

ABOVE THE LAW

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FINAL DRAFT

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ABOVE THE LAW

FADE IN:

1 TITLES SEQUENCE - MONTAGE WITH SCORE

PHOTOGRAPHIC STILLs show us NICOLA TOSCANI as a city boy in various growing-up SHOTS, circa 1950's -- with street chums wearing a Wyatt Earp T-shirt, in a communion suit. Then: in his first qi, a youngster studying the martial arts; he grows, we see news clippings of him winning trophies, his name on contest posters, SHOTS of him in action. Then: Japan. Nico now in his teens, studying with real masters, being dumped on his butt, posing smiling beside Japanese martial artists, then himself as an instructor. Now: a few military uniforms enter the picture, we see security clearance documents with Nico's picture and name on them. Then Nico near draft age with an American friend NELSON FOX on some kind of training base. TITLES END.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Blowing through the roof of a dense jungle straight AT CAMERA, HELICOPTER ROTORS RISE to a DEAFENING PITCH. SUPER: Viet - Cambodian Border, 1972. Jungle foliage whips in the fierce downdraft as --

3 "HUEY" GUNSHIP

with US Army markings becomes discernible. The chopper lowers toward a crude landing zone hacked out of the wilderness. We GLIMPSE Cambodian troops and several machine gun positions around the LZ.

4 EXT. JUNGLE - TWO ARMED AMERICANS - DAY

watch from the edge of the landing zone. We recognize Nico and Fox, now in their twenties, dressed in the nonmilitary jungle attire that usually marks a CIA "spook."

5 HELICOPTER

touches down. THREE OLDER AMERICANS -- rough-looking, in their mid-thirties, all carrying some kind of medical bags -- disembark into the HOWLING ROTOR BLAST. They hit the ground nimbly, as if they've done it many times before.

6 LEADER OF THREE

wears a khaki cowboy hat and packs a pearl-handled .45.

7 NICO AND FOX

don't know whether to react with laughter or uneasiness.

FOX
 You ever see chemical interrogation
 before?

Nico's eyes stay on the approaching "cowboy," KURT ZAGON,
 for whom he plainly feels an instant animosity.

NICO
 These assholes are agency?

8 NICO'S POV

FOLLOWS the medical bag in the cowboy's hand.

9 BACK TO FOX AND NICO

FOX
 We're all C.I.A. But these guys are
 from a page that ain't on the map.

10 EXT. JUNGLE - LATE AFTERNOON

Nico in the point, leading Fox and the three CIT (Chemical
 Interrogation Team) men down an unmarked, twisting trail.
 We see from Nico's gait that he is athletic, a born leader
 and totally at home in the jungle.

11 TRAIL - LATE AFTERNOON

snakes along a ridge line, high enough to give us a view and
 let us know these guys are way out in the boonies.

ZAGON
 How long till we're across the border?

NICO
 We've been over for the past hour.

The group continues along the ridge.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

The sky glows from nearby bomb attacks.

13 NICO

listening hard -- and even sniffing the air -- glances back
 at Zagon, who stands impatiently, drawing on a cigarette.

ZAGON
 What are you looking at, hotshot?

NICO
 (indicates cigarette
 glow)
 Why don't you light a bonfire?

Irritably, Zagon ditches his smoke.

ZAGON
Just drive the taxi, ace.

As the party moves out, Fox flashes Nico a look as if to say, "Don't fuck with these guys."

14 EXT. CAMBODIAN BASE CAMP - NIGHT

A pocket-fortified position. Armed Cambodian lookouts, several hooches, radio equipment. Nico leads the party in through the perimeter. Zagon eyes the layout like he's seen 100 of them. Fox indicates a hooch.

FOX
(to Zagon)
They're in there.

The three CIT men start for the hooch. Nico casts a concerned glance around at the base camp troops, looking sloppy as hell.

NICO
I don't trust these yo-yo's.

15 FULL SHOT - BASE CAMP

We see Nico moving like a shadow from one defensive position to another, checking the perimeter. We can vaguely hear him ROUSTING the Cambodian lookouts, speaking in dialect.

16 DEFENSIVE POSITION - NICO

hears a SOUND, looks back toward the hooch.

17 NICO'S POV - HOOCH

Two Asian prisoners, stripped to the waist, babbling incoherently, are dragged out the back by a pair of Cambodian guards and hustled off into the darkness. VOICES can be heard inside the hooch. A single lantern glowing inside gives the hut a creepy, frightening aspect.

18 BACK TO NICO

He's extremely uneasy about what's about to happen inside the hooch.

19 INT. HOOCH - CLOSE ON RICKETY CARD TABLE - NIGHT

on which are spread a terrifying array of syringes, drug vials and surgical instruments. Zagon's hand picks up a hypodermic, squirt-tests it.

20 TWO ASIAN PRISONERS

are on their knees, shirtless, handcuffed with heavy nylon tape to a stake driven into the ground in the center of the hooch. One of the subordinate CIT men moves in, grabs the first prisoner by the shoulders. Zagon injects the first prisoner. Instantly the man begins shivering, convulsing. Zagon watches with professional satisfaction.

ZAGON

That's the nice thing about modern technology. You don't have to wait for results.

He moves close to the first prisoner.

ZAGON

(to first prisoner)

Where is it, Charley? You got six tons of our shit --

The prisoner tries to speak, but he's in such torment all that comes out is a blood-curdling wail --

21 EXT. BAST CAMP - NICO

hears this horrifying cry. He starts swiftly toward the hooch --

22 INT. HOOCH - INTERPRETER

has moved as close to Zagon and the first prisoner as a fight referee to two boxers. The prisoner is convulsing wildly. Zagon grabs him fiercely by the hair.

ZAGON

Don't you die on me, fucker --

FOX

(from the side)

What the hell's wrong?

ZAGON

(throws the prisoner
down)

This pussy can't hold his liquor.

The first prisoner is plainly in a death spasm.

23 NICO

enters at this point. He takes in the scene quickly, moves to a spot beside the entrance. Zagon doesn't look at Nico, but it's plain he is aware of Nico's presence. It is as if he wants to prove something to this muscular kid -- and prove it to the others, too.

24 FIRST PRISONER

dies in agony on the ground.

25 SECOND PRISONER

watches with eyes like flint. He is in his mid-forties, scarred, missing several fingers. Probably a colonel or higher, he looks like he's been fighting these round-eyes since the French in the 50's. He is plainly one tough customer. The second prisoner meets Zagon's eyes, as if daring him to use the drugs on him, too. Zagon eyes the prisoner with barely contained hatred. The prisoner doesn't back down an inch.

ZAGON

(to second prisoner)

So my little doctor bag doesn't
scare you, eh? Well I don't need
it to open your yap.

*
*
*

Zagon reaches to a scabbard on his Western belt, pulls out a fearsome serrated blade -- a cross between a bowie knife and a scalpel. He steps toward the prisoner, displaying the blade in the lantern light.

26 NICO

watches impassively.

ZAGON (O.S.)

(to prisoner)

Where's our load, you sack of slime?
What did you do with my shit? --

27 ZAGON

punches the prisoner full in the face, holding the knife handle in his fist to double the force of the blow and to terrify him with the proximity of the blade. The prisoner crashes sideways, face bloody --

ZAGON

I'm gonna teach you good. I'm gonna
teach you never to fuck with my
opium --

28 FOX AND TWO CIT MEN

seem to know exactly what this is about.

29 NICO

didn't know, but the new kid on the block is catching on fast. Nico has difficulty containing his emotion. Zagon stands over the prisoner, as if daring him to get back up.

The prisoner gets back to his knees, bloody eyes meeting Zagon's with defiance --

ZAGON
 (to prisoner)
 You're a hard nigger, aren't you, boy?
 You took it from the Chinks... you took
 it from the French. You'll be fucked
 if some Yankee peckerwood's gonna start
 your gums flapping --

Nico watches Zagon move the knife blade closer to the prisoner.

ZAGON
 -- Well, you're gonna chirp for me,
 tough guy. You're gonna sing like a
 choir --

Nico takes a step toward Zagon.

NICO
 What the fuck does this have to do
 with military intelligence?

ZAGON
 Your orders are 'assist and observe'
 cherry --

Zagon turns to face Nico --

FOX
 (to Nico)
 Back off, partner --

Zagon turns from Nico. He moves close to the second prisoner, close as a lover, displaying the blade in the lamplight.

ZAGON
 (to second prisoner)
 I'm gonna start carving at your ankles.
 We'll throw your feet in that box right
 over there. Then I'm gonna take off
 your arms --

One of the CIT men yanks the prisoner's leg forward, clamping it to the ground with his hands. The prisoner still hasn't flinched. He seems as locked into this dance of death as Zagon.

NICO
 (can't take
 much more)
 Fox --

FOX
 Shut up, Nico.

ZAGON

You can disappear as easy as this
slope, kid --

Zagon starts for the prisoner. Here comes the blade. Suddenly -- Nico grabs Zagon's shoulder. Zagon spins with terrifying quickness, cocking the blade to slash at Nico. Before Zagon's blow even starts, Nico slams him with a ferocious elbow shot right under the jaw. Zagon literally comes off the ground, Nico's blow is so terrific. Zagon drops in an unconscious heap. In a flash the two other CIT men move to jump Nico. Smash! The second CIT man is swallowing his teeth. Fox leaps in the way of the third, shoves Nico out of the hooch --

30 EXT. HOOCH - NIGHT

Fox wrestles Nico away from the hooch --

FOX

Are you crazy?!!

(as Nico jerks free)

What the fuck's the matter with you?!!!

Nico is shaking with rage and fear. He takes several steps away from the hooch, then draws up abruptly. Nico pulls his .45 from his holster, pops the safety, starts back for the hooch --

FOX

Nico!

NICO

I don't cap him now, he's gonna do me
later.

The last CIT man appears, gun drawn, in the hooch doorway. Fox grabs Nico, hauls him back again --

FOX

I'll cover this. Get back to the
L.Z. --

(as Nico resists)

-- I'll fix it! Get out! Get the
fuck outa here!

The CIT man calls out to the Cambodian troops, in dialect, pointing at Nico. The soldiers start toward Nico, as if to seize him. Fox, too, starts yelling to the troops in dialect, apparently countermanding the orders of the CIT men. The troops, confused, hold up for a moment.

FOX

(to Nico)

I'll call for a chopper... get outa
here!

Nico gives a last look, turns and takes off down the jungle trail. Fox seems abandoned. The DISTANT BOMBING CONTINUES. Nico disappears into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

31 CHURCH STEEPLE - DAY

TILT DOWN to reveal St. Elizabeth's, a huge parish church in an Italian/Latino neighborhood in Chicago. The church looks festive, we see a few formally-dressed people hurrying in, then a squad car pulls up. The cops run upstairs as if they're late --

32 INT. ST. MARY'S - DAY

A baptism in progress. Nico -- 15 years older than when we last saw him, is standing beside SARA, his lovely wife -- watching a 60-ish priest, FATHER GENARRO, finish the final ritual on Nico's infant son Julian. The priest straightens the baby's baptismal garment, tugging the cloth around the little fellow's crotch. Smiles from friends and relatives clustered proudly around. Several cops, some in uniform are amongst them. Nico grabs his son from Genarro with a theatrical protective motion, tugs up the little boy's garment, kisses him smack on the bare butt. Laughter from all as Nico holds the lad high and proud. He puts his arm around Sara.

33 EXT. NICO'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Huge trays of Italian delicacies are carried out into the sunlight by several "old country"-type women. Wine is poured from generous carafes. Friends and relatives are everywhere, laughing and enjoying themselves; apparently the party has come here straight from the church. Presents for the new baby are being opened by Nico's wife, Sara, and Nico's mother, ROSA.

SARA

Mama, look at this -- all done by hand.

Sara lifts a cute baby outfit.

ROSA

Nico had one just like this. Thank you, Cora.

Cora, an aunt, proudly smiles.

34 NICO

Holding the baby. Realizes that his little son has pooped in his pants. He turns for help to Sara.

NICO

I think we got a little problem here.

SARA

(winking at the women)

I carried him for the last nine months,
you take him for the next diaper.

Assorted uncles and aunts watch with amusement as Nico tries awkwardly to deal with the problem.

NICO

(to all)

That's what you get for not marrying a
Sicilian.

Sara lets Nico struggle a moment, then takes over.

SARA

My brave husband. He's not afraid of
thieves and muggers, but he's terrified
when his son poops in his pants.

Toscani relatives look on with approval at the happy couple
and their baby.

35 ANOTHER PART OF BACK YARD

Three Chicago cops, LUKICH and HENDERSON in plain clothes
and LIEUTENANT STROZAH in uniform wolf some Italian goodies
while eying the group of celebrating relatives.

LUKICH

(indicates Nico
across the patio)

Toscani holds the record... for havin'
more relatives under federal indictment
than any other cop in Chicago.

36 TWO OF NICO'S UNCLES

BRANCA and LUIGI, who look like they have been on the other
side of a cop's work, are in turn eying Lukich and Henderson
-- plus a cluster of other cops in civvies hovering around
the buffet table like vultures.

BRANCA

Look at these stiff dicks. A free meal
and they come out like flies.

37 STREET OUTSIDE NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

An unmarked police car pulls up. DOLORES JACKSON ("Jax"),
another undercover cop, tall, black, and elegant, enters
the driveway leading to Nico's back yard --

38 BACK YARD

Jackson enters. She's impeccably dressed and radiates intelligence. She's greeted warmly by Lukich, Henderson, Strozah, and a couple of other cops.

STROZAH

I didn't do nothing, Counselor. I'm clean.

JACKSON

Eight more days, Lieutenant. You better start preparing your defense.

HENDERSON

Baby, I'm gonna put you on retainer.

LUKICH

You passed the bar? I make it a point never to pass the bar.

Jackson sees Nico and Sara across the yard, waves and starts toward them --

*

39 BACK TO BRANCA AND LUIGI

Luigi indicates Jackson as she crosses the patio.

LUIGI

Now this cop. She can bust me any day.

40 NICK, SARA AND ROSA (NICO'S MOTHER)

*

Jackson comes up, makes a theatrical appreciation of Nico's stylish attire, kisses Sara and greets Nico's mom warmly. She starts oohing and ahing over the baby.

*

41 VARIOUS SHOTS

Young kids playing on the lawn, more guests arriving, Father Genarro dancing with an elderly matron. We see that Nico's friends are an electric mix. Cops, art-y types, people of varied ages and professions.

42 BACK TO JACKSON

Holding the baby.

JACKSON

Look at this little bundle. What a cupcake!

NICO

You give up being the D.A. and hurry up and find the right fella, Jax. You might have time for one of these yourself.

SARA

Nico, will you let the woman
catch her breath?

*

43 JAPANESE WOMAN (DR. WATANABE)

*

moves in shyly on the fringe of the cluster. While Jackson
and Sara continue their "mom" talk, Nico edges off toward
Watanabe, shaking her hand with real pleasure.

*

*

NICO

Watanabe! Say hey, Doc.

They begin jabbering in Japanese.

We will meet Watanabe again later. She's a brainy-looking
woman -- reserved, a bit mysterious -- who talks quietly and
intensely in Japanese with Nico like they're old friends who
go back a long way.

*

*

44 EXT. TOSCANI FRONT PORCH - LATER

Branca, Luigi and several other Toscani patriarchs smoke cigars and sip beer in a cluster. Nico holds Julian.

BRANCA

You're a father now. Are you gonna take me up on my offer?

NICO

I'm happy, Branca. I like what I do.

Branca glances seriously to the other uncles, then, with a smile, pats Nico's cheek.

BRANCA

Look at this face! Six-foot-four, pretty as the statue of David. And he's a cop!

Branca laughs. From a distance, Watanabe watches, missing nothing. Across the porch, Lukich and several other cops observe and try to listen.

BRANCA

This face should be sticking up from a white shirt. It should be a banker, a businessman, someone who earns a decent living for his family!

NICO

We're happy.

LUIGI

Nickels and dimes. Your wife's a woman with class. What did she run -- a ballet school...?

NICO

An art gallery.

BRANCA

Same thing. She wants a husband who carries a briefcase, not a shoulder holster.

Jackson watches Nico trying to keep his good humor. This is serious stuff, despite the light tone. Branca's eyes meet Nico's.

BRANCA

You wanted to get shot, you got shot.
You wanted to get knifed, you got
knifed. You've had your fun. Basta!
Enough!

UNCLE GUISEPPE

Let your family help you, Nico.

NICO

(lightly)

Uncle Gio, that kind of help I don't
need. I'd rather get shot by someone
I don't know.

Jackson and Lukich crack up. The others follow. For the
moment, the tension is dispelled.

45 INT. NICO'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Nico comes out of the bedroom, adjusting his shoulder
holster, tugging his jacket over it. He sees his mother
standing near the head of the stairs, just outside
another bedroom door. Concern on her face.

NICO

What are you doing in here, Mama?
Go join the party...

Nico comes down the hall, tucking in his shirt -- stops
to give his mother a squeeze. O.S. from the bedroom:
the sound of QUIET SOBBING. Nico glances in.

46 INT. NURSERY - DAY

Sara and another woman sit on the bed, comforting a 60-ish
grandmother Zingaro, who is crying. Nico comes in. He
kneels before MRS. ZINGARO, concerned.

NICO

Mrs. Z.
(tries to be light)
Is this a way to act on the day of
my son's baptism?

The poor woman can't meet Nico's eyes.

SARA

It's Lucy. She's gone again.

Nico glances from Sara to Rosa.

Mrs. Zingaro shakes her head, choked with pain. Nico
holds her, looking over her shoulder toward Sara.

NICO

It's that kid from the bar on Damen?
The one with the drugs?

Sara doesn't know. Nico does. He comforts Mrs. Zingaro another moment, then stands. *

NICO
Listen to me, Mrs. Z. Are you listening?
(as the woman nods miserably)
I have to go to work now. But I'll come by tonight. You'll be at the bakery?

MRS. ZINGARO
Si, Nico.

NICO
We'll talk, okay? We'll find a way to take care of this.

Nico kisses Mrs. Z. He takes Sara's hand in goodbye, starts for the door. *

47 EXT. NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

Festivities still in progress. Nico passes through, nodding, thanking people for coming, taking farewells. Jackson waits for him, glancing at her watch.

48 INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOVING

Nico is driving. Jackson checks in on the radio.

JACKSON
(into mike)
Unit Ten Tango X-ray. We're up and clear.

49 EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - UNMARKED CAR

moves into the central city.

50 POV THROUGH CAR WINDOWS - STREETS - MOVING

Bad-looking hombres on stoops, street corners.

NICO (O.S.)
I promised the Lieutenant, I'm gonna take care of you. Broken windows and lost kittens for your last week.

WIDEN SHOT to include Nico and Jackson.

JACKSON
And then you're gonna come visit me in a nice, clean, air conditioned office --

51 EXT. STREET - BUCKSHOT'S LIQUORS - DAY *

The unmarked car pulls up outside a liquor store and bar.

52 INT. UNMARKED CAR

as it parks. Jackson gives Nico a look: "What are we stopping at this dive for"?

NICO

I gotta take a quick leak. Stay put.

He gets out of the car, starts for the bar.

53 INT. BUCKSHOT'S LIQUORS - DAY *

Dim, smoke-choked, dangerous characters at the bar. Nico enters.

