



THE UNTITLED SUPERFLY PROJECT

by

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"The Return of Superfly"**

written by Mark Jacobson

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A TELEVISION

broadcasts silent images of soldiers in the jungles of Vietnam at the height of the war, 1968. A rich, cultured, authoritative voice offers:

VOICE

This is the problem. This is what's wrong with America.

The war footage multiplies by twenty, becomes a stack of TVs with price tags dangling from the knobs.

VOICE

It's gotten so big you can't find your way.

INT. FEDCO DISCOUNT STORE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Two figures come past without looking at the sets - two black men - one in his sixties, the other in his thirties - both wearing expensive suits. The voice belongs to:

BUMPY

The corner grocery's a supermarket. The candy store's a MacDonal'd's. And this place. Look at it. Where's the personal service? Where's the pride of ownership?

The place is vast and all on one level with aisles that seem to stretch into infinity.

BUMPY

You know who owns this place? The federal government. They won't give you health care, but they'll sell you a TV. Tell me: What right do they have to compete in the private sector? And to compete unfairly. Buying direct from the manufacturer, cutting out the supplier, putting people out of work? And this is just one store. There's another one just like it in every major city.

They stop. Look around. Uncertain which way to turn.

BUMPY

What am I supposed to do in a place like this, Frank? Who am I supposed to ask for, the assistant manager?

The place is so big and impersonal it pains Bumpy.

BUMPY

This is the way it is now. This is the problem. You can't find the heart of anything any more to stick the knife.

KITCHEN & BATH DEPARTMENT

Bumpy stands at a marble sink in a model bathroom. Straightens the knot of his tie in the mirror. Tries the faux-gold faucet on the sink. It squeaks. To himself:

BUMPY

It's all fake now, too. Only looks like something real.

His grip tightens on the faucet as a pain grips his chest. Holding onto the knob he sinks to his knees. Frank sees it and comes running. Reaches his boss as he hits the tile. Cradles his head. Bumpy looks up at him confused.

FRANK

Somebody call an ambulance!

The entire cavernous place from high up: the endless aisles of consumer goods, shoppers pushing carts, the cash registers ringing up sales Bumpy will never see a piece of. Back down on the floor, looking up at Frank, he manages weakly -

BUMPY

Forget it, Frank. No one's in charge.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A minister intones a prayer as the casket is lowered into a grave, around which stands a large and important crowd of mourners attesting to the greatness of the deceased.

The governor of New York is there. The mayor of New York City and his entourage. The Chief of Police and other civic leaders. New York cops. Joe Louis and Wilt Chamberlain. Entertainment celebrities. Italian mob bosses. The press. And, furthest away, in their cars, fitting long lenses to cameras, FBI agents.

Frank glances from the sinking casket to the other Harlem crime figures present, knowing that each, even as they stand here, is already plotting to seize the pieces of Bumpy's once-unchallenged power.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - HARLEM - DAY

Frank takes off his jacket and hangs it up. Unstraps the holster strapped around his chest and sets it and the loaded gun it carries on a bureau.

He comes into the living room of his small apartment where the television shows images of the funeral he just attended.

He watches as the report segues to a brief history of Bumpy Johnson, famed Harlem gangster, the reporter offering at one point that Bumpy's death "marks the end of an era."

Over black and white photographs of Harlem and Harlem crime figures from the 1940's and 50's -

RICHIE V/O

I live in fear of hearing my name called.

PROFESSOR V/O

Mr. Roberts -

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A figure, his back to us, walks slowly toward a blackboard like a man to the gallows.

RICHIE V/O

Of walking up there, turning around, seeing everyone look at me. Knowing every one of them knows more than I do.

Like in a dream, Richie Roberts turns and faces his classmates, all of them a decade or more younger than him.

PROFESSOR O/S

Give us U.S. vs. Meade -

Richie's glance shifts to the professor of the class standing off to the side.

PROFESSOR

Subject, issues, how the issues were discussed on both sides, what the determination was, what it means in the larger context.

Silence. Richie doesn't know where to begin. Doesn't know what U.S. vs. Meade is. Stares at the faces.

RICHIE V/O
I get physically ill with the
anticipation. I throw up every night.

SANDERS V/O
And this is what you want to do for a
living.

RICHIE V/O
I don't want to be like that.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NEWARK - NIGHT

Richie and another man are coming up the back stairs of a
building.

SANDERS
Money will take that feeling away,
you know.

They come through a stairwell door and continue along a
corridor.

SANDERS
Who's going to do this?

RICHIE
He knows me; he'll take it from me.

SANDERS
Just throw it in, he doesn't take it.
That's good service.

He hands Richie a subpoena. They stop in front of a door.
Knock. Listen to footsteps approaching on the other side.

The door opens the length of a chain lock revealing a man in
an undershirt. He sees the subpoena and starts to close the
door -

SANDERS
Throw it!

As Richie flings the subpoena in, the door slams shut on his
hand. He wails in agony; tries to shoulder it open. Sanders
too throws his weight against the door but it doesn't budge.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Inside, the man is locking the door with a dead bolt. Blood
from Richie's hand runs down the jamb. The man steps back
just as the door rips from one of its hinges and the
detectives crash in -

The man tries to make it to the kitchen. To a window onto a fire escape. The detectives grab him from behind. Throw him against the sink. Get him in a headlock on the tile floor that's already smeared with Richie's blood.

Suddenly a woman appears from behind and beats at them with the handle of an umbrella. Everyone's yelling. It's chaos.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Silence. Calm. The men sitting in the living room. The woman elsewhere.

CAMPIZI

I swear to God, Richie, I didn't know it was you.

Richie unwraps a bloody dish towel to examine his hand.

CAMPIZI

I would never slam a door - knowingly - on your hand. Where's Richie's coffee?

RICHIE

I don't want any coffee.

The woman appears with a tray of mismatched cups and coffee.

CAMPIZI

Here it is. Thanks, honey.

RICHIE

Don't ever hit a cop again.

CAMPIZI

You heard him. Don't ever do that again.

Campizi waves her away. Pours sugar in his coffee.

CAMPIZI

How are the folks? Good? How's Sharon? You getting by all right? Need a few dollars?

Richie gives him a long-suffering look as he gets up.

CAMPIZI

What.

RICHIE

We brought the subpoena. You've been served. We're leaving.

CAMPIZI

You just got here. Have something to eat. Sweetheart, what do we have to eat?

The detectives on their way out step over the door that was ripped from its frame and now lies on the floor.

CAMPIZI

Take the towel, Richie. Come on, you're going to bleed in the car - Honey, bring Richie a fresh towel so he doesn't bleed in the car.

EXT. HARLEM - DAY

A street sign. 116th and 8th Avenue. Rising up takes us above a storefront to the window of a third floor tenement, beyond which Frank Lucas can be seen looking on as a dealer tests some powder he's selling.

INT. DINER - HARLEM - DAY

A huge black man and his bodyguards come in and approach Frank eating breakfast alone at a table. The big man sits without being invited, watches Frank eat.

TANGO

Sad about Bumpy.

Frank all but ignores him and the comment.

TANGO

What now? That's what everyone's wondering, isn't it? How's this gonna work. Is it every gorilla for himself now? Are people going to get hurt?

Frank scrapes his fork at the last of his eggs.

TANGO

Didn't you see the jar, Frank?

(pause)

I think you walked right past it.

(pause)

The jar. On the corner. What do I have to do, put a sign on it?

Frank indicates that he would answer if his mouth wasn't full. He swallows finally, but then only reaches for his coffee cup to take a sip, further irritating Tango.

TANGO

Bumpy don't own 116th Street no more, Frank. Bumpy don't own no real estate in Harlem no more. I'm the landlord now and the lease is twenty-percent.

Frank dabs at his mouth with a napkin and gives Tango a look that says that won't be happening.

TANGO

Then don't sell dope, Frank. Get a fuckin job. You need a job? You can be my driver, you can drive me around, open my door, yes, sir, no sir, where to, sir?

Now Frank - finally - seems to give what Tango is saying more serious consideration.

FRANK

Twenty percent?

TANGO

Of everything. Every bet, every truck, every girl, every ounce. In the jar.

Frank nods to himself. Reaches for the check. Gets up and takes out his money clip. Sets a five on the check. Peels a one dollar bill off and tosses it down in front of Tango.

FRANK

That's twenty-percent.

He turns and leaves. Tango watches after him ...

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank sits at his kitchenette table scribbling figures on a note pad. Maybe he's reconsidering Tango's cut. Maybe he's calculating other costs. It's unlikely he's doing his taxes.

Whatever it is, the bottom line seems not to please him. Behind him in the background the TV reports on the day's fighting in Vietnam.

EXT. NEWARK - DAY

A man emerges from a store, climbs into his car. As it pulls away, another car parked across the street idles a moment, then tails him.

INT/EXT. CAR / STREETS - DAY

Richie and Sanders keep the bookie's car in view up ahead. It pulls over again and the man climbs out. As he enters a small restaurant, the detectives pass and Richie notes the name and address of the place on a scribbled list of drops.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The detectives keep the car in sight ahead. It changes lanes, takes a Newark Airport off-ramp.

RICHIE

Now where's he going?

EXT. NEWARK AIRPORT - DAY

Long term parking. The detectives find a place in the crowded lot first and watch the other car take one a couple of rows over.

The bookie climbs out. If he's made them and tries to run, they'll grab him. Richie's hand is already on the door handle.

They watch him cross away from the tram stop. He's got no luggage. Stops at another parked car and opens the door.

SANDERS

What do you want to do, stay with him or the car?

Richie isn't sure. Whatever the decision is, it will have to be made quick.

RICHIE

Let's see who comes for the car.

The bookie drives away.

EXT. LONG TERM PARKING - NIGHT

Most of the cars in the lot are gone, leaving the detectives' and the one the bookie left sitting in islands of blue street lamp light. Eventually -

SANDERS

No one's coming for it. Except him
once we're gone.

Richie glances up from a law book. Homework.

RICHIE

Think he made us?

(Sanders shrugs)

Think he left any slips in the car?

SANDERS

Do you?

Richie doesn't know. They stare at the car a while more.

RICHIE

Want to look?

SANDERS

I'm going to fall asleep if we don't
do something.

EXT. LONG TERM PARKING - LATER - NIGHT

Richie trips the passenger door lock with a slim jim, climbs in, rummages through the glove compartment. Outside, Sanders knocks on the roof, gestures to the trunk. Richie pulls the interior release, digs old newspapers from under the seats, isn't finding anything.

SANDERS

Richie ...

Richie climbs out. Sees his partner standing by the open trunk, staring in like there's a body inside, comes around and takes a look himself:

It's money. Spilling from a grocery bag. Stacks of it rubber-banded together. More than either of them has ever seen in one place.

They consider one another, then both glance to the only other person around: a parking attendant inside a lighted booth, asleep.

INT/EXT. DINER - LATER - NIGHT

Both cars parked directly outside the window of their booth. Apparently they haven't decided what to do with the cargo and the silence as neither talks about it is oppressive.

They both know they could take the money and no one would ever know, and that if either gives even the slightest hint he's willing to do it, the other would have trouble not going along with it.

A waitress comes over. Clears the table. Refills their coffee cups. As she leaves, Richie and Sanders exchange a glance. Eventually -

SANDERS

What are we going to do?

INT. NEWARK POLICE - NIGHT

A police captain counts the money, noting each stack's amount on a note pad, as Richie and Sanders stand nearby watching. The total - so far - is approaching a million dollars.

Every other cop in the place watches from a distance. Richie knows they're not thinking, *Look at these two honest guys*, but rather, *What kind of idiot turns in that kind of money*.

More than that, there's contempt in their expressions. And an understanding that Richie and his partner can no longer be trusted.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richie lets himself into his modest one-bedroom apartment. Absently sifts through the mail on the kitchenette table. Bills mostly.

He comes into the bedroom past a small TV that's on, sound down low, late night show. Sits on the bed next to his wife who's fallen asleep with a section of the newspaper.

He watches her sleep, grateful perhaps he doesn't have to lie to the question, *Anything happen today?* He gets up and turns the sound off on the set, sits at a small desk, opens one of his law books and uses the light from a commercial playing silently behind him to read.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

Couples stroll along the boardwalk past grand old hotels.

INT. HOTEL, ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

A bellboy shows Frank his room. It's got a cabana feel to it, open, airy, pastel colors.

FRANK

I don't want the TV or the phone. Or maid service. No interruptions of any kind.

BELLBOY

You don't want the TV, don't turn it on. What am I supposed to do with it?

Frank regards the bellboy for a long moment -

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR, LATER - DAY

The TV and phones, both ripped from their jacks, sit in the hallway outside the door next to a room service cart.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

The furniture has been pushed to a corner. The natural beauty outside stays hidden behind plantation shutters. A ceiling fan chops at the humid air.

Frank sits in a straight-backed chair in the now cell-like room. He can hear distant, muted voices of vacationers and surf, but, deep in some kind of meditative trance, pays no attention to either.

Moving slowly closer to him, the sounds of life beyond his shuttered room recede, leaving only the soft whisper of the ceiling fan, then even that fades away into silence ...

He blinks. The sounds around him return in a rush. He's back from wherever he was ...

INT. CAMERA STORE, HARLEM - DAY

Frank sits against a plain backdrop. A camera strobe flashes.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

The photo and a duplicate are stapled to a passport application that Frank fills out using his real name.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A nurse stabs a syringe into Frank's arm, then picks up another from a rack of vaccinations for a multitude of exotic diseases.

EXT. BANGKOK, THAILAND - DAY

A Pan-Am flight touches down on the runway.

INT/EXT. TAXI / BANGKOK - DAY

Bicycles dart around in front of a taxi like flies.

FRANK

Where does everybody stay?

TAXI DRIVER

The Dusit Thani Hotel is good.

FRANK

Take me someplace else.

EXT. BANGKOK HOTEL - DAY

The taxi deposits him outside a small downtown hotel no Western tourist has ever stayed except by mistake.

INT. BANGKOK HOTEL - DAY

Frank pays cash for his room, grasps the handle of his one suitcase, and crosses through the lobby past Thai guests who regard him with some curiosity.

INT. BANK, BANGKOK - DAY

Application for an account. Frank signs where the bank representative indicates.

EXT. BANGKOK - NIGHT

Amidst a tangle of clubs and restaurants with Thai names, the "Soul Brothers Bar" stands out.

INT. SOUL BROTHERS BAR - NIGHT

The clientele is almost exclusively black servicemen on R&R and Asian women. A trio of ex-GI's plays authentic Southern blues on a small stage. Smoke chokes the place.

Frank, one of the few men not in uniform, and the only one not drunk or stoned, sits alone at a table nursing a Coke as he surveys the activity:

Dope being rolled. Dope being smoked. Dope being shot. GI's and prostitutes climbing a staircase.

His eyes follow a US Army major, moving from table to table as if checking on his men's well being. At some, though, his hand takes money and leaves in its place packets of powder.

INT. SOUL BROTHERS BAR - NIGHT

Frank's hand reaches for his drink. There are guests at his table now: the Army major who was making the rounds earlier, and two young Asian wise guys. They talk about him in Thai:

THAI

You know him?

IKE

I don't know him. He says he has money, I don't know if he really does.

THAI

He say how much he wants?

IKE

"A lot," he said. What does that mean, I don't know. Three, four keys. I wish him luck getting it into the States, but that's his problem.

THAI

Is he crazy?

Ike glances over at Frank. Then, to the Thais -

IKE

I think so. We can still make some money.

THAI

Ask him how much he wants.

IKE

(to Frank)

How much you want?

FRANK

Hundred kilos.

Ike just stares ...

EXT. AIRSTRIP, BANGKOK - DAY

Servicemen climb aboard idling choppers that will return them to Saigon and the jungles. Frank and Ike by one of the Jeeps and taxis parked on the tarmac shout to each other over the noise -

IKE

No one source has that much. It would have to be pieced together by several suppliers and none of it's going to be 100-percent pure.

FRANK

That's not what I want.

IKE

I know that.

FRANK

Whoever they get it from is who I want to talk to.

IKE

No, who you want to talk to is who they get it from gets it from - and whoever that is, won't want to talk to you. Or me. Or them. What you want is impossible.

A couple of the choppers take off. Ike needs to be on one of them and turns away -

IKE

Go home.

INT. BANGKOK HOTEL - NIGHT

Frank hasn't gone home. He sits in his hotel room, idly watching General Westmorland assess the fighting on a small TV. Neither one of them is leaving until the job they came to do is done.

INT. SOUL BROTHERS BAR - DAY

Frank sits in the dark, engaged in no other activity than letting himself be seen.

EXT. BANGKOK - DAY

He buys a pack of cigarettes, then moves along the street, towering over the local citizenry.

A car pulls up. The back door pushes open. Two Asians Frank's never seen before in back. He looks around, then climbs in.

INT. KARATE SCHOOL, BANGKOK - DAY

Frank empties his pockets: passport, visa, return plane ticket, bank papers, wallet. Behind him, a line of young men in robes kick at each other.

INT. BACK ROOM, KARATE SCHOOL - LATER

A middle-aged Chinese man examines Frank's papers while younger hoods guard him. The chiu-chou boss regards the bank receipt for the large deposit Frank made, sets it down, studies the American ...

CHIU-CHOU

If you were somehow able to get what you're asking for how would you get it into the States?

FRANK

What do you care?

CHIU-CHOU

Who do you work for in the United States?

FRANK

What do you care?

The boss glances to the only woman in the room. A Chinese nurse. Back to Frank -

CHIU-CHOU

Who are you really?

FRANK

It says right there.
(on the passport)
Frank Lucas.

CHIU-CHOU

I mean, what interest do you represent?

FRANK

Me.

The man doesn't believe it, but lets it go.

CHIU-CHOU

You think you're going to take a hundred kilos of heroin into the US and you don't work for anyone.

FRANK
Why is that strange?

CHIU-CHOU
Because it's never been done before.

Frank shrugs. The boss regards the nurse again. In Chinese, subtitled:

CHIU-CHOU
I don't believe a word of this.

Neither does she. Still ...

CHIU-CHOU
After this first purchase - if it were to somehow happen, and if you're not killed by someone in the States - then what?

FRANK
Then there'd be more. Whether it's you or someone else.

The man glances back down at Frank's papers.

INT/EXT. HELICOPTER / VIETNAM - DAY

Dense jungle rushes beneath a knot of Army choppers flying low over the trees. In one sit Frank and Ike, some soldiers and journalists.

Frank, who has never written more than a set of lottery numbers, wears a press card dangling from his neck like dog tags.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - LATER - DAY

An airstrip and staging area cut into the jungles of Vietnam. As the helicopters land, others crammed with soldiers take off. Frank and Ike climb down.

INT/EXT. TENT / LZ - DAY

Stripes on the uniform of a black man sitting with Ike under a canopy. Outside, Frank can be seen in the distance hanging out with some other black servicemen.

COLONEL
Where's it now?

IKE

Bangkok. I can bring it here or anywhere in between.

COLONEL

You ever seen that much dope in one place? It's bigger than an Amana refrigerator-freezer.

EXT. LZ - LATER

Frank watches the colonel emerge from the tent, cross to another tent and speak to a white officer. This one wears two stars. A general.

INT. HELICOPTER IN FLIGHT - DAY

Frank and Ike, alone in the back of a chopper headed back to Bangkok.

IKE

A hundred and twenty-five grand in advance. They'll pay the pilots and the guys on the other end; you go home and wait, I'll let you know when it's in the air.

INT. ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE - EVENING

Leaving for the day, Richie checks his mail cubicle on the way out. Recognizes the postcard he self-addressed when he took the bar exam. Stares at his name. On the other side, if he has the courage to look, are the results.

INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S - LATER

Richie stands at the perfume counter uncapping bottles, smelling the scents, checking the prices on the bottom and setting them back down.

His wife, finished with her shift, closes out the register, gets her purse and coat and comes over, ready to leave. Richie holds up one of the small bottles.

RICHIE

You like this?

SHARON

You can't afford it.

He uncaps it and touches a drop to her neck. She regards him a moment, and realizes -

SHARON

You passed.

He nods. She's thrilled. Drops her things and hugs him in front of everybody.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Her hand absently plays with the expensive perfume bottle. His toys with the stem of a glass of expensive wine. Their good mood has carried through to the end of the expensive meal.

SHARON

You call my brother and tell him?

(he didn't)

You think there's something wrong with that for some reason.

(he doesn't say).

What if their clients are wise guys, is that it?

RICHIE

Their clients are wise guys.

SHARON

Not all of them.

He shrugs, takes a sip of wine, considers its color.

SHARON

Everyone has the right to an attorney, Richie.

RICHIE

I know. And I'm thinking about it.

SHARON

Are you?

RICHIE

Because of the money.

She knows he's already decided what to do.

SHARON

It's all right, if that's what you want to do. You'll still make money in the prosecutor's office.

RICHIE

It's less.

SHARON
Of course it's less. The bad guys
always pay more.

RICHIE
I don't mean less than a defense
attorney. I mean less than what I
make now.

SHARON
Less than a cop?

The way she says it, almost laughing in disbelief, leaves
little doubt where in the social order she really thinks of
cops. Steadily -

RICHIE
Yes.

Their hands have both stopped moving, hers on the perfume
bottle, his on the wine glass.

SHARON
How much less?

RICHIE
Three thousand a year.

SHARON
Richie -

RICHIE
I know -

SHARON
You go to school for years. At night -

RICHIE
I know -

SHARON
You work, you study, you agonize, you
throw up, for God's sake -

RICHIE
I know -

SHARON
And pay for it what we can't afford in
the first place - and they expect you
to take less?

Richie downs the rest of his wine. Shrugs.

SHARON

What are they *thinking*? What kind of lawyers do they expect to get?

Maybe that's the point. They consider that and each other until a waiter appears with the check in its leather folder. They both look down at it, knowing they can no longer afford it. As Richie reaches for it -

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A defense attorney comes past the prosecutors' table clutching papers clipped with a \$10 bill.

PROSECUTOR

Basically, you're preparing a case while I'm trying the one I prepared the week before. Then you're trying yours as I'm preparing the next one, back and forth, week to week.

Richie nods as he watches another attorney deliver papers to the judge's assistant's desk, these clipped with a twenty.

PROSECUTOR

Generally they're run-of-the-mill. Gambling, assault, robbery, drugs, rape. No white-collar. Hopefully we get through seventy, eighty a year. I say hopefully because if we don't, we'll hear about it. The judge has to report to Trenton how many cases he moves, and if we're slowing him down ... he's not happy.

The parade of attorneys with their collection plate offerings continues. The place is packed.

PROSECUTOR

So, don't let your openings and summations go on and on. If there's a shorter word to say what you mean, use it. And don't challenge more than one prospective juror. And don't bother memorizing names. "The victim," "the accused," "the defendant," "the witness" - all fine.

