cleansing administered by a PRIEST as Chiyo cradles her tiny son. The Colonel stands a few paces off, part of the ceremony and yet clearly something of an outsider. His is the only Western face present.

Masanobu and Tami witness the ceremony with their own child Daigo held in his father's arms.

A magnificent PLASTER HORSE sits in a great wooden cage near the priest. The animal is a Kami for this shrine, venerated for its link to the gods, but like much else transpiring today, its significance escapes us, beguiles us, keeps us on the periphery with the Colonel.

Tami takes Daigo from Masanobu's arms, takes the older child to Nicholas in Chiyo's arms. And the two sisters bring their babies together, make the small hands touch...

EXT. HIKAWA SHRINE - DAY

(B & W)

Lt. Col. Linnear and Masanobu Kashiba are the first to exit, TWO YOUNG BODYGUARDS moving close to Masanobu, the Colonel pulling ahead of the pack, moving away toward a military car...

...as SEVERAL RAGGED JAPANESE kneeling at the side of the path bow low when Masanobu passes. One of them, a man called ARASHI (his face deeply scarred), suddenly speaks...IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES...

ARASHI

It is time! It is time! We
need your support...

Masanobu's bodyguards move in quickly, one of them laying a hand on Arashi. Lt. Col. Linnear turns from his car in time to see the beggar react swiftly, strike out and send the bodyguard sprawling!

Chiyo and Tami emerge from the shrine with their babies, see the second bodyguard move toward Arashi...back up, frightened when the beggar knits his fingers together, forms a complex pattern, a magical in sign. Again to Masanobu...

ARASHI

You need us!

Masanobu moves on, but the Colonel's fascinated, unnerved...*he walks*
BACK TO MASAN

LT. COL. LINNEAR

What the hell was that all about?

MASANOBU

Misguided patriots.

EXT. VILLAGE (KUMAMOTO 1981) - DAY

Only a DOG stirs. The village is in ruin, abandoned like the old warehouse that once supported the economy.

AN ELDERLY JAPANESE MAN appears in the doorway of a dilapidated building. He looks up that dirt roadway toward the warehouse...and though he's thirty-five years older now, we know him instantly by those frightful scars: Arashi.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Arashi has come on foot almost a full half mile now, and he can see Daigo's automobile parked incongruously at pond's edge.

He moves past the car, enters the shade of the warehouse eaves. He stops, listens to the wind. Remarkably, he is even less a disturbance to the natural order than was Daigo. He unlocks the warehouse door, employing the same hidden pin.

INT. NINE HANDS CUTTING - DAY

In this light it is difficult to see Daigo, but he is bare-back now, his body lean and hard. He freezes...though we have heard no warning sound of the other's presence.

Arashi stands across the room. Daigo sees him...and bows. A deep, reverential bow. The old man acknowledges it with just the slightest nod, speaks in Japanese. SUBTITLES TRANSLATE.

ARASHI

You have come back. Can I rest?

And he squats, never taking his eyes off the younger man who now removes a series of small metal objects from the chest. These are throwing blades, shuriken. Some are star-shaped, others barbed, several simply long delicate needles.

Next Daigo produces from the container a special costume, Shinobi shozoku. It consists of four parts (jacket, trousers, shoes, hood) and is of a magical red-black hue. Its lining, which can be turned outward if necessary, is the deepest, persimmon. Daigo slips the jacket on and seems almost to vanish.

A sword. To a warrior his living soul, but to a ninja just another weapon, part of his arsenal. Daigo lifts it from the chest, examines it only for a second, then sheaths it in a scabbard that appears much too long. Something else must be secreted in its bottom.

Arashi watches as Daigo's fingers move through the air drawing alternately five horizontal then four vertical lines. He begins to speak softly, and the old man joins in unison, the prayer Buddhist, asking for power to perform dangerous deeds. Daigo knits his fingers together, a series of in signs. The ceremony is called Kuji-Kiri. Nine hands cutting.

Daigo's fingers move out of frame, leave only blackness behind.

EXT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1946) - DAY (B & W)

Daigo, one-year-old, scowling in the face of a spoonful of American baby food Tami attempts to give him.

Chiyo sits near her sister, cradling her own baby, six-month-old Nicholas. The food is offered to the younger child...and Nicholas too pulls away from it, starts to cry as...

AN AMERICAN MILITARY STAFF CAR whips into the courtyard of the Linnear's modest Japanese house.

LT. COL. LINNEAR

What're you doin' to my son?

The Colonel's emerging from the house, carrying a briefcase, rushing out to meet the car.

CHIYO

Trying to feed him American baby food...

LT. COL. LINNEAR

He's too damn smart for that.

And the Colonel snatches his son away for a moment, tosses Nicholas skyward in such a vigorous, reckless way that it frightens Chiyo as much as it exhilarates and delights little Nicholas.

LT. COL. LINNEAR

(catching his son)

Don't want to baby the little son of a bitch!

The Colonel returns his son to Chiyo, kisses his wife on the lips...

LT. COL. LINNEAR

With any luck, I'll be back in a few hours.

His mood darkens as he heads for the waiting staff car.

EXT. MATSUMOTO RESIDENCE (TOKYO 1946) - DAY (B & W)

A large gravel courtyard. This is the palatial home of Jōji Matsumoto, an ultraconservative lawyer who along with members of the Shidehara government is reworking the first Japanese draft of the constitution.

Two United States Army staff cars enter the compound. Five men get out. GEN. COURTNEY A. WHITNEY, COL. KADES, Lt. Col. Linnear, COMMANDER HUSSEY, and the General's personal aide, a no-nonsense MAJOR who deals with his opposites on the Japanese side, clearing a path into the big house.

INT. MATSUMOTO RESIDENCE - DAY (B & W)

The Americans sweep down a long corridor...

LT. COL. LINNEAR
No matter how you rationalize it,
General Whitney, nothing you force
on people is ever democratic.

GEN. WHITNEY
Then it'll be our job, Colonel, to
make the thing as palatable to the
Japanese mind as possible.

They're admitted to a study at the rear of the house, suddenly finding themselves outnumbered by Japanese: DR. MATSUMOTO, FOREIGN MINISTER SHIGERU YOSHIDA, VICE-CHIEF SHIRASU of the Central Liaison Office, PREMIER SHIDEHARA himself, his cabinet secretary NARAHASHI, and a sixth individual whom we recognize at once: MASANOBU KASHIBA, Administrator of a nationwide network of Local Liaison Offices. These men represent a complex mix of government and business interests, but all we need sense is that they are powerful and dangerous.

A copy of the newest Japanese constitution lies spread on a table before them, and since they have obviously been at work "revising" it, the real purpose of this American visit will be rather surprising.

Dr. Matsumoto arranges their latest effort into a neat pile.

DR. MATSUMOTO
Though we have labored with great
care for many months to prepare
the first draft of our new consti-
tution, we accept, as Gen. MacArthur
points out, the inadequacy of our
efforts. We are now most thankful
for the privilege of finding our
errors and feel sincerely that these
alterations will very much please the
Supreme Commander, General MacArthur.

Matsumoto bows deeply as he hands the draft over to Gen. Whitney.

GEN. WHITNEY

This is in Japanese.

DR. MATSUMOTO

My apologies. We must learn to work as rapidly and as efficiently as the Americans. A translation is being prepared.

GEN. WHITNEY

Well, that won't be necessary, doctor. There's been a change of plans.

Gen. Whitney's hand drifts out toward Lt. Col. Linnear whose task it is to produce the American draft from his briefcase. The Colonel locks eyes with Masanobu as the General hefts this new constitution...

GEN. WHITNEY

I have brought with me a document, a draft of the constitution that already has the Supreme Commander's approval.

Stunned, Dr. Matsumoto accepts it, opens it. The text is in English.

DR. MATSUMOTO

I don't understand. Who prepared this?

GEN. WHITNEY

I did. We did. My staff.

Whitney stares the Japanese down. He knows he's doing the right and honorable thing.

GEN. WHITNEY

You can read it right now. Here's some copies. We'll wait. Then commence discussions.

LT. COL. LINNEAR

Gen. MacArthur is willing to consider certain modifications.

GEN. WHITNEY

Minor modifications.

DR. MATSUMOTO

But, general, we understand the mind of our people better than...

GEN. WHITNEY

There's just three things the Supreme Commander wants to see:
One: Japan has got to abolish her armed forces and renounce war.
Two: sovereignty is to be vested in the people, not the Emperor who will become, henceforth, merely a symbol of the state. And three: the peerage is to be abolished, the property of the Imperial household returned to the state. And the "state" from now on is the Japanese people.

As General Whitney talks, we study Masanobu, try to fathom his inexpressive face. He forces Lt. Col. Linnear to meet his glance. The Colonel looks away, stares straight ahead, uncomfortable.

GEN. WHITNEY

If you're not prepared to sponsor this document, Premier Shidehara, then General MacArthur will go over your head to the Japanese people. If you support it, the General will support you.

Silence. Dr. Matsumoto exchanges a few quick words in Japanese with Premier Shidehara. Gen. Whitney drifts toward a window overlooking a beautiful porch. He glances back at Lt. Col. Linnear, actually dares a smug wink...

...which Masunobu sees.

DR. MATSUMOTO

Gen. Whitney, if you and your colleagues would be so kind as to take tea on my porch...

GEN. WHITNEY

You got it.

The door is opened by a SERVANT...ARASHI. Working as a servant in Matsamoto's house, this strange, intense man catches Masanobu's eye, reads the anger and shame on Masanobu's face.

GEN. WHITNEY

(to his staff)

Gentlemen, let's step outside and bask in the warmth of the atomic sunshine.

Gen. Whitney vanishes in a glow of yellow light. His secretary Col. Kades, Commander Hussey, and Lt. Col. Linnear all follow.

EXT. MATSUMOTO PORCH - DAY

(B & W)

COL. KADES

How do you gauge it?

GEN. WHITNEY

Took 'em completely by surprise.
They're scared shitless.

Through the window, Lt. Col. Linnear can see the Japanese beginning to gather around their newest constitution.

A LOUD NOISE! SEVERAL U.S. AIRCRAFT fly remarkably low over the house. The Japanese hear them, see them...

COMMANDER HUSSEY

(amused)

Goddamnit, Courtney, you plan that?

GEN. WHITNEY

What, me?

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

Nicholas Linnear working at his lathe, on that long needle. He lowers a pair of safety goggles over his eyes, grinds the hard steel instrument spinning in the foreground.

The exterior of a modern house. White, functional, its design clearly influenced by things Japanese. THE SOUND OF THE LATHE GRINDING OVER THIS. A huge BLACK CROW suddenly lands on the house, dwarfing it and jarring our perspective.

NICHOLAS' VOICE

Away! Off!

The whole room. The house is only a model sitting in front of a window, the Atlantic Ocean visible beyond. Nicholas leaves his task at the lathe as the crow lifts away from its bold perch.

There is another man in the room, an older man, VINCENT ITO, working as well. Nicholas opens a door to the beach.

NICHOLAS

Out!

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

A car arrives as the black crow wings skyward. A SIMPLE LEGEND IS SUPERIMPOSED:

:-- MONTAUK, NEW YORK

Very few houses dot this desolate strip of beach, and most of them are already boarded for winter.

JUSTINE TOMKINS gets out of the car with an enormous sack of groceries. She approaches the house, and as she reaches its porch, the crow dives from out of nowhere swiping at her groceries, scavenging!

JUSTINE
Jesus Christ! Nicholas!

The door opens.

NICHOLAS
Let me take those.

JUSTINE
(keeping the groceries)
You have to get rid of that thing,
I mean it. It hates me.

NICHOLAS
Give me the bag. He knows you're
afraid of him, that's why.

She won't let Nicholas take the burden.

JUSTINE
I am not.

NICHOLAS
Well maybe he's afraid of you.

Squeezing past him, she kisses Nicholas in the doorway, rather passionately, goes inside. Nicholas looks up at the sky. It's empty. He hears the crow, a defiant caw. The bird sits on a tree, looking back at him.

INT. U.S. ARMY CHURCH (TOKYO 1951) - DAY

(B & W)

An Episcopalian service in progress at a simple all-denominational Protestant base chapel. Nicholas Linnear, six years old, sits next to his father (a full colonel now). Chiyo is absent.

REVEREND
Why do you not understand my speech?
Even because ye cannot hear my word.
Ye are of your father the devil, and
the lusts of your father ye will do.
He was not a murderer from the
beginning, and abode not in the truth,
because there is no truth in him.
When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh
of his own: for he is a liar, and the
father of it.

The REVEREND closes his bible and the CHOIR begins to sing.

A SHORT TIME LATER. THE SERVICE IS OVER, THE CHAPEL EMPTY
 SAVE FOR COL. LINNEAR AND HIS SON. The Colonel walks slowly
 about the perimeter, little Nicholas following, stopping
 with his father before a stained glass window depicting
 Christ in a long flowing white robe, kneeling, praying on
 the mount.

COL. LINNEAR

He is also your god, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

Mother says there are many gods.

COL. LINNEAR

She's right, I'm afraid. The world's
 overflowing with 'em. But Jesus
 Christ, not Buddha, will fill your
 heart in heaven. Your mother's
 giving you something very beautiful,
 but her Shinto will only comfort you
 here on earth.

NICHOLAS

But that's where I am.

COL. LINNEAR

You can have both worlds, Nicholas.
 The best of both.

A DOOR OPENS BEHIND THEM, A SUDDEN INTRUSION, MORE SOLDIERS
 POURING IN FOR THE NEXT SERVICE...

EXT. FOREST (KUMAMOTO 1951) - DAY

(B & W)

Sudden violence...two ninja, black as death, but young boys,
 that much we can tell, locked in mean-spirited hand-to-hand
 combat before a group of OLDER MEN...Arashi among them. That
 familiar warehouse, today in excellent repair, forms a back-
 drop for this savage scene.

Masanobu Kashiba. He's one of the observers, indeed the only
 person present besides a man called WATARU YOSHIHARA not
 dressed in traditional ninja attire.

The fight. One boy considerably larger and older than the
 other, his greater experience serving him well as he moves
 so fast the eye almost misses things...his feet propelling
 him off a tree, up and over the younger ninja's head, his
 fists driving savagely into his adversary's back! The con-
 test ends, older boy standing above younger, waiting for the
 slightest movements to cue another attack.

MASANOBU

Daigo!

Masanobu rises, approaches the fallen child, peels away its black hood...Daigo, his son, age six...Masanobu helps the boy to his feet, steadies him...then shoves him forward at his more powerful opponent! The older ninja is ready, retaliating with a brutal thumb blow (yubi) to Daigo's kidney! Again Daigo is knocked to the ground, looking up at his father's stern face. Masanobu shows no pity, walks off through the circle of men toward an automobile he's driven to this remote training site above the village.

Wataru Yoshihara lingers a moment to give Arashi a thick envelope, the two men bowing...money changing hands.

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1951) - DAY

(B & W)

An ambitious birthday party is being thrown by the Linnears for their son and his cousin, these two little boys so close in age that they're treated almost as twins by their adoring mothers.

The affair has a distinctly American feel, AMERICAN SERVICE KIDS filling the guest list, A MILITARY COMBO offering "Happy Birthday," even an AMERICAN CLOWN wandering around playing tricks on the children.

Nicholas (in Eastern clothing) sits at one end of a long crowded party table, Daigo (the only child besides Nicholas dresses as a Japanese) sits at the other, heaps of unopened presents almost obscuring the cousins.

Everyone is singing "Happy Birthday," the Colonel even getting Tami and Masanobu to join in. Chiyo sings, laughs. It's a splendid affair from the adults' point of view...until a husky, little tow-headed kid gets his hands on one of Nicholas' still-wrapped presents.

NICHOLAS

That's mine.

The instant the tow-head realizes Nicholas is upset, his face lights up and he throws the box to the ground. Other children laugh. Col Linnear sees this, sees that his wife is watching as well.

Nicholas recovers his present. The tow-head smiles, stretches the corners of his eyes into slits with his fingertips.

TOW-HEAD

Solly, Nichorus.

Daigo looks over at his father. And Masanobu motions slightly with his head. Daigo moves like a shot toward the tow-head, slams him to the ground! Pandemonium, shouting, crying...

MASANOBU

Daigo!

Masanobu pulls his son off the American child. Nicholas runs from the table with his present, off across the lawn toward a stand of magnificent cryptomeria.

The clown jumps into the breach, juggling oranges, relieving the tension. Chiyo starts after Nicholas, but the Colonel stops her.

EXT. CRYPTOMERIA FOREST - DAY

(B & W)

Nicholas hurls his present against a tree, struggling to control his anger. He picks up a stick, smashes it too against the tree. Silence. Just the sounds of the forest.

Nicholas walks several yards before a break in the trees affords him a sudden view onto the adjoining property where an OLD MAN works through a remarkable set of exercises, his movements so effortless and serene that he seems scarcely to expend any physical energy. Nicholas is fascinated.

COL. LINNEAR

He's totally at peace with himself.

Nicholas spins around. His father stands only a few yards away, in wonderful cool green shadows, watching the stranger exercise too.

NICHOLAS

How does he do it? He's so old...

COL. LINNEAR

Bushido.

NICHOLAS

Bushido?

COL. LINNEAR

The way of the warrior.

Nicholas looks back at the old man, at his father again.

NICHOLAS

I want to learn bushido.

The Colonel regards his son, knows by now the boy's fierce determination.

INT. SUPREME COMMAND HQ (TOKYO 1951) - EVENING

(B & W)

SCAP MILITARY POLICE, three of them escorting Masanobu Kashibu down a long corridor. They walk rapidly, no emotion apparent on Masanobu's face. His hands are manacled.

INT. SUPREME COMMAND HQ (TOKYO 1951) - EVENING (B & W)

COLONELS MURCHISON, HALL, STEGLEY, and GARTHWAITE sit around a polished mahogany table in a room poorly lighted by a few table lamps.

Dennis Linnear sits opposite them, examining documents provided for his perusal. It's after hours. They're his friends, and they're doing him a favor.

COL. LINNEAR

Black Dragon. Dark Ocean. This is nothing new. We've all been aware for years these secret societies were buying elections, putting pressure on the Japanese government to create another army...

COL. MURCHINSON

- But now they're exploiting Harry Truman's fear of the Chinese and the Russians. And they're getting away with murder.

COL. LINNEAR

Murder? I don't see my brother-in-law a part of that. It's not what Masanobu's all about. The only war he'll fight is an economic one. He wants a goddamn steel empire.

COL. STEGLER

At any cost.

COL. LINNEAR

Be specific, Walter.

COL. STEGLER

Ninja.

COL. LINNEAR

Ninja?

COL. GARTHWAITE

Ninjitsu. He's part of a reactionary, ultra-militaristic clan. They've started to train assassins, guerillas. They're going underground to resist democratic reform in Japan to the last man. Unless Harry Truman caves in first and rearms the country. Either way, the Japanese people lose.

There's a knock at the door.

COL. MURCHINSON

Come in.

Masanobu, still handcuffed. He enters, leaving his police escort out in the hall.

COL. LINNEAR

Sit down.

MASANOBU

Thank you, Dennis.

Col. Murchinson opens a folder, puts on a pair of reading glasses. The atmosphere is tense, strained.

COL. MURCHISON

Mr. Kashiba, I am going to read you a few pertinent sentences from the Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive, dated 29 August, 1945. "High officials of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters... officials of the Japanese government, and other important exponents of militarism and aggression will be taken into custody and held for future disposition. Militarism and ultra nationalism, in doctrine and practice, including paramilitary training, shall be eliminated from the educational system."

(pause)

The charges, sir, are "crimes against the people of Japan."

Masanobu stares back at Murchinson.

COL. LINNEAR

Is it true?

MASANOBU

What I say is of little importance. It is what the Americans believe that matters.

COL. LINNEAR

Is it true?

MASANOBU

No.

The Colonel takes measure of his brother-in-law.

COL. LINNEAR
I'll see what I can do.

A clear signal for the Japanese to absent himself. Masanobu rises, opens the door with some difficulty, rejoins the military police outside. Pause.

COL. LINNEAR
He's lying.

This acceptance of Masanobu's villainy drains a good deal of the tension from the room.

COL. MURCHISON
That's that.
(closes the folder)
I'm being shipped back to
Washington, Dennis.

The news takes Col. Linnear by surprise.

COL. HALL
And they're going to dump
MacArthur too.

COL. LINNEAR
You know that for a fact?

COL. HALL
Next week. I talked to a senator.

This is exceedingly disturbing.

COL. LINNEAR
Why?

COL. STEGLER
Because Mac wants to bomb China.

COL. LINNEAR
Bomb China? Jesus Christ.

COL. MURCHISON
They're all running scared from
the communists. Even MacArthur
now.

COL. LINNEAR
It's not the communists. We can't
let Japan rearm. That's the thing to
be concerned about.

COL. STEGLER
Nobody in this room is arguing with
you.

They're all looking at Linnear, as if somehow suddenly depending on him...

COL. LINNEAR
Okay, what's this all about?
They'll be getting rid of me
too then.

It's not clear whether he means Washington or the Japanese.

COL. MURCHINSON
No. You're good P.R. You've got
a Japanese wife, a son. Family's
very important here. Even Harry
Truman knows that, for Christ sakes.

COL. STEGLER
But the rest of us broke our asses
for nothing. It's heading right
back to Pearl Harbor.

COL. HALL
No. It won't be bombs this time.
This time it'll be dollars, I'm
convinced of that.

COL. GARTHWAITE
It was dollars last time too, and
you know it, my friend. Look at
his own goddamn brother-in-law
out there. The bastard's richer
now than he was before the war.
Even if we throw 'em in jail for
a year, his steel company's twice
as big as...

COL. LINNEAR
So don't. Let him go free.

COL. HALL
No way.

COL. LINNEAR
Put him in prison, and someone else
will take his place. Let him go
free and he'll be a dog on a leash.
Let's use him.

COL. GARTHWAITE
Too dangerous.

COL. LINNEAR
He's a very arrogant man. He'll
drop his guard. Maybe he'll lead
us to the center.

The colonels look at each other. Dennis Linnear is an impressive figure. The idea has its appeal.

COL. GARTHWAITE

I hope to hell you're not advocating this because he's your brother-in-law.

COL. HALL

Come on, Jack, don't be ridiculous.

Pause. Col. Linnear looks at them all with that penetrating, fanatical gaze he can always muster in a crunch.

COL. LINNEAR

I don't like the man, gentlemen.
My wife thinks family is everything.
I don't.

EXT. BEACH (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

A gray cloudless sky. A primitive black kite cuts across the screen. It resembles a demon bird, huge learing eyes, a face like a charred human skeleton, long sharp wings, horsehair tassels snapping at the tips. And then the SOUND OF A BIRD, confusing because it can't have come from this strange kite.

The crow, enormous, blacker than the kite, diving on the kite! The kite banks sharply, eludes its attacker.

Nicholas Linnear stands on the sand, working the thick guidewires of his kite, making the crow change direction again and again.

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - DAY

Justine Tomkins works with a metal tape and a two-foot level, consulting a blueprint, making notes on a legal pad. But Nicholas and the kite and the crow distract her. She stops writing for a moment, watches Nicholas suddenly run across the sand at water's edge, forcing the crow to give chase.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The crow dives at Nicholas! He ducks. The crow turns gracefully, soars back at Nicholas for another attack. But Nicholas extends his arm, and the crow responds, begins a noiseless glide, landing weightlessly on the outstretched arm.

Nicholas looks at the unfinished house. We've seen this structure before: the model in Nicholas' workroom. Justine's visible within, measuring again...

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - DAY ,

Wind whips through. The crow takes the chimney top for a perch. Nicholas ties his kite to the porch, moves through some 2x4 framing that will one day hold interior walls. He comes up behind Justine...silently...grabs her! She resists for a moment, then lets him pin her against a king stud.

NICHOLAS

Give up?

JUSTINE

Never.

He kisses her, and she responds. But...

JUSTINE

We're building a crooked house,
Nicholas. It's a disaster area.

She ducks away, sets the level against some framing.

JUSTINE

You're out here all day. I'm in
the city. You've got to keep
checking on them.

NICHOLAS

I'm busy too.

He kicks at the 2x4, takes the level out of her hand, checks the effect of his blow.

JUSTINE

You're going to go around beating
the place into shape? This whole
wall is a foot out of place...

NICHOLAS

Hey...

JUSTINE

And that throws the living room
into...here...look...

NICHOLAS

Hey. It's only a house.

JUSTINE

It's my house.

He's on top of her again.

NICHOLAS

Our house.

JUSTINE

I'm sorry. But I can't stand
incompetence...and I can't wait
to move out here...

(a kiss)

...and sleep here...

NICHOLAS

Why wait?

And he begins to seduce her, gets no resistance. The crow's
got a front-row seat.

