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All three volumes of the TRUST FUND BABIES trilogy are available bound as a single 7.44 by 9.69 inch trade paperback (638 pages 238,317 words | ISBN: 978-1-940028-16-3).

To learn more about the murders of the Clutter farm family: In Cold Blood, A true account of a multiple murder and its consequences, by Truman Capote (1966) ISBN: 0-679-74558-0

For information about the shotgun killings of Jose and Kitty Menendez by their sons, Eric and Lyle: Bad Blood: the shocking true story behind the Menendez killings by Don Davis (1994) St Martin, New York ISBN: 0-312-95334-8

Dedication-

The author dedicates the TRUST FUND BABIES trilogy to the memories of four women, angels of mercy. Three Nuns and a Catholic Lay Worker abducted, raped and shot to death in
rural El Salvador during the night hours of December 2, 1980. Very truly, the sacrifice of these ladies is of the same character, the same import, as the death of Lady Jane Gray, the- 'Nine Day Queen of England'.

**In Foxe's Book of Martyrs we read:**

"The next victim was the amiable Lady Jane Gray, who, by her acceptance of the crown at the earnest solicitations of her friends, incurred the implacable resentment of the bloody Mary. When she first mounted the scaffold, she spoke to the spectators in this manner:"

"I pray you all, good Christian people, to bear me witness, that I die a good Christian woman, and that I do look to be saved by no other mean, but only by the mercy of God in the blood of His only Son Jesus Christ: Then she kneeled down, saying, "Will you take it off before I lay me down?" And the executioner said, "No, madam." Then she tied a handkerchief about her eyes, and feeling for the block, she said, "What shall I do? Where is it? Where is it?"

**The Execution of Lady Jane Gray (Paul Delaroche 1797-1856)**

One of the standers-by guiding her there unto, she laid her head upon the block, and then stretched forth her body, and said, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" and so finished
her life, in the year of our Lord 1554, the twelfth day of February, about the seventeenth year of
her age. Touching the condemnation of this pious lady, it is to be noted that Judge Morgan, who
gave sentence against her, soon after he had condemned her, fell mad, and in his raving cried out
continually to have the Lady Jane taken away from him, and so he ended his life."


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TRUST FUND BABIES
Chasing the Cash Life

JEFF DEJENT
In Association With
DYNAMIC ENTRY PRODUCTIONS, LLC
Mir Aimal Kasi

Killed two, wounded three at the CIA entranceway 25 January 1993.
Arrested by FBI Agents in Pakistan 15 June 1997.
Executed on 14 November 2002.
Scene 1 Monday Morning On The Way To Work

Location: Andy and Karen Howell Residence, Gaithersburg Maryland

Andrew George Howell makes his way towards the front door of the apartment he shares with his wife Karen Chesley Howell, his adopted son Jason Blackstone Howell, and his daughter Alicia Lynn Howell. The spring weather in Washington D.C. is beautiful beyond belief, this second week in the month of May 1993.

Andy wears tan poplin trousers with a short sleeve shirt and a rep stripe tie. His brown shoes have round toes and laces. Major Howell sports a lightweight windbreaker although it is too warm for a jacket. In spite of the balmy weather, the jacket is a wardrobe essential. It helps him conceal the Browning High Power semi-automatic pistol he carries in a shoulder holster under his left arm.

Andy shifts his knapsack from his right to his left hand as he nears the front door of his apartment. While digging in his pockets for his keys he turns in the direction of the dining room table. Andy sees his stepson Jason and his daughter Alicia. Their attention is drawn to the television set. Jason has a worried, thoughtful look on his face. Alicia is all lit up. She bounces up and down in her chair. Alicia pounds her spoon in the fashion typical for excited two year olds.

Karen Chesley Howell strides from the kitchen towards the front door in two inch black patent leather sling back heels. She wears a purple print dress made out of a gauzy rayon. The dress is just as flattering as it is form fitting and comfortable. Karen balances her briefcase and two brown paper lunch bags in her right hand while she runs the fingers of her left hand through her shoulder length hair.

Alicia Lynn Howell gives out with a shout when Karen is half way between her children and her husband, "Mommy! Mommy! Father Arnold!"

Andy and Karen turn to focus their attention on their children. They see a laughing smiling two year old and a worried looking teenager.

Jason, the teenager, says to his two year old step sister.

"That's a Priest, Alicia. It's not Father Arnold."

Andy leans in the direction of his two children. Karen turns around and says.

"What?"Jason looks up and explains.

"Alicia thinks every Priest with blue eyes is Father Arnold."

Jason moves a bit closer to Alicia. He points at the television set.
"That's in Mexico, Alicia. Father Arnold lives in Aspen Hills."

Alicia Lynn Howells eyes cloud over. She peers at the television screen for a moment. Then she looks up at her parents.

"Father Arnold, Mommy!"

Karen and Andy exchange puzzled glances. Karen walks towards her son and her daughter and turns around. She bends slightly at the waist while she watches the news byte on the television screen. Andy Howell opens the front door to the apartment. He turns back towards his family and says to his wife.

"We have a meeting, Karen." Karen glances up at her husband. She replies.

"It's somewhere in Mexico. Some people died and a Priest is talking to a reporter."

Jason slowly nods his head. He adds.

"Four missionaries stumbled on a drug lab. Some place called El Mirador. All four were killed."

Alicia is too young to understand the meaning of the phrase- 'drug lab'. Still, her face blanches white and tears well up in her eyes when Jason says the word- 'killed'.

Karen peers intently at the television screen for a moment. She stands up straight and says to her husband.

"The missionaries were nurses. Making prenatal visits in villages that don't have doctors."

Karen moves towards her daughter. She caresses Alicia's head and says.

"Don't worry Alicia, Father Arnold is here. The television camera is in Mexico."

Alicia blinks her eyes. She sits up straight in her chair. Karen walks towards the front door and joins up with her husband. Karen passes one of the brown paper lunch sacks into her husband's hand. As Andy makes his way half in and half out the door, Karen turns towards her children. She promises.

"Sunday morning, Alicia. You can see Father Arnold in church this Sunday."

Karen waves at Alicia. She turns round and walks out into the apartment building corridor. Andy closes and locks the apartment door. He sighs and says.

"Colonel Wingate says the attacks in South America are blow back from the war against Saddam Hussein."

Karen Chesley Howell enjoys working at the Central Intelligence Agency as a cryptographer. She is not at all happy with the fact her Action Officer husband is under written orders to carry a
concealed weapon. Karen Chesley Howell walks towards the doors of the elevator. She presses lightly on the 'down' button.

When the elevator arrives, Karen and Andy alight and then turn to face the doors. Karen presses the lobby button. She says.

"I hate it when you carry a gun, Andy." Andy replies. "It's worse than that."

Karen turns to face her husband in profile. She asks. "How?" Andy says.

"Wingate's orders. A round in the chamber and the hammer half cocked."
Scene 2 Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson Has A Theory

Location: Hearing Chambers, Office of the Deputy Director for Operations, C.I.A. Headquarters, Langley Virginia

Andy and Karen Howell tip toe into the Central Intelligence Agency conference room. They are a good ten minutes late. Andy and Karen expect a scolding from the Commander of the Action Officer's Unit, Colonel Henry Winston Wingate. As they take seats near Joe Gomez, Bill Norman, Beauregard Morgan, and Moses Anderson, Colonel Wingate smiles and says.

"Let's back up a bit!"

Andy and Karen pull chairs out from underneath one of the conference room tables. Colonel Wingate slides a transparency off the glass top on his overhead projector. He replaces it with another sheet of clear plastic covered with a list of numbered and dated incidents. The Colonel looks up at his audience and smiles his avuncular, actually, grandfatherly smile.

Wingate puts his half moon bifocals up on his nose with a sweeping motion. He points at the items on his list with the tip of his pen and says.

"Nineteen Ninety Three is an unusually busy year for terror, ladies and gentlemen. An unusually busy year."

"Bombings in Medellin on the seventh of January and in Bogota Columbia on the thirtieth of January. The Bogota attack attributed to Pablo Escobar."

"Closer to home we have the AK-47 attack at the front gate of the Central Intelligence Agency on the twenty fifth of January. Two of our people killed and three wounded. Here, the assailant has been described as a person with a 'middle eastern' appearance. As we all know, after he sprayed bullets in all directions, he made good his escape in a waiting vehicle."

"A car repair shop bombed in Barrancabermeja on the eleventh of February. Fourteen killed and twenty five injured. Two bombs in Bogota, Columbia on the twenty second of February. A shopping mall bombing in Bogota on the fifteenth of April."

While the Colonel pauses to catch his breath, Lieutenant Colonel William Norman, USMC, throws his hand up in the air and adds.

"Pablo Escobar ordered the bombing in the mall."

Colonel Wingate looks up from his list and nods at Lieutenant Colonel Norman. He replies.

"Escobar would be the most likely suspect, he would be."

Colonel Wingate points at an entry about two thirds of the way down on his itemized list.
"Twenty six February, Nineteen Ninety Three. Six killed and a thousand injured by a truck bomb planted in a parking space in the World Trade Center Building. Here, we have reason to believe the attack was carried out by a coalition of middle eastern terrorists."

"Twenty eight February, ATF Agents fired upon by members of a religious sect in Waco Texas as they try to serve a search warrant. Fifty one days later, nineteen April, F.B.I. Agents storm the church grounds and neutralize the leaders."

Karen Howell throws up her hand. Colonel Wingate says.

"Yes, Mrs. Howell." Karen adds.

"Seventeen children died in that effort to 'neutralize' a civil disturbance, Colonel Wingate."

The room grows quiet. Colonel Wingate looks away from Andy's wife and towards the door. He is unable to meet her even gaze. The Colonel recovers. He looks down at the list of incidents on the top of his projector.

"Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson has a thesis to share with us this morning. But let me add by way of introduction, the conflict is global. A newspaper journalist was assassinated and a car bombing took place in Turkey on the twenty fourth of January. On the twelfth of March multiple car bombings in Mumbai India ended with two hundred and fifty seven dead and about fourteen hundred injured. There were additional bombings in India on the seventeenth and nineteenth of March."

The Commander of the Central Intelligence Agency Action Officer's unit, Colonel Henry Winston Wingate, looks up at his audience. He waits politely for questions. Wingate exchanges his itemized list for a photocopy of a newspaper headline. He says.

"Just this weekend four nurses making pre-natal health care visits. Brutally slain near the outskirts of El Mirador, Mexico. It appears they stumbled onto a number of men at work in a cocaine laboratory."

Colonel Wingate sighs. He pulls his bifocals off his face. Then he says.

"Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson. If you would, please, Sir."

Moses Anderson rises from his seat. As he mounts the podium, Colonel Wingate moves to a chair at the head of the first table. Wingate sits down next to Edgar David Coolidge, MD, Chief of Psychiatry for the Central Intelligence Agency. Moses stands next to the lectern. He has a stack of posters in his hands.

Moses holds four posters side by side up to the view of the audience.

"Last month we agreed the Shining Path Guerilla group in Peru had the best quality art work."
Since then, it dawned on me posters from before Desert Storm had strictly local themes. Pictures of humble farm workers and slogans like- 'Land For Those Who Work It'.

"This year things are different."

Moses lowers the posters in his hands to the lectern and raises up a second set of four posters.

"This year, nineteen ninety three, the pictures and the slogans are global. They feature images of Chairman Mao and slogans about holding hands across the ocean with Palestinians, Turks, Iraqi's and Afghanistani's."

"A year ago, September 1992, Andelmo Gutierrez, Head of the Shining Path Guerilla Movement was arrested in the Surco neighborhood of Lima Peru. Gutierrez's computer included an order of battle listing for his rebels. He has over twenty three thousand followers!"

Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson, Central Intelligence Agency Action Officer, looks out at his audience through a pair of gold rimmed spectacles. He nods his head up and down.

"That's my theory. Part of what's happening this year is blow back from the war against Saddam Hussein. Part of it has to do with Gutierrez's take down. I think when Gutierrez was captured, his people fled to the middleeast."

Major Andrew George Howell, Central Intelligence Agency Action Officer throws his right hand up in the air. Moses Anderson says.

"Major Howell?" Andy Howell asks.

"What about geography and time lines? Is it logical the missionaries killed in Mexico were killed by Gutierrez's people making their way up north?"

A puzzled expression appears on the face of Moses Anderson. He goes eye to eye with Colonel Wingate. Colonel Wingate explains.

"Possible, but not likely. All they found in Mirador was empty cans of ether. No posters, no papers suggesting a link to terrorism. No books on communist ideology."

Karen Howell looks directly at Colonel Wingate. She asks.

"Who would be cruel enough to kill missionaries?"

Colonel Wingate shakes his head and lets the air out of his lungs. Joe Gomez raises a hand. Colonel Wingate nods and says.

"Captain Gomez." Joe Gomez adds.

"Killing Missionaries and Priests and Nuns is on the increase in South America."
Karen Howell shakes her head. In a sad voice she says."But why?"

Joe Gomez looks at Andy Howell's wife. He explains.

"Both sides view the Church as under cover and against their interests. Federal troops are just as likely to kill a Priest as drug dealers or revolutionaries. They all think organized religion is working for the other side."

Karen Howell bites her lower lip. She remarks.

"Witches and evil spirits were supposed to be in the dark ages."

Joe Gomez nods and says. "Supposed to be."

Colonel Henry Winston Wingate rises to his feet. Time to get the morning conference back on course.

"Your proposal, Colonel Anderson, Sir."

Moses Anderson nods his head. He looks just a bit reluctant.

"That's why Doctor Coolidge is here this morning. Doctor Coolidge, Sir."

Edgar David Coolidge, MD, Chief of Psychiatry for the Central Intelligence Agency, rises to his feet. He makes his slow ponderous way up onto the podium. The Psychiatrist nods at Moses and then takes Lieutenant Colonel Anderson's place at the side of the lectern.

The top of the lectern slants from front to back. It is difficult for Coolidge to rest his oversize briefcase on the lectern and retrieve his notes from inside his case.

After a few moments of struggle, the Psychiatrist stands facing the audience with a file folder in his hands. He says.

"Thank you, Colonel Anderson."

Doctor Coolidge retrieves a form from the inside of his tan manila folder. He holds it up to the audience.

"Personality profiles. Estimates of potential behavior. My people are getting court orders. You name a likely suspect. We check for a psych history, especially an MMPI evaluation. We match his traits against the traits of his social contacts."

Colonel Beauregard Morgan, Readiness Detachment Commander, USMC, raises his hand. Coolidge nods, granting the Colonel permission to speak. The crusty Viet Nam War veteran queries.

"The social contacts part is easy enough. Phone records, credit card receipts. Travel agendas.
What's an MMPI?"

Doctor Coolidge nods. A grim expression clouds his face.

"Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. Patients answer questions one by one on a list. The answers correlate with a personality type or a type of mental illness. Long term, our goal is to have every MMPI in the world in a United Nations data base. Accessible to public safety agencies on search warrants."

Andy Howell shakes his head and frowns. He says.

"Psych profiling sounds like reading a crystal ball. I vote for global communications intercepts."

Doctor Coolidge does his very best to look stern and determined.

"Major Howell. With psych profiles we can decide who to watch minute by minute and who to keep an eye on once in a while!"

Andy opens his mouth to reply but Joe Gomez is there first.

"The higher ups in the DEA like psych profiles. Right now they profile suspects before an arrest. Doctor Coolidge grades them for potential violence. That's how we decide how many guys to send in on the team."

Coolidge smiles. He nods briskly at Captain Gomez. Coolidge says.

"Exactly, Captain Gomez. Manpower is a precious, limited, resource. Fewer agents are needed at an arrest at a fraternity house in a college town than in a crack den in a rundown neighborhood. Exactly correct."

Although Andy Howell is outnumbered, he remains skeptical. "This is the golden age for phone intercepts. The signals are all analog, nothing is encrypted."

Doctor Coolidge scratches his chin with the thumb nail on his right hand. He counters."Behavior is the key, Major Howell. I can tell you what your suspect is capable of. When you know what he is up to you have an easier time finding him."

Karen Howell shakes her head at Doctor Coolidge's remark. She asks.

"Doctor Coolidge Sir. What about the missionaries in Mexico? What would the psych profiles be for their assailants?"

Coolidge finds himself charged up by Mrs. Howell's question. He rushes forward to the edge of the podium and waves his hands in the air.

"The kind of a person who would kill a nurse will have issues going all the way back to
childhood. You give me a list of a hundred suspects. I'll narrow it down to three or four people in a day or two with a medical records search!"

Coolidge stands at attention while he speaks. He jerks his head up and down in a power gesture. Andy Howell says grimly.

"Human beings wouldn't kill a Nun or a Priest. These animals won't have an MMPI. They're mad dogs with rabies."
Scene 3 The Sinaloa Drug Gang, Baptism (sic) By Fire

LOCATION: Outskirts of the rural town of El Mirador Mexico

After the four men let loose with dozens of machine pistol rounds, after their unarmed and defenseless victims collapse into heaps. The assassins sit down on their haunches in the dry and sandy soil just outside the town of El Mirador, Mexico. A full moon hangs in the sky, bright enough to outline the facial features of the hapless victims and their four executioners. The air is still, tainted by the stench of cordite from small arms fire.

Each killer breathes heavily. Each feels a ringing sensation in his ears, a side effect of the muzzle blasts spitting time and time again from their weapons. In spite of the horrific nature of their crime. The self styled- 'revolutionaries' (sic) feel a mixture of relief and contentment rather than shame or guilt. In their sick minds, overkill is a certain proof of the power they wield in their world of lusts and deceit. They want to imagine overkill holds an element of mercy in its fearsome grasp.

The oldest of the young men, the first to speak, is a Mexican National named Enrique Sinaloa. Sinaloa is a tall and slender man who vacillates between periods of animation and somber withdrawal. Ricky Sinaloa is reasonably intelligent his antisocial upbringing left him both shrewd and cruel.

This particular evening finds Mister Sinaloa dressed in a sweat stained tank top and baggy tan trousers set off by high top Mexican army boots. Although the moon is full, it is not possible to discern if Mister Sinaloa's hair is either straight or curly. In the style of gang members all over north and south America, he has a bandana tied about his head.

Worse than the bandanna, a tattoo in the form of a spider's web covers the surface of Enrique's left elbow. This design giving mute testimony to the fact Mister Sinaloa was a willing participant, a co-conspirator, in an arranged killing at some time in the past.

Even if Ricky had not been domineering by nature the tattoo would have singled him out as a man to be feared. On a good day it might be possible to disagree with Ricky Sinaloa with your hat in your hands and a humble tone in your voice. But no one in the criminal world would ever cross him, or rat on him to the police.

Ricky Sinaloa rises to his feet using a worn farmer's spade as a crutch. Mister Sinaloa looks down at his companions and issues his orders.

“This is what we gonna do. After we bury the nuns’ bodies we put the coke in the back of their wagon. Lot easier to get past customs in a car registered to a nunnery than in the Chrysler.”

Ali Leon and Tepo Nayari nod in agreement with Ricky’s plan of action. Francesco Nayari,
Tepo’s older brother, glances up at Ricky. He says.

“Why don’t we just burn everything up, Ricky? We have plenty of chemicals from making the coke. Maybe a fire would get rid of the evidence better.”

Ricky shakes his head slowly from left to right. He replies.

“Yeah. ... But just maybe some farmer will see the smoke from the fire and have the smarts to go to La Policia. I want us driving through customs with no loose ends. If we was headed down to Bogota to sell the dope to your old man a fire would make sense.”

At the mention of his father, Tepo Nayari breaks into a wide day dreaming grin. He looks up at Ricky and says.

“When we get the money from selling the dope, that’s when we go see my old man. Then we each get a villa and a string of party girls.”

Taken one at a time, Ricky Sinaloa, Ali Leon, and the Nayari brothers, Frankie and Tepo are little more than a gaggle of twisted minds, each mind with a lust for excitement and the perverse pleasures in life. When they came together some months ago, the sum totaled up to something much greater than its separate parts.

Up until the time the Nayari brothers met Ricky and Ali, they lived the lives of the indolent rich. Frankie and Tepo never knew hunger they never had to ride on public transportation. Even at this moment, hunched down in the sand. The Nayari brothers dress in tailored trousers and shirts set off by expensive hose and handmade leather shoes.

Frankie and Tepo, actually Francesco Simon and Theodore John Nayari, both wear solid gold wristwatches. Their grandfather, Luis Jose Nayari, made millions in the nineteen forties and nineteen fifties as a Columbian drug lord. A family tradition carried on into the legitimate business world by their Attorney father, Alberto Enrique Nayari.

Slowly but surely, under the power of Ricky’s demonic spell, Frankie and Tepo graduated from a love of vice to a love of crime. Frankie in particular has been so eager in his new endeavors as to be something of a challenge to Ricky’s authority. As a result, the two men are wary in one another’s presence, often at loggerheads in their joint business dealings.

The quiet and thoughtful member of the group is a Mexican National named Ali Leon. In contrast to the other three, he wears thick eyeglasses giving him a scholarly, professorial look. Mister Leon is dressed in a dirty short sleeve t-shirt. A wide leather belt with a shiny silver buckle holds his loose fitting pants to his slender waist. He wears white socks inside of a pair of old six inch work boots. In common with Ricky, Ali has a bandanna tied round his head.

Ali makes no secret of the fact he resents the Nayari brothers for their wealth and position. Each month he sends money to Philadelphia to provide for his mother and his eight year old son. It
irks him the Nayari's use crime for the thrills it provides rather than as a primary source of income.

After the ringing in their ears dies away, Ali Leon, Francesco Nayari, and Tepo Nayari struggle to their feet. Without waiting for instructions from Ricky, they go to work as an unholy team, digging a shallow grave in the loose and arid Mexican soil.

As the older men watch, leaning on their shovels, Tepo drags the bodies of the missionary nurses into the shallow hole and lays them face down. With the bodies in place, Ali, Tepo, and Frankie carefully conceal the fruits of their crime under shovels of freshly turned earth.

After the bodies disappear from view, Frankie wraps his hands tight round the handle of his spade. He says.

“With any luck at all, nobody will report them missing until after Monday night.”

Ali, Tepo, and Frankie are out of breath. They nod in agreement with Frankie's assessment of the situation. Ricky sees his men are in an obedient frame of mind. He issues an order.

“Let’s get the coke in the back of the nun’s wagon. Cover em up with a tarp. Nobody at the border gonna inspect the car after they run the plate.”

Tepo Nayari walks to the front of the Mercury wagon belonging to the Missionary Nurses. He pulls a flashlight out of his back pocket. As he shines the light this way and that through the windshield, his eyes fall upon something useful, something important. Tepo calls out in an excited voice.

“Hey look here! The nun’s left us a passport!”

Tepo opens the driver’s door with a flourish. He pulls out a cardboard placard resting on the tray beneath the windshield. He carries the sign to his friends, holding it upright against his chest.

Then Tepo, actually- Theodore John Nayari shines his flashlight on the sign- making it easy to read by the other men in the circle.

Ali Leon studies the sign for a moment. He reads aloud.

SISTER’S OF SAINT CHRISTINA

MOBILE NURSING SERVICE

Ricky Sinaloa nods and smiles at Tepo as if the younger man were halfway through a rite of gang initiation.
Sinaloa says, “Put it back in the window. On the driver’s side. We want the custom’s guys to see it real easy.”

Tepo nods and grins. He runs back to the Missionaries Mercury station wagon to comply with Ricky’s order. Ricky Sinaloa strides to his Chrysler. He climbs in behind the wheel. When he turns the key the engine starts on the first try and blue smoke pours from the tailpipe. Soon blue smoke floods the fresh gravesite with a low-lying fog.

Ricky puts the Chrysler in gear. He maneuvers the vehicle until it is trunk to tail with the nun’s Mercury wagon. Sinaloa turns off the motor, leaving the keys in the ignition. In short order, the four men transfer dozens of kilogram packages of cocaine from the trunk of their Chrysler to the back of the Nun’s pre-natal healthcare delivery station wagon.

With the drugs loaded, Ricky shares a steely-eyed glare with his companions. In a flat even voice, he says.

“Alli drives the Mercury wagon, Tepo on shotgun. Me and Frankie gonna be behind in the Chrysler.”

The other men nod in agreement, too exhausted to speak. The mental image of Ali Leon behind the wheel in big thick eyeglasses with an impish Tepo bouncing up and down on the seat beside him is irresistible to all the men in Ricky's gang. No customs officer in the world would take the time to search a vehicle driven by Ali and with 'Tepito' riding shotgun. They are just too innocent looking to raise anyone's eyebrow.

With methodical motions, the four men stash their weapons arsenal beneath the front seats of the Chrysler sedan and the Mercury wagon. Tepo is the last man to take his appointed place.

While the other men sit waiting in the cars, growing more and more annoyed. Tepo Nayari walks over the crime scene, shining his flashlight this way and that. No one scolds Tepo because the younger man is acting out on a set of shared impulses. Theodore John Nayari is the lord and master of all he surveys. Even if all he surveys is a rundown deserted farm house and a horrible, savage crime scene.

In spite of the perverse nature of their activities, now and in the recent past. Each man wants to imagine they have accomplished something important. Something that amounts to nothing less than a job well done. Of the four guilty men, however, Tepo is the only individual flighty enough to act out on his sick lusts.

At long last, Tepo turns away from the 'scene of the crime'. He slams the trunk shut on the Chrysler. The noise startles Ali Leon. It brings him to a higher level of consciousness. Leon leans out of the driver’s window of the Mercury and turns back towards Ricky. In a moment,
Ricky sticks his head out of the driver's side window of the Chrysler.

Ali Leon suggests. “We ought a take the shovels and the pick. Put them in the back of the wagon. Make us look more like gardeners than dopers.”

As the scion of a wealthy family from Bogota Columbia, Tepo finds Leon's idea nothing less than distasteful.

In an irritated voice, Tepo says. “I don’t want dirty tools in the back of the car.”

Ricky sees the wisdom in Ali’s suggestion. Ricky glares at Tepo. He jabs at the younger man with a fingertip and says.

“You. You go pick up the tools.”

Tepo shakes his head from side to side in a gesture of rebellion. He turns towards his brother Frankie, looking wide-eyed, pleading for support. Frankie too, sees the wisdom in Ali and Ricky's strategy. Frankie says to his younger brother.

“Get the stuff in the car, Tepo. Ali and Ricky are right. We’re going to be poor gardeners for the sisters of Saint Christina until we cross the border. Then we’re going to be rich.”

Tepo frowns, his shoulders slump. Yet, under the weight of a group scolding, he sees the wisdom in Ali Leon's subterfuge. Slowly, one tool at a time, Tepo loads the shovels and picks into the back of the wagon. All the while the youngest man in the group keeps his eyes to the ground to avoid the angry stares of his comrades.

Soon the two cars are traveling in tandem. Headed due north in the direction of the city of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. A town of some three hundred and seventy two thousand people, referred to by some as the- 'Land of the Coyotes'. The four men drive their two cars down the moon lit roads in a pensive mood. The brutal killings of the nuns who stumbled upon their drug laboratory behind them, a thing of the past. Now they face a more dangerous challenge. Ricky Sinaloa, Ali Leon, Frankie and Tepo Nayari have to weasel their way past armed guards and drug dogs at a border crossing in two cars loaded with illegal drugs and unregistered weapons.
Scene 4 The Sinaloa Gang Takes A Meeting

Location: An all night restaurant in Nuevo Laredo Mexico

At sunrise, Ricky and Ali pull the Chrysler and the stolen Mercury wagon onto the dusty gravel parking lot of an all night diner just south of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. While they clamber out of their vehicles the men struggle to look business like and give the impression they are working men on a tight schedule. This is an essential task for this particular set of 'desperados'. A Police Officer just has to demand access to their vehicles, and the whole scheme comes unwound!

Ricky, Ali, Frankie, and Tepo have millions of dollars in kilogram packages of newly manufactured cocaine in the back of the Mercury wagon. And freshly fired semi-automatic weapons under the front seats of both vehicles. One by one, they make their careful way through the glass door of the restaurant. One by one, they take seats at a window table remote from the ears of the wait staff.

As the sun slowly takes the place of the moon in the clear blue Mexican sky, the men fill their empty stomachs on nearly identical meals composed primarily of breakfast burrito’s. Ali doses his food with large volumes of Tabasco sauce. Tepo winces at the sight of Ali's table manners. He makes eye contact across the table with his equally upscale brother Frankie.

Both Ali Leon and Ricky Sinaloa realize Tepo and Frankie are thinking something like, "Leon is such a typical Mexican peasant."

In an effort to stave off sleep, the men wolf down volumes of fresh coffee, one cup after another.
This strategy, unfortunately, leaves them more nervous than alert.

Ali, Frankie, and Tepo turn their eyes in the direction of their leader, Ricky Sinaloa. What will he have them do? What's next? As the men watch Ricky, it appears to them he is losing his nerve. They see a pair of narrowed suspicious eyes, and a set of trembling fingers. Is Ricky losing it?

Quite to the contrary, Mister Sinaloa is perfectly at ease with their most recent act of multiple homicide. He is not in the middle of a flash back to last night's savage killing. He is in the middle of a flashback to the time of his discharge from the Mexican army.

Under the watchful eyes of his 'companeros', Ricky's thoughts travel back to the six months he spent in the army stockade for assaulting an officer. Compared to time in prison, more properly time in a military stockade, the psychiatric discharge was something of a relief.

While Ricky pictures the face of the psychiatrist in his mind, his hands tremble, the coffee slops out of his cup. Does the psychiatrist know where he is at this moment? Does the psychiatrist know what he is up to?

Ali, Frankie, and Tepo pick up on the look of terror in Ricky's blood shot eyes. Frankie wonders if maybe it is time for him to take on the leadership role in the gang. The glance Frankie shares with his younger brother Tepo is not lost on Ricky.

Ricky Sinaloa puts his cup down in the puddle on his saucer. He stares at the other men, one man after another. It is time for him to re-assert his authority over the group. Sinaloa grimaces at Ali Leon in his 'tough guy' pose. He says.

“When you get to the booth have your driver’s license out. Stick it right in the guys face. Then hold up the Saint Christina sign in the windshield. If he starts asking questions tell him you gotta get the car back to Del Rio where the nunnery is.”

Ali nods in assent, he holds mute. Leon would rather take orders from Ricky than Frankie.

The look on Ali's face says if he had a notebook and a pen he would be writing Ricky's orders down one by one and committing them to memory. A fact Ricky and Frankie and Tepo know only too well. Next, Ricky turns to Frankie’s younger brother, Tepo.

“You do the talking. Shove your license at the custom’s guy so he can read your last name. Then tell him your brother is driving the car behind. Wave back at us and point to Frankie.”

Tepo nods and breaks into an impish smile. He savors the idea of telling a lie, playing a role, to someone above him and in a position of authority. In spite of himself, Tepo feels a tingling sensation. If the first car makes it through! The second car will make it through! Tepo bounces in his seat in the booth of the restaurant. His eyes gleam from the excitement. He wants to add something, some kind of bold gesture. Thinking aloud, Tepo says.
“We got enough guns to shoot our way out if something goes wrong. Take a few hostages. Then cop a plane, fly back to Columbia and be big heroes!”

Even Tepo’s older brother Frankie can see Tepo is going off the deep end. In an effort to rein Tepo in, Frankie stares at his brother and says.

“If you got back to Columbia you might be a hero. But in Texas they have the death penalty.”

Frankie’s remark is enough to burst Tepo’s bubble. When Tepo hears the phrase- ‘death penalty’ he shrinks down in his seat.

Frankie Nayari puts his cup down on his saucer. Then he bites the index finger of his left hand. While he stares at the manicured nail on the finger he tries to come up with some kind of an idea that will raise him up to Ricky’s level in the esteem of the other men. Finally, Frankie grins from ear to ear. He glances at Ali and then at Ricky to get their attention. Frankie says.

“Know what we should do? We should buy a couple of big fertilizer sacks.”

Frankie pauses for effect. Ricky shrugs his shoulders and replies.

“O.K. I’ll bite. What do we need sacks of fertilizer for?”

Frankie leans forward in his seat. His eyes sparkle at the opening gambit left for him by Ricky.

“Simple,” Frankie waves his hand and explains, “We buy a couple of fertilizer sacks and empty them out. Then we put the dope in the sacks in the back of the wagon.”

Ali is a bit mystified. This kind of scheming is over his head. He wonders if the other men are trying in some way to make him look like a fool. Leon pushes his glasses high up on his nose. Then Mister Ali Leon looks directly at Frankie, the eldest son of- ‘Don Alberto Enrique Nayari’.

“What does fertilizer sacks do for the coke?”

“Don’t you get it?” Replies Frankie in a voice filled with contempt for the working class. “The customs guy eyeballs the sacks and gets fooled into thinking we're gardeners! Plus we get a bonus. If they have cocaine sniffing dogs - the dogs smell the fertilizer, not the coke!”

Ricky, Ali, and Tepo stare at Frankie for a long moment. Ali’s mouth falls halfway open. Tepo looks up at his brother in admiration. There is a grin on his face extending from ear to ear.

Francesco Nayari's younger brother shakes his head back and forth slowly,

“Beautiful Frankie, Beautiful!”

Even Ricky has feelings of unreserved admiration for his rival, the older brother of Tepo Nayari.

“Hey! Hey!” Says Tepo in the loud boisterous voice you would expect from a fan at a baseball
Frankie laughs, nearly a giggle, at his own cleverness.

The sound Frankie makes is infectious. Soon all four men are holding their sides and roaring in laughter. After a while the noise catches the attention of their waiter. The man in the apron stares at his customers while sitting on a stool at the counter. He looks as if he is trying to match up their faces with a previous visit or maybe even a random street side encounter.

The waiter's studied look adds up to more scrutiny than the men can tolerate at this point in time. Their goal, after all, is to make it across the border without drawing attention to themselves. As soon as Ricky, Ali, Frankie, and Tepo spy the waiter glaring at them, they bring an abrupt halt to their mirth.

The room quiets down. The waiter turns round and goes back to reading his newspaper. The four men rise to their tired feet. They put folding money on the table. The Ricky Sinaloa gang strides through the front door of the restaurant, still surrounded by an air of confidence. The Sinaloa gang entered the restaurant at sunrise in a state of clinical depression. They are leaving the restaurant an hour or so later in a manic phase.

As the men climb into their cars, Ricky shouts to no one in particular.

“Find us a feed store Jefe! We got a garden needs fertilizing!”
Scene 5 Concealing Evidence / 'Hiding The Stash'

Location: A farm supply store and a vacant lot, Nuevo Laredo Mexico

Ali nods his head with a good deal of enthusiasm in response to Ricky's exclamation. The two cars make their cautious way off the gravel parking lot of the all night diner and back onto the highway. They motor north, deeper into the city limits of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

As the men search for a farm supply store, Ricky doffs his gang colors bandana and throws it onto the back seat of the Chrysler. With one hand on the steering wheel Ricky reaches into a crumpled paper bag resting on the floor behind his seat. Sinaloa rummages around in the bag for a while. Then he pulls out a long sleeve shirt.

Ricky and Frankie smile at one another. They both understand it simply won't do for Ricky to look like a gang member or display a tattoo of a spider web to the customs people. With one hand on the steering wheel, Sinaloa puts the shirt on top of his sweat stained tank top. He buttons up the sleeves, and by choice, he leaves the shirttails hanging in the breeze.

A short while later Ali locates a suitable feed store. The men park their cars against the curb. They go inside and pay cash for two fifty pound sacks of fertilizer. Two by two, the members of the Sinaloa gang manhandle the hefty sacks back out to the Chrysler and the stolen Mercury wagon.

Ricky feels on top of the world. In a voice filled with equal parts of enthusiasm and authority, he says.

“Let's put this stuff in the trunk of the Chrysler. The springs on the wagon are sagging from the weight of the cocaina."

At curbside, the men drop the heavy sacks of chemical fertilizer on the ground. While they huff and puff in silence, Ricky fishes around in his pants pocket for the key to the trunk.

Mister Sinaloa pops the trunk lid on the Chrysler. Then all four men toss the sacks into the yawning compartment. Ricky slams the trunk shut with an air of finality and triumph.

The men get back into their cars. They drive around randomly until they find a vacant lot. Ricky and Ali park the Chrysler and the Mercury wagon side by side on the weeds and gravel in the lot. The men alight from their vehicles. They are so pleased with themselves, they remain oblivious to the inquiring stares of the people living in the tenement buildings surrounding the lot.

Ricky, Ali, Frankie, and Tepo go about their business. Ricky pulls a wicked looking stiletto
knife out from underneath his right sock. He slashes into the tops of the paper fertilizer bags. Ricky and Frankie, the larger men in the group of four miscreants, pick up the bags and turn them upside down. They pour the chemical fertilizer onto the dry arid ground of the vacant lot.

“Shake out a little in the trunk of the Chrysler,” says Ricky. “Just in case maybe some dope got spilled out of the bags while we was loading or unloading.”

Ricky's wise remark is just another instance in which his cunning instincts show the way. All the men nod their heads slowly out of respect for their leader. Although, as a rule, Frankie is always on the lookout for opportunities to challenge Ricky’s authority. He complies with Ricky's insightful order without saying a word.

Ali retrieves the keys to the Mercury wagon from his pants pocket. He opens up the tailgate of the wagon. Leon leans inside the back of the stolen station wagon. He pulls the two shovels and the pick out of the back, being careful not to tear the tarp.

Tepo takes the empty fertilizer sacks from Ricky and his brother Francesco. Under the watchful eyes of Ricky and Frankie, Tepo and Ali load the clear plastic packages of cocaine into the now empty chemical fertilizer sacks.

“Gotta look casual.” Tepo says, while glancing up at his brother Frankie for approval. Frankie is too tired to speak he yawns and nods wearily in agreement.

All four members of the gang heft the sacks back into the rear of the Mercury station wagon. They put the tarp back on top of the sacks. Next, they toss the farm tools on top of the tarp. Ali slams the back door of the wagon shut.

Ricky turns to Ali and suggests. "I'm thinking the Juarez Lincoln Bridge. Should be the fastest."

Ali shakes his head from left to right. Under the watchful eyes of Frankie and Tepo, he replies. "No pedestrians. Besides, the Zetas use the Juarez and the Libre Commercial Bridge all the time."

Ricky nods at Ali. Next, he offers. "The Solidarity Bridge is too far out of town. All that's left is the International."


“Ali,” says Ricky to the stocky man wearing thick eye glasses,

“The earlier we get in line the more we look like we got paying jobs in the states.”

The other three men nod in agreement with Ricky's observation. Wordlessly they climb back into
their cars. Ali behind the wheel of the Mercury wagon, Frankie in the driver's seat of the Chrysler. On the way through metropolitan Nuevo Laredo, they pass by the Monument to Women in La Alameda Square.

Scene 6 In The Belly Of A Trojan Horse

Location: U. S. Customs Station in the town of Laredo Texas

The Gateway to the Americas International Bridge is four lanes across. There is a pedestrian walkway on either side of the traffic lanes. It is 1,050 feet long and 42 feet wide. Local people refer to it by names including: Convent Street Bridge, Bridge Number One, and Puente Viejo. The bridge was constructed in 1954 in the then popular Box Girder design. It is set aside for non-commercial traffic.
Although Ricky Sinaloa and his people drove away from the vacant lot well before eight in the morning, when they pull up at the customs station, they find themselves at the back of a very long line of privately owned vehicles. Glancing about, the four men see nothing but bored expressions on the faces of the cross border workers, the border guards, and the customs agents. Criminals very seldom try to enter the United States from Mexico, and so, monotony is the dominant theme.

Ali Leon and Tepo Nayari find they have little to say while sitting next to one another in the lead car. Although both men have the same reasons for feelings of anxiety. Anyone can see Ali is dealing with the stress of the hostile border crossing much better than his wealthy and boyish-‘partner in crime’.

The thought he might be 'found out' and arrested this morning is simply too much pressure for Theodore 'Tepo' Nayari. He needs to escape into a fantasy world. While the clock ticks on the dashboard of the Mercury station wagon. Tepo’s mind flashes back and forth from the danger of his present situation to dreams about how he is going to spend his share of the money from the sale of the cocaine.

“Gonna get a ‘vette first thing,” Tepo says, in a matter of fact tone to no one in particular.

Ali shakes his head in disgust at Tepo's out of place remark. The down to earth Mexican National brings his thoughts to bear on the immediate situation.

“I wonder how many dogs they got working today?” he says flatly.

In the second car, behind Ali and Tepo, Ricky and Frankie are getting along with one another a little better than usual. Just now, there is no immediate reason for them to compete for the attention of Ali and Tepo. As a result, their relationship has lost some of its usual tension and become somewhat relaxed.

“You think Tepo can handle it?” asks Enrique Sinaloa of the man sitting behind the wheel.

“No doubt.” Replies Frankie to Ricky, a bit too quick. “My kid brother's got good stuff. Gonna get through here and be millionaires.”

With that remark, Frankie takes his right hand down off the dashboard. Then he turns on the radio in an effort to avoid further conversation with Ricky.

The Mercury wagon is burdened down with fifty kilograms of cocaine and the two younger men, Ali and Tepo. Just now it sits with the engine idling, three cars back from a Custom's Agent sitting in a kiosk. Ali looks around carefully. He moves his eyes but not his head. Is anybody watching? The trick is to pick up on every little detail, but not to appear suspicious while glancing about. That's the trick!

Mister Leon counts three huge German Shepherds on leashes, each dog with a handler dressed in
a customs uniform. Tepo too, notices the dogs but he focuses his attention on the holstered sidearm's carried by the customs officer.

Tepo turns at the waist towards Ali. He remarks. “I bet all they got is old forty fives with seven round clips.”

Ali glances at Tepo in the mirror. He shivers and replies. “Stay cool, hombre.”

