

BREAKING IRISH

Written by
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Inspired by a true story

*Often the ones to trust are those born into
corruption. The ones who take a vow of honor, then
become corrupt, you can never trust...*

Charlie Logan

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Reg: WGA
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OVER BLACK: The SOUND of gun barrels being loaded and cocked.

This story either happened or it didn't. I should know because I lived every moment, though if asked, I'll deny it. I'll say this, a gambler who wins fifty-two and a quarter percent of the time is killing it. Beat the line, cover the juice, walk with cash. But for a whale it's like eating a minnow. Doesn't even pay to swallow. I averaged over seventy percent. I was never officially a mobster. I didn't use a gun, I just had a head for numbers, but with it I could kill. Then, and now, with just my mind, I could kill. "IRISH"

INT. HELL'S KITCHEN - APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bob Dylan "KNOCKIN' ON HEAVENS DOOR"

SUPER: Back in the day...

A week's worth of dishes fills the sink of the low rent digs. At the table is BILLY LOGAN, 50s, as Irish as the Whiskey he's drinking. Three days of stubble covers his battle worn face, a US Navy tatoo on his arm marks his pride.

A HARD KNOCK at the door-- Billy's lips kiss the bottle. Swig after swig as the KNOCKS GET LOUDER. He clenches the bottle until the next KNOCK BUSTS DOWN THE DOOR.

TWO MEN, in winter coats covered by clear plastic slickers, storm the kitchen. MAN #1 places a GUN against Billy's temple. We get the sense it's not the booze that keeps Billy from trembling, it's that he's been here many times before.

MAN #1

Where's our fucking money?!

The HAMMER cocked, Billy downs the last drop of whiskey wiping his lips then flipping both men one last "fuck you".

MAN #2

Fuck this Mick.

THE SHOOTER closes the last SNAP on his plastic rain slicker.

SUDDENLY -- A STORAGE CLOSET DOOR OPENS -- BULLETS FLY from within, filling the unsuspecting bodies of the two men.

Billy falls to the floor just as MAN #1's GUN FIRES-- missing his temple by a hair, the bullet lodging into the wall.

DANNY LOGAN, 16, lanky, street tough, emerges with TWO GUNS still BLAZING, their chambers emptying into the already dead. The clear rain slickers now blood splattered from inside out.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

The devil greeted everyone with a smile, but only the Irish survived beyond the gates of Hell's Kitchen. The reason alone is a tale worth telling. But that's another story.

Danny trembles over the blood soaked as Billy pries the smoking guns from his hands, then turns over the first body.

Billy pulls GOLD NYPD DETECTIVE'S SHIELDS from each of the dead men's belts, then hands the prize to his son Danny.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Five Families controlled New York.

Billy tosses his son's murder weapons and the cop's revolvers into a paper bag, then Danny tosses in the shields.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

The Westies controlled Hell.

As Danny reaches to take the BAG from his father, we see TATTOOED across DANNY AND BILLY'S fists-- WESTIES.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

My father and his father were Westies.

BILLY LOGAN

Into the river, as far as you can throw. Now get--

DANNY bolts-- BILLY looks down at the dead detectives.

FREEZE FRAME:

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Often the ones to trust are those born into corruption. The ones who take a vow of honor, then become corrupt, you can never trust...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - NIGHT

SUPER: About a dozen years later...

The ferry moves across the pitch black waters of New York Bay. RAIN pounds its deck like a symphony of machine-gun fire. A black sky looms-- the devil's restless for a soul.

A LONE FIGURE stands soaked in fear along the starboard side. Cold air escapes his lungs like smoke billowing from a chimney. His hands grip the rail-- as a man would to life.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Money will make people do things
 they'd otherwise never imagine.

Out of the darkness, a MAN in a BLACK BRIM HAT appears. BULLETS OF RAIN kill the sound of their conversation. A HENCHMAN suddenly appears. His size now blocking our view.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Desperation is a devil's market.

ANGLE ON the starboard side of the ferry's hull. In the blackness, the LONE FIGURE now DANGLES over the rail. His sole lifeline-- the Henchman's hand wrapped around his wrist.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Give your soul to save another or
 sell out theirs to save your own.

The man in the hat watches the lone figure beg for his life, his body bangs against the hull, the bay reaches to swallow.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 What's your life worth? I mean--
 what's it really worth?

INT. CAESARS PALACE - NIGHT

Frank Sinatra "COME FLY WITH ME"

SUPER: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas - June 1983

COLD HARD CASH shoots through a casino's currency discrimination counter like bullets through a Gatling Gun.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 I know what you're thinking-- Look
 at all that cash, just waiting to
 be won. Every sucker thinks that
 way. It's all so intoxicating that
 as the devil devours your soul,
 you'll offer him a glass of wine.

MORE CASH as it FLOATS from the hands of GAMBLERS before being SUCKED down the green felt vacuums of blackjack tables, craps, roulette, baccarat, Texas Hold'em, and so on...

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 The soul of a gambler does not wait
 in limbo at the pearly gates. It's
 either blessed with wins and
 granted heaven-- or plagued with
 losses and burns in hell.

The rising pulse of chance fills the room with the hopeful
 heartbeats of SUCKERS as the SOUNDS OF DICE, CARDS, AND SLOTS
 become a musical score orchestrated to lure the dreamers.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 The epitaph of suckers who attempt
 to beat the odds are etched on
 financial tombstones from Atlantic
 City to Las Vegas.

THE CAMERA FINDS-- TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD baby faced CHARLIE
 'IRISH' LOGAN. Slight build, street cool, with eyes that give
 you nothing. He'd be your hundredth guess if you were asked
 to pick the card shark in a room amongst ninety-nine suckers.

ECU ON CHARLIE:

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 My name is Charlie Logan, on the
 streets I'm known as 'Irish'. This
 is my story...

We follow as he enters the Las Vegas landmark. A portrait of
 the Rat Pack at the entrance brings a smile to his face.
 Breathing in the nostalgia, he looks over the casino floor.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 A year after I graduated Columbia,
 my classmates were pushing pencils
 at accounting firms... me... I was
 standing in the church of Sinatra.

He walks through the casino until his sensor draws him to a
 blackjack table where THREE PLAYERS are already playing.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Knowing where to sit can be as
 important as knowing how to play.

THE CAMERA PANS the PLAYERS' EYES.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Desperation is the Velcro of Vegas.

CLOSE ON: Charlie's eyes devoid of emotion.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Our eyes are the entry to the soul.
 The best gamblers allow no one in.

The DEALER breaks FOUR DECKS. Charlie takes a seat and runs his hand across the green felt. He grips a hundred dollar chip like a closer would a rosin bag. He STICKS the chip to the green felt playing field-- a foundation for a skyscraper.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Casinos are built on the cash lost
 by one week out of fifty-two-week-
 players who believe they can turn
 bonus checks into retirement funds.

CLOSE ON: The Three Players.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 They're dreaming.

The Dealer shuffles, cuts, then spreads BLUE BICYCLES across the table like icing. The cards lay there for a millisecond before being sent back like dominos into the dealer's shoe, then dealt like bullets to Charlie and The Three Players.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Vegas is a drug. Street value--
 priceless. Casinos know there's no
 generic for what they sell.

SHOW GIRLS pass by, stealing the other Players' attention for a second. Charlie notes their lack of focus.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Once hooked-- the high is
 incomparable, but the low-- oceans
 of morphine can't ease the pain of
 detoxing an empty bank account.

Silent prayers as The Three Players look at their cards. The Dealer's rhythm strikes a tempo that bleeds cool confidence as the cadence of the game moves at light speed.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I like a dealer who moves the game
 like a greyhound chasing a rabbit.

Charlie looks at his cards like a diamond cutter working to separate perfection from coal.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 For me, the rabbit can't run fast
 enough. I want in and I want out.

AS TIME PASSES, chips start to pile up in front of Charlie.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I'm not here to drink, get a comp
for the buffet, or see the show.

A WAITRESS approaches to take drink orders. Charlie places a ten dollar chip on her tray then immediately waves her off.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I'm here for a little taste... skim
the cream and leave the coffee.
I'll play six casinos a night to
avoid attention, but attention is
hard to avoid when you're winning.

HOUSEWIVES in sequin cocktail dresses, FACTORY WORKERS in silk shirts, bit players in a world of fantasy, CHEER as Charlie makes a run. The Three Players increase their bets in a futile, desperate attempt to recoup their losses.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
What most gamblers discover far too
late is, once in the casino's cage
they're fresh meat to a ravenous
lion. They will be eaten and no
bones will be left on the plate.

One by one the Players fold. Their hands turning into frozen tundra. Stacks of chips now falling off the Casino's cliff. Meanwhile, Charlie continues to mount an attack on the lion.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Blackjack offers a slight edge. But
"slight" can make for a nice living
if you can count cards. Now I'm the
lion and the casino is fresh meat.

An ocean of cards swim laps across the felt. Charlie's eyes give no clue as they scan every card. His mind an infinity of megabytes stored and calculated as he card counts.

A PIT BOSS watches the action. A FLOOR BOSS looks up to a security eye. Charlie can feel the eyes watching.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Now I know better than to continue.
I know it's time to go, to check my
ego at the door and leave this
casino a half a syringe of dignity.
But I'm a twenty-three-year-old
staring at a boxcar of chips.

CHIPS continue to stack up as he eats their cash like candy. The Dealer chants TWENTY-ONE and BLACKJACK like a mantra as Charlie continues to murder the already dead.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
It's so fucking hard to walk when
you know their balls are in a vice.

The Floor Boss' face tightens as Charlie draws TWO EIGHTS.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I could double down, but I'm not a
whore. I want this to appear pure.
Like virgin luck. A first timer on
a boot camp weekend pass who wakes
up smiling in a Tijuana brothel.

Charlie moves his whole stack of chips a fraction forward. The CROWD nearly faints at the size of the bet.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Every drop of my blood can feel
this move. The identity of the next
card travels my veins like heroin
to the brain. Too late to stop it.
See the sweat on his brow?

CLOSE ON: The Floor Boss wiping beads of sweat--

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I'm causing it and it's about to
get worse... and never better.

The Dealer slowly begins to draw Charlie's next card. The CROWD'S anticipation as thick as six stacked New York steaks.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
It's hard to match the rush of
heisting a casino when your only
weapon is your mind, which is more
lethal than a machine gun if loaded
with the right information.

FREEZE FRAME: On the next CARD before it is revealed--

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I'm about to put an ice pick
through their temple. Fuck-- how
did I get here?

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Elvis Presley "DEVIL IN DISGUISE"

SUPER: St. Francis Hospital, New York - April 26, 1959

A DOCTOR spanks the butt of a BABY BOY with the perfect Gerber face. A SCREAM as he takes his first breath.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
From the moment I was born, people
said that I had something special.

A NURSE wraps him tightly in a warm blanket. His coo brings a smile to her face. She lays him down on the beautiful pure white Irish skin of his mother, NATALIE LOGAN, 21.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Turned out they were right.

NURSES in the room are all taken by the newborn.

FREEZE FRAME ON: The newborn baby boy.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
And that something made me one of
the greatest odds breakers in
sports gambling history...

INT. BOWLING ALLEY

Chubby Checker "THE TWIST"

SUPER: Queens, New York - October 1969

LOCALS toss sixteen pounders. A pool table stands between the lanes and a long wooden drinker's bar as BUS DRIVERS and MA BELL REPAIRMEN break for eight ball.

An OBESE GUY'S POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE bowling shirt reads FAT MAN. His face fills with frustration as he misses a single pin pickup off his spare. THE CAMERA FINDS A-TEN-YEAR-OLD CHARLIE picking up a stack of quarters off a scorer's table.

Charlie gestures to the FAT MAN-- "so close". The Fat Man flips him off. Charlie laughs, shaking the quarters in his hand, before running to sit at the bar next to his Father.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
My mother passed when I was six.
That left my father to raise me,
and our environment to shape me.

DANNY LOGAN, now late 30s, a Greyhound Bus Company shirt, his WESTIES TATTOO faded, but not gone, reminds us of his past.

As the BARTENDER plops down two slices of pizza, Charlie lays down the stack of quarters to pay.

DANNY LOGAN
Where'd you get the loot?

CHARLIE
"Stuck and a quarter". The Fat Man couldn't pick up the spare.

DANNY LOGAN
What would you have done if he had?

Charlie smiles-- looks at his old man.

DANNY LOGAN (cont'd)
(laughing)
I wouldn't have covered your bet--

CHARLIE
Been watching Fat Man since I was six. Four years, he ain't done it.

DANNY LOGAN
Hasn't done it.

CHARLIE
Sorry. Hasn't done it. And today wasn't gonna be any different.

DANNY LOGAN
And this you know because?

CHARLIE
History has a very high percentage of repeating itself.

His Father can't fight his smile before looking up at the bar's TV SCREEN to watch the New York Mets as they play the Baltimore Orioles in the third game of the World Series.

DANNY LOGAN
Then my Mets don't stand a chance.

CHARLIE
I wouldn't bet on that.

BAR PATRONS EXPLODE IN CHEER as the Mets' Tommy Agee hits a first inning homer off Jim Palmer to give the Mets the lead. Danny shoots Charlie an inquisitive look--

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Destiny supersedes history.

Danny playfully rubs Charlie's head as they CHEER.

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE:

SUPER: SHEA STADIUM OCTOBER 16, 1969 WORLD SERIES GAME 5

New York Mets fans storm the field as the "Miracle Mets" win the World Series in five games over the Baltimore Orioles.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Trick is knowing which team is destined.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

SUPER: Hell's Kitchen - May 1971

A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD CHARLIE sits inside a steel caged basketball court watching a group of tough IRISH KIDS shoot around as they warm up to play a hard-core full-court game.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

My father worked twelve hour shifts for Greyhound. I had time to kill.

A BALLPLAYER, 20s, IRISH, looking to play in the next game leans against the fence shooting Charlie a nod.

BALLPLAYER

This will end quick.

CHARLIE

What makes you say that?

BALLPLAYER

The skins got no big man. You wanna win, you gotta own the middle. Shirts have that wall with feet.

A PLAYER on the shirt squad stands center court, every bit of his six-foot-five, three hundred pound frame, pure muscle.

CHARLIE

In the NBA you don't get to the show without a big man, but on the street, speed is king and the skins can outrun daylight.

BALLPLAYER

The skins won't get within five.

CHARLIE

Five? A buck says skins give them a run. I'll take skins plus two.

Charlie pulls a dollar from his bookbag. The Ballplayer pulls a buck from inside his sock leg.

BALLPLAYER

Okay, skins plus two. You're about to learn the evils of gambling.

CHARLIE

You just bet that the Pope don't pray on Sunday.

As the game unfolds, the smaller but quicker skins team hangs tough. The lead keeps changing hands. The shirts' final basket beats the skins by only a point. Charlie shoots a smile as he takes the ballplayer's dollar.

BALLPLAYER

How'd you know the spread was two?

CHARLIE

Same guys play here everyday. After a few weeks, I know their game. With that I just figure the odds.

The Archies "SUGAR, SUGAR" plays on a nearby Boombox.

TWO YOUNG GIRLS smile as they pass, Charlie shoots back a nervous one. His eyes zoom in on AVERY RHODES, beautiful, dark hair, green eyes, with a magical smile--

AVERY

Hey, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(blushing)
Hey, Avery...

The girls giggle a chorus as they continue walking.

BALLPLAYER

That your girl?

CHARLIE

I wish. That's Avery Rhodes.

BALLPLAYER

Stick to gambling. No man can predict what a female will do.

CHARLIE
There's one female I can predict.

EXT. AQUEDUCT RACETRACK - DAY

SUPER: AQUEDUCT RACETRACK - April 1976

THE START BUZZER SOUNDS

THREE-YEAR-OLD FILLYS pound a WET track. The SOUND of pure horsepower as dirt flies at every turn. Their noses flaring for air, ears pinned in pursuit of a win.

SCREAMS and CRIES from the cheap seats where BLUE COLLAR WORKERS hold their stubs like tickets to the pearly gates. A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD CHARLIE watches the race with his father.

DANNY LOGAN
Come on, six! Come on--

The pack is tight at the final turn. Necks lunging forward as WHIPS for glory are used by the JOCKEYS in the homestretch. CLOSE ON: The SIX HORSE trapped in the pack.

Suddenly, from the outside, a stitch of purple silk breaks from the pack with the heart that only a thirty-to-one odds horse could have-- THE THREE horse races for the wire.

Charlie's eyes widen, but he says nothing. His father CURSES, rips his ticket and throws a tout's GOLD SHEET to the ground.

DANNY LOGAN (cont'd)
Did you see her coming out of the gate?! Like a bolt of lightning.

CHARLIE
She had "cheap speed". Breaks from the gate looking like a sure winner, but fades when it counts.

DANNY LOGAN
I know what "cheap speed" means. But word had it that she was a lock. Everybody had her.

CHARLIE
Not everybody.

Charlie reveals the ticket showing the THREE HORSE - TO WIN.

DANNY LOGAN
Where'd you get that?

CHARLIE

When you went to the john I had a
guy buy it. Sorry Pop.

DANNY LOGAN

Never mind sorry-- What made you
pick the long shot?

CHARLIE

I figured I'd take a shot. The
jockey never placed out of money on
a wet track wearing purple silk.

His father turns to look at Charlie's three horse in the
winner's circle draped in purple silk.

DANNY LOGAN

That wasn't in the Gold Sheet.

CHARLIE

No. At lunch I read the race
results in the Post. After a few
weeks, I can see patterns.

DANNY LOGAN

Race results in the cafeteria?

CHARLIE

They encourage us to read.

DANNY LOGAN

Books, Charlie. Not race results.
You been cutting school, too? You
been cutting to come to the track?!

CHARLIE

No!

Danny waits--

CHARLIE (cont'd)

A couple of times.

DANNY LOGAN

Jesus, Charlie. No more. Hear me?!

CHARLIE

Okay. No more. I swear.

DANNY LOGAN

How much you bet?

