

"PANTHER"

Screenplay by

Melvin Van Peebles

1995

BLACKOUT

The SCREEN stands BLACK, like a chalkboard... or a grave.

A SOUND builds, like a RADIO surfing channels. Snippets of SONGS -- Joan Baez' "Blowin' in the Wind," James Brown's "I Feel Good." The music of a different time.

FOOTAGE

IMAGES hit the screen: ROSA PARKS, Peace Demonstrators stuffing FLOWERS in the barrels of National Guard rifles. Protesters in Birmingham, rallies on the White House Lawn.

Mixed in with the MUSIC comes NEWS BITES -- quick catchwords of 60's turmoil -- "More troops to Vietnam," "Bus Boycott," "Sit ins," "Draft Dodgers," "Malcolm X speaking."

Then a SINGLE PHOTO settles on screen -- a ROW of BLACK PANTHERS, fists raised, standing defiantly together.

The IMAGE FREEZES.

VOICE

(over)

The Black Panthers...

As the PHOTO FADES, LIGHTS APPEAR. A SHAPE takes form. The BAY BRIDGE arcs over silent water, spanning two worlds.

VOICE

(over)

People still ask me how it all started? How things went so far? And like a lot of questions about the Panthers, there are different answers. Different beginnings...

Rising behind the voice, the noise of a CROWD can be heard.

VOICE

(over)

What became the Black Panthers really started with just two guys -- Bobby Seale and Huey Newton -- saying two words: "Defend Yourselves..." Legend has it they met at some coffee house

where Bobby was running down a
rhyme...

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP (BLACK/WHITE) - 1966 - DAY

TITLE: MARCH 17, 1965

BOBBY SEALE -- a skinny, kinetic black man sporting an Afro --
teeters on a chair in front of a small CROWD. He reads from
a crumpled sheaf of papers.

At the side of the crowd, HUEY NEWTON -- well-built, magnetic
watches, grooving on the rhythm of the words.

BOBBY

Oh yeah. Yeah it's easy to see right
on your black and white TV. Black
man. Blue cop. Red blood. Niggers
watch other niggers die. That's right
Niggers watching niggers die. That's
the American way...

A COMMOTION starts at the rear of the crowd. TWO UNIFORMED
COPS roughly make their way to Bobby. They pull him off his
chair, cracking his head against the ground.

The cop over Bobby raises his NIGHTSTICK...

A BLACK HAND grabs the club, stopping its arc.

Shocked, the cop turns. It's HUEY. With honed precision, he
DECKS the cop with his free hand.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR (BLACK/WHITE) - 1966 - DAY

Bruised and bloody, Huey and Bobby sit next to each other as
the car moves through the streets.

VOICE

(over)

Pigs threw them in jail. There they
starting talking about black folks
oughta start standing up. No master
plan, no pot to piss in, nothing
like that. Just two fed-up brothers...
Next thing you know, you got the
Black Panther Party for Self
Defense...

CUT TO:

BLACKOUT

Again, the SCREEN goes BLACK.

VOICE

(over)

For me, it started different. A lot different. You may as well say The Panthers started in my front yard...

The black screen DISSOLVES into...

EXT. CLOSE-UP: SIDEWALK - DAY

CONCRETE, cracked and dirty, fills the frame. A BICYCLE whips past, gliding down the pavement.

TITLE SEQUENCE:

EXT. 55TH AND MARKET STREETS - OAKLAND - 1967 - DAY

TITLE: OAKLAND 1967

Teeming with life on a bright day, the Ghetto moves to its own unique cadence. A YOUNG BOY, no older than ten, pedals down the street on his BICYCLE.

A gust of wind brushes a SHAPELY WOMAN. She GRABS a HAT and holds tight, ignoring her DRESS rising in the wind. The BOY ogles her juicy thighs.

SHAPELY WOMAN

Shucks I see you staring, but I ain't letting go. Them hips is almost forty years old but the hat is brand new!

AFRAID, the boy PASSES an OAKLAND POLICE CAR, cruising slowly down Market. A WHITE COP scans the street.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

Continuing his ride, the BOY passes TYRONE (20's) -- a TOUGH YOUTH -- who GLARES at the cop car, LEAFLETS in his HANDS.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

BLACK HANDS pour a CAN of LEMON JUICE into a BOTTLE of cheap WHITE PORT. Shaking the mixture, then swigging it, ROSE (30's)

--
an aimless drunk -- passes it to his FRIENDS.

ROSE

Yes indeed, that Bitter Dog...

(to the Boy)

What's up little brother?

Smiling, the YOUNG BOY waves to the sidewalk drinkers, then moves on.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

Eyes downcast, the BOY passes REVEREND SLOCUM (50's) -- a passionate preacher.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

On the street corner, SABU (20's) -- a Superfly young hustler with a fast mouth -- trying to sell cigarette lighters to a couple of HARD HATS heading off to work.

SABU

I'm telling you, man. The perfect gift for the sophisticated lady in your life. Light up her flame with some solid gold satisfaction and get a second one half price for your wife. Can't beat my price with a stick, baby.

CY, a large man with an eye-patch, walks up and tries, in vain, to get one of Sabu's bogus lighters to light.

CY

Sabu, why're you still tryin' to sell these raggedy ass, non workin' Korean lighters man?

The HARD HATS drive off laughing as Sabu curses CY out. The boy continues on heading for the corner.

END TITLE SEQUENCE:

EXT. INTERSECTION - 55TH AND MARKET STREETS - DAY

Suddenly a HORN blares, BRAKES screech.

Brutal, fast, a CAR plows into the child, sending him and the bike bouncing against the windshield and back on the pavement, bleeding... dead.

EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE - 55TH STREET - DAY

JUDGE (20's) -- an intense young man wearing a FATIGUE JACKET

--

STARES numbly at the child in the street. Neighborhood people move toward the scene.

A WOMAN, perhaps the boy's mother, WAILS next to the body.

Judge's Mom, RITA (50's) -- raw boned and sharp eyed -- stands, drawn toward the tragedy.

RITA

Oh lord... not again...

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

A CROWD -- including Reverend Slocum, Cy and the DRINKERS -- gathers near the child and the wailing woman. Across from Judge, TYRONE keeps an angry distance from the horror.

CY

God damn... Kid never had a chance...

ROSE

Mothafuck... Hey!!! What the hell!!!

The CAR backs up, trying to leave the scene.

Market street regulars SWARM around the retreating vehicle, hitting it with fists, sticks, bottles. Young and old move together, their faces contorted with RAGE.

JUDGE

(over)

People were pissed off. Neighborhood had been begging for a stoplight since before dirt was invented. Way I saw it then, that boy dying was another shitty thing in a world full of shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE - DAY

Eyes locked on the dead child, JUDGE stands, angry and impassive.

JUDGE

(over)

Way I see it now... That day. That intersection. That's where it started for me.

(a pause)

Only, I didn't know it then...

EXT. CLOSE UP: INTERSECTION PAVEMENT - DAY

Running red past a SMALL sneakered foot, BLOOD streams toward the gutter.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOSE UP: BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

A BASKETBALL bounces off the cement, SNEAKERED FEET scramble past.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

JUDGE drives in for a basket, pursued by CY. It's a friendly

three on three street game. The MARKET STREET DRINKERS -- including ROSE -- fill out Cy and Judge's teams.

Young neighborhood MEN watch the game and shoot the shit. One of them, JAMAL, sports a beard and a DASHIKI.

Somewhere a RADIO plays James Brown's "Say it Loud"

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Gliding around Cy, Judge sinks a basket. ROSE retrieves the ball.

ROSE

You supposed to be a wounded vet,
Motherfucka. What you do in 'Nam
anyway, shoot gooks or shoot hoops?

JUDGE

All of the above, man...
(a pause)
And then some.

Shaking off the memory, Judge takes the ball in, PASSING it to a teammate. The BALL arcs through the air...

EXT. BASKETBALL GAME - NIGHT

HANDS grab the ball before the teammate can. TYRONE'S hands.

The GAME stops dead. Tyrone holds the ball, eyeing the players with contempt. At his side stands LITTLE BOBBY (16) hyper, childlike.

TYRONE

Tell me, don't you fine black men
got anything better to do than play
games?

ROSE

Sure I do, but your sister's busy.
Gimme the damn ball.

Tyrone passes the ball HARD to Rose.

TYRONE

Here... Take it. I thought some
righteous brothers like you might
help us out, but I guess that ain't
you...

JAMAL

(stepping forward)
Help who? With what?

TYRONE

Your community! That's who. Maybe

you didn't know but a kid died today.

LITTLE BOBBY

That's three this year... same spot.

TYRONE

Damn straight. And old Reverend Slocum's having a vigil on that corner, trying to get a stoplight put in.

JUDGE

(to Cy)

My Mom's at that.

ROSE

Funny you don't look like church folk to me.

TYRONE

Oh I ain't. But it seems The Man's getting uptight about black folk standing in the street, causing a fuss. What I'm asking for, is some of your able black asses to come down and be "Observers" on the cops. Take down badge numbers. They don't like pulling shit with too many eyes on 'em. So that's how you can help, not by praying but by watching.

DRINKER #1

Not me. This able black ass ain't fucking with no cops.

Others MUMBLE in agreement, moving away from Tyrone.

JAMAL

Look, I understand but if some Blacks insist on trying to interact with the white man, that's not our concern. We are African, "brother." Mother Africa is the only...

Anger FLASHES in Tyrone's eyes. His voice turn knifelike.

TYRONE

No, you look, you phony ass boojie nigger. We ain't in Africa, we're in Oakland. And in Oakland we got police brutality. We got the white man interacting his billy club up against the black man's head. Now if that don't bother you, then take your skirt wearing ass back to Africa... "Uncle."

Jamal -- very angry -- takes a step toward Tyrone. Tyrone backs him down with one fearsome look.

TYRONE

Try it.

Jamal backs away, joining Rose and the exiting drinkers.

LITTLE BOBBY

(watching them go)
Chickenshit boogie...

TYRONE

(to Judge and Cy)
What about you two? You were there,
you saw that kid?

JUDGE

I saw... but...

TYRONE

But nothing... you do live here don't
you?

Judge glares evenly back at Tyrone, sizing him up.

JUDGE

Yeah, I do.

TYRONE

(to Judge and Cy)
Well, act like it. Come on.

Tyrone and Little Bobby leave the court. After a beat, Judge and Cy follow. ROSE calls after them, BAITING.

ROSE

You young niggas crazy. The Man ain't
gonna let us have no say in running
shit! Keep it up and he's gonna come
down on our ass like a ton of
bricks...

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Taking confident strides, Tyrone and Little Bobby lead Cy and Judge down the street.

TYRONE

Don't let the cops provoke you. We're
there to watch and take badge
numbers...

JUDGE

And who is we?

LITTLE BOBBY

Brother where you been?
(a smile)
We're the Black Panthers.

Cy and Judge register the name.

CY
The Panthers...
(to Bobby)
How old are you?

LITTLE BOBBY
Sixteen.

TYRONE
(chuckling)
Shit, we made him get his moms to
give permission before he could sign
up.

JUDGE
Just a kid.

TYRONE
Yeah, well, cops kick the shit out
of kids too.

EXT. 55TH AND MARKET - NIGHT

A CIRCLE of church folk hold flickering CANDLES in the middle
of the intersection. Slocum's there as well as RITA. Their
faces are silent, passive in the candlelight.

POLICE CARS can be seen parked at the curbs. A small CADRE
of cops stands watching the congregation.

Tyrone, Judge and Cy approach the vigil. Looking around,
they spot other YOUNG BLACK MEN staked out at the four corners
of the intersection.

JUDGE
I thought you said all the Panthers
were gonna be here.

TYRONE
What you see is what you got.
(pointing)
That's' Bobby Seale.

Judge's eyes pick BOBBY out, skinny, notebook at the ready.

TYRONE
Carter... buddy of mine from way
back... And Gene...

CARTER -- enormous, terrifying -- comes into view, then GENE -

a wiry street tough.

LITTLE BOBBY

And that... that's Huey...

Judge strains to focus on HUEY NEWTON -- who's just a SILHOUETTE against a streetlight. There's a BOOK in his right hand and an aura of power surrounding him.

CY

Ain't too many of you is there?

TYRONE

(a slight smile)

Only takes a single grain of sand to move the world...

LITTLE BOBBY

(spotting something)

Heads up!!!!

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A PATROL CAR floats to a quick stop at the curb. White haired, red-faced, SERGEANT SCHRECK bounds from the car.

SGT. SCHRECK

What in the Sam Hell is this?

PATROLMAN

A vigil for some pickaninny got hit here.

SGT. SCHRECK

Vigil my ass...

Schreck GRABS a BULLHORN from the car.

SCHRECK

(through the bullhorn)

Listen up, you all have 30 seconds to disperse and return to your homes.

The LINE OF COPS takes a small step toward the black folks.

SCHRECK

Failure to do so will result in your immediate arrest...

The churchgoers flail a bit. Suddenly, with HUEY in the background, SLOCUM steps up and with a look of defiant piety, begins SINGING "We Shall Not Be Moved."

With gathering force the CONGREGATION joins in the song.

Schreck ROLLS HIS EYES and makes a MOTION with his hand.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

COPS wade into the crowd, herding them away. A patrolman pushes a MIDDLE AGED MAN, with his NIGHTSTICK.

PATROLMAN

Go on get your black hide outta here...

The MAN STUMBLES. By reflex, the cop RAISES his nightstick. TYRONE -- on instinct -- PUSHES the cop away.

CHAOS erupts. BILLY CLUBS snap up. Terrified, the congregation RUNS.

BULLHORN

You are resisting arrest!...

Police slap and snatch Black folks right and left. Judge bounces around in the confusion. Bobby Seale can be seen trying to get badge numbers.

Judge's eyes widen as he sees RITA running toward an alley, a COP right on her ass.

JUDGE

Oh shit Mom...

Judge runs toward her.

The cop lifts his BILLY CLUB over Rita... Boom!! Carter PUNCHES the cop straight off his feet.

A PAIR OF COPS have thrown Tyrone down on the ground -- PISTOLS pressed against his head.

Judge moves to Tyrone's aid. A RIFLE BUTT flashes out, cracking across Judge's temple, sending him into DARKNESS.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Judge slowly comes to on the filthy floor. Cy, a few nasty bruises on his face, kneels next to him protectively.

JUDGE

(amazed, in pain)

Jesus...

Disoriented, Judge sees TYRONE and the other PANTHERS. They're a rag tag little group, battered, locked down. SLOCUM'S there too.

Coming fully awake, Judge realizes SOMEONE is speaking. It's HUEY, his voice powerful and arresting in its urgency.

HUEY

(over)

The power structure locks the black man up. That's right. We move from chains to bars and locks. Kangaroo courts put brothers in jail. No jury of our peers. No jury of black folks. How do we stop this insanity? It's simple. Organization. That's the key. We must organize. We must maintain discipline...

Judge peers through the bodies and sees HUEY.

TYRONE

That's right brother... listen and learn.

HUEY

The white power structure wants us to act like savages.

(a smile)

But we're a different kind of animal altogether. We're Panthers. And The Black Panther Party for Self Defense is very painfully aware that America has historically reserved its most barbaric treatment for non-white people since the beginning of the country. So we need to organize, we

(a charismatic smile)

keep our shit correct! And effect revolution. We revolve the power into the hands of the people. Where it belongs.

(a beat)

Power to the people baby...

GENE

Power? Shit, old folks can't even sing without getting their asses kicked.

HUEY

Well, then like the man said... Maybe it's time we stop singing and start swinging.

CARTER

Yeah, but they got the guns.

Something -- some inexplicable mixture of mirth, raw intelligence and fierce willpower -- crosses Huey's face.

HUEY

We can change that. We got the right to bear arms, so I'd say it's time to exercise that right. Like Comrade Mao says, "Justice through power,

Power through guns."

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Blinking in the sunlight, the Panthers descend wearing a collective grin of relief.

TYRONE

Chickenshits, just harassing our ass, we weren't breaking any law.