Tepo ignores the slight tone of derision in Ali's voice. The rich kid from Bogota continues on with his Hollywood fantasies.

“One of our MAC-10's. ... I could get most of them. Then you could smash the car through the line and we get away clean as a whistle.”

Ali pushes his glasses up on the bridge of his nose. He takes a deep breath. Leon turns a little towards Tepo.

“Just don’t forget to tell the customs guy your brother is driving the car behind us.”

While Ali chastens Tepo, a Uniformed Customs Officer with a dog on a leash strides towards the second car. The Chrysler carrying Frankie and Ricky. The two men eye the situation. They struggle not to appear nervous or tense. The officer puts his right hand on the roof of the Chrysler and bends over slightly at the waist.

Eye to eye with Frankie, the Customs Officer says.

“Will you please get out of the car sir?”

In spite of himself, Frankie cannot come up with an original remark. He forces a weak smile on his face in an effort to look like an honest citizen and taxpayer. Frankie replies.

“Sure officer, did I do anything wrong?”

The Customs Officer drops his hand from the roof of the Chrysler. He steps back a little to give Frankie room to open the driver’s side door. The hinges of the door gives a low moaning squeak as Frankie opens the door from the inside. Frankie swivels in his leather seat. He puts both feet flat on the pavement, and stands up as quickly as he is able. Frankie bends over a little bit from the anxiety of the situation. Then he offers a weak grin at the canine officer handling the German Shepherd.

“Will you please now open the rear door on your side, sir.” Orders the border guard.

Frankie complies without a word. While Ricky sits stiff as a statue in the passenger's seat. The officer moves back to the front of the car on the driver's side. The Custom's Officer looks down at his animal and says.
"Now, front seat." The dog’s leash slackens as the well trained animal goes through his paces. The first thing the dog does is inspect under the seat on the driver’s side in the front. Although the animal is not quite intelligent enough to recognize the gun left lying on the floor of the car as a lethal and unregistered weapon. The dog does notice the smell of cordite. Unfortunately, this smell registers in his mind as a friendly odor. Along with most Custom's Dogs, this animal has spent many happy hours at the firing range in the company of his handler.

The German Shepard is soon complete with his inspection of the underside of the driver's seat of the Chrysler. He pulls his paws back out of the car and stands at attention with all four feet on the ground. The dog glances up at his handler. He waits dutifully for a set of fresh instructions.

“Back seat.” The customs officer says to his charge in a level voice.

The German Shepard is eager to please. He trots to the back of the passenger compartment and then pulls himself halfway into the vehicle. The dog peers this way and that. With a few vigorous sniffs, the animal soon identifies a collection of paper bags containing the soiled clothes belonging to the four men.

Once again, there is nothing in the car corresponding in any way to a German Shepards definition of contraband. The dog pulls himself out of the back of the car. He turns round to face his handler and lets out with short bark.

“Will you please open the trunk compartment?” Says the officer to Frankie.

Ricky hears this request through his open window. He gets out of the car as quickly as he is able and walks back to the trunk.

“I got the key, Officer.” Mister Sinaloa explains to the man with the dog.

At first, Ricky works the key with a sort of a flourish. Then, realizing his mistake, he opens the lid more slowly, making a determined effort to conceal his growing sense of self-confidence.

"They're going for it!" Ricky mutters under his breath, careful not to speak aloud or to appear pleased.

Once again, the dog gives out with a little leap. His effort leaves him perched with his front paws deep inside the trunk of the Chrysler. Not surprising, the harsh smell from the chemicals in the fertilizer register in the dog’s mind. But, as intended by Ricky and Frankie, the odor does not compare with any of the contraband odors the dog has stored away in his scent library.

The dog sneezes. His body trembles. The noxious smell drives him out of the trunk of the Chrysler. Soon the animal stands with all four paws down on the concrete.
“O.K.” says the Customs Officer to Ricky and Frankie. “You two can go and...”

Just that moment, the border guard stops in mid-sentence. His eyes are drawn to the powdery residue scattered around on the floor of the trunk.

“What's that?” the officer asks, while pointing into the trunk. The Guard's tone reveals more curiosity than suspicion.

Frankie stands there in silence. He is uncertain of how best to handle the awkward moment. Ricky, on the other hand, every bit the practicing criminal, has been waiting for a chance to disarm the guard. While Frankie watches, open mouthed, Ricky makes his way through a piece of theater.

At first, Mister Sinaloa pretends he does not completely understand the question. Once he sees that pose registering with the Customs Officer, Ricky leans into the trunk with a set of 'News To Me Too' gestures.

Sinaloa peers into the nooks and crannies of the trunk as a small piece of stage business. Then he scoops up a little of the fertilizer in his right hand. Ricky holds the mix of nitrogen based chemicals to his nose. He sniffs at the substance, doing his best to pretend he has no idea what the powder might be, or where it might be from. Finally, Ricky turns to face the border guard.

“That’s just fertilizer. Look in the back of the wagon if you want to make sure, Officer. We got two more bags in there.”

Ricky bends at the waist. He holds the powder under the dog's nose. The dog sneezes, his eyes water up. It is obvious the white powder in Ricky's hand is anything but illegal drugs.

Ricky stands tall while he wipes the powder off his hands. He points towards the Mercury station wagon parked in front his Chrysler. To the relief of both Frankie and Ricky, the guard is completely taken in by Mister Sinaloa's charade.

The Guard glances back and forth between Ricky and Frankie. He thinks to himself. "Kinda funny the one guy looks like a farm worker and the other guy looks like he summers in the Hamptons." Then, without another word, the Customs Officer walks his dog up to the back of the stolen Mercury station wagon.

By this time, the Mercury wagon carrying Ali and Tepo and fifty kilograms of cocaine is up even with the door at the guard station. In a bored, monotonous voice, the man in the kiosk reads Ali and Tepo the border crossing equivalent of their Miranda rights off a white placard.

Ali decides it would be best for him to come across as eager to please. Mister Leon digs his driver's license out of his wallet. He sticks it right up under the nose of the man in the booth. It is
the right thing to do.

Tepo follows suit. He says to the man in the kiosk. “My brother Frankie is driving the car right behind us, officer.”

Tepo can see the guard is not sufficiently distracted by the two legitimate driver's licenses. “Show the officer the sign, Mister Leon,” he says to Ali. “Let him see we have business in the states.”

This suggestion makes a lot of sense to Ali. He nods up and down while he pulls the sign up off the dashboard and holds it so the guard can read it easily.


“That’s right,” adds Tepo in his youthful voice. “We were setting up garden plots in Camargo all yesterday and the day before. Still got a little fertilizer left if you have a houseplant or something in your booth, officer.”

With that remark, Tepo jerks a thumb towards the bags of fertilizer in the back of the wagon.

The officer listens carefully to the dialogue between the two men in the Mercury wagon. He is not completely taken in. The Uniformed Customs Officer in the booth decides to check the watch list. The guard turns back into the booth and takes a large clipboard off a brass hook.

The man in the booth swivels back to face the two neophyte drug dealers. He remarks evenly. “May I please see the vehicle’s registration papers?”

Ali and Tepo’s hearts sink deep in a pool of fear and anxiety. They hadn’t even talked about vehicle registration papers back at the diner! Ali knows it is not a good idea to sit still. They have to stay on the offensive.

“Sure, Sure, Officer.” Leon says to the guard.

Then he pushes his glasses up on his nose, stalling for time doing his level best to appear harmless.

Tepo picks up on the need for a distraction. “Probably the papers are in the poor box,” he says, trying to be humorous.

“You know how those nuns are, always hiding things. All we have to do is find the poor box and we have the papers.”

Tepo grins at the guard, in an effort to disarm him.

At that moment, an alarming event transpires. The Uniformed Customs Canine Officer walks away from the Chrysler and on up to the Mercury wagon. He leads his dog to the passenger side.
Tepo’s window is full open. For arbitrary, unknown reasons of his own, the dog decides he does not like Tepo!

The German Shepard growls at the young man in the passenger's seat. The fur on the back of his neck stands up like a stiff brush. The Shepherd crouches down, his shoulder muscles ripple. Finally, he leaps up and thrusts his head through the window on Tepo’s side. The animal barks, snarls, lunges, and snaps at the young man!

Tepo reacts out of sheer terror. He bends forward and tucks his body under the dashboard. Ali Leon shivers in fear. Leon is not alarmed by the menacing gestures of the dog. He is frightened by the thought Tepo might go for a gun and start shooting!

Ali grabs Tepo’s left arm at the biceps. He has complete physical control of the boy. “Stay real cool, Tepito!” Leon whispers in a harsh voice.

Tepo understands exactly- Ali's real cause for concern. Indeed, Tepo had been thinking about grabbing a weapon from under the seat. It is a good thing Ali anticipated his reckless, actually self-destructive nature.

Red in the face, the canine officer pulls back on his leash. He grabs the dog by the collar. The Customs Officer lifts his snarling animal out of Tepo’s window and lowers him to the ground. While down on one knee, he speaks quietly to the agitated animal for a few moments.

Tepo sits up and looks out the window. He lets the air out of his lungs when he sees the dog is under control. It is time to change the subject. Ali turns back to the man in the booth and says. "Gonna find the papers officer. Tepo knows where they are.” At the sound of his name, Tepo gradually makes his way back to the real world. His first thought is to pull his visor down. Maybe the vehicle's registration card is taped to the upper side of the visor. Instead of a manila registration card from the state of Texas, a set of Rosary beads fall out onto Tepo's lap!

Tepo pauses for a moment. He bites his lower lip. Where to look? Tepo tries the glove compartment. Inside the glove compartment, he finds an assortment of maps and some mimeographed sheets of paper containing dietary instructions for pregnant women. For a second time, Tepo's heart sinks down to the floor.

Tepo looks at Ali and then at the guard sitting on a stool in the booth. The guard stares back at him. There is a blank expression on his face. Tepo stares out the front window of the stolen Mercury wagon. "Where else?” He thinks. Then he has a brainstorm!

The youngest son of Alberto Enrique Nayari pulls down the sun visor on Ali’s side of the windshield. He finds the vehicle registration card in a clear plastic envelope taped securely in place. Tepo works the card out of the plastic envelope. He hands it over Ali’s seat belted chest to
the man in the booth.

“Forgot where I put it cause I got scared by the dog,” Tepo explains to Ali and the guard in a lame tone.

The elaborate play-acting of the four men in the two cars is working as intended, on the guard sitting in the booth and the canine officer kneeling next to Tepo's open window. The Customs Officers are a little embarrassed by the spontaneous rage the German shepherd displayed towards Tepo. Just now, the drug dealers are on the offensive and the Customs Officers are on the defensive!

The truth of the dogs rage response is that rather than cocaine or heroin, the dog picked up on the blood scent of the murdered nuns on Tepo’s clothes. Tepo is the junior partner in the crime team. He had been delegated to drag the lifeless bodies of the sisters to their makeshift common grave.

The sturdy animal was fooled by the odors of the cordite and the fertilizer inside the Chrysler. But as soon as he smelled Tepo, he knew for certain an act of great violence had been committed. Sadly, there is no way for the dog to convey his findings to the guards at the customs station. Even though the men in uniform are fluent in both Spanish and English. Neither man can either speak or read in German Shepard.

Through the windshield of the Chrysler, Frankie and Ricky see Tepo hand over a postcard size piece of paper to the man in the booth. Both men breathe a sigh of relief. Both realize it counts heavily in their favor the customs people want to inspect papers. The guards can, after all, spend only so much time with each vehicle in the line.

Ricky has his eyes riveted on the uniformed man with the clipboard and the registration papers for the station wagon in his hand. Ricky brags to Frankie.

“We got ‘em shuffling papers. This is gonna be a walk.”

Frankie nods in agreement. “I told you little Tepito can handle himself. Was I right, or was I right?”

Frankie offers up his hand just above the car seat in a surreptitious 'high fives' gesture. Ricky slaps Frankie's hand and says. “Hey, Hey!”

Ali eyes the man in the booth while the seated officer checks the registration form against his watch list. Leon's level of self-confidence grows exponentially with every passing second.

“We cross here all the time, officer - the nuns have us going day and night.”

Once again, the guard is partially persuaded by Ali’s disarming remark.
He nods without looking up and goes back to a diligent search of his paper and ink database. While wending his way through a numerically ascending list of vehicle identification numbers. The man in the booth comes across a match with the number on the form Tepo handed him through the window.

It is just as Ali claimed. The address on the vehicle comes back to a location in Del Rio, Texas. In the comment box, the guard learns the Mercury wagon is usually driven by Sister Angela. The man in the booth looks up at Ali Leon.

“Say hello to Sister Angela.” the Guard, remarks to Ali and Tepo in a friendly tone.

Ali and Tepo blink. Their mouths fall open half way. They both look puzzled. Tepo is the first to recover his composure. He responds smoothly.

“Sure officer, you should have a nice day also.” The man in the booth and the canine handler exchange glances. It is obvious to the men in uniform Ali and Tepo are a little slow recognizing the name of Sister Angela.

“Better let the dog check the back of the wagon,” the officer in the booth remarks.

Ali knows he was a little slow on the uptake. He hustles out of the car and walks to the back. Leon opens the tailgate door for the man with the dog.

Ricky, Ali, Frankie, and Tepo know the odds are against the dog. The cocaine is triply wrapped in plastic. Thus, the only strong scent in the back comes from the fertilizer inside the fertilizer sacks.

But just then, the smell of the fear of the dying nuns wafts back towards the dog on a breeze passing through the window on Tepo’s side of the car and traveling back out the tailgate. At first, the dog is indecisive. He looks up at his handler. Then he explodes into another episode of canine rage. Tepo and Ali exchange worried looks. Both men fear there might be blood or fragments of the nun’s habits on the working surfaces of the shovels and the pick!

As luck would have it for the drug dealing entrepreneurs, the two guards read the situation in exactly the wrong way.

“Think your boy, Zorro, needs a girlfriend.” says the man in the booth with the clipboard to the canine officer with the leash in his hand.

"Something's rubbing him the wrong way,” agrees the dog handler.

Ali turns his head back and forth. He smiles up at both customs officers. “It’s O.K. now, I can close the gate?” he asks in a respectful tone.

The dog handler restrains his angry charge. He looks embarrassed and frustrated. The dog's
outbursts have him more concerned about his animal than the very real possibility the four men are criminals. Maybe the dog has worms!

“You can take off,” the canine handler says to Ali while looking directly at the dog. “I think maybe the two of us need a coffee break.”

Ali turns quickly on the worn down heels of his working boots. He is soon back in the driver's seat of the wagon. Tepo glances back at the car behind them and waves. The two cars speed away, out of Mexico and into the wide-open spaces of the state of Texas.

“Are we partners in crime here, or full fledged associates?” remarks Tepo impishly after the station wagon is out of earshot of the booth.

Frankie and Ricky keep their eyes on the German shepherd as they drive past the booth at a slow, respectful pace. Almost immediately, the customs agents turn their attention to the next car in line. The German shepherd watches the four drug smugglers and murderers until their cars pass out of sight.

In a few moments the dog loses the scent of death he smelled on Tepo and tried so desperately to explain to his humans. The wise animal trained with these men for weeks at a time. He shakes his head. Why didn't they respond to his warning cries?

Out of sight of the border crossing station, Tepo sits in the front seat with his left arm dangling casually behind the seat back. Shortly, he notices Ricky out of the corner of his eye, waving a hand in his direction.

“Pull over,” Tepo says to Ali. “Ricky’s got something to say.”

Ali looks up in his rear view mirror. He shifts his right foot from the gas to the brake. Both cars slow down and pull onto the shoulder. Ricky leans out of the passenger side window of the Chrysler.

With his hands cupped over his mouth Ricky shouts. “Dallas! Dallas!” Tepo shouts back to Ricky. "Dallas! Dallas!"

Ricky makes the universal O.K. sign with his thumb and first finger.

Frankie smiles at the thought of all the bars and lounges in Dallas. He likes the nightlife even more than Ricky and Tepo.

Frankie gives Ricky's left shoulder a playful punch. “All in a day's work!” He says to Ricky. “All in a day's work!”

Ricky grimaces at Frankie. He does not appreciate the familiarity of Frankie's gesture, but he lets the situation go. They have people to meet and things to do!
Scene 7 Looks Like Arab Suspects Are Planting Fake Evidence

Location: Action Officer's Station, Building C Suite 202, Central Intelligence Agency Headquarters, Langley Virginia

Major Andrew George Howell, Action Officer, the Central Intelligence Agency strides through the glass front doors of the C Building. He rushes through the lobby and up the stairwell to the second floor, taking the stairs two steps at a time. Andy makes his way through one more set of double doors and on into the Operations Center for the Action Officers unit of the CIA.

In another ten minutes it will be four o'clock in the afternoon. Not surprising everyone in the operations complex is getting ready to make their way back to their homes. Andy walks over to Moses Anderson's desk. He stands next to his wife Karen Chesley Howell. Andy's wife Karen is deep in a conversation with Bill Hespara, a Cryptographer in Signals Intelligence, his wife,
Donna Hespara, and Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson.

Karen Howell turns around at the sound of her husband making his way into the office. When she sees the new arrival is her husband she breaks out into a wide smile.

"Andy!" Andy Howell replies cheerfully. "Am I missing something?"

Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson responds.

"The locals raided an apartment in Falls Church, Virginia."

Bill Hespara adds. "The Arab National who shot up our front gate."

Karen holds a sheet of paper up to her husband's view. Andy sees a set of a hundred odd keyboard characters. The characters are arranged in groups of from one on up to about a dozen or so symbols. Nothing on the paper even remotely resembles English. Andy frowns at the paper. He looks up at his wife.

"It's not English. It's not even Arabic. As far as I can tell."

Andy shrugs his shoulders and turns to look at Bill Hespara. Before Bill can speak Karen explains."It's a Caesar's Cipher, Andy."

Andy shrugs his shoulders for a second time. He says.

"I used to know but I forgot." Bill Hespara explains.

"A Caesar's Cipher is a substitution code. One for one. Characters off the keyboard for the letters in the message."

Moses Anderson adds."Your wife broke it this afternoon. It's a message to someone in Los Angeles named Halal Rutbah."

Karen Howell smiles and says.

"Whoever wrote the note wrote it in English. All I had to do was match up the character frequencies in the message with the letter frequencies in our language."

Andy Howell shakes his head from left to right. In a wry voice he asks.

"Are Arabs really dumb enough to use a Caesar's Cipher?"

Moses Anderson nods. The light from the ceiling fixtures flashes in the lenses of his gold rimmed eye glasses. "Has to be a plant. They must have been expecting a raid."

Andy's curiosity is piqued. He asks. "How did they find the apartment?"

Moses Anderson replies.
"Checking gun stores. Someone in Falls Church traded a hunting rifle in for an AK-47 three days before they shot us up."


" Finger and palm prints where you would expect them. Cabinets and doorways. But no prints on the paper message. And no writing instruments, no pens, no pencils."

Andy frowns and sighs again. His wife, Karen Howell interjects.

"We think steganography."

Donna Hespara's face brightens. Bill Hespara's wife, Donna, is the Secretary in the Action Officer's Unit. She came to work today wearing an embroidered Henley Sweetwater Shirt over a tan skirt and dark brown pumps. Donna's hair is just as long and as beautiful as Karen's hair. But Mrs. Hespara has her hair pulled off to the side and resting in front of her left shoulder. Donna says.

"I wish the Arabs would use steganography to hide messages!"

Andy, Karen, and Moses glance at Bill's wife. They have puzzled looks on their faces. Bill Hespara explains.

"Donna has a masters in photojournalism. She knows how to search a jpeg for metadata and hidden messages."

Moses Anderson looks down at his watch. He rests a hand on the top of his briefcase. Andy turns to Bill Hespara's wife, Donna. He asks.

"Am I shooting for qualification next week?"

Donna frowns and bites her lovely lower lip. She replies.

"I know it's not next week. Do you want me to check the calendar?"

Andy shakes his head from side to side. He opens his mouth to speak but Bill Hespara interjects.

"The Captain of the Rockville Road Runner's turns out the training schedule, Major Howell."

Andy nods his head in a grudging manner. He says. "Are we adjourned, Lieutenant Colonel Anderson?"

Moses Anderson lifts his briefcase up off his desk. He says.

"The meeting is officially adjourned."

On that note, Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson turns around and makes his way out of the the
front doors of the Action Officer's Office Complex in Building C of the Central Intelligence Agency, Langley, Virginia. Short minutes later, the Howell family and the Hespara family follow suit.

**Scene 8 What We Need Now Is Fresh Plates**

**Location: On the road, Laredo to Dallas Texas**

As they drive across the vast stretches of Texas countryside, the four men in the two car convoy establish a comfortable routine. The Ricky Sinaloa gang stops for gas, and oil for the oil guzzling Chrysler, every six or eight hours. Ricky, Frankie, Ali, and Tepo take turns, either behind the wheel or sleeping fitfully on the back seat. It is difficult for them to get any real rest, due to the noise from the wind and the radio.

A short distance out of Dallas they stop for gas at a small town called Midlothian located at the intersection of highway 67 and highway 287. Ricky pays for their purchases from a heavy leather wallet hooked to a belt loop on his trousers with a chrome chain. The chill morning air finds them standing in a huddle between the rear of the Mercury wagon and the front of the Chrysler.

“What we need now is fresh plates,” remarks Ricky. “Can’t go checking into a motel with real tags on the nun’s Mercury.”

The other men in the gang nod in agreement. Ali senses a chance to make a good impression on Ricky. “The thing to do is lift two sets of plates,” Ali remarks.

“What for?” queries Tepo. “You mean to put on both cars?”

“No,” Ali answers quickly and decisively. “We look around until we find a Mercury wagon the same color as this one. Those are the plates we put on the nun’s car. Then, we get another set of plates a block or two away and put them on the other guys wagon. That way the guy who lost his plates to us don’t think to report it to the cops. How many people notice their license plate number each time they go out to the car?”

The wisdom underpinning Ali’s scheme sinks into the minds of his colleagues like a stone thrown onto the surface of a lake. Even Tepo catches on and is suitably impressed.

Tepo gives out a low whistle. He smiles in admiration at Ali.
Tepo exclaims. "If we're going, we better get going!"

The men clamber back into their cars and drive away. Ricky and Frankie in the oil burning Chrysler sedan, Ali and Tepo in the stolen Mercury station wagon.

Just at the moment, all four men are feeling exceptionally lucky. Hands on the wheel, foot on the gas, Ali drives along with an expansive look on his face. Mister Leon has a liking for non-violent, low intensity property crimes, especially in the planning stages. It makes him feel accomplished whenever he has a chance to share some small piece of the tradecraft he learned during one of his sojourns in prison.

Soon the four men find themselves motoring around the suburban west side of Dallas, Texas. They make a right hand turn off 360 and on to 183. Five more minutes of aimless driving, they exit the highway into the campus neighborhood surrounding the University of Dallas.

Ali is quick to find a Mercury wagon the same year and color as the vehicle they stole from the Sisters of the Holy Order of Saint Christina. Mister Leon beeps his horn. He turns round in his seat and points excitedly at the target vehicle. Ricky and Frankie acknowledge Ali's discovery by making gang signs.

Mister Leon drives away from the soon to be crime scene. He searches about until he locates another car parked in the lot of a dark apartment complex. Ali parallel parks the stolen Mercury wagon. He pulls a Swiss Army knife out of his pocket and soon has a set of stolen license plates in his hands. Ali hustles back into the driver's seat of the wagon. The men drive their two cars back to the location of the lookalike Mercury wagon.

Back at the first car, well after sunset, most of the nearby house lights are out and the street is free of pedestrian traffic. Ali exchanges the two sets of plates with a calm set of 'business as usual' mannerisms. The original issue Nun’s plates go under the seat in the front for 'safekeeping'.

As Ali climbs back onto the driver’s seat of the Mercury wagon the dome light lights up the interior of the stolen car. Mister Leon sees Tepo smiling at him with a look of sincere admiration on his face.

“Cops could be right behind us and run the plates,” explains Ali in the fashion of a tutor speaking to one of his pupils, “never get a clue the car and the plates are hot.” Tepo smiles broadly at Ali. He shakes his head in amazement.

By this time, it is a little past midnight. The men drive around the outskirts of the University of Dallas neighborhood until they come across a moderately priced motel. They register in their own names and take two adjoining rooms, Ali and Ricky in the first, and the Nayari brothers in
the second. Each man sleeps sound and secure. They are exhausted. They are much too tired to worry about being found out and arrested by the local authorities.

**Scene 9 Dining On Fine Cuisine, Making A Business Plan**

**Location: An inexpensive motel room Dallas Texas**

Enrique Sinaloa wakes from a deep sleep a few minutes after the noon hour. He rubs his eyes for a moment, yawns, and stretches his arms and legs. Connecting his senses to his present location is not an easy task. After a bit, Ricky picks up on the sound of a shower emanating from the wall behind his headboard.

"That would be Frankie", Ricky mutters. "Tepo will be knocked out until sunset." Ricky turns his head to check on Ali. All he can see is a mop of hair protruding above the covers on the second bed in the room.

“Ali!” Ricky says to the mop of hair, “Are you hungry?”


Ricky climbs from the bed. He showers as quickly as possible. Once out of the shower Mister Sinaloa blots his hair with a towel while sitting on the edge of the bed.

Ricky finds a copy of the Dallas yellow pages. He turns to the restaurant section. Mister Sinaloa locates a Chinese restaurant in the vicinity of the motel. He dials their number, and orders a sumptuous meal for four.

Ricky phones a liquor store. He places an order for a case of beer and a bottle of vodka. Mister Sinaloa uses his real name for the purchases. He gives the motel’s address and phone number. Last, Ricky dials the number of the room next door to the room he shares with Ali Leon.

Frankie answers the phone, “Yah!”

Ricky says, “Drag your brother out a bed and come on over. I ordered food and drinks.”

Mister Sinaloa hangs up the phone without waiting for a reply. Ricky fusses with the pillows and his headboard, forming them up into a kind of a lounge chair. Then he sits back with his hands behind his head, waiting patiently for his food, his liquor, and his guests.
The Chinese food arrives first, announced by a polite knock at the door to the motel room. A few minutes later the liquor order is delivered. Ali puts the case of beer in the bathtub. He pours a wastepaper basket full of ice cubes onto the bottles. It seems to him the quantity of ice is not sufficient. So he makes another trip out to the ice machine.

When he returns, Ali pours the second bucket of ice cubes on the bottles. Then he smiles at himself.

With the liquor seen to, Ali tends next to the Chinese food. He empties out the carry bags. Next, Mister Leon arranges the white paper cartons filled with entrees on the top of the small motel table. Ricky watches Ali, he says nothing. Then, from his pillow perch, he bangs on the wall behind his headboard with his fist.

Moments later the door gives way to the Nayari brothers. Tepo looks frazzled— he needs a shave and a shower. Francesco is immaculately groomed; in sharp contrast to his baby brother. Frankie has an eager look on his face Tepo appears disconnected.

Tepo's eyes light on the food. He hides a yawn behind his right fist, and then sits down wordlessly at the table. Soon he has a paper plate piled high with steaming white rice, pepper steak and tomatoes, and other oriental delicacies. Frankie glances this way and that about the modest motel room.

Ali recognizes Frankie's inquiring gestures for what they are. Francesco Simon Nayari needs a drink.

Ali says simply, "The beer and vodka are in the john."

Frankie walks quickly into the bathroom. Just as quick, he strides out of the bathroom with four bottles of beer in his hands. Frankie finds an opener on the table. He pulls the caps off the tall cold bottles. The eldest son of Don Alberto Enrique Nayari hands three of the bottles to his 'companeros'. Then he takes a long pull from his beer while sitting on the edge of Ali’s bed.

After another long drink, Francesco Nayari smiles and says,

"Two cars, a ton of white powder, more guns than we got hands and feet. Gentlemen, I would say we’re in the drug business."

The other men laugh and smile. Ricky, Ali, and Frankie rise to their feet. They walk to the table and serve themselves portions of the Chinese take-out. The men return to their seats and eat with no little enthusiasm.

After the meal is over, Ricky leans back on his bed and lights a cigarette. Ali meanwhile, goes into the bathroom for another round of beer. The four men sit for a while in silence. They are enjoying the- 'good life'.
“Now”, says Ricky, “we gotta work out a plan.”

It is the just the right thing to say at just the right moment in time. The truth is, no one in the room has any experience whatsoever in- “moving weight”.

Ricky and Ali have been street level pushers at various times in their lives but never gone any further or deeper into the illegal drug industry. Not even to the level of drug dealing middlemen. For Tepo and Frankie the situation is even more remote.

While it is true their father, Don Alberto Enrique Nayari, made millions selling illicit drugs. Francesco Simon 'Frankie' and Theodore John 'Tepo' Nayari have always lived the sheltered lives of the children of the ultra rich. Frankie is actually a recent attendee of an exclusive college preparatory school, located in a wealthy suburb on the outskirts of Boston.

Ali stands up and walks to the window during a lull in the conversation. First off, Leon pulls the curtains halfway back. Next, he works the Venetian blinds until all four men, regardless of where they are sitting, can look out the window directly at their two cars. Mister Leon turns back towards his friends and explains,

“Gotta keep an eye on our investment.”

The four men sit mute for a moment. Each man stares out the window at the Chrysler sedan and the stolen Mercury wagon.

“I vote we keep the two cars until all the coke is turned into folding money,” Ali Leon suggests.

“Yah,” Tepo says quickly, biting his lower lip like an imitation gangster.

“We have a good thing going with this nunnery gardener routine. Low profile like this, the cops won’t give us a second look.”

It is obvious to the room Tepo is proud of the way he handled himself during their trip through the gauntlet of the Customs Station at Laredo, Texas. The other men can see Tepo imagines himself a seasoned criminal.

“We got the weight, no doubt about it.” says Frankie, “but where do we go to move coke . . . five or ten kilo’s at a time?”

Ricky sits back on the bed in silence. He is taking in the situation and weighing their options.

“Main thing,” says Ricky sagely, “Gotta keep moving from city to city. Once they ‘get to know us’ they’ll take the whole stash and eliminate the competition. And I do mean eliminate.”

Ricky’s pessimistic assessment of their situation strikes a responsive chord with Ali Leon and the Nayari brothers. Leon's face goes grim and determined. Frankie and Tepo's faces cloud over with expressions of ill concealed terror.
“We can move ten maybe fifteen K’s each time we stop. More than that would get us an ambush,” continues Ricky, with his musings on the 'big picture' side to their situation.

“Maybe first we should try taverns,” Frankie offers up to the group. “Ask around and see if we can get an introduction.”

Tepo nods and chimes in, “Ali and me can wait in the cars while you two do the talking inside. We can cover you when you come out.”

Tepo’s mind is off in left field once again. As he bounces up and down in his seat, he sees himself with a machine pistol in each hand. Firing his guns on full automatic at comic book style assailants while Ricky and Frankie run to him for safety. In Tepo's fantasy muzzle blasts light up his features with all the drama of stage lights, while spent cartridges fall to the ground in a waterfall of hot brass.

Ali catches the detached look on Tepo’s face. He recognizes the gleam in Tepo's eyes for what it is- a dangerous fantasy. Leon turns his gaze towards Ricky. He hopes the older man can think of something to say to bring Tepo back down to planet earth.

Ricky picks up on the non-verbal message from Ali. He remarks,

“Tepo's got it right. If we split up into teams it ought a go better.”

Just then, the four men polish off their second beers. The mood in the room is sort of like at a board meeting when the company president says- 'meeting adjourned'. It is time to go out onto the streets of Dallas and put their plans into action.

**Scene 10 First Foray On The Streets Of Dallas**

**Location: A blighted neighborhood in Dallas Texas**

Once out of the motel room and at the doors of the Chrysler sedan and the Mercury wagon. The four men return to their seating arrangement from the previous day. Snug into the front seat passenger's side of the Mercury station wagon, Tepo busies himself with the firearms hidden on the floor. He pulls out a MAC-10 and places it on his lap. Tepo prudently holds the gun below
the eye level of pedestrian traffic. He methodically inspects the clip, the safety, and the firing mode lever.

"Rock and roll!" says Tepo to no one in particular, and with a manic tone in his voice. Then he bares his teeth in an evil grin and slides the weapon back into its hiding place underneath his seat.

Ali leaves the room with two of the carry bags from the Chinese restaurant. While Tepo fondles the MAC-10, Mister Leon walks to the back of the Mercury and opens the tailgate. Next, he hazards a glance towards the office window. Is the manager watching?

Once Mister Leon is reasonably certain no one in the manager's office has him under surveillance. Ali transfers four packages of cocaine from one of the two fertilizer sacks to the paper bags from the Chinese restaurant. He shuts the tailgate on the wagon and ambles over to the driver's side window of the Chrysler.

“Like you said, Ricky,” Ali remarks to the man behind the steering wheel of the Chrysler. “Be a little better if it looks like we only got a small supply.”

Ricky takes the bags from Ali’s hands and places them on the rear seat. “You got it, Leon!” Ricky says with a wide smile on his face.

The truth is, in spite of his forced effort at bravado, Ricky feels just a little bit frightened and a whole lot disappointed. From the moment they purchased the raw chemicals used to make the cocaine on up to this moment in time. Life has been little more than a series of dangerous incidents. Still, it is time to turn the white powder into folding money. So, Ricky Sinaloa turns the key in the ignition under the watchful eyes of Ali Leon and Frankie Nayari.

The four men drive around in their two cars for about an hour. Instinctively, they seek out Latino neighborhoods. For one, it seems a little safer to try to learn to be big time drug dealers among their own people. For another, there is no doubt that selling drugs gets easier in a direct correspondence with the neighborhood unemployment rate.

The black ghettos are not the right place for a fledgling cartel composed of two Mexican nationals and a pair of brothers, 'Trust Fund Babies', from the wealthy suburbs of Bogota, Columbia. Later, maybe, they might tie up with the black drug gangs, after they 'know the ropes' a little better. ...

Shortly before sunset, Ali locates a boulevard that appears to be just about right for their plans. The storefronts are run down on both sides of the street and sore in need of a painting. There seems to be only three kinds of businesses in the area. Taverns, with names like the Palomino Club, pawn shops with used guitars in the windows, and music stores with new guitars in the windows.
Ali pulls into the curb lane on the sunny side of the street. He brings the Mercury wagon to a halt in front of a parking meter. The Chrysler, carrying Ricky and Frankie and the Chinese food bags with the four packages of cocaine, slides into the space immediately behind the wagon.

Ricky clambers out of the Chrysler and walks up to the Mercury wagon. He looks down at Ali.

“Keep your eyes open,” Ricky says. “Frankie and me gonna try a couple of bars.”

Without waiting for a reply, Ricky strides in front of the wagon and on to the sidewalk where he joins up with Frankie. The elder Nayari brother stands in front of the window of a storefront protected from theft by a folding accordion style gate made of iron.

Although the gate is thickly covered in paint, there is considerable rust deposition at the hinge points. Frankie stares in through the window at a set of drums. He sees a hand lettered sign perched on top of the cymbals of the drum set reading- "two hundred and ninety nine dollars".

Frankie makes a slight shift in his position. He catches the reflection of his profile in the window. Frankie pulls a comb out of his back pocket and runs it through his hair. Then he smiles at himself. Frankie cocks his head. He sees the image of Ricky in the glass. Frankie turns and starts walking down the street, side by side with Ricky.

Ricky and Frankie walk towards the west. The bright Texas sun shines on their faces. Both men are forced to squint. At the end of the block, they turn round to look back at the Mercury wagon. They can easily see the outlines of Ali and Tepo in the front seat of the stolen car. But it is difficult to read the car’s license plate at that distance.

Ricky turns to Frankie, “This is the right distance from the car. You pick the spot.”

Frankie studies the urban terrain for a bit and says “Just across the street. On the corner.”

CHAPTER 2 DOOR TO DOOR SALES IN DALLAS
Scene 11 Do You Know Anybody Can Handle Weight?

Location: A Mexican tavern in the Barrio of Dallas Texas

The two men walk across the intersection with the traffic light green in their favor. The front door to the bar selected by Frankie for their trial run has a fresh coat of red paint. There is a small
diamond shaped window at about the level of a man’s head in the door. Green curtains on brass rails cover the lower halves of the dirty windows of the bar. From their vantage point on the street, the place looks like any average tavern or bar, anywhere in the world.

The two men walk through the red exterior door to the darkest area near the kitchen. They sit themselves down on stools at the back of the bar. Deeper into the back of the room, running the full length of the worn brick building, they see two men in cowboy hats and boots. The tavern 'regulars' are absorbed in a game of pool at a billiard table. A smiling waiter ambles down in their direction from behind the bar. The middle age man in the white apron says,

"Your pleasure, Gentlemen?"

It is a natural thing for Ricky to take the lead. This is his kind of neighborhood and his kind of tavern. He smiles and says. "Dos cervezas, Por Favor."

The man tending the bar responds,

“We speak English in here. Do you want what’s on tap, or maybe an export?”

“On tap is just fine,” Frankie answers, while smiling at the bartender with a confidential, insider's gleam.

The bartender wonders about the real agenda of his two new customers. He thinks to himself. “I hope they like women.”

The bartender moves out of earshot of his guests after he serves Ricky and Frankie their beers. The man in the apron occupies his time with a clean white towel, rubbing the surface of the bar.

Every few moments the bartender glances up at the pair, trying to anticipate their next move. It is obvious his new customers look self-conscious maybe- 'stage fright' is the more correct term.

Ricky and Frankie sip at their beers while they study the interior of the bar. They are searching for clues. Signs to reassure them this is just the right place to begin their careers in the wholesale drug industry.

Ricky and Frankie glance this way and that. They see worn shelves in need of a coat of shellac on the wall behind the bar. The shelves filled with a large assortment of bottles of various kinds of liquor. Above the shelves, on a black painted wall, they spy three flags arranged as symbols and decorations.

Nearest to the window on the street, Ricky and Frankie see a Republic of Mexico flag nailed onto the black wall above the shelves. Next to that, their eyes light upon an American flag of the exact same size. Towards the back of the wall, just above their stools, Ricky and Frankie find a solid black flag with silver lettering.
This flag displays a man’s head in profile. The lettering on the flag reads,

**P.O.W. M.I.A. YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

mute and certain testimony to the fact Mexican Americans saw their share of the fighting in Viet Nam.

Ricky and Frankie study the words and the image on the black flag for a few long moments. They are both too young to have an emotional investment in a war that ended way back in 1972. The flag means nothing to them, nothing whatsoever.

As their eyes acclimate to the dark in the bar, the two would be drug trade entrepreneurs spy a collection of photographs. About half of the pictures portray groups of men in uniform standing at attention in formations generally three rows deep. Ricky and Frankie can make out some variation in locale in the background of each of the pictures.

Two of the shots, appear to have been taken in front of a flagpole on a stateside military base. In other photos, the men pose in front of backgrounds made up of rice paddies and jungle growth.

One picture features a wiry Mexican American looking straight and level out at the camera. He wears Marine Corps fatigues with sergeant’s stripes on the sleeve of his shirt. The man in the picture looks a lot like the bartender although the bartender has aged a good twenty-five years and has longer and thinner hair.

Frankie muses over the memorabilia side by side with Ricky. There is a deadpan expression on his face. In common with wealthy children all over the world, Frankie knows nothing at all of the idea of spending time in the military. He has no response, none whatsoever to the photos, decorations, and flags on the wall.

Ricky, on the other hand, smiles. He feels a kinship with the bartender. Right now, in a very odd sort of a way. Ricky associates his psychiatric discharge from the Mexican Army with the bartender's tour of combat duty in Viet Nam. Just at this moment, Mister Sinaloa is completely out of touch with reality. Ricky starts projecting his own interest in dealing drugs onto the other men in the bar.

"This is gonna be easy!" Ricky mutters. Frankie's eyes go wide with alarm when he turns towards the sound of Ricky's voice and sees the detached look on Ricky's face.

The bartender's head jerks up in response to the indistinct noise from one of his customers. He sees the two men have finished their beers. The bartender walks down to the end of the bar, “Can I pour you a couple more?” He asks, looking first at Ricky and then at Frankie.
Ricky nods, Frankie says. “Sure, go ahead.”

The bartender picks up their glasses and walks back towards the middle of the bar. He refills the glasses from the tap and makes his way back to his customers. Last, he places the glasses square in the center of two cardboard coasters.

Ricky drinks about half of his second glass of beer in one big gulp in an effort to bolster his courage. He places the glass back down on the bar, but misses the coaster in his anxious state of mind. Time to get down to business! Senor Sinaloa gleams directly at the bartender.

The bartender’s shoulders slump. The expression on his face says. “Here comes the pitch!”

Ricky is on the way through his fourth beer of the day and he is a bit groggy. Mister Sinaloa puts both hands on the bar to steady himself. Then he leans forward to speak in confidential tones to the man behind the bar.

“Do you know anybody can handle weight?” says Ricky, with a confidential insider's nod.

“What?” Responds the bartender, not just a little bit irritated.

Frankie chimes in, he imagines he might make a better impression on the bartender as he is a little less drunk than his colleague.

“Uncut stuff.” Frankie explains to the man holding a white towel in his hand.

The bartender flips the towel so that it hangs over his right shoulder.

He says. “I don’t get it. What did you two come in here for?”

Ricky decides to be tactful. Ricky goes on to clarify his business inquiry.

“We’re looking for someone who wants to buy maybe three or four kilos of pure cocaine.”

The bartender’s face goes blank. He pulls the towel off his shoulder and wrings it with his hands. The muscles on his forearms bulge in response to the stress.

By this time, the two men in cowboy hats at the billiard table in the back of the bar have picked up on the fact they are in the middle of a developing situation. Both men lean on their cue sticks.