RICHIE

What are they doing?

PROSECUTOR

Who?

The attorneys and the judge's assistant who keeps rearranging the stacks of papers on his desk.

PROSECUTOR

Scheduling.

RICHIE

No, the money.

PROSECUTOR

Scheduling.

Richie still doesn't understand.

PROSECUTOR

It's a gratuity. You don't want to sit here all day waiting for an arraignment, tip him a twenty.

RICHIE

Tip who?

BAILIFF

All rise -

A clatter of chairs as the beneficiary of the gratuities - the judge - looking like he doesn't want to be here all day either - enters the courtroom.

EXT. ARMY BASE, NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

Frank sits in his car, parked on a dirt road outside the fence of a deserted firing range.

A pair of headlights appear in the distance. Frank watches them loom, lighting up targets on the range. They bear down on him. A Jeep pulls up on the other side of the fence: three servicemen, all armed with M-16's, all black.

CAPTAIN

Get out of the car.

Frank obeys. The Jeep's headlights shine in his face. No one speaks for several moments. Finally the captain climbs down, unlocks a gate in the fence, pushes it open.

CAPTAIN

Open the trunk.

Frank does it, then stands aside and watches as the other servicemen drag four heavy duffel bags from the Jeep to his car, lift them into his trunk and slam it shut.

Richie stands, but it feels like he's being lifted, steps forward, though it feels like he's being pushed, looks at the jury staring back at him like he's the accused, finds his voice somewhere under the pounding of his heart -

RICHIE

Thank you, Your Honor -

INT. MENS ROOM, COURTHOUSE - LATER

Behind a closed stall door, someone is throwing up.

ASSISTANT

Richie?

A young assistant has come in and tries to see if it's Richie in the stall by looking at the shoes. The toilet flushes.

RICHIE

Yeah.

ASSISTANT

Phone call. Says it's important.

INT. RICHIE'S OFFICE - LATER

Richie on the phone. His old partner on the other end.

RICHIE

Where are you now?

SANDERS V/O

I'm here. I can't leave.

RICHIE

The address. What's the -

SANDERS V/O

He "made" me, Richie. I don't know how but he did. He went for his gun, I swear to God, I had to do it. Now they're going to kill me out there.

RICHIE

Is he dead?

SANDERS V/O

He's dead. I'm dead. There's a hundred people out there heard the shots. You got to call Lordi.

RICHIE

He's not here. He's in Maine.

SANDERS V/O
The assistant prosecutor then.

RICHIE
He's on vacation, too.

SANDERS V/O
The chief.

RICHIE
It's August. Everyone's gone.

SANDERS V/O
Then who's the ranking prosecutor?
Richie, who's in charge?
(pause)
You? You got to help me. You got to
do something.

RICHIE
I'll be there as soon as I can. Call
an ambulance.

SANDERS V/O
The guy's dead.

RICHIE
Give me the address, hang up, and
call an ambulance.

EXT. NEWARK - LATER - DAY

Richie comes through an almost-all black crowd, past an ambulance parked outside a tenement, past two uniformed cops standing outside the door at the top of the steps. The heat is oppressive. It's riot weather.

INT. NEWARK TENEMENT - DAY

Drugs on a coffee table, a body on the floor. Sanders looks despondent sitting on the couch. The paramedics look frightened as the noise outside intensifies. All wait for the man in charge to tell them what to do. Eventually -

RICHIE
Bandage his head.

PARAMEDIC
Sir ... he's dead.

RICHIE
I know he's fucking dead. Bandage
his head, clean him up, put him on a
gurney and prop it up so he's sitting.

They all stare at him like he's crazy.

RICHIE
And open his eyes.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - LATER

Richie comes out first, motioning the crowd to allow a path
to the ambulance.

RICHIE
Step back, step back, injured man
coming out.

Moving quickly like it's a matter of life and death (which
it is) Richie pulls the ambulance doors open and hurries back
to help bring the gurney out.

RICHIE
Let them do their job and he'll be
all right. Ma'am. Excuse me. Step
back. Sir. Please.

The people step back when they see the victim on the gurney:
tubes in his nostrils, IV in his arm, eyes open. Before any-
one can look at him closer he's deposited into the ambulance.

Richie leads Sanders safely away through the crowd. The
siren wails as the ambulance pulls away to rush the "wounded"
man to the hospital.

On the stoop of the building, one of the cops, noticing the
address above the door, offers his partner -

COP
Think I'll play 2-4-1 today.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Richie comes into the precinct locker room where Sanders,
almost recovered from the events of the day, sits alone on a
bench. Richie, exhausted too, props himself up against a
wall. Eventually -

SANDERS
You know what I think about
sometimes?

RICHIE

Yeah.

SANDERS

Do you think about it?

RICHIE

No.

SANDERS

Bet you never told Sharon.

RICHIE

Why shouldn't I?

SANDERS

Because she'd leave you.

RICHIE

No, she wouldn't.

SANDERS

I don't know. She likes things.
Who doesn't. She could have bought
... a lot of things.

They regard each other, wishing perhaps they had it to do
over again.

SANDERS

It was dirty money. Who was the
victim? A bookie? His bank? What
the fuck did we owe them?

Richie shrugs. Listens to silence. Then -

RICHIE

Or a dealer. What do we owe *him*?
He owes us.

Sanders regards his old partner for a long moment.

RICHIE

Were you trying to rob him?

SANDERS

I told you what happened. That's what
happened.

RICHIE

Were you trying to rob him?

SANDERS

You know what? Fuck you.

Sanders gets up. Starts buttoning the clean shirt he's put on.

RICHIE

We did the right thing.

SANDERS

Yeah, well, it feels real good.

RICHIE

That's not what you think about.

SANDERS

I don't know what the fuck we were thinking.

Sanders gathers his things and turns to leave.

SANDERS

You're still a cop as far as I'm concerned. You should know you don't make accusations against your own kind. For obvious reasons.

The look he gives Richie is like a warning.

RICHIE

You still got some blood on you.

Sanders looks down. Couple of dots of blood on one of the arms of his clean shirt. He knows Richie knows they're from punctures made by a needle. He looks away from them and Richie and leaves.

EXT. NEW JERSEY SUBURB - DAY

A caravan of cars and pick-ups with North Carolina plates, loaded down with boxes and suitcases, pulls up outside a very traditional 2-story suburban house.

Exhausted from the long drive but excited to have arrived, the travelers climb out: Frank's five brothers, their wives and kids, and their mother. Shorty - who is short - is sure they're at the right place. The others aren't. This house is too nice.

The front door opens, at once revealing Frank and ending the discussion. He comes out and gathers his mother up in an embrace.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank leads his mother on a tour of the upstairs.

FRANK

This is your room.

Frank's mother is in awe of the simple splendor of the place and furnishings. Clearly it's unlike anything she's accustomed to. It's not Graceland, but may as well be.

MRS. LUCAS

It's beautiful, Frank.

She sits at the vanity. Frank has already bought perfume and other items and neatly arranged them on it.

MRS. LUCAS

I'm so proud of you.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The extended family sits around a big dining table.

LEEVON

He took 193 west.

SHORTY

Have you been here before?

LEEVON

I knew it wasn't west.

SHORTY

Have you been anywhere outside Greensboro? Five miles?

LEEVON

Have you?

SHORTY

I had the map.

LEEVON

Did you look at it?

SHORTY

Are we here?

LEEVON

He wouldn't let anyone look at the map.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

The Statue of Liberty, shrouded in fog, draws away from a ferry taking Frank and his brothers toward the Battery on a chilly day. The only ones atop decks, they're at the bow, gathered around him.

FRANK

The man I worked for ran one of the biggest companies in New York for almost fifty years. I was with him every day for fifteen of them, looking after him, taking care of what had to be taken care of.

The brothers nod, but are uncertain what kind of things he means.

FRANK

He was rich, but never white man rich because he didn't really own the company, he just thought he did. He managed it.

They follow his glance to the city. Is that what they own?

FRANK

I own my company. You're going to run it. We're going to sell a product that's better than the competition's at a price that's lower. No one ever went out of business doing that.

They still don't know what he's talking about but nod as if perhaps they did.

FRANK

The important thing is to never live beyond our means, and to never forget where we came from.

The dock is coming up. People below decks are getting ready to disembark.

SHORTY

What are we selling, Frank?

INT. STEPHEN CRANE PROJECTS - DAY

The brothers are tough but the scene here is unlike anything they're used to. Coming along the corridor of an upper floor they encounter a guy with a sawed-off shotgun standing outside an apartment door. Small children play nearby.

INT. PROJECTS APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Frank escorts his brothers inside and they see:

Five naked women at work tables, faces hidden behind surgical masks, cutting heroin with lactose and quinine in a precise mixture of controlled purity.

Another woman - clothed, red-headed - the supervisor of the activity - comes over.

REDTOP

Hi, Frank.

FRANK

These are my brothers.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Richie's witness in a dope case sits under cross-examination by a public defender, a young woman.

PD

You had probable cause.

DETECTIVE

We literally saw him cutting the dope.

PD

How?

DETECTIVE

Through the window in the door.

PD

There was a window in the door?

DETECTIVE

One of those little windows like in a classroom door.

PD

And you looked through it, saw this illegal activity going on, entered the apartment and made the arrest.

DETECTIVE

That's correct.

She returns to the defense table, picks up some Polaroids.

PD
Your Honor, these are photographs of
the defendant's apartment door.

She hands them to the judge. They show a solid wood door, no
window. The judge glances down at Richie unhappily.

INT. COURTHOUSE - LATER

Richie with his witness in the courthouse hall.

RICHIE
What are you doing - ?

DETECTIVE
Richie, I swear there was a window.

RICHIE
What the fuck are you doing lying to
me?

DETECTIVE
I'm not lying.

RICHIE
There's no window.

The public defender and her dealer client come past.
Richie turns away.

INT. YMCA - NIGHT

Virtually alone in the place, Richie works out with free
weights. His upper arms are huge, his T-shirt drenched in
sweat. The detective from the court comes in and watches.
Richie finishes a set and looks up.

DETECTIVE
I been to every door and window place
in the city.

RICHIE
Good for you.

The detective produces an invoice of some kind and holds it
out for Richie to see. It's for the purchase of a solid wood
door, signed for in feminine script.

INT. HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Joe Lordi, Richie's boss, the Essex County Prosecutor, sits
in his bathrobe in his study, examining the invoice.

LORDI

She replaced the door?

RICHIE

She replaced the door, beat the case,
the guy's back on the street back in
business.

LORDI

She could be in a lot of trouble.

RICHIE

Could be? She's disbarred. She's in
jail. I'll put her there myself.

LORDI

And you could.

RICHIE

I know.

LORDI

She's finished.

That's right. Lordi nods to himself. Then -

LORDI

You don't think it would be effective
if she resigned and that was the end
of it.

Richie stares. Is Lordi seriously considering that?

LORDI

You don't think that would be
punishment enough. You want her to
suffer more than that. You want her
career to end.

RICHIE

(pause)

For this, yes.

Lordi nods again, glances back down at the invoice.

LORDI

What do you think the guy would've
got if you convicted him? Couple of
years? But for her crime she deserves
to lose everything.

Richie doesn't answer. Lordi hands back the invoice.

LORDI

Whatever you want, Richie. You want her disbarred, or you want it so you never have to see her in the building again - either way, I'll go along with it.

Now Richie isn't sure. Lordi has defused his anger and indignation simply by making him think.

LORDI

You have the power to destroy her. You want to use it, I'll leave it up to you.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The woman hands over her ID to Security. Richie, sipping from a Styrofoam cup, watches unnoticed from down the hall as she then gathers up a file box containing her personal things, and leaves the building.

INT. APARTMENT, HARLEM - NIGHT

Grading equipment next to some powder. Leevon Lucas pockets several thousand dollars cash from a kilo-weight sale he's just made to a supplier.

SUPPLIER

Where's it come from?

LEEVON

What do you care, you got it, guy across the street doesn't.

COUSIN

I just never seen anything like it.

LEEVON

Look at it all you want, just don't cut it less than ten-percent. You do, I'll hear about it. Then there'll be a problem.

EXT. APARTMENT, HARLEM - NIGHT

Leevon comes down the front steps, crosses to a car. As he digs in his pocket for his keys he's suddenly jumped from behind, dragged into the alley and kicked by three guys. The biggest one towers over him.

TANGO

You know me? I don't know you.
I don't know where you come from or
who the fuck you think you are doing
business where you got no business.

He kicks him and tells him what he tells everybody -

TANGO

Didn't you see the jar? You walked
right past it. Didn't you see the jar
you put money in for the privilege of
walking on my street? What do I got
to do, put a sign on it?

One of the other guys empties Leevon's pockets, takes the
money. Tango kicks him again.

TANGO

Who you with? What'd you say?
What'd he say?

TANGO'S GUY

He didn't say anything.

TANGO

Who's dope is it? Whose jar do you
put money in?

Leevon probably couldn't tell him if he wanted to. He's
barely conscious.

TANGO

Who is this motherfucker don't know
how close he is to dying?

One of the others is looking through Leevon's wallet.

TANGO'S GUY

North Carolina license. Lucas.
Isn't Frank Lucas from North Carolina?

TANGO

Frank Lucas? Frank Lucas, Bumpy's
driver?

Tango can't believe Frank Lucas would have the audacity to
ignore the warning he gave him before. He kicks Leevon once
more and turns to leave.

INT. FRANK'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leevon's brothers wipe blood from his eyes and ears, try to clean him up before taking him home to his wife and kids. Frank, watching, appears calm, but is sick inside looking at his younger brother who will be lucky if he walks straight again.

EXT. HARLEM - DAY

Nice day. Sun's out. People shopping. Kids playing.

Tango comes down the street like Superfly, girl on his arm. Frank strides toward him. Tango sees him coming and waves.

TANGO

Frank. How's it going? I was just talking about you -

He goes for his gun, but Frank's is out first and pressed against Tango's forehead. Silence. People around them back away. Tango's girl takes off. Eventually -

TANGO

What're you going to do, Frank?
Shoot me in broad daylight? In front
of everyone?

Frank looks around. It's as if life on the street has stopped. No one moves; everyone is looking at him. Perhaps that's what he wants.

He pulls the trigger and Tango falls back like he's been hit with a board. Frank stands over him, aims at his chest and fires several more times, emptying his gun.

The shots echo down the street. Then it's quiet again. Everyone's still looking him, but he doesn't run. He just stands over the body for several moments.

He reaches into Tango's suit pocket, takes out a money clip thick with cash, walks calmly to the corner and sets it down on the pavement -

EXT. 116TH STREET - DAY / NIGHT

Tight on the money as the light on it begins to change, to darken into night. Under a street lamp now, it's still there, untouched, where it will remain, apparently, until Frank Lucas decides to come back and claim it ...

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

A cadaver drawer slides open revealing the body of Richie's ex-partner, Sanders, his arms, stomach, legs and toes dotted with the scabs of a longtime addict.

DETECTIVE

Did you know his girlfriend? Good-looking girl. One of his informants. Junkie.

RICHIE

Beth

DETECTIVE

Beth. Yeah. She's over there.

Richie follows the detective's look across to another body, laid out on a stainless steel table.

DETECTIVE

Should've seen their place. Like animals lived there.

Richie doesn't really want to hear this. Steps away. To the attendant -

DETECTIVE

Chose a good night, huh? Grand Central Station.

ATTENDANT

It's been like this. I'm lucky I get home before midnight. Lots of carelessness.

DETECTIVE

You can shut it.

The drawer closes, entombing Sanders.

DETECTIVE

Richie, you want to go get a drink?

Richie shakes his head no. The detective leaves. The attendant comes past and crosses through the crowded, backlogged morgue to a black woman, sitting in a folding chair alongside the body of a young man, holding his cold hand.

Richie watches the attendant try to explain to her quietly she has to leave; they're about to begin the autopsy. She's reluctant to go but finally does, and the body is moved to a stainless steel table.

EXT. STREET - LATER - NIGHT

Richie, from behind, walks toward his building. With the street deserted, it feels like his recurring dream, walking to the front of the room.

VOICE

Mr. Roberts?

Richie turns. Sees a man he doesn't recognize approaching.

RICHIE

That's close enough.

The man stops between pools of light from the street lamps. Richie tries to get a look at him.

RICHIE

What do you want?

The man comes forward again, hands him a manila envelope, crosses his name off a list and walks away.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Richie slides a set of documents from the envelope. Sees his name on them. And his wife's. Divorce papers. Which, truthfully, isn't a surprise to him. He pushes them aside, glances across to the television and -

FULL FRAME TELEVISION IMAGE

of American troops in the jungles. Moving in closer on it, an R&B song begins and carries over -

EXT. JUNGLE BASE - DAY

An airstrip. Slicing propellers. Wounded soldiers, some on stretchers, helped onto a transport plane.

A plastic pouch meant for maps, thick with cash. A pilot sifts through it like counting cards in a deck. Satisfied, he steps toward the cockpit giving Ike a lazy salute.

From an open tent, the 2-star general from before watches the pilot climb aboard, then Ike, heading off for an idling chopper. Ike glances over and salutes; the general's hand comes up perfunctorily to return it.

EXT. THAILAND AIRSTRIP - DAY

It's unlikely any of the wounded soldiers crowded on board can imagine why the plane has made an unscheduled stop to load, of all things, six Japanese refrigerators.

FULL FRAME TELEVISION IMAGE

of Westmorland, finished with a briefing to journalists, saluting as he turns away.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE, NORTH CAROLINA - NIGHT

A pile of discarded refrigerators outside a supply warehouse. In the darkness of the base perimeter, black servicemen transfer several duffel bags from a Jeep to the back of a station wagon, hoisting those that won't fit onto the roof rack as Ezell and Larry Lucas take out twine to tie them down.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

The station wagon heads north along a rain-slicked highway, the canvas tarp on top flapping in the wind. In the distance glows the spire of the Washington monument.

EXT. DISCOUNT DRUGSTORE - DAY

A woman pushes a shopping cart containing a baby, Pampers, formula, a case of quinine and a candy bar across a parking lot. She stops at the back of her car and opens the trunk revealing more cases of quinine.

INT. 123RD STREET APARTMENT, HARLEM - DAY

Empty quinine bottles and the boxes they came in.

Under the supervision of Redtop, the same table workers as before, clothed now, the surgical masks dangling from their necks, are cleaning up, wiping down table surfaces, scales and other apparatus.

Tens of thousands of blue-cellophane packets of heroin neatly cover two of the folding tables.

INT/EXT. BUS / 116TH STREET, HARLEM - DAY

A bus driver checks his watch. 3:55. Coming along 116th Street he crosses 8th Avenue passing a beat-up Chevy parked near the corner Tango was shot -

INT. BEAT-UP CHEVY - CONTINUOUS

Frank, sitting behind the wheel of the parked Chevy as the bus passes, watches it continue down the street through normal afternoon activity. He glances at his watch -

EXT. POLICE STATION, HARLEM - SAME TIME

A police car descends a ramp that opens onto a parking area under the station. There, other cops finished with their shifts, climb out of marked and unmarked cars.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A clock on the wall of a locker area reads 3:58. The arriving officers hang up their things as the next shift readies theirs to go out.

INT. PARKED CHEVY, 116TH STREET - DAY

Frank glances at his watch again, then into the rear view mirror where another bus, a couple blocks back, approaches -

INT. BUS - MOVING - SAME TIME

The bus driver checks his watch: 3:59. Up ahead past 8th Avenue, the block looks just as uncongested as the one he's on, but instead of continuing along it like the last bus, he twists at his steering wheel at the corner -

INT/EXT. FRANK'S CHEVY - CONTINUOUS

In the rear view mirror Frank watches the bus finish its wide turn just behind his car and disappear up 8th Avenue. He glances out the dirty windshield of the Chevy and, as his watch comes up on 4 o'clock, sees 116th Street transform:

It's as if an outdoor market has just opened its stalls. Dozens of junkies and dealers emerge from the alleys, from the side streets, from storefronts and tenements, from the street itself, it seems, snarling the handful of cars and delivery trucks caught unaware.

Small blue cellophane packets are pulled from pockets and change hands. In alleyways and dank rooms, it's cooked up, sucked into syringes and plunged into veins -

And the reverse:

Ten and twenty dollar bills changing hands, disappearing into pockets, pulled back out as decks of cash, percentages peeled away and given to other hands, rubber-banded and put into envelopes that are added to larger envelopes already thick with money, these reaching the waiting hands of Frank's brothers, and:

EXT. CHINATOWN - NIGHT

Beyond chickens hanging upside down in a window the Asian "nurse," no longer in the uniform but rather a traditional Chinese dress, can be seen inside, taking a bag Frank has brought her, payment in full for the shipment he received on consignment, and:

EXT. BRONX - DAY

The old Chevy pulls up to the Tremont Avenue branch of Chemical Bank. Frank climbs out, opens the trunk and reaches for one of the newly-assembled file boxes inside.

INT. BANK - LATER - DAY

In the privacy of the safety-deposit room, Frank fills several boxes with decks of cash. The R&B song is eclipsed by -

REPORTER V/O

Heroin addiction is no longer exclusive to big city neighborhoods - it's epidemic.

INT. FEDCO DISCOUNT STORE - DAY

The stack of color sets again. Images of inner-cities, lawmakers on Capitol Hill, and perhaps most telling, white suburban schools.

REPORTER

Since 1965, law enforcement has watched its steady increase, and with it, a rise in violent crime. This year, it seems to have exploded, reaching into cities as a whole, our towns, suburbs, our schools.

EXT. NEWARK - DAY

Richie emerges from his car and heads toward a seafood restaurant.

REPORTER V/O

Someone is finally saying: enough. Federal authorities today announced their intention to establish special narcotics bureaus in Washington, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Newark and other major cities -

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Richie comes into a place with shrimp so good it brings together a clientele from both law enforcement and organized crime. He sees Joe Lordi waiting for him at a table and tries to reach it through the crush.

REPORTER V/O

The special squads, made up of law enforcement personnel from state and local and federal agencies, under the auspices of the US Attorneys Office, will have a mandate to -

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

A waiter pours coffee for Richie and Lordi as a busboy clears their plates.

RICHIE

It's not a dog and pony show?

LORDI

It's not being advertised as one.

RICHIE

But it's federal.

(Lordi nods)

Then it'll be about numbers. Buys and busts. Quotas.

LORDI

Not necessarily. They won't know everything you're doing for one thing. You don't even have to be in the same building if you don't want.

RICHIE

I'd have to have someone from DEA.

LORDI

One. Maybe two. One ATF. The rest would be yours. Whoever you want.

RICHIE

No FBI?

LORDI

God, no. Hoover knows better than to mix his guys with dope. Too much temptation.

Richie remains unconvinced this is good idea.