INT. DŌJŌ (TOKYO 1958) - DAY

(B & W)

Nicholas is thirteen-years old, dressed in a loose-fitting
white cotton outfit, in a room crowded with dozens of other
JAPANESE BOYS his age, all of them dressed alike and matched
one-on-one, practicing kendo with long bamboo staffs called
shinai. The way of the sword. It is a raucous thing to see,
all these youngsters slashing at each other, blocking each
other's assault as an instructor, ZAMA, moves among the
forest of bamboo, barking orders above the din. A LEGEND IS
SUPERIMPOSED:

TOKYO 1958

EXT. DŌJŌ YARD - DAY

(B & W)

Hard work is over, and the boys are bathing, washing themselves
at a well in the dōjō courtyard, changing into their street
clothing. It seems chaotic, fun, like any locker room anywhere,
but then we realize that a small group is coalescing, dividing
into pairs, SIX BOYS moving through their compatriots with a
purpose undetected by most.

They begin to surround Nicholas, coming at him from all sides
as he sits on a bench putting his American clothing on.
Sensing their intent before they're really close enough to
act, Nicholas checks, sizes them up. They speak to him in
JAPANESE, and there are SUBTITLES...

FIRST BOY

What are you doing here? This is
where I sit.

Clearly an audacious lie, a provocation. Nicholas doesn't
respond, continues to dress.

SECOND BOY

Don't you have anything to say?

THIRD BOY

Maybe he doesn't understand
Japanese. Speak to him in English
like you must to apes in the zoo.

FIRST BOY
(suddenly in English)
I want an answer, ape. Why are
you stinking up my place?

NICHOLAS
(in Japanese)
The sun rises every day in the
East and sets everyday in the
West, and every day you grow more
foolish.

THE CONVERSATION REMAINS IN JAPANESE NOW...

SECOND BOY
The ape speaks!

FIRST BOY
(angry)
Shut up!

He steps forward...and without warning chops downward toward
Nicholas' exposed neck! Nicholas blocks the bigger boy's
blow, rises! But the others move in fast, six against one...
quick, nasty blows, several hitting Nicholas!

DAIGO
Hold on!

The boys turn to see who's spoken, and we hear "Daigo, Daigo..."
passed among them in whispered warnings. They back away from
Nicholas as Daigo advances from the main building.

SECOND BOY
It's the foreign ape. Making
trouble again.

DAIGO
Is that so? One against six? Do
you think that's honorable?

Daigo regards the little gang...slams the edge of his hand
into Nicholas' stomach. Nicholas pitches forward, his head
touching the ground as if in prayer, his lungs bursting.

Zama appears, still some distance off, not yet able to see
the situation clearly. Daigo kneels close to his cousin,
lifts Nicholas' head by a hank of hair.

DAIGO
Don't bother these people anymore,
cousin. Where do you get your
barbarian manners? From you father?

He lets Nicholas' head drop to the dirt again. Nicholas retches. Daigo melts back into the crowd...but Zama has seen his savagery from across the yard.

EXT. MATSUMOTO RESIDENCE (TOKYO 1960) - NIGHT (B & W)

Limousines and CHAUFFEURS clog the courtyard. Mr. Matsumoto's big home glows with hospitality, fills the night air with an ORCHESTRA'S SWEET SOUNDS. A LEGEND IS SUPERMINPOSED:

TOKYO 1960

A Ford station wagon parks amid all the official cars, and the Linnears get out, Nicholas dressed stiffly in a dark suit. He is fourteen years old now.

INT. MATSUMOTO RESIDENCE - NIGHT (B & W)

A zaibatsu party in progress, big business, a very political affair with WESTERN MUSIC to make all the American entrepreneurs, congressmen, senators, and soldiers feel right at home.

A JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHER works the crowd, snapping pictures of significant groupings as glasses of champagne on silver trays float everywhere.

Daigo waltzes with a lovely girl his own age, YUKI JOKOIN, slim, tall, "willowy" a Westerner might call her. She wears a dove-gray kimono with a feudal midnight-blue wheel-and-spoke pattern embroidered on the back. Yuki looks across the room as the Linnears walk by, Nicholas and Daigo exchanging looks.

COL. LINNEAR

There's more money in this room
than we got in Fort Knox.

CHIYO

Be nice, Dennis, please.

Only Nicholas has overheard this aside between his parents.

ANGLE ON MASANOBU, black tie, drinking champagne with Wataru Yoshihara, with a few AMERICANS (black-tie also), and a young major we should recognize as General Whitney's aid.

Masanobu bows to Chiyo, shakes the Colonel's hand, makes a few quick introductions.

MASANOBU

Col. and Mrs. Linnear...Senator
Burgoyne, Senator Verranzano, Mr.
Lake, you know my associate Mr.
Yoshihara.

COL. LINNEAR
How do you do, gentlemen?

SEN. BURGOYNE
We were just getting a lecture
from your comrade-in-arms here,
Col. Linnear, about "excessive
concentration of economic power."

COL. LINNEAR
Watch it, major, men have been
killed for less around this town.

MASANOBU
Excuse me...

And he's gone, taking Chiyo over to another conversational
group that includes the host, Jōji Matsumoto, Matsumoto
catching Col. Linnear's eye, bowing his head ever-so-slightly
in greeting.

WHITNEY'S AIDE
You boys are just afraid that what
we learned over here about trust-
busting, we'll re-export back to
the States.

SEN. VERRANZANO
I'm all for trust-busting, major...

COL. LINNEAR
Because it's goddamn American to be
against monopolies and cartels,
right.

MR. LAKE
Right as rain. But at the same
time you can't make the world safe
for demoncracy out of a corner
grocery store. You need supermarkets.

The Colonel is listening to all this, watching his wife
across the room..

WHITNEY'S AIDE
The fact is we told the Japanese
we were gonna save them from
communism...

COL. LINNEAR
But who the hell's gonna save them
from the people that dragged them
into war in the first place?

SEN. BURGOYNE

Colonel, nobody is anxious to help
rebuild the economic power base
Japan's pre-war cartels enjoyed...

COL. LINNEAR

Like hell. You all are. That's
what all this champagne's about,
isn't it?

There's an icy silence, the Colonel going too far too fast.

WHITNEY'S AIDE

I think maybe we should step
outside for some air, sir...

He's trying to do the Colonel a favor. Mr. Yoshihara has
expressed his keen disapproval to the senators with a glance.
Nicholas moves away, sits in a chair by the wall to watch the
dancers as Sen. Varranzano goes after...

EXT. MATSUMOTO RESIDENCE - NIGHT

(B & W)

...Col. Linnear and the major.

SEN. VARRANZANO

You're quite an asshole, mister,
you know that? You don't know
shit and people that don't know
shit need to keep their mouth shut.

COL. LINNEAR

I know that when the war broke out
General Electric owned 15% of Tokyo
Electric. I know Goodrich Tire and
Rubber got caught with a ton of cash
invested in Yokohama Rubber...

WHITNEY'S AIDE

You're cutting your own balls off,
Colonel.

COL. LINNEAR

Why? Because Westinghouse was all
tangled up with Mitsubishi Electric?
That's not my fault.

INT. MATSUMOTO RESIDENCE - NIGHT

(B & W)

MASANOBU

Nicholas.

His uncle has moved in behind him. Yuki stands with her hand
in Masanobu's. Daigo is nowhere to be seen. IN JAPANESE WITH
SUBTITLES:

MASANOBU

Nicholas, will you do me the honor
of dancing with Miss Yuki Jokoin?
She is my niece from Kyoto, and
she's come to Tokyo for a brief
visit.

Up close like this, Yuki is absolutely astonishing, her eyes
enormous, liquid and feral. She takes Nicholas' hand...

Nicholas and Yuki dance...slowly, suddenly just inches apart.
Nicholas seems so serious. Yuki smiles...keeps smiling,
finally forces a grin out of Nicholas.

YUKI

I speak English.

NICHOLAS

I speak Japanese.

YUKI

So which will it be?

Nicholas holds her close, feeling the heat from her body, the
subtle shifting of flesh beneath her thin kimono. English:

YUKI

All everyone here talks about is
war and business.

NICHOLAS

I don't.

YUKI

Even your cousin.

NICHOLAS

Daigo?

YUKI

He's afraid of you.

NICHOLAS

No.

YUKI

Yes. Of what you represent.

NICHOLAS

I don't represent any one but
myself.

Yuki smiles, swaying weightlessly to the music...pressing her leg between his. Nicholas is clearly startled by the move. Now Yuki raises the stakes, pushes discreetly forward, and Nicholas feels the hot contact with her thigh...and then incredibly her pubic mound. He looks at the other dancers...no one else has noticed.

YUKI

I think what we do here, our generation, that's what's important.

She stares into Nicholas' eyes, continues to rub herself lightly back and forth against him.

NICHOLAS

You mean we're making history?

It seems as if they're joined by a hardening fulcrum; Nicholas scarcely daring to breathe less some precipitous move dislodge them.

YUKI

Yes. The two of us. Together.
White and black. Yin and Yang.

Is she mocking him? His gaze falls upon Daigo on the edge of the dance floor, staring back...jealously.

EXT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1960) - DAY.

(B & W)

A cold, crisp Sunday. The Colonel works in his Japanese garden in civilian clothes, raking leaves into a pile. He squats, sets the leaves aflame with a Ronson lighter. He stares into the flames, his thoughts elsewhere.

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE - DAY

(B & W)

Chiyo slices fresh vegetables. Nicholas enters, takes a green onion, munches on it, watches his father through the kitchen window. Conversation between mother and son is in JAPANESE with SUBTITLES.

CHIYO

Will you go to the dōjō today?

NICHOLAS

Father looks tired. I should stay here with him. Help him.

CHIYO

Help yourself, Nicholas.

Nicholas turns toward his mother, surprised at the implied criticism of the Colonel...

CHIYO

You have many more choices than
your father.

NICHOLAS

Too many.

CHIYO

Pick only one and give yourself
over to it entirely. See with
your heart the natural beauty of
things.

Chiyo turns away, discreetly, a lovely, calming influence on
Nicholas.

He looks outside again. The Colonel is raking more leaves.
He seems the loneliest figure against the cryptomeria.

INT. LINNEAR DINING ROOM - LATE DAY

(B & W)

The Linnears eat a traditional Japanese Sunday meal in silence. Nicholas watches his parents from the corners of his eyes. There is a strange tension in the air. Finally...

COL. LINNEAR

You met a pretty girl last night.

NICHOLAS

Yes.

This goes nowhere. More silence.

COL. LINNEAR

You know what that Italian senator, Verranzano, you know what he said to me? He said I was un-American.

Chiyo knows where this is heading. She gets up to serve more food. Nicholas offers to help her.

COL. LINNEAR

Stay put.

That was almost an order. The Colonel is upset and confused, trying to sort things out and keep smiling. Nicholas eats.

COL. LINNEAR

He said the whole damn Occupation is un-American. It's worse than that: it's un-Anglo Saxon he said. The man's Italian, and he's telling me.

(pause)

He says you can't take away a person's property and give it to people standing on street corners because then the person will say "Why work if the State's gonna take it all away from me?"

Chiyo returns, serves, refuses to argue.

COL. LINNEAR

And the man you give it to? He says the same thing: "Why work? Money's falling out of the sky." Senator Verranzano thinks then you get a nation of do-nothings and before you know it a Russian or a Chinese communist dictator jumps in and grabs the reins.

(pause)

What do you think, Nicholas?

Nicholas looks at his mother, afraid to take a position. He looks at his father. You don't avoid the Colonel for long.

NICHOLAS

I hear people say big business is Japan's greatest weapon against communism. That the Russians and the...

COL. LINNEAR

I don't give a damn what "people" say. What do you think?

NICHOLAS

I don't know. I'm afraid of communism.

COL. LINNEAR

Why?

NICHOLAS

Well, because their power...you know what I mean, father.

COL. LINNEAR

No, I do not. Not unless you tell me. I'm not putting words in your mouth, son.

Silence. Nicholas looks at his mother...back at his father.

NICHOLAS

I think you want me to believe in a thousand things at once. In Japan. In America. In Shinto, Christianity, democracy, socialism. I don't know what I think...or who I am...or what I am!

Silence. The Colonel is moved by this outburst from his son, stung by it...but too proud to give in. He answers the boy's concerns so evasively...

COL. LINNEAR

I think we should get ourselves organized around here, the three of us, start listening to each other. Not your aunt and uncle.

It's awful for Nicholas, this role he must assume, a conduit for his parents' political arguments, a chunk of disputed territory over which they battle with the strangest blend of love and distrust for each other. The Colonel takes his wife's hand.

COL. LINNEAR
I'm sorry. Forgive me.

NICHOLAS
(boldly)
Are you a communist, father?

The Colonel looks at Nicholas, keeps Chiyo's hand in his.

COL. LINNEAR

Perhaps. But I think if I am, I want to take communism away from the communists.

NICHOLAS

That makes no sense.

COL. LINNEAR

Well, it does. It does to me.

The Linnears fall silent.

INT. DŌJŌ (TOKYO 1960) - DAY

(B & W)

Nicholas is dressed in an exercise uniform of darker color, signifying his advancing degree of achievement in the martial arts.

His movements are fluid now, graceful, and his contemporaries far more skilled as well. The class is disciplined, shinai no longer clashing wildly but only slapping now, barely touching, everyone breathing in unison as...

...their instructor, Zama, watches. He steps to the center of the floor, claps his hands together. All sound and motion immediately cease. All heads turn expectantly toward Zama. He speaks in JAPANESE, without emotion. SUBTITLES.

ZAMA

Hold your sword as if not holding it. Use it as if not using it. It is not you, but your sword that cuts.

Zama turns, moving his eyes across the students. He looks at Daigo.

ZAMA

The enemy presents himself to receive justice. And justice is mercy.

Zama claps twice signalling the end of this class. The students break rank, begin removing their protective gear...

ZAMA

Nicholas.

Nicholas stops.

ZAMA

Harada. Ishii. Rōnd.

Everyone freezes, watches as Zama singles out those boys who tormented Nicholas in the shower room.

YAMA

Yoshino. Watanuki. Kobayashi.

Six of them. Zama summons every one of them...except Daigo. He gives them instructions, and they nervously form a rough circle around Nicholas. The boys are uneasy, stripped of their protective padding, aware they are being manipulated by Zama. Nicholas appears extraordinarily calm.

Zama now turns to Daigo, takes his shinai away...and tosses it to Nicholas. Each of Nicholas opponents has a single shinai, but he now holds a weapon in each hand.

And so it begins with a command from Zama, the stealthy pad of bare feet against polished wood. Nicholas strikes first, setting his own tempo, spinning so fast that Kōno and Yoshino are struck simultaneously, one across the chest, the other across his thighs before either boy can react. The four remaining opponents lift their shinai, wait to defend themselves.

Zama claps once. They return to a resting posture.

ZAMA

Have no intention of counter-attacking! Do not respond to his threatening moves. Do not calculate. Act!

Another clap. And it is again Nicholas who acts, coming at two more of the, crying aloud, his right-handed weapon slamming against Watanuki's shoulder, his left swirling, crashing into Kobayashi's windpipe, knocking that boy backward onto the floor!

This sudden, genuine violence surprises everyone but Zama... and Daigo.

Ishii charges. Nicholas whirls, his back arched, his right shinai stabbing end-first into the aggressor's midsection, his left-hand weapon only a blur, connecting with Harada's shinai, disarming the bigger boy. Silence. Nicholas returns to perfect calm, his shinai poised, quivering, as if filled with a life of their own.

ZAMA

In a soul absolutely free from thought and emotion, even the tiger finds no room to insert his fierce claws. Daigo!

There is only a moment's pause, before Daigo snatches a weapon from the wall, a real weapon, a hardwood bokken...lethal. He charges from the crowd, willing to take things as far as Zama will allow.

Nicholas sees the cruel blow coming, an insane moment, here in front of all these students, in front of Zama.

Swiveling backward even as Daigo swings his weapon, Nicholas presents only the right side of his body. Meant for the neck, Daigo's blow sweeps down into empty air, and with his left-handed shinai, Nicholas makes a brutal contact, smashing his cousin's bokken away, swiveling again so that his back is toward Daigo! But only for an instant, Nicholas completing a devastating circular sweep that brings his right-handed shinai hard against Daigo's torso. The water wheel. It's over.

Nicholas stands now with the entire class watching him, his feet spread, his shinai on either side. He stares down at Daigo's sprawled form. Daigo half sits, holding his rib cage. There will be a wicked purple welt.

ZAMA

No thinking, no reflecting.
Perfect emptiness:
Yet therein something moves
Following its own course.

Zama picks up the bokken, regards Daigo.

ZAMA

Use this only if you intend to kill.

Zama claps his hands twice and the onlookers break rank, head for the well, class over.

Surrounded by moving students, Nicholas sees nothing but the face of his cousin staring up at him, containing so much hate it must seem for a moment that lightning might strike the room. DAIGO'S FACE...

DISSOLVE:

INT. YAWATA-FUJI STEEL MILL (TOKYO 1981) - DAY

DAIGO'S FACE, twenty-one years later. OTHER FACES...JAPANESE STEEL EXECUTIVES in business suits and hard hats, men ranging in age from their early thirties to their early seventies. They are touring a modern plant, showing off its most advanced methods to a pair of Americans, RAPHAEL TOMKINS, a slight, authoritative figure in his late fifties, and Tomkins' assistant, PETER FLEMING, younger, on the rise.

TOMKINS

There isn't a steel mill like this anywhere in America today. It's extraordinary, sir. I have to wonder who really did win the war.

"Sir" is Mr. Yoshihara, chairman of the board, in his seventies now. When we first met him, he was wearing a tuxedo at that zaibatsu party. Now, over twenty years later, he's in a Savile Row suit.

While Tomkins keeps talking, we study Daigo among the executives. He's thirty-four, in a western business suit, and from his attitude and position in the entourage hardly all that influential.

TOMKINS

We have common interests here, gentlemen. You got a year-old contract negotiated in good faith by your trading company for ten million dollars in steel. You've delivered me half. And I've paid you for it. But now I need a favor. Now I need a discount on the balance.

MR. YOSHIHARA

Then you should speak not to us but to the trading company.

TOMKINS

I don't like middlemen. I'm here in Tokyo because middlemen never understand the human side of a problem. They're too...what's the word...money hungry.

INT. BOARD ROOM YAWATA-FUJI STEEL - DAY

A short time later. Tomkins and Fleming sit at a big table with the Japanese who scrutinize a written proposal. Everyone has a bowl of green tea and a colorful bean-paste confection to nibble on. Daigo sits halfway down the table.

MR. YOSHIHARA

Mr. Tomkins, what you are really asking is that we (continue to) sell our steel below production cost.

TOMKINS

All I am trying to do, Mr. Yoshihara, is do business, and if there's anything we've both learned over the years...it's often necessary to take some short-term losses to guarantee yourself truly substantial rewards in the long run.

MR. FLEMING

Mr. Tomkins knows, gentlemen, that U.S. Steel can't possibly sell as low as you boys can.. You got the more efficient plant, and you don't have to put up with all those crazy anti-pollution laws they do. That gives you the room to be flexible.

MR. YOSHIHARA

It gives us the luxury to be resolute.

TOMKINS

Let's not argue. Too much is at stake here, and we can help each other. Hands across the water, okay. I am half through construction on a sixty-million-dollar office complex in Manhattan, and I've run into some serious cost overrides. Things I could not control. I need your cooperation or I will go bankrupt. And that does no one any good.

Tomkins pauses, sips some green tea. The Japanese say nothing, wait for the American to keep working.

TOMKINS

Can I be candid?

(a nod from Yoshihara)

I am watching my country die, sir. And it breaks my heart. We got unions driving prices up and quality down, cutting the work week and encouraging people to care less about what they're building.

(pause)

I want to give America a good kick in the pants. I want to come back from Japan and make the boys in my steel industry and my trade unions feel the competition breathing down their necks.

(pause)

I need your steel at bargain prices because I love my country and I want to wake her up before it's too late.

Very clever. Mr. Yoshihara sips his green tea. Tomkins never blinks, keeps his righteous gaze fixed on the Japanese

MR. YOSHIHARA

You are an honorable man. American patriotism is something the Japanese have learned to respect...and fear. But to ask us to subsidize a rebuilding of the American spirit...? We must work hard for our families. To make a profit for Japan. Let us think about your proposal.

TOMKINS

Oh, no, with respect, sir, I've heard that before from you people. I know what it means. Don't think about it. Consider it. I want a positive answer.

MR. YOSHIHARA

I don't have the authority to make such a decision.

TOMKINS

Then who's the boss here?

MR. YOSHIHARA

My managers must implement any decision I make. They must be consulted.

Pause. Mr. Fleming starts putting papers back into his briefcase. Mr. Tomkins has more tea.

MR. FLEMING

~~==~~, there've been rumors that certain Japanese mills are dumping steel in the U.S. at below their cost. We all know the U.S. senate would love any excuse to impose stiff duties and cut imports on steel. ~~Now~~ Mr. Tomkins has a lot of friends in the Congress ~~==~~. If he says the right thing to the right people, he could be a great help to Japanese heavy industry.

TOMKINS

YOU'll come out way ahead working with me.

Tomkins stands up. The Japanese remain seated.

TOMKINS

You all discuss it. Consider it.
 Don't give me an answer now. I'm
 flying back to New York this after-
 noon. I'll hear from you Monday,
 I hope.

Tomkins leaves. Fleming follows. Silence. When conversation resumes, it is in Japanese with SUBTITLES.

MR. YOSHIHARA

You have heard Mr. Tomkins' proposal.
 I believe you understand my position.
 But I would like to hear what you
 think...if anyone disagrees.

(silence)

Very well. Look through all our
 files. Find out which of our other
 companies do business with Mr. Tomkins.
 Deny him any further credit. Cancel
 any outstanding orders.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Daigo and two others examine company files on a series of TV screens. They take notes, flip through pages of text in Japanese, photographs, contracts, news clippings, corporate reports in English that permit us to read "Tomkins Construction" several times.

Daigo studies a series of photo images of Raphael Tomkins, the American prominently shown on several job sites, at political functions. There is a clipping announcing the death of his wife in a private plane crash. A photograph of their daughter...Justine. Justine Tomkins. The girl we've seen on Long Island with Nicholas Linnear. But she means nothing to Daigo.

He calls up the next item...and it stops him cold. Again a newspaper clipping with its accompanying photo: INDUSTRIALIST'S DAUGHTER TO WED. Justine, described as a "New York attorney," is shown emerging from a doorway "in the company of her fiancé Nicholas Linnear of Montauk, New York." Daigo orders a PRINTOUT.

He goes quickly through a drawer, finds a magnifying glass, lays it over the computer printout of that newspaper photo: Nicholas Linnear's face enlarges, distorts...begins to break apart into the photo-engraver's dots.

INT. APARTMENT (TOKYO 1981) - DAY

CLOSE ON a cannister of talcum powder, fingers unscrewing the lid, beginning to push a series of barbed needles deep in the powder...

WIDER. Daigo. He's working with the contents from that chest he collected at the old saké warehouse, secreting a variety of bizarre weapons among travel items. There's an open suitcase on the bed. Daigo consults his watch: 9:00 a.m. He picks up the telephone...

INT. YAWATA-FUJI STEEL (TOKYO 1981) - DAY

A SECRETARY answers the phone. Conversation is in Japanese with SUBTITLES.

SECRETARY

Mr. Yoshihara's office, good morning. Oh, hello, Mr. Kashiba. I'm so sorry to hear that. Of course I will, yes. At once.

INT. MR. YOSHIHARA'S OFFICE - DAY

A POLITE KNOCK, and the secretary enters. Mr. Yoshihara is working alone over coffee and a very American cinnamon doughnut.

SECRETARY

Daigo Kashibu has just telephoned. There's been an emergency in his family. His mother in Okayama is gravely ill, and he must go there by train this morning. He apologizes for any inconvenience this might cause the company.

Mr. Yoshihara barely looks up, eats his doughnut. He'll manage.

EXT. SKIES OVER NEW YORK - DAY

A 747 making its descent over the city. Japan Air Lines.
ROARING ENGINES...

INT. TÔHOKU NO DÔJÔ (NEW YORK 1981) - DAY

THUNDER...emerging from under the rumble of the big aircraft. The sky is darkening, and EILEEN OKURA moves around the dōjō's ante room closing windows against the coming downpour. She turns on lights, moves toward a doorway that affords a view onto the dōjō floor...

EILEEN'S POV...stark white. A clean wooden floor. Nicholas Linnear in a white karate outfit, black belt, armed with a long sword (katana).

ANGLE ON TERRY TANAKA, opposite Nicholas, dressed identically, holding a similar sword. Tanaka moves his blade, and a ballet begins, the two men expertly weaving through an intricate kendo drill, their weapons never touching, almost magically avoiding any contact. Tanaka stops the exercise to make an observation. He's the instructor, Nicholas the student.

TANAKA

Handle the sword as you would chopsticks. Enjoy it. Be like an infant...

They resume. Nicholas is very good. Tanaka is better.

MOMENTS LATER. No swords now, shinai instead. Tanaka and Nicholas approach each other across the empty wooden floor. They are still barefoot though their arms and shins are protected by bamboo armour. They bow...and then a blur of sudden action! Shinai whistling through the air, moving so swiftly it seems the two combatants are wielding enormous fans. Nicholas drops to one knee, sweeping his weapon horizonatally, but Tanaka uses a vertical block! He steps back, forcing Nicholas to regain his feet.

