

"TRUE BELIEVER"

Screenplay By

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1 EXT. SING SING PRISON - EARLY MORNING 1
Mist shrouds the prison.

2 C.U. - EYES 2
Closed. Then the lids fly wide open.
INT. CELL
An ASIAN MAN sits up on his cot, coming out of sleep with a gasp. SHU KAI KIM is in his late 20s. With a muscled torso and shaved head meant to inspire fear. And to hide it.

3 INT. CELLBLOCK - LATER 3
The electrified doors slide OPEN. Shu steps out of his cell. ORTEGA--a rugged young Cuban--steps out of a nearby cell. The two cons trade small nods.

4 INT. CORRIDOR 4
The CONS walk in single file. Ortega is behind Shu. Ortega * speaks softly, with barely perceptible lip movement.

ORTEGA
Fear will kill you.

Shu's replies are like a ventriloquist's, as well. *

SHU
I'm not afraid. *

ORTEGA
Good. Right after chapel... it's going down in the yard.

Now Shu and Ortega file into:

5 INT. PRISON CHAPEL - MORNING 5
On the dais, the MINISTER leads a small CONVICT CHOIR.

6 REVERSE - THE CONGREGATION

6

The cons have segregated themselves into sullen groups of black, white, and brown.

7* CLOSE - THREE CONS

7 *

At the rear. SHU is flanked Ortega and a stringy CUBAN. All three stare ahead with an intense blankness.

ANGLE - FROM THE SIDE

Now we see what's really happening: Shu grips a sharpened spoon. The Cuban wraps duct tape around Shu's fist --so that even if he wanted to, he couldn't let go of the knife.

*

8 ANGLE - A WHITE CON

8

In front. DUANE LINDEMAN is burly, with long blond locks, his arms decorated with SWASTIKAS. Tattooed on one cheek are three black teardrops. Lindeman is surrounded by OTHERS like him. All SINGING a hymn to the Lord Jesus.

9 THROUGH THE CHAPEL DOORS

9

A disturbance out in the hall: we hear THUMPS, loud CURSING.

10 DUANE LINDEMAN

10

and FRIENDS just keep on singing.

11 WIDE

11

The rest of the Congregation turns around, to see what's going on. The TWO CORRECTIONS OFFICERS at the rear of the Chapel venture to the door and peer out, truncheons drawn.

TWO WHITE INMATES spring out of opposing back row aisle seats and SLAM SHUT the Chapel doors on the C.O.s--who immediately start POUNDING on the doors with their STICKS.

12 ONSTAGE - A hulking WHITE member of the CHOIR discreetly moves to block the fire exit offstage.

12

13 SHU AND ORTEGA

13

turn back around to face what appears at first glance to be a grotesque apparition:

14 DUANE LINDEMAN

14

seems to be flying from the front of the chapel toward them, blond hair flowing, arms waving, a warlock...

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3.

14cont. In fact, he's racing from the top of one pew-back to the 14cont.
next--and his HANDS are duct-taped, too, around KNIVES. Not
sharpened spoons, but long, serrated blades.

ORTEGA

Motherfuckers! Not in here!

A SIREN WAILS as Lindeman leaps at Shu--who executes a
perfectly timed karate throw, sending Lindeman over his
shoulder to land sprawling in the aisle.

Lindeman's tattooed ACCOMPLICES move to help. Ortega holds
them off. Before Lindeman can right himself, Shu pins the
blond Goliath. Brings a fist to Lindeman's neck, sharpened
spoon pressed against the neo-Nazi's jugular.

Outraged, the MINISTER claws his way through the crowd of
rubbernecking cons.

Shu is breathing too hard to demand that Lindeman concede.
But his message is clear. Now, in gasps:

LINDEMAN

Kill... me.

Instead, Shu lifts the sharpened spoon away from Lindeman's
neck. Carefully climbs off, steps back.

Lindeman lies there defeated. Then looses a startling banshee
SCREAM and springs, blades flashing, at Shu.

They're like two snarling cats. Wrestling so furiously, we
see only a blur of flesh, glint of metal. Splash of blood.

A RING of INMATES forms around the combatants. Some CHEER,
others SHOUT for the fight to stop. None dare interfere.

15 Now the BACK DOORS virtually fly off their hinges as a HALF- 15
DOZEN C.O.s in RIOT GEAR charge the Chapel.

16 It takes all six to drag the bloody cons apart. Shu 16
immediately goes limp; Duane Lindeman is slack, twitching.

Horrificed, the Minister backs off, vestments soaked in gore.

CUT TO:

16A EXT. JFK AIRPORT - MORNING 16A

A CAB merges onto the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.

16B AERIAL SHOT - MANHATTAN ISLAND 16B

We PAN to the Brooklyn Bridge and PICK UP the CAB as it hits
Manhattan.

16C

INT. CAB

16C

In the back seat, face pressed to the glass, is ROGER BARON. A 25-year-old whose persona straddles two worlds: In his Brooks Brothers suit he'd be welcome in any boardroom. With his Buddy Holly glasses and conceptually cropped hair, he's someone you'd want in your band. Roger checks his watch.

ROGER

Could I give you some extra money, have you drop me at the Courthouse and bring my luggage to the hotel?

The CABBIE turns around, at a red light. No creepier than the average New York Cabbie. He is smiling.

CABBIE

No problem.

Roger smiles back. Big problem.

17

EXT. 100 CENTRE STREET

17

Manhattan's fortress-like Criminal Courts Building. Roger climbs out of the cab, lugging a suitcase, a briefcase, a duffel bag and a garment bag.

18

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR

18

To a COURT OFFICER:

ROGER

I'm looking for the court where Edward J. Dodd is defending a Mr. Nevins.

*

The Court Officer consults the docket sheet.

ROGER

That's the Edward Dodd.

*

The Court Officer blinks at Roger.

COURT OFFICER

Part 73, Room 1113.

Then, deadpan:

COURT OFFICER

That's the Room 1113.

19

INT. COURTROOM

19

An Assistant D.A. stands before the JURY, in mid-summation.

19 cont.

19 cont.

D.A.

Edward Dodd is an inventive lawyer.
I'm sure he'd like you to believe that
the pound of pure cocaine found in his
client's home was intended for
personal, recreational use.

Several JURORS stifle snickers.

D.A.

He may claim that the many pounds of
baby laxative were intended to help Mr.
Nevins stay regular.

More muted SOUNDS of amusement, from the gallery, as Roger
ENTERS. He quietly deposits his luggage in the empty back
row, then moves to the front row, behind the defense table.
Seated there is a slick, natty DEFENSE ATTORNEY. Next to him
is a wired and weird-looking DEFENDANT in a threadbare suit,
the cut decades out of date.

D.A.

What will Mr. Dodd say the defendant
weighed on his laboratory scales? Oh,
he'll think of something... But bear
in mind that you jurors control the
scales that really count--the scales
of justice. Only you can ensure that
the defendant--who is, let's be
honest, a vermin, a vulture...

ANGLE - THE DEFENDANT

winces with each adjective. He's in his mid-40s, his face
framed by a MANE of HAIR that hangs to his shoulders. His
vintage suit accented by an embarrassingly wide and loud
floral-print-tie.

D.A. (OS)

...will pay a penalty. Be wise, be
fair, and have courage. Thank you.

As she crosses to the Prosecution Table:

JUDGE BAUM

Thank you, Ms. Jessum. Mr. Sweeney,
may I have a word with you?

As Mr. Sweeney--the Court Officer--confers with the Judge,
Roger leans forward. Whispers to the Defense Attorney:

ROGER

Roger Baron. Sorry I'm late.

19 cont.

The Defense Attorney looks mildly baffled. Regardless, Roger extends a hand.

19cont.

ROGER

This is an honor. And a thrill.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Really?

But what the hell: he shakes with Roger.

Now the DEFENDANT turns, to see what's going on. Trying to breathe as much empathy as he can into the one syllable:

ROGER

Hi.

The Defendant has fixed Roger with the sort of soul-piercing stare it takes many acid trips to perfect. So, delicately:

ROGER

What're you, um, accused of?

DEFENDANT

All sorts of things. How 'bout you?

ROGER

Me? N-no, I'm a lawyer, I just got into town...

*

Nodding at the Defense Attorney. We HEAR a POUNDING gavel.

JUDGE BAUM

Mr. Dodd, would you care to make your closing argument?

*

Roger pats the Defendant's shoulder. Reassures:

ROGER

You're in good hands.

The Defendant lifts his eyebrows, as though to say "Is that so?" Turns back around. And, for some reason, he rises.

DEFENDANT

I would, your Honor.

ROGER

Confused, at first--then mortified: omigod, that's Dodd!

*

EDWARD J. DODD

*

takes three long, crooked strides over to the Jury Box, hands clasped behind his back, hair streaming.

19 cont.

19 cont.

EDDIE

Brian Nevins' pound of pure cocaine was quite clearly intended for sale.

The JURORS look surprised. So does the D.A. So does BRIAN NEVINS.

EDDIE

The baby laxative--dealers use it to dilute their coke before selling it. They can--quadruple their profits...

NEVINS throws a jittery glance at the jury.

EDDIE

...and of course you can't sell cocaine without a laboratory scale.

Eddie strikes a tone of cosmic lamentation.

EDDIE

Cocaine is evil. Selling cocaine is evil.

Nevins checks his mental Rolodex for a great appeals lawyer.

EDDIE

Dislike this wicked merchant, if you must. But despise the tactics the police employed to snare Brian Nevins. Don't lose sight of what's really on trial here--our basic personal freedoms, our quality of life...

"Freedoms" and "life" are rendered as startling SHOUTS that make the Jurors sit up straight.

EDDIE

Sublime concepts, such as "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures..."

Eddie's delivery suggests an unholy but hard-to-dismiss hybrid of rabbi and diva.

19 Cont.

EDDIE

19 cont.

For when we condone the bugging of our citizens' bedrooms, when we allow the police to enter our citizens' homes with specious warrants, when we invade our citizens' privacy in a frenzied quest for a wicked white powder, aren't we capitulating to the evil, aren't we surrendering to the drug? Aren't we saying cocaine is more potent than our Constitution?

19A

EXT. COURTHOUSE - AFTERNOON - LATER

19A*

Roger maintains a discreet distance behind Eddie and Nevins as lawyer and client stroll down the steps.

NEVINS

Wow, that speech... It was beautiful.
Amazing horseshit.

EDDIE

(tight smile)
Amazing client.

Nevins isn't sure how to respond. So he gives Eddie a quick, vigorous, almost hostile hug.

NEVINS

Eddie Dowd... Everybody should own one.

omit
sc. 20

Nevins spins away, hops into his girlfriend's double-parked sc. 20
Porsche. As the happy couple blasts off down the block, Roger draws even with Eddie.

ROGER

About the mix-up back there... I, ah, never saw your photo, I just read every civil liberties brief you filed in the '60s...

Eddie distractedly nods. Then rotely sticks out his hand.

EDDIE

Hey, it was nice meeting ya. Gotta get back to the office.

It takes Roger a beat to realize the awful truth.

ROGER

Roger Baron, Oberlin undergrad,
Michigan Law? None of this rings a bell?

Exactly. Amused, now, by the absurd series of missteps:

19A cont.

19Acont.

ROGER

You hired me? To clerk for you? My
letter..? Top 5 percentile, Law
Review, salary is no object..?

This last detail apparently jogs Eddie's memory.

EDDIE

That's right.

They start trudging to the subway station. Roger awkwardly
lugs his suitcase, garment bag, duffel bag and briefcase.

EDDIE

Here, lemme help you.

He grabs the briefcase.

20A

EXT. SHERIDAN SQUARE - LATER

20A

Several streets converge here; so do gays, yuppies, and
diehard bohemians. As Eddie and Roger emerge from the IRT
station, and cross 7th Avenue:

ROGER

...was a second-year law student when
I read your Chase Manhattan bombing
case summation in the '71 Leftist
Law anthology. I know this sounds
dorky, but it kinda changed my life.

*

Eddie lives and works over a landmark cigar store and an
eyesore of an all-night deli. As he unlocks the downstairs
door, Roger takes in the seedily picturesque Square.

ROGER

So this is Greenwich Village?

Eddie smiles. Somewhere between sarcastic and self-effacing:

EDDIE

Yes Roger. You've arrived.

He starts up the stairs. Roger follows.

21

INT. LAW OFFICE

21

Balding rugs, macrame hanging things, birdcages, Salvation
Army couches. TWO leather-clad SCARECROWS pace; a teenage
GIRL with blue hair squats on the floor, comforting her
SQUALLING INFANT. Then there's the slick young COUPLE in Ralph
Lauren Polo ensembles, here with a furtive STRAIGHT-ARROW who
scans the Wall Street Journal.

A crew-cutted secretary (BILLY) types with one hand, grabs the RINGING PHONE with the other. To judge by her typing and telephone skills, she was hired for her capacity to manage this menagerie.

Roger has struggled up the stairs, behind Eddie.

ROGER

...wrote to the court clerk and got hold of the trial transcript. Your cross-examination of the cops was like an indictment of the system. You were my age when you defended that case.

EDDIE

I was never your age.

The SCARECROWS clamor for Eddie, e.g., "You gotta call my parole officer!" and "Did we get the continuance?" Eddie ignores. Addresses his secretary.

EDDIE

Billy--this here's Roger, our new social conscience on Sheridan Square.

He gestures for Straight-Arrow and Slick Couple to come into his inner office.

Though Roger quickly notes the office's squalor and questionable clientele, what catches his eye is the trio of cracked and yellowing PHOTOGRAPHS tacked on a wall in the foyer.

Eddie in his late-'60s glory days: On a dais, igniting an anti-war rally. Hugging a pair of Black Panthers outside a courtroom, his face suffused with joy. In a swarm of student activists outside a Federal courthouse, held on the shoulders of the crowd like a conquering hero.

Roger's reverie is rudely interrupted by:

BILLY

You want to be an "assistant" or an "associate"?

Roger turns to see Billy tugging on her denim jacket.

BILLY

Some of them like "assistant," some like "associate". Up to you.

ROGER

--How many others are there?

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10A

21 cont.

21 cont.

As Billy, wearing a slight smirk, bustles out the door:

BILLY

You're the current one.

Roger wistfully watches her go. OS, he HEARS:

MAN'S VOICE

You Eddie's new partner?

21 cont.

21 cont.

SCARECROW 1 is standing a tad too close for comfort. Still, Roger is grateful for the attempt at friendliness.

ROGER

Not exactly. Well, kind of.

Roger flinches, lets out an involuntary YELP as Scarecrow grabs his lapels, shakes him.

SCARECROW

You gotta call my parole officer!

CUT TO:

22

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY - A FEW WEEKS LATER

22

A spruce ASSISTANT D.A. (GABE FULTON) jauntily exits a courtroom. Followed by a grim-faced Eddie, with Roger and CLYDE GRUNER, a sullen, street-hardened PUNK. *

EDDIE

(to his client)

Clyde, you wait here.

(to the D.A.)

Gabe, got a minute? *

FULTON

I had a minute before the hearing-- but I couldn't get you on the phone, Eddie...

EDDIE

Yeah, well I had reasonable cause to believe the judge might've heard of a concept called "entrapment".

We TRACK with Fulton, Eddie and Roger as they thread through the THRONG of milling lawyers, clients, relations and cops.

FULTON

Hey--Gruner was busted with three pounds of methedrine. Judge refused to exclude the evidence. No deal.

He turns a corner. So does Eddie.

EDDIE

Gabe, I'm deeply disturbed about Detective Cedar's conduct. Fact, I may demand an investigation. Think of the headlines. *

FULTON

I think of the headlines, I drool. "Undercover Cop Busts East Village Speed Factory". Eddie, you're out of step. Detective Cedar's a hero.

22 cont.

22 cont.

Fulton veers into the Men's Room. Eddie follows.

22A

INT. MEN'S ROOM

22A

Roger enters, behind Eddie.

EDDIE

Detective Cedar went "under cover,"
huh? So did Judas.

Roger lingers at the sink as Eddie follows Fulton to the
urinals.

EDDIE

Detective Cedar used his wiles to
insinuate himself into the bosom
of Clyde Gruner's life, his home, his
loved ones...

FULTON

Can't I take a simple piss without--

EDDIE

Detective Cedar broke bread with
Clyde Gruner! Detective Cedar was a
guest at Clyde Gruner's wedding.

Eddie's voice trembles with outrage and inspiration.

EDDIE

And yes, Detective Cedar took drugs
with my client. Not once but many
times.

FULTON

(flushes, sighs)

You're gonna trot out that crap for
the jury?

EDDIE

Only if I have to...

Roger backs out of the bathroom.

omit
sc. 22B

omit
CUT TO: sc. 22B

23

INT. LAW OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

23

At this hour, the office is empty. As EDDIE and ROGER enter:

23 cont.

23 cont.

BILLY

Nevins stopped by. It's on your desk.

As he lopes toward his inner office:

EDDIE

We pleaded out Clyde Gruner to five years' probation.

BILLY

Score another point for truth and justice.

Eddie stops, shoots Billy a "fuck you too" look. Then turns to Roger and staunchly reaffirms:

EDDIE

The last struggle for constitutional rights is being waged over drugs...

24

INT. INNER OFFICE

24

Atop his desk is a package wrapped in newspaper. Eddie tears it open, revealing small bills bundled with rubber bands. As he counts the cash:

EDDIE

And we're in the ring, Roger, doing battle with Big Brother.

Roger turns away from the drug money, embarrassed and ashamed.

CUT TO:

25

INT. OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT - LATER

25

Now Billy is gone as well. ROGER sits in his cramped anteroom of an office, mechanically making notes. HEARS: *

WOMAN (OS)

...Edward Dodd? *

ANGLE - TWO ORIENTAL WOMEN

are in the outer office. One is college-age, assimilated. The other is in her early 50s, with the aspect of an immigrant. A vinyl satchel is slung over her shoulder. The younger woman has dutifully come to translate for the older.