They keep their eyes on the two new customers.

As a bit of stage business, the pool player nearest Ricky and Frankie starts chalking up the tip of his cue. He eyes the bartender, patiently waiting for a request for some help with the two problem drinkers. Neither Ricky nor Frankie understand the gravity of their situation. They both imagine the bartender has an earnest interest in their proposition but is looking for some encouragement.
“Do you have one of those chemistry test kits?” asks Frankie. “We can let you test a sample. Either in a test tube or up your nose, ... whatever you like.”

The bartender looks back and forth between Ricky and Frankie. Then he looks up at the men at the billiard table in the back of the bar and says. “I can handle it.”

Although the men in the back are comfortable with the bartender's decision, they do not return to their game. Instead, they lean back against the pool table, tapping their cue stick in their hands. Ricky and Frankie are still oblivious. Both imagine the man behind the bar is holding out for a cheap price.

Ricky makes another offer to the man behind the bar. “We can leave you a little now if cash is a problem. What time would you want us to come back?”

The bartender opens his mouth but no words issue forth. He tosses his towel onto the bar next to where he stands. Next, he folds his arms in front of his chest. Last, the Marine Corps Viet Nam War Veteran spreads his legs slightly, balancing his weight more evenly between his feet.

“Get the hell out!” He says in a matter of fact voice.

Ricky and Frankie stare at the man. Their faces go blank. A few long seconds pass. Ricky responds in a tone just short of rage and anger.

“What are you talking about, ... Amigo?”

Ricky sees the pool players moving up and into the situation out of the corner of his eye. Each man hefts his cue stick like a club. Ricky glances at Frankie. He cocks his head slightly to get Frankie to notice the pool players.

Frankie turns his head. He sees two Mexican Americans with cue sticks staring straight and level into his eyes.

The pool player standing closest to Frankie turns his stick upside down. He starts tapping the hefty end of the stick on the palm of his left hand. Frankie lets the air out of his lungs. He mutters. "How am I going to look in front of Tepo?"

Ricky and Frankie start staring at one another. They know it is pointless to continue with the sales pitch. Very slowly, each man climbs off his bar stool.

As they walk out of the tavern, the bartender comes round the bar and falls in behind them.

“Don’t even think of coming in here again!” He warns.

Ricky and Frankie leave the bar without looking back. When the door closes behind them, the bartender turns back to the pool players.
“I should call the cops,” he remarks. “What those jerks have is a couple of pounds of sugar or maybe even Plaster of Paris. Waste of a good dime.”

**Scene 12 Frankie And Ricky Confer With Ali And Tepo**

**Location: Supermarket parking lot, Barrio in Dallas Texas**

Ricky Sinaloa and Frankie Nayari make their way through the red painted door of the tavern and out onto the sidewalk. Both men squint their eyes in the still powerful sunlight of the early evening Texas sun. Frankie brings a hand up to cover his eyes. Designer sunglasses are a long time ago for this- 'child of privilege'.

During a lull in the traffic, the two 'door to door cocaine wholesalers' walk easily across the street against the traffic light. Frankie brings his hand down as they move into the shadows of the neighborhood buildings on the side of the street opposite the tavern. He sets a brisk pace back to the cars. Ricky has to breathe heavily to keep up even with Frankie.

Frankie walks past his brother Tepo without saying hello. Mute testimony to his feelings of disappointment at a drug deal that did not get off the ground. Tepo can see something is wrong. He glances up at his brother, but makes no remark to either Frankie or Ali. Frankie gets into the Chrysler on the passenger’s side. Ricky steps off the sidewalk and onto the street in front of the Mercury wagon. He stops at Ali’s window and puts both hands on the top of the window frame.

While looking down at Ali from between his arms, Ricky says.

“Hang a u-turn right away. Don’t go near the corner.”

Ali nods and replies. “Sure thing Ricky.” Ricky walks back to the Chrysler sedan and climbs in behind the steering wheel. Ali and Ricky start the engines on their automobiles.
Ali looks to the front, he checks his mirror, and then makes a u-turn out of his parking space. Ricky follows suit almost immediately, as there is very little traffic on the boulevard.

Ali pilots the Mercury wagon at a conservative pace in an easterly direction. After a mile or two, he makes a right turn. Leon checks his mirror to make certain Ricky and Frankie are right behind in the Chrysler.

Tepo dangles his left arm over the seat back. He glances back and forth, between Ali, in the seat beside him, and Ricky and his brother Frankie in the car behind their car.

“What do you think happened to our first big drug deal?” he says softly. “They look sick in the stomach.”

Ali ignores Tepo's question. He flicks on his right hand turn signal. Ali slows and then right hand turns the Mercury into the parking lot of a supermarket. Mister Leon works the steering wheel to the left. He slips into an empty parking space remote from the front doors of the market, and brings the Mercury to a stop. Ricky follows suit, bringing the Chrysler sedan up smartly and parking it next to Ali and Tepo in the stolen Mercury wagon. Tepo and Ricky are now eye-to-eye with Ali and Frankie on the outside of their line of conversation.

Tepo looks directly at Ricky and asks. “What happened? Did they call the cops?”

With a sad face and in a low voice Ricky responds. “No. Don’t think so.”

Frankie tries to fill in the blanks. He does not enjoy looking small and weak in front of his younger brother. Frankie leans forward against his seat belt to be able to speak to his baby brother in front of Ricky.

“Must have been a rival gang situation,” he says in a frustrated voice. “That’s what it was.”

“The guys in the bar are dealers but they won't admit to it because they don’t want us for competition.”

Tepo looks at his brother with a mix of admiration and worry. “Do we go back to the bar and settle up with them?”

Frankie Nayari catches the full meaning of his younger brother’s remark. His lie worked! Tepo pictures his brother outgunned, not an object of contempt and disgust as is the real truth of the matter.

While looking at Tepo somewhat severely he says. “No. No shoot out. You could handle those punks yourself. But we don’t know the drug politics in Dallas. Those guys could have a hundred cops on the payroll.”

Ricky glances uneasily back and forth between Frankie and Tepo. He is a little uncomfortable
with the idea of lying about the aborted drug sale. Yet he knows the wealthy Nayari brothers have to find a sense of adventure in this thing or they will American Express card their way back to Bogota, Columbia.

Ricky Sinaloa is unable to look directly at Ali Leon. He says. “Find us some fast food. I need black coffee.”

Ali turns the key in the ignition of the Mercury wagon. The engine roars to life with grey smoke billowing out of the tail pipe.

**Scene 13 We Need A New Business Plan**

**Location: Fast food restaurant parking lot Dallas Texas**

The Mercury wagon is first out of the super market parking lot with the Chrysler sedan following close behind. After a few blocks of mindless roaming, the men come upon a drive-through restaurant on the right hand side of the street. Once again, they park their cars side by side, this time on the diagonal. Ali and Tepo alight from the Mercury. In a 'hands in the pockets' kind of a mood they amble on over to where Ricky sits in the driver's side window of the Chrysler. Frankie leans in front of Ricky. He hands Ali a twenty-dollar bill through the open window.

Frankie says. “Burgers and fries and black coffee. We have to talk.”

Ali accepts the money. He turns, and strides into the restaurant with Tepo bouncing along at his side.

Ali comes out of the restaurant with a large paper bag in each of his hands. Tepo follows dutifully behind, balancing drink trays filled with four colas and four large coffees. As the two younger men approach the Chrysler, Ricky and Frankie reach back and open the rear doors. Ali climbs in behind Ricky on the driver’s side, Tepo slides onto the back seat behind his brother. They pass around the burgers, fries and drinks, then, chomp at their food in silence for a good long while.

Tepo tells the group he is through with his soda by making a raucous sucking sound with his lips round the straw. He is the first to speak.

“If we can’t peddle coke in bars?” He asks. “Where do we sell it?”

It is just the right remark to bring the conference, this 'meeting of the board' to order. Ricky Sinaloa sits there behind the wheel, sipping at his hot coffee and smoking a cigarette. He blows a big cloud of smoke out the window. Then he makes eye contact with Ali and Tepo in his rear view mirror.

“When I was dealing,” he explains, “Used to buy from a middle man in a park near the corner I worked. Tried to follow him a couple times, but he always lost me. Never did find his supply.”
“All I know for sure,” says Tepo, “we're not going to find anybody like my old man to buy the stuff. People on top keep their hands clean. We have to find a middle man or a lieutenant, whatever it is they call them in the states.”

Frankie joins in, “What about, like at a race track?”

“For nickel or dime bags maybe,” answers Ricky. “But how do you get a whole kilo into the stands? They got guards crawling all over the place.”

Frankie drops his chin into a ring formed out of the index finger and thumb of his right fist. “We got a real problem here,” he remarks, while scratching at the edge of his jawbone.

A lengthy silence fills the passenger compartment of the Chrysler. It is Ali’s turn to have an idea. “After dark,” he begins, “we cruise the barrio near the expressway on and off ramps.”

The other three men turn towards Mister Leon, skeptical looks on their faces. “What's that going to do, Leon?” asks Tepo in a flat tone. Mister Leon enjoys the role of the sage.

He continues. “After dark suburbanites drive down to the barrio to make scores. They know better than to drive too deep in the neighborhood. So the pushers hang out by the expressway. We find a pusher. See if we can move the cocaine upstream the way we want. Instead of down our noses the way the pusher wants.”

The other three men look at Ali without saying anything. It is crystal clear Mister Leon has struck a responsive chord with his compatriots.

Ali nods his head and says, “If we stay inside the cars it can’t get too dangerous. Only thing, gotta keep an eye out for like a police sting or something. No telling what the cops are up to in Dallas.”

The sun, which has been out of sight beneath the level of the surrounding buildings for some time now, starts setting in earnest.

Ali checks his wristwatch, “We can get going about now.” he says. “Too early and you won’t find a dealer. Too late and they won’t be interested.”

Ricky sits up straight and brings the engine of the Chrysler sedan to life. He throws his cigarette butt out the window. Ali and Tepo climb out of the rear seat of the Chrysler. They make their way back to the stolen Mercury station wagon. Ali starts the motor of the station wagon. With Mister Leon in the lead, they pull out of the parking lot and head in a northerly direction back towards the segment of the expressway surrounded by the- 'barrio'.
Scene 14 The Ali Leon Business Model

Location: Expressway 'On' and 'Off' ramps, Dallas Texas

“How can you tell if somebody is a pusher?” asks Tepo.

Ali Leon considers the younger man's question with his hands firm on the two and ten o'clock positions on the steering wheel. Shortly, Mister Leon launches into a brief lecture.

“First off,” he explains, “Pushers wear colors... Red bandana, blue bandana. That way he marks himself for his gang and his turf. Like I said, a dealer wants to be near an on off ramp so his customers feel safe. Another thing he wants is places for lookouts to watch his back and a getaway. That way the cops got to get out of the car to bust him. You gonna see tonight pushers is all kids like you. Fast on their feet so they don’t get caught.”

Tepo absorbs everything Ali says. Before today, based on what he knew of his father’s life style, he believed drug deals took place on stylish patios near a swimming pool or by the light of a candle in an expensive restaurant. The young man should be frightened for his life at this moment. Instead, a morbid sense of fascination with evil floods his mind and soul.

Moments after his lecture, Ali brings the two-car caravan to the edge of the Dallas slums. Streetlights turn on up and down the avenue, one after another, as the natural light fades to dark. Ali turns on his headlights. Ricky in the Chrysler behind him follows suit. They begin to see signs on the stoplight poles indicating they will soon have access to the expressway. Shortly Ali catches sight of the expressway and so he makes a right turn.

“Fish up and down here, ..., maybe find something,” he says to no one in particular.

Suddenly, in the pitch darkness of the night, with the aid of the headlights on the Mercury, Tepo spies a young man wearing a blue bandanna.

“How about that kid over there?” Tepo asks, jerking a bit with his head.

Ali glances to his left. His eyes light on the object of Tepo's interest. “He looks nervous enough,” Ali replies to Tepo.

Ali brings the Mercury wagon to a halt under the watchful eyes of the boy in the blue bandanna. Leon leaves the car in drive. He keeps his foot on the brake pedal. The Chrysler sedan in back of the Mercury slows to a halt. Ali looks out of his window directly at the boy in the blue bandanna. The young man stands on the opposite side of the street. The putative pusher has a scared, nervous look on his face. He seems to be on the fence.

Should he run away or cross the street and deal with Ali?
Ali nods, he makes odd various motions with his fingers. Leon's gestures mean nothing to Tepo and Frankie. But to Ricky and the pusher it is obvious Ali is sorting through the various hand recognition signals in use by the largest and most well-known drug gangs in Mexico and the United States.

The nervous look on the face of the pusher evaporates into thin air. He grins. He strides directly across the street, coming to within hand shaking distance of Ali. “You guys need something?” queries the young man in the bandana with a wide confident smile on his face.

Ali shakes his head while looking directly at the young man standing in the street. He says, “No my young friend. Got something to sell. We ain’t interested in buying.”

The pusher blinks his eyes. He shoves his hands all the way down into his front pants pockets. The young man in the blue bandanna can think of nothing to say. This early in the evening, his typical customer is a matronly housewife sporting a blue rinse hairdo, sitting behind the wheel of a Lincoln town car.

“What you talking about, Jefe?” the pusher asks in an incredulous tone.

“Got a loose kilo of uncut coke.” Ali replies in a flat voice. “Just for you I got a special price.”

The young man in the street has a puzzled expression on his face. His head moves lightly back and forth, as he weighs the options. Ali and his friends certainly do not smell like cops but they might be from a rival gang. The pusher looks over his shoulder and then at the windows of an abandoned apartment building on Ali’s side of the street. He can see each of his lookouts and his number one shift captain. Nobody looks nervous. They are watching his moves. It is his turn to make the decision.

“I gotta see it and taste it,” he says flatly, trying not to sound overly eager.

Ali jerks his thumb back towards Ricky in the driver’s seat of the Chrysler. While smiling he says to the pusher “Go see the man back there...ask him for a little Chinese take out.”

The pusher takes his hands out of his pockets. He walks down the street to the driver’s side door of the Chrysler. First off, he glances down inside the vehicle to make certain neither Ricky nor Frankie has a gun in his hands.

Then he goes eye to eye with Ricky and says. “Whatcha got?”

The carry bags from the Chinese restaurant rest on the bench seat between Ricky and Frankie. With his eyes up and down on the young man in the blue bandana, Ricky retrieves a package of plastic wrapped cocaine from one of the paper bags. Ricky hefts the package up into the air with both hands. His gesture gives his personal endorsement as to its weight and purity.

Suddenly, the boy in the street catches sight of the spider’s web tattoo on Ricky's left elbow.
The mark startles the boy. His mind blanks. For an instant, he forgets about the pending business transaction. He thinks, "This guy is dangerous but he can’t be a cop. Nobody marks himself with a spider’s web to go undercover."

Emboldened by the ink on Ricky's elbow, the pusher matches Ricky’s stare and says, “My nose is the best test tube in Dallas!”

Ricky pulls his long thin stiletto from his pants pocket. With a few deft motions he cuts through the plastic layers surrounding the cocaine. The boy in the blue bandana does not have to be taught how to roll up a dollar bill into the form of a straw. In one smooth motion, the street corner pusher leans into the car while bringing the straw up to his nose.

“Easy kid,” cautions Ricky. “What we got here is the purest of the pure.”

The boy puts one end of the straw into his left nostril and the other end into the white powder. He makes a tentative sniff. His senses respond to the illegal substance in no time whatsoever. There is no doubt the bag holds cocaine and not milk sugar. The rush is unmistakable! The package is filled with pure, uncut cocaine. Just as advertised by the ‘traveling salesman' with the spider's web tattoo on his left elbow.

The young pusher leans back out of the car. He tries for an air of nonchalance. This is his first buy, he wants to seem experienced and he wants to put Ricky on the defensive.

“That’s coke alright,” he says. “I believe you.” Ricky and Frankie are becoming nervous. Strange neighborhood, dark night, everything seems to be swirling round them in slow motion. The deal is taking too much time.

Frankie leans in front of Ricky. He sneers and says, “Are you buying, or dreaming?”

The boy in the blue bandanna stuffs his hands back in his pockets and replies, “I got a little loose money to make change for nickel and dime bags. Hang on. I’ll go talk to the boss.”

Frankie senses he can dominate the young man. He glares at the pusher and snarls, “Hurry it up before the cops get here!”

The pusher bites his lower lip. He replies, “My lookout is looking out for you too. If they see the cops you’ll hear about it when I do.”

With that, the pusher turns away and run back towards an abandoned building on his side of the street.

The boy in the blue bandana runs up the steps to the second floor. There is a big grin on his face. At the top of the steps, he pulls open an unlocked door and walks into what had once been a large and fashionable living room. There are two men in the room. The one keeping watch out of the window stands back in the shadows, so as not to be obvious to people down in the street.
He holds a pump shotgun loosely in his right hand. As the young pusher makes his entrance, the man with the shotgun does not turn round. He keeps his eyes out on the street.

The other man stands to his feet behind an old dining room table. He faces the young pusher as he comes running into the room. He has a large revolver with a six inch barrel stuck in his waist band behind his belt buckle. There is a scale on the table, and a few small plastic bags scattered about. The bags variously filled with a shiny white powder. Next to the scale sits a wide-open aluminum finish brief case. Even from across the room the boy in the bandanna can see the briefcase filled to the brim with paper money!

The cash is largely twenty and fifty dollar bills. Most of the money bundled up, bank style, with self-sticking paper tapes. What remains has been folded into rolls held tight with rubber bands.

The pusher walks right up to the man behind the desk. In a buoyant voice, he exclaims. “Anybody in here want to buy a full kilo of pure white powder?”

The man at the window with the shotgun in his hands turns round at the waist. “How do you know they ain’t cops or somebody sizing us up?”

The young pusher stops in his tracks. He argues. “The driver in the Chrysler is all right. He’s got a spider’s web on his elbow and a screwy look on his face. These guys are from out of town and for real.”

“Did you test it?” Asks the man behind the desk with the handgun behind his belt buckle. “How much do they want?”

“I run my chemistry test on the stuff,” the young pusher replies proudly. “It’s a hundred percent.” Then, he scratches his forehead and confesses, “I forgot to ask them what they want for it.”

The older man behind the desk looks at the pusher incredulously and says. “You got a long way to go boy, a long way.”

The shift captain, the man behind the desk, stands silent for a moment, building an advantage over his young pupil. After a pause for dramatic effect, he dips his hand into the aluminum briefcase. With an easy gesture, he tosses the boy a roll of bills held tight with a rubber band. “See if you can get a kilo for this,” the older man instructs the boy in the blue bandanna.

Then he tosses the boy a bundled stack of twenties. “Don’t go higher than the roll and this wad.”

The boy catches the money in both hands as the shift captain tosses it to him across the table. Then he poses a more elaborate a plan to the man with the handgun. “The guy with the tattoo, he pulled the kilo out of a Chinese takeout bag. Might be a couple more kilos in the bag.”

Just as the boy hoped, the older man is pleased by the way he sized up the deal. The man behind
the table takes two more rolls and two more wads of bills out of the briefcase. This time he walks around the table and puts the cash squarely in the hands of the neophyte drug dealer.

“Split this up in your pockets,” he orders the youngster. Don’t get hurt. Just take off if they start getting goofy.”

The boy pushes the cash down into the depths of his pants pockets. Then he turns and runs, skipping and hopping his way out of the door. At the bottom of the steps, at the edge of the sidewalk, his blue bandanna falls off his head.

He skids to a halt and puts the cloth emblem back on the top of his head. The slight mishap brings him back to his senses. He walks slowly and deliberately across the dark street and out to the cars.

While looking directly at Ali, Tepo says. “About time that kid got out here. I was getting worried it was his nap time.”

Ali nods. His head swivels this way and that to see if there has been any change in the geography of their situation. Where are the look outs? Mister Leon is worried, and rightly so, the sale might turn out to be an ambush!

The young pusher walks out on the street in front of the Mercury wagon. When he makes eye contact with Tepo, the younger Nayari brother holds up a machine pistol by the barrel and slide with his left hand. The boy on the street sees the gun. Immediately, he holds his hands half way up, palms out and facing towards Tepo.

It is a reasonable exchange of gestures between the two young men. Tepo wants to convince the locals his party is heavily armed. The young pusher wants to reassure the stranger of his business like intentions.

The boy moves out on the street to a point where Ricky and Frankie can see him, Frankie queries Ricky. “Does he look like he has a gun?”

Ricky inspects the boy up and down. He responds. “I see bulges in his pants, they don’t look heavy. Maybe gonna get a real sale tonight.”

Frankie relaxes as Ricky’s verdict sinks into his mind. Then he puts his right hand down on the grip of a revolver tucked in under his left thigh.

Finally- the boy stands at the front window of the Chrysler. He is in a position to start wheeling and dealing with Ricky. Tepo turns around to be able to watch the transaction.

Ali looks at Tepo. “Ricky and your brother have the kid covered. Keep your eyes on the building he came out of and the parked cars. This could be a set up.”
Tepo turns around immediately without saying a word. He transfers the heavy machine pistol to his right hand. At the same time, the young pusher smiles at Ricky, sitting in the driver's seat of the Chrysler. The boy in the blue bandanna flourishes a roll of bills held tight with a rubber band.

“I can let you have this for the kilo.” He offers.

Ricky and Frankie look at the roll of bills. They look at each other. They turn and face forward. Ali Leon stares back at them through the windshield of the Chrysler. It is clear, Ali can see the money in the young man's hand. Mister Leon nods his head vigorously. As far as he is concerned, the price is right.

The young pusher is inexperienced and over eager. He reads the situation the wrong way. He interprets Ricky’s silence as a demand for more cash. The pusher digs into a back pocket for a stack of bills in a bank wrapper.

“O.K., O.K.,” he says quickly. “This roll and a stack of twenties.”

Ricky feels thrilled at the sight of so much money. He offers. “Can you handle two or three kilos?”

The young pusher has been hoping all along for a deal this generous! It is his turn to act coy. The boy in the blue bandana looks up and down the street as a precaution before he replies to Ricky. The street is clear of both pedestrians and vehicles.

“For three kilos,” the boy responds. “You can have three rolls and this wad of twenties.” While he names his price, the boy pulls out a stack of twenty-dollar bills and two more rolls held tight with rubber bands. He cups the cash in his hands, offering it up to Ricky.

Ricky looks over at Frankie. Might be a good idea to defer to the wealthy Columbian. That way Frankie can feel important in front of his younger brother. “What do you think?” Ricky asks in a polite tone.

Frankie catches the spirit of the moment. He smiles and answers. “You’re giving it away! He’s going to get spoiled.”

Ricky turns his head out the window to look at the young pusher. Then, as if on cue, all five men on the dark street swivel their heads this way and that. They peer around cautiously at their surroundings. Nothing has changed. They have a done deal and a safe deal for all concerned parties.

“Hand over the dope,” says the boy in the street. “Then you get the cash.”

The details of the exchange make perfect sense to the two men seated in the car. After all, they have the boy on the street covered. Just at that moment the man in the window, the one with the pump shotgun, sights down the barrel of weapon at Ali and Tepo. Ali can see nothing in the
window. Still, his instincts tell him he is under surveillance, maybe through a telescopic gun sight.

Ricky pulls two more kilos of cocaine out of the take out bag lying next to him on the front seat of the Chrysler. He passes the drugs over to the boy in the street. The boy’s hands are full. It takes him a long moment to give Ricky the money and, at the same time, not drop the cocaine onto the street.

While hefting the three packages of drugs the boy says brightly. “Why don’t you give me the bag? My boss likes Chinese take out.”

Ricky and Frankie laugh. “Sure thing, kid,” responds Ricky. Then he passes the bag out the window. The pusher slides the drugs back into the bag. He walks away from the men in the two cars without looking back.

Ali picks up on the boy's air of complete confidence. He interprets this to mean, and quite correctly, that he and Tepo are both in somebody’s gun sights.

While making eye contact with Tepo in the mirror he says. "Gotta have guns on us."

Tepo smiles wryly and responds. "Do you think?"

As soon as the boy is up on the curb on the other side of the dark and deserted street. Ali turns around to get instructions from Ricky. When Ricky sees Ali’s face, he lifts his right hand off the steering wheel and makes a jerky pointing motion with his index finger.

Mister Leon nods at Mister Sinaloa. Leon replies to Ricky by waving his right hand. Ali turns back in his seat. He takes his foot off the brake pedal. The Mercury wagon starts to roll forward, ever so slowly.

Turning to Tepo, Ali queries, “See anything in the windows of the house?”

Tepo studies the building as the boy goes in through the front door. His face soon loses all of its natural color. “Guy in the window on the second floor. Let’s get the hell out of here!”

Ali speeds away from the curb. He continues on down the street with the Chrysler right behind the Mercury. There is no doubt about their destination. Ali drives directly back to the motel where they stayed the previous night. They park their cars directly in front of their rooms.

The men dismount, they shut and lock the doors on their vehicles. All four men are relieved to find the motel manager’s office completely dark. Better still, none of the other patrons seem to take notice of their arrival. There are lights on in some of the windows. But no one pulls back on a shade or a curtain at the noise of doors slamming shut on their vehicles.

Their first foray into the world of big time drug dealing has ended as a financial success! Their
only mistake, the bag they gave to the pusher has the name, address and phone number of their Chinese Restaurant printed on both sides. Too tired to speak, they go into their rooms and directly to bed.

Scene 15 The Sinaloa Gang Divides The Take For The First Time

Location: An inexpensive motel in Dallas Texas

The four men wake from their slumber a little bit after nine in the morning the following day. As soon as Ricky and Ali are fully dressed, Ricky pounds the back of his fist on the wall connecting the two rooms. A short while later Ricky and Ali hear a knock at the door.

Ricky stands to his feet, walks to the door, and throws it wide open. “How’s it feel to be rich?”

The Nayari brothers stride into the room. Their hearts pound with a mix of optimism and a sense of a job well done. Frankie turns a chair around. He sits on the chair with his legs spread apart, facing the center of the room. Tepo plunks himself down on the edge of Ali’s bed. Ricky pulls the cash from the previous evening’s drug sale out of the drawer of the nightstand. He tosses the paper money onto the unmade surface of his bed.

Ricky sits down next to the money. He looks up at his team. “I’m gonna count it out into four even piles.”

Mister Sinaloa pulls the rubber band off one of the rolls of the fifty-dollar bills. Tepo’s eyes widen at the sight of so much cash. He feels proud of his efforts. At long last- Theodore John Nayari is outside the reach of his father’s domineering hand!

"The old man should see this!" says Tepo, while bouncing up and down on the edge of Ali Leon's bed.

Soon Ricky counts out the second roll, and then the third. Each of the bills in each of the rolls turns out to be, as promised, a fifty. Ali nods and smiles and quips, "They got honor among thieves here in Dallas."
Even Tepo’s billionaire father, Don Alberto Enrique Nayari, would have been impressed. Ricky breaks the paper seals surrounding the packages of twenties. Just as a Las Vegas card dealer hands out cards to the players at his table, Ricky places the twenty dollar bills on top of the four stacks of the fifties.

The four men look at each other in triumph. Frankie breaks the silence by saying, “We finally made it over the hump.”

Ali picks up the closest stack of bills. He folds it over once, with the fifties concealed by the twenties. Last, he puts the wad of bills into his back pocket. “Let’s get something to eat,” he suggests.

Ricky just barely manages to stuff his share of the bills into the trucker’s wallet tied to a belt loop on his pants on a light chrome chain. This is all new to the Nayari brothers. People in their upscale world sport credit cards with ten thousand dollar limits. They never carry large sums of cash.

Frankie and Tepo fold their shares of the take in the manner set for them by Mister Leon. Francesco, 'Frankie' Nayari and Theodore 'Tepo' Nayari, of the Bogota Nayari family, stuff their 'ill gotten gains' into a front pants pocket.

Once outside the door of the motel, the men find themselves in the bright light of a cloud free Texas morning. Frankie turns to Ricky. He states. “I’m going to pay up on the bill a couple of days in advance.”

Ricky grins, but pulls back from Frankie and responds in a cautious voice. “Don’t give the guy fifties. Some guys know rolled bills usually come from drug deal.”

Frankie had not thought of this, he smiles at Ricky in appreciation. Then he turns and walks off in the direction of the manager’s office. While he pays the bill on the two rooms, the other three men climb into the Chrysler and the Mercury. They start up the engines on the two cars, and wait patiently for their colleague.
Scene 16 The Sinaloa Gang Critiques Their Business Plan

Location: Family owned restaurant in Dallas Texas

Back from the office, Frankie gets into the Chrysler on the passenger’s side. The two cars motor off in search of a restaurant. After a few blocks of driving, Ali spies a family owned restaurant with clean windows. He turns into the restaurant lot and parks the Mercury. Ali shuts down the car. Then he digs around in the glove compartment. In just a bit he retrieves a pad of paper and a pencil. With quick and enthusiastic motions, Ali sticks the pencil above his right ear and beneath his baseball cap.

Once inside of the restaurant the men sit down at a table near a window. Their location gives them a clear view of their cars and, at the same time, puts them out of earshot of the kitchen. Each man orders a sumptuous breakfast from the cheerful waitress. They devour their morning meals with considerable relish. Within an hour, they nearly finish the pot of coffee placed on the table. The place begins to empty out, soon the four men have the restaurant all to themselves.

Ali pulls the pencil out from under his baseball cap. He licks the tip. Then he scribbles a little on the pad lying on the table. Mister Leon holds the pencil as if to take notes at a business meeting.

Ali Leon looks directly at the other men, one at a time, through the thick lenses of his eyeglasses. He states.

“We was wrong last night to park the two cars so close together. If me and Tepo had been shot up through the windshield you two would have been trapped behind us in the Chrysler.”

Tepo’s face goes completely white. Tepo spends so much time in fantasyland it is almost impossible for him to look ahead to the consequences of his foolhardy actions. Mister Leon's comments bring Tepo back to planet earth, if only for the moment. Then he fantasizes the Mercury's windshield shattering in front of him under the impact of a bullet or a load of buckshot.

Frankie looks at Ali. He shakes his head, and counters. “If we don’t keep the cars close together we can’t provide coverage. Keeping the cars apart cuts our firepower in half.”

Ricky can think of nothing to add to the discussion. The subject matter is a bit over his head. Mister Sinaloa glances back and forth between Ali and Frankie. There is a suspicious look on his face. Is he losing control? Are they dumping him?
Ali nods and smiles. He is pleased by Frankie's interest. Ali turns to Ricky and says, “Frankie and me is both right. If we do it either his way or my way we still lose.”

Ricky struggles for something to add to the conversation. He blinks and blushes red in the face. Mister Sinaloa is ill at ease and uncomfortable with the topic under discussion. He says, “You saying we should go out in just one car?”

Ali shakes his head. He has his friends in the palm of his hands. Leon replies. “No. What I think is, we should buy some of those citizen class radios.”

Frankie shakes his head in disbelief at the idea of buying radios. He says sarcastically. “How do people without a business address get the license to buy radios in the first place?”

Tepo volunteers. "So we steal em. Now we can talk car to car. But when our customers see us talking on radios they’ll think we’re cops and shoot us up.”

Mister Leon shakes his head to disagree with and over rule Tepo. With both hands flat on the table, Ali comes eye to eye with Frankie, “You don’t need a license in citizen style radios. They have them small enough you can hold them in your hand like a cordless phone.”

Frankie turns his head towards Ricky. “Ali probably knows what he’s talking about,” Ricky adds. “Least we can do is go to the store and look. That won’t cost us any questions.”

With a sense of triumph in his heart, Ali writes down the number one and then the phrase- 'four radios' on his shopping list.

“Another thing,” adds Ali, “I think we need suitcases for the powder and briefcases for the guns and the cash.”

Frankie is a little ahead of Ali in this arena. He counters.

“Might be good to leave some of the dope inside the fertilizer sacks. The back of the wagon looks nice and innocent.”

Ali sums up the issue by saying, “Half in the sacks and half in the suitcases.”

Mister Leon glances about to see if the matter calls for vote. The table holds silent, the discussion is at an end. Ricky and Frankie stand up to leave the restaurant.

Ricky places some folding money on the table. He puts the saltshaker on top of the bills so that they will not float off the table in the breeze from opening and closing the restaurant's front door.

The men walk out into the late morning sunshine. They get into their cars, and drive away. As
usual, they have no idea whatsoever as to where they are headed.

Scene 17 The Sinaloa Gang Invests In High Technology

Location: Military surplus store, Dallas Texas

The men drive around Dallas in an expansive mood, they look and feel like tourists, taking in the sights. Around noon, Ali comes upon a large red brick building with a sign in the window
reading, “Camping Equipment and Military Surplus”. He makes a u-turn, and parks the Mercury wagon directly in front of the store. Ricky follows Ali. He soon has the Chrysler tucked into a tight slot behind the wagon.

As soon as he walks through the door, Ali sees a locked display case filled with hand held radios. He waves a hand to his friends and calls out. “Hey, over here.”

Ricky, Frankie, and Tepo, join Ali at the glass window on the front of the display case. Ricky looks over the top of the display. He sees a sales clerk standing back away from them next to a desk. Ricky asks. “Can you show us how these radios work?”

The sales clerk cups a hand over the mouthpiece of his phone. He responds. “Be right with you.” After the man at the desk hangs up the phone, he walks to the back of the display case. Ali points mutely at a pair of Citizen's Band Radios in a cardboard display box. The salesman unlocks the cabinet and pulls out two demonstrators.

The salesman glances back and forth at his customers. “Each of these radios works on forty separate channels so you get lots of privacy.”

The man behind the counter holds a unit up for inspection. He points to the dial for changing channels. “Police monitor channel nine. If your car breaks down and your radio is working you get help right away.”

Frankie asks. “Do the cops listen in on the other thirty nine channels?”

“They could,” the salesman responds, “but they have their own radios, so they're usually too busy.”

The sales clerk turns on both of the citizen band hand held's. He tunes each unit to channel fourteen. The man passes one of the radios into Tepo's hands. He speaks into the mouthpiece of the second.

"This is Tac one to Tac two. Come in Tac two."

Ali, Ricky, and Frankie smile, they are quite pleased with the fidelity of the sound.

Tepo walks back to a point behind a display table deeper in the store. He holds his unit up to this mouth and says, “uno, dos, - uno, dos.”

To everyone's delight, Tepo's words are duplicated perfectly in the speaker of the radio held by the sales clerk.

“How far does the sound go?” asks Ali.

The sales clerk answers. “In the city about a block or two. Out in the country, maybe even as far as a mile.” Ali smiles back at the salesperson, he is ready to make a purchase.
Frankie eyes the sales clerk warily. He queries. “What do you do if you think someone is listening in while you’re talking?”

“That’s easy,” the man replies. “You change channels. You and your friend start talking, say on channel twenty eight. When you think someone is listening you say, ‘go to tac channel two,’ meaning channel twenty four. You and your friend could be anywhere on forty channels. You lose the guy trying to listen in.”

Frankie is impressed. He says to Ricky, “We need at least two of them.”

The sales clerk nods. Then he brings another problem to light. “Some people own scanner radios that can listen in on all forty channels one at a time.”

Ali is puzzled by this information. He looks up at the man and asks, “How do you handle somebody on a scanner?”

"Changing channels helps a lot,” suggests the sales clerk, “Doesn’t hurt to talk to your friends in a kind of a code.”

“We want two of the radios,” Ali says flatly. “And a set of batteries and a set of spares.”

The sales clerk smiles and replies. “Look around as long as you like.” Then he takes both radios up in his hands, along with the display box, and walks to the cash register at front of the store.

Ali’s attention goes to a luggage display further back in the store. He says. “Let’s go look at suitcases.”

After the men circle round the luggage display, Ali pulls out two large suitcases, both the same color. Frankie objects to this saying, “One is big enough, Leon. We were going to leave half the stuff in the fertilizer bags, remember?”

Ali defends. “One suitcase is for clothes. If the cops stop us we open the suitcase with the clothes and try to talk the cop out of looking in the other suitcase.”

As always, Mister Leon's wise remark is above reproach. Frankie blushes deeply in front of the other men. Without another word, Frankie pulls a black briefcase off the counter. He opens it up and tries to picture the inside loaded with an assortment of drugs, weapons, and money.

“This size ought to handle it,” he remarks to no one in particular.

Frankie grabs three more cases, one in black to match the first, and two more in brown. The four men walk to the front of the store with their purchases in hand. Halfway towards the register, a display of knives catches Ricky’s attention.

The four men stop walking while Ricky inspects, 'fondles' would be the more correct term, the knives. Ricky is especially attracted to a large sheath knife with a leather handle. He pulls the
knife out of the sheath. Mister Sinaloa turns the blade this way and that. He studies the way the fluorescent light from the ceiling fixtures glints on the highly polished blade.

"Man o man!" Ricky mutters with a leer on his face.

After a short while, Ricky makes his way back down to earth. Mister Sinaloa returns the blade to its sheath. He picks up four identical weapons from the counter and walks to the register alongside his companions.

The sales clerk rings up the purchases at the front of the store. He reads the total off the tape and then makes change out of the bills handed to him by Frankie.

The man behind the counter smiles impishly at his customers. He says. “Knives, radios, and a big set of matched luggage. You fellas bank robbers?”

Frankie smiles back at the man standing next to the cash register. “No sir,” he explains in a voice filled with false modesty. “We organize labor crews during the harvest season. Have to have radios to co-ordinate the crews.”

"Yah,” adds Tepo, “Bank robbers park so you can't see their plates." The youngest member of the gang waves towards the front window of the store. "Our cars are right outside your front door.”

The sales clerk gives out with a polite laugh at Tepo's attempt at humor.

“Thanks for stopping by,” the sales clerk says. “Come again soon.”

Once out the front door and onto the street, the men split up their merchandise. They put both suitcases in the back of the Mercury wagon in front of the cargo bed. Two briefcases go into each car, one black and one brown.

Ricky takes the deadly sheath knives out of the bag. He holds them out to each of his companions as if they were trophies or birthday presents. Then he returns the knives to the bag from the military surplus store.

It is a scary moment for Mister Ali Leon and the Nayari brothers, Tepo and Frankie. Most of the time Ricky Sinaloa keeps his true nature concealed. Just now he glows like the ghostly image of a demon in a horror movie.

Ali has his key in the ignition of the Mercury wagon. He is about to start the engine when his eyes fall upon a currency exchange across the street. Leon moans and then turns to face Tepo.

“Wait here,” He explains. “Gotta wire somebody some money.”

Ali throws open the driver's side door of the stolen Mercury wagon. He darts across the street to the front door of the currency exchange.
Ricky turns off the engine of the Chrysler when he sees Ali get out of the car. He groans in
disgust. Then he twists round to face Frankie. Sinaloa says.

"Now what?"

Frankie leans out the window of the Chrysler sedan. He cups his hand over his mouth and shouts
at Tepo.

"What is he doing?"

Tepo shrugs his shoulders. He leans out his window and turns back to face his brother.

"Sending money to his family!"

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**Scene 18 Plan B For The Sinaloa Gang**

**Location: An inexpensive motel room, Dallas Texas**

The Sinaloa gang of four park their cars directly in front of their rented rooms. They climb out of
the Chrysler and the Mercury and glance about the parking lot. Are they under surveillance?
Soon the men are reasonably certain no one has them under observation from behind a window
curtain.

Ali starts transferring sugar sack sized bundles of cocaine from the fertilizer bags to one of the
two new suitcases. Tepo sits idly on the fender of the Mercury wagon. He watches Ali, the
Mexican National, at work. It is business as usual for the Nayari brothers to 'delegate' physical
labor to Ali and Ricky. Mister Leon closes the lid on the suitcase. He looks up at Tepo.

“The guns go in the briefcases. Put them in the room.”

While smiling at Ali, Tepo answers, “I’ll get right on it.” Tepo goes from the Mercury to the
Chrysler. He fishes their guns out from under the front seats and tosses them into two of the four
briefcases.

Ricky, meanwhile, transfers the freshly purchased knives and radios into the paper grocery bags
they had been using as matched luggage for their spare clothes. He carries the bags into the
room he shares with Ali and puts them on his bed. Soon Ali, Tepo, and Frankie follow Ricky
into the room. Their hands filled with brand new and shiny suitcases and briefcases.

When the door to the room is locked and chained, Ricky says.

“Put three kilos of the coke into each of the four briefcases. Spread the guns out so each case has the same amount of firepower.”

Tepo nods in agreement. “Yah”, he quips. “But when do we eat?”

Ricky answers curtly. “When we get all the work done.”

When Tepo finishes his job, Ali has one suitcase filled to capacity with plastic wrapped packages of drugs, and a second suitcase filled with clothes and miscellaneous items.

Ali takes both suitcases in his hands. He stands them up against the wall. Ricky retrieves the radios and the knives from the paper bags. He puts a radio and two of the knives on Ali’s bed, indicating that they are for the exclusive use of the Nayari brothers. Mister Sinaloa hands a third knife to Ali. Ricky places the fourth knife on the night table next to his bed.


Frankie picks up the phone. He orders two large pizzas, four servings of garlic bread, and a six-pack of diet cola.

“Mister Francesco Nayari,” says Frankie to the young man taking his order, with a strong emphasis on the word- 'Mister'.

While they sit in the room waiting for their pizza, Ali makes two trips out to the ice machine with a waste paper basket in his hands. Soon the beers and the vodka from the previous day are cooling on a bed of ice in the bathtub. The food arrives about a quarter of an hour after Frankie's phone call. Ricky steps outside the door to pay the deliveryman. Then he brings the pizzas and bread inside the modest motel room.

Frankie gets a round of beer from the bathtub. He passes the bottles around. The men are so famished, they chomp their way through the first pizza in a matter of just a few minutes. During the second pizza, they are able to carry on a conversation.