Lightning thrusts from Tanaka, awesome! Nicholas blocks them all, but it's hard work, defensive work, and it's got him off balance. He attacks without his usual grace and concentration.

Tanaka's shinai is there to stop him every time, cleaving like a shadow, moving in concert...until, almost effortlessly Tanaka flicks at Nicholas' weapon, sends his opponent's staff clattering across the floor! Tanaka's shinai is at Nicholas' throat, holding back an inch from Nicholas' windpipe, defeating him.

TANAKA

See first with your mind. Then with your eyes. Finally with your body and your limbs.

Nicholas attacks! He spins around, hits Tanaka high on the side of his head with an elbow strike! The impact knocks Tanaka to the floor!

NICHOLAS

Sorry...sorry...

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES:

TANAKA

You must kill not the other man,
Nicholas, but your own ego.

IN ENGLISH:

NICHOLAS

I said I was sorry.

Tanaka rises, clearly ready for more. And Nicholas, keyed up, afraid and angry at himself, delivers a snapping back-fist strike. Tanaka blocks it, whirls a full 360 degrees, shouts, hits Nicholas hard with a spinning heel kick right above the eye. Blood.

Stunned only for a second, with blood running down his face, Nicholas changes. He loses all fear, all anger...he centers.

TANAKA

Your eye...

NICHOLAS

Again.

Straightforward, calm, unemotional. Nicholas wants to continue. Tanaka studies his friend, smiles, speaks again in JAPANESE. SUBTITLES:

TANAKA

No. Enough. Now you have no
anger. Now your mind knows my
mind. Nothing else matters.

Tanaka bows to Nicholas. Nicholas takes a deep breath, bows to Tanaka.

Eileen has appeared with a bandage and some antiseptic for Nicholas' eye.

EXT. BROWNSTONE (NEW YORK 1981) - DAY

Nicholas comes out of the building that houses Tanaka's dōjō. He carries an overnight bag, wears a small Bandaid above his eye. He walks down the street...

...and Daigo Kashiba appears behind him, looking back at the dōjō a moment before he follows Nicholas at a discreet distance.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

A commuter station, a train from the city arriving. Nicholas gets off with his overnight bag and a briefcase. He goes to his locked car in the parking lot, the car we saw Justine using.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

Nicholas drives up, goes inside.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

His assistant, VINCENT ITO, works now at the lathe, carefully turning another steel tool. His incredible concentration is not broken by Nicholas' arrival.

Nicholas leaves his briefcase near Ito, goes into the bedroom where he's somewhat surprised to see the bed strewn with casebooks, covered by scribbled-upon pages torn from a legal note pad. The bathroom door is closed.

Nicholas unclips his overnight bag, hangs it neatly in the closet. He moves reflexively to the bed and makes neat piles of the legal sheets, ordered stacks of the books as...

...the bathroom door opens. Justine emerges in her bathrobe.

JUSTINE

When you're through with that,
I have some ironing...

Nicholas drops all her note pages into the wastebasket, watches her retrieve them.

NICHOLAS

If I knew you were coming out
today, we could've taken the
train together.

JUSTINE

I worked on the train. Anyway
I've been here since noon...all
alone with Vincent.

She steps into Nicholas' arms, and they kiss.

JUSTINE

What happened to your eye?

NICHOLAS

Terry.

JUSTINE

You're going to kill each other
one of these days.

NICHOLAS

Can you stay for the whole weekend?

JUSTINE

I have to be in court Monday
morning at eight.

Another kiss. And all this while we can hear Vincent Ito
at work on the lathe.

LATER. Nicholas takes a precision drawing of a surgical
tool from his briefcase, spreads it on a work table. Ito
examines it.

NICHOLAS

Dr. Pauley wants to be able to get
at the inner layer of the ventricle
wall. Apparently a few years ago a
couple of surgeons in Dallas tried
to design one without this loop.

VINCENT ITO

I know why. Look now thin it is.
It could snap right off in some-
body's heart.

NICHOLAS

We'll use a cemented carbon alloy.

Justine comes in from the kitchen with two bowls and one mug
of tea on a tray. She takes the single mug for herself, sets
the tray on a simple breakfront over which hang on the wall,
one above the other, a pair of scabbarded gently curving
SWORDS. THE PHONE RINGS. Ito answers it.

VINCENT ITO

Surgical Design. Vincent Ito
speaking.

(pause)

Justine Tomkins?

Justine shakes her head, mimes "Who is it?"

VINCENT ITO

Who's calling please? Her father?

JUSTINE

Oh shit. I'm not here.

VINCENT ITO

I'm sorry but Miss Tomkins isn't here right now. Yes, absolutely, I will. Thank you.

Vincent hangs up.

NICHOLAS

You should just tell him...

JUSTINE

You don't tell my father anything.
It's like driving spikes into Jello.

She vanishes into the bedroom with her tea to resume work.

INT. SUBBASEMENT PARKING LOT (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - NIGHT

A limousine enters. The parking garage (like most of this building) is not yet completed. A NIGHT WATCHMAN is posted to safeguard stacks of shipping crates: toilets, hardware, light bulbs...finishing touches.

The limousine parks, and Raphael Tomkins gets out of the back seat before FRANK, his chauffeur/bodyguard, can assist him.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Evening, Mr. Tomkins.

TOMKINS

Good evening, Leon.

FRANK

Keep an eye on the car, Leon.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Yes, sir.

INT. TOMKINS' BUILDING - NIGHT

Tomkins and Frank get off an elevator on the top floor. The corridor is unfinished: unpainted drywall and an uncarpeted concrete floor. They walk to an incongruously elegant mahogany door marked "Tomkins Enterprises." Tomkins unlocks it, and they enter.

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - NIGHT

Frank flips on a few banks of fluorescents. This is a reception area. Painting tarps cover the expensive wood-work. Construction up here at least is much further along.

FRANK

You want me to make you some
coffee or anything, Mr. Tomkins?

TOMKINS

No, thank you, Frank. I'll just
be about an hour.

Tomkins goes into his own office---another mahogany door:
Raphael Tomkins, President.

INT. SUBBASEMENT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The night watchman opens his lunch pail, takes a sandwich
out of a baggie, starts to eat. He has no idea that...

...the door on Tomkins' limousine is being silently jimmied
by a man dressed head to foot in black clothing. Daigo.
He moves like a shadow.

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Daigo flicks on a pencil flash, works swiftly with a razor
blade to score the carpet in the passenger compartment. Two
cuts...T-shaped. He peels back the small flaps, inserts a
microphone no more than a half-inch in diameter, affixes it
with epoxy resin. He turns his attention to the telephone,
opens the box, places a second microphone in here.

INT. TOMKINS' BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank appears in the hallway first. Then Raphael Tomkins
emerges from his offices. They walk back toward the ele-
vator. Frank stops, his dead eyes glittering now, looking
down the long hallway.

TOMKINS

What is it?

FRANK

I don't know. Nothing.

TOMKINS

Then let's go.

Tomkins steps past Frank, leads the way to the elevator.

Daigo stands alarmingly close to them in a black, unlighted
bend of the corridor. Tomkins and his bodyguard board
their elevator, descend.

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - NIGHT

The fluorescents are off. The hall door rattles, opens.
Daigo enters, putting away the lock pick that's given him
access.

INT. TOMKINS OFFICE - NIGHT

Daigo enters. Another room not really ready for occupancy. Daigo enlarges his flashlight beam, surveys these new surroundings: blueprints and artist's renderings of the building tacked to unpainted walls, very little furniture yet in place.

Daigo examines Tomkins' sophisticated phone system. He flips the instrument over, removes a wireless mike from his pocket.

Still with the glow from only his flashlight, Daigo continues to work. He overturns a sofa. With his razor he carefully slits the underside, exposes the upholstery webbing.

EXT. RESTAURANT (MONTAUK 1981) - NIGHT

A small, woodsy place. It's late, near closing time, very few patrons left, a WAITER folding napkins at an empty table. Nicholas Linnear is visible inside paying his bill as Justine, Vincent Ito, and a fourth man, a weary architect in his late fifties, HENRY LOVELL, step outside.

VINCENT ITO

Whenever the Japanese undertake something they concentrate on the subjective side. They seek spiritual enhancement first and technique follows. It falls into place.

HENRY LOVELL

Tell that to my plumber. I can't get reliable tradesmen anymore, and I'm only as good as the people who build my houses.

JUSTINE

Then, Henry, you should be out there checking and double-checking on them every day. Nicholas and I don't have the time to...

HENRY LOVELL

It's not your job. That's what what you're paying me for.

JUSTINE

We're paying you for a dining room wall that's five degrees out of plumb?

NICHOLAS

(emerging)

Not anymore. I fixed it.

HENRY LOVELL

Five degrees? I'm sorry, Jesus...

Justine takes Nicholas' arm as they all walk along the empty, lonely beach community streets.

JUSTINE

"Sorry" won't be good enough when everything runs to the back of my stove because the kitchen floor, by the way, isn't level either. The place looks like I'm building it.

NICHOLAS

Give the poor guy a break, Justine. I think he's trying...

HENRY LOVELL

I wish you were building it. Then maybe I could buy a boat and sail away from all the pipes that don't fit, all the toilets that don't flush, all the switches that don't turn on lights...just sail away and eat berries.

VINCENT ITO LURCHES VIOLENTLY BACKWARDS, SLAMS AGAINST A CAR! His mouth works spasmodically, a vain effort to scream. Ito's hands tear at his chest.

Almost at once Nicholas is by his friend's side, but it's too late. Ito lies motionless. Nicholas checks the older man's carotid artery first, then his eyes, then the pads of his fingers...

HENRY LOVELL

Heart attack?

NICHOLAS

No.

JUSTINE

I'll call an ambulance...

NICHOLAS

He's dead.

Justine freezes. Nicholas is examining Vincent Ito's chest, his fingers working at something metallic embedded just under and to the right of Ito's heart. With a forceful tug the thing comes free in Nicholas' hand: a long projectile, thin as a knitting needle, small fins for stability in flight. We've seen it before...in that can of talcum powder Daigo was packing in Japan.

NICHOLAS
(carefully setting it
down)

Don't touch it.

HENRY LOVELL
Jesus Christ...what is it?

Henry Lovell never learns because Nicholas is up and moving,
instinctively running across the street...

A SHADOW detaches itself from a wall of hedges, slips between
two buildings. Nicholas pursues swiftly, silently. He emerges
behind the buildings. Docks. Waves lap against pilings.
Moonlight sparkles off the water's surface. Nothing more.

LATER. A CORONER'S VAN collects Vincent Ito's body.
SEVERAL LONG ISLAND DETECTIVES are on the scene, asking
the first of a series of questions that will get them
nowhere.

JUSTINE
That's my New York office. During
the week that's where to reach me.

DETECTIVE
Otherwise it's the same number for
both of you?

NICHOLAS
Yes. You're going to find a nerve
poison in his system. Doku, probably.

The detective looks intrigued for a second...maybe even
suspicious of Nicholas.

DETECTIVE
Okay. We'll be in touch, Mr. Linnear.
Just let us handle this right now.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - NIGHT

A slight sea breeze rustles trees, blows leaves around on
the drive. A car arrives.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Nicholas and Justine. He kills the engine, makes no other
move. Silence.

JUSTINE
Nicholas?

He's studying the house beyond.

JUSTINE
What's doku?

NICHOLAS

It's a powerful poison distilled
from chrysanthemums.

JUSTINE

From flowers? Nicholas, please
tell me what...

NICHOLAS

I should have sensed someone was
out there...before it happened.

JUSTINE

How?

But he's out of the car, listening to the sounds of the night,
blowing leaves, branches moving in the wind. Justine starts
to hear them too, enlarge them in her imagination.

JUSTINE

Let's go inside.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door unlocks. Vincent Ito's work is as he left
it in the lathe. Only a few lights are on. Nicholas and
Justine stand in semi-darkness. She watches him as he
surveys the living room.

JUSTINE

What was Vincent doing to...

Nicholas steps away from her, approaches a window that looks
out toward the sea. He flicks on a table lamp...and it
throws light across their model house. The model has been
cut right in half, Nicholas' sword driven through it, imbedded
in the table. Justine lets out a scream, silences herself.
Nicholas turns out the lights, removes his sword from the
table, from the savaged house, cold moonlight glinting off
hard steel.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - MORNING

TWO MEN IN DRAB BUSINESS SUITS walk down the corridor past
PAINTERS and PHONE MEN and ELECTRICIANS.

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - MORNING

There are TWO SECRETARIES here now, operating off folding
tables in a cluttered corner. Frank is sitting on the sofa,
reading a newspaper. The men enter.

LT. EPPERSON

Lt. Epperson, New York Police.
This is Lt. Niles.

SECRETARY

Oh, of course, Mr. Tomkins is expecting you.

Frank eyes the detectives while the secretary pushes a button. Mr. Fleming comes out of Tomkins' office.

MR. FLEMING

Gentlemen, Peter Fleming.

LT. EPPERSON

Lt. Epperson.

LT. NILES

Lt. Niles.

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE - MORNING

There are TWO OTHER MEN in the room beside Tomkins, bureaucratic types. More introductions, hand-shaking.

TOMKINS

Raphael Tomkins...

LT. EPPERSON

Lt. Epperson.

LT. NILES

Lt. Niles.

MR. FLEMING

This is Jeffrey Gray.

JEFFREY BLACK

Black.

MR. FLEMING

Sorry, Jeffrey Black. And Eliot Saunders. They're with the U.S. Commerce Department.

Everyone sits. Tomkins' manner is most soothing, disarming. He speaks like a history professor to these people, and in fact wears a bow tie and a soft tan cardigan sweater rather than a suit jacket like everyone else.

TOMKINS

(to the detectives)

I called upon your Captain Gavan, an old friend of mine, because I think we should work together and nip this in the bud. I hate two things in this world: violence and deceit. More often than not, when you find one, you find the other. Peter, show them, please.

Peter Fleming takes a cancelled envelope out of a folder.
Lt. Epperson opens it up, removes a white card with a single Japanese character drawn boldly in black ink.

TOMKINS

A Japanese steel company is trying
to get at me through my daughter.

LT. NILES

"Get at" you? How?

TOMKINS

I received that card in the mail
before they nearly killed her.

LT. EPPERSON

Somebody killed a man standing
near your daughter, Mr. Tomkins...

TOMKINS

The card is a warning. A death
sign. I had it authenticated
at Columbia University.

LT. EPPERSON

Okay, sir, but until somebody
goes and makes an attempt on your
actual life, I mean our hands are
tied.

TOMKINS

Look out that window, lieutenant.
See all that new construction?
Japanese steel. A hell of a lot of
it. I'm worried about that. The
United States Department of Commerce
is worried about it...

(a nod to his other guests)

The world's twenty-two largest steel
mills? How many of them do you think
are located in Japan?

Epperson and Niles have no idea. They're just cops. What
is this shit?

TOMKINS

Fourteen. You know how many of
the remaining eight we have here in
the United States?

LT. NILES

No, no idea.

TOMKINS

None. Don't be embarrassed. Very few people understand the severity of the problem. The Japanese want to make us their colony, Lt. Niles. They want to force us to consume their products. They're trying to force me to consume their steel. I want to buy American steel. So they're trying to frighten me.

Tomkins stops, the lecture over. Question-and-answer period to follow.

LT. EPPERSON

Okay. So we've been told to cooperate. Tell us what you want.

INT. HOTEL ROOM (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - DAY

Daigo sits quietly in a nice room, in very little light, shades drawn. A wireless receiver is on a coffee table, broadcasting, jacked into a small tape recorder. He's removing more weaponry from the insides of a travel hair dryer.

TOMKINS' VOICE

I want the New York Police Department to come in right now, and start asking the right questions. I don't want my country or my daughter endangered, gentlemen.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DUSK

A drab sedan parks in the drive. A MAN wearing a quilted jacket and a pair of sensible shoes gets out. THE WIND IS BLOWING HARD, LOUD. The man steps up onto the porch...and the door swings inward! The wind.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DUSK

The man sticks his head inside, pushing the door open wide.

MAN

Anybody home?

Silence. Failing light. He enters. The crew is perched near a window, watching him. The man moves carefully, quickly nosing around, prying. SOMEONE WATCHES HIM FROM THE SHADOWS. The man whirls around, a gun drawn, aiming it with both hands at Nicholas Linnear who steps away from the wall.

NICHOLAS

I live here.

MAN

Yeah? What's your name?

NICHOLAS

Linnear.

MAN

Why the hell you leave your door open?

NICHOLAS

So people can just walk right in.

The gun is still pointing at Nicholas, but he goes around turning on lights, defying the man...who finally lowers his weapon.

MAN

My name's Lewis Spranzo. NYPD.

NICHOLAS

You want something to drink? I was making tea.

SPRANZO

Coffee.

NICHOLAS

I don't have any.

Nicholas vanishes into the kitchen. Spranzo holsters his gun, glances at the lathe, the workbench, goes into the kitchen too.

SPRANZO

What exactly you do here, out on that bench? I notice you got a crow.

Nicholas is pouring tea from a pot into bowls, stirring the dark liquid with a bamboo whisk, all of this fascinating Spranzo.

NICHOLAS

I design surgical instruments.

SPRANZO

What, like for digging into people's insides?

NICHOLAS

Right. Little picks and shovels.

Nicholas doesn't dislike the guy.

SPRANZO

I read the coroner's report. Your friend, Mr. Ito, died of a massive heart attack induced by a very rare tropical poison. They put a sample of it through the computer. Whatever that means. The computer said the stuff was distilled from the pistils of a flower.

NICHOLAS

Chrysanthemum.

SPRANZO

Right. Chrysanthemum. So who did it?

NICHOLAS

I have no idea.

Spranzo takes his bowl of tea, sips it loudly because it's very hot. He eyes the room, spots something we haven't seen before out on a small porch: a hand-made wooden shrine. Folk art?

SPRANZO

They assigned me because I spent a year in the Philippines fighting the Japs.

(correcting himself)

The Japanese. W-W-two. Before your time. You're half-Japanese yourself, right?

NICHOLAS

Who assigned you?

SPRANZO

You know, I don't know. People upstairs. Strings got pulled. I'm supposed to bring big-city sophistication to the local scene. It's all kinda mysterious from my end.

NICHOLAS

Did you read my statement to the police?

SPRANZO

Yeah. I don't think you tell people what's really on your mind.

Nicholas sips his tea.

SPRANZO

See, I was right.

(stepping onto the
porch)

What's this thing? A buddhist
temple?

NICHOLAS

Shinto. It's a shrine.

Spranzo picks up an offering that's obviously been there
some time: a shrivelled orange.

SPRANZO

Shinto? What'dya believe in?
Old citrus fruit?

Spranzo sets the orange back with reverence.

NICHOLAS

It's a kind of nature worship.

SPRANZO

Hence the crow. Shinto. Ancestor
worship too, right?

NICHOLAS

Not really. Respect for the dead.
For family.

SPRANZO

You don't have to explain. I just
wanted to say hello, introduce
myself. I'll be talking to Miss
Tomkins back in New York. So you
can warn her.

Spranzo takes another slurp.

SPRANZO

What is this tea, what flavor?
It's weird.

NICHOLAS

Chrysanthemum.

INT. TANAKA APARTMENT (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - EVENING

Darkness. The front door opens, and Eileen Okura comes in with some fresh flowers wrapped in paper. She flicks on a light, moves to the kitchen, flicks on another light, puts the flowers in water. She heads for the bedroom removing her coat.

The bedroom is dark. Eileen moves to a closet, opens it, triggering a light. She hangs her coat, steps into the bathroom to brush out her hair, turning a bright light on over the sink.

We have remained in the bedroom proper. A soft glow from the living room helps illuminate the bed. But now that light flicks out.

Eileen swallows two aspirin, steps back out into the darkened bedroom. She doesn't notice the fallen light level. She walks into the living room. Illumination from the kitchen allows her to reach the front door...to flick the wall switch again. And, as she does so, for one awful instant Eileen knows/remembers that only a minute ago this light was on, that she turned it on.

Eileen whirls, someone blocking her view of the kitchen, a silhouette.

EILEEN

What do you want?

Something whistles out, wrapping around her wrist like a snake! Eileen is jerked forward toward a body swathed in matte black fabric. A tight hood and a mask leave only his eyes exposed...no more than six inches from her own now. His black-gloved hand grasps her thick hair, winds it quickly into a long twisted cord!

Eileen fights like a tigress, clawing at him with her nails, punching and slashing as her head is jerked backward, upward, her teeth snapping together...

Swift movement, the man doing many things at once, slapping off the living room light again, his back arcing over Eileen as though he were making love to her, dropping a black noose over her head, around her throat, jerking it taut...

EXT. BROWNSTONE (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - NIGHT

A taxi arrives. Terry Tanaka PAYS THE CABBIE, climbs the high stone stairs of his building.

INT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Tanaka approaches his apartment down a long hallway. He turns a key in the lock. There is MUSIC playing inside.

INT. TANAKA APARTMENT - NIGHT

Several lights are on, producing a maze of shadows. Tanaka closes the door behind him. His eyes take in the whole room ...details. He smells/sees/tastes/feels the difference in the apartment.

He moves quickly toward the half-open bedroom doorway, gets maybe three quarters of the way there when he's struck viciously four times in the first second of the attack!

Tanaka blocks three of the blows successfully, but the fourth gets through, smashes into his right kidney. All the breath goes out of him, and he rolls awkwardly across the floor...

A blow slices the air near his ear, but Tanaka's ready, tumbling away from it. The edge of a table explodes against the side of his face, shards of wood chattering through the air. Tanaka draws up his legs, kicks out, and literally catapults upright...running as soon as his feet touch the carpet!

He's into the bedroom, slamming the door behind him. The light in the living room goes out. Tanaka flicks on the bedroom light! And now he sees Eileen, her broken figure on the floor, naked, one leg still up on the bedspread. The sight drives all rational thought from Tanaka's mind, enrages him. Exactly its intent.

He lifts a slightly curved scabbard off its place of honor on a low table, from amidst a collection of extraordinary swords. The WHISPER OF A NAKED BLADE as Tanaka unsheathes his katana...and the door across the room splinters, buckling inward under the enormous force of a karate kick!

An ebony figure in the doorway, a bokken in its hand. Silence.

TANAKA

Ninja?

There is just the oddest response...a contemptuous laugh. Tanaka readies himself.

TANAKA

You have chosen death.

And he leaps upon the intervening bed, across Eileen, striking forcefully with his sword! Deftly, with almost no effort, the ninja avoids Tanaka's strike, whirls back into the living room, seeking darkness because in darkness there is death.

Tanaka moves into the black arena, sees a glint of moonlight off the polished hardwood shaft! He slashes with his sword ...into thin air. The bokken comes from behind him, a

violent percussive shock against Tanaka's spinal cord! He coughs, his throat on fire, the ninja a blur, driving in again. Instinctively Tanaka raises his sword though unsure of the exact point of attack, his vision cloudy...

SOMETHING TOPPLES TO HIS LEFT! A CABINET! Tanaka wheels that way, confused, fooled. The ninja is to his right, standing a foot away. Too late Tanaka realizes his error, feels a hand sheathed in steel grab his sword blade, snap it in half!

Desperately Tanaka raises his truncated weapon. But before he can strike, the pointed fragment of his katana is driven deep into his heart. Blood black as ink. And silence.

The ninja stands dominant in a black void, seeming scarcely to breathe. All we can hear is that music: Henry Mancini.

A duffel bag...pulled out from behind the sofa by the ninja's black hand. A zipper drawing open, the bokken being carefully placed inside.

EXT. TANAKA BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The front door opens, and Daigo appears in black pants, black turtleneck sweater, black duffel bag slung over his shoulder. He moves down the sidewalk with an easy, unhurried step. THE SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

A beautiful Japanese long sword lying across a table. The crow has alighted here, trying to peck at something under the sword's edge.

Nicholas. He's oiling a rag, shooing the bird away, picking up the sword, rubbing it against the rag. He stops, lost in thought for a second...and then he moves quickly, swinging the weapon, just once...that sound...STEEL PARTING THE AIR.

EXT. ATHLETIC UNIVERSITY (TOKYO 1965) - DAY B & W

A MOST ASTONISHING SIGHT, AN OVERHEAD VIEW DOWN ONTO DOZENS OF YOUNG JAPANESE MEN ENGAGED IN A FIERCE GAME OF BOTAOUSHI... two teams, each clustered like insects around its own mobile wooden pole, protecting the pole against assaults from opposition players who break from the outer circle of their own cluster and try to penetrate to the enemy's pole, topple it to the ground! The overall effect, from up here, is baffling, two desperate groups of humanity jockeying for position, sending warriors out on frantic forays, regrouping to defend their own treasure, that vulnerable pole...

THE ANGLE CHANGES as one team scores on another, Nicholas and Daigo (both twenty years old now) playing together on the losing side, the Red Team.

(NOTE: IT IS HERE THAT ACTORS PORTRAYING THE MATURE NICHOLAS AND DAIGO WILL MAKE THEIR FIRST APPEARANCES IN THE PAST.)

Everyone regroups, both cousins on the perimeter, part of the next assault force, both of them plunging like maniacs into the outer layer of the Blue Team's cluster...