His silk shirt and sport coat clash with the druggy, working-class attire of the bar's denizens. Hard faces check him out subtly, ignore him. Nico approaches the bartender, shows a photograph. The bartender (BAD DUDE) shakes his head.

BAD DUDE

Why the fuck don't you assholes
leave me alone?

*
*
*

He continues mouthing off to Nico. Nico moves to one stool, then another; the same exchange is repeated.

*

54 FAVOR ONE PARTICULARLY TOUGH CUSTOMER

*

A hulking bruiser with an earring. He watches as --

55 NICO

approaches him. Three ARMY JACKETS look up sullenly. Beefy arms, tattoos, greasy mustaches.

NICO

Gentlemen.

One Jacket treats him like he doesn't exist, and begins to pick his nose.

FIRST ARMY JACKET

(to others)

I thought this was a kosher bar.
They didn't allow no pork in here.

The two others snicker, then so does the rest of the bar. Nico holds out a photo of a young girl (Lucy).

NICO

You seen this girl?

SECOND ARMY JACKET

I seen the top of her head.

NICO

That's witty.

Nico takes a step away, as if moving on to the next stool. From behind the bar, the bartender swings a sawed-off baseball bat into view. Other bodies move ominously toward Nico. Suddenly he spins and, in a move almost too quick to see, he kicks the entire stool right out of its floor socket. Beer bottles fly, bodies crash. Nico slams the First Jacket in the face so hard it looks like his nose has exploded. Blood sprays onto Nico's silk shirt. He hauls the Second Jacket upright, nails him with a shot that crushes three ribs. A savage elbow blasts the third, head over heels, out over the bar and careening into the sink. In three seconds 600 pounds of fat has been put in cold storage. The rest of the bar is on its feet. Four huge men confront Nico. Now five. Six. Seven. Nico's jacket and shirt are ripped, blood spattered; his eyes are like an animal's, daring the men --

*
*
*

NICO

Come on. Show me something.

No one moves.

NICO

I get it. It's a gay bar. Is that it?

The men, led by the Bad Dude, are shifting to surround Nico. But no one attacks. Nico has Lucy's photo in his hand. He jams it in one man's face, then another's, slapping each one violently, spitting, raging for them to attack.

NICO

You seen the top of her head, huh?
Like I seen your mother's --
(to another guy)
Or was it yours?
(to a third)
Or yours?
(slaps him ferociously)
I couldn't tell, it looked like her ass --

Nico rages like a beast.

NICO

Come on, motherfuckers. Do it.
Do it! One man --

Nico lunges for the Bad Dude, grabs him like he's about to tear his face off --

BAD DUDE

Upstairs!
(in terror)
She's upstairs! 4-D!

Nico drags the Dude from behind the bar. Holding him, Nico turns, glowering, to all.

NICO

You cocksuckers are brave enough with 14-year-old girls.

55A INT. FLOPHOUSE HALLWAY

Nico throws Bad Dude down the hallway in front of him.

56 INT. FOURTH-FLOOR APARTMENT - DAY

The door bursts in from a jackhammer kick. Nico stands in the hallway. Bad Dude stands next to him; hurt, shaking.

NICO

(to Bad Dude)
Get outta here.

We look in the apartment.

REVERSE - NICO'S POV

*

A young PIMP -- quite handsome in a boyish way -- stares up in panic from a grimy mattress on the floor. Little LUCY is in bra and panties, strung out, 14 and beautiful. Syringes and free-base paraphernalia are on a table.

NICO IN DOORWAY

*

NICO

(to Pimp)

This ain't your day, kid.

Nico comes in, eyes taking in everything.

PIMP

Wait, man. It ain't like it
looks --

Nico grabs the Pimp by the scruff of the neck, lifting him
bodily. Lucy starts wailing in horror. Nico smashes the
Pimp's face down into a mirror with white powder on the
table --

NICO

That's two years.

He jerks the Pimp back, rips open a drawer. More pills
and glacene bags.

NICO

That's four.
(twisting the Pimp's
neck toward Lucy)
She'll get you eight more. And
I'm just warming up --

Lucy is crying hysterically. Nico flings the Pimp, face
bloody, toward the open door.

*
*

PIMP

(to Nico, indicat-
ing drugs)
Take it, baby. It's all yours --

NICO

Get your clothes on, Lucy.

PIMP

There's money. Three grand in the
mattress...
(begging)
... I can get ya more --

QUICK CUTAWAY TO:

57 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE - JACKSON

Three young STUDS have ambled to the window of her parked
car.

STUD

Hey, sister, what it be?

With infinite boredom, Jackson lifts her badge -- and
gun. The Studs shuffle away.

58 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Other tenants stare from doorways as Nico drags the Pimp
to the top of the flight of stairs, threatening to throw
him down.

*
*
*

NICO

Don't you fuckin' move.

*
*

Nico steps back into the apartment, hauls out Lucy in a dressing gown.

*

59

TOP OF LANDING

*

The Pimp is dazed, bloody. Nico comes down with Lucy, hauls the Pimp to his feet --

LUCY

Let him alone! He's beautiful!

NICO

Not when I get through with him.

Nico lifts the Pimp by the throat, pins him to the wall.

PIMP

No, man, wait! I'll give you something! Something big!

LUCY

Please, Nico! Don't!

PIMP

It's huge! I swear it! A shipment... coming in next Tuesday --

NICO

Shipment, my ass.

PIMP

This is square! On my mother's soul! You can't send me up --

Nico glances to Lucy. Half of him wants to tear the Pimp apart, the other half doesn't want to make the poor girl's life any more tragic. Besides, he's a good cop -- and maybe this "shipment" is on the level.

PIMP

I heard it from a hooker friend of mine. She's banging some big coke lawyer, he told her. I swear to Jesus!

Nico relents -- a little.

NICO

What lawyer?

PIMP

I don't know.

(sees Nico doesn't believe him)

That platinum chola... Carla DeCarlo... she knows.

Nico tightens his grip on the Pimp's throat.

PIMP

She got popped this afternoon.
She's downtown. Red dress, lizard
shoes --

60 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BAR - DAY

Jackson looks up from the car to see Nico -- wild-haired,
shirt ripped and bloody -- emerging from the adjacent
apartment stoop, leading young Lucy, who's tear-streaked,
wearing a torn dressing gown. Instantly, Jackson is out
of the car, moving to Lucy.

JACKSON

It's okay, girl. Mama Jax is
here.

She wraps an arm around Lucy, helps her toward the car.

JACKSON

(to Nico)

That was some leak you took.

From the door of the bar, several bloodied heads peek.

JACKSON

Broken windows and lost pussy cats,
huh.

Jackson checks out her battered partner.

JACKSON

You're one crazy bastard, Toscani.

Nico opens the rear door, helps Jackson ease Lucy in.

NICO

We'll get her some clothes and a
bath. I'm not bringing her home
to her grandmother like this.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 OMITTED

&
62

63 EXT. ZINGARO BAKERY - DAY

From the front seat of Nico's car emerges a tearful Lucy,
in fresh clothes and looking miserably contrite. Nico
walks her inside.

The Zingaro family is busy preparing for the night's baking. Grandpa and Grandma Zingaro leave their work and receive their waif-like granddaughter. With eyes watering they thank Nico. They disappear upstairs with Lucy. Jackson, standing in the doorway, has seen all this.

64 INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOVING - DAY

Nico at the wheel has just pulled away from the bakery. Jackson, in the passenger seat, studies her partner for a few moments, shaking her head at the contradictions in this man. Educated, classy, an elegant dresser -- yet underneath an out-and-out wild man.

JACKSON

I don't get you, Toscani.

(beat)

What the hell are you doing being a shitheel cop? With your background?

For a long moment Nico says nothing. Then, quietly, looking straight ahead:

NICO

When I was overseas, I saw some things. Things that eat your guts out. Things that stay in front of your eyes like they were burned in and branded.

He turns to Jackson.

NICO

You can walk away from them, Jax. You can quit, but you know it's still going on. You try something anyway --

(smiles a moment)

-- I know I'm not going to change the world. I can't stop the tonnage coming in, I can't fight the boys behind the desks pushing their buttons --

ANGLE INCLUDING MEAN STREETS OUTSIDE

NICO

But maybe here, huh?

(indicates street)

Maybe in my own city, my own neighborhood, on my own block -- maybe here I can do something.

He turns a corner.

NICO

That's why I'm a shitheel cop.

64A INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Behind the desk, a few detectives man the phones. A Latin attorney, ABANDANO, is at the counter.

COP (O.S.)

You can see your client. As soon
as she's through eating her dinner.

65 INT. POLICE LOCKUP - "CAGE" AND HALLWAY - EVENING

Hookers, female addicts, etc. in the downtown "cage."
Nico has the girl in the red dress and lizard shoes
(CARLA DECARLO) out in the hallway adjacent to the lock-
up. Nico is Mr. Charm, offering her a heart-shaped box
of chocolates.

NICO

Carla... Carla -- I just want the
name of your boyfriend --

CARLA

I got 200 boyfriends.

The hooker, Carla DeCarlo, slaps the box away, cursing in
Spanish.

CARLA

Pinchi cabron, cabeza colon!

Some of the chocolates tumble onto the lockup floor, the detainees snap them up, start munching. The girl continues to spit curses at Nico, gesturing with her hands with Latin flamboyance. Nico grabs her by the elbow, as a jailer opens the lockup door. More curses are being flung at Nico from various females in the cage. Nico heaves Carla in among them. Carla flops down on a bench next to a tall black hooker. MOVE IN ON the black hooker. It's Nico's partner, Jackson, dolled up like a street-walker, playing her undercover role to the hilt.

JACKSON

(to Nico)

Why can't you sons-a-bitches ever treat someone with a little respect?

NICO

(walking away)

Take it easy, sister.

JACKSON

I ain't your goddamn sister. We ain't got the same mother, motherfucka.

Carla fires one final parting salvo of obscenities, then sags back among the women. Carla starts to cry. Jackson comforts her; Carla responds, lets herself be comforted.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. DOWNTOWN - FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

Jackson, back in her normal daytime wear, exits a building. She gets into Nico's car.

67 INT. CAR - DAY

Jackson checks her makeup in the rearview mirror. Nico sits behind the wheel. The two are on some kind of stakeout.

JACKSON

The lawyer's name is Abandano. He's on the third floor. I got a look at him. I couldn't get how he's connected, but according to Carla, he's a lousy lay.

NICO

Maybe we can bust him for that.

Jackson spots something, gestures subtly out window --

68 EXT. DOWNTOWN BUILDING - DAY

A short, slick-looking Latin man in a business suit emerges from the building.

JACKSON

That's our stud.

Nico and Jackson leave their car and follow him on foot.

69 EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - BANK - DAY

ABANDANO meets a striking-looking middle-aged woman in front of a stately financial institution. They go in. Jackson remains out on the street, while Nico follows the couple in.

70 LATER

Jackson has been waiting, sipping some coffee. Nico emerges from the bank, signaling to his partner to follow him. Abandano and the woman exit from the bank's revolving doors and immediately jump into a cab. Nico and Jackson look at each other and step in front of another cab. Nico opens the cab door, flips his badge open, then asks the occupant to leave. Jackson gets in the front seat next to the protesting cabbie.

71 EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

Abandano and the woman are crossing the plaza as Nico and Jackson run up the block. Near the entrance to the Federal Building, a small but vocal group of protestors are gathered, carrying signs and chanting slogans. The frustrated cabbie watches them in the background.

*
*
*

72 PLAZA

Jackson and Nico watch Abandano and the woman pass the crowd of demonstrators and enter the building. Jackson acts indifferent, almost frustrated; Nico keenly senses something.

*
*

CUT TO:

73 INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT ("BOGOTA") - DAY

*

The main dining room. No customers, just busboys readying tables for the evening's business. We notice one of the busboys is the "pimp" Nico found with Lucy.

*
*

74 BOOTH NEAR BACK HALLWAY

The owner's table. Stacks of dining checks, a cashbox and calculator, full ashtrays, wine glasses. BAUTISTA SALVANO, a heavysset, swarthy Venezuelan dressed in a tux with the collar open, glowers across the table at a muscular, scar-faced Latin busboy -- the kind who looks like he does more for his boss than clean up the tables. The busboy (NARDO) is nervous, apologetic --

SALVANO

(pissed off)

-- I brought you in for your muscles, Nardo, not your mouth.

NARDO

(scared)

I'm sorry, boss.

SALVANO

Your English is getting good...
You're showing it off. Showing it
off on the street --

NARDO

I keep quiet. I never talk no
more --

Salvano glowers at Nardo like he's about to punch him. Instead he reaches over, playfully chokes the busboy -- then releases him, as if all is forgiven.

SALVANO

Make yourself useful.

(indicates empty
wine bottle on
table)

Get downstairs, bring me one of
these.

(as Nardo stands,
starts for back
hallway)

Then get back to work.

75 INT. RESTAURANT BASEMENT STOREROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Nardo enters at the top of the stairs, radiating relief. He trots down into the empty basement, toward a floor-to-ceiling wine rack.

NARDO

(to himself)

I thought I was dead, man.

(whistles with
relief)

I thought I was fucking dead.

He crosses to the wine rack. It's dark, hard to see. He searches for the bottle. Suddenly: a METALLIC sound behind him. Nardo turns -- CHI CHI TESTAMENTE, a wiry, pock-faced Latino, stands in the shadows (it is clear he has been waiting there, hiding) -- holding a small silencer automatic.

CHI CHI

You were right, cabron.

*

One SHOT between the eyes and Nardo CRASHES backward into the WINE RACK, eyes wide with shock and bewilderment. Chi Chi SHOOTs him AGAIN; Nardo drops like a stone. Coolly, professionally, Chi Chi pumps FOUR more SHOTS into the prone busboy's head. Chi Chi ejects the clip into his palm, unscrews the silencer, holsters the gun. Salvano appears at the top of the stairs. Two busboys are behind him. One of them is the young pimp. The busboys hurry down, the pimp -- scared shitless but playing it macho-cool. Salvano comes down the stairs. Chi Chi stands over his work.

*

*

SALVANO
(to busboys)
Clean up this mess.

CHI CHI
Who knows who else is talking --

*

*

SALVANO
He was a young fool.

*

*

76 BACK IN UPSTAIRS DINING ROOM

Salvano and Chi Chi emerge from the basement steps and walk toward their booth.

CHI CHI
We're crazy waiting for this
bullshit 'shipment.' Let me waste
the other fucker now.

Salvano puts a hand on Chi Chi's shoulder.

SALVANO
Be patient. This will be done
the way it was planned.

CUT TO:

77 EXT. BODY AND FENDER SHOP - NIGHT

Rusting cyclone fences surround a mud-lot repair yard in a dingy industrial section. Young Lation and black workers finish up for the night; through the dirty, security-barred office window we can see Chi Chi talking on the phone. The lawyer, Abandano, is also there.

78 EXT. ALLEY - REAR OF SHOP - NIGHT

Nico finishes connecting a small transmitter which has been hastily wired to the entering phone line.

79 INT. UNMARKED CAR - NIGHT

Nico and Jackson in the shadows down the street from the body shop. Nico wears earphones, a small tape recorder on the seat beside him. Jackson does not look happy.

JACKSON

Toscani, you're going to have me doing time.

NICO

Lighten up, Jax. No one's bringing this into court.

JACKSON

Except against us.

NICO

I don't give a shit how we do it. I just wanna get there.

Jackson gives Nico a dirty look, but stifles her protest.

JACKSON

I thought you said you were gonna protect me. Cover my butt. Be my guardian angel --

Nico hears something through the earphones. Gestures for silence --

80 ANGLE THROUGH OFFICE WINDOW

Chi Chi listens with increased intensity to something on the phone. He starts writing it down --

81 BACK TO NICO

In unmarked car. He's writing it down too.

NICO

I got the shipment. *

JACKSON

What? What's he saying?

NICO

(scribbling furiously)
'... Engine block has cleared customs. Serial number VA-748. Pick up Tuesday, 3 May as authorized.'

82 EXT. BODY SHOP - NIGHT

Chi Chi emerges from the office, tucking a scrap of paper into his pocket. Abandano follows. They get into a late-model Lincoln which pulls out onto the street. *

83 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Nico and Jackson's car follows at a discreet distance.

NICO (V.O.)
 Unit Ten Tango X-ray. I need a
 vehicle registration I.D.

POLICE RADIO (V.O.)
 Go ahead, please.

NICO (V.O.)
 '86 Lincoln. Illinois 354 Dog '67.

*

84 INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Jackson picks up Nico's pad to take down the response.
 After a moment:

POLICE RADIO (V.O.)
 Vehicle registration follows.
 Leaseholder: Ramon Testamente,
 registered alien. Nation of
 origin: Venezuela. Do you wish
 criminal record search?

NICO
 (into mike)
 I want to know when he wipes his
 behind.

*

*

85 SERIES OF SHOTS

As Nico and Jackson tail the Lincoln out of the industrial
 zone into a fancier, non-Latin neighborhood. On the sidewalks
 we glimpse theatergoers, fashionable white couples out on the
 town.

86 LINCOLN

Pulls up to a valet park outside a ton-y restaurant. A
 sign says: "BOGOTA."

*

87 INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOVING

Nico and Jackson exchange a glance.

JACKSON
 Salvano?

NICO
 Jackpot.

88 EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chi Chi and Abandano get out of their car, a valet takes it,
 Chi Chi enters the restaurant.

89 INT. SALVANO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nico and Jackson enter the main dining room, which we
 recognize from the scene with Nardo the busboy.

The place is packed with fashionable people of all races. A band plays salsa; couples dance. Nico and Jackson pass easily as a hip "uptown" couple. A pretty Latin HOSTESS approaches them.

HOSTESS

Two for dinner?

NICO

Two for drinks.

They elbow up to the packed bar, standing. Nico squints toward the rear dining room.

90 NICO'S POV - DOWN BAR

Looking past numerous patrons, we see Chi Chi whisper something to a waiter and take a seat at a rear table (the same "owner's table" where Salvano sat before.) The waiter hurries off into a back hallway.

91 NICO AND JACKSON - AT BAR

Jackson moves to the salsa beat. A BARMAID approaches.

JACKSON

Gimme something stiff. I need it.

BARMAID

Who doesn't?

Nico's eyes never leave Chi Chi.

92 REAR DINING ROOM

From the back hallway Salvano emerges -- in his tux, looking prosperous. He sits down beside Chi Chi and Abandano. A waitress brings two drinks. After a few words, Chi Chi removes the scrap of paper from his pocket, hands it to Salvano.

NICO (O.S.)

You'll have your engine block next Tuesday, boss.

93 BACK TO NICO AND JACKSON

As the Barmaid brings their drinks. Jackson sees her peaceful week to retirement flying out the window.

JACKSON

Why couldn't it be a week from Tuesday? I could read about it in the paper.

Nico grabs her waist, pulls her onto the dance floor, and does a playful twirl.

NICO

Cheer up, partner. I'm gonna
make you famous.

94 EXT. WHOLESALE MEAT AREA - DAY *

Track spurs, greasy streets, parked fork lifts.

94A EXT. ROOF - DAY *

Lieutenant Strozah surveys the street traffic. *

95 NICO, JACKSON AND LUKICH

The two men, dressed as meat processors in hard hats and bloody white coats, rake cattle guts under the eave of a packing plant. Jackson, dressed like a USDA Inspector and carrying a clipboard, inspects a few hanging carcasses. *

JACKSON

You missed a few spots, boys.