Tepo asks through a mouth filled with pizza. “Are we going to go out again tonight and try again?”

Ricky answers. “We make a few good scores in Dallas. Take off to someplace else. If the kingpins notice us, we got trouble. They won’t like us pushing in on their wholesale business.”

Frankie queries, “Does moving around mean L.A. or New York?”

Ricky thinks for a moment. He says. “For me it’s the same difference. Either city is fine.”
Ricky looks at Ali and inquires, “Where do you think we should end up, Leon?’”

Ali responds quickly, “I just wired a thousand bucks to my mother in Philly. I vote we head for the east coast.”

“Is that what you were doing in the currency exchange?” asks Frankie.

“Yah.,” responds Ali, "I got an eight year old kid. My mother is taking care of things til I can open up a business."

Tepo's face goes grim. He is still upset about having been in another man’s gun sights during the last drug sale.

“We need better plans,” Tepo insists, while looking at his colleagues, one at a time.

Frankie, Ricky, and Tepo know Ali Leon has the most experience dealing drugs city to city, and door to door. They wait politely for him to speak. While Ali sits deep in thought, chewing his lower lip. Ricky stands and retrieves four more beers from the bathtub. As he ambles out of the washroom, he has the vodka bottle in his hand.

Ricky passes the beer bottles round, but keeps the vodka for himself. He sits back on his bed and lights a cigarette. Mister Sinaloa takes a long drink of beer. Ricky screws the cap off the vodka bottle. He sips vodka in between gulps of the beer.

Ricky inhales from his cigarette and then blows out a large cloud of smoke. He picks up the hunting knife from the table next to his bed, and pulls the gleaming blade out of its sheath. Ricky holds the knife up to the light. He plays with it in an absent-minded fashion. It is an eerie scene. The room goes very quiet in Ricky's malevolent presence.

Ali has enough time to collect his thoughts during Ricky's piece of theater. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. Then he sits up and says.

“How bout this for plan B? Tonight we go looking the same way for a pusher near the expressway. But we use the radios. When we try to make the sale Tepo and me hang a u-turn and park opposite you guys. That way Tepo and me can still be lookouts but they got a harder time keeping us covered. Tepo keeps Frankie posted about what he sees over the radio. If they move in on you two, we can hold them off with the machine pistols.”

Frankie nods and smiles. He is happy with Plan B. He says.

“The radios are a good idea. We can drive around with a few cars between us and still stay in touch. Looks a little less suspicious.”

Tepo is not completely satisfied. There is another issue on his mind.

“What if we get split up?” Tepo asks. “How do we tie up again, say, if the cops show up in the
middle of a deal?”

Ali cannot think of a way to handle this very real possibility. He cocks his head and sits in silence on the edge of his bed. Frankie’s face brightens. He looks directly at his younger brother and says.

"If we get split up we meet at the airport. Go in the long-term parking and sit and wait. When the other car shows up we connect up by talking over the radios."

Ricky likes Frankie’s suggestion. He adds.

“We keep the cash and the dope split up even between the two cars. That way we get half the business instead of none if something goes wrong. From the airport you can always buy a ticket and fly somewheres to get out of trouble."

There is a noticeable improvement in the spirits of the four men. Yet while Ricky's contingency plan makes sense to the other members of the group, they realize something is wrong. Mister Sinaloa is slurring his words! He sounds a lot like someone about to have a seizure! Under the watchful eyes of Ali, Frankie, and Tepo Ricky's face screws up into a strange grimace. He seems to be under a spell, a hypnotic mix of mirth and anguish. Without warning, without preface, Ricky does something very unusual.

Enrique Sinaloa runs the long blade of his knife down lengthwise on his outstretched tongue! The edge of the blade is extremely sharp. Not surprising it makes a deep laceration in the surface tissue of the young man's tongue. Blood drips copiously from the wound. With no sense he has injured himself, oblivious to the other men in the room, Ricky watches the blood form up into a puddle in the center of his tank top t-shirt.

The Nayari brothers are completely mystified. They have never seen anything like this before, an instance of self-mutilation. In contrast to the upscale Nayari brothers, Mister Leon understands the strange rituals common to South American drug gangs.

Ali stands to his feet. He walks over to Ricky's bedside. Leon puts his hand on Ricky’s knee and shakes it gently.

“Wake up Ricky. Come back to planet earth.”

Ricky shakes his head back and forth lightly, as if recovering from a seizure. He pulls his tongue back into his mouth and swallows a gulp of bright red blood.

Then he takes a long drink from the bottle of vodka. Not surprising, Mister Sinaloa winces in pain as the alcohol soaks into the injured tissue.
Ricky Sinaloa has made his way back to reality. Glancing around the room, he realizes he has frightened the other men with his gesture at self-mutilation. Ricky sits up in the bed. Blood drips down from his t-shirt to the top edge of his trousers. He tries to brag his way out of this strange situation.

“When I was in the stockade in Mexico,” he explains, “The hard guys did it with a kitchen knife. Hurts more when the blade is dull.”

Ali says politely, “You need to sleep off the booze. We gotta get up and go to work tonight. Gotta be sharp and one hundred percent.”

Frankie and Tepo stand, they are anxious to go to their room and get some sleep. Right now, they want to be anywhere but in the same hotel room with Ricky Sinaloa. Tepo picks up his brand new sheath knife and one of the Citizen's Band radios. Mister Leon objects to Tepo leaving the room with a radio. Ali says.

“Leave the radio, I’m gonna number some of the channels for our private use.”

Tepo places the hand held on top of the bed. Frankie and Tepo walk silently out of the room. The Nayari brothers have nothing more to say to Ricky Sinaloa or Ali Leon.
Scene 19 Ali Leon Fine Tunes The Radios

Location: An inexpensive motel room, Dallas Texas

Ricky wakes just after sunset, still blurry eyed from his drunken stupor. His head hurts. There is a strange sensation on his tongue. Sinaloa looks down at his chest. He sees a pool of dried blood. For a moment, he imagines he is dead and disembodied. The victim of some kind of ritual sacrifice taking place on the top of an Mayan pyramid in the jungles of El Petén, Guatemala. Mister Sinaloa knots the bedspread in both of his hands in an effort to deal with his feelings of anxiety.

As his mind slowly clears, he recalls the circumstances of his self-inflicted injury. A few moments later Ricky turns his head to the right. He sees Ali sitting at the table. The blinds and the curtains are closed. Ali is working at some kind of a task in the light from a floor lamp. He has not yet noticed Ricky is awake.

“What are you fooling with, Leon?” asks Ricky of Ali.

Ali puts down a felt tip pen. He turns round in his chair and looks over towards the bed at Ricky. He is glad to see Ricky wide-awake. It means most of the liquor has worn off, and Ricky is nearly sober.

“I’m writing numbers here on the channels.” Ali explains patiently, “I made channel twenty four our channel one, channel twenty our channel two, and channel sixteen our channel three.”

Ali holds up a radio so Ricky can see the dial. In spite of himself, Ricky feels better. Ali’s 'science project' has taken his mind off his hangover.

Ricky cautions. “Make sure you do it the same way on each radio. Otherwise we’ll be talking at each other in outer space.”

Ali nods without saying anything in reply. He has enough intuition to ken Ricky is desperate for a chance to reassert his authority.

Finally, Ali picks up a radio in either hand. He holds the units so that Ricky can see the dials from his position on the bed. Ali smiles, he nods and says.

“Just like at the C. I. A.”

The two men laugh aloud. Then Ricky winces and brings his right hand up to his head. “Gotta shower,” he announces, “get the blood off my shirt, maybe get half sobered up.”
Shortly, Ricky climbs out of the shower wrapped in a clean motel towel. He dresses himself for the street. Ricky walks back into the washroom clothed in shoes, socks, and trousers. Mister Sinaloa pulls his blood stained tank top out of a puddle of soapy water in the sink. He twists the shirt vigorously with both hands, wringing out most of the water. He dons the shirt and inspects it in the mirror. Ricky grins at his image in the mirror. It is barely possible to see the bloodstain on his tank top.

Mister Sinaloa wants to believe the incident of self-mutilation is a thing of the past. He walks out into the room. “Ready, set, go!” Ricky says briskly.

As Ali rises up from his chair, Ricky pounds his fist on the wall behind his headboard. Ricky and Ali hear a muffled voice in the other room, “Outside by the cars, ten seconds.”

Ali opens the motel door to a pitch-black night. He leans out over the threshold and peers up and down the motel parking lot. Nothing seems amiss. Leon goes back into the room for the two new suitcases. These he puts in the cargo space of the Mercury wagon. The suitcase with the clothes on top of the one filled with drugs.

Frankie and Tepo go into Ali and Ricky's room for the four briefcases stuffed with drugs and weapons. They put two cases in each car. Last, Ali and Ricky lock the door of their room.

Tepo looks over at his brother in the front passenger's seat of the Chrysler sedan from his perch in the front passenger’s seat of the Mercury wagon. Tepo holds up his radio. He waves it back and forth to catch Frankie’s attention.

When Frankie notices his brother's gesture, he holds up his unit in response.

Tepo jerks his index finger. He points to the channel selector. Frankie glances down at the Citizens Band radio in his hand. He sees the numbers Ali printed on the dial with a felt marker pen. Frankie turns his radio on. He tunes it to the Citizen's Band channel number twenty-four, their channel number- one.

Tepo starts speaking into the microphone on his unit. “Uno, dos, tres, quatro.” The sound of his young boyish voice fills the passenger space in the Chrysler, it surrounds Frankie and Ricky.

Frankie responds saying, “Quatro, tres, dos, uno.”

Scene 20 A Second Midnight Sales Trip

Location: Mean streets of Dallas Texas

Out on the boulevard, Ali leads the way back towards the north end of Dallas. He motors along
in the general direction of the slums. Both drivers and their passengers feel relaxed. Now that they have radios, it is perfectly safe to let other vehicles fill the space between the Mercury and the Chrysler.

Tepo speaks into his radio microphone. “Coming up on a stoplight. Keep heading north.”

Frankie’s voice comes over the speaker in Tepo’s hand held. It is only a bit grainy, “Pull over if we have to stop for a light. We don’t want to get too far apart.”

Tepo glances down at the radio in his hand and smiles. He feels in control and a lot less vulnerable with a hand held transceiver in his grasp. “Roger that, unit two.”

After a short drive, Ali has the Mercury and the Chrysler back in the neighborhood where they made their first successful cocaine sale on the previous night. Tepo turns in his seat towards Ali. He asks, “Are we going to go back to the same pusher?”

Ali returns a startled look to the reckless grin on the face of the younger man. It is a struggle for him to keep both eyes on the road.

“No way! They got a supplier. Looks like we’re trying to muscle in. Any color bandanna but blue!”

Ali’s reply makes sense to Tepo. He feels a little embarrassed he had not thought things out the same way as the older, more experienced man. Tepo slumps down in his seat. He twists his head to look out the window.

“Take it easy, kid,” Ali says, “I got time in the joint, you don’t. No way for you to learn the basics in prep school.”

Tepo says nothing in response. He peers intently out of his window. If he sees a blue bandanna, Tepo intends to warn Ali that they might speed off in another direction. It is his plan for saving face.

Ali drives past the expressway instead of turning in front of the divided highway as he did on their previous foray. At the first traffic light past the expressway, he makes a right hand turn. Tepo presses down eagerly on the transmit button on his radio. He speaks into the microphone.

“One to two. One to two. Right hand turn at the light.”

As soon as Tepo lets up on the 'push to talk' button his brother’s voice comes over the speaker.

“Hear you good, one. Right at the light.”

As luck would have it, both cars slip through the same green light, one after the other. Coming out of the turn Ricky and Frankie in the Chrysler fall back some distance. Soon another car with an unknown destination fills the gap between the Mercury in the lead and the Chrysler in trail.
The street the men drive along narrows down from four lanes to two lanes. The car in between
the Mercury wagon and the Chrysler sedan makes a right hand turn onto a side street and
disappears from view. Three blocks later, the men drive up on their first potential business
opportunity for this particular moonless night.

Ali, Tepo, Ricky, and Frankie see a young man standing on the street corner. He is doing his
best to appear casual and unconcerned. Yet there is no doubt but that he is on the alert for both
customers from the suburbs and unmarked police cars.

Tepo peers intently out the windshield. He can see a bandana wrapped around the young man's
head. Unfortunately, it is too dark to make out the color.

Just then, the headlights of a car motoring in their direction light up the young man as if he were
on stage in a nightclub. Tepo taps Ali's elbow in his excitement. He exclaims, “It’s either yellow
or tan, I’m sure it’s not blue.”

Ali looks up and down at the pusher. He nods and says. “Give your brother a holler.”

Tepo speaks into his radio. “One to two. One to two. Customer on the north side of the street.
Check it out.”

Tepo leans back over his seat. He sees Ricky's Chrysler come to a stop well behind his location.
There is no doubt but that Ricky and Frankie heard his message. Frankie’s voice comes over the
speaker in Tepo's radio.

“Ali should go talk to him. If he wants anything we make the deal out of this car like last night.”

Ali responds wordlessly, he palms the steering wheel of the bulky wagon and makes an expert u-
turn. Soon he has Tepo in the passenger's side window of the Mercury wagon up even with the
boy standing on the curb.

The boy lounging on the corner notices Ali and Tepo in the wagon but not Ricky and Frankie in
the Chrysler parked on the opposite side of the street.

If Tepo had made hand signals to his brother, the pusher in the yellow bandana would have gone
on alert. Tepo's work with the radio leaves the young man in the dark, literally, and figuratively.
The Sinaloa gang has the upper hand.

The street corner punk looks down at Tepo. He asks. “Are you lost?”

Ali and Tepo see a gold tooth in the front of the young man's mouth. Tepo tries to meet the
punk's stare though he feels just a little afraid. “Can you handle any weight?” Tepo speaks in a
tentative voice and on a dry mouth.

Fortunately, for the members of the Sinaloa gang this street corner dealer is a little low on the
supply side of things this particular evening. Yet still, he does not wish to give the advantage over to Tepo. There is no point in coming across as over eager.

“So get your own corner.” He says to Tepo, with a short jerk of his hand.

Ali realizes Tepo is at a loss for words. He leans into the steering wheel, turns his head to the right, and remarks. “I got pure coke to give away. Three full kilos for three rolls of fifties and three stacks of twenties.”

The young boy standing in the dark on the curb does his best to seem casual and unimpressed. He counters.

“This is Dallas. Texas. We got it comin’ in from both coasts and from Mexico and Columbia.”

Ali blinks his eyes before he answers. He says.

“You look like a nice kid. For you I can go to three rolls and two stacks. No more. This is a onetime deal. Gonna be gone tomorrow.”

The boy glances back and forth between Ali and Tepo for a good long minute. He wonders about weapons. Finally, he says. “Let me see the stuff.”

Ali jerks his thumb and replies. “See that other car?”

The boy looks up and then up and down the street. His eyes come to focus on Ricky and Frankie in the Chrysler on the other side of the narrow avenue.

As soon as the young man sees puffs of blue smoke bubbling out of the tail pipe of the Chrysler he nods and then smiles. Then he goes back eye-to-eye with Ali. Ali smiles at the young man. It is obvious the boy is impressed by the professional nature of his operation. Ali says.

“We’re gonna drive up a little and you buy from him. We keep him covered.”

In a split second, the pusher goes from on guard to enthusiastic.

He says quickly. “You ain’t gonna get a hassle. I might want to buy from you again!”

Tepo opens the briefcase on his lap. The pusher glances down. He sees Tepo's machine pistol. The boy lifts his shirt with his right hand in a 'tit' for 'tat' gesture. The motion reveals a revolver tucked in behind his waistband. Tepo smiles up at the young man in the yellow bandana. The young man smiles down at Tepo. On that note of collegial friendship, Ali drives up a few car lengths to make room for the Chrysler driven by Ricky.

Ricky and Frankie sit tense and alert in the Chrysler. They keep their eyes on the scene playing
out on the other side of the street. Tepo presses down on his push to talk button,

“Hang a u-turn. Offer the guy three kilos for three rolls of fifties and two stacks of twenties.”

Tepo's voice comes over the speaker on Frankie's hand held. Frankie does not key his radio to make a reply. He nods his head at Tepo instead. With swift eager motions of the steering wheel, Ricky brings his car around. Soon Frankie finds himself staring up at the street corner dealer.

Without a word, Frankie opens the briefcase on his lap. Then he turns the case sideways. Now the young man in the yellow bandanna can see three kilos of cocaine and a large caliber revolver with a four inch barrel.

A switchblade knife appears as if by magic in the right hand of the young dealer. He presses the button on the handle, the blade springs open. With an easy and a familiar motion of his thumb, he pushes forward on the slide, locking the blade on his deadly knife.

This is all new to Frankie. He does not know what to say or do. Ricky takes over the negotiations. He is obviously pleased to be one up on someone who has a tailored wardrobe and an entry in the social register.

Ricky makes a casual wave and says. “Cut any bag. It's your choice.”

The boy grins at Ricky. He replies. “Cafeteria style, right?”

The street corner drug dealer leans into the car. He makes a small incision into one of the bags. Moving swiftly, he scoops a small portion of the white powder onto the flat side of the blade of his knife. He holds the blade up to his nose, and inhales deeply. Seconds later a wide smile spreads across the face of the boy in the yellow bandanna.

The street corner dealer rubs his nose with the back of his left hand.

“Don’t go nowhere.” The boy said in a voice brimming with enthusiasm, “Be back with the money, pronto.”

Without another word, the pusher turns and runs across the sidewalk and up the concrete stairs of a large, tenement style apartment building.

Waiting for this pusher to return is a lot less stressful on the four men this evening then it had been on the previous night. For one thing, the hand held radios take away the men's sense of isolation.

As soon as the young man disappears through the doors of the apartment building, Tepo starts chatting with his brother on their hand held radios. Looking first up and down the dark deserted side street, Tepo says. “I don’t see anything at all. No cops, no open windows, no lookouts.”

Frankie feels the same way as his brother, but he never passes on a chance to assert his authority
over the younger man.

“Looks good from here too...but they could be hunched down in the parked cars.”

Tepo gives a terse reply, “Roger that two. I'm looking.”

The men wait patiently in their two cars for nearly a quarter of an hour. After an impatient glance at his gold wristwatch, Frankie presses down on his push to talk button and speaks into the microphone. “Ask Ali if he thinks we should take off.”

Ali hears the question- there is no need for Tepo to repeat his brothers remark. Ali says.

“Tell your brother to stay cool for another ten minutes.”

Tepo brings the microphone of his radio up to his lips.

"The boss says hang in for another ten." Frankie comes back on Tepo's speaker.

“Ten minutes if we don’t see anything suspicious.”

Just then, the door to the apartment complex opens wide. Out walks a man and his wife. The man holds a newborn infant, wrapped in a blanket, in the crook of his right arm. As the couple step down onto the sidewalk, the pusher makes his appearance at the top of the stairs.

The young drug dealer in the yellow bandanna waits politely at the top the concrete steps. The man and his wife are absorbed in themselves, they seem not to notice Frankie and Ricky sitting in the car across the street. Let alone the young man in the yellow bandanna behind them at the top of the stairs.

The pusher waits until the couple ambles off and turns the corner. Then he looks up and down the street. Last, he walks down the steps and closes the distance to Ricky and Frankie in the Chrysler sedan. Up even with the front passenger side window, the young man tosses a paper lunch bag onto Frankie’s lap.

The man standing on the curb folds his hands over his stomach with his fingers interlaced. The revolver behind his belt buckle is in easy reach of his right hand. While the drug dealer rocks back and forth on his heels. Frankie digs through the paper bag. After a bit, Frankie looks up at the pusher. He says. “You got a done deal.” Then he passes the plastic wrapped packages of cocaine out the window, one at a time.

The boy holds the packages of cocaine as if they were sandwiches. He stacks one sack on top of another. He grins broadly at Frankie and then at Ricky. Ricky guns the engine of the Chrysler and speeds away from the curb. Frankie slips his right hand into the briefcase on his lap as Ricky drives away from the business deal. He wraps his fingers around the grip of his revolver. It is a comforting feeling.
The two-car convoy drives along down the streets of Dallas through the dark of the night. Ricky and Ali are very careful not to exceed the speed limit or to make any gestures which might bring them to the attention of the police. Ricky makes a left turn at the corner where they made the right hand turn taking them into the deeper reaches of the slums a short while back. The two cars head towards their budget rate motel. It is nearly eleven at night.

As the two cars cross over the expressway, the speaker in Tepo’s radio come to life with a crackling sound. “I checked the rolls,” they hear Frankie say. “Each of the bills is a fifty.”

Ali’s shoulders relax and a smile spreads across his face. He remarks. “I’m gonna have a legit business day after tomorrow. Leave you high rollers all this excitement to yourselves.”

Tepo is just as pleased. He exclaims. “My old man should see this!”

Tepo's comment makes little sense to Ali. Yet he is too pleased with the results of their efforts this evening to make a remark that might spoil the mood. Worse, the sense of triumph the men now share washes off the guilt they should have felt from bringing about the deaths of the Sisters of the Order of Saint Christina.

Ali and Ricky pull their cars into the parking lot back at the turn in for their motel. Ricky and Frankie are the first to alight from their vehicle. They open the doors to their rooms. Then, all four men off load their suitcases and briefcases from the two cars. They want their weapons and their drugs next to their beds, not out in the Chrysler and the Mercury.

Ricky stands on the sidewalk between the two rooms. He says to Frankie and Tepo, “Bang on the wall when you two get hungry.”

Frankie nods at Ricky and replies. “Give us a call if you two get up first.”

Frankie turns away from Ricky and Ali. He walks towards the door of the room he shares with his baby brother. Just then, something catches Frankie's eye. For a moment, he thinks he saw the curtain flutter in the motel office window. Frankie halts in mid-step. He stares at the office window.

“Couldn’t be,” He mutters. “The light is out just like it was last night.”

On that note, Francesco Simon Nayari, eldest son of Don Alberto Enrique Nayari, strides into his shabby motel room and locks and chains the door. With the door shut, and the tabletop light on, a hand lifts the curtain in the dark window of the motel office for a second time. ...

The people in the office might not be able to see and identify the members of the Sinaloa gang. But they can see the numbers on the license plates of their Chrysler sedan and their Mercury
Scene 21 'Family Values' In The Sinaloa Drug Gang

Location: An inexpensive motel in Dallas Texas

Tepo is the first man in the Sinaloa gang awake on the following morning. When his eyes open, he lays in bed on his back and yawns. Tepo is overly sensitive to cold weather, even for someone born in Bogota Columbia. He waves his hand around above the covers to see if there is a chill in the air of the room. The place seems warm enough to take a shower. Tepo hauls himself out of his bed and makes his way to the bathroom.

Tepo's shower noises bring Frankie to a state of wakefulness. Frankie sits up in bed and starts flexing his muscles. Frankie jumps into the shower right after his baby brother. After his shower, he feels clean and wide-awake. Frankie remembers the surreptitious motion he saw out of the corner of his eye in the window of the motel office on the previous evening.

After Frankie dresses for the day, he walks over to the window and pulls the curtains back a short distance. Everything out in the parking lot seems to be in place. He does not see any suspicious cars. No one peers out the office window in his direction. Tepo picks up on his brother's vigilant behavior. He asks, “What are you worried about?”

Frankie replies, “Felt like someone was watching us from the office window last night.”

Tepo thinks about their situation for a moment. He states, “I didn’t see anything. Maybe they own a cat or something.”

Frankie shrugs his shoulders. “I need to take a night off and get loaded.”

Tepo can think of nothing more to say. He puts his briefcase on the bed, works the locks, and lifts up the lid. He removes a MAC-10 from inside the case and hefts the machine pistol in his right hand. The young man works the magazine release button. The loaded magazine slides out of the grip. Tepo catches it deftly in his left hand.

He looks up at Frankie, smiles, and says, “Rock and Roll, big brother! Full clip, full automatic.”

Frankie's eyes gleam with pride at his younger brother’s cocky stance.
Still clowning around Tepo sticks the heavy weapon into his waistband.

“Now I look like the best man at the Viejo’s wedding.”

Tepo uses the word 'Viejo' in reference to their father- Don Alberto Enrique Nayari. The joke makes Frankie laugh in a raucous manner, until his sides hurt. When the fit of laughter plays out Frankie grabs his brother by both of his ears. For a while, they stand there in silence, staring in admiration at one other. Then Frankie gives his little brother a big hug. It feels good to be working together and out from under their father's domineering grasp.

Tepo realizes his brother’s usually cocky attitude is back up to normal. He slides the deadly machine pistol into his briefcase. Frankie picks up his own briefcase. It is lighter than it had been the previous night. Lighter by the weight of the three kilos of cocaine they exchanged for an equivalent value of paper money.

“Time to get defense out of bed.” Says Frankie.

Frankie pounds on the wall. Without waiting for a reply, the Nayari brothers walk out of their room and into the bright sunshine. Glancing about, they are relieved to see there are no strange cars in the parking lot. Frankie knocks vigorously on the door to Ricky's room. Frankie and Tepo are buoyed up by the familiarity of their surroundings. Soon Frankie and his brother Tepo can hear the sound of a security chain rattling against the wooden door. The door opens. The Nayari brothers see Ali Leon looking out at them through his thick eyeglasses. There is a big smile on Mister Leon's face.

At that moment, the light from the sun is so intense it is difficult for Frankie and Tepo to recognize Ricky, standing in the dark inner recesses of the room behind Ali. After a bit, their eyes adjust to the contrasting levels of light. Then they see Ricky has a grin on his face as big as his roommates.

As is typical of people with severe emotional problems. These four men have left the guilt of the murder scene in Mexico far behind. What they did on the outskirts of the town of El Mirador is a thing of the past, ancient history. The money they made in recent days proves, if only in their minds, in the overall scheme of things they are on the right track.

Frankie, Tepo, and Ali can hear Ricky’s voice from the inner recesses of the hotel room,

“Let’s take off. I could eat a Palomino.”

Frankie and Tepo step back, they leave Ali and Ricky a path to come out of the room. The four men drive off in both cars in search of breakfast. They motor along south on the boulevard, careful not to stop at the restaurant where they dined on the previous day.
After a time they find a place with large plate glass windows. This is to their liking, it makes it easy for them to keep an eye on their cars and watch for suspicious looking pedestrians. Anyone might be stalking them. Even at this early point in time, the Dallas police might have them under surveillance!

Scene 22 The Motel Clerk Don't Know What She's Doing
Location: An inexpensive motel in Dallas Texas

Once back at the motel the men walk, briefcases in hand, directly into the room occupied by Ali and Ricky. Ricky goes to his bed. He lays down with his head propped up by both of the pillows. Mister Sinaloa slides the ashtray on his nighstand to within an arm's reach. Then he lights up a cigarette with wide expansive hand motions. Just a bit on the side of the dramatic, Ricky blows the smoke from the cigarette straight up towards the ceiling.

Ali, meanwhile, takes a seat on the edge of his bed. There is a relaxed expression on his face. The two Nayari brothers, Francesco and Tepo, pull the chairs away from the small table near the window.

As soon as they sit down in the two chairs Frankie looks directly at Ali and asks,

“How long do you think it’s safe to stay here in Dallas?”

Ali’s facial expression grows very serious. He folds his arms in front of his chest and takes in a deep breath. He replies,

“One more night is no problem. We should take off tomorrow or the day after.”

Ricky has enough intuition to understand the gravity of their situation. He feels pulled in two directions. Mister Sinaloa's first idea is to overrule Ali and thereby regain complete control of the group. At the same time, he realizes Ali Leon has everything figured out right. While looking up at the ceiling and blowing smoke, Ricky remarks.

“Tonight we move more weight. If it goes off smooth, tomorrow night, same thing.”

There is nothing else on the agenda, no unfinished business. Frankie opens his briefcase. He tosses out the rolls of fifty-dollar bills and the packages of twenties from last night's exchange onto Ricky’s bed.

“Why don’t you split this up for us, Ricky?” Frankie asks.

Ricky feels one of the rolls of bills bounce up against his calf muscle. He sits up straight and then puts out his cigarette in the palm of his hand. Sinaloa drops the cigarette butt in the ashtray. He rubs his hands together. Then he goes about the methodical business of sorting the money into four piles.

The other three men watch in fascination as Ricky counts out the bills. The Nayari brothers have seen larger amounts of cash money on their father's desk in his home office. Never before have they accumulated such a large amount of illicit folding money out their own efforts.

It was a good idea to have Ricky split up the cash. It is clear from his posture and the smile on his face he feels- 'back in the saddle'. Sinaloa walks the room in triumph, handing each man his
share of the cash.

“Six kilo’s down,” says Ricky lightly, “and the rest of the U.S. of A to sell to.”

Frankie is about to pocket his share of the money when an idea comes to his mind. In an effort to ingratiate himself with Ali and Ricky, he says.

“I’m going over to the office and pay up for the next couple of days. Be back in a second.”

With that, Frankie walks out of the room, closing the door firmly as he exits.

The motel office is about a hundred paces from their room doors, situated at right angles to their building. A buzzer goes off as soon as Frankie opens the rickety door to the office. When Frankie closes the door behind him, the noise from the buzzer stops.

In spite of the noise, no one appears behind the desk for a long moment. Frankie sees a mirror screwed to the wall just behind the countertop. He brings his left hand up and checks on the location of the part in his thick black hair.

From where he stands in the quiet of the office, Frankie hears the muffled sounds of a man and a woman in the middle of a heated conversation in the back room. When the male voice gets louder for a just a brief moment, Frankie imagines he hears the man say.

“You go handle him.” The next thing Frankie hears is the unmistakable sound of a door closing on its hinges. And then the light clatter of female footsteps in one inch heels moving in his direction. A woman appears in the doorway. She is well into middle age and quite a bit overweight. As soon as she sees Frankie, she gives out with a weak smile. Once out of the hallway the woman moves quickly to her place behind the desk. She puts both hands flat on the tabletop and leans forward slightly.

“Are you checking out sir?” Asks the woman.

“No.” Frankie replies. “Want to pay up for two more days.” The lady responds, “And the room number sir?”

Frankie’s mind goes blank for just a second. His hostess is just a bit too formal and distant. She makes him feel just the least bit nervous and self-conscious. Frankie pulls out his room key. He reads the number off the plastic tag.

“One-o-seven,” he says. “Actually, one-o-seven and one-o-eight.”

The woman turns to an in box on the table behind her counter top. She digs around in a stack of papers. The reservations specialist is looking for the room registration cards. When she finds the forms for rooms 107 and 108 she turns back to face Frankie. She puts the cards down on the desk in a very deliberate manner and goes eye to eye with her guest.
By this time, Frankie is a little surprised. The day he rented the rooms there were no other cars parked in the lot. He thinks, "Why is it so hard for her to figure out who I am?"

The woman studies the information on the two cards for a long moment. Then she looks up at Frankie and asks.

"Is it just the four of you sir, Two men in each room?"

"Yes." Frankie says abruptly. Then, without thinking, he pulls a very thick roll of bills from his pants pocket. The woman gives out with a startle gesture when she sees the size of the roll of paper money. She was expecting a credit card or a wallet stuffed with ten dollar bills. Not a small fortune in fifty dollar bills!

Frankie realizes, too late, it is a mistake to flash his roll under the nose of the desk clerk. In the marble lobby of an exclusive hotel Frankie’s cash would have gone unnoticed. But the size of his wad is too much, it is out of place in the office of a rundown motel. Quickly now, Frankie peels two fifty dollar bills off the roll. Just as quickly, he stuffs the rest of the money back in his pocket.

For a minute or two, the woman busies herself adding up a set of numbers on a small piece of paper. Then she takes the bills off the top of the counter and studies them carefully. Her worried look and her posture make it clear she is concerned about counterfeit cash.

Once the desk clerk is satisfied the bills are real she pulls a cash box out from under the counter top. The key to the cashbox is in the lock. She does not have to turn it to open the box. After she places the bills inside the strong box, she hands Frankie his change. Then she makes out a receipt and passes it into Frankie's outstretched hand. Last, she takes her pencil and makes a few marks on the registry cards.

The lady holds the cards up in front of her so she can inspect the cards and look at Frankie at the same time. She glances up at her guest and says."Four men for two more nights in rooms one-o-seven and one-o-eight. Is that now correct sir?"

"You got it right," Frankie says to the lady. With that, he forces a smile on his face, turns, and leaves the office. Back at rooms 107 and 108, Frankie walks into Ricky's room and closes the door.

"Screwy old broad," he remarks in a stage whisper to no one in particular.

The other men look up at Frankie, waiting to hear what he has to say. Frankie shakes his head and continues, "The old broad who checked us in is working the desk this morning. Doesn’t even recognize me. Can’t even figure out change in her head. Keeps asking over and over; four men in two rooms sir?"

A look of disgust grows on Frankie’s face. He ends the anecdote saying. “Some people get too
old for their own safety.”

Given the prosperity of their present state, none of the men are inclined to attach any significance to the obtuse manner of the desk clerk. They smile at Frankie’s new story and the comical way he relates it to his friends. It is perfectly in character for Frankie to complain about the help. He did a good job of imitating the desk clerk.

Ricky yawns. He stretches out his arms and makes his hands into fists.

“We ought to get some sleep until it’s time to go back on the street.”

Ricky’s suggestion makes perfect sense to Frankie. He turns to his younger brother. “Let’s get back to the room. You can play with your guns until you fall asleep.”

Tepo and his older brother walk out to the sidewalk and over to their room. Ali and Frankie close the doors of their rooms at about the same time. Neither man bothers to fasten the safety chain. By this time, shabby though it might be, the motel feels like a fortress, a private sanctuary.

Scene 23 On The Prowl For New Contacts

Location: The mean streets of Dallas Texas

Several hours later Ali Leon awakes from a fitful sleep in the now darkened room he shares with Ricky Sinaloa. Ali rolls himself up like the gymnast he once aspired to be and sits up in bed. Next, he puts his legs over the edge of the bed so he can face Ricky.

"Time for work, Mister Sinaloa." says Ali to Ricky in a matter of fact voice.

Ricky yawns wide. Then he sticks his bare arms above the covers.

"Is it Philadelphia yet?" he asks.

"Gonna be Philadelphia", quips Ali, "we need gas money first."

After they dress, the two men place their suitcases and Ali’s briefcase in the Mercury wagon. They look around to see if anyone is watching. Then Ricky knocks on the door of the room occupied by the Nayari brothers.

Frankie’s voice carries through the shabby door. “We’re ready to shove off. Be with you in a second.”
Ricky hears the sound of the safety chain. The door in front of his face opens on squeaky hinges. Frankie and Tepo walk out of the room. Each man has his briefcase in his hand.

Ali busies himself transferring five packages of cocaine to his briefcase from the fertilizer sacks on the bottom of the cargo space of the wagon. Ali speaks to Frankie through the open window of the car,

“Give me the case, I’ll load it up for you.”

Frankie hands his briefcase in through the window to Ali. Ali opens the case. With swift expert motions, he places an identical number of packages of cocaine in the bottom of Frankie's briefcase. Leon puts Frankie’s revolver on top of the packages of drugs. He hefts the closed briefcase out the window into Frankie's eager grasp.

The men climb into their cars with Ali behind the wheel of the Mercury and Ricky behind the wheel of the Chrysler. The two cars drive off in search of yet another drug deal.

At sunset, Ricky and Ali switch on their headlights in one smooth motion. They head north, back towards the expressway and the Dallas slums. This time, Ali makes a right turn a couple of blocks before they come to the expressway. The two men in the Chrysler follow easily behind.

Ali glances at Tepo. He remarks. “No blue bandanas. No yellow bandanas.”

Tepo laughs aloud, catching the spirit of Ali’s joke. Then he picks up the Citizens Band radio from off the floor of the car. He keys the microphone and says playfully,

“One to two. One to two. No blue bandanas. No yellow bandanas.”

Tepo turns and looks over his shoulder at his brother and Ricky in the Chrysler sedan. After turning back in his seat, he says to Ali,

“They’re laughing too!”

The cars move along for a few yards and then the speaker in the radio in Tepo’s hand comes to life. Ali and Tepo hear Frankie say,

“We’re looking for designer color bandanas. Like maybe Miami maroon or Puerto Rican purple.”

All four men laugh. A few minutes more and the cars speed past the abandoned apartment building where they made their first sale. The location is deserted. There is no one standing at the curb and no parked cars for a considerable distance in either direction. Ali makes a left turn and then a right at the next block. He has to stay parallel to the expressway but he also has to change his pattern to avoid being predictable. It could cost them their lives to do anything, go anywhere,
on a set schedule.

Frankie is in such a good mood he feels like talking to everyone in the group. After keying the microphone in his hand held radio, he says.

“Know what I'm thinking? That old broad back at the motel has a one way mirror behind her head. I bet her husband put it in so he could watch her make change. She can’t be trusted with a roll of quarters!”

Ricky, behind the wheel of the Chrysler and next to Frankie, smiles appreciatively. Then they hear Tepo’s voice come across the radio speaker. Frankie's baby brother sounds a little disappointed,

“We might end up trying to sell to the motel lady. Nothing's doing.”

Tepo's observation leaves the men driving along in silence for a good long time. Ali turns the caravan this way and that in search of a business opportunity, but it is no use. Though he is careful to keep his caravan in the right neighborhood, the streets are deserted.

Finally, a short while after midnight, Tepo spies a potential customer. He sees a young man standing at curbside, doing his best to look inconspicuous. In a flash Tepo snatches up his radio. Thrilled to the point of agitation, Tepo chirps.

“This side of the street. Slow down so we can talk to him.”

Tepo glances back over his shoulder. He sees the Chrysler has slowed, preparing to halt. He turns to Ali.

“Go ahead, they’re right behind us.”

Ali slows the Mercury, bringing Tepo right up next to the pusher. Tepo holds the radio in his left hand while keeping his right hand out of sight inside his briefcase.

When the pusher sees the radio and the briefcase, and the position of Tepo’s right hand, a startled look flashes on his face. His eyebrows move up and his eyes widen. As soon as he regains his nonchalance, the street corner punk goes eye to eye with Tepo.

“Where you boys from?” the pusher asks.

Ali leans towards Tepo's open window. “L.A., we drove out here for the racing season.”

The pusher sneers. He asks. “What you think you gonna find round here?”

Tepo feels a little bit impatient. He says to the young man on the curb,

“We got some pure coke to sell, maybe as much as five kilo. Can you handle it?”
The pusher responds to Tepo's challenge, “That’s a lot of weight for me to be pushing upstream. My job is selling, not buying. If you boys is that much for real why don’t you have your own crew?”

Ali knows the answer. While staring at the young man he replies.

“It's seasonal work for my people. We keep moving.”

Ali’s response makes a lot of sense to the pusher. He says.

"Gotta taste your stuff."

Tepo jerks his head back in an effort to get the boy on the street corner to notice Ricky and Frankie in the Chrysler behind the Mercury. Tepo explains.

“Settle up on a price with the guys in the back of us. We’re going to move up and keep an eye on things.”

Ali takes his foot off the brake pedal. He lets the wagon roll forward a few car lengths. Ricky sees the motion. He does not have to be told it is his turn to handle the negotiations for this evening. Sinaloa drives the Chrysler up to the place where the wagon was parked. As his car comes to a halt, Frankie opens his briefcase, turning it so the pusher can see inside. Frankie says simply.

“Which package do you want me to cut open?”

Wordlessly the pusher points to the package in the upper right hand corner of the case. Frankie makes a small cut through the wrapper with the huge sheath knife Ricky bought for him as a present. The pusher's eyes sweep up and down the street.

Then, with the help of an unusually long fingernail at the end of the little finger on his left hand, he scoops up a portion of the drug. The street corner punk brings the sample up to his face. He admires the pure white color. Last, he inhales deeply while bringing the powder into his nose with a vulgar sucking sound. Moments later the street corner punk nods and smiles. He says.

“You must be the dudes whole town be talking about.”

The pusher bends down far enough to make eye contact with Ricky. “What kind of tattoo you got on your arm?”

Ricky feels flattered by the question. He replies. “Might be a spider’s web I earned back in the day.”

Once again, the pusher nods. “All five keys for real then. People be talking about you all up and down the barrio.”
The casual gang chatter between Ricky and the pusher leaves Frankie feeling upstaged. He is never very happy when someone else is the center of attention, especially a 'low life' like Ricky Sinaloa.

Frankie sneers at the young man perched on the curb. He says, “Can you get us five rolls of fifties and, say, three stacks of twenties for the whole five kilo’s?”

While he speaks, Frankie makes a 'hurry it up' gesture with the hand he holds dangling out the window.

The pusher puts his hands in his pockets. He looks square into Frankie's eyes.

“That’s a lot of change. ... I’ll go see what I can do.”

On that note, the pusher turns and walks down the dark side street, away from the Chrysler. While still in sight of Ricky and Frankie, he passes through the gate of a chest high chain link fence. A few more quick steps and he is over a cracked sidewalk, up a concrete step, and then through the front door of a brick bungalow.

The house is quite dilapidated- there are tattered cardboard boxes scattered about and an old truck tire lying on the front yard. As the drug dealer enters the door, Frankie sees a curtain move slightly in one of the bay windows of the house. The movement brings a sense of fear to Frankie’s mind. Yet Frankie is too worked up to consider what the sinister motion might portend for the immediate future.

When the pusher comes out of the house a few moments later, he has a brown paper bag tucked under his left arm. Frankie and Ricky notice he is now wearing a jacket and that his right hand dangles in the pocket. They exchange worried looks. It is, indeed, a fearsome moment! Just then, Tepo’s voice comes over the speaker on their hand held radio.

“We got him covered. Keep an eye on his right hand.”