RIGHT IN THE THICK OF BATTLE WITH NICHOLAS AND DAIGO...huffing and puffing, elbows flying, grunts, body checks...progress as Red drives deeper and deeper...the sacred pole in sight... Nicholas in a position to touch it, driving Blue players aside ferociously...Daigo shoulder-to-shoulder with his cousin... suddenly undermining Nicholas! A mindless, pointless cheap shot at Nicholas, Daigo knocking his cousin right out of the action, using the fallen Nicholas as a ladder...

HIGH ANGLE AGAIN...Daigo rising above the cluster, taking hold of the top of the Blue pole, riding it heroically to the ground under his own weight!

Nicholas lifts himself from the dirt, watches Daigo accept the congratulations of their teammates.

EXT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1965) - DUSK (B & W)

A municipal bus leaves Nicholas by the side of the road. He walks alone with his books into the courtyard of his parents' home.

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE - DUSK (B & W)

Nicholas enters. The house seems empty. He turns on a few lights.

MOMENTS LATER. Nicholas stands in the bathroom, staring at himself in the mirror. He touches the tip of one finger to the corner of his eye, pulls the lid down, makes himself appear more Occidental. He pulls the lid upward, makes himself appear more Oriental. Neither effect seems to satisfy him.

MOMENTS LATER. Nicholas is in the shower, his eyes closed, hot water and steam enveloping him. A SHADOW FALLS ACROSS THE FROSTED GLASS DOOR.

Nicholas opens his eyes, sensing another's presence. He turns the water off, remains perfectly still. The shadow approaches, condenses. Nicholas swings open the shower door!

Yuki. She stands naked on the cold tile, her skin opalescent in the glare of the bathroom's fluorescent light.

Yuki?

NICHOLAS

It's as though he doesn't recognize her. She moves one leg toward him, and Nicholas sees her tiny ankle, the flesh of her calf, the extended knee...the long sweep of her thigh.

Yuki glides into the shower, her hands on his body, moving. She slides against him, her hands behind him, grabbing the slippery chrome taps, turning the water on again.

Nicholas watches her head float back, and he seems almost frightened, dazed as she begins to soap his body. Not a word more has been spoken...wet hair cascading downward, her thighs rising up until they're locked around his waist, Yuki on him like a snake, kissing him...and Nicholas is moving against her now, his hands on her waist to hold her tight against him, hard circular movements...

INT. NICHOLAS' ROOM

(B & W)

Darkness. Nicholas sits alone, in a robe. He looks somehow different, confused, excited, ashamed. After several moments...

VOICE

Nicholas? We are waiting.

INT. LINNEAR DINING ROOM - NIGHT

(B & W)

Yuki. She sits demurely at the family table with Nicholas' mother and father, Dennis Linnear a one-star general now, sitting in the same chair, precisely the place he was when we saw him last, five years ago. But he's a much different man, grayer, everything about him seeming to have aged poorly though he tries to maintain appearances.

A fourth place at the table is empty, Nicholas missing, late. As a result, no food is being served.

GEN. LINNEAR

Do you like it here in Tokyo?

YUKI

Yes, but in many ways it still frightens me. So many people. So many men everywhere. They crowd you in the streetcars and on the buses...

Nicholas arrives somewhere during the above speech, taking his place under the General's unforgiving stare. Tardiness is unforgivable around the Linnear house. Chiyo begins serving food, and Yuki quickly lends a hand.

NICHOLAS

I'm sorry.

GEN. LINNEAR
 (ignoring his son)
 How long you think you'll be
 staying, Yuki?

YUKI
 Until my aunt and uncle return
 from America next week.

GEN. LINNEAR
 No, I mean in Tokyo.

CHIYO
 She will live permanently with
 Tami and Masanobu now that her
 own mother is dead

NICHOLAS
 I don't know why she doesn't get
 a place of her own.

YUKI
 Like you?

NICHOLAS
 I will. As soon as I'm through
 with my studies.

Silence. Food is consumed.

YUKI
 Your cousin has a place of his own

NICHOLAS
 I don't believe you. Where?

YUKI
 It's not in Tokyo. It's in
 Yamaguchi.

GEN. LINNEAR
 (intrigued)
 Yamaguchi?

NICHOLAS
 Is that where he goes when he leaves
 the university? Disappears for weeks?

GEN. LINNEAR
 Disappears? What're you talking
 about, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS
 His studies never seem to suffer.

CHIYO
 Daigo is very smart.

YUKI
Not that smart. It's been arranged
with his instructors. By his father.

The general wants into this conversation badly.

GEN. LINNEAR
What's going on of interest in
these days in Yamaguchi?

YUKI
I don't know. They're always
plotting. My uncle is very proud
of his son. I can't imagine Daigo
would do anything on his own.

Chiyo gets up from the table, taking two bowls to the kitchen.
The General watches her go. Yuki stares at Nicholas with a
devilish little grin. Nicholas eats.

INT. LINNEAR GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Yuki is alone, her robe slightly parted. The door opens.
Nicholas enters, and Yuki closes the robe. Sudden modesty?

NICHOLAS
I must know which town in Yamaguchi
Daigo visits.

Conversation is in SUBTITLED JAPANESE.

YUKI
Why? For your father?

NICHOLAS
Daigo leads a double life.

YUKI
So do you.

NICHOLAS
I have no choice. It's in my
blood.

Yuki says nothing. Nicholas fixes her gaze.

NICHOLAS
Which town?

She stares at him...coldly...

YUKI
Matsudo. Nearby. A village.

NICHOLAS
And he's there now, isn't he?

She kisses him. Nicholas resists.

YUKI

In the West they say "I'm coming."
Here we say, "I'm going."

NICHOLAS

Westerners turn everything around.

YUKI

Perhaps Daigo's right then. Perhaps
they are barbarians after all.

Another kiss...and this time Nicholas succumbs.

YUKI

I wanted to fuck you that night
on the dance floor.

NICHOLAS

Why say it that way? Why not
"make love"?

YUKI

Because I mean it that way. Have
you ever "made love," Nicholas?
Tell me what it's like.

NICHOLAS

I've never been with a woman
before.

She looks at him uncertainly.

YUKI

I don't believe you.

Yuki studies him for a moment. His expression never changes.
She opens her kimono...draws him inside. The silk enfolds
Nicholas.

INT. UENO STATION (TOKYO 1965) - DAY

(B & W)

Nicholas appears amid the arriving and departing TRAVELERS.
He carries a small overnight bag, purchases a round-trip
ticket, uttering a single word to the SELLER.

NICHOLAS

Matsudo.

INT. EXPRESS TRAIN - DAY

(J & W)

Nicholas comes on board, locates his compartment, stores his bag, sits. A JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN in a dark pinstripe suit enters, sits opposite. He looks very Western: calfskin attaché case, charcoal-gray cashmere overcoat which he folds meticulously, sets on the seat next to him, surmounting it with his black bowler hat.

He glances at Nicholas with a smile, thick round glasses giving to his eyes an unnatural size. The train begins to move. The businessman turns to his newspaper.

Nicholas sits quietly. The compartment door opens again. Yuki enters, carrying a small suitcase. The businessman acknowledges her arrival with a polite bow of his head. She sits opposite Nicholas, next to the businessman. Nicholas refuses to return her smile. She starts to speak to him in Japanese.

NICHOLAS

In English.

The businessman lifts his eyes. Yuki changes seats, moves next to Nicholas.

YUKI

Do you hate me?

Her hand moves to Nicholas' thigh to brace herself against the rocking train. Her fingers spread...nails digging in. The businessman steals a glance at this ambiguous gesture, embarrassing Nicholas.

EXT. JAPANESE COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

(B & W)

The express train makes its way toward Osaka, glintings of the sea visible on the horizon, factories everywhere, an industrial sprawl running out from Tokyo, blanketing the countryside.

EXT. EXPRESS TRAIN - DAY

(B & W)

The businessman opens his attaché case, removes a small package wrapped in wax paper. He sets it carefully on his spotless case, unwraps it, revealing a chicken sandwich. Yuki watches him. Now he produces a small bag of potato chips, offers them to her. She accepts the whole bag, munches, offers some to Nicholas. He ignores her.

NICHOLAS

You can't even see Mt. Fuji through the smoke stacks. I know what my father means.

YUKI

Let's not go on.
What for? We could go sailing
out into the ocean instead. Find
ourselves an island

NICHOLAS

My foot's asleep.

Nicholas shifts his weight, edges away from her. Yuki looks
at the businessman eating his chicken sandwich.

YUKI

Nicholas, please.
(moving close again)
I'm begging you. I don't want
to go to Matsudo.

NICHOLAS

You don't have to.

YUKI

Neither do you.

The businessman rises. Nicholas looks up, feeling terribly
conspicuous. The businessman excuses himself from the
compartment, leaving all his possessions behind, leaving
them alone at last:

NICHOLAS

Why the hell are you following
me like...

YUKI

I'm afraid, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

Of what?

YUKI

Of my uncle. Of Daigo. And
their secrets. Who cares what
he's doing?

NICHOLAS

I do.

YUKI

It's like you have each other by
the throat. I hate my uncle.
(in a whisper)
I hate Daigo...and so do you.

NICHOLAS

I don't hate anyone.

YUKI

One of you has to let go. Why
can't it be you?

NICHOLAS

Because my cousin won't let me.

Yuki stares at Nicholas, but he's looking out the window. She rises, pulls the shades down on the corridor windows. Nicholas leans his head back on the seat, closes his eyes. Yuki locks the compartment door. She comes back to Nicholas, stands in front of him in the gently rocking train. She lifts up her skirt, moves onto his lap, straddling him. Nicholas has yet to open his eyes.

NICHOLAS

You think sex is the only thing
you have to give.

YUKI

It's the only thing that makes
me happy.

THE DOOR HANDLE RATTLES. Nicholas looks that way, but Yuki doesn't. The rattling stops, a SILHOUETTE moves away beyond the shade. Yuki stares at him, never turning her head, her eyes wide and glittery. Nicholas looks away, out the window, but Yuki touches his face, brings him back toward her...

YUKI

What are you afraid of, Nicholas?
Are you afraid of me?

EXT. RURAL STATION (MATSUDO 1965) - DAY

(B & W)

The train arrives in a burst of steam and screeching brakes.
A LEGEND IS SUPERIMPOSED:

MATSUDO

The Japanese businessman is first off the smoking train, putting his shiny bowler hat atop his head.

Nicholas and Yuki follow into the cold station. Many of the JAPANESE here are in traditional garb.

INT. MATSUDD HOTEL ROOM - DAY

(B & W)

A PROPRIETOR shows Nicholas and Yuki to the door of their room, leaves them.

YUKI

It smells just like Tokyo.

NICHOLAS
The oil refinery. Stay here.

YUKI
Where are you going?

NICHOLAS
To Daigo's apartment.

YUKI
Then I'm going too.

NICHOLAS
No.

YUKI
I gave you the address.

NICHOLAS
And I thanked you for it.

He's gone. Yuki stands in the center of the small room.

(B & W)

EXT. STREET OF THE WRESTLERS - DUSK

Nicholas waits in shadow, his breath visible, his coat buttoned up. He's watching an apartment block across the way. It's dark now, and some time has passed. A FIGURE finally emerges from the building. Daigo.

Daigo moves off down the quiet street. We go with him. He turns into the front door of a fish shop.

Nicholas watches the fish shop for several seconds. He has successfully trailed Daigo this distance. Now he crosses toward the store.

(B & W)

INT. FISH SHOP - DUSK

A tiny bell rings as Nicholas enters. It is a narrow place the walls stocked with glass tanks. A MAN worn down by the passage of time sits on a wooden stool. Nicholas speaks to him in Japanese. SUBTITLES translate:

NICHOLAS
Is there a back way out?

(B & W)

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DUSK

Nicholas exits the rear of the shop. A FIGURE is barely visible at the end of the long alley, moving off. Nicholas follows.

EXT. STREET - DUSK

(B & W)

A small crowd on the sidewalk. Daigo purchases a paper at a news kiosk. He moves off. Nicholas steps from the alley, follows to the edge of the city.

Daigo's silhouette now, fast diminishing down a dark, narrow street, disappearing like a nocturnal animal onto a wooded trail that leads into the hills beyond.

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - DUSK

(B & W)

Nicholas moves along quietly in the enveloping darkness. He stops, listens. NIGHTBIRDS. The path takes him right to that rural VILLAGE...

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

(B & W)

...where the old man appeared years ago from his crumbling house. WE HAVE BEEN HERE. Even in this half light the place is recognizable.

Nicholas sees a FIGURE moving some distance ahead, moving on through this abandoned settlement and further up into the mountains.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DUSK

(B & W)

Nicholas takes the dirt road we know leads to that strange, isolated warehouse.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

(B & W)

And there it sits, not as decayed as we know it will be in 1981, but clearly in disuse, a ghostly presence.

No sign of Daigo...or of any other life until Nicholas appears on the forest's edge. He moves carefully toward the building.

CLOSER ANGLE...TIGHT ON NICHOLAS, inching forward below the porch eaves. BOARDS CREAK UNDERFOOT as he advances, reaches the main door, sees its ideogram...a circle, nine black diamonds...Kuji-Kiri. Nine hands cutting. THE DOOR IS AJAR.

INT. NINE HANDS CUTTING - DUSK

(B & W)

Darkness. Nicholas slides in without moving the door open any farther. Silence. AND THEN A CIGARETTE LIGHTER FLARES ACROSS THE ROOM!

Daigo...dressed in a black raw silk suit, rather old-fashioned somewhat like a Chinese mandarin. He touches the lighter to one candle, then another, then another, moving slowly around the room until there is sufficient light to reveal...

...Yuki...lying on an old mattress upon the floor. She's naked, her breasts and belly rising, falling as she breathes.

Nicholas doesn't move.

NICHOLAS

Wake her up.

DAIGO

Not now.

English. Conversation will continue that way, Daigo letting Nicholas choose the language.

NICHOLAS

What're you doing to her? How did you get her here?

Nicholas looks at Yuki's unresponsive form on the bed.

DAIGO

Your first lesson, cousin: don't be surprised by anything or anybody. Did she tell you we were lovers?

NICHOLAS

What is this place?

DAIGO

Kuji-kiri. Nine hands cutting. I'm saving myself, Nicholas. Saving Japan. Beyond bushido. Way beyond.

NICHOLAS

You're a fool!

DAIGO

We're invincible. And it's too late to stop us. Tell that to your father. Because we don't need places like this anymore. We're everywhere in Japan now. Everywhere. If you go to a bank, we're there. If you buy insurance, we're there. A new car. You buy from us. With America's blessing.

Nicholas steps toward the bed. ANOTHER FIGURE appears, easing slightly from the shadows. That Japanese businessman from the train. He removes his thick glasses, peels away his old face. He is a young man, a ninja, like Daigo. The effect is quite startling, calculatedly so.

DAIGO

Remind your father we're allies now, America and Japan. Fighting shoulder-to-shoulder against the communists. You should be at peace with yourself, Nicholas. You could be the best of both worlds. I true man of the future.

NICHOLAS

This is mad. It's an excuse...to control everything. Like before the war.

DAIGO

No. We have wonderful plans, Nicholas, great plans. So tell your father to stop tormenting you. You're Japanese. Join us.

The two cousins are not more than six feet apart.

NICHOLAS

You're the one who's being tormented...and manipulated! By your father. Just like he wants to manipulate everyone else?

Daigo stiffens, for the first time visibly stung by a statement from his cousin.

Nicholas steps toward Yuki, takes her wrist. The ninja steps forward from the shadows. Nicholas turns to meet his advance, a millisecond too late...

...the ninja's face balloons out toward Nicholas like the wedge of a viper, his cheeks billowing, his lips curling into an O. A fine mist shoots from the aperture, catches Nicholas in the face! Nicholas reels, opening and closing his mouth soundlessly like a fish dying of the air, rubbing his eyes.

He turns toward Daigo and sees him in a blur now in the half light, untying his belt, loosening his black silk pants...

The ninja takes hold of Nicholas' hair, forces him to his knees, drags him to the bed on his face, near Yuki.

...Daigo SNAPS HIS FINGER IN FRONT OF YUKI'S EYES. SHE AWAKES ABRUPTLY, STILL IN SOME SORT OF TRANCE.

Nicholas' vision is cloudy, the whole scene a nightmarish swirl as Yuki's features arrange themselves into a slow sensual slavish smile. Her arms come up around Daigo's shoulders, but he rejects her, moves instead to Nicholas.

Nicholas tries to struggle, but it's hopeless, the other ninja bracing a fist against the back of his neck.

Daigo stands behind Nicholas, begins to mount him like a dog.

Nicholas closes his eyes. The ninja jabs his neck. Nicholas opens his eyes, looks into Yuki's face as...

...Daigo rams himself into his cousin's anus. Nicholas screams, writhes against the bed in a rhythm that finally matches Daigo's thrusts...

EXT. STREET (MATSUDO 1965) - NIGHT (B & W)

An automobile moves onto a desolate back street, stops. The driver gets out. He is Daigo's confederate, the other ninja. He opens the front passenger door.

INT. AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT (B & W)

Nicholas sits drunkenly in the front seat, blinking salty sweat and tears as he's yanked out and left on the pavement.

Daigo is in the backseat with Yuki. She seems like a robot, uninterested.

EXT. STREET - DAWN (B & W)

Nicholas lies huddled in a dirty corner. There is some FOOT TRAFFIC now, the city awakening. His eyes open, and he sees shadows looming, moving off. People?

Nicholas stands uneasily, supporting himself against a brick wall. THE SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. PENN STATION (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - DAY

Nicholas Linnear steps off a commuter train from Long Island. He moves through the CROWD with a natural grace, avoiding even the slightest brush with all these strangers, somehow setting himself apart from the rest of humanity.

A LEGEND IS SUPERIMPOSED:

NEW YORK

Nicholas approaches a station bookstore, stops near its window, not looking inside but using the plate glass as a mirror to survey the station behind him. He moves away, avoiding a collision with an OLD WOMAN towing her suitcase on wheels.

Nicholas enters a Nedicks, wedges himself next to a FAT MAN devouring a slice of coconut cream pie.

NICHOLAS

Coffee.

A WAITRESS gets it as Nicholas uses the establishment's mirrored columns to continue his surveillance of the station activity behind him.

Now Nicholas stands at a line of shining chromium telephones, his call already going through.

NICHOLAS

Lt. Lewis Spranzo, please.
Nicholas Linnear.

He watches a YOUNG MAN in a dark windbreaker standing near a bank of lockers. AN OLDER MAN wearing an expensive camel overcoat approaches. The two shake hands, walk off.

NICHOLAS

Yeah. I'm here. I'm in Penn Station. I want to see the apartment. Before you clean it up.

(listens)

Today. Now. In an hour. I might see things you don't.

(listens)

Spranzo, there is someone following me.

INT. NYPD - DAY

Spranzo's office. He's on the telephone.

SPRANZO

What's this person look like?

INT. PENN STATION - DAY

Nicholas is walking again, extraordinarily focused, alert, leaving the station. BUT WE HEAR NO NATURAL SOUNDS, JUST BOTH SIDES OF HIS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH SPRANZO...

NICHOLAS' VOICE

I haven't seen him yet.

SPRANZO'S VOICE

Then how do you know it's a he?

NICHOLAS' VOICE

Sakki. It's a kind of ESP.
Bujutsu. I can't explain it.

SPRANZO'S VOICE
Who do you think it is?

NICHOLAS' VOICE
The ninja.

EXT. PENN STATION - DAY

Nicholas emerges, looks for a taxi...

SPRANZO'S VOICE
Stay there, Linnear. I'll be right over.

NICHOLAS' VOICE
He'd smell you. Forget it.
Leave him to me.

SPRANZO'S VOICE
To you?

Nicholas gets into a taxi.

SPRANZO'S VOICE
Hey, Linnear? You still alive?

NICHOLAS' VOICE
I'll meet you at Tanaka's apartment
in one hour. Three fifty-five.

INT. TANAKA BROWNSTONE - DAY

Nicholas comes down the corridor. NORMAL SOUNDS RETURN...
HIS FOOTSTEPS. Spranzo waits for him by the apartment door
on which there's now affixed a bold notice: THESE PREMISES
CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE CORONER, CITY OF NEW YORK.

SPRANZO
You bag him?

NICHOLAS
No. Let's go inside.

INT. TANAKA APARTMENT - DAY

The door opens. Spranzo precedes Nicholas. The place looks
like a tidal wave washed through.

SPRANZO
No fingerprints. I mean except
theirs.

Nicholas walks slowly through the rubble, squatting to
examine a cracked table leg.

SPRANZO

It looked to me like the guy used
a baseball bat on 'em.

NICHOLAS

A bokken. It's a staff. Hardwood.
Terry was a tatsujin, a master of
kenjutsu, karate, aikido. No man
alive should've been able to get
close enough to kill him.

SPRANZO

How about two men?

NICHOLAS

One man. This is a spiritual
killing.

SPRANZO

Nothing spiritual about the work
of a pile driver. Who is it,
Mr. Linnear?

NICHOLAS

I don't know. Probably Japanese.
He killed Eileen first. To enrage
Terry. That's the only way this
could have happened: anger.
There's no room for anger.

Nicholas is angry, hating himself for the weakness it implies.

SPRANZO

Your assistant...?

NICHOLAS

Vincent Ito?

SPRANZO

You were kinda close to the guy.

NICHOLAS

Like family.

SPRANZO

Same killer. My latest hunch.
People close to you.

(pause)

Where's Tanaka get the money for
his business?

NICHOLAS

Why?

SPRANZO

It takes an awful lot of cash to open a place in this town. Orientals like to gamble. Maybe he couldn't pay someone back.

NICHOLAS

The Chase Manhattan Bank didn't do this, lieutenant.

SPRANZO

Don't be too sure.

INT. SUBBASEMENT PARKING GARAGE (NEW YORK 1981) - DAY

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ferry boxes of fluorescent tubes to the upper floors as Raphael Tomkins' limousine arrives.

Frank parks the big car, gets out of the driver's side. Another bodyguard, PURVIS, vacates the shotgun seat. Beefed-up security. They make a fast visual scan of the immediate area before opening a rear passenger door. Tomkins appears. He seems more overtly anxious than before, moving quickly through the WORKERS to the safety of his elevator...

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Purvis and Frank stand on either side of Tomkins as the lift ascends. They are not alone. TWO ELECTRICIANS in tan uniforms, burdened with fluorescent tubes, also occupy this confined space. One of the electricians seems familiar to us, not instantly recognizable. Frank eyes him, and he smiles back. Daigo.

INT. TŌHOKU NO DŌJŌ - DAY

Nicholas comes inside. There are boxes stacked on Eileen's desk now. AN OLDER JAPANESE MAN AND WOMAN work to pack personal effects and business records.

NICHOLAS

Mr. Tanaka? My name is Nicholas Linnear. Your son was my friend.

INT. DŌJŌ FLOOR - DAY

Nicholas and the elder Tanaka enter. The room is silent, eerie. Nicholas walks around, several yards from Terry's father.

ELDER TANAKA

Terry spoke proudly of you.

NICHOLAS

I may have brought this upon him.

ELDER TANAKA

Death can never be transmitted from one person to another. It comes from within oneself. All the technical discipline my son taught was meant to make his students finally understand that.

Nicholas picks a bokken from several hanging on the wall.

NICHOLAS

Was Terry afraid of someone?

The old man studies Nicholas.

ELDER TANAKA

You are afraid.

IN JAPANESE SUDDENLY. SUBTITLES TRANSLATE.

NICHOLAS

I think so.

He moves the bokken slowly through the air. Mr. Tanaka watches, speaks in Japanese as well.

ELDER TANAKA

Into a soul free from thought and emotions, even the tiger finds no room to insert his fierce claws.

Nicholas has heard that idea expressed before, years ago, on the other side of the world. He returns the bokken to its place on the wall, speaks in English again.

NICHOLAS

Can I help you in any way?

The older man is now rolling up a straw mat. His face is unchanged but there are tears in his eyes. He says nothing.

INT. LAW OFFICES (NEW YORK CITY - 1981) - DUSK

A small successful firm at the end of their busy day. It's growing dark outside, and SEVERAL ATTORNEYS are leaving when Nicholas appears, gets a wave from the RECEPTIONIST who's fielding a phone call. Nicholas starts back toward the private offices...

RECEPTIONIST

(covering the phone)

Mr. Linnear...she's not in. She's on the island.

NICHOLAS

She's where?

INT. JUSTINE'S OFFICE - DUSK

A cluttered eclectic little space covered with folk art and museum posters and law books, every surface heaped with one thing or another. Nicholas is sitting behind Justine's desk, placing a call on a speaker-box phone, looking at a photograph of himself in a Time Magazine Man-of-the-Year frame.

JUSTINE'S VOICE

Hello.

NICHOLAS

It's me. What the hell're you doing out there? You're supposed to be here?

JUSTINE'S VOICE

Where's "here"?

NICHOLAS

New York, in your office.

JUSTINE'S VOICE

You are supposed to be out here.
Look, if we're never even in the same city, tell me how we're ever going to get married.

NICHOLAS

I'm not screwing around, Justine.
I told you to be careful.

JUSTINE

I am careful. Take me off the box. Now.