25 cont.

25 cont.

TRANSLATOR

Edward Dodd, please.

Roger gets up from his desk. Hurries into the big room.

ROGER

I'm Roger Baron--Mr. Dodd's associate.

Can I help you?

The Immigrant anxiously peers past Roger. She knows he's not Edward Dodd.

TRANSLATOR

Mrs. Kim needs a lawyer. Her son killed a man in self-defense. In prison. *

ROGER *

(calls) *

Eddie... *

MRS. KIM SPEAKS in urgent-sounding Korean. Translating: *

TRANSLATOR *

He didn't belong there in the first place. Eight years for a murder he didn't commit. *

(adds) *

I'm her neighbor's daughter.

Without turning away:

ROGER

Eddie...

Finally Eddie strides in from his office. Waving away a cloud of pot smoke that's followed him out. He gives the women his patented reassuring smile.

EDDIE

I'm Eddie Dodd. What's up?

MRS. KIM SPEAKS, urgently, in Korean. Translating: *

TRANSLATOR

Her son didn't shoot anybody. He's the wrong guy. You meet him, you see he wouldn't stab a guy just for fun.

EDDIE

He shot a man and stabbed a man?

TRANSLATOR

He didn't shoot anyone... Eight years
in jail for a murder he didn't commit.

MRS. KIM SPEAKS again, at the same passionate clip. *

TRANSLATOR

He's a good boy. From a fine home in
Seoul, Korea. Shu Kai Kim. *

The Translator takes a breath. And explains: *

TRANSLATOR

That's his name. Shu Kai Kim. *

Eddie nods, solemnly taking all this in. Then:

EDDIE

I'll bet he's a wonderful boy.

As TRANSLATOR REPEATS this in Korean, Roger watches Eddie, to *
see where he's going. Hides his disappointment when he hears:

EDDIE

But I can't help him. You see I have
a specialty. Lawyers specialize, Mrs.
Kim, and these days I do mostly...

Translator, also in mid-sentence, waits for Eddie to finish.
But Eddie changes the subject. *

25 cont.

25 cont.

EDDIE

Anyway, I couldn't even go see your son
without looking at the files on his
case, first.

Abruptly Mrs. Kim swings her satchel--bulging with Shu's
files--into Eddie's arms.

Eddie smiles; she understands more than she'd let on. But
Mrs. Kim doesn't smile back. She's waiting for an answer. *

EDDIE

How did you find me?

TRANSLATOR TRANSLATES for Mrs. Kim, who RESPONDS in Korean.

TRANSLATOR

She went to all the courthouses. They
all speak of you, they all say the same
thing. *

Eddie can't help but puff up a little.

EDDIE

What do they say?

TRANSLATOR REPEATS, in Korean; Mrs. Kim ANSWERS. Translator
hesitates. Then: *

TRANSLATOR

You do cases cheap.

Roger stifles a laugh. Eddie lowers Mrs. Kim's satchel to the
floor and places a hand on her shoulder.

EDDIE .

Tell you what. Mr. Baron and I will
review your material and get back to
you as soon as possible.

Translator TRANSLATES. *

Mrs. Kim intently peers at Eddie to gauge his sincerity. He
boldly meets her gaze as he steers her to the door.

EDDIE

Thank you for stopping by.

Translator starts to TRANSLATE but Mrs. Kim holds up a hand,
to quiet her. Now Mrs. Kim responds, in halting English. *

MRS. KIM

Thank you for helping my son. *

EDDIE

Thank you for stopping by.

Evidently convinced, Mrs. Kim makes a parting remark.

TRANSLATOR

She thanks you in advance for saving
her son.

Eddie flashes one last smile, then closes the door on the
women. Roger shakes his head, bemused and moved.

25 cont.

25 cont.

Eddie flashes one last smile, then closes the door on the women. Roger shakes his head, bemused and moved. *

ROGER

"Thank you for helping my son." *

He picks up the vinyl satchel, starts pulling out papers.

Eddie feels compelled to poison the moment.

EDDIE

Talk about hard-sell, huh?

He snorts, incredulous, as he crosses the room.

EDDIE

Show me a guy who's not somebody's son.

Roger looks up at this remark. Then sets down the satchel.

26

INT. EDDIE'S INNER OFFICE

26

Eddie has re-lit his evening joint. As he settles back to enjoy it, there's Roger in the doorway.

EDDIE

--Hit?

Rather than reach for the joint, Roger mops his brow.

ROGER

Whew. That was close... We almost defended a guy who wasn't a dealer. Who knows, might even be innocent.

Eddie chuckles, defensive. Then:

EDDIE

We have a full caseload, Rog.

ROGER

Right, I forgot... We're pledged to protect every mid-level drug dealer in the Tri-state area.

(shivers)

It's an awesome responsibility.

EDDIE

I don't venerate drug dealers, Roger. To the contrary.

ROGER

Of course.

26 cont.

EDDIE

What we're trying to do here is to
check the government's attempts to
abridge our civil liberties...

*

ROGER

I know that.

*

He backs out of the doorway. Eddie stands. Continues, as he
follows Roger into: *

27

THE OUTER OFFICE

27

EDDIE

...through use of informants,
eavesdropping, unreasonable search and
seizure..!

*

27 cont.

27 cont.

ROGER

Right. You're right.

EDDIE

Damn right I'm right.

Roger starts for the door. Stops. Turns.

ROGER

It's just... I leave behind friends,
family, a coupla good job offers in
Chicago and in three dizzying weeks
I've helped acquit a coke dealer, a
speed dealer--

EDDIE

I specialize, Roger...

ROGER

--an angel dust dealer--

EDDIE

I'm not a kid anymore, I can't be all
over the map--

ROGER

--a speed manufacturer--

EDDIE

So get a job on Wall Street. I'm
sure your rich daddy can arrange it. *

Roger looks surprised. With a look, Eddie says that Roger's *
privileged background couldn't be more obvious.

ROGER

Don't tell me where to work. I moved
to New York to work for Edward Dodd.
But I can't believe that Edward Dodd
has nothing better to do these days
than invoke exalted legal issues to get
off guilty little--

EDDIE

Hey. You plan to be a criminal defense
attorney, know this going in:
Everybody's guilty.

This buys Roger's silence, for two beats. Then, sadly:

ROGER

You wouldn't've said that ten years ago.

He grabs his briefcase. Starts for the door. As he swings it open he HEARS:

EDDIE

Ten years is a long time.

ROGER

(stops, turns)

Look--I'm tired, I'll see you in the morning, Eddie.

Eddie watches him walk out. Drops the joint and vengefully grinds it out on the floor. To the closed door:

EDDIE

Long time.

Alone, now, he surveys his shabby domain and sighs, deeply. As he exhales, Eddie seems to be trying to blow away all the pot smoke that has clouded the room and shrouded his heart.

Then he shambles across the office and through the door that leads to his living quarters. We TRACK with EDDIE past a kitchenette equipped with no labor-saving devices into:

27A

INT. BEDROOM

27A

Small, and beyond spartan. Single bed in one corner, plain wooden bureau opposite. The only color is provided by Eddie's festive tie, casually strewn. Eddie's bedroom is not unlike a cell we saw at the beginning of the movie.

Eddie stands at the window, trying to stare past the security bars into the New York night. But all he can see is his reflection.

CUT TO:

28

EXT. STREET - NEXT MORNING

28

Roger exits his hotel, briefcase in one hand, bagel in the other. He starts up the block, looking for a cab. Ignores a persistent HONKING, OS. Until he hears:

MAN'S VOICE

Roger!

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28 cont.

28 cont.

Roger turns. Sees:

EDDIE

in an old convertible, holding up traffic as he stops where
Roger stands.

EDDIE

We're late. Let's get going!

Roger gets into the car. Eddie looks alarmingly revved.

ROGER

Where?

EDDIE

Ossining Correctional Facility... Sing

(Sing) Everybody's innocent there,

man... Just ask 'em...

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EXT. ROUTE 9 - LATER

Wending north along the Hudson. ANGLE Eddie's vintage convertible as it wheezes its way upstate. OVER:

ROGER'S VOICE

Kim had a pretty good record till the incident with Duane Lindeman. Member of the "Aryan Army"...

EDDIE'S VOICE

White power prison gang.

INT. CONVERTIBLE - MOVING

Roger extracts info from the clippings in Mrs. Kim's files.

EDDIE

(What was Kim in for in the first place?

ROGER

Killing a young Chinese gang leader. Kim admitted the gun was his, and he got 25 to life. Prosecution said he did it to get into a rival gang-- "the Pell Street Dragons".

(beat)

All these goddam gangs.

EDDIE

Primitive response to fear, Rog. Organize to create more fear.

EXT. SING SING PRISON - DAY

Through the gates, we watch Eddie and Roger escorted inside by a C.O. We HEAR:

C.O.

Now you understand our no-hostage policy. In the event of an uprising, we will make every effort to secure your release but will not trade your freedom for inmates' demands...

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON

A C.O. leads the lawyers through a security checkpoint.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The room is large and bare but for a long wooden TABLE, four chairs. Leaden light leaks through one high, barred window. Eddie and Roger, on one side of the table, anxiously wait. Roger jumps at the CRUNCH of a deadbolt lock, turning.

34 cont.

Two hefty OFFICERS enter escorting SHU, in manacles. One pulls out the chair for Shu, the other sits him down. Eddie waits for them to back out of the room and re-lock the door.

EDDIE

I'm Eddie Dodd. I'm a lawyer. This here's Roger Baron--also a lawyer.

Shu's eyes, beady and suspicious, bore into Roger.

Roger wants to smile. But he can't. He stares down at his notebook.

Now Shu peruses Eddie's long hair, peculiar suit.

SHU

My mother find you?

EDDIE

That's right.

SHU

Figures.

EDDIE

(undaunted)

Want to tell me what went down here?

SHU

(very slowly)

Racist asshole came at me.

EDDIE

Exactly what happened then?

SHU

(coolly)

I killed the motherfucker.

EDDIE

Okay.

Roger is now furiously scribbling notes; we can almost hear him whimper.

EDDIE

Let's talk about Chinatown.

Shu doesn't open the conversation.

EDDIE

There was bad blood between the Dragons and Jimmy Chin's gang, that right?

Shu shrugs.

34 cont.

EDDIE

34 cont.

The night Jimmy Chin was shot to death,
you were... where?

*

Shu doesn't answer. Eddie reaches into his jacket pocket,
pulls out a pack of cigarettes. Offers one to Shu. Shu
plucks the cigarette from his fingers, careful to avoid any
contact. Eddie lights it.

*

Now Roger wills himself to look up from his notebook.

*

ROGER

At the trial, you said you were at your apartment that night. Alone.

EDDIE

--Remember?

SHU

(stubbornly)

That's eight years ago. Long time.

He studies his cigarette. No--he's staring at the shackles on his wrists. Stares for one, two, three beats. Gravely:

SHU

Real long time.

Eddie's eyes flicker: He's heard that phrase, or one quite like it, somewhere before.

CUT TO:

35

EXT. PRISON - LATE AFTERNOON

The lawyers head for Eddie's convertible.

ROGER

I feel like I've been mugged... That guy was cold. So, what would we claim? He stabbed Lindeman in self-defense?

EDDIE

With knives taped to his hands? Forget it, Rog.

Roger shrugs, sighs.

ROGER

I hate to admit it... I'm kinda relieved we're not taking the case.

Eddie nods.

EDDIE

We're taking the other case.

ROGER

What other case?

EDDIE

Eight years ago. The Chinatown hit.

Roger stares, baffled, as Eddie orates.

35 cont.

35 cont.

EDDIE

A gang leader gets wasted in front of the tourists. The mayor pressures the cops. The cops pressure the enemy gang that probably did it--the Pell Street Dragons. The Dragons give up Shu Kai Kim--the schmuck kid from Korea who's been pestering 'em to get in.

ROGER

You really think that's what happened?

EDDIE

I don't know but it makes one hell of an opening statement.

As they reach the Riviera, Eddie's in his all-the-world's-a-courtroom mode; i.e., he shouts, does semaphore.

EDDIE

We prove Kim should never have been imprisoned in the first place, D.A. 'll back off the Nazi knifing...!

omit The lawyers climb in.
sc.36

omit
sc.36

ROGER

--Easy as that, huh?

EDDIE

Easy? No...We have to find some piece of evidence that got buried, to reopen the sucker.

ROGER

...But I mean if the guy's guilty--

EDDIE

Only he and God know if he's guilty, and neither of 'em are talking. Our job is to defend him with everything we've got-- Fact, the guiltier he is, the more he needs us.

Eddie shifts into gear. Pensive, now, as he steers out of the prison parking lot:

EDDIE

He's a victim, Roger. He deserves to see the sun again, breathe the air. He's been in prison too goddamn long.

CUT TO:

37

EXT. STREET - LATE NIGHT - A FEW DAYS LATER

37

A block of warehouses in lower Manhattan, under the shadow of the West Side Highway. Out of the drizzly darkness comes the RIVIERA, headlights doused. The car GROANS to a halt. Eddie and Roger climb out. Furtively glance around...

Roger follows Eddie to the fortified ENTRANCE of one of the warehouses. Eddie KNOCKS (in a pattern) on the reinforced steel door. Three sets of TUMBLERS TURN. The door opens.

Filling the doorframe is the imposing silhouette of a MAN in Nikes, chinos and windbreaker that must be standard issue for plainclothes cops. In a Darth Vader voice:

COP (TOMMY)

Okay. C'mon.

38

INT. WAREHOUSE

38

BLACK. Then Tommy flicks ON a row of OVERHEADS, lighting a long, tall aisle of gunmetal gray LOCKERS. Aisle after aisle, in shadow, to either side. Reverently, to Roger:

EDDIE

...the Exhibit Warehouse.

39

END OF THE AISLE - LATER

39

Tommy paces, checking his Timex.

Eddie and Roger squat on the asphalt, sifting through piles of paper. Each has two large boxes to process.

ROGER

Transcript...transcript...exhibits...

He pauses to to contemplate a grisly photo.

INSERT - THE PHOTO

A man's face, in 3/4 profile, with gaping entrance wound above the left eye. The man is young, Asian, very dead.

SCENE

Roger hurriedly tucks the picture away. But the next item he comes upon is:

ROGER

--The murder weapon.

He gingerly holds a sealed plastic bag sagging with the weight of a handgun.

CHUCK

ROGER

They found four of Sam's fingerprints
on this thing.

Eddie impatiently glances over

EDDIE

When did you start moonlighting for
the goddam D.A.?

ROGER

Eddie... I don't know about this.

But Eddie has already resumed his search.

DISSOLVE TO

An hour later. Roger holds a form, yellowed with age.

ROGER

Eddie... What's a DB-47

EDDIE

A Complaint Follow-Up form.

ROGER

--Listen: November 5, 1963, Cecil
Skell walked into 6th Precinct. There
he witnessed Chin shooting, saw
suspect's picture in The Post.
Says Shu Kai Kia is the wrong man.

EDDIE

"Cecil Skell?"

ROGER

I didn't see that name on an
affadavit or a police report.

EDDIE

He wasn't on the witness list.

Roger looks at Eddie. Time stops. Roger looks back down
the memo. Reads:

ROGER

"Also says he knows who killed
Kennedy."

Time starts again. Roger lets the memo flutter to the floor.

EDDIE

Keep looking. Something'll turn up.

DISSOLVE TO

41

END OF THE AISLE - DAWN

41

Files of paper everywhere. By the lawyers' haggard looks, we know something didn't turn up. Tommy surveys the mess.

TOMMY

Closing time.

Eddie looks up, exhausted--but scheming, still.

EDDIE

How's your brother, Tommy?

TOMMY

You kept him outta jail and I thank you, Dodd. But if you're not gone before the day shift shows up, I'm back to emptying parking meters.

*

Eddie surveys all this evidence, that they've been through twice. Looks over at Roger.

EDDIE

That DD-5.

ROGER

What, the lunatic who--

EDDIE

Cecil Skell. Find it.

*

CUT TO:

41A

EXT. MACDOUGAL STREET - MORNING - TWO DAYS LATER

41A

KITTY GREER strides down the West Village street. Kitty's 40, once cute, now simply sexy, and not apologetic about it.

42

INT. CAFFE REGGIO

42

The hangout that time forgot. Kitty finds the table where Eddie and Roger sip espresso. With studied detachment:

KITTY

Hi Eddie.

Eddie stands. Pulls out Kitty's chair.

EDDIE

Roger Baron, Kitty Greer. Private investigator.

*

(to Kitty)

Roger's my new associate. Top of his class at Michigan Law.

Kitty smiles at Roger.

42 cont.

42 cont.

KITTY

Eddie's Chase Manhattan Bombing
summation kinda changed your life..?

*

ROGER

(turns to Eddie)
You told her?

*

Eddie clears his throat.

KITTY

My skip-trace turned up two Cecil
Skells. One's in Butte, Montana.
Other's at Long Island Veterans
Psychiatric.

ROGER

I'll take odds on Cecil Number Two.

KITTY

So what'd this guy do? Snitch off a
dealer?

EDDIE

(casually)
Murder witness.

KITTY

You're doing a murder case?

EDDIE

It hasn't been that long.

Kitty's too polite to voice her disagreement.

*

42 cont.

42 cont.

EDDIE

Skell was just one of four eyewitnesses who came forward, Kitty. Y'oughta start looking for the others...

*

KITTY

Eddie, I'm not working on this case. You boys have fun. I have business back on Planet Earth.

*

She stands.

EDDIE

Lemme guess. Some corporate V.P.'s banging his secretary over lunch and you have to focus your camera and plug in your little tape recorder.