Ricky and Frankie breathe out with sighs of relief. They feel comforted by the timely message from Frankie's baby brother. Frankie jokes with Ricky saying, “Here comes a down payment on a beach house!”

The pusher walks up to the front passenger side window of the Chrysler. His eyes hold a bright and friendly sparkle. Ricky and Frankie notice that when the young man pulls his right hand out of his jacket pocket. The pocket sags down, as if under a hefty weight.

While looking directly at Frankie the young man explains, “Each time you hand me out a kilo, you get a paycheck.”
Frankie smiles at this, he hands one of the kilogram packages of cocaine out of the window of the car. The street corner punk drops the hefty package of drugs into his paper sack. Then the man standing on the curb tosses a roll of fifties and a stack of twenties into Frankie's open briefcase. The exchange continues until Frankie's allotment of cocaine sits in the brown bag and the pusher's cash lays haphazardly about the inside of Frankie's briefcase.

The sale is complete to the satisfaction of all concerned parties. The pusher hunkers down in an effort to build a more intimate relationship with his wholesale suppliers. He sees a pair of glowing eyes on Frankie and a look of triumph on Ricky's face. He says. “You guys staying in a boat at the dock or a motel room or what?”

Ricky is overconfident. He does not realize he is being led along. Ricky answers the question with a question. “You want to call us tomorrow at the motel?”

The pusher smiles, although now his face reveals a noticeable degree of anxiety. “Might be, maybe, I want to ring you up some time,” says the pusher.

Ricky vacillates- it is easy for him to trust another man who, like himself, has grown up in poverty. Still, the heavy lump in the pusher's right hand jacket pocket speaks out for caution.

Ricky starts to say, “The old broad running the place...” but stops in mid sentence when he sees the angry look in Frankie's eyes.

Frankie cuts Ricky off in a voice filled with contempt, “We gotta take off. It’s way past our bedtime.”

The harsh tone in Frankie's voice brings Ricky back down to earth. He does not wait for the pusher to stand up and back away from the window. Ricky takes his foot off the brake pedal. He presses down on the accelerator. Both men, Ricky and Frankie, realize it might not be safe to return to the same motel.

Scene 24 Chance Encounter With An 'Old Friend'

Location: The mean streets of Dallas Texas
As Ricky and Frankie's Chrysler speeds past the Mercury wagon, Frankie brings his radio up to his lips.

“Get Leon to take us back to the boulevard and then back to the motel.”

Tepo and Ali hear the message loud and clear. Ali responds by catching up with and then smoothly passing the Chrysler on the outside. All four men are now on guard and super vigilant. Tepo is well aware of the need to keep his messages short and cryptic. Tepo keys his microphone, “One to two.  One to two.  Are we all done for the night?”

Shortly, Ali and Tepo hear Frankie's voice on the speaker, “Head on back to the motel,” barks Frankie, “but drive real slow and keep separate.”

Soon both cars, Ali in the lead behind the wheel of the Mercury, are at the intersection of the north south boulevard.  Ali makes a slow and cautious left turn.  Hearts pounding, Tepo and his brother Frankie clutch their radios in their left hands.

The men drive along for a good long while. They see nothing suspicious, nothing worthy of a raised eyebrow. Two traffic lights short of their motel the vehicles carrying the men become separate at an intersection.  Ali and Tepo just make it across the cross street, Ricky and Frankie are held up by a red light.

With his eyes glued to his rear view mirror, Ali watches Ricky pull the Chrysler to a halt. Ali turns to Tepo, "Some kind of problem?"

Held up at the intersection, waiting for the light to change, Frankie glances into the windows of an all night diner located at the corner and on the right hand side of the street.

Somewhat out of character for the run down nature of the neighborhood, the interior of the diner is lit up by a row of one hundred watt light bulbs in ceiling fixtures.  Frankie thinks he sees a familiar face in the glare of the lights in the restaurant!

Frankie sees a young boy smoking a cigarette and idly working a spoon in a cup of coffee. Frankie stares at the boy until the light changes. The encounter is one sided. There is plenty of light in the restaurant for Frankie to see the boy, not enough light on the street for the boy to see Frankie.

The light goes green, the Chrysler rolls across the intersection. Frankie turns his head to keep the boy in view. When the boy passes out of view, Frankie turns his head towards the windshield and anxiously keys his radio.

“Tepo!, Ali! - run back to the diner. See if you recognize the kid sitting at the table."

Ali sits up quickly against his seat belt. His hands clench the wheel and his shoulders tense. The frightened and anxious tone in Frankie’s voice drives Ali into a state of full alert. Ali grabs the
radio out of Tepo’s hand. He brings the microphone up to his lips and presses down on the 'push to talk' button.

“Gonna drive back and take a look. Pull up ahead. Stay low in the car and out of sight.”

With that, Ali makes a u-turn and drives back to the intersection with the diner.

Ali drives as slowly as he dares through the intersection and past the diner on a green light. Tepo turns towards Ali at the waist and stares at the patrons in the diner. Out of range of the diner, Ali glares at Tepo with hooded eyes, “Did you see the guy Frankie is talking about?”

Tepo shakes his head and replies. “Nobody sitting in the window. There was an old couple and somebody using the phone. Guy on the phone had his head turned away from the window. Couldn’t see his face.”

Ali presses his foot down on the accelerator pedal. The Mercury wagon gathers speed. Two blocks later Ali makes a right hand turn on squealing tires. He circles the block, almost on two wheels, and then drives south on the boulevard. Ali brings the wagon to an abrupt halt in front of the diner, even though the light is full green. Ali barks at Tepo.

“Get a good look this time and figure out who everybody is!”

Tepo sticks his head and shoulders out of the window of the Mercury wagon. He peers into the diner. He recognizes the elderly couple, presumably a husband and wife, and the cook who stands behind the counter. Just at that moment, however, no one stands near the telephone on the wall by the entrance door.

Tepo swivels his head around and says to Ali, “Nobody on the phone. Everybody else is either too old or wearing an apron.”

Ali and Tepo exchange frustrated glances. What should they do? Ali drives the Mercury up into the intersection. He places the car at a point where he and Tepo can see up and down the sidewalk of the intersecting street.

Ali looks to the east and Tepo looks to the west. The streets are deserted. There are neither pedestrians nor cars moving along in either direction.

Just then, a brief motion catches Tepo’s attention. Tepo leans his head and shoulders further out his window. Then he turns his head to the far right. Now he is able to watch a young man walking towards him up the aisle of the restaurant, between the window tables and the counter seats.

Tepo sees the young man has an unopened package of cigarettes in his right hand. Moreover, he notes the boy moves along with the kind of a rolling slouch or saunter one typically associates with membership in a gang. The scene piques Tepo’s curiosity. Yet he is not quite certain of its
Just then, the boy in the restaurant passes the point where the waiter stands behind the counter. He glances out through the plate glass window of the diner and makes eye contact with Tepo. A startled look appears on his face. His eyes blaze! The young man drops his cigarettes and stops in mid-stride. White in the face, the boy bends over and picks up the cigarettes. Then he sits down quickly on a swivel stool at the counter. He pulls a menu out of a holder, pretending to be absorbed in the cuisine, and pretending to be oblivious to Tepo.

Tepo recognizes the charade for what it truly is, a bit of play-acting. He mutters.

“That’s got to be him.”

Tepo pulls his head and shoulders back into the Mercury. He sits bolt upright. Tepo grabs his radio. His hands tremble so much he puts the radio back down on the seat. Then he turns his head to Ali and exclaims. “We better take off!”

Mister Leon maintains his composure. In spite of the fact his face shows a mix of anger and fear. Ali drives away from the intersection at a pace calculated not to draw attention.

Tepo turns his head towards the older man and says.

“Has to be the blue bandanna from the first night. The guy from last night had a gold tooth in the front.”

Ali makes eye contact with Tepo in the mirror. He asks. “Did he make you?”

Tepo responds without hesitation, “Like somebody from finishing school!”

Tepo looks at Ali in profile for a long moment. Then he says.

“Pull up next to the Chrysler. We have to talk it out.”

Ali waves his hand in front of his face until Ricky sees the motion in his rear view mirror. Ricky turns his head all the way round for a brief moment. Ali makes a stabbing motion with his hand towards the sidewalk. Ricky slows the Chrysler. He lets Ali drive past on the outside. Ali brings the Mercury to a halt in the middle of the next block. Soon the two cars sit side-by-side, engines running, with the Mercury wagon pulled into a parking space. Ali puts the gearshift lever of the wagon into park. He leans out his window to be able to converse with Ricky and Frankie.

“Tepo thinks the kid is the blue bandanna from the first night.”

Ricky looks hard at Tepo. “Did he act nervous or like he knows us?”

Tepo responds, nearly out of breath. “Soon as he saw me he sat down real quick at the counter and grabbed for a menu. Too scared to go outside.”
Tepo’s older brother Frankie is very much alarmed. Their business deals have been too easy, much too smooth to be for real. Frankie starts to wonder if maybe the blue bandanna was watching him through the one-way mirror in the motel office while he paid the bill.

Frankie struggles to regain his composure. He summarizes the problem for the other three. While looking directly at Ali he says. “Makes sense if they hit us they hit us back at the motel. That way they get all the drugs and the money.”

Speaking for both himself and his older brother, Tepo asks. “What do we do?” Then he glances nervously back and forth at Ricky and Ali.

Ali bites his lower lip and stares straight out the windshield. Then he glances up into the rear view mirror. Ricky tightens his grip on the steering wheel in the heavy silence. The knuckles on his fingers go white. Ricky opines to Ali.

“No matter how it goes we lose in a shoot out. They won’t have anything on them but guns.”

Ali adds dryly, “There’s no telling how many guys with guns or even where or when they plan to take us.”

Ali, Frankie, and Tepo, sit quietly in their seats. Suddenly Ricky smiles. It dawns clear he is the only man in the group with enough experience to make the right decision. Looking straight across at Ali in the driver’s seat of the wagon Ricky says.

“Get us on the interstate, Ali, we gonna take off and head to Saint Louis.”

Ali nods his head in complete agreement with Ricky. He shifts the transmission from park to drive and speeds away from the curbside rendezvous. Ricky and Frankie follow close behind in the Chrysler.
CHAPTER 3 ON THE ROAD FROM DALLAS TO PHILADELPHIA
Scene 25 The Ambush That Almost Was

Location: On the road, Dallas Texas to Saint Louis Missouri

Ali drives east until he sees the signs for highway 12. Mister Leon heads north on 12, then makes a right hand turn onto 30. Due to the late hour, the two-car caravan speeds rapidly through downtown Dallas. The men soon find themselves on the south side of Garland Texas.
While the Mercury and the Chrysler motor over the smooth blue expanse of Lake Ray Hubbard. A man hefting a pump shotgun in one hand steals a quick glance out the window of Ali and Ricky's empty motel room. The man peers this way and that. He sees nothing of interest, so he lets lose of the curtain. The man with the shotgun turns full around. There is another man sprawled on Ricky’s bed. The man with the shotgun says. “Thought I heard the Chrysler.”

That was it for the ambush. Tepo's sharp eye and his well-honed intuitions saved his life and the lives of his older brother Frankie, and their companions, Ali Leon, and Ricky Sinaloa.

The two cars head towards the northeast during most of the dark hours of the night. In Arkadelphia Arkansas, halfway between Texarkana and Little Rock, they stop for gasoline and two quarts of oil for the Chrysler. On the southern outskirts of Little Rock, they leave the interstate and pick up the beltway.

They travel briefly towards the east and then to the north. Soon they find themselves motoring along Interstate 40. Halfway to Memphis Tennessee they exit from the divided highway near yet another run down motel. Here they rent two room and rest during the following day and night.

The men pay in full for the rooms on the previous day. They leave the motel without stopping at the office. This is by intent. Their idea is to avoid an encounter with someone who might later be able to recognize them from a photograph.

Instead of checking out, they simply toss their room keys on to the bed. The brush with danger in Dallas leaves them super cautious.

Back in the cars after breakfast, the men drive on Interstate 40 east to the outskirts of Memphis. Here they make a turn to the left, continuing north on Interstate 55. For a few hours, their path runs parallel to the Mississippi River. In Cape Girardeau, they stop for gasoline and oil. At nightfall, they arrive at the city of Mehlville, just on the southern outskirts of Saint Louis, Missouri. Here they exit the interstate and rent another pair of budget rooms for the evening.

**Scene 26 Monday Morning Combined Services Briefing**

**Location: Hearing Chambers, Office of the Deputy Director for Operations, C.I.A. Headquarters, Langley Virginia**

Colonel Henry Winston Wingate, Commander Action Officers Unit, Central Intelligence Agency smiles an optimistic at his audience. The conference room holds a Catholic mix of people from the Central Intelligence Agency the Drug Enforcement Agency and just today the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. He says.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we've a lot of ground to cover. Let's begin with Agent Daniel Collins of the College Park Drug Enforcement Agency station. Mr. Collins, if you would please, Sir."
Dan Collins rises to his feet, file folder in hand. He makes his way onto the raised speaker's platform and over to the podium. Colonel Wingate takes his traditional seat at the head of the first table in the conference room. Mr. Collins clears his throat.

As he stands behind the lectern on the podium, Dan Collins holds a half dozen file folders in his hands. The room quiets. He pulls a sheet of paper from one of the folders, and looks out directly at the audience. Agent Collins says.

"Let me start out by reviewing some of the facts in this case. Some weeks ago on a Friday morning a group of nuns, nurses by profession, drove out of the small Mexican town of El Mirador in a 1969 Mercury station wagon. Their car contained things like vaccines, prenatal supplies, antibiotics, and laboratory equipment. The nuns planned a two or three-day tour through a collection of remote Indian villages dotting the countryside around El Mirador."

Dan goes to a second sheet of paper for more facts.

"Late Friday night the people in one of the villages which the sisters visited heard gunshots at about one in the morning. They were too frightened to go out and investigate in the darkness. The village chief surmised the gun battle involved rival drug gangs, not innocent civilians."

"In the morning, a group of men from the village marched out in the direction from which they heard the noise. About a mile outside of town, they came upon a plot of newly turned soil. Some of the men went back to the village to get shovels. Some went to inform the Chief of the Local Mexican Police."

"Around noon time the farmers uncovered the bodies of the nuns, hidden in a shallow grave. Right close to the gravesite they found spent brass from semi automatic weapons and drug lab paraphernalia. The local police photographed the crime scene. They got in touch with the Drug Enforcement Agency liaison office in Mexico City. Our people in Mexico called up to Washington. We arranged for Dr. Baron to fly down to Mexico City and perform the autopsies."

Dan Collins steps down off the speaker's platform and says.

"You have the floor Mister Gomez."

Joe Gomez mounts the podium as Dan Collins steps down. Gomez says,

"The police in El Mirador started speaking with informants. Late Saturday they found someone eager to talk. Turns out a number of farmers and storekeepers remembered four young Hispanics. But only one could help us out with a first and a last name."
"A Mexican National told our people he used to work for a group of coyotes smuggling people over the border for small cash payments. He told us a few years back the coyotes had a shift boss using the name Ali Leon."

"According to him, one of the four Hispanics who disappeared right after the murders was probably Mr. León. The police went back to the bars with the name. In a few of the hangouts the bartenders and patrons connected the name Ali Leon with three other men calling themselves Ricky, Frankie, and Tepo."

Gomez consults his notes. Then he reads off physical descriptions of the four drug dealers and killers.

"(1) Ali León is a male Hispanic in his mid to late thirties. He stands about five feet six. No distinguishing marks but he wears eyeglasses."

"(2) The male Hispanic, named Ricky is the tallest of the group at around five feet nine or ten. This man often covers his head with a bandanna. Some of the informants thought they saw a tattoo of a spider's web on the surface of his left elbow. There is a rumor this suspect received a psychiatric discharge from the Mexican army within the last five years. Our people in Mexico are looking into this possibility. If the Ricky suspect was in a military prison, we ought to soon have a picture and a set of prints."

Joe Gomez continues,

"This is where the case gets interesting for the Central Intelligence Agency. According to reports, the last two suspects are sons or nephews of one of the wealthiest and most powerful drug dealers in Colombia."

"(3) The older brother, Frankie, is five feet nine he weighs around one hundred and fifty pounds."

"(4) The younger one, Tepo, is five seven and one twenty. Neither of these men have distinguishing marks or features. Frankie looks to be about twenty years old. The Tepo suspect perhaps sixteen or seventeen."

Joe Gomez looks around the room. He says, "If you don't have any questions about the physical descriptions, I'd like to have Doctor Baron go over the forensic findings from the autopsies."

Doctor Baron stands, he takes Joe Gomez's place behind the lectern. He says,
"For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jeffrey Baron. I am a forensic pathologist at the Armed Forces Pathology Institute here in Washington."

"The major theme in this crime is overkill. The assailants could have simply tied up the victims and fled across the border into Texas. They might have taken the lives of the sisters with single gunshot wounds to the heart or the head."

"But what they chose to do was shoot a great many large caliber bullets into the bodies of defenseless females. It takes a lot of hostility to commit a crime like this. These men are sociopaths who wander in and out of reality the way normal people make a visit to a mall on Saturday morning."

"Another point," continues Doctor Baron, "Concerns the uniformity of the entrance wounds. Do not, I repeat, do not imagine the victims died at the hands of a single assailant. If the crime had been committed by only a single man in the gang he would of necessity have been made into a scapegoat."

"A more likely scenario is the killers used one or more identical weapons which they passed from hand to hand. Keep in mind the suspects range in height from five foot nine or ten down to five foot seven. Each of them would have held the gun at roughly the same angle as the injuries were inflicted."

Doctor Jeffrey Baron takes a step forward towards the edge of the platform. He says,

"The killers have to be the product of a physically abusive father. You can picture them as never having developed a mature love relationship with another person. Perhaps one in the group is divorced, but the others will be single and sexual predator types. What makes them a danger to society is the fact they feed off one another. In this gang the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts."

Dan Collins mounts the speaker's stand off to the side of Dr. Baron. While the forensic scientist stands there in silence, Dan asks, "Any questions about the physical findings at the autopsy or the psychological profiles?"

Mister Collins waits for a moment. He turns to Doctor Baron and says, "Thanks a lot Doctor. We appreciate getting so much help with the human side of our cases."

The forensic pathologist nods, he leaves the podium for a seat in the audience.

Dan Collins takes the spot behind the lectern. Dan goes to another one of the file folders in his hand. He pulls out a fresh report. He reads it over for a short while. Looking up he says.

"The killers took off from the murder scene. They drove north towards the Rio Grande River. They left in two cars, the Mercury wagon belonging to the sisters and a late model four door Chrysler."
Dan Collins looks over at Joe Gomez. He nods his head. Agent Gomez hits the 'on' switch on the slide projector on the center table in the conference room.

Dan looks back at the screen behind the podium, then out at his audience. He says,

"This is the Mercury wagon. The photographer took this picture in front of the free clinic in El Mirador. The prenatal clinic set up by the Sisters of Saint Christina. The nuns standing on both sides of the hood of the wagon are the victims."

"I don't know if you can make out the sign in the windshield on the driver's side. We found out it reads, **SISTERS OF SAINT CHRISTINA, MOBILE NURSING SERVICES**. The sign turns out to be our best piece of evidence. The killers used it to bluff their way across the border."

Andy Howell asks, "Dan, what good did the sign do for the suspects?"

Collins replies,

"They left the sign in the windshield of the Mercury wagon. At the Laredo Border crossing, they told the customs people they were gardeners working for the nuns on both sides of the river. The guards fell for the bluff because the nun's car was down on a list of frequent and friendly border crossers."

Andy says, "Has the nun's car turned up anywhere?"

Dan replies, "We think they still have it in their possession. It was in good working order, and besides, with fertilizer sacks and a pair of shovels in the back it would look harmless to the local police."

"How did they get the cocaine past the drug sniffing dogs at the border?" Asks Moses Anderson of Dan Collins.

Dan Collins looks puzzled. Joe Gomez speaks up from his seat in the audience.

"We think they put their cocaine inside sacks of chemical fertilizer. Dogs went over the wagon and the Chrysler from top to bottom. But they were misled by the smells of the chemicals."

Lieutenant Colonel Moses Anderson frowns, he lets out with a weary sigh. He says,

"So now we have four drug dealing murderers running loose in the United States. Will it be easier to find four needles in a haystack instead of just one?"
Scene 27 The Traveling Salesmen Meet Another Traveling Salesman

Location: A shopping mall in Florissant Missouri

After a breakfast meal in a fast food restaurant the men drive their cars onto the beltway headed first to the west and then to the north. For no particular reason they exit at the town of Florissant Missouri. The four men drive around aimlessly for a while through the well to do neighborhoods of this community.

Tepo picks up his radio at a stoplight on Shackelford Road. He says. “This is what we want for customers. Should we go door to door?”

Ricky and Frankie hear Tepo's tongue in cheek inquiry out of the speaker of the hand held radio in their car. Frankie picks his Citizens Band radio up off the seat and brings it to his lips.

“Cruise around a mall parking lot until we find a pothead. Maybe someone wants to go big time.”

It takes Ali and Tepo but a short while to find a mall stocked with upscale stores and boutiques in the prosperous town of Florissant Missouri. The men fear an encounter with plain-clothes detectives. So, as a safe alternative to walking up and down in the mall, they prowl through the expansive parking lots surrounding the many stylish buildings. The cars separate. They drive slowly up and down the parking lanes on opposite sides of the mall. After a time Tepo jumps up and down in his seat and pounds on the armrest in the door of the Mercury wagon.

Tepo exclaims to Ali. “Guy over there on the motorcycle. Has to be weed.”

Ali nods. He drives ever so slowly down the parking lane and towards the man on the bike.

Ali brakes to a stop when Tepo is head to head with the marijuana smoker. As soon as the car halts, the biker’s face breaks out into a conspiratorial grin. He glances back and forth between Ali and Tepo.
“What’s happening guys?” Then he inhales deeply from his hand rolled cigarette.

Ali leans forward and to his right. He replies to the man on the bike.

“We’re selling, not buying.”

The biker sits up straight and peers into the Mercury wagon. His face displays a mix of curiosity and a fear of entrapment. He gets off his motorcycle by swinging his booted left foot in a big arc over the handlebars. Next, he stands full erect and walks over to the Mercury wagon. After flipping the butt of the cigarette onto the pavement, he puts both hands on the roof of the car just above Tepo’s window.

Ali and Tepo can see tattoos all around the man's arms and around his neck. Tepo smells marijuana on the man’s breath. When you factor in his blood shot eyes and rancid body odor, there is no reason to think he might be a decoy police officer. Tepo looks up and says without hesitation.

“I might be able to find you a kilo of pure cocaine. Could you come up with two rolls of fifties?”

On his guard, still peering into every corner of the interior of the Mercury, the biker replies. “See a safe deposit box on my wheels?”

Tepo laughs and answers. “When you see what I got you’ll wish you had!”

The biker laughs at this and replies. “Let me see the stuff.”

Tepo does not need a second invitation. With his left arm, he reaches behind Ali’s seat and grasps the handle of his briefcase. He pulls the case up to the front and places it flat on his lap. In one swift practiced motion, he flips open the locks and lifts the lid of the case. The biker brings his head down, nearly full into the window. He squints his blood shot eyes. What he sees in the case is five packages of cocaine and a MAC-10 machine pistol!

Tepo hands the man one of the plastic packages so that he can feel the weight. Then he idles his hand on top of the gun in the briefcase.

The man stands erect, taking his hands off the roof of the Mercury. He hefts the package in his right hand. Soon his face breaks into a wide grin. Looking first at Ali and then at Tepo the man says.

“You got the weight alright, I gotta test it for strength.”

Ali nods at the biker. He makes a gesture with his thumb and first finger, signaling the man he is
free to try a small sample.

The biker walks slowly back to his motorcycle. He climbs back onto the leather seat. He puts the package of cocaine down squarely on the middle of the gas tank of his bike.

Then he reaches down into the leather saddlebag on the right hand side of the rear wheel of the motorcycle. From inside the bag he removes a small plastic case. The kind used to hold commercial music cassettes. He flips open the lid and pulls out several small screw top jars. Two of these are filled nearly to the top with a clear liquid.

The biker digs in the right hand side pocket of his leather jacket and comes out with a small penknife. He makes an incision into the top surface of the package of cocaine. Then he uses the flat edge of the knife blade to transfer a small quantity of the drug into the empty screw top jar. He pours small volumes of the liquid from the other two jars on top of the white powder. Then he caps the test vial and shakes it vigorously in his right hand. Finally, he holds the test vial up to the light so that he can appreciate the color of the liquid. Satisfied with the test results, the man shifts round on the seat of his bike to speak to Tepo and Ali.

Smiling he says. “Purest of the pure.”

Suddenly the biker’s face takes on a business like demeanor. It is time for some hardheaded wheeling and dealing. In a no nonsense voice he says to Ali and Tepo.

“Can’t go two for one. Give me two, I can promote you three rolls of fifties.”

Ali sneers and replies. “Let me see the rolls of fifties. If all the bills are real we can let you have two for three.”

Without another word, the biker reaches back into the same saddlebag. When his hand hove's back into view, it holds three rolls of fifty-dollar bills. One at a time, he tosses the rolls in through Tepo’s window. Tepo catches each of them, one, two, three. He passes the cash over to the man in the driver's seat. As Ali inspects the bills in each roll, Tepo keeps a careful eye on the biker. Not surprising, he worries about the contents in the saddlebag on the left hand side of the bike.

The man on the motorcycle grows impatient with Ali's deliberate manner. He groans and says, “Don’t take all day Jefe, cops cruise this lot all the time!”

Ali ignores the man straddling the motorcycle. His lips moved slightly as he inspects and counts the fifty dollar bills. Finally, Ali looks up and turns to face Tepo.

“Let the guy have another package,” he says.
Tepo nods at Ali. He pulls another kilo of cocaine out of his briefcase and tosses it out the window of the car towards the biker. The man on the motorcycle catches the package in both hands. Smooth and quick, he reaches down and slides the cocaine into the saddlebag on the left hand side of his machine. Then he transfers the kilo resting on top of the motorcycles gas tank to the same place. Finally, he returns the glass vials to the cassette tape holder and tucks this into the fringe trimmed black leather bag on the right hand side of his bike.

In mute testimony to the fact the meeting is adjourned, the biker picks up a black coal scuttle helmet off his handlebars. He centers the helmet square on his head. The man cinches the strap with the buckle. Then he glances at Ali and Tepo and smiles. “Pleasure doing business with you gents.”

Before either Ali or Tepo can respond, the man turns the key in his ignition, bringing the motorcycle engine to life. Soon the air fills with blue smoke and an ear splitting cacophony as the biker rolls the throttle in his right hand.

Ali puts the Mercury in gear. He moves the wagon up a car length so that the motorcyclist can maneuver out of his parking space. As the biker speeds away, Ali glances up at his mirror. He sees a large iron cross on the rear fender of the bike.

Ali wheels the Mercury into a parking space and turns off the engine. He leaves the keys dangling in the lock. He takes the pile of fifty-dollar bills off his lap and places them in Tepo’s briefcase. Then he returns the briefcase to its resting place behind his seat. Ali looks over at Tepo and suggests.

“Better locate your brother and Ricky. Might be a good idea to get back on the freeway.”

Tepo nods, no need for Ali to draw him a picture. He picks up his radio and says to Ali.

“Let’s see if this thing works through buildings.”

Tepo makes certain the radio is on, then he inspects the channel selector. He sees the device is still tuned to the channel chosen by Ali as their primary communications frequency. Tepo keys the microphone button. He says.

“One to two, one to two, give us your location.”

Tepo pauses, waiting for a reply. Hearing nothing, he repeats his message a few times. The speaker on the radio stays mute. Is there a problem?

Ali looks square at Tepo.
“Probably turned their radio off. Maybe they went into the mall to get something to eat. Gotta drive around and find their car.”

Ali Leon brings the engine of the Mercury wagon to life. He backs the car out of the parking space. Very carefully, so as not to attract the attention of the patrons or the security people, he drives around to the west side parking lot. Ali and Tepo cruise the lot until they come upon the four door Chrysler sedan. Ali drives up next to the Chrysler and parks the Mercury on the passenger's side.

Ali and Tepo sit and wait. Ali drums his fingertips on the steering wheel. A while later the two men sitting in the Mercury see Ricky and Frankie walking out of the mall entrance and towards their car. Ricky holds carry out bags in both of his hands. Frankie balances a large cardboard drink tray. When Ricky and Frankie notice Ali and Tepo sitting in the car next to theirs they break out into wide smiles. Ricky holds the food bags up in the air indicating there is enough food for all.

Ricky walks over to Ali’s window. He explains.

“No customers on this side. We broke for lunch.”

Then he hands the carry out bag in his right hand through the window to Ali.

Ali takes the bag in his hands. He glances up at Ricky and says.

“We found a biker. He paid three rolls of fifties for two kilos of our stuff.”

Ricky responds with the air of a practically minded executive.

“Makes sense we would get a little more for it this far north. Dallas is over supplied.”

Ricky shakes his head. Although he is pleased with the slight gain in their profit margin, he regrets the life saving flight from the warm climate of Dallas to the colder regions of the north.

Frankie passes soft drinks to Tepo, one at a time while standing at the other front window of the wagon. Frankie gets into the passenger's seat of the Chrysler while Ricky climbs into the driver’s seat.

Hungry as wolves, the four men sit and eat their fast food meal in total silence. When Ricky finishes eating, he lights a cigarette. Halfway through the smoke he turns to Ali and says through their open windows.

“If we make just one good sale in the barrio tonight it might be safe for us to sleep over. We could take off in the morning.”
Ali looks down into his French fry holder while he carefully weighs the intangibles. He pops a few of the fries into his mouth and chomps down with no little relish. Then he says.

“Let’s get rooms somewheres around here. We can go looking for a place to do business after it gets dark.”

Ali wipes his hands carefully with a paper napkin. He starts the engine of the Mercury. Tepo puts the trash from their meal into the carry bag. The carry bag goes on the floor directly behind his seat. Ali Leon backs out of the parking space and drives out of the mall parking lot. He turns left onto the boulevard. The Chrysler follows close behind. The men are in search of a refuge, a secure place they can safely remain for the night.

As they drive towards the east, Ali studies the motels on either side of the road. He is searching for a place to stay at which their cars will not be visible from the street. There is no point in making their cars easy to find by the biker. Finally, he sees a motel built to his specifications. Ali taps Tepo on the shoulder like an uncle and says.

“There. If we get a room in the back nobody will be able to see the cars from the street.”

Tepo's eyes follow Ali's pointing finger. Soon his gaze falls on a motel with a curbside office and a long complex of rooms running parallel to the boulevard.

Tepo exclaims. "Just perfect!"

Ali makes a quick right turn. He brings the Mercury wagon to a halt just in front of the managers building. Ricky and Frankie pull up right behind the Mercury. Ali turns to Tepo.

"Gimme a pair of fifties."

Tepo does not need any more prompting. He has two fifty dollar bills in Ali's outstretched hand in a moment's time. Ali strides into the manager's office to rent his team a pair of rooms.

As Ali walks out of the manager's office, his companions see a big smile on his face. Mister Leon dangles two sets of room keys in his left hand while he stuffs the change from the fifties into his front pants pocket with his right hand. He walks up to the Chrysler. Ali hands Ricky one of the room keys through the window. While looking down at Ricky he says.

“Follow me to the back of the building.”

Once back in the rear of the complex, Ali is quick to locate their two rooms. He pulls his stolen Mercury wagon into the parking slot in front of a door bearing the room number on his key tag. Leon looks over at Tepo.

“Leave the dope in the car. Take the briefcases inside. We gotta keep the guns on us all the
Tepo nods in reply. Then he reaches over the seat and retrieves his briefcase and Ali’s briefcase. Both men climb out of the Mercury wagon. Ricky and Frankie do not need Ali to tell them they need their weapons in their room. As they alight from the Chrysler, each has his briefcase in his hand.

The men split into pairs. The Nayari brothers go into the room in front of the Chrysler sedan. Ali and Ricky pass through the door of the room in front of the Mercury wagon.

Quickly now, the men go back to their cars for their suitcases. Everything that needs to be in their rented rooms is in the rented rooms. It is time for a high-level strategic planning session.

A chilly blast of damp air greets Frankie and Tepo as they make their way out of their rented room and towards the room occupied by Ali and Ricky. Though dressed against the cold in a stylish windbreaker jacket and a sweater, Frankie is not happy with the unseasonably cold spring weather in Saint Louis. He wishes he was back in Dallas.

Frankie and his baby brother Tepo walk the short distance to the door of the other room. They knock and soon hear the security chain rattling in its moorings. The door swings open, Frankie and Tepo stride into the room, briefcases in hand.

Once inside Frankie tosses his briefcase onto Ali’s bed. Then he blows on his hands and offers.

“If the dope was all sold we could be on the beach at Acapulco.”

Tepo reaches down, he puts his briefcase on the floor, handle up. Then he stands to his full height.

Tepo looks first at Ali and then at Ricky. He queries.

"How do we find the pusher’s neighborhood in Saint Louis?”

Frankie's visage fills with irritation. It angers him to see his younger brother sidestep his authority and defer to the two low caste strangers. Frankie says harshly,

“If this was Mexico city, we could follow our noses to the slums.”

Frankie's condescending and sarcastic remark angers Ali a lot more than Ricky. Although Ali and Ricky are both Mexican Nationals. Ali reacts to Frankie's insult in a very personal manner.

He sits up quickly on the bed, beet red in the face. Pretty much out of character, Ali snarls.

"You two playboys would be dead if we wasn’t holding your hands."

Then he slumps back against the headboard, too tired to fight.
Ricky catches on to the fact it is time to change the subject. While eye-to-eye with Frankie, Ricky says.

“Time to get going. We might be driving around for a long time until we find a good spot.”

Ali Leon adds.

“Ought to be something near the expressway. Gotta to keep looking till we find buildings with smashed out windows.”

Tepo chimes in. “You guys have to keep your radio on all the time. I couldn’t raise you when we were back at the mall.”

Scene 28 Another Evening Exchange Of Drugs For Cash

Location: The mean streets of Saint Louis Missouri

Ali leads the two car caravan through the driveway in the motel building and out onto the boulevard. His path meanders, most of the time the nose of the Mercury points towards the southeast. Tepo takes his hands out of his jacket pockets after the car's interior warms and reaches for his radio. He flicks the power button and then speaks into the microphone.

“One to two, one to two. Uno, dos, tres,...Uno, dos, tres,...”

Tepo and Ali hear Frankie’s voice in the speaker of their radio.

“Two to one. Two to one. Tres, dos, uno.”

With that, Tepo swivels around in his seat to wave his radio at his brother in the Chrysler just behind the Mercury.

As the two cars drive along it becomes more and more obvious, they are moving in the right direction, deeper and deeper into the urban areas of Saint Louis. Stylish malls are the first to disappear. Then upscale businesses become less and less frequent. These entities replaced by
growing numbers of storefront businesses with hand painted signs and rundown apartment buildings.

Soon the landscape converts to apartment buildings with taverns and liquor stores dotting the intersections and, in some cases, watering holes in the middle of the block on both sides of the street. At about the same time, they see signs giving directions to the on and off ramps of the interstate. This is the right place! This is their sales turf! Assuming, of course, it is not too cold for the pushers to man their street corners. If the men cannot locate a dealer standing in the street, they are lost!

Ali sees the interstate a block and half ahead of his location. He makes a right hand turn at the next intersection. For what seems like an interminable time, the two cars cruise aimlessly, this way and that through the blighted neighborhood.

Suddenly, Ali and Tepo hear Frankie’s voice in the speaker on their radio.

“Locos! Just behind you on the left side of the street.”

Ali and Tepo turn their heads in the direction indicated by Frankie. What they see leads Ali to bring the Mercury to a stop in the middle of the block. A Potential Customer! A young black man in a heavy jacket and a wool knit cap on the sidewalk just behind the Mercury. Ali takes the radio away from Tepo. He keys the ‘push to talk’ button.

“Hang a u and check it out.”

The street is just a bit too narrow for the cars to complete a u-turn in a single fluid motion. Ali turns the Mercury wagon halfway around and then moves back and forth while he swaps end for end. Ricky follows suit. The two cars row back and forth under the watchful eye of the black man standing on the curb. He nods his head as his heart swells with optimism. No way local cops would pull such a stunt! They have to be paying customers from out of town!

Soon Ali and Tepo pull up even with the young man. Tepo rolls down his window. He sees a boy dressed in a ragged old corduroy coat. The street corner punk has a wool knit cap on his head. His hands stuffed in his pockets against the cold.

Before Tepo can speak, the boy in the tattered coat leans back on his heels and laughs a hearty laugh.

“Having trouble findin’ the opera house?”

The punk's breath condenses into small white puffs as he speaks.

“If you ain’t lookin for the opera I got nickel and dime bags of whatever you be dreamin’ about.”
While speaking the young man keeps his hands in his pockets. Ali leans over in front of Tepo.

“We’re wholesalers, not opera fans. What can you pay for a kilo of uncut coke?”

The boy looks in both directions up and down the dark deserted street. Then he glances over his shoulder at the gangway between two buildings. He turns back to Ali and says.

“If it tastes good I can get you a roll of fifties for a kilo.”

Tepo needs no more encouragement. He pulls his briefcase out from behind the seat. With the lid on his case flipped up to the open position, he says.

“Which one do you want to try?”

While the young man deliberates, Tepo pulls the blade of his hunting knife out of it’s sheath, holding it at the ready position. The boy points to a package with a gloved index finger. Tepo makes a small cut in the wrapper. Swiftly, the boy doffs his glove and then plucks out a pinch of the coke between his thumb and first finger.

The drug dealer stares up at the starry sky as the particles of cocaine absorb into his nasal membranes and float into his circulation. He smiles and laughs. The street corner punk glances down at Tepo. He says.

“A roll of fifties is no problem. Let me see if I got the cash to cover four kilos.”

The drug dealer can see a willingness to deal in Tepo's eyes. He turns and walks down to the dark gangway just behind his post. He does not look back. Ricky and Frankie sit stock still in the Chrysler parked several car lengths behind the Mercury.

Frankie watches his baby brother with a mix of pride and anxiety in his heart. For as much as Tepo appears to be in control, Frankie worries for his safety. Frankie brings the microphone of his hand held radio up to his lips.

Ali and Tepo hear Frankie say. “Where did he go?”

Tepo lets the air out of his lungs. He is relieved to hear his brother’s voice. It is good to know he has a vigilant back up. Tepo picks up his hand held radio.

“It’s too dark between the buildings to make out where he went.”

Frankie comes back in a worried voice. “Keep your hand on top of the MAC-10.”

Tepo replies speedily, "That's a roger!"

Tepo nods his head. He lowers the radio back down on the seat. Tepo peers this way and that in
the dark night. He struggles to see anything at all in the gloomy recesses of the gangway. Moments later, Tepo thinks he sees a brief motion in the space between the two apartment buildings. Just then, the pusher makes his appearance, walking deliberate and nonchalant towards the car. His face is a blank mask. There is no clue as to his intentions in either his expression or his posture.

As the young black boy steps up to Tepo's window in the Mercury, he has an easy view of the machine pistol resting in Tepo's hand.

Just at the door to the Mercury, the boy comes to a halt. He glances over his shoulder and peers at one of the dark windows of the building right behind his location. It is clear to Ali and Tepo, he too, has his back covered by someone hefting a powerful weapon. Tepo says flatly.

“Toss the rolls in one at a time. Each time I get a paycheck, I'll hand you the groceries.”

The dealer nods at Tepo. He bends down to have a look at the man behind the steering wheel. Then he stands erect, digs around in his right hand coat pocket, and pulls out a roll of bills. He tosses the roll into the briefcase on Tepo’s lap.

Tepo hands the money to Ali with his left hand. He keeps his right hand on top of his machine pistol.

Mister Leon goes through the bills one at a time, making certain each and every bill is real. As soon as Ali nods at Tepo, Tepo passes a package of the cocaine into the eager hands of the drug dealer. The exchange of money for drugs is soon complete.

While Tepo closes the lid on his briefcase, the young man smiles and says.

“Been real good doin’ business with you, my man.”

Without another word, the street corner hoodlum walks backwards, away from the stolen Mercury station wagon. He holds the packages of cocaine in a slippery stack between his left hand on the bottom and his right hand on the top. Once on the sidewalk the black man turns around.

He makes a little waving motion with his right hand in the direction of the windows on the darkened apartment building. The kilos of cocaine teeter dangerously in the palm of his left hand. Ali drives away from the curb at a moderate pace. Tepo rolls up his window as fast as he is able. He feels a chill up and down his spine.

The image of the Chrysler sedan fills the inside rear view mirror of the Mercury wagon at the intersection of the ghetto street with the first north south boulevard. Ali sees Ricky and Frankie grinning at him in his rear view mirror. He beeps his horn a few times in celebration. Then
Mister Leon makes a right turn. The two car caravan heads due north. They soon find a freeway on ramp to take them back to the neighborhood near Florissant and their rented motel rooms. It is only a matter of minutes until they have their two cars parked on the motel lot, safely out of the view of the boulevard traffic.

The men feel safe, secure, and prosperous. They walk briskly to the front doors of their rooms. With their doors unlocked, Frankie and Tepo turn to face Ricky and Ali.

Tepo says brightly, "Business as usual!" Ali replies, "I'll be glad when it's over."

On that note, the men make their way into their rooms, locking and chaining the doors behind them. Frankie and his younger brother Tepo fall fast asleep. Ali stays awake for a short while. He busies himself sorting the evenings take into four piles of bills. As Ali counts, Ricky lays on his back in bed smoking a cigarette.