Nicholas snatches up the receiver.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DUSK

Justine stands in the living room near the window, telephone to her ear, listening for a moment...

JUSTINE

- Just don't lecture me, Nicholas, okay? When are you coming back here? I got some lobsters.

We should experience a growing apprehension for Justine as the sun sets. She seems so alone in the house, cut off...
THE CAMERA SLIDING AROUND, ISOLATING HER AGAINST A DARK WINDOW.

INT. JUSTINE'S OFFICE - DUSK

NICHOLAS

As soon as I can get a goddman
train. By nine o'clock if I get
going now.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DUSK

Justine. She listens, notices a mirror on the wall...glowing.
She turns: THE HORIZON BEHIND JUSTINE HAS BEGUN TO GLOW, AT
FIRST A DULL ORANGE...BUT NOW FLAMES APPEAR BEYOND THE TREE-
LINE.

INT. JUSTINE'S OFFICE - DUSK

WE'RE ON NICHOLAS. He sits up straight.

NICHOLAS

Justine? Hey...talk to me.
Justine!

EXT. UNFINISHED HOUSE (MONTAUK) - NIGHT

THE STRUCTURE ABLAZE as Justine reaches it, frantic, helpless,
trying to use a garden hose on it, knowing the gesture is
futile even as she keeps the water stabbing into the fire...

...AS SOMEONE WATCHES HER FROM THE COVER OF A NEARBY STAND OF
TREES.

INT. NICHOLAS' CAR - NIGHT

He speeds around hairpin curves on country roads...Montauk.

EXT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - NIGHT

Nicholas' car races up to the scene of the fire. But by now
their new homes been destroyed. ONE ENGINE COMPANY is still
on the property hosing down the smoldering ruins and tinder-
dry grassland to protect stacks of building materials that
escaped the flames.

Nicholas sees Justine the moment she sees him, and they rush
toward each other, embrace. She's been getting some comfort
from a FIRE CAPTAIN and a LONG ISLAND DETECTIVE.

NICHOLAS

You're all right? Are you all
right?

JUSTINE

It's gone, all of it, everything.
And it was set.

' She's rattled, shaking.

NICHOLAS

How do you know that? Do they
know for sure?

DETECTIVE

Mr. Linnear?

The detective's come over.

NICHOLAS

What happened? What the hell happened here?

DETECTIVE

We know one thing: the place was definitely arsonated. Can a gasoline lying big as life in your driveway.

NICHOLAS

Thank you.

Nicholas stares at the charred house.

DETECTIVE

We'll get a team out here in the morning. Go through everything.

NICHOLAS

Thank you.

Nicholas leads Justine away from these well-meaning authorities. He's seen something they haven't:..

...a tree at the head of the drive, stripped of its bark for about a foot at eye-level.

JUSTINE

What is it?

NICHOLAS

My cousin wants to kill me.

Nicholas is staring at the raw exposed wood of the tree. Nine black diamonds have been inked onto the blond surface... a five-pointed shuriken driven into the center of the symbol.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Tomkins' limousine arrives at a modest neighborhood restaurant. Purvis gets out curbside, gives his boss exit from the rear. They head into the eatery together while Frank takes the car away to park it.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tomkins is well known around these parts, and he's shown to a comfortably private table where Lt. Spranzo is already reading the menu, nursing a beer.

TOMKINS

Don't get up, don't get up.

Spranzo has no intention.

TOMKINS
You know about this place?

SPRANZO
No. Too expensive for me.

TOMKINS
(laughs)
I been coming here for thirty
years.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Frank kills the limo's headlights. It's a lonely, poorly lighted location.

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Frank settles in, smoking a cigarette, propping his Daily News on the steering wheel, illuminating it with a convenient overhead map light. He tunes the RADIO to a ball game. Top of the ninth. Paradise. Until Frank hears THE PING OF A PEBBLE AGAINST THE WINDSHIELD.

He looks up, out at the darkened parking lot. ANOTHER PING. He silences his radio. He turns off the map light...sits there all alone in the dark. ANOTHER PING.

Frank clicks on his headlights. They fall across the empty lot, spill onto a shabby brick building. AND THEN A BLACK-CLAD FIGURE STEPS RIGHT INTO THE BEAM OF FRANK'S LEFT HEADLIGHT.

Frank hits his brights. The figure seems to vanish into thin air in just that instant when the headlights kick up their intensity.

FRANK
What the fuck...

He's getting out...a mistake...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

...drawing his sidearm, sailing across the gravel, all in the blink of an eye! Frank jumps to his feet, weaponless, in a boxer's semi-crouch, fists up in front of his chest...but no opponent to take on.

FRANK
Come on, you sonofabitch...

A flash of that short sword in the wash of the limo's headlights! Frank might have seen it coming, but so what? The air in front of him splits apart, vibrates like a beaded curtain! The blur of Daigo's blade pierces the night, and then it pierces Frank, hitting the top of his right shoulder first.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Purvis sits alone, eating at the table near his boss and Lt. Spranzo.

SPRANZO

Why this guy is after you, who's payroll he's on, I don't care. How he's after you is all I need to figure out right now.

TOMKINS

I'll tell you how: it's psychological warfare right now. He kills an old man a few feet from my daughter. He kills her fiancée's best friend, then the man's girlfriend. He burns down my daughter's dream house. To make me suffer.

SPRANZO

Linnear thinks it's designed to make him suffer, not you.

TOMKINS

And you believe that?

SPRANZO

Hey, the sun revolves around each and every one of us, don't it?

TOMKINS

You shouldn't be a cop, Spranzo.

SPRANZO

I should do talk shows, I know.

Spranzo eats. Tomkins eats.

TOMKINS

Then what's your plan?

SPRANZO

I want you to leave the country.

TOMKINS

That's impossible.

SPRANZO

I know: he'll never let you get
off the ground.

SLAM! THE FRONT DOOR SWINGS INWARD! Purvis is up, gun
coming out...Spranzo with a mouthful...Tomkins wheeling
around in time to see...

...Frank crash inside, under his own failing, crazy power,
an awful confusion of blood and cloth and muscle...no right
arm. He looks at the room for one frightening moment then
pitches headlong through some chairs onto the floor, dead.
Silence. Spranzo wipes his lips with a linen napkin.

EXT. BEACH (MONTAUK 1981) - DAWN

A solitary figure on the foggy beach. Nicholas Linnear
preparing himself for the inevitable confrontation, execut-
ing the tenth series of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, his body and mind
in perfect balance, his movements fluid, even, centered,
hands held like a bow, his torso and his arms moving back
to front, imitating the motion of an arrow ("Shoot Tiger").

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAWN

Justine is sitting on the bed, reading through the yellowed
contents of a large manila envelope. Bits and pieces of
Nicholas Linnear's past, old wedding photographs of the
Colonel and Chiyo, clippings from various Armed Forces news-
papers chronicling the Occupation and featuring underlined
mentions of the Colonel's participation.

She stops at a photo taken at the birthday party we attended
for those two little cousins...Daigo and Nicholas side-by-
side, six-years old.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Nicholas...his weight falling back to his left leg, his arms
dropping to his sides...fists moving clockwise to hit the
opponent's head ("Circle Fist")...his weight shifting exqui-
sitely to his right foot, open hands now wide over his head,
now coming downward and crossing at the wrists, chest level,
palms in. His right foot pivots on its toes, and Nicholas
steps back to his original straight-forward position.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAWN

Nicholas comes into the bedroom, his T'ai Chi completed.
Justine is fishing out her overnight bag, her suitcase.

JUSTINE

How long since you've seen him?
Your cousin Daigo?

NICHOLAS

Fifteen years. What do you think
you're doing?

JUSTINE

Your father must have been an amazing man.

NICHOLAS

Amazing. He wanted to make Japan into America and America into Japan.

JUSTINE

That sounds like a terrible idea.

Justine keeps packing, avoids his glance to hid her uneasiness.

NICHOLAS

I said where do you think you're going? Justine?

JUSTINE

Back to the city.

NICHOLAS

No, you're not.

JUSTINE

I can't stay here. I can't think straight here anymore.

NICHOLAS

Well, I can. He could've killed you. If he wanted to. But he didn't. I can't have you around me, Justine.

She stops packing, turns toward him.

NICHOLAS

Not now.

JUSTINE

Fine.

She stuffs paperwork into her briefcase. Nicholas pulls his overnight bag out of the closet...

NICHOLAS

And I have to go in, to see the police.

JUSTINE

It's a big city. We'll stay out of each other's way.

NICHOLAS

I'm not going to argue with you about this.

But she keeps packing. Nicholas stops, watches her until she relents, looks at him.

JUSTINE

I'm scared. Okay?

He puts his hands on her shoulders, and they draw close together. Silence.

NICHOLAS

We'll get a hotel room. I don't want an address anybody knows about.

INT. MODEST HOTEL (NEW YORK CITY) - LATE DAY

AN ORIENTAL BELLBOY takes Nicholas and Justine down the corridor, into their room...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATE DAY

The bellboy draws back curtains, flips on lights, adjusts the thermostat, sets up luggage racks, turns on the TV...

NICHOLAS

It's okay, we can handle the rest...

Nicholas tips the man, buys their privacy, all this while Justine's been perusing a complimentary copy of The Times.

JUSTINE

Holy shit.

Nicholas comes back from double-locking the hall door. She hands him the paper.

JUSTINE:

Page three, column one.

He confronts The Times' discreet coverage of last night's bizarre violence: INDUSTRIALIST'S CHAUFFEUR MURDERED OUTSIDE BRONX RESTAURANT.

NICHOLAS

Why his chauffeur?

JUSTINE

He's leaving the country tonight. It says he's flying to London on his private jet.

NICHOLAS
You've got to call him, Justine.

JUSTINE
Me?

NICHOLAS
He can't get on that plane. It's suicide.

JUSTINE
If it's business, he'll do it.
Nothing that I say has ever effected him.

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - EVENING

The big car moves through a midtown tunnel, heads for Kennedy.

Spranzo (in an executive 3-piece suit) sits on the jumpseat across from Tomkins and Fleming. His eyes focus out the windows, on traffic...ON A CAR THAT SUDDENLY PULLS PARALLEL, SPEEDS ALONG WITH THEM. Spranzo locks eyes with one of the car's occupants. Tomkins sees all this.

TOMKINS
You ever get frightened, lieutenant?

SPRANZO
Me? No time for that. Could happen any second.

MR. FLEMING
Right here in traffic?

SPRANZO
Any second. Bang.

The other car pulls ahead, moves off innocently. Spranzo looks at Tomkins, smiles.

EXT. PRIVATE TERMINAL - EVENING

Bright lights. A GUARD at the gate. Sleek private aircraft visible on the tarmac beyond.

Nicholas appears. He approaches the gate, picking up as many details as he can, trying to detect any extra security. He can't. He walks right inside, past the guard who makes no effort to stop him. Odd.

INT. TERMINAL COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

Small. A HOSTESS in a degrading mini-dress. A FEW EXECUTIVES sipping complimentary drinks, waiting to depart.

HOSTESS

Good evening. Can I ask who you're flying with tonight?

NICHOLAS

Raphael Tomkins.

The hostess checks her flight log.

HOSTESS

I hope you have your passport. Mr. Tomkins should be here any minute. Can I offer you a cocktail?

NICHOLAS

I'll wait outside.

Nicholas exits. No one in the room seems to care one way or the other.

EXT. PRIVATE TERMINAL - EVENING

Tomkins' limousine appears preceded by an unmarked car carrying Lt. Niles and a few OTHER MEN, followed by another unmarked car carrying Lt. Epperson and several ASSOCIATES. The first car drives on by. The limo goes through the gate. The third car (Epperson's) enters the airport too, but then it quickly parks, letting the limousine go forward unescorted.

INT. TERMINAL BUILDING - EVENING

Not much light in here. Looking out a window at the limousine as it rolls past, SUDDENLY OVER-HEARING THE CONVERSATION INSIDE THE CAR WITH ELECTRONIC DISTORTION...

SPRANZO'S VOICE

There's forty cops out there so don't nobody panic.

TOMKINS' VOICE

If he doesn't try it, what do I do? Fly to London?

SPRANZO'S VOICE

Yeah, give my best to the Queen.

EXT. TARMAC - EVENING

Purvis drives the limousine toward a snow-white Lear jet being groomed by THREE MECHANICS. He brakes twenty yards from the aircraft. Silence. Nothing happens.

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - EVENING

Spranzo has drawn his gun, and now he's surveying the airfield.

SPRANZO

It's all in the wrist. It's more than just pulling a trigger. Gotta be an extension of your brain. That's why I don't even practice with my gun. I use my hand.

TOMKINS

Let's go, lieutenant.

Spranzo smiles. He can't wait.

EXT. TARMAC - EVENING

Purvis gets out of the driver's side, sniffs the air, hikes his pants, opens the rear door. Spranzo gets out, gun concealed again. Peter Fleming emerges. He is very nervous.

Raphael Tomkins gets out. A UNIFORMED PILOT appears from beneath the fuselage, completing his routine pre-flight visual check of the landing gear. He enters the aircraft. Purvis takes three suitcases out of the trunk.

NICHOLAS. He's standing some distance away, observing all this, sipping coffee out of a styrofoam cup, trying to look everywhere at once. TWO PILOTS come out of a door right behind him, head onto the tarmac...

PILOT

Last time I took him to England, he decided to go on to France. I didn't see my wife for a month.

Nicholas hears this, watches the two men start toward the Lear.

Spranzo, Tomkins, and Fleming are just about to board.

SPRANZO

My shoe's untied.

He's stalling, hoping, praying for an attack. Tomkins is getting a little disillusioned with all this...

TOMKINS

Forget it, lieutenant.. He's
smarter than we are.

ON NICHOLAS AGAIN, crossing the tarmac, catching up to those
two pilots...

NICHOLAS

Hello.

PILOT

Hello...

NICHOLAS

How many of you guys it take to
fly that thing to Europe?

PILOT

Just two of us.

Almost before the words are out of the man's mouth Nicholas
is five yards away, on a dead run for the jet!

Tomkins is halfway up the short boarding ramp, Fleming
already inside, Spranzo bringing up the rear. He sees
the man charging them, draws his gun!

Nicholas dives, tucks, rolls! Spranzo doesn't fire, can't
find his target.

The three mechanics draw weapons! Purvis draws a weapon!
Nicholas lashes out, takes Purvis down, keeps coming...

SPRANZO

(to Tomkins)

Get the fuck inside!

Tomkins is frozen, terror-stricken! Spranzo aiming with
both hands...Nicholas launching himself through the air,
a miraculous acrobatic vault that lands him squarely in
front of the astonished cop...hands raised in surrender,
close enough for Spranzo to recognize him now. The three
"mechanics" surround Nicholas, weapons leveled at his head.

NICHOLAS

He's inside.

SPRANZO

What?

NICHOLAS

He's inside the plane. You don't
need three pilots to fly it.

Spranzo sees two pilots still on the runway, remembers the third guy who was checking the landing gear. Nicholas and Tomkins have locked eyes. Tomkins senses instinctively that whoever this guy is, he knows something the cops don't. The industrialist bulls his way past Spranzo, away from the Lear just as...

...the aircraft's cockpit EXPLODES IN A FLASH OF BLUE-WHITE LIGHT! Spranzo is hurled forward into Nicholas by the concussion! Smoke and confusion everywhere...

Tomkins dives into his limousine, Purvis behind the wheel, burning rubber...Fleming rushing out of the Lear, unhurt, chasing after the big limo...

Lt. Epperson's car peels away from its parking place, fish-tails out toward the jet, passing Tomkins and company going in the other direction, getting the hell out of here...

COPS EVERYWHERE! GUNS EVERYWHERE!

Daigo soars out of the twisted, smoking nose of the Lear, soars, that's the only word for it. He's dressed like a pilot...dark blue clothing, hard to see him when he hits the ground running...

...but there's a COP waiting...a sten gun. Daigo swings his arm out and a razor-sharp disc flies into the officer's throat before he can fire.

Spranzo's back on his feet, with Nicholas...

SPRANZO

What happened?

NICHOLAS

Flash bomb.

They see it at the same time, through the smoke, a blur of movement leaving the dead cop. They pursue.

ANGLE ON THE RUNWAY. Smoke. Moonlight. Security light. A dark figure moving in wreaths of light, spectral, broken into oblique shards as it darts between OTHER PRIVATE AIRCRAFT...

ANOTHER PLAINCLOTHES COP, raising his .38, leading the target, squeezing off a shot! The report is loud, ricocheting off metal!

Epperson's car appears out of nowhere, headlights blasting through the smokey haze, finding Daigo's fleeing form, speeding off after him to the edge of the runway...

Nicholas overtakes Spranzo, faster and younger than the cop, both of them heading for the end of the field where Epperson and his men have gone.

ANGLE ON EPPERSON and his two associates spreading out. Heavy firepower here as they stop, listen. Tall grass. Epperson finds a pilot's jacket lying on the ground...hears the soft lap of sea water against the shore. Movement.

Epperson swivels, legs spread, his .38 aimed from a combat stance! Aimed at what? Silence. No movement. Behind him! He drops to one knee, FIRES FAST, accurately, reflexively. But the figure keeps coming, leaping at him, left hand extended, wielding a short black-wood stick, blunt-ended. Epperson braces for an overhand blow, leaves himself totally unprepared for the horizontal thrust, for the SEVEN-INCH STILETTO BLADE POWERED BY A HIGH-THRUST STEEL SPRING AS IT SHOOTS OUT FROM THE END OF THE WOODEN STICK, punctures him front to back, his heart, his lung...dead before he hits the ground.

Nicholas is there first, even before Epperson's partners, in time to see the detective crumble. Nicholas looks up quickly toward the water...

DAIGO, black as death, standing ten yards away, staring at him!

Nicholas moves forward...one step...two steps...

And Daigo flips backward into mid-air, an almost superhuman reverse somersault into Long Island Sound.

Nicholas reaches the water's edge a second later...but the moonlit surface is already silent, vast. Spranzo arrives, out of breath.

SPRANZO

Where? Where?

NICHOLAS

Nowhere.

Nicholas turns to go, but Spranzo grabs his arm, stops him. A tense moment.

SPRANZO

I-fucked up.

Nicholas looks at Epperson's body, at the body of that other cop lying out on the runway...the smoking Lear jet. Raphael Tomkins' limousine is long gone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - NIGHT

A framed photograph of Masanobu Kashiba rests upon a red silk pillow. Flickering candelight creates a glowing cocoon in the darkness, and Daigo kneels solemnly before this shrine to his dead father, worships in the traditional Buddhist manner.

He seems devoid of emotion, his soul free from thought...no room for the tiger to insert its fierce claws. Daigo leans slowly forward, blows the candle out and THE SCREEN BLACKENS.

INT. MOVIE THEATER (NEW YORK CITY 1981) - NIGHT

AS JUSTINE'S FACE APPEARS out of the darkness, the SOUNDS we hear confuse us. SOUNDS OF AN AWFUL FIGHT.

SPRANZO'S FACE...watching the same thing Justine is watching...

...A LOW-BUDGET JAPANESE MOVIE...EXTRAORDINARY ACTION...A NINJA DESTROYING AT LEAST TEN OPPONENTS.

ANGLE ON NICHOLAS, sitting in this musty old theater between Justine and Spranzo...scattered around them a sparse crowd of BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN KIDS.

SPRANZO

This is movie bullshit. Nobody can do that.

NICHOLAS

Maybe.

SPRANZO

It's like a western.

NICHOLAS

No, It's an eastern. Watch it. You might learn something.

ANGLE ON THE SCREEN. AGAINST UNBELIEVABLE ODDS, THE NINJA PREVAILS.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Nicholas, Justine, and Lt. Lewis Spranzo eat a simple meal with chop sticks, drink Japanese beer.

SPRANZO

I got a cousin too. My age, in New Jersey. The son of a bitch is a mobster, I think, narcotics. To him I'm a joke. I'd like to rip his head off.

JUSTINE

So why don't you?

SPRANZO

It's against the law.

NICHOLAS

I can get him.

SPRANZO

Who? My cousin or yours?

~~Pause~~ Pause. Spranzo knows what Nicholas is talking about.

JUSTINE

A guy in a funny black suit travels halfway around the world to get you and the way he does it is he murders all your friends and he tries to kill my father...

NICHOLAS

Don't apply logic to this. He wants you to do that so you'll be frustrated.

SPRANZO

I am frustrated, okay? If you don't wanna tell me why this little prick's after you...
(to Justine)

Excuse me.

JUSTINE

Keep it up. I love it.

SPRANZO

(to Nicholas)

...that's okay. Just tell me how we get him. You got the Japanese brain. I'm all ears.

NICHOLAS

I go where he wants, and I wait for him.

SPRANZO

Hey, brilliant. Why didn't I think of that?

JUSTINE

Go where, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS

Your father's office. The warlord's castle. I'm going to be his samurai.

JUSTINE

His what?

NICHOLAS

His bodyguard.

SPRANZO

And this Duca character's not going to figure that out? Come on.

NICHOLAS

Daigo. He'll know exactly what I'm doing. But he'll still attack. Because it's me.

SPRANZO

So what? It was you fifteen years ago. Why now?

NICHOLAS

The time is right. I'm getting married. I might have a son of my own. He can't let that happen.

Justine looks at Nicholas, amazed, unnerved by the notion.

JUSTINE

This is insane.

SPRANZO

It sure is. You think the whole New York police department can't stop him, but you can.

NICHOLAS

That's right.

JUSTINE

Really? How?

NICHOLAS

When he fights me, I think he'll do it honorably. Face-to-face. Because I'm family
(pause)

Do I get your help or not?

SPRANZO

Meaning?

NICHOLAS

No cops around Tomkins. When Daigo gets inside the building, I do it. Alone.

Justine throws her napkin on the table, gets up. Nicholas grabs her wrist, looks at her.

JUSTINE

I don't know how you can talk like this. It's like you're someone else.

She walks out. Nicholas takes out his wallet, puts down enough money to cover everything.

NICHOLAS

Well?

SPRANZO

How can I agree to that?

NICHOLAS

Suit yourself.

He gets up too, leaves Spranzo...

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Justine is trying to flag a vacant cab. There aren't many at this hour. Nicholas comes out behind her. She sees him, ignores him. He watches her efforts. Spranzo emerges...and a CAB stops at the curb.

SPRANZO

I'd marry her too. What the hell, it's gotta be interesting.

Justine's already in the cab, Nicholas hurrying so he won't be left behind, Spranzo on his tail...

SPRANZO

I appreciate all this Oriental doubletalk, I do. But I can't go off half cocked with just a bunch of Zen Buddhist shit in my back pocket. We'll figure something out. Put our heads together.

JUSTINE

But not our brains.

SPRANZO

(closing them into the cab)

Right.

Spranzo steps back as the cab pulls out into traffic, disappears. He turns around and walks toward his unmarked car parked behind the Japanese restaurant...not a busy area. He fishes in his pockets, comes up with his keys. A NOISE BEHIND HIM.

Spranzo turns to see a DOG digging around in some garbage near the restaurant. He goes back to his keys, the door lock. But he can't get the key into the lock.

SPRANZO

What the fuck...?

He looks closer: a small stick's been broken off in the lock. Spranzo looks around, circles to the passenger side. Same deal, the lock jammed here too. Now what? Spranzo draws his gun.

There's no one around. Spranzo doesn't like this at all. WHACK! A THROWING STAR COMES OUT OF NOWHERE, EMBEDS ITSELF IN THE CAR'S DOORPOST...INTO METAL.

Spranzo whirls around. No one in sight. FOOTSTEPS... HURRYING AWAY DOWN AN ALLEY. He investigates...

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Brick walls. Trash cans. Spranzo and his gun. SPRANZO'S FOOTSTEPS. He stops. Silence. SOMEONE ELSE MOVING UP AHEAD!

Spranzo lifts his weapon with two hands...and Daigo steps into view! Spranzo FIRES, POINT BLANK, HIS TARGET JUST TEN YARDS OFF! THREE LOUD SHOTS. Daigo hurtles backward... grotesquely...out of sight.

Spranzo never lowers his gun, advances, turns a corner... Daigo! Standing up another ten yards off! Spranzo FIRES AGAIN, TWICE THIS TIME! But the alley ahead of him is empty, crisscrossed with long shadows.

Spranzo keeps coming, follows the narrow passage out onto Sixth Avenue where there's life again, PEDESTRIANS, MOVING TRAFFIC, bright lights. He lowers his gun to avoid a panic. Where the hell is Daigo?

Spranzo looks left and right down the sidewalk, PEOPLE coming at him from both sides. He's confused, disoriented, somehow more vulnerable here than he was in the alley. PEOPLE brush past him...

...AND SPRANZO GRABS HIS FOREARM! BLOOD. He's been cut, but by whom? That OLD WOMAN walking away? That TEENAGE KID in the club jacket? We're looking at poor Spranzo, and we can see something behind him, approaching...

...Daigo, coming right down the sidewalk big as death, among INNOCENT PEOPLE but moving toward Spranzo who senses the danger...