KITTY

Beats getting paid in twenties by slimedogs selling angel dust to high school seniors.

EDDIE

Kitty, where exactly do you place the microphone to catch the most incriminating moans?

KITTY

(to Roger)

A law degree is a terrible thing to waste. Do your parents know you're here?

*

EDDIE

Okay, forget it. You've blown your chance to participate in this case, Kitty.

KITTY

I'm kicking myself, Eddie. Right out of here.

She briskly exits the coffeehouse.

Eddie turns to Roger. Wearing a little grin.

EDDIE

We got her.

CUT TO:

42A EXT. RIVERHEAD VETERANS PSYCHIATRIC - DAY 42A

A gray edifice just outside a blue-collar Long Island town.
As Eddie and Roger ENTER:

EDDIE

You have to gently pressure a guy like
this to test whether he'll keep it
together on the stand...

43 INT. DAYROOM - CLOSE ON CECIL SKELL 43 *

Hollow-eyed, tousle-haired, late-30s. In pajama bottoms and
an olive-drab t-shirt.

SKELL

Dr. Berger said you g-guys needed to
talk to me..?

43 cont.

43 cont.

WIDE - THE DAYROOM

Depressing in proportion to the attempts to make it cheery. Eddie and Roger sit at a round wooden table we last saw in nursery school. As he pulls out a chair, for a wary Skell:

EDDIE

Hello, Cecil.

SKELL

*

See-cil.

EDDIE

See-cil. I'm Eddie Dodd, this is Roger Baron. We're lawyers.

*

*

ROGER

Mr. Skell. A young man named Jimmy Chin was shot to death eight years ago, in Chinatown. Do you remember talking to the police?

SKELL

(beat, then)

That guy they arrested--he was the wrong g-guy.

EDDIE

Cecil, we want to reopen the case, and we can't without your testimony. I want to use what you have to say so badly--but I must add, my friend, that I think you're fucking full of shit.

Roger winces: this is "gentle pressure"?

ROGER

I think what Eddie wants to say is--

SKELL

*

No! I saw it! The killer wasn't Chinese.

EDDIE

Oh come on, Cecil.

43 cont.

43 cont.

SKELL

Hey, Chinese people have this energy field that vibrates at a particular frequency.

Eddie and Roger trade glances. Then:

ROGER

Uh, Cecil... What's all this about the Kennedy assassination?

Skell's voice goes hollow. He should've known.

SKELL

You're from the Company.

He anxiously peers past the lawyers--as though looking for a hospital orderly, as though looking for help.

ROGER

(incredulous)

CIA?

SKELL

Telephone.

(sarcastic)

I suppose you don't know the phone company killed Kennedy because he was trying to b-break it up--and they ll never let that happen. They control everything: what you say in the mouthpiece is never exactly what comes out the other end, and--

ROGER

The phone company was broken up.

SKELL

(with muted contempt)

And you b-believe that.

EDDIE

--Cecil.

(places his hand over
Skell's)

Are you what heroes are made of?

Skell looks down at Eddie's hand, touching his own. Waits for, a lethal bolt of electricity. But nothing happens.

*

43 cont.

43 cont.

SKELL

I did two tours in Nam...

EDDIE

Good. Now we're going to take an
affadavit from you, but only concerning
the facts of the Chinatown shooting.
We honestly don't care about the
Kennedy assassination.

*

Skell considers whether Eddie and Roger might be on the level.

EDDIE

Are you willing to testify that the
man you saw shoot Jimmy Chin was not
the man the cops arrested?

SKELL

They g-got the wrong guy.

*

EDDIE

Now when the D.A.'s office gets wind
of this, they'll send someone here,
maybe claiming to be a journalist.
That person will ask you lots of
questions. Just be truthful, Cecil,
okay? To all of us?

*

SKELL

I always t-tell the truth.
(sad smile)
That's why I'm here.

*

CUT TO:

44

INT. HEARING ROOM - MORNING - SIX WEEKS LATER

44

No jury. CECIL SKELL on the stand. Hair freshly cut, beard
trimmed. In a suit no worse than Eddie's best.

*

Eddie speaks softly, so as not to excite the mental patient.

EDDIE

... You told the Desk Sergeant you were
certain Mr. Kim wasn't the killer?
(Skell nods)

*

You left your telephone number?

SKELL

Y-yes, sir.

*

EDDIE

Did the police make any attempt to
phone you, to follow up?

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44 cont.

SKELL

No, s-sir.

EDDIE

Thank you, Mr. Skell.

Eddie rejoins Roger at the defense table.

JUDGE

Mr. Rabin? You may cross-examine.

Assistant D.A. DEAN RABIN, 30, jumps up--alert and vigilant, as though he were the bodyguard of Justice herself.

RABIN

Mr. Skell, for how long have you been a patient at the Long Island Veterans Psychiatric Hospital?

Overlapping, Eddie leaps up, ROARS!

EDDIE

Objection, your Honor! The fact that the witness is currently a patient is immaterial!

JUDGE

Sustained.

RABIN

Alright. Mr. Skell, how long have you resided at the Long Island Veterans--

JUDGE

Mr. Rabin, you're out of line. Next question.

Now Rabin moves in for the kill.

RABIN

Mr. Skell: you're under oath to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. Who killed President Kennedy?

EDDIE

--Objection! Irrelevant! The witness is not an expert in--

RABIN

(overlapping)

Your Honor, the question relates directly to the witness's abil--

44 cont.

44 cont.
★

SKELL
(overlapping; tremulous)
I'd l-like to answer the question.

EDDIE
Mr. Rabin has no right to--

CLOSE - SKELL

★

He's answering. But, given the din of the lawyers' battle, he can't be heard. Until the Judge POUNDS his gavel.

SKELL
Lee...H-Harvey...Oswald.

To mouth this hideous lie has taxed all Skell's strength and self-control. *

In mid-argument, Eddie stops shouting. He sits.

EDDIE
Never mind, your Honor.

★

And Rabin is left sheepishly smiling at the Judge, who's wondering what the hell that was about. *

CUT TO:

45 INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - THAT AFTERNOON 45

Shu is escorted along the tier by TWO C.O.s.

46 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM 46

Enter the two C.O.s, with SHU. EDDIE and ROGER wait here.

EDDIE
Shu, the judge has ordered a retrial in the Chinatown murder case.

Shu's lips move. No sound emerges.

ROGER
If we can prove reasonable doubt on your imprisonment eight years ago, we feel sure the D.A. will reduce the charge in the prison knifing. You may get out of here much sooner.

★

SHU
Do I--have to be in the courtroom?

46 cont.

46 cont.

Eddie knows that Shu isn't eager to relive the last trial.

EDDIE

Shu, the State won't want to retry an eight-year-old case... At the pre-trial conference, an offer'll be made. Odds are we'll cut some kinda deal.

Roger is searching Shu's face for a ray of hope. Instead he hears, constricted:

SHU

--I can't pay you.

EDDIE

(gently)

That's okay, Shu.

ROGER

We're not billing.

This makes Shu even more uncomfortable. His eyes bore into Eddie's, searching for an answer.

Finally Eddie supplies it.

EDDIE

You've done enough time, Shu.

Shu holds Eddie's gaze for a beat. Then he nods. And then, without expression, he backs out of the Conference Room.

CUT TO:

47 CLOSE - X-RAY POSITIVE

47

As we contemplate a man's shattered skull we hear:

ROGER'S VOICE

"Comparative analysis of the bullet, wound and powder burns inescapably lead to the conclusion that Mr. Kim's .38 killed Jimmy Chin."

INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie sits at his desk across from Roger. On Roger's lap are a stack of forensic exhibits and old trial transcript, from which Roger was just reading. He looks up, at Eddie.

47 cont.

47 cont.

ROGER

Since the first trial, their guy wrote the textbook on forensic ballistics analysis. He's now tops in the field.

EDDIE

Hey. Cops tell the eyewitnesses, "Don't doubt your I.D.--our expert says it's the gun." Meantime they tell their ballistics expert, "Don't sweat it--three people saw the suspect fire the gun." I don't care how tops this guy is--that's how the game is played, and two can play the game.

But Roger's attention is momentarily diverted, because--

--KITTY has just casually walked in. As she strips off her overcoat and hangs it up:

KITTY

Of the prosecution's three original eyewitnesses, one's dead, one's moved to Montreal and won't budge...

(to Roger)

Your mouth is open.

Roger closes his mouth. Kitty sits.

KITTY

But they've still got Laura Gayley--and she was the closest, about 20 feet from the killer.

EDDIE

Gee, maybe she saw the gun.

Eddie pulls a joint from his desk drawer and lights up.

47 cont.

ROGER

Do you have to do that?

EDDIE

"Have to"? No...

He takes a hit. To Kitty:

EDDIE

Start looking into the Pell Street
Dragons--who assigned the hits in
'79, what rank in the gang generally
did the hits. Your extensive law
enforcement contacts should be of
some use.

KITTY

(to Roger)

I was never politically correct enough
for Comrade Dodd.

Billy KNOCKS. Sticks her head in.

BILLY

Robert Reynard's office called.

Eddie grinds out the joint.

EDDIE

Put him through.

BILLY

He's not on the line. His secretary
left word he wants to see you. This
afternoon.

KITTY

(incredulous)

Robert Reynard?

ROGER

The Manhattan D.A.?

CUT TO:

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48

EXT. MEN'S CLUB - DAY

In ~~Manhattan~~. Where Manhattan's oligarchs go to stay hungry. Several generations of WASPs stride in and out, attache cases in their left hands, racquets in their right.

EDDIE hurriedly enters this sanctum of health and wealth, too self-conscious to notice the startled WASPs noticing him.

49

INT. CLUB BAR

With a Rare Book Room ambience. A MAITRE D' steers an edgy Eddie past POWER BROKERS who stop brokering, briefly, to gaze at this bizarre interloper. Excepting one self-absorbed MAGNATE who pontificates on the Trade gap at FOUR REPORTERS.

MAGNATE

(Why do the Japanese shellack us month after month? Because they make cars and TVs, and what do we make? We make lawyers... It boils down to goods versus services. There's a reason goods are called "goods".

Eddie is delivered to a table in the center of the room. Settled here, sipping a scotch, is Manhattan B.A. BOBBY REYNARD. AT Reynard's elbow sits Dean Rabin. Wearing a vindictive little grin.

MAITRE D'

Mr. Reynard..?

49 cont.

49 cont.

Head bowed, Eddie awkwardly thrusts out a hand.

EDDIE

Edward J. Dodd.

REYNARD

(shaking)

Bob Reynard.

*

He offers Eddie a seat. Indicates the human terrier at his side.

REYNARD

Of course you know Dean Rabin, one of my Assistant D.A.'s. Dean generally handles nuisance cases like the... what's the man's name?

EDDIE

Shu Kai Kim.

REYNARD

You won't remember this, but in '72 I was one of several prosecutors assigned to the Black Panther-Police Shootout.

(laughs)

You walked into court by yourself and kicked our collective butt.

(beat)

So what've you been up to since then?

EDDIE

This and that.

REYNARD

My staff tells me it's been mostly drug pushers... I said that can't be the same Edward Dodd.

EDDIE

(evenly)

It's in the area of narcotics, Mr. Reynard, that the government tramples on the Fourth Amendment.

REYNARD

Let's not drag the Constitution into this. You used the testimony of a paranoid schizophrenic to overturn a murder conviction that had stood unchallenged for eight years.

*

49 cont.

49 cont

Rabin pipes up.

RABIN

Until we get the death penalty
reinstated, we depend on our ability
to make long sentences stick.

*

EDDIE

And the hell with my client's civil
rights--?

*

REYNARD

Your client is guilty. I know a
little something about street gangs,
Ed. In the Seventies I spent years
putting away kingpins in a Colombian
crime syndicate...

*

EDDIE

(dryly)

I think I recall some media hoopla.

*

REYNARD

If we can't protect this city from
incorrigible street assassins, then
my office isn't worth a damn... Now
maybe you got this case reopened
because you see yourself as a thorn
in society's side, or you want to
walk into any restaurant in Chinatown
and get free dumplings...

*

49 cont.

49 cont.

EDDIE

Are you implying that my motives are less than sincere?

REYNARD

Yes, but that's not the issue. What's on your wish list, Ed? Pleading Kim out to Man 1 on both homicides? Come on... What're you looking for here?

*

EDDIE

What am I looking for? You're the one talking deal.

(then)

Sentences to run concurrent?

*

REYNARD

Fifteen to life, both counts.

*

EDDIE

Fifteen? That's insulting...

*

REYNARD

Friday's the drop-dead date on the offer.

EDDIE

Please don't bullshit me, Mr. Reynard. You've got witness problems, you've got proof problems...

REYNARD

You're my only problem, Ed. What does it take to make you go away?

Eddie doesn't have to ponder long.

EDDIE

Eight-and-a-third on both counts to run concurrent, and credit for time served.

REYNARD

Your man'd walk out next month... Are you joking?

*

49 cont.

EDDIE

(rising)

I never joke about waiving a client's Sixth Amendment right to trial.

REYNARD

You're pissing me off, Ed.

EDDIE

I'm sorry if I've ruined your day, Mr. Reynard. But my client's had a rough eight years behind bars.

(beat)

Sleep on that, and then make me an offer.

Eddie turns, lopes away. Calling after him:

REYNARD

Ed: After Friday, no deal.

ANGLE - A REPORTER

at the Trade Gap table sniffs a story.

INT. CORRIDOR

Eddie waits for the elevator. And HEARS a confidential:

REPORTER

'Scuse me... Len Davis. Daily News.

Eddie turns.

REPORTER

Looks like you've wriggled up Reynard's ass... What gives?

The elevator arrives.

EDDIE

I can't comment.

Eddie boards. Slow enough that the Reporter has time to follow him in. The door closes.

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50A

INT. LOBBY - ON THE ELEVATOR DOOR

as it opens; Eddie and the Reporter step out. The Reporter madly scribbles notes as Eddie declaims.

EDDIE

...not saying there was a conspiracy.
Law enforcement is too disorganized for
that... No, I suspect sloth was the
culprit--lassitude... My client made
a convenient patsy...

They stride past CAMERA, Eddie just warming up, as we:

CUT TO:

51

INT. CAFFE REGGIO - NEXT NIGHT

At this hour, the espresso has given way to red wine. KITTY, EDDIE, ROGER and assorted West Village characters have taken over a table in the middle of the room.

ROGER

"Edward J. Dodd, retained to defend Mr. Kim, has disclosed that a witness will corroborate Mr. Kim's alibi?"

Roger reads from the News--everyone at the table has a copy. On an inner page is a file photo of Eddie under the headline "Stunning Revelations in 'Wrong Man' Murder Case."

EDDIE

I embellished.

KITTY

"Dodd also reports that his team of private investigators..."?

EDDIE

I embroidered.

KITTY

"...are close to naming the man they believe actually killed Jimmy Chin"?

EDDIE

I lied.

Roger gives Eddie a thin smile.

ROGER

Shoulda told the one about Shu being the bastard child of Mother Theresa.

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51 cont.

EDDIE

Shit, yeah... Reynard'd lop two more years off Shu's sentence.

Eddie stands, stretches.

EDDIE

I'm heading home--get some sleep...

52

EXT. MACDOUGAL STREET - NIGHT

52

As Eddie starts north, a STREET DEALER calls from the shadows:

STREET DEALER

omit
sc.53

Hey Eddie... Loose joints? Buy one, get one free.

omit
sc.53

EDDIE

I get 'em all free.

54

ON SHERIDAN SQUARE

Eddie crosses Seventh Avenue. Pulls out his keys, to let himself into his building. OS, hears:

VOICE

Hey, Eddie.

A MAN stands, silhouetted, at the top of the subway stairs.

MAN

Spare a quarter?

EDDIE

reaches back into his pocket. And gets RAKED across the jaw with a short length of PIPE.

HIS ASSAILANT

is a muscular PUNK in a black sleeveless t-shirt. Two black teardrops tattooed on his cheek. In a WHISPER:

PUNK

Race traitor. Gook lover.

54A

INT. SUBWAY STAIRS

54A

The Punk flings a stunned Eddie halfway down the stairs, to continue the beating out of plain sight. On the landing, the men bob back and forth, drunken dance partners--

--and then Eddie manages to grab the Punk's face, squeezing it with his ebbing strength, SMUDGING the TEARDROPS.

54 cont.

EDDIE

puzzles, for an instant, at the smeared "tattoos".

THE PUNK

senses something's awry. In his eyes, a flicker of panic.

SCENE

Then the Punk's eyes go cold again as he smashes Eddie's head against the tile. As Eddie collapses:

PUNK

Enemy of the Aryan People.

Punctuated with a kick of his combat boots. Eddie curls up to protect himself.

PUNK

Commie. Faggot. Motherfucker. Jew.

EDDIE

(gasps)

--Only half.

For this, Eddie gets another kick. Then the ultimatum, to as a "Confucious say" joke:

PUNK

Aryan Army say: If the Chink goes to trial, you die.

Eddie groans, his eyes roll back. FADE to BLACK. While the SCREEN stays BLACK, we HEAR:

DETECTIVE 1'S VOICE

Dodd-- Y'take on a client who wasted a Nazi in prison...

55

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT - LATER

Ice pack pressed to his bruised jaw, Eddie leafs through a mugbook. Roger sits beside him. DETECTIVE 1 sits across the desk. DETECTIVE 2 is slouched in the corner.

DETECTIVE 1

...Y'gotta expect the Nazis to come back at ya.

ROGER

Oh, Eddie deserved this. And I guess rape victims want to get laid at gunpoint.

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55 cont.

But Eddie could care less. He intensely scrutinizes each
defiant Aryan face, on page after page...