LUKICH

I'm takin' it home t'a make
kilbasa, boss.

Luke casts an impatient glance across the street to a lot with four parked meat trucks. We glimpse two "truckers" keeping low in the shadows of one cab. Down the block a seemingly empty pickup truck is parked in an alley.

LUKICH

This ain't a bust -- it's a
convention.

NICO

Don't you like company, Luke?
(sarcastic)
We got all the scouts here --
Drug Enforcement Agency, the
Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms --

WALKIE-TALKIE (V.O.)

Keep this channel clear, Toscani.

We realize Nico, Jackson and Lukich are wired, with mikes out of sight under their coats. Nico glances to the pick-up, near to which three men can be spotted in the alley. Apparently one of them is the walkie-talkie voice.

NICO

(into mike)
This is our channel, dickhead.
And our collar.

ANOTHER WALKIE-TALKIE (V.O.)

That's enough, all of you! Keep
this channel clear.

96

ANGLE ON MEAT PLANT - DAY

Nothing happening.

97 ANOTHER ANGLE

Dead as hell.

98 NICO, LUKICH AND JACKSON

Bored, pissed off, tired. Suddenly:

99 BATTERED VAN WITH TWO MEN

emerges from a corner, two blocks down. It starts slowly this way.

1ST WALKIE-TALKIE (V.O.)

All right. Everyone get their heads outa their ass.

The meat truck men duck down out of sight, the pickup men back into the shadows. Nico and Lukich keep raking cow guts. The van passes slowly, checking out the area.

JACKSON

(sarcastic)

'... And so I quit the police department... got myself a steady job -- '

The van accelerates slightly, turns a corner, vanishes. Silence.

LUKICH

They spotted me. I'm too good-looking to be a meat slobber.

*

*

1ST WALKIE-TALKIE (V.O.)

Will you hot dogs shut up?

The van returns. On a cross street. Heading behind the packing plant.

NICO

(to Lukich)

You're too ugly.

*

*

Now a second car appears. The Lincoln. Behind it is an ancient station wagon. Both vehicles take a different cross street, but both heading behind the packing plant.

NICO

(into hidden mike)

Here we go, boys and girls --

(to Jackson)

You stay put.

*

As soon as the two vehicles pass out of sight, Nico and Lukich ditch their rakes, dart into the packing plant. The meat truck men START their TRUCK.

The pickup men board their vehicle -- Jackson follows Nico and Luke -- but at a safe distance.

100 INT. PACKING PLANT - DAY

Nico and Lukich sprint in a crouch past the blood runoffs, meat cutting tables --

101 NICO'S POV - RUNNING

THROUGH the windows at the rear of the plant, we see the station wagon and the van, pulling up swiftly beside one another, men getting out --

102 INT. PLANT

Nico and Lukich draw their guns, running full-tilt.

NICO
(into hidden miki)
It's going down now. Move!

103 EXT. REAR OF PACKING PLANT - DAY

The station wagon men heave their rear door open, the van men start to open their side door. The Lincoln is stopped at a distance. Suddenly --

104 NICO AND LUKICH

burst from the rear door of the packing plant, guns drawn.

LUKICH
Police!

105 QUICK CUTS - VAN AND STATION WAGON MEN

grab for their weapons --

106 COPS IN MEAT TRUCK AND PICKUP

come highballing around both sides of the packing plant --

107 VAN AND STATION WAGON MEN

OPEN FIRE. There is confusion and mayhem; it's not clear who's a cop and who's a criminal.

108 NICO AND LUKICH

dive for cover, RETURNING FIRE. The DEA men in one truck also OPEN UP. One of the van men is hit between the eyes. MACHINE GUN FIRE rakes the DEA truck; it spins out of control; flips. Lukich SHOTS the machine-gunner.

LUKICH
(shouts; points)
Nico! The Lincoln!

109 LINCOLN
starts to PEEL OUT. We glimpse Chi Chi in the driver's seat, Salvano on the passenger side.

110 NICO
steps in front of the accelerating Lincoln, raises his .45.

111 INT. LINCOLN - DAY
Salvano and Chi Chi dive below the dash and continue forward. Salvano, in the passenger seat, raises his GUN; FIRES blindly -- trying to hit Nico.

112 EXT. LINCOLN - DAY
Nico UNLOADS his .45 into the windshield and the firewall. The Lincoln keeps coming down the narrow alley.

113 NICO
brazenly steps up onto the hood and dives, grabbing onto the roof.

114 INT. LINCOLN - DAY
Salvano can't believe it. He screams something in Spanish. He FIRES again, this time through the roof.

115 EXT. LINCOLN - ROOF - DAY
Bullet holes appear. Nico narrowly misses being hit.

116 ANOTHER ANGLE - LINCOLN
Nico reaches over the side of the car and SMASHES the passenger WINDOW with his fist.

117 CLOSEUP - NICO'S HAND
Salvano's face is bashed. Nico's huge hand grabs Salvano's throat; he won't let go.

118 CLOSEUP - NICO
He hangs on with one hand.

119 CLOSEUP - SALVANO
Nico's fingers now dig into Salvano's larynx; he may never talk again. He's gagging. Salvano now points the gun at Chi Chi. Chi Chi makes the decision to stop the car in order to save his boss.

120 NICO

leaps off the roof pulling Salvano past the broken glass, out of the window.

121 SEVERAL POLICE VEHICLES

SCREECH into the lot. Officers pour out, guns drawn, surrounding the Lincoln and the other vehicles. Jackson joins them, weapon in hand.

122 NICO

drags Salvano by the neck across the lot to the van, slamming the drug dealer up against the van's side. Lukich, Jackson and Strozah are there, with the DEA cops, all covering the other men.

NICO
(to Salvano)
How many kilos you got in there,
Skivuzo?

Salvano couldn't answer if he wanted to. The other cops look at Nico with awe. Lukich whips the van door open, yanks a tarp off the cargo.

123 INT. VAN

The engine block sits in a wooden shipping frame, wrapped with industrial plastic. Nico climbs into the van, rips the plastic sheeting off, grabs the wood slats of the shipping frame, tears them off. In the background, ambulances are arriving to care for the wounded cops and criminals.

124 CLOSEUP - ENGINE BLOCK

From the cylinder heads emerges a full load, not of drugs, but of plastique tubes labeled U.S. ARMY C-4 HIGH EXPLOSIVE.

125 LUKICH, JACKSON AND OTHER COPS

react with surprise and shock.

126 NICO

rips open one of tubes and smells it.

127 CLOSE - NICO

Confused; frustrated.

NICO
What kinda fuckin' high is this?

CUT TO:

128 INT. FBI OFFICE - NIGHT

OPENING ON SALVANO, in a chair, looking bruised and swollen, and wearing an expression of fuming indignation.

SALVANO

-- I'll tell you what this cop is.
He's a fucking menace!

129 TWO FBI AGENTS (NEELEY AND HALLORAN) *

face Salvano, Chi Chi and the lawyer Abandano (apparently representing Salvano and Chi Chi). Neeley is on the phone. *
Pictures of Reagan and Meese are prominent on the wall.

SALVANO

You see what he did to me?!

AGENT HALLORAN

Your problem is being handled right now, Mr. Salv --

SALVANO

Yeah? Well, it shoulda been handled twelve hours ago. I don't know who's running this outfit, but somebody better get his goddamn wires straight!

AGENT NEELEY *

(into phone)

-- yes, sir... yes, sir, I understand --

SALVANO

That maniac should be wearing a number, not a badge.

Salvano knows what the call is about. He straightens the tie beneath his bruised neck, assuming the attitude of a respectable citizen who has been unjustly wronged.

AGENT NEELEY *

(into phone)

-- count on it, sir. Right.
You'll have our full cooperation.

Neeley hangs up. Glances dubiously to Halloran. Then turns grimly to Salvano, Chi Chi and the lawyer Abandano. *

AGENT NEELEY *

You're free to go.

130 OMITTED

131 INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT *

The hoods and their lawyer smugly walk past a cleaning woman.

132 INT. PRECINCT CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - MORNING

OPENING ON Agent Neeley's face. Composed, clean-cut, but intense, wearing a light-colored business suit. PAN TO Agent Halloran -- the same upright, clean-shaven bureau look. The two men are seated to one side of LIEUTENANT FRED STROZAH. *

133 NICO, JACKSON, LUKICH AND DEA AND ATF MEN

sit and stand in various postures in front of the Lieutenant's desk.

LIEUTENANT STROZAH

(to Nico, DEA & AIF)

-- This is no reflection on the work you officers have done. I feel, and the whole department feels, extremely proud of your initiative and gallantry.

That "spare me the horseshit" look on Nico's face. He's fuming. Strozah sees Nico's bitter expression. It's on the others' faces too.

LIEUTENANT STROZAH

As all of you are well aware, possession of these explosives is a federal offense and under jurisdiction of the F.B.I.

Nico's eyes meet Lieutenant Strozah's. There's respect between the two, but it's plainly under a helluva strain.

NICO

Sir. With all respect to our brothers in the Bureau --

(biting sarcasm;

turns to Neeley) *

-- That's no answer. It's no answer to why one of the biggest dealers in the city is out on the street now, free as a bird!

Agent Neeley stiffens. *

LIEUTENANT STROZAH

Keep it in your pants, Nico. These men have a job to do, just like us.

Nico stifles his outrage. The other cops exchange glances -- upset and angry. Agent Neeley clears his throat. *

AGENT NEELEY *

Lieutenant, I think these officers are entitled to a fuller explanation.

(MORE)

AGENT NEELEY (CONT'D)

They've risked their lives. I understand one man is in the hospital.

He speaks to the officers.

AGENT NEELEY

What I'm about to say doesn't leave this room. Is that clear?

Assent from everyone.

AGENT NEELEY

Mr. Salvano has been working for some time in cooperation with certain federal agencies.

134 CLOSE - NICO'S FACE

Stunned and furious at this royal fuck-up.

AGENT NEELEY (O.S.)

I'm not at liberty to divulge the nature of Mr. Salvano's involvement -- I just learned of its existence myself a few hours ago. But one thing I can tell you --

135 BACK TO AGENT NEELEY

AGENT NEELEY

Mr. Salvano's role is crucial to an extremely sensitive ongoing investigation. Any further surveillance, harassment, or unauthorized operations against this individual are forbidden. I must order you gentlemen --
(looking straight at Nico)
-- with all respect for your work and your courage, to stand down.

Lukich shakes his head; Nico is devastated. Jackson takes it all in.

CUT TO:

136 INT. POLICE SQUAD ROOM - MORNING

OPENING CLOSE ON a desk drawer being opened. Aside from rounds of ammo, notes and an aging eggplant parmigiana sandwich, there are half a dozen hand-labeled audio-cassettes and a small collection of miniaturized bugging devices. Jackson and Lukich watch Nico take out the notes, hand them to Lieutenant Strozah.

LIEUTENANT STROZAH

The tapes too.

NICO

(mocking)

That's my Lawrence Welk
collection!

LIEUTENANT STROZAH

I want everything you got on this
one.

Reluctantly, Nico hands over the tapes. The Lieutenant eyes
the bugs and wires.

LIEUTENANT STROZAH

I know you don't give a shit
about yourself, Toscani.

(a glance to Jax)

But you're gonna put Jackson's
ass in a sling, too, with these
illegal wires.

136A OTHER SIDE OF SQUAD ROOM

Agent Halloran edges up to Jackson, who's grabbing coffee on the far side of the squad room, and watching from there as Nico gives Strozah more of a hard time.

AGENT HALLORAN

What's the story on your partner, Jackson? Did he learn this style or was he born with a brick up his ass?

Jackson checks Halloran out. He's black too and, despite herself, there's a certain rapport.

JACKSON

He has ethics. Unlike certain others on this case.

Halloran watches the illegal bugs and tapes come out of Nico's drawer.

AGENT HALLORAN

His 'ethics' are gonna cost him his badge and his gun.

This "white" talk gives Jackson a pain. She slips into her jive mode.

JACKSON

You don't wanna catch him without no gun.

Halloran's look asks why not?

JACKSON

'Cause what he do with his hands... make bullet holes look pretty.

Across the room, Nico turns over the tapes.

AGENT HALLORAN

He bad?

JACKSON

Bad bad.

137 INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - STAIRWAY - DAY

Nico and Jackson come down the stairs. Jackson has had ample excitement for her last week on the force.

JACKSON

Is that enough? Can we do something normal now -- like eat lunch?

NICO

Anything you say, Jax. How about Salvano's?

JACKSON

Let it be, Nico.

138 EXT. PRECINCT HOUSE - DAY

Nico and Jackson's car pulls out into traffic.

139 INT. UNMARKED CAR - PARKED (ALLEY BEHIND SALVANO'S)

Jackson and Nico are eating some fast good. Nico reaches to his jacket pocket; takes out a cassette.

JACKSON

What... you kept his tape, too?

Nico already has it in the PLAYER. We hear FRAGMENTS of the telephone tap from the body shop in Spanish and English. Jackson looks frustrated. Nico listens carefully to what appears to be the taped PHONE CONVERSATION.

NICO

Poetry, ain't it?

140 EXT. REAR SALVANO'S RESTAURANT - DAY (POV FROM CAR)

The pimp (busboy) comes out and dumps a load of garbage.

141 INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Nico and Jackson case the restaurant from down the alley.

142 EXT. REAR SALVANO'S - NICO'S POV - DAY

From the restaurant door, Salvano and Chi Chi emerge. They get into a black Cadillac and pull out. *

NICO (O.S.)

And now for some dessert.

143 SERIES OF SHOTS

As Nico's car tails Salvano's through various streets.

144 EXT. OAK STREET

Salvano comes out of a fancy flower shop with a bimbo on his arm. He kisses her goodbye and puts her in a cab.

NICO (O.S.)

And that must be Mrs. Sal. So nice to see married couples still in love.

144A NICO AND JACKSON

are hidden, waiting.

144B CHI CHI

emerges from a dry cleaner's with a suit on a hanger. *

145 EXT. ST. ELIZABETH'S PARISH CHURCH - DAY

Salvano's Caddy pulls up outside the same church where we saw Nico's son get baptized. Salvano and Chi Chi get out, look both ways up and down the street. Salvano, holding flowers, makes eye contact with a car down the block. *

146 EXT. STREET UP BLOCK FROM CHURCH - DAY

Nico's car backs out of sight around the corner.

147 SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF CHURCH

Salvano and Chi Chi, seeing nothing, enter the church.

148 INT. CHURCH - DAY

A smattering of older women and men praying. Salvano and Chi Chi stop at the head of the aisle, genuflect to the altar, move in, take seats toward the front.

149 BACK OF CHURCH

Nico and Jackson slip in the front door, glide silently into the shadows at the rear of the church.

JACKSON

This is your mother's church, isn't it?

NICO

Yeah. But I bet she's never seen these boys in the choir.

150 NICO'S POV

Salvano's head is bowed, but Chi Chi is looking around quite carefully. Nico and Jackson fade into the shadows behind the huge pillars.

151 SALVANO AND CHI CHI

After a few moments, the pair rises. They cross themselves, start out for the front door. As they walk, they continue to look for something.

152 INT. CHURCH - DAY

*

Nico and Jackson emerge into a courtyard which reveals a day care center and a rectory. They head toward the front of the building. Jackson, planning on picking up their tail on Salvano, is stopped by Nico. He wants to stay and look around.

FATHER GENARRO (O.S.)
 Nicola! That can't be you in
 church without the family!

Nico turns to see Father Genarro, perspiring in a baggy
 sweatshirt, a handball glove on his hand. The courtyard
 alongside the church is marked off as an athletic area.

NICO
 Father Genarro.

The priest seizes Nico's hand warmly, smiles at Jackson.

FATHER GENARRO
 This must be your partner in
 crime.
 (shakes her hand)
 I'm Father Genarro. I saw you at
 the baptismal party.
 (with a wink to Nico)
 What a partner.

JACKSON
 Dolores Jackson
 (smiling, but
 impatient)
 Nico, we gotta go --

FATHER GENARRO
 No, please --
 (more serious now)
 It's good you stopped by. I have
 to show you something. Please.

The priest begins leading Nico and Jackson. Jackson keeps
 glancing back out the alley to see Salvano's car slowly
 driving by.

153 INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

This is an old building. The dark corridors resemble an
 underground bunker. Old trophies and furniture are stored
 along the walls. The two cops and the priest walk.
 Another priest emerges from a door, nods, passes. Nico
 and Jackson glance in through the door as they walk.
 They reach a door with a broken handle. It looks like a
 break-in has taken place.

FATHER GENARRO
 The rats are getting bigger.

NICO
 When did this happen?

FATHER GENARRO
 Two nights ago. I didn't call
 the police.

Father Genarro knocks on the door, pauses, then knocks again. The door opens. A twelve-year-old who looks like he's from Central America stands in the doorway.

FATHER GENARRO

(in Spanish)

It's all right, son. These are friends.

The boy steps back and we MOVE INTO --

154 INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

A largish room, no exposed windows, everything boarded up. Newly-constructed makeshift toilet and shower in one corner, various cots. A number of LATIN REFUGEES -- families mostly -- react shyly as Father Genarro introduces Nico and Jackson. Sister Bonifacia is there, and a youthful priest, FATHER TOMASSINO. We will see both of them again.

FATHER GENARRO

(referring to the cops)

These are friends.

(to Nico)

This is Father Tomassino.

FATHER TOMASSINO

How do you do?

Nico shakes the young priest's hand. There is a moment between them as Nico meets Tomassino's eyes, liking what he sees. The refugees are relieved, however, when Father Genarro, Nico and Jackson take their leave.

155 NICO, JACKSON AND FATHER GENARRO

continue down the hall.

JACKSON

I didn't know this church was a sanctuary, Father.

FATHER GENARRO

Yes. But, perhaps not such a safe one.

NICO

How long have they been here?

FATHER GENARRO

Too long. At least the kids can go to our school.

NICO

Who did it, Father?

FATHER GENARRO

Kids, maybe.

(significantly)

Maybe worse. It's not the first
time.

JACKSON

We can have a car check by, every
hour.

FATHER GENARRO

No... please. Police frighten
these people.

156 INT. CHURCH - MAIN AISLE - DAY *

The three are outside, taking their leave. A big smile and a hand on Father Genarro's shoulder. The priest is greatly relieved.

NICO

Really, I don't mind coming by.

FATHER GENARRO

Tell me, Nico... When was your last confession?

NICO

I'm a married man, Father. I've got no sins to confess.

FATHER GENARRO

You're a police officer, you have many sins to confess.

JACKSON

Amen.

Nico and Jackson start off.

FATHER GENARRO

(calls after Nico)

You come back Sunday. I feel better when I see Nicola in church.

(calls louder)

You don't show, I'm phoning your mother!

DISSOLVE TO:

157 SAME CHURCH - POV FROM WINDOW - EARLY MORNING (SUNDAY)

HIGH ANGLE FROM ACROSS the street: neighborhood people dressed in their Sunday best fill the sidewalk, filing in for Mass. We hear an ORGAN from inside the church.

158 VARIOUS ANGLES - CONGREGATION

An Italian neighborhood becoming more Hispanic. As the churchgoers file in, we see families -- women, kids, babies.

159 NICO, SARA, ROSA AND JULIAN *

are among the crowd, exchanging pleasantries with friends and neighbors -- in English, Italian and Spanish.