...turns just in time to see the ninja, that Oriental face, only yards away, PEOPLE BETWEEN THEM. Spranzo makes his decision, lifts his pistol! THROWING STARS: TWO OF THEM COMING AT SPRANZO AT THE SAME TIME! THEY WHIP BY ON EITHER SIDE OF HIS HEAD, A HAIR'S-BREADTH AWAY, PINNING HIM TO A WALL! Everyone scatters! Everyone. Daigo's not there!

Spranzo comes forward...people cowering in front of him... those throwing stars on the wall, mocking poor Spranzo.

SPRANZO

I'm a cop. It's okay. I'm a cop.

Terrible silence. A man backs away. Spranzo touches an ear... nicked by one of the shuriken.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - DAY

Nicholas and Spranzo stride down the hall...

SPRANZO

He's not that tough. I'm not dead.
I scared him.

NICHOLAS

He didn't kill you because he wants
a nervous confused person around me,
someone who'll make mistakes, get
angry...

SPRANZO

Hey, don't tell me who's gonna...

NICHOLAS

See?

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - DAY

Nicholas and Spranzo enter the reception area. PHONES ARE RINGING, SECRETARIES AND ASSISTANTS are buzzing about. Purvis occupies a conspicuous chair.

NICHOLAS

We'd like to see Mr. Tomkins,
please. My name's Nicholas Linnear.

SECRETARY

I'm sorry, but Mr. Tomkins is in
a meeting right now.

SPRANZO

For how long?

SECRETARY

Well, the better part of the day
I should imagine.

NICHOLAS

Please interrupt him then.

SECRETARY

Oh, I can't to that. If you just
leave your...

SPPANZO

Yes, you can. Pick up the phone
and buzz him.

SECRETARY

That is impossible.

NICHOLAS

No, it's not.

Nicholas picks up her phone. Purvis rises. Nicholas hits a rather obvious call button...

NICHOLAS

Mr. Tomkins? Excuse me, but this is Nicholas Linnear. I'm out here with Lt. Spranzo. I think it's time we met.

(pause)

I will.

Nicholas hangs up, smiles at the secretary, at Purvis, sits down to calm everyone.

SPRANZO

How you doin', Purvis?

The door to Tomkins' inner office opens, and a HALF DOZEN CONTRACTORS troop out with unfinished business under their arms. Mr. Fleming appears...

MR. FLEMING

Mr. Linnear?

INT. TOMKINS OFFICE - DAY

Raphael Tomkins is at his desk, in a sweater vest, a loosened tie. Fleming brings his two visitors inside.

TOMKINS

That'll be all for a few minutes, Peter, thank you.

Fleming excuses himself. Nicholas comes forward. Tomkins extends his hand. Nicholas takes it, and they shake, Tomkins hanging on a beat too long, testing Nicholas, smiling at him...assessing his daughter's lover.

TOMKINS

Would you care for a drink? I owe you one.

NICHOLAS

I know who's trying to kill you.

TOMKINS

So do I. A hired assassin.

SPRANZO

We don't think so anymore.

Silence. Tomkins takes an envelope from his desk, hands it to Nicholas. Inside the envelope: Daigo's note...nine small diamonds orbiting a large circle like satellites about a sun.

NICHOLAS

Tell me how you got this.

TOMKINS

Right in the fucking mail.

This sudden profanity, used in such a graceful way by Tomkins, hints at the man's complexity.

NICHOLAS

It's a crest. For a ninja ryu...
a school in Japan, on the main island
Huma ninja. Demon wind.

TOMKINS

Very scary, right?

NICHOLAS

Yes, it is. Very. The man who
intends to kill you wants to destroy
me as well.

TOMKINS

Surely not just an unhappy
coincidence? We have only one
thing in common...my daughter.

SPRANZO

No. Two. Japan.

Nicholas comes around to Tomkins' desk, squats next to Tomkins. He runs his hands under the lip, finds nothing, moves to Tomkins' other side, repeats the effort.

NICHOLAS

I want to put us both in the
same place, here. To make it
easy for him.

TOMKINS

"Him"? Does he have a name?

NICHOLAS

(refusing to supply it)
I don't want him hunted. And I
want Justine some place else.

TOMKINS

Where is she now?

NICHOLAS

Some place else.

TOMKINS

Never patronize me. I'm well aware of my failings as a father.

Nicholas gives a pull under Tomkins' desk, extracts a bit of plastic, wire, metal...thin as a waifer, less than an inch in diameter. He gives it to Tomkins, begins unscrewing the telephone mouthpiece.

TOMKINS

(of the bug)

American made. The bastard's not even patriotic.

Nicholas removes another bug from the telephone.

TOMKINS

Can we talk now?

NICHOLAS

Probably not.

TOMKINS

(fed up)

Let's stop wasting each other's time with all this crap. I may well have angered some powerful people in Tokyo, but I'm not about to be scared off a deal involving corporations on three continents, that will, may I remind you, lieutenant, bring into this city untold millions of dollars in tax revenue.

SPRANZO

Thank you. We need the money.

TOMKINS

And what I need now is not to be disturbed. I don't want some asshole oriental assassin hanging around my neck. Can you grasp that much?

SPRANZO

Yeah, sure. Don't get angry with me.

TOMKINS

"Anger" is not the issue, lieutenant.
This is business. When someone sends
a killer after the chief executive
of another...

NICHOLAS

No one sent him. He's acting on
his own. And his hatred for me
is going to defeat him.

TOMKINS

For you? For you. You. Who the
hell are you, Mr. Linnear? I am
the son of a bitch in this deal!

Silence. Spranzo looks at Nicholas, wondering how much
Nicholas is going to let out. He gets his answer.

NICHOLAS

It's not you. You're an excuse
to confuse the issue. It's me.
Because my father dishonored his
father.

EXT. KASHIBA STEEL (TOKYO 1965) - DAY

(B & W)

A private helicopter pad. Gen. Linnear, retired now, wear-
ing civilian clothing, holds a big black umbrella over his
wife as he and Chiyo make their way through a cold December
rain to Masanobu's enormous corporate helicopter. DAIGO awaits
the Linnears, helps his aunt inside, follows the General in,
closes the chopper's door. A LEGEND IS SUPERIMPOSED:

TOKYO 1965
NEW YEAR'S EVE

Kashiba EMPLOYEES stand dutifully by, backing away only as
the chopper's huge blades begin revolving.

INT. KASHIBA HELICOPTER - DAY

(B & W)

Rising over Masanobu's steel mill. Trim and fit, the
Japanese industrialist sits with Tami, across from the
Linnears. Daigo opens a bottle of Dom Perignon, pouring
it into unsteady glasses...

Only the General, in a voluminous raincoat that reduces his
significance rather than enhances it, seems unexcited at the
prospect of this luxurious adventure.

MASANOBU

(a toast)

To family. To friends. To 1966--
a new and prosperous time for
everyone.

They all drink Masanobu's French champagne, brothers-in-law locking eyes.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE (YAMAGUCHI 1965) - DAY (B & W)

The Kashiba helicopter roars above a simple snowy landscape, buzzing over a village, rice paddies...

EXT. PROVINCIAL VILLAGE (YAMAGUCHI 1965) - LATE DAY (B & W)

Darkness has begun to settle on the wintry countryside as the big Kashiba helicopter settles down in a field. A LIMOUSINE awaits it, driven ahead from Tokyo the day before. A SMALL CROWD OF LOCAL OFFICIALS is on hand to welcome the Kashibas and their guests, conversation en route from helicopter to car in JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES...

OFFICIAL
Welcome home, Mr. Kashiba.

There is much bowing and deference to the powerful man returned to his humble roots for New Year's Eve.

INT. KASHIBA LIMOUSINE - DUSK (B & W)

The travellers moving again, bundled against the chill, Chiyo concerned about Dennis...arranging his scarf tighter.

GEN. LINNEAR
Leave it alone, it's fine.

CHIYO
Please, Dennis? Today at least,
try to enjoy yourself? We're
going to have a wonderful celebration.

GEN. LINNEAR
I'm fine, I said.

He looks like hell, a shadow of the vigorous Colonel we once knew.

MASANOBU
It fills a man with such warmth
to come home with his family at
the start of each year. Perhaps
you should go home one day soon,
Dennis. Take Nicholas. Rejuvenate
your spirit.

The General smiles, offers no other reply, looks across at Masanobu and Daigo...father and son side-by-side.

Is returned to the car at 10:00
at 10:00.

INT. FARMHOUSE (YAMAGUCHI 1965) - NIGHT

(B

A SHINTO PRIEST in elaborate regalia beats an enormous drum to a room CROWDED with JAPANESE FARM FAMILIES, extraordinary faces, men, women, children gathered in concentric circles. Much drinking and eating going on...

...Daigo, Masanobu, Chiyo, Tami, and the General a part of it all, guests of honor but accorded no special place in the jumble.

A ritual begins, a ceremony that's been practiced in this village on New Year's Eve for over eight hundred years. THE VILLAGE ELDER sits with a small drum of his own, beating it. He's a little drunk, very happy. He singles out a SOMBER MAN drinking saké. All eyes swing toward the chosen fellow...who suddenly bursts into LAUGHTER, forcing a laugh. The elder pounds on his little drum. The somber man must laugh again, LAUGHS this time with much more conviction, a crackling high-pitched cackle that lifts him right up on his toes. This time he's a hit! MANY DRUMBEATS! Everyone starts DRUMMING, joining in, a way of thanking the gods for last year's harvest, for next year's harvest, finally laughing for the sake of laughing, unbridled, infectious optimism.

Daigo laughing. Masanobu laughing. Chiyo laughing. Tami laughing, all of them mixing with these hardy provincials but the General, once again an outsider, watching with a sense of wonder and sadness as his Japanese wife drifts further away. He turns, walks outside.

Chiyo sees him go, looks to Masanobu for help.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

A light snow is falling, dusting down upon the General as he stands some short distance from the house. THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER seeps out, glorifying the night. DRUMBEATS.

VOICE

Dennis.

Masanobu. He's come outside with the General's big black umbrella, and he holds it over his brother-in-law's head. He did that day twenty years ago when Nicholas was born. Times have changed so much.

MASANOBU

You should come inside by the fire. Join us.

GEN. LINNEAR

I didn't think that was really the point of all this.

If nothing else, these two men seem ready at last to share a refreshing candor...

MASANOBU

You have always misunderstood
me, Dennis.

GEN. LINNEAR

Because you've always lied to me.

Masanobu absorbs the challenge without emotion.

MASANOBU

And now our sons misunderstand
each other. That we must not
permit. Nicholas should be here
too. With us.

GEN. LINNEAR

(pointedly)

Nicholas has a mind of his own.

They have begun walking, away from the house, the General
leading. Several buildings dot the landscape...a stable...
a lovely rural shrine...~~THAT STEADY DRUMBEAT AUDIBLE FROM~~
THE HOUSE...COMPETING SPORADICALLY WITH JOYOUS LAUGHTER.

MASANOBU

We must not dwell in the past,
Dennis. I made mistakes then.
So did you. We both know that.
But it's a different world now.

GEN. LINNEAR

And we made it.

MASANOBU

Yes. With America's help.
A prosperous world.

GEN. LINNEAR

Prosperous. Japan's being destroyed
...you can't see Mt. Fuji through
the brown haze that...

MASANOBU

You can't eat Mt. Fuji. Japan has
no hunger. No unemployment. We
can't have everything.

GEN. LINNEAR

No? But you can.

Gen. Linnear steps into the shrine. Masanobu follows, closing
the umbrella, setting it against the wall.

INT. SHINTO SHRINE (YAMAGUCHI) - NIGHT

(B & W)

Masanobu takes his wallet out, tosses a coin into a box, says a silent prayer while the General watches him cynically.

GEN. LINNEAR

What's you ask for? Another blast furnace?

MASANOBU

You're too much an idealist, Dennis, a romantic. You'd have us return to the day of the rickshaw because you think everyone was happy then. But that's an illusion. Like the laughter inside that house. All we can do is make as many people as possible think they're happy.

GEN. LINNEAR

Like children.

Gen. Linnear retrieves his umbrella. But he makes no move to leave, Masanobu taking this as a positive sign. DISTANT DRUMBEATS.

MASANOBU

To ruin your health, Dennis...to give your wife and son such great concern...for your family's sake I ask you to...

GEN. LINNEAR

I have destroyed my family! Because of you. People like you. People who pretend to care about something outside themselves. Who build shrines...to themselves.

A sudden, troubled outburst. Masanobu never raises his voice...

MASANOBU

I will not be spoken to like this. Not by you. You've learned nothing in all these years.

GEN. LINNEAR

I have. I've learned...

The General grows bolder now with every word that tumbles from his mouth, his thin hands slowly turning the closed umbrella, winding the fabric tight against its shaft. He takes steps around the shrine while the Japanese stands rock steady, watching his American in-law...

GEN. LINNEAR

I've learned that there's no point in trying to rebuild...to make things over in our image. Because the problem is...the danger is we might succeed. This is America now. And it's yours, Masanobu, so you and your friends can tear it to pieces, chew it up...

MASANOBU

Dennis, you're not well.

GEN. LINNEAR

I'm not well? You're the one who's sick. I saved you once...but not again.

The General has come around face-to-face with Masanobu, neither of them giving any quarter...

MASANOBU

You saved me to use me.

(pause)

In a dozen years we will no longer be alive. Maybe then the world will be a better place...

GEN. LINNEAR

(calmly)

Killed ourselves for you. Gave our sweat...and then our blood, and you took it all. And you taught your children the same lesson. To kill our children.

MASANOBU

No. To fight an enemy that doesn't exist anymore. We're friends now, Dennis. Daigo will forget those things I taught him. He knows to survive you must move with the wind.

GEN. LINNEAR

It never ends. War never ends as long as people like you exist.

MASANOBU

No. As long as people exist.

There is just a moment's pause before the General brings his umbrella upward and slams it against Masanobu's windpipe, one hand held on the handle, the other on the tip, driving the Japanese up against a wooden pillar, holding him there with an awful, reckless force...

GEN. LINNEAR

Then we have to make it end...

~~U. S. S. S. S.~~ Masanobu dies, not by strangulation, but much faster, his spinal column suffering a sudden snap at the base of his brain.

Silence. Softly falling snow. The General stands motionless over Masanobu, as dead in many ways as his victim. He drops the umbrella, looks out at the house. His eyes grow moist, and the General suppresses an urge to weep, to cry.

He unbuttons his great raincoat, withdraws an automatic pistol from beneath its folds. He places the barrel of the pistol into his mouth.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

(B & W)

A BURST OF LAUGHTER! Daigo. Chiyo. Tami. AN EXCITING BEATING OF DRUMS. THE SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL ROOM (NEW YORK CITY) - DAY

CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN...A NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SHOW BABBLING AWAY...as Nicholas and Justine move back and forth across the foreground...WIDER ANGLE...Nicholas packing Justine's things into her suitcase, tension and anger building...

JUSTINE

I'm not going. You're the one he's after. You're the one who needs to get out of this town until they catch him. Let the police...

NICHOLAS

They won't catch him! There's no place I could go that...

JUSTINE

Why not! How about Ohio? How about Nebraska? I don't know... Quebec. Anywhere else, and I'll join you as soon as I finish this goddamn custody case and we'll...

NICHOLAS

No. I have to take responsibility, Justine. I have to accept responsibility for my own life. For what I am! For what my father did.

JUSTINE

I'm sick of fathers, mothers, family
...and you're like them all now, you
know that? Going behind my back
like that. All of you discussing me
like I was some...

NICHOLAS

We didn't discuss you. He has
bigger problems right now. Just
forget about your father for ten
minutes...

JUSTINE

I would. Gladly. Be he won't
leave me alone. I'm not going
back out to the island. I'm
not, Nicholas.

But he keeps packing her clothes.

INT. PENN STATION - DAY

Nicholas carries Justine's suitcase along the platform,
follows her, tries to keep up with her because if she's
going, then she's going at her own speed. She hops up onto
a car with her briefcase...

NICHOLAS

Hey!

Justine stops. He's still got her bag. He steps half into
the train, hands it to her. She reaches for it, takes it,
but Nicholas won't let go.

NICHOLAS

Smile. Please.

JUSTINE

What about? Give it to me,
Nicholas...

So he does, a sudden kiss, both of their hands still on the suitcase.

NICHOLAS
I've been running away from
people all my life, Justine.

JUSTINE
Then why did you come bother me
here? Why did you ever leave
Japan and screw up my life...

THE TRAIN STARTS TO MOVE...SLOWLY...

NICHOLAS
To get away from what I hated.

JUSTINE
Then stay on ~~on~~ this train with me
right now.

NICHOLAS
I can't. He's come back to remind
me of everything I've tried to forget,
to ruin everything I have. Don't
expect me to look the other way.

THE TRAIN IS MOVING FASTER...

JUSTINE
One question: do you want to die,
Nicholas?

NICHOLAS
No. But I'm not afraid anymore either.

A moment more...and then he leaves her, jumps off the moving
train onto the platform, watches her disappear.

INT. COMMUTER CAR - DAY

Justine is seated, reading. She looks out the window. Open
countryside taking her thoughts away...

VOICE
Your father'd like to talk to
you, Miss Tomkins.

She turns, startled. It's Purvis, looming over her in the
aisle.

INT. TRAIN (BETWEEN CARS) - DAY

Raphael Tomkins waits for his daughter. Purvis delivers her,
steps a discreet distance away, back into the car to give
them privacy. AND A BLACK MAN SEATED SEVERAL YARDS AWAY
TAKES NOTE.

~~Silence~~ Icy silence. Tomkins glances out the window. THE TRACKS RUN PARALLEL TO A ROAD, AND HIS BIG LIMOUSINE IS OUT THERE, RIPPING ALONG, PACING THE TRAIN.

TOMKINS

Let's talk about Nicholas Linnear.

JUSTINE

Let's not.

TOMKINS

You listen to what he says or you wouldn't be on this train.

JUSTINE

I have reading I like to do away from the office.

TOMKINS

I don't want you marrying him. He's not like you. He's from another world. He doesn't understand you and you only think you understand him.

JUSTINE

Through?

TOMKINS

You're still my little girl. Why don't you come work for me?

JUSTINE

Like father like daughter?

TOMKINS

"Father." Whatever you think of me...never forget that. And I love you.

A long pause. Tomkins has never seemed more sincere, more vulnerable, more lonely.

JUSTINE

(gently)

No, you don't. You love yourself. You're a dangerous man because you're sentimental. And you're self-righteous, and you think it's noble to love your children.

TOMKINS

(correcting her)

Child. You're all I have.

JUSTINE

You don't have me. You don't love me. You don't understand real emotion.

Tomkins absorbs that, looks out at his speeding limousine.

TOMKINS

That's my car. When we stop at the next station, we're going to get off this train, and I'm going to have you taken some place safe.

Justine can't believe it, the whole thing, the insane notion she'd comply, the roaring limousine out there like something from a cheap melodrama. She just walks away from Tomkins, back into the car, past Purvis who looks to his boss for instructions...

TOMKINS

Let her go.

EXT. SUBURBAN STATION - DAY

The train stops. Tomkins and Purvis get off.

INT. COMMUTER CAR - DAY

Justine sits by the window, watches A CHAUFFEUR let her father into his limousine. Purvis gets into the shotgun seat. The car drives away before the train resumes its journey.

DAIGO. He's sitting only a few seats behind Justine, on the opposite side of the car...watching her. He's dressed conservatively in a dark three-piece suit and a club tie. Very American.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT (MONTAUK) - DUSK

The train arriving. Justine gets off with her luggage. We've seen Nicholas go through these same paces.

Justine walks away from the station toward the small overnight parking lot. Nicholas' car is there. She unlocks the trunk, puts her bag inside. THE PARKING LOT LIGHTS COME ON. Justine lowers the trunk lid...comes around to the driver's side, gets in, motors off.

THE BLACK MAN STEPS FROM THE STATION, AND AS IF ON CUE A LOCAL POLICE CAR APPEARS, COLLECTS HIM, FOLLOWS JUSTINE.

Daigo has seen all this subterfuge.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK) - DUSK

Justine drives up, takes her suitcase inside...

...as THAT POLICE CAR eases into our field of vision, hidden from the house.

~~EXT.~~ INT. LOCAL POLICE CAR - DUSK

The black New York cop sits next to his white MONTAUK ASSOICATE.

NEW YORK COP
Now we just sit.

MONTAUK COP
How long?

NEW YORK COP
Forever I guess, if we have to.

THE CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE OFF THEM...

EXT. LOCAL POLICE CAR - DUSK

...MOVE DOWN TOWARD THE ROADWAY. SOMETHING IS BENEATH THEIR CAR. DIAGO. IN BLACK. HE RELEASES A VAPOR FROM A SMALL PRESSURIZED CARTRIDGE INTO THE POLICE CAR'S VENTILATING SYSTEM.

INT. LOCAL POLICE CAR - EVENING

Silence. The two cops watch the beach house.

NEW YORK COP
Christ, I can hardly keep my eyes open.

MONTAUK COP
It's the sea air. Makes everybody sleepy.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

A FIGURE IN BLACK CLOTHING STEALS ACROSS THE YARD, LEAPS UP ONTO THE PORCH. JUSTINE CAN BE SEEN MOVING THROUGH THE WINDOW, MOVING AROUND IN A LIGHTED ROOM BEYOND THE INTRUDER...

INT. HOTEL ROOM (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Nicholas Linnear, bareback, performing a series of aikido exercises to loosen his muscles. Not much light in the room. Slow, methodical. As much for the mind as for the body.

NICHOLAS A MOMENT LATER...glistening with sweat. He looks rather frightening, stepping into the bathroom...picking a straight razor up off the sink top...

CLOSE ON BLADE...

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK) - NIGHT

ANOTHER BLADE. Nicholas' sword. In Daigo's hands now. Justine stands in the center of the room, naked, motionless.

Daigo (naked also) circles her with that long deadly blade raised high...his free hand forming in-signs...kuji-kiri...mesmerizing her...

THE CROW! It appears suddenly out of the darkness, flashing across the moonlit room, flapping right above Daigo's head. Only his eyes react, follow the bird...

Justine's face. Her eyes. Fearless, void of emotion...NO REACTION AT ALL TO THE SOUND OF THE CROW'S WINGS AGAIN...

Daigo's arm flies upward...his sword intercepting the bird as it dives back at him...steel and flesh connecting! The crow slams sideways, knocked out of the air, against the wall, dead.

Still no reaction from Justine. Daigo moves behind her, brings the blood-stained blade over her head...around in front of her. Justine's hands come forward, accept the ancient weapon. She is not in danger though for a moment we feared for her life.

She holds the katana, and Daigo's hands are atop hers, his groin pressed against her buttocks, guiding her movements, imprinting ancient rhythms upon Justine's subconscious, a strange, unnerving scene, sexually charged yet oddly without passion, somehow profoundly evil.

INT. HOTEL ROOM (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Nicholas Linnear...his head nearly shaved of all its hair by his own hand, by that straight razor. Nicholas too acts now as if forces outside himself compel his choices, shape his personality and his appearance.

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Tomkins sits alone in the big space, his chair turned toward the window. He's lost in thought. He swivels around slowly...opens the drawer, takes out the bug Nicholas found under his desk. It's been put in a small box, wrapped in cotton. Tomkins balances it on his fingertip, contemplates it. He reapplies it to his desk top in plain view. He thinks for a moment, getting his proposal in order...

TOMKINS

One million dollars. In gold.
Because I know you aren't
interested in American dollars.

(more)

TOMKINS (cont'd)

(pause)

When you come in here...I don't care what happens...as long as when you leave I'm alive. I'm not hurt. Do what you want to Linnear...one million dollars if my safety is guaranteed.

INT. HOTEL ROOM (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

CLOSE ON DAIGO'S VOICE-ACTIVATED TAPE RECORDER...

TOMKINS' VOICE

If you're interested, I'm sure you know how to reach me.

CLICK. The message over, the machine shutting off as the CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal the tape recorder in Diago's empty hotel room. THE CAMERA MOVES to the window, looks out at the night-time skyline...AT TOMKINS' BUILDING LESS THAN A BLOCK AWAY.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAWN

~~SEVERAL~~ SEVERAL SHOTS. The city moving from darkness into light.

INT. ELEVATOR - EARLY MORNING

Nicholas. His radically ascetic appearance on display for the first time as he steps off the lift onto...

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

...an unfinished lower floor of the high rise. SEVERAL UNIFORMED POLICEMEN are visible sipping coffee from styro-foam cups. Two of them have DOGS on leashes. THE ANIMALS COME ALIVE, SNARL AT NICHOLAS! But he just walks past them and their handlers, drawing curious stares. Nicholas finds Lt. Spranzo and Lt. Niles talking to Peter Fleming.

SPRANZO

What the hell happened to you?

NICHOLAS

Let's start.

MR. FLEMING

I want to know what should I tell the work crews we're doing here when they...?

NICHOLAS

We'll be through before they start.

A SEARCH COMMENCES, Nicholas working with an instinct matched only by the dogs', ferreting a variety of STEEL WEAPONS of all shapes and sizes out of the building's crevices. RAZOR-SHARP CLAWS. A HOLLOW BAMBOO SHAFT CONTAINING A WEIGHTED, SPIKED CHAIN. A SMALL HAND SICKLE. A BLOW PIPE AND A POUCH OF SMALL NEEDLES.