CHARLIE

Ten bucks...

DANNY LOGAN

You hit for three hundred?! May your mother and God forgive me. Who do you like in the seventh?

CHARLIE

Two, Five, Three.

DANNY LOGAN

I ask for a horse-- you give me a trifecta?

CHARLIE

To get you out of the hole you've been digging yourself all day.

Danny shoots Charlie a look--

EXT. AQUEDUCT RACETRACK - LATER

CLOSE ON: The TWO, FIVE, and THREE HORSES as they cross the wire in trifecta fashion.

Danny is stunned, then jubilated, as he embraces Charlie.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I was just getting started.

EXT. STREET - PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Charlie speaks on a public phone across from his high school.

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

Dime on three in the third. No. On the nose. Yeah, I'm sure.

INT. BOOKMAKING DEN - SOMEWHERE IN NEW YORK - SAME TIME

BIG MAUI, a bookmaker built like an island, wears an Italian horn under his loud HAWAIIAN SHIRT.

BIG MAUI (INTO PHONE)

Shouldn't you be in school?

CHARLIE (OVER PHONE)

You a bookie or a Priest?

Big Maui laughs, jotting down Charlie's bet on a slip.

BIG MAUI

Okay, okay. You're down for a dime.

MONTAGE:

SHOTS OF: Various New York tracks: Charlie standing alone at the fences watching RACES at....

SUPER: Yonkers Raceway

SUPER: Aqueduct Raceway

SUPER: Monticello Raceway

His reactions SCREAM winner-- he knows he's got the touch.

EXT. BELMONT RACETRACK - DAY

Rare Earth "GET READY"

SUPER: The Triple Crown, Belmont Park - June 11, 1977

In the mud, 'SEATTLE SLEW' crosses the finish line to become the first undefeated winner of The Triple Crown.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

By the time 'Seattle Slew' crossed the finish line, I had already won enough money to pay for Columbia.

CHARLIE turns to AVERY-- now SEVENTEEN and even more beautiful. She jumps up and down, falling in Charlie's arms.

CHARLIE (V.O.)(cont'd)

But that day, my biggest win was Avery's heart.

An awkward moment leads to a kiss.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ON THE RADIO: Stevie Wonder "SHOO-BE-DOO-BE-DOO-DA-DAY".
 AVERY lays in Charlie's arms. The walls covered by POSTERS including Ali standing over Joe Frazier, Secretariat crossing the finish line, Joe Namath beating Baltimore in Super Bowl III, Willis Reed holding the 1970 NBA Championship Trophy.

AVERY

We've been best friends for ever...

CHARLIE

Right-- wasn't like we didn't wait.

AVERY

Wait? I'm seventeen...

CHARLIE

Well, I've known you since second grade. So we waited ten years.

She looks across the room at a CRUCIFIX on the wall.

AVERY

Have you any idea how many Hail Marys we're looking at?

CHARLIE

I don't think I'd cop to this.

AVERY

You're probably right. But still-- What I gave to you, Charlie...

He kisses her.

CHARLIE

I have something to give you, too.

He reaches under his bed and reveals a gift wrapped present. Avery smiles, removing a card attached to the gold wrapping.

AVERY

(reading)

To Avery, my diamond in the rough.

She smiles-- kisses his lips. She unwraps the gift paper and opens the jewelry box inside. Her eyes widen as she holds up a diamond cross on a gold necklace.

AVERY (cont'd)

Are you crazy?! Are they real?

CHARLIE

They'd better be or someone's gonna get a beating.

He slips the necklace on her neck. She looks in the mirror behind his closet door. The diamond cross sparkles. In the mirror's reflection, her eyes drift to A LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE FROM COLUMBIA on a wall covered by PERFECTLY CUT clippings of basketball and baseball box scores lined border to border.

AVERY

Charlie-- how did you pay for this?

CHARLIE

With cash. What? Do you think I stole it? I'd never do that.

AVERY

I didn't think you stole it. I just don't know how you could afford it.

In the closet, SIX SHOE BOXES line the top shelf above PERFECTLY folded clothes meticulously separated by color. He takes one down and hands it to Avery. It's filled with CASH.

AVERY (cont'd)

My God. How much is this?

CHARLIE

Sixty-four twenties, forty-eight tens, and sixty-two hundreds. Approximately.

Avery looks up at the remaining five boxes.

AVERY

Are they all filled with...?

CHARLIE

I own two pair of shoes. I'm wearing one of them.

AVERY

All this from betting on horses?

CHARLIE

And basketball, baseball, football. A little blackjack once in a while.

AVERY

That money makes me nervous. You should keep it in a bank.

CHARLIE

How would I explain a six figure deposit? I'd have to have the largest paper route in the world. I have a better place to put it. The tuition department at Columbia.

AVERY

I thought you got a scholarship.

CHARLIE

I did-- this is for your tuition. You got accepted to Columbia and that's where you should be going.

AVERY

Charlie, I can't let you pay for my tuition. I'm going to go to City.

CHARLIE

I'm just looking out for my interests. You think I'm gonna risk some guy stealing my girl? I want you where I can watch you. Please, Avery-- let me do this for you.

Avery smiles-- she holds him as tears fall from her eyes.

AVERY

This is crazy. How am I supposed to explain it to my mother?

CHARLIE

Tell her I hit the Lotto. Tell her I hit it a few times a week.

They both laugh-- but Avery is still clearly scared.

AVERY

Can't you get in trouble gambling like this?

CHARLIE

A million guys gamble in this city. I'm just a kid betting lunch money. Who's gonna be interested in me?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alice Cooper "SCHOOL'S OUT"

SUPER: Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn - July 1977

A BLACK CADILLAC drives a tree lined street. KIDS play stickball, MEN sit on stoops, MOTHERS stroll carriages.

EXT. DELICATESSEN - CARROLL GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

TWO MEN escort a nervous EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD Charlie from the back seat of the Cadillac into an old storefront entrance.

INT. DELICATESSEN - CONTINUOUS

A dingy joint with faded wallpaper and checkered tile floors. Charlie walks past MEN in booths that wear the wardrobe and makeup of the neighborhood-- players on the underworld stage.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

If you were a gambler who breathed
New York air, it was impossible not
to have heard of Jackie Gazzo.

In the last booth, JACKIE GAZZO, 60s, button down cashmere
sweater, reads "La Divina Commedia" by Dante Alighieri. A
BLACK BRIM HAT sits next to him on the table.

A BODYGUARD motions Charlie to sit. A WAITER places an
espresso cup in front of Jackie. As he sips his double shot,
he stares at Charlie with a lifetime of experience behind
dark and unforgiving eyes. It feels like an eternity. Then--

JACKIE

So you're the kid?

CHARLIE

I'm Charlie Logan.

JACKIE

Do you know who I am?

Charlie replies with just a slow nod.

JACKIE (cont'd)

Do you know why you're here?

Charlie shakes his head.

JACKIE (cont'd)

I hear someone hit a twenty-to-one
at Aqueduct for ten large, I don't
blink. I hear someone hit for fifty
large laying nine on the Jets, I
don't blink. But when six books
tell me that for a year straight
some kid is beating them up with
lousy dime bets on basketball,
baseball and football, while
hitting three races a day, five
days a week, you know what I do?

CHARLIE

Blink?

JACKIE

No. I wonder. I wonder why this kid
ain't betting ten dimes.

CHARLIE

To avoid this very thing.

JACKIE

Winning smaller amounts won't draw less attention. A few big wins just makes a moment of fame. But winning day in and day out makes a legend.

CHARLIE

Not looking to be a legend-- just looking to keep making a living.

JACKIE

How'd you like to bet with somebody else's dime? They win, you win. They lose, you get a free ride.

CHARLIE

Sounds too good to be true.

JACKIE

It's only too good to be true if you're a fluke. You a fluke, Logan?

Jackie throws the challenge like a hundred mile an hour fastball aimed at a rookie's heart.

CHARLIE

I ain't no fluke.

JACKIE

This ain't no nickel and dime play. My kind of action moves the line. Your luck gonna run out tomorrow?

CHARLIE

My picks aren't based on luck. Before I choose heads over tails, I flip that quarter a thousand times.

JACKIE

So that's it, you flip quarters?

CHARLIE

The quarters are just a metaphor.

JACKIE

I know what the fuck a metaphor is. I'm an anomaly. What's your excuse?

CHARLIE

I grind it out until I find that one thing that no one else had the patience to find. Then I take that missing piece and solve the puzzle.

JACKIE

And what puzzle is that, kid?

CHARLIE

Who's gonna win, who's gonna lose... and by how much.

JACKIE

You think it's just that simple?

CHARLIE

Not simple. Fact. I grind. I win.

JACKIE

Fifty-two and a quarter percent or better, kid. That's what you need to stay ahead. Not too many guys I know can keep that going past two Sunday sermons, but if you can, I'll make you fatter than a million Santas at an all-you-can-eat.

CHARLIE

I'm running about seventy percent.

Jackie lets that percentage settle in. A smile comes to his face. It's brief-- but it's clearly satisfying.

JACKIE

I knew your grandfather, Billy.

CHARLIE

I never had the pleasure...

JACKIE

The way he went was a fucking crime. If you can't trust Irish cops-- I mean who the fuck can you?

CHARLIE

Word was they were Italian.

JACKIE

That so? Well, I still prefer Brooklyn. That neighborhood you come from-- too many funerals.

The meaning behind that statement rests on Charlie's shoulders like a thousand pound weight of reality.

JACKIE (cont'd)

So whadda you say you and me make a little change together?

CHARLIE

I'm planning on going to Columbia.

JACKIE

I'm not a fucking guidance counselor, but if it don't interfere with our thing, then go.

CHARLIE

I appreciate your offer--

JACKIE

This place look like J.C. fucking Penny? This ain't a job offer. It's the gateway to your chosen way of life-- and I'm the gatekeeper.

Jackie puts his hand on Dante's book as if to quote.

JACKIE (cont'd)

Life appears filled with opportunity. In time, most turn to shit. If blessed, one will be grand enough to light the pathway to a better life. This is your one.

FREEZE FRAME ON: Charlie and Jackie face to face in the booth as Charlie weighs the most monumental decision of his life.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Our defining moments are when we're born and when we die. In between are consequences of our choices.

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - MORNING

STUDENTS cross the massive campus in upper west Manhattan.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Ivy League life or a gambler's life?

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - LIBRARY - DAY

Charlie and Avery sit on the steps eating lunch together.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

While Avery majored in journalism, I majored in business.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie sits in a large lecture hall. STUDENTS watch with lost looks as A PROFESSOR speaks from a podium.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
But not the kind they taught at
Columbia.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAWN

COMMUTERS empty out onto platforms. Charlie approaches a CONDUCTOR who holds a NEWSPAPER under his arm. He slips him a ten spot as he takes the paper and quickly moves on.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Jackie started me off working
college games. To stay ahead of the
morning line I needed an edge.
Train conductors passed through
small college towns every day.

Charlie moves from platform to platform repeating the ritual with a dozen more conductors.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Local papers reported which star
was arrested for DUI, or caught
with his pants down at a motel.

INT. COLLEGE BASKETBALL ARENA

A PLAYER stands at the foul line. One second remaining on the clock. A HUSH comes over the CROWD. The player looks lost.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
So I knew which players had
problems weighing on their minds.

The ball hits the front of the rim.

MONTAGE OF COLLEGE BASKETBALL ARENAS

COLLEGE STUDENTS CHEER at games all over the country. In each crowd, ONE STUDENT holds an 8 mm CAMERA shooting the game.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And for twenty bucks, plus postage,
I made deals with students across
the country to film school games.

OTHER STUDENTS hide under bleachers filming TEAM PRACTICES.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - MEDIA ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie sits surrounded by stacks of mailing envelopes. 8 mm film runs through a PROJECTOR and onto a hanging white sheet.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

By the third week of the season, I
knew the weaknesses and strengths
of most NCAA Division one teams.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAWN

A frigid day. Charlie buys the Daily News, Post, and Times from a newsstand, then crosses the street to a greasy-spoon.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Charlie reads NBA statistics in the Post. The SALT & PEPPER SHAKERS draw his attention. The pepper a fraction higher, he empties just enough on a napkin to even them out.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I'd become the guru of basketball.

MATTY, 20, slick, leather jacket, baby face, street wise, with a DICTIONARY under his arm, takes the seat facing Charlie. A toothpick moves rapidly in his mouth as he talks.

MATTY

Logan, right?

CHARLIE

Charlie.

MATTY

I'm Matty-- Jackie's nephew.

CHARLIE

Yeah-- I've seen you hanging around
the Deli. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

MATTY

My uncle wants me to work with you.
You know-- in case you need
anything.

CHARLIE

Like what?

MATTY

It's just in case-- you know? So nobody gets any stupid ideas.

CHARLIE

What kind of ideas?

MATTY

Hypothetical ideas. But just in case they ain't-- give the picks to me and I'll see they get to Jackie.

CHARLIE

Is there something wrong?

MATTY

No-- Hey, you a Mets or Yankee fan?

CHARLIE

Mets.

MATTY

I love the Yankees, but I'm from Queens. A guy could lose a finger wearing a Yankees cap there.

CHARLIE

I'll take it to my grave. What's with the dictionary?

MATTY

I look up a word everyday-- expand the vocabulary a bit.

CHARLIE

That's good. What's today's word?

MATTY

Surreptitious.

CHARLIE

Hush-hush.

Matty double checks the dictionary--

MATTY

Good guess. Now just slide the picks to me surreptitiously.

Charlie folds a piece of paper with his picks written on them inside a N.Y. Post then he slides it over to Matty.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Matty walks out to the street and hands the NEWSPAPER to a GUY in a waiting TOWN CAR. The car immediately speeds off.

EXT. STREET - ELSEWHERE - SOON AFTER

The TOWN CAR stops at a corner. A GUY walking by in a warm-up suit takes the NEWSPAPER from the driver and crosses the street.

As the GUY reaches the opposite corner, ANOTHER GUY in a warm-up suit steps out of a phone booth and takes the NEWSPAPER, then walks down a subway station stairway.

INT. SUBWAY - PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

THE GUY hands the NEWSPAPER to ANOTHER GUY on the platform who then jumps on an express marked CARROLL GARDENS BROOKLYN.

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - NEWSSTAND - SOON AFTER

The GUY walks up the stairs to a corner newsstand where he hands the NEWSPAPER to A GUY working behind the counter.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Now, this whole procedure might appear laced with paranoia, but the word paranoia means "psychotic disorder marked by delusions of persecution or of grandeur."

A BLACK CADILLAC stops at the corner. A HOOD jumps out, steps to the newsstand. The NEWS GUY gives the Hood the NEWSPAPER.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Forget the grandeur and focus on "persecution." That's the word that makes paranoia a realistic emotion.

A moment later, the Hood reenters the Cadillac with The Post in hand and the car quickly pulls away from the curb.

EXT. DELICATESSEN - CARROLL GARDENS - SOON AFTER

The Hood steps out of the black Cadillac and enters the deli.

INT. DELICATESSEN - CONTINUOUS

The Hood hands the NEWSPAPER to ANOTHER GUY who walks to Jackie's booth. Jackie opens the newspaper, gives Charlie's picks a quick look, then the paper travels again.

EXT. SOCIAL CLUB - BROOKLYN - SOON AFTER

A BLACK CADILLAC stops. A GUY the size of Mount Rushmore leans into the passenger window, takes the NEWSPAPER and walks inside the club as the Cadillac quickly pulls away.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Depending on traffic, the whole
procedure took about two hours.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

With a nod, the Guy walks past a BODYGUARD and the NEWSPAPER lands on a table with FIVE LARGE MEN eating lunch.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
What I didn't know then was it was
all designed to get my picks safely
into the hands of these five guys.

Charlie's PICKS are passed around to each of the Five Men. They look more like bank board members than a betting crew.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Gambling is fly paper to
degenerates, but winning cleanses
better than pure bleach. It can
transform street whores into
thousand-dollar call girls and
wiseguys into world class bankers.

Each of the Men gives a nod of approval, then one dials on a beat-up public phone on a wall next to a cigarette machine.

WISEGUY (INTO PHONE)
It's us. A hundred dimes. Ready?

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Just so you follow-- each "dime" is
a thousand dollars. Yeah, that's
right, a hundred grand. And this
went on every day. Get the picture?

WISEGUY (INTO PHONE)
(checking his watch)
Go!

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - SOMEWHERE USA - CONTINUOUS

A MAN in the booth hangs up, then quickly dials a number.

EXT. VARIOUS PHONE BOOTHS - ELSEWHERE IN THE USA

SHOTS OF: MEN standing near public phone booths holding archaic looking Motorola pagers. They read coded instructions, then quickly place phone calls.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Within three minutes, 'movers', crews of more than twenty men, simultaneously placed bets on behalf of these five whales, with bookmakers across the country

INT. VARIOUS BOOKMAKING DENS - SOMEWHERE USA - CONTINUOUS

SHOTS OF: BOOKMAKERS in dens from New York to California, jotting down the same series of bets on betting slips.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

By the time bookmakers figured out that a crew was behind a bet, it was too late. The bets were down.

A MONTAGE OF:

FOUR WISEGUYS in bowling shirts sit at a bowling alley bar.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

There were lots of competing crews. 'The Crushers' from Kansas City...

SIX WISEGUYS sit at a bar in an Irish Pub.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

'The Clovers' from Chicago...

FIVE WISEGUYS sit in the back oven room of a bagel store.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

'The Bagel Boys' from Miami... Just to name a few.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

The five men sit in the booth eating their daily feast.

SUPER: 'The Doughboys', Brooklyn.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

But in the eighties, no crew beat "The Doughboys". From that pay phone, they triggered enough action, created enough steam, to crush bookmakers from New York to Vegas.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - CLASSROOM - DAY

Charlie sits in a large lecture hall filled with GEEKS. THE PROFESSOR uses a pointer as he explains a chalkboard of mathematical equations fit for a rocket scientist.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

It was damn near perfect.

