

CROOK COUNTY

Written by

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Based on actual events.

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"No man who is corrupt, no man who condones corruption in others
can possibly do his duty by the community."

-- Teddy Roosevelt

OVER BLACK

WOLFSON (V.O.)

Don't ever let a man convince you that he didn't have a choice. There's always that moment where he makes the choice between right and wrong.

INT. ITALIAN BAR & RESTAURANT - NIGHT

TWO MEN sit in the back of an empty restaurant.

DEAN WOLFSON (mid 40s), a silver-haired, impeccably dressed man sits across from JAKE KRAUSE (late 20s), a square-jawed, younger man in a cheap and wrinkled suit. Wolfson eyes his prey with a piercing glare. Jake looks worn down and weary.

Untouched drinks on the table between them. Condensation drips down their glasses like beads of sweat. Wolfson's fierce look intimidates Jake. A long and uncomfortable beat.

JAKE

I know you've probably heard things, rumors. I just want to tell you up front that it isn't true.

MUSIC CUE: "American Heartbeat" by Survivor

EXT. ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Jake exits the restaurant. Turns down the sidewalk. The 'L' train thunders overhead.

Jake passes a dark alleyway-- IN A FLASH, TWO GOONS BULLRUSH HIM. Jake pushes back against the men. STRUGGLING TO BREAK FREE. A FORD LTD HARDTOP screeches up onto the sidewalk. The back door swings open-- THE TWO GOONS DRAG JAKE TOWARDS THE OPEN DOOR.

JAKE

GET OFF ME. GET OFF ME.

GOON #1

GET THE FUCK IN.

GOON #2

It's over.

THE GOONS SHOVE JAKE FORWARD-- FORCING HIM INTO THE BACKSEAT. They jump in behind him. Slam the door shut. THE CAR TAKES OFF DOWN THE BLOCK. All we see are the red tail lights as THE CAR DISAPPEARS AROUND A CORNER.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: **CROOK COUNTY**

EXT. ROW HOUSES - MORNING

The sun breaks thru the clouds over a rundown strip of row houses in Lincoln Square-- a lower class neighborhood on the North Side of Chicago.

TITLE CARD: CHICAGO
 SEPTEMBER 1978
 FIVE YEARS EARLIER

INT. BEDROOM - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - MORNING

A cramped bedroom decorated in the late '60s. Untouched over the last decade. Movie posters of Paul Newman as 'Cool Hand Luke' and Steve McQueen as 'Bullitt' adorn the walls. Stacks of vinyl are piled up on two wooden speakers flanking a record player.

Steam drifts from a bathroom doorway. The shower running.

Laid out on the neatly made twin bed: a dress shirt, a Sears & Roebuck suit, and a striped tie in a gift box.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is small. No frills. Single mother LARA KRAUSE (50s) stands at the counter, fixing a traditional German breakfast-- rye bread, jam, salami, cheese, boiled eggs, and coffee.

LARA SETS THE TINY TABLE FOR ONE. She looks to the open doorway.

INT. BEDROOM - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - MOMENTS LATER

JAKE KRAUSE buttons up his dress shirt, tucks it into his pants. This is not the same worn out Jake we just saw in the restaurant with Dean Wolfson. He's youthful, fresh-faced and energized.

He walks to a full-length mirror, his new necktie in hand. Loops it around his neck. His mother's voice drifts up from downstairs.

 LARA (O.S.)
 Jake?...

 JAKE
 Yeah?...

 LARA (O.S.)
 I fixed you some breakfast.

Jake straightens his tie. One last look in the mirror.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - MOMENTS LATER

Jake enters the kitchen. He looks at the special breakfast his mother made for him.

JAKE
Ma. You really didn't...

LARA
It'll be a long day at the courthouse.

His mother hands him a glass of orange juice, noticing the necktie. She slides her hand under the tie, smiling.

LARA (CONT'D)
Oh, you see? It's so nice. It's perfect. Sit. Sit...

Jake sits down, drinking the orange juice. He picks up a spoon, cracks the top off a boiled egg.

LARA (CONT'D)
Are you nervous?

JAKE
Excited.

His mother nods approvingly. To say she is proud of her son would be an understatement.

LARA
Well, you worked so, so hard... And you earned it. You're my good boy.

EXT. FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - MORNING

A brick and mortar courthouse. Trees shed autumn leaves on the front lawn. While others trudge inside, JAKE BOUNDS UP THE STEPS.

INT. HALLWAY - FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - MORNING

Jake turns the corner into a narrow corridor and STOPS COLD. His smile vanishes.

REVERSE ANGLE on absolute mayhem. This hallway is clogged with the worst filth Chicago has to offer. The scum that's been skimmed off the top, scooped up, and swooped in for sentencing. This is their day in court. And they all need a lawyer.

Three feet from the courtroom door, HUSTLING LAWYERS in cheap suits prey on drugged out prostitutes, coke-pushing pimps, crackheads, and dealers. All looking to walk. Overheard sales pitches are simple and to the point.

Intimidating a down-on-his-luck DRUG DEALER...

HUSTLING LAWYER #1

This judge hands out jail time like candy. You really wanna walk in there with a public defender?

Negotiating with a HIGH-PRICED HOOKER...

HUSTLING LAWYER #2

Listen, honey-- You wanna walk outta here happy in ten minutes? You pay for quality.

Jake looks overwhelmed. A FAMILIAR FACE emerges from the sweaty mob. This is Jake's friend ART CIRIGNANI (30). Art approaches Jake with A WIDE SMILE plastered on his face.

ART

Welcome to 'Whore Court'...

JAKE

Aptly named.

ART

Wish I could take credit. I had that same look on my face last fall.

JAKE

You couldda warned me.

Art frames Jake's sullen face with his open palms.

ART

And miss out on this... It's priceless.

Art waves Jake forward, pushing thru the sea of scum.

ART (CONT'D)

C'mon, these are defense attorneys-- the hustlers. We prosecutors, we got our own office upstairs.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jake and Art in a hallway outside a group of elevators. A few other men in business suits stand with them.

ART

It's a high volume business and you'll see most of the shit drops first thing in the morning.

DING. The elevator doors slide open. Jake and Art take a step forward AND STOP.

Inside the elevator, A TALL JUDGE (60s) in a black robe is surrounded by GIGGLING HOOKERS. One of them on her knees rocking back and forth, performing a trick of her trade UPON THE JUDGE. The judge is neither surprised nor embarrassed by the situation.

JUDGE
(gruffly)
Wait for the next car.

The elevator doors slide shut. No one sure quite what to say...

ART
(to Jake)
Can you, uh, hit the button again.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE - MORNING

Jake and Art are at desks in A LARGE OPEN OFFICE AREA. Their chairs turned around to face one another. Art's desk looks lived in. Jake's desk is completely bare.

JAKE
Is this some kind a joke?

ART
You get used to it.

Jake lets it all sink in. His reality shifted in one morning.

MOBSTER'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)
What's the difference between a lawyer
and a bucket a shit?...

INT. BASEMENT - BAR & RESTAURANT - LATE NIGHT

ANGLE ON the back of a man's head. His hair is thinning. Beads of sweat forming in his bald spot. Before it's all over, it'll be clear that this man is a LAWYER.

MOBSTER
...The bucket.

The lawyer is trying to reason with a low level MOBSTER, who is pacing in the background and telling the bad jokes.

LAWYER
And here I thought I'd heard 'em all.
Look, I'm telling you, I can fix it.
Money talks and I can fix it for him.

EXT. ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE NIGHT

A few restaurants and businesses line the street. At this hour, most places are dark and long since closed.

LAWYER (V.O.)

If I can't get to the judge, I get to his bagman. If I can't get to him, then I go to the arresting officer.

A BEAT-UP WHITE VAN in an adjoining alleyway. The words TRIPLE A DRY CLEANERS stenciled on the side.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - CONTINUOUS

There are no pressed shirts inside the van. Instead, TWO FBI FIELD TECHNICIANS are surrounded by surveillance equipment.

A needle twitches back and forth across an AUDIO METER.

A large REEL-TO-REEL AUDIO RECORDER captures the escalating exchange. The technicians listen in on headphones.

MOBSTER (V.O.)

Why should we believe a fucking word that comes outta your CUNT FUCKING MOUTH?--

LAWYER (V.O.)

Cause I've seen every charge in the book dropped. Gambling charges are nothing.

INT. BASEMENT - BAR & RESTAURANT - THAT MOMENT

Back on the lawyer's sweaty head. Pleading his case.

LAWYER

Hell, if the money's right I can make a murder case disappear.

MOBSTER

Oh yeah? Well, good luck with that.

BOOM-- BOOM-- The lawyer's head snaps to the left OUT OF FRAME. A GUNMAN PUTS TWO BULLETS IN HIS HEAD.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - THAT MOMENT

THE AUDIO NEEDLE JUMPS. The two gunshots ring out thru the technician's headphones.

One of the technicians slides a headphone off one ear.

FBI TECH #1
What the fuck? Did they just kill him?

FBI TECH #2
Call Jordan.

EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - CHICAGO DIVISION - ESTABLISHING

The imposing FBI building on West Roosevelt Street. Ten floors of nothing but windows, looking out onto the city.

INT. OFFICE - FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

FBI AGENT LAMAR JORDAN (30s) talks to his superior-- FBI Special Agent in charge of the Chicago Division ED HEGARTY (50s).

JORDAN
We caught something on a wiretap. It could be big-- A lawyer running his mouth about fixing cases.

HEGARTY
Can we bring him in? Lean on him?

JORDAN
Well... it's kinda too late. He was killed. They got it all on tape. Still haven't located the shooter but he's mobbed up-- part of The Outfit.

HEGARTY
(confused)
He was killed? What the fuck were we doing?

JORDAN
It was the gambling probe. The room's been bugged for weeks. We were *listening*. It ramped up-- It happened fast. But what he was saying, it lines up with everything else we keep hearing about corruption in the courts. Problem is, nobody'll talk. They know eventually it means testifying against the system.

EXT. WEST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

A STOUT AND TOUGH MAN steps out of his suburban home. A lunch pail under one arm. A Local 130 Union patch on his jacket. This is BILLY LOGAN. His NEIGHBOR walks his dog on the lawn next door.

A 1970 CHRYSLER 300 pulls up fast, screeching to a halt. A BAD ASS with two-tone hair and sunken eyes jumps from the passenger side of the car. THIS IS MOB ENFORCER HARRY "THE HOOK" ALEMAN. He carries A SAWED OFF 12-GAUGE SHOTGUN.

This happens fast: Aleman levels the shotgun, racking the pump. Billy registers what is happening. A FLASH OF FEAR on his face.

ALEMAN
HEY, BILLY...

BOOM-- The blast from the shotgun BLOWS A HOLE IN BILLY. He somersaults across the lawn. Dead before he hits the ground.

INT. CHRYSLER 300 CAR - THAT MOMENT

Aleman hops back in the Chrysler.

ALEMAN
GO.

THE GETAWAY DRIVER STOMPS on the gas. PEELING OUT.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

TITLE CARD: COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Inside a drab meeting room. Harry Aleman at a conference table in prison orange and ankle chains. ALEMAN'S ATTORNEY sits across from him. Delivering the good news.

ALEMAN'S ATTORNEY
It's all set-- A bench trial.

ALEMAN
Good... And the judge?

ALEMAN'S ATTORNEY
Billy's union friends are all over the news. And the state flipped your driver...

ALEMAN
Won't matter-- *What about the judge?*

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE FRANK WILSON presides over the BENCH TRIAL of Harry "The Hook" Aleman. THE JURY BOX IS EMPTY-- THE VERDICT IS ALL ON WILSON. The courtroom overflows with spectators and reporters.

TITLE CARD: COOK COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

Aleman sits next to his DEFENSE TEAM. The GETAWAY DRIVER is on the witness stand. Flipped and testifying against Aleman. The prosecutor paces in front of him, waiting for the payoff.

GETAWAY DRIVER

I pulled up... Billy was walkin' out to his car... I stopped... and Harry jumped out and shot him.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Same courtroom. Different day. Still a packed house. Judge Wilson listens to Billy Logan's neighbor on the witness stand.

NEIGHBOR

I heard tires screech and I looked up... I saw the shotgun blast. Billy got knocked back, ass over teakettle. Maxwell was barking like crazy--

The prosecutor interrupts the neighbor's incriminating testimony.

PROSECUTOR

And the gunman. The man who shot Billy Logan. Do you recognize him here in the courtroom today?

NEIGHBOR

Yes, sir.

PROSECUTOR

And could you point him out to us?

The neighbor raises his arm. POINTING TO ALEMAN.

NEIGHBOR

Right there... Mr. Aleman.

Judge Wilson watches as the neighbor makes the positive ID.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

It's judgement day. Tensions are running high. Judge Wilson nears the end of his brisk oral ruling...

JUDGE WILSON

...And due to these factors, I, find the defendant, Harold Aleman, to be not guilty of the charge of first degree murder.

THE COURTROOM ERUPTS with shock and outrage. Reporters scurry for the exits like mice.

A small smirk creeps across Harry Aleman's face. Not guilty.

Judge Wilson slams his gavel down and makes for a QUICK EXIT.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: APRIL 1979

INT. THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS OFFICE - CHICAGO - DAY

U.S. ATTORNEY TOM SULLIVAN (50s) walks briskly down a hallway. A CARDBOARD BOX stuffed with file folders in his arms. He takes a sharp left into...

INT. DAN REIDY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

...FIRST ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY DAN REIDY'S (27) office. A moustache camouflaging how young he really looks.

Sullivan drops the box of files onto his desk.

SULLIVAN

This is important. Read it. Don't talk to anybody about it.

REIDY

What is it?

SULLIVAN

Came over from the FBI-- Judicial corruption. Some bribed witnesses, some stuff caught on federal wiretaps.

Sullivan turns to leave. He stops short of the door.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

And, Dan-- I need you to get your arms around this. We all know the fix was in with the Harry Aleman trial... We need to prove it. Find a way in.

Reidy nods as Sullivan exits. He pulls a folder from the box, opens it, starts to read.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - 7TH DISTRICT - NIGHT

Jake walks side-by-side with a plain-clothes Chicago DETECTIVE (30s). They're down in the guts of the police department. A labyrinth of mostly empty hallways.

DETECTIVE

He's a real sonofabitch. Here...
Dontelle Jackson...

The detective HANDS JAKE A FOLDER. The arrest report and photographs inside.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

We've got him on child abuse, child endangerment, and marijuana possession, but make no mistake-- he's a straight up pimp dealer. Mostly crack and cocaine. Kid's mom is a whore.

Jake lifts the arrest report to reveal CLOSE UP PHOTOS OF BODY PARTS. Heavy bruises, scrapes, whatever happened, it looks bad.

JAKE

Is this?...

DETECTIVE

Yeah, those are photos of the kid taken directly after the incident.

Jake flips thru more photos. The detective points to one.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

And that's the leash. The arresting officer-- Joseph Trunzo-- responded to witness complaints and arrested this asshole at the scene.

JAKE

Trunzo-- I know him. He's a bailiff over at Whore Court.

DETECTIVE

The Trunzo brothers strike again-- You're thinking of Officer James Trunzo. Identical twins 'cept for the moustache. Captain made Joey grow it just so we could tell 'em the fuck apart... Or maybe he made Jimmy shave, I forget. Either way, I mention Officer Trunzo, only to say he's been known to...

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

let's say, write some *holes* into his reports from time to time, and alter his testimony in court to potentially open those holes up, for the defense to drive their dick thru. But I prob'ly don't need to tell you--

Jake gives a knowing look.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Anyway, mommy hooker is happy to fill you in on all the gory details, 'cause *surprise*-- she actually loves her kid-- but it's a big, fat fuck you to her testifying in a court of law against daddy pimp. That leaves us with the witnesses, of which, there are two... So, let's start there.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM #1 - NIGHT

A FEMALE WITNESS (20s) at a metal table. Jake sits across from her, jotting down a few notes.

FEMALE WITNESS

Me and my boyfriend are walking home from the coffee shop and we see this guy. And he's pulling his little boy along on some kind of a *dog leash*.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM #2 - NIGHT

A MALE WITNESS (20s) tells his version of the incident to Jake. Same story. They match.

MALE WITNESS

The kid falls down, and *HE DRAGS HIM* the rest of the way across the road. The kid's crying, choking, grabbing his neck...

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM #3 - NIGHT

A young looking girl (17-18) in a tight and trashy get up. Heavy makeup covering up burns and bruises. This is the HOOKER MOM.

Jake slides the GRAPHIC PHOTOS across the table. Spinning them around. She looks at the photos, showing little emotion.

HOOKER MOM

'Dre's always gettin' bumps and bruises. Little boys just play rough.

JAKE

Does that normally include him being dragged by a leash? Is that normal?

HOOKER MOM

Sometimes Dontelle spansks him or takes his belt off, but we all gots to deal with Dontelle when we be bad. It ain't just him.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Jake sits across from the pimp-- DONTELLE JACKSON (30s)--

DONTELLE

You need to be talkin' to my lawyer.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A SOCIAL WORKER sits at a table with the small boy, ANDRE (5-6). ANDRE is busy with a coloring book and pile of crayons. His neck heavily bruised. Scrapes and cuts peek out from bandages.

JAKE ENTERS. Andre stops coloring and looks up. Jake kneels down to the boy's eye level. Andre speaks in a tiny voice...

ANDRE

Am I gonna be in trouble?

INT. FELONY PRELIMINARY HEARING COURT - MORNING

JAKE STANDS behind the prosecutor's table, opposite DONTELLE JACKSON and his SLICK ATTORNEY.

TITLE CARD: FEBRUARY 1980

JUDGE JOHN REYNOLDS (50s) enters the courtroom. THE BAILIFF sets court in motion.

BAILIFF

All rise...
(waiting as people stand)
This court is now in session. The honorable Judge Reynolds presiding. Please be seated.

JAKE watches as the bailiff walks by Judge Reynolds, steps up into the EMPTY JURY BOX, and sits down. EACH ACTION SEEMS DELIBERATE.

Judge Reynolds turns his attention from the bailiff back to the courtroom.

JUDGE REYNOLDS
Good morning, ladies and gentleman.

INT. THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHICAGO - DAY

A closed and empty office area. Dan Reidy has gathered together a small team for a sit down with Tom Sullivan. It's just him AND TWO OTHER PEOPLE-- This is close to the vest kind of stuff.

SCOTT LASSAR (30) is thin and well-manicured and the longest tenured assistant attorney. CHUCK SKLARSKY (29) is tall, lanky, and the newest member of the office.

The first thing you should notice is *how young these men are*. Three silver spoon lawyers from Ivy League schools.

REIDY
(to Sullivan)
I believe the only way we can take this on is from the inside out. We need to go undercover to make it work.

SULLIVAN
Just so we're clear, there's some very large pitfalls and serious political landmines that come with attacking the Chicago judicial system...

REIDY
Yes, sir. I agree.

SULLIVAN
Let us all understand what you're setting out to do here today... You'll be working to build criminal cases against judges and attorneys. Make no mistake, these men may be corrupt, but they know the law better than anyone. If you do not make every attempt to perform to the best of your abilities in *all* facets of this investigation, these men *will* walk.

The anxiety in the room is palpable as Reidy, Lassar, and Sklarsky realize what's being asked of them.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
And if you *fail*, they'll be coming after ALL of our law licenses. We'll be disbarred... You understand that, right?...