DETECTIVE 2

Yeah well it's a fact of life-- These
folks don't just spray swastikas on
synagogues. They take care of their
own.

EDDIE

stops paging. Squints.

CLOSE - A MUGSHOT

of the Punk. Sure enough, no teardrops on his face. His
name: CHUCKIE LODER.

Eddie's HANDS enter FRAME. His fingertips still smeared
black ink, from Loder's cheeks.

SCENE

Eddie studies the photo, his fingertips. Now he looks up
realizes that three sets of eyes are on him. As casually
he can, Eddie shuts the mugbook.

EDDIE

Y'don't mind, I'll look some more
tomorrow. Starting to see double.

55A

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Roger grips Eddie's upper arm, to steady him. Quietly:

EDDIE

His name is Chuckie Loder. But
something's very weird.

ROGER

--You found his mugshot?

They found the corner. In b.g. is the County Coroner's
Office; AMBULANCES are double-parked in front.

EDDIE

The tears... they weren't real.

omit
sc.56

CUT TO:

omit
sc.56

Revised 2/1/88

56A

EXT. EXPRESSWAY - LATE NIGHT

As we TIGHTEN on Eddie's wheezing RIVIERA we HEAR, OVER:

ROGER'S VOICE

I don't believe we're going to talk
to a bunch of Nazis. At night.

EDDIE'S VOICE

They only think they're Nazis.

57

INT. RIVIERA - MOVING

57

Roger drives. Eddie, in the passenger seat, massages his
swollen jaw. In his free hand are scribbled directions.
Covering his fear:

EDDIE

They're just frightened, fucked-up
losers that prison fucked up worse.

ROGER

(tense, snaps)

I didn't ask for a closing argument.

EDDIE

There's no one else to talk to. The
tattoos were phony!

ROGER

--So?

EDDIE

So an upstanding member of the Aryan
Army wouldn't paint them on. They
take those teardrops seriously--
they're badges of courage, of honor.
Only their most vicious killer elite
get to wear them..!

ROGER

I feel much better now.

EDDIE

Hey, Clyde Gruner sold these guys a
pound of crystal meth at cost. We're
Clyde's buddies, it's cool.

(checks the directions)

Next exit.

CUT TO:

58

EXT. DELAPIDATED HOMES - LATE NIGHT

58

A desolate outpost of the disenfranchised on Staten Island.

Eddie KNOCKS on a door. Roger waits with trepidation. The door is answered by:

A BOY

Towheaded, in pajamas. No more than eight years old.

EDDIE

Hi there. Is your daddy home?

59

INT. ARYAN ARMY HOUSE - MOVING SHOT

59

The little boy giggles, then leads the lawyers through a KITCHEN strewn with pizza cartons, shotgun shells and dogshit... A banal '60s sitcom flickers across an old b&w TV on the counter...

INT. LIVING ROOM

The little boy wraps his arms around a pair of legs. ANGLE UP on a MAN whose face is marred by a single teardrop tattoo.

EDDIE

I'm a friend of Clyde Gruner's...

TEARDROP

We know who you are. You're the race traitor who's defending the gook that murdered Duane.

omit
sc59A

REVERSE

omit
sc.59A

TWO ARYANS have materialized in the doorframe, blocking the lawyers' exit. One loosely cradles a MAC-10 submachine gun. The other circumspectly chews on a Slim Jim.

SLIM JIM

You got balls coming here.

TEARDROP

--The hell do you want?

EDDIE

Look, I'm sorry about Duane. But a man jumped me tonight. He said he was Aryan Army. His name's Chuckie Loder...

*

SLIM JIM

Chuck? Rhymes with suck? Chuckie Loder is no longer a comrade in the resurrection of our nation. We expelled that faggot junkie last year.

Eddie and Roger trade glances.

EDDIE

Do you know where he can be found?

TEARDROP

Hanging with his tongue out and a sign around his neck says "I Betrayed My Race" along with the rest of society's scum, on the Great Day of the Rope.

ROGER

Um... prior to the Great Day of the Rope, where can Chuckie be found?

TEARDROP

Mixing with mongrel races.

EDDIE

--A job? An address?

Teardrop doesn't answer. Hoping to help him out:

SLIM JIM

Art supplies, right?

Teardrop shoots a look at Slim Jim. If looks could kill, Slim Jim's brains would be decorating the walls.

EDDIE

Then you weren't behind this.

TEARDROP

You wouldn't be standing there if we were. Now get the fuck out of here.

CUT TO:

Revised 2/1/88

60

EXT. ROAD - LATE NIGHT

Headed north on an empty Route 9. Roger drives, a little while.

Eddie stares out into the night.

CUT TO:

61

EXT. SING SING PRISON - DAYBREAK

A tense ROGER squats on the hood of Eddie's parked car.

ANGLE - EDDIE

At the main gate, that isn't open yet. Eddie stands with head bowed, hands clasped behind his back. A guard. Waiting to get in.

62

INT. VISITORS ROOM - MORNING - LATER

Roger sits several feet behind Eddie, separated from Shu a plexiglass pane. Eddie and Shu pick up their receiver.

SHU

Who did that to you?

Eddie worries his discolored jaw.

EDDIE

A soldier in the Aryan Army with black teardrops painted on his face.

SHU

"Painted"?

Eddie nods.

SHU

That wasn't an Aryan soldier.

Eddie nods.

EDDIE

But why would a guy do that? Paint
black teardrops on his face?

*

SHU

I guess he... wanted you to think he
was... somebody he wasn't.

EDDIE

But why?

SHU

Maybe... because someone's afraid.

EDDIE

Afraid of what?

SHU

I don't know. The truth, maybe.

EDDIE

--About what?

SHU

About Chinatown. What went down.

EDDIE

What went down?

SHU

You tell me, man.

EDDIE

No. You tell me, Shu.

SHU

How can I tell you what I don't know!

EDDIE

You can't. So tell me what you do
know--say it!

SHU

I don't know shit, man! Goddammit--

EDDIE

Well I know that you're innocent, Shu
--even if you forgot.

Shu sucks in a breath. The curses are like stifled sobs.

SHU

Shit... fucking... bitch bastard...

Tears are spilling down Shu's rock-hard cheeks.

62A ANGLE - ROGER 62A

Watching Shu cry, Roger is stunned but not surprised. For now his pact with Eddie and Shu is sealed.

62B SCENE 62B

EDDIE

Shu. The D.A. is talking deal. A little negotiating, and you could be out in five years. But we take the deal, that's it. I don't look for the scumbag that jumped me, don't get him on the stand to tell the court who put him up to it, don't go after the fuck who put him up to it--the fuck who did the crime and let you do the time... We take this deal, we walk away without knowing what really went down, never get a shot at nailing some guilty bastard's balls to the wall.

Shu swipes at his face, roughly wiping it dry.

SHU

No.

EDDIE

"No," what?

Slowly, softly, emphatically:

SHU

Fuck the D.A.'s deal.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - DUSK - VARIOUS SHOTS 63

Hungry tourists, hyper street vendors, harried locals...
Roasting chicken carcasses, counterfeit merchandise
aggressively hawked, tiny old ladies bent over bins, squeezing
strange fruits... FIND ROGER striding down the sidewalk,
nose in trial transcript. To himself:

ROGER

Jimmy Chin came east on Pell... He stopped on the corner to let a car go by.

(Roger stops)

At the last instant he must've sensed something. He turned-- and--

Roger looks up from the text, turns his head. There's:

63 cont.

63 cont.

EDDIE

About twelve feet away. Loosely holding his transcript as he absorbs the Chinatown ambience.

ROGER

Laura Gayley was just behind where you are, Eddie. No bus stop, phone booth, stop sign in the way... Shit, she had a perfect view of the killer's face.

*

EDDIE

But she couldn't have, could she, because she thinks she saw Shu and now we know she didn't see Shu...

Roger looks dubious. Eddie starts loping toward him.

EDDIE

I'm stalking you, I'm right behind you, there's rage in the air. You feel the rage, like an electrical charge-- You turn-- I pull out a loaded gun--

Eddie shapes the fingers of his right hand like a gun and starts to wave it.

EDDIE

--Time contracts, space explodes, perceptions can't be trusted when I--

Eddie violently whips his finger-gun into Roger's face. Roger flinches--we HEAR a shattering GUNSHOT--and we're in:

64

INT. FORENSIC BALLISTICS LAB - A FEW DAYS LATER

64

A forensic ballistics expert (HOWARD) has just test-fired Shu's gun into a long wooden box. He and Roger remove their ear-protectors. (Eddie hadn't bothered wearing one.) To Roger, as he opens the box's lid:

*

HOWARD

Some guys in the field, they'll try to bullshit you that comparison microscopy's an exact science.

*

64 cont.

64 cont.

The box is tightly stuffed with wadded cotton, divided at intervals by cards.

HOWARD

*

Powder residues, grease stains, skin fragments... it's all subject to interpretation, know what I'm saying?

He lifts out successive cards. When he finds the first card that's not pierced, he knows where to dig for the bullet.

64 cont.

64 cont.

ROGER

... Not exactly.

HOWARD

I'm saying, we need to finesse a
little, we'll finesse.

Eddie adamantly shakes his head.

EDDIE

Howard--I told ya--! We don't need to
finesse this one! That's Shu's gun
there-- and Shu didn't do the crime!

HOWARD

Jesus! Jump back...

He recovers the bullet with a pair of sterile forceps.

HOWARD

You wanna hang out, Eddie, I'll have
something preliminary in an hour.

EDDIE

My associate'll wait, Howard. I've got
good news of my own to deliver.

CUT TO:

65

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - DAY - LATER

65

The D.A.'s office is on the south side of the building.

RECEPTIONIST (VO)

Is Mr. Reynard expecting you?

66

INT. REYNARD'S RECEPTION AREA

66

Reynard's Receptionist is politely but terminally skeptical.

EDDIE

This'll only take a minute.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry but Mr. Reynard is running
about an hour behind schedule.

EDDIE

Then just leave word: Mr. Dodd and Mr.
Kim plan to proceed with trial.

67

INT. STAIRS

67

Eddie's footfalls ECHO as he descends. And now he hears a
deep, sepulchral:

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67 cont.

MAN'S VOICE

Ed?

ANGLE - ROBERT REYNARD

stands at the top of the stairs, shirt-sleeves rolled up, arms akimbo.

REYNARD

Did my girl hear your message correctly?

Eddie stops, looks up.

EDDIE

I guess so, or you wouldn't be standing there, am I right?

The D.A. shakes his head, disappointed in himself.

REYNARD

Why did I think I could deal reasonably with a man who defends coke pushers for free?

The lawyers face off, salvos reverberating.

EDDIE

Coke pushers pay cash. That subsidizes the pot possession cases. They're free.

REYNARD

But now you've strayed from your area of expertise--dope--into street assassins. A subject on which you're dangerously ignorant.

EDDIE

But I'm a quick study. Tell your Assistant D.A.--Rabin?--that I'll see him in court.

REYNARD

No, Mr. Dodd, you'll see me in court. I'm prosecuting this case.

Eddie takes a beat to absorb the news. Then:

EDDIE

Why am I surprised? It's consistent.

Reynard nods in solemn accord.

67 cont.

67 cont.

EDDIE

You've made a career of putting non-whites behind bars.

*

A frost settles on the District Attorney's face.

REYNARD

I'll prosecute anyone who fucks up.
If that makes me look racist, it's a trade-off I'll live with, Ed.

EDDIE

That's big of you, Bob.

He gives Reynard a farewell-for-now salute.

EDDIE

I'll see you in court.

Before he can hurry away, Reynard has the last word.

*

REYNARD

Ed: You should've taken the deal.

*

And Reynard turns, to go back to his office.

*

CUT TO:

omit
sc 68

omit
sc 68

69

CLOSE - ROGER

69

On the telephone. Clearly he's just received bad news.

ROGER

Right, Howard. Thanks.

WIDEN. We're in:

INT. EDDIE'S OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT

Kitty and Eddie huddle at the conference table. As we TRACK over, with Roger, we hear:

EDDIE

...I want mugshots of the Dragons in '79. What'll you bet there was a guy in the gang looked enough like Shu to fool the white eyewitnesses!

*

Eddie notices Roger standing there, uneasy. With a look, he challenges his associate to spit it out.

ROGER

That was the ballistics guy. Howard. His tests showed that Shu's gun fired the bullet that killed Jimmy Chin.

*

EDDIE

Howard is a fucking burnout case. I didn't want him on the stand anyway. Get more names from Billy.

*

He turns to Kitty.

EDDIE

There's a Sociology professor up at Columbia knows everything about New York street gangs. He wrote a book on the subject... ah...

*

KITTY

Poverty's Armies. I talked to him.

*

Eddie looks expectant.

KITTY

Apparently doing a hit was the way to get into the Pell Street Dragons.

*

(shrugs, apologetic)

So there goes your theory about the Dragons giving up Shu to protect their trigger man.

69 cont.

69 cont.

EDDIE

But I like that theory. And since I'm not putting Professor Twerp on the stand, and since I don't have a better theory, I'm sticking with that theory. But I wouldn't need a goddam theory if you'd just find the sonovobitch who beat me up. Chuckie Loder is the answer man!

KITTY

I've phoned every art supply retailer and wholesaler in a 100-mile radius. No one's heard of Chuckie Loder.

EDDIE

Here's a new's flash: Maybe he's not calling himself Chuckie Loder these days. Maybe he has an alias. Biff Loder. Get his mugshot from one of the many law officers who've got hotpants for you, then canvass those art supplies places. You've got great legs, Kitty, I'd love ya to use 'em... Or else just stroll on outta here-- Both of you.

KITTY

That's not fair, Eddie.

ROGER

We're all committed to this... We all believe it's a good fight.

EDDIE

A good fight? We're not going into court to make some kinda statement. You think Shu gives a shit if we go down nobly? He could've taken a deal, gone free in a few years... But he's bet it all, on us. It's only a good fight if we win.

ROGER

And if you want to bail out, Eddie, now's your chance.

KITTY

Roger and I have work to do.

EDDIE

(smiles; softly)

Good. Okay. The cops testify first.

As he continues we PULL BACK, through the window, into:

70* EXT. WEST VILLAGE - NIGHT

70*

By the end of the next speech, Eddie, Kitty and Roger are three little silhouettes in one of many windows. In the context of the larger cityscape, there's a poignant--even fearful--sense of their smallness and isolation.

EDDIE (VO)

I'll start by casting doubt on their line-up. Jurors don't know how cops pack a line-up...

As we WIDEN, Eddie's voice is lost in the TRAFFIC SOUNDS... and then we BRING UP an excited BUZZ of VOICES, and we HEAR:

COURT OFFICER (VO)

Matter of People vs. Shu Kai Kim.

CUT TO:

71 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - MORNING

71

We've hit the big time; it's clean, spacious, echoic. The previous courtrooms were, by comparison, mere vestibules.

COURT OFFICER

All rise for the Honorable Justice
Marcus Quealy, presiding.

*

AT THE DEFENSE TABLE

There's SHU. With his new bristly growth of head-hair and oversized suit, he appears thin and mild-mannered, almost bookish. There's ROGER, looking around, bemused. The chair between Roger and Shu is empty. Anxiously:

*

SHU

Where's Eddie?

*

71A INT. MEN'S ROOM

71A

Eddie is alone in here, at the sink. He's just doused his face. He examines his reflection in the dirty mirror, trying hard to like what he sees. HOLD for several silent BEATS as Eddie gathers his strength and courage. Then:

REYNARD (VO)

You will hear from the detectives who
arrested Shu Kai Kim with his gun, in
his apartment.

72 INT. COURTROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

72

Eddie has now taken his seat beside Shu. Reynard is in the midst of his opening statement.

72 cont.

72 cont.

REYNARD

An expert who examined that gun, and the bullet that tore through Jimmy Chin's brain, will testify that Shu Kai Kim's gun was indeed the murder weapon. An eyewitness will testify that she saw Shu Kai Kim sneak up behind Jimmy Chin and shoot him in the face, point blank. You will hear that the defendant never knew his victim... That Shu Kai Kim killed Jimmy Chin in cold blood to get into a gang.

*

He strides over to the jury box.

REYNARD

Counsel for the defense will remind you that I must prove Mr. Kim's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. That doesn't trouble me; I know exactly what happened that night in Chinatown. And by the end of this trial, so will you.

TIME CUT:

73

EDDIE paces off a large circle--a territorial act in which ~~he~~ is claiming the courtroom as his.

EDDIE

Eight years ago the streets of Chinatown were plagued by muggings. Burglaries. Murders. No one felt safe. Tourism was down.

As Eddie pivots, we see that his hair is pulled back with a bright blue ribbon. The Jurors see this, too. If he didn't have it before, Eddie's now got their full attention.

EDDIE

Chinatown's shopkeepers and restaurant owners pleaded with the Mayor... The Mayor put pressure on the Police Commissioner...

Eddie jigs over to the jury box.

EDDIE

What do you think the Mayor said to the Police Commissioner? Perhaps the Mayor said "Arrest somebody..."

73 cont.

73 cont.

He's trailed off; the last word is whispered. As he opens his mouth again--

--TWELVE JURORS crane forward to hear.

EDDIE

...ANYBODY!"

An older woman GASPS. The others merely flinch.

TIME CUT:

74 The homicide detectives lead off. First up is MONTELL. Early 74
40s, beefy, black, with a tough-but-fair persona.

Reynard concluding his direct.

REYNARD

And so, Detective Montell, having brought in Mr. Kim for booking, you arranged a line-up with six other Asian males.

*

MONTELL

That's right.

REYNARD

And the results of the line-up?

MONTELL

All the eyewitnesses picked Kim.