REV. SLOCUM

But at least we're free! God has delivered us from the lion's den.

BOBBY

Free? We're back where we started. Shit we still don't have a stop light.

HUEY

Well as the Rev says, God helps those who help themselves.

(a smile)

We'll be our own stoplight.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Huey marches into the middle of the street. Amid swerving cars and screeching brakes he begins DIRECTING TRAFFIC.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Judge and Cy split off as the other Panthers march into the intersection, joining Huey's traffic duty.

CY

(pointing)

Check it out... Great huh? I tell you those guys know what time it is. Man I'm with that...

JUDGE

I don't know. Look around man.

CY

C'mon Judge we got to start somewhere.

JUDGE

Yeah, and I'm gonna start by getting on my feet. Working on things from inside the system.

CY

Inside ain't in the system.

(poking Judge)

It's right there inside you!! I'm joining up.

Judge's face cracks into a wry SMILE. Suddenly his smile fades when he spots RITA staring at him from her stoop.

JUDGE

I... I gotta go...

Judge crosses the street, heading over to his mother.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Concern searing her face, Rita regards her son warily.

JUDGE

It's okay Mom. I'm allright.

RITA

You don't look alright.

JUDGE

(touching his head)

Yeah... cop hit me...

RITA

I saw. I saw that big one

(pointing to Carter)

hit that police man. Saw 'em drag
you off too.

(a beat)

They take you to jail?

JUDGE

(soft)

Yeah.

RITA

Lord, never thought I'd live to see
my boy in prison.

JUDGE

Mom! It wasn't like that. It was
bullsh... They were just harassing
us. No charges were filed. It's
alright.

Worry in her voice, Rita stares across at the Panthers.

RITA

You meet those friends of yours in
jail too?

JUDGE

Yes... No... Mom it's not like you
think. They're alright. There out
there trying to do something.

RITA

I hear them boys, those Black Panthers, they're communists. They don't even believe in God.

JUDGE

Mom, black folks been praying to God for four hundred years. Maybe it's time we tried something else...

RITA

You believe that?

JUDGE

I don't know. I really don't.

A moment passes, Rita notes her son's confusion.

RITA

I'll tell you one thing Judge...

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Following Huey's lead, the Panthers move traffic through the intersection. CY'S with them, guiding cars past.

RITA

(over)

Them boys gonna start a bunch of trouble they keep on like that.

INT. OAKLAND POLICE HEADQUARTERS- DAY

DORSETT, the Chief Duty Officer, shifts behind his desk, popping a TUMS. A VOICE comes from the doorway.

RODGERS

(over)

Those things don't work...

Looking up, Dorsett sees RODGERS -- a hawk-faced guy with slippery glasses. He's FBI down to the shine on his shoes.

DORSETT

Don't I know it. Come on in Agent Rodgers. Sit down. Always a... pleasure to see you. How can I be of help?

RODGERS

It's a bit more like how can we help you. Bay Area's become quite a hornet's nest in terms of subversive activities. And... well Mr. Hoover wants to reiterate that the FBI will be happy to assist local authorities in any way we can. On a strictly advisory basis... of course.

DORSETT

Of course. Well, I appreciate your offer, but we got things pretty well under control. Same bunch of kooks you guys already have under surveillance. They're still doing a lot of yelling and pot-smoking but nothing to worry about.

RODGERS

(cocking an eyebrow)

I see. What about the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense?

DORSETT

Heh, bunch of shines running around in dark caps waving their fists about some streetlight. They're loud, but they aren't dangerous,

RODGERS

Can you make a deal with them?

DORSETT

Naw... They're kids mostly. Idealists. They actually think they're for real.

RODGERS

Hmmm. As you know the Bureau -- and Mr. Hoover -- is particularly "sensitive" to anything that might agitate or solidify the coloreds on the left.

Dorsett pauses for a second, trying to read the angle.

DORSETT

You want me to put a man on it?

RODGERS

That would be an excellent start.

(a pause)

Tell him to keep a low profile.

EXT. FIFTY FIFTH AND MARKET - DAY

Panthers direct traffic at the corner. On the other side of the street a VW BUS with a UC BERKELEY sticker sits.

SABU's talking to a WHITE HIPPIE in the bus.

SABU

What do you want? Panama Red? I can get you Panama Red Sinsemilla? Got a line on some chocolate hash... get you high as a motherfucking monkey...

WHITE HIPPIE

Uhh... man I was wondering...
(dropping his voice)
can you get some Cocaine?

SABU

Coke? Shee-it.
(dropping his voice)
Yeah, I can get you cocaine. But
it's dangerous. Cops everywhere.
Gimme twenty dollars and meet me
back here in an hour. And don't fuck
around white boy, this is the serious
shit.

WHITE HIPPIE

Uh okay, alright. You'll be here in
an hour?

SABU

Yeah I'll be here.

Sabu grabs a TWENTY from the van. He SMILES as the van pulls
away.

SABU

(to himself)
Now that was one dumb motherfucker...

Cy, Tyrone at his side, APPEARS.

CY

Sabu, what the fuck you doing? Ain't
nobody gonna push on this street.

SABU

Shit, I ain't doing nothing. White
bread asks for cocaine, I take his
money. Shit... you know... It was
just a hustle.

CY

Sabu... High white dude's the only
thing you could hustle.

SABU

Man... fuck you. Why you always
bustin' my balls? All that high and
mighty militant shit. I ain't doing
nothing.

TYRONE

I dig, you just hustling. But you
make sure it stays like that brother,
or you will have much grief on your
sorry ass.

Cy lets Sabu go. He scrambles down the street.

SABU
(to himself)
Motherfucking Panthers, worse than
the police...

INT. UNMARKED CAR - FIFTY FIFTH AND MARKET - DAY

Nestled among empty paper COFFEE CUPS, BRIMMER - a once athletic white cop -- watches the Panthers at the corner. He stubs yet another CIGARETTE into an overflowing ashtray.

Brimmer sees CY taking over traffic duty from CARTER. There's a NOTEPAD on the seat next to Brimmer. He makes a HASH MARK in it -- COUNTING Panther heads.

EXT. STAIRS - DAY

Bottle of BITTER DOG in hand, Rose sits with the other drinkers, STARING at Brimmer's car. Taking a swig and smiling at his buddies, Rose walks toward the car.

EXT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Sauntering up to the car, Rose flashes a wicked grin.

ROSE
What's the matter Casper, you lost
or something?

Brimmer IGNORES him.

ROSE
Hey! I'm talking to you.

Rolling his eyes, BRIMMER holds up his BADGE. A gold DETECTIVE'S shield gleams at Rose through the glass.

ROSE
Ohhhh... Looky there...
(to the other drinkers)
It's a Cop...

Behind him the other drinkers RISE, checking Brimmer out.

INT. BRIMMER'S CAR - DAY

Brimmer fumes, so much for keeping a low profile.

BRIMMER
Fuck.

The Detective STARTS his car.

EXT. FIFTY FIFTH AND MARKET - DAY

Rose and the others goofing at him, Brimmer PULLS AWAY from the curb.

EXT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

BRIMMER'S CAR glides by the storefront.

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

HUEY talks earnestly with TYRONE and GENE.

HUEY

...Yeah, it's a perfect next step,
let the community know that we're
dedicated to Malcolm's ideals...

(checking his watch)

Damn where's Bobby Seale?

BOBBY SEALE, a whirlwind of energy, come careening through the door.

BOBBY SEALE

Huey!! Man you gotta check this out...
You're gonna love...

HUEY

(interrupting)

Hold up a second... We got a decision
to make.

BOBBY SEALE

What's up?

HUEY

Dig it, you know those brothers over
in San Fran... call themselves the
Black Panthers too?

BOBBY SEALE

Sure, those boogie jokers don't do
anything except print up a lotta
paper saying "Black is Beautiful."

TYRONE

Shit, nothing but Paper Panthers.

HUEY

(a smile)

Yeah... but it seems they're bringing
Malcolm's widow Betty Shabazz to
town, to speak at a rally, do an
interview for Ramparts.

(a pause)

And they want us to help with
security.

BOBBY

Well if anyone's gonna protect
Malcolm's legacy it better be us.

HUEY

Damn straight...
(rising)
Let's go check out these Paper
Panthers.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK PANTHER OFFICE - DAY

BOBBY'S PONTIAC sits in front of a rather upscale house, on
a street that would never be mistaken for Oakland.

INT. BLACK PANTHER OFFICE - DAY

Looking street and very tough, BOBBY, HUEY, TYRONE, LITTLE
BOBBY and GENE walk in. Spotting them, ROY -- the Paper
Panther President -- picks his afro and smoothes his DASHIKI
vainly.

In the background other men in AFRICAN GARB can be seen,
along with ALMA - a REGAL BLACK GIRL.

ROY

Greetings African brothers... You're
here to help us with Sister Shabazz
no doubt?

TYRONE

(under his breath)
Fucking boojie...

HUEY

That's right. We'd be proud to provide
as escort for Malcolm's widow. How
many men you got?

ROY

(to Alma)
Get the brothers a beer. Me too while
you're at it.
(to Huey)
Men? Well we can spare six for
security...

HUEY

(to Alma, declining
the beer)
No thank you sister.
(to Roy)
Six?! That seems a little light.
Cops are watching Betty, watching
her hard. We need at least twenty

men. And that's twenty armed Panthers dig? You do have guns don't you?

ROY

I assure you that we as the revolutionary vanguard are as serious about this as you are. We'll be prepared.

EXT. BLACK PANTHER OFFICE - DAY

Disgusted, HUEY stalks to the car with the others.

TYRONE

They ain't fit for the name Panthers.

BOBBY

Twenty men? I don't know if we got that.

HUEY

We'll get them. Right now we got to worry about being armed and ready to protect Betty Shabazz. Those phonies sure as hell can't. We need guns.

TYRONE

We need money first...

HUEY

Yeah... Bobby you gotta...

BOBBY

(moving)

Got it covered Huey, that's what I was trying to tell you before. Check it out...

Bobby's pops the PONTIAC'S TRUNK. BOXES sit inside it, overflowing with LITTLE RED BOOKS.

BOBBY

Bought every copy in Chinatown. Got us a discount too, thirty cents a piece.

CUT TO:

EXT. SATHER GATE - BERKELEY CAMPUS - DAY

In the stream of students, Tyrone, Huey and THE PANTHERS hold up Mao's LITTLE RED BOOK. A RADIO can be heard blaring Gladys Knight's "Heard it through the Grapevine."

HUEY

Here it is Brothers. The Lowdown straight from comrade Mao's mouth.

(to Bobby)
If you open the minds, the bodies
will follow.

CARTER moves toward Huey with TWO WHITE STUDENTS

CARTER
(looking confused)
Huey uhhh... these... these guys
want to join...

Huey smiles and shakes his head congenially.

HUEY
I'm sorry boys. But right now The
Party feels it's important for Black
People to do it for themselves. We're
not signing up white folk.
(the trademark smile)
But, if you are down with what we're
doing, organize some righteous white
folks. I got a feeling we're gonna
need each other.

EXT. SATHER GATE - DAY

Judge, holding notes and SCHOOLBOOKS spots the Panthers. Cy
catches his eye.

JUDGE
Hey, this what they got you doing
now?

CY
Party needs the bread.
(to the students)
Be hip to the struggle, only a
dollar!!!

STUDENT
A dollar? Far out! Is it authentic?

CY
Comrade, this here's the real deal,
straight from Revolution HQ.

STUDENT
Huh?
(catching on)
Hey, I can dig it man.
(buying book)
Thanks! Long live the revolution,
brother.

CY
(to Judge, pocketing
the bills)

Money's cool, but what the party
really needs is brothers like you.

(hands Judge a RED
BOOK)

Judge I could use someone like you.
These books, hell I don't know half
the words. You might.

JUDGE

Have to pass on the revolution today
man, I got class... But how about
tonight, I was gonna check out "Cloud
Nine." Just like old times.

CY

Can't... they're having a PE meeting
at Headquarters tonight, come on
down. Check it out.

JUDGE

PE? What? You guys doing gym class?

CY

No man. PE -- "political education."

TYRONE moves closer to Cy, checking out Judge

TYRONE

You're a smart brother... you should
dig what Huey and Bobby got to say...

JUDGE

Maybe...

TYRONE

(a smile)

Fuck maybe... be there.

Judge grins back at Tyrone, holding ground.

JUDGE

Like I said... maybe.

EXT. PANTHER HEADQUARTERS - 56TH AND GROVE - NIGHT

Essentially a storefront, the PANTHER HQ's a rag-tag, hipster
shrine. POSTERS hangs in the window -- "BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL,"
the BLACK PANTHER LOGO, an upraised BLACK FIST.

CY and JUDGE walk past a couple of loitering street folk.
ROSE is there, happily munching on a paper plate of stew.

JUDGE

Rose, what the hell you doing here?

ROSE

Just come for the food, man. Ain't

quite sure what their bag is but...

Rose POINTS through the doorway to BOBBY SEALE standing at a podium speaking front of a very small GROUP.

ROSE

That one's one hell of a cook...

INT. PANTHER HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Little Bobby and Tyrone PASS out LEAFLETS labeled with "What we want" and "What we Believe" to a SMALL ASSEMBLY.

At the podium, Bobby SPEAKS passionately. Judge and Cy make for empty secondhand seat.

BOBBY

...We... the Black Panther Party are not anarchists. We want a government that serves the people. In the black community we want a government that serves black people. Black cops for Black People. Not the Army we have occupying the community "Army?" you ask. "What army? This isn't Vietnam." Well the Army's right out your door folks. They're the cops.

A chorus of "Yeahs," "Right Ons and APPLAUSE."

BOBBY

They're pigs brothers and sisters. And these pigs are soldiers fighting against us. Whether you got an Afro or a process on. Whether a sister's got her hair straightened or whether she's got a natural on. Whether it's a brother in a dashiki or a pimp with a sharp suit on. Whether a sister's prostituting or teaching kids to read. The pig will murder you because you're black. No matter what kind of hair you wear. So we best get ourselves together, organize, learn our history and put the power in the hands of the black community before this army, these pigs wipe this community out.

Applause rings out. Even JUDGE claps.

INT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Political Education over, the small group of Panthers and neighborhood folk, chat as Judge makes his way over to Cy.

CY

...Glad you came man.

JUDGE

Yeah, only I figure you'd be the one doing the speaking.

CY

Not yet, one of these day's maybe. Bobby's party chairman. Political Education's really his bag.

Huey steps up with TYRONE.

HUEY

You're Cy's Vietnam buddy right?

(Judge nods)

C'mere I'd like to talk with you...

Huey pulls Judge toward a BACK ROOM, Tyrone watches them leave, protective, suspicious...

HUEY

You were. infantry right?

JUDGE

Yeah.

HUEY

So I guess it's safe to say you know about firepower.

INT. YANG'S HARDWARE - SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: A nest of WEAPONS -- shotguns, M1's, handguns -- sit is on a DESK in the cluttered back room of the store.

Judge's hands run over the guns, checking them out. He sets an AUTOMATIC aside.

JUDGE

Busted firing pin.

(checking a revolver)

You want only the legal stuff right?

TYRONE

Just the legit shit.

Judge SETS ASIDE the revolver.

MR. YANG -- a nervous oriental man -- hovers over them.

MR. YANG

Nothing wrong with that pistol.

JUDGE

Serial number's been filed. Cop catches you with that he figures you

either stole it or killed someone
with it...

MR. YANG

I don't want no trouble. No cops
coming to me about these guns.

HUEY

No trouble here. You got a permit to
sell.

(handing over cash)

We're buying. All perfectly legal.

MR. YANG

(counting)

These are worth a lot more.

BOBBY SEALE

(pointing to a Mao
portrait)

I thought you were a revolutionary.
We can't afford em if you don't cut
us some slack. But... you treat us
right and we'll be doing a lot of
business.

MR. YANG

Alright.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Cy and Tyrone load the weapons into Cy's VAN. Bobby, Huey,
and Judge talk.