He appears to be doodling in his notebook, but a closer look reveals that he's already solved the equations.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Who would've ever thought that an Ivy League kid sitting in Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics was responsible for the bet that had triggered it all.

CLOSE ON CHARLIE: He checks the clock on the wall which reads 11:00 AM-- a small smile appears across his face.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

By eleven, the deed was done.

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - DAY

SUPER: Columbia University - May 1981

GRADUATES and their FAMILIES enjoy festivities on the grounds of one of the most prestigious universities in the country.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

During my four years at Columbia, I made Jackie and "The Doughboys" more money than most people dream of.

In cap and gown, Charlie stands with his father and Avery for a PHOTO. He notices Matty approaching with a few WISEGUYS.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
I'll be right back.

Charlie walks quickly to intercept Matty. They embrace as the WISEGUYS stand a few yards away.

MATTY
Congratulations!

CHARLIE
Thanks. Who are those guys?

MATTY
Alumni. (laughs) You're a big shot now. They came to pay respect.

CHARLIE
Isn't that usually at funerals?

MATTY
Why wait? (laughs) That your dad?

CHARLIE
Listen Matty, I don't think...

MATTY
No sweat.

CHARLIE
I don't mean nothing by it.

MATTY
Forget it-- I understand.
Avery's looking pulchritudinous.

CHARLIE
Beautiful... Yeah, she is. I'll catch up with you later. Okay?

MATTY
You got it.

Charlie returns to join Avery and his father. Danny looks Matty's way. Matty nods respectfully, then walks away.

EXT. CARROLL GARDENS - BROOKLYN - DAY

A BODYGUARD follows as Charlie and Jackie walk a tree lined street.

CHARLIE
I gotta tell them.

JACKIE

If you love someone, the truth
isn't worth the risk.

CHARLIE

So, I just lie to them?

JACKIE

Lie to yourself, then your eyes
will do the lying for you. Tell
them an investor is backing you.

CHARLIE

In what business?

EXT. ALL-NITE-LONG LAUNDROMAT - DAY

A storefront operation sits on a neighborhood street.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

It should've been named "All-Nite-
Long-Money-Laundering-Mat." It
cleaned more cash than clothes.

INT. ALL-NITE-LONG LAUNDROMAT - CONTINUOUS

Coin operated machines spin as WOMEN drop dimes and nickels.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Guys like me don't file a 1040,
occupation, "oddsbreaker". I became
a legit tax paying business owner.

An old Hispanic man, HECTOR sweeps and cleans up lint.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I had one employee, Hector, who I
met the very first day I walked in.

Charlie shakes Hector's hand, smiles, then exits.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I never saw Hector or visited the
laundromat again. I guess you could
say the place ran itself. Good
business that laundry business.

INT. LOGAN RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Avery sits with Charlie and his father finishing dinner.

AVERY

I think this laundry business sounds like a great opportunity.

CHARLIE

It's just the one location, but they want to open in each borough.

AVERY

Well, when you open one in Hell's Kitchen I expect a discount.

CHARLIE

Spin cycle is on me.

Avery laughs, but it's clear Danny wants the subject changed.

DANNY LOGAN (TO AVERY)

How did your interview go?

AVERY

It went well, thanks.

CHARLIE

It went very well. Tell him.

AVERY

Charlie--

CHARLIE

You're looking at the newest writer for the New York Post.

DANNY LOGAN

That's great, Avery.

AVERY

I'm just a stringer.

CHARLIE

Not for long. It just takes one great story to break a career.

DANNY LOGAN

(raising his glass)
To Avery.

AVERY

And to Charlie...

They all touch glasses-- but Danny passes up Charlie's. Avery and Danny exchange a look. Avery starts to clear the table.

CHARLIE
I'll help you...

AVERY
No. I have it. You two talk.

Avery stacks a few dishes, then exits to the kitchen.

DANNY LOGAN
So the laundry business?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

DANNY LOGAN
Now listen closer than you ever
have. Jackie will steal your one
chance before you know it's gone.

CHARLIE
How do you know about Jackie?

He makes a fist so that his faded WESTIES tatoo can be seen.

DANNY LOGAN
You forget where I grew up? You got
no idea what you're dealing with.

CHARLIE
He's fronting all my bets. I'm
getting a free ride on his dime.

DANNY LOGAN
There's no free rides with Jackie.
He turns Columbia grads into train
jumping hobos. Ever see what they
do when someone can't pay up?

CHARLIE
That's only if you lose. I've been
crushing. Hitting over the fences.

DANNY LOGAN
I lost my dreams thinking like you.
I borrowed from one shark to pay
another's vig. That's why I sold
the car and your mother's jewelry.
We would've been on the street. But
for them, that's better than
killing you. Because if you're dead
you can't place another bet.

CHARLIE
How did you get out from under?

DANNY LOGAN

I found a way out. Looking back, I should've let them take everything, because in the end, they take your money and then they take your soul.

CHARLIE

I'm not ever going to let this get that far. I'll cut myself loose.

DANNY LOGAN

Sure you will. And what about Avery? What does she know?

CHARLIE

She knows some, but not all.

DANNY LOGAN

If you intend to marry her, don't start out with a lie. You can't mend deception. Tell her. If she walks, you'll spare her this life. If she stays, she'll stand by you through anything. Understand?

CHARLIE

Yes, sir.

DANNY LOGAN

I haven't set the best example Charlie. But you can't always live by example. We have to make our own way. The sins of a father should never be paid by the son.

CHARLIE

What sins?

DANNY LOGAN

When I was young, me, your grandfather, others, we fought for these streets. I thought it meant something. But you can't carve a life with a fist. You have to open your hands to work. I tried to make things right. I'm still trying. Don't make the same mistakes I made. Forget about Jackie.

Charlie nods-- Danny puts his hand firmly on his shoulder.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

SUPER: Hell's Kitchen - December 1981

With the help of a couple of WISEGUYS from Jackie's crew, Charlie and Matty move furniture into a small apartment.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Feeling unstoppable, I ignored my
 fathers warning. Jackie set me up
 in an apartment on fifty-first.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

In a cabinet we see a sampling of Charlie's idiosyncrasies. Canned goods stacked labels forward and separated by color and brand. On the counter, quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies all lined up in perfectly even stacks.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 I told Avery the laundromat paid my
 rent. She knew the score, but she
 wanted to hear the truth from me.

Avery and Charlie eat dinner together. On the table, the SALT & PEPPER SHAKERS are perfectly even. A bottle of red wine pours along with the conversation until they both empty.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I waited too long. It surfaced all
 on its own.

INT. ELEVATOR - UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

Avery, dressed to the Nines in a sexy outfit, holds a bottle of wine as Charlie leans unenthusiastically against the wall.

CHARLIE
 You know I hate these things.

AVERY
 We'll have fun. Besides, my friends
 from work think I made you up.

CHARLIE
 I'll let them pinch me, then we'll
 go.

AVERY
 Very funny.

INT. UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT - PARTY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Avery enter the nicely furnished digs. Meets and greets with Avery's COWORKERS from the Post. Clean cut group of well-bred thinkers. In the living room, WILLIAM, NATHAN, KENNETH & CHESTER sit playing a friendly game of POKER.

KENNETH

We need a fifth. Come sit down.

CHARLIE

Thanks, but I'll just watch.

AVERY

Go ahead, Charlie. Play a while.

CHARLIE

Avery...

Avery nudges him, then she walks into the kitchen to join the GIRLS. Charlie reluctantly takes a seat as William deals.

WILLIAM

It's two hundred a man. Too steep?

Charlie nonchalantly reaches into his pocket and peels off two hundreds from a FAT ROLL that catches unwanted attention.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Avery and the women watch. The friendly game no longer friendly. Chips stacked high in front of Charlie. William, looking like he's holding the hand that will save himself, pushes his last stack into the pot, then lays down FOUR OF A KIND. Avery catches Charlie's eye, she shakes her head, "no", but Charlie can't resist playing his ROYAL FLUSH. William fumes--

WILLIAM

Good game. Beginner's luck?

CHARLIE

Haven't played in a while.

WILLIAM

When was the last time you cheated?

The room falls silent. All eyes on Avery and Charlie.

CHARLIE

That's quite an accusation with five players, four decks and the fact that I haven't taken my elbows off the table in three hours.

WILLIAM

I don't know how you did it. I just know you did.

CHARLIE

I've never had to cheat to win--

WILLIAM

The saint from Hell's Kitchen.

CHARLIE

There are no saints from Hell's Kitchen. Lucifer likes it that way--

Charlie reaches for the pot--

AVERY

Charlie, just leave the money...

CHARLIE

No. But I'll give him a chance to win it back.

AVERY

Charlie, please, let's just go--

CHARLIE

If you can't watch this-- I'll meet you downstairs.

Charlie's ice. Avery stands frozen-- the room just as cold.

WILLIAM

I'm listening.

CHARLIE

Draw the top three cards off any deck. If the first two combined are higher than the third, you take the pot. If they're lower-- it's mine.

William's FRIENDS urge him to take what looks like a lock. His smile fades as he draws a card off the top of the furthest of four decks, turning over a TWO OF SPADES. A sigh of relief as he turns over the EIGHT OF DIAMONDS to make TEN. The THIRD CARD still sits on top of the deck.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
I'm gonna give you an out. Let's
forget this and split the pot.

WILLIAM
Why? I've got ten. I'm not the
sucker who needs an out.

William's friends laugh. He salivates over the pot until
Charlie reaches over and turns up the THIRD CARD. An ACE OF
HEARTS stabs like a knife.

CHARLIE
Next time a "sucker" offers you an
out, you ought to think a moment.
Because the real sucker in the room
might just turn out to be you.

Charlie stands as he pushes the POT over to William.

CHARLIE (cont'd)
That's twice I beat you--

Leaving the POT behind, he takes Avery's hand as they exit.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Avery and Charlie stand on the street-- the game lingering.

AVERY
That was some show up there. You
want to tell me how you did that?

CHARLIE
By kindergarten I could remember
names, addresses and phone numbers
of every kid in my class. By ten I
could watch a movie once, then
recite every line. And by sixteen I
could remember every card dealt
from four decks in sequential
order. I remember things even when
I don't try to. Six, B, nine, two.

AVERY
What is that?

CHARLIE
The medallion number of the cab we
took here tonight.

AVERY

Christ, Charlie, suddenly I feel like I don't even know who you are.

CHARLIE

You know me. And you've known about this part of me for years. You just chose to ignore it. Cash in the shoe boxes, the diamond cross, the tuition for Columbia...

AVERY

You finally threw that back in my face. I never asked for that money.

CHARLIE

I know that. I was just making a point. And for the record-- I paid your tuition because I love you.

AVERY

But not enough to fold your hand. I have to work with those people. Do you know what Monday will be like?

CHARLIE

I told you I didn't want to play.

AVERY

So you cleaned them out to get back at me?

CHARLIE

No-- I cleaned them out because that's what I do.

AVERY

Oh you mean you're not in the laundromat business?

His lie surfacing, leaves him speechless.

AVERY (cont'd)

No more games. You ready to start telling it straight? I need to know where my life is heading if I stay.

CHARLIE

If?

AVERY

You think it's easy wondering whether you're alive or dead until I feel you crawl into bed at night?

(MORE)

AVERY (cont'd)
You could be anything you want.
Instead you put everything at risk.

CHARLIE
What you see as risk, is instead,
my immunity from an ordinary life.

AVERY
Is that how you see life with me?

CHARLIE
Of course not. Can we just forget
this night?

AVERY
It's not just this night. I can't
live everyday in the unknown.

CHARLIE
Life is all unknown.

AVERY
Not for you. You never make a move
without knowing the odds. You never
leave anything to chance. I think
you knew that ace was there before
we ever arrived. And you know at
this very moment if you can or
can't go on without me.

CHARLIE
I never want to be without you.

AVERY
Then you have to trust me enough to
tell me everything. Even the things
I won't want to hear.

CHARLIE
I do trust you. And I don't trust
easy. But the truth won't make life
perfect.

AVERY
I don't want a perfect life-- I
want a life of perfect truth. Can
you give me that?

He nods, taking her in his arms for a long kiss.

INT. DINER - DAWN

The Who "WHO ARE YOU" plays through the next seven scenes.

Charlie sits in a booth with his ritual assortment of newspapers. He eyes the perfectly even SALT & PEPPER SHAKERS.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

When things do appear perfect, you
can bet that something is wrong.

TWO MEN, built like tanks, eat at the counter. GOLD DETECTIVE SHIELDS under their jackets, they keep glancing at Charlie.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

They stood out like Hasidic Jews at
an Irish wake.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

As Charlie exits, he dumps the newspapers in a trash can, before running down the subway station steps.

INT. SUBWAY - PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

As Charlie boards a LOCAL, three train cars away, the TWO DETECTIVES are in pursuit. As the train car lights flicker between stations, Charlie runs from car to car. At the next station, he slips in with the exiting MASSES. The Detectives search the jam-packed platform, spotting him as he reaches the stairs. They make chase through the crowd.

EXT. STREET - COLUMBUS CIRCLE - DAY

Darting up the subway stairs, Charlie quickly hails a taxi.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Charlie stuffs a hundred through the money tray, then lies flat on the seat. The DRIVER looks in his rearview mirror.

CHARLIE

Cut through the park.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

The Detectives appear from the subway station stairwell looking in every direction for a sign of Charlie.

INT. DINER - SAME TIME

Matty enters. He looks for Charlie, then notices the SALT & PEPPER SHAKERS at his usual booth. Tops screwed off-- salt emptied onto the table.

INT. TAXI - MOVING - SAME TIME

Charlie stays low as the taxi weaves through traffic. He stuffs another hundred in the driver's money tray.

CHARLIE

Turn on your off duty light and
just keep driving around.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Matty exits and gets in the back of the waiting TOWN CAR.

MATTY (TO DRIVER)

We got a problem.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Charlie enters breathing heavily. He turns on the LIGHT. On the couch are the TWO DETECTIVES from the diner. ERIC CASEY and DENNY O'BRIAN sit relaxed with their jackets opened. Their GUNS rest in worn holsters.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

You kept us waiting.

DETECTIVE CASEY

How ya doing Charlie?

Charlie stands frozen in fear, a stranger in his own home.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

My partner asked you how ya doing?
You didn't shit your pants, did ya?

Charlie shakes his head.

DETECTIVE CASEY

Good for you. Most times we visit a
virgin, he just shits his pants.
Nice place. We like the wallpaper.

Every inch of the wall is covered by newspaper clippings. Thousands of box scores form a gambler's wallpaper.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

So here's the situation. We know all about you. That's fucked for you, and good for us. Now if you want to get to know us better it's gonna cost you. And if you don't want to get to know us better it's gonna cost you. Understand?

CHARLIE

No...

DETECTIVE CASEY

No? How about we beat your fucking head against the wall a few hundred times? You think that will help?

CHARLIE

(taking a step back)

No. Look, I don't mean any disrespect. I just don't understand why you're here. So just tell me...

The Detectives take an awkward beat of sudden paranoia.

DETECTIVE CASEY

You wearing a wire?

CHARLIE

No. No, of course not.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

You little prick...

O'Brian stands, grabs Charlie, and pats him down for a wire.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN (cont'd)

He's clean.

DETECTIVE CASEY

Okay, listen real close kid. We know you're Jackie's boy. We know you're feeding him picks-- taking down serious dough for doing so.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

Now a guy sailing like you don't need headwinds or rough water. You need to walk the streets without looking over your shoulder-- so you can sleep nights.

DETECTIVE CASEY

Think of us like sleeping pills.

CHARLIE

You're here because you want money?

The two detectives exchange a look and start laughing.

DETECTIVE CASEY

You can drop the act, kid. Relax.
We're gonna do real well together.
From now on, when you collect,
we're right there. Nobody is gonna
rip you off with us protecting you.

CHARLIE

I own a laundromat. The change goes
into a lock box. Then my guy Hector
takes it to the bank in broad
daylight. He's never had a problem.
So excuse me if I don't understand.
Who do I need to be protected from?

Casey, up off the couch, hits Charlie in the head with an
open fist. Charlie goes down hard to the ground. O'Brian
steps in stopping Casey from hitting Charlie again.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

Now you understand who?

Charlie stunned, nods, then suddenly O'Brian pulls his GUN
from his holster and WHACKS him across the face, drawing
blood. He forces his GUN'S BARREL into Charlie's mouth as
Casey walks to a STEREO and FLIPS the switch on LOUD.

DETECTIVE CASEY

That should cover the shot.

MUSIC BLARES-- PANIC ENSUES. Charlie can't shake the barrel
from his mouth. O'Brian's knee in his chest cuts off his air.
His eyes widen as the barrel begins to turn. Is this it?

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

You think Jackie owns these
streets?! The fuck he does! We do!

Casey steps in-- coaxing O'Brian to remove the GUN. As
O'Brian's knee comes off his chest, Charlie GASPS for air.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN (cont'd)

We're what stands between Jackie
and twenty years in a cage. You
operate on our streets you pay the
pad. You fucking got that?!

Charlie nods. Casey shuts off the stereo, then lifts Charlie to his feet, patting him hard on the back. Half friendly, half threatening.

DETECTIVE CASEY

See? That wasn't so hard. Okay, tomorrow a guy is gonna come to collect. He's not like us. No social skills. A real prick.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

I once seen him break a windshield with a guy's face, then made him watch while he fucked his girlfriend.

DETECTIVE CASEY

You got a girlfriend kid?

Charlie looks Casey's way-- staying silent, not a nod or shake of the head, but his eyes scream with fear.

DETECTIVE CASEY (cont'd)

Now you understand how this works?

Charlie nods.

DETECTIVE CASEY (cont'd)

Good.

O'Brian holsters his gun. Then as he and Casey exit, Charlie runs straight into the bathroom to throw up.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie hugs the bowl-- A KNOCK at the door nearly sends him into cardiac arrest.

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie looks through the peephole-- Matty staring back. Charlie opens the door, quickly locking it after he enters.