Sullivan lets this last point breathe wanting them all to understand the gravity of the situation. You almost can't believe these untested young men have been entrusted with this task.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Okay, so start with the assumption that court cases are being fixed in Chicago.

INT. FELONY PRELIMINARY HEARING COURT - LATER

WIDE ON THE COURTROOM. Jake confident and animated. Passionately pleading his case to Judge Reynolds.

JAKE

Having spent significant time with the young victim, Your Honor, it's clear this is not the first time Mr. Jackson has been abusive to his five-year-old son. And the state firmly believes, that if Mr. Jackson were to be released, it would not be the last.

MOMENTS LATER...

ANGLE ON arresting OFFICER JOE TRUNZO (20s), now on the witness stand. Dontelle's SLICK ATTORNEY cross-examining him.

SLICK ATTORNEY

Now, it doesn't explicitly state this in your arrest report, but was the leash actually even on the child's neck when you arrived on the scene?

Officer Trunzo thinks a beat.

OFFICER JOE TRUNZO

I guess... I can't recall, one-hundred-percent, whether the child was on the leash when I arrived.

SLICK ATTORNEY

Then you also can't be sure that my client had *any involvement* in the injuries sustained by the child.

Jake can't believe what he's hearing. Disbelief turns to anger.

JAKE (PRE-LAP)

How did this go sideways? How?

INT. MIKE FICARO'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake is clearly upset. Speaking with direct superior MIKE FICARO (40s). Ficaro is hard-headed and jaded by the job.

FICARO

It happens. The case got thrown out. He walked.

JAKE

Mike-- *How is that possible?*

FICARO

Cases fall apart. Witnesses recant. Victims wilt under examination. You know how it's possible.

JAKE

Not here. This was open and shut-- He did it. How does he walk on this? What happens now to this kid?

FICARO

You tellin' me the system's broke? No shit. Wha' tha fuck do you want *me* to do 'bout it?

INT. THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHICAGO - DAY

Back in the closed office area. Reidy, Lassar, and Sklarsky work on a strategy.

LASSAR

Can we be involved in affecting the outcomes of real cases?

REIDY

Chuck-- weigh in here. Scott and I don't have as much experience as you do, when it comes to being inside a Chicago courtroom.

SKLARSKY

I'd need to know more about each case. Are we assuming it'll be fixed and dropped regardless?-- Cases aside, don't we need *real attorneys*? Where do we find real attorneys?

LASSAR

A lot of FBI agents are lawyers.

REIDY

How many FBI agents, across the U.S., are members of the Illinois bar and have no known ties to Chicago?... I'm asking...

SKLARSKY

We use someone *known to be former FBI* and now we're presenting them to be an attorney on the take? It's never gonna work.

REIDY

Nothing's easy. We need to dig deeper. Who can we trust?

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

JAKE ENTERS. Angry. Dropping his briefcase. His desk now just as cluttered as Art's. Art turns in his chair.

ART

I heard... You win some, you lose some.

JAKE

This fuckin' cop-- How is he okay with this? It's a goddamn kid.

ART

What'd Ficaro say?

JAKE

Ficaro doesn't give a shit.

ART

(shrugs)

Well, there you go-- I don't know. So go talk to Carey.

JAKE

Who's Carey?

ART

Ficaro's boss.

Jake stops venting. Thinking.

INT. BERNARD CAREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake sits across from STATE'S ATTORNEY BERNARD CAREY (50s)-- Mike Ficaro's boss. Carey exudes Midwest sensibilities. Reasonable and pragmatic. Absorbing everything he's just been told.

CAREY
Does Ficaro know you're here?

JAKE
(hesitant)
...No.

CAREY
And have you voiced these concerns to anybody else?

JAKE
No.

CAREY
I hate to say it, but it's the unfortunate truth-- we have no way to take this on... But give me a few days... Let me make some calls.

INT. XEROX ROOM - STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE - DAY

Jake stands over an ancient dinosaur of a XEROX COPY MACHINE. Copies spill out into a large tray.

Another young ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR pops his head in SHOUTING over the whirring sounds of the copier.

ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR
KRAUSE-- YOU GOT A PHONE CALL.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE UP on the phone receiver off its cradle.

Jake picks up the phone.

JAKE
This is Krause.

Chuck Sklarsky's voice spills from the receiver.

SKLARSKY (V.O.)
Assistant State's Attorney Jake
Krause?

Jake realizes this isn't one of the typical cops or hustler lawyers that call him multiple times a day.

JAKE
Yeah...

SKLARSKY (V.O.)

Jake, this is Chuck Sklarsky from over at the U.S. Attorney's Office. We'd like you to come down to the federal building, and have a talk with myself and First Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan Reidy. I'd also ask that you keep this phone call to yourself.

JAKE

OK. I can make some time for you later this week.

SKLARSKY (V.O.)

Actually, we'd like you to come now...

JAKE

Uh, OK... I guess I can be there in... twenty minutes?

SKLARSKY (V.O.)

Enter through the basement. Take the freight elevator to the 27th floor. If you're on the roof, you went too far. And Jake... Don't let anyone see you.

Jake hangs up the phone. A beat.

INT. BASEMENT - FEDERAL BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

Jake walks thru the dingy basement of the Chicago Federal Building. Floor-to-ceiling iron cages are stacked high with cardboard boxes stuffed with archived documents.

He glances side to side as he approaches an OLD FREIGHT ELEVATOR. This is the extent of Jake's covert skills.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - FEDERAL BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Jake grabs the THICK CANVAS STRAP, pulling the heavy iron gate down in front of him.

Jake rides up in the creaking elevator. The car groans to a stop and settles. The giant metal door slides open to REVEAL...

INT. 27TH FLOOR - FEDERAL BUILDING - THAT MOMENT

...A GROUP OF MEN. REIDY, SKLARSKY, LASSAR, and FBI Agent LAMAR JORDAN talking quietly. They all turn with the sound of the elevator door opening.

REVERSE ANGLE as the four men look at Jake thru the iron cage. Jake opens the gate. The men all take notice of his clean-cut appearance. *Who is this Boy Scout?*

Dan Reidy breaks from the group and walks forward, extending his hand towards Jake.

REIDY

Jake, I'm Dan Reidy. Thanks for coming.

INT. 27TH FLOOR - FEDERAL BUILDING - LATER

THE FIVE MEN ENTER A CAVERNOUS ABANDONED OFFICE AREA. Now, a converted storage space for broken office furniture.

They pull a few rickety chairs from the piles of old furniture. Jake, Reidy and Lassar sit. Sklarsky and Jordan remain standing.

REIDY

Just so you know, Bernard Carey sent you our way. And if you could, we'd like you to tell us what you know about corruption in the courts.

JAKE

Well, it's like I told him... You see innuendos. You start hearing things-- Rumors of bailiffs sitting down in the jury box to signal a pay off, court clerks and crooked cops acting as bagmen to pay off judges-- *Judges sending innocent people to jail to make up for the all the criminals they're letting go.* Some of these defense attorneys? I've never seen 'em lose a case... And my last trip to court... It topped 'em all.

Lassar looks to Reidy. Reidy gives him the slightest of nods.

LASSAR

Jake, the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office are launching a joint federal investigation into judicial corruption in Chicago.

SKLARSKY

No matter what happens next, you can never repeat that-- to anyone.

REIDY

We'd like you to come work for us--
And we'd like you to go undercover, as
a prosecutor on the take--

Jake interrupts. Confused by what exactly Reidy is offering.

JAKE

Wait-- Undercover? Undercover, *how?*

REIDY

You'll accept bribes. You'll take
kickbacks and we'll build a case
against them all. You're still you.
You're already in the system, they
know you. They just didn't know you
were one of them.

JAKE

Yeah, I'm still me. I'm no FBI agent.
I'm just someone that happens to give
a shit.

SKLARSKY

Well, giving a shit is not enough. Ya
know, you can sneak up here and bitch
about how fucked up things are, or you
can really do something about it.

JAKE

And who are you? Bad cop?

REIDY

Listen. I think we can all agree, the
courts are a mess... And we just might
have a real shot here at cleaning 'em
up.

EXT. CHICAGO LAKESHORE - EARLY MORNING

Jake and State's Attorney Bernard Carey meet on a park bench
along the lakeshore. Powerful waves crash against the concrete
barriers.

CAREY

Chicago's been corrupt since Capone
was a kid. So, forget all that.
They'll push, cause they know without
you, *there is no investigation*. I want
to be perfectly clear, Jake-- I mean,
look, I'm not trying to talk you out
of this-- *I'm former FBI*-- but you
also need to understand the full
implications of taking this on.

JAKE

Ficaro warned me if I ever blew the whistle on something like this, I probably couldn't practice law in Cook County for a good five years.

CAREY

Well, Mike's wrong. If you do this, you'll never practice law in Cook County *again*. You could never stand in front of a judge and get a fair shake, knowing you may have just sent his best friend to jail... *Your life as a lawyer will be over.*

They both stare out at Lake Michigan. A beat. Carey gets up and walks away. Jake is left to make this decision alone.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Jake at the kitchen table with his mother. She is visibly upset.

LARA

Oh, Jake, honey, no, no, no... All that time, all your studying-- law school, the Bar, and for what? You can't just throw that all away--

JAKE

Ma-- You don't think I thought about that?... We both know why I became a lawyer in the first place.

Jake's mother just looks at him. Embarrassed and uncomfortable.

LARA

JUST STOP. Stop it... Your father is dead and gone. He can't hurt me anymore, and you can't live your whole life trying to make up for the past.

JAKE

I'm not. You should've seen this kid. And the guy goes free... 'cause he has the money to pay... I'm never gonna just sit back and do nothing ever again. How can I be a part of a system that's this broken?

Lara gets up. Knowing her son well enough to realize she can't win this argument.

LARA
(frustrated)
If it's as bad as you say, what makes
you think you can fix it?

Jake just looks at her. Letting the question hang in the air. His mother turns and storms out of the kitchen.

REIDY (PRE-LAP)
At the end of the day, what we're left
with is this... In Cook County there
are now two systems of justice--

INT. 27TH FLOOR - FEDERAL BUILDING - LATER

Dan Reidy and Chuck Sklarsky stand in front of Lassar, Jordan,
FBI Agent BILL MEGARY (30s)-- AND JAKE. *A team of six men in all.*

REIDY
--One for those *who pay*, and one for
those *who do not pay*.

SKLARSKY
And those of us that don't pay... get
fucked.

REIDY
And this fact should be unacceptable
to us all. But to fix it, we must
first prove it to be fact. We must
prove it beyond any reasonable doubt.

Jake feeling like he just jumped into the deep end.

EXT. FINE ARTS BUILDING - ESTABLISHING

A ten-story stone building on South Michigan Avenue. Two giant
Romanesque granite pillars frame the doorway.

TITLE CARD: MAY 1980

INT. HALLWAY - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

A MAINTENANCE WORKER stencils bold letters onto the privacy glass
of an office door: TRIPLE A JANITORIAL SERVICES...

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

INSIDE there are no mops, brooms, buckets, or rags. This is an
off-site, off-the-books headquarters for the operation.

Sklarsky, Lassar, Jordan & Bill Megary unload boxes of supplies.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ADLER PLANETARIUM - DAY

WIDE ON the sprawling parking lot outside the planetarium.

ANGLE ON a 1970 4-DOOR CUTLASS SUPREME. Megary and Jordan are in the front. JAKE sits in the back.

MEGARY

Never get dropped off at your front door.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jordan turns back to Jake.

JORDAN

Park and walk, mix it up. Pick a spot, five blocks away-- Where do you live?

Jake hesitates, almost embarrassed to say...

JAKE

I... After I graduated-- I live back with my mom, over in Lincoln Square.

Megary and Jordan both give Jake a look.

LARA (PRE-LAP)

What's wrong with living with your mother?

EXT. KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Jake exits his mother's house, carrying a moving box to his car. His mother follows closely behind.

JAKE

Ma-- You can't talk about this to anyone-- It's only for a little while.

LARA

What's a little while?

JAKE

I don't know. They didn't even want me to tell you. But it's for your safety.

Jake drops the box into his trunk. His car filled with boxes.

LARA

What about *your* safety? And your future? What did they say about after?

JAKE

They said if it goes well, there might be a spot for me at the FBI.

LARA

(skeptical)

The FBI? Doing what?!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ESTABLISHING

A rundown apartment complex in a lower income neighborhood.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

JAKE ENTERS a sparsely furnished, studio apartment carrying a moving box. Drops the box onto a tiny cafe-style table. He looks around his new home, noticing A MURPHY BED in the wall.

MEGARY (PRE-LAP)

You'll be wired.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - MORNING

Parked at the planetarium. Megary behind the wheel. Jake sits shotgun.

JAKE

Inside the courts?

MEGARY

Everywhere.

Megary has the metal cover off a NAGRA AUDIO RECORDER. *This is old school '70s spy gear about the size of a paperback book.* He pulls a small metal lever up and uses it to rewind the reel-to-reel by hand.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

You ever play baseball-- little league as a kid? Your dad ever make you sleep with your glove?... Make you wear it around the house 'til it feels like it's a part a you?

JAKE

My dad wasn't really around.

Megary snaps the lever back down. Hits a button on the side of the recorder. The reels start to turn, recording now.

MEGARY

Well, take this home, and learn all the bells and whistles. You need to know it inside and out. It'll feel awkward, so wear it around 'til it don't. You're gonna sweat, but these tapes can't get wet...

Megary snaps the metal cover back on top.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

...So make sure the cover is on tight. I've seen guys blow an entire case over a fucked up recording.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - ANOTHER DAY

Jake sits in front of Sklarsky, Megary, and Jordan.

SKLARSKY

He looks too straight-- too clean cut.

Jordan looks Jake up and down.

MEGARY

You think you could grow a moustache?

EXT. BUSY CHICAGO STREET - MORNING

Megary and Jake stand at A THREE-STALL BANK OF PAY PHONES.

MEGARY

Never use the pay phones in the courthouses. EVER. You need to know the location of every pay phone in Chicago-- and always have some coins in your pocket-- But don't fuck with 'em. I can't stand coins jingling on my recordings.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Jake rushes in. Late for court. Art looks up from his paperwork.

ART

Thought I was gonna have to cover for you.

JAKE
(points to his jaw)
Sorry. Dentist... Two cavities.

Jake drops his briefcase. Grabs a stack of manila file folders and heads for the door. Juggling two full-time jobs now.

INT. TRAFFIC COURT - LATER

JUDGE JOHN DEVINE (50s) presides over a full courtroom. A balding, impish man with a thin moustache and glasses. He looks down from his bench at Jake.

JUDGE DEVINE
Mr. Krause?...

Jake at the prosecutor's table with a thousand yard stare.

JUDGE DEVINE (CONT'D)
MR. KRAUSE...

Jake snaps out of it. Looking up at the judge.

JAKE
Sorry, your honor. Uh, the defendant... he, uh, failed the sobriety test on the scene.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Back in the office. Jake with his head buried in case files.

Art approaches.

ART
Well, I'm out...

Art spins his chair around, sits down next to Jake.

JAKE
(confused)
Whadda you mean?

ART
Just put in my notice. Tommy and me, we're gonna open our own firm-- defense attorneys for hire. Finally make some real money. When you're ready, we'll make a spot for your name on the door. A full partner.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake on the edge of his Murphy bed. He turns the Nagra recorder over in his hands. It's so quiet, you can hear the wall clock.

TICK. TICK. TICK... Jake at the cafe-style table. Practicing. He loads the recorder. FUMBLING WITH THE REELS.

TICK. TICK. TICK... Jake struggles to flip the tiny lever up. Rewinds. Snaps the lever into place. Hits record.

NONE OF THIS IS SIMPLE.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - A FEW DAYS LATER

Jake enters the operation headquarters. A few days growth of fuzz on his upper lip.

Megary takes one look at Jake's poor attempt at a moustache.

MEGARY

Lose it.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake in his boxer briefs. He secures the recorder to his lower calf with SURGICAL TAPE.

Jake in suit pants and dress shoes. Acting to an empty room.

JAKE

Yeah, no, no, hang on, I just need to tie my shoe. Don't say a word...

He goes down onto one knee, mocks tying his shoe, trying to discreetly hit the button on the recorder. It's not easy.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Come. On... Really?...

Jake back in boxers. Peeling the surgical tape off. Wincing.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Are you fucking kidding me?...

He looks at the patch of hair stuck to the tape. Thinking.

INT. BATHROOM - JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake stares into the bathroom mirror. His left arm raised over his head. Shaving the hair under his armpit with a razor.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jake puts the recorder under his left armpit. Holding it in place with long strips of surgical tape. He pulls on an undershirt. Buttons up a dress shirt. Puts on a suit coat.

MEDIUM ON Jake standing at the kitchen sink in his suit coat, eating a bowl of cereal.

CUT WIDE TO REVEAL Jake with no pants. He rotates his shoulder. Feels under his armpit. Adjusting the recorder.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

THE ENTIRE TEAM at the operation headquarters. Reidy walks in front of A LARGE HIERARCHICAL ORG CHART.

Across the top, thumbtacks hold up official Circuit Court of Cook County photos of SEVERAL JUDGES-- INCLUDING JUDGE FRANK WILSON. All dressed in black robes.

Pieces of yarn lead to other targets working in the court branches. A lot of this is sparse, missing photos and names.

REIDY

OK. These are identified targets we believe to be part of the problem. Judge Wilson retired after the Aleman trial. He's out. He's not an option.

(to Jake)

So, where do you think you should start?

JAKE

(thinking)

Narcotics Court... It'd be a natural progression from First Municipal.

CLOSE UP ON A PHOTO of a fat judge with white hair and a white moustache. THIS IS JUDGE WAYNE OLSON (50s). Jordan jumps in.

JORDAN (O.C.)

Judge Wayne Olson works Narcotics in Branch 57 at 26th and Cal...

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jake puts on a dress shirt, covering the hidden recorder taped under his armpit.

JORDAN (V.O.)
...By all accounts, a haven for hustling. Mostly the nickel-bag stuff...

JAKE GRABS A JAR OF LOOSE CHANGE. Spilling coins out onto the table. He sweeps up a handful and shoves them in his pocket.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - ESTABLISHING

The seven-story structure at 26th and California on the southwest side of Chicago. Adjoining the Cook County Jail.

JORDAN (V.O.)
Olson's reputation is legendary...

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - MORNING

JAKE ENTERS the hallway. Nervous. Already sweating. A little kid trying to make friends on his first day of school.

REVERSE ANGLE ON a motley crew of hucksters, shysters, gangsters and ghetto-style mobsters. They gather in conspiratorial clusters with the hustling lawyers.

One of those hustling lawyers is ex-cop turned defense attorney JAMES COSTELLO (40s). Costello is rugged and bespectacled, with an out-of-control shock of brown hair.

Right now, Costello is selling his services to a jammed up DRUG PUSHER straight out of the ghetto.

COSTELLO
Look, your case can take eight weeks or eight minutes. But you're looking at some real time here. Up to you where you wanna spend the next five years.

DRUG PUSHER
So, just how much you gonna cost me?

COSTELLO
The ten-percent of your bond you already paid. No more. How much was your bail again?