HUEY

We appreciate your help with this.

JUDGE

So what's the deal?

HUEY

(a smile)

Freedom... We're just gonna test
some of the words in that law book.

Truck loaded, the Panthers make to leave. Huey lingers a bit
with Judge.

HUEY

Judge... we're doing security for
Betty Shabazz's visit next week. I'd
like to have someone who knows there
way around a pistol there. Someone
like you.

JUDGE

I don't know.

HUEY

You are down for protecting Malcolm's widow aren't you?

JUDGE

Yeah... let me think about it.

HUEY

Okay man I ain't going to push. But remember the revolution isn't going to wait for anyone. Come on, we'll give you a lift.

JUDGE

No man. Gonna walk.

Tyrone watches Judge warily as he turns and walks away.

MONTAGE:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Judge, feet moving across pavement, walks alone.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A WHITE PROFESSOR nasally drones about ECONOMICS as Judge stares out the window, watching PANTHERS sell RED BOOKS.

EXT. GHETTO - DAY

Panthers exhorting the community. Chaos slowly turning into organizations, repainting, sickle cell program, and handing out bags of food as BRIMMER watches from his car.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

A COP CRUISER slowly passes Judge as he walks, shining its SPOTLIGHT on him.

INT. JUDGE AND CY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's late. Judge studies a TEXT BOOK. Next to it sits MAO'S RED BOOK. He can't concentrate. Grabbing his jacket, Judge heads out the DOOR.

END MONTAGE:

INT. BOBBY'S PONTIAC NIGHT

Huey's DRIVING. Bobby's next to him, a RIFLE on his lap. Tyrone and CY sit in back. They're all in UNIFORM.

HUEY

(to Cy)

This here's a "Panther Patrol." We

see a brother getting busted. We
check it out, make sure the pig don't
go beating on the man. Brother gets
taken downtown, we post bail, hook
'em up with a lawyer.

TYRONE

We're like policing the police.

Huey SPOTS something through the windshield a COP CAR.

HUEY

(pulling over)

Damn straight.

EXT. GROVE STREET - NIGHT

TWO BEEFY COPS have a BLACK MAN up against the wall. Panther's
Pontiac pulls to the curb. The cops TURN...

HUEY -- holding a RIFLE, backed by the other Panthers --
stares solidly at the policeman.

BEEFY COP #1

(into radio)

Get me some back up...

In the BACKGROUND, the man against the wall SCOOTs AWAY.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Walking thinking, Judge moves down the street. After a bit,
RED LIGHTS can be seen on the wall behind him. Judge MOVES
quickly toward the lights, SPOTTING something.

EXT. GROVE STREET - NIGHT

Near Panther HQ, FIGURES move in silhouette against a SQUAD
CAR's HEADLIGHTS.

High tension as HUEY and BOBBY SEALE stand next to the beat
up PONTIAC holding a RIFLE. THE BEEFY COP faces him --
flashlight in one hand, Huey's LICENSE in the other.

Cy, Tyrone and other Panthers -- in full PANTHER UNIFORMS --
move through the crowd passing out BLACK PANTHER PARTY TEN
POINT PROGRAMS.

BEEFY COP

Okay now, er, Huey, so what's your
telephone number?

HUEY

I have confirmed to you my address,
that's all I'm required to by law to
do. We have broken no law.

BEEFY COP

What are you doing with the gun?

HUEY

(calm, controlled)

What are doing with yours?.

As JUDGE pushes through the semi-circle of black folks, TWO MORE SQUAD CARS pull up. The cops inside swagger over. One of them a BABY FACED COP, has his NIGHT STICK drawn.

BABY FACED COP

These boys giving you trouble?

Beefy Cop shines his light on the PASSENGER SEAT of the Pontiac. It illuminates a PISTOL.

BEEFY COP

Here's another one. That your pistol there?

Bobby Seale reaches over and PICKS UP the pistol. The Panthers snap to a STRAIGHT LINE behind Huey.

BOBBY

No! It is not his weapon. A handgun would be a violation of his probation. It's mine!

Nearby, THE CLOUD NINE NIGHTCLUB pulses with MUSIC. Purple suited hipsters move onto the sidewalk observing the escalating scene between Panthers and police.

BEEFY COP

(stretching out his hand)

Lemme see that rifle son...

HUEY

(snatching the gun away)

No! This is my private property. According to California law we have a constitutional right to bear arms.

BLACK VOICE IN CROWD

Them's some badass niggers...

COP 2

(to the crowd)

Okay. Okay. Move along. Go on about your business...

Reluctant but docile, the crowd begins to DISPERSE.

HUEY

Wait!! Brothers! Sisters!! You don't

have to go anywhere. This is your business. Stay right here. The law says as long as you keep a reasonable distance, eight to ten feet to be exact, you've got a right to observe the police carrying out their duties. From what I can see, you're standing some 22 feet away from this man here. So brothers ain't no law being broken.

Emboldened by Huey's words, the crowd REGROUPS.

BLACK VOICE IN CROWD
Talk that good shit Brother...

BEEFY COP
Is that gun loaded BOY?!!

The crowd GASPS, then goes silent as Huey steps right up into the cop's face.

HUEY
Fish and Game laws clearly state that it is unlawful to have a live round of ammunition in the chamber of a shotgun or rifle in a vehicle...
PIG!!

BLACK VOICE IN CROWD
Oh sweet Jesus, I do believe I have died and gone to heaven...

COP #2
Refer to him as officer.

BOBBY
Well then don't refer to him as BOY!

BEEFY COP
(glaring)
Well... is it loaded?

HUEY
I tell you "officer", it wasn't...

Huey COCKS A ROUND into the chamber.

HUEY
...but now IT IS!

The cops TENSE. The Beefy One blows a gasket.

BEEFY COP
For the last time Boy!!! What do those guns mean??!!

HUEY

They mean, Pig!, that the Black Panther Party declares that if you try to brutalize our community or take our weapons.

(a beat)

We are going to shoot you!!!

The crowd stands FROZEN. Joy spreads out beneath their guarded ghetto masks.

BLACK VOICE IN CROWD

(whirling like a dervish)

Pigs that's just what the hell they are!!!

Cops and Panthers stand TOE TO TOE. Deadly moments pass. Cop eyes flash from Panthers to Crowd. Then something TURNS. The cops BACK OFF, climbing into their cars.

GROVE STREET - NIGHT

Judge moves away, walking down the street. He senses the joy and amazement of the community, picking up on SNATCHES OF CONVERSATION from a dozen different doorways.

VOICE

(over)

Never thought I'd live to see the day! You know the police ain't nothing but the KKK with badges.

A breeze wafts a TEN POINT PROGRAM past Judge. Slowly, thoughtfully he picks the leaflet up.

INT. DORSETT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: A TEN POINT PROGRAM sits in Dorsett's fleshy fingers.

It's after hours as Dorsett, Rodgers and BRIMMER - each holding PAMPHLETS -- have a tense "discussion".

DORSETT

One: "We want freedom. We want the power to determine the destiny of our Black Community." Two: "We want full employment for our people." Three: "We want to end the robbery by the white man of our Black Community." Christ, they're asking for reparations...

RODGERS

They couldn't have thought this up for themselves.

BRIMMER

(sarcastic)

Yeah... Sounds like the Constitution to me. With a little of the Bill of Rights thrown in...

RODGERS

Inspector Brimmer, this is no joke. During your surveillance have you seen any outside agitators? Professorial types? Communists?

BRIMMER

No. I've seen Black men handing out bags of food. Having meetings. Patrolling the neighborhood. Having more meetings. They ain't...

RODGERS

They are carrying guns. They are threatening police officers. They are undermining the United States of America. And you Inspector Brimmer are not taking your duties seriously...

DORSETT

Now hold on Rodgers...

RODGERS

Chief Dorsett, if the Black Panthers are going to remain in your jurisdiction, some fundamental changes in attitude need to be made...

BRIMMER

Like?

RODGERS

Like, you Inspector Brimmer are not going to be sitting in your car anymore. I think it's time for a more active type of involvement.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Beat by late hours, DORSETT walks to his car -- a brand new CADILLAC, sitting in his 'reserved' spot.

A LIMOUSINE pulls up next to him. Its window rolls down. At first we don't see the passenger's face.

VOICE

Evening Chief. Another hard day keeping the streets safe?

DORSETT

(forced joviality)
What are you doing out so late?

VOICE
I like to keep an eye on my
"investments" so to speak. You know
we still need to discuss that business
expansion we spoke of.

DORSETT
(ill at ease)
Look, I don't think...

LOUIS TRAFFICANTE -- all style, all mobster -- LEANS out the
window. His right hand man, TONY, at the wheel. He points to
the Cadillac.

TRAFFICANTE
That's a beautiful car. You'd do
well to remember who paid for it.
Good night, Chief, we'll speak again
soon.

INT. JUDGE AND CY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dawn pushes pink against the loft windows as Judge, dressed
for class, pores over Cy's copy of "Wretched of the Earth."

CY
(coming out)
Man, did you see Huey down on Grove
street? All up on that cop, that was
beautiful.

JUDGE
Yeah, it was alright. Hey, can you
give me a lift?

CY
You got it. Berkeley?

JUDGE
No, Panther Headquarters.
(a smile)
Least that way we could hang out
more like we used to.

CY
You joining? My Brother..
(hugging Judge)
My brother.

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

Panther HQ has improved. Bobby Seale stands behind a newly
painted display counter, interviewing NEW RECRUITS.

BOBBY'S POV - FACE MONTAGE

FACES -- all of them BLACK, all of them MEN, most of them ANGRY -- flash into the frame, each talking.

FACE #1

Sign me up!! Just gimme a gun and point out the cops you want me to shoot...

FACE #2

Where's the free food at?

FACE #3

My momma, she marched with King. Don't know exactly what kinda change that brought. But man you put that cop on Grove through some serious changes!!!

FACE #4

I hear you Panther boys get the finest pussy.

FACE #5

Vietnam man... I go there and then come back to some honky motherfucker telling me what to do, beating my ass if I don't. Man... fuck that.

A FINAL FACE comes into view... JUDGE'S

CUT TO:

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

CY stands proudly next to Judge in front of Bobby.

CY

Judge is gonna join us.

Tyrone looks less than pleased at the news.

BOBBY

Welcome Brother, if we stand together we can break the chains.

TYRONE

(miffed, to Judge)
Huey wants to see you.

JUDGE

Huh?

TYRONE

He had a feeling you'd be coming by.

INT. BACKROOM - DAY

Judge moves warily into the dim and musty room. As his eyes acclimate to the gloom he spots HUEY sitting half hidden in the shadows.

HUEY

Welcome brother, have you decided to get down with us?

JUDGE

I'm down.

HUEY

Yeah... You were a lot of help with those guns. Your soldier shit is bad-ass.

JUDGE

I'd hoped I was finished with all that. But...

(shrugs)

HUEY

You know, you're lucky to be back. Most niggers die on the front lines. Seems like that's what they're there for.

JUDGE

Don't I know it. Every brother I knew in 'Nam's dead. My company... a land mine. Twenty of my friends dead in less than a second.

HUEY

Mind if I ask you something? Why'd you put up with shit like that for someone else's war?

Judge flashes Huey a look of bare honesty.

JUDGE

Hey, GI bill pays for school. And shit, if I stuck around here, instead of signing up, I'd probably be in jail, or sitting on the stoop drinking Bitter Dog with Rose, you know?

HUEY

Yeah I know. You're smart Judge. You ain't no bourgeois nigger like those Paper Panthers across the bay. I need every good man to help us with the security on Betty Shabazz, particularly soldiers. You do solid on that I might have something else

for you, something real important.

JUDGE

Whatever you need, I'll be there.

HUEY

Right on Brother Judge...

Huey and Judge grip HANDS.

EXT. OAKLAND AIRPORT - DAY

TITLE: FEBRUARY 21, 1967

With tight precision, HUEY, TYRONE, JUDGE, CY, GENE, BOBBY, CARTER and LITTLE BOBBY form a circle around BETTY SHABAZZ guiding her past AIRPORT POLICE to a waiting car.

Led by ROY the PAPER PANTHERS seem useless in their dashikis and fluffed Afros.

INT. RAMPARTS OFFICE - DAY

In an INNER OFFICE, Betty Shabazz talks with ELDRIDGE, a tall man wearing sunglasses. In the OUTER OFFICE, Huey's PANTHERS stand by while ROY'S PAPER PANTHERS do little.

ELDRIDGE

What would you tell young brothers and sisters to do in following Brother Malcolm's footsteps?

BETTY SHABAZZ

I'd say that Malcolm lives in each of us. We all need to work together for the community.

(gesturing outside)

Like those brothers out there are...

Overhearing, Roy PREENS a bit at Betty's words. Nearby JUDGE flicks his eyes to the GUN at Roy's waistband.

JUDGE

(low)

Huey...

Suddenly ROY spots something outside... POLICE CARS, followed closely by NEWS VANS.

ROY

(nervous)

Oh oh...

Snapping up his SHOTGUN, Huey nods to the others. Bobby Seale pulls back his jacket revealing a .45.

Solemn, professional, Huey and the Panthers file out the

door. ROY'S PAPER PANTHERS hang behind.

EXT. RAMPARTS OFFICE - DAY

Led by Huey, the Panthers take up a line between the cops and the office. REPORTERS, expecting another GROVE STREET, push forward.

COP #1
(eyeing Huey's gun)
What's going on here son?

HUEY
We are breaking no law, you've have
no right to detain us.

A REPORTER spots BETTY SHABAZZ, flanked by JUDGE and TYRONE leaving the building heading toward a car.

REPORTER
There she is!!!

Surging forward the reporters PUSH CAMERAS toward BETTY SHABAZZ. One of them, CHUCK, tries to push HUEY away.

Controlled, Huey holds Chuck in check, watching Betty move toward the car. Chuck PUSHES FORWARD trying to get a PICTURE.

Seeing Betty safely inside and the car PULLING AWAY, Huey SHOVES Chuck back. Chuck makes to swing at Huey. Huey SHOVES HIM DOWN.

HUEY
(to Cop #1)
Arrest this man!!!

COP #1
If I'm gonna arrest anyone it's going
to be you...

Fast, the PANTHERS take up position behind Huey, their GUNS highly visible. Huey flicks the SAFETY of his shotgun.

HUEY
Not today!!

ROY come running out, UNARMED, scared yelling at Huey.

ROY
Don't point that gun!!!

COP #1
That's right be a smart nigger like
your friend.

TENSION ripples through the air as ROY runs back inside. Huey glares at the cop.

HUEY

He's not my friend and I promise you
pig. Your men draw and this will be
a blood bath. It's your call.

EVERY PANTHER stands facing the cops, weapons at the ready.
THROUGH the glass PAPER PANTHERS can be seen HIDING.

Slowly the cops begin backing away.

CHUCK

(to the cops)
Aren't you going to do anything...

COP #1

(nervous)
Like he said asshole, they're not
breaking any law...

Screeching their TIRES the police leave.

CUT TO:

INT. BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT

Packed in the car, Bobby, Little Bobby, Judge, Cy and Tyrone
recount the day as HUEY drives.

LITTLE BOBBY

You see that on jive dashiki man,
hiding under the desk. Shit paper
panthers.

Huey notices JUDGE'S SILENCE.

HUEY

What it be Judge. Nobody got hurt,
Sister Betty's safe. This was a good
day...

JUDGE

They were empty...

BOBBY

What was empty?

JUDGE

The Paper Panthers' guns, they weren't
loaded. I know guns man. Those guns
were empty.

Huey's KNUCKLES TIGHTEN on the steering wheel.

EXT. YARD - DAY

FISH fries on a grill as ROY and the PAPER PANTHERS celebrate.

Alma's looking DISGUSTED with the whole thing.

ROY

Like I say Brothers we are the
vanguard.

(to Alma)

Get me a beer... I tell you once
Cleaver's story comes out, we're
gonna...

ROY'S face DROPS as HUEY AND THE OTHER PANTHERS appear at
the edge of the party. Huey marches up, YANKING Roy's gun
from his pants, checking it.