INT. PENN STATION - EARLY MORNING

A TRAIN ARRIVING. COMMUTERS piling off. Daigo among them.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - MORNING

ANOTHER FLOOR. Nicholas boosts himself to the top of an air-conditioning duct, discovers a strange double-curved piece of plastic.

LT. NILES

What is it?

Nicholas separates the two pieces, screws them together end-to-end: a BOW of high-tension space-age design with an aluminum hand grip and sight. A QUIVER OF SHORT ARROWS.

THE SPOILS...everything arrayed on a concrete floor...Spranzo poking through it...impressed and threatened.

SPRANZO

Lookit this shit...in this day
and age. What's this supposed
to do?

Before Nicholas can show him, Spranzo depresses a wooden
peg...AND ONE OF THOSE STEEL SPIKES SHOOTS OUT, DRIVES INTO
THE WALL, STARTLING EVERYONE!

LT. NILES

I want this building closed and
searched top to bottom.

NICHOLAS

No. We've got enough. You'll
never find it all. But when he
goes for this...

(the sickle)

...and it's not there, he'll
start to doubt himself. That's
what I need.

SPRANZO

Okay, my friend. You get the top
of the building. You and Tomkins.
But we take the first floor and
the garage. If he gets through
us, he's all yours.

NICHOLAS

He'll get through.

INT. ARMY-NAVY STORE (NEW YORK CITY) - DAY

Deep in the East Village. An enormous establishment selling
military surplus, camping supplies, what-have-you. Daigo
stands in an aisle amid all the other ORDINARY SHOPPERS.
He's examining a dark-colored heavy-duty duffle bag with
triple-weight polyurethane lining.

EXT. TOMKINS' BUILDING - DAY

The police van with its dogs motors out of the garage
area, passes Tomkins arriving now in a less-conspicuous
standard American sedan, Purvis at the wheel, STILL ANOTHER
BODYGUARD, a new face, up front with him.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Purvis drives toward Tomkins' parking spot...Nicholas suddenly visible through the windshield, head shaved, waiting for them like a premonition of doom.

PURVIS

Oh my Christ.

INT. SUB BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Tomkins exits the back seat of the sedan.

NICHOLAS

Where's your limousine. I don't want anything changed.

Nothing changed? Tomkins looks at Nicholas' shaved head. He won't comment on it.

TOMKINS

I don't usually meet the cops driving out when I come in either.

NICHOLAS

Spranzo's going to have some of his men down here tonight. And on the first floor.

TOMKINS

And that's all right with you?

NICHOLAS

It might slow him down.

TOMKINS

What? Make a mere mortal out of him?

Tomkins walks past Nicholas with his bodyguards, enters the elevator.

EXT. BROADWAY - DAY

Daigo moves anonymously through the CROWDS, carrying his brand-new American duffle bag. He enters a THEATRICAL SUPPLY HOUSE.

EXT. TOMKINS BUILDING - DAY

Nicholas is in a phone booth across the street, listening to the phone ring in his ear, surveying Tomkins' building, observing FOOT TRAFFIC. Nothing looks normal, no one innocent.

INT. PHONE BOOTH (NEW YORK CITY) - DAY

NICHOLAS

Justine?

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK) - DAY

BEGIN INTERCUTTING THEIR CONVERSATION...

JUSTINE

Nicholas? Where are you?

She seems quite all right, has her legal briefs spread out as usual, across the dining table this time.

JUSTINE

Well, I am. I'm fine. Except there's two cops parked at the end of the drive, guarding me, and I have to pretend I don't know they're around. Are you with my father? You sound so distant.

NICHOLAS

I'm in a phone booth. I just wanted to make sure...

JUSTINE

I'm fine. I slept like a baby. Actually that's a lie. I had a nightmare or two but this morning the sun's shining, and I...

NICHOLAS

What about? The nightmares?

JUSTINE

Nothing. Just bad dreams.

Justine's got the phone pinned between her shoulder and her ear, to free her hands so she can change some newspaper underneath the crow's perch...as if the bird were still alive and might reappear at any moment.

JUSTINE

Your cousin. Okay? Satisfied?
End of discussion.

(pause)

Take care, Nicholas, for me.
Please.

(pause)

Nicholas. I love you.

NICHOLAS

I'll call again.

He hangs up. Justine hangs up. WE'RE WITH HER NOW. She starts to take the soiled newspaper to the kitchen, stops, noticing NICHOLAS' KATANA JUST LEANING AGAINST THE WALL UNSHEATHED. Justine looks at it, puzzled, returns it to its scabbard, rehangs it.

EXT. CHINATOWN - LATE DAY

ON THE BACK OF A MAN of Daigo's age, height, build. Indeed, we've grown so suspicious of Daigo's multiple identities that for a moment we think the man is Daigo.

Until the real McCoy appears. The other man turns. He's Chinese. Daigo is acutely aware of him. More than aware: he's stalking the man, waiting for him to reach a tenement, go inside...

INT. CHINATOWN TENEMENT - LATE DAY

A dark flight of stairs. Ideal. The man begins to ascend. The street door opens again behind him. A CORD lashes out, double-loops the man's neck. (THE WEAPON IS CALLED KYOKETSU-SHOGI, CONSISTING OF A LONG BRAIDED CORD, AT ONE END A STEEL RING TO ENSNARE AN OPPONENT OR HIS WEAPON, AT THE OTHER END A DOUBLE-POINTED KNIFE TO USE AFTER YANKING THE ENEMY WITHIN REACH).

INT. SUB BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE - EVENING

POLICE OFFICERS. Some of them in regular blue uniforms, others in SWAT gear. An army of policemen, all standing in regular rows in the brightly lighted garage of Tomkins' building, passing around examples of Daigo's arsenal confiscated earlier in the day.

SPRANZO'S VOICE

This is the kind of shit you're gonna be up against. He's got things like this stashed all over the building. And he'll have more in his pockets, on belts, in the folds of his clothing, in his shoes.

ANGLE ON SPRANZO. Nicholas stands near him.

SPRANZO

He's probably got something can kill a person shoved up his ass... if I believe Mr. Linnear here.

(pause)

The man is a terrorist. A guerrilla. He knows more ways to kill you than any son of a bitch you ever turned

(more)

SPRANZO (cont'd)
 a corner on. He's gonna be using techniques and tactics developed over twelve hundred years in the Orient. He kills the way other people eat.

WE'RE ON THE FACES of the cops again. A lot of YOUNG MEN. They could be going off to fight the Viet Cong. No one is taking this lightly...certainly not Lt. Niles.

SPRANZO'S VOICE
 In the last week and a half he has ruthlessly murdered six people. Two of them were New York City law enforcement officers like yourself.

CLOSE ON NICHOLAS watching the police. He seems easily the fiercest man in the room.

SPRANZO'S VOICE
 Tonight he wants two more victims. Mr. Linnear...and the man who owns this building, Raphael Tomkins. They'll be up on the top floor. We are not going to let this maniac get above the ground floor.
 (pause)
 Any questions?

Silence for several seconds.

POLICEMAN
 How do we know it's tonight?

SPRANZO . . .
 Mr. Linnear has sent him some sort of invitation he can't refuse. Mr. Linnear also informs me that he, as well as this killer, is equipped with a mysterious kind of ESP. You wanna explain that?

All eyes swing toward Nicholas. Spranzo has sort of put him on the spot.

NICHOLAS
 It's called sakki. It's a heightened sixth sense. Lower animals rely on it to warn of a predator's approach. It's undeveloped in most civilized men. The ninja will know you're here before he sees you. Sakki. But I'm hoping that sakki will warn me as well.

SPRANZO

Mr. Linnear is gonna have a walkie-talkie upstairs to pass the information on down to me. I can't read his mind, see, because I'm too civilized.

SOME LAUGHTER, relieving the tension a bit. Spranzo looks at Nicholas. Nicholas isn't smiling.

NICHOLAS

If you plan to stay alive, don't take anything for granted. Nothing. If you give him an opening, he'll kill you with just his thumb and his forefinger.

Silence. A lot of these cops are suitably unnerved.

ANOTHER PATROLMAN

What's he supposed to look like?

NICHOLAS

Anything and everything.

EXT. STREET (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Tomkins' building. Everything looks so normal. OCCASIONAL PEDESTRIANS. SEVERAL SHOTS TO ESTABLISH THE ORDINARY...BUT IMPLY THAT NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS.

Lt. Niles steps out of the building's eastside lobby entrance. He leans against the wall, lights himself a cigarette, surveys the war zone.

A MAN comes strolling by. Niles watches him approach. The man is only yards away...

LT. NILES

Anything?

MAN (COP)

Nothing.

The cop keeps going, passes another PEDESTRIAN coming in the opposite direction, right toward Niles.

Niles doesn't recognize this man, tenses...but the stranger just walks right on past, an innocent.

EXT. BACK ALLEY (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Dirty brick buildings. Litter. A FIGURE moves on a ledge three stories up. It's Daigo. He has the corpse of that Chinese. He dangles it by its feet, drops it three stories to the pavement below...head first.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - NIGHT

Nicholas gets off the elevator on the top floor, walks the empty hallway, passes a dozen doors, reaches Tomkins Enterprises.

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - NIGHT

The new bodyguard is stationed out here. Nicholas walks right by him, goes into...

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Purvis jumps to his feet! Tomkins looks up from a phone call. Nicholas sits on the sofa.

PURVIS

How you doin'?

NICHOLAS

Okay.

Tomkins hangs up, looks at Nicholas. Silence for a moment. Nicholas clearly is waiting until...

TOMKINS

Goodnight, Purvis.

PURVIS

What, you mean go home?

TOMKINS

Wait downstairs with the car.

(Purvis starts to leave)

And if you see our friend, kill him for me.

PURVIS

Absolutely.

Purvis is gone. Nicholas reaches under the sofa, draws out a long object wrapped in felt. Tomkins watches, surprised at nothing anymore. Nicholas unwinds the cloth, exposing a beautiful sword, a priceless katana.

TOMKINS

How long's that been under there?

NICHOLAS

This afternoon. It belonged to a friend of mine.

TOMKINS

Tanaka?

NICHOLAS
And his father before that.

TOMKINS
Well, this goes back only about
three weeks, but it makes me feel
comfortable.

A pistol. Tomkins draws it out of a shoulder holster under his jacket. The weapon's nickel-plated. Very expensive. Very distinctive.

TOMKINS
I figure if...

Nicholas takes the gun right out of his hand, examines it, feels its dead weight in his palm.

NICHOLAS
Don't figure. You think too much.

TOMKINS
That's what makes me a good
businessman. You know what the
real irony is here? I probably
would've liked your cousin's father.

NICHOLAS
And hated mine.

Nicholas hands the gun back, starts out of the office...and this suddenly panics Tomkins.

TOMKINS
Hey, where you going?

NICHOLAS
Check the hall.

EXT. STREET (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

ANOTHER ORDINARY PEDESTRIAN...A BUSINESSMAN with a briefcase. He's standing across the street from Tomkins' unfinished building, waiting at a light so he can cross toward it.

ANOTHER ANGLE. MOMENTS LATER. The businessman approaches Tomkins building. There's a station wagon parked at the curb, and the man reaches into his pocket, produces a balled-up paper sack, drops the sack under the wagon. It rolls beneath the gas tank.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - NIGHT

SEVERAL SHOTS OF THE HIDDEN ARMY OF POLICEMEN. FACES. Every-one waiting for God-knows-what. Spranzo waiting. The lobby

is a huge three-story atrium. Several banks of painters' scaffolding. SWAT SNIPERS IN POSITION UP HERE.

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - NIGHT

Tomkins stands out in his reception area, at its hallway door. He can see down to the elevator. No sign of Nicholas anywhere.

A NOISE BEHIND HIM! He whirls, reaching for his pistol!

Nicholas stands in the reception area, katana at his side.

TOMKINS

How the hell...I saw you go down that hall.

NICHOLAS

There.

A store room door in the reception area.

TOMKINS

That's a dead end.

Tomkins looks. There's a hole in the back wall, some sheet-rock missing.

NICHOLAS

The whole floor interconnects. Either because it's not finished or because he's removed panels of drywall.

TOMKINS

So what do we do?

NICHOLAS

We relax. We make ourselves feel as though nothing critical is happening. Nothing more important than walking across the room. Keep your heart and your spirit here in your stomach. Not in your head.

Tomkins thinks Nicholas is crazy. But he knows he needs Nicholas.

TOMKINS

Great. How?

NICHOLAS

Your diaphragm...

(touches Tomkins' gut)
...imagine it down. So your lungs have more room to breathe. So your
(more)

NICHOLAS (cont'd)
heart can beat freely. It's more
important than the gun you're wear-
ing. The simple calm that comes
when you're ready to die in battle.

TOMKINS
You mean decide before you go to
war that you're going to lose?
That's bullshit.

THERE'S A SUDDEN EXPLOSION AUDIBLE SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE...
MUFFLED. Tomkins freezes.

NICHOLAS
Not tonight it's not.

EXT. STREET (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

That station wagon, involved now in a blaze of white smoke
and green fire. EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED TO TOMKINS' LEAR JET.

SEVERAL UNIFORMED OFFICERS race out of the building, weapons
drawn, to investigate, to cordon off the area.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - NIGHT

The lobby. Fairly quiet. Just a lone SECURITY GUARD visible.

ANGLE INTO THE SCAFFOLDING. Spranzo and his walkie-talkie...

SPRANZO
Nicholas. You read me? Nicholas?

NICHOLAS' VOICE
What was it?

SPRANZO
A car, I think. Down the block.
It blew up.
(no response)
Nicholas?

NICHOLAS' VOICE
He's in the building.

SPRANZO
What?

NICHOLAS
He's somewhere in the building.
I'm signing off. Don't come up
here.

CLICK.

SPRANZO

Nicholas? Hey? Where is he?
(no response)

Linnear? Talk to me, you son
of a bitch.

INT. SUB BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Deep shadow. The businessman strips down amid dormant construction machinery, pulling off his disguise. Diago, of course. He drags his new duffel bag into view: IT SEEMS ABOUT TO BURST...A DEAD WEIGHT.

He unzips it, removes some dark clothing, a few arcane objects, has to shove a LEATHER-SHROUDED, SPIKE-ENCRUSTED HAND BACK INSIDE.

Daigo reaches in, twists off a light bulb, jams the heavy duffel into a small exterior elevator cage used to ferry building material skyward. The lift GRINDS into motion with just the flick of a switch.

Daigo jams the heavy duffel into a small exterior elevator cage used to ~~ferry~~ building material skyward. The lift GRINDS into motion with just the flick of a switch.

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Nicholas has doused all the lights in Tomkins' office. The industrialist stands against a wall, his eye on the door to the reception area. Nicholas is near the window, looking down on the street where A FIRE TRUCK is responding to the explosion.

TOMKINS

What do you see?

NICHOLAS

Nothing.

TOMKINS

What the hell's going on down
there?

NICHOLAS

Nothing that affects us.

INT. SUB BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Daigo. Dressed in black. Moving up near the ceiling of the garage, among struts and supports that have been coated with a rough-textured rust-retardant. Daigo stops, perched like a bird of prey, watching as...

...A UNIFORMED POLICEMAN approaches on the floor below. The cop has heard the little elevator ascending, and he's come to investigate.

Daigo produces another of those two-piece bows from the lining of his jacket. He assembles it in total silence. His target: A SWAT TEAM SNIPER. This man, like Daigo, is elevated above the garage floor...but not nearly as well hidden.

Daigo fits A STEEL-TIPPED ARROW TO HIS BOW.

The sniper hardly breathes, watches the patrolman approach the elevator power panel. THUNK. It's almost a soft sound, gentle, the unruffled feathers on Daigo's arrow protruding darkly from the sniper's neck, the armor-piercing point driven deep into a concrete wall, pinning its victim in place like a butterfly. But his rifle clatters to the floor!

The patrolman hears that, moves away from the elevator and toward the source of the noise. He sees the sniper's rifle lying on the cement floor, and he stops, his nerve gone. He unclips a walkie-talkie from his belt, hesitates, looks up in time to see it coming...

...Daigo's animated shadow dropping fast, arm lifted high in the air, scribing an arc with an AWFUL HISSING SOUND! A HAND ENCASED IN A THIN STEEL NETWORK RUNNING FROM WRIST TO FINGERTIPS...CLAWS, CURVED AND RAZOR-SHARP...ARTICULATED STEEL TENDONS ACROSS THE BACK OF THE HAND, ACROSS EACH FINGER...

The policeman swings his submachine gun upward...too late. The claws rip viciously through his throat, his chest, piercing cloth, bullet-proof vest, skin, flesh, internal organs.

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE -- NIGHT

Silence. Nicholas stands in pale moonlight in the center of the room, concentrating.

Tomkins watches him from a corner.

INT. TOMKINS' LOBBY - NIGHT

Spranzo. His walkie-talkie comes alive.

VOICE

Lt. Spranzo, Lt. Spranzo. This is Michaels in the garage. He's in here somewhere. He just got two of us. You hear me?

SPRANZO

Yeah. What about him?

VOICE

Nobody saw nothing.

INT. SUB BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

ANOTHER SNIPER. He knows the enemy is among them.

ANOTHER PLAINCLOTHESMAN, a black guy on the garage floor, in shadow. A NYLON CORD flips over his neck! It pulls tight, paralyzing his vocal chords! His back arches, and he fights for breath. He really fights!

And this surprises Daigo! The cop whirls and goes for Daigo's throat! He's monstrously strong in these close quarters, behind some air-conditioning equipment. He's got both hands on the ninja's throat! He's winning! Daigo slams a foot down on the big man's instep, breaks his choke hold, goes at him with a series of savage karate chops! The cop blocks them, smashes Daigo against the wall, onto the floor!

Daigo frees his right hand as the cop comes back at him. A SMALL BLADE SPRINGS AWAY, drives into the black man's shoulder just center of the collar bone. He absorbs it, pounces on Daigo, knees-first, pinning the ninja to the floor. He tears at the blade in his shoulder, trying to rip it out...

Daigo's feet fly upward, his heels passing by the cop's ear, coming back at the cop's face like twin line drives! The cop's head hammers backward, the whole situation reversing in an instant, Daigo in mid-air, driving down at his supine foe with both feet, fracturing the cop's skull. Silence.

Daigo is shaken, out of breath. SNIPER FIRE! It comes from nowhere, pumps into the air-conditioning units a foot from Daigo's head! He drops low, scurries laterally into darkness.

BRIGHT LIGHTS COME ON. AUXILIARY LIGHTS. But they help Daigo as much as they hinder him, create massive shadows and areas of dazzling illumination. He touches his arm: blood. A bullet has creased his bicep.

Daigo contorts himself, snaps his shoulder joints drawing himself into an extraordinarily narrow shape. He slides into an air-conditioning duct.

INT. TOMKINS' LOBBY - NIGHT

The security guard is no longer visible. Nothing stirs.

ANGLE ON THE SCAFFOLDING. It seems empty. Where are Spranzo and Niles and their snipers? Oblique shadows cut every which way, play havoc with our depth perception.

A SNIPER MOVES INTO VIEW. He looks down at the lobby floor. Nothing there to shoot at. He looks at the scaffolding around him...locks eyes with STILL ANOTHER SNIPER across the way. The man shakes his head. Nothing here either.

ANGLE ON THE SECOND SNIPER. All we can hear is his breathing...A SUDDEN CRACKLE from his walkie-talkie! He turns the volume down as quickly as he can. Silence. He rakes his eyes across the scaffolding, finds himself staring right at...

...Daigo! Not more than ten feet away! For an impossible moment the two men simply look at each other...the insanity of it all...and then the sniper starts to swing the muzzle of his gun around...

DAIGO

No.

The sniper freezes...victim of the ninja's penetrating stare, his remarkable sai-min jitsu.

The sniper remains still as a statue while Daigo raises a BLUNT BLACK STICK similar to the weapon Spranzo accidentally shot off. The sniper's eyes are blank. His ears probably never detect the WHISPER OF STEEL AS DAIGO'S SPIKE shoots across the ten feet between them and enters his mouth... through the roof, into his brain.

The dead man spins around, his finger now free to tighten reflexively on the trigger. A SINGLE SHOT!

Daigo is already moving as the sniper falls heavily to the patterned tile floor a story below. He can hear the POUNDING OF RUNNING FEET, THE STATIC OF A WALKIE-TALKIE. In a leap he gains the catwalk halfway up to the MEZZANINE. TWO SHOTS in rapid succession spit off the metal close by his left side, but he's moving, gone before the sound is.

DAIGO'S HANDS. They run quickly along a concrete ledge, looking for a weapon that is no longer there.

ANOTHER SNIPER. ANOTHER. ANOTHER. THE SWAT TEAMS are converging!

Daigo abandons his search, confused. His eyes dart left and right. He draws A SHORT KNIFE from his boot. He takes three deep breaths and springs forward. One step, two and he's in the air, his legs jackknifed into a diver's tuck so that he spins by the first sniper as no more than a rotating ball.

THE REPORT OF A LONG GUN...

Daigo's feet barely hit the mezzanine floor again before he launches himself into another somersault, through an atmosphere suddenly thick, turbulent with TEAR GAS! THE DULL FLASH OF THE METAL CANISTER ROLLING ALONG THE FLOOR. Daigo lands. But the gas is everywhere. He pushes through it as quickly as he can, emerges like a demon...

...only to confront ONE MORE SNIPER, this man already prone, wearing a gas mask, already taking aim...

Daigo never stops moving, hurls that short knife down at the floor! It skids along, rockets point-first under the sniper, into his heart as Daigo vaults over him, vanishes into an open elevator; its doors already CLOSING...

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

...Lt. Niles inside, astonished to find himself suddenly riding upward in the company of the ninja. He hasn't a prayer. Two swift chops, and Niles is history. Daigo hits the emergency stop button, boosts himself up through the service hatch atop the lift.

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE - NIGHT

TOMKINS

They got him. Listen to all that noise, huh?

(silence)

They got him, right?

The walkie-talkie on Tomkins' desk comes alive.

SPRANZO'S VOICE

He's all yours, Nick. You hear me? He's all yours.

NICHOLAS

Thank you, lieutenant.

Nicholas shuts the walkie-talkie off.

NICHOLAS

Sit over here, in your desk chair.

TOMKINS

What are you going to do?

NICHOLAS

Sit down. I want you away from the windows.

TOMKINS

That's where he'll...

NICHOLAS

Sit over here!

Tomkins moves to his desk, sits. Nicholas draws his katana, Terry Tanaka's katana...A SOUND LIKE NO OTHER ON EARTH AS THE EXTRAORDINARY STEEL UNSHEATHS.

TOMKINS

It's my life. I demand...

NICHOLAS

Keep talking and you'll bring him right to you.

Tomkins shuts up.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

Daigo pries an elongated slender object from the dark walls: his katana, secreted here, wrapped in oil cloth. He slings it obliquely across his back, takes four pads from his belt. These he ties carefully, one on each soft-soled shoe, the other over the palms of his hands. SPROUTING FROM THE OUTER EDGES OF THE PADS...TWO-INCH STEEL SPIKES SET IN A COMPLEX PATTERN.

From around his waist, Daigo unwraps A LONG NYLON CORD, WEIGHTED ON ONE END BY A SMALL SHARP TRIANGULAR HOOK. He looks up, studying the sides of the elevator shaft. He begins to swing the weighted cord about his head...

THE HOOK ARCS UPWARD, loops around a transverse iron beam. Daigo begins to ascend, a fly on the wall.

INT. TOMKINS BUILDING - NIGHT

The top floor corridor. Empty. Silent.

INT. TOMKINS ENTERPRISES - NIGHT

The reception room. Empty. Silent.

INT. TOMKINS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Tomkins sits at his desk, listening, sweat beginning to glisten on his brow. A PING in the air-conditioning shaft! Tomkins draws his pistol.

Nicholas. He listens, knows the sound meant nothing.

NICHOLAS

(softly)

I want you to face away when he comes in here. Don't look into his eyes.

TOMKINS

Why?

NICHOLAS

He'll take your mind first. Sai-min jitsu. Then your life.

TOMKINS

Is that where you'll be?

Nicholas has moved to the dead center of the office, facing its door.

NICHOLAS

Don't concern yourself with me. For once don't think about being in control.

TOMKINS

I can't help it.

NICHOLAS

It'll be over very fast. No stopping, no sparring. He'll only use a sword on me. There'll be no time to think. Only time to act.

It suddenly hits Tomkins: this isn't a lecture for him... it's a pep talk Nicholas is giving himself.

TOMKINS

You're afraid, aren't you?

He says it so simply. Nicholas looks at Tomkins sitting there in the moonlight. And Tomkins smiles, knows he's hit a nerve.

TOMKINS

Holy Christ, my life is in your hands, and you're pissing in your pants.

ANOTHER NOISE SOMEWHERE! Nicholas snaps around, faces the door, studies the door, trying to shut everything else out of his mind. SMALL SOUNDS BECOME ACUTE, EXAGGERATED AS WE SHARE NICHOLAS' HEIGHTENED SENSIBILITIES...SAKKI...MOVEMENT SOMEWHERE ELSE ON THIS TOP FLOOR OF TOMKINS' BUILDING...