TIME CUT:

75 Eddie smiles broadly at Montell, who smiles back. Then: 75

EDDIE

Isn't it a fact that the "six other Asian men" in the line-up were all of the classic Mongoloid type, whereas Shu has the distinct facial bone structure of a Korean?

REYNARD

Objection. The witness is not an expert in racial classification.

EDDIE

You had to use less than scrupulous methods, no? The Mayor was pushing you hard for an arrest, wasn't he?

*

MONTELL

The Mayor and I have never spoken.

*

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75 cont.

Snickers from the half-dozen REPORTERS present.

Eddie walks back to the defense table. Roger hands him an old tabloid. Eddie waves it.

EDDIE

If it please the Court, this banner headline appeared in the Daily News on October 25, 1979. A week before Jimmy Chin's murder.

(reads the headline)

"Mayor Rips Police Commish. 'Fed Up' With Chinatown Violence".

(beat)

So, Detective Montell. You were aware of the pressure, weren't you?

Montell smiles, shrugs. Almost embarrassed to admit:

MONTELL

I'm sorry, Mr. Dodd, but I read the Post.

More snickers from the Reporters.

76

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

Next up is SKLAROFF, a coiled, rangy cop in his late 30s.

EDDIE

Detective Sklaroff, exactly what information led you to arrest my client just two-and-a-half hours after the shooting took place?

SKLAROFF

We had a description of the suspect.

EDDIE

"Description"? What, Asian male 18 to 30, black hair, brown eyes?

From the prosecution table--

REYNARD

Badgering.

JUDGE

Overruled.

SKLAROFF

We had intelligence.

EDDIE

You had intelligence..?

76 cont.

Phrased to sound as likely as peace in Beirut. Sklaroff struggles to contain his resentment. Carefully:

SKLAROFF

We had information bearing on Mr. Kim's desire to gain admission into the Pell Street Dragons by assassinating a member of a rival gang.

EDDIE

Didn't this "information" come from the Dragons themselves--did they not all but hand you Shu Kai Kim, a Korean, an outsider?

REYNARD

Objection! Your Honor, this isn't cross-examination, it's Mr. Dodd's opening argument again--and again, it's pure fabrication.

JUDGE

Sustained.

Eddie essays another line of attack.

EDDIE

Isn't it unusual for a man who's just committed a murder in plain sight to bring the weapon back to his apartment?

REYNARD

Calls for speculation.

JUDGE

Sustained.

But Sklaroff has weathered enough abuse. Indignantly:

SKLAROFF

You're implying that I planted a gun?

EDDIE

We'll let the jury decide.

SKLAROFF

Kim's prints were all over it-- He admitted it was his gun, f'r godsake!

EDDIE

(overlaps, loudly)

Your Honor, the witness' response was non-responsive... I ask you to strike it from the record...!

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76 cont.

JUDGE

The jury will disregard the witness's last remark.

Eddie backs away from the excitable detective.

EDDIE

No more questions.

As he drifts back to the defense table, Reynard stands.

REYNARD

The People call retired Detective Vincent Dennehy.

Eddie sits. Wearing a confident grin for the benefit of any jurors who may be watching. Only Roger and Shu can HEAR.

EDDIE

...I'm dying out there.

SHU

(quietly reassures)

It's okay, Eddie.

As the Court Officer brings in the last homicide detective.

ROGER

You've got one more shot.

77

ANGLE - DETECTIVE DENNEHY

enters. In a wheelchair, pushed by his sister CONNIE. He's overweight and droopy-eyed, probably on pain pills. She's got the gait, physique and complexion of a spinster alcoholic.

ANGLE - THE DEFENSE TABLE

EDDIE

(sotto, to Roger)

A fucking wheelchair?

TIME CUT

78

Mellifluous and caring, Reynard concludes his direct.

REYNARD

And you left the murder scene..?

Dennehy clutches his original report. His eyes rake the page, find the relevant section. He adjusts his glasses. His voice is a whisper thickened by painkillers.

DENNEHY

At, uh, ten-thirty, sir.

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78 cont.

REYNARD

And then what did you do, Officer?

As Dennehy replies we FLASH BACK TO:

79

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - NIGHT, NOVEMBER 2, 1979

79

Flashbulbs EXPLODE. GAWKERS press up against police tape. Jimmy Chin's BODY is covered with a sheet. Where the head is, the sheet turns a deep crimson. As the stain spreads:

DENNEHY (VO)

I secured the scene. Took statements from the eyewitnesses.

(beat)

Then proceeded with Decedent's body to the office of the County Coroner.

REYNARD (VO)

Thank you. No further questions.

80

INT. COURTROOM - EDDIE

questions the disabled detective, careful to be cordial. He opens with a rote question.

EDDIE

Detective Dennehy. You reached the County Coroner's and signed over the body, when?

Dennehy finds the relevant section of the report. Focuses. Fusses with the pages. Starts to answer--then succumbs to a terrible coughing fit. COMPASSIONATE MURMURS from the JURY.

The Bailiff hurries over, gently pats Dennehy's back, pours him a cup of water. Dennehy downs it with effort. Then:

DENNEHY

...Eleven-thirty.

Eddie opens his mouth, to continue his cross. But now his eyes dart to the jury box, to the concerned faces there.

EDDIE

No more questions, your Honor.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Eddie hurries past Reynard, surrounded by REPORTERS. Looking well pleased with himself, the D.A. is engaged in a genial Q & A.

Roger and Kitty catch up with Eddie, making for the exit.

EDDIE

A fucking wheelchair?

KITTY

I didn't put him in a wheelchair.
Reynard did.

ROGER

He had a spinal injury, in the line of duty. He just needs a cane-- It was in Kitty's report.

EDDIE

I don't have time to read every word in every report, I'm too busy getting killed in court... Meantime my crackerjack investigator can't find the goddam art supplies store where Chuckie-fucking-Roeder works!

omit
sc81A

omit
sc81A

KITTY

I'd love to chat but I'm meeting a cop for drinks. He'll be bringing the Joe Boys' mugbook, circa 1979.

Eddie tries not to look overly impressed.

EDDIE

And I need an expert on the Joes I can put on the goddam stand!

Kitty pulls a BAG from her pocketbook.

KITTY

Eddie? Stick this up your ass.

And she exits.

Eddie pulls a length of PIPE from the bag. He and Roger trade baffled looks. Then Roger notices the PRINTING on the BAG.

* CLOSE - BAG

As Roger reads.

ROGER (OS)

"Art's Supplies."

81 cont. *

SCENE

Suppressing a smile, Eddie reads the rest.

EDDIE

"Everything For The Plumber".

CUT TO:

82

ESTABLISHING - LONG ISLAND CITY - EARLY EVENING

82

Light manufacturing and loft-dwelling refugees from SoHo, separated from Manhattan by the East River. TIGHTEN ON:

83

"ART'S SUPPLIES"

83

as Eddie and Roger enter:

INT. "ART'S SUPPLIES" FRONT OFFICE

A sign reads "Custom Plumbing Fittings". Roger notes the PLAQUES lining the walls, from the Chamber of Commerce, Urban League, etc., naming Arturo Lopez Esparza "Equal Opportunity Employer of the Year". At the front desks are TWO tough-looking SECRETARIES.

EDDIE

Is "Art" around?

SECRETARY 1 squints at this bizarre interloper. Before she can answer, we HEAR a pleasant, modulated:

WOMAN

Is he expecting you?

ANGLE

A coffee-colored YOUNG WOMAN hurries over from her desk in the far corner.

WOMAN

I'm Mariquilla Esparza--Art's wife.

Eddie and Roger are struck by her fine, radiant features.

ROGER

"Mariquilla"? It's a lovely name.

Mariquilla blushes, a bit.

MARIQUILLA

Thank you, Mister...

Eddie is letting himself through a door in the rear. As he slips past Mariquilla, to join Eddie:

Revised 2/1/88

83 cont.

ROGER

We'll just be a minute...

84

INT. WAREHOUSE

Crowded with sinks, toilets, tubs, pipes, etc. Black, white and brown MEN take inventory, fill orders.

Eddie is halfway across the floor when he's approached by a balding, brooding LATINO in his mid-30s.

LATINO

Art Esparza. How can I help you?

EDDIE

Eddie Dodd.

ROGER

Roger Baron.

As they detour around Esparza, scanning EMPLOYEES' faces:

ESPARZA

You can't come back here. We forge pipe, there's open flame...

EDDIE

I'm a lawyer. The firm is thinking about renovating. Everything dates back to the Sixties.

ESPARZA

I noticed.

EDDIE

(to Roger)

Do you see a toilet here you think is really me?

Roger joins in the snoring of Esparza.

ROGER

We're considering one of those high tech designs, what do you call it, a "lowboy"?

ESPARZA

Excuse me but we're not a store and we're not a showroom...

Eddie has slipped away. Hoping to distract Esparza:

Revised 2/1/88

84 cont.

ROGER

Didn't I read it's healthier? To sit
lower on a toilet? Y'know, with your
knees up, and--

Esparza is suddenly--angrily--aware he's been had. Sharply:

ESPARZA

--Where's your friend?

85

INT. FACTORY

85

A multi-tiered hubbub. MEN forge plumbing fixtures, load
skids, ride forklifts.

TRACK WITH EDDIE

as he strides toward a wall of material.

A FIGURE

enters FRAME, in foreground, out of focus.

EDDIE

sees, through the flames, the face of--

CHUCKIE LODER

who startles, then drops the fixture he was holding.
TRACK with CHUCKIE as he sprints like mad down the length
of the "wall".

EDDIE

YELLS OUT. TRACK with Eddie as he runs along his side of
the wall... The two men racing nearly parallel...

SCENE

Finally Eddie reaches an opening in the wall. He goes after
Chuckie, who rounds a corner... Then an EMPLOYEE carrying
a springing cauldron of molten metal crosses his path.
Eddie ducks around it, then--

--Chuckie, in hiding, swings a shovel at Eddie's head--
Eddie ducks, the shovel connects with a power box,
shooting out sparks...

TRACK in front of CHUCKIE down a narrow corridor of metal,
with Eddie in the distance, steadily gaining ground...
Chuckie pulls down a rack of shelving, blocking Eddie...

85 cont.

85 cont.

EDDIE

knocks into another EMPLOYEE and vaults over the rack, then continues the chase through a grinding area-- there's a shower of sparks--

CHUCKIE

turns the corner and reaches a dead end-- a wall of sandbags. He starts to climb the wall...

EDDIE

climbs behind him. Grabs Chuckie's legs, Chuckie kicks free and keeps climbing--

SCENE

And then the wall of sandbags collapses, sending both men flying...

Chuckie leaps to his feet first, jumping from one cylinder conveyor belt to the next... Eddie right behind him...

Chuckie rounds a corner-- Eddie follows--

--into a room so thick with steam that the two grappling figures are nearly obscured...

Chuckie breaks free, grabs hold of a tall steel door that, with grunting effort, he slides open-- He slithers out--

85A*

EXT. BEHIND THE FACTORY - DUSK

85A*

Eddie grabs Chuckie, on the loading dock-- They struggle, but Eddie retains a choke-hold on Chuckie... He gasps for air, starts to pass out--

--And then several BIG MEN intercede, forcibly separating Eddie from their co-worker, slamming Eddie up against the wall.

An iron bar is pressed up hard against Eddie's neck.

CHUCKIE

dashes across the fetid little swamp back here, climbs over the fence and disappears.

86

SCENE

86

Art Esparza charges through the ring of Employees. Grabs the winded and disoriented Eddie.

ESPARZA

You fool. I warned you not to come back here.

*

To his Employees:

ESPARZA

Everything's cool! Back off... take five!

He barks some SPANISH for the benefit of his Latinos, then starts briskly marching Eddie back through:

86A

INT. FACTORY

86A

EDDIE

Look, I'm a lawyer and--

ESPARZA

--And that gives you license to barge into my place of business and chase one of my people?

*

EDDIE

"One of your people"--Chuckie Loder--happens to be a Nazi reject with two felony priors...

*

ESPARZA

You mean Chuckie's done prison time?

*

EDDIE

That's right.

*

ESPARZA

Well so has Jake over there. And Hector. And Frank. And so have I.

*

They've now reached:

THE WAREHOUSE

As Esparza marches Eddie back the way he came:

ESPARZA

omit
sc. 87

That's what Art's Supplies is about. Giving ex-cons the break they can't get anywhere else. Maintaining an atmosphere of self-respect, mutual respect, and trust. And we don't need lawyers here to help us.

omit *
sc. 87

EDDIE

Look-- Chuckie Loder is a precipient witness in a murder case I'm defending. The last time we met, he massaged my jaw with one of your pipes. I didn't sense a lotta mutual respect...

*

Esparza looks pained to hear this.

ESPARZA

Chuckie... Never learn.

Then remembers he's with a civilian. Collects himself.

ESPARZA

If you'd had the sense to ask for my help, I would've been able to help you. But you've probably scared Chuckie off for good, I have a whole bunch of jumpy employees to settle down now and I think you'd better be on your way.

*

88 EXT. "ART SUPPLIES" - EVENING

88

Roger is waiting out here. As Eddie crosses to the car:

ROGER

Y'okay?

EDDIE

Fine. I lost Chuckie, I got a lecture from the jailhouse saint of Long Island City... Where the hell were you?

*

ROGER

1530 Rivington Street.

EDDIE

--What?

Revised 2/1/88

88 cont.

ROGER

Chuckie's address. I sneaked a peek
at the Rolodex.

EDDIE

You sneaked a peek at the Rolodex.
(then)

Nice.

CUT TO:

89

EXT. RIVINGTON STREET - EARLY EVENING

89

A stretch of transient hotels and pawn shops. Eddie parks at
a hydrant, the lawyers hop out.

ROGER

(...Eddie? 1530 Rivington...

omit
sc.90

ANGLE - 1530 RIVINGTON

A hole in the ground, surrounded by a fence that's decorated
with a fanciful sketch of a luxury condominium that'll never
be built and some pretty words about urban renewal signed by
His Honor Edward I. Koch.

ANGLE EDDIE

on the corner pay phone.

EDDIE

Kitty, Chuckie Loder's most recent
address is a hole in the ground. Now
when they demolish a residential
hotel, the city has to relocate the
tenants! Housing Authority'll have
records of--

(then)

You taught me that? So why'm I wasting
my breath?

CUT TO:

91

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

91

Pleasant, middle-class decor. We haven't been here before.
We HEAR a persistent KNOCKING.

KITTY crosses to the door, squints through the peephole and
sighs. Then opens the door. ENTER:

EDDIE

--Y'find Chuckie?

Revised 2/1/88

91 cont.

KITTY

Eddie, these things take time.
Particularly at this hour...

Eddie's all over the room, edgily picking up odds and ends.

KITTY

My guy at Housing's waiting at home for
a pass to get back in his office.

Meantime Eddie has found a BINDER on Kitty's coffee table.

EDDIE

The Pell Street Dragons in '79...!

KITTY

A number of them are dead, three are
in prison, one's a waiter... Two--
(you'll enjoy this--two are actually
members of the Chamber of Commerce

ON THE MUGBOOK

Like the one the cops showed Eddie. But instead of sneering
tattooed whites, here are sneering tattooed Asians.

SCENE

Eddie looks up from the book.

EDDIE

Doesn't do me much good unless I know
what Shu looked like back th--

Kitty hands him a photocopy of Shu's 1979 mugshot.

EDDIE

(studying it)

Whoa.

THE MUGSHOT

An ornery-looking Shu Kai Kim wearing a greasy shag haircut.

SCENE

EDDIE

Boy, I was right about the distinctive
facial bone structure of a Korean. I
thought I was bullshitting.

He's all over the room, waving Shu's photo, fulminating:

12/15/87

71.
91 cont.

91 cont.

EDDIE

The odd man out always takes the fall!
Haven't I been saying all along that--

Suddenly aware that Kitty's watching him play Edward C. Dowd, Legendary Hell-For-Leather-Lawyer, he falters, embarrassed. But Kitty's expression is affectionate, approving--this is just the spirit that drew her to Eddie years ago.

Sensing this, Eddie relaxes. His voice softens.

EDDIE

I haven't thanked you for your work,
Kitty. You're doing good work.

KITTY

I'm a professional, Eddie. Getting
paid is all the thanks I require.

EDDIE

(realizes)
I haven't paid you.

KITTY

(little smile)
Right.

A beat passes between them that's both intimate and awkward.

EDDIE

Got any booze in the house?

KITTY

You don't drink "booze".

EDDIE

You do.

KITTY

Eddie, if I wanted to make love with
you again, I'd do it sober.

Eddie gently places his big hands on Kitty's slim shoulders.

KITTY

Eddie this is silly...are we supposed
to pretend nothing's happened in the
last ten years and--

EDDIE

Nothing has. But that's all changing.

Revised 2/1/88

91 cont.

Touched by Eddie's optimism, Kitty kisses him. It's meant to be quick and light but he embraces her and the kiss continues.

CUT TO:

BLACK. A phone RINGS. A table-lamp goes ON. We're in:

92

INT. KITTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

92

On Kitty, in bed, as she answers.

KITTY

...Yes? Oh. Great. 602 East.
103rd...

PAN to EDDIE. Out of bed and already half-dressed.

CUT TO:

93

EXT. E. 103RD STREET - NIGHT

As Eddie's Riviera pulls up to a Barrio flophouse. He goes to his trunk, pulls out a tire iron.

94

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The ancient NIGHT CLERK is asleep, his head resting on the Front Desk. Gimlet-eyed, Eddie peers at the NAMES taped to the mailboxes behind him.

95

UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR

Musty, narrow, dimly lit. Muffled, debauched LAUGHTER... Eddie squints at one door, then another, then: Room 2D.

He takes a breath, pulls out the tire iron, KNOCKS with it. No answer. Eddie tries the door. It's unlocked.