HUEY

We put our lives on the line today.
Malcolm X's widow was on the line
today. And your guns weren't even
loaded.

ROY

A gun's a gun man. It don't need to
be loaded.

HUEY

Tell that to the pigs. Better yet
tell that to Malcolm.

ROY

Wait a second there brother...

HUEY

No you wait a second. You and your
"Panthers" got three choices. One
you join with us and follow our rules.
Two you change your name.

(a smile)

Or three you face annihilation.

PAPER PANTHERS step up, Huey's men follow suit. Judge standing
right at Huey's.

ROY

Pretty boy, you're a long way from
Oakland. Fuck you.

Bam! Huey hits Roy with a ferocious hook. A BIG PAPER PANTHER
moves on Huey, Judge DROPS HIM like a stone.

In seconds Huey's men have kicked the shit out of the Paper
Panthers. Huey's got ROY'S FACE in the grill.

HUEY

You're exactly the kind of brother
we don't need. Kind of brother who
gets others killed. Now you gonna
change your name.

Huey pulls Roy up, his SINGED BEARD covered with fish and onions. ROY just glares silently.

ALMA

Roy, tell him you'll do it.

Huey shoves Roy's face back down toward the grill.

ROY

Please!!! Yes!!! We'll change the name.

Throwing ROY away, Huey LOCKS EYES with Alma as the Panthers depart. She watches them every step of the way.

Nearby SOMEONE ELSE watches the Panthers also. ELDRIDGE CLEAVER, the reporter from Ramparts.

INT. HUEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Unwinding, alone with Judge, Huey hands him a beer.

HUEY

You were alright Judge, better than alright. You're what the Party needs. A fighter but also one that's going to school not making the man too nervous.

JUDGE

I don't know about that.

HUEY

I do. You think you're smart enough to keep playing the game?

JUDGE

What, I don't know how you mean?

HUEY

See, the thing about Panthers. For all their speed and strength. They are not naturally aggressive. They don't just go out killing, tearing through the jungles murdering. No, the Panther

(makes a fist)

keeps his claws hidden until he is attacked, until he's backed into a corner. Then

(opens his fist)

believe me those claws are fierce.

JUDGE

Huey, you're losing me. What are you talking about?

HUEY

I'm talking about survival. Yours, mine, all of it. Outside and in. You got to do something for me. Staying alive might depend on it. The pigs are gonna try to infiltrate us and we're gonna let 'em. But their spy's gonna be our spy too. How about it?

There's a pause as Judge chews on the grave proposition.

JUDGE

Me? You've got a whole lot of other folks signing up. Why me?

HUEY

You fit the profile, Brother. You look exactly like the kind of nigger they think they can trust...

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - WASH D.C. - DAY

A cold harsh building sits like a satisfied giant on the Capitol street.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Passing a SIGN on the door: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
DIRECTOR: J.E. HOOVER.

The Uber-cop himself sits at the desk, his large watery eyes scanning a TELETYPE. He presses an INTERCOM.

HOOVER

Get me out man in Oakland...

EXT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

A HUGE LINE of NEW RECRUITS stretches outside the building.

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

Bobby and Tyrone stand there uncomfortably facing ALMA and a platoon of SISTERS.

TYRONE

Alma!? I uhh I don't think...

ALMA

What do you mean? We're black ain't we? And we care about improving the plight of out people don't we? Or you figure oppression stops at that thing dangling between your legs!

TYRONE

(looking to Bobby)
Uhh... I with it sister but...

ALMA
But nothing, we want full fledged membership in the Black Panther Party... and none of this "Okay sugah as long as you stay in the background washing my socks and rubbing my feet" bullshit either!

Bobby GRINS.

BOBBY
I can dig that! If your down with the Ten-Point-Program, sign up.

MONTAGE:

EXT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

Panthers place POSTERS of Bobby Seale and Huey in the storefront window as JUDGE, ALMA, CY and TYRONE load LEAFLETS into a VAN.

BOBBY
(over)
There's a lot of work to be done.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Little Bobby Hutton lectures a group of school kids

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - BREAKFAST PROGRAM - DAY

Judge's HAND ladles out porridge to a sea of hungry kids. ALMA smiles across the room at them.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Tyrone and Cy watch as Judge holds an M1 RIFLE, lecturing NEW RECRUITS. Each recruit has a DISASSEMBLED RIFLE. Judge starts his stopwatch. The RECRUITS fumble with the rifles. Suddenly a sound -- the perfect clicking and clacking of metal on metal. ALMA assembles her rifle with lightning speed. Still FUMBLING with their rifles, the other recruits stare amazed at Alma. Judge checks the stopwatch... TWENTY SEVEN SECONDS. Looking up, Judge and TYRONE'S EYES MEET.

EXT. FIFTY FIFTH AND MARKET - DAY

Judge takes his place DIRECTING TRAFFIC. Turning Judge LOCKS EYES with RITA across the street. She looks worried.

END MONTAGE

EXT. UC BERKELEY CAMPUS - DAY

Judge hawks RED BOOKS to park goers, engaging them in pro panther banter. Black folk move away from him when they spot BRIMMER, an obvious cop, striding toward Judge.

BRIMMER

You're Judge right? We need to talk.

JUDGE

I don't know you and I got nothing to say to you.

BRIMMER

(flashing his badge)

Yeah you do. It's up to you either here or downtown.

Giving up, Judge walks with Brimmer listening as the cop talks.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

Huey's COOKING BREAKFAST for the kids as Alma, Tyrone and Little Bobby serve up bowls of porridge.

Passing the munching kids, Judge -- obviously excited -- moves over to Huey.

JUDGE

(sotto voce)

They tried to recruit me. Just like you figured.

Tyrone looks over, FROWNING. Huey signals him that everything's cool.

HUEY

(joking loudly)

You're a little old to be a school boy aren't you brother.

(whispering)

Cool it! You're probably not the only one they've gone after. Stall a little so they believe you're for real. Make them trust you.

(raising his voice)

Hey Tyrone, you figure feeding our children is gonna make The Man jumpy?

TYRONE

(bantering back)

Black people getting uppity, feeding their children breakfast, taking their destiny into their own hands. What's this world coming to?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

TITLE: RICHMOND CALIFORNIA, APRIL 1, 1967

Pursued, a thin Black man -- DENZIL DOWELL -- LIMPS painfully past. TWO COPS, guns drawn, run after him.

COP #1

Hands up, you ain't going nowhere.

Faced with a BLIND ALLEY, Dowell RAISES his hands. The cops close in.

DENZIL

I wasn't going nowhere in the first place. I ain't done shit.

COP #2

"Done shit, SIR!!" Nigger don't move...

Scared, Denzil instinctively BACKS AWAY from the cops.

DENZIL

I ain't done...

GUNFIRE rips through the alley.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DOWELL HOME - DAY

The room is filled with mourners. Shades are drawn but a little sun brushes the PANTHERS LEATHER JACKETS. Denzil's brother GEORGE, speaks softly to MOMMA DOWELL.

GEORGE

Momma, these here are the Panthers I asked over from Oakland.

MOMMA DOWELL

I thank you all for coming to grieve with us. The police won't tell us nothing.

MOURNER

They been shooting Black men down around here like they're going out of style.

MOMMA DOWELL

(breaking into tears)

My boy didn't do nothing. He didn't do nothing. Can't nobody do something.

HUEY

We came to do something.

EXT. RICHMOND RALLY - DAY

Panthers, carrying GUNS, line both sides of the block. NEW
FACES can be seen with Judge, Alma, Cy, Tyrone, Little Bobby
and the others.

A block or so distant, the SHERIFF'S OFFICE looms up.

EXT. RICHMOND RALLY - DAY

BOBBY SEALE shuttles back and forth distributing PROGRAMS
and LEAFLETS to a forest of outstretched Black hands.

HUEY stands on top of a car, his strong voice ringing out
over the gathering.

HUEY

...The police report says he was
shot three times but the coroner's
report says quite clearly that Denzil
Dowell was shot six times. And two
of those shots were in his armpits.
Brothers and Sisters you know why
that is?

(raises his arms up)

Because Denzil had his hands up!!

BOBBY SEALE

(to crowd)

No more police brutality! WHAT DO WE
WANT?

THE CROWD

JUSTICE!

Frenzied hands grab all the PAMPHLETS from Bobby.

SEALE

(to Judge)

More programs man!!! In the car.

Judge moves away toward the PONTIAC.

EXT. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

Judge grabs a pile of LEAFLETS off the seat. Turning back to
the rally, Judge comes nose to nose with BRIMMER.

BRIMMER

Afternoon asshole... You shoulda
told me about this. C'mon...

EXT. RALLY - DAY

Tyrone SEES Brimmer spin Judge around and cuff him.

BOBBY SEALE

WHAT DO WE WANT?

THE PANTHERS
JUSTICE!!!

Tyrone NUDGES Huey, gesturing to Judge being led to Brimmer's UNMARKED CAR.

TYRONE
C'mon let's...

HUEY
No! Just harassment. Can't let it
stop this.
(an eye to car, then
the crowd)
Brother we got momentum!

Whipped up, the crowd YELLS as Tyrone looks perplexed.

BOBBY
What do we want!???

THE CROWD
JUSTICE!

REVEREND SLOCUM steps out, trying to calm the crowd.

REVEREND SLOCUM
Amen! The Lord God Almighty be our
witness. Let us bow our heads and
pray for...

BOBBY
(interrupting, raising
his fist)
POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!!

CROWD
POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

The Panthers move into precise FORMATION. Huey and Bobby at the front, the crowd moves toward the Sheriff's Office.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Tense, a DOUBLE LINE of police blocks the entrance. With the crowd screaming for "JUSTICE!" and "BLACK POWER!" behind them, Bobby and Huey step up to the Deputies.

DEPUTY
(shoving Huey)
You're not getting in here with no
gun.

Huey SHOVES the cop back. The line of cops BRISTLES.

HUEY

This firearm is being carried in plain view and is therefore perfectly legal according to California statute...

COP

Over my dead body.

Huey steps back and Clack!, jerks a ROUND into the gun. A HUSH falls over the crowd. The POLICE raise their weapons.

HUEY

That's your call pig.

Rev. Slocum puts a steadying hand on Huey's arm.

REV. SLOCUM

(to cops)

We come for justice, not bloodshed but don't be pushing us too far.

Tense moments pass. Huey looks over at MOMMA DOWELL, reading the concern in her eyes.

Then, Huey and Bobby RAISE their weapons up, PASSING THEM to the police. Unarmed, The Panthers enter the building.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Surrounded by deputies, Bobby and Huey confront the smug SHERIFF.

BOBBY

Bled to death!?!? The Coroner's report says he was shot to death. We demand a grand jury investigation in the death of Denzil Dowell and the pattern of brutality against the Black citizens of Richmond.

SHERIFF

(icy)

The Police department has conducted its own inquest and concluded that no misconduct occurred. As for a "pattern of brutality..." The charge is ridiculous.

HUEY

Then what do you call four dead Black men in six months?!

SHERIFF

I call it the police doing there duty under the law. You got a problem with that... take it to the

legislature but get the hell out of
my office.

BOBBY

(to Huey)

The pig might just have a point.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

Brimmer's UNMARKED CAR sits in front of the tattered building
near the heart of Oakland.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

JUDGE -- handcuffed to a chair in the vast lofty space --
looks like he's been through the wringer. BRIMMER, smoking
vehemently, hovers over him.

BRIMMER

So... we understand each other Judge?

JUDGE

(sullen)

Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE WAREHOUSE - DAY

RODGERS watches Judge and Brimmer from the SHADOWS.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

Brimmer UNCUFFS Judge from the chair.

BRIMMER

Alright then.

Judge STANDS a little shakily. Brimmer slides a BUSINESS
CARD in his pocket.

BRIMMER

I expect to hear from you soon. If
Huey Newton takes a crap, I want to
know how big it was. Otherwise I'm
gonna come looking for you. And I
won't be as "friendly" as today.

JUDGE

I got you.

Judge turns to leave. Brimmer stops him

BRIMMER

You just remember one thing Judge.

You've got a lot at stake. And The Panthers are gonna lose. Question is, are you gonna lose along with them? Your future? Your mother? Think about it.

Judge leaves. Brimmer takes a long drag of his cigarette, STARING at RODGERS.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Half a step out the door, Judge THROWS Brimmer's CARD away.

EXT. DE FEMERY PARK - DAY

A combination BARBECUE/AWARENESS RALLY covers the park. Panthers and just plain neighborhood folk eat, drink and talk. Judge - a worried look on his face -- walks by.

Huey's on the podium, speaking clearly and passionately.

HUEY

As soon as black people exercise their rights to bear arms and defend themselves the pigs want to change the law. We're not going to make it easy for them to have unarmed targets. Now, you all have a good time cause this here's our community and it is a beautiful thing.

(raising his fist)

Power to the people.

Pulsing MUSIC kicks in as Huey steps from the stage.

EXT. DE FEMERY PARK - SIDE OF THE STAGE - DAY

Huey joins a meeting in progress with Tyrone, Alma and Bobby, who's particularly edgy.

HUEY

This brothers is gonna be a colossal event. We'll shut the mother down right at the capitol, in front of the cameras.

(annoyed off Bobby's pacing)

Will you cool it? What's up man? What it be Bobby?

BOBBY

What it be is, You aren't coming with us.

HUEY

What? We're the leadership, you and me. There ain't enough of us to...

BOBBY

That's just it Huey. The pigs don't know how many Panthers there are. Both of us show and they might start putting 2 and 2 together. We're not even two hundred strong yet... but we got 'em guessing thousands.

HUEY

I hear you. Alright. I'll go, you stay.

Admiring, Bobby shakes his head.

BOBBY

Huey... We took a vote. You're still on probation. We can't risk you. Things is starting to get hot. Go mow yo momma's lawn like you promised.

Huey's TENSES, ready to argue. Then he SPOTS Judge. A LOOK passes between them.

HUEY

Alright, I'll stay. Judge, I want to...

TYRONE

(to Judge)

Where you been? I saw the cops rousting you at the rally.

JUDGE

Aw... uh... it's was just harassment. My driver's license expired.

HUEY

Chickenshits, they're grabbing at anything.

Huey leads Judge away, Tyrone WATCHES them closely, very suspicious.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE PARK - DAY

Huey's charged, talking fast to Judge.

HUEY

What's the pig's name?

JUDGE

Brimmer.

HUEY

(very serious)

You got to keep very cool on this.

Icy god damn cool. Cause baby, you just became the strongest weapon we got. Let me guess, he wants you to call him, tell him what we're doing.

JUDGE

Yeah.

HUEY

And you're gonna do just that. But I'll tell you what to feed the pig. You alright with this?

JUDGE

Yeah... I guess. Any of other Panthers know about this?

Huey just looks at Judge silently.

JUDGE

Man, this shit's pretty thick.

HUEY

You got that right. And brother, I got a feeling it's going to get a whole lot thicker.

EXT. LEGISLATURE BUILDING - DAY

TITLE: SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA MAY 2, 1967

Governor RONALD REAGAN stands on the Capitol lawn speaking to THE FUTURE LEADERS -- a teenage group.

Suddenly, THE PANTHERS pull up, stepping out of their cars, ARMED, clad in black leather. CHAOS erupts.

Bodyguards whisk Reagan away as a swarm of NEWS CREWS converge on the Panthers. CAMERAS flanked around him, a REPORTER shoves a microphone in Bobby's face.

NEWSMAN

Is this a militant action? Are the Panthers storming the Capitol?

BOBBY

No!!! Definitely not!!!

(to the news camera)

We are here to send a message. The Black Panther Party for Self Defense calls upon the American people in general and Black people in particular to take careful note of the racist California Legislature now considering the Mulford Act, which is aimed at keeping Black people disarmed and powerless while racist police agencies

throughout the country intensify the
terror, brutality, murder and
repression of Black people.