Nicholas grips his katana with both hands, assumes the attitude of Happo Biraki, "Open on all eight sides."

AND THROUGH NICHOLAS' EYES NOW WE SEE THE ROOM, EVERYTHING AS SEGMENTS OF THE WHOLE...FURNITURE...FIXTURES...THE SPACES BETWEEN...FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING...THE WORLD SHRUNKEN INTO A SERIES OF SEVERELY CONFINED SPACES...

A SHADOW SHIFTS, MOVES IN THE OUTER OFFICE! DAIGO! BLACK SILK SHIRT, COTTON PANTS...HIS HOOD REMOVED NOW.

Nicholas sees his cousin come forward across the reception area, katana held before him, leading the way.

Nicholas doesn't move, simply waits. Daigo enters the office, edges slowly around the perimeter, Nicholas shifting now to follow him, their eyes locked on each other.

Tomkins is paralyzed with fear.

Two cousins facing each other, the last two men on earth. And Daigo bows...as if twenty five years have melted away, as if they're back in that dōjō in Tokyo. Nicholas understands, returns the formal bow. IN JAPANESE, SUBTITLED...

DAIGO

With honor.

NICHOLAS

With honor.

Tomkins has begun to move his hand, raise it...THAT NICKEL-PLATED PISTOL...AIMING AT DAIGO...

NICHOLAS

Don't!

But Daigo needs no help. He's already somersaulting, snapping away a SHURIKEN, the metal star driving into Tomkins' forearm, his gun clattering away! Silence.

Daigo turns to face Nicholas. The first position. Two swordsmen preparing for battle, honed steel an extension of their hearts, the most holy of holies.

They charge simultaneously, as if the sun and the moon, offshoots of a single entity, have entered into conflict, enemies sworn against each other from a time when the silent stars in the sky held different positions, two mortals hissing at each other now in a language so elemental it must recall the dawn of man...

Tomkins holds his wounded arm, watches this awesome sight, cringes as the CLASH OF COLD STEEL, hundreds-of-years-old, reverberates through his office, echoes in the building's hallways. Skyscrapers and swords, yesterday, today, and tomorrow losing all meaning as Nicholas and Daigo fight on, Daigo attacking strongly, swiftly, his strength appalling.

Nicholas falls back under this onslaught! Daigo moves fast, to kill, but Nicholas deflects the blow, backing up, losing mobility. Daigo keeps coming, magic all around him, sparkling steel, SPARKS when the two swords meet! Nicholas seems no match, this awful truth dawning on us, his breath coming in pants while Daigo only smiles, strikes, grins, like some mad dog...

In a blur, Daigo cuts from left to right. In shock, Nicholas lifts up his own blade to meet the blow, eyes wide, steel colliding...NICHOLAS LOSING HIS KATANA, THE IMPACT KNOCKING HIM SIDEWAYS TO THE FLOOR!

Daigo attacks! Nicholas is flat on his back, propelling his body upward, using his palms, arms, shoulders for power, twisting the soles of his feet hard into Daigo's fingers as they curl around his sword! The weapon spins out of Daigo's grip!

A GUNSHOT! Daigo hurls himself into shadow.

Tomkins? No. The industrialist still stands immobile near his desk.

Nicholas looks at the office doorway...SPRANZO, WEAPON AIMED, TRYING TO CRACK ANOTHER SHOT OFF AT...

...Daigo who's rolling toward his own lost katana.

Nicholas charges his cousin, wrapping his fingers around Daigo's powerful ankles. The two men crash together into a drawing board. Daigo armed once more with that sword...

ANOTHER BULLET! IT RICHOCHETS OFF THE CORNER OF THE BOARD, SPEWING SPLINTERS AT NICHOLAS, FORCING HIM TO ROLL AWAY...

Daigo knows the odds have suddenly shifted, all the rules radically changed by Spranzo's crazed intervention. He swings his sword once more at Nicholas, just to drive him backward, reaching as he does so to his belt, palming something no bigger than a marble, charging Tomkins, at the same time launching the SMALL EXPLOSIVE DEVICE.

DAIGO SLAMS FORWARD, SWORD MOVING AT TOMKINS WHO SWIVELS AWAY IN HIS CHAIR, IN DESPERATION, HIS BACK TO THE NINJA...

A HOT BURST OF GREEN-WHITE-YELLOW LIGHT, A CONCUSSION...SMOKE ...and the soft pattering of wrecked furniture like sleet on a frost-filled day. Silence.

SPRANZO

Tomkins?

Nicholas moves toward the industrialist's desk, expecting the worst. But Tomkins is unharmed, lifting himself off the floor through a smokey haze, coughing. HIS EXECUTIVE SWIVEL CHAIR'S BEEN SLICED NEATLY IN HALF, TOP TO BOTTOM.

SPRANZO

The window!

A section missing, shards of glass littering the carpet. The night wind whistling in. Spranzo goes to the opening, peers down.

SPRANZO

He killed himself. Son of a bitch...

SPRANZO'S POV...a dizzying perspective down on the distant street. POLICE CARS ALREADY CONVERGING.

EXT. STREET (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

A SMALL CROWD OF THE CURIOUS has gathered at the police lines, A MEDICAL EXAMINER shrouding Daigo's corpse in a body bag.

SEVERAL AMBULANCES ARE ALREADY HERE FOR THE POLICE KILLED AND INJURED EARLIER.

SPRANZO

(to a LIEUTENANT)

All right, get everybody outta here,
it's all over...

He's coming out of the building with Nicholas, Nicholas carrying Terry Tanaka's sword.

SPRANZO

Just a second there. We need a
look.

Daigo's body on the pavement, in that bag.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Not much left. I don't think
there's a bone over an inch long.
He hit head-first.

Nicholas looks into the plastic sack. Something about it leaving him uneasy.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Who's he supposed to be anyway?

NICHOLAS

Me.

Nicholas stands up, looks around...at the crowd, the tall building.

SPRANZO

I had to go up there.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, I know.

SPRANZO

Why the hell did he jump?

NICHOLAS

Honor.

SPRANZO

This? Come on, don't give me
"honor."

NICHOLAS

Bushido. The will to die.
Westerners never understand it.
Failing to reach your goal, still
being alive, then you're a coward.

SPRANZO

You're goddamn right I don't
understand it.

NICHOLAS
Did you find his katana? His
sword?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Tell you the truth, I don't think
we found all of him yet.

Silence. Spranzo watches Nicholas for a moment, their eyes
meeting.

SPRANZO
I'll see you get it, Nick.

Nicholas nods, starts to walk away, stops. Tomkins is stand-
ing at the open door of his limousine with Purvis and the
other bodyguard. The car's motor is running.

TOMKINS
Please...

An invitation to get into the car.

NICHOLAS
Some other time.

TOMKINS
Don't be a pain in the ass, Mr.
Linnear. You saved my life. Let
me at least take you to the train
so you can go live happily ever
after with my daughter. Come on.

Nicholas looks around, at the body bag being loaded into a
coroner's van, Spranzo supervising, keeping the curious away.
Nicholas joins Tomkins in the limousine.

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

A whisper-smooth ride. Nicholas sits silently with Terry's
scabbarded katana across his lap. He is not relaxed. The
big auto squeezes past the coroner's van, past Spranzo,
through the police lines...

NICHOLAS
Your arm...

TOMKINS
I don't want these amateurs
touching it.

EXT. STREET (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Tomkins' limo comes abreast of his building, still negotiating police vehicles and CIVILIANS who've come out of the woodwork to gape. There is only one way out for the car as it clears all this activity, turns a corner onto a side of the building where most of the construction equipment spends the night.

Midway along this drive there's a metal and wood overhang. It juts out over the curb where during daylight hours it's used to maneuver the building's enormous panes of tinted glass into place. A SHADOW MOVES HERE NOW...

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Tomkins watches his future son-in-law carefully for several seconds. Nicholas looks at Tomkins. They have nothing left to say to each other, nothing in common.

EXT. OVERHANG - NIGHT

THE CAMERA MOVING INTO THE DARKNESS, SLOWLY TRYING TO DISCERN WHAT'S THERE AS TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE DRAWS CLOSER...A FLASH OF STEEL.

INT. TOMKINS' LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Purvis' VOICE comes into the passenger compartment through a speaker box...

PURVIS VOICE

You want me just to go right to Penn station first, Mr. Tomkins.

TOMKINS

I think so, yes.

A TREMENDOUS CRASH! THE WINDSHIELD IN FRONT OF PURVIS SEATERS! Viewed through the plexiglas partition, the next few minutes are horrific...THE BLADE OF A SWORD...Purvis' suit jacket sliced one second, his spine the next, blood spurting against the plexiglas...that other bodyguard dying next, the car veering up onto a curb, smashing into a light stanchion... knocking out the power. Darkness. Stillness.

Tomkins tries to get out. Nicholas is already drawing his Katana...fluid movement as he shoves Tomkins out one door with his feet, uses the leverage thus gained to catapult himself out the other door.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Deserted save for the limousine, its occupants, and their attacker. The low-speed crash has made very little noise. Nicholas stands on the asphalt, open on all eight sides.

Daigo! He vaults from the roof of the limousine, Tomkins witnessing all this from the ground, not knowing exactly what the hell it is he's seeing...

Daigo swinging his katana, missing Nicholas, driving the blade deep in a parked car, unable to dislodge it. Nicholas raises his sword...and Daigo starts running TOWARD THE PARK ACROSS THE STREET, UNDER LAMP POSTS.

Nicholas starts after his cousin.

EXT. PARK (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

Autumnal moonlight. Dead leaves. Pathways winding among rocks and bare trees. A small pond lies cool and still, its silvery surface reflecting the heavens. This is nature. Where the ninja dominates.

Nicholas appears. He walks slowly, carefully, knowing this isn't a chase, but a stalking. That he is a samurai. That his cousin is not.

A SOUND UP AHEAD...SOMEWHERE IN THE DARKNESS...OFF THE PATHWAY, BECKONING. NICHOLAS REMOVES HIS SHOES, STEPS FORWARD SILENTLY ONTO THE GRASS...

Nicholas at pond's edge. He might be only twenty-years-old again, following his cousin into the Japanese countryside outside Kumamoto, approaching that ghostly warehouse through a forest of tall bamboo...

ANGLE ON THE WATER'S SURFACE...EYES, JUST THE TIP OF A NOSE. DAIGO. HE WATCHES HIS COUSIN PASS BY...AND THEN HE SUBMERGES ENTIRELY, SINKING FROM VIEW...

NICHOLAS AGAIN. He's stopped, turned...to look at the pond. No movement there at all save for the ripples from a light breeze that whistles through the park, scuttling leaves across the ground, around Nicholas' bare feet.

He moves forward again...a nerve-racking progress because Daigo could be anywhere. WHEHRRRR! Nicholas ducks! A STEEL DART IMBEDS ITSELF IN A TREE!

Nicholas rolls sideways across the ground, springs upright, katana poised, quivering. Silence. Nicholas takes one hand away from his sword, holds it up in the moonlight. HIS FINGERS TREMBLE, SHAKE INVOLUNTARILY.

Nicholas stares at his hand, takes two deep calming breaths, a third, until his fingers stop shaking and a thin stream of crystal clarity rises from deep inside him, piercing the terror, removing all fear. Nicholas stands fully upright, both hands again on his sword. Steady.

NICHOLAS

Daigo!

AND HIS COUSIN CATAPUTS FORWARD OUT OF THE DARKNESS, ALMOST NAKED, WET, PRIMEVAL, WHIRLING THE RING-END OF THAT VICIOUS KYOKETSU-SHOGI OVER HIS HEAD.

The ring spins out at Nicholas, snares his katana, tears it out of his arm! Daigo uses the knife-edge of his weapon, cuts its cord, sends the katana flashing off into the forest.

In Daigo's right hand now the double-pointed knife of his kyoketsu-shogi. In his left, on his left hand...the terrible clint of moonlight on STEEL CLAWS...

Nicholas is barely ready when Daigo attacks, swinging his clawed hand savagely, Nicholas countering with strikes to the liver and spleen, missing but somehow deflecting Daigo's attack at the same time!

Monstrous swiftness, so fast the eye misses things...one second Nicholas flying off a tree, kicking Daigo's spine, the next instant Daigo atop Nicholas...Nicholas reversing, dodging the knife! The claws! Twisting away with a knee-strike...Daigo not fooled, delivering a blow that catches the ridge of Nicholas' collarbone! It draws blood...those claws.

Nicholas drives his kneecap into Daigo's groin, hears him grunt, sees him lose the knife, almost simultaneously hears a SOFT METALLIC CLICK in front of his face...a small blade flashing in the moonlight, standing out like a deadly toothpick between Daigo's first and second fingers! A conjurer's trick? No illusion...the blade moves toward Nicholas' eye...his forearm holding Daigo back, sweat glistening on both men...

ANOTHER FLASH OF MOVEMENT, and the two cousins crash across a rocky outcropping, slam through the underbrush, locked together now, fingers grasping wrists, elbows against sternums, Daigo's feet against Nicholas, hurtling Nicholas backwards and hard against a tree, stunning him.

Daigo rises, sees Nicholas' katana lying in the leaves, the kyoketsu-shogi cord and ring still wrapped tightly around its hilt. Daigo picks up the sword, starts forward to kill Nicholas...

...who is only now slowly rising, using the tree to support his weakened legs. He's bruised, bloody, beaten.

Daigo draws closer, slowly...raises the sword to the first position, waist-high, pointing at Nicholas, indicting him.
IN JAPANESE, SUBTITLED...

DAIGO

Upon your father's grave.

He lifts the sword higher, over his head, into the killing position...higher.

And Nicholas responds, reaching into the small of his back, quickly pulling out a hidden weapon of his own: TOMKINS' NICKEL-PLATED PISTOL.

The two cousins, eyes locked...an eternity before Daigo makes the next move, actually relaxes, just his shoulder, the slightest movement but significant...his eyes locked on Nicholas' eyes as he starts now to lower the katana.

Nicholas, taking no chances, letting Daigo bring the sword all the way forward before he dares respond...lowering the pistol...both weapons pointing toward the ground, some sort of uneasy truce until...

...DAIGO ATTACKS, SWINGS THE KATANA LATERALLY AT NICHOLAS' HEAD, NICHOLAS MOVING, FIRING, THE SHOT MUFFLED AS THE BLADE MISSES HIM BY AN INCH, AS HIS COUSIN CRASHES RIGHT ON TOP OF HIM, DEAD.

Silence. Nicholas pushes Daigo off...low, under his breath.

NICHOLAS

Fuck honor.

The words are tragic, anguished, condemning everything, everyone. Nicholas is breathing heavily, tears in his eyes.
THE SCREEN FADES TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

A remarkably clear morning. Clouds stand sharply delineated moving in the high wind. Seagulls circle the beach house, calling out above the rumble of the ocean. A timeless vista.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Justine stands at the window, watching the birds circle. They seem angry, anxious.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Nicholas lies in bed, his body bruised, his wounds bandaged. The room is filled with bars of bright golden sunlight and deep shade that fall obliquely across the bare wooden floors. He hears the front door open and close, glimpses Justine move through the living room like a vision.

Nicholas rolls over, searching for rest, into the darkness...
AND WE SHARE HIS POINT OF VIEW, SHARE THE DARKNESS, ENTER
HIS JUMBLED, EXHAUSTED SEMI-CONSCIOUSNESS VISION WHERE IT IS
AGAIN...

EXT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1966) - DAY

...and Nicholas is twenty years old, emerging from a United States Army vehicle in the courtyard of his parents' Japanese home.

A wake is in progress...AMERICANS in somber western attire, JAPANESE in somber western attire. An AMERICAN MAJOR takes Nicholas inside...

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE - DAY

There are MORE PEOPLE here, a TRADITIONALLY DRESSED JAPANESE LADY serving tea to the mourners near an AMERICAN CHRISTMAS TREE.

NICHOLAS

My mother...?

Someone points the way, and now Nicholas is walking through his parents' house, down one corridor, then another...until he sees the back of her hair, her sky blue kimono. Yuki. Turning toward him.

JUSTINE'S VOICE

Nicholas...Nicholas.

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

Nicholas opens his eyes in his Montauk beach house, sees Justine sitting on the bed next to him...

JUSTINE

Were you dreaming? Are you all right?

NICHOLAS

I don't know...

She touches his head, wipes his brow.

JUSTINE

The sea is so blue now. Bluer than the sky.

NICHOLAS

Don't leave.

JUSTINE

Try to make me.

And she's slipping out of her clothes, naked in the broken light. She takes something out of the closet...a silk kimono, puts it on. Nicholas closes his eyes, feels her slip into

bed with him, move her pillow closer to his, the warmth of her body close against him, the line of her spine, the soft curve of her buttocks, her knees close against him, her pubic mound...Yuki.

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1966) - DAY

Yuki. It's Yuki he sees for a moment, not in bed with him but standing in his parents' house again, all the impossibly tangled cords laid out in their skeins. Nicholas is twenty again...

NICHOLAS

My mother...

Yuki tries to stop him, but he shoves past her into yet another room, a single tatami mat at its center, his mother kneeling there, her back to him. HIS FATHER'S COFFIN...A JAPANESE FUNERAL ROOM...CANDLES...FRUIT...A PICTURE OF DENNIS LINNEAR SURROUNDED BY FLOWERS.

Tami kneels to her sister's right, and all Nicholas can see is his aunt's profile...his mother's back, his father's coffin, Chiyo's light gray kimono, pink roses embroidered across her shoulders, her head bowed as if in prayer, sunlight gleaming on her blue-black hair...a SHORT KNIFE in her hand!

NICHOLAS

No! Don't!

TAMI

She must.

Chiyo turns, looks at Nicholas. Tami rises...

NICHOLAS,

Don't! Nothing's worth that.

A RINGING TELEPHONE.

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

Nicholas. His eyes snap open! Justine rolls over. THE PHONE STILL RINGING...

JUSTINE

I'll get it. Sleep. I'll get it in the other room.

And she's up, the rustle of silk from her kimono, from Yuki's, from Chiyo's, from Tami's...darkness.

Justine lifts the receiver out in the living room.

JUSTINE
Hello. This is she.

BEGIN INTERCUTTING THIS CONVERSATION...A DESK CLERK IN AN
EXPENSIVE NEW YORK CITY HOTEL...

DESK CLERK
I have a message from one of our
guests. He left instructions to
telephone you this morning at seven.

JUSTINE
Please read it.

DESK CLERK
Well, I don't understand...it
starts "From your Japanese friend..."

Justine listens carefully now, transfigured, her eyes chang-
ing, emptying...

DESK CLERK
"Kill the rabid dog in your bed."
That's it. I mean there isn't
anything else.
(pause)
Hello? If you have a rabid dog,
ma'am, I'd call the Pound...ma'am..."

The telephone's been hung up in his ear.

Justine stands in the living room, and now her eyes are not
her own, the color all wrong, in the flickering sunlight even
her face different, somehow no longer feminine. Sai-min jitsu.
She turns, moves silently, immersed in her kimono as if in a
mist. She reaches upward with two hands, unsheaths Nicholas'
katana from its scabbard on the wall....

AND THE SOUND REPEATS ITSELF, SHARP AND NEAR AND STARTLING,
LIKE THE FIRST BREAK OF THUNDER FROM AN UNEXPECTED STORM...
AND WE ARE IN JAPAN AGAIN.

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1966) - DAY

And Nicholas is watching TWO FACES, his aunt standing right
behind his mother now, the sisters' four hands entwined on
that knife handle, their arms moving with unnatural speed!

Nicholas steps forward across the bare wood floor, but it's
too late. His mother's transition from absolute motionless
to rapid movement is irrevocable. Her short knife flashes
platinum, blinding as the sun, slashing in a blur of fright-
ful conviction into the left side of her chest!

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

NICHOLAS OPENS HIS EYES IN BED, AMERICA, NOT JAPAN, SWEAT GLISTENING ON HIS FACE. But he doesn't move. He seems extraordinarily focused.

JUSTINE'S BARE FEET...SLOWLY, ONE BEFORE THE OTHER AT PRECISE ANGLES...THE RUSTLE OF SILK...

NICHOLAS. Just his face. Sakki. He knows. We know. But he doesn't move. Not even when her shadow falls across the bed...his neck exposed on the clean white pillowcase...the tip of the katana above him, beginning to quiver in her hands, the killing energy building inside her, inside the weapon...

INT. LINNEAR HOUSE (TOKYO 1966) - DAY

There is just a thin cry from Chiyo, like a startled bird, but no fear, and her body remains still in Tami's arms, a slight tremor, perfect folds of silk disturbed, an eyelash flutter, and then Tami releases her sister and with infinite slowness, as if settling by degrees, fists still locked around the hilt, Chiyo's body crumples forward, in total control, a living monument. Her forehead touches the floor an inch beyond the tatami.

TAMI

What little honor there is left in the world resides in this room.

SPOKEN IN ENGLISH. UNREAL. A NIGHTMARE. NICHOLAS WHIRLS AWAY, CONFRONTS YUKI, SEES A FIGURE APPEAR AT THE FAR END OF THE HALLWAY BEHIND HER...HIS COUSIN DAIGO. HERE ALSO ON THIS TRAGIC DAY.

INT. BEACH HOUSE (MONTAUK 1981) - DAY

NICHOLAS OPENS HIS EYES! ROLLS OVER...TOWARD JUSTINE...AND WE SEE THE MOVE COMPLETED FROM HER POINT OF VIEW, SEE THE HIDEOUS FACE OF A RABID DOG SNAPPING UP FROM THE BEDDING! JUSTINE'S BLADE A SUDDEN BLUR, CLEAVING THE AIR, DOWNWARD LIKE A BOLT OF BLACK THUNDER!

Nicholas' arms shoot upward, crossed just past the wrists, catching Justine's forearms above his head! He's on his feet at the same time and she comes at him magnificently, a horizontal cut from left to right! This time Nicholas has no choice but to catch the blade in his hands, stop the weapon inches from his face.

JUSTINE

Kill the dog! Kill him!

NICHOLAS
What dog? Justine!

JUSTINE
... (suddenly in Japanese)
The rabid dog! Kill him!

NICHOLAS
(Japanese also)
I killed him! He's dead!

But she won't relent, all her weight down on the sword, his hands tight on the blade, bleeding... Justine racked with a frightful muscular tension and strength that Nicholas battles to contain.

JUSTINE
Daigo! Daigo!

NICHOLAS
It's over, Justine! My cousin is
dead! I killed him! Daigo is
dead! He's dead!

The words howl out of Nicholas, a shattering cry

INT. ATHLETIC UNIVERSITY (TOKYO 1966) - DAY

A GRADUATION CELEBRATION. THIRTY YOUNG MEN LOCKED ARM-IN-ARM ...swaying, singing a university song so full of emotion, so happy and so sad that even though the words mean nothing to us we feel a part of it.

A good deal of drinking has been going on, even a good deal of crying among these intense comrades... and Nicholas is among them, dressed in the same school uniform they all wear, only his western face marking him somehow different from his friends, from his cousin...

Daigo Kashiba. Arms locked with the others too, singing with the others, looking across the circle at his cousin, Nicholas Linnear... eye contact.

This song over, precipitating some confusion, more toasting... beer and sakē... Daigo crossing toward Nicholas, raising his cup of sakē, Nicholas lifting a glass of beer in response. Daigo speaks IN JAPANESE. SUBTITLES TRANSLATE.

DAIGO
You're leaving Japan?

NICHOLAS
(in English)
Tomorrow.

They drink, never take their eyes off each other. IN ENGLISH...

DAIGO

Then I should kill you tonight.

Nicholas is startled, trying to hold in his torment...a mother dead, a father dead, an uncle dead. IN JAPANESE. SUBTITLES TRANSLATE.

DAIGO

But we both grieve too much now...

And Daigo moves right at Nicholas, embraces him, startles him, Nicholas embracing his cousin, both of them crying tears, the closest to love the two boys have ever gotten.

ANOTHER SONG BEINGS, and this time Daigo and Nicholas are side-by-side, arms locked, singing with their friends, singing of a reunion they all vow must one-day occur. THEIR VOICES RISING, THE CAMERA SWIRLING AROUND THE CIRCLE, SIGHT AND SOUND REACHING A FEVERISH PITCH BEFORE THE SCREEN IS PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS. AND IN DARKNESS THERE IS DEATH.

THE END

**PARAMOUNT PICTURES CORP.
FACILITIES OPERATIONS**

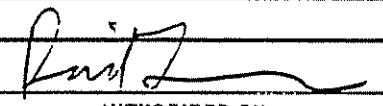
**PRINTING DEPARTMENT
STUDIO CHARGE**

SOURCE 375

REF. NO.

MARATHON ST., HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90038

FO - 280-1

W. A.	ENTITY	7 2 6 2 4 CONTROL	SHOW SET	MAJOR	SUB	NAME	BLOG.	ROOM	DEPT. NO.
No. of Orig. Pages	No. of copies Ea. Page	DESCRIPTION/INFORMATION						UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
140	2	The Ninja							
☒ XEROX ☐ PRINTING		 AUTHORIZED BY				APPROVED BY		TOTAL ☐ Taxable ☐ Non Taxable	