160 INT. CHURCH - SIDE AISLE

Sara, holding Julian, slips into a pew. As Nico and Rosa follow, Father Genarro passes, heading for the front. *

ROSA
 Father Genarro! I have you to thank
 for getting my son back into church!

FATHER GENARRO
 It's amazing what shame can
 accomplish.

Father Genarro smiles and continues on toward the pulpit.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

161 VARIOUS SHOTS

A) THE CHOIR

building to the finish of a hymn.

B) NICO'S WIFE (SARA) *

also singing, balancing baby Julian and a hymnbook.

C) NICO AND HIS MOTHER ROSA

sing with full gusto.

D) THE CHOIR MASTER

makes the sign to be seated.

E) CONGREGATION

sits. We notice a young, intellectual-looking man
 (Alan Singletary) wearing wire-rim glasses, sitting in
 the front row. We will see his face again later. He
 looks out of place and glances around, surprised as...

F) FATHER GENARRO

moves into the pulpit, opens his Bible.

FATHER GENARRO
 In nomine patris, filius et
 spiritu sancti... (etc)

162 SARA AND JULIAN *

The little one starts to CRY; she comforts him. Nico
 reaches over to try to help. The BABY continues FUSSING.
 Nico looks toward the priest and the front of the church.
 He notices a woman in a black shawl rise from the front
 of the church and turn, heading down one of the side
 aisles.

SARA *

(examines Julian's
 diaper)
 Way to go, Julian -- perfect timing.

She cynically smiles at Nico. Nico sees the woman in black pass toward the exit of the church.

163 CLOSEUP - WOMAN

It is the same woman Nico and Jackson were following with Abandano, the lawyer!

164 CLOSEUP - LARGE SHOPPING BAG

The woman has left it in front of the votive candles directly before the priest's pulpit.

165 CLOSEUP - NICO

His head spins from the shopping bag to the doorway --

166 NICO'S POV - DOORWAY

The woman is hastily sneaking out.

167 BACK TO NICO

Instantly he pushes his family to the floor, covering them with his body.

168 CLOSEUP - NICO - SECOND LATER

BOOM!!! A POWERFUL EXPLOSION erupts between the priest and his congregation. Fragments of plaster, wood, and marble come blasting past Nico and his family! Churchgoers in the first rows are blown off their feet by the shock wave of the blast. Pews overturn, smoke everywhere --

169 CHOIR

is shrieking hysterically. Stone and plaster dust rain down on them from the ceiling.

170 CONGREGATION

is in total pandemonium. Screams, cries, panic --

171 PULPIT

has been blown to oblivion. Where Father Genarro had been standing is now nothing but smoke and rubble.

172 NICO

Prone, covering Sara and the baby, groping frantically to protect his mother as well. *

SARA
(clutching baby)
We're okay! We're okay! *

Nico checks them and his mother swiftly.

ROSA
(in Italian)
Help the others! Help them, Nico!

CUT TO:

173 STATUE OF JESUS

Splattered with real blood.

CUT BACK TO:

174 ANGLE ON CONGREGATION

Everyone is down, reeling from the concussion, dust and smoke. Nico rises alone from this scene.

NICO
(forcefully)
Help each other move outside. Be calm.

175 EXT. SIDE OF CHURCH - MORNING

From a doorway and a shattered window smoke pours forth. We hear SCREAMS from inside.

176 INT. CHURCH

Nico on his feet, plainly the leader in this moment of terror. Worshippers, shattered and bleeding, pour past him toward the door. Nico grabs a stout-looking church-goer.

NICO
Call 911. Tell 'em to send everything they got!
(turns to his wife)
Sara, get the baby and Mama outside.

*

Nico starts for the altar where the damage is worst.

177 EXT. FRONT OF CHURCH - MORNING

The congregation streams out in terror-stricken disarray. We see Nico's family -- they're all right.

178 NICO

appears from the church, carrying a young choir girl. He hands the child over to two older women, races back into the church.

179 LONG SHOT - STREET OUTSIDE CHURCH

The first paramedic van comes speeding around the corner, SIREN BLARING. Police cars appear right behind --

180 INT. CHURCH

Nico appears through the backlit smoke and kneels over the bloodied body of Father Genarro. He desperately tries to maintain the priest's life.

CUT TO:

181 INT. HOSPITAL/ICU WARD - AFTERNOON

The aftermath of the blast. Doctors and nurses have the scene more or less under control, but there's still plenty of pain and misery.

182 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nico stands, his back to the wall -- a scary, blank look on his face. A doctor and several nurses are pulling the plugs on the terribly mutilated body of Father Genarro. A nun is crying; a fellow priest is blessing the Father.

183 JACKSON

arrives. Nico talks to her, aside.

NICO

I want a list of everyone that's been treated here today. Everyone.

JACKSON

Right.

NICO

Then find those sanctuary people, the ones we saw in the church basement --

As Jackson makes notes.

NICO

Find out where they're from, why anyone would want to harm them.

Jackson flips her notepad shut, ready to go.

JACKSON

Where are you gonna be?

NICO

Just stay near a radio. I'll find you.

184 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NICO'S MOTHER (ROSA) - AFTERNOON

Sits on a bench with a bandage over one eye. Sara and Julian are sleeping beside her. Nico kneels beside his mother, deeply concerned. Nico takes his mother's arm, helps her to her feet.

*

Sara wakes and picks up Julian. Mama knows Father Genarro has died. She begins sobbing softly. Other members of the congregation are in the hallway, mourning. Nico, with his family, takes several steps toward the exit. Suddenly, Nico stops. He sees Agent Neeley entering (the FBI man who ordered him off the case) accompanied by Lieutenant Strozah and two uniformed officers. *

NICO

Sara... go down to the car; I'll be with you in a minute. *

He hails Neeley. *

NICO

I need to talk to you.
(a glance to Strozah
and others)
... Alone.

Neeley nods. Nico leads him off the corridor, through a fire exit door -- *

185 STAIRWELL LANDING

The door closes behind them. Nico and the FBI man are alone on the stairway landing.

AGENT NEELEY *

(impatient)
What the hell is it, Toscani?

Without warning, Nico grabs Neeley by both lapels, slams him furiously into the wall! *

NICO

You. That's what the hell it is!

AGENT NEELEY *

Get your goddam hands off me!

Neeley tries to shake free; Nico won't let him. *

NICO

You let Salvano walk.

AGENT NEELEY *

Salvano?! Are you crazy?
(rips himself free)
What does he have to do with this?

NICO

That was no cherry bomb in there.
That was C-fucking-4!
(struggles to master
his rage)
I've used that shit.
(MORE)

NICO (CONT'D)

I know what it smells like, I know
what it blows like --

Neeley glares at Nico.

AGENT NEELEY

Salvano never came near that C-4.
It's in federal holding now!
Besides, why would he blow up a
church?

NICO

I tailed Salvano. Two days ago.
Him and one of his apes were in
that church -- and they weren't
taking communion. I saw some broad
saw who was with his lawyer plant
the bomb. Now I want some goddamn
answers.

AGENT NEELEY

You tailed him? After I ordered
you off?

NICO

Where is he? Where's Salvano?

AGENT NEELEY

My orders were release him. Not
babysit him.

Neeley brushes Nico's fingermarks off his lapels.

AGENT NEELEY

You think you're rough stuff,
Toscani -- martial arts hero, chop
suey crap. Well I'll tell you
something: you're not bullet-
proof. You're not even a good
cop.

(composes himself;

reclaims his dignity)

You sneak around, playing your
street dick games. But all you
come up with is conjecture, wild
coincidence and bullshit.

NICO

I want the agent who signed for
the explosives.

AGENT NEELEY

I'll do my job. You do yours.

NICO

Bank on it, pal.

Nico stalks off. The door slams.

CUT TO:

186 MONTAGE WITH SCORE

A) EXT. "BOGOTA" (SALVANO'S RESTAURANT) - LATE AFTERNOON *

Nico's unmarked car whips in front. Nico storms toward the front door of the restaurant.

B) INT. RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON *

Nico storms through toward the restaurant rear. The employees are getting ready for the evening crowd. He flashes his badge, checks the kitchen, Salvano's office. The man is gone.

C) INT. MORGUE - LATE AFTERNOON

Jackson has her list from the hospital. A coroner and his assistant show her a body on a slab. The body is that of Alan Singletary, the man we saw in the front row of the church. Jackson takes notes. The dead man is definitely not the ethnic type you'd expect in St. Mary's congregation. *

D) EXT. BODY AND FENDER SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

The same place where Nico and Jackson wire-tapped Chi Chi. Nico interrogates the shop boss, several workers. All shake their head, gesture emphatically. Salvano not here.

E) CUT BACK TO MORGUE - JACKSON

takes Polaroids of the dead man's I.D. and personal effects.

187 CLOSEUP OF DEAD MAN'S EFFECTS

as Jackson's flash pops. We see clearly a U.S. Senate staff ID, a U.S. Senate office building parking pass and an Illinois driver's license with address.

188 EXT. AFFLUENT BROWNSTONE - LATE AFTERNOON

Nico comes storming out. A Maid and a bodyguard follow after him screaming. The door slams. We see it is missing a panel.

MAID

You gonna be in real trouble,
mister, when El Senor Salvano
find out about dis.

189 EXT. ST. ELIZABETH'S CHURCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Jackson at the blast scene. Police tapes rope the area off while a TV news crew photographs the damage. Jackson talks with neighborhood people, asking questions. *

190 EXT. BICEK'S BAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Nico in the alley, grilling several tough guys we saw before when he raided this bar. The answers are all zero; Nico's disgusted, worn out, frustrated. He starts out the alley -- At the edge of the street, a battered van pulls in. A jacketed LATINO MAN leans against it, an unlit cigarette in his mouth. As Nico approaches, turning toward his car --

FIRST LATINO

(polite, casual)

'Cuse me, sir. Can I bum a light?

Nico slows, eyeing the guy dubiously. As he reaches to his jacket -- The side door of the van flashes open. A .38 is leveled straight at Nico's head. Instantly three other Latino hoods leap to the sidewalk.

FIRST LATINO

(machete under jacket)

Don't even think about it,
motherfucker.

Machete Man (First Latino) snatches Nico's gun from its shoulder holster. Two hoods shove Nico back into the alley. Nico checks out his assailants quickly. Four of them. Machete, CROWBAR, BALL BAT, GUN.

MACHETE MAN (FIRST LATINO)

You come to our streets... fuck
with our people. Now our people
gonna fuck with you.

The five advance on Nico.

PIPE MAN

We ain't gonna shoot you, man.
We gonna beat you to death. You
gonna learn what it means to 'get
down.'

191 QUICK CUTS

A) Nico is trapped. The hoods advancing. Nico has a moment of stillness, as if all senses are clicking out of normal gear and into some hyper-combat readiness. Then:

- B) Gun and Machete Man are side by side. As Machete Man starts to move, Nico spins in beside him, seizes his wrist, twists it violently, wrenching the machete away, keeping Machete Man between him and Gun Man so Gun Man can't shoot. In a flash, Nico swings the machete, slicing over the top of Machete Man, half-severing the wrist of Gun Man. Gun Man falls, clutching his wrist in agony; the gun skitters away beneath a chain link fence, out of reach. Nico flips Machete Man (who has Nico's gun in his pocket) sending him crashing, half-unconscious.
- C) Instantly, Pipe Man aims a home run shot at Nico's head. Nico uses the machete, matches the angle of the oncoming blow, slides under and, in the same arc, blocks the blow and turns it into a strike, slashing Pipe Man's tendons behind the knee. Pipe Man goes down on one knee, writhing, hamstrung, crying out in pain.
- D) Now Ball Bat attacks. Nico intercepts the blow, flips Bat Man ass over teakettle, sending him sailing -- feet first -- through the side window of the van. Bat Man CRASHES THROUGH the GLASS, hung up with just his head and shoulders dangling free.
- E) Nico is spread out, feet wide, in a crouch. Crowbar Man sees his chance. He is the fiercest of the four, and the savviest fighter. He throws three consecutive vicious blows at Nico's head; Nico drops to one knee, dodges the blows, then intercepts the third, machete in hand, matches the arc of interception and whips the blade up -- straight into the crotch of Crowbar Man. Crowbar Man can't believe it. He remains frozen a moment, staring at Nico, then down at his own groin.
- F) Machete Man, the first to be flipped, struggles desperately to regain his senses. He tries to get Nico's gun from his own pocket, but Nico bats it away. Machete Man scrambles to his feet, in terror, bolts.
- G) Nico snatches his gun from the sidewalk, glances to Bat Man who is still half-dangling from the van window. Nico gives Bat Man one parting punch to the head, then tears off after Machete Man --

192 EXT. STREET - DAY

Shrieks from passersby as Machete Man hurtles past, straight into the street. A car nearly hits him, he vaults its hood. Here comes Nico, in hot pursuit. He too leaps the car, whose owner is staring, cursing --

193 ANGLE DOWN BLOCK

An all-out foot face.

Machete Man is a speedster; he hurdles a row of trash cans. TWO YOUNG GIRLS, on a stoop, whistle as he passes.

FIRST GIRL

Fly, baby!

194 NICO

tears after this human cannonball. Amazingly, he's gaining --

195 INT. BODEGA - DAY

Machete Man highballs off the sidewalk, straight into a Mom and Pop groceria. Customers scatter in shock as the hood blasts past them, out the back door. Here comes Nico. Patrons curse in Spanish as he barrels past --

196 EXT. YARD BEHIND BODEGA - DAY

Machete Man bolts from the bodega into a small patio with tables and chairs. He leaps the fence into the next yard, which belongs to a funeral home. He hurdles the headstone inventory, clambers up the fence on the far side --

197 BACK TO NICCO

pursuing along the same route.

198 MACHETE MAN

claws his way to the top of the fence and onto a framework of two-by-fours which form an arbor-like canopy above the third back yard. Plastic sheeting is tacked between the beams. Machete Man glances back at Nico, starts out -- tightrope-style -- across the two-by-fours. Nico reaches the fence behind the hood, starts also onto the two-by-fours. We hear FEMALE SCREAMS from below as the rickety structure starts to wobble precariously. Machete Man reaches the far side. A fire escape is adjacent; he grabs for it, starts up. Nico catches him by the ankle. The two crash together back onto the two-by-fours, which give way, sending them plunging into --

199 BACKYARD OF FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Four young Oriental women, potting plants, react with terror as the two bodies CRASH through. Machete Man scrambles away from Nico but is trapped in the corner next to the rear shop door. The flower girls can't move either; Nico and the hood are too near the door. The girls retreat to the far corner, squealing in fright.

MACHETE MAN

(to Nico, in terror)

No, hermano. Please --

Nico starts menacingly toward the hood, breathing hard from the chase.

NICO
Who put up the money?

MACHETE MAN
What money?

Nico grabs him by the hair.

NICO
You didn't come after me for a
piece of ass.
(twists the youth's
neck)
Who paid you?

MACHETE MAN
I told ya! No one!

Nico slams him with a fierce shot to the ribs. The hood doubles over, gasping. The flower girls shriek even louder. Nico turns to the girls with a ferocious glare.

NICO
(shouting)
Shut up!

The girls instantly go silent in terror. Nico turns back to Machete Man, spins him violently face-down, jacking the punk's right arm straight out behind him. We see that Nico can break his elbow with one blow.

NICO
Give it to me!

Nico raises his fist to strike.

MACHETE MAN
Jimmy Constanza!

Nico shoves the hood into the ground, tearing the hood's wallet from his trouser pocket. Nico rips the wallet apart, seizes the kid's identification and holds it up. He grabs the punk by the hair with his free hand. Machete Man is staring up in terror, wondering what this means.

NICO
If you're lying to me, I'll come
and kill you right in your own
fucking kitchen.

Nico dumps him on the ground and walks away. Instantly Machete Man changes his tune.

MACHETE MAN
Salvano! Bautista Salvano!

Nico walks back, his foot smashes into the punk's face. He hits the ground with a thud.

NICO
Gracias, muchacho.

Nico walks away.

200 MONTAGE WITH SCORE

A) INT. NICO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nico at the kitchen table spread with notepads, old address books, 3X5 cards. He's on the phone, impatient, apparently getting nowhere. He slams the phone down.

B) INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Nico paces, phone cradled to ear, talking urgently. CLICK: he's been hung up on; he looks at the receiver in frustration and disgust.

C) CLOSE - CORKBOARD ON KITCHEN WALL

Nico's hands pushpin a 3X5 card into the wall.

D) INSERT - 3X5 CARD

We read: "FBI / Agent Smith / 11:53 / B.S. / Covering for who?"

E) KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nico back at the table, listening to the wiretap tape, transcribing it.

F) ANOTHER ANGLE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (LATER)

Nico holds Julian, goes over notes.

G) CLOSE - YELLOW LEGAL PAD

The page is headed: "FATHER GENARRO." Below in doodle formation, are a series of boxes, each one containing a phrase. We read: "Father G had something on Salvano?" "Church break-in?" "Drug information?" "Father G connected to FBI?" Irritably, Nico's pencil crosses everything out.

201 SARA

*

Appears in a nightgown at the kitchen doorway. She looks frail, frightened. MUSIC ENDS.

SARA
(softly)
I can't sleep. Will you come and hold me?

*

NICO

Of course I will. I've been waiting to hear from Jax. She was supposed to get back to me by now.

202 INT. NICO'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Nico comes in with his arms around Sara. She stops near the bed, holds him tight. They look to little Julian sleeping in the crib nearby.

SARA

Thank God you couldn't find your shoes. We would of have been sitting in the front row.

(beat)

Alright, I know the rules -- I don't ask you don't tell. But could've died today and I deserve to know.

(beat)

Why did we go to church this morning?

NICO

I'm willing to break the rules; I'm willing to tell you whatever I know. But I need some time. Could you just give me some time?

Nico leans to kiss her, but is cut off by the HARSH RING of a PHONE. Sara starts at the sound. She and Nico glance at each other --

SARA

I'll bet that's her.

Nico picks up the phone.

NICO

(into phone)

This better be good, Jax.

MAN (V.O.)

(filtered)

It's bad, Nico.

Nico glances to Sara. The voice on the phone is not Jackson. Nico is chilled. He glances to Sara, finger to his lips. He points to his bare wrist as if wanting to know the exact time. Sara, not sure what's going on, mouths: "Two-fifteen."

NICO

(into phone)

Long time, Nelson.

203 EXT. STREET - PHONE BOOTH - LATE NIGHT

We recognize Fox, Nico's buddy from SE Asia whom we met in the opening sequence. Fox, too, of course, looks 15 years older. He wears a suit and seems quite prosperous. We are unable to identify from where Fox calls.

FOX

You should know not to use a name on an open line.

(beat)

I'm gonna talk for fifteen seconds, then I'm getting off. You're in trouble, Nico.

204 BACK TO NICO'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

FOX (V.O.)

(filtered)

Serious, serious trouble. Take your wife and family and get them someplace safe now.

205 BACK TO STREET - PHONE BOOTH - LATE NIGHT

FOX

You hear me? Now. I'm risking my ass by telling you this. Good luck, kid.

206 BACK TO NICO'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The PHONE CLICKS DEAD. Nico tries to keep a casual expression. Sara sees through it -- she knows he's shaken. *

SARA *

(grim)

That was Fox, wasn't it?

Nico doesn't answer.

SARA *

(very concerned)

Why is the C.I.A. calling you at two in the morning?