INT. LEGISLATURE - DAY

--
It's hard to tell who there's more of -- Panthers or reporters
as the chaotic circus enters a LONG CORRIDOR.

Seale's in the lead, with Little Bobby, Alma and Tyrone
following. Disoriented, they CLIMB stairs, continuing down
another CORRIDOR. A GUARD at a DOORWAY starts to freak.

GUARD

You can't come in here!

BOBBY

We are here to observe the Assembly.
You will not stop us.

GUARD

This door leads to the Assembly floor,
it's closed to the public. You have
to go to the Visitor's Gallery,
it's...

The guard TURNS TO POINT, Seale twists to follow his finger.
Reporters swing around. A crewman BUMPS into the guard. CHAOS.
The entourage PANICS, stumbling through the door. A mass of
Panthers and reporters spill into...

INT. ASSEMBLY ROOM FLOOR - DAY

Pro Tem Speaker Carlos Bee's mouth drops as a noisy mass of
Panthers and reporters careens into the chambers.

Swiftly the rat pack of reporters BACKS AWAY, leaving the
Panthers, armed and confused, in the MIDDLE OF THE ROOM.

SECURITY GUARDS converge on the Panthers.

FOOTAGE

Camera pans up from lawnmower to Huey's face.

FADE INTO

US and International HEADLINES scream the story. "New York
Times," France's "Le Figaro, Italy's "Il Giornale." The
Panthers have just become a worldwide phenomenon.

PROSECUTOR

(over)

Tell the court Mr. Seale are you
proud to be the co-founder of the
Panthers, an anti-white movement.

BOBBY

(over)

The Black Panther Party is not anti-white, you cannot fight racism with racism.

APPLAUSE rings out.

JUDGE

(over)

Gentlemen, please approach the bench.

The Judge's GAVEL BANGS.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - AT THE BENCH - DAY

Bobby, Huey, Prosecutors, Defenders and the Judge yell. GAVEL still banging, a rapid-fire PLEA BARGAIN is underway.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

My clients broke no law. It was an accident, a wrong turn. Besides, the guns were not illegal. Dismissal!

PROSECUTOR

They will be as soon as the Mulford act passes. Six Months for everyone!

Huey SHAKES his head at the Defense Attorney.

PROSECUTOR

Okay, last offer. Ninety days, no felony charges, just a disturbing the peace.

Huey NODS.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Deal!

PROSECUTOR

Not so fast. But only if he
(points to Bobby)
and one of his lieutenants agree to six months.

HUEY

You got six months to donate to the party, Bobby?

BOBBY

You know it brother.

INT. HOOVER'S OFFICE - DAY

The TAPE MACHINE rolls as a very agitated FBI director growls into the phone.

RODGERS

(over)

...at least that takes Bobby Seale off the street...

HOOVER

Not good enough Rodgers. Not good enough at all. Black terrorists on the floor of a State Capitol. I will not say this again, these Negro Commies are to be stopped and now. You tear them down. Either from the outside or the inside.

RODGERS

(over)

We're working on that...

HOOVER

Work harder. And get me some results. Those Black Bastards could be up to anything.

EXT. MARKET STREET - NIGHT

Finished with traffic duty Judge walks home. He passes BRIMMER'S CAR at the curb.

BRIMMER

C'mon we're going for a ride...

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Brimmer's car pulls onto the bridge.

INT. BRIMMER'S CAR - NIGHT

Brimmer lights a cigarette angrily.

BRIMMER

Why didn't you tell us about the party you boys were planning at the capitol?

JUDGE

Shit man. It was... you know spontaneous.

BRIMMER

Spontaneous my ass!! You told the press and you don't tell me. Remember you're working for us.

JUDGE

Yeah... whatever you say.

BRIMMER

Are you fucking with me? You smartass piece of shit...

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Brimmer's car SWERVES pulling over in the MIDDLE of the bridge. Playing angry cop to hilt, Brimmer jumps out.

BRIMMER

Get out of the car.

JUDGE

What's with you?

BRIMMER

Get out of the fucking car.

Judge obeys. Brimmer produces HANDCUFFS. He CUFFS Judge.

BRIMMER

"Whatever you say, Inspector Brimmer."
Fucking a right pal. Time you got
your wiry head on straight.

Brimmer grabs the front of Judge's shirt, PUSHING him hard against the railing. It's a hellish drop. Brimmer pushes harder. Judge's FEET scramble for purchase.

JUDGE

What are you crazy?

BRIMMER

Do you know how easy it would be for
you to just disappear. Shit, you
wouldn't even wash up for weeks. Do
you fucking understand?

(still pushing)

I want you to move your ass outta
neutral. I want a bunch of Panthers
served up on a fucking plate. I want
you to set 'em up... armed robbery!!

JUDGE

I can't... they don't operate that
way...

BRIMMER

Fuck how they operate. Just do it.
like your man says, "By any means
necessary."

Brimmer UNCUFFS Judge, stuffing an ENVELOPE OF MONEY in his pocket.

BRIMMER

Alright then. Here's a little help
on your tuition. Get back in the
car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

In UNIFORM, proud -- Tyrone and Cy walk down the street toward
Cy and Judge's APARTMENT.

TYRONE

Where the hell's Judge anyway?

CY

Between school and the Panthers,
he's been running raw. I never see...
Aw shit...

Cy catches SOMETHING happening across the street.

EXT. CY'S POV - ACROSS THE STREET - NIGHT

SABU makes a furtive EXCHANGE with a young BLACK KID.

EXT. JUDGE AND CY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tyrone sees what Cy's looking at.

TYRONE

You want a hand?

CY

(tossing Tyrone KEYS)
No... go on up. I been kicking his
narrow ass since high school.

Cy trots across the street. A WHITE GIRL walks his way.

WHITE GIRL

What you got to sell?

CY

(rolling his eyes)
Lady, every Black man you lay eyes
on ain't a dope dealer.

INT. JUDGE AND CY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tyrone waits inside the messy apartment. Suddenly he spots
JUDGE'S CLOTHES hanging over a chair. A moment passes. Then
Tyrone, begins RIFLING through a pair PANTS.

He checks Judge's WALLET. Pulling out a DRIVER'S LICENSE,
Tyrone's finger traces the EXPIRATION DATE: 5/20/69.

TYRONE

(to himself)
"My license was expired" Yeah, right.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cy's got SABU against the wall, hissing into his face.

CY
I ain't gonna tell you no more. No
pushing in the neighborhood,
especially not on my fucking street.
You're killing your own people
asshole.

SABU
Man, fuck you!!!

CY
No Fuck you!!!

Cy SLUGS Sabu hard in the gut, dropping him to the ground.

CY
I ain't playing Sabu. You keep on
like this and I'm going to bust you
up.

Shaking his head in disgust, Cy heads toward home.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Holding his belly, Sabu catches his breath. SHOES appear in front of him, shiny COP SHOES. It's SGT. SCHRECK.

SABU
Aww man...

SCHRECK
Those Panthers are turning into real
shitheels ain't they...

Schreck REACHES DOWN, helping Sabu. Sabu's amazed at the "Good Cop" routine.

SABU
Yeah, they're motherfuckers, all
high and mighty.

SCHRECK
You shouldn't take that. If I was
you...
(an edge of violence)
I'd stand up for myself, if you know
what I mean.

INT. JUDGE AND CY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CY looks around the empty space.

CY

Tyrone? Shit, where'd you go?.

INT. PANTHER MEETING - NIGHT

Room filled with all the PANTHERS and more than a few NEW
FACES, Huey stands at the podium, filled with purpose.

HUEY

Look around you, brothers and sisters,
we're building the numbers. New
members coming in almost every day.
I'd like to introduce one of them.
He's is the author of "Soul on Ice,"
a respected journalist and I'm proud
to say the newly appointed Minister
of Information for the Black Panther
Party. Brothers and sisters, Eldridge
Cleaver.

Applause rises as the tall, black man from before, still
wear SUNGLASSES, strides to the podium.

ELDRIDGE

Brothers and Sisters! You are all
well aware of the chains that we as
a people bear. The chains of slavery,
of second class citizenship. But
there are other, more invisible
chains. The chains of not speaking
your mind. The chains of all the
words left unsaid out of fear of
reprisal by The Man. The silencing
of our Black voices. I'm here to
tell you that we have a voice.

(a smile)

And I'd like to prove to you. All of
you, repeat after me.

SILENCE fills the room, everyone hangs on Eldridge's words.

ELDRIDGE

Fuck Ronald Reagan.

Smiles hit the assembled faces. Judge chuckles.

ELDRIDGE

I'm serious. Repeat after me. Fuck
Ronald Reagan.

ASSEMBLY

Fuck Ronald Reagan!!!

ELDRIDGE

Feels good don't it. Amazing how

saying your mind can free your soul.

ASSEMBLY

Fuck Ronald Reagan!!

Powerful and playful, the CHANT course through the room. Everyone's SMILING, reveling in the camaraderie.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MEETING - NIGHT

Meeting over, Huey, Judge and Tyrone watch the room clear. Tyrone's EDGY, trying to get Huey alone.

TYRONE

Huey man I got to talk with you...

HUEY

So talk...

TYRONE

(looking at Judge)

Alone...

HUEY

Look... can we deal with this tomorrow... I'm tired...

Huey walks away, leaving Tyrone glaring at Judge.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - DAY

Sun streams through the girders, shining its light equally on both sides of the bridge.

INT. HUEY'S VW - DAY

Upset and in deeper than he ever expected, Judge smacks the dashboard in frustration.

HUEY

Listen Judge, Oakland's Panther International Headquarters. We shut the Pig's infiltration down here, they're gonna think twice about running their games on other chapters.

JUDGE

Huey, man who's gonna straighten out the brothers if they get on my ass?

HUEY

Like the manual says, "Information is..."

HUEY AND JUDGE

(in unison)

disseminated on a need-to-know basis."

HUEY

Yeah, and what I need to know, is what exactly your gonna do about feeding the pigs a bust?

JUDGE

I don't know man. I don't know. That reminds me.

(passing an ENVELOPE
to Huey)

Another little donation from the police.

HUEY

If the pigs only knew they were subsidizing The Panthers...

JUDGE

Yeah well, they want a lot for their money. They want a felony, preferably with "violent intent." We've got to give them something. They'll kill me if I don't. And the Panthers are going to kill me if I do. I'm scared.

HUEY

Me too. That's why I fight so hard.

EXT. GROVE STREET - DUSK (MAGIC HOUR)

Something's CHANGED in the neighborhood, the Panther presence seems to have given the street focus. Folks gather nearby, hanging enjoying the sunshine.

Bo Diddley's "Oh Baby" grooves from a radio.

CY -- amped on the movement -- walks out of the PANTHER HQ. He runs into JUDGE out on the street.

CY

Hey, it's the invisible man. Brother where you been?

JUDGE

(gripping Cy's hand)
Cy... I ain't even sure.

CY

C'mon we'll walk and talk...

JUDGE

(pointing inside)
Naw... I gotta...

CY

I hear you. I'll catch you in a bit.

Feeling cooped up in there, you know?

Cy steps out into Grove street. Judge WATCHES him go.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DUSK

Cy cruises the street. People check out the UNIFORM, some even offer up a "Right on." or flash the fist salute.

ROSE -- staked out on his steps -- beckons Cy over.

ROSE

Hey... Cy... what now you a righteous Panther man, you too uppity to drink with us?

CY

You know that's bullshit.

Rose passes him the BOTTLE, Cy takes a small swig. Immediately his FACE PUCKERS.

CY

Aaaah, Bitter Motherfucker... I almost forgot how nasty that shit is.

ROSE

Well don't go forgetting your friends.

CY

(leaving)
Ain't gonna happen, stay cool.

ROSE

You know it. Stay Black...

CY

Damn straight.

EXT. 50TH STREET - NIGHT

Rounding a corner Cy spots SABU -- yep, he's still dealing. Rolling his eyes, Cy steps toward him.

CY

I swear, you gotta be a card-carrying member of the stupid revolution.

Sabu's SCARED, he backs away from Cy. Customers SCATTER.

SABU

Motherfucker... you stay away...

CY

Look this is bull...

Dumb, cowardly, SABU comes up with a PISTOL. He FIRES it

into Cy, not even aiming, just fear pulling a trigger. Once,
Twice, Three times.

Cy takes a PAIR of BULLETS straight to the chest. Blood flecks
his surprised face.

CY
(amazed)
...shit...

Cy COLLAPSES onto the pavement as SABU runs away.

INT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Alone in the main room, Judge works a MIMEOGRAPH MACHINE,
running off more Ten Point Programs.

TYRONE comes in through the back door, startling Judge.

TYRONE
C'mere...

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Carter has an obviously terrified YOUNG PANTHER up against
the wall as Judge and Tyrone step into the half light.

TYRONE
Signed up 'bout a month ago. Says
his name's Matty. I call him spy!

Wham!! Tyrone SLUGS Matty right in the gut.

TYRONE
Motherfucker gave the pigs the license
numbers of every Panther car.

Tyrone grabs Matty's INDEX FINGER.

TYRONE
(to Matty)
This the finger you ratted on us
with?

CRACK!! Tyrone jerks Matty's finger back BREAKING IT.

Repulsed, Judge turns back inside.

INT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Tyrone bolts in after Judge.

TYRONE
What? You don't like to see a traitor
get hurt? I wonder why that is?

JUDGE

If you got something to say, say it.

TYRONE

Anything happens to Huey it ain't gonna be a finger. I'll...

GENE -- eyes lit up with anger and fear -- bursts in.

GENE

It's Cy... he's been shot.

Bam! Judge SNAPS pushing Tyrone away and bolting out the door. Tyrone follows.

EXT. 50TH STREET - NIGHT

Cy WRITHES in agony on the pavement, in a pool of blood. Judge kneels down next to him, cradling him. Cy's COUGHING, trying to talk.

JUDGE

Cy... Cy... Oh shit man... who did this to you. Was it the pigs?

CY

N... N..... Not... Oh.

Cy DIES right there in Judge's arms. Something twists in Judge's heart, the struggle has just become very personal.

INT. JUDGE AND CY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

His shirt covered with his dead friend's blood, Judge sits at the table, destroyed.

JUDGE

Motherfuckers...

Judge grabs the phone, punching out a number.

BRIMMER

Inspector Brimmer

JUDGE

Yeah, it's me.

BRIMMER

Judge, hold on, is your phone safe?

JUDGE

Who fucking cares? You cops killed Cy. And before you bastards kill anyone else, I'll give you your fucking set up. That make you happy??!!

BRIMMER

Judge, calm down.

Judge grits his teeth.

JUDGE

I'm calm. I'm calm. You just shut
the fuck up. And listen...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The PANTHER VAN heads down the road, sticking out like a
sore thumb.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

POV: Through the windshield of a police vehicle. The VAN
crosses the screen right to left. Starting forward, the police
car following at a safe distance.

INT. PANTHER VAN - DAY

TYRONE'S driving as Judge sits -- preoccupied -- in the
passenger seat. Suspicion hovers between the two. GENE'S in
back next to a load of NEWSPAPERS.

TYRONE

(eyeing Judge)
What's up with you?

JUDGE

Nothing.

TYRONE

You got something on your mind...
"brother."

JUDGE

Yeah, "brother" My best friend is
stone dead.

The words cool Tyrone off a bit.

TYRONE

Sorry man...

JUDGE

S'alright. I'm sorry too. Shit, I
gotta take a leak... Pull over at
that gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The VAN pulls into the TINY station. Judge's hops out heading
inside.

EXT. BRIMMER'S CAR - DAY

BRIMMER watches the scene through BINOCULARS. He hisses into a WALKIE TALKIE.

BRIMMER

It's going down... Right on time.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

An OLDER MAN sits placidly behind the counter as Judge enters, the door ringing a BELL.

OLDER MAN

If you want gas my nephew...

TYRONE

(interrupting)

Where's your bathroom...

OLDER MAN

Out back.

Judge stands, stock still, sweating. The Man cocks his head, strangely.

Adrenaline raging, Judge PULLS a GUN.