LORDI

Richie, tell me who'd be better for this and I'll go talk to him. Someone with more experience, more honesty, and more ...

He trails off, unable to decide on the right word.

RICHIE

More what?

LORDI

Whatever it is makes you first through the door with the sledgehammer every time.

RICHIE

Am I?

LORDI

Like Eliot fuckin Ness.

The scar from the door slamming on Richie's hand is only one of the many on display. Lordi studies him.

LORDI

What is that? What's that about?

Richie shrugs.

EXT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

An old building dwarfed by taller, modern ones.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

The place has been long abandoned. Built in the 1820's, it has sat here unused for decades. Alone in it, Richie, moves beneath three tiers of vandalized cells.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

He regards an ancient wooden gallows stands shrouded in shadow in a corner of the basement. Then the rusty shackles bolted into the damp stone walls.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Ground floor. A faded drawing in a broken frame of the building from when there were more Indians than Europeans in Jersey, standing solitary against the landscape.

Richie picks up an old court document from one of the few desks not in pieces, 1930's date stamped on it. He sets it down and regards the city maintenance employee who let him into the building.

RICHIE

This is the only floor we'll be using.

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

A still-powerful older man in a nice suit rises from his chair to wild applause. From the stage -

SINGER

Mr. Joe Louis, ladies and gentlemen.

Joe bows graciously and gives a little wave to the crowd before sitting back down at his table. The band starts up.

FRANK

You know him?

Frank's at another table with Zack Robinson, a slightly older dope man, cocaine mostly. Like Frank he favors well-tailored conservative suits. Their dates, too, are nicely dressed, not too much make-up or jewelry.

ZACK

Joe? Sure. Want to meet him, I'll introduce you later. He's a good guy. Always borrowing money, but -

Zack shrugs, Good guy anyway. Frank looks back to Joe's table, to the fighter and his wife and a few others. His glance settles on a beautiful young woman there.

FRANK

Who's the beauty queen?

ZACK

She is a beauty queen. Miss Puerto Rico.

Her glance crosses Frank's briefly but is yanked away to the entrance of the club where Frank's brothers are coming in with their wives and girlfriends. Shorty's wearing a green zoot suit, gold chains and a hat, acting like he owns the place.

INT. CLUB MEN'S ROOM - LATER

Frank hustles Shorty into the men's room, tips the attendant extravagantly to get out, locks the door.

SHORTY

What're you doing?

FRANK

Why you want to draw attention to yourself?

SHORTY

What're you talking about?

Frank turns him so he's facing the mirror.

SHORTY

What. I'm wearing clothes.

FRANK

I'm wearing clothes. These are clothes. Those -
(Shorty's clothes)
- those are, you look like - like fuckin Nicky Barnes.

SHORTY

What's wrong with Nicky? I like Nicky.

FRANK

You like Nicky? You want to be like him, you want to be Superfly? Go work for him, end up in jail.

Shorty pulls himself away from Frank's grasp. Smooths his shirt, straightens his hat.

SHORTY

There's nothing wrong with him. He wants to talk to you by the way. I told him I'd tell you.

Frank stares at his brother's reflection in the mirror.

FRANK

You and Nicky were talking about me?

SHORTY

No. We were talking. Sometimes we talk.

FRANK

About me.

SHORTY

Not about you.

FRANK

You just said -

SHORTY

He said he wanted to talk to you.

FRANK

About what?

SHORTY

I don't know. Jesus.

Frank groans. Clearly he wants nothing to do with Nicky Barnes.

FRANK

I'm taking you shopping tomorrow.

SHORTY

I went shopping today.

FRANK

You go shopping every day. Like a girl.

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - LATER

Zack has moved over to Joe Louis's table. Returning with his brother to his, Frank glances to Miss Puerto Rico again before his attention is again jerked to the entrance where -

Nicky Barnes, the original Superfly in his trademark blue-tinted Gucci glasses, glides into the club with his entourage of bodyguards and friends. Frank glances across the table to Shorty and slowly shakes his head in disgust.

Nicky makes the rounds, exchanging greetings at several tables including Joe Louis's, eventually making it over to Frank's.

NICKY

Hey, Frank. Shorty, how you doing?
Nice suit.

He means it. It looks a lot like his. He leans close to whisper something to Shorty, who nods. Nicky looks back to Frank.

NICKY

So we'll talk, Frank?

Frank sort of shrugs and indicates all the people at his table he has to think about.

NICKY

Later. When it's convenient.
Thanks, Shorty.

He moves off toward his reserved table with his entourage. Shorty dares a look back at his brother.

FRANK

Thanks.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Richie sits at his kitchenette table writing checks for utilities and payments to the credit union. He puts one in its windowed envelope and sets it atop others resting on a newspaper.

His glance settles on the paper. He turns it to right an upside-down ad with a heart graphic. A dating service. He pushes it away ... then pulls it back to read it.

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - LATER - NIGHT

Frank hands over a claim check wrapped in a ten dollar bill. As he waits for his coat to be retrieved, a woman steps up with her claim check in hand. Miss Puerto Rico. She nods hello. Frank nods hello back. Silence as they wait. Eventually -

FRANK

I'm Frank.

JULIE

I know.

FRANK

You know?

She nods. Glances to the only other person around, a big man standing nearby.

FRANK

That's Doc.

JULIE

Hello, Doc. I'm Julie.

Doc nods hello. The checkroom girl returns with Frank's overcoat. He peels off another ten and hands it to her along with Julie's claim check.

JULIE

Thank you.

Frank nods she's welcome. The checkroom girl disappears again.

JULIE

Why you leaving so early?

FRANK

Too many people. Too much noise.

JULIE

It's a nightclub, Frank.

FRANK

I know. I'm tired, I guess.

She nods. Silence. Frank can't help but stare at her, she's so beautiful. She glances away to Doc.

JULIE

Doc's your driver?

FRANK

And my cousin.

JULIE

Where's he driving you to?

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - NIGHT

A black Cadillac crosses the bridge into Jersey.

EXT. BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

Doc sits alone in the car parked outside one of Frank's unassuming houses.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julie considers some framed photographs on a mantle.

JULIE

Is this your father?

Frank shakes his head no. It's a picture of Bumpy Johnson.

FRANK

You really don't know who that is?

JULIE

No.

FRANK

It's Martin Luther King.

JULIE

It is not.

FRANK

You're right. He was as important as Dr. King, though.

JULIE

What'd he do?

FRANK

A lot of things. He had a lot of friends. In the city. He served New York and it served him.

JULIE

What was he to you?

Frank has to think. Bumpy was more than his employer.

FRANK

Teacher.

JULIE

What'd he teach you?

SUDDEN BURSTS OF VIOLENCE

Guys beat up - others shot - one begging to be shot to put an end to his torture.

BACK TO FRANK'S LIVING ROOM

Bumpy's calm face in the photograph. Frank's calm face looking at it.

FRANK

To be a gentleman.

JULIE

That's what you are?

Frank nods. Julie smiles like she knows better. Any second now, like every other guy she's ever met, she's sure this one too will try to take her upstairs.

FRANK

I have five different apartments in the city I could've taken you to. I brought you here instead. To meet my mother.

She stares at him, not sure if he's kidding.

EXT/INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

From outside a window, Frank's mother, in her robe and slippers, can be seen in the kitchen setting several plates of food in front of Julie, despite her protests.

MRS. LUCAS

She looks just like a beauty queen, Frank.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Richie moves through a crowded chaotic station with a Newark Police narcotics detective.

DETECTIVE

I got three I can loan you. They work together, so you like one you got to take them all. Spearman, Jones and Abruzzo. The Three Amigos.

FLASHCUT TO THREE GUYS

in their twenties coming into a club. They look more like criminals than cops and seem to know everyone in the almost all black club.

DETECTIVE V/O

Spearman's the oldest and the smartest. Black. Kind of quiet.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUED

Spearman, late twenties, quietly surveys activity in the club from a table, hand slowly stirring the swizzle in his drink, gaze settling on money changing hands.

DETECTIVE V/O

Jones, I don't know what Jones is, I guess he's black. Good-looking. Only goes out with skinny white women.

Jones, early twenties, light-skinned, dances with a skinny young white woman.

DETECTIVE V/O

Whereas Abruzzo only goes out with fat black women.

Abruzzo, Italian, is dancing with a heavy black woman.

DETECTIVE V/O

They'll do anything. They're insane. Like you, Richie.

FLASHCUTS:

A sledgehammer crashing through a door; weapons swinging into frame;

Street blurring past a windshield of a speeding car;

Drugs and weapons pulled from pockets of guys lined up against a chain-link fence.

DETECTIVE V/O

They're the best men I got.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUED

They've reached the detective's desk. Sit.

RICHIE

You're trying to get rid of them, is that it?

The detective allows a half-smile and half-shrug.

DETECTIVE

Maybe I am.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Spearman, Jones and Abruzzo sit at the back of the room like delinquent students. Of everyone in the open ground-floor space that's been only slightly renovated, they're the most disreputable-looking.

Richie sits up front, perched on a desk before the group, bulletin board behind him on which a ten dollar bill is conspicuously tacked.

RICHIE

Our official name is the Essex County Narcotics Bureau. We got a captain from the prosecutors office, another from the sheriffs, investigators from city and state, agents from DEA and ATF, and two prosecutors.

We saw each as each was mentioned, and noticed the DRA and ATF agents sitting conspicuously apart from the others.

RICHIE

Some of you know each other, most of you don't. What you have in common is that I know you. Personally or by reputation.

He pointedly doesn't look at the Federal men.

RICHIE

Our mandate is to make major arrests. No street guys; we want the suppliers, the distributors. Heroin, cocaine, amphetamines; no grass under a hundred pounds; less than that, someone else can waste their time.

(he throws a glance to
the Feds)

We'll be handing big shipments, big money, big temptation.

Jones raises his hand.

RICHIE

Yeah.

JONES

There's a story about you. I'm sure it's not true. One of those myths you hear about, but -

RICHIE

I turned in a million dollar once?
(Jones nods, yes, that's
the rumor)
You're right, it's not true.

Some of those present almost seem relieved to hear it. They all watch as Richie takes down the ten dollar bill from the bulletin board.

RICHIE

Let's go shopping.

INT/EKT. CAR / NEWARK - DAY

Reflected in a side-view mirror of a parked car, a young black man approaches another on a street corner. They know each other and exchange brief pleasantries before the real exchange takes place: \$10 for a blue-cellophane packet.

The buyer's figure looms in the mirror as he approaches. The seller moves off the way. A hand in the car cranks the window down. The buyer digs into his coat pocket. As he passes, the blue-cellophane packet falls onto Jones's lap in the passenger seat. The informant continues on, his hand slipping back into the warmth of his pocket.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

A police chemist tests the heroin as Richie, Spearman, Jones, Abruzzo and some others watch. Finishing -

CHEMIST

I have an explanation for why the
morgue's so crowded. Stuff's ten
percent pure.

The chemist begins packing his things. The detectives exchange a glance. None has ever heard of anything on the street that pure. To Spearman -

RICHIE

You paid a dime?

SPEARMAN

(nods)
And it's all that's out there.

RICHIE

That doesn't make any sense. Run it
again.

CHEMIST

I'd be happy to but that would be tantamount to admitting I made some kind of mistake.

The chemist leaves. Richie regards his detectives.

RICHIE

How is that possible? Who can afford to sell hits twice as strong for half the money?

He glances to a Table of Organization - black and white photographs thumb-tacked to a bulletin board - known dope men and their places in the hierarchies of their individual criminal families - almost all of them Italian.

INT. BANK OFFICE - DAY

Frank regards portraits on the walls of cheerless bank presidents of years past, then the living one in front of him writing out a receipt for a huge deposit into a new account.

BANK PRESIDENT

You have an investment counselor, Frank?

FRANK

I deal with enough crooks as it is.

The bank president jots down a name and number on the back of a slip of paper.

BANK PRESIDENT

This one couldn't be more honest. Ask around. He has a lot of clients in the business. We work with him all the time.

He hands Frank the scrap of paper across the rich oak desk.

BANK PRESIDENT

You can't keep this kind of money in savings accounts and safety-deposit boxes, Frank. You could, but it would be foolish. Give him a call.

Frank drops the card and receipt into his shirt pocket.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A Wall Street place. White finance. Expense accounts.

A white business manager orders a pricey bottle of wine that Frank will probably end up paying for, then looks back down at some paperwork Frank's brought in: bank transfers, receipts, offshore accounts, lease agreements.

MANAGER

These apartments in the city. You rent them out?

FRANK

No.

MANAGER

You live in them.

FRANK

No.

The guy glances up with a look that asks, Then what are they?

FRANK

Girls I've met. I put some of them up. Honestly, I don't even see them anymore.

MANAGER

But you continue paying the rent.

(Frank shrugs)

These are very expensive apartments.

Frank shrugs again. The man returns to looking through the papers and receipts.

FRANK

What you get for what you do?

MANAGER

Fifteen percent.

FRANK

Fifteen percent of the profit on the investments you make.

MANAGER

No. Fifteen percent. Of your gross income.

His income? Frank stares. What kind of racket is that?

FRANK

What if the investments you make lose money?

MANAGER
Still fifteen percent.

FRANK
Of my income.

The manager nods like it's the most routine thing in the world. Frank stares at him. He was right; they are thieves. The man glances down to sift through the paperwork again.

MANAGER
Maybe you want to talk it over with your attorney. I'd be happy to answer any questions he might have. Who is he? Which firm?

Frank doesn't say.

MANAGER
You do have a lawyer. You don't?

Apparently not. The man jots down a name and pushes the piece of paper across the table.

INT. LAW FIRM - DAY

Frank sits across from a white attorney.

ATTORNEY
This is a full service firm, which means we take care of all your legal needs. Set up a living trust, which you definitely should have, review all your real estate contracts, leases, escrow papers, consult with defense attorneys in the event that's ever necessary, prepare your will -

FRANK
Wait a second. Consult with a defense attorney? I thought you were one.

ATTORNEY
Oh, no. Me? No.

FRANK
Someone else here. This is a big place.

ATTORNEY
No.

FRANK

Then why should I give you seven-and-a-half percent? I should give it to him.

ATTORNEY

To who?

FRANK

To a defense attorney.

ATTORNEY

You will. But he doesn't do what we do. He *only* litigates.

FRANK

I got to give seven-and-a-half to him and to you.

ATTORNEY

You don't *have* to do anything, Mr. Lucas. You don't *have* to have an attorney.

The man shrugs, It's up to you. Frank tries to calculate how much is that now he's given away between the lawyers and business manager, the accountants and crooked bankers? Twenty-five percent? Thirty? Thirty-five?

ATTORNEY

But you should. A man with your kind of money needs to do everything he can to protect himself from those who'd take advantage.

You're not kidding.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Spearman and Jones rearrange some of the photographs on the Table of Organization.

JONES

Tony West goes over here.

SPEARMAN

No, you're thinking of Tony the Bug. Tony West's with Red Check Paul's crew.

JONES

Tony the Bug's with Red Check Paul.

SPEARMAN

No, Tony the Bug's with Ice Pick Paul.

JONES

Ice Pick Paul. I think you're right.

Jones lets him move the picture. They stand back and look at the bulletin board like it's art on the wall of a museum. Satisfied they take their seats. Richie steps up to it.

RICHIE

For a cop the uppermost thing is the arrest. For a prosecutor, the arrest means nothing without the evidence to convict.

Richie considers the five pyramids of crime on the board.

RICHIE

If were going to be effective, it's because we have the same goal: Build cases from the bottom up, follow them as far as they go, present evidence even the dumbest juror can understand - legally-attained evidence - and convict them all.

He starts untacking the photos, from the top down.

JONES

What are you doing?

RICHIE

We have no real evidence on anyone on this board, so they're coming down. We're starting over from the street. Abruzzo, give me a name.

Abruzzo was almost asleep. He glances behind himself. Is Richie talking to him?

ABRUZZO

Name of who?

RICHIE

Your lowliest informant.

Abruzzo glances to his partners and shrugs.

ABRUZZO

Benny?

RICHIE

Benny what.

ABRUZZO

Benny Two-Socks.

RICHIE

Benny Two-Socks what.

ABRUZZO

His last name?

Richie nods patiently. Abruzzo glances to his partners again; they don't know Benny's last name either.

ABRUZZO

I never asked.

RICHIE

Find out what Benny's last name is, register him as a paid informant, and put him to work.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Benny takes two socks that almost match from a hamper. Determines they're close enough and pulls them on. Emerges from the bathroom carrying his shoes.

He comes into the living room, slumps onto a couch next to Abruzzo, picks up a phone and dials, jots down the number and hands over the scrap of paper. Abruzzo switches on a cassette recorder.

ABRUZZO

Consent wire, (604) 472-7841.

The call connects.

BENNY

It's me, Benny ... Benny.

Abruzzo thought he was going to get the last name without having to ask, but apparently not.

BENNY

Those parts come in yet? Same ones as before? I'll be over.

He hangs up. Empties his pockets of change, keys, wallet, and pulls at them to prove they're empty.

Abruzzo opens the wallet, glances at the name on the drivers license, removes all the money - two dollars - puts it and the change in an envelope and seals it. For the tape recorder -

ABRUZZO

Two dollars and seventy cents.

He pockets the envelope, holds up a twenty.

ABRUZZO

How much is this?

BENNY

Twenty dollars.

ABRUZZO

Where am I putting it?

BENNY

In my wallet.

Abruzzo puts the twenty in Benny's wallet, hands it back to him with the keys, and switches off the recorder.

INT/EXT. CAR / GAS STATION - NEWARK - DAY

Spearman, Jones and Abruzzo sit in a car parked down the street from a gas station, watching as Benny disappears into the darkness of the garage.

Jones notes the time on his watch, jots it down on a spiral pad that's got the date, address, phone number, the amount \$20, and "Benny" written on it.

JONES

You get his last name?

ABRUZZO

De Novi.

Jones adds it to his notes. Benny reappears. Crosses the street. Abruzzo and Jones climb out, open the trunk. Benny arrives and empties his pockets into it: wallet, keys, two packets of heroin in blue-cellophane; shows that they're otherwise empty.

Abruzzo checks the wallet. No money. Jones notes it. Abruzzo opens the envelope. Returns the two dollars. Benny pockets it, the wallet and the keys.

ABRUZZO

See you, Benny.

EXT. NEW YORK - NIGHT

Limousines disgorge celebrities, socialites and sports figures outside Top of the Sixes. The entrance, cordoned off, is guarded by bouncers and cops, allowing only those with invitations to enter.

Nicky Barnes climbs out of a limo with an armful of Sunday New York Times Magazines featuring his own Gucci-bespectacled face on the cover, poses with one of them for the paparazzi, hands others out to anyone who'll take them, and steps inside past the velvet ropes.

In parked cars, federal agents with long lenses photograph Nicky and everyone else arriving at the bash he's throwing for himself.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - SAME TIME

An invitation to the party Frank has no intention of attending, rests on a coffee table in one of his nicely-appointed apartments. He's looking over stock fund prospectuses.

FRANK

Why would I want to go there? To have my picture taken? To go up on somebody's wall? To have my phones tapped?

JULIE

To have fun.

FRANK

That sounds like fun to you?

JULIE

Nobody's taking pictures.

Frank sets his reading down, reaches into a wastebasket and holds up the Times magazine with Nicky on the cover.

FRANK

This is a fucking idiot. You can't see that?

She shrugs. She doesn't want to argue but doesn't want to give in either.

FRANK

You want to go? I'm not stopping you.

JULIE

I'm not going to go alone.

Good. Then it's settled. Frank returns to his investment reading.

JULIE

Can we go to dinner?

FRANK

I want to stay home, I'm tired.

JULIE

(more to herself)

Maybe I will go alone.

(Frank ignores her)

I said, maybe I will go alone. To Nicky's party.

She comes over and picks up the invitation. Frank just looks at her. He knows she won't go unless he says it's all right. She tosses the invitation back down and sits; they're staying in. But somehow it doesn't feel to Frank like he's really won anything.

EXT. NEWARK - DAY

A BMW pulls into the same gas station as before. A white kid climbs out, disappears into the garage, then reappears moments later having purchased nothing, not even gas, and drives away.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Couple of packets of blue cellophane on the bed of a teenager's bedroom. Rock and roll posters on the walls. The kid with the BMW stares at the two black men in his room - Jones and Spearman - who patiently wait for him to make a decision ...

HARD CUT TO:

Masking tape torn from a roll. Black hands holding a small recorder against white skin. A length of tape drawn across it and pressed against the skin.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The kid emerges from the garage again, gets in his car and drives off. Down the street, Spearman lifts a camera fitted with a long lens and focuses. A mechanic steps out wiping his hands on a rag, and the shutter clicks -

INT. NEWARK STREE JAIL - DAY

A slightly-blurred photograph of the mechanic goes up on the new, almost bare Table of Organization.

At a desk, Jones types information from his spiral pad to an affidavit, stating that the phone number 472-7841 is being used to conduct narcotics business.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Richie looks the affidavit over and signs it.

INT. PROSECUTORS OFFICE - DAY

Joe Lordi approves the request for the wire tap by signing at the bottom.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

A judge adds his signature to the request.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Carbons are removed. One copy goes into the files, another into an inter-department envelope for the Prosecutors Office, another for the US Attorneys Office.

EXT. NEWARK - DAY

A Phone truck parked down the street from the gas station. At the top of a telephone pole, Abruzzo, dripping with equipment, works to attach a 'slave' to the lines.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

An almost bare room. Jones and Spearman eating take-out food as the reels of a tape recorder slowly turn.

MECHANIC

I need a set of plugs for a '65 Impala. You got that, I'll come pick them up.

SPEARMAN

You see an Impala?

Jones glances out the window to the gas station, to the few cars waiting to be worked on, and shakes his head, no.

INT. AUTO PARTS STORE - DAY

Abruzzo watches as a salesman hunts the shelves for a part he's asked for. To another salesman behind the counter -

ABRUZZO

You got the number for Eastside Electric?

The guy points to a Roladex on the counter. Abruzzo flips through it to the "P's." Takes out a card with a plumber's name and number on it, turns it over and rewrites the name with a different number. Returns it. The first salesman emerges from the shelves with a distributor cap in a box.

SALESMAN

A sixty-one, you said.

ABRUZZO

That's it. You got a restroom?

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

Abruzzo pulls an entire roll of toilet paper from its core, throws it in the bowl, flushes and leaves.

INT. AUTO PARTS STORE - DAY

Spearman and Jones - plumbers - mop up the mess and "fix" the toilet. Making sure everyone is occupied up front, Jones opens the phone line box and attaches the tap.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

A picture of the second salesman from the auto parts store goes up on the Table of Organization.