NICO

It's okay, sweetheart --

(crosses to her, puts his arms around her)

-- You know what a crazy bastard Fox is. He gets drunk and forgets he's halfway around the world. He calls me.

Nico gives her a squeeze and a smile.

NICO

He just wanted to make sure we got
his Christmas card.

207 INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Sara is sleeping next to Nico. Julian next to her. A *
LOUD POUNDING comes O.S. from the front door. Nico jumps
out of bed. His gun appears in his hand, as if from nowhere,
he steps quickly to the front window, looks out --

208 NICO'S POV - STREET BELOW

Two unmarked cars pull in.

209 BACK TO NICO

He moves swiftly to the rear window and spots another un- *
marked car. *

210 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - FRONT DOOR

Nico enters the vestibule in his pajama bottoms with his gun
in his hand.

VOICE THROUGH DOOR (O.S.)

F.B.I., Toscani. Open up.

Nico pulls aside a curtained glass panel; he recognizes *
two uniformed police officers, plus Neeley and Halloran,
the FBI agents who authorized the release of Salvano. He
lowers his gun, opens the door. The cops surge in.

NICO

(to one of cops)

It's a little early for breakfast,
O'Hara.

O'HARA

Sorry, Nico.

(displays warrant)

You're under arrest.

AGENT NEELEY *

(reaches for Nico's
gun)

I'll take this, thank you.

Before Neeley can get his hand on the gun, Nico, without *
pausing, hands it over to another agent.

NICO

No, you won't. I'm gonna give it
to you.

211 INT. NICO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JULIAN BAWLS fearfully; Sara holds him, trembling. Nico is hurriedly getting dressed. A cop and the FBI agents stand at the door. *

SARA
(to cops; distraught)
This is ridiculous -- there's
no need for this! *

NICO
It's all right, darling.

Two agents enter the room carrying Nico's confiscated papers and tapes and begin rummaging through dressers, jewelry boxes and closets. Rosa crosses swiftly to calm Sara. *

ROSA
(to cops)
Who do you think you are --
coming in here like this,
treating my son like a criminal? *

SARA
Why are you terrifying us?
There's an infant here! *

Nico pulls on a jacket. He looks like he could kill. He restrains himself for his family's sake.

AGENT HALLORAN
(to cops)
Check that coat.

The cops cross to frisk Nico. Sara, still holding the baby, starts slapping at them. *

SARA
Get your hands off him! *

Rosa grabs Sara -- *

NICO
(to Sara,
allowing himself
to be frisked)
It's all a mistake, Sara -- It's
gonna be all right. *

The cops steer Nico toward the door.

SARA
(calls after them)
The Police Association's got lawyers
for this, you bastards! *

Sara grabs for the phone; Nico is manhandled out the door --

*

212 EXT. NICO'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The neighbors are now on their porches. Nico is led to a waiting unmarked car.

CUT TO:

213 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LATE NIGHT

Bad Dude, the bartender we remember from Nico's first visit to the Polish bar, finishes signing a deposition. A cop takes the paper. Bad Dude stands, glances half-fearfully, half-defiantly to Nico, who is led down a hallway flanked by two uniformed officers. Agent Halloran opens the door for Bad Dude, who exits.

214 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Neeley, Halloran, Lieutenant Strozah and Deputy Superintendent JACK CROWDER. Halloran indicates a stack of depositions, tapes and notes on the table before Nico.

*
*

AGENT HALLORAN
Illegal wiretaps. Unauthorized surveillance.

NICO
When were you born, asshole?

AGENT NEELEY
Associating with known felons. Disobeying direct orders --

*

NICO
Where's Jackson?

CROWDER
She's outa this.

*

AGENT HALLORAN
You're the rotten apple in this barrel, Toscani. We don't have to look any farther than you and your 'family.'

Nico comes out of his chair, going for Halloran. Strozah tries to block him, but it's useless.

LIEUTENANT STROZAH
Nico! You damn fool! You wanna go to prison?!

*

Nico stops. He's speechless with rage. His finger points toward Halloran like a loaded gun.

CROWDER
 (indicates more
 depositions)
 Unlawful entry. Illegal search
 and seizure --

NICO
 (spits on papers)
 You'll never build a frame on this
 chickenshit.

AGENT NEELEY
 (angrily)
 You were ordered to back off on
 Salvano. But you had too big a
 hard-on for that, didn't you--

Nico contains his fury. He steps away from Strozah, with
 a gesture that says "I won't hurt you."

NICO
 (to Strozah)
 Fred. You can't be in on this.

Nico faces his lieutenant -- a look that calls on long
 years of comradeship and loyalty. Strozah is torn. He's
 a good man, over his head in a situation he doesn't com-
 pletely understand.

LIEUTENANT STROZAH
 You're officially suspended, Toscani.
 I want your tin... and your iron.

Neeley leans past Nico; drops Nico's gun (with an evidence
 tag on it) onto the table. Nico looks to Strozah, who
 averts his eyes. Nico flips his badge onto the table.

NICO
 You holding me?

AGENT NEELEY
 You can walk for now. But don't
 walk far.

CUT TO:

215 EXT. PHONE BOOTH ON DOWNTOWN STREET - DAWN

We are outside of a cop breakfast hangout. Several police
 cars are parked in the lot. Nico is on the phone.

NICO
 Sara, I'm okay. I love you.

CUT TO:

215A INT. NICO'S KITCHEN

Sara on the phone.

SARA

Where are you? Why aren't you
coming home?

CUT TO:

215B EXT. PHONE BOOTH

NICO

I'll be home later. Lukich will
be there. Tell mama not to worry.

Jackson and Lukich are waiting by Nico's car. They see
Nico emerge from the phone booth.

CUT TO:

216 EXT. STREET - NICO, JACKSON AND LUKICH - DAWN

A mood of urgency.

JACKSON

-- I found the sanctuary people.
(MORE)

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

JACKSON (CONT'D)

They're refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile. They won't talk to me, they're terrified of cops.

*

Jackson has an armload of notes, including photocopies of news clippings.

JACKSON

Ready for this? One of the people killed at the church was definitely not a congregation member.

She shows Nico and Lukich the Polaroids we saw her take in the morgue.

JACKSON

Alan Singletary. He's an aide to Senator Harrison.

Nico is electrified.

JACKSON

That's right. Harrison. Foreign relations committee. The guy who's been crawling all over the Central American drug connections.

NICO

(impressed)

You're gonna make a helluva D.A., Jax.

LUKICH

God help us.

JACKSON

(savors the compliment)

I've been at the Tribune all night, wearing out their Xerox machine. Harrison's staff has been compiling some kind of white paper. He's due to release it next week.

Nico's mind races.

NICO

That's how Fox knew.

JACKSON

What?

Nico turns to Lukich, dead earnest.

NICO

Luke. I want you to go to my house. Call Branca... my mother has the number. Get my family ready to move out.

LUKICH

You got it, buddy.

NICO

Stay with 'em. We'll be there.

LUKICH

What's going on, Nico? What happened?

NICO

I got a call last night. An old agency friend. He told me my family was in danger.

Jax and Lukich can't put all the pieces together yet. But if it's drugs-CIA-Senate, it's got to be heavy.

LUKICH

You got a weapon?

Lukich knows he doesn't. He glances up and down the street, makes sure no one's watching -- then cracks the driver's door of his car. There's a bulge in the map pocket. Nico pulls out a Sig Saur .45.

LUKICH

Try this on.

Jackson watches Luke slip Nico a clip.

*

CUT TO:

217 INT. DAY CARE CENTER (BEHIND CHURCH) - MORNING

OPENING CLOSE ON the faces of the sanctuary refugees. They are faces that have known fear and tragedy. The kind of faces we see on newsreels after villages have been burned and family members murdered. The refugees have been moved from church basement to a back room in the day care center. Nico kneels, facing them. Jackson in the background. A nun (SISTER BONIFACIA) and a priest (whom we saw in Genarro's hospital room) watch over the people. Nico is frustrated; he can't crack the refugees' fear.

NICO

(to nun)

Sister... you know me. Tell them there's no need for fear.

SISTER BONIFACIA
 There is rubble all over the yard,
 Nicola.

(THE REST OF THE SCENE MAY BE IN ENGLISH, OR SPANISH WITH
 SUBTITLES, AT THE DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION.)

NICO
 (to refugees)
 I was there... in the church.
 They tried to kill my family, too.

Several of the refugees look like they want to speak, but
 they are terrified.

NICO
 I know there was a man here, from
 an American senator's office. Who
 was he going to speak to?

The refugees become increasingly anxious.

NICO
 (to one woman)
 Was it you, senora?
 (to a man)
 Was it you?

More silence. Glances among the people. Finally:

REFUGEE WOMAN
 The priest.

The others shrink. The Woman glances to them.

NICO
 Who?
 (gently)
 Father Genarro?

REFUGEE WOMAN
 The other one.

Nico looks to the American priest standing there.

REFUGEE WOMAN
 No. The young one. From Costa
 Rica.

Sister Bonifacia sighs.

SISTER BONIFACIA
 Father Tomassino.

Jackson has her pad out, taking notes. Bonifacia knows
 too much has already been revealed; she must speak.

SISTER BONIFACIA
 He came alone... two weeks ago.
 He had papers. Papers to give to
 the senator.

Nico tries to contain his excitement; not scare anyone by
 losing his calm.

NICO
 But the bomb... The bomb was
 planted to destroy the pulpit.

SISTER BONIFACIA
 Father Tomassino was going to
 give the Mass that day.
 (shaken)
 Father Genarro talked him out of
 it.

The refugees' faces confirm this.

NICO
 (understands)
 It was Father Tomassino they were
 trying to kill.

Bonifacia starts softly to cry. Nico puts his hand on her
 shoulder, comforting her.

NICO
 Where is Tomassino? Where is he
 now?

The nun shakes her head. Nico looks to the refugees.
 They don't know, either.

REFUGEE MAN
 He run, mister. He go --

He gestures: "who knows where?"

NICO
 If you know where he is, you've
 got to tell me. I want to help
 him. I can help him.

The refugees lower their eyes. Bonifacia continues her
 soft weeping. Nico glances to Jackson; her look says
 "Enough, let's leave these poor people alone." Nico
 stands, touches Bonifacia one more time on the shoulder --

218 EXT. CHURCH DAY CARE BUILDING - DAY

Nico and Jackson come out. Nico has made a decision.

NICO
 You're outa this, Jax. Go home.

JACKSON
 (displays her notes)
 You see this list? Well, I'm not
 done.

Nico admires his partner's guts, but he's worried.

JACKSON
 I'm not a rookie, Toscani. Now,
 go home. Get your family out of
 here.

Nico agrees. The pair starts to split.

NICO
 (calls after
 Jackson)
 Just paperwork, you understand?

CUT TO:

219 INT. NICO'S CAR - MOVING - MORNING

Nico drives, a jumble of emotions on his face. Urgency
 fear, exhaustion. He's deep in thought --

220 EXT. INTERSECTION - MORNING

Nico's car pulls up at a stop light. He looks around
 without really seeing. An old lady pulls a shopping cart
 while a crossing guard takes some kids across the street.

*
 *

221 ANOTHER CAR

ROARS up out of nowhere, without two men inside, SCREECH-
 ING to a stop head-on to Nico's door. Its doors spring
 open --

222 NICO

dives toward his own passenger door --

223 SECOND CAR - TWO MORE ARMED MEN

leap out, OPEN FIRE with pistols and automatic weapons.

224 QUICK CUTS

Nico's car riddled with a furious FUSILLADE. WINDOWS
 BLOW OUT; the driver's door is shredded --

225 NICO - ON FLOORBOARD

crawling frantically; shoving the passenger door open as a FIRESTORM of lead and FLYING GLASS BLAZES all around him.

226 FOUR MEN

FIRING point blank (6 to ten feet) into Nico's car. The men are cool, professional.

227 NICO

spills from the passenger door onto the ground, scrambles like mad under his own car toward one of the attackers' cars.

228 PEDESTRIANS AROUND INTERSECTION

scream and scatter in terror.

229 FOUR MEN

FIRING as shells spew from the ejection ports of their weapons.

230 NICO'S CAR

being chewed to pieces --

231 NICO - UNDER MEN'S CAR

*

crawling at full speed from the car's front to its back. On the ground, alongside the car, spent CARTRIDGE CASES RAIN like hailstones.

232 FOUR MEN

As their magazines empty. The last shells spring free, GUN BARRELS SIZZLE, blue smoke fills the air. The leader waves two men forward to check their kill. At that instant:

233 NICO

springs to his feet behind the men, the Sig Saur .45 clutched in both hands. (He has crawled under both cars to envelop his attackers.)

*

NICO

Over here, you sons-a-bitches!

Nico's rage is superhuman. The men stare in consternation. One of the men has a fresh magazine half into his weapon --

NICO
 (eyes like an
 animal)
 Try it. Be my guest.

The man lets the magazine clatter to the street. The others raise their hands. It takes all Nico's strength to keep from wasting all four of them on the spot. His gaze swings wildly around the intersection. He spots a corner grocery store. A phone inside.

NICO
 (gestures with gun)
 Over there! Move it! -- Now!!

The men are scared shitless. They put their hands in back of their heads; trot jelly-legged --

234 INT. CORNER GROCERY STORE - DAY

A Pakistani counter clerk takes one look at the mob entering his store and bolts for the rear. A customer exits as Nico herds his captives in.

NICO
 Hands on the counter!

Three men do it; the fourth is slow.

NICO
 Don't tempt me, ASSHOLE --

The fourth obeys. Nico moves to the pay phone on the wall, covering the men with his .45. He grabs the receiver in his free hand; tries to dial. Adrenaline makes his hand shake; the dials spin wrong -- One of the men sees Nico's dilemma. To hit 911, Nico has to take his eye momentarily off his captives. As Nico turns again to the dial -- A free-standing sales display hurtles toward him, crashing into his gun hand. One of the men has lunged into the display; now he dives atop Nico a second later. The whole human pile crashes, thundering into a glass freezer. Somehow Nico gets to his feet. One of the men grabs Nico's gun; Nico swings one of the freezer doors -- Wham! -- smack into the man's face. The GLASS SHATTERS; the man drops like a rock. Now it's three against one -- prime odds for Nico. He wades into his attackers. A coffee stand goes flying. A body sails into a makeup display. One fool is lucky enough to land a blow that bloodies Nico's nose; he pays with a shattered forearm and a head-first heave into an ice cream locker --

235 POV FROM OUTSIDE STORE

It looks like a tornado has hit the interior. Magazine RACKS CRASH, mayo jars fly through the air, the ICE MACHINE seems to EXPLODE as a man's back careens into it --

*

236 STREET CORNER UP BLOCK

Two police cars heave into view, SIRENS WAILING --

237 FRONT DOORS OF STORE

Nico takes the last man, lifts him up, and drives him like a battering ram straight through the glass.

238 NICO

Wild-eyed and bloody, sees the cop cars whipping into the corner. He spins to see his .45 on the floor -- too far away to race for. He bolts down a gangway.

CUT TO:

239 INT. NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

The PHONE RINGS next to Lukich. Sara starts towards it. Lukich stops her with a look; he picks up the phone. *

LUKICH
(into phone)
Yeah?

240 INTERCUT NICO ON STREET - PHONE BOOTH - DAY

NICO
(into phone)
Get their stuff into the car now.
Do it in the alley, not the
driveway. I'll be there in five
minutes.

CUT TO:

241 TWO MORE POLICE CARS

SQUEALING around a corner, entering the block where Nico is.

242 NICO - ON SIDEWALK

Lets them pass, keeping low. He sprints across the street and down the alley.

243 OMITTED

&
244

CUT TO:

245 INT. NICO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sara grabs a handful of dresses from the closet and angrily throws them into an open suitcase on the bed. Nico watches, hoping to ride the storm. *

SARA
Your job and your family in one day,
Nico. You're batting a thousand.

*

NICO
(softly)
Sara...

*

Sara is at the dresser, pulling open drawers, dumping her clothes haphazardly into the suitcase. She stops suddenly. She pulls out a handgun and ammo from her panty drawer. She starts to weep. Nico steps up behind her, puts his arms around her.

*

NICO
You'll be safe with Uncle Branca.
It's gotta be this way... I'm sorry.

He turns her around to face him.

NICO
Don't you think I'd rather be with
you?

He holds her passionately. Rosa coughs loudly in the doorway.

SARA
(no longer angry)
-- Mama... you got your medicine?
Don't forget the baby's sweater --

*

ROSA
I know about babies.

We glimpse other relatives in the hallway; Nico hands them a pair of suitcases; they hurry off --

SARA
(of Nico's bloodied
shirt)
You sure you're all right?

*

NICO
I am if you are.

SARA
(trying to lighten up)
Don't worry --
(touches him)
We needed a vacation, anyway.

*

Sara takes her suitcase, hurries out --

*

246 EXT. ALLEY BEHIND NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

Branca's sedan is half-loaded; Branca adds a few more bags. Lukich's car is parked behind it.

NICO
(crossing yard with
Sara)

I'll give you five minutes start. We
have to do it this way. *

They get their suitcases into the sedan. Mama and the baby
are already aboard. Sara gets into the passenger seat. *
Lukich comes around from the front, glancing around like a
lookout.

NICO
Where's Jax?

LUKICH
She thinks there may be documents at
some guy's apartment.

Nico starts toward the rear basement door. Lukich falls
in with him.

247 INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Nico and Lukich enter, start down the steps.

NICO
They killed the wrong priest.

Lukich doesn't understand.

NICO
There was a second priest... from
Costa Rica... hiding at the church.
He was the one they meant to kill.

Nico starts to remove a large piece of ducting from the
basement heater.

LUKICH
And you know where to find him?

NICO
No.

The hole in the foundation holds several shotguns and a
couple of pistols, some passports and some cash.

LUKICH
You're gonna need help.

Nico grabs the pistols, starts to strap them on.

NICO
Just stay with my family

Nico replaces the piece of foundation, starts back up the
steps.

LUKICH
 What are you gonna do?

NICO
 You don't want to know.

248 EXT. ALLEY BEHIND NICO'S HOUSE

Branca STARTS the SEDAN. Sara looks back, pained. *
 Rosa, Lukich and Julian are also in the car. Nico grabs
 another hand-carried case from the basement, hurries into
 Lukich's car.

249 NICO'S POV - LOOKING DOWN DRIVEWAY

Two police cars pull up to the front of the house.

250 HIGH ANGLE SHOT - ALLEY BEHIND HOUSE

Lukich's car continues off.

CUT TO:

250A EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

We see Uncle Branca's car and Lukich's car out front.

251 INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Branca leads Nico, Sara, Rosa, Julian and Lukich down a *
 corridor. Two older Italian women open a door leading to a
 basement rec room.

BRANCA
 My sister's cousin's place. You're
 safe -- not even I can find this joint.

The family enters the back room. They take in their
 sanctuary.

CUT TO:

252 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Agent Neeley hurries across the lot toward his car. He gets *
 in, STARTS the ENGINE. As he puts the car in gear --

253 BARREL OF .45 AUTOMATIC

nestles behind his right ear.

NICO
 (rising from rear seat)
 Don't forget your seat belt.