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - MORNING

Jake at the prosecutor's table. Preparing for his first case. He takes a deep breath. Trying not to sweat on the recorder.

ANGLE ON the door to Judge Olson's chambers. COSTELLO EXITS, closing the door behind him. Jake watches Costello walk to the defense table. Standing next to the jammed up DRUG PUSHER.

BACK ON the door to Judge Olson's chambers. A beat. The door opens and Judge Olson exits, lumbering to the bench. *This is the same fat man seen in the org chart photo.*

A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

WIDE ON the jam-packed courtroom. Now in session. Judge Olson is always boisterous. Today he is in rare form.

Jake watching as Olson looks down from his perch at the DRUG PUSHER. Ready to hand out his sentence.

JUDGE OLSON
Anything to say for yourself?

DRUG PUSHER
It's my birthday today, your honor.
Cut me a break...

JUDGE OLSON
It's your birthday?

Judge Olson stands up, unsteady on his feet. He leans over the bench like a drunken bear and begins to roar...

JUDGE OLSON (CONT'D)
(singing)
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...
ONE YEAR IN THE SLAMMER...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU--

The crammed courtroom fills with uncomfortable laughter. Judge Olson turns to THE BAILIFF.

JUDGE OLSON (CONT'D)
Now, get 'em outta here.

Costello turns to the Drug Pusher, who is not amused.

COSTELLO
He gave you a year-- that's a win.

INT. STANDUP COFFEE KIOSK - NARCOTICS COURT - LATER

Hustlers swarm the COFFEE KIOSK just around the corner from the courtroom. Shooting the shit during recess.

JAKE LEANS against the wall, sipping coffee. Uncomfortable. The metal recorder digging into his side.

AT THAT MOMENT veteran defense attorney DEAN WOLFSON ENTERS THE FRAY. It's obvious he's no two-bit hustler. It's also clear, Jake and Wolfson have yet to meet.

The hallway HUSTLERS quickly offer up their love and respect.

HUSTLER #1
The Dean...

HUSTLER #2
Professor Wolfson...

Wolfson makes a parting motion with his arms.

WOLFSON
Part the Red Sea, boys-- Moses has
arrived.
(to Coffee Shop Clerk)
Medium. Black...

WOLFSON POUNDS HIS FIST on the coffee shop counter. Doing his best Charlton Heston impersonation.

WOLFSON (CONT'D)
LET... MY... PEOPLE... GO.

Wolfson's disciples all burst into laughter, aspiring to be him. He pounds his fist again, channeling Moses--

WOLFSON (CONT'D)
WHO ARE YOU... TO MAKE THEIR LIVES
BITTER... IN HARD BONDAGE?

EXT. SIDEWALK - CHICAGO STREET - LATER

EXTREME CLOSE UP on a quarter shoved into the coin slot of a pay phone. A finger punches number pads.

WIDE ON a busy sidewalk. Jake stands at a pay phone.

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - EVENING

Jake and Bill Megary in the Cutlass Supreme.

JAKE
You can listen to it, but it's all
garbage. I got nothing.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - CONTINUOUS

Megary takes the audio reel from Jake, handing him a fresh one.

MEGARY

Look, they don't know you, so they don't trust you. It's easier to go to the cop, if he's crooked. And if the cop isn't crooked, then they pay more and go straight to the judge. They don't need to pay you off.

JAKE

Then what the hell am I doing?

MEGARY

Make yourself useful. You gotta convince 'em... *that they need you.*

JAKE

This guy, Wolfson-- it was like Steve McQueen walked thru the courthouse door, the King Of Cool himself. They all kept calling him '*The Dean*'...

MEGARY

I'll ask Lamar to take a look. But I think we can both agree-- you're no Steve McQueen.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAYS LATER

Scott Lassar tacks up A SURVEILLANCE PHOTO OF DEAN WOLFSON to the org chart. Right next to a PHOTO OF JAMES COSTELLO.

Sklarsky and Reidy sit with Jordan and Megary. The WHOLE TEAM present-- MINUS JAKE.

REIDY

You really think he can do this?

MEGARY

I don't know. It's not like he trained at Quantico. It takes time. There's a learning curve.

REIDY

(to Lassar and Sklarsky)
What've you guys got?

Sklarsky stands. Joining Lassar. Pointing to the photo.

SKLARSKY

Dean Wolfson, attorney at law, with offices located at 105 West Madison Street...

JORDAN

He's got ties to The Outfit-- *real ties*. Any mobster in Chicago worth a damn... He walks into court, he walks in with Dean Wolfson.

LASSAR

We went back and looked at the last year and a half of narcotics cases handled by Wolfson... The man has won more than *ninety-five-percent* of his cases. We're talking about nearly two-hundred clients. And that's just narcotics.

SKLARSKY

So either this is a man who has walked the straight and narrow to an unparalleled rate of success. Or more likely still, this is a man who has figured out a way to rig the system.

Reidy stands. Walks over to the org chart. He looks at the surveillance photo of Wolfson.

REIDY

Let's assume the latter to be true... This is our big fish, and we need to hook him... Nothing's easy.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - AFTERNOON

TITLE CARD: AUGUST 1980

ANGLE ON defense attorney James Costello and his client. Costello sizing Jake up. Jake speaks to Judge Olson. Still tense. Still sweating. Still paranoid about the recorder.

JAKE

...Due to, um, insufficient physical evidence, the state, uh... The state would like to drop the charges against Mr. Williams, your honor.

Judge Olson perks up--

JUDGE OLSON
Good Christ All Mighty, I thought
you'd never get there-- Case
dismissed.

Olson slams down his gavel. Ready for happy hour.

Costello looks at Jake. Satisfied. He walks over, rapping his
knuckles on Jake's table to grab his attention.

COSTELLO
Krause-- Let's grab a drink at Jean's.

EXT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - ESTABLISHING

Here's everything we need to know about Jean's Restaurant-- It's
a hole-in-the-wall located a block from the courthouse. The bar
is empty at 2pm every afternoon...

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

...But by 2:15pm it's crawling with judges, lawyers, court
clerks, and cops... And their 'on-the-side' girlfriends.

Judge Olson drinks bourbon at the bar. Savoring every sip. A
YOUNG WOMAN, in a short skirt, on the stool next to him. Her
small hand near his crotch.

A FEW OF THE LAWYERS are at the other end of the bar. They mingle
with more YOUNG GIRLS. Drinking. Laughing. Flirting.

ACROSS THE RESTAURANT, Jake and Costello are in a corner booth. A
WAITRESS drops off a whiskey for Costello and a beer for Jake.

Costello takes a big drink. He's been waiting for it all day.

COSTELLO
I watch you in court... You fidget.
You always seem anxious, like you
don't know what the fuck you're doing.
You always sweat like that?

Jake laughs nervously.

JAKE
I guess, uh-- I'm still just trying to
figure out if I'm cut out for all a
this.

COSTELLO
When I was your age, I was still a
copper working the South Side.
(MORE)

COSTELLO (CONT'D)

Six years of that, then I was in the same spot you're in now-- assistant with the state for five years...

JAKE

And then you became a defense attorney?

COSTELLO

Figured it was time to settle down and make some real bread. Point is-- I've been in your shoes...

Costello gulps down his whiskey. Signals the waitress for another one. HE PULLS OUT A \$100 BILL and slides it across to Jake, leaving it in front of him.

JAKE

What's that for?

COSTELLO

Dropping that drug charge today, that was a smart move. You can't win 'em all.

(re: the money)

Put it away.

Jake slides the money off the table. Slipping it into his pocket. He shifts in his seat. The recorder digging into his ribs.

JAKE

Thanks. But what're you gonna do when the evidence at the precinct comes up missing.

The waitress delivers another whiskey to Costello.

COSTELLO

Thanks, sweetie.

He takes a drink, watching her walk away. Back to Jake.

COSTELLO (CONT'D)

Well, coppers gotta make a living too. Back in the day, when I walked a beat, I had attorneys makin' a run at me every other hour, waving green in my face to make something or other disappear, futz with an arrest report, pull a no-show in court, whatever it was. No different today. A little extra bread is always welcome... Drink up. It's on me.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

WIDE ON Jake and Costello walking in a parking lot. They're both a little tipsy even though the sun is still out.

INT. PONTIAC LEMANS CAR - MOMENTS LATER

They climb into Costello's car. Costello throws his briefcase into the backseat.

Jake notices a PHOTO stuck in the dash: COSTELLO WITH HIS WIFE AND YOUNG SON AT A CUBS GAME.

JAKE
Is that your family?

Costello looks back and forth. Worried. Slurs a little.

COSTELLO
Where?

Jake points to the photo.

JAKE
There.

COSTELLO
Jesus Christ. Yeah. Who the fuck else would it be?...
(burps)
...Fucking Mondays, huh?...

Costello reaches under his seat. Pulls out a SMITH & WESSON .38 SPECIAL REVOLVER. Holds it up. Jake tightens--

JAKE
Whoa, whoa, whoa-- Jimmy...

COSTELLO
Relax, relax, just fuckin' relax-- I told you, I was a cop. Carried a piece ever since I was on the force. You gotta be prepared for whatever comes your way. Never be the one left holdin' a burnin' bag-of-shit.

Jake tries to relax.

JAKE
Maybe we should just take a taxi.

COSTELLO
Fuck that. Where do you live?

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DUSK

AERIAL VIEW of a quiet middle class neighborhood. Costello's Pontiac comes weaving down the block. Stopping short. Brakes screech. Lurching forward again...

STREET VIEW as the big car veers UP ONTO THE CURB and back down before suddenly stopping.

INT. PONTIAC LEMANS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Costello takes his foot off the brake. The car rolls forward again before he slams it into park.

COSTELLO
Right here?

JAKE
Yeah. This is me.

Jake points out the window at A TWO-STORY BROWNSTONE. *This is obviously not where Jake lives.*

JAKE (CONT'D)
Thanks for the ride. You gonna be okay to get home?

COSTELLO
Fuck off, I'm fine. Here...

Costello digs into his pocket. Pulls out another \$100 bill. Pushing it at Jake...

JAKE
Jimmy, you don't hafta--

COSTELLO
Jimmy, you don't hafta, what? I know I don't hafta. Take it-- here, just take it. You'll do me a favor, take it.

Jake takes the money.

JAKE
Thanks.

COSTELLO
(smiling)
There, good-- now get the fuck out before I shoot you.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jake exits Costello's Pontiac. He moves slowly up the walkway towards the brownstone, stopping just short of the steps. He watches COSTELLO DRIVE OFF.

Jake reaches under his jacket, stopping the recorder. He turns and heads back down the walkway. Still a little wobbly.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - LATER

Jake waits next to a stall of pay phones. Megary pulls up in the Cutlass Supreme. Jake hops in.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - LATER

Jake and Megary in another underground parking garage.

Listening to playback-- A MUFFLED VERSION of the conversation with Costello. The recorder and the two \$100 bills are on the seat between them. Jake fired up and a little buzzed.

COSTELLO (V.O.)
(on recording)
Point is-- I've been in your shoes...

Jake sprinkles in some play-by-play for Megary.

JAKE
This is when he gave me the money.

Overlapping his own voice on the recording.

JAKE (V.O.)
(on recording)
What's that for?

COSTELLO (V.O.)
(on recording)
Dropping that drug charge today, that was a smart move. You can't win 'em all... Put it away.

Megary stops the playback. Noticing Jake's enthusiasm. He gets serious. Ready to make a point.

MEGARY
When you're in a sit down like this you gotta narrate the situation. You gotta add the details, as they happen-- It's never 'what's that for?'... It's gotta be 'what's the money for?'-- 'what's the hundred dollars for?'...
(MORE)

MEGARY (CONT'D)

You gotta make it clear for that jury who's gonna be hearing these tapes down the line. He couldda just handed you a giant dildo to shove up your ass. If you don't say it, nobody knows.

JAKE

--Okay. I got it. What's your problem? I finally *got something*-- Three months, sweating it out with this thing taped to me, and I finally got something. And all you can say is I'm gonna get a dildo shoved up my ass?

MEGARY

He *didn't ask you to do anything. IT'S NOT A BRIBE*. He's testing you. Wants to see if you push back on what he's saying-- Or maybe you say 'no' to the C-note. He's just feeling you out.

JAKE

(frustrated)

Great. Whatever. So then it's nothing. Fuck this... I gotta go get my car.

MEGARY

You sober enough yet?

INT. PLYMOUTH FURY CAR - NIGHT

Jake slumped in his car. Trying to not be seen.

REVERSE ANGLE thru the windshield: Jake's mother, Lara, exits a small corner store carrying a brown bag full of groceries. Her nurse's uniform peeks out from the bottom of her worn overcoat.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lara struggles up a flight of steps to an 'L' train stop. Heading home after a long day of work.

ANGLE ON Jake's car, as he spies on his mother.

He watches her board the train. A beat. He slowly drives away.

EXT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - WEEKS LATER

Jake stops just outside of Jean's. He looks around. Uneasy. Reaching into his jacket to hit the record button.

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Costello at the same corner booth as before, whiskey in hand. He watches Jake approach. Costello slides a folded up newspaper to Jake as he sits down.

COSTELLO

Check out the story on page five of the Metro section. Thought you'd find it interesting.

Jake flips to the page to find a stack of bills folded into the newspaper--

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - LATER

Jake and Megary listen to the muffled recording of the bribe.

JAKE (V.O.)

(on recording)

That's a lot of money.

COSTELLO (V.O.)

(on recording)

You okay, kid? Don't go gettin' nervous on me. You'll do fine.

JAKE (V.O.)

(on recording)

It's just-- It's a big bond.

MEGARY

That's uh, that's better.

Jake hands the bribe money over to Megary.

INT. OFFICE - FBI HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Megary types up a '302' Summary Report. Recapping his meeting with Jake. Costello's muffled voice continues...

COSTELLO (V.O.)

...These two cops from the 19th District came in with a big marijuana case. I need it to go away...

CLOSE UP on typebars striking black letters onto white paper. We catch just enough to follow along.

...OPERATION GREYLORD...

...Krause accepts payment from James Costello of \$500...

...in exchange Krause agrees to dismiss...

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

Megary with Reidy and Sklarsky. They're both reading Megary's Summary Report detailing Costello's payoff to Jake.

Reidy looks up. Relieved. Nodding with approval.

REIDY

It's solid. It's a start. It's one brick.

SKLARSKY

Now bring us enough to build a fucking prison.

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - ANOTHER DAY

A different day. The same setup. Costello in the corner booth, whiskey in hand. Jake approaches.

Costello pulls A BEIGE TRENCH COAT from beside him.

COSTELLO

Hey, there he is-- you forgot your jacket over at the courthouse.

Jake takes the trench coat and sits down. He discreetly checks the pocket finding an envelope stuffed with cash.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - CHICAGO DIVISION - LATER

Megary types another report. More muffled recordings...

JAKE (V.O.)

How many C-notes is that?

CLOSE UP on typing...

...OPERATION GREYLORD...

...attorney James Costello passed an envelope to Krause...

...the envelope containing \$1000 in exchange...

COSTELLO (V.O.)

An even thousand. Just don't pursue the appeal. Easy.

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - YET ANOTHER DAY

It's a routine. Have a drink. Accept a bribe. Repeat. Build a case, brick by brick.

COSTELLO

There he is-- bought you a paper.

Same as before. Costello slides the folded newspaper. Jake checks the fold for the payoff. Jake pulls the newspaper off the table--

JUST THEN, JUDGE OLSON comes lumbering up. Angry and drunk. He's carrying a glass of red wine with the bottle.

JUDGE OLSON

COSTELLO, YOU COCKSUCKER. You know what you did-- I can squash you like a goddamn bug.

Costello shifts from easygoing to enraged in a flash.

COSTELLO

Back the fuck off, Wayne-- you're drunk. You're drunk and way over the line. Go sleep it off. We'll talk it out tomorrow.

OLSON SLAMS the bottle of wine down. Leans menacingly into Costello's face. He pours the glass of red wine all over Costello's crotch. Costello jumps back in his seat.

Olson explodes--

JUDGE OLSON

YOU'RE THROWN OUT OF 26TH AND CALIFORNIA, YOU COCKSUCKER.

Olson stomps off. Costello steaming. Jake's adrenaline pumping.

EXT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Costello's Pontiac parked outside Jean's.

INT. PONTIAC LEMANS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Costello hands Jake a flask. Jake takes a swig. Still on edge.

COSTELLO

Forget that fat fuck.

Costello looks at his wine-stained lap.

COSTELLO (CONT'D)

SON OF A BITCH. How'm I explaining this to my old lady?

(to himself)

Forget it, Jim. FUCK--

THAT MOMENT, OLSON STAGGERS OUT OF JEAN'S. Stumbling towards his car. A giggling girl in tow. COSTELLO LOCKS IN ON THEM.

IN A FLASH. He reaches under his seat and pulls out the .38 SPECIAL. Flips the cylinder open to check that it's loaded.

JAKE
HEY-- HEY, JIM. What the fuck? What are you doing?

COSTELLO
What's it look like?...

JAKE
STOP. STOP. Just stop, think about this for a second.

COSTELLO
I am thinkin'-- I'm thinkin' I'm gonna teach that cocksucker a lesson.

Jake makes a last ditch effort to stop Costello.

JAKE
Jimmy... I got a girl waitin' for me back at my apartment. And you got a wife waitin' for you at home. We don't wanna do this...

COSTELLO
(sighs)
Fuck... Why didn't you say somethin'? Is she nice? She cute?...

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JAKE ENTERS his apartment. Throws his keys on the table. Grabs a bottle of beer from the fridge.

Jake sits down. Drinking. He stares around the empty apartment... No girl. No nothing. A beat. HE SLINGS THE BEER BOTTLE across the room. GLASS SHATTERS AGAINST THE WALL.

JUDGE OLSON (PRE-LAP)
(muffled recording)
YOU'RE THROWN OUT OF 26TH AND CALIFORNIA, YOU COCKSUCKER.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jake plays back the heated exchange between Costello and Olson. Hands Megary the bribe money collected for the day.

COSTELLO (V.O.)
(on recording)
...I'll make right by that fat fuck
tomorrow. He don't like my math, let
him keep tabs on what he's owed...
Look at my fucking pants-- *Look.*

Jake stops the recorder.

MEGARY
It's not enough.

JAKE
Whadda you mean it's not enough?

MEGARY
We need more.

JAKE
(frustrated)
Then maybe I shoulda let 'em kill him.

Jake shakes his head. Gets out of the car, slamming the door.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - MORNING

Megary talks with Reidy, Sklarsky and Jordan.

MEGARY
We're still missing the money--
Costello to Olson. He never sees the
money change hands.

REIDY
What've we got? We've got multiple
instances of Costello bribing Jake.

MEGARY
On tape.

REIDY
And we've got Costello telling Jake
that Olson refers defendants his way,
and dismisses the cases for a split of
the C-B-R.

SKLARSKY
On tape... Costello is intoxicated and
running his mouth, but it'll stand up.

MEGARY

But we're still missing the payoff to Olson-- Several times a day, Jake observes Costello entering Olson's chambers-- Couple beats, then they come out, first Costello, then Olson...

SKLARSKY

Olson's not gonna take money with anybody around that doesn't need to be around. *So where do you go?...*

JORDAN

(thinking)

We need in on Olson's chambers. We need to hear it. On tape.