MATTY

What happened? Your face looks like you went ten with Ali.

CHARLIE

Two gold shields inside the diner. I thought I lost them, but I get home and they're sitting in the fucking living room like roommates.

MATTY
They were here?

CHARLIE
Did you not just hear me? They just
fucking left! I'm surprised you
didn't run into them.

MATTY
I took the stairs.

CHARLIE
They want money. Protection money.

MATTY
So what did you tell them?

CHARLIE
Does my face look like we had a
back and forth? I don't pay these
guys-- I'm in a box.

MATTY
They just like to put the scare in
you. Cops are always whoring off
us. The cost of doing business.

CHARLIE
I'm not doing business. As of
today, I'm closed.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie throws clothes into a bag as Matty watches in angst.

MATTY
You're leaving because of the cops?
Don't even sweat this. We own them.

CHARLIE
Yeah?! You own them?! Then you got
a fucking communication problem!
They never got the fucking memo!

MATTY
Okay, okay. Maybe we don't know
these two. But we'll find them.

CHARLIE
They stuck a fucking gun in my
mouth. You ever had one? Huh?

MATTY

No. Okay. But pull it together.

Matty picks up the bedroom phone.

CHARLIE

Who are you calling?

MATTY

My uncle. He'll send someone to see about these two fucks.

CHARLIE

No. Put down the phone! Put the fucking phone down Matty!

Matty puts it back in the cradle.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I have no stomach for this kind of life. I'm just a guy with a head for numbers. I'm no mobster.

MATTY

Mobster? Nobody says mobster. You're watching too many movies.

CHARLIE

Find that funny? I didn't leave the diner today-- could be your girlfriend they warm up to fuck.

MATTY

They threatened Avery?

CHARLIE

It was no threat. If this was a day she was here cooking dinner-- who knows what might have happened.

Charlie closes his overstuffed suitcase.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I don't know what I was thinking. I own a laundromat I've been to once.

From his closet, Charlie removes SIX SHOE BOXES filled with CASH. He dumps three into a duffle and hands Matty the rest.

MATTY

There's three feet of cash here.

CHARLIE

Take a foot for the trouble.

MATTY

What trouble? We're friends. I'll hold it until you come back.

CHARLIE

In eight hours, call my father. Give the other two boxes to him. And tell him he was right.

MATTY

Right about what?

CHARLIE

Everything.

MATTY

Where you gonna go?

CHARLIE

Don't know. Upstate, maybe Canada. But first I'm going to Avery's.

MATTY

What do I tell my uncle?

CHARLIE

Just tell him you couldn't find me.

MATTY

You know how much trouble I'm buying if I lie to Jackie?

CHARLIE

Half as much than if everyone found out you're really a Yankees fan.

Charlie fakes a missing pinkie finger. Matty smirks a nod.

INT. DELICATESSEN - CARROLL GARDENS - MIDNIGHT

Matty sits nervously across from Jackie.

MATTY

I don't know. I checked everywhere.

JACKIE

You have your mother's eyes. She couldn't lie very well either. Don't test your fate on bloodline. You're a nephew, not a son.

MATTY

He's gone. About eight hours ago.
But I don't know where. Honest.

JACKIE

Why?

MATTY

Two detectives followed him home
from the diner. They said something
about wanting him to pay the pad.

JACKIE

He runs because of scumbag cops?
What the fuck were their names?

MATTY

I don't think these cops were ours.
They didn't give a shit about who
Charlie knew-- and they made it
clear they'd be back.

JACKIE

That so? Seems respect... this day
and age-- we still can't be civil!
Some people-- some cops, only
understand one thing! One way--

Jackie SLAMS his fist-- Matty jumps. His eyes fill with fear.

MATTY

Uncle Jackie--

JACKIE

It's odd how you call me, "Uncle
Jackie" whenever you're scared.

MATTY

He just ran because--

Jackie puts his finger over his own lips-- gesturing Matty to
stop talking. Matty stops-- frozen in Jackie's icy stare.

JACKIE

Running is futile. Fear follows
wherever you go. Looms patiently
until you think you're safe. Then,
like a snake, it strikes to
paralyze-- so you never run again.
Now go find him-- bring him to the
midnight ferry.

MATTY

Uncle Jackie--

JACKIE

This isn't a conversation. Do it.

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - NIGHT - LATER

A black Cadillac sits parked on the deck as the FERRY moves across the black water between Manhattan and Staten Island.

Charlie stands on the deck shivering in the cold night air as he holds the outer rail. He looks back-- knowing he is under the watchful eye of a HENCHMAN a few feet behind. Out of the darkness, Jackie appears wearing his BLACK BRIM HAT.

JACKIE

I love it at midnight. Especially when we get here-- the halfway point. Twelve and a half minutes into the ride. It's so black it could be the center of the ocean. A priest once told me if I listened closely I'd hear screams for mercy from the bodies that lie below. But as many times as I've been out here, I've never heard so much as a whisper. So much for confession.

Charlie looks down at the black bay. Only the sound of the ferry moving through the water can be heard.

JACKIE (cont'd)

You ever been to Staten Island?

CHARLIE

No.

JACKIE

Some say it's the lost borough. The city's stepchild. But not to me.

CHARLIE

So we're going ashore?

JACKIE

Unless you want to get off here.

Charlie looks his way--

EXT. STATEN ISLAND APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER

A dilapidated building overlooks an abandoned shipyard.

INT. STATEN ISLAND APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE CAMERA MOVES through a sparse two-bedroom dump. SHADY CHARACTERS sit around watching football games and horse races on small, crappy looking black and white TV sets.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

If you needed to, you could've packed the place up in two minutes. Everything about it was low rent. Except for the cash, which came in all day-- and all night.

TWO HOODS eat corned beef sandwiches. Their bellies hang, but their eyes are lasers tracking RUNNERS that come and go with bags of CASH. FOUR MORE HOODS stand watch with PUMP GUNS.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bad Finger "COME AND GET IT"

In a makeshift COUNT ROOM, HOODS dump endless paper bags of CASH onto a table. Charlie, mesmerized, stands next to Jackie as denominational piles are wrapped in rubber bands.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

This room. The count room-- was what this life was all about. I stared at the cash like an addict eyeing mounds of cocaine.

Jackie looks Charlie's way-- breaking the trance as he motions for him to follow him out.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Jackie and Charlie stand on the platform of the fire escape. SEAGULLS fly over. In the distance we can see Manhattan.

CHARLIE

What's that smell?

JACKIE

Fresh Kills Landfill. You get used to it. After a while-- we can get used to anything. The smell of garbage, of death. I've never adjusted to the smell of cops though. When something's in the air, you can't run from it. Like this life, it follows you.

CHARLIE

I'll leave no trail to follow.

JACKIE

Yeah? You did real good losing those two cops today.

CHARLIE

Even more reason why I want my life back. I'm not good at this part. I just want to be left alone.

JACKIE

To do what? Get a day job? (laughs) You're a lifer kid. The needle's been in for so long you can't feel it anymore. You don't know what it means to truly be alone. It's colder than you imagine out there.

CHARLIE

I'll adapt.

JACKIE

If I had a dime for every guy who said that, it would be more than worth it to me to dig them all up.

CHARLIE

Christ... What the fuck, Jackie? I mean-- I've always been loyal to you. Always. I've made you God knows how much over the years--

JACKIE

You don't gotta sell me on you, kid. I'm your biggest fan. But these cops see-- there are some that just don't know when to quit. They'll feed off you-- bit by bit until your skin opens and your veins bleed green.

CHARLIE

I thought you had the cops under control. I thought you owned them.

JACKIE

Not these guys. I don't know them. They want more than just a sensible premium. I can't allow it. I do and every dirty cop will come to feast.

CHARLIE

Then what do you plan on doing?

JACKIE

Vegas. Ever been?

CHARLIE

I've never even been on a plane.

JACKIE

You'll really enjoy it. They warm your nuts in first class.

CHARLIE

What part of this aren't you getting? I want out.

Jackie's voice elevates as he speaks. Each word strong enough to dismantle the building brick by brick.

JACKIE

What part aren't you getting?! That cash inside. You think that's a lot? For a taste of that they'd kill you. But for a taste of what's really out there-- everyone you know gets killed.

The blood rushes from Charlie's face. Suddenly he holds the fire escape railing to keep from falling.

JACKIE (cont'd)

I'm just saying this to make a point. But everything I'm saying-- is true. So this is a very strong point. You gotta leave New York for a while.

CHARLIE

Are those cops going to kill me?!

INT. BLACK CADILLAC - EARLIER THAT NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

Jackie in the passenger seat. A HOOD at the wheel. In the back, JAMMED between TWO HOODS, we recognize the FAT MAN from the bowling alley in Queens-- A GOLD SHIELD on his belt.

FAT MAN

No doubt about it. They'll milk him for a while, then if you don't deal, they'll kill him just to prove they're not fucking around.

JACKIE

Who the fuck?

FAT MAN

The two who visited Logan, Denny O'Brian and Eric Casey, are highly decorated, but loose cannons. They work on a special OCCB task force with Anthony Pazanti and Raymond Loeb who came over from the Bronx.

JACKIE

Who they working under?

FAT MAN

Frank Hall. Vice Enforcement.

JACKIE

Can we get to him?

FAT MAN

He's a straight arrow. But I reached out to a friend who works the Bronx. He said Pazanti's fucking crazy. He and Loeb beat a few investigations. Ask me-- somebody put together a real nice foursome.

Jackie tosses FAT MAN a small envelope.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Charlie's heard all he needs to hear. He turns to Jackie--

CHARLIE

When do I leave?

JACKIE

Tomorrow. Matty too. This will give me time to deal with the cops. We keep our same deal-- just a long distance call.

CHARLIE

How do you know we'll be safe there? What if these cops follow.

JACKIE

To New York cops, Jersey is a journey-- Vegas is the moon. Besides, we have friends out there.

CHARLIE

It's not just me you know...

JACKIE

What she'll see just hanging around
could send us away for a long time.

CHARLIE

I'll vouch for her.

JACKIE

I knew you would-- that's why I
already booked her a ticket, too.

CHARLIE

You're hard to figure.

JACKIE

That's why I'm still breathing.
Good luck in Vegas-- 'Irish'.

CHARLIE

Irish?

JACKIE

I think it fits. You good with it?

CHARLIE

Sure. I'm good with it.

Jackie puts out his hand-- Charlie grips it firmly.

EXT. SOUTH STREET TERMINAL - LOWER MANHATTAN - LATER

As the ferry docks, Charlie steps off alone-- suitcase and
DUFFLE in hand. Matty is waiting at the end of the dock,
leaning against his 1977 RED MONTE CARLO.

CHARLIE

You look surprised to see me.

MATTY

One never knows...

Matty tosses Charlie's suitcase and duffle into the MONTE
CARLO'S TRUNK. Inside is the shoebox of cash Charlie gave
him. Matty opens it and dumps the cash into the duffle.

INT. AVERY'S APARTMENT - LOBBY ENTRYWAY - SOON AFTER

Matty holds a LOUISVILLE SLUGGER as he and Charlie enter.
Charlie presses a security buzzer to Avery's apartment.

AVERY (OVER INTERCOM)
(out of a sound sleep)
Who is it?

CHARLIE (INTO INTERCOM)
It's me. I need to come up.

The BUZZER sounds. Charlie and Matty enter the main lobby.

MATTY
I'll wait here. Just hurry up--

CHARLIE
This isn't asking her to a movie.

MATTY
We're on a seven a.m. out of
Kennedy. With or without her.

Charlie nods-- passes up the elevator to take the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Charlie climbs the last stair, Avery is waiting. She notices the swelling on his face from the cops' beating.

AVERY
What the hell happen to you?

CHARLIE
I'll explain everything, but not
now. Your mom home?

AVERY
Ohio, visiting her sister.

CHARLIE
Good. I gotta leave town for a
while. I want you to come with me.
Can you be ready in an hour?

AVERY
An hour? It's three a.m.--

CHARLIE
Pack only what you need for a few
days. We'll send for the rest.

AVERY
You're not asking-- you're telling
me, aren't you?

CHARLIE

Yes.

He takes her hand and as they enter he closes the door.

INT. LOBBY - SAME TIME

Matty practices his batting swing. As he comes around, he sees TWO MEN in street clothes enter the entryway.

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE ANTHONY PAZANTI, 40s, stocky, face of danger, and DETECTIVE RAYMOND LOEB, 50s, weasel, check the name RHODES written on a piece of paper against the resident directory. They use a locksmith's kit to open the security door. Before they can spot him, Matty runs up the stairwell-- BAT in hand.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Matty BANGS on Avery's door. Charlie opens it with Avery standing behind him. It's obvious she's been crying.

MATTY

We got two fans on their way up--

CHARLIE (TO AVERY)

Stay inside and no matter what you hear-- don't open that door!

Avery DEAD BOLTS her door. The SOUND of the elevator moving up from the lobby sends Charlie and Matty into the stairwell.

Pazanti and Loeb exit the elevator, GUNS IN HAND. As they near Avery's apartment, Charlie appears from the stairwell. The COPS make chase as Charlie runs back down the stairwell.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

As Pazanti and Loeb reach the lobby, a waiting Matty WHACKS PAZANTI knee level, sending him hard to the ground. His GUN slides. Loeb tries to react, but Matty's second SWING nails him. Charlie quickly grabs their GUNS, tossing them to Matty.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Dead! I'm looking at two dead guys!

Matty KICKS Pazanti's busted knee cap-- he cries out in pain.

MATTY (TO CHARLIE)

Go get her!

Charlie charges up the stairwell. Matty looks down at the COPS near passed out from the pain. He COCKS the HAMMERS. Would he off two cops?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie BANGS on Avery's door-

CHARLIE

It's me-- open up!

A NEIGHBOR'S door opens, then quickly shuts. Avery's door opens. In her hand, one SUITCASE. Charlie kisses her, takes the case, then guides her toward the back stairwell exit.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

If someone truly loves you, there's
no end to what they'll do for you.
At least for a while.

INT. CAESARS PALACE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

SUPER: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas - June 1983

FREEZE FRAME RESUMES ON: Charlie sitting where we left him, at the blackjack table. The DEALER about to deal his card.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

We laid low for over a year-- Then
I decided to slay Caesars.
To kill, the stab must be so deep
that a floor boss' tourniquet can't
stop the cash from bleeding. My ice
pick is all the way in. Time to
flat line this casino's heart--

ECU ON: THE FIVE OF SPADES.

Charlie hits TWENTY-ONE. The CROWD ERUPTS IN CHEER. Blood rushes from the Floor Boss' face as he picks up a phone.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Now for sure it's time to leave.

Charlie slides A FIVE HUNDRED dollar chip to tip the DEALER, then he picks up tray after tray filled with ONE HUNDRED, FIVE HUNDRED, AND ONE THOUSAND DOLLAR CHIPS.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Only now I can't.

As he turns to leave, he finds himself sandwiched between TWO SUITS wearing Caesars Palace BADGES.

ANGLE ON MATTY AT THE CASINO BAR dressed in a pinstripe suit. He throws back a shot as he moves to follow Charlie.

INT. CAESARS PALACE - CASINO MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Matty sit in a back office facing the CASINO MANAGER, while TWO SECURITY GUARDS stand at their side.

CASINO MANAGER
You must think yourself quite the smart guy. Count your way into our shrine, take us for six figures.

One guard FLASHES POLAROIDs. He hands them to the Casino Manager who turns the photos toward Charlie and Matty.

CASINO MANAGER (cont'd)
You two are done in this town.

CHARLIE
I'm not wired. It's not illegal to count if all I use is my mind. I know the law. You can't detain me.

CASINO MANAGER
You worked-over my dealers.

MATTY
Maybe you need a better training program. Pay... him... out.

CASINO MANAGER
Maybe we take you both downstairs and gut... you... inside... out.

The two security guards remove BILLY CLUBS from their belts.

MATTY
Then you would need a fucking road map just to find yourself.

CASINO MANAGER
Hey, Slick-- What's with you? You know somebody? Somebody knows you?

CHARLIE
Jackie Gazzo.

Matty looks Charlie's way. The Casino Manager falls silent.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I just said it without thinking.
 But the blood rushed from his face.
 We were not alone in the desert.

The Casino Manager sets a BLACK BAG on his desk.

CASINO MANAGER
 Whatever visions of grandeur you
 had are now in this bag. Invest
 well, because from here on, I don't
 give a shit who you know. Don't
 come here again. I know people,
 too. Understand?

Charlie nods, then exits-- Matty grabs the BAG OF CASH.

MATTY
 Have a nice night fucko!

The Casino Manager flips Matty off as he exits laughing.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Barred from Caesars, which in Vegas
 means, barred from the strip.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

The GLITTERING LIGHTS of endless rows of casino billboards
 advertising star studded shows illuminate the strip.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 I took the casino manager's advice
 and invested the money well.

SHOTS OF: INCONSPICUOUS CARS sit in parking lots of A DOZEN
 DIFFERENT CASINOS with single MALE AND FEMALE SENIOR CITIZENS
 behind each wheel. Clipped to their belts-- MOTOROLA PAGERS.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I set up a crew of thirty and
 began to move the line inside.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Charlie drops a coin in the phone, then dials a number.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 From a phone booth on the outside.

SHOTS OF: PAGERS SOUNDING OFF, signaling each SENIOR CITIZEN to exit their car and enter designated CASINOS.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Perfect employees-- trustworthy,
with plenty of time on their hands.

INT. CASINO SPORTSBOOKS - CONTINUOUS

SHOTS OF: SENIORS place \$5,000 limit bets at VARIOUS CASINOS.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
The key-- identify the games where
the line is off. A half a point in
football can mean a seven percent
edge. Three points? Do the math.

ON A BIG BOARD: The sudden heavy action causes the betting line to move on a New York Jets vs Philadelphia Eagles game. GAMBLERS hurry to the cashier windows to place bets.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I didn't care how many followed me.
Once I was down, my line was a
lock.