254 INT. FEDERAL WAREHOUSE - DAY

Nico walks casually beside Agent Neeley, holding his gun out of sight in his pocket. They proceed down a corridor. Behind them we glimpse a security checkpoint, manned by two uniformed guards, through which they apparently have already passed. *

255 ANGLE - CORRIDOR

The two walk past floor-to-ceiling warehouse shelves, packed with labeled boxes, film cans, etc. which are visible through a heavy wire-mesh screen.

AGENT NEELEY *

Congratulations, Toscani. You just made number four on the most wanted list.

NICO

Keep walking --
 (another nudge)
-- I'm bucking for number one.

256 ADMINISTRATIVE WINDOW

A pot-bellied, Naval-retired-type CLERK looks up from his desk as Nico and Neeley come up to the counter. We see a sign: "EVIDENCE HOLDING DEPOT -- You MUST Have Your Requisition Number!!!" The Clerk stands, chomping a cigar, waddles to the counter. We see his arms covered with tattoos. *

CLERK

What can I do for you, lads?

Neeley presents his ID. *

AGENT NEELEY *

There was a quantity of C-4 explosive brought in four days ago --

CLERK

Hell, that's gone.

NICO

When?

CLERK

Right away, pardner. They scooped that stuff outa here before we even got it tagged.

NICO

Who? Who took it?

CLERK

(casual)

C.I.A.

Nico reacts, nudges Neeley once more. *

AGENT NEELEY *

(to Clerk)

We'd like to see the paperwork.

The Clerk has an accordion file right under the counter. He indicates a sign-in book.

CLERK

You gotta sign.

Neeley signs the book. The Clerk starts leafing through his files, searching for the release form. *

CLERK

Yeah... I remember that guy. Flew in special from Langley. Bomb tech. Real nice fella --

(finds the form,
lifts it from
file)

-- Here it is. Fox. Nelson Fox.

257 NICO

snatches the release form. Stares at the signature, stunned.

258 EXT. LAKEFRONT - DESERTED SECTION - DAY

Neeley's car parked in the boondocks along the lake. *

FEMALE (V.O.)
 (from car radio)
 -- Here it is, sir. Coming in from
 Langley now --

259 INT. CAR

Neeley holds the radio mike, as if about to say something. *
 Nico shoves his gun against the guy's temple.

FEMALE (V.O.)
 (from car radio)
 -- That agent has been with the Central
 American desk, uh, since '84 --

AGENT NEELEY *
 (into mike)
 Thank you. That's what I wanted.

Nico takes the mike, clicks it back into its cradle. Neeley *
 freezes, unsure what Nico's going to do with him.

NICO
 (motions with gun)
 Dump your shoes. Ditch your I.D. on
 the floor.

Nico watches the FBI man obey.

NICO
 So you think I'm a lousy cop, huh,
 Neeley? Maybe I am. But I haven't got *
 my face buried up Washington's ass.

AGENT NEELEY *
 Nobody buys me, Toscani.

NICO
 Yeah? Then somebody pulled the plug
 on your brain, pal. You didn't come
 up with the second priest, did you?
 Or Harrison's dead aide.

(as Neeley fumbles with *
 his laces)

Hurry up!

(as Neeley obeys) *
 You heard the radio. The Agency's
 pushing buttons and bodies are dropping
 like flies. You assholes are missing
 half the case!

Despite his animosity toward Nico, Neeley is beginning to realize this cop is onto something. *

AGENT NEELEY *

Listen. Toscani --

Nico grabs Neeley's shoes, heaves them into the back seat. He shoves the agent out the door, swings himself behind the wheel. *

NICO

Watch your step.

260 EXT. DESERTED LAKEFRONT - DAY

Nico drives off, leaving the FBI man miles from nowhere.

CUT TO:

261 MONTAGE

with SCORE and V.O.

A) INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

From out of an elevator and down a busy corridor march the brass, Deputy Superintendent Crowder included. Lieutenant Strozah lags slightly behind. They enter an auditorium where a large contingent of press, cameras ready, wait. *

B) INT. CONDO COMPLEX - HALLWAY - DAY

Jackson outside an apartment door in a Yuppie-esque condo complex. She looks both ways to be safe, then slides a credit card behind the lock. The door opens.

C) EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Nico parks Neeley's car in a huge packed lot. A towering marquee sign reads: "COMPUTER EXPO '87." Nico starts on foot toward the convention center entrance. *

D) INT. CONDO APARTMENT - DAY

Jackson enters, looking guilty as hell. She picks up a framed photo from a piano: the dead Senator's aide posed smiling beside a distinguished-looking man (Senator Harrison) in front of the capitol building. Jackson sets the photo down, starts rummaging through desk drawers.

E) INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

CROWDER *

The officer is alleged to be involved in illicit drug trafficking, racketeering and kidnapping --

F) INT. CONVENTION CENTER

Nico, in the crush of convention-goers, pauses before a booth promoting a TV manufacturer. The latest model TV's are set up in a sales display, with visitors gawking at the pictures of the church bombing aftermath.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

(on TV's)

Police sources also speculate that Toscani may be connected to the suspect in the bombing of St. Elizabeth's parish church --

A police composite rendering of the woman who placed the bomb at the church is shown on the television.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

(on TV's)

-- the suspect is likely to be armed and considered to be extremely dangerous --

Nico's police ID photo appears on the news. He blends back into the crowd.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

In other news, Senator Ernest Harrison's presidential bid has...

Nico moves swiftly through the convention center floor (which is packed for thousands of square feet with sales booths, each manned by technicians and pitchmen, all displaying the latest in high-tech data processing equipment, telecommunications, etc.)

G) INT. CONDO APARTMENT - DAY

Jax stuffs a wad of official papers -- including appointment books, notes and tapes -- into her briefcase. At the apartment door, she looks both ways, then emerges, starts away down the hallway.

H) INT. CONVENTION CENTER - COMPUTER BOOTH - DAY

Nico in the crowd in front of the booth of a Japanese computer manufacturer. Dr. Watanabe (Nico's friend whom we remember from the baptism/picnic scene) is the chief engineer at the booth, showing off some high-tech equipment to several brainy looking executives.

Watanabe glances up, spots Nico. Nico makes a subtle sign to indicate he must speak to Watanabe. Watanabe crosses at once to Nico.

WATANABE

So good to see you again, sir!
(shakes Nico's hand)
Come back near closing... five-
thirty... we'll place your order
then.

Nico nods, fades like a shadow into the throng. MUSIC
DOWN, SEQUENCE ENDS --

DISSOLVE TO:

262 INT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

All customers gone, lights being turned off. Janitors
sweep up, the last booth people shut down for the night.

WATANABE

emerges with Nico from behind a booth divider, leads her
old friend at a brisk pace across the deserted floor. *

NICO

Listen, Wat... you know I wouldn't
call in a favor --

WATANABE

Of course not. Just because you kept a few 'friendly' tribesmen from cutting my heart out and serving it up as Pad Thai?

With a wink, Watanabe escorts Nico into a back area off the floor. Carpeted office dividers set off a small area, packed with super sophisticated computer equipment.

Watanabe "boots up" a terminal, sits down with relish.

WATANABE

The last six years I've been risking nothing but money. It's a kick to risk my ass again.

Nico eyes the equipment and Watanabe, impressed.

NICO

The old Spook.

CUT AWAY TO:

263 OMITTED

&

264

265 INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jackson has the Senator's aide's papers spread before her, cataloging them with interest. The PHONE RINGS. Jackson picks it up.

JACKSON

(into phone)

Jackson.

Whoever the voice is (which we can't hear), it makes Jackson forget the documents.

JACKSON

(into phone)

-- Yes... yes, of course, sister, I know who you are.

(listens)

-- where... where are you?

CUT BACK TO:

266 INT. WATANABE'S COMPUTER AREA - NIGHT

Watanabe working two computers simultaneously, with the gusto of a rock keyboard player.

WATANABE

-- No way to access Covert Ops directly. But Ornstein's at Princeton, he's got a database bigger than Langley --

(works keyboard lovingly)

If I can't crack that turkey's code, it's time to hang up my rock and roll shoes --

Nico watches Watanabe work.

WATANABE

-- ah, here! Here's a little trap door. Let's see if we can wriggle up into --

(watches the screen with anticipation)

Personnel files! Operative dossiers. Will that do?

NICO

It's a start.

Nico sits down beside Watanabe.

DISSOLVE TO:

267 FULL ASHTRAY

Watanabe stubs out a cigarette. Empty coffee cups all around. Nico paces, reading a hard-copy printout.

NICO

Fox has had a helluva career.

(reads down page)

'69 to '76, Cambodia, Laos. Operation Phoenix. Operation Green Mountain. Operaton Northstar. This is all Vang Pao, it's all heroin --

WATANABE

You friend has found his metier.

Nico circles the "operations" on the page, hands it to Watanabe.

NICO

Run personnel retrievals on all these operations. I want the names of every company man who was on them.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

268 CLOSE - COMPUTER SCREEN

A list of about thirty names -- mostly civilian, but some with military rank attached.

NICO (O.S.)

Altshuler. Cosgrove. I know half
these guys --

(thinking)

Okay... now run me an update. Where
are these fuckers now?

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

269 NICO - LATER

Pouring a fresh coffee, studying the screen with Watanabe.

WATANABE
(finger tracks down
screen)
Central American desk. Central
American desk. Central --

NICO
Thirty names from secret drug
operations... and two-thirds of 'em
are in Central America.
(beat)
All right. Run these two names:
Bautista Salvano and Ramon 'Chi Chi'
Testamente.

WATANABE
Those street dealers you were talking
about? They're not gonna be in here.

Nico gives her a look. Watanabe starts punching keys. *

270 CLOSE - COMPUTER SCREEN

Official biographies of Salvano and Chi Chi come up.

WATANABE (O.S.)
Well, kiss my ass.
(reads)
Both former Somoza secret police.
(whistles, impressed)
Recruited by agency, 1975. Trained
Fort Benning, counter insurgency...

NICO (O.S.)
 Where's Fox's printout?
 (finds it, reads)
 1976... Fort Benning. He recruited
 these pricks!

DISSOLVE TO:

270A EXT. CONVENTION HALL - NIGHT

*

It's even later. The last of the janitorial crew is
 finishing up the huge floor. A few display lights remain
 on, otherwise it's dark. Nico stands above, observing,
 contemplating the information he has received.

*

*

*

*

271 INT. WATANABE'S COMPUTER AREA

*

Watanabe crapped out in a chair; Nico looking weary, pacing,
 wracking his brain.

*

WATANABE
 There's nothing left, Nico. We've
 wrung these files dry.

NICO
 (muttering to
 himself; thinking)
 Fox is here, in Chicago... or was
 here...
 (has an idea)
 ... Listen. Can this thing tap into
 airlines? Reservations records --

WATANABE
 I can get you the ball scores, too.

DISSOLVE TO:

272 NICO

As he finishes viewing the screen, stands.

NICO
 Five agents from Central American desk.
 All trained assassins. All arrived in
 Chicago in the last week -- and none
 of them has left.

Nico grabs his coat, gulps a last swallow of coffee --

NICO
 Thanks, Wat. You finally may have
 done some good for your country.

WATANABE
 Where are you going?

NICO
 To find a priest.

CUT TO:

273 EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

Jackson's unmarked car whips into the curb. Aboard:
 Jackson and Lukich. Nico steps from the shadows, ducks
 into the back seat. The car takes off.

*

274 INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

NICO
 How did ya find him?

JACKSON
 The nun phoned me. She said two men
 had been sneaking around the church.
 She sounded scared --

Nico checks his .45. Two spare clips.

JACKSON

There's more. I got the papers
from that senator's aide's apartment.
Everything Harrison's been working on.
It's all at my place.

CUT TO:

275 ELEVATED SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

BOOMS PAST CAMERA, only a few feet away from a row of
tenement apartment buildings. As TRAIN sound RECEDES,
CAMERA MOVES IN ON one building. We hear LOUD UPBEAT
ROCK AND ROLL coming from a third-floor apartment --

276 EXT. TENEMENT - POV FROM CAR ON STREET - NIGHT

VOICE (O.S.)
(from within car)
Once you're inside, you'll signal us.

277 INT. CAR - CLOSEUP ON TREMBLING WOMAN (SAME STREET)

It is the Middle-aged Woman who left the bomb, seen in Father
Genarro's church. A police sketch of her was seen on tele-
vision. She is looking up at the third-floor window, getting
instructions. She turns around occasionally to see who's
talking to her.

SALVANO (O.S.)
Don't be scared. Your life depends on
this.

278 CLOSE ON DRIVER

It is one of Salvano's goons we've seen before. He is
checking his gun.

279 INT. TENEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Woman walks slowly down the hall. She carries a small
donation can. She knocks on a door. We hear FOOTSTEPS from
within the apartment. The door opens. It's Bonifacia, the
nun from the church (though now in civvies). The Middle-Aged
Woman with the donation can raises it as if asking for a
contribution. Bonifacia looks flustered, impatient. She
really doesn't want to leave the door open.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Exusame, por favor. Tiene dinero
para...

280 FROM NOWHERE

Three of Salvano's armed goons appear on both sides of the
doorway. They push both women violently into the apartment.

281 CLOSEUP - GOON
He steps quickly, surely into the apartment.

282 CLOSEUP - BEDROOM DOOR
It flies open. The goon points his gun AT the CAMERA.

283 GUNMEN'S POV
Father Tomassino, the Costa Rican priest, stands at the window, he has been trying to open it. He turns. He knows he can't escape.

284 EXT. APARTMENT - POV FROM SALVANO'S CAR
The light in the apartment window blinks twice.

285 EXT. TENEMENT - STREET - NIGHT
From two cars emerge the shapes of several men.

286 EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT
Jackson's car -- with Jackson, Nico and Lukich aboard -- swings around a corner into a traffic jam. The HORN BLARES.

287 INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - THIRD FLOOR - NIGHT
A STEREO SPEAKER BLASTS MUSIC from the front room. CAMERA PANS ACROSS Bonifacia's bedroom dresser. We see mementos of her life and a photo of herself with Father Genarro with a group of children. CAMERA CONTINUES TO PAN PAST Bonifacia's bed, PAST Bonifacia's body! CAMERA CONTINUES DOWN TO the floor, where lies the lady who planted the bomb. They both appear dead.

288 CLOSE - FATHER TOMASSINO
He is in a chair, his wrists strapped to the chair arms. He is sweating, fearful but clinging to his courage.

289 ANOTHER ANGLE
Behind Father Tomassino, we see Salvano, Chi Chi and two other goons, armed with pistols. Salvano moves toward the priest, sets a small TV table down beside him. The priest glances toward it --

290 PRIEST'S POV - TV TABLE
Atop its rickety surface: a fearsome array of syringes and drug vials.

291 BACK TO FATHER TOMASSINO
He glances up from the hypodermics --

292 PRIEST'S POV

INTO FRAME moves Kurt Zagon! We see clearly the 15 years of aging since SE Asia. His face is even scarier than when he performed similar atrocities in those days. Zagon prepares a syringe, tests it, shooting a clear liquid skyward. *

ZAGON

You'll be in heaven in a few minutes, padre. But first I'm going to put you through hell.

293 EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

Nico, Lukich and Jackson are speeding through the infamous Southside. We want to scream at them to get there already.

294 BACK TO APARTMENT

Salvano holds the priest's arm steady, Zagon moves in with the needle.

ZAGON

You came here to talk to the Senator's aide, didn't you? *

FATHER TOMASSINO

I tried. But you killed him first. *

ZAGON

Who told you about our plans? *

FATHER TOMASSINO

This is from confession. I tell no one.

ZAGON

You wouldn't lie to me, Father? It's a sin.

Father Tomassino says nothing, he begins to cry.

ZAGON

(almost with kindness)
If you spoke to anyone, tell me now --
(indicates hypo)
-- and I won't have to use this.

295 EXT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

The unmarked police car pulls up, across the street.

296 INT. CAR - NIGHT

Nico, Jackson, and Lukich gaze at the building.

296A POV FROM CAR

*

In the shadows by the corner, a hulking Latino man loiters.

*

JACKSON (O.S.)

*

That's an eyeball if I ever saw one.

*

296B BACK TO CAR

*

Nico starts to open the car door. Jackson moves to join him.

*

NICO

You're our backup. If we come out
running, then you can shoot.

Nico's eyes meet his partner's. It's plain he'll break her leg if he has to, to keep her safe by the car. Jackson accepts this reluctantly.

297 EXT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

Nico and Lukich exit the vehicle. Nico indicates an adjacent building; he and Lukich start for it.

298 INT. APARTMENT

Father Tomassino is beginning to come under the influence of Zagon's chemicals. In spite of this the priest's spirit to resist is astounding...

ZAGON

Speak to me, Father -- who did you tell?

FATHER TOMASSINO

I know what you are. I know what beasts you are.

299 EXT. ADJACENT BUILDING - ROOF OF TENEMENT

Nico and Lukich emerge from the roof door, guns drawn. The roof is empty. Antennas, skylights, clotheslines. The pair creep soundlessly onto the next roof. They cross toward the roof door like infantrymen, moving one at a time from cover to cover, covering each other. They reach the door that leads down into the building. Nico checks the far side of the enclosure, nods to Lukich. Lukich cracks the roof door open --

300 STAIRWELL FROM ROOF - NICO AND LUKICH

Nico and Lukich creep down the stairs from the roof. Nico opens the door leading to the top (third) floor.

301 INT. APARTMENT

The drugs have taken hold. The priest's brain is an open memory bank for Zagon to probe.

ZAGON

I want to know who you told.

FATHER TOMASSINO

(barely coherent)

I told them... you make the ninos... see... castrating their fathers -- raping... mutilating their mothers ... And...

(breaks down crying)

... and sometimes... to the ninos...

302 NICO'S POV - HALLWAY

As he slowly pushes the door open. The hallway is empty.

303 INT. HALLWAY

Nico and Lukich pad in.

Quickly Lukich checks the stairs leading down. Nico crosses silently past the first apartment door, checks the far end of the hallway. Nico comes back toward the apartment door. Lukich approaches from the opposite side. They take up positions flanking the door, guns drawn. The LOUD MUSIC CONTINUES from inside.

304 INSIDE APARTMENT

Salvano and Chi Chi look on, revulsed. Whatever is happening to Father Tomassino is enough to make even cruel men ill.

ZAGON (O.S.)

-- Tell me the truth, Father --

The priest's eyes roll grotesquely; he convulses, sweat beading on his forehead. He looks like a man in the agonies of some narcotic hell.

ZAGON

(close to priest)

-- Can we kill him? If you told anyone, about our plans to kill the senator, we cannot do it.

FATHER TOMASSINO

Nadie. Nadie. Nadie.

*

305 NICO AND LUKICH IN HALLWAY

O.S. we hear another ELEVATED TRAIN APPROACHING outside. Nico kicks the apartment door in! He and Lukich burst in, guns clutched two-handed.

306 QUICK CUTS

The first goon reacts, raises his pistol. Lukich SHOOTS him. Nico NAILS the second goon, just as Chi Chi aims his sawed-off pistol-grip shotgun at Nico. Nico has a split second to dive behind a heavy upholstered chair. Chi Chi's DOUBLE-BARREL BLAST blows the chair into powder. Almost instantaneously Nico sees the priest -- just as Zagon slashes the priest's throat! Salvano SHOOTS Lukich point blank, in the shoulder, sending Lukich's gun sailing. Nico, FIRING, grabs Lukich, dives out the door with him --

307 HALLWAY

Zagon and Salvano OPEN FIRE from the apartment full-tilt. BULLETS RIP through the WALL, BLASTING WOOD and PLASTER everywhere. Nico shoves Lukich toward the stairwell --

NICO

Go! Go!