INT. DINER - DAY

A different man comes in, walks past Richie who's sitting alone at the counter, and joins the auto parts salesman at a table. Richie watches the cigarette pack he set down as he took his seat. The salesman reaches over, puts it in his own pocket.

EXT. PARK, NEWARK - DAY

Three different detectives from the squad walk through the park as the man from the diner - the supplier - makes his rounds, stopping to talk with a bike rider, a guy shooting hoops, a chess player.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The chess player rings an apartment bell. He's buzzed in and disappears inside. Across the street in his car, Richie looks up as if following the guy's ascent in the elevator to a window on the third floor.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Several more photographs go up on the wall, grouped together like pieces of a puzzle, tentacles of an octopus yet to have a head. Only the lowest section is made up of blacks. The rest of the faces are white. All stop about mid-way up.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The reels of a tape recorder turning. A telephone voice inquires -

VOICE

I been meaning to ask you. You know those snow tires you give me last time? I'm going to want to get one-and-a-half more of those.

Jones and Spearman laugh.

INT. HENRI BENDEL'S, 57TH STREET - DAY

Frank wanders past racks of lingerie, reaches the end of an aisle and comes around it to find himself looking at his own reflection in Nicky Barnes's Gucci goggles. Nicky looks just as surprised to see Frank here.

NICKY

Frank. You didn't come to my party.

FRANK

I know. I couldn't. I wanted to. I had this previous thing I couldn't get out of.

NICKY

With who? Everybody was there.

FRANK

Personal thing.

NICKY

You weren't trying to say something. You weren't trying to tell me something.

FRANK

No.

NICKY

Because I'd come to anything you personally invited me to. Unless I wanted to maybe say something.

FRANK

Nicky, I'm trying to buy some lingerie for my girlfriend.

NICKY

Me, too. Where is she? Miss Puerto Rico.

He looks around.

FRANK

Trying something on. She's in the room.

NICKY

So's mine. She's a good-looking girl. Yours.

Frank nods. He just wants to leave now.

NICKY

I wanted to talk to you about something.

FRANK

I know. I keep meaning to call you. I been busy.

NICKY

I have an idea.

Whatever it is Frank is sure he doesn't want to hear it.

NICKY

I want to form a group of us. A council. The Council. You know what I'm saying? I spoke to Zack and Frank Matthews about it. They think it's a good idea but they want to know what you think.

Frank nods but has no idea what the fuck he's talking about.

NICKY

A partnership. Something bigger than any of us individually. Where we pool our resources, our business interests, everything. Like the guineas.

It's one of the most absurd ideas Frank's ever heard.

NICKY

What do you think?

FRANK

The Italians are family, Nicky.

NICKY

What?

FRANK

They go back generations. They're from the same place. It's not like they threw it together one afternoon in the lingerie department of Henri Bendel's.

NICKY

We're from the same place.

FRANK

I'm from Greensboro, North Carolina, I don't know where you're (from) -

NICKY

Africa. We're all from Africa. We're family.

Frank nods weakly. If he's smart, he'll put a stop to this right now.

FRANK

My brothers are my family. I trust my brothers.

NICKY

I'm your brother. We're brothers. You don't trust me?

The girls emerge from the changing suite in satin teddys. Nicky's glance goes straight to Julie. Frank's, too, but for a different reason. He studies her for the slightest indication she finds Nicky even remotely attractive. She smiles at both of them.

INT. FRANK'S CHEVY / 116TH STREET, HARLEM - DAY

Frank oversees the business interests Nicky Barnes wants a piece of: watching the 4 o'clock action on the street for inconsistencies from the front seat of his battered Chevy. Julie's with him, looking like a deposed queen on the tattered seats.

JULIE

How long we gonna sit here?

FRANK

Until I'm finished working.

JULIE

This is work.

Frank nods to himself. Julie watches him watch the transactions between the buyers and sellers. Eventually -

JULIE

Frank? What good is having money if you don't live like you have it?

FRANK

You mean if people don't know you have it. If you don't show it off.

(she shrugs)

I wasn't raised like that. Neither were you.

JULIE

What's wrong with showing it sometimes?

FRANK

Did I take you shopping today?

JULIE

You bought me underwear. Something else people can't see.

FRANK

You can see it and I can see it. Who cares about anybody else?

She sighs, looks out at the dreary street. Then -

JULIE

Actually, Nicky saw it.

Frank looks back over and studies her for a long moment.

FRANK

You liked how he looked at you?

JULIE

How did he look at me?

FRANK

You like how he lives? That how you want to live?

JULIE

At least he lives.

FRANK

You think he's good-looking?

Silence. She shrugs.

FRANK

I saw how you looked at him.

JULIE

How did I look at him?

Not like Frank is looking at her now.

FRANK

You ever go out with him before?

JULIE

No.

FRANK

It would be easy for me to find out.

JULIE

I didn't even know him.

FRANK

You want to go out with him now?

She doesn't say. Frank sighs.

FRANK

What do I have to do to prove I love you? Buy you more things, walk around looking like Nicky fucking Barnes? What. What do I have to do?

She doesn't answer that either, looks back out the dirty windshield. Frank tries to hide it but he's very much afraid of losing her.

INT. FEDCO DISCOUNT STORE - DAY

The stack of televisions. Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazier at a pre-bout press conference, Ali going on about how unfair the fight is because Frazier is so old.

INT. BUSCH'S JEWELRY STORE - DAY

A set here, too, tuned to the same channel, as Frank looks at glittering jewelry in glass cases. He points to a diamond engagement ring. The salesman lays it upon a bed of black velvet.

INT. CAMERA STORE - NEWARK - DAY

Another set here, tuned to the press conference. Richie glancing at it as a salesman pulls a couple of rolls of Tri-X film from a rack and sets them on the counter.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

TV set. Howard Cossell, ringside, opining on the match-up as the first early fans arrive behind him.

Frank and Julie are getting dressed. Frank slipping on conservative dark slacks; Julie, in her new lingerie, putting on make-up at a vanity.

Frank moves his suit jacket on the bed aside to reveal a jewelry box. Comes up behind Julie and sets the box next to her on the vanity.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

TV set. Richie getting dressed. Jeans and a sweatshirt. Tennis shoes.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUED

Julie's reflection in the vanity mirror, watching Frank slip the engagement ring on her finger. She wipes at a tear, then gets up and hugs him.

JULIE

Yes.

FRANK

Are you sure?

JULIE

Yes.

She kisses him. Admires the ring again. And -

JULIE

I bought you something, too.

She crosses past the TV, opens a closet, takes out a hanging garment bag and lays it out on the bed on top of Frank's dark suit jacket.

He comes over. She takes hold of the zipper but doesn't immediately pull it, hoping perhaps to create some dramatic tension.

FRANK

What is it?

She unzips the bag like she's unveiling great art. But instead of seeing what's inside, we're allowed only Frank's reaction: his smile of anticipation slowly changing to stunned chagrin.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The place is filling up. Excited fight fans finding their seats. It's going to be standing room only.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Richie's VW passes the \$10 parking lot. Pulls into a more affordable place down the street. He finds a spot, climbs out, locks up as -

A white limousine comes past and pulls up directly in front of the Garden. Julie climbs out. No one else. She glances back -

JULIE

Come on. You look great.

(still no one emerges)

Do you want to miss the fight? Come on.

Finally, a white patent leather shoe pokes out of the limousine and sets down on the curb, then its mate beside it. The shoes step away from the limo.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Richie's dirty-white tennis shoes climb what seem to be endless concrete steps, while -

The gleaming white patent leather shoes descend concrete steps -

Richie reaches his row finally, almost at the top of the arena, as -

The white patent leather shoes come all the way down to the floor -

Richie finds his seat, sets a canvas book bag in his lap -

The owner of the white patent leather shoes is shown his ringside seat, just behind the sports writers and photographers, and -

We move up from the white shoes, to the full-length chinchilla coat, to the gold chains around the neck, to the wide-brimmed matching chinchilla hat that can only partially obscure Frank's mortified expression.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - LATER

Richie fixes a telephoto lens to a camera, loads it with film, lifts it to his eye and scans the faces of the holders of the prime tickets ringside:

Organized crime figures, celebrities and politicians, women with plunging necklines and dyed-blond hair.

He snaps a picture of an Italian wise guy he doesn't recognize. Shifts and focuses on Joe Louis and his wife, but doesn't take a shot of them. Shifts again past some Superfly in a chinchilla coat ...

The camera view returns to the stranger. What's most odd is not the way he's dressed - though that is what drew Richie's attention - but who he's talking to, like they're old friends: crime boss Tony Salerno.

The other odd thing is that "Chinchilla's" seat is better than the Italian's. All the Italians. If he keeps that hat on, he'll probably block their view.

Richie focuses on the Superfly's date, a stunning girl, a beauty queen. Shifts back to her boyfriend who's now shaking the proffered hands of other Italians, then Don King, then Joe Louis himself.

Suddenly, there's a roar from the crowd as the lights go out except for the spot on the ring. Ali and Frazier are coming down the steps through the crush of fans and reporters.

Richie tries to find the guy in the chinchilla coat again, but he's obscured by shadows and the crowd. He *thinks* he sees Frazier acknowledge the man as he passes.

The fighters climb into the ring and dance in their respective corners as the bout is announced. Richie tries to find Superfly in his viewfinder again.

A bell is rung. Flashbulbs pop throughout the arena. The fighters move center-ring. Richie frames the figure in the chinchilla coat in the shadows, focuses the image as sharp as possible, and snaps the shutter -

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Richie tacks the photograph of the man in the chinchilla coat on his Table of Organization, low and off to the side where he keeps other pieces of the puzzle that don't fit, other new faces without names.

He'll try to figure out who he is later, if there seems to be any reason to. For now he concentrates on men higher up, like Nicky Barnes and his supplier, an Italian ...

EXT. NEW JERSEY - DAY

The same Italian emerges from his house and climbs into his car. As he comes down the driveway, two cars pass by -

EXT. STREETS, NEW JERSEY - DAY

The cars that passed the house are still in front of the target, "following" from ahead. Approaching a turnpike one turns onto it as the other continues straight. The target car, too, takes the on-ramp.

EXT. TURNPIKE - DAY

The car begins a lane change in anticipation of the ramp headed for the George Washington bridge. In the other car, Jones, driving, glances to Abruzzo -

JONES

He's going into the city. We gonna call ahead?

Abruzzo doesn't want to. And doesn't reach for the radio. Jones moves into the lane headed for the bridge.

EXT. STREETS - EAST HARLEM - DAY

The target car pulls to the curb outside a Pleasant Avenue restaurant. The guy climbs out. As he enters the place, the detectives' car comes past and pulls over at the corner long enough for Abruzzo to get out.

He crosses the street. Tries to see who the guy inside is meeting with. Jones's car comes past again and turns at the corner to begin another circle around the block.

As soon as it's gone, the man emerges from the restaurant with a bag and puts it in the trunk. Abruzzo throws a look to the corner expecting Jones's car to reappear any second -

A truck is there instead, double-parked, guys unloading crates of fruit. Abruzzo hears horns honking and knows one of them must be his partner stuck on the side street.

The man starts his car. As it pulls away, Abruzzo, desperate not to lose it, flags down a taxi and flashes a badge.

ABRUZZO

Get out of the car.

TAXI DRIVER

What?

ABRUZZO

Get the fuck out of the car!

TAXI DRIVER

No!

The driver realizes the man outside his taxi is crazy and tries to get his window rolled up. Abruzzo yanks the door open, pulls the cab driver out and jumps in.

The target car is now a block and a half ahead and turning onto another street. Abruzzo guns the engine and swings the taxi into opposing lanes to get around traffic. He makes it to the corner and screeches around it ... but the car is gone.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - EVENING

Abruzzo and the others try to keep a low profile as Richie, behind the glass of his office across the room, explains to Lordi what happened.

They emerge. As Lordi comes past the detectives, they bury themselves in paperwork to avoid his look to them on his way out.

Richie comes over. Perches on one of the desks. Looks at them all. Eventually -

RICHIE

An attorney representing the cab driver has filed aggravated assault and grand theft charges -

ABRUZZO

That fuckin -

RICHIE

Which he may reconsider - depending on the amount the State of New Jersey offers to settle.

ABRUZZO

I told him I was a cop. I showed him my identification -

RICHIE

You stole his cab and broke his arm.

Abruzzo shrugs; it couldn't be helped. Richie regards all those present.

RICHIE

No one goes into New York again without informing them first. Any surveillance in the city must be approved - in writing - and assisted by - NYPD.

ABRUZZO

We would've lost him if we did that.

RICHIE

You did lose him.

Abruzzo groans at the unfairness of it all. Silence.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richie comes in carrying mail from the box downstairs. Among the bills and junk is an oversized manila envelope. Inside, he finds some VHS tapes.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT

He pushes one of the tapes into a player. Switches on the set and sits with a glass of water. A woman appears on the screen, smiles nervously, finds her voice -

WOMAN

Now? My name is Debra. I'm 33.
I'm a secretary. Divorced.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

I have two children - 10 and 7 - and -
I'm sorry, I'm a little nervous doing
this.

MAN O/S

It's all right. You want to start
again?

WOMAN

No it's okay. Um -

MAN O/S

What do you like to do for fun?

WOMAN

I like to swim. I pay tennis. I
like to dance -

The phone rings. Richie pauses the tape. Answers.

RICHIE

Hello. What's up? Who? When?

He just got home. He doesn't feel like going out again.
Listens to whatever the caller is telling him as he stares at
the frozen image of the woman on the TV.

RICHIE

Yeah, all right. Where?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Richie comes in to find Lappe, the DEA agent from his squad,
sitting in the darkest corner of the room with another man he
doesn't recognize. He joins them.

LAPPE

Drink?

RICHIE

No, thanks. How you doing? I'm
Richie.

The stranger, a black man about 50, shakes Richie's hand but
doesn't offer his name. Instead he studies him. Then -

MUIR

What do we hate most? Isn't it the
transgressions of others we fear we're
capable of ourselves?

Richie glances to Lappe with a look that says it's late and
he could use sleep more than this.

MUIR

How serious are you about your investigation? I ask because if you are, then I don't understand how you could say what you said today.

RICHIE

What did I say?

MUIR

Apparently you said no one goes into New York without first letting New York know.

RICHIE

It's the law. I have to inform them. Just as they have to inform me.

MUIR

The law.

Richie nods, yes, perhaps a little too piously. Muir smiles but isn't amused.

MUIR

Then your investigation's over.

RICHIE

Is it. Why is that.

MUIR

Why do you think? They're all on the take. They're not your partners. They're in a different business than you altogether, and business is good.

RICHIE

I see.

MUIR

No, you don't.

Silence as they regard each other for a long moment.

MUIR

I might be able to help you if I thought it was worth it. It isn't if you're going to sit there and tell me about the law like it's something anyone should follow.

RICHIE

You could help me by telling me who the fuck you are.

MUIR

But that wouldn't help me.

He has no intention of telling Richie his name or which agency he works for.

MUIR

If you're serious, you can't tell anyone what you're doing. Not DEA, not the US Attorney, not the cops in New York, not SIU. Especially not SIU. They'll hurt you.

Richie nods, but not in agreement. He's sure the man is some kind of conspiracy nut. Muir's weary face looks even wearier as it regards Richie's skepticism.

MUIR

What do I have to do? Prove it to you?

EXT. HARLEM - NIGHT

The lights and storefronts and denizens of 116th Street reflect in the side window of a black and white squad car slowly coming past. The window rolls down, revealing New York cops inside.

Without stopping, and with no attempt to hide what they're doing, they make their nightly collections from the dealers on the street, the envelopes of payoff money tossed into their moving car.

Richie watches the tithing ritual from a car with Muir driving just behind the cops.

Glancing to the other side of the street, he sees the same routine going on there with another squad car, the money deposited like tokens in a slot.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

From a booth in back, Richie and Muir watch a pair of NY undercover cops making the rounds, collecting "their" money like a waiters picking up tips.

INT/EXT. STREETS/BARS - NIGHT

Several quick shots, intercut with Richie watching, of envelopes and money changing hands at established "drops":

On the steps of a stash house -

In the parking lot of a cop hangout -

In a bar, a restaurant, a grocery store -

Outside a police station -

EXT. HARLEM - NIGHT

Richie emerges from the car, steps away without saying goodbye, climbs into his own car parked on the street and watches the other with Muir in it drive off.

He rolls down the window to get some air, listens to the noises of the city, seems unable to leave until he can absorb what he's seen.

A man emerges from a garishly-lighted sidewalk clothing store. Approaches Richie's car, drops an envelope of money in his lap, turns around and disappears again behind the racks of clothes.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Julie stands atop a pedestal, beneath which seamstresses stick pins in the hem of her bridal gown.

INT/EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Rented tables and chairs are unloaded from trucks and set up in the big suburban. Bartenders in tuxedos set out cases of beer and wine, liquor and glasses. Caterers take over Frank's mother's kitchen, unwrapping Virginia hams and platters of hors d'ouvres.

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL - DAY

Richie regards his Table of Organization from top to bottom, eyes moving across the faces of possible targets and settling eventually on the man in the outlandish chinchilla coat.

Still no name on it, and no affiliations. It's an orphan photograph and it annoys him. As he glances from it to his squad's blank looks, a wedding march, played in tradition fashion on a church organ, begins and carries over -

RICHIE

Who is that?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A file is pulled from a cabinet and opened on a desk, revealing a thin arrest record clipped with mug shots of Frank Lucas, years younger.

RICHIE V/O

His name is Frank Lucas. Couple of minor arrests. Gambling, robbery, unlicensed firearm.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The wedding guests are arriving. Frank helps his mother out of a car and escorts her up the church steps.

RICHIE V/O

For fifteen years he was Bumpy Johnson's personal driver and body-guard. Which is how everyone still describes him: "Bumpy's driver." He was with him when he died.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Frank ushers his mother to the front row while the other relatives and guests are shown to their seats behind them - Julie's family and friends to one side of the aisle, the extended Lucas family - Frank's brothers and many cousins, their spouses and children - to the other.

RICHIE V/O

He's from Greensboro, North Carolina. Big family. Five brothers, all living here now, spread out around the boroughs and Jersey. Lots of cousins.

As each of the brothers settles into the pews with his immediate family members -

RICHIE V/O

The brothers are -

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

One of them stands outside a modest house, watering a flower bed in his robe and slippers.

RICHIE V/O

Ezell Lucas in Brooklyn -

INT/EXT. BODY SHOP - DAY

As an appraiser walks around Jones's car, giving him an estimate for repairs, the detective watches the owner of the body shop, another Lucas brother, attending to paperwork inside.

RICHIE V/O
Lawrence Lucas in the Bronx -

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

From a parked car, another brother is watched as he walks his six-year-old daughter to school.

RICHIE V/O
John Paul Lucas in Queens -

EXT. GROCERY - DAY

Another brother is observed by Lappe from a car down the street as he sets crates of fresh fruit on the sidewalk in front of his corner grocery store.

RICHIE V/O
Leevon Lucas, Staten Island -

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

Abruzzo comes past Shorty standing next to a stock car as its crew of mechanics readies it for a race.

RICHIE V/O
And Vernon Lee, or Shorty, in Bergen County.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

A photograph of Shorty goes up on the T.O. next to Frank and the other brothers and some cousins.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUED - DAY

Best Man Shorty is now standing next to Frank at the altar as the bride is escorted down the aisle by her father. Tight on Frank in a beautiful linen suit -

RICHIE V/O
Except for the chinchilla coat, which no one can explain, Frank's life seems fairly orderly and legitimate.

EXT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAWN

A light goes on in a penthouse window. Down below, by his parked car, Richie shivers in the early morning cold.

RICHIE V/O

He gets up early. Five a.m.

EXT/INT. RESTAURANT - MORNING

Richie walks past Doc, Frank's driver, standing by a car, and tosses a glance inside the restaurant as he passes the window to where Frank sits alone at a table.

RICHIE V/O

Has breakfast at a Midtown place, usually alone. Then goes to work -

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Frank looks over blueprints of a building under renovation behind him.

RICHIE V/O

Meeting with his accountant or lawyer. Dropping in on one of his dry cleaning businesses or one of the office buildings he owns.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

One of Richie's detectives sits in a car across from an exclusive club with velvet ropes and bouncers keeping out people like him.

RICHIE V/O

Nights, he usually stays home. When he does go out, it's to a club or dinner -

Frank, Julie, Joe Lewis and his wife emerge from the restaurant together.

RICHIE V/O

- with his fiancée and friends - celebrities, sports figures - never O.C. guys.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUED - DAY

Frank's mother looks on with tearful joy as her son slips a ring onto Julie's finger next to the fat engagement diamond already on it. She, in turn, puts a gold band on Frank's.

RICHIE V/O

Sundays he takes his mother to church.

The minister pronounces them husband and wife, the veil is lifted, and they kiss to great applause. A photographer in the aisle focuses a camera. The strobe flashes and -

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Joe Lordi considers the photographs on Richie's Table of Organization: The Lucas brothers and cousins - about 35 in all - caught by surveillance cameras in the streets of New York and New Jersey, arranged in some imagined hierarchy.

LORDI

That's not your typical day in the life of a dope man, Richie.

RICHIE

Neither was Bumpy Johnson's. He lived quietly, and at the same time owned Harlem.

LORDI

You think Frank Lucas took over for Bumpy Johnson? His driver?

RICHIE

He conducts himself like him. Everything he does. Unlike the other Harlem guys - Nicky Barnes, Frank Matthews, Zack Robinson.

LORDI

Bumpy never wore a chinchilla coat in his life.

RICHIE

We haven't seen that again. That apparently has been returned to the closet.

Lordi nods. Considers Richie.

LORDI

Where you got all this from?

RICHIE

Surveillance. Informants. A lot of them have been put out of business by the Lucases.

LORDI

What other source? Who gave you his name in the first place?

Richie would rather not say, but has to say something.

RICHIE

I can't tell you who he is because I don't know. I think he's DEA, I'm not sure.

LORDI

What do you got on him that's real? Because this isn't.

RICHIE

Nothing on him. Some of the cousins, yes.

LORDI

Powder?

RICHIE

Powder, wiretaps.

LORDI

The brothers?

RICHIE

No. They'd be higher up. I'd need money to find out.

LORDI

How much?

RICHIE

To get above the cousins? Twenty-five thousand?

That's a lot of money. Lordi studies him.

LORDI

You really think these country boys are worth it?

RICHIE

No. I don't care about them. Or Frank Lucas for that matter. I want to know who he's working for. Which of the Italians. Who's bringing the stuff in?

Lordi glances across to where Spearman, Jones and Abruzzo lounge around smoking, out of earshot.

LORDI

You sure you can trust them with twenty-five grand?

RICHIE

I think so.

LORDI

Because if I can get it for you and it disappears - no matter how good a story they tell - I won't be able to get it for you again.

Richie nods; he knows.