JUDGE

Open the god damn register!!!!

INT. PANTHER VAN - DAY

Impatient Tyrone drums his fingers on the dash.

TYRONE

How long can a piss take?

Gene SHRUGS.

GENE

Hey... I got one for ya. Two brothers are taking a leak off the Bay Bridge. First one says, "Damn, this water's cold." Other one just smiles and goes, "Yeah and deep too."

Tyrone CHUCKLES, suddenly his face DROPS.

TYRONE

What the fuck?

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

SIRENS LIGHTS. Half a dozen POLICE CARS swoop down on the filling station.

Fast, like storm troopers, the cops pull TYRONE and GENE from the van, roughing them up.

BRIMMER

(pushing through)

Watch the faces Goddamit!! We want them recognizable...

Tyrone SHOVES a cop away from him. Brimmer DRAWS his .38, training it calmly between Tyrone's eyes.

BRIMMER

Easy boy... Or I will blow you right away...

TYRONE

(putting up his hands)

We haven't done nothing! Why don't you fascist pigs stop harassing us?

BRIMMER

Harassment my ass, pal. You just stuck up this station. We got a witness...

TYRONE

What kind of bullshit...

ROOKIE COP

I'll go get the other one.

BRIMMER

No!!! Get the bastards cuffed, I got him...

EXT. BACK OF STATION - DAY

Brimmer dashes around the corner. He bangs on the BATHROOM DOOR. Nothing. He puts his mouth to the door.

BRIMMER

(hoarse whisper)

It's me Brimmer. Get the fuck out of here.

Judge BOLTS out of the toilet. Brimmer FIRES over his head. Judge runs fast through the weeds, up the hill.

THE ROOKIE COP sprints around the corner, AIMING at Judge. Brimmer BUMPS him. The shot fires wide.

Judge DISAPPEARS over the hill.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

REPORTERS swarm the steps. DORSETT, basking in the camera's glow, smugly addresses them.

DORSETT

Today's arrest exposes the Black Panthers for what they truly are... common criminals. Yes, we have a group of the so called revolutionaries in custody right now. Caught red handed robbing a local business. And as soon as our witness gives us a positive identification, we'll file charges of armed robbery with intent to kill...

NEWSMAN

Sir... was anybody hurt?

DORSETT

(turning back inside)

I have no further comment.

INT. DORSETT'S OFFICE - DAY

Flushed with victory, Dorsett strides into his office. Pissed, Rodgers looks up from a TELETYPE.

DORSETT

I want it duly noted, that this operation was entirely under the auspices of the Oakland Police Department. The FBI doesn't have a monopoly on agents infiltrating enemy organizations, my friend. As I've said before, Agent Rodgers, we have things under control in our city...

RODGERS

Are you finished?

DORSETT

No I'm not. I'd like to say, frankly and off the record, that I resent the Bureau's presence here. "Advisory Basis" or not. And, once we get these boys put away and the Panthers permanently discredited, I'd appreciate it if you'd leave us to take care of our own. Now I'm finished.

Rodgers fixes Dorsett with a stony glare.

EXT. SEEDY STREET - NIGHT

Fast, head down, JUDGE moves through Oakland's skid row, heading for an ABANDONED GARAGE.

INT. LINE UP ROOM - DAY

Actually the line up room is two chambers. Dorsett and Rodgers enter the smaller room. BRIMMER, haggard, smoking, beckons Dorsett to a corner. Rodgers sticks by the door.

Brimmer WHISPERS to Dorsett, we can't hear the conversation but obviously The Chief doesn't like it.

In the FOREGROUND, THE MAN from the gas station stands in front of TWO WAY GLASS -- A UNIFORM cop at his side.

TYRONE AND GENE stand on the line up platform on the opposite side of the two way glass.

Dorsett and Brimmer move to the man. We see now that he's staring blankly at the Panthers.

DORSETT

Brimmer, what are you telling me?

The uniform cop WAVES his hand in front of the man's face.

UNIFORMED COP

He's blind chief. Couldn't I.D. his own mother.

BRIMMER

(sheepishly)

He just stands in for his nephew during lunch.

Dorsett TURNS, locking eyes with Rodgers. Fixing Dorsett with a WITHERING GLARE, Rodgers walks out the door.

INT. ROSE'S GARAGE - DAY

Rose's place -- the back of a chop shop -- is a forest of BOTTLES and CAR SEATS. An OLD TV blares a NEWSCAST: "Panthers Freed" complete with a PHOTO of Tyrone and Gene.

ROSE

This cool the heat off you any?

JUDGE

I don't know.

(rising)

But I'm sure I'll find out. Rose, you did me solid.

Judge PULLS some BILLS from his pocket.

ROSE

Unh... Unh Man... I don't take no money from friends that need help. Fuck no. What do you think I am a bum?

JUDGE

Not at all.
(gripping Rose's hand)
I'll catch you later.

Rose -- something big on his mind -- STOPS Judge at the door.

ROSE

Judge... I... I shoulda told you
this before but... well... fuck...

JUDGE

What?

ROSE

It was Sabu killed Cy.

JUDGE

Where is he?.

ROSE

Ain't no one seen him.

JUDGE

Why didn't you tell me?

ROSE

Didn't want folks to think I was a
snitch. You know?

PAIN creases Judge's face.

JUDGE

(softly)
Yeah man... I know.

INT. PRINTING PLANT - DAY

The Panthers are celebrating. TYRONE and the others release
while the paper gets printed. BOB DYLAN's "Ballad of a Thin
Man" PLAYS. Huey, wine in one hand, grooves to the music

HUEY

(to Tyrone)
Shit... check this out.

SONG

(over)
...something is happening here...

HUEY

But you don't know what it is Mr.
Jones. See Dylan is hip. The part
about the geeks getting the worst
jobs, that's like us, man. Black
folks always get given the lowest
shit.

TYRONE

(with purpose)

Yeah man, but where's Judge?

HUEY

(pointedly)

You know I think Brother Judge needs our support right now, not our suspicion

(picking up paper off the press)

This is beautiful man. Folks around here never read the truth like this before.

TYRONE is just about to speak, when ELDRIDGE who's been bustling around escorts Huey into a basket chair, replacing his wine glass and paper with a spear and rifle. Tyrone stares after them as ALMA comes over.

HUEY

El Rage what's with all the Zulu shit?

ELDRIDGE

We can no longer let the white media control our image. We gotta let the people know what we are about ourselves.

HUEY

That's what our newspaper will do.

ELDRIDGE

But lots of our people don't read, man. They need strong imagery to help them out.

HUEY

Yeah... then shouldn't this be all of us together.

ELDRIDGE

(propping up a shield)

Trust me Huey, this picture will be worth a thousand words. Now have you given any thought to that Peace and Freedom Party thing. They really want to hook up with us. Do a rally together. Hell it'd broaden our base of visibility.

HUEY

Yeah, but aligning with white organizations. I'm not sure now's the time.

ELDRIDGE

The time, my friend, is what Sartre called, "the moment the match is being put to the fuse." Question is, is the hand holding that match gonna be black or white.

HUEY

...no full fledge alliance. But I think we should do a rally with them. Show that there's some common ground between Black and White. You all with that?

(everyone nods)

All right then Eldridge, set it up.

EXT. ANTI WAR DEMONSTRATION - DAY

TITLE: OAKLAND INDUCTION CENTER OCTOBER 20, 1967

By far this is the largest rally we've seen. Police stand in RIOT FORMATION as a HUGE CROWD looks up to a podium near the center's steps.

CROWD

Hell No! We won't go! Hell No! We won't go!!!

HUEY, TYRONE, ALMA, ELDRIDGE and a contingent of Panthers hold precise formation at the side of the platform as AVAKIAN, a sandy haired young man finishes his speech.

AVAKIAN

Not long ago, we came to these steps to protest. We were four thousand then. Tonight we are ten thousand.

A HUGE ROAR rises from the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDGE'S PLACE - DAY

The ROAR continues over as Judge approaches his DOORWAY, a CAR glides to the curb. BRIMMER -- eyes red-rimmed with hate -
- stares out.

JUDGE BOLTS, running fast down an alleyway and turns the corner. Screeching tires, two uniformed cops in a SQUAD CAR blast out of nowhere, sealing the exit, weapons drawn.

Brimmer PULLS UP on the curb. In seconds he's got Judge face down on the hood, CUFFED.

Brimmer SMACKS Judge's head against the car.

BRIMMER

Thanks a lot Motherfucker, that blind man was real cute.

Brimmer drags Judge toward an ALLEY.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTI WAR DEMONSTRATION - DAY

AVAKIAN

Ten thousand different voices. All unified, saying one thing. That you cannot have an imperialistic war abroad and social peace at home. So with that unity, that purpose in mind... Ladies and Gentlemen I give you the Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party -- Huey Newton.

APPLAUSE.

HUEY

Thank you. The Black Panther Party is proud to be here tonight. Here in front of this monument to oppression both at home and abroad. Not far from here, Brother Bobby Seale is locked down.

Shouts go up, "Yeah Bobby!!" "Set the brother free!"

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Brimmer pushes Judge up against the wall.

HUEY

(over)

A victim of the tyranny we feel here at home.

EXT. ANTI WAR DEMONSTRATION - DAY

HUEY

That same tyranny is at work many miles from here. In Vietnam. Black men are dying there, white men are dying there. Yellow men are dying there. We're told they're dying in the name of freedom.

(a beat)

Freedom. Well, now if their blood's keeping us free. How come so many of us -- like Bobby -- are in jail. If

they're dying so we can enjoy our rights, how come the police still kill us in the streets?

Angry YELLS rise, agreeing with Huey.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Brimmer lays into Judge, hitting him in the gut. Defenseless, CUFFED, Judge takes each brutal punch.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION - DAY

HUEY

So, when you think about it. The question we have to ask is... Why should the Black man go fight the Yellow man for the White man? It's that simple. The answer's simple too.

(a beat)

We shouldn't!

THE CROWD CHEERS

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

CHEERS ringing out, Brimmer's hands work for pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION - DAY

HUEY

The Black Panther Party is opposed to the war in Vietnam! We know our war is here. Against hard drugs in the community. Against unemployment. Against a system that beats a Black man in his home, then sends him to die in a foreign land. That my brothers and sisters, is our war.

Ten thousand unite in THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Crumpled on the ground, Judge's doubled up in pain. Brimmer UNCUFFS him and WALKS AWAY. Over, the APPLAUSE rises to a

deafening pitch.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Brimmer stalks down the hall, unhappy. FBI guys in suits are EVERYWHERE -- pulling teletypes, on the phones. They're like an occupying army.

BRIMMER

(passing a doorway)

What the fuck?

RODGERS

(over)

Brimmer! Could you come in here please?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Rodgers has set himself up in a command center. Across from him DORSETT sits like a whipped dog.

RODGERS

Sit down, This concerns you too.

(pulls out a Black

Panther newspaper)

I don't need to say that your department's handling of the Black Panthers -- particularly Inspector Brimmer's "undercover operation" has been a complete travesty.

BRIMMER

Just hold on a god damn minute. I...

Ignoring Brimmer, Rodgers passes the PAPERS to Dorsett.

RODGERS

These are memos from the commissioner, the mayor and Hoover himself, putting the Black Panthers and their subversive activities under the full jurisdiction of the Bureau.

DORSETT

(reading)

Jesus...

RODGERS

As far as Mr. Hoover is concerned the worst has happened, the Panthers have unified with other organizations -- most likely sponsored by communists -- to undermine the war in Vietnam.

(a beat)

By doing so, they have quite simply guaranteed their own extinction.

Rodgers studies Dorsett and Brimmer's incredulous faces.

RODGERS

Of course we welcome any cooperation
the your department has to "offer..."

MONTAGE:

Jimi Hendrix's "Machine Gun" plays as the cops move in for
the kill...

EXT. MEETING HALL - NIGHT

A BOMB crashes through the window. Yells, Chaos, Then an
EXPLOSION.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO PANTHER HQ - DAY

Cops BATTER down a door, storming the place. They BURN papers,
destroy FOOD for the breakfast program. It looks and feels
like a modern day version of Kristalnacht.

EXT. OAKLAND PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

TYRONE and LITTLE BOBBY stand out front. A SQUAD CAR passes.
White faces gaze stonily at Black. A cop points his finger
like a GUN at the Panthers.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cops SLAP NEWSPAPERS from Gene's hand, pushing him up against
the wall.

COP

What's your name punk?

GENE

Five.

COP

What?!?!?

GENE

Five!!

END MONTAGE:

INT. HUEY'S VW - NIGHT

Gene spins out his tale to HUEY. Jimi Hendrix plays in the
background

GENE

And I keep saying "Five" like the
fifth amendment you know? And shit
this cop is getting pissed. But there

ain't much he can do... So... dig
this, he gives me a ticket for
littering, on account of the papers
he ripped outta my hand.

Huey notices "cherry tops" red glow in the rear view mirror.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

TITLE: OAKLAND SATURDAY OCTOBER 28, 1967

A SQUAD CAR sits, lights FLASHING, behind HUEY'S VOLKSWAGEN.

The belligerent BABY-FACED COP from the showdown on Grove
Street -- settles his flashlight beam on HUEY.

GENE, sitting next to Huey, looks very nervous.

BABY FACED COP
Well, well, well, what do we have
here, the great Huey P. Newton...
(a smile)
Get out of the car.

Huey holds up his LAW BOOK.

HUEY
(calmly and carefully)
California law does not require the
driver to leave a vehicle, unless he
is being placed under arrest...

BABY FACED COP
Well, then you're under arrest get
out of the car...

Baby Face pulls his REVOLVER.

GENE
Huey...

Huey moves out of the car very, very slowly -- his life
depending on it.

HUEY
I am not resisting arrest. Nor am I
armed. Any use of force on your part
is illegal...
(holding up BOOK)
according to California...

BABY FACED COP
You can take that law book and shove
it up your ass nigger...

ANOTHER SQUAD CAR pulls up. A NERVOUS PATROLMAN gets out.
His hand HOVERS over his pistol.

NERVOUS COP
Hey... whatcha got...

Baby Face COCKS his .38. Huey stiffens. TENSION.

BABY FACED COP
Buddy, we just got ourselves a
promotion.

There's a SOUND, GENE'S getting out of the car.

BABY FACED COP
You!!! Get the fuck back in...
(moves the gun)

GUNFIRE rings out. Hitting Huey in the gut. BABY FACE, also
wounded, drops.

The NERVOUS COP has freaked out and is shooting wildly.
Bleeding HUEY crawls toward BABY FACE'S GUN. He grabs it,
turning it on the NERVOUS COP.

MORE GUNFIRE. Chaos. Screaming. Splattered with BLOOD, THE
LAW BOOK lies on the ground, bearing an inscription on the
flyleaf: HUEY P. NEWTON.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Huey's HANDCUFFED to a GURNEY, being wheeled fast through
the hall. I.V.'s hang. Blood is everywhere. COPS hover
malevolently over his spread-eagled form.

Cops COVER HUEY'S FACE with a towel, then start viciously
BEATING HUEY. Doctors and Nurses look on impotently.

INT. PANTHER HQ - MORNING

Tears streak Alma's face. TYRONE, JUDGE and the other Panthers
sit solemnly. NEWSPAPERS cover every surface blaring: COP
SLAIN PANTHER LEADER WOUNDED IN SHOOT-OUT.

In the background, Panthers put Huey's WICKER CHAIR poster
in the window. Eldridge's got his ear glued to a PHONE.

ELDRIDGE
(to the others)
The pigs are going for Murder one...

TYRONE
Right with Bobby getting out, they
try to put Huey in the gas chamber...
Damn.

LITTLE BOBBY

Please Huey stay alive

INT. ALAMEDA COUNTY JAIL - DAY

In a MOS sequence, JACKSON a Black Trustee leads Bobby Seale -
dressed in STREET CLOTHES -- down the windy halls. Bobby
holds a FILE of RELEASE PAPERS.

Seale comes to the doorway of the INFIRMARY. HUEY lies there,
beaten and bloody. The two men LOCK EYES, each raising a
FIST in salute.