-- Simultaneously FIRING back through the kicked-in door, EMPTYING his GUN.

ZAGON
 (in Spanish, from
 apartment)
 Get him! Finish him!

Nico is slamming a fresh clip in, Lukich is stumbling away toward the stairwell. Salvano and Chi Chi appear in the apartment doorway. Chi Chi levels his fierce "hogleg" at Nico's head. At that instant -- A broadside of BULLETS slam into the wall around Chi Chi. It's Jackson -- on the stairs! Chi Chi is hit, but spins, FIRES. His shotgun blast catches Jackson square in the chest, blowing her back like a doll, down the stairwell, out of sight. Nico reacts with agony, * twists on the floor, SHOOTS Chi Chi in the face. Nico pulls the trigger as fast as he can, sending a HAIL of FIRE through the doorway, through the walls. Salvano clutches his henchman, using his dead body as a shield; Nico's BULLETS blow Chi Chi apart. Zagon FIRES back, hits Nico in the side by the ribs! Nico tries to fire back; he's empty!

ZAGON
 Now!

Nico bolts for the stairwell to the roof, clawing for a new clip as he goes. Salvano and Zagon burst into the hallway, SHOOTING at Nico.

308 INTERCUT - ELEVATED TRAIN

THUNDERING along the tracks adjacent to the building.

309 EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Nico highballs from the stairwell as the tarpaper roof erupts all around him with GUNFIRE from the floor below! He dives sideways, rolling to avoid the fire -- He recovers his footing in time to see Salvano and Zagon burst onto the roof from the stairwell. Nico's BULLETS miss them; they separate, taking cover behind two walls at the roof's margins. Nico is trapped -- in the open.

310 ZAGON AND SALVANO

pop back out, aiming at Nico --

311 NICO

leaps off the roof!

312 ANGLE - ELEVATED TRAIN - MOVING

Nico lands on the roof of the speeding "el" train, his momentum nearly carrying him off the far side --

313 NICO - ATOP TRAIN

catches a railing, claws at it. BULLETS rip into the train roof all around him --

314 ATOP TENEMENT ROOF - SALVANO AND ZAGON

FIRE for all they're worth at Nico's receding form.

315 ATOP TRAIN - NICO

crawls to the space between cars, lowers himself down. He clings to the swaying chains.

315A INT. TRAIN CAR

Nico staggers through the almost empty car and collapses on a bench.

316 AROUND CORNER - TWO POLICE CARS

hurtle INTO VIEW under the El, SIRENS BLARING. *

317 BACK ON TENEMENT ROOF

Zagon and Salvano scramble away.

318 OMITTED

CUT TO:

319 EXT. EL STATION - STAIRWAY TO STREET - NIGHT

A cleaner, more upscale neighborhood. Nico labors down the steps, clutching his jacket to his ribs. Several affluent people look at him oddly, he ignores them, keeps going -- He makes his way up the street, weakening, to a tasteful brownstone. Nico climbs the steps in pain --

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

320 INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nico over the sink, shirt off, WATER RUNNING -- applying a makeshift bandage to his bloody ribs. We see Jackson's make-up stuff along the counter, feminine robes hanging on the door, law books around a reading stand. Nico is in real pain, exhausted, weakening --

321 LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nico at Jackson's desk, its surface spread with the notes and papers she got from Senator Harrison's aide's place. We glimpse them: photos of Central American atrocities, dead bodies, etc. He tries to study them, quickly, but his attention shifts --

Nico glances around the apartment: more law books, Jackson's degree on the wall, her rowing machine on the floor, several framed photos beside him on her desk. Nico turns several toward him.

322 INSERT - FRAMED PHOTOS

Jackson with her sisters and their kids, Jackson in law class, Jackson and Nico posing, smiling, at the police shooting range --

323 BACK TO NICO

He starts to cry.

NICO

(to Jackson's photo)

-- Had to be a hero... another fucking hero. I'm sorry Jax.

He reaches for a small calendar, looks at it.

324 CLOSEUP - CALENDAR

Nico circles "meet with Father Tomassino." Nico circles another date, "Senator delivers foreign policy position paper/Committee for Democratic Policy fund raiser."

*

325 OMITTED

&

326

327 BACK TO NICO

Nico scoops up the aide's papers, stands, wobbly --

NICO

-- Senator... --

(of papers, with scorn)

-- dumb fuck... think they're gonna let you put 'em outta business --

327A INT. EMERGENCY ROOM CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Several cops frantically clear the way to the emergency room. A gurney is wheeled down the corridor. Lukich, a shoulder bandaged, walks beside the gurney, holding the hand of Jackson.

327B CLOSEUP ON

a bloody flak jacket rests upon the gurney.

327C CLOSEUP - JACKSON

She's been sedated. She has buckshot wounds on her neck and shoulder, but she is alive.

JACKSON

(to Lukich)

You call Nico's goddamn Uncle and find out if he's heard anything.

329 EXT. DRIVEWAY - BRANCA'S SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

From the darkness, Nico appears, barely making it up the driveway. We hear the sound of the CAB DRIVE OFF.

330 EXT. BRANCA'S SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Branca and a bodyguard come forward, grabbing Nico as Nico almost collapses.

BRANCA

Jesus Christ!

NICO

The motherfuckas got Jackson.

BRANCA

Lukich called. She's not dead.
She's gonna make it. She was
wearing a vest.

Nico can't believe it. In spite of it all, life comes to him. A little smile...

NICO

That broad didn't trust me.

CUT TO:

331 EXT. BRANCA'S SAFE HOUSE - POV FROM WINDOW - NIGHT

We glimpse several armed bodyguards in concealed positions. A late-model Cadillac pulls up. A man carrying a doctor's bag gets out and is escorted to the side door.

332 INT. BRANCA'S SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Rosa has pulled back the curtain from the second-floor bedroom window. She witnesses the arrival of the doctor. On the bed behind her sleep Sara and Julian. A bodyguard stands outside the bedroom door. *

333 INT. BASEMENT FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

The doctor tends Nico. Bloody bandages and antiseptic bottles litter a coffee table. Two guards stand by. Branca is showing Nico an 8-by-11 photograph.

BRANCA

It was picked up with your mail this
afternoon.

334 INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

A shot of Nico's family taken from a parked car, in front of the church, the morning of the bombing.

335 BACK TO NICO AND BRANCA

Nico's grim expression shows he knows just what this means.

BRANCA

Don't worry, they're booked on an early plane. They'll be out of the country tomorrow.

Nico winces as the doctor finishes applying a bandage. In the background we hear a COMMOTION.

336 INT. BASEMENT STAIRWAY - NIGHT

A bodyguard tries to fend off the physical and verbal assault from Sara and Rosa. Sara carries Julian. *

337 INT. BASEMENT FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Sara rushes to Nico's side. Nico reaches for her, but the pain stabs him. *

SARA *

Oh my God, Nico! *

Rosa starts forward, her face in agony at the sight of her wounded son.

BRANCA

He's fine. The boy has ribs of steel!

ROSA

(touching Nico's brow)
Enough of your humor.

Sara clings to Nico's arm, tears in her eyes. Rosa crosses herself. Sara begins to weep. The doctor finishes. There's a long awkward moment. Then: *

BRANCA

(to doctor and
bodyguards)
Leave them. Leave them alone.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

338 INT. FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Rosa sits in a chair. Nico on the couch, holding Julian. Sara faces him. Tears have stained her cheeks, but she is in control of her emotions now. *

SARA

-- You've got to do it, Nico. You know you have to.

Whatever Sara is proposing, Nico is dead set against it.

ROSA

Listen to her, Nicola.

(dead serious)

Whatever you think of him, Federico is family. He is our family.

Nico makes no response. Instead, he lifts Julian, nuzzles him tenderly.

NICO

Ever notice how clean babies smell? Like nothing in the world has touched them yet.

Sara glances to Rosa. Rosa knows what she wants. Discreetly Rosa rises, exits. Sara and Nico are alone.

SARA

If you won't go to him, I will.

NICO

(in pain)

Don't push me like this --

Her eyes meet his -- loving, but desperate.

SARA

Branca can put us on a plane -- but where can we fly to? Tibet? The moon? There's nowhere they can't find us.

NICO

You don't know what the hell you're talking about.

SARA

I'm talking about everything I've learned from you in the past five years.

Nico is in agony.

NICO

You know I can't go to him.

Sara takes both his hands in hers.

SARA

Do you know why I love you? Do you know what it is about you that I've always loved?

(as Nico fights his own emotion)

Pride. It's what you have inside. You don't live the way other people live. You trust what you see as right and won't let anyone or anything make you stray from it.

MOVE IN PAST Sara TO Nico's face.

SARA (O.S.)

But now that pride may kill all
of us.

(beat)

You've got to swallow that pride,
Nico. Choke on it if you have to.
Lay it aside.

339 ANOTHER ANGLE - NICO AND SARA

Close together, with their baby between them. Sara buries her face against her husband's chest. Nico's arm goes around her. He holds her tight.

CUT TO:

340 CLOSE - NICO - AGAINST WALL - DAY

He wears a suit and tie, a hat. All business.

MAN (O.S.)

Is this the attorney?

ANOTHER MAN (O.S.)

You can come now, Mr. Carlucci.

O.S. we hear a METALLIC sound BEGIN, VERY CLOSE -- PULL
BACK TO:

341 ANOTHER ANGLE

To reveal bars which slide electrically to the side. A prison door opens, letting him through.

342 ANGLE - PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

Nico, escorted by a prison guard, walks down a long, blank hallway.

CUT TO:

343 NICO

Waiting in a barren reception room. Several benches, tables; heavy steel mesh over windows --

344 NICO'S POV - ACROSS ROOM

A steel door opens on the far side. Out steps a small Italian man in his seventies, wearing the faded denim of an inmate.

345 INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - LONG SHOT - DAY *

Nico and the small man (FREDERICO LARUSSO) walk together down a long corridor, speaking occasionally, the tension thick between them. Behind them, a discreet fifteen paces, walk two armed prison officials. *

346 CLOSER - LARUSSO AND NICO

The old man never looks directly at Nico, yet we sense keenly that he is taking the younger man's measure.

FREDERICO LARUSSO

I am only an old man. An old man
with a cancer.

The two are like an old and a young lion, appraising each other -- using all five senses and more.

NICO

I don't have much time, Uncle. So
I must speak plainly.

Larusso listens. Nico waits for a beat. Then:

NICO
 (this is very painful
 for him)

-- For as long as I've been old enough
 to think, I've hated you and hated
 everything you stood for.

Larusso takes this in without a flicker.

NICO
 I was so sure that you and I were on
 opposite sides of the fence... and
 that you and your people were
 destroying this country --

Nico pauses, glances away across the grounds.

NICO
 -- The most painful realization of my
 life was that the people I worked for
 and you are not far apart.
 (meets Larusso's eyes)
 -- And there's not much difference
 between what you are and what I was.

Larusso studies Nico a long moment. Then takes Nico's elbow. *
 *
 *
 347 OMITTED

348 NICO AND LARUSSO

continue across the grounds.

FREDERICO LARUSSO
 I will be candid with you. I knew,
 probably before you did, that you
 would be coming to me. I knew what
 you would ask... and I had every
 intention of refusing you.

He glances to Nico.

FREDERICO LARUSSO
 But it is a form of wisdom to know
 when to cease relying only upon
 yourself.

He keeps walking.

FREDERICO LARUSSO
 You know, of course, that this Senator
 Harrison will never live to make his
 speech tomorrow.
 (as Nico acknowledges)
 You know, too, that as long as this
 man... this torturer --

NICO

Kurt Zagon.

FREDERICO LARUSSO

-- As long as this Zagon lives, nothing I can do will guarantee your family's safety.

(beat)

'Ecce non uomine, ecce bestie.' You know Dante?

(translates)

'These are not men, these are animals.'

Larusso stops, takes a small note pad from his pocket. He quickly scribbles a few lines.

FREDERICO LARUSSO

Memorize this address.

He holds the paper for Nico to see.

FREDERICO LARUSSO

Have you got it in your mind?

Nico nods. Larusso tears the paper into tiny shreds. *

349 INT. ADMIN BUILDING - RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

The old man takes his leave of Nico with a warm, if formal handshake. The guards stand by, waiting.

FREDERICO LARUSSO

Thank you, Mr. Carlucci. I trust you will give my love to my niece, Rosa.

NICO

I will do that, Mr. Larusso.

(sincerely)

I hope you will be well.

350 LARUSSO

nods: "Bene." Then: without a word he turns and exits back through the steel door.

CUT TO:

351 INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - DAY

Passengers file aboard a flight to Toronto. Hugs, goodbyes. Rosa, carrying the baby, is among the crowd moving toward the boarding door. Leaving with them are two of Branca's men. We PICK OUT Branca and two of his bodyguards near the fringes, looking inobtrusive but definitely on guard.

352 CORNER NEAR BRANCA

Hidden by a bank of phones, Sara clings to Nico, holding him as tight as she can. When she releases him, we can't hear what she says, but it seems like, "Be careful, please be careful." Nico glances to Branca, who motions subtly to hurry. *

He squeezes Sara's hand, she joins the crowd swelling toward the boarding door -- *

CUT TO:

353 EXT. O'HARE - RUNWAY - DAY (STOCK) *

An Air Canada PLANE BLASTS skyward.

354 NICO AND BRANCA

watch from an open corner of a parking lot. As the plane begins its bank to gain altitude, Branca turns to Nico. The two bodyguards keep a discreet watch nearby.

BRANCA

You got the architect's drawings?
Wiring, floor plans --

Nico indicates a briefcase he is carrying.

NICO

It's all here.

Nico turns to his uncle. Regards him with affection.

BRANCA

I could help you from here on.

NICO

It's not your business.

Nico embraces his uncle by both shoulders.

NICO

Grazie, tio caro.

Branca pats Nico's cheek.

BRANCA

Take care of yourself, Nicola.

CUT TO:

355 SERIES OF SHOTS

SEVERAL SHOTS of high-rise cityscapes at night.

DISSOLVE TO:

356 OMITTED
thru
360

*
*
*

361 TELESCOPE POV - CHICAGO SKYLINE - NIGHT

CAMERA PANS TO the apartment complex across the plaza.
FOCUS ON one suite on the topmost floor. Curtains are drawn
on all windows, but through one crack we glimpse a man
pacing. The man wears a white shirt and a shoulder holster.

362 RAISE TELESCOPE POV

TO the roof of the apartment complex. We see a heli-pad.
Two more men, also in suits -- smoking, talking.

363 LOWER TELESCOPE POV

BACK TO the apartment suite. Now another man crosses before the gap in the curtains. Wearing a cowboy hat: Zagon! He's laughing, pouring himself a drink at the wet bar --

364 EXT. ROOFTOP SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

Nico, looking through a high-tech night telescope. His briefcase is by his feet, open. Several architect's drawings, floor plans visible.

365 NICO

lifts his eye from the scope, jots a note on a pocket pad.

VOICE (O.S.)

Not even you can hit him at this range,
Nico.

O.S. behind Nico: the unmistakable sound of a .45 SAFETY being CLICKED OFF. Nico freezes, his back to the voice. He raises his hands.

NICO

That wasn't the plan, Nelson.

366 NELSON FOX

covers Nico from behind with a silencer-fitted .45. He glances to the briefcase and building plans, on the floor.

FOX

Close range, huh? Never work. Place is rigged, scanned every 35 seconds.

NICO

(back still turned)

I was thinking of a mine on the roof. Remote-triggered, when the chopper comes in.

FOX

Roof's wired too. Sensors every fifteen feet.

Fox's finger rests ready on the trigger.

FOX

You can turn now. Slowly. Slooowly...

Nico turns. We see Fox clearly now. His boyish features have weathered since his "spook" days in Vietnam. There is grey in his hair now: he wears an expensive suit and is alone.

FOX
I figured you'd do your recon from this building.

Nico regards his old mate across the gun barrel.

NICO
You're looking fit, Nelson.

FOX
Getting a bit of a tire.

NICO
(indicates Fox's suit)
Your own tailor?

FOX
Hong Kong.

NICO
You've gone a long way.

Fox motions for Nico to dump his gun; Nico complies, dropping it gently into the briefcase. Nico takes half a step toward Fox. Fox shakes his head in warning.

FOX
Uh uh. Uhhh-uh...
(motions Nico back)
I know what you can do when you get too close to a man.

367 CLOSEUP - NICO *

NICO *
I don't believe you, Fox. *

367A INT. BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT *

Nico walks, hands behind his head. Fox is catty-corner behind him, carrying the briefcase, .45 leveled at Nico's back. *

FOX
-- What's so hard to believe. I want to help you, you dumb guinea!

NICO
Fox the fixer.

FOX
If I wanted to cap you, I'd have saved myself this chit-chat. Make big points for me to bring in your scalp. I'd be White House material.

NICO
Is that what Zagon is? One of your basement boys?

FOX

Zagon's a rancher. 4000 acres in
Costa Rica. Beautiful place.

NICO

Bought with what -- opium from Cambodia?

FOX

And a ton a week of coke from other places.

NICO

Which he funnels here through Salvano. With the Company getting its cut.

FOX

Legal tender.

NICO

Still dodging appropriations committees, eh, Nelson?

FOX

That's my job, Nico.

They arrive at an elevator.

FOX

Keep your nose in the corner. When we get out, stay five paces ahead of me. Cross down to the garage.

367B INT. LOWER CORRIDOR

Nico and Fox emerge from the elevator. Nico lowers his hands from behind his head. Fox keeps his gun out of sight as he and Nico step past.

368 ELEVATOR BANK - NIGHT

Fox maintains a slight distance behind Nico as they cross toward some escalators under a sign: "TO PARKING LEVEL 8."

NICO

The Senator couldn't be bought, could he? He was gonna blow the lid off, so you cleared Zagon to frost him --

FOX

Keep walking.

369 INT. PARKING STRUCTURE

They reach a corner and turn.

NICO

But the priest found out somehow and ran here. You couldn't do the Senator's number 'till you knew if the priest had talked. So Zagon flew in with his little medical bag. Only by then I was in on it -- and you thought I might recognize his handiwork.

370 PARKING GARAGE - VALET STATION

*

Several guests and diners wait by the cashier's booth for their cars to be fetched. Valets hustle with tickets. Fox and Nico come off the escalator.

FOX

If your name was Joe Smith I never would have caught it. But how many Nicola Toscani's are there?

NICO

You got it off the arrest sheet.

Fox hands his ticket to the cashier, motions Nico to the side, away from the guests, still keeping his distance -- should Nico try to make a move.

FOX

I tried to warn you, old buddy. I knew you had wiretaps. and I knew you wouldn't let 'em go.

NICO

Only I was too dumb to crack it. I was so busy trying to figure a code, I didn't even recognize Zagon's voice.

It's all crystal clear to Nico now.

NICO

So we kill our own senators now.

FOX

Why not? The Romans did.

A Cadillac pulls up; the valet hops out, two particularly florid, well-fed guests get in, tipping the valet.

NICO

(to Fox, watching the guests)

Are we the Romans?

FOX

We're an empire too.

Fox doesn't like the look Nico gives him.

FOX

Would you rather spoon borscht and quote Lenin?