96

INT. ROOM

96

CHUCKIE LODER sits quietly at a plain wooden desk in the darkened, unadorned room. Scattered across the floor are well-thumbed copies of Guns & Ammo and Blueboy.

EDDIE

--Loder?

CLOSER - LODER

Waxy and still--like a Duane Hanson sculpture. Right hand suspended over the left forearm.

EDDIE

sharply inhales as he ventures closer.

12/15/87

73.

96 cont.

96 cont.

CLOSER

A SYRINGE in Roeder's right hand, needle jammed in a vein.
The left arm is dotted with track marks.

SCENE

Eddie slowly backs away from the upright corpse. Gripped not
by horror, but the strangest sort of pity.

CUT TO:

97

INT. MORGUE - MORNING

97

Chuckie Roeder is laid out in a locker drawer. On one side
stands a MORGUE TECH; on the other, Detective 1 (from the
police headquarters scene).

Roger is off in a corner, giving a statement to Detective 2.

Eddie stands nearby, moodily contemplating the demise of his
last, best hope. OS, he HEARS:

MAN'S VOICE

--I guess you found him.

ART ESPARZA has entered. His face is flushed with emotion.

ESPARZA

He had no family. I have to I.D. him.
I'm his family.

Eddie nods, not sure what to say. Esparza grimly regards
Roeder's corpse, then nods at Detective 1. A tear slides down
his cheek as the MORGUE TECH slams shut the drawer. Esparza
turns to Eddie. His voice thick:

ESPARZA

You won't be able to use him now, will
you?

Roger wraps an arm around Eddie's shoulder.

ROGER

C'mon, Eddie, let's go.

ESPARZA

--That's goddam tragic, isn't it?

He starts for Eddie, who doesn't speak or even move to defend
himself. Detective 1 grabs Esparza in time, holds him back.

DETECTIVE 1

C'mon, get outta here, Dowd.

98

EXT. MORGUE - MORNING

98

Eddie and Roger exit. In b.g. are POLICE and POLICE CARS;
Police Headquarters is around the corner.

ROGER

Cop told me Loder had three heroin
possession busts. Coroner counted a
hundred-twenty track marks on him.

EDDIE

Guy who hired Chuckie probably gave
him a bag of skag to kick my ass--!

ROGER

Eddie... Isn't it possible Loder beat
you up on his own..? Maybe to try to
get back on the Aryans' good side?

EDDIE

To even suggest that means you don't
understand the Aryan Army psychology.
Do me a favor Rog-- Don't even try to
project yourself into that mindset.

ROGER

Okay.

(then)

I heard from the last ballistics
expert on the list. It's an even ten
who say Shu's gun killed Jimmy Chin.

EDDIE

That's why I hate experts.

ROGER

Look, maybe we ought to go back to
Reynard and try to cut a deal--

EDDIE

I'm gonna fall to my knees and whimper
for that stooge of the ruling class?

ROGER

This isn't about you, Eddie-- it's
about Shu. Reynard reconvicts,
he goes back inside for another
seventeen years! And that's not even
looking at the prison knifing. But
we plead him out, maybe--

EDDIE

Y'plead out guilty people, Roger.
Shu Kai Kim is innocent.

Revised 2/10/88

98 cont.

74A. *

98 cont..

ROGER

Eddie-- Only God and Shu know that.

*

Eddie stubbornly shakes his head.

EDDIE

You know how I know? 'Cause Reynard
says he's guilty, and Reynard's full
of shit! Look--!

*

98 cont.

98 cont.

Intoxicated by his illogic, Eddie yanks out his battered wallet. Tugs out Shu's mugshot.

EDDIE

It's not the face of a killer!

He hands it to Roger. Who hands it right back.

ROGER

Eddie... You're carrying that around like it was a picture of your girlfriend! I don't want to see your heart break when this case crashes and burns..!

EDDIE

That's not gonna happen.

ROGER

Ballistics says it's Shu's gun. All the facts--

EDDIE

"All the facts"?

Eddie laughs, a bit maniacally.

EDDIE

I'm going to put the facts on trial.

ROGER

What are you talking about?

EDDIE

Just buckle your seatbelt and watch me work.

He steps into the street. HONKING cars swerve around him. Roger looks both ways, dashes out.

ROGER

Without Loder what do we have? We don't have a single witness!

omit
sc. 99

omit
sc. 99

Revised 2/10/88

76.

98 cont.

98 cont.

EDDIE

Then go fucking find me one. There's
goddam Chinatown.

*

ANGLE

Sure enough, Chinatown is just a few blocks in the distance.

ROGER

That's weird...

Puzzled, he peers back the way they came.

ROGER

I guess I pictured the morgue being
way uptown.

As he and Eddie continue OUT of FRAME together, we HOLD on
Chinatown. OVER:

REYNARD'S VOICE

Is this the fatal bullet fired that
night in Chinatown?

CUT TO:

omit
sc. 100

omit
sc. 100

OMIT
Pages 77 & 78

Revised 2/1/58

OMIT PAGE

79

101

INT COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

101

Reynard's venerable BALLISTICS EXPERT is on the stand. He has just examined the bullet, tagged as evidence.

BALLISTICS EXPERT

Yes it is.

REYNARD

According to your analysis, can this bullet be linked to Mr. Kim's weapon?

AT THE DEFENSE TABLE

Shu listens to the testimony with pain etched on his face. Whereas Eddie wears a strange, lupine grin.

BALLISTICS EXPERT (OS)

Bearing in mind that every gun barrel leaves a distinctive mark on the bullet it fires, we must conclude that this bullet was fired from Mr. Kim's .38 caliber handgun.

REYNARD (OS)

Thank you, sir. Your witness.

Eddie pats Shu's hand. Then rises.

SCENE

On the wall opposite the jury hang TWO POSTERS. Apparently identical photos of a spent BULLET, deformed by impact. Eddie jigs over to the wall and grabs the pointer there.

EDDIE

The photo on the left shows the bullet that killed Jimmy Chin, true?

BALLISTICS EXPERT

True.

EDDIE

And the one on the right is the bullet you test-fired from Shu's gun?

BALLISTICS EXPERT

Correct.

Eddie contemplates these apparently identical photos. And manages to sound a note of colossal incredulity.

EDDIE

You would have the court believe that these two bullets were fired from the same gun?

BALLISTICS EXPERT

Absolutely.

Eddie presses the tip of the pointer to a thin smudge along the lower edge of the right bullet.

EDDIE

I see a groove here. I don't see a groove here.

Pointing, now, to the lower edge of the left bullet.

BALLISTICS EXPERT

It's not a significant difference.

Eddie's pointer finds another mark on the rear of the right bullet. Or maybe it's the shadow cast by the pointer.

EDDIE

And what about this? I don't see this on the other bullet.

He points to something else on one of the enlargements--but so quickly, we're not even sure what he was pointing at.

EDDIE

Or this--is this a significant difference?

BALLISTICS EXPERT

No it is not, Mr. Dodd.

As though baffled by the Expert's criteria, Eddie sets down the pointer.

EDDIE

To the best of your recollection, were you sober when you performed the tests?

REYNARD

Objection.

JUDGE

Sustained.

EDDIE

Forensic ballistics isn't an exact science, is it?

BALLISTICS EXPERT

It most certainly is.

EDDIE

Isn't there a ten to fifteen-percent margin of error?

Revised 2/1/88

101 cont.

101 cont.

BALLISTICS EXPERT

Absolutely not. No more than seven percent.

EDDIE

Ah. Then in every hundred cases, seven innocent men go to prison based on your testimony--?

AT THE PROSECUTION TABLE

Rabin is incensed. He looks to his boss for a vociferous protest. Oddly, we only get a mild:

REYNARD

Objection.

JUDGE (OS)

Sustained.

102

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

102

On the stand: LAURA GAYLEY, the young white eyewitness.

REYNARD

Would you tell the court exactly what you remember seeing on that evening?

MS. GAYLEY

I'll never forget it. I was walking east on Pell Street...

As she continues, we FLASH BACK TO:

103

EXT. PELL STREET - EVENING, NOVEMBER 2, 1979

103

MS. GAYLEY (VO)

A man walked past me. I noticed him for two reasons.

HER POV

The KILLER hurries by. ONSCREEN for only a second--but long enough for us to see he looks a lot like Shu.

MS. GAYLEY (VO)

He was walking very fast and his hand was shoved inside his jacket. Something told me to turn...

We watch the Killer's back as he races to an intersection where several PEDESTRIANS wait. We glimpse his face again as he pulls a gun... The YOUNG MAN in front of him whirls, there's a sharp CRACK and then the YOUNG MAN is lying in the street, blood welling around his head. The Killer runs off.

BACK TO COURTROOM

REYNARD

And the man whom you saw murder Jimmy Chin. Is he in this courtroom?

Ms. Gayley nods at Shu.

MS. GAYLEY

That's him sitting right there.

REYNARD

Let the record show that Ms. Gayley indicated Shu Kai Kim. Your witness.

omit
sc.105

omit
sc.105

Again, Eddie reassuringly pats Shu's hand. Then rises, and ambles over to the witness box.

EDDIE

Ms. Gayley. I have studied the diagrams and the photographs and I have visited the murder scene and the conclusion I keep reaching is... and I hate to have to say this... You weren't even close enough to see the killer's gun.

Ms. Gayley is shocked by the rawness of Eddie's accusation.

REYNARD

Does Mr. Dodd have a question?

EDDIE

Come now. Did you see the gun?

MS. GAYLEY

I can describe it.

EDDIE

Oh really?

MS. GAYLEY

It was silver, with a stubby barrel... snub-nosed, I think they call it. It wasn't automatic, it had one of those... cylinders...

EDDIE

After eight years? You can't remember that--!

MS. GAYLEY

I can see the hammer still, it was cocked...

EDDIE

(as though pained)

How can you remember that?

MS. GAYLEY

I didn't take my eyes off it!

EDDIE

Ah.

Eddie is facing the JURY--only they can see the smile that's sprouted on his face.

EDDIE

Thank you, Ms. Gayley.

A HUSH in the COURTROOM. And now Ms. Gayley realizes she's been tricked. As Eddie returns to the defense table:

MS. GAYLEY

Not the whole time, of course. I--

EDDIE

No further questions.

Shu looks up at Eddie. For the first time, there is hope in his eyes.

A frustrated Laura Gayley is led off the stand.

Reynard isn't even paying attention-- he's whispering to the COURT OFFICER, who nods. Now the D.A. rises.

REYNARD

Your Honor, the People wish to call a witness whose name does not appear on the witness list. He--

Eddie's smile evaporates. He hurries up to the bench. As Reynard coolly joins him there:

EDDIE

Your Honor, that's trial by ambush!

REYNARD

We just discovered him. His appearance is critical to a fair presentation of our case. He is an inmate at Sing Sing Prison and--

EDDIE

Your Honor, the case at hand has nothing to do with any events at Sing Sing prison!

REYNARD

Your Honor, I assure you that the witness has specific information in the case at hand.

As the Judge considers, Reynard keeps up the pressure.

REYNARD

He's recalcitrant--I had to personally make a body attachment this morning!

EDDIE

The great personal sacrifices endured by Mr. Reynard have no bearing on the legal issues, your Honor--!

JUDGE

Mr. Dodd, you will be granted ample time to prepare your cross-examination. In the absence of substantial prejudice to your client, I will permit Mr. Reynard's witness to testify.

EDDIE

With objection!

JUDGE

So noted.

And Eddie skulks back to the defense table.

REYNARD

As their final witness, the People call Richard Ortega.

The Bailiff swings open the rear door. TWO MARSHALLS hand over ORTEGA, from the opening scene, to the Court Officer. Ortega looks resentful and scared.

AT THE DEFENSE TABLE

Shu notices Eddie eyeing him with a sense of foreboding. Shu turns away, and grimly studies the tabletop.

Reynard begins his direct examination.

REYNARD

Mr. Ortega, what is "La Fraternidad"?

ORTEGA

(beat, then)

A Cubano prison gang, basically.

REYNARD

And its purpose?

EDDIE

Objection! This line of questioning is entirely irrelevant!

REYNARD

If your Honor will permit me the leeway normally afforded advocates...

JUDGE

You may proceed, Mr. Reynard.

REYNARD

Its purpose, Mr. Ortega?

ORTEGA

Protecting our own against the Aryan Army and the Black Avengers, basically.

REYNARD

In the course of protecting your own, does it sometimes become necessary to commit murder?

ORTEGA

I would tend to plead the Fifth.

REYNARD

Your Honor, the witness has been granted immunity from prosecution for any criminal activity he may disclose on the stand today.

Judge Quealy nods. Turns to Ortega.

JUDGE

Under this grant of immunity, nothing you testify to can be used against you. Therefore you cannot invoke the Fifth Amendment.

106 cont.

106 cont.

REYNARD

I repeat, Mr. Ortega: Do the members of La Fraternidad sometimes resort to murder?

ORTEGA

Sometimes.

REYNARD

Isn't Shu Kai Kim a soldier in La Fraternidad?

Ortega contritely peers at Shu. But Shu won't meet his gaze. Ortega hesitates. Then:

ORTEGA

That's right.

REYNARD

Isn't it unusual for an Asian to be accepted into a Cuban prison gang?

ORTEGA

(beat, then)

Shu's the only one.

REYNARD

And why was an exception made?

EDDIE

Objection! Counsel is calling for the speculation of a snitch!

JUDGE

Thank you, Mr. Dodd. But I'd like to hear Mr. Ortega's answer.

106 cont.

REYNARD

I repeat: Why was Mr. Kim allowed to join La Fraternidad?

Ortega mops his brow with his hand. Finally:

ORTEGA

... Chinatown.

REYNARD

And how do you know what Mr. Kim did in Chinatown?

Ortega squirms.

REYNARD

Did Shu Kai Kim tell the members of La Fraternidad that he murdered Jimmy Chin?

EDDIE

Objection. Leading.

His tone is stern. But for once he doesn't stand.

JUDGE

Overruled.

Ortega looks past Reynard, at Shu. Mournfully:

ORTEGA

Man, they got me all fucked up here.

JUDGE

Mr. Ortega! I warn you--! You must answer under the threat of contempt! I can sentence you to more years than you've already served and have remaining!

REYNARD

--Did Mr. Kim confess to you that he killed Jimmy Chin?

ORTEGA

--He mentioned it.

106 cont.

REYNARD

"Mentioned it"? Or did he in fact
boast about it, to any inmate who'd
listen?

Eddie is looking at Shu, who is resolutely staring down.

EDDIE

(dully)

Objection.

JUDGE

Sustained.

REYNARD

Withdrawn. The People rest.

Reynard returns to the prosecution table, lips pursed with
self-satisfaction.

JUDGE

Mr. Dodd? How much time will you
require to prepare your cross?

But Eddie doesn't react. So:

ROGER

We move that the witness's testimony
be stricken. He's clearly been
manipulated by the prosecution, he--

JUDGE

Mr. Baron, you are not the attorney
of record here. Mr. Dodd: Do you
wish to cross-examine?

Eddie just blinks at Judge Quealy, as though the Judge were
speaking in a foreign language.

ON THE JURORS

The more sentimental souls regard Eddie with faint pity.
But there's no pity left for Shu.

SCENE

Judge Quealy shakes his head, then bangs his gavel.

JUDGE

Court is hereby adjourned until ten
a.m. tomorrow.

Eddie sits there. The sky has fallen on him. Now Reynard
rises at his desk. He catches Eddie's eye.

Revised 2/10/88

106 cont.

89.
106 cont.

REYNARD

I hope you've learned something, Mr.
Dodd.

He and Rabin briskly exit the courtroom together.

CUT TO:

107 INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - LATER

107

The spectators--including KITTY--emerge. The CROWD
disperses quickly, silently.

Here comes EDDIE. What has seemed a merry jig in court now
looks like a limp.

ROGER behind Eddie. He moves to catch up, but sees that
Eddie is moving toward Kitty, waiting at the exit door. So
Roger hangs back.

But without even slowing down or giving a sign, Eddie moves
right past Kitty, and out of the building.

Shocked, Roger goes to Kitty. Gently touches her arm.

KITTY

It's okay. It was always like that.

107A EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - AFTERNOON

107A

Roger catches up to Eddie halfway down the steps.

ROGER

Where're you going, Eddie?

Eddie doesn't answer.

ROGER

I heard Ortega say Shu confessed--
I didn't see any evidence.

Eddie just keeps walking.

ROGER

We ask the Judge for a continuance--
forty-eight hours-- find an inmate
who'd testify Shu told him he was
innocent!

Still no response from Eddie.

ROGER

Eddie, the guiltier he is, the more
he needs us. You said that!

107A cont.

107A cont.

Eddie turns to Roger. The light's gone out behind his eyes.

EDDIE

Get lost.

Roger stops, dazed. Watches Eddie wander away. And then someone else in the departing crowd catches his eye.

ANGLE - A WOMAN

Furtive and alone, hurrying away.

ROGER

An odd look on his face. He follows.

CUT TO:

108 INT. PRISON VISITORS ROOM - EVENING - LATER

108

The lawyer and his client face each other through a pane of bulletproof plastic. Each has a telephone in front of him. Both fretfully finger their receivers. Eddie picks up first.

EDDIE

Quite a bit you didn't tell me.

SHU

When I joined up I took an oath of secrecy. I told you what you needed to know.

Eddie's words hiss, like steam escaping.

EDDIE

I didn't need to know you bragged about killing Jimmy Chin?

Shu doesn't answer.

EDDIE

So what was the prison knifing about, really? Aryan Army cutting in on your crack trade? C'mon, tell me...

SHU

It was self-defense.

EDDIE

Jimmy Chin... Was that self-defense too?

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90A.*

108 cont. *

108 cont.*

In response Shu hangs up. Eddie POUNDS on the plastic, to get him to pick up again. Shu does, provisionally.