INT. AUDITORIUM - FREE HUEY MEETING - NIGHT

Bobby enters. The auditorium is empty except for Cleaver,
Tyrone, and Little Bobby.

BOBBY SEALE

(shocked)

Where's everybody?

TYRONE

We had over a hundred people, just
on the "Free Huey" Defense Committee
alone until we chose a lawyer.

CHARLES GARRY, a white man in a crumpled suit move across
the gym floor towards them.

BOBBY SEALE

Can he free Huey?

ELDRIDGE

If anybody can, he's the man.

Bobby Seale SHAKES Garry's hand.

BOBBY SEALE

(to the Panthers)

Brothers the struggle has begun...
We need allies and we need 'em fast.
Eldridge?

ELDRIDGE

I'm on it...

EXT. STEPS - ALAMEDA COUNTY JAIL - DAY

TITLE: JANUARY 10, 1968

Panther FLAGS fly -- now bearing the words "FREE HUEY." A
nonstop RALLY/VIGIL of Panthers and Black Folks covers the
steps. WHITE FOLKS wear "HONKIES FOR HUEY." buttons.

Uniformed COPS stare out from the jail's GLASS DOORS.

CROWD

Black is beautiful/FREE HUEY!/Set
our warrior free/FREE HUEY!/Black is
beautiful/FREE HUEY/Set our warrior
free...

Bobby Seale stands next to Eldridge and other BLACK ACTIVISTS near a microphone. A very intense, wiry man in sunglasses approaches the mike -- STOKELY CARMICHAEL.

Carmichael's speaking style is unique, his slow low-key drawl underscoring the incendiary nature of the words.

CARMICHAEL

We say that Huey P. Newton is a prisoner of war. Many people say that that's not true. Or that the Party is exaggerating. I think it's clear, it's crystal clear that the United States has declared war on Black people. She did that when she took the first black man from Africa.

The Crowd ROARS in approval, raising Black FISTS.

CARMICHAEL

Now of course, she never came out and said the words, "I declare war on Black people. She did not do that. Well now, the United States to this day has not declared war on Vietnam, but there is Vietnam. They did not declare war on North Korea but they fought in North Korea. And they did not declare war against the Indians. They just wiped them out.

MORE applause, even non-Panthers pick up on the message.

CARMICHAEL

So we must define our position... We are at war. Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense, is our leader. He is in jail. He is a prisoner of war. We must get him by any means necessary. If we cannot get him, we must, we must retaliate. Period.

CHEERS, a CALL rises from the crowd -- plain in it's message: "Free Huey." Over and over again. "Free Huey."

CUT TO:

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

A bee hive of activity, Bobby mans the phone. Tyrone, Alma and Judge open a BOX -- containing FREE HUEY BUTTONS.

ELDRIDGE

Man, we can't make enough of these things. We got movie stars calling up, asking how they can help. I tell you sister it's nation time...

ALMA

Yeah I wish we didn't need no pins... Wish Huey was here right now...

JUDGE

(softly)

Me too...

Tyrone fixes Judge with an INQUISITIVE STARE.

TYRONE

You sure about that... brother?

At the door LITTLE BOBBY -- amazed -- YELLS to the others.

LITTLE BOBBY

Brothers!!! Sisters! Come here. This, you gotta see...

EXT. PANTHER OFFICE - DAY

A GOOD SIZED NEIGHBORHOOD group carries FOOD inside. OLDER MEN, kids, BOBBY HUTTON'S MOM. In the front walks RITA.

Judge pushes to the front, his jaw drops. He exchanges a probing LOOK with his mom.

RITA

You all been working so much... you know. Me and some others thought you might be missing the home cooking...

MRS. HUTTON taps a finger to his "Free Huey" button.

MRS. HUTTON

Hey... you got any more of those...

LAUGHTER rises as the Panthers usher their folks in.

INT. RODGERS OFFICE - DAY

Rodgers, obviously getting an earful over the phone, splutters excuses and explanations.

RODGERS

Granted, the Free Huey thing has become a bit of a rallying cry for the left...

HOOVER

(over)
Rallying cry, it's an insurrection.
Seale, that god damned Cleaver, Where
the hell do these guys come from?

RODGERS
Well... like they say, there's a
Panther born every minute in the
ghetto. Uh... we seem to have
"underestimated" the support of the
Black community. It's their power
base...

CUT TO:

INT. HOOVER'S OFFICE - DAY

Hoover takes a couple moments before saying his next words.

HOOVER
Well, then we're going to take that
power away from those bastards.

RODGERS
(over)
You mean...

HOOVER
Yes, that's exactly what I mean. And
Agent Rodgers?... This conversation
never occurred.

Hoover HANGS UP.

CUT TO:

EXT. FISHING BOAT - DAY

MEN wander the decks as RODGERS and DORSETT stare off the
bow at the Bay. TONY keep an eye on them from a distance.

DORSETT
Rodgers... this is no good...

RODGERS
Cut the crap, you've been taking the
man's money for years. Now it's time
you earned it.

A booming VOICE grabs their attention.

TRAFFICANTE
(over)
Gentlemen!!! Forgive me for keeping
you.

An immaculately dressed man -- LOUIS TRAFFICANTE -- steps

out. Smooth as silk, his every movement spells Mafia.

TRAFFICANTE

Odd isn't it Chief Dorsett? No matter how much we try to deny it, we find ourselves on the same side of the coin. It's almost funny...

Trafficante settles easily into a deck chair. Dorsett's looking mildly indignant.

DORSETT

To be quite honest it turns my stomach.

RODGERS

Neither your stomach or your opinion matters here Dorsett... What matters is that Mr. Trafficante and the Bureau have come up with a solution to our Panther Problem. One might say...The Final Solution.

TRAFFICANTE

Well put. As you and Agent Rodgers know, my organization has moved into narcotics. It was decided that this product would be confined to the ghettos. However, you and your police department has made operations in Oakland impossible. I take delivery of shipments and they sit. I -- and my associates -- lose money. Vast sums of money. Now, you have some very large problems with the Black community.

RODGERS

More like a revolution. West Oakland's turning into hostile territory.

TRAFFICANTE

I assure you the pacifying properties of Heroin are quite remarkable. See, junkie's politics are different from yours and mine. For them the only Party's the next fix.

DORSETT

Dealing dope... And you want the department to turn a blind eye while you turn Oakland into a city of zombies.

TRAFFICANTE

Not the entire city, just one troublesome part.

DORSETT

And what if it spreads to the rest
of the population?

TRAFFICANTE

Relax, Chief. That will never happen.
I gotta little gypsy in me. Soon the
moolies gonna be too busy -- we'll
sell 'em a few guns too -- blowing
each others brains out over the stuff
to be fucking with protests. Now
I've got the product. What I need is
a center of operation and someone to
oversee the movement of the product.
Not one of my people but a native,
someone inside the community.

RODGERS

I don't think that will be any
problem...

DORSETT

You talk as if this thing's already
been decided.

Rodgers hits Dorsett with a piercing GLARE.

RODGERS

It has.

CUT TO:

INT. RITA'S APARTMENT - DAY

JUDGE and LITTLE BOBBY sit, finishing dinner as Rita bustles
around clearing DISHES, being a mom...

In the background, the TV plays, its sound turned down.

RITA

Glad to see you boys eat like that.
No wonder either you're both looking
like scarecrows. Don't sleep, don't
eat, ain't no way to live...

LITTLE BOBBY

It's good to be skinny, easier to
run from fat cops.

(his eye catching the
TV)

Hey what's that?

Casually, everyone glances at the television.

HORROR hit RITA'S face.

RITA

Oh no... Dr. King...

CLOSE UP: TELEVISION - KING ASSASSINATION

FOOTAGE: The balcony... Abernathy, Young, Jackson POINT to where the shots came from as Dr. King bleeds on the cement.

INT. RITA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Everyone stares at the television. Rita has dropped a BOWL on the floor. Little Bobby's face is covered with TEARS.

RITA

Oh lord, please god no. No.

LITTLE BOBBY

They killed him. He never hurt nobody.
They killed him...

CUT TO:

FOOTAGE: America EXPLODES into riot.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

The Panthers trot over to where THREE YOUNG MEN face a SMALL GROCERY. One's holding a GAS CAN.

YOUNG MAN

That's right burn the mother down.

REVEREND SLOCUM steps from the shadows.

SLOCUM

Hold on there, exactly what are you boys doing?

YOUNG MAN

Sending a message... They shoot Dr. King... we burn them...

SLOCUM

What good's burning our neighborhood down.

YOUNG MAN #2

Fuck you.

It gets TENSE. Then a voice come from a SIDE STREET.

VOICE

Brother... you best clean out your head, or we will do it for you.

Turning, the young man spots a CADRE of Panthers -- Tyrone, Alma, and Little Bobby moving toward them.

TYRONE

Reverend's right, you burn the neighborhood, you're just doing the pig's work for him. And we sure as hell ain't gonna stand for that. Dig?

Eyeing the deadly serious Panthers, the men back down.

YOUNG MAN

I dig. But how we gonna let 'em know we ain't gonna take this shit.

ALMA

You know where Black Panther headquarters is? You come on down there, speak your mind, listen. Organize.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know...

TYRONE

(grabbing the can)
Later for that... be there.

Rev. Slocum gazes at the Panthers with new respect as they head off into the night.

INT. PANTHER HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Tense, angry, the PANTHERS meets. Flanked by two PANTHER BODYGUARDS, ELDRIDGE speaks pure rage.

ELDRIDGE

No more words!!! No more god damn words!! No more sitting, no more praying for the pig to stop killing us. Later for lying down. Later for waiting to get shot like dogs. Nonviolence has died in Memphis, died with Dr. King. We must retaliate. We've got the fucking guns, it's time to use them.

BODYGUARD

Off the pig man. Off the god damn pig.

Bobby Seale -- his eyes steely -- INTERRUPTS.

BOBBY

Brother Eldridge... I hear you. But I disagree. And we both know Huey disagrees too. Yeah, we got the guns, but the Pigs got more. The Pig has

got the National Guard. I'm not afraid to fight. But we aren't stupid either. We got to be smart, not angry.

ELDRIDGE

Later for that...

TYRONE

(pissed)

No man... later for you! What? We gonna forget Huey and his trial? Start killing pigs, start the revolution now. With our leader in jail? We do that and Huey's a dead man. We're all dead. No man, we stay cool.

ELDRIDGE

What? You giving me orders now?

TYRONE

Just telling you what it is.

ELDRIDGE

Fuck that. It's time to intensify the struggle. That is what it is.

Indignant, Eldridge storms out -- his guards follow.

BOBBY

(watching them leave)

Fuck.

INT. VISITING ROOM - DAY

Bobby Seale -- haggard, concerned -- faces HUEY under the watchful eye of a GUARD.

HUEY

You got to sit on Eldridge...

BOBBY

Man, El-Rage is El-Rage. You know him.

HUEY

Yeah, I do, but he's gotta cool it...

EXT. STREET - OAKLAND - NIGHT

TITLE: OAKLAND CALIFORNIA APRIL 6, 1968

SMALL HOUSES sit quietly on this tree lined street, as...

Car full of cops screeches into frame blasting ELDRIDGE fires back. A couple of other Panthers scatter as Eldridge pulls LITTLE BOBBY towards a house for safety.

ELDRIDGE

C'mon.

EXT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

ELDRIDGE tumbles down STAIRS, LITTLE BOBBY right behind him. They hunker down in the basement, sweating. Eldridge checks his legs -- BLOOD soaks his pants.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

HALF A DOZEN police cars screech to a stop in front of the house. Cops POP up, armed to the teeth.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

BULLETS tear through the room as Eldridge and Little Bobby hit the deck. It's a ferocious volley of fire, hundreds of shells pouring through the thin walls.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

For a second the GUNFIRE STOPS. A SERGEANT makes a motion to his men. TEAR GAS rifles appear.

The COPS fire gas canisters THROUGH the basement walls.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Smoke chokes the room, as Little Bobby and Eldridge, blinded hacking, crawl along the floor.

LITTLE BOBBY

Papa E, we got to get out of here.

Eldridge THINKS for a second.

ELDRIDGE

Take off your clothes.

LITTLE BOBBY

What?

ELDRIDGE

(undressing)

Take 'em off. Pigs ain't gonna shoot an unarmed, naked man. Where they gonna say you hid a gun.

LITTLE BOBBY

No man I can't.

ELDRIDGE

Later for that. Just do it.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

HANDS UP, Eldridge and Little Bobby emerge from the house.
Eldridge's NAKED, Little Bobby's fully CLOTHED.

Cops descend on them, grabbing them.

COP#1
(pointing to a car)
Go on, get in that car fuckers, and
don't try nothing.

Moving very slowly, Eldridge heads for the car.

ELDRIDGE
I am not resisting arrest!!

Suddenly, a COP SHOVES Little Bobby forward. He stumbles a
bit, out in the open, EXPOSED.

A VOLLEY of SHOTS rips through Little Bobby. Tearing him up,
KILLING him in moments.

EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Next to the car, Eldridge stares horrified at Little Bobby's
ruined body. A SERGEANT stands nearby.

A COP approaches the Sergeant holding a .22 PISTOL.

COP
He was going for this...

ELDRIDGE
(disgusted)
Motherfuckers...

Wham! The Sergeant PISTOL WHIPS Eldridge into unconsciousness

The SCREEN goes BLACK.

EXT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

Opposite the HUEY poster, a new IMAGE hangs -- LITTLE BOBBY's
picture. A memorial to a Panther's martyr.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A SMALL CASKET lowers into the ground. Panthers pay their
respects. The CROWD with JUDGE, ALMA, TYRONE, RITA, AND REV.
SLOCUM disperses.

ALMA
Little Bobby... Just a kid...

TYRONE
(somber)
They're hurting us, baby. Huey locked

up. Bobby Seale running all over the country holding things together. Cy dead. Little Bobby... I don't recognize half the faces at meetings.

Tyrone's eyes JUDGE suspiciously.

TYRONE

'Cept him...

Strain showing on his face, BOBBY SEALE heads over.

BOBBY

Look... I gotta get on a plane tonight. Huey's trial's starting. I need you to make sure there's a strong Panther Presence there.

TYRONE

What about Cleaver? You got him out on bail, didn't you?

BOBBY

Yeah... but well, things are too hot. Eldridge and Kathleen...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Tyrone watches from the window of ELDRIDGE'S PLYMOUTH as Eldridge and Kathleen climb out of the car and into the back of an old pickup truck.

BOBBY

(over)

...they're gonna disappear...

MONTAGE:

FOOTAGE: NEWSPAPER JULY 15, 1968

The headline reads: NEWTON TRIAL BEGINS.

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

An absolute MADHOUSE of activity, Alma, Judge and Tyrone juggle phones, fill boxes with pins. Everywhere the words: FREE HUEY can be seen.

END MONTAGE:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Rodgers and Dorsett sit facing TWO BLACK MEN, one is named SHORTY, the other we cannot see. Dorsett looks ill. He pops a TUMS. BRIMMER'S there too, looking very unhappy.

RODGERS

So you enjoy your little "vacation?"

VOICE

I tell you, Vegas don't have much flavor. But it was alright. Good to get back to the neighborhood though.

RODGERS

That's what we wanted to talk to you about. We have a proposition for you. One that will make you the most powerful man in West Oakland...

The CAMERA MOVES. We see the man Rodgers is talking to -- SABU.

SABU

(smiling)

I'm all ears...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY - DUSK

SUNSET paints the water peaceful colors a night falls.

INT. JUDGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's late as Judge lays on his bed, staring at the ceiling, tortured.

BOOM! Judges door flies off its hinges. BRIMMER storms in -- mean, drunk. He's on Judge in a second -- handcuffing him.

JUDGE

Hey... what the hell you doing?

BRIMMER

Shut up. Just shut the fuck up.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - NIGHT

BRIMMER'S CAR pulls onto the bridge.