SKLARSKY

Never gonna happen. A *judge's chambers*? You fucking kidding me? It's sacred. It's off limits. No federal judge is gonna green light something like that. It's never been done.

REIDY

He's right.

SKLARSKY

Thank you.

REIDY

(pointing to Jordan)

No. *He's right*. We need inside those chambers.

(to Jordan)

Put together the affidavit. Give me probable cause.

JORDAN

This is bigger than Chicago. We need to send it up the chain.

(to Megary)

Pack a bag.

SKLARSKY

(shaking his head)

It's gonna be our asses on the line when this thing goes sideways.

REIDY

(to Jordan)

Give me probable cause. Show me that with the bug, we get the evidence of bribes...

(MORE)

REIDY (CONT'D)
(to Sklarsky)
And I'll sell Sullivan on putting it
in front of a judge.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - ESTABLISHING

AERIAL VIEW of Washington, D.C. The U.S. Capitol building in the distance.

EXT. J. EDGAR HOOVER BUILDING - WASHINGTON, D.C. - ESTABLISHING

A high-rise office building on Pennsylvania Avenue. FBI Headquarters.

WILLIAM WEBSTER (V.O.)
Absolutely not. Abso-fucking-lutely
not...

INT. FBI DIRECTOR WILLIAM WEBSTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jordan and Megary are in the middle of being grilled.

The placard on the desk reads: Director of the FBI, William Webster. Webster drills his index finger into the affidavit on his desk. Punctuating each point.

WILLIAM WEBSTER
...These two U.S. assistant *assholes*
are in way over their heads. They're
way over the line here, and they're
signing *your* goddamn name to it. This
blows up, you're the one getting
burned to a crisp. You're the one
taking the heat. The FBI, not them.

JORDAN
Look, sir, I understand. I get what
you're saying, but it's not what you
think. This isn't-- there's no high-
minded critical conversations
happening in there. Nothing of any
weight.

MEGARY
It's a mill. High volume bonds and
bribes. You're treating this judge...
He doesn't deserve the respect you
think you need to give him.

WILLIAM WEBSTER

You're gonna talk to me about respect? No federal judge is gonna sign off on this bullshit. Those *assholes* find a judge willing to put his name on this, you give me a call. 'Til then, fuck them, and fuck you.

INT. HALLWAY - J. EDGAR HOOVER BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Jordan and Megary exiting down a hallway. Put in their place.

JORDAN

Well... That was a good first meeting.

MEGARY

Let's hope he doesn't remember our names.

INT. JUDGE ANDERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Reidy and Sklarsky are with Tom Sullivan in the office of U.S. District JUDGE ROBERT ANDERSON (60s). The difference in class is noticeable. If a state judge were a priest, then a federal judge is an archbishop.

Anderson reads the affidavit.

REIDY

As you can see from the affidavit, there's sufficient probable cause to demonstrate that there are criminal activities taking place inside those chambers.

Judge Anderson looks up.

JUDGE ANDERSON

You're asking me to defecate where I eat. I don't defecate where I eat. I'm not signing my name to this.

INT. JUDGE MITCHELL'S OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

Reidy, Sklarsky, and Sullivan are in the office of U.S. District JUDGE CHARLES MITCHELL (60s). Reidy again pleading his case.

REIDY

You can clearly see we have more than enough evidence to support our suspicions.

JUDGE MITCHELL

You're right. You do. But there's no way on God's green earth that I'm signing this.

INT. JUDGE PARSON'S OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

Reidy, Sklarsky, and Sullivan in the office of Chief U.S. District JUDGE JAMES PARSONS (60s)-- a distinguished African-American man.

Judge Parsons slowly reads over the affidavit. He peers over his reading glasses at Sullivan, then over to Reidy and Sklarsky.

JUDGE PARSONS

I'm quite certain I've never heard of this type of thing ever being done...

Before Reidy can make his usual argument, Sklarsky pipes in--

SKLARSKY

Well, and-- *that's exactly right.* And I even said to them, '*what judge is going to green light something like this?*'...

(to Reidy and Sullivan)

Right? *I said that.*

Reidy and Sullivan glare back at Sklarsky. Dumbfounded.

SKLARSKY (CONT'D)

And-- And, and that's why we came to you *first*. Because when this all comes out, there's going to be a whole lot of people across this country, thinking that every judge in Chicago is corrupt. So, ya know, the man who signs his name to that affidavit... Well, he needs to be the most honest man that we know.

Judge Parsons just stares blankly at Sklarsky. A long beat. He goes back to reviewing the affidavit.

JUDGE PARSONS

You have more than ample probable cause here... But...

Their faces drop. Waiting for the worst.

JUDGE PARSONS (CONT'D)

...If you overstep by even one inch, I'm pulling this-- You've got thirty days... One. Inch.

CLOSE UP on the affidavit. Judge Parsons signing his name--
AUTHORIZING THEM TO BUG JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

Reidy and Sklarsky enter the headquarters to find Jordan and Megary. Sklarsky is all smiles. Holding up the signed affidavit.

SKLARSKY

Let's go boys. We got thirty days.
(pointing at himself)
Tell your boss this U.S. assistant
asshole found a judge.

MEGARY

Are you serious?

JORDAN

(to Megary)
You wanna call Webster or should I?

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: THANKSGIVING 1980

PRE-LAP: Intense music with a driving beat...

INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - AFTERNOON

The intense music plays perfectly over the panicked look on Jake's face. And then--

NFL ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Third and goal from the four, six
seconds left to go in the game, Lions
leading 17-10.

WIDE ON living room. The dramatic music coming from the TV. Jake watches football on a clunky wood-framed MAGNAVOX TV with his ELDERLY UNCLE (80s). His uncle holds up a bony index finger.

ELDERLY UNCLE

They got one play.

ANGLE ON television. It's the Thanksgiving NFL game between the Chicago Bears and Detroit Lions at the Silverdome.

NFL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This might be the final play of the
game. Back to throw, Evans, looking,
looking-- HE'S GONNA RUN IT-- HE'S AT
THE FIVE. HE SCORES.

Jake jumps out of his seat. His elderly uncle lifts his skeleton arms up, as if in slow-motion. But it's not.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - LATER

Jake and his family quietly eat their Thanksgiving dinner with all the fixings. His ELDERLY AUNT (80s) sits next to his uncle.

Jake keeps checking the wall clock. His mother and elderly aunt both notice.

ELDERLY AUNT

No one works on Thanksgiving.

(to Lara)

Who works on Thanksgiving?

(to Jake)

Where do you hafta run off to on this night of all nights? *Is it a girl?*

LARA

Please. All he tells me, I got no time for a girl.

Jake tries to stop his mom from elaborating any further.

JAKE

Ma...

LARA

He's more than a lawyer.

ELDERLY AUNT

More than a lawyer?

His elderly uncle suddenly comes to life.

ELDERLY UNCLE

What's more than a lawyer?

JAKE

Ma!...

LARA

He's got extra responsibilities is all I'm saying.

Jake tries to put a stop to all the inquiries.

JAKE

I forgot some case files that I need to review over the long weekend.

SECURITY GUARD (PRE-LAP)

Where you gotta go again?

INT. LOBBY - CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jake bundled up in front of a large desk in the courthouse lobby. An armed and uniformed SECURITY GUARD behind it.

JAKE

The fourth floor-- the state's attorneys office. I'm a prosecutor.

SECURITY GUARD

You gotta sign in.

Jake pulls off his scarf. Grabs a nearby pen, pausing before he signs his name to the GUEST REGISTRY. Thinking.

CLOSE UP on the registry. Jake signs the name STEVE McQUEEN. *The King of Cool himself.*

JAKE

How 'bout that game, huh?

Jake drops the pen and heads for the elevators.

INT. HALLWAY - CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The empty and cavernous courthouse. Jake walks briskly down a dark hallway. He looks over his shoulder. Oversuspicious.

FBI TECH #1 (PRE-LAP)

You know the difference between a wiretap and a bug?...

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - ONE HOUR EARLIER

A WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN, parked in a nondescript downtown alley. Blending in with a few other service vehicles.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)

A wiretap we tap into the phone line, we get both ends of every phone call.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - CONTINUOUS

Jake in the back of the cramped van with Megary and TWO FBI TECHNICIANS. Getting prepped before entering the courthouse.

FBI Tech #1 holds up a small black cylinder with metal coils on top. A red wire & black wire split off from it.

FBI TECH #1

But a bug-- You see this right here? A bug, we still hide it in the phone, it's powered by the phone, but it puts us *in the room*. We hear what's happening *around* the phone.

INT. BASEMENT - CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - PRESENT

The filthy bowels of the Criminal Courts Building--

ANGLE DOWN a long underground brick tunnel that connects the courthouse to the Cook County Jail. Halfway down the tunnel, Jake waits behind the bars of a locked jail door.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)

I say all this to you because with a bug, it's a lot more complicated.

Megary and the TWO FBI TECHS-- *DRESSED AS JANITORS*-- enter the foreground. They walk swiftly towards Jake-- *Crossing over from the jail side to the courthouse side*.

The moment they reach Jake, FBI Tech #2 drops to his knees. Pulls a pick from his tool belt. Working on the lock to the jail door.

JAKE

We've got ten minutes, fifteen tops.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - ONE HOUR EARLIER

Back in the surveillance van. Megary explains the restrictions of the bug to Jake.

MEGARY

We're under strict orders on when we can listen, what we can listen to, and even stricter orders on what we can record.

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - PRESENT

Inside Olson's chambers. It's dark and motionless. Five long black robes hang from a corner clothes rack.

MEGARY (V.O.)

So we need to know when specific targets enter Olson's chambers-- that means Olson, Costello, a bagman, someone-- *anyone*-- we believe to be involved in the bribing of cases.

The door cracks open. Light spills in. FBI Tech #2 has just picked the lock.

The two FBI Techs enter Olson's chambers with purpose. Their fast and methodical movements LIT ONLY BY FLASHLIGHTS.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - CONTINUOUS

Outside the chamber door, Jake and Megary stand guard in the empty courtroom. Megary checks his wristwatch.

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

FBI Tech #1 cracks open the receiver of Olson's desk phone. Attaching the bug near the mouthpiece.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)

Radio waves only go so far-- there's interference, shit gets distorted by radio traffic. So we need to build a chain-- a relay. To relay it shorter distances.

FBI Tech #2 takes over. Soldering the tiny black & red wires with the green & yellow wires of the phone.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - ONE HOUR EARLIER

Back in the van...

FBI TECH #1

(to Jake)

It starts with you. We outfit you with a radio transmitter-- it's small, like a pack a smokes. You hide it somewhere, tape it to the small of your back.

Jake cuts him off fast--

JAKE

I already got a tape recorder under my fucking armpit.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jake in his apartment half-dressed. He props the Nagra recorder under his armpit with his right hand. His skin red and raw from all the surgical tape.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)
It's nothing. It's small. The transmitter has a two-way toggle switch.

He's holding the radio transmitter in his left hand. It's not nothing. It's something. He looks at the toggle switch, dangling down from the two small wires.

MEGARY (V.O.)
And you'll use that switch to send us a coded message-- a frequency.

He eyes the roll of surgical tape lying on his table. Unsure of how to make this all work.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)
Flip it one way for green, the other for red-- Green means go, start recording, a target has entered the chambers. Red is stop, stop recording, the target or targets, have exited the chambers.

Jake on the edge of his Murphy bed. Three pairs of dress pants *turned inside out*. He uses scissors to CUT A SMALL HOLE into the right-hand pocket of each pair of pants.

Jake standing again. The recorder taped under his armpit. Two more strips of tape secure the radio transmitter to his lower back. The altered pants around his ankles.

JAKE
(sarcastic)
It's small... It's nothing...
(sotto)
Fuck me...

He pulls his pants up, but leaves them unzipped. He struggles to feed the toggle switch thru the tiny hole in his pocket.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - ONE HOUR EARLIER

It's starting to get complicated...

FBI TECH #2
You flip the switch, your transmitter sends out a new frequency.

FBI TECH #1
(points to FBI Tech #2)
To him...

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MORNING

FBI Tech #2 parked in a car on 26th and Cal.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)
He'll be in a car just outside the
courthouse, with a radio receiver.

INT. CHRYSLER LEBARON CAR - CONTINUOUS

A cord runs up to a small earpiece secured in FBI Tech #2's right ear. The radio receiver hidden in a folded newspaper.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)
...You transmit the signal, he
receives it. Then he relays the signal-
- green or red-- out to me.

INT. RADIO ROOM - FEDERAL BUILDING - MORNING

FBI Tech #1 in a windowless room. A desk full of radio equipment in front of him.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)
I'll be stationed in the radio room
down in the guts of the federal
building. And with a communications
encoder...

He punches numbers into a Zetron Communications Encoder-- a clunky machine that sends frequency tones out to a pager system.

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - MORNING

Megary wears bulky headphones in front of audio recording equipment. Reidy and Sklarsky in the cramped room behind him.

FBI TECH #1 (V.O.)
...I'm able to send the code securely
to Bill and the rest of the team.

INT. WHITE DRY CLEANING VAN - ONE HOUR EARLIER

Megary holds up a Motorola Pageboy II beeper, about the size of a TV remote control.

MEGARY
To these pagers-- Got it?

Megary puts a period on the insanely complex network of people and technology needed to make this all work. *By today's standards of technology, this whole system is fucking ridiculous.*

JAKE

I think so?...

FBI TECH #1

It's real cutting edge stuff, but like I said, it's complicated.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MONDAY MORNING

A wintry Monday morning after Thanksgiving as throngs of people stream into the busy courthouse.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - MONDAY MORNING

Jake at the prosecutor's table, waiting for court to begin. Trying not to fidget. Sweating. Constricted by the load of electronics hidden under his suit.

He slides his hand into his right pants pocket. Checks the small toggle switch currently transmitting a 'red tone.'

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - CHICAGO - MONDAY MORNING

There's palpable excitement as we cycle thru all the players in their positions--

CHRYSLER LeBARON CAR - OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE

FBI TECH #2 is alert and listening to the 'red tone' sent from Jake's radio transmitter ...00000000000000000000... It spills from his earpiece, like a dial tone.

RADIO ROOM - FEDERAL BUILDING

FBI TECH #1 in the radio room, sipping from a steaming cup of coffee. He checks the equipment, making sure it's functional.

LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION

Megary enters the LISTENING ROOM. Sets his pager down in front of him. Slides the headphones around his neck.

Reidy and Sklarsky in the doorway. BOTH HOLDING PAGERS.

REIDY

Are we set?

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - MONDAY MORNING

Jake watches the COURT CLERK enter. Court about to begin.

A DEFENSE ATTORNEY ENTERS THE COURTROOM with his client. They stroll to the defense table.

Jake turns to the defense, expecting to see Costello. His face drops at the sight of... BRUCE ROTH (40s). Roth turns to Jake, nodding hello. NO COSTELLO-- *Where the fuck is Costello?*

COURT CLERK
ALL RISE...

The chamber door opens. Judge Olson enters the courtroom.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - LATER

Roth exits the courtroom during recess. Followed closely by Jake. Jake pushes his way thru the crowd. Rushing down the hallway.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Jake exits the courthouse. The biting wind smacking him in the face. He jogs down the front steps to the sidewalk. He looks around. His jog turns into a sprint.

INT. CHRYSLER LEBARON CAR - CONTINUOUS

FBI Tech #2 is dumbfounded. WATCHING JAKE RUN AWAY FROM THE CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING.

FBI TECH #2
(sotto)
What the fuck?...

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Jake breathing heavy. At a pay phone--

JAKE
HE'S ON VACATION. Costello's in the goddamn Bahamas all week on vacation.
(listens)
He's a fill-in, and he hasn't stepped foot inside Olson's chambers-- This guy Roth.
(listens)
I don't know him. Bruce Roth.
(listens)
Okay...

Jake hangs up the phone. Still trying to catch his breath. Blowing into his hands to keep warm.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - AFTERNOON

Jake opposite Roth and a DRUG DEALER in an expensive suit.

ROTH

Your honor, based on your ruling on the motion to suppress evidence, I'd ask for a dismissal of the charges against my client.

OLSON

Motion granted. Case dismissed.

Olson pounds his gavel...

PRE-LAP: 0000000000000000... The 'red tone' transmitting strong.

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - CHICAGO - AFTERNOON

We cycle back thru all the players in their positions. The excitement from this morning is long gone.

CHRYSLER LeBARON CAR - OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE

FBI Tech #2 reads the newspaper. The 'red tone' still transmits from his earpiece... 0000000000000000... He pulls it out. Wiggles a finger into his ear.

He dangles the earpiece over his shoulder. Just close enough so he can faintly hear the tone. Back to the newspaper.

RADIO ROOM - FEDERAL BUILDING

The radio room is empty.

ANGLE ON an open bathroom door. FBI Tech #1 is taking a piss.

LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION

The listening room is empty. No Megary. No Reidy. No Sklarsky.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - AFTERNOON

Court has just ended. Olson rises from the bench and waddles into his chambers, closing the door behind him.

Jake and Roth both stand. Dropping case files into their open briefcases. Jake closes his briefcase, turning to leave--

Roth picks up his briefcase *AND HEADS TOWARDS OLSON'S CHAMBERS*. Jake's pulse quickens. He thrusts his hand into his pocket.

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Roth enters. Olson putting his black robe onto a hanger.

OLSON
You owe me some money.

ROTH
Is two enough, judge? A deuce?

Olson sits down at his desk. Gives Roth a double-take.

OLSON
The other guy gives me *half* of what he gets. How much did you clear?

PRE-LAP: The 'red tone' switches to the 'green tone.'
...0000000000000000---**EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE**...

INT. CHRYSLER LEBARON CAR - THAT MOMENT

FBI Tech #2 jumps in his seat. Fumbles to get the earpiece back in. The 'green tone' transmitting now-- **EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE**...

He grabs the microphone from the CB radio--

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - CONTINUOUS

Jake pacing back and forth. His hand still in his pocket. He stares at the chamber door. Unsure of what to do next.

INT. RADIO ROOM - FEDERAL BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

FBI Tech #1 drops the CB radio. Races across the room. FBI Tech #2's voice still crackling over the speaker.

FBI TECHNICIAN #2 (V.O.)
Do you copy, over? I repeat, the tone is green-- The tone is green, over.

FBI Tech #1 punches keys on the Zetron Communications Encoder.

INT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - THAT MOMENT

CLOSE UP on a beeper. Resting in a charging station. It's silent. **BEEEEP-BEEP-BEEEEP**-- A piercing signal emits like a fire alarm.

ANGLE DOWN AN EMPTY HALLWAY: MEGARY, REIDY, AND SKLARSKY spill out different doorways. Scrambling for the listening room. Pagers in hand. Forming a symphony of overlapping beeps.

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

Megary bursts thru the door. Grabs the headphones. He hits multiple switches on the large reel-to-reel, powering it up.

CLOSE UP on the audio meter of the reel-to-reel. It lights up and the needle starts to jump. Roth's voice fills the room.

ROTH (V.O.)
I think I'll be back on Wednesday.

OLSON (V.O.)
Good-- Good...

The three men all lean forward towards the speakers.

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Roth moves to the door. Ready to leave.

ANGLE ON \$500 some odd dollars lying on Olson's desk. Olson picks up the cash, dropping it into a desk drawer.

OLSON
...Who's here tomorrow?