EXT. MRS. LUCAS'S BACKYARD - DAY

Lloyd Price himself sings his gold record hit, "Personality," to Julie. Hundreds of guests, including film stars, Motown artists, basketball greats and Harlem gangsters look on.

ZACK.

She's the most beautiful bride I ever saw, Frank.

FRANK

I wish Bumpy could've met her. I wish she could've met him.

Zack nods. As Lloyd serenades her, Frank adores his new wife from the sidelines.

EXT. MRS. LUCAS'S HOUSE - LATER - EVENING

Rice rains down on the bride and groom making their way to their car. Doc holds the rear door open, comes around once they're inside, climbs in behind the wheel and slowly pushes through the crush of guests waving and throwing kisses.

EXT. NEW YORK - LATER - EVENING

The car stops at a light. The newlyweds cuddle in the backseat. Another car pulls up alongside and Doc's right hand instinctively comes off the steering wheel to settle on his holstered piece. The guy in the shotgun seat of the other car smiles and shakes his head, no.

EXT. NEW YORK - LATER - DAY

The two cars parked under a bridge. Doc and Frank outside theirs, hands on the hood. Doc's gun is taken from him by one of the SIU cops.

DOC

It's registered.

The cop pockets it while the other one tries to help Julie keep her lace train out of the mud.

TRUPO

Let me help you with that.

She pulls it away from his grasp. Det. Bob "Route 66" Trupo shrugs and leads Frank away for a private conversation.

TRUPO

You sure you done the right thing? She's beautiful but she's got an attitude that might become a pain in the ass.

FRANK

What do you want? I pay my bills. If you're not getting your share, it's not my fault.

TRUPO

You don't even know me. Maybe I'm special.

FRANK

You're all the fuckin same.

Trupo begs to differ by showing Frank his shield.

TRUPO

What does that say? Special Investigations Unit. You see that? Special. What do you got for me?

FRANK

On me? Couple of thousand.

TRUPO

Where? In the trunk? The luggage?

FRANK

In my pocket.

TRUPO

Nothing in the trunk? You know what I mean.

FRANK

What do you think? Do I look to you like I drive around with dope in the trunk.

TRUPO

Honestly? I almost didn't recognize you at all without the chinchilla coat and hat.

Frank shakes his head to himself in dismay. *Why did he ever wear that fucking coat?* Trupo empties Frank's wallet. Couple of thousand, like he said. Hands the wallet back and turns to leave.

TRUPO

Have a nice honeymoon.

INT. FRANK'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Frank doesn't carry Julie across the threshold. He strides in, leaving her at the front door, throws a match in the gas fireplace, disappears into the bedroom, comes back a moment later with the chinchilla coat and throws it on the flames.

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL - DAY

Richie signs for \$25,000 cash laid out on his desk.

EXT. STOCK CAR TRACK - NIGHT

Some of the Lucas cousins, recognizable from the Table of Organization photos, work on a car that will be in the next race. Spearman is led into the pit area by another cousin who introduces him to the others.

EXT. RACE TRACK - LATER - NIGHT

Jones and Abruzzo watch from a distance as Spearman is introduced to another cousin up in the stands.

EXT. RACE TRACK - LATER - NIGHT

At the open trunk of a car in the parking lot, Spearman hands over the \$25,000 in a paper sack for a half pound of heroin. The men part, the cousin now in possession of the money climbing into the car and driving off.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

The same car pulls to the curb outside a corner grocery store. The cousin from the track climbs out and disappears inside.

EXT. CORNER GROCERY - DAY

Leevon Lucas, the owner of the place, emerges when his brother Shorty's car pulls up. He leans in with a box of groceries, sets it on the seat, chats, then goes back inside.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

The detectives keep Shorty's car in view ahead. Then cruise past when he pulls over in front of Ezell Lucas's modest home outside which Ezell plays with his kids.

The detectives' car circles the block. As they come past the house again, Ezell is emerging from it with a paper bag he puts in Shorty's trunk.

EXT. BODY SHOP - DAY

Same thing here: Shorty making the collection from Lawrence Lucas, the owner of the body shop, putting it in the trunk and driving off.

EXT. SHORTY'S NJ HOUSE - DAY

Shorty's car parked in the driveway of his house. The detectives in the back of a van equipped with recording equipment, listening to dialing sounds and the call connecting -

FRANK V/O

Hello.

SHORTY V/O

What're you doing tonight, you busy?
I should come over.

FRANK V/O

Not here.

SHORTY V/O

Where?

EXT. HARLEM - NIGHT

Richie, Spearman, Jones and Abruzzo in a car parked across from Small's Paradise. The clientele - going in, coming out, milling around - is all black.

SPEARMAN

You and Benny should stay out here.

Richie nods. He and Benny Abruzzo would get "made" as cops the second they walked into the club.

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

Jones and Spearman, drinking at a table, watch as Shorty comes in and briefly makes the rounds before climbing some stairs to the private rooms on the second floor.

EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - LATER - NIGHT

Spearman emerges from the club alone, crosses to where Richie and Abruzzo wait in the car, pokes his head in.

SPEARMAN

You see Frank?

RICHIE

No. Shorty. You didn't see him?

SPEARMAN

Shorty came in, went upstairs, hasn't come back down.

RICHIE

What's upstairs?

SPEARMAN

I don't know. Offices, private rooms. We could find out.

RICHIE

Think Frank's already up there?

Spearman wouldn't know. Shrugs. Waits for Richie to tell him what he wants them to do.

ABRUZZO

He's got our fuckin money.

RICHIE

He's got to come down eventually.

SPEARMAN

So you want us to wait? Or go up there?

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - LATER - NIGHT

Spearman and Jones wait. Keep glancing at the stairs. A waiter appears at their table with another round of drinks and sets them down.

SPEARMAN

We didn't order those.

WAITER

On the house. Law enforcement's always welcome here.

The drinks go flying as the detectives push away from the table, sprint across the club and rush up the stairs. They kick open doors, finding club guests and musicians hunched over lines of cocaine - but not Frank or Shorty.

They reach the end of a hallway that leads to another staircase down to the kitchen next to a back door. Livid, out of breath, they regard each other in a moment of quiet frustration before crashing back into the dressing rooms.

MAN

What are you doing, this is a private -

JONES

Shut the fuck up.

The detectives, in a rage, begin dragging everyone up and against the walls, emptying their pockets.

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - LATER - NIGHT

Richie and Abruzzo follow Spearman across the club. The band has stopped and everyone watches them as they climb the stairs.

They come along the second floor hallway. Spearman shows them the back stairs - by which Shorty and Frank must have left, then leads them to a lounge-like room where everyone has been assembled and lined up facing the walls.

Richie regards the piles of drugs and money on a coffee table. Then Spearman and Jones. He gestures to them to follow him, leaving Abruzzo to keep an eye on everyone in the lounge, takes the other detectives into one of the dressing rooms and closes the door.

RICHIE

What's all that?

JONES

What. What do you mean? It's narcotics, narcotics money, and a roomful of felons.

RICHIE

In New York. Do we work in New York? Do we have any jurisdiction whatsoever in New York? We're not supposed to be here.

JONES

What were we supposed to do, Richie, ignore it?

RICHIE

You were supposed to observe Frank Lucas receiving money, delivered to him by his brother, so we could get a wiretap authorized. Did you?

JONES

No.

RICHIE

Did you see him at all?

JONES

He may not have even been here.

RICHIE

But you busted everyone else in the place?

It wasn't really a question, so Jones shrugs something less than an answer.

RICHIE

What am I supposed to do with all that in there?

EXT. EAST RIVER - LATER - NIGHT

Richie and the detectives dump the confiscated powder and pills into the river and watch as the current carries it away then pulls it beneath the surface.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - LATER - NIGHT

Standing around a barrel fire like bums, the detectives warm their hands as Richie takes fistfuls of money from a paper bag and drops it into the flames.

EXT. BERGEN COUNTY ESTATE - DAY

A Napoleonic statue of a man on horseback gets wet in a fountain outside a mansion more befitting the hills of Tuscany than New Jersey. Next to it stand three others - a woman and two children - also astride marble horses.

Frank's car can be seen coming past a guardhouse and up the long driveway. Doc parks it next to the fountain. As Frank and Julie climb out, they see Richard "The Boot" Boiardo and his wife emerging from the enormous house to greet them.

INT. BOIARDO'S MANSION - DAY

A strained silence has settled over the formal dining room as the two couples eat lunch. Eventually -

BOIARDO

I want to show you something after lunch, Frank.

Frank nods, fine. Julie tries to smile pleasantly. Neither has any idea what to say to their hosts.

INT. MANSION - LATER

Boiardo leads Frank down stairs to wine cellar with a low coved ceiling. Beyond the racks of bottles, Frank can see a crypt under dusty light filtering down from a narrow basement window. Boiardo brushes at the name chiseled into the stone.

FRANK

That's you.

Boiardo nods. Frank's confused. Chiseled beneath the name are two dates - the mob boss's birth and death.

BOIARDO

You're too young, but - during the last war - the one here, not in Europe - Jerry Catini and Dutch Schultz - I was gunned down outside Tom's Restaurant in Newark.

He pulls up his shirt to show Frank the scars on his back.

BOIARDO

Shotgun. In the back. There I am, lying in the street watching my blood go down the sewer, when you know what happened?

FRANK

What.

BOIARDO

God spoke to me ... You believe in God, Frank.

FRANK

Of course.

BOIARDO

God said, Richard? You're not going to die today. You're not going to die tomorrow. You're going to die - on *this* day.

He touches the date carved into the cold stone and gives Frank a look full of great significance.

BOIARDO

I've conducted myself accordingly ever since. Without fear. Because I have this knowledge.

Frank nods uncertainly. Boiardo seems as much at peace as anyone in his world can be.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

The grounds are like a forest. On one of the many patios overlooking it, Frank and Boiardo sip ice water and look out at Julie and Mrs. Boiardo, in the distance, feeding deer from their hands.

BOIARDO

She's a lovely girl. Looks like a beauty queen.

FRANK

She is.

BOIARDO

Is that right?

(Frank nods)

Can I tell you something? The most important thing? The most important thing in an Italian family ... is *family*.

It's almost an admonition, Boiardo wagging a finger at Frank.

BOIARDO

My wife likes to sit down to dinner at 7 o'clock. Since our wedding day, no matter where I am, what I'm doing - I don't care if I'm with my girlfriend - I make sure I'm home at 7 o'clock.

He's serious, and Frank shouldn't forget it if he wants to stay happily married.

BOIARDO

You interested in history, Frank?

FRANK

History of what?

BOIARDO

History. The past. The events that have brought us to where we are today.

Frank tries to recall if anything like that has ever held any interest for him ...

FRANK

No.

BOIARDO

You know who was? Bumpy.

FRANK

Bumpy was interested in a lot of things.

BOIARDO

I used to wonder - still do - if people knew when history was being made. And what exactly they were doing at the time.

Frank has no idea what Boiardo is talking about.

BOIARDO

This for instance could be a historic moment, and you're sipping a glass of ice water.

Frank looks at the droplets snaking the side of the glass. Boiardo has finally gotten around to the reason he invited Frank here.

BOIARDO

Bumpy and I did a lot of things together, as you know.

(MORE)

BOIARDO (cont'd)

Whatever he needed, he'd come see me and I'd do my best to provide it. He came to me, I didn't go to him, is the point I'm trying to make. You know why?

FRANK

He was a nigger.

BOIARDO

No, no, no. How can you say that?

Boiardo stares at Frank aghast, but of course that was the reason.

BOIARDO

No, he came to me because he didn't have what I needed, I had what he needed.

Frank nods. Boiardo nods. They watch the women. Then -

BOIARDO

Monopolies are illegal in this country, you know Frank. No one can compete with a monopoly. If they let the dairy farmers do that, half of them would go out of business tomorrow.

FRANK

I'm just trying to make a living.

BOIARDO

Which is your right. This is America. But not at the unreasonable expense of others. That's un-American.

Boiardo studies him. Frank knows he's not just speaking for himself, but many others.

BOIARDO

You know the price you pay for a gallon of milk doesn't represent the true cost of its production. It's controlled. It's set.

FRANK

I set a price I think is fair.

BOIARDO

It's very unfair, in fact. Your customers are happy, sure, but you need to think beyond them.

FRANK

I'm not going to raise the price artificially.

BOIARDO

All right. I see you're getting excited. Don't get excited. That's not why I invited you into my home. To get excited.

He waits for Frank to settle down a little, then regards him hopefully.

BOIARDO

What if you sold some of your inventory wholesale. And what if I helped with distribution.

FRANK

I don't need it.

BOIARDO

You don't need it here. I mean nationwide. L.A., Chicago, Dallas, all the major cities. Your business wouldn't suffer - it'd expand. Ten fold. I'm sure you can see that.

Frank can. Weighs the pros and cons in his head.

BOIARDO

What would you get? That's a legitimate question to ask yourself. Money. Of course. That's one thing. But, more important - peace of mind. You know you're being investigated.

He is? Boiardo nods gravely.

BOIARDO

That kind of thing I could help. That's what I mean by peace of mind.

Frank knows, in truth, he's not being given any choice in this matter. Still, maybe it's not so bad.

BOIARDO

You can see it makes sense for you. Does it make sense for me? That would depend. On the wholesale price.

FRANK

You pay the Corsicans what a kilo?

BOIARDO

Eighty.

FRANK

I'd consider fifty.

Boiardo slips on his best poker face. Fifty thousand a kilo would be an extraordinary deal for him.

BOIARDO

You see? I was right. This is a historic moment. How's your water? You want some more?

EXT. PARK - DAY

Sunday hardball game. Richie pitching for the team he's played with for years, guys from the neighborhood he grew up with. One of them, the catcher, comes out to the mound.

JOEY

Who's the broad?

The secretary from the dating service tape sits somewhat apart from the other wives and girlfriends, who look like the wives and girlfriends of wise guys and cops, which they are.

RICHIE

Dating service.

JOEY

No kidding. That's good, Richie. It's about time.

(Richie nods)

Come over after. I'll barbecue. Bring her.

EXT. JOEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Richie and Joey drink beer and watch the hamburgers on the barbecue while Mrs. Saldano and Richie's date lounge by the pool in the backyard of the middle-class house. Two girls splash in the water.

RICHIE

She married an Arab. I'm serious. He's a sheik or something, lives out in Los Angeles.

JOEY

Can I say something? It's not that I didn't like Sharon ... but I didn't like her a lot.

Joey starts taking the burgers off the grill and puts them on a plate, giving Richie a look he can't quite read.

INT. JOEY'S HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Joey rummages around a refrigerator in a kind of den/rec room. Takes out a couple of beers and grabs some snapshots off the bar.

JOEY

Been skiing?

RICHIE

Not this winter.

JOEY

Look at these.

Richie leafs through the snapshots: the Saldano family on vacation on the slopes of a ski resort somewhere, and a few in and outside a beautiful snow-dotted cabin.

JOEY

Aspen.

RICHIE

I'd like to go to Aspen.

JOEY

We had the greatest time. You know who we met? Burt Reynolds. I'm not kidding. A lot of people from Hollywood go there now, buying up the place. When I say met, we saw him. And his wife. What's her name?

RICHIE

I don't know.

JOEY

Good skiers, both of them.

RICHIE

This is your place?

JOEY

Are you kidding? You know what that place is worth? Ski-in, ski-out, five bedrooms, steam room, sauna, everything. We were guests.

Richie nods. He can't help but admire the big cabin in the pictures. It's beautiful.

JOEY

No ... No, that's your place, Richie.

Everything seems to stop. Richie becomes aware of the sounds around them: the splashing of water in the pool, the girls' lilting voices calling "Marco" and "Polo," the beating of his own heart. He looks up from the pictures to find Joey studying him.

JOEY

Isn't there something we can do?

RICHIE

I don't know what you're talking about.

JOEY

About leaving the big guy alone. I don't even know who that is, but apparently you do.

Richie glances away to the room itself as if perhaps measuring the odds of microphones and a tape recorder being in it somewhere. Eventually -

RICHIE

You're taking an enormous risk, Joey.

JOEY

I know.

RICHIE

If I don't report what you just said to me, I could be in a lot of trouble. And if I do, then it's you.

JOEY

I'm hoping you won't do that.

RICHIE

Why are you doing this? Why would you put us *both* at risk?

JOEY

Because I care what happens to you.

Richie glances away again to the room. No matter what he does or says at this point, he's got a problem.

JOEY

I'm not taping it.

RICHIE
How do I know that?

JOEY
Because you're a friend and I'm
telling you I'm not.

Richie holds the pictures out to him but Joey doesn't take them.

JOEY
It's a real offer. It's a good
offer.

RICHIE
You shouldn't have done this. You
know better.

JOEY
I had no choice. I was given no
choice. Take it, Richie.

RICHIE
I can't.

JOEY
Yes, you can. Believe me, you can.

Richie puts the pictures back in Joey's hand and turns to leave.

INT. RICHIE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER - DAY

Richie's hands grip the steering wheel as he drives. Approaching a red light that blinks yellow ahead, he guns the engine, changes his mind, slams on the brakes and screeches to a halt in the middle of the intersection.

RICHIE
Fuck.

He glances across to his passenger, his date, who is terrified by the driving and the outburst. He looks away. Listens to the bleating of horns of cars that can't get around him. Finally clears the intersection.

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL - NIGHT

Richie regards his Table of Organization. The higher echelon Italians. The lower echelon blacks. Nicky Barnes. Zack Robinson. Frank Lucas ...

EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

The Chinese "nurse" waits on a street corner for a ride. Eventually, Frank's car pulls out of crawling traffic to the curb. As the Chinese woman climbs in, Richie's car drives past.

INT. CHEMICAL BANK - DAY

Richie fills out a deposit slip with a pen chained to a counter. Glances across the crowded bank to a glassed-in office where Frank meets with the bank's president.

EXT. HARLEM - DAY

Richie comes past a Harlem diner where Frank sits at a table alone. He continues to the corner to a pay phone and pretends to make a call while looking back the way he came.

A car pulls up. A man emerges from the back seat, enters the diner. Richie hangs up, comes back along the sidewalk, looks in as he passes only long enough to note the identity of the man who has come to Harlem to meet with Frank Lucas: Richard "The Boot" Boiardo.

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL - DAY

Richie steps up to his Table of Organization, takes Frank's picture from its low position, studies the board, then tacks it to a place no black has ever occupied: above the Mafia guys, at the top.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

A disembodied voice enunciates simple phrases in French. Julie repeats them as she packs a suitcase. Frank strides in clutching plane tickets.

FRANK

We're not going to France.

JULIE

What?

Frank doesn't repeat it. Takes his suitcase down from a closet and grabs some shirts.

JULIE

Where are we going?

EXT. BANGKOK - DAY

Bicycles clatter past a taxi stuck in traffic. Sitting next to Frank, Julie stares out at the chaos from the back seat.

INT. DUSIT THANI HOTEL ROOM - BANGKOK - DAY

Julie's listening to a Thai language tape as she unpacks the same suitcase.

FRANK

I have to go out.

INT. SOUL BROTHERS BAR - DAY

Frank and Ike at a table in the corner.

IKE

I don't know what you're doing here. There's nothing you can do. A couple of weeks, he said.

FRANK

A couple of weeks is what he said a couple weeks ago.

IKE

I can't believe you got on a plane -

FRANK

This isn't how you run a business. I'll tell him myself -

IKE

He doesn't have it. When he *has* it, he'll have it. It's not like a train schedule.

FRANK

I have a schedule. My trains run on time.

Ike shrugs; there nothing he can do about it.

FRANK

Fuck him. I'll go get it myself.

Ike laughs; Frank doesn't.

IKE

You're gonna get it yourself. You're gonna up into the fuckin jungle.

FRANK

I'm not going to wait any more. Every day I wait for these Chinks I lose money. Why should I wait?

IKE

Why? Because it's the jungle. The fuckin snakes alone will kill you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - BANGKOK - DAY

Julie sits alone in the room waiting for Frank to return from wherever he's gone. A Thai newscaster on the TV reports on the American war in neighboring Vietnam.

EXT. THAILAND - DAY

Frank has prevailed. Ike, in turn, has procured a motley bunch of fortune hunters and desperados piled in the back of an open-bed truck: Thai thugs and black American soldiers, all armed with automatic weapons.

Frank and Ike and some dogs sit among them, Ike in uniform, Frank in his Botany 500 sportswear, as the truck bounces along a rutted dirt road headed upcountry.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Money changes hands aboard an idling American patrol boat, now owned, apparently, by Thai river pirates. The men and the dogs from the truck crowd onto it. The captain shoves off. The boat roars away from the shore.

INT. HOTEL - BANGKOK - DAY

Julie stands at the front desk watching a clerk check the mail pigeon holes. Turning back to her -

CLERK

No, ma'am. No messages.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The patrol boat motors slowly up the ever-narrowing river, the jungle trees on either side stretching into a canopy over it.

Frank glances to Ike who's wisely watching the banks for movement - guerrillas or wild animals - either one of which could attack without warning.

EXT/INT HOTEL - BANGKOK - DAY

Julie considers the street through a lobby window. Decides to venture outside and is immediately set upon by a family of beggars who in turn are set upon by hotel staff. An argument breaks out. A cop arrives. A crowd gathers. Julie withdraws into the lobby.

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

On foot now, the small "army" trudges through the jungle itself, weapons slung over shoulders. Frank's suit is still miraculously clean considering. To him -

IKE

The snake you don't want to step on is about this long. Green. It bites you, you're dead in two minutes. I'm not kidding.

INT. HOTEL - BANGKOK - NIGHT

Julie sits at a table in the hotel's restaurant, eating dinner alone.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

A picked-over carcass warms on a spit. Frank is the only one not eating.

IKE

You don't eat, no one's going to pick you up when you drop. They'll leave you here.

FRANK

I don't eat dogs.

Ike shrugs. Suit yourself. Picks meat from a bone.

FRANK

Nobody could bring something else? Some normal meat. A loaf of bread. A fucking potato.

IKE

Dogs travel lighter.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The suit is finally showing some wear. Looking out for little green snakes, Frank watches his dress shoes trudge through mud.

INT. HOTEL - BANGKOK - DAY

Julie's feet are bare. A pedicurist kneels at them, carefully brushing polish on each toe nail.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Frank notices the point men have stopped at a rise up ahead. Reaching them, he stares out at:

Poppy fields the size of Manhattan.

EXT. JUNGLE RISE - LATER

Ike speaks with one of the Thais, translating the salient points of their conversation for Frank:

IKE

He says this whole area's in the hands of the Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-Shek's defeated army.

Some of which they can see down below.

IKE

Once they see how many we are we'll be at a disadvantage. If they don't know, maybe they'll think the whole fuckin American army's out here.

FRANK

They're going to sell it to us, then try to take it back?