FACES of GAMBLERS staring at the boards pondering the spread. CASHIER'S deadpan eyes watching, waiting, seen it all before.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Suckers have to guess. Which way to
go? Out the fucking door if they're
smart. Because what I do is odds-
breaking--

INT. STARDUST HOTEL - A BACK ROOM - DAWN

A GROUP OF MEN drink coffee as they sit around a dimly lit table. Note pads in front of them with long lists of games.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And whose odds am I trying to
break? These guys, the guys who set
the line. Bookmakers across the
country waited for the call.

ONE MAN lifts a phone from its cradle and dials.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
And another day begins...

EXT. VEGAS - THE DESERT - NIGHT

A TOWN CAR comes to a stop on a single lane highway.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I'd place action with local books
so I'd get an honest line. Then
I'd send this old-timer, Jackie set
me up with, to collect.

MICKY MURPHY, 60s, with a BROOKLYN DODGERS CAP on his bald head, limps up to the driver's side of the TOWN CAR.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Micky Murphy-- honest as a saint.
So superstitious, he'd never
collect without his lucky hat on.

TWO HOODS INSIDE THE TOWN CAR suddenly pull GUNS aiming them at Micky. He shakes nervously. The HOODS laugh.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
They'd always fuck with Micky. He'd
play nervous to make them laugh,
but he knew he had nothing to fear.

CLOSE ON: MATTY behind the wheel of a CADILLAC SEVILLE parked further down the highway. A GUN on his passenger seat.

THE HOODS hand Micky a LARGE BROWN PAPER BAG before driving off. Micky peaks into the bag. LOTS OF CASH.

INT. NEVADA SAVINGS AND LOAN - MORNING

Micky enters with the BROWN PAPER BAG. TELLERS wave, nod. A ritual as he signs a signature card at the vault entrance.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Every Friday Micky made the drop.

INT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

A cute FEMALE BANK EMPLOYEE unlocks a VAULT BOX. She carries the SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX for Micky into a small, private, viewing room. Then she gives Micky a smile and closes him in.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Not once did anyone question him.

INT. SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Micky jams CASH from the bag into an already stuffed DEPOSIT BOX. He marks something down on a NOTE PAD inside the box.

INT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

THE FEMALE BANK EMPLOYEE slides the SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX back inside the vault and returns the key to Micky with a smile.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Micky had no family, few friends,
and one hobby-- crossword puzzles.

EXT. BUS STOP - IN FRONT OF MICKY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Micky sits on a bus stop bench doing a CROSSWORD PUZZLE in front of an old but well maintained SAND CASTLE APARTMENTS.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
The bus stopped in front of his
apartment and in front of the bank.
It ran on time every day. Except on
one particular Friday--

INT. CHARLIE'S VEGAS HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Al Green "LET'S STAY TOGETHER" plays on the box as Charlie and Avery make love.

The room is sparsely decorated giving us the sense the furniture would be left behind when it was time to go.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATTY sits on the couch with his feet up on the coffee table watching TV. A PIZZA BOX, a SIX PACK and a GUN at his side.

EXT. CHARLIE'S VEGAS HOUSE - SAME TIME

SIX UNMARKED CARS come to a quiet halt in front of a track home in a builder's community of upper working class Joes.

TWO FBI AGENTS approach as TEN others surround the property, GUNS in hand. One of the TWO AGENTS POUNDS on the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATTY jumps-- grabs his GUN. Through the window, he sees the letters FBI on the flack jackets moving along side the house. He quickly hides his gun in the zipper of the couch cushion.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie throws on a pair of pants.

CHARLIE
Stay right here...

Frightened-- Avery nods as he bolts--

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Matty at the front door.

MATTY
Feds-- about a dozen.

CHARLIE
(looking through peephole)
What the fuck?

MATTY
I don't know.

THE POUNDING AT THE DOOR CONTINUES.

CHARLIE
Don't do anything to get us shot.

CHARLIE OPENS THE DOOR-- TWO AGENTS now in their face.

FBI AGENT HUDSON
Charlie Logan?

CHARLIE
Yeah?

FBI AGENT HUDSON
(flashing credentials)
FBI-- I'm Agent Hudson, this is Agent Taylor. We just have a few questions-- May we come in?

Charlie looks at Matty-- then nods to the agents. HUDSON and TAYLOR enter, followed by two other AGENTS.

INT. DINNING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The two Agents stand nearby as Charlie and Matty take a seat with Agents Hudson and Taylor at the dinning room table. Avery enters, forcing a smile as she sits next to Charlie.

FBI AGENT TAYLOR
Sorry to disturb you Miss Rhodes.

AVERY
How do you know my name?

Taylor just smiles. Hudson removes a note pad from his coat.

FBI AGENT HUDSON
When did you first meet Micky
Murphy?

Micky's name ricochets off every wall.

CHARLIE
Who?

FBI AGENT HUDSON
Maybe this will jog your memory.

Off Hudson's nod, an AGENT enters carrying a SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX, placing it down in front of Charlie, Avery and Matty.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I knew right then we were fucked--

Hudson removes the NOTE PAD Micky kept in the box to jot down the deposit entries. He turns the pad towards them. Written next to a series of SIX FIGURE NUMBERS-- CHARLIE LOGAN.

FBI AGENT HUDSON
Seems the contents belong to you.

CHARLIE
I have a common name. I'm sure if
Mr. Murphy takes a look at me he--

FBI AGENT HUDSON
That's not going to be possible.

EXT. BUS STOP - IN FRONT OF THE BANK - (FLASHBACK)

As he exits the bus, Micky waves good-bye to the DRIVER.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 I always factor in the unexpected.
 A last second shot at the buzzer, a
 hail Mary pass with no time left.

Suddenly, a GUST OF WIND lifts his LUCKY DODGER CAP. As Micky reaches for it, THE BROWN BAG falls to the sidewalk, his cap into the street. Without looking, he steps off the curb--

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 But this?-- Come on.

The 3:02 bus SCREECHES to a halt-- MICKY LOOKS UP-- his hand on his lucky cap as the bus SMACKS him DEAD to the ground.

INT. CHARLIE'S VEGAS HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matty, Avery and Charlie try not to react to Mickey's demise--

CHARLIE
 I told you I didn't know the man.

FBI AGENT HUDSON
 That's too bad--

Hudson flips open the box-- ALL CASH.

FBI AGENT HUDSON (cont'd)
 Three hundred seventy-one thousand.

Matty shifts. Avery stares at the CASH. Charlie stares at his sweat and blood. Hudson repeatedly CLICKS his BALLPOINT PEN.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Feds love to prosecute tax evasion.
 Fucking unbelievable. Robbed by a
 guy holding a ballpoint pen.

FBI AGENT TAYLOR
 That's a lot of jack. Maybe you did
 a good deed for the guy and you
 just don't remember.

CHARLIE
 I'd remember if I met Micky Murphy.
 Seven, nine, three, six, zero.

FBI AGENT TAYLOR
 What the hell is that?

FBI AGENT HUDSON
 My agent number off my credentials.

Taylor and Hudson exchange a look-- neither can believe it. Then off Hudson's SIGNAL - SAFETY DEPOSIT BOXES are brought in ONE BY ONE until FOURTEEN are side by side on the table. HUDSON FLIPS OPEN EACH BOX-- ALL FILLED WITH STACKS OF CASH.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I had done well, but not this well.
Suddenly tax evasion sounded a lot
better than getting whacked for
losing money I never knew I had.

Charlie, Matty and Avery stare at the SEA OF GREEN. You could hear a pin drop on a cloud of cotton.

FBI AGENT HUDSON

Take a wild guess?
(savoring the moment)
Three million. Three big ones.

Avery trembles, reaching for Charlie's hand to steady her as her eyes SCREAM for an explanation. Hudson CLICKS his pen.

FBI AGENT HUDSON (cont'd)

How's your memory now?

CHARLIE

Fucked. What's your name again?

Hudson stands, buttons his suit coat, then sits on the table as close as he can to Charlie. His smile now clearly gone--

FBI AGENT HUDSON (TO CHARLIE)

We know Micky Murphy was a bagman
for you. And we know you work for a
syndicate back east. An Ivy League
graduate with no record. Work with
us and we can cut the deal of the
century. Point us to who's on the
other end of this money and you and
your two friends walk away clean.

CHARLIE

I want this on the record.

Hudson unbuttons his suit jacket-- tasting blood.

MATTY

Charlie?

FBI AGENT HUDSON

Sure-- on the record.

CHARLIE

Fuck you and the fucking money! You have nothing. A Fed don't offer a deal unless he knows he's just standing there holding his dick.

Matty breathes-- he can't help but smile from Charlie's out of characteristic reaction, but Avery looks white as a sheet.

FBI AGENT HUDSON (TO AVERY)

You'd better talk some sense into him. You think we'll just go away? Ten years for tax evasion alone. Tack on gambling, racketeering-- My way you have a life. Nobody can help you but us.

AVERY

You're asking him to confess to something he knows nothing about.

Charlie looks her way-- her loyalty never more clear.

FBI AGENT HUDSON

Go ahead, play stupid girlfriend. You know he's no saint. I'm walking with three million in mob money. In a few days you're going to wish you talked. I won't need a warrant, just a shovel to dig you all up.

(to Charlie)

If you love her, call me, if not she's gonna take the fall with you. On the record-- that's fucked up.

Hudson takes a last look at Avery. He lays his BUSINESS CARD down in front of her, then he and Taylor exit. ONE BY ONE AGENTS remove the DEPOSIT BOXES until the FRONT DOOR SLAMS.

CHARLIE

We gotta straighten this out fast.

MATTY

Only two ways straightens out three million. Whack, or get whacked.

Avery looks at Matty-- frozen by fear.

CHARLIE

Matty! We ain't whacking anybody. Tell her--

MATTY

We ain't whacking anybody. Okay?
Just don't plan anything long term.

CHARLIE

Enough! We gotta get out of here.
Vegas is over for us.

AVERY

I'm not going anywhere.

MATTY

Well, I ain't waiting around here
so I can turn up in a dry river
some warm summer day. I'm packing.

Matty exits. As soon as his bedroom door SHUTS--

CHARLIE

Don't pay attention to him. You
know I'd never do anything like
that. He's just talking--

AVERY

I don't give a shit about him. This
is the moment of truth for you and
me. Don't think, just answer. Did
you know about the three million?

CHARLIE

No. No way-- I only knew about the
three hundred grand.

AVERY

When you needed me, I never
wavered. In a moment's notice, I
gave up The Post to write
obituaries at The Sun just to be by
your side.

CHARLIE

I know--

AVERY

Let me finish. I know you're no
saint. I grew up with you. I'm from
the same neighborhood of hoods, but
now I need to know-- are you ever
going to walk away from this life?

CHARLIE

If you asked me an hour ago, I might have said I can walk away at any time, but now, even if I wanted to, it will never be that easy again.

Avery picks up Agent Hudson's CARD off the table--

AVERY

You heard what he said-- if you want out, all you'd have to do is call and this life is behind us.

CHARLIE

You want me to trust an FBI agent?

AVERY

No-- you're right. Matty and his Uncle's hoods are a better bet. Charlie Logan-- the stand up guy.

CHARLIE

I've never crossed anybody in my life who's ever done right by me. And I don't intend to start now.

AVERY

And what about me? About us?

CHARLIE

You think telling them what I know is a ticket out of this life? Do you know the life span of a rat?

AVERY

I'll bet it's a lot longer than a stand up guy.

She puts down Hudson's card and starts to walk away.

CHARLIE

Where are you going?

AVERY

To pack. Just what I need for a few days, right? We'll send for the rest-- isn't that the drill?

Charlie shamefully nods-- She SLAMS the bedroom door. He picks up Hudson's card. A few moments later, Matty reenters.

MATTY

Don't take this wrong, but do you think she'd ever go to the Feds?

CHARLIE

Would you ever rat me out?

MATTY

Of course not.

CHARLIE

Don't question her loyalty unless you question your own. All I care about now is getting us back home.

MATTY

We can't fly commercial. FBI will be watching the airports. I know a somebody's, somebody with a private jet parked in the desert.

CHARLIE

Can we trust this somebody?

MATTY

All I know is, for ten large he'll fly us to a field in upstate New York. And he knows if he fucks up, I'll have him killed for free.

CHARLIE

Okay-- set it up.

INT. PRIVATE JET - FLYING - NIGHT

Steppenwolf "Magic Carpet Ride"

Avery sits next to Charlie in a plush private jet. The look on her face says it all as THE CAMERA PANS to Matty sleeping. His head rest-- two hundred pounds of WHITE POWDER in plastic bags.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Guys with jets parked in the middle of the Mojave don't work day jobs. They don't ask questions either. Twelve hours later we were home.

INT. DELICATESSEN - CARROLL GARDENS - DAY

Charlie and Matty sit with Jackie in the back booth.

CHARLIE

If we'd known about the other cash,
we could've taken precautions.

JACKIE

A bus hits Micky-- in front of the
very bank-- that kind of bad luck
precludes any kind of precautions.

CHARLIE

How come you never told us Micky
was holding for 'The Doughboys'?

JACKIE

It was on a need to know basis. I
didn't even know.

CHARLIE

Tell it to us straight-- do you
think you can straighten this out?

JACKIE

If it's already in their minds to
clip you, then there's nothing I
can do. But you have one thing
going for you-- you've made them a
lot of dough. Otherwise, they'd
just chop you up to be on the safe
side. But with these guys it's not
only about money. It's if they
think you left a trail the Feds
could follow.

CHARLIE

There's no trail.

JACKIE

Says you--

MATTY

You should've seen Charlie work the
Feds. It was beautiful. When he was
done, they knew they had nothing.

JACKIE

The hot sand make you stupid? They
got three million. FBI wants to
find something, they will. They got
high tech shit. They could be
watching us from a satellite.

MATTY

Fuck--

JACKIE

Yeah-- fuck. And women got a whole other set of tools. Eventually they all talk. Where's the girl?

CHARLIE

Don't worry about the girl.

JACKIE

I'm not the one to worry. First name out of her box will be yours.

MATTY

What about those cops we had on us?

JACKIE

They moved uptown-- whoring off Colombian drug dealers.

CHARLIE

So what do we do now?

JACKIE

Go home. When I know, I'll call. With them nothing is grey. It's either cool or run for your life.

Charlie and Matty nod-- their fate in Jackie's hands.

INT. AVERY'S APARTMENT - LOBBY ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Charlie looks up and down the resident directory. His frustration evident as he makes a few attempts at the BUZZER next to an EMPTY NAME PLATE before finally exiting the lobby.

INT. BLACK CADILLAC - PARKED - NIGHT

A HOOD at the wheel. Jackie looks into the rearview mirror to speak to Charlie and Matty who sit in the back.

JACKIE

It took some doing, but you got a pass--

MATTY

Christ! Thank you, Uncle Jackie!

CHARLIE

Thanks, Jackie--

JACKIE

What the hell-- we're family.
(beat) Strange, I never thought I'd
ever say that to a Mick.

CHARLIE

I never thought I'd ever hear that
from a Guinea.

Matty looks Charlie's way-- "shit"! Not a sound. Even the
DRIVER nearly shits himself until Jackie breaks up laughing.

JACKIE

Three million is a lot of coin.

MATTY

All that matters is we ain't
getting whacked. NBA starts up,
we'll make back the three. You know
Charlie when it comes to hoops.

CHARLIE

Let's not jinx this thing.

MATTY

I'm just saying we're golden on the
hardwood.

JACKIE

I rented you a loft downtown. It's
better than working from your old
neighborhood. Okay with that?

CHARLIE

Sure-- Okay.

JACKIE (TO MATTY)

Give me and Charlie a minute.

Matty respectfully kisses Jackie's cheek as he exits.

JACKIE (TO CHARLIE) (cont'd)

I didn't just vouch for you two. I
stood up for you. It's saying my
life and your life is the same. Now
I don't know what the Irish have
that's equivalent to that, but with
Italians, that's as good as it
gets.

CHARLIE

Both our blood runs red. My word is
all I have and you have it. Someone
takes from you-- they take from me.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
Someone hurts either of us, we
answer with one bullet. With the
Irish, that's as good as it gets.

Jackie nods--

INT. DINER - NIGHT

We recognize Detectives O'Brian, Loeb, and Pazanti eating in
a booth. Casey enters and joins the others.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Guess who's back? Matty and that
fucking 'Irish' kid, Logan.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Those two are fucking dead--

DETECTIVE CASEY
Not so fast-- Jackie's offering
thirty thousand a month to stay
clear of them and 'The Doughboys'.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Fuck him. If he's offering thirty,
you can bet he'll pay fifty, sixty.

DETECTIVE CASEY
I don't think so-- You know Jackie.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
Someone hits those fucks on payday,
he'll wish he had paid us better.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Why wait for someone?

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
Hitting 'The Doughboys' is suicide.
Pay days they send five-- six cars
with a platoon of firepower. We hit
'The Doughboys' we start a war.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
What if we just hit a whale? Send
Jackie and 'The Doughboys' the
message-- They don't up the pad,
they'll be next.

DETECTIVE LOEB
It would take a big fucking whale
to shake the trees above Jackie.

DETECTIVE CASEY

Fucking Jackie looks at Logan like a son. Put the scare on Logan and we'll own Jackie's attention.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Logan move enough cash to make it worth the risk?

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

Word is-- he moved seven figures in Vegas. Fucking kid's an Orca.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Then the next time he collects, lets put a spear in the fuck.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

To time a hit just right, we'd have to be on him twenty-four-seven.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Not necessarily. We just need a way to know where, when and how much.

INT. ORGANIZED CRIME CONTROL BUREAU - DAY

Pazanti stands in the office of task force leader DETECTIVE FRANK HALL, 50s, tough, no-nonsense. He reviews an investigation request for a wiretap and surveillance.

DETECTIVE HALL

This is a lot of man hours.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

We get 'The Doughboys,' we destroy a multi-million dollar operation.