ROTH
Wolfson, I think.

OLSON
Oh, that's good. That's good. So, I'll see you Wednesday.

Roth grabs the doorknob. Stops short of opening the door.

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

The men listen intently. Not knowing they've missed the payoff. Roth's voice crackles and pops over the speakers.

ROTH (V.O.)
That reminds me, judge. Do you know if Elsie over at the Circuit Court would take some money to assign one of my felony cases to Judge Murphy? I know Murphy will work with me.

The three men all perk up when they hear Roth's question. Megary hits a button. The reels start turning.

REIDY
Are we recording?

Megary nods.

OLSON (V.O.)
I can't say for sure.

ROTH (V.O.)
Do you think Wolfson might know?

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Roth steps towards Olson's desk. Olson thinks for a moment.

OLSON
I'll tell you what I'll do-- you say he's here tomorrow morning-- I'll say Dean, I heard that Elsie over at the Circuit Court takes dough. Now Dean, you know he's gonna tell me the truth. He's either gonna say yes, he's gonna say no, or he's gonna say I don't believe it. But he's gonna be legit with me. I'll ask him tomorrow.

ROTH
Could you remember? I'd appreciate it.

OLSON
Oh, I'll remember cause I wanna know the answer myself...

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

Olson finishes his thought...

OLSON (V.O.)
I love people that take dough, cause you know exactly where you stand.

Reidy looks at Sklarsky. *It's a start.*

SKLARSKY
Who the fuck is Elsie?

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - LATER THAT DAY

Lassar tacks up a surveillance photo of BRUCE ROTH next to the photos of Costello and Wolfson.

He stretches a piece of yarn from Judge Olson down to Roth. Another piece from Roth up to JUDGE JOHN MURPHY. Another brick. The case building.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - THE NEXT MORNING

Jake trails Dean Wolfson up the courthouse steps.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake following Wolfson at a safe distance. Walking swiftly towards the courtroom.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - MOMENTS LATER

The courtroom seats filling up fast. Jake stops in the back and watches Wolfson cut a path straight to Olson's door.

Jake slides his hand into his pocket. Flips the switch from the 'red tone' to the 'green tone'-- **OOOOOOOOOO---EEEEEEEEEE...**

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - MINUTES LATER

Megary, Reidy and Sklarsky listen to A STATIC-FILLED BUG TRANSMISSION. Wolfson talking to Olson. The reel-to-reel records the exchange. The audio dropping in and out.

WOLFSON (V.O.)

Elsie'll steer it any way he wants, if he pays her right. Elsie's a good girl. Judge Murphy or--

THE BUG TRANSMISSION CUTS OUT-- A police DISPATCHER'S voice, reporting an assault, crackles over the speakers.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

--got a report of a 2-45 at the intersection of Rush and Oak.

SKLARSKY

--WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS?

MEGARY

These fucking radios. It's crossed with another signal.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Car two-five, do you respond?

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Wolfson in front of Judge Olson. Slumped in a chair and relaxed.

WOLFSON
Fuck Elsie, let's get back to me. How 'bout box seats at the Cubs game this weekend? Does that work for you?

OLSON
I'll refer as many cases your way today as I can.

Wolfson sits up, sliding forward in his chair.

WOLFSON
I don't want 'em all. I just want the big ones, the big bonds. You still drinking Black Label? I can get a case sent over to your house.

OLSON
You know what I like, Dean. Just remember, I gotta find some guys guilty or my numbers are gonna look bad.

Wolfson stands up. Flashing a smile. But all business.

WOLFSON
That's what the other guy's cases are for. Do whatever the fuck you want with 'em. But I don't pay for guilty.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake sits at the prosecutor's table.

Wolfson doesn't even look his way, as he exits Olson's chambers. Walking over to the defense table.

Jake slides his hand in his pocket. Flips the toggle switch from 'green' to 'red'-- **EEEEEEEEEE---OOOOOOOOOO...**

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

Megary, Reidy, and Sklarsky still listening to the POLICE DISPATCHER as their beepers go off-- **BEEP--BEEEEEEEP--BEEEEP.**

SKLARSKY
(to Reidy)
There goes your big fish...

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - ANOTHER DAY

POV: We're underneath Jake's clothing.

We move past the radio transmitter taped to Jake's lower back. Following the wires running down his leg. A bead of sweat tracking just ahead of us. We turn around the bend of wires. Heading back up and thru the cut hole in his pocket.

INSIDE JAKE'S POCKET: The faint red light from the toggle switch illuminates Jake's hand, as it plunges in at us. He flips the toggle switch.

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - MOMENTS LATER

Costello's voice fills the room. Megary starts to record. The reel-to-reel turns slowly like giant wheels of justice.

COSTELLO (V.O.)
Now, hold on, Wayne. I don't owe you
on that one. That's my own case, man.
You didn't refer that one.

OLSON (V.O.)
That case was lost. I resurrected it.

INT. JUDGE OLSON'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Olson heats up. Costello trying not to be bullied.

OLSON
You don't think I resurrected that?
Geez, man. Holy shit. You wanna see me
un-resurrect it?

COSTELLO
No. Just forget it.

OLSON
Add it in with the rest.

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - LATER

Jake and Costello drink at the bar with A GROUP OF LAWYERS AND CLERKS from the courthouse. The group laughing. Jake now comfortable in this environment.

Costello spots DEAN WOLFSON ENTER. He watches him walk to the other end of the bar. Costello downs his drink.

COSTELLO
(to Jake)
Gimme a minute.

Jake watches Costello move down the bar towards Wolfson.

PRE-LAP: The sounds of a typewriter working overtime.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE UP on typing...

...OPERATION GREYLORD...
...KRAUSE observed JAMES COSTELLO speaking to...
...passed an envelope to DEAN WOLFSON...

Jake buzzed from drinking. Typing up his own '302' Summary Report. Doing the work of a real FBI Agent.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

A bitter cold and windy winter night. Jake freezing next to a stall of pay phones. Megary pulls up in his Cutlass Supreme, leaning over to roll down the passenger side window.

MEGARY
Hey-- Title III for Olson's bug expired. We're pulling it. Drop the transmitter.

Jake nods. Tossing his report and audio reels on the passenger seat. Megary hands him fresh reels and drives off.

EXT. THE PATIO THEATER - NIGHT

Giant letters spell out STIR CRAZY on the theater's marquee.

RICHARD PRYOR (PRE-LAP)
That's right. That's right. We bad.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - THE PATIO THEATER - CONTINUOUS

JAKE SITS ALONE in a half-empty theater.

ANGLE ON the big screen. A sheriff leads RICHARD PRYOR and GENE WILDER to a holding cell. Packed with rough and tough criminals.

RICHARD PRYOR
We bad. We don't take NO SHIT.

GENE WILDER
Well, we don't take TOO much shit.

The audience laughs. Jake doesn't. He's preoccupied watching a YOUNG COUPLE (roughly his age) a few rows in front of him. Hot and heavy in a full make out session.

GENE WILDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
NO SHIT. WE DON'T TAKE NO SHIT.

ANGLE BACK ON THE SCREEN as Gene Wilder starts throwing wild karate chops. Trying to act tough.

INT. PLYMOUTH FURY CAR - LATE NIGHT

Jake in his parked car drinking a beer. Spying.

REVERSE ANGLE thru the windshield. Across the street is his mother's house. Lara visible thru the window, watching TV. His mother stands. Turning the TV off. She exits the living room. The window goes dark.

ANGLE ON JAKE. He slumps down in his seat. Pulls his jacket up over him like a blanket. Falling to sleep.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: JUNE 1981

REIDY (PRE-LAP)
What's our next play?

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

THE ENTIRE TEAM is in the undercover headquarters-- JAKE INCLUDED. Reidy stands in front of the filled out org chart.

JAKE
I can't keep starting over as a prosecutor in all these different courts. It'll take me a decade to get what you want.

REIDY
He's right... We need to switch it up. I think it's time we take this investigation to another level.

SKLARSKY
(confused)
There's another level?

REIDY
(to Jake)
How do you feel about opening your own practice? Words out you're on the take. Now, we flip you to the other side and *you're the one doing the bribing...*

JAKE
I'm sweating thru my shirts already. Now, I'm the one walking up to a judge trying to *bribe* him? I really don't--

Reidy cuts Jake off. Pointing to the top row of the chart. Running his finger across the photos of ALL THE JUDGES.

REIDY
--We get you representing cases in the right courts, you finally got a chance to take 'em *all* down.

JAKE
(sarcastically)
Right, I'll just... *bribe them all.*

LASSAR
It's some work. We'd need to set him up with an office. Someplace downtown. Jake Krause, defense attorney for hire.

SKLARSKY
Hold up. *Can we even do this?* Can he take a case, then bribe a judge to drop it?

They all look at each other, unsure of the right answer.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY TOM SULLIVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Reidy sits across from Tom Sullivan. Sullivan knows the right answer and is already shaking his head.

SULLIVAN
You can't use real cases. If he represents a suspect on a real misdemeanor, lays down a bribe and that guy walks... And now he goes out and kills somebody a week later, we're all in jail. You can't use real cases.

REIDY
So whadda we do?

SULLIVAN
Well, how do you build a fake case and still get it into the system?

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - THE NEXT DAY

The next day. Reidy in front of the team. Lassar objecting--

LASSAR
Is that even ethical?

SKLARSKY
Wait-- Just what are we saying here?

A beat. The FBI portion of the team joins the discussion.

JORDAN
We need fake *crimes*.

MEGARY
A lot of them. *This is big*. It'll take some time.

REIDY
Okay. Time, we've got. Let's just get it right.
(to Jake)
You keep pushing on Wolfson.

Jake gets up. Walking to the door.

JAKE
(shaking his head)
Yeah, I'll get right on that.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEYS OFFICE (NARCOTICS DIVISION) - ANOTHER DAY

Jake approaches another assistant prosecutor, ALAN BROOKS(30s), who is reading a case file.

JAKE
Hey, Brooks-- What's going on with the drug bust that came down this morning?

ALAN
I got it.

JAKE
Who's on defense?

ALAN
Dean Wolfson.

Jake tries to worm his way into the case.

JAKE
It sounded big. Want me to take a look at things? We could tag team it?...

ALAN
No, no, no, I got it-- it's easy. It's straightforward felony possession of Schedule 1 narcotics.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - LATER

Jake in the hallway. WOLFSON EXITS the courtroom. All smiles as he cuts a line thru the chaotic crowd.

A beat. ALAN BROOKS follows Wolfson out. Jake sees Alan and slips in beside him.

JAKE
Alan-- Hey, how'd it play?

ALAN
Uh, I lost it...

Alan tries his best to downplay the disappointing verdict.

ALAN (CONT'D)
You can't win 'em all, right?

Alan pats Jake on the arm. HIS HAND HITS UP AGAINST THE HARD METAL OF THE RECORDER. Alan pulls his hand back, leaning in towards Jake.

ALAN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Hey-- what is that, a gun?

Jake realizes what just happened. His mind races for an answer--

JAKE
No. No, it's a back brace. I threw my back out moving some heavy furniture.

Alan walks away. He stops NEXT TO COSTELLO in the hallway. Whispering something to him. THEY BOTH LOOK BACK AT JAKE--

A wave of paranoia washes over Jake.

INT. BATHROOM - COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jake inside a cramped stall. His jacket removed. Dress shirt unbuttoned. He frantically RIPS THE RECORDER out from under his arm. THE SURGICAL TAPE tears his skin. Drawing blood.

A beat. Jake grabs his necktie, pulling it loose. He places the recorder at the small of his back. He quickly wraps the necktie around his waist, holding the recorder in place.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake walks back towards the courtroom. The top button opened on his dress shirt.

He approaches TWO YOUNG PUBLIC DEFENDERS heading in the opposite direction-- reminiscent of Art and Jake, back on *his* first day. One of them points to Jake.

PUBLIC DEFENDER #1

(whispers)

He's one of those guys I was warning you about. They'd sell their mothers to make a buck.

Jake just stares at the two men as they pass. The overheard accusation cuts deep.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - EVENING

It's getting dark as Jake's mother walks home from work.

ANGLE ON A FORD LTD HARDTOP creeping by-- THE SAME TWO GOONS THAT GRAB JAKE outside the restaurant watch Lara as she starts up her steps.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - LATER THAT NIGHT

A LOUD KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Jake's mother shuffles to her front door in robe and slippers.

SHE OPENS THE DOOR TO REVEAL: Art standing on her stoop.

LARA

Arthur. What're you-- *is everything all right?* Where's Jake?

ART

I was hoping you knew.

LARA

Is he okay? *Is he in trouble?*

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jake lays awake on his Murphy bed. Staring at the ceiling. THE DOORBELL BUZZER sounds off. Startling him. The buzzer sounds again. Jake sits up in bed. Alert.

ANGLE ON WALL INTERCOM. Three buttons: Talk. Listen. Door.

Jake's pushes the talk button. His mouth next to the speaker.

JAKE

Yeah?

ART (V.O.)

(on speaker)

Hey-- it's Art. Buzz me in.

Jake's face says it all-- *How does Art know where I live?* Jake spins around. Scanning his apartment for any evidence that might give him away-- *there's plenty--* recorder, reels, surgical tape.

The buzzer rings again. Jake jumps.

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Art waits outside Jake's apartment complex. He hits the buzzer again, just as Jake opens the door half-dressed. A narrow entryway behind him.

ART

We're goin' out. Get dressed.

JAKE

Ahh... I can't. I got a big day tomorrow, and--

ART

Horseshit. We're goin' out. Get ready and get the fuck out here. Tommy and me are waiting. Hurry up. I'm not taking no for an answer-- And dress nice.

INT. TOMMY'S BMW CAR - LATER

Jake rides shotgun next to Art's law partner, TOMMY DelBECCARO (28). Tommy is a year younger than Jake and clearly in love with his NEW BMW m535i SEDAN. Art sits in back.

TOMMY

It's one of the fastest sedans in the world.

JAKE

Yeah... Still smells new.

TOMMY

Now you know how the better half lives, huh? When are you coming over to the dark side? We're still saving a spot for you.

Tommy turns up the radio. An '80s rock song spills out of the speakers. Art shouting over the music--

ART

I stopped by your mom's-- boy was she ever excited to see me. Ready to cook me dinner-- said you never come around. I had to lie just to get her to give me your address. Told her it was life and death.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

Jake follows Art and Tommy past a long line of GLITZY-DRESSED PATRONS. A BIG BOUNCER waves them into the nightclub...

MUSIC CUE: "Just What I Needed" by The Cars

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

A typical '80s nightclub-- loud music, a packed dance floor, waitresses buzzing around in skimpy getups, and private rooms running along the outer edge of it all.

Art leads Jake and Tommy to one of the roped off PRIVATE ROOMS.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHTCLUB - LATER

Art, Tommy, and Jake are drinking champagne and flirting with THREE GIRLS (20s). The girls could be clubbing, prostitutes, or maybe both.

ART

Business is good. Business is *better than good*. Take a look around...

Jake looks out at the packed nightclub. Everyone having fun.

ART (CONT'D)

You see it? It's your future.
(to the three girls)
Give us a little time, can you?

The guys all watch the THREE GIRLS as they exit. Art slides forward in his seat, getting closer to Jake.

ART (CONT'D)

A little birdie told me a secret about my good friend, Jake. I didn't believe it at first, but damn if that little birdie didn't convince me it's true.

Jake tries to hide his escalating anxiety.

JAKE

What secret is that?

Art just stares at Jake. A beat. Art picks up an expensive bottle of vodka. Pours out three shots. Grabs one and knocks it back.

ART

Hey, you know Judge Reynolds? You've had cases in front of Reynolds, right? - 'Black Jack' Reynolds? Well, Tommy and me, we're hooked up real good with him, we're in. It started with Tommy--

Tommy takes over. He leans in closer to Jake.

TOMMY

Six months back, Reynolds starts tossing me cases left and right-- *big cases with big cash bonds, and he's ruling my way every time, and he's signing the C-B-Rs over to me, so the money starts rolling in-- I'm talking eight, ten grand a week. So one day, he pulls me into his chambers. And he says to me 'Hey, Tommy, you were on a scholarship, and the scholarship's over. From now on I get a third of anything I refer you.'* Just like that. So from that day on, I paid. But I also got him to refer cases to Art, too-- same deal. We got more business than we can handle.

Art picks up right where Tommy left off.

ART

So then the other day, I'm asking Jimmy Costello if he wants a piece of the action, and he lets me in on what you two are up to-- what you two have been doing over at Olson's court. I said, '*Jake? Really?*

(MORE)

ART (CONT'D)

Jake?'-- Then two days ago, lo and behold, a helluva narcotics case drops right in my lap, and I said to Tommy, I said 'I think it's time we take our boy Jake out and show him a good time.' So whadda you say? Think you can help us out?

JAKE

Is it a solid case?

ART

As solid as it can be.

JAKE

So why not just try the case on its own merits?

ART

Really? You make Costello beg you like this? I don't know Olson like you do, and the arresting officers-- they're good men. C'mon, Jake. What? You want me down on my hands and knees.

TOMMY

We'll make it worth your while. This is just the start. You and Costello? That's nothing. We get you in with Reynolds, sky's the limit. You like my Beamer?

EXT. ROW HOUSES - LATE NIGHT

Jake navigates by moonlight thru his mother's backyard. He stumbles up the steps to the back door. Gropes around to find the handle and slides his key in the lock.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - LATE NIGHT

Jake feels his way thru the dark. Hits the light switch, illuminating the kitchen. He opens the fridge.

His mother enters the kitchen. A wooden baseball bat in hand.

LARA

JESUS, JAKE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING? You scared me half to death. Are you in trouble? *What's wrong?*

JAKE

Ma-- *Ma-- I'm fine.* Put the bat down.

INT. KITCHEN - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - LATER

Jake and his mother sit at the table. She's visibly upset. He looks exhausted and unkempt.

LARA

Look at you-- It's too much. It's too much. When is enough, *enough?* *How long can they make you keep doing this?*

JAKE

As long as it takes, I guess. I can't just go back to being a lawyer. I have no choice.

LARA

There's always a choice, Jake.

INT. LOBBY - OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

JAKE ENTERS. Walks towards a bank of elevators.

CLOSE UP on the OFFICE DIRECTORY BOARD:

CIRIGNANI & DELBECCARO
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
1501

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Jake in the elevator looking like he was up all night. He closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath. Jake exhales. Reaching into his jacket to start recording-- DING.

INT. ART & TOMMY'S LAW OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Art walks Jake into his office. Taking in Jake's tired and disheveled look.

ART

You okay?... You look like shit.

Jake looks at the fancy leather furniture, the sophisticated art on every wall. Jealous of Art's upscale law firm.

JAKE

I'm fine. I'll drop the case for you.

ART

That's great. That's great. Jake, that's... I can get Tommy to bring you the money by tomor--

Jake cuts Art off. Taking control of the deal.

JAKE

I don't want any money. It's okay. I need something else from you.

ART

Okay. Anything, just say it.

JAKE

I want you to vouch for me to Dean Wolfson. Let 'em know I'm a stand-up guy.

ART

Okay... Why Wolfson?

JAKE

If I'm gonna do this, I want to work with the best, with guys I can trust. And Wolfson's the best.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - EVENING

In an abandoned parking lot. Jake and Megary listen to the muffled playback of Jake's deal with Art.