Ike asks the question in Thai, gets the answer, nods, yes.

FRANK

Just like home.

EXT. OPIUM FARM - LATER

Chinese soldiers with outdated weapons stare at a strange formation emerging from the mist: Frank, Ike, a couple of other Americans and one Thai.

Frank, too, is armed now, rifle and a pistol, ammunition belt slung across his suit, hanging back with the others as the Thai steps ahead to speak to the guerillas.

INT. HOTEL - BANGKOK - DAY

Water splashes onto hot rocks. Steam billows. Sweat beads on Julie's closed eyelids as she reclines in a sauna.

INT. CAVE - LATER

A natural cavern as big as a football field carved into the mountain. The processing center for the entire region.

Frank and his Thai translator negotiate with a vanquished Chinese general in the vast place as the other Americans and Thais guard them, and the Chinese guard them.

EXT. OPIUM FARM - LATER

Purchased mules are loaded up with burlap bags containing four hundred kilos of dope. It's still tense with everyone watching everyone else for any hint they're about to go for their weapon.

EXT. OPIUM FARM / JUNGLE - DAY

The mule train approaches the perimeter of the jungle surrounding the farm. The Thais left behind, in sniper positions in the trees now, stand ready to open fire if they have to. The mules pass below.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

They seem to have made it, winding back down through the jungle with the mules.

Suddenly, a barrage of gunfire erupts from the trees. A couple of Ike's men are hit; the rest dive for cover, returning the fire. Frank's got his pistol out from the waist band of his suit and shoots into the trees. Bullet-severed palm fronds rain down.

FRANK

Give them half!

Ike, pinned down closer to the mules, can't hear him over all the noise.

FRANK

Cut half of them loose! The mules!

Ike crawls to the pack of mules, cuts their tether approximately in the middle and slaps half the animals in the direction of the gunfire.

As the freed mules disappear into the wall of trees, the shooting subsides. Then stops altogether.

Silence. Smoke from all the gunfire rising like mist around the half dozen Thais and Americans lying dead on the ground.

INT. HOTEL - BANGKOK - EVENING

The clerk turns away from the message cubicles again, shaking his head no to Julie's query.

EXT. THAILAND - NIGHT

The survivors are back in the truck, returning along the rutted road with the dope - the half they managed to get away with.

Frank's suit is a different shade altogether now, covered with mud. He looks across to Ike, exhausted in a way he's never been before and wishes never to be again, then looks away at the night sky ...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - BANGKOK - NIGHT

The room is dark. Julie's asleep. Stirs at the sound of water, the shower, sees Frank's silhouette behind the frosted glass. Pleased he's made it back safely from wherever he's been, she closes her eyes.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

Richie regards two stone-faced FBI agents. Eventually -

RICHIE

Who's took it out?

(nothing from the agents)

If there's a contract on me, it would help me to know who took it out.

FBI AGENT

We can't tell you. Not without compromising our source. You understand.

RICHIE

No, I don't. It's a source. It's my life.

FBI AGENT

We could assign someone to you if you want.

RICHIE

Who? FBI? You're going to protect me?

Richie almost laughs at the thought, but, in fact, none of this is funny.

INT. POLICE FIRING RANGE - NIGHT

Richie fires a pistol at a paper target, empties the clip, two, three, four shots, and -

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ring of a phone as loud as the shots. Richie gropes around for it in the dark.

RICHIE

Yeah?

MUIR V/O

I couldn't find out. That doesn't mean it isn't real. But I got something else for you. Something coming in. This is real. You got a pen? Here's the tail number.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Richie's entire staff of detectives, along with several customs agents, stand on the tarmac watching a military transport plane make its final approach.

It lands and taxis to an area away from the terminals. A ramp is wheeled up. The door behind the cockpit slides up. The first passengers emerge. Secret Service, some aides ... Henry Kissinger.

Everyone down below looks at Richie like he must be mistaken or insane as the Secretary of State, his entourage and the flight crew come down the steps. They come past and are escorted to a small corporate terminal.

Several Marines deplane. The highest ranking of them approaches the law enforcement group.

RICHIE

Captain, I'm Richard Roberts,
Director of the Essex County Narcotics
Bureau.

INT. AIRPORT HANGAR - LATER

The plane has been brought into a hangar where it's being taken apart like a car stripped by thieves.

Inside the cabin, the seats are removed and inspected, the carpeting pulled up, panels unscrewed, the cockpit searched.

Outside, the engines and landing gear are dismantled, the tires opened up, cargo off-loaded and searched.

A nozzle is plunged into a toilet receptacle. The hose pumps out its contents into barrels where detectives fish through it with gloved hands.

INT. AIRPORT HANGAR - LATER

Richie, off by himself, watches with a growing sense of panic as the mechanics, detectives and customs agents tear the plane apart.

They've looked everywhere and have found nothing. The plane, in fact, hardly resembles a plane anymore - no panel left that hasn't been removed, no cavity that hasn't been probed except -

Richie's glance settles on the military caskets lined up beside the plane, and the armed Marines standing guard over them. He walks over slowly, and, standing over the nearest coffin -

RICHIE

Open it.

The captain regards the detective for a long moment.

CAPTAIN

No.

RICHIE

The court order permits me to search the plane and its cargo. Read it again.

The captain ignores him and his court order. Richie waits a moment, then moves to open one of the coffins himself and every shouldered Marine rifle immediately comes into firing position, aimed at him.

CAPTAIN

But you don't have my permission.

Richie stares at the weapons and the uniformed men holding them. The safeties are off and fingers are on the triggers. All they're waiting for is their commander's order to fire.

RICHIE

I don't need it.

Richie kneels down and pulls the latches of one of the coffins, half expecting to hear an accompanying barrage of gunfire.

He lifts the lid. Finds a long black body bag inside. Pulls at the zipper and parts the plastic, revealing the bloodied decomposing remains of a young soldier.

It takes his breath away. He stands, takes a step back, stares ...

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

Richie sits before a cadre of officials from the U.S. Attorneys Office in their suits and almost-identical ties. He's in serious trouble and knows it. As does Joe Lordi, who he's brought along.

ATTORNEY

That was a military transport plane. If there was heroin on board then someone in the military would have to be involved. Which means that even as it's fighting a war that has claimed the lives of 50,000 Americans, the military is using its planes to smuggle narcotics.

(pause)

That's how this morning's events were interpreted by General Easton in his call to me. That someone employed by the US Attorneys Office believes the US Army is now in the drug trafficking business, and is trying to prove it by desecrating the remains of young men who have given their lives in the defence of democracy.

RICHIE

There were drugs on that plane -

ATTORNEY

Shut the fuck up.

Richie does, but can't conceal the contempt he feels for these men who have never spent time on the street but act as if know more than him, and who are in the unfortunate organization of his world, his superiors.

ATTORNEY

Beyond that, accompanying the bodies of its fallen soldiers home, was this country's third highest authority, who was detained while an agent of his government searched his plane -

RICHIE

It wasn't his plane; he was on it -

ATTORNEY

- and found nothing.

INTERCUT - AIR FORCE BASE

The coffins they speak of are being opened in a hangar, the plastic body bags lifted out by a small group of black soldiers and set down next to them.

ATTORNEY V/O

Is it any wonder then, because of the actions of this one agent that the entire federal narcotics program is now in jeopardy of being dismantled as completely and enthusiastically as that C-3 transport?

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING OFFICE - CONTINUED

ATTORNEY

That's what you've accomplished, Mr. Roberts. Single-handedly.

RICHIE

I had information there was heroin on that plane.

ATTORNEY

From who?

Richie won't say who.

RICHIE

I had information.

ATTORNEY

Whose information?

INTERCUT - AIR FORCE BASE

False bottoms in the caskets creating 4-inch cavities are removed. Tightly-packed bricks of heroin are pulled out and transferred to duffel bags -

RICHIE V/O

I had information that the target of my investigation was bringing in a hundred kilos of pure heroin on that plane and I still believe it was there.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING OFFICE - CONTINUED

ATTORNEY

And that target is who? Henry Kissinger?

RICHIE

Frank Lucas.

No one in the room, except Richie himself, has ever heard the name. The federal men regard one another blankly.

ATTORNEY

Who? Who's Frank Lucas?
(no one seems to know)
Who's he work for? Which family?

RICHIE

He's not Italian. He's black.

Now there is an even deeper silence as the feds look to each other.

ATTORNEY

Is that supposed to be some kind of joke? You're this close to the end of your career in law enforcement and you're making fucking jokes?

RICHIE

I believe Frank Lucas controls most of the heroin trade nationwide, that he supplies the Italians, that he's cut out Corsican middlemen by dealing directly with the Chinese syndicates in Southeast Asia and that he uses US military planes and personnel to bring No. 4 heroin into this country.

INTERCUT - AIR FORCE BASE

The duffel bags are hoisted onto Jeeps as the body bags are returned to the coffins. The hangar door slides open and the jeeps drive off.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING OFFICE - CONTINUED

Richie is looking at faces that are still trying to make sense out of his ridiculous theory. Joe Lordi tries to come to his defense -

LORDI

Richie has a lot of experience.

ATTORNEY

Does he. And how many arrests has he made in this investigation?

RICHIE

I was told when I took this job, my mandate was real arrests.

ATTORNEY

Does that mean 'none?'

RICHIE

I have cases against most of Lucas's organization, but not him. If I start making arrests, I'll lose him.

ATTORNEY

(more to the others)

Frank's "organization."

RICHIE

That's right.

ATTORNEY

Start making arrests.

RICHIE

No one tells me when or when not to make -

ATTORNEY

No fucking nigger from Harlem has accomplished what the Mafia hasn't in a hundred years!

Silence. Richie knows he should just get up and leave while he still has a job. Instead, he offers -

RICHIE

You're right, you know what you're talking about. You know narcotics - sitting up here twelve floors above the street -

ATTORNEY

Joe, get this fucking kike out of my office.

Richie goes for him. Lordi struggles to hold him back while the attorney rather pretends to struggle against his men.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Lordi and Richie driving back in silence. Eventually -

LORDI

The guy was out of line. Forget it.
Keep doing what you're doing and I'll
keep them off your back.

Richie doesn't acknowledge that he's even heard him. Stares out at the darkness, listens to the hiss of the tires.

INT. STEPHEN CRANE PROJECTS - NJ - DAY

Shorty and two other Lucas brothers accompany a dealer up a flight of stairs.

DEALER

You're not upset, are you?

SHORTY

I'm curious who told you to do it.

DEALER

You know who. Where are we going?

SHORTY

You do everything he tells you? If he said, Jump off a roof, you'd do it?

DEALER

You are upset.

SHORTY

What if I told you?

DEALER

Told me what? Cut the stuff?

SHORTY

Jump off a roof.

EXT. STEPHEN CRANE PROJECTS - NJ - DAY

The dealer tries to dig his heels into the tar paper as the brothers drag him across the roof.

DEALER

I get the point.. I should check with you before I do anything out of the ordinary. I understand. This is funny, ha, ha, but -

They fling him from the edge, thirty floors above the ground, and don't even look down, just turn and leave.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Frank sits with his financial advisor, looking over a profit and loss statement.

ADVISOR

Your lunch is getting cold, Frank.

FRANK

I don't understand this.

ADVISOR

Let me explain it.

FRANK

No, I understand it. I don't understand how you could lose this much.

ADVISOR

The market's getting hammered by the war winding down.

FRANK

I'm not talking about the stocks. I'm looking at the bonds. Bonds should be secure.

ADVISOR

Well, some are. Yours are more speculative.

FRANK

Did I tell you to do that? Speculate?

ADVISOR

Would you prefer it in a savings account? You don't need me for that.

FRANK

No, I need you for this. To lose me money as fast as I can make it.

ADVISOR

If you want to be in equities, you
have to expect fluctuation.

FRANK

Shut the fuck up.

The man sighs, glances to the entrance where Shorty has
just come in.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Frank and Shorty emerge from the restaurant and approach
Shorty's driver, Eddie James, standing outside the car.

SHORTY

Give me the keys. Take a cab.

INT. SHORTY'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Now they can talk in private. Shorty drives.

SHORTY

I got the girls trying to remove
some of the quinine from what's left.

FRANK

That's not going to work.

SHORTY

Maybe we could add to it, bring it
back up to ten percent.

FRANK

Throw it out.

SHORTY

This is a lot of dope.

FRANK

It's no good. Dump it.

INT. NICKY BARNES'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

Nicky's penthouse looks like a set from a blaxploitation
film, an orgy of sex and drugs and loud music. Frank and
Shorty are led through it all by a bodyguard, Shorty waving
to various people; he's obviously been here before.

They're delivered to where Nicky and a group of friends sit
hunched over a mirrored coffee table streaked with lines of
coke. Nicky looks up, thrilled to see his new guests -

NICKY

Frank -

FRANK

We need to talk -

INT. STUDY - NICKY'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

Frank and Nicky come in to find a Kamasutra convention.

NICKY

Everybody out.

Nicky plops down on a couch. Lays out a couple more lines as the group gathers their things. Frank wipes at a modern leather chair with his handkerchief, throws it away and sits as the revelers leave.

NICKY

Close the door.

It closes. Nicky offers a rolled up hundred dollar straw. Frank shakes his head, no thanks.

NICKY

You talked to Zack. You want to hear more about The Council. Let me explain it to you -

But first, let me suck up a line of coke -

FRANK

That's not why I'm here.

Nicky glances up from the powder. No?

FRANK

Everybody's happy, Nicky. Zack, the Italians, the cops. Everybody. My fuckin accountant. Everybody except you.

NICKY

I'm happy.

FRANK

Then I don't understand. Why do you feel you have to take something that's perfectly good the way it is, and ruin it.

Nicky doesn't seem to know what he's talking about.

FRANK

Brand names mean something. Consumers buy them because they know what they're getting. They buy RCA, they know the company isn't going to try to fool them with an inferior product.

Frank's look to him says, Right? Nicky allows a shrug.

FRANK

Blue Magic is a brand name. It's as much a brand name as Ford. I own it. I stand behind it. I guarantee its quality, and people know that even if they don't know me anymore than they know the chairman of any big American corporation.

NICKY

What the fuck you talking about, Frank?

FRANK

What you're doing as far as I'm concerned when you cut my dope down to five percent, is copyright infringement.

That. That's what it is. Nicky nods, but -

NICKY

With all due respect, if I buy something, I can do whatever I want with it.

FRANK

No. Not unless you call it something else. You call it Blue Magic, that's misrepresentation.

They study one another.

FRANK

You don't need more money than you can make with it the way it is. No one does. At a certain point it's just greed.

NICKY

That's your opinion. And it's very narrow-minded.

FRANK
That doesn't make it wrong.

NICKY
You want me to call it something else?

FRANK
I have to insist.

NICKY
Fine. I'll call it Red Magic.

FRANK
That's fine.

NICKY
Black Magic.

FRANK
Cut it down to nothing, tie a bow
around it and call it Shit, I don't
care. Just don't let me catch you
doing this again.

NICKY
Catch me? Insist? Infringement?
I don't like these words as much as
words like please, thank you, sorry to
bother you, may I. These are better
words. You should try one of those,
you come to my house without an
invitation.

Nicky waits to hear one. Frank remains silent. Nicky nods,
Fine, okay, but it's more like he's saying, We'll see.

INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

Frank pulls a girl off Shorty's lap and points him toward the
door. Nicky watches them leave.

INT. SHORTY'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

They drive in silence. Eventually -

FRANK
I don't want you over there any more.
And the next time he wants something,
tell him no ... "no, thank you."

Shorty doesn't like it, but nods. Suddenly his face is
illuminated by a bright light reflecting in his rear view
mirror. An unmarked car behind them. Frank looks back.

FRANK

It's all right, pull over. What are they going to do? Give us a ticket?

But Shorty isn't as calm. Pulls over and watches Trupo and his partner climb out of their car and approach.

SHORTY

Frank? I got something in the trunk.

FRANK

What, a gun? So what?

SHORTY

Dope ... a lot of it ...

FRANK

You're driving me around in a car with dope in it?

Frank looks at his brother in stunned disbelief. The SIU detectives arrive.

TRUPO

Get out of the car.

The Lucases climb out. Put their hands on the hood without being asked. Are patted down. No weapons.

TRUPO

Keys in the car?

Shorty nods. Trupo reaches in the driver's side window, takes the keys from the ignition, takes them around to the trunk. Frank and Shorty exchange a glance as they hear it open. Then silence, until -

TRUPO

Hey, Frank, you want to come over here a minute?

Frank joins him at the back of the car. Looks at four kilos of heroin in the trunk.

TRUPO

So what do you think?

Frank reaches in, takes one of the bricks, sets it apart from the other three. That will be Trupo's payment.

TRUPO

I have a better idea. Give me cash.

FRANK

I don't know what I got on me.

Frank reaches for his wallet to see how much he has on him.

TRUPO

No. From that.

Trupo gestures to the brick. Frank shakes his head no, but only because he isn't sure what Trupo means.

TRUPO

No? You don't want to do that?
You'd rather I took it all?

FRANK

No, I'm trying to understand what
you mean.

TRUPO

This is what I mean: Right now it's
my property. Not all of it, just the
one. I'm giving it to you to sell on
consignment. Once you've done that,
you give me the money from it.

Frank stares at him. Trupo wants to be his drug partner.

TRUPO

K?

Frank is too stunned to answer. Trupo calls to his partner:

TRUPO

Let's go.

The cops leave him with the dope. Climb into their car and
drive off. Frank stares after them, then finally shuts the
trunk.

INT. NEWARK STREET JAIL - DAY

The Lucas Table of Organization has been fleshed out to
include not just everyone's name, but how each is related,
who's blood and who's an in-law. Richie points to one.

RICHIE

Shorty's driver. Cousin, in-law,
what. Do we know?

SPEARMAN

He's not related. Knew Shorty back in
Greensboro, racing cars.

RICHIE
He's not related?

Spearman shakes his head no.

EXT. RACE TRACK - NIGHT

Stock cars bank around a turn and thunder down a straight-away. As they blur past the view shifts and refocuses on two men - one black, one white - coming down the steps of the grandstands.

Richie lowers his binoculars. Glances from Spearman to Jones and Abruzzo, sitting in different areas of the crowds. Gets up.

EXT. RACE TRACK - LATER

In the parking lot the two men approach a car. The black man - Shorty's driver, Eddie James - gets the trunk open and takes out a bag, exchanges it for one given to him by the white buyer.

SPEARMAN
Don't move.

The men see him kneeling with a gun aimed at them and immediately take off in different directions. Abruzzo is closest to the route the white one takes and gives chase with Jones. Richie and Spearman go after Eddie.

The stock cars roar past again and dive into the turn. Eddie hops a fence onto the track and crosses it between the cars hurtling by.

Richie follows ahead of Spearman, makes it to the infield and chases Eddie past crews and officials and onto the track at the far side. The race cars dive into the turn, narrowly missing them. As Eddie tries to scale the far fence, Richie grabs him from behind and pulls him down.

INT. BASEMENT, OLD NEWARK JAIL - DAY

Richie sits with Eddie James in the basement of the building.

RICHIE
I got you on a wire tap, on surveillance, with the powder and with the money. What else do I need? Can you think of anything? I can't.

Eddie knows he's going to jail unless he can give somebody up. Looks around. The place looks like a torture chamber to him.

EDDIE

What the fuck is this place?

Richie doesn't say. Eddie regards the gallows standing in the shadows at the far end of the room. Eventually -

EDDIE

What can you do for me?

RICHIE

What can I do for you? What can I do for you if what?

EDDIE

You know.

RICHIE

You think you know somebody I don't know about? I doubt it.

EDDIE

I could give you Clive.

RICHIE

Clive? Clive gave me you.

Eddie's look says, *What?* Richie shrugs, *Sorry, you're going to have to do better than that.* Eddie thinks about it, mumbles something too low for Richie to make out.

RICHIE

What?

EDDIE

I said I drive for a guy.

RICHIE

You drive for Shorty Lucas; so what? Shorty I got on a tap, too. All the Country Boys. They're all going to jail. You'll be together.

EDDIE

I'm not.

RICHIE

Going to jail? I'm afraid so.

EDDIE

A Country Boy. A Lucas. They won't talk to you. I might.

RICHIE

You're not listening. I said they're all going to jail as it is. I got them all and now I got you.

EDDIE

Frank? You got something on Frank? I don't think so.

RICHIE

You don't?

EDDIE

I could get you something.

Everything since targeting Eddie was intended to lead to this point, but Richie tries not to show it.

RICHIE

Frank Lucas.
(Eddie nods)
Like what?

EDDIE

Shorty's the only one Frank deals with and Shorty's hands on. Hands in the powder itself. When there's something to discuss, Frank talks to him. No one else. Only Shorty and only in person. I drive Shorty wherever it is.

Richie's look says, Maybe that's something, maybe not, when, in fact, it's *everything*.

RICHIE

If. When. . Maybe. Wherever. None of that means anything.

EDDIE

They meet maybe once a month, like any business, to go over things.

RICHIE

Uh-huh.

EDDIE

Different places.

RICHIE

Uh-huh.

EDDIE

I could let you know when and where.

Richie's nod allows, Maybe that would be worth knowing.

RICHIE

You'd testify when the time comes?

EDDIE

I'm testifying *now*. I'm telling you what you don't know.

RICHIE

I'd need you in court. What I say doesn't matter. Jury needs to hear what you say. I need a witness and I need powder.

Now Eddie thinks long and hard. Testifying in court is a lot worse than informing. Worse in terms of his chances of survival.

EDDIE

You know what they'd do me?

RICHIE

Probably throw you off a roof.

EDDIE

Throw me off the fuckin roof.

Richie knows. Nods. Eddie's probably been up there with them himself on occasion.

EDDIE

You get me a job and a house somewhere, Wyoming or some fuckin place, witness-whatever-it-is?

RICHIE

It's not up to me. I can keep you out of jail, that's all I can promise.

Eddie runs it all around his brain, knows he's fucked either way. Finally nods.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A rural highway stretching past farmland.

INT. SHORTY'S CAR - MOVING

Eddie James glances in the rear view mirror, sees in it Shorty in the back seat, and, out the back window, the car that's following them.

INT. RICHIE'S CAR - SAME TIME

Richie keeps Shorty's car in sight ahead. Glances in his rear view mirror at the cars following him, his detectives.

EXT. FARM - DAY

The detectives' cars - and there are several of them - are parked on a dirt road by a stand of trees.

Richie peers through binoculars at Shorty's car parked next to a barn, and Frank's car pulling up next to it.

Frank gets out. Discusses something with his brother, then crosses to some other men and talks to them.

He returns to his car. Opens his trunk. Takes out a bag, and from it, cash. Begins counting it out on the hood as the barn doors swing open and a semi-truck backs out. Frank hands the money over, then walks over with Shorty to take a look at the truck. It's full of live turkeys ...