Mister Sinaloa has his hands folded behind his head while he blows puffs of smoke up towards the ceiling. Ricky is happy with the way the cash pile grows more and more large from night to night. Better still, he feels in complete control of the gang. Ricky says to the ceiling.

"Where do we go from here?"

Ali nods and blinks his eyes. Then he climbs into his bed and turns out the light.
Scene 29 A Long Talk About The Future

Location: An inexpensive motel room, Saint Louis Missouri

Some six hours later, at sunrise, the four men wake to a soft light diffusing through the cheap curtains on the windows of their rooms. They rise, take turns in the shower, and dress for a chilly day in the Saint Louis springtime. As Ricky lights up his first cigarette, Ali pounds his fist on the wall separating the two rooms. Moments later Frankie Nayari knocks on the front door. Ali and Ricky hear Frankie say.

“It’s us, let us in.”

Ricky opens the door, Frankie and Tepo walk inside. When Ali sees them enter, he goes back to the table at his bedside to scoop up two piles of cash. Ali turns round with the cash in both hands. He offers the first pile to Frankie and the second pile to Tepo. Frankie and Tepo open their briefcases on the top of Ricky's unmade bed. Wordlessly, the Nayari brothers put their share of the take inside their brand new briefcases.

Frankie shuts the lid on his briefcase. He asks.

“Is it still Philadelphia? Los Angeles has better weather this time of the year.”

Ricky decides to side with Frankie. Ricky turns to Ali and says.

“Are we going to Philly just so you can see your kid?”

Ali stands still while he ponders his reply. He waves a hand and explains.

“Yah, My kid is just my kid. But the other thing is the big mob families are on the east coast. Maybe make one or two big sales in Philly and get it over with. The way it is now, we’re drawing a lot of exposure time.”

Tepo looks at Ali and sneers. In a voice filled with pessimism, he asks.

“How does four beaners sell dope to the Mafia? The Italians will chew us up and spit us out.”

Fact is, Mister Leon ran through this issue in his mind just before he fell asleep on the previous night. He can handle this situation! While smiling at Tepo and Frankie, Ali says.

“We’re gonna use your father as a business card.”

“What?” says Frankie with a surprised look. “What are you talking about? Are you crazy?”

“Crazy like a fox,” responds Ricky, in full agreement with Mister Leon.
“Ali means we talk to the gangs like we're runners for your old man. That way we get the dough and get treated with kid gloves at the same time. Nobody in his right mind wants to screw with Don Alberto Nayari.”

Tepo and Frankie have dazed looks on their faces. The beauty, the simplicity of Ali's plan is beyond anything they had ever imagined. Ali glances up at Tepo and Frankie. He smiles his avuncular smile. “Let’s get going,” he says brightly.

Scene 30 Tepo's Problem Comes To The Attention Of His Colleagues

Location: On the road from Saint Louis to Harrisburg Pennsylvania

One after another, each man picks up his shiny new briefcase. As they stride out of the room, Frankie and Ricky turn back and toss their motel keys onto Ricky’s bed. They motor off the motel property in search of a family owned restaurant. After breakfast, they climb back into the
Chrysler and the Mercury and drive off towards the interstate. Ali makes a left turn onto a freeway on ramp with Ricky close behind. Soon both cars merge with the freeway traffic.

The men encounter light traffic on their west to east journey on Interstate 64, out of Saint Louis Missouri. They make good time for the distance across the state of Illinois. Both cars run along trouble free, thus, they stop only for gasoline and oil. A short time before nightfall, they reach the outskirts of Lexington, Kentucky.

Ali takes the Citizens Band radio from Tepo. He radios Ricky, suggesting they gas up the cars before they stop for the night. From the gas station, they drive to the first available motel. Once again, they rent two adjoining rooms. Frankie orders out for food. Shortly, two large pizzas arrive, accompanied by two six-packs of beer. The men eat in silence and are soon asleep in their motel beds.

The following morning when the men wake and open the window curtains they see a driving rain. They leave the motel in search of a fast food restaurant. At the drive through, the men eat breakfast while seated in their two cars. Once again, Ali leads the way in the stolen Mercury wagon back onto the interstate. In Charleston, West Virginia they pick up Interstate 79. In Morgantown, West Virginia, they stop for the night. The next day, the four men find themselves together in the Chrysler, working away at their morning meal in Cumberland, Maryland.

Ricky and Frankie in the front seats, Ali right behind Ricky, Tepo next to Ali, and just behind his older brother.

The Sinaloa gang members are famished from the long drive along the interstate. They sit in silence, wolfing down on double burgers. For a while, the only audible sounds in the car are crinkling food wrappers and the faint drumming of raindrops pelting the windows and the roof of the Chrysler.

It is a chilly day in Cumberland. The men keep the windows in the Chrysler shut tight to ward off the hostile climate. Ali pulls the plastic lid off his Styrofoam coffee cup. At about the same moment, Tepo starts making sniffing sounds.

Guarded expressions fill the faces of Ricky, Ali, and Frankie. While Ricky, Ali, and Frankie look on, Tepo pulls a handkerchief from out of his back pocket. In a level voice, everyone in the car can hear, Ali says to Frankie's baby brother.

“How much are you using, Tepo?”

Tepo cannot make eye contact with Ali. He stares out of his window while he blows his nose into a monogrammed silk handkerchief. The youngest member of the Sinaloa gang lives in a state of total denial, in common with drug addicts the world over.
Tepo does his best to pretend he has just come down with a cold. Ali holds his eyes on Tepo. In a slightly louder voice, he queries.

“How much are you blowing up your nose, kid?”

At this point, Ricky and Frankie twist around in their seats and stare at Tepo.

Tepo’s eyes are watery and bloodshot. His nose is running. The delicate, boyish, fingers wrapped round his monogrammed handkerchief tremble ever so slightly.

“What are you talking about?” he replies, with his gaze fixed on the back of Ricky’s seat.

Frankie’s face transforms into a mask of anger. He shouts.

“You better kick it or I’ll kick your ass all the way back to Bogotá!”

Tepo protests in a loud and defensive voice.

“I ain’t doing nothing. You guys use the same amount when you party. I take a little bit once or twice a day.”

Tepo leans forward and grabs his stomach. There is no doubt but that he is suffering from the effects of an overdose. Frankie's baby brother starts coughing and sneezing. Suddenly, without warning, Tepo vomits into the bag holding his hamburger and French fries. The passenger compartment fills with a disgusting and fetid order.

Ricky sits there in silence with his right arm on top of the seat. His eyes dart left and right while he takes in the details of the scene. Mister Sinaloa kens this incident offers an opportunity for him to assert his authority over the other men in the gang. Ricky decides the smart thing to do is to chastise Tepo, but leave out Frankie's display of rage. While looking directly at Ali, Ricky says.

“Give me the kid’s briefcase.” When Tepo hears Ricky's request he shivers and slides his briefcase behind his back, out of Ali’s reach.

Tepo wipes his nose with the back of his left hand. With his right hand, he clutches at his stomach. Ali can see what Ricky has in mind. He grabs the briefcase hidden behind Tepo's back with both of his hands and pulls. Tepo resists with all of his remaining strength. A vigorous tug of war ensues.

Just then, Frankie intervenes in the manner he learned firsthand from his father, Don Alberto Enrique Nayari. Francesco Simon Nayari leans over the seat. He slaps Tepo on the face and on the head with all the strength he can muster. The younger man refuses to cry, yet still, tears pour from his eyes. Ricky elbows his way into the Nayari family feud. Mister Sinaloa snarls.
“Give it up or I’ll get in the back seat and knock you around myself!”

Tepo is woozy from an excess of cocaine. He feels humiliated by his colleagues. Tepo releases his grip on his briefcase. Then he puts his face down on his knees and starts to weep. Ali, meanwhile, hands Tepo's shiny new briefcase up to Ricky.

Ricky takes the briefcase from Ali’s hands. He places it on the bench seat between himself and Tepo’s brother, Frankie. Ricky uses a paper napkin to gingerly wipe off a few small spots of Tepo’s vomit and tears. Then he pops open the latches on the case and throws back the lid.

Ricky glares at Tepo. He proclaims.

“We’re gonna take away all your coke. You keep the guns. No more dope.”

Ricky hands four wrapped packages of cocaine over to Frankie, one package at a time. Frankie takes the drugs. With angry hand motions, he stuffs the packages into his own briefcase. It is a tight fit. After he closes the lid on his briefcase, Frankie leans over the seat back and slaps his brother on the back of the head.

“Your mother should see you now!” He shouts at his trembling baby brother.

Tepo cries softly. Then he wretches and goes through a period of dry heaves. Ali shakes his head in disgust. Ricky says to Ali, “Pat him down.”

Ali nods his head at Ricky. In a detached, almost professional manner, he frisks the young man, searching for hidden stores of drugs. Mister Leon finds nothing suspicious in Tepo's pockets. He looks up at Ricky. "He's clean."

Ricky grimaces at Ali. Then he turns back in his seat, twists the key in the ignition, and brings the engine of the Chrysler to life. While the eight-cylinder motor roars, Ricky flicks on the windshield wipers. As the raindrops clear from the glass in front of his eyes, he is able to make out the asphalt of the parking lot glistening in the light rain.

Mister Sinaloa makes eye contact with Mister Leon in his rear view mirror. He snarls.

“Drag his tail back to the wagon. Get him some coffee on the way out of here.”

Frankie adds. “Make him take the bag of vomit and throw it in the trash can. It stinks in here.” Frankie's tone of voice implies he sees his baby brother as something less than human.

Ali turns to Tepo. With newfound sympathy in his voice, he says.

“Let’s get going. You can sleep it off in Harrisburg.”

On that remark, Tepo and Ali climb out of the back seat of the Chrysler and walk towards the Mercury wagon. Ricky exits the parking lot of the drive-in restaurant, he makes a right turn.
Sinaloa pulls the car over to the side. After braking to a stop, he puts the transmission in park. Ricky and Frankie sit and wait in silence. Tepo pushes his trash bags into the restaurant garbage can under the watchful eye of Ali. The two men climb back into the Mercury wagon.

Ali starts the car. He motors up to the drive in window. Leon smiles at the girl in the order window. “Two large coffees with two creams. And give me some extra napkins.”

With change in hand, Ali drives up to the second window. As the young man in the window hands him his order, Ali passes the items over to Tepo.

“Keep blowing your nose kid,” Ali says in a wry voice.

With that, the Mercury rolls out on to the street. Ali in the lead, the two cars make a left turn onto the boulevard and then a right onto the interstate.

The rainy weather does not let up. The cars drive through regions of extremely beautiful countryside. Unfortunately, steam on the side windows obscures their view. Ali motors along in his usual style. He keeps both hands on the wheel, while chomping absentmindedly on a wad of gum.

Tepo sits slumped, with his backside wedged in the angle formed by the seat and the car door. During the drive to Harrisburg he uses up all of the napkins in the car, wiping his nose and mouth at very frequent intervals.

While Ali chews gum behind the wheel of the Mercury, Ricky chain-smokes. Mister Sinaloa pilots the Chrysler with only his left hand on the wheel. Frankie, always the most nervous, the most obsessive-compulsive member of the team, alternates between playing the radio, fiddling with the guns in his briefcase, and counting his share of the money from their drug deals.

Just as the two cars pass over Interstate 81 the rain clouds part, and a red ball of a setting sun appears in the rear windows of the Mercury and the Chrysler. Ricky and Ali come upon a series of exit signs labeled with the names of the streets in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. They drive under Interstate 83.

While motoring over the Susquehanna River, they catch a glimpse of the Harrisburg International airport off to the south. As they drive near the runway, a large passenger jet takes off in front of their vehicles. All four men feel as if they are sitting in a drive in movie theater. The noise from the jet engines brings Tepo alert and to the upright position. He sits up straight and starts looking around. Yet still- in spite of himself, he continues to cough and sneeze.

Once over the river the cars exit the toll way. They drive towards the southeast and in the general direction of the Harrisburg International Airport. Ali and Ricky comb the area in search of an inexpensive motel. They finally settle on a motel in the center of the block on a busy thoroughfare.
Tepo is still very weak from the effects of the drugs. He has to steady himself with his hands on the door of the car as he struggles to alight from the Mercury wagon. Shortly, both pairs of men have the doors to their adjoining rooms open wide. Ricky turns in the direction of Tepo and Frankie.

"Gonna be alive tomorrow? Or is it gonna take all year?"

Frankie's eyes blaze at Tepo. In a slurred and half-asleep voice, Tepo counters.

"What's gonna happen to you in Philadelphia should happen to a rat!"

Before they go to sleep, Frankie takes the precaution of locking up his briefcase to keep Tepo away from the cocaine. While Frankie and Tepo sleep, Ricky and Ali stay up and watch television.

As Ricky readies for sleep, he tries to formulate a plan for the large drug sales they hope to accomplish in Philadelphia. Will the Italian crime families welcome them as valued trading partners? Will they swat them dead as flies?
Scene 31 Tepo Does Business With Some Lost Children

Location: Easy on, easy off truck stop near Lancaster Pennsylvania

At breakfast the following morning, the three older men are relieved to see Tepo has nearly recovered from the effects of his cocaine overdose. Overnight, his skin color made its way back to its normal healthy shade of light brown. Better still, his eyes are no longer bloodshot! All that remains as evidence of his interlude of self-abuse is a slight tremor in his fingers. Frankie actually feels ashamed of himself for having slapped his younger brother on the previous day. He smiles at Tepo.

“We were real worried yesterday, Tepito. You had us all scared.”

Tepo sits there in silence. He fills his mouth with a fork full of syrup soaked pancakes. He puts the fork down and says to his brother Frankie.

"Might as well be at home with the old man."

Frankie tries once again to make things right with Tepo.

“Maybe we can put in some time at a gun range when we get to Philly. Shoot up some profile targets instead of tin cans and bottles. Are you up for that, Tepo?”

The idea of a gun range workout brings Tepo back into a real world relationship with his older brother. His face breaks into a weak smile.

“Maybe better do that before we deal with any mafia types.”

Tepo's eyes start to glow. He might be off drugs at the moment, but he is for certain back into his fantasy world.

After they breakfast, the four men walk out of the restaurant and into a chill wind on a bright sunny day only partially obscured by clouds. When they start the engines in their cars, Ricky sees blue smoke puffing out of the tail pipe of the Chrysler.

Mister Sinaloa glances down at his oil gauge. With a look of disgust on his face, Ricky rolls down the window of his car. Ricky says to Ali.

“Let’s gas up at the first big truck stop. I gotta pour some more black gold into this beast.”

Ali smiles and quips. “You’re getting miles to the quart, not miles to the gallon.”
Frankie laughs at Ali’s joke. He leans to his left and punches Ricky lightly on the shoulder.

The men drive down 283 to get to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They soon encounter a large truck stop with a sign reading, “Easy On - Easy Off.” It is all the invitation Ricky needs. He flashes his turn signal to get Ali’s attention. Then he drives into the truck stop. The men gas up the cars in tandem. Then they go inside the restaurant and store to pay for the fuel and purchase some oil.

Change in their hands, the men turn to make their way back out to their cars. Tepo says. “I have to use the washroom.”

On the way out of the washroom, Tepo happens upon a man roughly his own age. The stranger has a furtive look on his face.

Although the young man pretends an interest in the bobble dolls and chrome trimmed mud flaps on the sales tables. It is obvious to Tepo he has a hidden agenda. Tepo studies the man up and down. Then, slowly, the truth dawns clear.

The young man wears trucker's boots, denim jeans, a denim jacket over a dirty t-shirt, and a red bandanna. He is smoking a marijuana cigarette right out in plain view! Tepo smiles and stands to his full height. He senses he has a chance to restore his tarnished image. Tepo walks straight up to the boy. With no hesitation whatsoever, Tepo chirps.

“I got pure white powder. Wanna graduate from grammar school?”

The boy in the boots and bandanna spent most of the morning trying to sell nickel and dime bags of marijuana to the patrons of the restaurant and store. The take has been meager, to say the least. Not because of lack of demand, but rather due to the modest profit margin typical for the trade.

The boy can see Tepo is a little strung out, he is a drug abuser, a member of the clan. There is no reason for the young man to worry he might be talking to a police decoy. The boy in the denim jacket glances up and down at Tepo for a few moments. He is worried, rightly so, his newfound friend might be carrying a gun. Finally, nodding his head, he replies.

“I might be old enough to buy a couple of kilo’s if the price is right.”

Tepo responds smoothly. “If the money you got is for real, I’ll arrange for a free sample. Special just for you.”

With the formal introductions behind them, the two young men saunter out of the restaurant. They look innocent, like a couple of sophomore students at any respectable community college. Once into the sunlight, the boy in the boots raises an arm, points a finger, and says.
“That’s my van over there, with the peace signs.”

Tepo glances up and over towards the parking lot. His eyes fall on a decrepit old windowless van, hand painted in a shade of earthy green. The car sports a large diagonal crack in the windshield and rusted out rocker panels. Tepo guesses, rightly so, the boy is homeless, living day to day in his vehicle.

As the young boy and Tepo walk towards the van, Tepo is careful to make eye contact with Ali. Tepo cocks his head towards the boy. Ali knows immediately what Tepo has in mind. The two young men pass the Mercury wagon on the way to the windowless van. Ali picks up on them in his rear view mirror. Mister Leon starts the engine of the Mercury. Then he reaches behind the seat to retrieve his briefcase.

Just as Ali unlocks the locks on his case, Ricky and Frankie slam the hood shut on the Chrysler. The engine needed nearly two quarts of oil. Ricky has an unopened quart of oil in his right hand. He says.

“Let me throw this in the trunk before we take off.”

While standing at the trunk of the Chrysler, Ricky notices Tepo and the young man. Ricky assumes, correctly so, a sale will soon be in the making. He hurries into the driver’s seat of the Chrysler, smiles at Frankie, and says.

“Look back there. Easy. I think you’re kid brother gonna finance today’s lunch.”

Frankie turns his head and peers out the back window. He sees Tepo and the young man standing at the sliding side door of the decrepit van. The young man works the handle of the door. He slides it open with considerable effort. Somewhat on his guard, Tepo leans forward and peers into the dark interior.

When his eyes become accustomed to the gloom, Tepo sees a stripped out van. The walls are bare, the vehicle holds only two seats. One seat for the driver, the second for a front side passenger. There are cardboard boxes behind the seats and an old rusty two burner propane stove.

Tepo's eyes fall on a pile of sleeping bags and pillows in the back of the van.

Just then, a young girl with long black hair sits up in one of the bags and rubs her eyes. “Is that you honey?” she asks while squinting in the fresh sunlight.

“Yah,” says the boy abruptly. “Brought home a friend from school.”

The boy pulls a red metal toolbox towards himself across the floor of the van. He fiddles with a combination lock and then opens the top. After the lid squeaks open, he pulls a tray out from the top. Then he holds the toolbox so that Tepo can see inside. Tepo whistles at the sight of all the
cash money lining the bottom of the box.

Tepo explains. “We get two rolls of fifties for a kilo of coke.”

The boy in the boots shakes his head, “I can’t make anything at that price. Competition is pretty stiff around here.” Tepo can think of nothing to say. He turns round to look for Ali.

Ali sees Tepo wave at him with his right hand through his rear window. He backs out of his parking space and drives over to the side of the van. The wagon comes to a halt, facing head to tail with the van. Tepo leans into the Mercury through the front window on the passenger's side. Tepo says to Ali.

“The gentleman can’t afford two rolls for a kilo.”

Ali shakes his head at the sight of the run down green van, “Does he have any cash at all?”

Tepo feels pleased with himself, accomplished. He is working a deal! Better still- the older men seem content to defer to his judgment. With a confident look on his face, Tepo says.

“Give me a package. Let him sample the merchandise.”

Ali smiles his avuncular smile at Tepo. Without a moment's hesitation, the senior partner hands the junior partner a package of their cocaine. Tepo passes the plastic wrapped parcel over to the young man. Ali and Tepo both imagine the boy will test the cocaine in his nose. Much to their surprise, the boy tosses the cocaine back to the girl curled up in the sleeping bag.

The girl with the long black hair catches the package with relaxed familiar motions. She makes a slit through the plastic with a nail file. Then she puts a pinch of the white powder into each of her nostrils. The girl in the sleeping bag closes her eyes, she inhales deeply, she sits in silent ecstasy for a few long moments.

Tepo is just getting used to the idea of a female junkie living in a van. Then things get even more strange. Tepo sees the blankets stirring at the feet of the young girl. Next, he hears the low crying sound of an infant awakening from a deep sleep!

While Tepo looks on, open-mouthed, the young girl puts the package of drugs down near the back door of the van. Next, she picks up an infant wrapped in a small pink blanket. The girl cradles the child in her arms, whispering softly. When the infant stops crying, she looks up at the boy in the bandana.

“Hurry up!” She says in an irritated tone. “You’re daughter wants breakfast.” The girl turns away from the young man in the boots. She brings all of her attention to bear on the infant, oblivious to the shabby nature of her surroundings.
The boy in the boots looks at his wife and daughter with fatherly pride. He turns to Tepo, “Can’t go two rolls for a kilo. You can see for yourself where the money all gets spent. She’s been through two programs.”

Empathy floods Tepo's heart. If it was up to him, he would leave the cocaine with the two homeless kids.

He replies. “O.K., one roll and a stack of twenties, but you have to take two kilos.”

The boy nods. He goes for the toolbox and counts out the cash. As soon as Ali sees the money, he tosses the second kilo of cocaine out of his window and onto the floor of the van. The boy watches the package skid to a halt against the far wall. Then he hands the rest of the money over to Tepo.

The boy senses he can trust Tepo. “We work the expressway from here to Lancaster most of the time. If you come back this way next week I might be able to handle a little more weight.”

As the boy speaks, Tepo walks around the front of the Mercury and climbs back into the passenger's seat. In the passenger's seat, through Ali’s window he replies. “Don’t count on us coming back this way. But if I spot you’re wheels again we’ll pull over and try to help you out.”

Tepo and the boy in the boots and denim jacket wave at each other while Ali puts the wagon in gear and drives off towards the expressway on ramp.

Ricky and Frankie follow close behind in the smoking Chrysler. Frankie is unaware of the fact his younger brother just closed a drug deal with two teen-aged junkies.

After Ali merges with the expressway traffic, he turns to Tepo. “Was there a kid in the van? I thought I heard a baby crying.”

While Ali makes conversation, Tepo counts out the money from the drug deal back at the truck stop. For a moment, he glances at Ali. Then he fixes his gaze out of the windshield.

“Did you see that guy’s girl friend? Looks like they’re living in the van, raising a kid at the same time.”

Ali ruminates for a while. Then he remarks. “It figures. That’s why the cops don’t bust the kid.”

Tepo blinks. He stops counting out bills and twists his head towards Ali. “What figures? What do you mean about cops?”

Ali replies sagely. “Don’t you get it? Your friend would have been in the can years ago but the restaurant people make believe he’s not a pusher because they know about the girl and the baby.”
At long last, Tepo catches on to Ali’s line of reasoning. His face fills with sadness and pity. Tepo shakes his head and says.

“Won’t happen to us. When all the coke is cash we can buy real businesses.”

“That's the plan,” Ali responds in a grim voice. “I sure hope you’re right.”

As the freeway crosses route 222, Ali glances at Tepo. “Been a long time since I was back. The roads are starting to look familiar.”

Tepo replies. “We going to stop soon?”

Ali thinks before he answers. “My relatives is on the Jersey side of the river. Better stay out here in the sticks. Less chance of selling dope to one of my nephews or cousins or somebody.”

A while later, on 30, they motor past signs giving directions to Immaculata University. Ali says briskly. “Give me the horn, gotta talk to Ricky.”

Tepo digs his radio out of his briefcase. He drops the unit into Ali’s open right hand. With his eyes on the road, the older man asks. “Is this thing even on?”

Tepo replies. “Don’t change the channel. Hit that little rocker switch in the middle.”

Frankie notices the radio in Ali’s hand. “Hey!” Frankie says to Ricky. “Here comes a secret message.”

Ricky peers through the windshield of the Chrysler and into the Mercury wagon through its back window. He suggests. “Turn on the phone. Maybe there's a plan.”

Frankie nods. He picks up the radio and turns it on. No sound comes over the speaker. Frankie speaks into the microphone on his handheld.

“Two to one, two to one. On the air, waiting for your message.”

Ali brings his hand held up next to his cheek. “I want to stay somewhere outside of the city.” Frankie responds. “Coming through loud and clear. Pull over where ever you like.”

Shortly, Ali sees a motel that looks just right for their purposes. Twelve rental units in a wood framed building set far back from the road. The motel office is a small cottage style building in the center of the parking lot. The vacancy sign is on. Ali counts only two cars parked in the lot. Under his breath, Ali exclaims. “Perfect!”

Mister Leon exits interstate 76 with the Chrysler close on his tail. They pull into the gravel parking lot of the motel. All four men register for two adjoining rooms. They pay a week in advance. Ali alibis his team to the motel manager.
“We move around organizing labor crews, like for construction jobs or harvesting.”

The manager is an older man with white hair. He is dressed in a cardigan sweater over a pair of comfortable slacks. Not surprising, the manager looks the other way. He says.

"Lots of folks up this way this time of year."

The manager hands Ali a receipt for his cash over the countertop. Without another word, the men are out of the office and into their rooms.

CHAPTER 4 WHEELING AND DEALING WITH THE PHILADELPHIA MAFIA
Scene 32 Yah, But How Do We Do Business With The Mafia?

Location: An inexpensive motel room near Philadelphia Pennsylvania

Later that same evening, after they finish eating two large pizzas and start in on their third round
of beer, Ricky stands up and turns down the volume on the television set. Next, he swivels around, and goes eye to eye with Ali.

“O.K. wise guy, how does four border banditos sell coke to the Italian Mafia?”

Ali takes a long drink of beer. It feels good to spend the night in a clean room. It feels even better to be the ‘go to’ person in the Sinaloa drug gang. Mister Leon pushes his thick eyeglasses up on his nose.

“We go to the social clubs in the Italian neighborhoods.”

Frankie and Tepo stare at one another. Ali’s line of reasoning makes no sense to the trust fund babies from Bogota. Frankie looks down his nose at Ali.

“Are you saying we stick up the clubs for the money in the cash register and then throw the drugs on the counter?”

“No, stupid,” replies Ali in a blunt tone. Ali's curt remark makes Ricky chuckle. “We cruise the clubs until we find a lieutenant or a capo who will talk to us.”

Tepo's lips curl. “Why would Italians buy from Latino’s when they got their own suppliers?”

Ricky grins. He leans in his seat towards Tepo. In an expansive, hands waving in the air voice, he replies.

“We tell the mafia gonna set up a pipeline between your old man's coke factories in Columbia and the families in Philadelphia.”

In a somewhat ironic tone Frankie adds. “So two or three days from now we back up the wagon against the loading dock of a warehouse and shovel powder into a wheelbarrow?”

Ricky nods eagerly at this remark. He wants to believe it might be just that easy to close a deal with the mob. As Ricky's face breaks into a wide smile, feelings of fear and anger well up in Ali's gorge. Mister Leon slams his beer bottle down hard on the nightstand. He shouts. “No Hombre, No!”

Ricky, Frankie and Tepo turn to look at Mister Leon. Ali wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. In an angry tone, he says.

“The last thing we do is tell the Italians we got dope in our pockets. That’ll get us all hanging upside down by the ankles. Bleeding to death in somebody’s shower.”

The lurid and sinister image behind this remark sinks deep into the minds of the Nayari brothers and Ricky Sinaloa. The room falls silent. Each man knows Ali is one hundred percent in the
right. After a long pause, Frankie comes up with another idea.

“How about we cruise the mafia joints and talk to people about a business deal between the Nayari family in Bogotá and the crime families in Philly?”

Ali nods vigorously while gulping down more beer. Frankie feels encouraged. He adds more planks to his platform.

“Tepo and me make believe we're on special assignment for the old man. We pretend we have to call back to Columbia to arrange for coke to be delivered up here. That way we don’t get any visits from midnight brokers.”

Ricky's face bursts into a wide and glassy eyed smile. Frankie's plan fills his mind with fantasies about wealth and privilege. He starts dreaming about dealing with mafia kingpins, coming away from the encounters a rich man. When Frankie mouths the phrase- 'Midnight Broker' Ricky laughs at the top of his voice.

After pausing to catch his breath, Ricky shouts. “Midnight Brokers! That's who we are!”

Everyone in the room bursts out laughing. When the laughter dies down, Tepo polishes off his beer with a flourish. Secretly, he wishes he could get his hands on some of the coke. The other men, however, have him under a vigilant eye. He dares not raise the subject.

In an effort to ingratiate himself with Ali, Tepo asks.

“How long does it take to drive to the Italian neighborhoods from here?”

Mister Leon smiles, it is obvious he is pleased at the way his plans are taking hold. He responds. “I don’t know anymore. Moved back to Mexico City when my kid was born about eight years ago. Italians used to own the southwest side of Philly.”

Ricky finds himself a little confused by Ali’s explanation. He asks.

“Why go back to Mexico after you had a kid? Nobody in his right mind crosses the border north to south!”

Ali’s face goes weary at the world. “I got arrested on a burglary charge in Willingboro across the river,” he explains to the group. “Jumped bail but the warrant kept me from getting a job. So I waded across the big river backwards and went to work as a coyote.”

Ricky understands Ali perfectly well. The Nayari brothers, on the other hand, born to privilege, feel left in the dark. Frankie and Tepo look at Ali with a mix of pity and morbid curiosity. Tepo asks. “What's a coyote?”
Ali glances back and forth between Tepo and Frankie. He realizes they live in circles far far removed from the slums illegal immigrants call home.

Shoulders slumped, in a sad voice, Leon explains. “A coyote is like a tour guide to the wealthy. Only what he does is sneak starving Mexicans into the states so they can mow somebody's lawn or wash clothes for a nickel an hour.”

The Nayari brother's faces fill with surprise and amazement. This is all new to the sons of Don Alberto Enrique Nayari. Tepo says. “Do you know where your son is right now, Ali?”


Mister Leon senses it is time to change the subject. He wants a business relationship with the other three men in the room. Not words of sympathy.

Ali stands up and says.

“One more beer... then I gotta call it quits.”

Ali takes four bottles off the table. He hands three of them to his colleagues. Leon pulls the top off his bottle with a bottle opener. Then he hands the opener to Frankie. Soon the men are halfway through their last beer for the evening.

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**Scene 33 Ali Leon Deals With Family Matters**

**Location: An inexpensive motel room near Philadelphia Pennsylvania**

The following morning finds Ali awake well before sunrise. His head hurts and he feels sick to his stomach. Mister Leon groans. Then he picks up his wristwatch from the bedside table. Squinting through bloodshot eyes, he learns it is not yet half-past five. Very slowly, so as not to aggravate his headache, he turns his head towards the bed where Ricky lays in a drunken stupor.

Ali can see Ricky breathing heavily. Ricky looks limp. Ali guesses, rightly so, his friend is still-'under the influence'.

Mister Leon has to support his weight with both hands to make it out of bed. Once erect, he takes a deep breath. Little by little his symptoms dissipate. A minute later, Ali has the courage and the strength to walk to the bathroom. Slowly he walks, ... inch by inch. Turning on the light in the bathroom proves to be a mistake.
The bright light jars Ali's senses and makes his head throb. The light jolts Ricky wide-awake. Ricky responds to the noxious stimulus by stiffening up and then turning his head away from the bathroom and towards the window. He curses Ali Leon under his breath.

Ali swallows three aspirin tablets dry, without water. He turns on the shower and climbs into the stall. When it comes time to towel himself dry, Mister Leon is nearly recovered from last night's debauchery. He feels almost human.

Clean and cheerful, Ali climbs back into the clothes he wore the previous day. Ali scoops up his briefcase and the keys to the Mercury. Half way out the door, Ali turns to speak to his hung over friend.

“I’m taking the wagon, Ricky. Gotta go look in on my Mother and my kid. The three of you should stick around until I get back.”

Ricky makes a groaning sound. He rolls over in his bed. Ali nods his head. He opens the door to the motel room and makes his way out on to the sidewalk. Ali swings his briefcase back and forth, as he walks to the Mercury wagon. The engine starts the first time he turns the key. Ali smile and mutters.

“That’s always a good sign.”

**Scene 34 Ali Leon Looks In On His Mother**

**Location: The barrio in Philadelphia Pennsylvania**

Mister Leon drives to his mother's home in Philadelphia. Ali has no problem finding a parking space in front of the apartment building where his mother lives. His neighbors are all members of one-car families- everyone living on his street is safely off to work.

Ali sits for a while in the parked Mercury wagon. He is home. Leon pulls off his golf cap. He runs his fingers through his hair while he inspects his face in the rear view mirror. Leon nods and smiles. He is pleased with his appearance.

Ali climbs out of the Mercury wagon and very carefully locks all the doors. Briefcase in hand, he walks up the worn concrete steps leading to the foyer of his mother’s apartment building.

The outer door was never locked when he was a boy. Even today, it opens wide on its hinges when he turns the knob. Leon steps into the foyer of the apartment building. He smiles and sighs. There are newspapers scattered on the floor. Some of the mailboxes show fresh screwdriver marks, certain signs of forced entry. Home sweet home for Mister Ali Leon!

Ali's gaze goes directly to the mailbox labeled 3D. Leon ignores the fact the piece of tape with
his mother's last name has disappeared. He presses firmly down on the doorbell - once long and twice short. The secret code he and his mother used year after year to announce their arrival.

Ali waits patiently for the buzz back from his mother's apartment. He expects access to the inner corridors of the red brick building. The foyer holds silent. Ali glances down at his watch. He tries the buzzer for a second time. Nothing. He tries the 3D buzzer for a third time. Once again, there is no response.

“Must be down in the laundry room,” Leon mutters to himself.

Ali sees a vague motion through the glass in the door. He presses his face against the glass. Ali is just barely able to make out the outline of a young woman, walking towards him down the steps. She has a small child in one hand and a folded wire laundry cart in the other hand.

As the woman walks out the door with her daughter, she pretends not to notice Ali. He seizes the opportunity. Leon moves swiftly into the lobby of the building before the door can close in his face. He climbs the stairs to his mother's place two stairs at a time. Soon he stands square in front of the D apartment on the third floor. Ali Leon knocks on the door vigorously and says.

“Hey Ma, open up, it’s me, Ali.”

Mister Leon's words echo up and back the third floor corridor. The building responds with a stony silence. Finally, Ali thinks to knock on the door to the 3F apartment. Ali can hear television noises. He hopes someone in the F apartment might be able to help him locate his mother.

Ali knocks repeatedly and with no little vigor. Finally, the door opens to the width of the safety chain. Ali peers through the crack between the door and the frame. He sees a woman with bloodshot eyes, barefoot, and wearing a shabby housedress.

Just as their eyes meet, the woman moves her right hand behind her body. Ali catches a glimpse of dim light glinting on a brown quart beer bottle. The bottle disappears behind her back. Mister Leon does not recognize the woman. He asks politely. “Do you know where the lady in 3D is today?”

The woman squints up at Ali. It is obvious she is struggling to connect his face with a name. Finally she says. “3D? Which way is that?”

Ali points to his left. He says. “Right next door. An old lady with an eight year old boy, Mrs. Leon.”

“Oh,” says the woman, while she blinks and tries to conceal a belch behind her fingertips. “You mean little Eddie and his grandmother?”

“Yes,” says Ali eagerly. “My boy’s name is Eddie. Do you know where they went today?”
The lady pauses at length. She needs time to collect her disorganized thoughts. Frustration wells up in Ali’s heart. His face grows darker and darker with each passing second. Finally, the lady begins.

“The old lady got sicker and sicker. She went to the hospital last week. Maybe the week before. Social workers sent the kid out to Los Angeles. But that was about a month ago, maybe more.”

Ali sees the barefooted lady’s lips are quivering. As she finishes her story, her voice starts to crack. He worries she might shut the door on him and refuse to answer any more questions. In a hurried voice, he says.

“Where did the kid go in Los Angeles?” The woman nods her head and replies.

“I think it was something like a sister-in-law or maybe an adoption agency. Something like that.”

Once again, Ali entreats the woman, “What hospital did they take my mother to?”

The woman ignores Ali’s question. She closes the door and turns the thumb switch in the lock. Mister Leon raps on the door. In a loud frantic voice, he says.

“I said where is my mother now?” There is a pause, then, a muffled voice says something including the words- "Albert Einstein".

Ali stands and stares at the locked door for a long moment. He hears bare feet shuffling away, and then the forced gaiety of a game show on the television. Ali sighs.

He walks back to the door of the apartment where his mother lived for so many years. Leon works the doorknob with his hand. The mechanism rattles but the door holds fast, it does not yield. Ali Leon feels as if someone sketched a portrait of his mother and his son in front of him on a chalkboard and then calmly wiped the picture away with an eraser.

Ali sighs again. He turns away from the door to his mother's apartment. Leon trudges down the steps and then wends his way out onto the sidewalk. He gets into the Mercury and throws his briefcase down on the seat. Ali bites his lower lip while he works out a plan.

Ali Leon is hungry enough for lunch, but he decides to drive directly to the Albert Einstein Medical Center. In one smooth motion, he turns on the engine, shifts the transmission to drive, and speeds away from the scene of his boyhood home.
Scene 35 Ali's Mother Has Terminal Cancer

Location: Albert Einstein Medical Center, Philadelphia Pennsylvania

Ali grips tight on the steering wheel as he drives back down into the central district of Philadelphia. He watches carefully in his mirrors for police cars. Mister Leon knows a traffic stop for speeding might well lead to the discovery of all the cocaine in his stolen car and years and years in jail. Ali struggles to balance reckless anxiety against the kind of cautious behavior he knows will render him invisible to the police.

Near the Independence Mall, Ali tries to turn onto Fifth Street, to make his way down to the Albert Einstein Medical Center. The traffic flows against his path, so he circles the block.

After what seems like an eternity, he finds a parking lot within walking distance of the hospital. Once in the parking lot and parked, he stares at his briefcase. Ali scratches the hair of his left sideburn while he makes up his mind. What to do with a briefcase filled with drugs and guns?

Leon realizes it is a bad idea to take the briefcase into the hospital. In addition to cash, the case holds firearms and several packages of cocaine. Ali pulls two rolls of fifties from the briefcase. Then he locks the locks and conceals the case beneath a rumpled paper bag on the floor behind his seat. As Ali alights from the car, he stuffs the rolls of money into his pockets. It is time to go visit his mother!

Ali's pulse quickens as he crosses the street in front of the main entrance to the hospital. His mother must be very seriously ill, else why the admission to such a prestigious institution? Through the massive front doors, Ali grinds his teeth and walks over to the reception area. One of the women sitting in a tall chair smiles at his approach. She has a look of concern and sincerity on her face. Ali stuffs his hands as deep as possible in his pockets.

“I think my mother is here. I don’t know the room number.”

Nervous family members and friends are an everyday challenge for the accomplished lady receptionist. She says sweetly.
“If you tell me your mother’s name I can look her up in the alphabetical.”


The receptionist turns the pages of a directory until she comes to the letter L. She runs a manicured finger down a list of names and says.

“Can you tell me your mother’s first name, Mister Leon?”

Ali answers. “Maria, Maria Loretta Leon, age sixty one years.”

“Yes Mister Leon,” says the receptionist. “Your mother is in the D ward on the fifth floor.”

The lady points with her left hand to a bank of elevators further back in the lobby. Ali smiles and nods. He walks away from the receptionist at a rapid pace. Halfway to the bank of elevators that will take him to the fifth floor he turns and says in a loud stage whisper. “Thank you miss, thanks.”

Ali regains his composure inside the elevator car. He can see his face in the metal plate surrounding the floor buttons. Ali notices the bright shiny surface is free of fingerprints. "This is a good hospital", he concludes. A minute or two after he pushes the button the elevator doors open on the fifth floor to the sound of a subdued bell. Leon steps out into the corridor. He dutifully follows the arrows pointing the way towards the D ward. Soon he comes upon a bustling nurse's station.

Mister Leon walks to the desk. He waits patiently until the lady sitting behind the desk looks up from her work. Ali clears his throat.

“Excuse me, Miss. Can you tell me where Mrs. Leon’s room is? I was told downstairs she's in the D ward.”

The nurse makes eye contact with Ali but she seems reluctant to answer his question. “She’s my mother,” Ali adds hastily. “I’m her son, Ali Leon.”

Now the nurse feels she has the proper handle on the situation. She explains.

“Mrs. Leon is in the A bed in room forty four. Wait outside until the doctors are finished making rounds. Then you can go in.”

The nurse can see the tension dissolving in Ali’s face. Wordlessly she points towards his mother’s room.

Ali says. “Thank you very much, Miss.” He smiles in relief and takes off his hat. Then he walks, slow but sure, to the doorway of his mother's hospital room.

Ali peeks in at the door to his mother’s room. He sees a cluster of six people surrounding the bed
nearest the window. Each dressed in a heavily starched laboratory coat.

One of the men looks considerably older than the other members of the team. Ali guesses, rightly so, the older man is his mother's attending physician and the younger men and women are medical students.

As the older man speaks, a young attractive woman with black hair and delicate features makes notes in a chart. Ali backs out of the doorway. The last thing he wants to do is break the concentration of the doctor and his medical students!

After a wait of a few minutes, the house staff walks out of the room and down the corridor towards the nursing station. They are absorbed in a highly technical discussion, and so they do not notice Ali. Leon steps into the room. He walks quietly up to his mother's bedside. Ali Leon's heart fills with alarm as he looks down at the figure beneath the sheet!

Ali recognizes his mother, even though she has lost a remarkable amount of weight and most of her hair. He swallows several times and then whispers.

“It’s me, Ma. It’s Ali.” The lady in the bed looks up at Ali and smiles. She says. “I knew you would come. The virgin told me you would come.” Ali's mother points at the hospital bed table with a bony finger.