EDDIE

I'm sorry, it's just-- You'll laugh but there was awhile when I thought, Hey, we're two sorry assholes who need each other. Who can help each other.

As though he couldn't possibly have heard this right:

SHU

--How could I help you?

EDDIE

By trusting me. Shit, man...

He trails off, momentarily defeated by the magnitude of what's been lost. Now:

EDDIE

I got my face kicked 'cause I trusted
you.

(more)

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91.

108 cont.

108 cont.

EDDIE (Cont'd)

I couldn't find an expert to say it wasn't your gun killed Jimmy Chin but it didn't matter... I went up against the goddam D.A. himself but I didn't care because I trusted you, because I believed in you, because I thought there was a bond between us!

Like a spurned lover who can't let go, Eddie implores Shu, through the plastic:

EDDIE

Didn't you feel that?

Shu looks at Eddie as though he were an alien life form.

SHU

You're out there and I'm in here. My bond--my trust--is with the dudes in here that watch my ass. I took an oath of loyalty to them. You're out there. Who are you to me?

As he continues, a simmering resentment heats up his words.

SHU

When you leave this place you're going out to dinner or a movie or get laid. Where's our bond? I'm going back to my cell and wait to die. So tell me: Where's our bond?

EDDIE

For awhile we had this dream we were innocent. That was our bond... but then we woke up. And now I'd like to hear everything.

Shu's eyes narrow.

SHU

What do you mean, "everything"?

With exaggerated calm, to cover the rage:

EDDIE

Tell me about Chinatown, Shu. Tell me the tr--

Shu hangs up. Rocks to his shackled feet. And shuffles out of the room, to return to his cell.

CUT TO:

109 EXT. ART'S SUPPLIES - EVENING - LATER

109

Through the gated window, a WOMAN and MAN--surely Art and Mariquilla Esparza--are seen in silhouette. Business hours are over; the couple is alone in the front office. Mariquilla sits at her desk, Art paces the office. Now, as he passes her chair, Art leans down and kisses the top of his wife's head. She involuntarily stiffens.

Art takes umbrage. MUFFLED WORDS. Mariquilla rises, grabs her raincoat. Art touches her shoulder, entreating. Mariquilla shakes her head.

110 EXT. STREET - ROGER

110

Watching this shadow play from the opposite curb. In b.g., the shimmering lights of the 59th Street Bridge and Manhattan's skyscrapers seem worlds away from this misery.

111 BACK TO "ART'S SUPPLIES"

111

As Mariquilla exits the building.

112 EXT. STREET - EVENING - WITH MARIQUILLA

112

As she hurries along, lost in her thoughts. Now Roger falls into step beside her.

ROGER

...Mrs. Esparza?

She startles slightly, then quickly recovers her composure.

MARIQUILLA

What do you want?

ROGER

I'm Roger Baron. I work with Edward Dodd.

Mariquilla gives no sign that this means anything to her.

ROGER

What were you... Why were you at Shu's trial this afternoon?

MARIQUILLA

--What trial?

Her pace quickens.

ROGER

I followed you here from court.

MARIQUILLA

I knew Jimmy Chin. The boy who was shot. Okay?

ROGER

Okay...

(then, trying to make sense)

And you were concerned that Shu might go free this time...

MARIQUILLA

That's right.

She picks up the pace. Roger stays on her.

ROGER

... So you had Chuckie Loder try to scare Eddie off the case?

MARIQUILLA

Why don't you ask Chuckie.

ROGER

(reminds her)

Chuckie OD'd, Mrs. Esparza. He's dead.

Mariquilla seems to flinch.

ROGER

Art didn't tell you..? He was at the morgue...

Mariquilla abruptly stops and turns to him. Imploring.

MARIQUILLA

Look. Mister--

ROGER

--Roger--

MARIQUILLA

You mustn't talk to Art. You mustn't tell Art that I was at the trial. Do you hear me?

There is animal fear behind Mariquilla's eyes.

ROGER

Why are you so afraid of Art? If you and Jimmy Chin were friends, you had a right to be at the retrial...

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94.

112 cont.

112 cont.

Mariquilla gazes into Roger's open, questing eyes. They're the same age, but one has lived much longer than the other.

MARIQUILLA

You don't understand anything.

With that she turns and hurries across the street. Slipping into darkness.

Roger stares after her, into the night.

ANGLE - ART'S SUPPLIES

On the silhouetted figure of ART ESPARZA, in the window. Watching.

CUT TO:

113* EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT - LATER

113*

Eddie buzzes the intercom. After a beat, hears:

KITTY (VO)

--Yeah--?

EDDIE

I'm in a party mood. Let's drink a toast to Shu Kai Kim.

KITTY (VO)

(sighs)

Hold on.

Eddie pulls a joint from his pocket, lights up, has a toke as he fidgets at the top of the stoop.

Now Kitty emerges, in a shirt and jeans she's pulled on. She touches his shoulder.

KITTY

Eddie. A guilty client's not the end of the world.

Eddie wildly waves the fuming joint.

EDDIE

Exactly! It's liberating, defending a client who's guilty as dick!

He suddenly notices the joint he was waving.

EDDIE

Do you realize I haven't gotten
stoned since the trial started?

Then disgustedly chucks the joint away.

KITTY

Come in. We'll talk in the morning.
Meantime you'll get some sleep.

EDDIE

I don't need sleep.

Eddie looks terribly sad. Kitty reaches out and hugs him.

omit
sc.114 But he just stands there, unresponsive. So Kitty lets go. omit
sc.114

EDDIE

Kitty, do you believe in luck?

KITTY

Luck? No. Why?

EDDIE

Because after ten years of defending
nothing but scumbags-- dealers--
hitters-- this kid comes along under
the mistaken impression that I was
something special and suddenly out of
nowhere we're fighting to free an
innocent man-- an innocent man, I
don't see many of those in my line,
Kitty, and for a minute I thought
Hey, the kid brought me luck, and it
felt goddamned good--

Kitty nods to herself.

KITTY

It felt good.

Eddie turns back to her.

EDDIE

But our minute is up, Kitty.

Kitty nods. She wears a pained smile.

KITTY

"Our minute is up".

(then)

That's great, Eddie. I'm glad we had
this talk.

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113 cont.

95A: *
113 cont.

She backs away from Eddie, toward her door.

KITTY

Goodbye, Eddie.

There are tears in her eyes. Eddie reaches out to her.

EDDIE

Kitty, you don't understand-- This is a new beginning. Y'see we're going back to defending scumbags. But not just dope dealers anymore. From now on: Child molesters. Porno merchants. Repeat drunk drivers, and I'm gonna get 'em all off. Hit men... Send me every contract killer. None of 'em does time ever again.

KITTY

Eddie. Go home. Get some sleep.

Eddie shakes his head. As he stumbles down Kitty's steps and back into the night:

EDDIE

I told you, Kitty. No more sleep for me.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. SHERIDAN SQUARE - NIGHT - LATER

115

A bleary Eddie fumbles with his keys, to unlock his door.

IN THE GLASS

A FACE looms up at him. The door swings open-- ROGER's been waiting for Eddie.

EXT. EDDIE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Roger steps outside. The door slams shut again.

EDDIE

Why're you still hanging around? Go home-- Take your job on Wall Street...

ROGER

Eddie. Stop it. Listen-- It wasn't a Chinatown gang hit!

EDDIE

Right.

He starts in on the door again, trying to find the right key.

ROGER

I think Jimmy Chin and Art Esparza's wife were lovers! She just about told me..!

EDDIE

(snorts)

What, you phoned Esparza's wife..?

ROGER

I followed her from the courthouse. I talked to her. She was scared to death I'd tell Esparza!

EDDIE

(distracted, mumbles)

... So what? What are you saying..?

ROGER

I'm not sure.

EDDIE

Then don't waste my time.

115 cont.

115 cont.

He gets the door open. Shuffles past Roger, starts inside.

ROGER

Dammit. Eddie. Do you hear me?
She was at the trial!

Halfway up the stairs, Eddie stops. Slowly turns.

EDDIE

Esparza's wife was at Shu's trial?

ROGER

That's what I've been telling you.

Eddie slowly walks back down the stairs, steps out onto the Square.

EDDIE

What do we know about that self-righteous sonovobitch Esparza?

CUT TO:

116

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LATE NIGHT

116

DOLLY PAST the odd HOOKER and VAGRANT being led from booking to the bullpen. The unnatural quiet bespeaks the late hour.

CAMERA PUSHES into Records, closed for the night... Pacing here is TOMMY, the cop who'd opened up the Exhibit Warehouse for Eddie, earlier. Tommy appears to have been dragged out of bed. Under his car coat is a flannel pajama top. Between tense puffs on his cigarette:

TOMMY

Dodd... We're even now...

PUSH PAST Tommy, to TWO FIGURES huddled at a desk in the corner. ROGER looks on as EDDIE rifles through a DOSSIER.

EDDIE

Check this out... The man's a prince.

CLOSE - CITATION

Dated 1988. From the Interborough Police-Community Affairs Board.

ROGER

(reads)

"...commend Arturo Lopez Esparza for his efforts on behalf of those who have paid their debts to society..."

Clipped to the citation is a photo, cut from a newspaper, of Esparza receiving the citation from a borough BUREAUCRAT.

SCENE

Eddie flips to:

EDDIE

Esparza's security clearance to go inside the jails for parole hearings.

CLOSE - PHOTO ID

A recent passport-type snapshot of Esparza.

EDDIE'S VOICE

Wonderful work Esparza does...

INTERCUT EDDIE and THE FILE as Eddie flips the page.

EDDIE'S VOICE

Skipping back two years.

(then)

How 'bout this.

116 cont.

116 cont.

We can't make out the fine print, only the PHOTO--a grainy long-lens shot of Esparza, in sunglasses, emerging from Art's Supplies. He had some thinning hair left, then, and wore a moustache.

EDDIE

Esparza was being watched by Narco.
Suspected of using his warehouse as a
drug drop... Surveillance terminated.

NEXT PHOTO - A set of mugshots. Esparza has lots more hair.

EDDIE

Four years ago. Esparza charged with
assault. Dismissed.

NEXT PHOTO - More mugshots. Esparza's hair thicker, longer.
He's clean-shaven.

116 cont.

116 cont.

EDDIE

Accessory to extortion. Dismissed.

Eddie flips, faster, through the file.

EDDIE

Dismissed for lack of evidence.
Dismissed, dismissed...

Roger looks questioningly at Eddie.

EDDIE

You get the feeling this little prick
is protected?

He glances, suddenly skittish, at Tommy--who picks up on
Eddie's paranoia and promptly reciprocates.

TOMMY

That's it--I'm outta here. You owe me
one, Dodd.

Frowning, Eddie returns his attention to the file.

EDDIE

Dismissed...

CLOSE ON ESPARZA'S FACE

As he gets younger, his hair gets thicker and longer.

EDDIE

...dismissed. Shit!

Eight years ago: Esparza's black hair is cut in a shag. He
wears a moustache and short, scraggly beard.

EDDIE

(softly)

Shit.

Something new in Eddie's voice commands Roger's attention.

ROGER

--What?

EDDIE

I've seen this picture before.

He reaches into his wallet, pulls out Shu's old mugshot.
Holds the two mugshots next to each other. Hushed:

EDDIE

They could've been brothers. It's why
the eyewitnesses picked Shu.

116 cont.

116 cont.

ROGER
Esparza shot Jimmy Chin...

INSERT - THE PHOTOS

Given that they're of different races, the resemblance between Art Esparza and Shu Kai Kim, in 1980, is startling.

ROGER
"The killer wasn't Chinese"... Cecil Skell was right..!

EDDIE
Everyone else was wrong and the one
fucking lunatic was right!

Roger wears a tense smile.

ROGER
Does this mean Kennedy was killed by the phone company?

117

INT. HEADQUARTERS CORRIDOR

117

The lawyers hurry out. Eddie smiles at the DESK SERGEANT with exaggerated amiability.

ROGER
(quiet intensity)
But Shu's gun is an absolute match..!
How could that be, dammit?

EDDIE
Not here, Roger.

118

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LATE NIGHT

118

The lawyers bound down the steps, dart into the street--
--and are nearly run down by an AMBULANCE that whizzes past, pulling into the garage of the County Coroner's Office.

ROGER
...Jesus!

EDDIE
Least we'd already be at the Morgue.

Briskly shaking off their brush with eternity, Eddie and Roger proceed down the block.

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99A.

118 cont.

118 cont.

ROGER

Let's make a citizen's arrest of
Esparza! We'll need back-up... Who's
the meanest motherfucker you ever got
off?

Roger ducks into a phone booth, feeds the phone.

ROGER

Gimme a name--any client who owns a
Magnum.

(beat)

Eddie?

Eddie's staring at the PHONE BOOTH. It's pagoda-style, with Chinese-red pent roof.

EDDIE

Wait a second.

Eddie squints down the street...

ANGLE

Even at this late hour we see enough decoration and signage to recognize Chinatown, not seven blocks away.

EDDIE

(softly)

How long did it take Detective Dennehy to drive Chin's body from Chinatown to the morgue?

ROGER

...An hour.

(realizes)

That's why I thought the morgue was on the other side of town.

Eddie fairly pushes Roger out of the phone booth. Thumbs through the White Pages, finds the page he's looking for, tears it out and stuffs it into his pocket.

As he races for his Riviera, parked in a towaway zone:

EDDIE

Roger... I may be late for court this morning. Fill in for me, huh?

He hops in, revs the old heap.

ROGER

I'm coming with you.

EDDIE

No. I need you in court.

And Eddie peels out.

CUT TO:

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101

119

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

119

In Washington Heights. The George Washington bridge in b.g.

120

INT. BEDROOM

120

Dark. The front door buzzer BUZZES. We HEAR a groggy:

WOMAN'S VOICE

--Who the hell..?

A frowzy CONNIE DENNEHY snaps ON a LIGHT. Reflexively reaches for the bottle of Seagrams on her night-table.

AT THE DOOR

stands the long-haired creep from last week's murder trial.

EDDIE

Hope I didn't wake you. I'm Edward J. Dodd. You're Mrs. Dennehy?

Connie waves her bottle of whiskey like a weapon.

CONNIE

Ms. Vin's sister.

EDDIE

I have to talk to your brother.

CONNIE

The hell you do. At this hour?

He pushes past her, toward Dennehy's bedroom. She starts to follow. He whirls, points a finger.

EDDIE

--Stay.

Like a good dog, Connie hangs back. Whimpering, slightly.

121

INT. DENNEHY'S BEDROOM

121

Eddie gasps--stops short.

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121 cont.

102

121 cont.

Dennehy lies propped up in his robe and socks. He's staring at the test pattern of a TV on his bureau. He's dead.

No he's not... Expressionless, still staring ahead:

DENNEHY

Do I know you?

Eddie crosses to the inert ex-cop.

EDDIE

I'm Eddie Dodd. I cross-examined you.

(beat)

But not very well.

Dennehy's eyes are shiny as marbles. On his night-table we notice a half-dozen prescription vials.

EDDIE

What did you do with Jimmy Chin's body?

Dennehy's lips part, but there's no sound. Eddie shakes him.

EDDIE

What did you do with Jimmy Chin's body?

Dennehy's lids flutter.

DENNEHY

I brought it... to the coroner.

EDDIE

An hour after you picked it up!

Dennehy reaches for a vial, casually fishes out two pills. Drowsily concedes:

DENNEHY

An hour later...

He pops the pills.

EDDIE

From Chinatown. Which is right up the street from the morgue! Where did you go with the body? What did you do with it?

DENNEHY

Please... I need to sleep...

Eddie slams Dennehy up against the headboard.

DENNEHY

You're fishing. You don't know shit.

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121 cont.

103

121 con

EDDIE

I know about Esparza.

A cloud crosses Dennehy's face. OS, we HEAR:

CONNIE'S VOICE

--It wasn't Vin's idea.

Connie has advanced to the doorway.

EDDIE

Whose idea was it?

Dennehy tries to focus on his sister.

DENNEHY

Connie get outta here... this is official business..!

CONNIE

You were pressured... Tell the man!

DENNEHY

Dammit Connie--go back to bed!

As she backs out of the room, to Eddie:

CONNIE

The little guys always take the rap for the big shots.

DENNEHY

(growls)

Connie!

Connie leaves. Eddie turns back to Dennehy. Before he can resume his inquisition:

DENNEHY

Montell... one of my partners... he said it'd work if it was a thru-and-thru.

Eddie inhales sharply. Lets go of the ex-cop. His voice shrinking to a near-whisper:

EDDIE

What's a "thru-and-thru"?

Dennehy reaches for another pill.

DENNEHY

I have this chronic pain...

He pops the pill, leans back.

121 cont.

121 cont.

DENNEHY

Eight years I'm waiting for some genius to notice it took me an hour to drive seven blocks.

He lets his eyes close. One, two, three beats. Then:

DENNEHY

I drove Chin's body to the Manhattan Bridge. Under the bridge...

FLASH BACK to NOVEMBER 2, 1979:

122

DENNEHY'S POV - MOVING - MIDNIGHT

122*

As he pulls the paddywagon up against a bridge abutment. The TWO other COPS wait in the shadows. The SHOT has the floating quality and irresistible forward motion of a dream.

DENNEHY (VO)

Sklaroff and Montell were already there, with Shu Kai Kim's gun.

123

INT. PADDYWAGON

123

Dennehy (younger, fit) lifts his end of the stretcher bearing the sheet-covered corpse. Slides it out, to Montell.

DENNEHY (VO)

We only had three hours. After that, with the body cooling, and the clotting... it wouldn't look right to the pathologist.

124

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE

124

The cops squat beside the stretcher. Dennehy strips the bloody sheet down to the corpse's waist. Sklaroff grips Jimmy Chin's shoulders and carefully hoists his torso upright. Chin's head lolls, empty eyes staring at the moon.