EXT. HARLEM - DAY

Like Bumpy used to do every Thanksgiving, Frank and his brothers hand out hundreds of freshly-butchered turkeys to the poor.

INT. FRANK'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

A TV: Mo Dean sitting stoically behind her husband John as he gives the testimony that will bring the Nixon administration to an end.

In the kitchen meanwhile, Julie and the other Lucas wives help Frank's mother prepare Thanksgiving dinner.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Out back, Frank has gathered his brothers for a meeting while his nieces and nephews play.

FRANK

I'm thinking leaving town for a while. I'm tired every time I turn around there's another hand out. Paying cops is one thing.

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)

I been doing it since I was sixteen.
This is something else, this Special
Investigations Unit. They think they
are special.

EZELL

They're fucking crooks.

FRANK

If I leave, are things going to fall
apart? Is everybody is going to start
living large and forget they got jobs?

SHORTY

The business almost runs itself,
Frank.

FRANK

No, it doesn't.

Shorty shrugs, Whatever you say. To all of them -

FRANK

Do I need to be concerned?

(to Shorty)

Do I need to worry the minute I'm
gone, you're over at Nicky's with a
girl in your lap and your nose in
powder?

LEEVON

Where you going?

Frank doesn't answer. He's still waiting for Shorty to tell
him he won't act like a fool. Shorty finally offers a sober
shake of the head he'll behave himself in Frank's absence.

FRANK

I bought some land back home -

EXT. NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

A 5,000-acre ranch from high overhead.

FRANK V/O

Some cattle. Horses. Sheep.

A horse and rider gallop past hundreds of grazing Angus
cattle. In the Western saddle sits Frank in jeans, boots,
hat - a gentleman farmer surveying his spread.

The place is paradise. Pastures, streams, trees, barn,
stables, riding ring, ranch house. A car kicking up dust
comes up the long drive.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Julie limps out onto the porch in stiff new cowboy boots. Sets down a tray of iced tea.

JULIE

I have to take these off.

FRANK

They're not going to get broke in you don't wear them.

JULIE

They're the wrong size.

FRANK

No, they're not.

She hands Zack a glass of iced tea and a long-suffering look.

ZACK

Thanks, Julie.

She limps back inside. Zack and Frank stare out at the perfect pastoral view and sip their tea.

FRANK

How long can you stay?

ZACK

I wouldn't mind staying a day or two, long as I don't have to dig post holes or anything.

FRANK

You like to fish?

ZACK

I like to eat fish.

Frank points off to one of the streams on the property.

EXT. STREAM - LATER

They're fishing. The setting is idyllic. But something's troubling Zack.

FRANK

What's is it?

ZACK

They indicted Frank Matthews.

Frank is stunned.

ZACK

Not only that. It's worse. Two days after the Grand Jury handed it down, he disappeared.

FRANK

What does that mean? Disappeared.

ZACK

Nobody knows. He went to Africa somebody said. Zaire or some fuckin place. Others are saying the guineas were worried about what he might say and killed him. Dumped him.

(pause)

I don't know what's going on, but I'm concerned I'm next.

Frank studies him. Eventually -

FRANK

What're you going to do?

ZACK

I don't know. Leave the country?

He glances away to the water. Shrugs. Reels in his line.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

An iron "L" above the main gate - like Kane's "K" outside Xanadu - stark against the night sky.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

Unseen frogs and crickets croak and chirp down by one of the streams.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Julie looks like she hasn't slept in days, propped up in bed in the dark, listening to the cacophony of nature outside while Frank sleeps blissfully beside her.

She lays back, determined not to let the night creatures keep her awake any longer. As she closes her eyes, a rooster crows as loud as if it were in the room.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Frank's trying to teach her to ride. She has no natural ability, and her horse knows it. She slides down one side of the saddle, then the other, barely hanging on as the horse trots with a punishing gait.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Frank comes in with an armful of wood, throws a log in the fireplace, sits down in his favorite old cracked leather chair, puts his feet up, picks up the local paper.

JULIE

I'm not a cowgirl.

Frank glances up. Julie stands before him in a low-cut dress and heels, looking like the beauty queen he married. But there's a suitcase next to her.

EXT. MOTT STREET - DAY

Richie's got an apron on, vending hot dogs from a cart down in Chinatown, watching the "nurse" in her shop while Abruzzo tries to attach a slave to her line atop a phone pole.

VOICE

Gimme a dog.

Richie turns. He doesn't recognize the customer, but it's Trupo.

RICHIE

Everything?

TRUPO

Oh, yeah. Everything.

Richie sets about making it. Trupo glances up at the guy on the phone pole, and back down at the hot dog vender.

TRUPO

Heard you flipped one of the Country Boys.

Richie hesitates with the mustard ... then paints some on.

TRUPO

If that's true that's quite a break. That's big time. Frank Lucas is big time. A little more -
(sauerkraut)
I'll tell you when - that's good.

Richie hands him the dog and a napkin.

TRUPO

Is it true? You're that close to Frank?

RICHIE

Something to drink?

Trupo studies him. Then smiles benevolently.

TRUPO

We should be working together. You should tell us what you know - we'll share what we know and we'll get him. Yeah? Coke.

Richie gets him a can of Coke.

RICHIE

Anything else?

TRUPO

Yeah. Directions. Where am I?

RICHIE

You're on Mott Street.

TRUPO

Mott Street? But Mott Street's in Manhattan. How could that be if you're here?

RICHIE

Two dollars.

TRUPO

Here's the thing when you come over here. Not every other cop in the city knows you. You wander in someplace in the middle of something, someone could make a mistake. Someone could get hurt. Right? Two dollars?

Trupo takes out his wallet, extracts two dollars from it and hands them to Richie.

TRUPO

Thanks. Looks good.

He takes a bite and walks off.

EXT. NEW YORK - DAY

Frank and Julie, back from their trip to the North Carolina ranch, sit in silence in the back of a car approaching their New York apartment.

FRANK

Keep going.

He's seen something ahead: Trupo's partner standing outside the building like a doorman waiting for a tip.

EXT. REGENCY HOTEL - LATER

The car pulls up in front of the Regency. A doorman who'll be satisfied with a lot smaller gratuity than the SIU, helps Frank and Julie with their luggage. They disappear inside.

INT. SUITE - THE REGENCY - NIGHT

Frank stands at the window of a nice suite looking down at the street below. When he speaks, it's soft enough that he could be talking to himself.

FRANK

Bumpy hardly ever went out at a certain point. He stayed in, read, watched television, played chess.

(pause)

I thought he chose to lead a quiet life. He didn't. He couldn't go out without something happening.

JULIE

We can still go out.

FRANK

Where? How?

He looks back out the window as if expecting to see Trupo or some other cop down there.

JULIE

Why don't you just pay them?

FRANK

I do pay them. I pay them all. Cops, accountants, lawyers, who don't I pay? Everybody. I pay them a fortune it doesn't matter. It doesn't satisfy them. The more you pay, the more they expect ... They always want more.

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - NIGHT

They emerge from a service elevator. Come past laundry carts. Past the hotel kitchen and out the back door like deadbeats sneaking out on their bill.

EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

Frank's car rounds a corner and approaches Small's just as Nicky Barnes and his entourage climb out of theirs and enter the club. Frank groans to himself. To Doc -

FRANK

Keep going.

INT. CHINESE TAKE-OUT PLACE - NIGHT

Frank, Julie and Doc wait for their order under harsh fluorescent lights.

JULIE

I'm going to wait in the car.

DOC

Go ahead, Frank. I'll wait for the food.

FRANK

You can carry it all? We ordered a lot.

DOC

Go with Julie.

Frank nods. Hands Doc a couple twenties. Julie's already out the door.

FRANK

Don't forget that yellow sauce.

EXT. STREET - HARLEM - NIGHT

Julie's half a block ahead by the time Frank emerges from the Chinese place. She waits outside the locked car. He arrives and realizes he can't open it.

FRANK

Doc's got the keys. Let's go back.

JULIE

The lights give me a headache, you go.

FRANK

I'm not leaving you on the street.

JULIE

Get the keys, Frank, it's cold.

He turns back. Sees two young junkies coming down the street toward them and decides to stay with Julie. One of the junkie's hands goes under his jacket and Frank groans.

JULIE

What.

The junkie's hand reappears with a gun in it and Frank nods to himself, Of course.

JUNKIE

Get in the doorway.

INT. CHINESE PLACE - CONTINUED

The cook dumps sizzling vegetables into a take-out container, sticks it in a bag. Doc hands over the money.

EXT. STREET - HARLEM - CONTINUED

Frank hands over the money in his wallet, couple thousand.

FRANK

(to Julie)

Even the junkies. I pay the fuckin junkies, too. Everybody.

JUNKIE

The ring.

FRANK

That's my wedding ring.

JUNKIE

Hers, too.

Over the junkies' shoulders, Frank sees Doc coming out of the Chinese place carrying two bags. Watches him stop, set the bags down, kneel and take aim.

Frank takes Julie's ring off, but keeps a hand on hers. Suddenly, as he yanks her down, several quick shots ring out. Both the junkies go down. As the one with the gun hits the pavement, it goes off, the bullet ripping through Frank's hand.

He rolls onto his side, groaning, reaches for the ring on the ground with his good hand. Doc is there then, like Frank was when Bumpy fell. Helps him up and hustles him and Julie into the car.

The car speeds away, leaving the bleeding junkie thieves and the leaking bags of Chinese food on the sidewalk.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An emergency room clerk pecks at a typewriter.

CLERK

Insurance.

JULIE

We don't have insurance.

CLERK

Credit card.

JULIE

I'm paying cash

CLERK

Billing address.

Paramedics come past with another Saturday night bleeder. We follow them into the emergency room, but then tag after an intern with x-rays and a yarmulke, following him to where Frank lies on a bed. The young intern sits.

INTERN

You get to stay a while.

FRANK

I can't stay. I got things to do.

INTERN

You can get along all right with one hand? You don't need this one?

Frank looks at his injured hand. He can't move the fingers.

FRANK

Surgery?

The intern nods matter-of-factly as he looks at the x-rays.

INTERN

You've injured it before.

He points to little grey lines on the x-ray, bones that haven't healed right. Frank nods.

FRANK

In the war.

EXT. EAST HARLEM - NIGHT

A late-edition paper on a rack shows a photograph of Zack Robinson and his attorney, Gino Gallina, on the courthouse steps, and the headline: *Grand Jury Indicts Harlem Coke King Zack Robinson.*

A car comes past, pulls to the curb. Zack and Gino climb out, take a couple of suitcases from the trunk, and enter -

INT. EAST HARLEM RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

They cross through the restaurant and into the kitchen where a couple of Italian wise guys eat dinner at a private table.

INT. ANOTHER CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

The Italians in front. One of them fiddling with the radio, finding a ball game. Zack sits alone in back.

EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT

A glimpse of money before a bag is zipped up and put in the trunk. The Italians shake Zack's hand. He climbs aboard a fishing boat.

EXT. BOAT / OCEAN - NIGHT

Lights on shore shimmer in the distance. They're several miles out, the engine of the boat droning. Zack peers out at the blackness ahead and finally begins to relax. A gun in a hand appears behind his head. As it fires -

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Julie screeches around an underground lot looking for a place to park -

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Carrying a grocery bag, she trots down a corridor that seems to stretch off forever -

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Frank proves to a physical therapist he can move his fingers.

THERAPIST

That's good. That's progress.

Julie bursts into the room completely out of breath.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

She takes clean clothes for Frank from the bag, sets them on the bed. She hasn't settled down much. They're alone.

FRANK

How do you know he's dead?

JULIE

Everybody says so. His lawyer - your lawyer - took his money and let them kill him.

FRANK

Let who?

JULIE

I don't know *who*. Who shot you?

FRANK

They were nobody.

JULIE

Were they?

Now Frank isn't sure.

JULIE

What difference does it make? We're leaving. From here. We're not going home. Everything's in the car.

FRANK

What's in the car?

JULIE

Clothes, passports, money.

FRANK

How much?

JULIE

Everything from the house.

FRANK

In the car?

JULIE

Yes.

FRANK

Who's with the car? Doc?

JULIE

No one.

FRANK

No one? Where's the car?

JULIE

In the parking lot.

FRANK

With ten million dollars in it?

JULIE

I didn't count it.

FRANK

Are you crazy? Take it home.

JULIE

I'm not going home. We're going to the airport. From here. We're leaving the country.

Frank stares at her. The thought is almost inconceivable.

FRANK

To where?

JULIE

Anywhere.

FRANK

No, but where? Where would we go?

Frank tries to imagine living somewhere else, and discards each place almost as fast he thinks of it.

FRANK

I can't think of anyplace I'd feel right.

JULIE

Frank, Zack's dead.

Silence. This is all too sudden for Frank. He's not sure what to do. She sits. Tries to settle down.

FRANK

Who didn't like Zack? Everybody liked Zack? Who doesn't like me? No one, do they?

JULIE

Nicky doesn't like you very much.

FRANK

You think Nicky had this done?

She doesn't know. The whole thing is depressing.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Their car passes under a JFK highway sign, takes the ramp.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Cargo planes on the tarmac alongside the road pass behind Frank as he sits in the passenger seat, wrestling with what they're about to do.

FRANK

Pull over.

Julie doesn't want to, but does as she's told and listens to the engine idle.

FRANK

When I called my brothers and told them to come to New York, they didn't ask why, they just came. They trusted me. They came up, brought their families, went to work, bought houses, put my nieces and nephews in school, brought my cousins and their families up. That's how the business grew to what it is. My brothers and cousins, their wives, kids - hundreds of people who depend on me. What are they going to do if I leave? What am I going to do? Where am I going to go? Spain? China? Some fuckin place. We can't even figure out where. Where're we gonna go?

A plane roars overhead. Fades. It's quiet again.

FRANK

This is where I'm from. This is where my family is. My business, my mother. I can't live someplace else.

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)

I don't even sleep well when I'm out
of the country.

(pause)

I'm an American.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER - DAWN

The Statue of Liberty in the pre-dawn light mist seems to rise from the waters of the Hudson River.

EXT. FRANK'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Frank and Julie escort Mrs. Lucas - wearing her Sunday church dress, shoes and hat - from the house to the car. Doc holds open the back door for them.

EXT. BAPTIST CHURCH - LATER - MORNING

Most of the Lucas clan - brothers, cousins, their families - are arriving for Sunday service, climbing from their cars, chatting on the steps of the church.

Eddie James, chauffeuring Shorty and his wife, pulls in. Frank and Julie and Doc arrive moments later and help Mrs. Lucas up the steps.

INT. BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Frank leads his mother to her customary pew, gets settled, leans over the wooden back to where Shorty sits.

FRANK

We need to go out there later.

Shorty nods. In the pew behind him sits Eddie James.

INT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunday paper on the kitchen table. Richie on the phone.

SPEARMAN V/O

Eddie called. Frank and Shorty are getting together - he *thinks* to move something.

RICHIE

When?

EXT. RICHIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Atop a phone pole outside Richie's apartment, someone has attached a slave to the wires.

SPEARMAN V/O

He doesn't know. After church
sometime.

RICHIE V/O

Does he know where?

SPEARMAN V/O

He's guessing.

RICHIE V/O

Where?

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER - DAY

Several cars including Richie's, marked and unmarked, race along the Turnpike, hoping to reach the destination and be in position well before the Lucas brothers arrive.

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Doc pulls up the drive. Frank and Julie emerge from the back seat, climb the porch steps and disappear inside the house.

EXT. ARMY BASE - DAY

The detectives and State Police have set up off the main road. From here, in the trees, they peer at the perimeter of the base through binoculars, and wait.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Upstairs, Julie unclasps her necklace of pearls, sets it next to a jewelry box, pulls a couple of pins from her hair and lets it fall.

FRANK

I have to go out.

In the vanity mirror she can see Frank unlacing his dress shoes.

JULIE

Where?

EXT. ARMY BASE - CONTINUED

Richie focuses his binoculars on the occasional truck or Jeep crossing beyond the fencing. It's quiet on the base today.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - CONTINUED

And quiet here as Frank exchanges his dress shoes for a pair of more sturdy ones. The only sounds around him are those of suburban domesticity: birds, a dog somewhere, a distant lawn mower.

Julie reaches behind her back to unzip her dress. As the zipper comes down - there's a sudden roar of engines and squeal of tires outside -

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

A swarm of cars surrounds the house. NYPD, SIU, DEA. Guns drawn, they take positions and bark at Doc to get down on the ground.

EXT. ARMY BASE - DAY

Richie shifts the binoculars to the highway for some sign of Frank's or Shorty's car. Everything's calm.

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Here it's chaos. A suitcase sails out of an upstairs window and splits open as it hits the lawn, hundreds of thousands of dollars spilling out onto the grass as several cops approach the front door.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

They come in, fan out, find no one downstairs. Climb to the second floor, kick open doors, reach the master bedroom where Frank and Julie wait, unarmed, hands in clear sight.

They're escorted downstairs. Trupo and a couple other detectives stay to search the bedroom, pulling open drawers, throwing clothes from the closets.

One picks up an invitation to a United Nations ball, discards it. Another finds a safety-deposit box key in a sock drawer and puts it in his pocket.

EXT. ARMY BASE - CONTINUED

It's beginning to feel to Richie like a snipe hunt. Maybe the brothers changed their minds. Or maybe Eddie James is a liar. He exchanges a look with Spearman.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Frank is escorted back upstairs. Every room has been torn apart. He's brought before the SIU detectives who wait for the NYPD cops to leave the room. Then -

TRUPO

Where's the money, Frank?

FRANK

Where's the search warrant?

Trupo regards Frank for a long moment ...

TRUPO

Where is it?

FRANK

In the suitcase I threw out the window.

TRUPO

The rest of it.

FRANK

The rest of what? That was it.

TRUPO

Shit money.

FRANK

That's five hundred thousand dollars -

TRUPO

Where's the rest!

FRANK

That's it! Why would I keep more than that here?

TRUPO

Get him out.

Frank's taken out again. Trupo steps over debris scanning the room for places they haven't look.

TRUPO

Check all the heating grates.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LATER

Downstairs, Frank and Julie listen to the sounds of the search continuing upstairs: things being ripped from the walls, the walls themselves being opened, glass breaking.

Abruptly then, silence.

INT. UPSTAIRS - SAME TIME

Moving across the debris on the floor to a closet. A chair. Trupo perched on it, head above the edge of the trap door to the attic crawl space.

His flashlight slowly rakes across stacks and stacks of cash - 10 million dollars of it - nestled between the 2x4 bracing timbers.

EXT. ARMY BASE - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun's going down, the detectives sitting under the trees, waiting around for Richie to admit what they all know - that nothing's going to happen here today.

They glance to the sound of an motor. Spearman's car coming along the dirt road. He parks, climbs out, approaches the boss..

RICHIE

What's Eddie got to say for himself?
He heard wrong?

SPEARMAN

Frank's been arrested.

Richie stares.

INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

The safety-deposit key and the suitcase containing the \$485,000 gratuity is among the seized property being inventoried in the evidence room but certainly not the \$10 million taken from the attic. Trupo signs the official itemized form as the other SIU detectives look on.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - EVENING

Frank, still in his Sunday clothes, sits with Julie.

JULIE

In the closet.

FRANK
Above the closet. The attic.

JULIE
I know. That's what I mean.

FRANK
Nothing?

Julie shakes her head no.

FRANK
They stole it. Those motherfuckers
stole my money.

Frank pushes away from the table and yells at the two-way
mirror:

FRANK
You mother fuckers. You robbed me.
You came to rob me. It wasn't an
arrest, it was armed robbery.

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL - DAY

Richie sits staring at his Table of Organization. Lordi
appears and watches him. Richie regards his boss a moment
before -

RICHIE
You hear what he's saying?
(Lordi has)
I think he's telling the truth.
I think they did it.

Lordi isn't as sure, or at least doesn't indicate he is.

RICHIE
They knew I was close and wanted one
last paycheck before I brought him in.

LORDI
Come on, Richie, ten million dollars?

RICHIE
Why would he lie?

LORDI
Why does anybody lie?

RICHIE
He took a polygraph.

LORDI

So what.

RICHIE

I'm just saying, he took it and he passed it.

Lordi's shrug says, That still means nothing, but even he knows better.

RICHIE

You know what they got on him?
Unlicensed firearm which they probably planted. He'll do six months and they pocket ten million dollars.

Silence. Then -

RICHIE

I don't think I can do this any more.
What's the point? Nobody wants it to end; everybody makes too much from it.

LORDI

They're not all dirty.

RICHIE

That's what I used to say.

Lordi studies Richie for a long moment ...

LORDI

I should start looking for somebody else?

RICHIE

(pause)

Maybe.

LORDI

I'd rather not.

Richie isn't sure what to do. Shakes his head as if he still can't believe it:

RICHIE

They took his money.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Richie sits in the back of the courtroom watching the rubber-stamp proceeding of the so-called case against Frank Lucas. None of the SIU detectives are present.

JUDGE

Mr. Lucas, in 1967, you were placed on probation.

Frank sits with his attorney, Gino Gallino, at the defendant's table. Both seem calm, as if knowing what will happen here and that it won't be too painful.

JUDGE

Violation of any of the terms of that probation carries a mandatory term of six months in prison and an extension of the probation for two years. You understand that.

FRANK

Yes, sir.

JUDGE

How do you plea to the charge against you?

FRANK

Guilty, Your Honor.

JUDGE

The defendant's plea is noted. You are hereby reprimanded to the custody of the State of New -

INT. FEDCO - DAY

The wall of televisions show images of American troops beginning to withdraw from Vietnam.

INT. TRETON PRISON - DAY

Frank is escorted along a cellblock by a prison guard. The cells they pass are co-occupied. His is private. He comes in, sets bedding atop a bare mattress.

FRANK

Would you tell the warden I'd like a word with him at his convenience?

The door closes.

INT. CAFETERIA, TRENTON - MORNING

Frank works in the kitchen, scrubbing pots and pans in a cloud of steam.

GUARD

Lucas.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Frank, still wearing his apron, sits before the warden, watching him eat his breakfast.

WARDEN

Have you seen this? I'm very proud of this.

He hands Frank a copy of the prison newspaper.

WARDEN

That's entirely done by the men. The writing, editing, photography, layout, printing, everything.

Frank takes a cursory look at it; it means nothing to him.

WARDEN

They enjoy it, too. In fact, working for the paper is the most coveted job at Trenton.

FRANK

What's so good about it?

WARDEN

Frank. Freedom of the press. Freedom of the press is sacrosanct even here.

(pause)

What do you think? Interested?

FRANK

Phone calls aren't monitored there?

WARDEN

In a newspaper office? Heavens no.

The thought of such compromise to the fourth estate is almost profane to him.