JAKE (V.O.)

...So vouch for me to 'The Dean,' and I drop the case.

ART (V.O.)

You got it, you got it. I'm having lunch with Wolfson tomorrow.

Jake stops the playback. They sit in silence. A beat.

JAKE

Growing up, my mom always used to tell me 'well done is better than well said.'... But when people look at me now... All they see is a crooked lawyer. It's the one thing I never wanted to become...

MEGARY

But you're not. And your mom was right. When this is all over, they'll look at you like a hero.

Jake just shakes his head. Not feeling like much of a hero.

JAKE

In the beginning, it was just this faceless thing... But, he was my best friend. These guys all have families-- wives, kids-- I'm the godfather to Art's youngest boy.

MEGARY

Okay, and what've you got?... Goin' on two years now, whadda you go home to at night? These men gotta know there's consequences for rigging the system.

JAKE

But are these guys really rigging it? Or just stuck in it?

PRE-LAP: The hard pounding of a gavel-- THUMP. THUMP.

INT. NARCOTICS COURT - MORNING

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. Jake at the prosecutor's table. He looks over at Art, standing next to his client.

Judge Olson bellows...

JUDGE OLSON

Case dismissed. Call the case, court clerk. Let's keep this 'L' train moving.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Art approaches Jake in the crowded hallway. A \$100 BILL palmed in his hand.

ART

Krause.

Jake turns to see Art with an outstretched hand. He shakes it. Art transfers the \$100 bill to Jake's palm. Jake pulls his hand away, looking down at the \$100 bill. He discreetly slips it into his pocket.

JAKE

What's the C-note for?

ART

(leaning closer)
Compliments of 'The Dean'...

INT. STANDUP COFFEE KIOSK - NARCOTICS COURT - LATER

JAKE ENTERS the bustling COFFEE KIOSK area. He spots Wolfson standing alone, drinking coffee from a Styrofoam cup. A few hustler lawyers lingering nearby.

Jake tries to pull himself together. Straightens his tie. Pats down his hair. Brushes the wrinkles out of his suit. *Fuck it.*

Jake walks over to Wolfson. He leans in--

JAKE

Thank you for the C-note.

WOLFSON

What, *that*? That's nothing. It's my pleasure. Lemme buy you lunch.

INT. THE CAPE COD ROOM - THE DRAKE HOTEL - LATER

Jake and Wolfson at a secluded table in the famous Cape Cod Room inside the Drake Hotel. The definition of fine dining. Wolfson looks right at home. Jake looks like he should be working in the kitchen.

Wolfson points across the vast dining room.

WOLFSON

The table over in that corner... It's got the initials of Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio carved in it. You believe that shit? Fuckin' *Joltin' Joe* and the *Blonde Bombshell* ate right over there. I love history. It's all around us and we don't even know it. If you're lucky it leaves a mark, something to let you know it was there-- that it really happened. But for you and I, right now? All we got is what's in front of us. How can we leave our mark?

JAKE

I'm thinkin' of going into private practice.

Wolfson looks Jake up and down. Jake feeling self-conscious.

WOLFSON

You may wanna think about buying yourself a new suit... I get it-- There's no money on the other side. No real money anyways. Nickel and dime shit.

(MORE)

WOLFSON (CONT'D)

But if you're smart, there's plenty a ways we can still do something together.

Trying not to fall under the spell of Wolfson's charm. Jake smiles. Baiting him.

JAKE

But I don't know how you do it. I really don't.

WOLFSON

Look, it's not a magic trick. I look at everyone involved. And I think, who needs to be made happy? I don't want anybody to be unhappy. If the cop wants something, I give the cop something. If the judge wants something, I give the judge something. The court clerk, the prosecutor-- right on down the line. Whatever it takes, I make them all happy. And what makes them happy? *Money*. And then... Well, then they hafta make me happy. And what makes me happy? *Winning*.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake's place is a cluttered mess. A half-eaten slice of deep dish on the table. Jake has the cover off the recorder. Pops the reel off. Snaps a fresh reel on. It's all second nature to him now.

THUMP. THUMP. Jake looks towards his door. A LOUD NOISE out in the hallway. Listening-- THUMP. His heart rate jumps.

Jake softly creeps across the room. His ear to the door.

EXT. HALLWAY - JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THAT MOMENT

Jake's door creaks open just a crack. He peers out into the darkness. He pushes the door open. Walking slowly into the hallway. Another thump-- A MAN CLOAKED IN BLACK LUNGES AT HIM FROM THE SHADOWS--

MAN IN BLACK

WE TRUSTED YOU--

THE MAN IN BLACK PLUNGES A KNIFE INTO JAKE'S STOMACH. TWISTING--

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

FIX THIS, YOU SONOFABITCH--

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - THAT MOMENT

JAKE'S EYES SNAP OPEN-- He's laying on his Murphy bed covered in sweat. He reaches for his abdomen. Nothing-- A BAD DREAM.

His refrigerator SNAPS ON. Jake jumps. His head spins to the fridge. Paranoia sets in.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - ESTABLISHING

A dusting of snow swirls around a nondescript office building off West Madison Street in the heart of downtown Chicago.

TITLE CARD: JANUARY 1982

INT. LOBBY - OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP on the OFFICE DIRECTORY BOARD:

JAKE KRAUSE
ATTORNEY AT LAW
SUITE 505

CLOSE UP on an old-style elevator floor indicator. An arrow moves over brass numbers on a cast-iron half-circle. The arrow reaches five-- DING!

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jake looks worn out and beat down. He struggles to organize his desk while two FBI CASE AGENTS work to dress the room with standard business equipment.

FBI CASE AGENT #1
Where do you want the plant?

Jake looks at the agent, holding a large potted plant, waiting for instructions. Jake closes his eyes. *Realizing he's only halfway thru a marathon.*

JAKE
I don't give a fuck...
(snaps)
I CAN'T FUCKING DO THIS!

FBI CASE AGENT #1
...Wait...What?...

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

The entire team gathered in operation headquarters. Jake finally breaking down from the stress of it all.

JAKE
I CANNOT FUCKING DO THIS. Okay? Stop.
When does it end? I mean, if I get you
Wolfson, does it end? I bribe all
these judges... Then what? Is it over?

The team sits in awkward silence. A beat.

REIDY
Jake--

JAKE
This is my life-- I've given you
everything.

MEGARY
(to Jake)
Let's take a walk.

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jake and Megary walking by rows of cars.

JAKE
Look, I get it-- I'm fine.

MEGARY
I wanna show you something. Maybe you
saw it.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Megary and Jake in the Cutlass. Megary hands Jake the Metro section of the Chicago Tribune. Folded and wrinkled.

MEGARY
It's from a few weeks ago. The lower
right hand corner. They buried it.

Jake takes the newspaper. Scanning it.

ANGLE ON THE NEWSPAPER: a small sub-headline-- MAN BRUTALLY STRANGLES SEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOY. A photo of ANDRE accompanies the article-- *The young boy from Jake's earlier case*. He drops the paper onto his lap. STUNNED.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

That was your case, right? The one you told me about?

Jake is speechless.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

Sometimes, we all forget why we're doing this... You ever been to San Francisco?

Jake just shakes his head.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

Well, I spent two years there on a RICO case... That big car chase in Bullitt? McQueen chasing that Charger all over San Fran in his Mustang?-- I loved that fucking movie. Even tried driving the chase route while I was there... None of it works. You look at a map and none of it makes any sense. It's all bullshit. It's movie magic. Point being, McQueen could only pull off the impossible with Hollywood helping him.

JAKE

Yeah... well, I'm no Steve McQueen.

MEGARY

No. You're right. *You're better than McQueen.* We gave you an impossible task-- no training at all, and you're doing it. And it's no magic trick. You and I both know what it really takes to catch these guys... We need to finish this...

A hint of a smile slowly creeps across Jake's face.

JAKE

...He was still pretty fucking cool.

MEGARY

(smirking)

Well... You're working on it.

EXT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - ESTABLISHING

Snow covers a dilapidated, abandoned warehouse in a sketchy neighborhood suburb just outside of Chicago.

JORDAN (V.O.)
We're talking about committing a large number of crimes in very specific locations...

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - CONTINUOUS

Jordan in front of a rolling bulletin board easel. A detailed map of Chicago tacked to it-- broken down by police precinct.

JORDAN
...So as to guarantee an arrest at a predetermined police precinct, which will in turn put the cases in front of targeted judges.

Megary off to one side. Dan Reidy on the other. Dozens of folding chairs set up. Sklarsky and Lassar sit front and center.

The huge warehouse floor stretches out behind them. In the distance are several unmarked vehicles, hundreds of cardboard boxes filled with random props, equipment containers, and clothes racks filled to fit all shapes and sizes... *It looks like they've set up shop in a Hollywood prop warehouse.*

LASSAR
You're also talking about undercover agents committing crimes out in public. *How is that legal?*

JORDAN
It's not. And that's why they'll be arrested.

MEGARY
But we can hope to control it... to a point.

SKLARSKY
Uh, excuse me. Not to be the wet blanket here, but is it just me, or are there some huge ethical fucking elephants in the room? It's not just me, right? We can all see 'em? They're right over there...

(points to empty corner)
Like, for starters, if we actually get one of these agents in front of a judge, we'll be inducing perjury.

LASSAR
Your agents would be testifying under oath in a state court--

SKLARSKY

And lying about who they are, what they've done...

REIDY

Look, you're right. You're both right. And we will be risking our law licenses each and every time we do this... But, you gotta remember--

Sklarsky and Lassar both finish Reidy's sentence in unison. Rolling their eyes.

SKLARSKY

NOTHING'S EASY.

LASSAR

NOTHING'S EASY.

REIDY (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Nothing is easy.

EXT. O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A jet plane lands on the runway.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY

A trio of RUGGED MEN exit with a crowd of passengers.

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - DAY

One of the RUGGED MEN walks in front a blank backdrop. He turns to face the camera.

CLOSE UP on camera. THE FLASH POPS. His photo taken.

INT. LAB - FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An FBI TECH works to create a fake ID with the photo.

EXT. TWO-STORY HOUSE - DAY

WIDE ON a house. An APARTMENT FOR RENT sign in the window. AN FBI CASE AGENT enters the frame, walking towards the front door.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

Another FBI CASE AGENT in front of an old used car. He hands cash to a shady CAR SALESMAN.

INT. LAB - FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An FBI TECH meticulously files the serial number off A COLT .45 PISTOL.

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - MORNING

THE ENTIRE TEAM is present INCLUDING JAKE. Megary at the center. The rest of the group off to the side.

The folding chairs filled in by twenty-five or so plain-clothes FBI AGENTS-- mostly men but a few women.

MEGARY

We have now identified and screened over four hundred agents from around the country to aid us in our investigation. Those of you lucky enough to be here today are the guinea pigs. This is Assistant U.S. Attorney Chuck Sklarsky...

Sklarsky walks to the center next to Megary.

SKLARSKY

When your higher ups sold you on this assignment as a way to see Chicago, they were fucking with you...

The agents all start chuckling.

SKLARSKY (CONT'D)

...If you do your jobs right, you'll be left exposed-- you'll be arrested, taken to a police precinct, and booked. You will then wait for your day in court. If we do our jobs right, you won't get sent to jail. I'm kidding... Sort of.

The chuckling turns to uncomfortable laughter.

MEGARY

This is defense attorney Jake Krause. And he is who each and every one of you will hire, to represent you on that day in court.

Jake steps forward with a renewed energy. Cool and confident in what he's about to say.

JAKE

Each crime you commit needs to fool a streetwise Chicago cop.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

He needs to believe he's cuffing a real criminal. So, when they say you'll be acting, you really need to play the part. I've been at this for almost three years now. And I can tell you, the facts of each crime must be strong enough to deem paying a bribe in order to dismiss them. But not so strong that a judge might balk at accepting that bribe.

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - ANOTHER DAY

ANGLE ON three undercover FBI AGENTS modeling their costumes. Rows of overflowing clothes racks stretch out behind them...

FBI AGENT MIKE SHEA (30s) dressed in greased up Dickie's pants and jacket-- Undercover as car mechanic DON BENSON.

FBI AGENT JOSEPH MORA (late 20s) in jeans and a T-shirt-- Undercover as petty thief RICKY COSTA.

FBI AGENT DALE LYON (30s) is African-American. Wearing an open tracksuit jacket, no shirt, and tight dirty jeans-- Undercover as drug dealer FLOYD FARRIS.

REVERSE ANGLE on Reidy, Megary and Jake. They look the men up and down. Satisfied with their costumes.

REIDY

Okay, guys... Good luck out there.

EXT. LAKESHORE DRIVE - NOON

A beat up 1970 FORD CORTINA parked to the side of Lakeshore Drive, during the lunch hour rush.

INT. FORD CORTINA - CONTINUOUS

DON BENSON (FBI Agent Shea) grabs a BOTTLE OF JACK DANIELS WHISKEY. Breaks the seal to open it. He looks at the open bottle. A beat. HE DUMPS HALF OF IT around the interior of the car.

He pours whiskey into his cupped hand. Rubs it on his clothing. Pours another handful. Splashes it on his face and neck.

Benson throws the empty whiskey bottle on the floor. Drops the car into drive. AND PEELS OUT DOWN LAKESHORE DRIVE-- Weaving wildly between lanes.

INT. MARSHALL FIELDS DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

RICKY COSTA (FBI Agent Mora) in the electronics department of Marshall Fields. Looking at the vast selection of TV sets on display. He sizes up the biggest one he can carry. Picks up A BOXY 24-INCH SONY TV, and starts for the front of the store.

FRONT OF THE STORE-- Costa passes the row of checkout aisles and keeps on going. Carrying the large TV RIGHT OUT THE DOOR.

EXT. GRANT PARK - CHICAGO - DAY

FLOYD FARRIS (FBI Agent Lyon) on a bench in a bustling Grant Park. He rocks back and forth, waiting for a potential buyer.

ANGLE UNDER THE BENCH-- A worn brown paper bag filled with drugs.

A SECOND UNDERCOVER AGENT approaches, blatantly handing Farris some crumpled bills. He reaches under the bench to retrieve the brown paper bag.

He pulls out a dime bag of marijuana and hands it to the second agent. TOURISTS WALK BY THE BENCH.

EXT. LAKESHORE DRIVE - LATER

BENSON'S Ford Cortina is pulled to the side of the road. A police car, with twirling red & blue lights, parked behind it.

CLOSE UP on Benson's fake drivers license. A photo of FBI Agent Shea with Benson's doctored info.

A uniformed POLICE OFFICER stands next to Benson's car door, looking over the license.

POLICE OFFICER

Mr. Benson, I'm gonna need you to step out of your vehicle.

DON BENSON

(faked slurring)
Wha'for? Wha'd I do?

POLICE OFFICER

You're drunk, and I'm impounding your vehicle. Go sleep it off.

DON BENSON

(faked slurring)
How'm I s'posed to get home, you sonofabitch?!

POLICE OFFICER
Hoof it.

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - LATER

ANGLE ON the stolen TV from Marshall Fields.

SKLARSKY (O.S.)
How do you just walk out without
anybody saying anything?

WIDE ON Reidy, Sklarsky, and Megary standing with COSTA. The
stolen TV on the table next to them. Costa shrugs.

RICKY COSTA
I wasn't trying to hide it.

ANOTHER AREA OF THE WAREHOUSE - LATER

WIDE ON Reidy, Sklarsky, and Megary with FARRIS. He explains the
ease of dealing drugs in Grant Park.

FLOYD FARRIS
We cycled thru all ten agents--
nothing. So we cycled thru 'em all
again-- still nothing. Then they each
came by and *sold it back to me*. After
six hours, we called it quits.

SKLARSKY
*Are there no good samaritans out
there?*

Reidy and Megary look at each other.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - ANOTHER DAY

BENSON'S Ford Cortina is out of impound and back in action.

INT. FORD CORTINA - CONTINUOUS

Megary in the passenger seat coaching Benson, holding a fresh
bottle of Jack Daniels.

MEGARY
You were a cop, think about it.
They're allergic to paperwork. Give
'em a reason to arrest you. Push it.

INT. FORD CORTINA - LATER THAT DAY

CUT TO the middle of a HIGH SPEED CHASE. Benson looks in the rearview mirror. Flashing lights. A cop car speeds up behind him.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

BENSON'S Ford Cortina is pulled over again. This time, Benson is already out of his car and SCREAMING IN THE COP'S FACE--

DON BENSON

(faked slurring)

I was drinkin' but I wasn't muthafuckin' drivin'. Soooo what? I'm drunk. I was fuckin' drinkin' BUT I WASN'T MUTHAFUCKIN' DRIVIN'. So what'choo gonna fuckin' do?

INT. BOOKING ROOM - POLICE STATION - LATER

CLOSE UP on a CAMERA. FLASH POPPING.

REVERSE ANGLE on Benson. His mugshot taken.

INT. MARSHALL FIELDS DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

COSTA, another TV in his arms, walks to the front of the store.

A FEMALE FBI AGENT dressed in plain-clothes. Watching Costa. As he reaches the door, THEY EXCHANGE A QUICK GLANCE.

THE FEMALE FBI AGENT rushes to a clueless STORE CLERK. She grabs his arm and points towards Costa--

FEMALE FBI AGENT

That guy's stealing a TV-- CALL THE COPS.

The store clerk zeroes in on Costa as he exits.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Costa walks with the TV a few blocks from the store.

A Chicago P.D. cruiser pulls up beside him. TWO POLICE OFFICERS stare at Costa from their car window.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

Megary at a pay phone. He picks up the receiver. Dials 9-1-1...

MEGARY

(angry)

I'M WALKIN' MY KIDS THRU GRANT PARK
AND THERE'S A BLACK GUY SELLING DRUGS
RIGHT OUT IN THE OPEN. YOU NEED TO DO
SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.

Megary hangs up the phone. Looks around.

EXT. GRANT PARK - CHICAGO - LATER

FARRIS back on a bench. His brown bag clearly visible underneath.

TWO CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS enter the foreground. Approaching Farris with caution. Their hands move slowly towards their service weapons.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

Reidy and Lassar stand at the org chart.

Megary in a chair. JAKE ENTERS. Sits down next to Megary.

REIDY

(to Jake)

Okay... Time to make your first bribe.

Megary hands Jake an envelope of cash. Jake flips thru it.

MEGARY

It's a grand.

JAKE

(nodding)

That should be more than enough for a
D-U-I.

Lassar steps in and takes over. Pointing to the chart.

LASSAR

Benson's D-U-I is with Judge Devine.

A CLOSE UP on the photo of JUDGE JOHN DEVINE. We've been in his court before.

ART (PRE-LAP)

You know Devine. Go talk to him
yourself.

INT. BATHROOM - FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - MORNING

Jake and Art are side-by-side at the sinks. Washing their hands. Art grabs a paper towel. Wipes his hands quickly.

ART

I gotta go. I got a case in front of Reynolds in ten minutes. Just go knock on his door.

Art exits the bathroom.

CUT TO: OVERHEAD ANGLE on Jake in a bathroom stall. He reaches to his lower back and powers on the recorder.

INT. TRAFFIC COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake navigates thru a congested courtroom, walking up to Judge Devine's chamber door. He pauses a moment. A knot in his stomach. Wiping his sweaty palms on his pants. He knocks.