Ali spies a very familiar sight on the top of the bedside table. A double portrait of the Virgin Mary and the scene of the Crucifixion in a gold painted wooden frame. No matter where they lived, Mexico or America, that portrait sat at his mother's bedside for as long as Ali can remember.

Not surprising, feelings of guilt well up in Leon's heart in the presence of his mother and her cherished relics. Ali crosses himself. He hopes his mother will not ask too many questions about his recent- 'business affairs'. Even Ali can see his mother has not much time left in this world. He puts his hand on the framed portrait. In a stoical and optimistic tone, he asks.

“So when are you getting out of here? Can I take you home tomorrow or maybe Sunday?”

Mrs. Leon smiles at her son. She replies. “I have needles all the time and oxygen at night when I sleep.”

Just then, Ali notices the bottle of intravenous fluid dripping slowly into her system. He can think of nothing to say. Ali Leon sighs in anguish.

“How about Eddie, Ma. Where's Eddie?”

The old woman is more than half-asleep from the effects of pain killer medications. Her first response is monosyllabic. "What?" Then she recovers and replies.
“Eddie is with your sister-in-law. East Los Angeles.”

Ali gently inquires. “Which sister-in-law, Ma, Clarita or Josefina?”

Mrs. Leon has a difficult time answering. She is short of breath. She lays there for a moment in silence, gathering her strength. “Charita, Ali ... She married a boy from the neighborhood named Hector Balista. They moved out to L. A. where they own a restaurant.”

Ali waits a few moments for his mother to catch her breath. He asks. “How is Eddie doing Ma, how is his school work?”

Mrs. Leon realizes her son worries his sister-in-law and her husband might have adopted Eddie and changed his name. She knows Ali is not ready for the truth. “His grades real good,” She answers quickly. Then she changes the subject. “When are you gonna own a real business so you can make someone a good husband?”

It is crystal clear to Ali his mother is side stepping a sensitive issue. He makes a mental note of the name Hector Balista and then says.

“Any day now I’m gonna open up a Bodega somewhere. Need a little more time to find a good location.”

Mrs. Leon smiles at this remark, then she turns her head. She cannot bring herself to meet her sons gaze. “Good,” She says. “Life is just a big struggle. Good you still fighting to be somebody.”

Ali glances up at the clock. He has been with his mother for about an hour. She looks more tired than when he arrived. “Ma,” he says in a soft voice, “Can I have the doctors or the nurses get you anything? Are you comfortable?”

“Madre de Dios, Ali my boy.” his mother replies, “Albert Einstein is the best hospital in the whole world!”

Ali nods. He leans over the bed and whispers, “I’m gonna go now, Ma. I’ll be back on Sunday. Maybe take you to the gift shop in a wheel chair or something.” Mrs. Leon says nothing in reply. She has fallen fast asleep.

Ali tiptoes out of the room. He makes his way back down to the nursing station. At the nursing station, he sees one of the medical students who had been in his mother’s room. He walks up to the young man. “Can you tell me what my mother has, Mrs. Maria Loretta Leon?”

The student replies, “She has a stage four colon cancer. That means the disease is spread out in her body.”
The words sink into Ali’s mind, one at a time, like heavy weights on a rope. Anxious and restrained at the same time he asks, “Does she have long to live? If I come back on Sunday or next week will I be able to see her?”

The student shares Ali’s grief, but he hides his feelings behind a mask of scientific professionalism. “You’re mother doesn’t have a fever right now so there's no infection. With no fever, she might live as long as a month. But if she gets an infection, like pneumonia, we won’t be able to save her.”

Ali feels wracked with guilt and anguish. Worse, he realizes the student cares about his mother and wants very much for her to survive. Ali pulls a roll of fifties out of his right hand pants pocket.

He starts counting the bills out onto the counter top. Glancing up, he sees a red-faced look on the medical student. “Can’t I even pay you for helping us?” queries Ali.

“No,” the young man responds in a flat, definite voice. “I pay tuition. The attending doctor gets a salary from the hospital. Buy something for your mother or make a gift to the hospital if you like.”

Ali hides his embarrassment by pushing his glasses up on his nose. He scoops up his cash and stuffs it back into his pocket. He asks.

“Do you have a list of family names and phone numbers for my mother?”

The student responds. “Ask the lady sitting down at the desk.”

Mister Leon hurry to the desk. He looks down at the receptionist.

“Can you give me the names and phone numbers of Mrs. Leon’s relatives?”

The lady seated behind the desk consults a chart. She scribbles a set of names, addresses, and phone numbers onto a slip of paper, hands the note to Ali, and says.

“Mrs. Leon gave us a Mr. Hector Balista in East Los Angeles. And a son named Ali with no known address or number.”

The receptionist glances up and asks. “Do you want to add your name and number to the list?”

“No,” Ali replies swiftly, struggling not to sound secretive.

“I’m Ali Leon her son. Can I please have the Balista number in Los Angeles? They’re taking care of my son until I get some things settled.”

The receptionist makes a jabbing motion towards the paper in Ali's grasp,
"It's there." She says. Ali blushes. Then he turns the paper right side up.

“Hector and Clarita Balista,” he reads, followed by a Los Angeles address and phone number.

Ali folds the paper carefully and then tucks it into his wallet. He looks up at the medical student and the receptionist.

“Thanks a lot for all your help. I’m coming back on Sunday to look in on my mother. Thanks again."

The medical student and the receptionist smile at Mrs. Leon's son and visitor. No way for them to know anything about the dark things Ali does to make a living.

Ali turns away and walks in the direction of the elevator. Next to the day when he received his divorce papers, this is the saddest day of his life.

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**Scene 36 The Sinaloa Gang Plots A Meet With The Mafia**

**Location: A family owned restaurant in Philadelphia Pennsylvania**

An unusually chill wind greets Ali, Ricky, Frankie and Tepo when they leave their motel rooms the morning after Ali’s visit to his mother’s bedside at the Albert Einstein Medical Center. The sun shines bright, the sky is free of clouds, yet still, the men can see their breath as they walk across the parking lot to their two automobiles.

They begin the day by driving around for nearly a half hour in an aimless manner. It appears they are trying to lose a tail. In fact- the men are in search of a restaurant with large windows fronting on the parking lot. That they might eat breakfast, and at the same time, keep an eye on their cars and an eye out for the police.

At long last- the men happen upon a restaurant with just the right physical make up. They waste
little time parking their cars. The men soon find a table inside the restaurant. While they eat, Ali says nothing about the visit with his mother on the previous day. Ricky notices Ali is more taciturn than usual. He guesses there must be some kind of a problem in Ali's family life.

Nonetheless, Mister Sinaloa is the head of the gang, and the leader should stay on top of his people. Ricky puts his coffee cup down on its saucer.

“So how did things go at your mother’s house, Leon?”

Ali nods his head politely at the inquiry. He maintains a blank expression on his face. He replies.

“It ended up I had to run down to Albert Einstein on Old York Road. The old lady has been sick. My boy, Eddie, is just fine. I got a sister-in-law babysitting.”

In spite of their disparate backgrounds, Tepo has grown fond of Ali. Early on, he patronized the older man. Tepo wanted to believe Ali was only good enough to work for him as a gardener or a groom in his family stables.

As their relationship developed, Tepo relied more and more on advice and suggestions from the humble man born and raised in the slums of Mexico City.

Tepo says fondly. “Did you get a chance to take your kid anywhere?”

“No,” says Ali, again with a stoical expression. “Eddie is out in Los Angeles. When we wrap things up that’s where I’m gonna go.”

While Ali and Tepo exchange pleasantries, Frankie Nayari drums his fingertips on the table with an air of impatience. The other men in the gang can see Tepo's older brother looks eager to go out and make a drug deal.

“Where are we headed to today?” Frankie says to Ali and Ricky, ignoring his brother.

Ali always has a plan. He responds. “I’m gonna run us down to the Italian neighborhood. We’ll cruise around and visit the bars and social clubs.”

Ricky asks. “What are we gonna do until it gets dark out?”

Ali responds quickly and smoothly. “We go looking for contacts now. Made guys don't work nine to five. In the evenings their hang outs will be filled with family and neighbors. Nobody for us to talk to.”

Ricky offers. “I think we gotta invent a relative. Some kinda cousin. We tell the mafia we can get our hands on about four briefcases filled with pure coke as a first time deal. If that goes through, we pipeline from Bogota a month or two down the road.”

Ali, Frankie, and Tepo nod in a chorus. Ricky’s narrative makes a lot of sense.
Frankie adds. “We have to convince these guys we’re connected to my father’s operation. That’s the first thing. The next is to make them believe we’re clean but we can get our hands on a big pile in an hour or two.”

Ali purses his lips. His eyes sparkle behind the thick lenses in his eyeglasses.

“If you get to talking to anyone by yourself tell him our stash is near Camden. We all have to have the same story or they will be on us like a rat.”

With that remark, the men feel ready. The meeting is adjourned. Out in the parking lot Ricky says to Tepo.

“Keep the radio turned on. We have to coordinate real good today with no screw ups.”

Tepo replies. “This Friday we’re going to be driving around in a pair of new town cars. All by dropping my old man’s name at just the right time.”

Tepo's face breaks into a dreamy grin, he laughs lightly.

The Mercury wagon and the Chrysler sedan are soon speeding down the freeway, Interstate 76. Ali makes a wide circle around the metropolitan area of Philadelphia. He exits in a neighborhood in which the buildings are mostly two and three stories tall. They motor on into a very much middle of the road kind of a community in the inner city. Not enough broken windows to qualify as a slum, too few redecorated storefronts to be labeled a center for gentrification.

For the most part the residential streets on which they drive in tandem are too narrow for two-way traffic. They might just as easily have been in either Brooklyn or Queens, but they are not in Brooklyn or Queens, they are in Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love.
Scene 37 The Sinaloa Gang Touches Base With The Mafia

Location: An Italian 'Member's Only' social club, Philadelphia Pennsylvania

Ali leads the two-car caravan up and down the streets and avenues of inner city Philadelphia all during the late morning hours. Things are just as he predicted. The men see row upon row of red brick apartment buildings, here and there a family owned restaurant or a 'members only' social club. Narrow sidewalks are the rule. Except in some locations, the sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate fresh blossoming trees.

By three in the afternoon, the men are discouraged they feel ready to quit. They uncovered about a half dozen social clubs driving from here to there in no particular pattern. Problem is- the clubs look so similar to one another from the outside, it is impossible to decide where to stop!

Then, as they drive up one of the avenues in the Italian neighborhood for the third time, Ricky has a brainstorm! He sits upright behind the wheel and exclaims to Frankie.

“Give me the radio real quick! What do you see in that drug store parking lot?”

Frankie passes the Citizens Band radio into Ricky's outstretched hand. Then his eyes go to the pharmacy parking lot mentioned by Ricky. Frankie sees a collection of four cars. And a man wearing a chauffeur's cap. Standing at attention with his hands splayed out on the roof of a long wheelbase Cadillac limousine.

Ricky shouts into the radio. “Hey Leon, hold up for a second. Look at the cars in the drug store parking lot!”

Ricky sees the brake lights go on in the Mercury. He peers through the window of the wagon. Ali is looking at him in the rear view mirror of the Mercury!
Tepo hands his Citizen's Band radio to Ali. Ali keys the microphone on his hand held. “What are you talking about?”

Ricky’s voice bubbles over with excitement. He nearly shouts into his microphone. “What kind of cars in that lot, amigos? Use your heads!”

Ali says flatly, “What I see here is a stretch caddy limo and three late model Buicks, all in black. Now what? Go in the drug store and talk to the man about a trade in?”

“Put it all together!” Shouts Ricky, “If a family head was in a club with his lieutenants what would their cars look like?”

Ricky stops to catch his breath. He adds. "Why would a chauffeur be standing outside a caddy?"

The radio clutched in Ricky’s hand stays silent for a good long while. Ali stares at Tepo. Then, in concert, they look at the cars and the chauffeur with his hands on the roof of the Cadillac. Next, the men turn their gaze to the front door of an Italian social club directly on the other side of the street from the drug store.

Frankie’s gaze moves back and forth from the cars to the front door of the social club. Then, at long last, the three men in the two cars turn to come face to face with Ricky. The looks in their eyes says Ricky is their one true leader! Ricky grins in triumph. He barks.

“Let’s get these junkers parked! Make a big deal!”

As the two cars roll forward, Ali’s voice comes over the radio in Ricky’s hand.

“Maybe by Sunday I’m gonna own a supermarket. This is the right time and the right place.”

The men are nearly in a state of ecstasy. They drive the Mercury and the Chrysler down to the end of the block. Here they find a fast food restaurant with a spacious parking lot. Soon both cars are parked in parallel slots deep in the back of the lot.

The men clamber out of their cars and assemble in a loose circle around Ricky Sinaloa. With his eyes on Tepo, Ricky cautions.

“Don’t be carrying nothing. They got no reason to try anything until they think they know where we’re hiding it. Pretend like it’s just a business.”

The men walk swiftly back up the narrow street to the social club. They are eager to make a deal, and not just a little worried the club has emptied out and they will not have an opportunity to talk to the right people. The men form up into a huddle at the front door to the club. Ricky reminds.

“Don’t forget what I told you. We can get to the stuff. We don’t have anything on us. Comprende?”
Ali, Frankie, and Tepo nod in silence. Tepo's Adam's apple bobs up and down as he swallows on a dry throat. Frankie says, “Let's hope these guys recognize my father’s name.” With that, the four men stick their fists into their pants pockets. With Ricky in the lead, they saunter single file through the front door of the 'Members Only', Italian social club.

Once inside the club it takes a while for their eyes to get used to the darkness. Shortly, the men can make out an arrangement of eight small round tables on the left side of the room and an L shaped bar on the right. Frankie Nayari finds the clothing styles of the men in the club nothing less than remarkable. With no exceptions, every one of the patrons wears a white shirt and a long and narrow dark necktie.

Frankie winces as he sees the 'social club' patrons suit coats and trousers come in three colors, and three colors only: navy blue, dark grey, or black. Frankie feels completely remote from his homeland. In the big cities in South America, the men dress in white shoes and pastel sport coats, just like in Miami Florida.

Frankie mutters. "This ain't Bogota." Tepo nods and adds, "For sure."

While Frankie and Tepo disparage the clothing styles popular in the club, Ricky focuses his attention on the bartender. He sees the man behind the bar is tall and slender, bordering on cadaverous. And that the man in the apron behind the bar has large luminescent eyes and a receding hairline. Just a bit surreal, the man's white shirt glows in an eerie shade of blue in the ultraviolet light shining up from the underside of the bar.

The bartender pretends not to notice Ricky, although he is, in fact, intrigued by the arrival of these four newcomers. They are obviously Latino's! What do they have in mind? The man behind the bar pours shots of Amaretto with an expert hand into a row of six glasses resting on a round waiter's tray. A beefy young man in a long sleeve knit shirt stands on the customer's side of the bar. He is perched to take the glasses over to a table.

Ricky walks over to the bar. He waits patiently and respectfully for the bartender to notice his arrival. Mister Sinaloa's hands are still stuck in his pockets. He holds his shoulders erect and tense. This is one of those moments Ricky is glad he wore a long sleeve shirt. This is neither the time nor the place for him to flaunt the spider's web tattoo on his left elbow!

The bartender turns round and returns the bottle of Amaretto to its appointed place on the shelf behind the bar. He walks over to Ricky. The tall slender man puts both hands on the edge of the bar. He grips the wood as if to gain a strong purchase. Then he leans over the bar towards Ricky.

“It's a private club fellas. Members and invited guests.”

Ricky can see the man’s tone and his posture are completely neutral. He guesses, rightly so, the
bartender means if Ricky and his friends cause any trouble, they will be run out onto the street.

In the most polite voice he can muster, Ricky pleads.

“My buddies and me just wanna couple beers. Maybe make friends in the neighborhood. Won’t be no trouble.”

The bartender’s face remains stiff and formal. Although, to Ricky, he seems pleased with the way Ricky is handling a little opposition. In a non-committal tone, the bartender says. “You better sit up here at the bar.”

Ricky turns round and cocks his head. The Nayari brothers and Ali Leon take seats at the bar. Ricky pulls his trucker's wallet out of a back pocket. The chain connecting the wallet to a belt loop on his pants gleams in the dim light. Ricky lays a fifty-dollar bill on the counter top. Then he sits down next to Frankie.

“Whatver you got on tap.”

The bartender puts a coaster down in front of each of the men. The coasters make snapping sounds like poker chips. He fills four tall glasses at the tap. The bartender sets the glasses of beer down in front of his new customers. Just then, the young waiter / weightlifter in the knit shirt strides back on up to the bar.

The body builder halts and turns towards Ricky and his friends. Then he folds his arms with his fists behind his biceps. He spreads his feet, flexes his muscles, and smiles. The message is unmistakable. The Latinos are in Italian territory and under Italian control. Frankie watches the waiter's display of crude physical power. He tries to appear unimpressed. Yet he understands full well, it would be a lucky day if either he or Ricky could handle the weight lifter in a fistfight. As for Tepo and Ali, they would end up hanging by their ankles if this guy found them without a gun.

Not surprising, Tepo is a little caught up in the mystery and excitement of this impromptu visit to a private Italian 'Social Club'. While Ali and Ricky sit perched on their bar stools, trying to figure out a next move. Tepo dreams a dream about a briefcase or two filled with cash. Handed to him through a smoke glass privacy window in the caddy limousine parked across the street. Frankie's baby brother sits there smiling and sipping his beer, oblivious to the real gravity of his situation.

As soon as his new customers go to work on their beers. The tall cadaverous bartender turns his head towards a portly man of about fifty years sitting at the table closest to the door. Once he has the 'doorman's' attention, the bartender cocks his head very slightly. He motions first towards the Latinos, and next he nods towards the door.

The man at the table nods at the Bartender. Targioni 'Bulls Eye' Barberini empties his shot glass
down his throat. Then he clamps his Fedora on his head. Last, he shuffles out of the social club. The 'Doorman' is off in search of the visitor’s cars, under the direct orders of the man behind the bar.

Halfway through their second round of beers Ricky, Ali, Frankie, and Tepo find entertainment in a bit of Neighborhood Theater. The door to the club opens wide, daylight shines in on the interior of the 'Social Club'. Two tall men step over the threshold. They wear Fedoras, long black wool overcoats, and polished black loafer style shoes with tassels on top. For a moment, the men scrutinize the patrons of the club in no little detail.

Satisfied everything is in order, the man nearest the front door steps outside and makes a slight bend at his waist. After an impressive wait of about a minute, an extremely well groomed gentleman strides through the door. He is late middle age, has silver hair, and wears a very expensive tan leather trench coat.

The distinguished gentleman comes to a stop in the center of the patch of sunlight on the floor of the 'Social Club'. He slaps the palm of his left hand with a pair of tan leather gloves held loose in his right hand. He glances around quizzically for a second or two. Then he smiles in the direction of a table set in the deepest and darkest region of the room.

The man in the trench coat, Don Girolomo 'Jerry' Cardano, walks towards the back of the room. His host, equally well dressed, stands up from behind the small table. The two men shake hands warmly. They smile at one another.

The senior men, Mafia Don's really, embrace in a kind of a wrestler's display of manly affection. As soon as they sit down to talk, the weight lifter in the knit shirt hovers over them, eager to serve them drinks. In the meantime, the lieutenants, the men first through the door and into the club, take a table near the door.

An intuitive person would have guessed in spite of the cordial greeting between the two bosses. Today's meeting is about a parting of the ways. Why else would the bodyguards at the table by the door leave their hats on? Why didn't the bodyguards order any drinks?

The noise level in the club returns to normal. Tepo turns to Ali.

“Now we have two black stretch limos parked outside this place.”

Ali smiles, he replies. “Let’s hope they both got trouble finding suppliers!”

The bartender assembles a complicated drink order for the back table. Then he turns to Ricky and Frankie.

“Are you boys from the Philly area?”

Ricky takes initiative. He explains. “We just drove up from Texas. My buddies and me we
organize work crews and set up deals whenever we get a chance.”

The bartender replies. “Anywhere near San Antonio? I was in San Antonio a couple of years ago.”

Ricky responds. “The last place we worked any business deals was Dallas.” Frankie glances over his shoulder at the well-dressed men talking to one another at the far table in the dark back end of the room. He turns and looks at the man behind the bar. Very politely, he asks.

“Are those guys back there investors or something?”

The bartender nods. “Both of them are real wealthy. All kinds of businesses, all kinds.”

Frankie says. “My brother and I, our father’s name is Alberto Enrique Nayari. Our old man does international business, ... but we’re just getting started.”

The bartender nods at Frankie's mention of the Nayari family name. In fact, Alberto Nayari is not only well known in the underworld, he has been written up any number of times in the popular press. Right after Pablo Escobar, Alberto Nayari is the name most likely to come up in any conversation about organized crime in South America. You do not have to belong to a crime family to be familiar with the Nayari family name. You just have to have a subscription to Time or Newsweek magazine.

The man behind the bar runs his fingernails through his bushy right eyebrow while he collects his thoughts. Careful not to come across as too eager, he says.

“So you boys are looking to set up contacts here in Philly?”

Frankie answers. “My brother and I could be riding polo ponies. We want to prove to the Viejo we have his backbone.”

The bartender is from a crime family that can trace its roots back many generations to the Island of Sicily. He knows he has punks perched on the stools on the customer's side of his bar. More importantly, he knows these are Latino punks, men who understand the call to organized crime.

Just then the muscle bound young man in the knit shirt strides up to the bar with a drink tray in his hand. He glances at Ricky, Frankie, Ali, and Tepo. Then he says to the bartender.

“Mustie wants another round.”

As the bartender prepares the drinks, the young man stares at each of the four Latinos, sizing them up as potential- 'business associates'. The waiter looks the Hispanics up and down, slowly,
one man at a time.

If he had spotted a concealed weapon on any one of the four visitors, he would have jumped the offender. The weight lifter is excited by the possibility of a fist fight with the 'intruders'. He tenses up and shifts his considerable weight back and forth on the balls of his feet. There is an over eager smile on his face. He is always on the lookout for a fight.

Soon the drinks are prepared and on the way to the table in the back of the room. The bartender returns to exchanging pleasantries with Ricky and Frankie. In a severe, yet fatherly tone, he queries.

“You fellas didn’t come in here carrying anything, did you?”

Ricky gulps. Things are moving along exactly as he predicted! He quickly replies.

“Our merchandise is real close, maybe near Camden. We know how to behave in public.”

The bartender says nothing. With both hands flat on the bar, he eyes his four visitors, one at a time. Then he nods. It seems to him the men from Columbia are probably telling the truth. They are not carrying weapons.

The man behind the bar, more formally- 'Jimmy the Bartender' has a low opinion of Frankie. He finds the young Columbian a little patronizing. Jimmy goes eye to eye with Ricky in a manner that excludes Frankie from the talk, he says.

“I might be able to get you in to speak to Mister Mustalaro in maybe a few minutes. Would you like that?”

Ricky answers directly. “You're gonna be happy. We don’t know much yet, but we deliver one hundred percent.”

The bartender nods and says nothing in reply. He looks back at Ricky. His face breaks into a brief smile. Ricky treats him with the kind of respect he feels he deserves. Jimmy the Bartender has a good feeling about his guests, especially with Ricky in control.

While Ricky sips his beer, the bartender ambles away from his new customers. Jimmy moves out of earshot and towards the end of the bar. He motions to the waiter standing on sentry duty, behind and to the left of Mister Mustalaro. The waiter walks casually to the bar towards Jimmy. He swings the round drink tray in his right hand back and forth. The bartender leans over the bar. He speaks into the waiter's left ear.

The waiter listens attentively. His face clouds over. Then he sneers at the four Latino’s. The waiter / weight lifter walks back to his station near Mister Mustalaro. He leans down and speaks into Mister Mustalaro's ear. Mister Mustalaro listens. Then he nods his head while wiping his manicured hands in cloth napkin.
Jimmy the bartender strides back towards Ricky. “Keep still for a little while. I’ll pour you fellas another round,” he remarks to Ricky. Ricky says nothing. He nods his head. The bartender’s avuncular style leaves Ricky feeling comfortable in his new and unfamiliar surroundings.

Ricky and Ali and the Nayari brothers do not have long to wait. Although the discussion at the back table gives the appearance of being amicable. There is, in fact, considerable tension between the two heads of the two crime families. Mister Mustalaro and Mister Cardano, the one in the tan leather trench coat, are at loggerheads over such essential issues as territories and suppliers. While there is no danger of violence in the immediate future, violence hangs over this relationship like a cloud over the horizon.

Jimmy the Bartender wipes his hands clean on a white towel. He leaves the service area. Ricky watches Jimmy in the mirror hung over the rows of liquor bottles on the shelf behind the bar. The bartender walks back to Mister Mustalaro’s table. Ricky sees both crime bosses rise to their feet, slowly, nearly at the same time.

As the Don's rise, the two lieutenants sitting near the door jump to their feet and stand at attention.

Mister Mustalaro and the man in the leather trench coat shake hands vigorously, two hands at a time. They smile respectfully at each other but do not embrace as they had at the beginning of the meeting. There is tension between the two men, no doubt, but they are far from anger.

The portly man in the tan leather trench coat turns and smiles at Jimmy the Bartender. The mafia don in the designer coat and the man in the bartender's apron exchange pleasantries. They do not shake hands. The man in the leather coat with the silver hair steps over to the muscle bound waiter.

He squeezes the waiter’s shoulder and brings his fist up to the young man’s chin with a playful motion. In a voice loud enough for Mister Mustalaro and Ricky to hear, Don Girolomo 'Jerry' Cardano says.

“I like it you’re going out with my youngest girl, Bobby. You should come around the house more.”

With that, Mister Cardano wheels around and walks out of the 'Social Club' with his lieutenants single file and close behind.

Soon as the door to the club closes shut, the bartender strides up to the space between Ricky and Frankie like a man on a mission. He puts a hand on each of their shoulders.

“Come on back. Mister Mustalaro has a little time left for talking.”
Ricky and Frankie, Ali and Tepo, get up off their bar stools and walk to the back table. Mister Mustalaro stands relaxed at their arrival. He has one hand loose on the back of his wooden chair. There is a wide, sincere smile on his face. His double-breasted suit nearly sparkles, it is tailored to perfection. The husky man introduces himself saying.

“Hi fellas, I’m Salvatore Mustalaro.”

The crime family boss shakes hands with his 'out of town visitors', one visitor at a time. With sweeping motions, he beckons them to take chairs and sit down with him at his table. After Ricky, Frankie, Ali, and Tepo take seats, the man gets right down to business.

“O.K. now. Let's see if I got the names straight. Enrique, Ricky Sinaloa from Mexico. Frankie and Tepo Nayari of the Nayari family in Bogotá, and Mister Ali Leon from Mexico City. Did I miss anybody?”

“No sir,” says Ricky in a very respectful tone.

Frankie and Tepo, in contrast to Ricky and Ali, are not all that impressed by the presence of this man. To the Nayari brothers, Mister Mustalaro, 'Don Salvatore Mustalaro’ more properly, comes across as one of their fathers golfing partners, or business associates. They have no sense whatsoever of the precarious nature of their situation.

Mister Mustalaro picks up on the casual pose assumed by the young men from Bogotá. He can see the Nayari boys, given the opportunity, are likely to become overly familiar.

Before the start of the conversation, the waiter in the knit shirt arrives with a loaded tray. While looking down at the crime boss, avoiding the eyes of his youthful guests, the weight lifter says.

“Jimmy told me to bring over a round of espressos, Mister Mustalaro.”

Salvatore glances up at the young man. He likes it, the waiter / weight lifter is polite.

“Good idea! Amaretto is too much for me in the middle of the day. I like it better as a nightcap.”

The waiter serves the coffees to the five men crowded round the round table. He smiles respectfully at the family head. Then he glares a little at the uninvited guests.

It is clear from his body language the waiter feels an allegiance to the portly man in the tan trench coat. The Mafia Don who just left the club without coming to terms with Mister Mustalaro.

Mister Mustalaro takes a long, satisfying drink from his steaming cup of espresso coffee. He puts the cup back down on the saucer. The he goes eye to eye with Ricky and Frankie.

“Jimmy tells me you boys want to get a little business going here in Philly then connect up with your father in Bogotá. That’s a pretty good story. Makes a lot of sense to me too!”
Says Mister Mustalaro while looking in turn at Tepo, Frankie, Ali and then Ricky.

“Fact is,” he continues, “I might be looking for new sources. A lot of my merchandise comes from Columbia. But it goes to the old country before it gets here. Too many middlemen, everybody gets a cut.”

With that, Mister Mustalaro glances at the door, alluding to the discussion he had just completed with his first visitor. Then he shakes his head and wrinkles his lips.

It is Ricky’s place to say something, but Frankie interrupts. In an overly familiar voice, waving his hands in a theatrical manner, he says.

“There’s no end to the quantity my old man can provide. We have private planes so big they can fly here from Bogotá on one tank of gas.”

Ricky looks as if his palms are sweating, which is actually the case. He adds.

“We got powder put away someplace near Camden. We can get it pretty quick if you want to try us out.”

It is late in the afternoon. Mister Mustalaro feels a little tired. He wants to get right to the point of the conversation. Eye to eye with Ricky, he queries.

“How much stuff? What kind of quality have you got?” Ricky responds, “How does four briefcases filled with kilogram packages sound for a start?”

Mister Mustalaro blinks his eyes, once. He takes another drink of his espresso as he ponders on how best to negotiate with the young men from South America. He puts his cup of fragrant liquid down carefully, pinkie finger up in the air. While looking at Ricky he says.

“If your coke really is pure I can go a briefcase full of twenties for each case full of dope.”

Ricky, Frankie, Ali, and Tepo, sit back in their chairs. Their mouths fall half way open. Each tries to imagine what it would feel like to have four briefcases in their possession, each filled with cash. The men turn in a chorus and look at Ricky.

Ricky thinks for a moment. He realizes it will not do to appear to be eager. In a careful voice, he says.

“I can live with that. But Mister Nayari, Don Nayari, Frankie’s father, might want more money for weight once it goes full time.”

Don Salvatore Mustalaro sits poised while he looks directly into Ricky’s eyes. He bites his lower lip while he considers what next to say. Finally, he remarks.
“Set something up for tomorrow night with Jimmy. I gotta be going.”

The crime family boss stands up abruptly. He looks down at the four Latinos.

“You punks don’t know what you’re getting yourselves into. But you handle yourselves pretty good. Gonna be a long time till I admit I know you. But I think you’re gonna turn out alright.”

The four men from south of the border sit stock still in their chairs. They are so in awe of the power of the man standing before them. They cannot get to their feet.

Mister Mustalaro strides off to a spot near the front door. He stands still for a moment while one of his men helps him into his camel’s hair overcoat. Another of his 'associates' opens the door, the Don is out of the club and into the waning light of the early evening. Mister Salvatore Frederico Mustalaro has just completed his work for the day. It is time for him to go home and be with his family.

The four Latinos finish drinking their espresso's in total silence. As they sit in their chairs, the waiter walks up to Ricky. The young man, Bobby Gotella, leans down and speaks into Ricky's ear.

“Jimmy will get with you at the bar.”

Ricky picks up on the surly attitude of the waiter. He concludes Jimmy the Bartender must have told the waiter about the wealth and social position of the Nayari family. It is clear the waiter is working his way up to the top. He does not like the idea of competing with rich kids from Bogotá. The four men stand up. They walk back to the bar, and return to the stools they occupied when they first arrived. Jimmy the Bartender stands behind the bar, directly between Ricky and Frankie. He has both hands on the rail. Jimmy leans forward a little to carry on a private conversation.

“This is your first time dealing with us,” says the bartender, “Let me give you the rules. First off, only the four of you show up. I’ll be there with three men so we each got the same size team. That way nobody has a reason to get nervous. Next thing, only two guys on each side can have a weapon in his hands. That leaves two a piece to make the exchange as quick as possible. Do you guys follow so far?”

Ricky replies. “Two and two makes four in Philadelphia and Mexico. Did Mister Mustalaro say we can get a briefcase full of twenties for each one of our four cases full of coke?”

The bartender responds. “I heard the exchange rate. You fellas are lucky to get that price. You ought a move nickel and dime bags for a while until you get some experience.”

“We used to do that,” responds Ali in a disgusted tone. “But we stopped being stupid long time
ago.”

The weight lifting waiter takes umbrage at Ali’s sarcastic remark.

“Don’t get smart with us. We could set up a lab and cook the stuff up ourselves if we wanted to.”

Ali can think of nothing to say. The waiter is simply too powerful for him to take a chance on making him angry. Ali sits there in silence with a beet red face.

Jimmy steps in to get the discussion back on the right track. He asks.

“Can you find your way back to the neighborhood tomorrow night at about nine?”

“Sure,” Ricky responds to Jimmy. “Where do you want us?”

The bartender explains. “Across the street in the drug store parking lot. We bring the business cars up together trunk to trunk. You can have a second car with you if you like. But no more than four men or the deal is off.”

Ricky sits on his barstool in silence for a long minute. He is trying to find some kind of a flaw in Jimmy’s instructions or to come up with a better idea on his own. Mister Sinaloa bites on his thumbnail, blinks, and says.

“That’s the way we usually do things. All of our big deals are trunk to trunk.”

Jimmy smiles at Ricky’s counterfeit bravado. It is plain as day these punk Latinos have never before dealt with the mob. "Still”, he thinks to himself, "there has to be a first time for everybody."

With a grin on his face, the bartender says. “You’re a good kid Ricky. See you tomorrow night at nine.”

The four men rise stiffly and walk to the door. Ricky turns around and waves at Jimmy. He can see the waiter scowling in his direction. The waiter’s hostile pose does not matter much to Ricky. It is obvious the waiter has a long way to go until the day comes when he will be making any decisions. Jimmy wipes the bar top with a spotless towel while Ricky and the weight lifter exchange glares. He looks up at the men at the door.

“Take care of yourselves.”

Ricky replies. “You too!” And with that, the four men are out of the club and onto the sidewalk.
Scene 38 Too Worked Up To Notice The Tail

Location: From the Italian social club back to the motel room

The men walk up the street in the direction of the restaurant parking lot where they left their cars. They have no sense of fear or danger. Each man feels accomplished. Each man feels they are making progress and that the group has just climbed up another step on the ladder.

Dealing with pushers on the streets, as they had just recently, proved a frightening experience. Due to the fact that, as addicts themselves pushers come across as unstable and therefore completely unpredictable.

In a sharp contrast with their impromptu curbside excursions, inside the social club they struck a business deal with an important businessman rather than a drug addict. It seems not very likely anything will go wrong tomorrow evening. Consequently, the spirits of the men float along above their heads like helium-filled balloons. With a spring in his step, Tepo says brightly.

“How many deals like this until we never have to work again?”

Ali turns towards Tepo. “Now you’re talking kid. Now you’re talking.”

Tepo excuses himself in the restaurant parking lot. He explains.

“Gotta use the washroom.”

While the other men climb into the Mercury and the Chrysler, Tepo walks into the restaurant. After washing his hands, he pulls a small glass screw topped jar out of his pocket. He pours a little of the white powder from the jar into the cap and then sucks it up into his nostrils. Then he checks his appearance in the mirror.

Frankie's baby brother wipes a little of the powder off his upper lip while he smiles at his boyish reflection in the mirror. Tepo is exhausted from the pressure of the day’s wheeling and dealing. He feels he has to have a little jolt to keep up even with his brother Frankie and Ricky and Ali.

As Tepo loiters in the restroom, a heavyset man of about fifty years of age gets up from his table in the restaurant. He dons his Fedora and walks out onto the dark street. Targioni 'Bulls Eye' Barberini turns to the right. He doffs his Fedora at the edge of the curb and waves it in the air with his arm outstretched. There is a man sitting in a two door late model Pontiac down the street to his right. The man in the Pontiac waves in return.

The driver fires up the engine of his Pontiac, the man with the Fedora watches puffs of smoke belch from the tailpipe. Next, the man with the hat in his hand glances surreptitiously to the left.
He sees a man and woman, parked in a four door Mercedes, smile and wave.

Steven Napoli is the name of the man behind the wheel. The woman next to him is Bobby Gotella's sister, Candy Gotella. Satisfied with the arrangement, the man with the hat gets into his own car, a compact size Oldsmobile. As Ali and Tepo, and Ricky and Frankie, drive out of the lot of the restaurant, they are covered front and back by a three car tail!

Ali drives the Mercury wagon around the block twice. Mister Leon knows full well they might have a tail. Unfortunately, Ali is unfamiliar with the neighborhood, he is neither able to detect the tail nor shake it loose. When Ali gets onto the expressway he is surrounded by cars plated to full-fledged members of the Mustalaro crime family!

The Mercury wagon and the Chrysler sedan motor along in the direction of the exit that will take them to Lancaster Avenue. The tailing cars exchange places with one another in an expert and completely random manner. In Dallas, the men escaped from a trap like this out of a combination of luck and common sense. In Philadelphia, they are face to face with opponents who are much more experienced than the drug traders in Texas!

Ricky goes vigilant on the expressway. He glances in the rear view mirror of the Chrysler at frequent intervals. Finally, he says to Frankie.

"Look behind us. What do you think about the car right in back?"

Frankie twists his shoulders and turns his head. He studies the car on their tail.

The problem here, Frankie's guard is down, because Don Salvatore Mustalaro reminds him so much of his father. With a trace of annoyance in his voice, he says to Ricky, “It’s a man and a woman in a Benz. Probably on the way to a P.T.A. meeting or a mall.”

Ricky, in sharp contrast to Frankie and Tepo, has been around long enough to understand the real motives of drug dealers- either rich or poor. Ricky struggles to calm his shattered nerves. He asks nervously.

“You heard me tell them the stuff is in Camden, didn’t you?”

Frankie replies smoothly. “You got the idea across. They swallowed it.”

The cars drive on a little while longer. Ali takes the exit leading to their motel on Lancaster. While the two cars are in the process of a left hand turn, Ricky picks up his radio. He turns the radio on. Then he flashes his headlights at the car in front of his Chrysler. Tepo sees the flashing headlights in his outside mirror. He reaches for his hand held.

Just as he powers his radio up, they hear Ricky saying something that ends in the word- "drug
store”. Tepo holds his unit up close to his lips. He says.

“Say again, unit two. We didn’t get the first part of the message.”

Ricky speaks into his radio again. “I said ... stop at a drug store.”

Tepo replies, “Roger unit two. As soon as we see a place on this side of the street.”

The cars ride along in tandem until they come upon an all night pharmacy. Ali leads the convoy into the store parking lot. He puts his gearshift lever in park, and turns off the headlights, but he does not kill the engine. Ricky dashes out of the Chrysler and into the pharmacy. A few minutes later Ricky comes out of the front door of the drug store.

There is a white paper bag in his right hand. Ali opens his window. As Ricky gets back into his car, he says to Ali.

“You can run us back to the motel. I got what I want.”

Shortly, Ali takes his team through the drive in lane of a fast food restaurant. It is too late to stop for a sit down meal. Unfortunately, the men do not notice the cars trailing them back to the motel. They are overtaken by the delicious aroma of the food in their carry out bags. Worse, their senses are dulled by the newly fallen darkness in a totally unfamiliar community.

As Ali’s Mercury and Ricky’s Chrysler turn onto the gravel parking lot of their motel, three cars pass by, one car at a time. Out of sight from the motel, the Mustalaro family vehicles turn round and drive back. The drivers take up positions from which they are able to monitor the activity of the four Hispanics from Texas. Are they planning an after-hours break in?

The men climb out of the Mercury and the Chrysler. They stop to talk on the sidewalk between their two rooms. Ricky says.

“Get all the guns in the rooms. Leave the radios on all night. We might need to get up real quick and get out of here.”

Frankie and Tepo nod their heads. They are too exhausted to speak. Ali adds.

“Tomorrow we can sleep in. Gotta look over our stuff. Talk this thing out until everything is one two three.”

The four men open the doors to their two adjoining rooms. They throw their briefcases on the beds. Then they put their food on the small tables. Last, they haul in their suitcases. Luggage bulging with what they wish to believe is a precious white commercial cargo. Ricky, Ali, Frankie and Tepo polish off the food in the paper carry out bags. Soon they are fast asleep.
A man dressed in a long black woolen overcoat, and a matching Fedora, walks carefully across the gravel parking lot and up to the Mercury wagon and the Chrysler sedan just before sunrise on the following morning.

He pulls a flashlight and a slip of paper out of his pocket. Glancing up and down, the man finds the license plate numbers on the cars match the numbers written on the paper. The man nods his head and then walks away with slow deliberate steps. Don Targioni 'Bulls Eye' Barberini knows what he needs to know. ...

**Scene 39 Drug Counseling Session With Tepo Nayari**

**Location: A fast food restaurant parking lot, Philadelphia Pennsylvania**

It is the morning of the fateful day of the drug sale to the Mustalaro crime family. Ricky Sinaloa drives his associates to a fast food restaurant for an informal breakfast in the Mercury wagon. After they make their way past the pickup window, Ricky drives to the back of the lot and parks their stolen car. Ricky sits in the driver’s seat with Ali at his side. The Nayari brothers fill the back seats, Tepo seated right behind Ali. Frankie Nayari has an expansive look on his face. He remarks.

“Do you know what the best part is?” Frankie looks at each man in turn. Then he crows. “The best part is my old man couldn’t do it any better.”
Frankie’s remark is a little bit of braggadocio. Truth is- the cars they drive around in are ready for the bone yard. Moreover, the rooms they rent could be, and often are, rented by the hour. Yet to Frankie, any life at all out from under the heel of his domineering father is preferable to shouldering the burden of being the eldest son of Don Alberto Enrique Nayari. Though his life is in eminent peril, Francesco Simon Nayari feels completely free from the enormous pressures of his childhood.