FRANK

What would it cost me?

WARDEN

Twenty thousand a month.

EXT. TRENTON - DAY

A guard leads Julie down a walkway to where the warden plays catch with his son on a patch of lawn outside his house.

WARDEN

Mrs. Lucas?

JULIE

How do you do?

The warden tries not to look at her purse. Takes off his mitt and hands it to the guard. To his boy -

WARDEN

I'll be right back.

He disappears into the house with Julie.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE, TRENTON - DAY

It really is a newspaper office. Inmates typing, others cropping photographs, laying out pages, a couple conducting interviews (and business) on the secure phones.

Frank, apparently, is more interested than the rest in world news. Perched on the editor's desk, he watches the office television - the continued pullout of American troops.

INT. SOUL BROTHERS BAR, BANGKOK - SAME TIME

Another television here. The same images playing behind Ike on the phone at the bar.

FRANK V/O

I'm watching the news. Where the hell is everyone going?

IKE

The war's over.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE, TRENTON - INTERCUT

FRANK

Just like that?

IKE V/O

We been here since 1961, Frank.

FRANK

I haven't.

This is an unfortunate turn of events for Frank. The war helped his business thrive..

FRANK

We leaving anybody behind? Any troops at all?

IKE V/O

I don't think so.

FRANK

We're just going to leave the country to the Communists?

IKE V/O

Pretty much like we found it.

FRANK

That's great, what the fuck am I supposed to do now?

IKE V/O

You? What about me? I haven't been home in seven years. There's *nothing* for me there.

FRANK

Can we still get something out?

IKE V/O

Now? I don't think so. It's pretty chaotic.

FRANK

Maybe that's good. Lot of planes coming back.

IKE V/O

True.

FRANK

Let me give you a number. It's secure.

IKE V/O

You move? Where are you?

FRANK

My office.

INT. YMCA - NIGHT

Eddie James comes in to find Richie bench-pressing his weight. He stands off to the side and watches, waits to be noticed. Both the workout and Eddie's appearance seem routine.

INT. YMCA - LATER

Old tiled indoor pool. The place is deserted except for Richie and Eddie.

EDDIE

I drove him out to the Bronx this morning to Chemical Bank -

EXT/INT. CHEMICAL BANK - DAY

Standing outside Shorty's car, Eddie tries to see inside the bank past the glare on the windows.

EDDIE V/O

Meets with the president, or vice president whoever he is, in an office.

INT. YMCA POOL - CONTINUED

EDDIE

Then he wants to go down to Chinatown. I take him to Chinatown.

EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

Standing outside the car again, Eddie squints at the glare coming off a window across the street here.

EDDIE V/O

Where he meets with some Chinese woman. They make some calls. Pass the phone back and forth.

INT. YMCA POOL - CONTINUED

EDDIE

Then to East Harlem.

EXT. EAST HARLEM - DAY

Eddie outside the car again, trying to see into the neighborhood Italian restaurant he's parked in front of.

EDDIE V/O

He's never been to East Harlem. Who has who isn't Italian? He meets with a guy, more phone calls. Then -

INT. YMCA POOL - CONTINUED

Eddie seems uncertain what he did next.

RICHIE

Then?

EDDIE

Then I took him home. Then I got something to eat. Then I took a nap. Then I got up. Then -

RICHIE

Nothing else with Shorty.

Eddie shakes his head. Shrugs. Maybe all that means something to Richie; it doesn't to him.

EDDIE

Can I go?

RICHIE

You write everything down? Times, addresses?

EDDIE

What for? I just told you.

RICHIE

What did I say before? They need to hear it from you, not me.

EDDIE

I don't remember the addresses.

RICHIE

That's why you have to write them down. Eddie, I can almost make a case based on what you just said. Shorty's doing what Frank tells him. Frank is still in business. He's sitting in Trenton but he's still in business.

EDDIE

You want me to write down everywhere single place I go.

RICHIE
(patiently)

No ... everywhere *Shorty* goes.

It seems like a lot of unnecessary work to Eddie, but if that's what Richie wants - fine - he'll do it from now on.

EDDIE
I could use some money.

EXT. JFK - DAY

A commercial cargo plane touches down on a runway.

EXT/INT. WAREHOUSE, JFK - DAY

Merchandise is off-loaded from planes and carted into a customs warehouse where imported goods from all over the world are held for processing.

We follow one shipment already cleared out to the docks where it's loaded into a semi-trailer. The rear doors of the truck next to it are pushed shut and locked and that one pulls out.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The same truck, seen from high above, moves along a highway.

EXT/INT. WAREHOUSE, NY - DAY

Another loading dock. The same truck backed-in, being relieved of its cargo: boxed television sets.

We follow them into and through the warehouse until a hand cart with plumbing supplies passes by, then follow after it and the worker pushing it. He approaches a set metal doors and pushes past them into -

INT. FEDCO DISCOUNT STORE - CONTINUOUS

The retail floor of Fedco. The man with the faucet boxes pushing his cart to the bath department. He stops next to a line of sinks, the spot Bumpy Johnson dropped dead, and begins stocking a shelf.

Beyond the sinks, the electronic wall of TVs shows the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, the last of the ambassadorial staff clambering onto helicopters lifting off the roof ...

INT. FEDCO WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A night watchman watches a bank of security screens that show: A truck backing up to the loading dock, two black men climbing down and sliding open an unlocked corrugated door, striding through the warehouse to the stack of boxed TVs, loading them onto carts they push back toward the dock.

The night watchman finally gets up out of his chair, gathers his jacket and lunchbox, ejects the security tapes from four VCRs, drops them into his bag and calmly walks away.

INT. MECHANICS GARAGE - NIGHT

Ike looks on as sixty packages of Double UO Globe heroin are pulled from the television sets and stacked neatly on a work bench.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Shorty regards himself in a 3-way mirror. The suit is a good cut but might work better without the lime green tie. This doesn't occur to him. A figure drifts past unnoticed by Shorty in the background of the reflection. Richie.

EXT/INT. STREET / BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Abruzzo hangs out across the street from a beauty parlor where Julie, head back in a sink, is being shampooed by a black beautician with red hair.

Red Top finishes the rinse, wraps a towel around Julie's head, and excuses herself to sign for a delivery of hair products wheeled in the front door.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Looking like a bum, which isn't hard, Jones washes the windshield of a car stopped at a light while keeping an eye on Leevon Lucas in his corner grocery ringing up a sale on the register.

EXT/INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

From a parked car, Spearman watches John Paul Lucas dealing with customers in his dry cleaners shop.

EXT/INT. STREET / BEAUTY PARLOR - CONTINUED

Abruzzo watches Julie leaf through a magazine as Red Top circles her chair, combing at her wet hair, snipping at it with scissors.

A medical supply truck pulls up out front. A guy climbs down, comes around back, loads several boxes onto a handcart and pushes it in past the front door of the parlor.

Red Top excuses herself again and signs for the delivery. The guy gives her a receipt, leaves the shop, climbs back into his truck and drives off.

Medical supplies? Abruzzo crosses the street to get a closer look, strolls past the storefront window glancing inside, and glimpses printed on the boxes: *Quinine*.

INT. RICHIE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Richie keeps Shorty's car in view up ahead while Abruzzo reports over the radio -

ABRUZZO V/O

Maybe you mix it up with hair dye, I don't know.

RICHIE

You treat malaria and cut heroin with it, that's it.

EXT/INT. STREET / BEAUTY PARLOR - SAME TIME

Abruzzo's on the two-way radio in his car, parked across from the beauty parlor.

ABRUZZO

You want me to stay with Mrs. Lucas, or stay here? She's almost done, Mrs. Lucas.

From here he can see Julie under a hair dryer cone.

RICHIE V/O

Stay with the red head and give me the address.

EXT. STREET / BEAUTY PARLOR - LATER

Julie's left. Red Top's out front, loading the last case of quinine into the trunk of her car. She closes it, locks the door of the beauty parlor, climbs in behind the wheel, pulls away. Richie and Abruzzo, in Richie's car, follow.

INT. ABRUZZO'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Red Top's car makes a turn. As Abruzzo's car makes the same turn, the infamous Stephen Crane Projects rise up in his windshield. He glances to Richie.

ABRUZZO

What do you want to do?

They both know there's no way the two of them alone could go in there and come back out alive, but Richie seems to be considering giving it a try. Finally, he shakes his head.

RICHIE

Let her go.

Red Top's car pulls onto the projects' war zone-like grounds. Abruzzo turns his car around just short of the road in.

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL - DAY

Marked-up maps of the Crane Projects and surrounding streets, others of New Jersey and New York.

Richie comes past carrying a shotgun, heads down a hallway, steps into an elevator and descends to -

INT. OLD NEWARK JAIL GARAGE - DAY

He emerges from the elevator and crosses through an underground garage where an army of Jersey cops and his own detectives wait by their marked and unmarked cars.

EXT. NEWARK STREETS - DAY

The cars emerge from the garage and come down the street like a funeral cortège. At the first corner they split up, some turning to the north, the rest south, and at the next, split again, east and west.

EXT. STEPHEN CRANE PROJECTS - DAY

The tall graffiti-covered buildings cast long shadows of dread on every activity below no matter how routine: A woman pushing a stroller, guys shooting hoops, a couple arguing, kids on bikes, old men resting on a cement bench.

Above the pathways, Richie sits atop a telephone pole like he's working on the lines, surveying the place which, every minute of every day and night, you can feel, teeters on the brink of violence

Parked below is a phone truck and in it, locked in back with radio equipment and hoping no one decides to set fire to it, sits Spearman.

Jones, wearing an equipment belt (and semi-automatic pistol), "works" on a switching box nearby.

Just about everywhere Richie looks from his relatively safe perch atop the pole he sees drugs being bought, sold, smoked, sniffed or shot.

Indeed, one of few legal activities he sees going on in the immediate vicinity is someone moving in - unloading a U-Haul trailer - carrying furniture and cardboard boxes into one of the buildings.

If he could spot among the faces moving below him just one familiar to him from the Lucas Table of Organization, perhaps he could hope to determine which apartment or which floor, or at least which building the heroin is being cut in.

He watches a car pull up near the U-Haul. Out of it climb four young woman, purses slung over their shoulders, looking like secretaries on their way to the office. But they seem uncertain which direction the office is. They seem to be waiting for - what - for someone to tell them?

Richie looks around. Sees something red coming toward them. A blotch of red hair. Red Top. He speaks into his walkie -

RICHIE

The women. By the U-Haul.

JONES V/O

I-see them.

Richie has already started down the pole but he won't make it in time. Red Top has reached the four women, and is now escorting them toward one of the buildings.

RICHIE

Follow them as far as you can without getting shot and wait for me.

INT. CRANE PROJECTS APARTMENT - DAY

The "secretaries" sit naked and masked at the work tables cutting the powder. Suddenly the door splinters open from a sledgehammer blow and Richie, Jones, Spearman, Abruzzo and others pour in, weapons drawn, ordering the girls, Red Top, Shorty and a couple of armed Lucas cousins to the floor -

INT/EXT. NEW JERSEY / NEW YORK - DAY

Several flashcuts as Leevon, John Paul, Ezell, Lawrence Lucas and Country Boys cousins are arrested at their homes, at their businesses, in their cars.

INT. CHEMICAL BANK - DAY

Cops come into the bank president's office informing him he's under arrest.

INT. TRENTON PRISON - DAY

The warden comes into the newspaper office and draws Frank aside for a private conversation.

WARDEN

In about an hour, someone from the Prosecutors Office will be here to arrest you. I just got the call.

The warden seems more shaken by this news than Frank.

FRANK

Are you concerned for me or you, I can't tell.

WARDEN

I've been good to you since you been here, Frank.

FRANK

I pay you to be good. Is that the same thing?

The warden is obviously scared now that his future depends on the loyalty of this criminal. Frank smiles.

FRANK

Don't worry. I pay them, too.

The warden manages a little nod; he hopes he's right.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

of Richie and his men standing over tables covered with seized heroin, cash and weapons, looking not unlike Eliot Ness and his Treasury Agents from fifty years ago.

HEADLINES:

Country Boys Called No. 1 Heroin Gang; 30 Country Boys Indicted in Heroin Operation; Heroin King Frank Lucas To Face Drug Conspiracy Charges; Chemical Bank Pleads Guilty to 200 Violations; Lucas Trial Begins Today.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Mens Room. The sound of someone getting sick behind one of the closed stall doors. The toilet flushes and in a moment Richie appears, skin a shade of death under the fluorescent lights.

He steps up to a sink, splashes water on the sweat on his face, tries to calm the panic he still feels getting up in front of everyone in court.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

He sits alone at the prosecutors table like a castaway on a raft in shark-infested waters stealing glances at the battery of expensive attorneys crowded around the defense table.

Behind him, the courtroom doors swing open. He twists in his chair and sees Frank Lucas - for the first time in person - as he's escorted in without cuffs by an amiable-looking federal marshal. An Armani jacket drapes perfectly from Frank's shoulders.

As he moves through the gallery, Richie sees it's full of the gangster's friends, many of them celebrities, who smile and greet and fawn as if the Pope has just arrived.

Joe Louis is among the well-wishers who will later testify to Frank's benevolent character. The Champ hugs the heroin trafficker warmly in front of everyone, including the jury, and Richie feels like vomiting again.

As Frank continues to shake hands like some visiting dignitary, Richie sees it in slow motion: the hands reaching out to him, the pats on the back of the fine wool fabric, the lip-sticked mouths of beautiful women offering kisses and words of encouragement.

He watches Frank's head turn slowly toward the front of the court, his eyes passing his phalanx of attorneys, the judge, the jury, finally settling on the small seated figure in the cheap suit at the prosecutors table.

Frank's eyes smile as they regard Richie, and seem to ask, Can you see this - can you see what you're up against - can you see how insignificant you are? Richie can.

Frank's face turns away again, back to his supporters, as he continues down the welcoming line. Reaching the end of it finally, he brushes past Richie and disappears from view somewhere within the protective husk of his million-dollar legal team.

JUDGE

Mr. Roberts -

Richie slowly lifts himself from his chair -

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Wire mesh separates Frank from his battalion of lawyers. He glances over them to Richie being led through the large Visiting Room.

FRANK

Here he is. Let me talk to him alone.

The attorneys get up and leave. Richie takes their place. Frank regards him a moment, offering the same knowing smile from the courtroom. Richie offers nothing. Eventually -

FRANK

I just heard something. I said it couldn't be true. No one could say for sure. It's about you.

(pause)

You didn't really turn in a million dollars you found in the trunk of a car, did you?

Richie doesn't say. Frank stares at him, searches his face for some clue to where on earth he's from.

FRANK

Want me to tell you what happened to it? It ended up in cops pockets.

RICHIE

Maybe.

FRANK

Maybe? No. It did. All you did was give it to them for nothing in return. No, not nothing: You got their contempt.

Richie shrugs even though he knows Frank is completely right.

FRANK

Why'd you do that? Trying to prove you're better than them? You're not better than them. You are them.

RICHIE

I really don't have the time or the interest to sit here and -

FRANK

You did it because it was right.
That's all. Why is that hard to say?

Richie shrugs again. Maybe that is the simplest way to explain it. And the most truthful.

FRANK

The question is would you do it again? That was a long time ago.

(pause)

It would be very easy to find out.
Tell me you want to find out, tell me where, give me an address, and the car will be there, the trunk loaded.

Richie actually seems to think about it. Or about something else. He knows Frank isn't kidding. Richie nods to himself.

FRANK

Are you nodding to say yes?

RICHIE

No.

FRANK

You're nodding to say no?

RICHIE

I'm not interested.

Frank suddenly explodes -

FRANK

Who the fuck are you to say no to that? You think it impresses me?

Guards look over, then glance away when it's clear the outburst is through.

FRANK

It doesn't. It bothers me. What am I supposed to do with you?

He studies Richie.

FRANK

You have any sort of case? Or only that idiot who drives for my brother? Is he your case? Because if he is, that's not going to be enough.

RICHIE

Then you got nothing to worry about.

But Frank is worried, most of all by this cop who doesn't take money sitting placidly in front of him.

FRANK

My brothers won't talk to you. My cousins. None of my family. No one but that mother fucking driver.

RICHIE

Actually the line of people who want to talk to me stretches out the door.

FRANK

Bullshit.

RICHIE

Is it? Tony West. Tony the Bug. Tony the Lip. Tony -

FRANK

Who the fuck are they?

RICHIE

Guys you put out of business. Guys who can't believe a black man came in and took their money.

FRANK

I don't even know who those people are.

RICHIE

They're pretty convincing they know you.

FRANK

These are your witnesses. What kind of lawyer are you, use witnesses like that?

RICHIE

I use what I got. It's what I got.

FRANK

Look at me. You looking?

(Richie is)

Can you tell by looking it would mean nothing to me if tomorrow you turned up dead?

RICHIE

So?

FRANK

So what does that say to you?

RICHIE

Nothing.

Frank has never been so frustrated by anyone in his life. He wants to work something out with Richie obviously, but he can't figure out how. Richie gets up to leave -

FRANK

Wait. Sit down. Please.

Richie sits back down. Frank studies him.

FRANK

What can we do?

RICHIE

What can you offer?

FRANK

I don't know what to offer you'd take.

RICHIE

I'd take names.

Silence. Frank studies him. Then smiles.

FRANK

Names. That's all? You flip Eddie James to get Frank Lucas then flip me to get who - the Italians?

(pause)

How long would I live you think if I did that? A week?

RICHIE

I'm not talking about OC guys ...

There's no one close enough to hear them. Richie makes sure of that before -

RICHIE

Cops.

Frank isn't sure he heard right.

FRANK

Cops.

(pause)

You want to go after cops? How long
you think you'll live?

Frank has to laugh. Richie doesn't. Eventually -

FRANK

You're serious. You'd do that?
Go after your own kind.

RICHIE

They're not my kind.

They regard one another. Richie can tell Frank sees some
daylight.

FRANK

What can you promise me?

RICHIE

I can promise you if you lie to me
about one name, you'll never get out
of prison. I can promise you if you
lie to the attorney general about one
dollar in one account in one offshore
bank, you'll never get out. You can
live rich in jail for the rest of your
life, or poor outside it. It's your
choice.

Frank is silent for several moments. Finally, to be sure
they understand each other -

FRANK

No O.C.

RICHIE

No.

FRANK

Only cops.

(Richie nods)

Every one I ever paid. Every one who
ever stole from me.

RICHIE

Every one you remember.

FRANK

Oh, I remember them all. Every one.
That's not the problem.

RICHIE

What is?

FRANK

The jail's aren't big enough.

SEVERAL QUICK CUTS:

Cops in handcuffs on front lawns outside their houses,
in restaurants, on the street -

The Trenton warden is led off in cuffs across the prison
yard -

The Chemical Bank president is escorted from his office as
other agents cart out several file boxes -

Detective Trupo is led away in cuffs from the 14th tee of a
golf course -

His partner, in a car, puts the barrel of his service
revolver in his mouth and pulls the trigger -

INT. FEDCO DISCOUNT STORE - DAY

The stack of TVs. A report on the indictments handed down
by the Manhattan district attorneys office against 53 NYPD
and SIU detectives -

EXT. FEDCO DISCOUNT STORE - DAY

The report continues over the outside of the huge store,
the front windows whitewashed with: *Going Out of Business,*
Everything Must Go -

Pulling further back reveals a new, even larger discount
store with a vast parking lot full of cars, people pushing
shopping carts loaded with boxes and bags.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Frank clearly has not had the run of the prison like before.
He's in a cell that looks like all the others, gathering his
few personal belongings into a box, and standing with it
waiting for the doors to be opened.

Legend: *Frank Lucas was convicted of Conspiracy
to Distribute Narcotics and sentenced to terms
totalling 70 years. He served 15 of them.*

INT. PROSECUTORS OFFICE - DAY

Richie, too, is packing to leave, putting personal items into boxes.

Legend: After convicting Frank and 30 of his Country Boy relatives, Richard Roberts quit the New Jersey Prosecutors Office to become a defense attorney.

EXT. TRENTON PRISON - DAY

Frank steps out into bright sunlight. He's free but owns nothing but the cardboard box in his arms. Looks out across the parking lot to see if anyone has come to pick him up.

Legend: With Frank's cooperation, Federal authorities confiscated from him over 250 million dollars in equities, bonds, real estate and cash in US and foreign banks.

Frank finally sees Richie standing next to an old car in the distance, hand raised above his head like a flag.

EXT. 116TH STREET, HARLEM - DAY

The two of them stand outside Richie's car on the same corner Frank shot Tango. Frank looks up at the street sign to make sure he is where he thinks he is. 116th Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard.

FRANK

Frederick Douglass Boulevard? What was wrong with just plain 8th Avenue?

He considers the street itself. It too has changed. The corner groceries really are gone now, and where his favorite diner used to be there's a big new place called The Gap.

FRANK

What the fuck is that?

RICHIE

They sell jeans and t-shirts.

FRANK

Jeans and t-shirts?

That makes no sense to Frank. He stares at the place with the same pained look Bumpy had in Fedco.

RICHIE

Your brothers know you're out?

FRANK

I haven't talked to them in years.
It's better for them. I don't know
where they are. Maybe Greensboro.

Richie nods. Frank looks back at the new storefronts.

FRANK

You know, if I'd been a preacher,
they'd have been preachers. If I'd
been a cop, they'd have been cops.

He seems to disappear into the thought, imagining things
turning out differently.

FRANK

What am I going to do now? What do
I know how to do? How am I going to
live?

RICHIE

I told you I wouldn't let you starve.

FRANK

You can barely take care of yourself.

He glances to the pay phone on the corner.

FRANK

You know, one phone call, Richie, I
could be back in business.

Richie glances over with a look that calmly assures Frank
if he did that, it would be the last phone he made outside
prison - ever.

FRANK

I won't. I wouldn't want to
disappoint you. I'm just saying.

He buttons the cuffs of the fake *Members Only* windbreaker
Richie bought him off the street.

FRANK

Thanks for the clothes.

RICHIE

You're welcome.

Frank glances away to three young hoods coming toward them
like they own the sidewalk and everything around it - baggy
pants, bandanas tied around their heads.

FRANK

Uh-oh. Look out. Here come the gangsters.

Frank's standing right in their path, but doesn't move, forcing one of them to squeeze past him and a parking meter. The kid stops and looks back, is about to say something, but then, examining the expression of quiet menace on Frank's face, thinks better of it. The others stop.

GANGSTA 2

What.

The first one is still staring at Frank, but then, finally, has the good sense to look away.

GANGSTA 1

Nothing.

They move on. Frank glances to Richie.

FRANK

I guess every idiot gets to be young once.

Richie nods. Frank zips up the *Members Only* jacket, props up the collar and points himself in the other direction.

FRANK

Let's get out of here.