INT. JUDGE DEVINE'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

The door opens halfway. Jake pops his head in.

JAKE

Um, Judge Devine?

REVERSE ANGLE on Judge Devine at his desk, drinking coffee.

JUDGE DEVINE

What's up?

Jake enters. Takes a hesitant step forward. The door closes.

JAKE

Jake Krause.

JUDGE DEVINE

How you doing, Jake?

JAKE

I've, uh, I've got a case in your courtroom today. I've got a D-U-I. Can I talk to you about it?

JUDGE DEVINE

Yeah, sure.

JAKE

I need to get this case, uh, you know, taken care of...

Judge Devine just stares at Jake. An uncomfortably long beat.

THE DOOR OPENS ABRUPTLY. An older African-American man in a cheap suit and tie enters. This is COURT CLERK HAROLD CONN (50s).

HAROLD CONN
Judge?... You all ready?

JUDGE DEVINE
This is Harold...

Harold walks over. Stands next to Jake.

JUDGE DEVINE (CONT'D)
This is the guy you gotta see. See Harold afterwards, okay?

JAKE
See Harold afterwards?

JUDGE DEVINE
Yeah. Harold'll take care of you.

Harold looks at Jake. Eager to help.

INT. TRAFFIC COURT - LATER

These are QUICK CUTS...

ANGLE ON Jake. He stands behind the defense table next to Don Benson (FBI Agent Shea).

JAKE
Judge, Jake Krause representing Don Benson...

WIDE ANGLE ON Jake. Assertive and passionate.

JAKE (CONT'D)
The officer never even gave my client a sobriety test...

ANGLE ON Judge Devine. He delivers his verdict.

JUDGE DEVINE
...The defendant's driver's license is released...

JAKE
Thank you, your honor.

Jake nods to Judge Devine.

INT. EMPTY COURTROOM - LATER

Jake enters. Harold Conn waiting inside for him. Jake closes the door. Walks over to Harold.

JAKE
Uh, okay... *How much?*

HAROLD CONN
Alright, he told me five-hundred for him and whatever, you know, you want to do for me.

JAKE
Well, okay, here's the five for Devine.

Jake counts out five \$100 bills into Harold's palm.

HAROLD CONN
Okay, okay.

Jake pulls out three \$50 bills, folding them in half.

JAKE
And how's a hundred and fifty for you?

HAROLD CONN
(excited)
Oh, you come see me *anytime...*

JAKE
Okay, good...

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

ANGLE ON the recorder next to Jake's typewriter. The metal cover off. The playback reel turning slowly. Jake typing up his report.

HAROLD CONN (V.O.)
I mean, it don't only have to be with Devine-- if it's somebody else -- I can maybe do something for you too...

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - ANOTHER DAY

The audio of Harold's muffled voice continues...

Lassar stretches yarn from the PHOTO OF JUDGE DEVINE down to a surveillance PHOTO OF HAROLD CONN.

HAROLD CONN (V.O.)
...Come on up and look for me, and say
'Can you, Harold?' and I'll let you
know whether we can or not.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - NIGHT

Jake and Megary parked in an abandoned lot.

Jake hands Megary the audio reels and report. Megary hands him back A LARGE MANILA ENVELOPE stuffed with cash. Jake opens it, looking in.

JAKE
How much?

MEGARY
Five grand. Don't spend it all in one
place.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE UP on the turning reels of the recorder. Typing in the background.

JAKE (V.O.)
That was beautiful-- *That was beautiful.* Okay, um, jeez, all I got here is twenties.

INT. EMPTY COURTROOM - EARLIER THAT DAY

Jake with THE TRUNZO BROTHERS in their police uniforms. *Identical twins aside from Joe's moustache--*

OFFICER JOE TRUNZO
Well, *that's money.* It's a grand to Murphy. And two hundred to us.

Jake counts \$20 bills into Joe's palm... Staring at Joe, but thinking about ANDRE-- the dead little boy. His anger building.

JAKE
Okay-- 20, 40, 60, 80...
(to Joe)
Now is that all to you, or do I pay
Joe separately?

James Trunzo looks to his brother. Back to Jake.

OFFICER JAMES TRUNZO
(pointing to Joe)
That's Joe.

JAKE
Oh, *that's Joe*-- but you're always
with him right? *It's like he drags you
around by a leash.*

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - LATER

CLOSE UP of yarn stretching from surveillance PHOTOS OF THE
TRUNZO BROTHERS up to a photo of JUDGE JOHN MURPHY.

JOE TRUNZO (V.O.)
Just give it to me.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE MURPHY (50s) bangs his gavel.

JUDGE MURPHY
Case dismissed.

Jake turns and smiles at defendant, RICKY COSTA (FBI Agent Mora).
We hear audio of Jake's muffled voice...

JAKE (V.O.)
Three hundred? It was worth it.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - ANOTHER DAY

CLOSE UP of yarn stretching from Harold Conn's photo to the PHOTO
OF JUDGE RAYMOND SODINI.

PRE-LAP: The roar of an 'L' train approaching...

INT. FELONY COURT - DAY

JUDGE SODINI (60s) presides over Felony Court. A circus-like
atmosphere with the judge shouting, just to be heard over the
frequently passing 'L' trains.

ANGLE ON Judge Sodini as THE 'L' TRAIN RUMBLES BY OUTSIDE. We see
his lips moving but can't make out a single word of his verdict.

REVERSE ANGLE on Jake and defendant, FLOYD FARRIS (FBI Agent
Lyon). Their smiles say it all. Jake shakes Farris' hand.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: APRIL 1982

COP #1 (PRE-LAP)
PUT YOUR HANDS AGAINST THE WALL AND
SPREAD YOUR LEGS. DO IT. NOW.

EXT. ALLEY - LATE NIGHT

FBI AGENT JOHNNY CORDOVA (30s) spread eagle against a brick wall, posing as thief ANTHONY LOZANO. COP #1 pats him down.

COP #1
YOU GOT ANYTHING ON YOU THAT'S GONNA
HURT ME?

ANTHONY LOZANO
No.

WIDE ON alley. COP #1 completes his search of Lozano. COP #2 appears from behind a big metal dumpster, down near the opening of the alley. Carrying something in his hand.

COP #1
(to Cop #2)
I got nothing.

COP #2
It's over here. He tossed it.

COP #2 approaches holding A COLT .45 PISTOL. Using a handkerchief to preserve fingerprints.

COP #2 (CONT'D)
Look what I found by the dumpster.
(to Lozano)
Look familiar?

ANTHONY LOZANO
That's not mine.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

WIDE ON the street connecting to the end of the alley. Lozano cuffed in the back of a Chicago P.D. cruiser. Lights flashing.

The TWO COPS talk to A POTENTIAL WITNESS on the sidewalk. Taking notes as the man speaks.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - THE NEXT MORNING

CLOSE UP on a small TV-- A live feed of PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN in Chicago delivering a speech at McCormick Place.

PRESIDENT REAGAN

(on television)

...The immigrants who came to Chicago, the poor in our inner cities, the middle class struggling to make ends meet--

WIDE ON the undercover headquarters. Sklarsky and Lassar review the chart. President Reagan continues on TV in the background...

PRESIDENT REAGAN (V.O.)

...these Americans still believe in the American dream. They still yearn for prosperity...

JAKE ENTERS the office. Frantic.

JAKE

We got a problem. He did too good a job.

Sklarsky and Lassar turn around to face Jake.

LASSAR

What are you talking about?

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - LATER

Jake is now talking with the ENTIRE TEAM. Huddled in an empty corner of the warehouse. A few FBI Agents can be seen working in the background.

JAKE

With the gun.

(to Megary & Jordan)

Your guy did too good a job filing off the serial number. Agent Cordova tosses the gun, the cops find it, bring him in-- problem is, Chicago police forensics are *incapable* of recovering the serial number. I ask--

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - 22ND DISTRICT - EARLIER

Jake in an empty hallway with the STATE PROSECUTOR.

JAKE

Is that strange?

STATE PROSECUTOR

Is it strange? How 'bout your client is being eyed as a potential assassin.

JAKE

WHAT?

STATE PROSECUTOR

A normal crook files a number off a gun, nine times outta ten, these guys can use chemicals to restore the numbers-- Like from down below the metal surface, or some shit. But this? They said nobody does this. They'd never seen anything like it before.

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - PRESENT

Back with Jake and the team.

JAKE

So now they got a guy behind bars with no rap sheet, no criminal history of any kind, carrying a gun around Chicago with a serial number *obliterated* from it...

SKLARSKY

So...

JAKE

On the same day the President is in town.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - 22ND DISTRICT - EARLIER

THE STATE PROSECUTOR spells it out to Jake.

STATE PROSECUTOR

A year after Hinkley, we're not taking any chances.

INT. LARGE WAREHOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - PRESENT

Sklarsky says what they're all thinking.

SKLARSKY

Fuck...

JAKE

Bail's set at *two hundred thousand*, that's twenty grand-- just for the bond. I can take a run at Murphy, but this'll take a lot more than just bribing a judge.

JORDAN

We can go down there and get our guy,
but then it's all over. It's all done.

LASSAR

And there'll be plenty more questions
that need answering...

SKLARSKY

Like what the fuck were we doing?

REIDY

Okay, first off, we're not pulling
Agent Cordova. We've come too far to
just throw in the towel.

(to Lassar)

Can we even cover the twenty grand?

LASSAR

It'll be tight, but we can make it
work.

REIDY

Okay, and can we all agree we're gonna
need a goddamn miracle worker to pull
this off...

(to Jake)

So, maybe you're not the right guy for
the job.

WOLFSON (PRE-LAP)

Hey... What are friends for?

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

ANGLE ON the same corner booth where Jake always meets with
Costello. Only this time, it's with Wolfson.

JAKE

I appreciate it, Dean. I really do.
I'm not gonna lie, there's some tricky
angles to work thru, but he's looking
for a way out. I just don't have the
time to give to it. Wish I did.

WOLFSON

Why's the bail so sky high?

JAKE

It started as theft with an eye
witness-- but there's a gun charge.

WOLFSON

A gun charge doesn't explain away two hundred grand.

JAKE

Reagan was in town. It's bullshit, but they're trying to trump it up into something more...

WOLFSON

Well, we're not gonna let *that* happen. He paid the bond?-- The twenty grand? He's out, yes?

JAKE

Yeah, he's out. He's coming to my office later today.

WOLFSON

Well, it's never bad when business is good. Let me finish up at 26th and Cal and we'll go have a talk with him.

ANTHONY LOZANO (PRE-LAP)

Mr. Krause told me there were ways around anything.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - LATER

Jake and Wolfson at a small table across from LOZANO.

WOLFSON

I've certainly found that to be true.

ANTHONY LOZANO

Mr. Krause also mentioned we might be able to take a run at one of the arresting officers, maybe make him an offer of some kind...

WOLFSON

(without hesitation)

If you're committed, you want to give it to me. I'll pass it on.

INT. LISTENING ROOM - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

Megary, Reidy and Sklarsky listen in on the conversation as it unfolds-- Jake's office clearly bugged.

ANTHONY LOZANO (V.O.)

You think we have a chance?

WOLFSON (V.O.)

I tell ya what, I looked over your entire file... If this thing isn't walked right out of court, you come pick up every penny you give me. You get it right back. I don't want a nickel.

Sklarsky impressed by Wolfson's confidence.

SKLARSKY

This fuckin' guy is handing out money-back guarantees.

INT. COFFEE SHOP DINER - DAYS LATER

LOZANO in a booth with Wolfson. Half-eaten breakfast between them. Lozano pretending to be pissed.

ANTHONY LOZANO

I thought you said it would work?

WOLFSON

I won't say I'm surprised, these things can happen...

ANTHONY LOZANO

But we *paid* him.

WOLFSON

I've seen it before. They take the money and then they get cold feet, or maybe the captain has an eye on 'em.

ANTHONY LOZANO

On top of that, I got police watching my every move. They're all over me.

WOLFSON

Lemme give you a dissertation on some of my philosophies pertaining to the criminal justice system. If you play the game-- *and it is a game*-- they gotta role and you gotta role. But whatever it looks like they're doing, it's all a show. The prosecutor has a hard-on, so everybody's gotta play...

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - LATER

Agent Cordova plays back his conversation with Wolfson-- still dressed undercover as Anthony Lozano.

Megary, Reidy, and Sklarsky huddled around a small recorder.

WOLFSON (V.O.)
...And fortunately for us, there's
more than one way to skin a cat.

ANTHONY LOZANO (V.O.)
Whadda you mean?

INT. COFFEE SHOP DINER - EARLIER

Back in the diner. Wolfson draws up his next play.

WOLFSON
Well, let's find the witness. We offer
him something. It'd probably take a
dime. If he's a stand-up kind of guy,
he just takes the subpoena and puts it
in his pocket and doesn't come in.
Nobody is gonna come out to look for
him for failure to appear.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - LATER

Reidy looks up from the recorder. Countering Wolfson.

REIDY
(to Megary)
Float him the address of the witness.

EXT. TWO-STORY ROW HOUSE - AFTERNOON

THE EYEWITNESS to the ANTHONY LOZANO theft exits his house. *This is the same man questioned by cops near the alley.*

ANGLE ON STREET-- TOMMY DelBECCARO leans against his red BMW.

TOMMY
Mr. Leroy Nance?

Tommy starts up the walkway towards the man.

THE EYEWITNESS
Yes?...

Tommy reaches out, handing the man an envelope--

POV SURVEILLANCE CAMERA with TELEPHOTO LENS. FREEZE FRAME as
Tommy makes the envelope exchange with the eyewitness...

Tommy keeps it simple.

TOMMY

You're no longer needed in court.

The man opens the envelope. He flips thru a stack of cash.

INT. CHICAGO STREET - LATE MORNING

Jake at a pay phone. Conveying the news to Reidy.

JAKE

(on pay phone)

Murphy dropped the case, the witness was a no show, but they've already filed an appeal.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - DAY

Reidy and Sklarsky talk strategy with Megary.

REIDY

(to Sklarsky)

Find out which Judge is gonna catch the appeal.

(to Megary)

I think it's time we bring some of these guys in and try to flip 'em.

MEGARY

Anybody that won't play ball could blow the whole thing.

REIDY

We always need to be a step ahead. We get one guy to talk-- our case gets infinitely stronger.

SKLARSKY

What about Jake? Do we tell Jake?

Reidy thinking it over. A beat.

REIDY

Not yet. He's in deep with Wolfson. It's only gonna make him more nervous. ...Let's take a run at Harold Conn.

INT. FELONY PRELIMINARY HEARING COURT - ANOTHER DAY

JUDGE REYNOLDS presides over the appeal of potential felony charges against ANTHONY LOZANO.

THE STATE PROSECUTOR urging Reynolds to reconsider.

STATE PROSECUTOR
Your honor, the state requests that
you reinstate criminal charges against
Mr. Lozano. We strongly believe--

Wolfson cuts off the state prosecutor.

WOLFSON
I object-- The key witness failed to
appear, your honor, and they have no
new evidence against my client-- who
has no prior criminal history.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE COURTROOM - RECESS

A brief recess. Waiting for a decision from Reynolds. Wolfson and
Lozano huddle together in the hallway.

Wolfson spots Jake in the crowd. Waving him over. Jake rushes up.

WOLFSON
(to Lozano)
All right, this recess could last ten
minutes or an hour. Here's what I want
you to do. I want you to give the
judge a dime. If you haven't got it,
I'll lay it out-- Right now. I want to
get rid of this thing.

Lozano digs into his pocket, pulling out some money.

ANTHONY LOZANO
I think I got two hundred?

Wolfson grabs the money from Lozano, reaching into his own
pocket, producing a thick wad of cash.

WOLFSON
(to Jake)
Put your hand out.

Wolfson counts out the money into Jake's hand...

WOLFSON (CONT'D)
Two, three, four, five, six, seven,
eight. We gotta dime.
(to Jake)
Lay it on Reynolds. Tell him this case
is taking a ride. Go.

INT. JUDGE REYNOLDS' CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

Judge Reynolds behind his desk. Looking over court documents.

A BAILIFF opens the door. Peeking his head in.

BAILIFF
Judge?...

Judge Reynolds looks up from the documents.

The bailiff opens the door wider. JAKE ENTERS.

JAKE
Judge, Dean Wolfson wanted me to give
you a message.

INT. FELONY PRELIMINARY HEARING COURT - LATER

Recess is over. JUDGE REYNOLDS enters the courtroom.

BAILIFF
All rise...

Wolfson and Lozano both stand. Lozano leaning over...

ANTHONY LOZANO
So is the judge on our side?

A sly grin creeps across Wolfson's face. He leans in.

WOLFSON
Yes, Oh, God. Yes.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: AUGUST 1983

INT. DAN REIDY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Reidy at his desk in the U.S. Attorneys Office. Lassar enters.

CLOSE UP on a CHICAGO TRIBUNE NEWSPAPER dropping onto Reidy's desk. The headline reads: FBI HAS 'A MOLE' IN THE COURTS.

REIDY
Shit... Where's Jake?

LASSAR
What time is it? It's still early. At
the courthouse?
(points to newspaper)
It doesn't name anyone, no mention of
Jake or anyone else... but it got a
lot right.

REIDY

Let's get eyes on him. Make sure he knows.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MORNING

JAKE ENTERS. The building is already buzzing-- A few people whispering, watching each other.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - MORNING

Men gather in their usual clusters, but the energy is all different-- like a schoolyard. They move pack-to-pack like gossiping children. All of them reading a copy of the Tribune.

Jake approaches a group of hustlers huddled around a newspaper. A shady and stocky hustler-- 'FAST EDDIE' KAPLAN-- spots him. Pulling him into the conversation.

FAST EDDIE

So who do you think it is?

JAKE

What?...

FAST EDDIE

The mole-- Who do you think the mole is?

Jake uses everything in his power to mask the panic alarm going off inside of him.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

EXTREME CLOSE UP on a quarter stuffed into A METAL NEWSPAPER VENDING MACHINE. CHA-CHUNK. The door yanks open. CLOSE UP on a newspaper pulled out. CHA-CHUNK. The door slams shut.

INT. PLYMOUTH FURY CAR - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jake back in his car. His dress shirt unbuttoned. Jake rips the recorder out from behind him. Wincing. Shoves it under his seat. He quickly buttons his shirt, tucking it in.

Jake grabs the folded newspaper lying on the seat. He stares at the headline. Quickly scanning the article. Searching for any clues that might give him away-- KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK--

JAKE JUMPS IN HIS SEAT. COSTELLO PEERING IN AT HIM THRU THE WINDOW. He motions to Jake to get out of his car.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MORNING

Back in the hallways of the Criminal Courts Building. Crowds still buzzing.

THREE UNDERCOVER FBI AGENTS emerge from three different directions. Moving swiftly. They all look towards each other. Subtly shaking their heads as they pass in the hallways.

INT. OFFICE - FINE ARTS BUILDING - MORNING

The team is assembled in operation headquarters. Megary enters.

MEGARY

We just sent three undercover on a walk-thru of the entire courthouse. No eyes on Jake yet.

REIDY

(concerned)

Well, where the fuck is he?

INT. PONTIAC LEMANS CAR - MORNING

Jake and Costello sit in silence. A beat. Jake starts shaking his head. Apprehensive.