DENNEHY (VO)

Chin was hit once in the forehead by Esparza's .32. The bullet exited clean. That's a thru-and-thru.

Dennehy gingerly tugs on a hank of Chin's hair, to raise up the corpse's head. Sklaroff is leaning a discarded mattress up behind Chin's head.

DENNEHY (VO)

All Montell had to worry about was firing Kim's .38 at the same angle.

124 cont.

124 cont.

Montell, with gloved hand, brings Shu's gun to Jimmy Chin's forehead. Tilts it, just so. And FIRES.

125

INT. BEDROOM - DENNEHY

125*

The ROAR of the GUN-BLAST, no less loud as it echoes in his head eight years later, has startled open Dennehy's eyes.

DENNEHY

We picked the bullet out of the mattress and that was it--an airtight case...

EDDIE

But why? All to protect Espanza?

Dennehy reaches, unsteadily, for another pill. His lids have drooped again.

DENNEHY

Nasty little bastard. He stepped in shit...

Dennehy's head slumps. The impact of his chin striking his chest surprises him awake again.

DENNEHY

...we had to lick his boots clean.

EDDIE

(realizes)

He was your snitch.

DENNEHY

(sardonic smile)

Our own Colombian Connection... For three years... Three years of ball breaking detective work. And we put a lotta bad guys behind bars.

EDDIE

And one good guy.

Dennehy reaches for the vial again. Eddie grabs it first. Reads the label.

EDDIE

Demerol? What's your problem, man? You wanna die?

DENNEHY

I'm dead. We're both dead.

Eddie hurls the open vial across the room: the pills scatter.

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125 cont.

EDDIE

Nobody dies till I hear the truth! Who ordered the frame on Shu?

Dennehy stubbornly shakes his heavy head.

EDDIE

It was wrong, Vinnie--you know that! But we can make it right...if you'll stand up!

Dennehy looks up at Eddie. His eyes fill with tears. Still he doesn't move. Eddie grabs the ex-cop's pudgy hands.

EDDIE

Get up, godammit!

And Eddie hauls Dennehy off the bed.

126

INT. HALLWAY

Eddie drags Dennehy past Connie, chewing her cuticles.

CONNIE

Don't hurt him.

EDDIE

Where's the nearest hospital?

CONNIE

Bellevue. Straight up First--

127

INT. ELEVATOR

Dennehy is slumped in the corner. The car descends with painful slowness. Eddie nudges Dennehy's shoulder.

EDDIE

Stay awake, Dennehy. Vinnie... Come on, man, talk to me!

Dennehy's response: A faint SNORTING sound.

EDDIE

Did I say snort? No, I said talk. Please... I need you to live... (an idea)

Hey: When was the first time you got laid?

(no answer, then)

Okay, I sympathize, I blocked mine out myself. She had a moustache...

Finally the car stops. The door creakily slides open. As Eddie pulls the hulking ex-cop upright:

127 cont.

127 con

DENNEHY

...Where're we goin'?

EDDIE

That-a-boy. Hospital.

DENNEHY

I don' need a hospital... I feel fine.

EDDIE

Too fine, Dennehy. The bad news is, you're gonna live.

In response Dennehy GURGLES--it sounds, disconcertingly, like a death rattle.

EDDIE

Make y'a deal. You clean up, I clean up. No more dope.

(amends)

No more dope for a year.

(amends)

For the rest of the year.

He hauls Dennehy OUT of the elevator, and right into--

128

SKLAROFF AND MONTELL

128

Montell, the burlier of the two, flings Eddie against the wall. With an odd, brutal melancholy:

MONTELL

Why'd you have to come here, you hippie-dippie fuck?

Meantime Sklaroff helps Dennehy down the access stairs as he murmurs soothing assurances in the ex-cop's ear.

As Montell roughly pat-searches Eddie:

EDDIE

Montell... listen to me: Vinnie took a buncha pills. He needs a hospital.

MONTELL

Makes two of ya.

He knees Eddie in the groin, then tosses him into:

129

INT. ACCESS STAIRS

129

Eddie tumbles down the short flight. Then picks himself up as Montell hurtles after him. Eddie makes a break, into:

130

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE

130

but ESPARZA's waiting here. He hauls off, smashing Eddie's head against the concrete wall.

MONTELL

Goddammit Art, get back in the car!

Meantime Sklaroff walks Dennehy past a row of dark sedans huddled like hearses... Past a mesh gate that guards the building's ancient furnaces, crackling with flame, spewing steam... To an UNMARKED CAR parked at the far end of the garage. Softly, suppressing his unbearable tension:

SKLAROFF

Vin... What'd you tell the lawyer?

He opens the back door, maneuvers Dennehy onto the seat.

DENNEHY

Lou...

With infinite kindness, infinite patience:

SKLAROFF

I'm here, Vin. So's Dave. We need to know what you told the lawyer.

Dennehy nods, slowly. A stoned, beatific smile forms.

DENNEHY

I came clean...

Pain stabs Sklaroff's face. He pats Dennehy's knee.

SKLAROFF

Good, Vinnie... You wait here.

As he starts back to where Montell and Esparza stand over Eddie, Sklaroff draws the gun from his shoulder-holster.

His face, in the dirty yellow fluorescent light down here, is a taut, shiny death mask. Quietly:

SKLAROFF

Vinnie told 'im everything.

Woozily, as he mops the blood from his brow with a sleeve:

EDDIE

What, "everything"? You shot a corpse. I don't give a shit about that--!

ESPARZA

Let's snuff this lowlife!

12/15/87

109.

130 cont.

130 cont.

EDDIE

(to Esparza)

Hey--the fact you popped Jimmy Chin in broad daylight proves it wasn't premeditated. Jury'll sympathize--dude was banging your wife, right?

ESPARZA

Shut your sewer mouth!

He lunges at Eddie. Montell pulls him back.

EDDIE

Killing me in the middle of the trial would cause quite a stink...

(to Esparza)

It won't be clean like with Chuckie. What, y'treat him to a match-head of pure smack..?

Esparza shakes Montell loose.

ESPARZA

That's right--I'm a generous guy!

Montell gazes with loathing at Esparza.

MONTELL

--Who'd y'waste now, Art?

Meantime Sklaroff levels the gun at Eddie's face.

SKLAROFF

Goddam you.

ESPARZA

Do it. So we can go home.

Sklaroff's finger twitches, on the trigger.

EDDIE

Still letting your snitch run you?

Sklaroff's eyes flash. Eddie's touched a nerve.

MONTELL

Lou...We have to.

ESPARZA

Waste him, y'little worm!

Sklaroff's gaze flies from Esparza to Eddie to Montell. All four men's faces are slick with sweat.

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110.

130 cont.

130 cont.

 ESPARZA
 (draws his .32)
 Okay then I'll put this filthy lawyer
 freak out of his mis--

Abruptly Sklaroff swivels, jams his gun against Esparza's ear and FIRES. As Esparza topples backward, eyes and mouth wide:

 SKLAROFF
 Shut up, Art.

Eddie jumps up in horror. Montell blinks at Sklaroff.

 SKLAROFF
 Shoulda done that eight years ago.

Waving his gun at Esparza's ruined head, Sklaroff hoarsely shouts at Eddie:

 SKLAROFF
 You see that? You wanna be like that?

 EDDIE
 No. No...

 SKLAROFF
 You fucking swear to shut up!

Montell registers shock at his partner's offer.

 MONTELL
 ...We can't trust this fuck...

 SKLAROFF
 (at Eddie)
 You gonna keep quiet--?

Eddie considers for a moment that feels like forever. Then:

 EDDIE
 I can't do that... Keep quiet? You
 can't ask me to do that!

 MONTELL
 (explodes)
 Shoot 'im, f'r Chrissakes!

Desperate, Sklaroff kicks Esparza's corpse.

 SKLAROFF
 That's the motherfucker killed Jimmy
 Chin. It's justice..!

Eddie nods... he agrees...

EDDIE

But I have a client eight years in prison didn't do it...

Montell grabs the gun from Sklaroff.

MONTELL

You sorry bastard.

Eyes fixed on the gun, Eddie takes a step back.

EDDIE

My guy's gotta walk. You hear me?

Montell swallows hard, then raises the gun.

EDDIE

You hear what I'm saying? It's over--all the bullshit. Your bullshit, my bullshit--all the lies-- that's it, party's over, enough's enough. I live a lie, you die inside--don't you know that?

(then, softly)

I have to go now. I have to be in court.

Eddie turns.

MONTELL'S GUN

Pointed at Eddie's back. His finger tightens on the trigger.

EDDIE

crosses the oil-stained concrete... past the row of black sedans, the clanking furnaces... barely able to breathe... waiting for the bullet.

MONTELL'S ARM

starts to shake, just slightly. He brings up his other arm, to steady the gun.

EDDIE

has traversed this humid half-acre of hell... he reaches the unmarked car. A bleary Dennehy looks up at him, Eddie holds out a hand. His voice catching:

EDDIE

Vinnie... You coming?

Dennehy reaches up. And takes Eddie's hand.

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130 cont.

130

MONTELL AND SKLAROFF

Sklaroff places his hand on Montell's wrist. He helps his partner slowly lower the gun. Party's over.

EDDIE AND DENNEHY

awkwardly walk up the ramp. The sun is just rising over New York City. The two men squint as they come into the light.

CUT TO:

131

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT MORNING

131

Shu sits at the Defense Table. Not thrilled to be here. Roger stands.

ROGER

Your Honor, Mr. Dodd indicated that he may be detained this morning. He asked me to fill in for him.

JUDGE

This doesn't amuse me, Mr. B--

The door opens. It's EDDIE. Tattered, bruised and tired.

AT THE PROSECUTION TABLE

Rabin nudges Reynard. It appears that the defense has been on a titanic bender.

SCENE

The Judge puts on a sarcastic smile.

JUDGE

Good morning, Mr. Dodd. Do you think you might be up to cross-examining Mr. Ortega this morning?

EDDIE

Your Honor: I'm afraid that, no matter how careful my questioning, Mr. Ortega would, in his well-intentioned way, dig my client's hole even deeper.

Judge Quealy nods. Not without a trace of compassion.

EDDIE

Now I suppose I could find an inmate who'd say that Shu boasted about Chinatown just to survive in the joint--though he didn't really do it...

131 cont.

131 cc

Shu looks up. Interested, again, in the proceedings.

EDDIE

I suppose I could find witnesses to dispute every point made by the D.A. But in the end, would we be any closer to understanding what really happened in Chinatown eight years ago?

His impatience tinged with pity:

JUDGE

Then you don't wish to call any witnesses, Mr. Dodd?

EDDIE

If it please the court, I'd like to call Mr. Reynard.

AT THE DEFENSE TABLE

Roger and Shu look perplexed.

AT THE PROSECUTION TABLE

Rabin looks outraged. Reynard is merely annoyed.

REYNARD

I would ask opposing counsel to make an offer of proof that this is anything more than a desperate tactic.

JUDGE

Will you both approach the bench..?

AT THE BENCH

Eddie strides up. As Reynard joins him:

EDDIE

As a prominent Assistant D.A. at the time, Mr. Reynard had specific knowledge of external pressures that led to my client's arrest and indictment.

REYNARD

Your Honor, are we going to hear more nonsense about pressure from the Mayor's office?

131 cont.

EDDIE

A man's freedom is at stake here. Years more of his life may be obliterated... Your Honor, I urge you to give me the benefit of the doubt.

Judge Quealy considers, then turns to the D.A.

JUDGE

I don't wish to be reversed on appeal because the record suggested undue bias... As the defense has no other witnesses, I am inclined to permit this, Mr. Reynard.

REYNARD

It's a last-ditch ploy, your Honor. The Defense clearly hopes that my presence on the stand will create the opportunity to call for a mistrial.
(grim smile)

The defense is mistaken.

Reynard proceeds to the witness box. Though it's clearly a formality, the D.A. must be sworn in. An embarrassed CLERK proffers her Bible.

CLERK

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

REYNARD

I do.

Eddie can barely wait for Reynard to sit down.

EDDIE

Mr. Reynard. Let's discuss your involvement in the original Shu Kai Kim case.

REYNARD

My "involvement," as you put it, was marginal at best. I was not assigned to the original Shu Kai Kim case.

EDDIE

That's right... Weren't you busy investigating a Colombian crime syndicate back then?

As though indulging a child:

REYNARD

Yes, Mr. Dodd.

EDDIE

Didn't this investigation, with its attendant publicity, catapult you into the office you now hold?

REYNARD

If I were sitting where I normally sit, I would say "Calls for speculation."

EDDIE

Did you have a hands-on role or did you just supervise, from on high?

*

REYNARD

Mr. Dodd, I was personally involved with all phases and principals of the investigation. You Honor, I fail to see a connection between--

EDDIE

And who were the detectives who assisted you, Mr. Reynard?

Reynard turns back around to Eddie, to read what's behind his eyes.

Eddie's expression gives away nothing.

Reynard, as he answers, manages to sound perfectly casual.

REYNARD

Lou Sklaroff, Vin Badalato, Dave Montell.

EDDIE

The same three detectives on the Shu Kai Kim case.

*

REYNARD

In those days, they often worked as a team.

EDDIE

Didn't you submit letters of recommendation that led to their promotions just three weeks after my client's arrest?

*

Rabin jumps up.

RABIN

Objection. Irrelevant.

*

131 cont.

131 cont

JUDGE

Sustained.

EDDIE

Who was Arturo Esparza?

Reynard hesitates. Then:

REYNARD

I don't think I know that name.

EDDIE

--But you just said you were personally involved with all the principals of the investigation.

REYNARD

I can't be expected to remember the name of every informant eight years after the fact.

EDDIE

I didn't say he was an informant. But in fact, wasn't Esparza your primary informant? Without him you had no investigation, true?

REYNARD

(bristles)

Showboating can cost lives, Mr. Dodd. You're trespassing in the area of witness protection.

EDDIE

"Witness protection"... That's when the State grants favorable treatment in exchange for information?

REYNARD

That's one aspect.

EDDIE

Does the concept include, say, granting immunity to a convicted felon, for testimony? As with Mr. Ortega..?

REYNARD

A necessary compromise to serve a greater good. It comes down to a trade-off, Mr. Dodd.

EDDIE

A trade-off... And how far does it go? Protecting a key informant by covering up a murder he's committed?

(beat)

Or does it go even farther?

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131 cont.

Reynard stares at Eddie. Then:

REYNARD

I think you're a dangerous man, Mr. Dodd.

EDDIE

I hope so, Mr. Reynard.

Judge Quealy peers at Eddie, then at Reynard.

EDDIE

On the night of November 2, 1979, did Art Esparza phone you at home to say, "I just killed a man in Chinatown-- people saw me do it"?

The Reporters start to madly scribble.

REYNARD

(ice)

No.

EDDIE

No? Then what did he say?

Dean Rabin knows he must do something. He stands, again.

RABIN

Objection! Mr. Dowd is badgering the witness. His questions are inflammatory, prejudicial and improper.

Judge Quealy takes a beat. Then, sternly dispassionate:

JUDGE

Overruled.

Rabin sinks back down. Eddie keeps hammering at Reynard.

EDDIE

To let Esparza's crime of passion spoil everything... that wouldn't serve the greater good, would it? So you'd make the killing look like a Chinatown gang hit.

Now, at the back of the courtroom, Dennehy is helped into the courtroom by Connie. As she sits her brother behind the defense, with Kitty and Mrs. Kim:

EDDIE

Didn't you order your team to comb through the mugbooks? Find a patay and frame him?

131 cont.

131*cont

Reynard's gaze flicks from Badalato to Eddie.

REYNARD

I refuse to answer these questions.

*

EDDIE

--On what Constitutional grounds, Mr. Reynard?

*

Reynard's jaw is clamped shut.

EDDIE

By keeping your informant out of prison and in place, you were able to complete your work. Ultimately you saved scores of lives, didn't you?

*

Reynard stays defiantly silent.

Shu has gone pale. Tears stream down Mrs. Kim's face. Kitty reaches an arm around her shoulders, to comfort her.

*

EDDIE

It was a trade-off, wasn't it?

It is very quiet in the courtroom. And finally Reynard answers.

REYNARD

A trade-off. Yes.

(then)

I'd do it again.

Eddie nods. Then walks back to the defense table and sits, between Roger and Shu. Eddie looks drained but exalted.

He can sleep, now.

EDDIE

The defense rests.

132

INT. PRISON CELL - MORNING

132

Shu Kai Kim sits on the edge of his cot. Listens to the ECHO of FOOTSTEPS that grow LOUDER. In eight years of waiting, a man learns patience.

The FOOTSTEPS STOP, tumblers TURN. Still, Shu doesn't move; moving might break the spell. The cell DOOR slides OPEN.

C.O.'S VOICE

C'mon, Kim. Time to go.

133

EXT. PARKING LOT

133

Shu emerges from the Main Gate, toting a sad little vinyl valise. Blinking, as though he hasn't seen daylight in years. He heads toward the concrete depot where a bus will take him south, to New York City. How strange to walk without shackles, handcuffs, armed guards. OS, he HEARS:

MAN'S VOICE

Need a lift?

Edward J. Dodd lounges against his Riviera.

Shu cocks his head, stares at the lawyer.

Eddie shrugs, stares down. Three beats. When he looks up--

Shu is standing before him. Searching for words. Failing to find them. At last:

EDDIE

Shit, man--let's get out of here.

Now ROGER steps out of the car, holds open the door for Shu.

THE RIVIERA

Spewing clouds of pollution, Eddie's car pulls away.

RISE over the turrets and towers and electrified fences as Eddie, Roger and Shu drive away from the prison, to freedom.

FADE OUT - THE END