(losing patience)

I'm trying to save you, asshole! I got a spot for you. Thailand, deep under, no names, no numbers --

NICO
Doing what -- processing heroin?

FOX
You 'consult.' You 'assist.' You send
checks to your family. Zagon won't
touch you, you'll be on the team --

NICO
Fuck you.

FOX
In five years you're out, with a fat
Swiss account and a GS-15 pension.

Nico stares at his old friend with contempt. He sees the
gun under Fox's coat, but he's too tired and too disgusted
to care --

NICO
You know, Fox, right now in Israel
they're trying some 80-year-old camp
guard for war crimes. And all around
our country there are guys on Death
Row for killing one person, two people.
And probably they all deserve it --

He takes a step toward Fox. Fox's hand tightens on his gun.

NICO
(emotion rising)
-- but you and I know a couple guys
personally who are responsible for the
murder of at least what... 60,000 non-
military personnel.
(ticks off the beats)
Viet. Lao. Thai. Cambodian.
Librarians, teachers, doctors... women,
children... and that's just a sliver of
it.

Fox tries to maintain a hard face. But his own guilty
conscience is working --

NICO
(presses closer)
We've wiped out entire fucking
countries. And not one agent --

FOX
(moves gun into Nico's
view)
Stop right there!

NICO

(doesn't stop)

-- not one C.I.A. agent has ever been tried or convicted, much less accused of any crimes.

(closer still)

You motherfuckers think you're above the law --

(right in Fox's face)

Well, you ain't above mine.

Nico holds himself, trembling with intensity. At that moment -- O.S. from the garage entrance ramp: the SQUEAL of APPROACHING TIRES. Nico and Fox turn to see --

NOTE 4-17-87. THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE (SCENES 371 - 401) WILL BE MODIFIED TO CONFORM TO LOCATION. DO NOT BUILD OR PURCHASE WITHOUT CHECKING WITH STUNT COORDINATOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS. STORYBOARDS AND NEW PAGES WILL BE AVAILABLE NEXT WEEK.

371 A BIG CAR

*

SCREECHES to a halt in front of them. Five men dismount swiftly. Salvano, Bad Dude, and two agent types from the tenement... and Zagon!

*

*

*

Zagon and his men are forty feet from Nico and Fox, playing it cool so as not to alarm any innocent bystanders, but the bulk under their jackets is unmistakably guns.

NICO

Well... well. What a team we have here.

ZAGON

(calls, friendly)

We've been looking for you, Nelson. I see you've found our friend.

Fox looks shaky, unnerved: Nico's words have hit too close to home. Now Nico backs away a step, ready for anything. One of Zagon's agents holds their car's rear door open.

*

NICO

Thanks for the help, Fox.

FOX

I didn't bring him, Nico. I swear it!

ZAGON

Have you two been sharing fond memories? Reminiscing about the good old days?

Zagon waves Nico and Fox toward his car. Zagon and Salvano start forward. Fox glances, torn, to Nico, who has backed away another half-step. Will Nico attack? Run for it?

*

FOX

Stay still!

(to Nico)

Don't fucking move!!

Fox pulls his .45 from concealment, covering Nico. An EVENING-GOWNED WOMAN, waiting with her husband for their car, hears Fox's shout, sees his gun.

EVENING GOWN WOMAN
(grabs her husband's arm)

Jack --

The husband sees. So do the other guests. Salvano sees their alarm; he swings his jacket open, revealing a snub machine gun. Someone SCREAMS --

ZAGON
Bring in our friend, Nelson.

Salvano's muzzle covers Fox and Nico --

ZAGON
Be a good boy --

372 FOX

His moment of truth.

FOX
Dive, Nico!!

He FIRES -- at Salvano! In the same instant, Salvano pulls his own trigger! Salvano's MACHINE GUN BURST cuts Fox down, a milli-second before Fox's .45 SLUG BLOWS Salvano off his feet! Pandemonium. Fox, dying, slings his .45 to Nico, who snatches it from the ground just as a HAIL of MACHINE GUN FIRE THUNDERS around him. Nico dives headlong behind a concrete column, which is instantly chewed to shreds by GUNFIRE. Zagon FIRES his MAC-10 on full automatic. A second agent hurries forward to outflank Nico. Nico pops from behind the column, DRILLS the agent broadside behind the ear, blowing the whole side of his head off! Guests and valets are shrieking in terror, hitting the deck in clusters, clawing and scrambling over each other for safety.

ZAGON
(to first agent,
advancing)
Move!

Nico springs from cover, FIRING, trying to bolt down the garage ramp, toward the lower levels. His path puts the first agent directly in Zagon's line of fire. Zagon doesn't hesitate; he OPENS UP on Nico, cutting down his own man -- Salvano has gotten to his feet, wounded, but still handling his gun. He joins Zagon, rushing forward --

373 RAMP TO LOWER LEVELS

A valet rounds a corner, unsuspecting, bringing up a car. Nico is on him like a cat, tearing the poor boy from behind the wheel, leaping in --

374 ZAGON AND SALVANO
tear around the corner at the top of the ramp. Both OPEN
FIRE as --

375 NICO - IN CAR
highballs straight toward them!

376 SALVANO
hold the trigger down, FULL AUTOMATIC --

377 NICO'S CAR (MOVING)
Nico drops below the dash, driving blind. The WINDSHIELD is
BLOWN APART, both FRONT TIRES EXPLODE, the RADIATOR BLASTS
STEAM --

378 ZAGON
Reloading as Salvano FIRES.

379 NICO'S CAR
pinwheels out of control, its nose facing away from Salvano
and Zagon. The car BRAKES FURIOUSLY --

380 NICO
hits reverse, looking back over the seat --

381 NICO'S POV - THROUGH REAR CAR WINDOW
He sees Salvano, his clip empty now, hurrying to wrestle a
fresh magazine in --

382 ANGLE - NICO'S CAR AND SALVANO
Nico floors it in reverse, slamming into Salvano, lifting
him off his feet, smashing him with the car into a metal
grate wall. *
*

383 SALVANO
A horrible death.

383A EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT *
From the eighth floor the metal grate of the parking struc- *
ture blows out onto the street below, followed by Salvano's *
body. *

384 NICO - BEHIND THE WHEEL
BURNING RUBBER FURIOUSLY, away from the wall --

385 ZAGON

Reloaded, turning his gun toward Nico, when --

386 TWO UNIFORMED HOTEL SECURITY GUARDS

hurtle around the corner from the escalators, guns drawn.

FIRST SECURITY GUARD
(shouts to Zagon)

You there --

Zagon spins, rips both guards with a FIERCE BURST! The Guards drop. Zagon turns to --

387 NICO - OUT OF CAR

on his feet, charging straight at Zagon. Nico grabs him, slams Zagon with incredible force into a concrete column. Zagon's gun goes flying, but miraculously he spins away. Nico dives for him, gets his neck in a grip that is certain to snap it in half a second. But --

388 ZAGON'S KNIFE

appears in the torturer's hand. It slashes Nico, right across his already wounded ribs! Nico cries in agony --

389 ZAGON

scampers free. Nico gets to his feet, bleeding. Nico is between Zagon and Zagon's machine gun on the ground. Zagon bolts for his car. Nico dives for the gun --

390 CAR

Zagon floors it into a SCORCHING 360, BLASTS up the exit ramp, out of Nico's line of fire --

391 NICO

leaps into the other, half-destroyed car. Its two front tires are flat, windshield blown out, RADIATOR POURING STEAM. Nico does the only thing he can do: puts the pedal to the metal in reverse, BLASTS across the ramp divider, takes off after Zagon in reverse --

392 ON RAMP - ZAGON'S CAR

Another car is coming down. Zagon sideswipes it into a wall, keeps going --

393 ON RAMP - NICO'S WRECKED CAR

Rear TIRES CHURNING smoke, FRONT FLATS SCRAPING on their rims... he pours on the speed --

394 TOP OF RAMP - HOTEL ACCESS DRIVE

Zagon's car whips out into the night-time commotion. Pedestrians, POLICE SIRENS O.S. Zagon looks behind him --

395 NICO'S CAR - TOP OF RAMP

hurtles into view in reverse!

396 ZAGON'S CAR *

is trapped by the traffic. Zagon looks around wildly, then floors the accelerator. Zagon's car bucks straight up the pedestrian steps, onto the plaza! Strollers scream and scatter as it fishtails wildly, careening toward the huge stone fountain -- *

397 NICO'S WRECKED CAR *

Follows, pouring smoke, in reverse! Nico cuts Zagon off, CRASHES into Zagon's car broadside, sending it skittering sideways into the fountain retaining wall -- *

398 ZAGON

leaps free, sprints toward the hotel alley. Nico takes off after him on foot --

399 EXT. ALLEY - REAR OF HOTEL - NIGHT

Zagon races down the darkest of alleys, rounds a corner --

400 NICO

hurtles after him, gaining. Nico whips around the alley corner, straight into:

401 FOUR ARMED AGENTS

waiting beside a plain grey TV remote van. Nico skitters to a stop as a shotgun, an M-16 and two pistols cover him. Shotgun Agent raises his weapon to fire -- *

ZAGON

No! I want him! I want him alive!

402 EXT. MIDLAND HOTEL - NIGHT *

A banner reads: WELCOME COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRATIC POLICY *

403 EXT. ANOTHER ALLEY - BEHIND MIDLAND HOTEL - NIGHT *

A car pulls up. Nico, his wrists tied, is dragged into the basement of the hotel. Zagon follows.

CUT TO:

404 INT. BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Sweating, windowless concrete. Overhead pipes. Churning machinery. As the CAMERA REVEALS this airtight dungeon --

PISTOL AGENT (O.S.)

-- this is bullshit, Zagon. We got work to do.

ZAGON (O.S.)

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

405 NICO

in a metal chair, wrists taped in front of him. One agent stands behind him, clasping a thin cable noose wrapped tight around Nico's throat. Shotgun agent holds his weapon on him, its twin muzzles inches from Nico's skull.

406 ZAGON

finishes washing his hands in an industrial-type sink. He is cleaned up, wearing a fresh shirt, his hair combed. When he dries his hands, he looks like a surgeon preparing to operate.

ZAGON

We've got an hour before the honorable senator.

(hands towel to
pistol agent)

You've got to learn to take time,
smell the roses.

Zagon turns to Nico.

NICO

How are you gonna do him, Zagon?
In a motorcade? Or passing
through a hotel kitchen?

The Noose agent jerks his cable tight, making Nico gag and choke. Zagon motions to slacken off. He stops at a small table before Nico -- unrolls a well-worn felt pouch. Zagon watches Nico's reaction as the tools of the interrogator's trade come into view -- drug vials, syringes, scalpels, surgical tools.

ZAGON

I've used these little beauties
many times to extract information --

(lifts a needle to
the light)

-- This'll be the first time I've
ever used them... just for fun.

Zagon sets the syringe down, slips on a heavy, weighted glove.

ZAGON

(to agents)

Take his arms.

Pistol agent and Bad Dude move in, one on each side, seizing Nico's forearms. Shotgun agent holds his weapon tight to Nico's head.

*

Zagon punches Nico square in the face, so hard the chair reels backward, spinning out from under Nico --

ZAGON

Hold him up!

Pistol agent and Bad Dude lift Nico. Zagon slams him again. Again. Nico's cheekbone is broken; blood drains from his nose. Zagon aims a two-handed blow; backhands Nico, crushing the other side of his face! Zagon backs off, chest heaving. Pistol agent and Bad Dude plop Nico back in the chair, gagging, choked by the noose. Nico looks like the Viet prisoner -- the one we saw in the opening sequence. Like the prisoner, Nico takes his beating -- still conscious, still meeting Zagon's eyes with defiance.

ZAGON

This is where you came in, Toscani.
Only, now it's where you're gonna
check out.

He takes off his glove, grabs the syringe. Pistol agent and Bad Dude clamp Nico's right arm down tight. Zagon injects Nico.

407 NICO

reacts instantly to the hypo -- cursing, sputtering under the choking noose. He twists wildly trying to free himself, but the agents' powerful arms hold him.

ZAGON

That's it. Fight it, cherry.
Fight it, so it speeds faster on
its way --

Nico struggles more violently.

ZAGON

Fight it. Till the vessels burst
in your brain. Till the arteries
rupture in your heart --

Slowly, the struggle goes out of Nico. His muscles go limp; he slumps -- drooling, babbling incoherently.

ZAGON

That's my boy. That's what I was
waiting for --

Zagon produces his famous knife. He motions Pistol agent and Bad Dude to release Nico's arms. Noose agent slackens his grip on the choke cable. Zagon moves in closer, gloating, cooing --

ZAGON

A fool learns from his own
mistakes. But a wise man learns
from the mistakes of others --

(moves closer, blade
in hand)

You should have killed me when
you had the chance, Toscani --

The blade moves to Nico's throat. Suddenly: Nico springs to life (catching Noose man by surprise and jerking the cable from his grip) -- grabbing Zagon with his taped hands by the throat, lifting him bodily, slamming him ferociously into the wall! Zagon drops to the floor, half-conscious. Nico spins instantly to find: the Shotgun agent right behind him, raising his weapon to Nico's face, about to pull the trigger. Nico sidesteps, grabbing the man's wrist. The SHOTGUN GOES OFF, missing Nico by inches, blasting a huge chunk out of the concrete wall. The Noose agent draws his weapon from his shoulder holster. Nico snaps the Shotgun agent's wrist, flipping him through the air, simultaneously grabbing the weapon, spinning behind the Noose agent, then using the shotgun barrel like a club to smash the back of his head in! Another swing wipes out Pistol agent. Bad Dude, now with a clear shot, aims his M-16. Nico blows him away with a double-barreled SHOTGUN BLAST. In a flash, Nico has spun to Zagon's surgical tool table, lifted a razor-sharp scalpel and slashed the tape, freeing his hands. He yanks the choke cable off his neck --

408 ZAGON - AGAINST WALL

On his feet again. He reaches swiftly to the floor, snatches up his famous knife. Nico confronts him -- face battered, bloody -- shaking, battling internal spasms.

ZAGON

Can you feel the chemicals,
cherry? You can't fight 'em much
longer --

NICO

Long enough to finish you.

Sweating, half-spitting, Zagon slashes at Nico like an animal -- Nico traps the knife, and enters, smashes Zagon in the face with one lightning blow. We see Zagon's nose and face completely cave in. Nico comes under Zagon's elbow, the arm that still holds the knife clamping it in a vise-like grip and bending it backwards, slowly, against the joint -- which now starts to rip in half. Zagon is screaming and cursing, writhing in agony -- The drugs have hit Nico full force now. He's weakening, his eyes are starting to roll. Zagon tries one last surge of strength to save himself; it almost seems he'll wriggle free when: the elbow JOINT SNAPS in half with a sickening sound.

As the joint hangs, dangling grotesquely, Nico reaches up around Zagon's neck, still holding the dangling limb with one arm. He begins to now do to Zagon's neck what he did to his arm. We hear a terminal CRACK. Zagon's body crumples to the floor. Nico, in delirium, staggers toward the door --

409 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - REAR STAIRWELL - NIGHT

A woman at a pay phone. She turns, drops the receiver in shock as --

410 NICO

bursts, delirious, from the stairwell door!

411 MAIN LOBBY - FRONT ENTRANCE

A commotion as Lukich, Agent Neeley and Jackson, arm in a sling, race in from their car. *

412 MAIN LOBBY - REAR - NICO

weaves wildly forward. He drops to his knees. Guests react in astonishment and horror.

412A JACKSON

is the first to spot Nico. She runs up to him as he collapses.

412B NICO

looks at Jackson.

413 LUKICH AND NEELEY *

reach Nico and Jackson.

LUKICH
(shouting for
anyone)
Is there a hotel doctor? Call 911!

414 NICO

passes out in Jackson's arms. Behind them we see a banner, announcing Senator Harrison's address. From the ballroom we hear CHEERS and APPLAUSE. A fiery address is being finished inside. The senator is now leaving.

415 FULL SHOT - LOBBY

Total confusion. Guests staring everywhere. From a side office, a man with a medical bag comes running. The senator sees the group around Nico.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON:

416 EXT. NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

Press vans outside; a crush of cars, reporters, neighbors. Newsmen are trying to gain access to the house, held back by several cops and some of Nico's more strapping relatives.

417 BUICK STATION WAGON

escorted by two police motorcycles, pulls in. The press surrounds it as Lukich, Neeley, Lieutenant Strozah and Jackson, her arm in a sling, disembark from the car. *

417A SECOND CAR

pulls up. Neeley walks over and opens the door as a court stenographer, carrying her transcription machine case, steps out -- followed by a federal judge, CLAYTON ALSPAUGH and SENATOR ERNEST HARRISON. *

418 REPORTERS

shove mikes and cameras at the senator and the judge, shouting questions. Lukich, Neeley and Strozah clear a path for them. *

419 ANGLE FROM INSIDE HOUSE - THROUGH FRONT WINDOW

Harrison and Alspaugh fend off the questions, cross the path and mount the steps to the house.

T.V. REPORTER (O.S.)
(in front of house)
-- Senator Harrison has today
issued a statement calling for the
appointment of a special prosecutor --

CUT TO:

420 INT. NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

Nico, propped up on the couch, looking like hell, but definitely conscious and in full command of his faculties. Sara, Jackson, and Rosa beside him. *

421 TV

A network ANCHOR delivers the headline news.

ANCHOR (V.O.)
Earlier this week, the Harrison
Commission delivered its report
on the growing C.I.A. scandal to
Congress...

The image changes to SENATOR HARRISON behind a battery of microphones, sitting at a senate hearing-type table, with a plaque reading "SEN. ERNEST HARRISON" before him.

SENATOR HARRISON (V.O.)
(on TV)
-- officially-sanctioned deceit,
murder and corruption, will
continue until these men are
brought to justice.

422 NICO

*

looks up as the real Senator Harrison, Judge Alspaugh and the others enter the room. TV SOUND DOWN. Harrison stops before Nico, taking a moment to look with respect and admiration at the man propped up on the pillows.

*

SENATOR HARRISON

Detective Toscani. I wanted to personally thank you. You are making it possible for a sliver of truth to finally come out.

He holds out his hand. Nico takes it. The senator gestures to Judge Alspaugh.

SENATOR HARRISON

And this is Clayton Alspaugh of the fifth circuit court.

NICO

Your Honor.

The Judge nods to his stenographer, who swiftly sets up her equipment, takes a seat. Rosa makes a face at Branca, who rises, clearing a seat for the Judge. Sara moves in tight beside Nico. *

JUDGE ALSPAUGH

Are you sure you're feeling well enough?

Nico glances to Sara, to the supporting faces around him. Lukich. Neeley. Strozah. Jackson. The others. *

NICO

(to Alspaugh)

If you're ready to listen, I'm ready to talk.

423 CLOSE - STENOGRAPHER'S HANDS

As the Judge's VOICE begins OVER, "slating" the depositions, the stenographer's fingers start moving.
PULL BACK TO:

424 ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE ROOM

The full scene. Nico telling his story. Responsible officials recording it --

425 EXT. YARD OUTSIDE NICO'S HOUSE - DAY

The press corps, vans, neighbors -- CLOSING CREDITS BEGIN.

426 LONG PULLBACK

to the street, the houses, and finally: the neighborhood. Nico's neighborhood, to which the truth has finally come home. CLOSING CREDITS CONTINUE OVER.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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