ABOVE THE LAW

Screenplay by
STEVEN PRESSFIELD and RONALD SHUSETT
and ANDREW DAVIS

Story by
ANDREW DAVIS and STEVEN SEAGAL

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.

2.  

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 5.

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.

6.

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!

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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.

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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.

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 ahhing 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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 10A.

   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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 11.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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?

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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

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 EXTERIOR VARIOUS STREETS - UNMARKED CAR

moves into the central city.

50 POINT OF VIEW 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.

WIDE SHOT to include Nico and Jackson.

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

51 EXTERIOR STREET - BUCKSHOT'S LIQUORS - DAY

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

52 INTERIOR - 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 INTERIOR, BUCKSHOT'S LIQUORS - DAY

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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.

FAVOR ONE PARTICULARLY TOUGH CUSTOMER

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

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

Come on. Show me something.

No one moves.

NICO

Come on. Show me something.
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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, indicating 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.

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.

**ABOVE THE LAW** - Rev. 4/17/87

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

**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:**

---

**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.

**ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87**

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.

**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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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.

21.

  CARLA
Pinchi cabron, cabeza colon!

Some of the chocolates tumble onto the lockup floor, the
detainees snap them up, start munching. The girl con-
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 --

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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 heavyset, 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 --

**ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87**  

**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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87  25.
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.)


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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 28.

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.
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 28A.

**ANGLE ON MEAT PLANT - DAY**

Nothing happening.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 29.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

Dead as hell.

**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 slopper.

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.

30.

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 SHOOTS 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.
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.

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

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

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

EXT. LINCOLN - ROOF - DAY

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

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

CLOSEUP - NICO
He hangs on with one hand.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

LUKICH, JACKSON AND OTHER COPS  
react with surprise and shock.

NICO  
rips open one of tubes and smells it.

CLOSE - NICO  
Confused; frustrated.

NICO  
What kinda fuckin' high is this?

CUT TO:

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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!

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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)

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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.
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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.
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

37.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 37A.

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.

38.

**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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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?

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87
39A.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87
40.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87  41.

ROSAR
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87  42.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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 --

**ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87** 44.

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 of 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.

**ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87**

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)

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87  47.

Nico stalks off. The door slams. 

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
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.

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.

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.

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
claw's 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 ad-
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 --

51.

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?

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 53.

* 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.

NICO
(filtered)
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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 unmarked 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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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
[to cops]
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!

ABOVE THE LAW – Rev. 4/29/87

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 hall-
way 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 Superinten-
dent 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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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 completely 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.


*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 newreels 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.

61.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 63.

**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:

INT. NICO'S CAR - MOVING - MORNING
Nico drives, a jumble of emotions on his face. Urgency
fear, exhaustion. He's deep in thought --

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.

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 --

NICO
dives toward his own passenger door --

SECOND CAR - TWO MORE ARMED MEN
leap out, OPEN FIRE with pistols and automatic weapons.

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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

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

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

PEDESTRIANS AROUND INTERSECTION
scream and scatter in terror.

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

NICO'S CAR
being chewed to pieces --
crawling at full speed from the car's front to its back. On the ground, alongside the car, spent CARTRIDGE CASES RAIN like hailstones.

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:

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 conster-
nation. One of the men has a fresh magazine half into
his weapon --

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 65.

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 --

INT. CORNER GROCERY STORE - DAY
A Pakistani counter clerk takes one look at the mob enter-
ing 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 --

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 66.

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.  

**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.  

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87  

**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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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.
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

**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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 69.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 69A.

NICO

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 70.

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 Requi-
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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

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.
Neeley 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.

EXT. DESERTED LAKEFRONT - DAY
Nico drives off, leaving the FBI man miles from nowhere.

CUT TO:

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 --

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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 --

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 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?

266 INT. WATANABE'S COMPUTER AREA - NIGHT

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87                          75.

*  

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. Operation 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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 75A.

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:

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 76.

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...

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

76A.

NICO (O.S.)
Where's Fox's printout?
(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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

77.

NICO
(muttering to himself; thinking)
Fox is here, in Chicago... or was
here...
... 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.
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 --

EXT. TENEMENT – POV FROM CAR ON STREET – NIGHT

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

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 television. 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.

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

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...

FROM NOWHERE

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

CLOSEUP – GOON
He steps quickly, surely into the apartment.

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 80.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 80A.

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.

81.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87  82.

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

*  

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 83.

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

NICO - ATOP TRAIN

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

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 84.

NICO - ATOP TRAIN

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

INT. TRAIN CAR

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

AROUND CORNER - TWO POLICE CARS

hurtle INTO VIEW under the El, SIRENS BLARING.

BACK ON TENEMENT ROOF

Zagon and Salvano scramble away.

OMITTED

CUT TO:

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:

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 --

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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 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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 85A.

* 

LUKICH
(wounded himself)
You just shutup and take it easy, pal.

328  INT. TAXI - NIGHT
CLOSEUP of Nico riding through the wet streets.

328A  INT. EMERGENCY ROOM
Lukich is on the phone. His shirt is off and he's being bandaged. In the background Jackson is also being cared for.

LUKICH
(on phone)
We don't know what happened to him, Branca. Ya, she's gonna be alright.

328B  INT. BRANCA'S SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT
Branca, a bodyguard next to him, grimly puts down the phone. He looks devastated.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 86.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 87.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 88.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

* 

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.
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:

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

ANGLE - PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY
Nico, escorted by a prison guard, walks down a long, blank hallway.

CUT TO:

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

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 88B-90.

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.

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 --

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

NICOL
Kurt Zagon.

FREDERICO LARUSSO
-- As long as this Zagon lives, nothing I can do will guarantee your family's safety.
(beat)
'Ecce non umoine, 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.

NICOL
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 92A/93.

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 --

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
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.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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?

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 96A.

    FOX
    Zagon's a rancher. 4000 acres in Costa Rica. Beautiful place.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 97.

* 

    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.

### ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

### 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!

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 100.

**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**
SCREECHEES 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?

100A.

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.

101.

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 --

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 102.

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 structure 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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87  

102A.

387  **FIRST SECURITY GUARD**

(shouts to Zagon)

You there --

Zagon spins, rips both guards with a FIERCE BURST! The Guards drop. Zagon turns to --

388  **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**

hurts into view in reverse!

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87 104.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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.
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 --

107.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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!

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87 108A. *

**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 IN ON:

FADE OUT.
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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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.

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 ALSHAUGH and SENATOR ERNEST HARRISON.

REPORTERS

shove mikes and cameras at the senator and the judge, shouting questions. Lukich, Neeley and Strozah clear a path for them.

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:

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.

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.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/17/87

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 ad-
miration at the man propped up on the pillows.

ABOVE THE LAW - Rev. 4/29/87

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 Alspauch.

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

NICO

(to Alspaugh)
If you're ready to listen, I'm
ready to talk.

CLOSE - STENOGRAPHER'S HANDS
As the Judge's VOICE begins OVER, "slating" the depo-
sitions, the stenographer's fingers start moving.
PULL BACK TO:

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