INT. BRIMMER'S CAR - NIGHT

Apprehensive, Judge eyes Brimmer from the back seat.

JUDGE

Brimmer what's with you man?

Stone silent, Brimmer takes a deep swig from a PINT BOTTLE.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Brimmer's car approaches the center of the Bridge, then KEEPS GOING.

INT. BRIMMER'S CAR - NIGHT

Judge stares at Brimmer's back, relieved, confused.

BRIMMER

(mumbling, loaded)

Twenty years asshole. Twenty years
on the force. I've seen some fucked
up stuff. Done some fucked up stuff...

(a beat)

But nothing like this...

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Brimmer's car pulls over on the shoulder past the toll booth.
He yanks Judge out of the car. Then UNCUFFS him.

BRIMMER

Go! Run! Go on! Get the fuck out of
here!!

JUDGE

What? So you can shoot me? Call it
resisting arrest?

BRIMMER

I ain't gonna shoot you Judge. Look...
it's over. Just run away. Get out.
Stay away from Oakland. Cause it's
gone... it's gone.

JUDGE

Brimmer you're fucked up...

BRIMMER

Yeah... I'm fucked up. You're fucked
up. Government's fucked up. Whole
country's fucked up. You got no idea
what's going on here. This is bigger
than you and me. We're just little
tiny soldiers getting moved around
on some big asshole's desk. The
Panthers... fuck you're history...
they killed you and you don't even
know it.

JUDGE

Who's they?

BRIMMER

(rambling on getting
into his car)

Drugs Judge, they're gonna flood
West Oakland with dope. Jack you up
and string you out like a two dollar
whore. And while the community's
shuffling for a fix, they're gonna
snuff every Panther they can find.

JUDGE

Who? I mean besides the FBI?

BRIMMER

I don't know. Except, it's one of you. Maybe not a Panther, but it's someone from the neighborhood. Judge. Look, just go. Get away. It's over. You lost.

(a beat)

We all lost.

Brimmer's car lumbers away, kicking up gravel. Judge -- thinking furiously -- stares after it.

THE BRIDGE looms up in the background, dwarfing Judge.

JUDGE

Fuck that. Ain't nothing over.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - DAWN

Judge WALKS across the bridge heading BACK to Oakland.

EXT. JUDGE'S PLACE - DAY

Judge, weary approaches his building. He spins, startled, as something moves in the alleyway. A voice calls out.

VOICE (O.S.)

Judge...

Judge moves into the alley, eyes adjusting to the darkness.

JUDGE

Rose?

ROSE

(scared... whispering)

Yeah... Look man, what I gotta say. It's just you, me and the rats, right? Alright... well... Sabu's back.

JUDGE

Motherfuck... well then I got something to do.

ROSE

No... wait, there's something else, something weird. I hear he's set up down at that warehouse on fifty deuce. He's talking big and living bigger.

REALIZATION dawns on Judge.

JUDGE

God damn it's him. I gotta go.

ROSE

Judge man. Watch yourself. Sabu's got juice now.

JUDGE

You don't even know it man, but you're a god damn hero.

Judge bolts out the alley. ROSE stares after him.

INT. VISITING ROOM - JAIL - DAY

MOS: Judge and HUEY TALK EARNESTLY through a GLASS PARTITION.

EXT. STEPS - ALAMEDA COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Alma and Tyrone stand at the front of a huge CROWD standing vigil for HUEY'S trial.

CROWD

No more brothers in jail
Off the Pig!
The pigs are gonna catch hell
Off the Pig!
Revolution has come
Off the Pig!
Time to pick up the gun
Off the Pig!

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

NEWSMEN cover every available seat, frantically writing notes as THE PROSECUTOR finishes examining THE WOUNDED POLICE OFFICER from the shoot-out.

CHARLES GARRY, Huey's lawyer, a WHITE MAN in a rumpled suit, sits next to Huey, with a STRANGE smile on his face...

PROSECUTOR

Now you say that it was Huey Newton that opened fire without any provocation What makes you so sure? It was a dark night, there was a lot of confusion.

WOUNDED COP

Well, sir I was there.

PROSECUTOR

That's right you were.

(to the Jury)

He was there. He saw everything. And he is not on trial. He does not need to lie to save his life.

(to Garry)

Your witness.

GARRY

Thank you.

(to the Judge)

If it would please the court, I would like to introduce testimony of a new witness. One who is not on trial for his life and... one who was there also. I call Gene McKinney to the stand.

A MURMUR ripples through the court as Gene McKinney takes the stand. The Prosecutor goes red with rage.

PROSECUTOR

Objection, who is this man?

GARRY

This is an eyewitness to the shooting. The passenger in Huey Newton's car.

JUDGE

Overruled Mr. Garry you may examine your witness.

GARRY

Mr. McKinney, were you a passenger in the car on the night of October 28, 1967.

GENE

Yes sir I was.

GARRY

And did you witness the shoot-out?

GENE

Yes sir, I did.

GARRY

From what you saw, did Huey Newton start the shooting?

GENE

No sir he didn't.

More MURMURING, the Prosecutor looks dumbfounded.

GARRY

Huh, well then...

(a pause)

did someone else start shooting?

GENE

I refuse to answer the question on the grounds it might incriminate me.

The COURTROOM EXPLODES in shock and amazement.

GARRY

Did you shoot the officers in question?

GENE

Again I'll take the fifth amendment on that question.

MAYHEM, the Prosecutor begins yelling. The Judge bangs his gavel, and the jury looks very confused.

CUT TO:

INT. PANTHER HQ - DAY

Excited, ALMA slams down a PHONE. Every set of Panther eyes is on her.

ALMA

That was Garry.
(smiling)
He says they're gonna come back with manslaughter.

YOUNG PANTHER

What's that mean?

TYRONE

It means youngblood, Huey's out in less than two years. He ain't gonna get the chair. He might not be free yet, but brothers and sisters he is not going to die.

A CHEER ripples through the room. Alma HUGS Tyrone.

TYRONE

I gotta call Bobby...

Tyrone reaches for the PHONE, it RINGS before he can pick it up.

TYRONE

Black Panther Party.

RODGERS

(over)
Congratulations asshole. Huey got off, but we just got your boy Bobby Seale.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY KIDNAPPING (BLACK/WHITE) - DAY

POLICE CARS on a highway force a PANTHER wedding caravan off the road. Guns drawn, cops rip SEALE from the car, dragging him on his back toward an UNMARKED CAR.

TYRONE

(over)

Who the fuck is this?

RODGERS

(over)

The tooth fairy. And I got a present for you. Guy who helped us get Bobby His name's Judge.

CUT TO:

INT. PANTHER H.Q. - DAY

Click, the line goes dead. Tyrone smacks the phone into it's cradle. GRIM-FACED, Tyrone looks to ALMA.

INT. ROSE'S - NIGHT

Something moves outside, Rose turns dropping his wine. It's Sabu and Shorty. Sabu fires... killing Rose and his dog.

INT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Judge moves into the dark, senses on alert. Something's wrong. Suddenly he's attacked. He flips his assailant as the light snap on. Tyrone has Judge in a choke hold, Alma has him at gun point.

JUDGE

Fuck is up?!

TYRONE

Mothafucker! You just set Bobby Seale up to be kidnapped. They dragged him off to some bullshit conspiracy trial in Chicago. How much the pigs pay you for this one, Judge?

(pulling out his gun
and cocking it)

Judge's HAND flies out, grabbing ahold of Tyrone's GUN HAND. Neither moving a muscle, Judge STARES at Tyrone.

JUDGE

You got it wrong.

Alma, puts her 38 to Judge's face.

ALMA

Let him go. And drop your piece.

Outgunned, Judge obeys.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROVE STREET - NIGHT

TWO COP CARS move slowly toward Panther HQ.

INT. COP CAR - NIGHT

An ANGRY COP lights a cigarette as his partner drives past Panther HQ.

ANGRY COP

Can't believe that rat bastard ain't going to the chair. That Newton turd should be taken out and shot.

Pointing to the WICKER POSTER, the driver SMILES.

PARTNER

How about a little target practice?

INT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Glaring at Judge, Tyrone's finger TIGHTENS on the TRIGGER.

JUDGE

(dead serious)

You better just kill me Tyrone. And when Huey gets out, when Oakland's just wall to wall junkies, you tell him you blew away the only chance we all got. I'm sure he'll be real happy about that.

TYRONE

What are you saying?

JUDGE

The pigs are gonna start flooding us with dope. Huey wants us to stop them.

TYRONE

Bullshit...

ALMA

Tyrone hold on...

BLAM!! A shot from outside shatters the window. The trio dives for cover. Another SHOT wings ALMA.

EXT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Out front, FOUR COPS in two cars, FIRE on the OFFICE. Bullets rip into the POSTERS of HUEY and LITTLE BOBBY.

INT. PANTHER HQ - NIGHT

Tyrone, gun still on Judge, huddles on the floor.

Screeching tires can be heard outside, the COPS LEAVING.

TYRONE

Chickenshits? What you bring your buddies with you?

JUDGE

No man No!! Tyrone listen... we got to move man, they got a warehouse...

TYRONE

Shut the fuck up!!

Alma APPEARS her left arm BLOODY.

ALMA

Tyrone...

TYRONE

Oh shit Alma... you're...

ALMA

I'm okay... listen to me...
(serious)

Let's go with Judge, check it out.

TYRONE

What?!? Don't tell me you're buying this?

A tense moment, Alma looks from Judge to Tyrone.

ALMA

Yeah, I believe him. And you do too.

After a moment of thought, Tyrone RISES. Then he picks up JUDGE's .45. Alma GRABS her own GUN.

TYRONE

Alright, but no fucking around.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

TWO BLACK THUGS stand on opposite sides of the warehouse doors, checking out the street.

INT. ELDRIDGE'S CAR - NIGHT

TYRONE - in the passenger seat, a gun on Judge -- stares at the warehouse from the car. Alma, her arm ROUGHLY BANDAGED sits in back.

ALMA
Those ain't cops.

TYRONE
And they sure ain't from the
neighborhood. Figure Sabu's in there?

JUDGE
Yeah with a whole load of drugs. So,
you trust me now?

Tyrone takes his .38 off Judge, then COCKS Judge's .45 and
HANDS it to him

TYRONE
Brother, I ain't got a choice...

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

SABU is talking quietly with TRAFFICANTE's right hand man,
TONY. SHORTY and THREE BURLY BLACK BODYGUARDS stand nearby.
Suddenly Sabu hears and sound and pulls his gun.

SHORTY
Fuck was that?

SABU
Check the back.

Suddenly gunfire rips out. Tony disappears as Shorty gets
taken down. One of the THUGS nails Tyrone in the shoulder,
Judge retaliates blasting him backwards.

JUDGE
(helping Tyrone up)
You alright?

TYRONE
Not really. Gimme the keys for the
trunk.

ALMA moves shakily from the BACK SEAT.

TYRONE
(to Alma)
Stay here, watch this door. Anybody
besides me and Judge steps out kill
them.

Alma -- ever the soldier -- NODS.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Warily, Judge and Tyrone step in. Tyrone's BLEEDING heavily.
Judge holds a GAS CAN. It's quiet. Too quiet.

TYRONE

There it is...

On a TABLE in the corner of the DARK warehouse sits BOXES, VIALS and a stack of GLASSINE BAGS - filled with POWDER.

JUDGE

(handing the CAN over)

Shut the motherfucker down. I'll find Sabu.

Tyrone moves to the table. A BULLET hits him in the leg. Another rips into Judge, dropping him to the floor.

SABU

(over)

You just did.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Tyrone drops, his GAS CAN spilling out over the floor.

Judge ROLLS -- operating like a soldier -- emptying the .45 into the BODYGUARD #1.

Sabu and the other BODYGUARDS disappear into the SHADOWS.

EJECTING the clip from the .45 and slams a fresh one in. He gets to his feet, LIMPING into the DARKNESS.

A NOISE sounds, Judge WHIRLS firing, dropping BODYGUARD #2. Judge TURNS coming eye to eye with a .45, held by a very HIGH SABU.

SABU

Drop the gun Panther man.

Pistol pushed against Judge's skull, Sabu moves around to Judge's side. Judge DROPS the gun.

SABU

All your mighty militant bullshit,
man you don't know what fucking time
it is do you? Dig it

(holding up a bag of
COCAINE)

this is power baby.

JUDGE

Sabu you sorry motherfucker...

SABU

Sorry? Not me not now. This is my
time not yours. Black Panthers? Who
the fuck are you. Promising everything
to everyone. Well fuck that. I got
mine... Now y'all get yours...
brother.

Sabu COCKS the gun.

Judge SPINS, batting Sabu's gun hand away.

JUDGE

You ain't my fucking brother!!

BULLETS tear through Sabu as TYRONE fires from the ground.

TYRONE

Damn straight.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Judge and Tyrone help each other up... From BEHIND a CRATE, the SECOND BODYGUARD bolts toward the DOOR.

GUNFIRE blares out, blasting the BODYGUARD across the room. ALMA appears in the doorway.

TYRONE

Alma I told you to...

ALMA

(icy calm)

Fuck that, we've got company...

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

POLICE CARS pull up in front. Armed to the teeth with RIOT GUNS, half a dozen COPS take up position behind the cars.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Alma -- hidden in the shadows -- watches the windows. Behind her. Tyrone -- BADLY HURT -- leans against the wall next to her. Behind them Judge finishes pouring out the GAS CAN.

ALMA

Judge... hurry!

Throwing that can away, Judge SMILES at Tyrone.

JUDGE

Hey, brother you got a match?

GUN SHOTS rip through the walls as the cops OPEN FIRE.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Riot Guns pour lead into the building a la the Fred Hampton massacre. Today, the police are taking no prisoners.

Behind the POLICE, RODGERS watches the mayhem, SHAKING his head. Whatever the outcome, the operation's OVER. Alone, he WALKS back to his car.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Tyrone CRAWLS across the floor, leaving a trail of BLOOD, toward Judge and Alma.

JUDGE
Motherfuckers...

TYRONE
(hurt bad)
Look... You... take her and get the hell out of here. I'll keep 'em busy.

ALMA
No...

TYRONE
(to Judge)
You gotta. You gotta stay alive. You know what they were trying to do here. You got the pigs dead to rights. It's like Huey said, you're more important than any of us.

JUDGE
We'll all get out of here together.

TYRONE
Later for that. I'm done either way...

Another BARRAGE of bullets rips through the walls. One GRAZES Tyrone's ARM. His GUN slides across the floor.

The PISTOL settles ominously in front of Alma. She looks over it at Tyrone. Their eyes LOCK.

TYRONE
Go...

Click! Clack! Faster than a thought, Alma checks, clears and COCKS the pistol. She HANDS it to Tyrone. Tragic understanding flows between them.

Grabbing the pistol, Tyrone SCOOTs across the floor.

ALMA
Tyrone!!!

Near the door, Tyrone turns to Judge and raises his fist.

TYRONE
Power to the people.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

FLAMES leaping up behind him, TYRONE, pure defiance, steps

out and FACES the cops.

The IMAGE FREEZES. GUNFIRE cuts through the air. The moment is frozen, in time, in history, in legend. Slowly, the IMAGE dissolves. Fading into...

EXT. PANTHER HEADQUARTERS

SUPERIMPOSED over the WAREHOUSE FLAMES, the bullet-riddled posters of HUEY and LITTLE BOBBY stare out, like a legacy... or a warning.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOSE-UP: SIDEWALK - DAY

CONCRETE, cracked and dirty, fills the frame. A SMALL FOOT steps onto the pavement.

EXT. 55TH AND MARKET - DAY

A STOPLIGHT hangs at the once deadly intersection. SCHOOL KIDS wait at the corner. The light CHANGES and they step safely into the street.

JUDGE

(over)

The community got the streetlight...
finally. But the way I see it...

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK. A TITLE APPEARS

IN 1970 THERE WERE 300,000 ADDICTS IN THE U.S. YESTERDAY,
THERE WERE 3 MILLION...

JUDGE

(over)

The struggle continues...

THE END