DETECTIVE HALL

Just remember that this ain't the Bronx. Manhattan South's my division and I don't go for no cowboy shit. Understand?

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Understand. No cowboy shit.

DETECTIVE HALL

You got six weeks to build a case.

Hall signs, giving his consent.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - DAWN

A simple no frills loft near Battery Park in lower Manhattan. BASKETBALL box scores and articles cover nearly every wall. Charlie sits on a couch as Matty paces in front of him.

MATTY

What do you mean you can't? Jackie just dug us out from hell. You want back in?

CHARLIE

I'm trying. My head's all fucked up. I need to know she's okay.

MATTY

You want her to be okay-- start making back the three million.

CHARLIE

In Vegas I never even took her to see Sinatra because we worried Feds might be photographing everybody. We had boxcars of cash, that we couldn't spend. It's crazy. No wonder she wants no part of me.

MATTY

Maybe you have lost it. Maybe she took your heart and your brain.

CHARLIE

Fuck you.

MATTY

No, fuck us. You don't get your shit together, you, me and Jackie are sharing a closed casket. No fucking "Danny Boy" about it.

CHARLIE

I need some time to clear my head.

Matty reads an old box score taped on the living room wall.

MATTY

We ain't got time. Is this just some bullshit excuse? If you lost your touch-- just say so.

CHARLIE

I ain't lost my touch.

MATTY

Yeah? Five grand says you can't remember March third, nineteen-seventy-eight. Come on sucker--

CHARLIE

Washington over Detroit, one-twenty-four to one-o-eight. Atlanta over Houston, one-thirty-three to one-ten. Boston over New Orleans, one-sixteen to one-thirteen, LA over Phili, ninety-six, to ninety-five and Phoenix over Milwaukee, one-thirty-three to one-twenty-six.

MATTY

Got you! Phoenix over Milwaukee, one-thirty-eight to one-twenty-six.

CHARLIE

Look again. Chinese food got on the three, makes it look like an eight.

Matty looks closer-- sure enough Charlie was right.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

That's five large you owe me.

MATTY

What are you gonna do with it? You can't spend it anyway, Loverboy.

THE PHONE RINGS. Charlie picks up, then after a second, a DIAL TONE.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Dressed in telephone repairmen jumpsuits, O'Brian and Casey work on the switch box, tapping into Charlie's line. As O'Brian finishes tieing in, he shoots Casey a smile--

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

We're in.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

SUPER: Greenwich Village - October 25, 1985

Matty and Charlie sit at the table. Matty piles a wad of cream cheese onto a bagel as Charlie dunks his into a coffee.

MATTY

You dunk a donut, not a bagel.

Charlie shoots him a look, then submerges his entire bagel. They exchange grins. Matty reads a DICTIONARY as he eats.

CHARLIE

What's the word?

MATTY

Adumbrate.

CHARLIE

To give hint or indication of something to come.

MATTY

Good guess college boy--

CHARLIE

Thanks, dropout.

MATTY

You think your head's clear enough to place some action today?

Charlie hands him a piece of paper with the picks.

CHARLIE

Call these in to 'Dead Eddy' for us, then call them into Jackie.

MATTY

It's only our fucking lives at stake, so I hope you're sure.

CHARLIE

I'm always sure-- Unless you want to take a crack at it.

Matty laughs-- It's good to be back in business.

INT. BOOKMAKING DEN - SOMEWHERE IN NEW YORK - SAME TIME

A sea of phones RING. MEN answer and jot down bets into grade school BLACK AND WHITE COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS.

'DEAD EDDY', pale, anemic looking, 50s, talks into the phone.

DEAD EDDY (INTO PHONE)

Hey, Matty. Where you been?

MATTY (OVER PHONE)
Resting up to take your money.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Matty sits at the kitchen table as he talks to 'Dead Eddy'.

THE SCENE IS INTERCUT BETWEEN MATTY AND 'DEAD EDDY'.

DEAD EDDY
Yeah? It's here waiting for you.

MATTY
Bulls still sitting at two?

DEAD EDDY
Like a statue.

MATTY
Give me the Bulls taking the two,
Washington laying six and Portland
laying the four. Two dimes on each.

DEAD EDDY
Two dimes each. Got it. Okay...
You're down. Let me read it back--

EXT. STREET - DOWN THE BLOCK FROM CHARLIE'S LOFT - DAWN

Matty walks towards the loft with coffees and a bag of bagels. As he walks, he notices a stream of exhaust SMOKE coming from the tailpipe of a PARKED UNMARKED VAN.

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
NBA season got off to a good start
for the Bulls last night. They beat
Cleveland by one in overtime--

INT. UNMARKED VAN - SAME TIME

The Four Detectives drink coffee and listen to the RADIO as they wait to start another day outside Charlie's loft.

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Washington and Portland were also
victorious in their debut--

O'Brian at the wheel, checks the list of games on a note pad.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
 Fuck-- He hit three out of three
 last night for six grand.

DETECTIVE CASEY
 We speared the right whale. Poor
 schmuck won't know what hit him.

The Four Detectives can't help but laugh to themselves.

EXT. UNMARKED VAN - CONTINUOUS

Matty works his way from behind park cars until he's leaning against the back of the van itself. In the reflection of the side view mirrors, he can see O'Brian at the wheel.

Matty sets the bagels and coffee on the curb, then walks up and BANGS on the driver's side window. The Four Detectives momentarily freeze, only O'Brian and Casey visible to Matty.

O'Brian and Casey jump from the van.

MATTY
 What the fuck are you guys doing?!

O'Brian FLASHES his SHIELD. Matty stands toe to toe.

MATTY (cont'd)
 Fuck you. You want to pinch me? Go ahead. I'll be out in an hour.

Matty walks back towards the coffees. Pazanti and Loeb exit the rear of the van. Pazanti LIMPS, a souvenir from Matty's bat. In a flash, he PUNCHES Matty in the face. Matty goes down hard. Blood trickles from his mouth. He tries to stand. Pazanti PUNCHES him again. Blood pours. As Matty clears his eyes, he recognizes Pazanti and Loeb from Avery's apartment.

MATTY (cont'd)
 What the fuck?!

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
 Too late motherfucker! Did you think I'd forget?!

Pazanti unleashes a few hard kicks to Matty's gut. Matty fights for air as Pazanti's shoe leather busts up his ribs--

DETECTIVE CASEY
 Easy Tony...

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
 No! I'm killing this fuck--

Pazanti pulls his backup piece strapped to his angle. No doubt Pazanti means to use it. The Four circle Matty.

MATTY

Fuck. Fuck! Hey, I let you live. I let you live motherfucker. What are you doing?! What the fuck?!

Pazanti moves to push the barrel into Matty's gut.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

You know who owns the streets?! We do-- we do!!

DETECTIVE LOEB

Not here--

Pazanti looks around-- PASSERSBY eye the melee. Matty, covered in blood-- desperation ricochets off every building.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

Charlie sits at the kitchen table reading the morning line.

Matty enters-- he quickly sets down the bag of bagels and two coffees on the counter avoiding Charlie's view--

CHARLIE

You're late-- where you been?

MATTY

Sorry. I caught a little trouble--

Matty quickly disappears into Charlie's bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matty looks in the mirror. His face swollen. He spits blood into the sink, then takes off his shirt and removes his bloody undershirt. His chest and ribs badly bruised.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Charlie opens the bag of bagels-- then feels the coffee cups. He pours both coffees into a stove pot to reheat them.

Matty returns, blood still trickles from his mouth. A new clean shirt on Matty already showing signs of blood.

CHARLIE

Jesus! What happened to you?

MATTY

I'm okay. Some moolies tried to mug me on the train. I fucked them up.

Matty takes ice cubes, holding them against his swollen face.

CHARLIE

It looks the other way around. You need a doctor?

MATTY

No. I'm okay. I borrowed a shirt and some bandages from the cabinet.

CHARLIE

When did you say this happened?

MATTY

On the way in.

CHARLIE

So you got the coffee afterwards?

MATTY

Yeah...

An awkward moment as Charlie hands him a reheated cup. Matty tries not to grab his ribs as he sits, but the pain wins.

CHARLIE

So-- what's today's word?

MATTY

Don't have one yet.

Out of character, Matty's dictionary remains closed as he bites his bagel without any cream cheese on it.

CHARLIE

I got a word-- consuetude. A mode of behaving by fixed repetition. Like a ballplayer stepping to the line, repeating his ritual before every foul shot. If he changes his ritual, I know he's questioning himself, I know he's dealing with something. Like a guy who eats his bagel without his usual glob of cream cheese. Or leaves his dictionary unopened. It makes me wonder if I can I count on him. Do I bet with him or against him?

Matty eyes his unopened dictionary-- the plain bagel in his hands. The tension between them is thick--

MATTY

History says you bet with him.

CHARLIE

I hope history proves right.

Charlie hands Matty a piece of paper with his picks. Charlie watches as Matty winces just to stand and pick up the phone.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

This time say it's for 'Irish'.

INT. BOOKMAKING DEN - SOMEWHERE IN NEW YORK - SAME TIME

Joey 'The Dice', a guy who looks the part, picks up a PHONE.

THE SCENE IS INTERCUT BETWEEN MATTY AND JOEY 'THE DICE'.

JOEY 'THE DICE'

Yeah.

MATTY

It's Matty for 'Irish'.

JOEY 'THE DICE'

'Irish'?

MATTY

What, am I speaking Chinese?

JOEY 'THE DICE'

Okay, Matty. Go for 'Irish'.

MATTY

Ten dimes. Knicks laying six.

JOEY 'THE DICE'

Hold on.

Joey covers the mouthpiece as he looks to another BOOKMAKER.

JOEY 'THE DICE' (cont'd)

I got Jackie's nephew Matty. He's ten large for some guy 'Irish'.

BOOKMAKER

Take it. He's good for it.

Joey 'The Dice' makes the entry into a composition notebook.
BOLD LETTERS-- 'IRISH'

JOEY 'THE DICE'
 Okay, Matty. Your boy 'Irish' is
 down for ten large, laying six.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

SUPER: Greenwich Village - Thanksgiving 1985

Charlie and Matty finish eating Swanson turkey dinners, then they put on heavy winter jackets.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - MOVING - NIGHT

Matty keeps checking his rearview mirror as he drives.

A HIGHWAY SIGN reads: BROOKLYN QUEENS EXPRESSWAY.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Collecting is always scary.
 Collecting six figures is daunting.

MATTY
 The new engine is sweet, huh?

Charlie eyes every detail in the car. The peace sign stickers on the radio dials, the half-broken latch on the glove compartment, the bobbing Hula girl on the dash, the picture of Jesus tucked under Matty's visor. The rearview mirror--

CHARLIE
 Where's the dice?

MATTY
 They lost their scent. Car wash was
 out of em. They'll be in next week.
 Why, does it smell bad in here?

CHARLIE
 Just don't change things, okay? Not
 on nights like this.

MATTY
 Okay. Sorry...

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Matty's Monte Carlo drives down a long, dark, narrow loading dock. Cargo ships line both sides of the pier.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

CHARLIE

This is a public place to you?

MATTY

We're picking up enough cabbage to open up a grocery store. You expect to pick it up on aisle nine? Just relax, I know these guys.

Matty reaches into the glove compartment and retrieves a THIRTY EIGHT CALIBER REVOLVER and places it on the seat.

CHARLIE

Then why'd you bring the gun?

MATTY

It makes me feel phlegmatic.

Matty cuts the lights. In the moonlight, TWO WISEGUYS stand with SHOTGUNS. A THIRD sits behind the wheel of a TOWN CAR.

CHARLIE

Confidence might not be enough. You should've brought a bigger gun.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

Matty approaches, his hands inside his coat pockets.

WISEGUY #1

Hey, Matty. Happy Thanksgiving.

MATTY

You, too.

WISEGUY #1

Do me a favor? Take your hands out of your pockets, okay?

Matty takes them out and drops them to his sides. Wiseguy #1 nods to Wiseguy #2 who then walks to the back of the TOWN CAR. He removes a LARGE DUFFLE BAG from the trunk.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - CONTINUOUS

Charlie watches nervously with clinched fists.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

Wiseguy #2 walks with the DUFFLE in hand. Before handing it to Matty, the Cadillac's HEADLIGHTS TURN ON, lighting up the Monte Carlo. Charlie blocks the LIGHT with his hand. The Wiseguy smiles, then hands the DUFFLE off to Matty. He walks back to the Monte Carlo, tossing it into the trunk.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - CONTINUOUS

Matty jumps in, shoots Charlie a wink, then puts it in drive.

CHARLIE
Should we count it first?

MATTY
Honor among thieves.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - SOON AFTER

MATTY'S MONTE CARLO travels over the bridge. The city that never sleeps, seems asleep. The bridge nearly void of cars.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
The only thing more daunting than
collecting is the drive home.

As the Monte Carlo nears Manhattan, a VAN speeds by. Suddenly it cuts in front of Matty's car, causing it to swerve. Then another VAN speeds up and boxes in the Monte Carlo.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Matty turn all directions trying to get a fix on what happened. Then, through the front windshield, they see TWO ARMED MEN in ski masks wielding semi-automatic weapons. Through the rear windshield-- TWO MORE ARMED MEN in masks.

MATTY
Fuck!

As Matty reaches for his gun on the seat, Charlie stops him.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

FOUR MASKED MEN, with SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, surround the Monte Carlo. ONE OF THE MEN moves with a slight limp.

GUNMAN #1
Don't fucking move!

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Those three words were all I needed
to hear to know they were cops.

Charlie and Matty sit frozen. Not a breath or a blink, as ONE GUNMAN takes a crowbar to the trunk and grabs the DUFFLE.

The light bridge traffic passes slowly. LOOKERS don't dare to stop, but it's enough to make The Four Masked Men quickly back away. In a matter of seconds, the two vans speed off.

EXT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - UNDER THE BRIDGE - LATER

The Monte Carlo rolls to a stop on Old Fulton Street under the overpass to the bridge.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Matty, sit soaked in sweat, shaking, still stunned from the robbery.

MATTY

Who the fuck?!

Charlie turns to Matty-- The air filled with betrayal.

CHARLIE

They were cops, Matty.

MATTY

How do you know?

CHARLIE

Because we're still alive! Question is, how'd they know about tonight! Something you need to tell me?!

Matty turns his way-- his face tells the whole story.

MATTY

I'm not sure-- not for sure-- but I think I may have met them before. That morning, on the train--

CHARLIE

The morning you said you were mugged by some moolies?

MATTY

Yeah, only it was four cops outside the apartment. Two of them were from the night at Avery's.

CHARLIE

And you don't say anything to me?!

Charlie instinctively grabs the gun off the car seat and puts it on the floor next to his feet. Matty's a fucking mess--

MATTY

What the fuck? You think I'd shoot you? You're a brother to me!

CHARLIE

Then why did you lie to me?! A month's work gone in twenty seconds. Hundred-thirty-five grand split five ways. Not bad, is it?

MATTY

You think I would set you up?

CHARLIE

You tell me what I should think.

MATTY

Fuck you. I took a beating for you. I've stood up for you since the day we met. I would never sell you out. Not for nothin', not for nobody.

Charlie wants to kill him, but they're clearly like brothers.

INT. O'BRIAN'S HOME - BASEMENT - DAWN

Still pumped from the robbery, the Four Detectives sit around a card table and stare in awe at FOUR STACKS OF CASH.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Nearly thirty-four thousand each.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

I can't fucking believe it. I'm looking at it and I still can't.

DETECTIVE CASEY

A year's salary in twenty seconds.

DETECTIVE LOEB

Logan must've hit on nearly every bet. We didn't need to rob him, we should've just bet along with him.

They all laugh as they take their stacks.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Loeb is right-- we shadow his bets.

The Detectives look Pazanti's way-- the laughing stops.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Eventually we'll be found out.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
So what? We can always use the tap
as evidence and then bust them.

DETECTIVE LOEB
What about 'The Doughboys'?

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
When this is over-- we bust them,
too. Then we put in for transfers
and forget the four of us ever met.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
We're gonna need extensions for the
wiretaps. Getting Hall on board
won't be easy.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Let me worry about Hall. Nobody
fucks this up. We run a trap and
trace on 'Irish' -- ride the fuck
to the end, then break him.

They all nod-- Pazanti lifts his beer.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI (cont'd)
To breaking 'Irish'.

They down their beers.

EXT. DINER - MORNING

A BLACK CADILLAC pulls to a stop in front of the diner.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

The diner is packed with the breakfast crowd. The Four
detectives eat in a booth as O'Brian delivers a punch line--
They all laugh out loud until they look up to find Jackie,
Matty and a Hood looking down on them. Silence falls--

JACKIE (TO MATTY)
These the cocksuckers?

Matty nods, his bravado pumped with Jackie at his side.

JACKIE (TO THE COPS) (cont'd)
Twitch, you're dead-- and I
guarantee nobody sees a thing.

The Four look at the Hood. His hands in his pockets. Even Pazanti knows better than to say anything just yet.

JACKIE (cont'd)
Thirty large a month and you rob my
boys on the fucking bridge!

A few PATRONS turn to see the commotion.

DETECTIVE LOEB
You want to lower your voice?

JACKIE
No! I don't want to lower my voice!

The diner suddenly falls silent. Patrons watch the show--

JACKIE (cont'd)
There are rules on these streets.
Whores get paid to fuck. They need
money so bad, they're willing to
degrade themselves. You scumbags
take money for doing nothing. From
here on-- not another dime! You
want money-- take it up the ass.
Steal from my crew again-- the
morgue will have four more body
bags. Understand motherfuckers?!

Jackie turns his back and exits. Matty follows. The COPS are ready to explode, but they remain frozen in the booth as the Hood backs out, putting himself between them and Jackie.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

Charlie sits on the couch listening to Matty who paces, still pumped from the diner.

MATTY
Then he just said-- Understand
motherfuckers?

CHARLIE
You gotta be kidding me?

MATTY

I shit you not. Jackie was stone cold cool. Not a bead of sweat.