JAKE

It could be... It could be a court clerk for all we know.

Costello explodes--

COSTELLO

ARE YOU FUCKIN' WITH ME?... *DID YOU EVEN READ THE ARTICLE?* It reads like he's inside courts all across Chicago... *What I took from it?* He's a fucking defense attorney.

Costello's words hang in the air. Jake stammers. Afraid to say the wrong thing.

COSTELLO (CONT'D)

Olson is pissed-- Called me outta bed late last night. Someone at the Tribune tipped him this was dropping. He talked to the mayor himself. He swore to Wayne he hadn't heard a word a this. I reached out to every copper I know. Nobody knows nothing.

(MORE)

COSTELLO (CONT'D)

You're trying to tell me the FBI is running an undercover operation in this city and nobody knows shit? The Feds wouldn't get support from Chicago P.D.? Wouldn't inform Mayor Washington what they were up to? BULLSHIT...

Jake chooses his words carefully...

JAKE

...Somebody must know something-- It's in the Tribune.

COSTELLO

Okay, so let's drive down there and ask 'em-- WHO THE FUCK IS THE MOLE? Maybe I get the Trunzo brothers to take a run at the reporter. I'M NOT GETTING DISBARRED OVER THIS-- *You wanna lose your license over this bullshit?*

(sotto)

Who the fuck is the mole?...

EXT. PARKING LOT - ADLER PLANETARIUM - NIGHT

WIDE ON the parking lot. Jake jogs up and gets into...

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - CONTINUOUS

...Megary's car. Jake just looks at him. Furious.

JAKE

How the fuck did this happen?

MEGARY

They brought a few of the little fish in and tried to get 'em to flip. Obviously someone wasn't biting. So now, it leaks.

JAKE

Wait-- WHAT? *Why am I just hearing about this now?*

MEGARY

Sometimes... in situations like this, the less you know, the better.

JAKE

Really? Situations like this? When do you like being kept in the fucking dark? So, what else do they know?

MEGARY

We're not sure, but we're working on it... How was court?

JAKE

How was court? Court was great. First time I ever saw the public defenders at the top of the docket-- I thought to myself, '*good for them.*' No hustler wanted to be in front of a judge today, I can tell you that.

MEGARY

It'll get worse. These guys aren't used to getting their cages rattled. Everybody's gonna be suspicious of each other, so leave the recorder at home, but stick to the script. Someone wants to buy you lunch, go for a drink... Do it.

JAKE

You know what? Fuck you. You talk to me like I'm one of you. What script? I have no friends. Not one person I can talk to about any of this. I can't even see my mother. Was that all part of the script?

MEGARY

Yeah, it's a shitty script... It's a shitty fucking script...

Jake half-chuckles. So fucked, all he can do is laugh.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

But you do have a friend...

Jake just looks at Megary. Nodding.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CHICAGO - NIGHT

Jake walks home. It's quiet and dark. Cars line both sides of the street, parked for the night.

Half a block behind Jake, A CAR PULLS OUT. It creeps towards him, headlights off. IN A FLASH-- The headlights snap on. The car lurches forward. Speeds up to Jake. Screeches to a halt.

Jake spins around. Caught in the headlights. A car door flies open-- A voice in the darkness.

VOICE

HEY, JAKE...

Jake stands there frozen. Prepared for the worst. He squints to make out the dark figure beyond the headlights-- *it's Art.*

ART
...Get in.

EXT. 24-HOUR DINER - LATE NIGHT

ANGLE THRU THE WINDOW. Jake and Art drink coffee in the booth of a 24-hour greasy spoon.

ART
I'm telling you... You wanna be real careful of Wolfson. He's looking at everybody, but he's asking about you.

INT. 24-HOUR DINER - CONTINUOUS

Art is clearly on edge, making Jake even more nervous...

ART
...But, if you're being straight with me-- *Are you being straight with me?*

JAKE
How long have we known each other?

ART
So believe me when I tell you, he's not playing. He finds out who's the rat, he'll fucking kill 'em. And trust me... He won't need to look far to find the men that will do this.

JAKE
I know-- he's got ties to the mob.

ART
Then you also know, with the mob, it's not about guilty or innocent-- they think there's a few guys who *might be the mole*-- it's just as easy to get rid of 'em all. With as many cases as they got in the system, they're not losing Wolfson.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - LATE AFTERNOON

Jake with the rest of the lawyers. On edge but doing what he was told. Making an appearance. Sticking to the script.

Costello exits the courtroom. He navigates his way to Jake.

COSTELLO
I need a drink.

INT. JEAN'S RESTAURANT - LATER

Jake and Costello in their usual corner booth. The rest of Jean's nearly empty. A few hard-core drinkers up at the bar.

COSTELLO
Look at this place... Everybody's suddenly the 'good husband,' gotta be home in time for dinner.

A waitress drops another whiskey off for Costello.

COSTELLO (CONT'D)
And Olson-- fuckin' guy thinks he can fix his numbers with a week of cracking down on my ass.

JAKE
(meaning every word)
It's a total fucking mess.

The hard-core stragglers stiffen up as DEAN WOLFSON ENTERS.

Wolfson scans the room. Spots Jake and Costello. He cuts a path straight over to their booth.

WOLFSON
(to Costello)
Jimmy...

COSTELLO
Dean...

WOLFSON
(to Jake)
I want to talk to you.

JAKE
(apprehensive)
Okay...

WOLFSON
Not here.

Wolfson turns and heads for the exit. Expecting Jake to follow. Costello looks at Jake suspiciously.

EXT. ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

It's closing time. Back on the same street where it all began.

INT. ITALIAN BAR & RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Wolfson in the back of the empty restaurant. The untouched drinks on the table between them. Jake with his back to the door. Exposed.

Wolfson's fierce look still intimidating Jake.

JAKE

I know you've probably heard things, rumors. I just want to tell you up front that it isn't true.

WOLFSON

What was that?

JAKE

That I might be a mole for the FBI-- Cause it's, I just wanted you to hear it from my own mouth that it is not true-- honest to God.

Wolfson sips his drink. His eyes boring a hole thru Jake.

WOLFSON

Do you have any idea what's happening right now...

(long beat)

...up in outer space?... We put the first woman on the Space Shuttle.

(pointing up)

She's up there right now, floating around with the rest of 'em... Before the launch, some *asshole* asks her if she cries when shit goes wrong at her job-- Are you fuckin' kidding me? She's an astronaut!

(getting angry)

A fucking astronaut. She's one of a handful of people that are the very best at what they do. And he's got the balls to ask her if she cries when shit goes wrong?...

(shaking his head)

I look at people sometimes... What are you thinking, you do something like that?... *What the fuck are you thinking?*

EXT. ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's closing time. A couple of the restaurants go dark, as their outdoor lights turn off.

INT. ITALIAN BAR & RESTAURANT - THAT MOMENT

Jake and Wolfson still at their table. Wolfson looks over to the bartender, who looks back at Wolfson, nodding.

WOLFSON
Why don't you go ahead... I gotta settle up my tab.

JAKE
I guess... I'll see you in court?

WOLFSON
You bet.

Wolfson's eyes fixed on Jake as he walks towards the door.

EXT. ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Jake exits the restaurant. Turns down the sidewalk. The 'L' train thunders overhead.

Jake passes the dark alleyway-- THE TWO GOONS BULLRUSH HIM. Jake pushes back. STRUGGLING TO BREAK FREE.

THE FORD LTD Hardtop screeches up onto the sidewalk. The back door swings open-- THE TWO GOONS DRAGGING JAKE.

JAKE
GET OFF ME. GET OFF ME.

GOON #1
GET THE FUCK IN.

GOON #2
It's over.

THE GOONS FORCE JAKE INTO THE BACKSEAT. Jumping in behind him. THE CAR TAKES OFF DOWN THE BLOCK. SCREECHING AROUND A CORNER.

INT. FORD LTD HARDTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Jake struggles against the men. His adrenaline on overdrive--

JAKE
GET THE FUCK OFF ME.

MEGARY
JAKE-- JAKE!

Jake stops struggling when he realizes it's Bill Megary in the passenger seat, screaming his name.

MEGARY (CONT'D)

Your name leaked. It's out. It's done.

ANGLE ON Jake. Still breathing heavy. Relieved to be alive.

EXT. DINGY MOTEL - EDGE OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

A low-flying plane passes over. Heading for nearby O'Hare.

The Ford sedan is parked in front of a shitty motel room. THE TWO 'GOONS'-- FBI AGENTS-- are standing watch outside the door.

A SECOND FORD SEDAN pulls in beside the first. Reidy and Sklarsky exit. Walking towards the door.

REIDY (V.O.)

This is home for a little while.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jake on the edge of a crummy double bed. Reidy, Sklarsky, and Megary positioned around the room.

JAKE

What's a little while?

SKLARSKY

We don't know exactly. But we need you outta sight for the real fireworks.

JAKE

What about my mother?

MEGARY

I'm on it. She's safe. We've got eyes on her. Don't worry.

REIDY

For now, just get some rest.

The three men head for the door. Reidy and Sklarsky exit. Megary stops in the doorway, turning back to Jake.

Jake stares at Megary. Stunned by the sudden turn of events.

MEGARY

Hey... These things never end neat. You lasted longer than anyone ever thought you would... Well done.

MUSIC CUE: "Neanderthal Man" by Hot Legs

INT. HALLWAY - FIRST MUNICIPAL DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - DAY

We're following Harold Conn down a busy hallway inside the courthouse. He takes a sharp left turn into...

INT. EMPTY COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

...A COURTROOM AND STOPS DEAD IN HIS TRACKS. There's no lawyer hanging out to pay him. Instead, TWO FBI FIELD AGENTS & TWO CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS are waiting for him.

The two police officers walk towards Harold. Reading him his Miranda rights.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - AFTERNOON

ANGLE ON JUDGE DEVINE bent over his putter. He lines up the golf ball. Stopping. Looking up. Something catches his eye.

WIDE ON the golf course. Judge Devine straightens up. He watches TWO CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS and an FBI FIELD AGENT cross the fairway towards him.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - 7TH DISTRICT - DAY

JAMES & JOE TRUNZO sit in the police captain's office. THE POLICE CAPTAIN does not look pleased.

ANGLE ON TWO FBI AGENTS as they appear in the doorway.

In perfect unison, the twin brothers turn, looking at the TWO AGENTS waiting to arrest them.

INT. FELONY PRELIMINARY HEARING COURT - DAY

Two Chicago police officers lead JUDGE REYNOLDS off the bench and down the aisle in black robe and handcuffs. JAWS HIT THE FLOOR. AUDIBLE GASPS FILL THE OVERCROWDED COURTROOM.

INT. HALLWAY - NARCOTICS COURT - AFTERNOON

The guilty and innocent alike all stand witness. COSTELLO AND TWO OTHER HUSTLER LAWYERS ARE HANDCUFFED and escorted down the hallway by several Chicago police officers.

People stare. Stunned. A YOUNG THUG breaks the silence.

YOUNG THUG
Man, I knew these guys was crooked.

EXT. THE DRAKE HOTEL - EVENING

THE DRAKE HOTEL'S landmark sign lights up in red neon.

INT. THE CAPE COD ROOM - THE DRAKE HOTEL - THAT MOMENT

DEAN WOLFSON sits at his usual secluded table. Savoring a glass of bourbon. Waiting patiently for what he knows is coming.

REVERSE ANGLE: TWO FBI FIELD AGENTS enter the room.

Wolfson stands. Downing his bourbon. He buttons his suit jacket.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CHICAGO LOOP - DAY

Judge Olson with a slick BULLDOG ATTORNEY. A table top reel-to-reel player between them. Olson listening to the evidence against him-- his own voice on FBI audio recordings.

OLSON SLUMPS FORWARD. Clutching his left shoulder. Grimacing in pain. He tumbles out of his chair and onto the floor. KEELING OVER-- HAVING A HEART ATTACK.

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - DAY

AERIAL VIEW of a high-end suburban neighborhood. Palm trees line the streets. We're not in Chicago anymore. This is Arizona.

EXT. JUDGE FRANK WILSON RESIDENCE - THAT MOMENT

TWO FBI AGENTS start up the walkway to an upscale McMansion. They ring the doorbell. A HOUSEKEEPER answers.

INT. STUDY - JUDGE FRANK WILSON RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

RETIRED JUDGE FRANK WILSON peers out thru the drapes. FBI Agents waiting to arrest him. *The man that started it all by fixing the trial of HARRY 'THE HOOK' ALEMAN.*

Wilson walks over to his desk, sitting down. He opens a drawer TO REVEAL A SMALL CALIBER REVOLVER. He picks the gun up. A beat. He points the gun towards his open mouth.

PRE-LAP: A PHONE RINGS SHARPLY.

EXT. DINGY MOTEL - OUTSIDE CHICAGO - DAYS LATER

TWO FBI AGENTS still flank the door to Jake's room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room looks lived in-- empty food containers, a pile of dirty laundry, a stack of newspapers. Jake walks out of the bathroom, wrapped in a towel. He picks up the ringing phone.

JAKE

Hello...

MEGARY (V.O.)

Hey, it's Bill. You watching TV?

JAKE

No.

MEGARY (V.O.)

Turn it to channel two. You'll wanna see this.

ANGLE ON MOTEL TV. Jake pulls out the power knob and turns the dial to channel 2.

POV TELEVISION SCREEN: The soap opera, AS THE WORLD TURNS, is on. Right now, CRAIG is crying over his baby's crib. His wife BETSY (played by a young Meg Ryan) looks on in the background...

CRAIG

(on television)

I lost my job, I lost my nightclub...

(sobbing)

I lost my wife--

THAT MOMENT, Craig is cut off by A WBBM-TV SPECIAL REPORT NEWS GRAPHIC. An urgent news stinger plays under the stern voice of a NEWS ANNOUNCER.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We interrupt your regularly scheduled programming to bring you this special report...

The news graphic CUTS TO THE MIDDLE OF A PRESS CONFERENCE-- A group of law enforcement gathered behind U.S. Attorney Tom Sullivan standing at a podium. A cluster of microphones in front of him. Reidy, Sklarsky, and Lassar all stand off to one side.

SULLIVAN

(on television)

...I believe this will be viewed as one of the most comprehensive, intricate and difficult undercover projects ever undertaken by a law-enforcement agency...

Jake watches the next phase of the operation unfold.

INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAUSE HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME

Jake's mother watches the news conference on the edge of her armchair. Just now realizing the full magnitude of what her son did. Her eyes well up with tears.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

...Now, I'd like to turn it over to
First Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan
Reidy, who led the investigation...

INT. OFFICE - FBI HEADQUARTERS - SAME TIME

Megary and Jordan stand shoulder-to-shoulder. They watch the press conference on a small B&W television.

REIDY (V.O.)

We first launched this operation in an
attempt to determine the full extent
of the corruption within the Chicago
judicial system...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Back on Jake watching the press conference on TV.

REIDY (V.O.)

(on television)

Let me be clear, we have no illusions
that *anybody cleans up Chicago*. I have
no faith that we can do away with
corruption...

Jake is disappointed by Reidy's choice of words.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Inside the packed press conference. Bulky news cameras on tripods. Reporters scribble on pads. Camera flashes pop.

REIDY

But I do believe we can at least limit
it by exposing these men to the risk
of prosecution... The first round of
indictments include judges, lawyers,
police officers, and numerous court
officials...

ANGLE ON Sklarsky and Lassar as they listen to Reidy. Sklarsky leans over to Lassar--

SKLARSKY

(whispering)

Now we just have to actually convict
all these assholes... Or we are so
fucked.

A small smirk creeps across Lassar's face. Sklarsky's right.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE OVER BLACK: Tuesday, March 6th, 1984
 SEVEN MONTHS LATER

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CHICAGO SUBURBS - MORNING

JAKE STANDS ON THE STOOP of a shitty apartment complex somewhere on the outer edges of Chicago. Sporting a full moustache and wearing a new Sears & Roebuck suit.

A young and attractive GIRLFRIEND (late 20s) stands one step up. Still in her nightgown and slippers. She straightens Jake's tie and gives him a kiss.

GIRLFRIEND

You nervous?

Before Jake can answer Megary's Cutlass Supreme pulls up. Jake walks down and gets in. His girlfriend watches from the stoop.

INT. CUTLASS SUPREME CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Megary looks over at Jake. Takes in the moustache.

MEGARY

That's not bad... You ready for court?

JAKE

And what if I said no?

MEGARY

(smiling)

That's what my gun's for.

Jake smiles. They drive in silence. A beat.

JAKE

You been reading the papers? You watch
the news?

MEGARY

Yeah. Fuck 'em.

JAKE
Hero, huh?

MEGARY
(smirking)
I may have misread that one.
(serious)
But hey-- You know what you did.

Jake just stares at him...

MEGARY (CONT'D)
If one guy can walk into a Chicago
courtroom today and get a fair shake--
was it worth it?

ANGRY MAN (PRE-LAP)
YOU'RE A RAT!

INT. HALLWAY - CHICAGO FEDERAL BUILDING - MORNING

HORDES OF PEOPLE flood the hallway. Forming an angry mob scene.

Megary leads Jake down the packed corridor. A CROWD OF REPORTERS surround them. A TV REPORTER sticks a microphone in Jake's face.

TV REPORTER
JAKE-- JAKE-- PEOPLE SAY YOU'RE A
SNITCH? WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THEM?

Megary pushes by the reporter. An ANGRY MAN screams out again.

ANGRY MAN
YOU'RE A FUCKING RAT!

Megary and Jake pass a DEFENSE ATTORNEY being interviewed by another swarm of reporters.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY
These cases were frauds on the court.
It was perjury. Those who commit
crimes themselves cannot prosecute
crimes.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

ANGLE ON JAKE. On the witness stand. Right hand raised, left hand on the bible. The court clerk swearing him in under oath.

COURT CLERK (O.S.)
Do you solemnly swear to tell the
truth, the whole truth, and nothing
but the truth, so help you God?

Jake answers. Hardened and defiant.

JAKE

I do.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE OVER BLACK:

The 3 1/2 year undercover investigation, dubbed OPERATION GREYLORD, resulted in the indictment of 92 officials-- 17 judges, 48 lawyers, eight policemen, 10 deputy sheriffs, eight court officials, and one state legislator. Nearly all were convicted.

TITLE FADES. REPLACED BY:

Following Judge Frank Wilson's suicide, Harry "The Hook" Aleman was re-indicted and convicted in the murder of Billy Logan. It was the first time in the history of the United States that a criminal defendant was tried twice for the same crime. The court ruled the double jeopardy law did not apply. Aleman was never in jeopardy during the first trial, as Judge Wilson had been paid off. Aleman died in prison in 2010.

Judge Wayne Olson survived his heart attack. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Judge John Devine was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Judge John Reynolds was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Judge John Murphy was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

TITLE FADES. REPLACED BY:

Attorney James Costello was sentenced to 8 years in prison.

Attorney Dean Wolfson was sentenced to 7 1/2 years in prison.

Attorney Art Cirignani was granted immunity from any charges in exchange for cooperating and testifying for the government.

TITLE FADES. REPLACED BY:

Following OPERATION GREYLORD --'Jake Krause'-- the young lawyer who went undercover, posing as a corrupt attorney, became an FBI agent. He still works in law enforcement in Chicago to this day. He never practiced law again.

- THE END -