Frankie nods in the silence. He adds. "Going back to Bogotá rich. Going back all on my own."

Ali swivels his head round to have a close look at Tepo. Through the steam rising from his coffee cup, he sees Tepo has a runny nose. In a guarded voice, Ali says.

“Looks to me like you’re getting into the stuff again.”

Tepo’s first thought is to deny the truth of his addiction. He makes a weak effort to meet the gaze of the older man. Tepo alibi’s. “I just got allergies. Something in the air maybe.”

Ali nods his head sagely. Then he frowns. He turns to Ricky in the driver’s seat.

“What's gonna happen tonight if the kid drops the ball?”

Ricky studies Tepo’s expression in the rear view mirror of the Mercury wagon. There is no doubt but Frankie’s brother is concealing a serious problem. It is time for Ricky to assert himself as the leader of the gang. Ricky says to Tepo.

“You got slapped around last time. You looking for more?”

Tepo sits there in silence. He struggles to think of something to say. Tepo looks at his older brother for emotional support. That turns out to be a mistake, a waste of time. Tepo speaks directly to the men in the front seat.

“All I do is take a little coke on a regular basis,” he explains. “Why is that a big deal? When you guys get drunk you’re sick with hangovers for the whole next day. How is that better than my way of relaxing?”

Ali turns in his seat. He replies in an angry tone. “We got a touchy job to take care of tonight. Can we count on you one hundred percent?”

Frankie is disappointed with his younger brother, but not as angry as the last time they caught him using drugs. He looks at Tepo.

“We don’t mind if you blow some of it when it’s party time. It’s the sneaking around behind our backs that’s getting you in trouble.”

Frankie takes a long drink from his coffee. He is proud of the way he has just dealt with his kid brother. Ricky nods. He thinks Frankie is on the right track with Tepo. He turns and says.
“Learn to save it up junior. We unlax when the job is done. Not before.”

The remarks made by the older men make sense to Tepo at an intellectual level. Unfortunately, Tepo has relied upon fantasy as a means of coping with reality all the years of his young life.

The fact of the matter is- breaking Tepo's cycle of abuse would require a lot more time and effort than a single heart-to-heart talk in a parked car. He needs to spend time in a rehab clinic and a few years on a psychiatrist's couch. Maybe even go to church three times a week for the rest of his life.

Ricky carefully backs the Mercury out of the slot. He drives forward and to the right. As the men circle the lot on the way to the exit, they hand their paper trash back to Tepo. Ricky stops the stolen car next to a trashcan. Tepo gets out of the car and stuffs the garbage from their meal into the can. The springtime air is inviting, almost balmy. They roll down the windows of the Mercury wagon in a chorus. It is only a short drive back to the parking lot of their modest motel.

Scene 40 The Mustalaro Gang Checks The References Of The Sinaloa Gang

Location: Office of an inexpensive motel, near Philadelphia Pennsylvania

While the members of the Sinaloa gang are at breakfast, a late model Mercedes Benz sedan pulls onto their motel parking lot. The Mercedes stops next to the cottage style office building. The vehicle's license plates are out of sight from the motel office windows. A man and a woman get out of the car and go directly into the office. As the door closes, a small brass bell gives out with a polite and melodious chime.

Soon the clerk comes out to greet his visitors. The clerk is an elderly, slender man with snow white hair. He is dressed in a maroon cardigan sweater. The clerk stands bent over slightly. There is a look of perpetual irritation on his face.

“Yes,” he says somewhat abruptly, “What can I do for you? Looking for a room?”

The man on the other side of the counter says nothing in reply. He reaches into an inside pocket of his suit coat and brings out a business card. He places the card squarely on the counter top.

The man and the woman smile at the clerk, in an obvious attempt to gain his confidence. Then the man explains. “I'm with the Schuylkill Construction Company, Steve Napoli. I wonder if I might ask you a couple of questions about some of your guests?”

“What kind of questions?” replies the elderly clerk.
“Mostly what I need to accomplish is a name check.” Offers the younger man in a sympathetic tone, “These men claim to be in business with a prominent firm overseas. I need to make sure they are representing themselves honestly.”

The clerk ponders the situation. The request from this nice young couple seems harmless enough. Perhaps it might lead to some kind of a long-term rental contract in the future.

In a tentative voice, the clerk says. “I might be able to let you look at the register.”

The woman responds to the crotchety clerk's gambit. Candy Gotella, Bobby's sister, opens her purse and takes a twenty dollar bill from her wallet. The woman waves the bill in the air. Then she puts the twenty down on the counter top. That is enough for the clerk.

The old man in the cardigan sweater turns and reaches for the guest register from the shelf on the wall. He flips the book open to the right page and places it on the counter on top of the twenty-dollar bill. Last, the man behind the counter turns the book around that his guests might read the entries for themselves.

The young man standing next to Candy Gotella, Stevie Napoli, pulls a small scrap of paper from out of his pants pocket. He compares the four names on the paper to the entries on the register. Very carefully, he checks the spelling of each name.

Then he looks up at the clerk and explains. “Most often when people use assumed names they forget the correct spelling or use the wrong middle initial, things like that.”

The clerk is suitably impressed by this remark. He wonders if maybe the younger man and the women are private detectives. The younger man comes up with a question.

“Did they make any long distance calls from the room. Like to South America or Mexico City?”

The clerk responds. “I would have noticed a long distance call, especially overseas. They didn’t do anything like that.”

Now the man with the construction company business card looks just a little bit nervous. He asks. “How about visitors?”

“Nope,” says the clerk, flatly. “I checked them in, been working the desk since they got here!”

The younger man plucks a motel business card from a holder on the counter top. Stevie smiles at the clerk. “We might need to get back with you or maybe call these people directly.”

It is obvious to Stevie and Bobby's sister, Candy, the clerk is not at all suspicious of their
motives. Stevie and Candy exchange glances. The young man tries to go one level deeper.

“Are you sure it’s just the four of them in the two adjoining rooms?”

The clerk scowls. He takes this question as a slight challenge to his memory. He replies sharply.

“Leon and Sinaloa in room seven. The Nayari family in room eight.”

The young man and woman have all the information they need. All that remains is to discourage the clerk from speaking to his guests about the visit from the 'construction company official'. The younger man steps up close to the counter.

In a confidential tone, he suggests.

“It might be a good idea if you don’t say anything to your guests about our visit. We still have to check their credit ratings, talk to their references. No point in getting their hopes up until the job is done.”

The clerk nods quickly. Along with most people, he likes to be on the receiving end of confidential information. It makes him feel like an insider. Then too, there is the matter of the twenty dollar bill. The man and the woman break into the most sincere smiles they can manage in this set of circumstances. On the way out of the office the lady remarks.

“Thanks again for all your help, Sir.”

Her male companion adds. “You should look us up in the yellow pages if you want concrete poured over this gravel.”

The clerk nods with some effort, and then smiles. He says. “Thanks a lot for stopping by. Take care of yourselves.”

The couple make their way out into the sunshine closing the door carefully behind them. Stevie and Candy get back into their black Mercedes sedan. They motor away from the motel at a leisurely pace. After driving a few blocks, they come upon a filling station. The woman looks over the layout of the gas station carefully. She nods he head and says.

“Over there. You can call the club without having to get out of the car.”

The man behind the wheel glances over at the woman. “Where? I don’t see a phone.”

This time the woman points and says. “In the back corner by the air hose.”

The man behind the wheel catches sight of the phone. He drives to it and parks his car. The woman digs into her purse. She pulls out a handful of silver. She hands the coins to the man in
the driver’s seat. He picks up the hand piece, holding it to his face with his shoulder. Then he deposits the coins, and dials a number.

Jimmy the Bartender answers the phone. Jimmy hears a polite male voice say.

“This is Stevie calling. Can I talk to Bobby?” Jimmy replies.

“Hold on a sec. I’ll get him for you.”

Jimmy the bartender says. “Hey Bobby, Stevie wants to talk to you.” At the mention of his name, the muscle bound waiter gets up from the table where he was reading the newspaper.

Bobby takes the phone from the bartender. Jimmy assumes the conversation probably has something to do with girls. He walks to the end of the bar and busies himself with polishing a row of shot glasses.

In a quiet but anxious voice, Bobby asks Stevie. “What did you find out?” Stevie replies. “The names might be for real. They check out. But they didn’t make any phone calls, not anywhere.”

Bobby Gotella the waiter smiles at this remark. His shoulder and back muscles ripple in anticipation. “I told you they were bogus, didn’t I?” says Bobby.

Stevie counters. “If the coke is for real these guys are for real. Who cares if we never hear from them again?”

Bobby answers speedily. “Took me three years to get where I am. We got to keep Mustie in line with the Cardano family or you and me are down the tubes. What we got on our hands is rats going for our loaf.”

Stevie feels a little nervous. He is behind Bobby one hundred percent but not at all willing to cross anybody as high up as Jimmy the Bartender. He and Bobby are just soldiers in the Mustalaro family, after all. There is a pause in the discussion. Stevie cautions Bobby.

“Don’t get any goofy ideas Bobby. Jimmy is the boss until you and I are his pall bearers.”

Stevie's remark cuts Bobby down to the bone. It hurts when he remembers the way Jimmy took an immediate liking to the taller Hispanic. Bobby argues with Stevie. He says harshly. "I washed glasses for a year until Jimmy would let me speak to Mustie. Those Latino punks walk in off the street yesterday. Twenty minutes later Jimmy has them at the table with- 'Mustang Sally'. How would you feel?"

Stevie decides it might be a good idea to have a long talk with Jimmy the Bartender. He takes one more stab at calming Bobby down.

“You know Bobby,” Stevie says in a too patient voice, “Jimmy is almost sixty years old.
Cardano won’t even shake hands with him. You gotta learn to stay in your place if you want to get anywhere in the Mustalaro family.”

Bobby picks up on the edge in Stevie’s voice. As he tries to think of a reply that will allow him to back out gracefully, he hears a familiar bell sound ringing twice through the phone hand set. There is no doubt but Stevie parked his car at a gas station. The ringing sound means a car has just driven over the air hose bell.

Bobby smiles at the knowledge Stevie is calling him from a gas station. He shifts his weight back and forth. “I’m just blowing off steam, Stevie. You know what I mean. You don’t have to tell me Jimmy is the boss. I’m just laying out the problem for you.”

Stevie kens from the tone in Bobby’s voice the body building waiter is back in control. He says. “Listen, I got a kid to pick up from school. Keep a lid on it. I’ll come by your place around eight. O.K.?”

Bobby answers. “Everything is cool. I’ll be watching for your car.”

Stevie goes eye to eye with the woman in the passenger seat of his automobile. He says to Bobby, "Want to talk to your sister?"

Bobby Gotella replies."Just tell Candy Bobby says hello."

There is nothing left to discuss. The two men hang up their handsets at about the same time. Bobby tries to go back to reading the newspaper, but he is too angry to concentrate. For the rest of the shift, he avoids making eye contact with 'Jimmy the Bartender'.

Scene 41 The Sinaloa Gang Makes Ready For Their Business Deal

Location: Inexpensive motel room, Philadelphia Pennsylvania

When Ricky drives the Mercury onto the gravel parking lot of the motel after breakfast, the only car parked in the lot is their Chrysler. This sight reassures the four men. As might be expected, they are becoming more and more anxious at the thought of what might happen to them that evening. The men clamber out of the Mercury wagon. Ricky opens the door to his room. All four men haul the briefcases and the suitcases filled with cocaine into the room shared by Sinaloa and Leon. They go inside and take seats. It is time for a long and careful discussion.

Ricky takes his usual seat on the bed closest to the window. He arranges the bed pillows as a cushion and then leans back against the headboard. Sinaloa lights a cigarette. He moves the ashtray from the bedside table onto his lap. The Nayari brothers sit on the edge of Ali’s bed, facing Ricky. Ali takes a chair from the table. He sits down in the chair at the foot of Ricky’s bed.

Leon is the first to speak. Ali looks back and forth between Tepo and Ricky. “The kid can have a gun in his pants but not in his hand. He’s too shaky. Him and me exchange the briefcases between the two cars. You and Frankie carry the guns and keep us covered.”

Tepo has been on the defensive all during the morning. His patience is wearing thin. He does not like being referred to with the adjective- ‘shaky’. Tepo turns to his brother Frankie. He pleads with his eyes. Frankie says sheepishly,

“Don’t look at me, junior. You’re the one with the runny nose and the blood shot eyes.”

Ricky likes Ali’s plan. But the look on the faces of the Nayari brothers tells him it is time to change the subject. He says simply.

“Get out the guns. We better look em over.”

Tepo's visage brightens, he likes having a set of worthwhile responsibilities. Frankie's baby brother jumps up from Ali's bed. Soon all of their weapons are on display at the foot of Ricky’s bed.

“There you are gents,” says the younger man. “Take whatever you like.”

Tepo snatches up a machine pistol capable of full automatic fire. He waves it around the room.

His choice does not go over well with Ali. Leon takes the weapon out of Tepo’s hand. He says.

“You’re brother needs that. You need something that will stay up behind your belt buckle.”
Ali hands the machine pistol to Frankie. He gives Tepo a revolver from the pile on the bed. Ricky leans forward on his bed. He picks up a machine pistol, identical to the one in Frankie’s hand. Ricky goes eye to eye with Frankie.

“Should be on full automatic, you and me both.”

Frankie nods and smiles, he adds, “When that punk waiter with the muscles sees these pieces he’s gonna get real respectful.”

For a good while, the four men busy themselves checking the actions of the weapons, making certain each magazine is loaded to full capacity.

Then Tepo inquires. “Where do you want the rest of the guns?”

Ricky responds directly. “Split them up on the floor of the cars. Won’t be any time to reload if the Mafia gets goofy.”

While Ricky tutors Tepo on the fine points of dealing drugs. Ali takes a revolver with a six inch barrel up into his hands. He rolls out the cylinder to make certain it is loaded. Then he closes the action with a firm squeeze. Mister Leon holds the gun up to the light, admiring its heft and purpose.

Finally, he sights down the barrel of the gun at the lampshade at Ricky's bedside. Mister Leon is satisfied with the feel of the weapon. He tucks it into his trousers, just behind his belt buckle. Tepo, by this time, is anxious to be back in the group as a voting partner and not just Ali’s whipping boy. In a deferential voice, he asks.

“Who's gonna cover the muscle bound waiter?”

Ricky takes a deep drag from his cigarette. He exhales up towards the ceiling. Sinaloa replies.

“Good question. Jimmy the Bartender is so old he’s gonna be handing the briefcases back and forth. We all gotta keep an eye on the waiter. He has it in for Frankie and me both.”

Frankie remarks. “Look at the bright side. It's going to be four against three tonight. Because the bartender doesn't count in a real fight.”

Ali listens carefully to the dialogue between Ricky and Frankie. He nods his head and says. “If I was the waiter with the muscles I’d grab Tepo. Ain’t very likely Frankie is gonna shoot through his brother to hit a Mustalaro soldier.”

Tepo shivers at the keen wisdom embedded in Ali’s remark. He realizes the older man is right on the money with his estimate of the waiter's character. Ricky sees a flash of terror on Tepo’s face. He smiles and says.
“Don’t get shook up kid. I got a little something give you an edge in a scuffle.”

Understandably, the younger Nayari brother is in a receptive mood. He says.

“Gonna let me have another gun?” Ricky stands up from the bed. “Better than that!”

Mister Sinaloa goes for the paper bag he carried out of the drug store on the previous night. From inside the bag he pulls out two large rolls of white adhesive tape.

Frankie sees the rolls of tape in Ricky’s hand. He quips, “We take the old guy in the motel office hostage and exchange him for the cash?”

Ricky chuckles at this, and says. “Take off your shirt and turn around.”

Tepo does not have to be told twice. Frankie's baby brother strips off his shirt. Ricky picks up one of the large sheathed hunting knives they purchased in Dallas. Ricky says to Frankie.

“Hold this thing against the back of ’Don' Tepo's neck. I’m gonna tape it between his shoulders.”

Frankie catches on in a flash. He places the knife high up on Tepo’s back. The top of the handle is up even with the bottom of Tepo's hairline at the back of his head. Ricky tears strips of tape off the roll. Frankie takes the strips one at a time. He uses the tape to secure the knife to the center of Tepo’s back.

The tape goes over the young man’s shoulders in the front. The adhesive strips form a large white X where they cross over on top of the sheath in the space between Tepo's shoulder blades.

Tepo bounces around, he is ecstatic! He buttons up his shirt in a hurry and runs to the mirror to have a close look Ricky’s invention. The young man whistles softly. He says.

“Eight inches of stainless steel, nobody can even see it! Gonna put it right in that waiter’s guts if he looks at me twice!”

With that, Tepo reaches behind his head and works the snap on the sheath. As soon as he has a grip on the handle, he brings the blade out and down in front of his face. The youngest member of the Sinaloa gang admires his reflection in the polished metal. He slashes left and right at a gaggle of imaginary enemies.

Everyone in the room can see Frankie's baby brother is good to go. Unfortunately, Tepo's gain in position is, as always, at the expense of his hold on reality. Tepo is now off in a never never land where he can defeat thousands of men!

Ali and Frankie fix their eyes on Tepo and his new weapon. Their eyes gleam with admiration and paternal pride. They smile at Ricky. In an almost reverential tone, Frankie asks Ricky.
“Where in the hell did you learn to do that?”

Ricky basks in the warmth of the praise from his colleagues. He smiles and nods his head. He replies.

"You don't know I did graduate school in a military prison?"

Ali and Frankie shake their heads. Ali suggests.

“We all ought to go out tonight with the same set up. Each of us should have a knife like that. It’ll be eight to three and no contest.”

Ricky tosses one of the rolls of surgical tape up in the air. He laughs and says.

“Why do you think I bought two rolls of this stuff?”

The boys go to work with remarkable vigor at the task of concealing their deadly sheath knives. Ricky does the taping on Ali and Frankie. Try as he might, Ali cannot come up with a way of improving on the design pioneered by Ricky.

Ali is careful to continue the bandage well up onto and over Ricky’s shoulders. Soon the men stand posing and admiring themselves in the mirrors in the room and in the bath. It is not long until Tepo thinks to ask.

“Are we coming back here tonight?”

Ricky replies quickly. “Not a chance. All the mafia families in the city heard about us by now.”

“Well then,” Tepo suggests, “Let’s get some practice in with these blades.”

Ali says, "I second the motion." Frankie continues on with, "All agreed say aye." Then, in a laughing male chorus, all four men chime- "Aye, Aye."

Ali steps to the wall separating their rooms. He sketches a bull’s eye pattern with a ballpoint pen up level with his eyes. He turns to Tepo.

“The center of the bull is right at the waiter’s neck. That’s the ten point spot.”

Tepo walks up to the mark. The young man throws his knife at the bull’s eye. He tries various ways of holding the weapon, but soon discovers sinking the point into the wall is largely a matter of luck. The other men try their hand at the target with equally uneven results. Tepo summarizes their findings.

“Throwing won’t work. Gotta get in close and stab.”

Frankie nods at his brother. He adds, "Tercio de Muerte! Just like with the bull!"
Scene 42 The Drug Deal Takes A Turn For The Worse

Location: Drug store parking lot across the street from the members only Italian social club, Philadelphia Pennsylvania

It is nearly eight P.M. Time to drive down to the drug store parking lot across the street from the social club the Mustalaro crime family calls home. The men pack their four briefcases with the remaining packages of cocaine with all the energy of traveling salesmen working on commission. They squeeze as much of the drug as they are able into their four briefcases. Ali observes.

“One more big deal like this, we can all go legit.”

Frankie adds. “Yah. Wear a camel’s hair coat just like Sally Mustalaro.”

“Not me,” says Tepo. “Where I’m gonna live it’s too warm for a coat. I want his stretch caddy.”

Frankie feels so proud of his kid brother’s level of confidence he punches him playfully on the shoulder.
Ricky- 'sets his cap'. It is time to exert full control over the other members of the gang. An easy thing to do, given the room filling sense of 'upward mobility' in the air this evening.

“Let’s get rolling,” Ricky says. “Don’t leave nothing behind, toss the keys on the bed.”

Nodding, and smiling, the four men load up their vehicles. They place the four briefcases stuffed with product into the trunk of Ricky’s car. Then they take their customary positions in the passenger compartments of the Chrysler sedan and the stolen Mercury wagon.

The men pass a parked car a few traffic lights down on the avenue and away from the motel. An attractive woman with blond hair, in her mid thirties, sits behind the wheel, concealed from their view behind privacy glass.

She has a scarf over her head and a fur coat wrapped round her shoulders. The lady appears to be studying a road map. When the two cars drive past she alights from the car and walks quickly in two inch patent leather heels to a public phone booth. The woman, Bobby Gotella's sister Candy, is soon on the line with 'Stevie'.

After a terse exchange, with no mention of names, the woman returns the handset to its hook. Then she walks to her Buick Riviera and drives back to the heart of the Italian neighborhood in southwest Philadelphia. Frankie holds his Citizens Band radio up in his right hand. He turns around and waves it at Tepo. Tepo replies by holding his unit up as a sort of a gang sign. Frankie pushes on the microphone key.

"Two to one. Two to one. You guys get up in front of us so Leon can find the drug store."

Tepo responds with a good deal of enthusiasm, “One to two. One to two. As soon as the traffic lets up we’re taking over.”

Ali navigates the Mercury wagon past the Chrysler. A few more traffic lights finds them driving down the expressway. Their sensitivities are heightened by the mortal danger of their situation. The four men glance about cat like in all directions. They see nothing out of the ordinary. They have no sense of being under surveillance. Each man smiles in anticipation of the evening’s deal with the Mustalaro gang. Each man wants to imagine he is in complete control of his own destiny.

Ali brings the Mercury wagon to a stop in front of the social club. The lights are on behind the curtains in the small windows of the club. The curtains hang still. The pharmacy is closed for the evening. Ali spies two cars in the drug store parking lot in the gloom of the evening. A late model black Buick with two doors, and a four door Mercedes Benz.

Ali studies both cars with an eye for a double cross. He keeps his left foot on the brake pedal. His right foot hovers just above the accelerator. Leon glances back and forth. He sees two men sitting in each of the two cars.
Except for the Buick and the Mercedes, the parking lot is empty. There seems to be considerable room to maneuver and escape from the lot if anything were to go wrong during the deal. Ali and Tepo, and Ricky and Frankie, peer carefully in all directions. They see nothing unusual, nothing to raise an alarm.

Although the drug store is closed, the roof top parking lot lamps cast a reasonable amount of light on the Buick and the Benz. The fine details of the scene come together as an warm invitation to the eye of the neophyte drug dealers. They see plenty of room on the lot to pull out in a hurry. There is just enough light to watch another man's hands, but not enough light for surveillance photography.

Ali Leon is soon confident of the geography of their situation. He makes a left turn onto the one-way street forming one of the borders of the rectangular parking lot.

Ali can make out Jimmy the bartender as the driver of the Buick from his new vantage point. The men wave at each other briefly. Ali drives up another fifty feet. He makes a cautious left turn down the alley running behind the drug store and forming another border of the rectangular parking lot. Mister Leon puts his foot on the brake and stops the Mercury wagon.

Ahead, through his windshield, Ali sees the alley is empty all the way down to the end of the block. The view in his rear view mirror includes just the head and shoulder figures of Ricky and Frankie in the Chrysler. It appears to be safe to proceed with the next step in the exchange.

Ali rolls down the window of the Mercury wagon. He leans out and while bracing himself with the steering wheel speaks to Ricky.

“Back the Chrysler up against the trunk of Jimmy’s Buick. Leave ten feet or so so we got space to talk.”

Ricky has his head out of his window while he listens to Ali. He responds.

“Yah. Then pull the wagon up on my side opposite the way the Mercedes is next to Jimmy’s Buick.”

Ali nods. He lowers himself back into the driver's seat of the wagon. Leon drives up a little ways so Ricky can maneuver the Chrysler into a trunk to trunk position with the all black two door Buick.

After a few minutes of rowing their cars back and forth, the four cars are arranged for a fast and safe exchange of money for drugs. Jimmy’s Buick and Ricky’s Chrysler are parked trunk to trunk. There is a healthy ten-foot space between their bumpers. The other two vehicles sit parallel to the exchange cars, but on opposite sides with about a six-foot spacing. Jimmy is the first to get out of his car.
Jimmy the Bartender looks the picture of a high school principal, dressed in his regulation long woolen coat and matching fedora. No one would imagine him a lieutenant in the Mustalaro crime family. While his eyes move from one Latino to the next, Jimmy explains.

“O.K. fellas. Let’s all get out of the cars like we’re friends and have a show of hands. Remember I told you, two guys can have something in their hands and the other two gotta keep it in their pants.”

The eight men climb out of the cars. They assemble into two loose groups on either side of an imaginary line drawn between the trunks of the two exchange vehicles, Jimmy's Buick and Ricky's Chrysler. Ali and Tepo walk over to join Ricky and Frankie. Ali reminds Tepo.

“Keep away from the muscle bound waiter.”

Ali makes this suggestion to Tepo in Spanish. The Italians hear nothing that makes any sense. The groups draw close to one another. They inventory the weapons of their opponents. The Italians stiffen as they take note Ricky and Frankie have very deadly looking machine pistols in their right hands.

Ricky sees Bobby Gotella the waiter hefting a massive revolver in the palm of his hand. Jimmy the Bartender stands in front of the trunk of his car. His overcoat is loose and unbuttoned. The butt of a snub nose revolver in a holster protrudes up from his waistband. The weapon is in plain view of everyone in the lot.

Ricky and Frankie stand at the ready at the rear fenders of the Chrysler. Their attention is drawn to a young man at Jimmy’s side by the trunk of the Buick. He is somebody new. Though they have not seen him before, it appears from his features and his mannerisms he is Bobby Gotella's younger brother.

Stevie Napoli stands at the young man's left side in front of the front bumper of the Mercedes Benz. He brandishes a semi-automatic pistol in his left hand. Stevie is the make believe Schuylkill Construction Company official who ran the make believe reference check on the Latino’s at the motel and then phoned Bobby at the social club. Again, this man is an unknown player to the Sinaloa gang members.

Jimmy the Bartender realizes he needs to loosen up the tension. He forces a smile on his lined face. He says.

“Did you guys have any trouble finding the place?”

Ricky and Frankie's mouths open, they come close to laughing at the quip from the bartender.
Fact is, they feel nearly invincible with machine pistols in their hands. Yet their throats are much too dry for small talk. While Jimmy the Bartender jokes, Tepo and Ali pair up with their backs to the trunk of the Chrysler.

Ali comes up face to face against Jimmy. Tepo stands on Ali’s right side. This is by intent. It puts Tepo as far as possible out of the reach of Bobby’s hands.

Jimmy the Bartender nods his head. He says flatly.

“Listen boys, all we do is stick with the drill and nobody gets hurt. I’m gonna open the trunk of my Buick and pull out a briefcase. The guy with the glasses should do the same thing.”

Jimmy turns on his heels. He opens the trunk of his Buick. Ricky leans over the trunk of the Chrysler. He opens the lid. With both lids up in the air, Bobby and Stevie move in a little, ostensibly, to keep Ricky and Frankie covered.

Tepo and Jimmy pull briefcases out of the trunks of the exchange cars at about the same time. Jimmy opens the case in his hands. He displays the stacks of twenty-dollar bills to all of the participants. Tepo does likewise with the drugs.

Jimmy says. “What I see there in your case is plastic packages. Before you get the dough, Phil's gotta test the merchandise.”

Phil, Bobby the waiter’s younger brother, takes a step towards Tepo. Phil doesn't ask Tepo for his cooperation, he growls at the younger man.

“Hold the case open so I can cut into a bag. Gotta run a little up my nose.”

Tepo looks up at the man with a stiletto knife in his hand. Phil is a head taller and nearly as strong as his brother Bobby. Tepo feels small and vulnerable. He does his best to conceal his anxiety behind a blank stare.

Phil picks a package of the cocaine at random. He makes a slit into the top with the tip of his razor sharp stiletto. Phil goes for a pinch of the white powder with his thumb and first finger. He brings it up to his nose and inhales. Shortly, he turns to face Jimmy. With a smile of satisfaction, Phil says.

“It's a hundred per cent.”

Jimmy purses his lips and nods. He closes his briefcase and hands it to Ali.

Phil says to Tepo, “Give me the case and get out the next one.”

Tepo notices Phil holds the knife he used to cut into the bag open and at the ready. It is difficult for Tepo to take his eyes off the thin blade of the stiletto in Phil’s right hand.
Tepo shuts his drug filled briefcase. He passes the case to Phil. Phil hefts the briefcase to test its weight. He hands it back over to Jimmy. Jimmy puts the case of drugs in the trunk of his black Buick. He brings out another briefcase filled with cash. Jimmy opens the lid. He displays the bundled paper money inside. Jimmy the Bartender is considerably taller than Ali Leon. He tilts the case down in front of the shorter man.

Light from the parking lot lamps reflects off the lenses of his thick eyeglasses as Ali looks down at the folding money. He looks for all the world like a prosperous tax attorney. In the mean time, Tepo brings out another of the cocaine-filled briefcases from the trunk of the Chrysler.

Tepo opens the briefcase under the wary and watchful eye of Phil, Bobby’s brother. For a second time, Phil walks towards Tepo. For a second time, he orders the younger and smaller man to hold the case still while he samples the cocaine.

"Hold steady kid. You got nothing to worry about."

Tepo complies without saying a word. Phil runs his 'taste test'. He nods. The four men exchange a second pair of briefcases, Mafia cash for Latino drugs.

The drug deal between the Italians and the Latinos is halfway complete. The men on both sides are getting comfortable. They are starting to feel relaxed. At this point no one smiles, or whistles, or shuffles his feet in a victory dance. Yet it is clear to all the dangers of the exchange are nearly a thing of the past.

Then, suddenly, as he and Bobby rehearsed, Phil makes a subtle change in his routine. He steps up to Tepo more quickly and more closely than before. Phil leers at the younger man. He barks. “Hurry it up kid before the cops get here and take it all for themselves!” Tepo responds in a knee jerk manner to Phil’s command. In spite of himself, Tepo is under the psychological control of the tall and domineering stranger.

Tepo leans, in obedience to his master, into the open space of the trunk of the Chrysler.

Just as Tepo has his hands on the third briefcase, Phil grabs him by the shoulders and tosses him up against Bobby! Just as fast, Bobby slides his arm around Tepo’s chest! He puts the muzzle of his revolver into Tepo’s ear!

At the exact same moment, with all the coordination of a troupe of ballet dancers, Phil lunges at Ali with his stiletto!

The tip of the blade catches Ali on the jaw line on the right hand side of his face. Ali leaps
backwards, startled and afraid for his life. Ali tears his revolver out from behind his waistband in spite of the pain! Ali's move is a complete surprise to his enemies! The plan was to slit Ali's throat and watch him collapse and bleed to death! The plan has failed!

Phillip Gotella and Ali Leon stand against one another, man to man. The taller Italian has a stiletto in his gun hand. Unfortunately for him, his pistol rests in his pants behind his belt buckle. The shorter Hispanic stands against a man armed with a knife. Leon hefts a revolver in his hand. He aims his weapon at the center of mass of his opponent's chest. The game has moved to a higher and much more deadly level!

Jimmy glares first at Phil and then at Bobby. In a voice filled with disgust, he says to the Gotella brothers.

“Screwballs! I told Mustie you was trash when I first laid eyes on you!”

Bobby is indifferent to Jimmy's remark. He truly believes he and his brother are in control of the situation. Bobby squeezes down tightly on Tepo’s chest with his left arm. He lifts the slender boy off his feet. Bobby Gotella looks into Frankie's eyes. He says.

“We get it all or your brother gets dead.” Bobby works the muzzle of his revolver a little deeper into Tepo’s right ear for emphasis.

Tepo writhes from the pain of the arm clamped round his chest and the cold steel object in his ear. Frankie's baby brother raises his arms high above his head in a reflex gesture. Tepo protests in a choked voice.

“Let go of me before you get a bullet in your head.”

The eight men men stand frozen in the half-light from the lamps of the parking lot. Suddenly, everyone sees a flash of light near Bobby's head! Bobby’s frame stiffens. He jerks backwards a half step. As soon as Bobby Gotella realizes he cannot see out of his right eye, he grunts.

“What? Huh?”

Bobby feels something warm and wet dripping down his face and onto his gun hand. He drops Tepo to the ground. Then he brings his left hand up to his face. When he holds the palm of his left hand under his left eye, he sees fresh blood! Bobby looks up from his hand with his left eye. He sees a huge gleaming knife blade in Tepo's right hand!

Too angry, too ashamed to feel fear, Tepo pulled the hunting knife from the sheath taped to the skin between his shoulder blades. Angry and in pain, he made a slashing lunge backwards into the flesh of Bobby’s face. The cut went all the way down to the bone from Bobby's chin to his hairline.
As the blade moved upwards and back on its way out of the sheath, it sliced through the cornea and the eyelid of Bobby's right eye. Bobby finds himself blind in one eye and bleeding profusely.

His right hand is drenched in fresh blood. The plastic grip of his revolver slips in his hand, spoiling his hold on the weapon. With his left hand resting on the savage wound like a bandage, he struggles to locate Tepo in his field of vision.

Tepo is terrified! He has no real understanding of the extent of Bobby’s injuries. Tepo sees Bobby gripping madly at the butt of his revolver. He steps up and drives the blade of his knife into Bobby’s chest.

The huge blade penetrates all the way to the hilt. Bobby makes a sound halfway between a cough and a grunt. It is his death rattle. Too strong, too fit, to die on the spot, he falls to his knees and weeps out of his left eye.

Tepo stands over the taller and stronger man with his hands on his hips. He looks like nothing so much as a Matador! Tepo's chest heaves up and back. He pants through his mouth in the excitement! The young man smiles and nods at the sight of the handle of the sheath knife protruding from the wound in his opponent's chest.

In spite of the fact, the Italians have one man down they might still have triumphed over the Latinos. The problem for the Italians, they came onto the field with two separate game plans. An official plan put together by Don Salvatore Mustalaro and his loyal Lieutenant, Jimmy the Bartender. And an 'under the table' strategy crafted by the two overly ambitious traitors, Bobby and Stevie. The Italians are not only one man down their loyalties are split down the middle!

Another issue weighing heavily in favor of the Hispanics, Bobby Gotella died right before their eyes in complete silence, not in a hail of bullets.

The Mafia soldiers were wired up to shoot back at the first sound of gunfire. Tepo’s silent and deadly attack with an edged weapon took them by surprise. Bobby, the muscle bound waiter, the overeager and ambitious leader of the traitors in the Italian gang, under estimated the skills and resources of his Hispanic rivals. A mistake he paid for with his life!

While Bobby slumps dead to the pavement, Ali stands bleeding from the shallow knife wound Phil made across his face. Not surprising Mister Leon is enraged.

Not surprising he does not hesitate! Ali raises his pistol up in the air and locks his arm. BLAM! A single bullet from his revolver strikes the taller man square in the center of his chest! Phillip Gotella staggers from the impact of the bullet. He tries but fails to draw his own gun in his defense.

Phil bends at his knees in pain. Ali stretches his right arm. He shoots the man, execution style, right in the face. BLAM! The second report from Ali's revolver galvanizes the men on the scene.
Latino's and Hispanics alike, start firing their weapons at their enemies.

Frankie puts a burst from his machine pistol into Jimmy before Jimmy can get to his snub nose revolver. Jimmy the Bartender slumps to the ground like a pile of old clothes.

Wide eyed, open mouthed, Stevie and Ricky fire their weapons at one another. They both miss their targets in the first exchange. Stevie might have killed Ricky with the next bullet. He might have. But with Bobby, Phil, and Jimmy out of the picture. Ali and Frankie are free to shoot at Stevie in concert. Stevie slumps to the ground, lifeless, dead in a hail storm of bullets from three separate weapons.

Ricky, Frankie, Ali, and Tepo stand and stare at one another for a long moment. Their hearts pound, their ears ring, puffs of gun smoke fill the air. There are four dead or dying Mafia types sprawled on the ground at their feet. As soon as Ricky realizes no one in his gang is injured he says.

“Get the coke and the cash! Get the hell out of here!”

Ali, Frankie, and Tepo nod in silence. They are too exhausted and frightened to speak. Better said, they are under Ricky's demonic spell.

Ali walks over to Tepo. Leon holds a hand over the knife wound on his face. He picks up the briefcase full of cocaine from where it fell out of Tepo’s hands during the struggle with Bobby. Leon says to Frankie's baby brother.

“Get in the car. You been through enough already.”

Tepo smiles at Ali, his mentor and his guardian. His chest heaves. Tepo walks, stumbles would be the more correct term, to the passenger’s side of the Mercury wagon. Ali takes the case of drugs dropped on the ground back to the Chrysler. He tosses the case into the trunk.

Next, Leon walks over to Jimmy’s Buick. Reaching gingerly, to avoid making contact with the dead man at his feet, he pulls the cases of cocaine and cash out of the trunk, handing them one at a time to Ricky.

Ricky breathes heavily. His face is a mask of alarm. Ricky and Ali walk to the Chrysler, their arms filled with briefcases stuffed with cocaine and cash. They toss their booty in the trunk of the Chrysler sedan.

In all the excitement, no one counted the number of briefcases handed back and forth. Ricky says dimly to Ali and Frankie. “Do we got everything? Ali replies. “Let me take a look in Jimmy’s trunk.”
Ali walks the ten pace distance from the back of the Chrysler to the back of the Buick. He leans into the trunk of Jimmy's Buick. “It’s all taken care of.”

Leon is too tired, too wound up to be vigilant and pro-active. Ali puts his left hand flat on the exterior surface of the trunk lid. He slams the lid shut. Still bleeding, still tired, Ali transfers his gun to his left hand and pulls out a handkerchief.

Leon presses the cloth against the wound on the right side of his face with his right hand. Ali walks back to Ricky. He drops the cloth away from the knife wound.

“Take a look at this. Do I need to go to the hospital?”

Ricky stares into the wound with a look of brotherly solicitude on his face. He answers. “I don’t see any bone sticking out. Let Tepo drive the wagon.” Ali nods in agreement with Ricky’s suggestion.

Frankie slams the lid shut on the trunk of the Chrysler. The evening air is deadly silent. Still, the men realize police must be on the way. Ricky turns to Ali for instructions. Ali says.

“Once we get out of the neighborhood we take ninety five until we’re a couple of states away from here.”

Ricky says. “Adios time amigo’s!” He walks towards the driver’s door of the Chrysler.

Frankie flatly replies. “Be with you in a second.”

Francesco Simon Nayari, son of Don Alberto Enrique Nayari, walks up to Bobby Gotella's slumped form. He fires a burst from his machine pistol into the man’s head. The muzzle flashes light up the scene like packets of fireworks. The shell casings make a tinkling sound as they fall to the pavement while the noise from the explosions fades away.

"Mafia Son of a Bitch!" Frankie growls.

Frankie walks around Bobby Gotella's dead body. He strides to a point about ten feet back from the side of the four door Mercedes Benz. Frankie sprays the luxury car with the rest of the rounds in the magazine of his machine pistol.

The gasoline tank on the Mercedes bursts into flames a few seconds after the last round blasts out of the chamber. Frankie stands there, angry, stiff, and cold until the entire car is engulfed in flames. Then, without looking back, Frankie strides to the passenger side door of the Chrysler.
Tepo leads the caravan in the Mercury down the alley behind the drug store. Ali gives him instructions as to when and where to turn. They soon find themselves on the expressway. They do not see any police cars as they drive out of the metropolitan region of Philadelphia.

Even if they had, it is not likely the police would have considered them suspects in the gun battle in front of the Mustalaro social club. When the police arrive and survey the scene they decide, almost at once, what they have on their hands is a shoot out between rival crime families.

Just by luck, a hard working and responsible evidence technician. Discovers the bloody palm and fingertip prints from Ali Leon's left hand on the lid of the trunk of the black Buick. And Tepo's prints on the handle of the sheath knife. What do you do with a set of fingerprints that do not match up to anything in the database?

**In Foxe's Book of Martyrs (epilogue) we read:**

"And now to conclude, good Christian readers, this present tractation, not for the lack of matter, but to shorten rather the matter for largeness of the volume. In the meantime the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ work with thee, gentle reader, in all thy studious readings. And when thou hast faith, so employ thyself to read, that by reading thou mayest learn daily to know that which may profit thy soul, may teach thee experience, may arm thee with patience, and instruct thee in all spiritual knowledge more and more, to thy perfect comfort and salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to whom be glory in secula seculorum. Amen."

John Foxe (1516 / 1517 - 18 April 1587)

-The End-

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**Dedication Image** The Execution of Lady Jane Grey (1833) by Paul Delaroche (1797-1856)
Wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/13/ExecutionJaneGrey.jpg

A photograph of a lunging German Shepard on a green grass background.


**Chapter 2** /www.flickr.com/photos/cbpphotos/6280049266/in/photostream Photographer, Jacqueline Wasiluk 25 October 2011 Packages of cocaine wrapped in silver duct tape, in the trunk of an automobile

**Chapter 3** office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/results.aspx?qu=Missouri#ai:MP900401313| This is a view of Saint Louis taken through the Saint Louis arch.

**Chapter 4** /commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georges_de_La_Tour_057.jpg Georges de La Tour (1593-1652) The Musicians Quarrel (1625-1630)

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**SIX: United States Air Force**

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**SEVEN: Department of Defense**

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Further and deeper still the Department of Defense says:

**USE OF DOD PERSONNEL AND MATERIEL IN ADVERTISING, MARKETING, OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL**

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