CHARLIE

So we're good to go?

MATTY

Good to go--

INT. SURVEILLANCE APARTMENT - DAWN

CLOSE ON: A wiretap meter activates.

In an empty apartment across the street from Charlie's loft, Loeb, Casey and O'Brian down coffee and donuts as Pazanti puts on headphones.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Charlie scrambles up some eggs while Matty's on the phone.

MATTY (INTO PHONE)

Detroit laying the eight, Denver taking six, Kings laying three, and Houston laying the ten.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Pazanti writes down all the bets on a legal pad.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Fucking idiot thinks we're off him.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

Beautiful.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Guy has balls. He's pushing the line on every game. Sixteen grand in action. (beat) Fuck you, Jackie!

The Four laugh. Pazanti tears the sheet from the pad and hands it to Casey.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI (TO CASEY) (cont'd)

Place these before the line moves. Shadow him-- dollar for dollar.

Casey grabs the piece of paper and bolts from the apartment.

PINK FLOYD'S "MONEY" PLAYS THROUGH A MONTAGE OF:

CHARLIE'S LOFT: Dawn to dusk, day after day, Charlie sits reading through a sea of NBA statistics as Matty keeps track of wins and losses on the box scores plastered across the living room wall. On the kitchen phone, Matty places bet after bet.

SURVEILLANCE APARTMENT: The Four Detectives record weeks worth of action off the wiretap-- Pazanti writes down bet after bet as they continue to shadow Charlie's picks.

PUBLIC PHONE BOOTH: Reading off the wiretap notes, Casey places a ton of action. We see THOUSANDS being wagered.

BOOKIES: Write down WAGERS of FOUR NICKNAMES in BLACK COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS that follow the name-- 'IRISH'.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Charlie and Matty sit eating Swanson TV dinners.

MATTY

It's so fucking hard to not eat the cobbler before you finish the turkey. You know what? They should sell it separate. Like normal size.

CHARLIE

Don't hurt yourself there Einstein.

MATTY

Fuck you. I bet they pay for ideas like that. I'm gonna call them.

THE PHONE RINGS

CHARLIE

Word travels fast.

MATTY

You're not seeing a dime out of it.

Charlie shoots him a grin as he picks up--

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

After a few moments, Charlie hangs up-- his eyes water.

MATTY

What's the matter?

INT. ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL - CARDIAC UNIT - LATER THAT NIGHT

A crucifix hangs on the wall above Danny Logan. Charlie sits at his father's bedside as Danny struggles to speak into his son's ear. Matty watches from a nearby corner chair.

INT. LOGAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie enters his father's apartment. FAMILY PHOTOS on the wall. His parent's wedding photo among them.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

On a top shelf in the closet sits the TWO SHOE BOXES Charlie gave Matty to give to Danny before they left for Vegas. Charlie sets the boxes down on the bed, removing each lid.

INSIDE-- both boxes still filled with CASH. On top of the cash, a NOTE from his father, a PHOTO and a LEDGER BOOK.

NOTE: "Use the cash to help create a life you won't regret"

PHOTO: Charlie, his father and Avery at college graduation.

LEDGER: Pages of cash payments being made to Jackie Gazzo.

EXT. TRINITY CEMETERY - MANHATTAN - MORNING

Overlooking the Hudson River, giant hundred-year-old oaks and elms look down on grassy knolls and manicured walkways of the only remaining active cemetery in Manhattan. TWO MEN, dressed in kilts, play "Danny Boy" on bagpipes.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Death isn't life's redemption. We
inherit the struggle to resolve.

An ocean of MOURNERS, comprised of BLUE COLLAR WORKERS, WISEGUYS, WESTIES and COPS are all there to pay respect.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

God forgives the sins of the
departed, but their wrongs remain--
until made right by the living. I
owed my father at least that.

A PRIEST concludes the service. Danny Logan's coffin is lowered into the ground. Charlie tosses dirt onto the casket. Matty and Jackie follow with the same. Mourners pay respect as they pass. Jackie embraces Charlie.

JACKIE

You need anything, 'Irish'--
anything-- you let me know.

CHARLIE

What I need is the truth about the
marker you held on my father.

JACKIE

Not now. Lets show some respect.
Your father is lying right there.

CHARLIE

In a state of grace because he
cleared his conscience. What about
yours? What will you take to the
grave?

JACKIE

I ain't dying.

CHARLIE

Everybody dies, Jackie. A little
bit each day. Some all at once.

Matty stands next to Charlie avoiding Jackie's eyes. Charlie
nods at the last of the mourners as they leave the grave.
Jackie smiles, trying to cover for the awkward moment.

JACKIE

You really want to do this now?

CHARLIE

Right now.

JACKIE

What did your father tell you?

CHARLIE

Enough so I'd find the ledger.

JACKIE

This ain't gonna be a question
you'll be glad you asked, kid.

CHARLIE

I don't expect a nursery rhyme.

JACKIE

It wasn't the bookmakers who told
me how good you were. It was your
father. He was desperate. Weekly
juice eating him up. He made a
sacred offer. A human marker.

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

The ferry moves across the pitch black waters of New York Bay. RAIN pounds its deck as the devil seeks a soul.

ANGLE ON the starboard side of the ferry's hull. In the blackness we can now make out the identity of the LONE FIGURE who dangles over the rail. A HENCHMAN'S hand-- his sole lifeline-- is wrapped around the wrist of DANNY LOGAN.

We can now make out the identity of THE MAN in the BLACK BRIM HAT as a YOUNGER JACKIE GAZZO. He looks down at Charlie's father. Danny begs for his life as his body bangs against the hull. His fate hangs as the bay reaches to swallow him--

EXT. TRINITY CEMETERY - MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS

Charlie's eyes fill with hurt and anger as Jackie speaks.

JACKIE

After you proved you weren't a fluke, I paid off all his debt. It got him off the hook, but it sealed your fate. Everyone has a breaking point. People do the unimaginable to survive another day.

CHARLIE

Most people aren't held over the side rail of a ferry at midnight.

JACKIE

If they bet with money they don't have, they are. It was business. It wasn't personal. I liked Danny.

CHARLIE

All these years, why not tell me?

JACKIE

I gave him my word that I wouldn't. I'm sorry 'Irish'. Like I said, you need anything...

Charlie just nods, trying to keep his pride intact. Jackie walks off with his Hood in tow toward a waiting Cadillac. Watching from an UNMARKED CAR, we see THE FOUR DETECTIVES.

In the distance, beneath a row of oak trees, stands Avery. Charlie and Matty exchange a nod. Charlie walks to her. They embrace for a long hug before she puts space between them.

AVERY

You okay?

CHARLIE

Yeah. How'd you hear?

AVERY

The Hoods from the hood. Everyone knows Danny was like family to me.

CHARLIE

I've been worried. I came by--

AVERY

I didn't feel safe there. I'm staying at a friend's while she's working at our London bureau. I'm a stringer for the Times now.

CHARLIE

Why didn't you call-- at least to let me know you were okay?

AVERY

I didn't feel like being talked out of the inevitable. I love you Charlie. I always will. I think I know that now more than ever. But I can't do this anymore.

CHARLIE

What can I do to change your mind?

AVERY

The one thing I know you never can.

Her tears stream, she quickly kisses his lips and walks away.

EXT. DELICATESSEN - CARROLL GARDENS - NIGHT

The inside lights shut off. A BODYGUARD exits and walks to a BLACK CADILLAC waiting in front. He opens the back door as Jackie exits the Deli, locking the door behind him.

ANGLE ON AN UNMARKED CAR parked with its lights off, a few cars in front of the Caddy. Pazanti exits the driver's side. Without a word, he walks up to Jackie's DRIVER and puts a bullet through his brain-- BLOOD SPLATTERS the interior.

The Bodyguard reaches for his gun, but he's too late. Pazanti FIRES TWO SHOTS, dropping him dead on the sidewalk. Jackie stares straight at Pazanti as if expecting the assassination.

JACKIE
You fucking piece of shit--

Without a word, Pazanti steps up close-- then FIRES A BULLET into Jackie's forehead. Jackie drops to his knees, then falls face down into the cement. Before walking away, Pazanti spits on Jackie's lifeless body.

EXT. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - BROOKLYN - MORNING

Limousines and TRAFFIC COPS line the street. A SEA OF COLORFUL CHARACTERS pay their last respects.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
A king had been killed. A legend died-- Wiseguys from all five boroughs came to pay respect. The unwelcome came as well.

POLICE PHOTOGRAPHERS stand nearby shooting MOB PHOTOS.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Even those who hate, find a way to forgive the dead. But the street never forgives and never forgets.

Hidden among the crowd Avery bows her head as the large procession follows the mahogany casket towards a hearse. Matty, Charlie and 'The Doughboys' are the PALLBEARERS.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I met 'The Doughboys' the morning we carried Jackie's casket. I knew anyone of us could be next. It became clear-- either walk away from this life or be carried away. Jackie's death sent a message that kings are only as powerful as the soldiers paid to protect them.

Casey and O'Brian stand across the street watching.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - BROOKLYN - LATER

Still dressed from the funeral, Charlie, Matty and 'The Doughboys' sit talking as they share a memorial feast.

DOUGHBOY #1
After all these years, we meet under these circumstances.

CHARLIE

I should've come by after Vegas,
but Jackie felt it best that he
explain about the three million.

DOUGHBOY #2

Yeah, we never got around to
thanking you about that.

MATTY

Thanking us?

DOUGHBOY #3

For having the sense to walk away.

CHARLIE

So you weren't mad about the cash?

DOUGHBOY #4

We weren't happy, but we couldn't
hold two months worth of green over
your head after six years together.

CHARLIE

Two months worth? You mean the
three million in the boxes was just
from two months worth of drops?

DOUGHBOY #5

Yeah-- the cash is flown to the
Bahamas every eight to ten weeks.

CHARLIE

Fucking Jackie-- God rest his soul.
He had us near cardiac arrest--

DOUGHBOY #1

Leave it to Jackie to figure out a
way to keep you around, kid.

'The Doughboys' all laugh-- Even Charlie and Matty can't help
but appreciate Jackie's way. They all raise their glasses--

DOUGHBOY #2

To Jackie Gazzo. A friend of ours.
Here's to his life!

MATTY

And to avenging his death.

'The Doughboys' all nod, then down their drinks.

DOUGHBOY #3

We know for sure those cops been running a tap on your place. Half a dozen bookmakers checked the books and they could see the same four nicknames shadowing all your bets.

MATTY

Then that's how they knew when to hit us on the bridge.

Matty looks Charlie's way-- a bit of vindication.

DOUGHBOY #4

And the word is, cocksuckers bought themselves a fucking bar off of our dimes in Teaneck.

DOUGHBOY #5

Fucking living it up while Jackie is sucking dirt. That's that-- we take these cops down.

MATTY

I want to do it.

DOUGHBOY #1

We can't just clip them. To take down four cops, we need a smoking gun powerful enough to bury them so deep they can't come back to haunt us.

CHARLIE

I got a way to bury them so deep their own ghosts won't find them. And I can do it without ever firing a single bullet.

Matty and 'The Doughboys' all look Charlie's way--

DOUGHBOY #2

We're listening.

CHARLIE

First, we let them continue shadowing our bets.

DOUGHBOY #3

You want us to let them keep running up our cash?

CHARLIE

I want to keep running up the evidence. Then at the season's end, we'll take them down with the pages from the books.

DOUGHBOY #4

And what if you're wrong? What if they get us, before we get them?

CHARLIE

I'm not in the "what if" business. I don't bet on games-- I bet on human nature.

MATTY

You saying let these fucks live?

CHARLIE

Do you want heat for the rest of your life?

DOUGHBOY #5

Keep talking, 'Irish'.

CHARLIE

From now to the end of the season, when I move, you move. For every dime I bet, you bet a hundred. We'll crush every bookmaker between here and the moon.

DOUGHBOY #1

Like always.

CHARLIE

That's right. Only when this season ends-- I'm walking.

DOUGHBOY #2

And where does that leave us?

CHARLIE

Rich.

DOUGHBOY #3

So, we just retire?

CHARLIE

That's up to you. Computers are coming. Corporations are gonna turn Vegas back to sand. Casinos will feed fish in water too shallow for whales like us.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)

It will be like buying a ticket to a circus. Sportbooks for conventioneer suckers. The lines will get tighter, but a 'sharp' who can break them can still make millions.

DOUGHBOY #4

So why walk and leave all that cash on the table?

CHARLIE

I was never in for the cash. I was in for the 'in' and now I'm out.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - MORNING

Sitting at the table, Charlie dunks his bagel as Matty globs cream cheese on his while studying his dictionary.

CHARLIE

What's the word?

MATTY

Audacious.

CHARLIE

Showing no fear when faced with something dangerous or unknown.

MATTY

Fucking... A.

Matty picks up the phone and dials.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The wiretap meter activates-- Pazanti puts on the headphones. O'Brian, Casey, and Loeb stand by.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - SAME TIME

MATTY (INTO PHONE)

This is for 'Irish'.

INT. BOOKMAKING DEN - SAME TIME

JOEY 'THE DICE' (INTO PHONE)

Go.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - SAME TIME

MATTY (INTO PHONE)
All dimes, ten times each. Kings,
Celtics, Rockets, and Sixers.

JOEY 'THE DICE' (OVER PHONE)
Kings, Celtics, Rockets, Sixers.
Ten dimes each. Got it.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Pazanti writes down the bets on a yellow pad. Under the list of bets he writes: \$40,000.00. Loeb, Casey and O'Brian shake their heads at the bold bet, but they're clearly game--

A MONTAGE OF:

Casey, Loeb, and Pazanti entering phone booths to place action. BOOKMAKERS in various betting stores on the calls. We see NICKNAMES entered into numerous COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

Charlie lies in bed listening to a clock RADIO.

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER
In NBA action, the Sixers handed
Detroit a twenty point defeat, one-
twenty-seven to one-o-seven.

A smile of satisfaction comes to Charlie's face.

INT. O'BRIAN'S HOME - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

O'Brian tries to hide the fact that he is listening to the sports report on the TV as he makes love to his WIFE.

TV SPORTSCASTER (O.S)
In a nail biter, the Celtics
clipped the Bucks one-twelve to one-
o-nine.

INT. LOEB'S HOME - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Loeb lies in bed, his wife asleep, as he listens to the news on a small transistor radio with earphones.

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER
The Bulls were slain by the Kings
one-thirty-one to one-eighteen.

Loeb pounds the pillow in a silent victory cheer.

INT. CASEY'S HOME - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Casey makes PB&J sandwiches for THREE KIDS' SCHOOL LUNCH
BOXES lined up on a kitchen counter as he listens to a radio.

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER
And Houston sent the Suns down, one-
eighteen to one-twelve.

Casey checks the games, noting WINS next to each of the
NICKNAMES they used-- BIG D, PB&J, DEUCE, & DONUT.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Fucking beautiful.

INT. PAZANTI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A PLAQUE on the wall reads: Anthony 'DEUCE' Pazanti - Police
Athletics League Poker Champion 1981.

The Four Detectives sit at a card table, beers in hand. They
sit quietly smoking cigars as the DOOR BELL RINGS. Pazanti
answers. Detective Hall enters and takes a seat, immediately
noticing there are no cards or poker chips.

DETECTIVE HALL
I should've known this wasn't a
social invite. What gives?

O'Brian hands Hall a cigar. He SNIPS the end, lights up.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
We're on to something. Something
that doesn't come along but once.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Could be deep six figures for each.

DETECTIVE HALL
I don't care how much. I don't want
to hear a word of this shit--

DETECTIVE LOEB
Frank-- there's no way around it.
We need you with us. We're gonna
need a few more wiretap extensions.

DETECTIVE HALL

I'm not getting involved in any shit. And if you want to keep your badges, neither will any of you.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

This is walkaway money. A lifetime pension in a few months. None of us can afford to let the job get in the way.

DETECTIVE HALL

The job? You mean being cops? You mean upholding the law, don't you?

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

Don't preach that shit to me--

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

We're not taking it from wives and orphans, Frank. The cash belongs to scum.

DETECTIVE LOEB

We've all put in our years for the badge. This is just one time for us. You know? It could be a hundred grand or more for each of us. Box cars-- we can't miss out.

Hall looks at his Four Detectives. He takes a career altering long beat before he says--

DETECTIVE HALL

This is the last time we talk about it. Loeb deliver's my end. The diner a block from my house. When it's over-- you're all transferred.

DETECTIVE LOEB

Good Frank-- Good for all of us.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

(to Hall)

No cowboy shit, huh?

DETECTIVE HALL

Fuck you Pazanti--

Pazanti laughs to himself. Hall exits. The Detectives puff their Cubans-- A cloud over the table.

MONTAGE: OLD GAME CLIPS AND SCENES INTERCUT

Matty dials on Charlie's phone placing a slew of action.

SHOTS OF: The Four Detectives monitoring the wire tap set up from the surveillance apartment.

O'Brian, Loeb, Casey, and Pazanti call in from public phones as VARIOUS BOOKMAKERS record their bets in BLACK and WHITE COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS. NICKNAMES and WAGERS fill pages.

WE HEAR NBA PLAY-BY-PLAY INCLUDING THE VOICE OF MARV ALBERT OVER A SERIES OF GAME CLIPS AND SCENES INCLUDING--

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar scoring his 34,000th career point, becoming the only NBA player to reach that milestone in the Los Angeles Lakers' 124-102 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Matty placing Charlie's action from the loft's kitchen phone.

Dallas Mavericks win 139-138 in double-overtime over the Phoenix Suns, led by Mark Aguirre who scores forty-two points, giving him back-to-back games of forty-plus points.

The New York Knicks end the regular season in Milwaukee by being trounced 116-78 by the Bucks.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

The Knicks ended the regular season
with the worst record in the NBA.
The Celtics ended it with the best.

The Celtics celebrate their win over the Nets 135-107, ending the regular season 40-1, the best home record in NBA history.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Other than my fear of being killed,
it was a great year to be 'Irish'.

PAGES of BOOKMAKERS' composition notebooks being filled with WINS followed by the name 'IRISH'. Below, a LIST OF NICKNAMES the COPS used to place bets-- BIG D, PB&J, DEUCE, and DONUT.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pazanti and Casey walk a seedy hallway to an apartment door. Casey stands out of view, his GUN drawn, as Pazanti KNOCKS.

A MAN looks out the peephole, as we hear a GUN'S HAMMER being cocked from INSIDE.

MAN (O.S)

Yeah?

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
"Deuce" to collect.

MAN (O.S)
Hold on--

A WOMAN and CHILD exit the elevator. She sees the GUN in Casey's hand and pulls her child back inside.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Shit...

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
(banging on it again)
Open the fucking door?!

MAN (O.S)
Hold on, man. Shit...

The door opens-- a PAPER BAG is slipped to Pazanti under the security chain, then the door SLAMS. Pazanti opens the bag-- INSIDE FILLED WITH CASH. They shake their heads in disbelief.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - THE MALL - DAY

Charlie approaches Avery on a park bench under a canopy of American Elms. He sits next to her holding a large ENVELOPE.

CHARLIE
Thanks for coming--

AVERY
I'm fighting a deadline so I just
have a few minutes.

He hands her the ENVELOPE.

AVERY (cont'd)
What's this?

CHARLIE
Evidence. Four cops robbed my
payday and they've been shadowing
my bets. When the NBA season ends--
they're gonna kill me, just like
they killed Jackie.

Fear reads immediately across her face as her eyes well up.

AVERY
Christ...

She quickly opens the envelope. Inside, BETS RECORDED ON PAGES pulled from BOOKIES' COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS. She reads just enough to understand, then looks his way--

CHARLIE

It's the perfect front page story.
The kind a stringer would die for.

AVERY

The story I want to tell is how you
walked away from this kind of life.

CHARLIE

It would just be "Filler" compared
to a "Scoop" about taking down four
dirty cops.

AVERY

Not to me. To me it's a Pulitzer.

CHARLIE

Then write it.

AVERY

Don't play with me--

CHARLIE

I'm not. One last move-- I'm done.

AVERY

Don't just tell me that because you
know it's what I want to hear.

CHARLIE

I'm telling you because it's true.
Fact is, I love only two things in
life and both of them are you.

AVERY

My heart can't afford to risk
believing you. But if it turns out
to be true, I'll write the story.

CHARLIE

And what about us?

AVERY

A good writer never gives away the
ending...

She takes the envelope and walks away.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - MORNING

SUPER: April 20, 1986

Matty on the phone.

MATTY (INTO PHONE)

This is for 'Irish'. Five hundred dimes on Boston-- laying the five.

BOOKMAKER (OVER PHONE)

How much?

MATTY (INTO PHONE)

Five hundred dimes.

BOOKMAKER (OVER PHONE)

Okay, 'Irish' is down. Five hundred large-- laying the five on Boston.

INT. SURVEILLANCE APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Pazanti listens in on the wiretap. He writes down \$500,000. The size of the wager evident on the Four Detectives' faces.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

'Irish' just laid five hundred large on Boston minus the five.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN

Half a million. Holy shit--

DETECTIVE CASEY

We can't shadow that.

DETECTIVE LOEB

Even if we wanted to. A bet that size-- we'd need the cash up front.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

We still got some cash. And we use the bar as collateral for the rest.

DETECTIVE LOEB

Tony, five hundred is crazy. I say we go for a hundred.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

And walk away from the biggest payday of our lives? This is-- buy our own island money.

DETECTIVE LOEB
And what if we lose?

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
Logan must know something to go
this heavy.

DETECTIVE LOEB
I don't know. Betting against
Jordan... If the Celtics don't win
by more than five we're fucked.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Celtics went forty and one in
Boston Garden-- They'll cover five.

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
Fuck it. Lets do it.

INT. COPS' BAR - NIGHT

SUPER: Teaneck, New Jersey

An UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT banner hangs above a still under construction, unopened bar. It looks like a lot of money has already gone into the place, including the new bar stools that The Four Detectives sit on while they watch TV.

ON TV: Game Two of the NBA Eastern Conference First Round Playoffs at Boston Garden. Celtics vs Bulls-- we pick up the game in the third.

O'Brian busts open a case of Johnnie Walker and pours shots.

ON TV: Michael Jordan dribbles between his legs once, twice, mesmerizing Larry Bird. He fakes again, dribbles between his legs once more, then fades away. A rainbow arc-- All net.

Jordan's shot throws a knife into the Detectives hearts.

ON TV: Now with only forty-eight seconds left in regulation play, the Celtics lead 116-113 on a Kevin McHale layup.

They CHEER McHale's shot. Pazanti pours them another round.

ON TV: Paxon inbound to Jordan, who launches a three-pointer that hits the iron and bounces off as the buzzer sounds.

The Detectives sit stunned as it appears the game is over and though the Celtics have won, they did not cover the spread.

ON TV: As the crowd erupts in victory, an official calls a pushing foul against McHale.

The Four stare at the TV in silent prayer hoping that the game will go into overtime.

ON TV: Jordan's two free throws sends the game into overtime.

The Detectives CHEER! Still alive! Another round of drinks.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

As the game plays on the TV, Matty paces the room-- manic. Charlie sits at the edge of the couch trying to ignore him.

CHARLIE

Sit down, you're driving me crazy!

MATTY

I can't take this shit--

CHARLIE

I told you I didn't want to watch!
It's why I never watch.

MATTY

Maybe I should shut it off--

CHARLIE

Touch it and I'll fucking kill you.

INT. COPS' BAR - LATER

The Four Detectives continue to down an ocean of booze trying to keep their desperation at bay.

ON TV: With the score tied, the clock winds down as Jordan misses a mid-range jump shot sending the game into double-overtime.

The Four CHEER again as they remain very much alive.

ON TV: Now in double-overtime, Jordan ties the game at 131.

The blood is all but drained from the Detectives' faces.

ON TV: Robert Parish hits a jumper. Boston goes ahead by two.

The Four CHEER.

ON TV: As time is running out-- Celtics' sub Jerry Sichting hits a jumper to put Boston up by four. The BUZZER sounds ending the game at 135-131.

The Four Detectives sit in stunned silence. Despite Jordan's playoff record of 63 points, Boston's four point victory does not cover the spread.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Losing five-hundred grand is a powerful wave that sends you deep into the sand. A sea of pain washes over as you drown in instant debt.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOVING - SOON AFTER

Jimi Hendrix "HEY JOE"

Pazanti at the wheel. The Four Detectives, drowning in anger and fear, sit in a frenzied silence as they travel over the George Washington Bridge from New Jersey to Manhattan.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
If you don't have the cash, the juice is twenty-five thousand a week. Miss a payment, it doubles.

INT. COPS' BAR - SAME TIME

It's pitch black until a HAND flips a switch illuminating the UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT banner above the empty bottles of Johnnie Walker laying on the bar. The place is dead still.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Miss too many payments, you're dead. Cop or no cop-- you're dead.

THE CAMERA FINDS A DOZEN MEN holding BASEBALL BATS just inside the front doorway. The HOODS' LOUISVILLE SLUGGERS turn the cops' dream into rubble.

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Matty sits on the couch eating a Swanson dinner as he watches TV. Semi-packed moving boxes are stacked nearby.

SUDDENLY FOUR BODIES bust through the front door. They POUND the floor boards as they enter the room. Matty jumps from the couch to find Pazanti, Loeb, Casey and O'Brian, GUNS in hand.

MATTY
Fuck!!

Casey knocks him to the floor. Pazanti SNAPS a wooden leg off the coffee table then BREAKS it over Matty's back. Pazanti sees the moving boxes--

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
You fucking making a run for it?!

Matty cowers on the floor. As Pazanti cocks his gun's hammer--

MATTY
No! Not me-- just 'Irish'!

DETECTIVE O'BRIAN
Where's that motherfucker?!!

MATTY
I don't know--

Casey kicks him hard in the head. Matty falls back. Blood starts dripping from his ear--

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Where?!

MATTY
I swear I don't know, but I know
where he'll be tomorrow night!

Matty takes a long beat-- Pazanti shoves his gun in his face.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Where?!

MATTY
Picking up the cash.

The Four Detectives exchange quick dumbfounded looks--

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
He had Boston laying the five.

MATTY
No. You had Boston laying the five.
He had Chicago taking it.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
We heard the bet! We heard you lay
the five!

MATTY
It was a set up. Charlie tipped off
the bookmakers to go the other way.
He knew you were listening in.

The Four Detectives stand there in total silence. A bizarre sudden calm comes over Pazanti--

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Dead-- you understand? Dead.

Pazanti grabs a pillow off the couch as a makeshift silencer for his snub nose thirty-eight.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Wait! Where's the pick up?

MATTY
Fuck you!

Pazanti and Casey snap, unleashing a barrage of kicks into Matty. Blood pours from his mouth.

DETECTIVE LOEB
Stop! You're gonna kill 'em before
he tells us!

MATTY
The only way I'll tell you-- is if
I walk.

DETECTIVE LOEB
Give us Logan and the cash-- and
you'll walk.

Matty takes a long beat, then he nods. Pazanti backs off--

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

The Doors "THE END" plays through the next seven scenes.

SUPER: Rockaway, Queens April 21, 1986

A full moon diffused by black clouds that hang like a velvet theater curtain waiting to go down after the finale.

A chain-link fence surrounds a sea of graffiti riddled train cars parked liked dinosaurs in an abandoned train yard. Warehouses and housing projects border the dismal scape.

At the far end, TWO BLACK TOWN CARS are parked doors to doors, HEADLIGHTS OFF. On the opposite end of the yard, MATTY'S MONTE CARLO passes through a CORRIDOR of WRECKED JUNKED TRAIN CARS, stopping a few yards from the TOWN CARS.

INT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - CONTINUOUS

Matty checks the CLIP of a STEEL BLUE BERETTA. Next to him, Charlie checks his watch. INSERT WATCH-- ELEVEN PM.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

SIX HOODS exit the TOWN CARS-- GUNS in hand. Matty and Charlie exit the Monte Carlo.

INSIDE THE TOWN CAR'S TRUNK-- FOUR DUFFLES. Matty and Charlie each grab two, and toss all four into the Monte's trunk.

INT. UNMARKED BLACK VAN - PARKED OUTSIDE YARD - SAME TIME

Pazanti, Casey, O'Brian and Loeb load CARTRIDGES into AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. They exchange "LETS GO" nods as they pull down BLACK SKI MASKS.

EXT. MATTY'S MONTE CARLO - TRAIN YARD - SAME TIME

As Matty and Charlie are about to climb back into the Monte--

MATTY

Maybe I should take this on my own?

CHARLIE

First run to the last. We began together-- we finish together.

Matty reluctantly nods-- signaling good-bye to the SIX HOODS.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

The Monte Carlo drives through the corridor of JUNKED TRAIN CARS heading back towards the exit. Its HEADLIGHTS TURN ON.

INT. UNMARKED BLACK VAN - CONTINUOUS

The Four Detectives sit cloaked in their black ski masks. Guns at the ready--

DETECTIVE PAZANTI

That's the signal-- lets do it.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

As the Monte Carlo enters the clearing, THE BLACK VAN BROADSIDES IT pinning it in place. THE DETECTIVES RUSH the Monte, GUNS raised as they circle. THE COLD AIR reads every breath sending smoke signals of adrenaline. INSIDE THE MONTE, it's as still as a casket.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Open the fucking doors!!

Pazanti looks to his three cohorts, then he opens FIRE sending a STREAM OF BULLETS into the driver's front quarter panel. The SOUND RINGS throughout the yard for seconds after.

MATTY
(from inside)
Okay! Okay! -- We're coming out!

Matty and Charlie exit with their hands up.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Keys!

Matty reaches in slow-- then tosses Pazanti the keys. As Pazanti catches them, he SHOTS MATTY twice-- straight in the chest. Matty falls to the ground hard. Charlie turns--

CHARLIE
Fuck! Why the fuck did you have to kill him?!

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
Fuck him! That fuck sold you out--

CHARLIE
And what about Jackie?

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
That one was just for fun.

Pazanti tosses the car keys to Casey who quickly opens the trunk. He and Loeb run the FOUR DUFFLES OF CASH to the van. Planned to perfection.

From the van, Loeb and Casey signal they're ready to go. O'Brian starts to back away. Pazanti's eyes pierce the ski mask as he points his gun at Charlie--

DETECTIVE PAZANTI (cont'd)
See you in hell, ya Mick bastard!

As Pazanti takes a step toward Charlie-- suddenly POP! POP!
The first SHOT hits his BULLETPROOF VEST, the second catches
his neck. BLOOD SPURTS-- Pazanti goes down.

FROM BETWEEN THE JUNKED TRAIN CARS, GUNFIRE lights up the sky
like the Fourth, giving Charlie cover as he ROLLS UNDER THE
MONTE. HOODS from the TOWN CARS, packing an armory of
automatic weapons, rain lead as O'Brian runs towards the van.
A yard away-- a round hits O'Brian in the leg. He stumbles--

INT. UNMARKED BLACK VAN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Loeb and Casey watch O'Brian's futile attempt to get to his
feet as Pazanti lays in a pool of blood.

DETECTIVE CASEY
Leave 'em! Go! Go! Go!

Loeb hits the gas-- SPEEDS off leaving their partners behind.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

As O'Brian struggles to one knee, a series of rounds finishes
him off. He falls hard into the dirt.

The cop's black van shoots past the front gate on its way
towards an overpass. SIRENS in the distance.

THE HOODS jump into their TOWN CARS, exiting onto the street.

Pazanti, his neck spouting blood, struggles to reach his gun,
but Matty, now standing over him, grabs it first.

MATTY (TO PAZANTI)
Like a fucking ghost-- You know who
owns the streets? We do! We do!

Charlie crawls out from under the Monte Carlo.

IN THE DISTANCE-- AUTOMATIC WEAPONS LIGHT UP THE OVERPASS as
the black van meets head on with a sea of FLASHING CHERRIES.

DETECTIVE PAZANTI
(gasping for air)
Fuck you!

Matty unzips his coat. UNDERNEATH, A KEVLAR VEST READS-- FBI.

MATTY
No-- Fuck you!

Matty sends a BULLET into Pazanti's forehead. A DOZEN BLACK UNMARKED CARS fill the yard. FBI AGENTS, GUNS DRAWN, fan out behind Agents Hudson and Taylor, who we recognize from Vegas.

FBI AGENT HUDSON
Put down the gun, Matty!

Matty hesitates-- the air filled with distrust.

CHARLIE
We've still got a deal, right?

FBI AGENT HUDSON
Yeah-- We've still got a deal.

Matty's drops the gun. Hudson looks down at Pazanti's body.

MATTY (TO HUDSON)
You guys cut it a little too close--

Hudson shoots Matty a look. Charlie hands Hudson a small TAPE RECORDER from his pocket.

CHARLIE (TO HUDSON)
Sorry-- I didn't have time to gift wrap it.

Hudson smirks--

ON THE OVERPASS-- THE GUN BATTLE dies like the last kernels in a microwave. Matty rips the Kevlar vest from his chest. Underneath, he's covered in blood. He looks Charlie's way--

AGENTS escort Avery from a car. She runs into Charlie's arms.

EXT. DINER - QUEENS, NEW YORK - LATER THAT NIGHT

Through the window, we see Detective Frank Hall sitting alone. Suddenly, RED FLASHING LIGHTS reflect off the windows. Hall turns to look outside as NYPD squad cars fill the lot. A SWARM OF UNIFORMED COPS enter the diner to arrest Hall.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - THE PRESSES

TIGHT ON-- THE FRONT PAGE moving through the presses.

FREEZE ON BANNER HEADLINE:

DARK DAY FOR FINEST -- FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND FOUND IN VAN --
FBI STING NAILS FIVE DIRTY COPS, by Avery Rhodes.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

As part of the deal, the FBI took the credit. In return, Avery got her story, 'The Doughboys' and Matty got a pass, and I got Avery.

Below the headline we see the full page story along with a PHOTO of one of the PAGES FROM THE BOOKIES' COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS. COPS' NICKNAMES fill the ledger following 'IRISH'. Along side each nickname-- BADGE NUMBERS OF EACH DETECTIVE.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Bob Dylan "LIKE A ROLLING STONE"

SUPER: Sometime around now...

SHOTS OF: DORM ROOMS -- MOVIE POSTERS of THE GAMBLER, ROUNDERS, CASINO and THE STING hang on the walls. BOOKSHELVES are lined with how-to books, instructional DVD's-- visual after visual promoting every opportunity to lead the sheep to slaughter. Gambling, gambling, gambling, until it's a BLUR...

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Somebody is always selling the idea that you can make it the easy way. Believe me, there is no easy way.

SHOTS OF: FRAT BOYS sit watching football on plasma TV's as they monitor the odds of college games on Pinnacle's website.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Ten percent of seventeen million college students gamble online. A twelve billion dollar a year business.

SHOTS OF: STUDENTS in dorm rooms enter credit card numbers, as they hover over laptops betting online SPORTBOOKS.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Credit cards leave you no time to ponder. Today, an Ivy leaguer can go from school president to campus degenerate in an afternoon.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - CLASSROOM - MORNING

A large lecture hall filled with GEEKS. Mathematical equations fit for rocket scientists cover the chalkboard.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And thanks to wireless internet,
kids can lose their shirts without
leaving their classroom or dorm.

SHOTS OF: STUDENTS sit with LAPTOPS gambling online.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
But if a kid was taught to apply
the principles of Advanced
Statistical Analysis to timing the
stockmarket or say-- picking
basketball games, then a kid could
possibly make a boxcar of cash.

THE CAMERA FINDS-- CHARLIE, now late 40s, at the blackboard
explaining an equation the length of the eastern seaboard.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Those who made a promise to no
longer do-- can always teach.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END