

THE VICECONSUL

Original Screenplay
by

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Inspired by a true story

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IT Dialogues

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**"Italy can survive the loss of Aldo Moro.
It would not survive the introduction of torture."**

General Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa - Rome, May 1978.

In response to a suggestion that torture be used in the investigation of the assassination by the Red Brigades of Prime Minister, Aldo Moro.

FADE IN ON:

1

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

1

An OMNISCIENT NARRATION -- TEXT TO COME -- accompanies ARCHIVE IMAGES destined to explain the historical context, the socio-political tensions of the time, introduce the principal players of the political spectrum, for the purpose of placing in a comprehensible perspective the events during 1975 and 1976, dramatized herein.

Perón dead in mid '74, his Vice-president and wife, Isabelita, assumes power. Lopez Rega -- The Warlock -- Perón's former crony, and then Minister of Social Welfare, a Rasputin-like figure who controls Isabelita, is in fact pulling the strings. He created the Triple-A death squad and uses it to ruthlessly eliminate anyone he perceives as getting in his plans for total control.

Eventually, in March '76, a Military Junta grabs power in a bloodless coup and Lopez Rega is forced to leave the country. Then, the real killing begins... To many of the persecuted, the Italian Vice-consul, Alessandro Podestá, is the only hope to be able to leave the country, before the murderous military regime makes them "disappear."

Then, STILL IN PHOTOGRAPHY MIMICKING THE ARCHIVE IMAGES, WE..

CUT TO:

2

INT. STATION WAGON FIAT 124 - DAY

2

Moving along a wet street in Villa Devoto. ALESSANDRO PODESTÁ -- late 30's, beard, tender eyes, delicate hands, austerely dressed -- rides with his gaze lost out the window, embracing an old leather briefcase.

THE IMAGES SETTLE INTO CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY.

RENZO FORZONE -- 50, a strong man with a habitual scowl but an easy smile -- Podestá's chofer -- drives. INSISTENT HORN.

Forzone checks the rearview mirror, gives way to TWO DARK GREEN FORD FALCON, packed with armed thugs. It speeds past, showering the Fiat with slush. SUPER:

"Buenos Aires, Winter, Mid 70's"

3

EXT. SECOND VILLA DEVOTO STREET - SHORT TIME LATER

3

The Fiat turns a corner, comes upon the two Fords and the thugs raiding a house for "subversives." A thug with a machine gun blocks their way, motions Forzone back.

SCREAMS. NEIGHBORS SLAM their windows. Podestá sees a YOUNG COUPLE being dragged by the hairs toward a "Ministry of Social Services" van. The Young Man is tossed in.

The Young Woman slips away, runs up the street.

SERGEANT PRIETO -- a short man from Salta province, with dark skin and slits for eyes, that we'll know better later -- pulls his service '45 pistol, calmly takes aim, shoots a bullseye to her head. The Young Woman lands near the Fiat.

Podestá reaches for his door. Forzone holds him back roughly.

FORZONE

NO!

Prieto crosses Podestá's eyes, holsters his weapon and goes back to the van, like nothing happened.

PODESTÁ

We must do something!

FORZONE

No, Mr Consul. Nothing!

The First Thug squeezes a burst of GUNFIRE in the air. Forzone signals for calm, quickly drives in reverse. Podestá stares, shocked, at the dead girl until they've disappeared down the side street.

All took less than a minute.

4 EXT. DEVOTO PRISON - MINUTES LATER 4

Lugubrious, massive, twenty foot high walls. The Fiat stops before the gate where FAMILIES, VISITORS wait vociferating.

FORZONE

I'll come with you...

Podestá looks at him.

PODESTÁ

No, Renzo, thanks. I must get used to it.

He steps out. SOUND OF METALIC DOORS LEAD THE...

MATCH CU TO:

5 INT. DEVOTO PRISON - DAY 5

Podestá behind opening steel-bar doors. VOICES, SHOUTS REVERBERATE. TWO POLICEMEN read papers at a desk. Podestá approaches.

PODESTÁ

Good morning...

(he's ignored)

I understand you have a young man detained here by the name of Federico Petrocelli?

Podestá looks past them, on edge. THE FIRST POLICEMAN finally, folds the sports section, looks at him.

FIRST POLICEMAN

We don't have young men here, just prisoners.

THE SECOND POLICEMAN chuckles. Podestá stares back at them. The First Policeman glances at a ledger.

FIRST POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

Petrocelli... Nagh...

PODESTÁ

Look again, please.

FIRST POLICEMAN

Now you tell me how to do my job.

PODESTÁ
I am the Italian consul, Alessandro Podestá, and I have from a reliable source that young Federi--

FIRST POLICEMAN
You can be the King of Spain, but if Patrocelli ain't here, I doubt I can make him appear for you.

SECOND POLICEMAN
Magicians we're not...

Podestá smiles, produces pen and black notebook.

FIRST POLICEMAN
He must be in Europe, on vacation.

SECOND POLICEMAN
Or getting laid.

Calami takes note of names on their uniforms.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Fuck you writing, asshole?!

PODESTÁ
(immutable)
You obviously ignore it, but young Petrocelli is an Italian citizen. And under the Vienna Convention, can not be detained without previous communication to his diplomatic representative. If you are concealing his presence here, you will be violating several statues of international law. Interesting what your superiors will make of that.

The policemen exchange looks.

6

INT. DETENTION BLOCK - DAY

6

Podestá follows the Second Policeman. Against a wall, a terrified youth with no shoes is violently interrogated. Podestá lags...

SECOND POLICEMAN
Coming or what?

Podestá picks up the pace. A multitude of DETAINED MEN AND WOMEN are being processed in the next holding area.

Packed cells. YOUNG PRISONERS with bloody clothes and bruised faces wait in silence, seated on the cold floor.

SECOND POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
Petrocelli, Federico!

They move ahead past more prisoners on their knees.

SECOND POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
Petrocelli...

PODESTÁ
PATROCELLI!

Before the policeman can chastise him, from one of the cells comes an anguished voice.

PETROCELLI (O.S.)
Here, yes! Petrocelli... It's me!

Podestá approaches. Young PETROCELLI -- 20, thin, covered in bruises -- holds up his hand, terrified.

PETROCELLI (CONT'D)
It's me, Sir...

Podestá turns to the policeman who reluctantly produces keys.

7 INT. FIAT STATION WAGON - DAY

7

Moving. Petrocelli watches the prison recede -- a miracle -- tries to control his emotion but breaks. Forzone eyes Podestá.

PODESTÁ
Consulate.

He pats Petrocelli's knee, eyes Forzone.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
We saved one.

Forzone shrugs.

FORZONE
A hole in the ocean.

8 INT. "EL CITY" BILLARDS - DAY

8

VALENTINO SALVATI -- 19, handsome, tender, intelligent eyes, incipient beard, long hair -- executes impossible shots of "artistic pool," marveling FANS. RADIO MUSIC -- Los Cinco Latinos' ("Como Antes" min: 0:58>) -- reaches from the bar.

POCHÍN (POLICE INSPECTOR OVIDE) -- 60's, intense, tough, loyal -- watches from a table, huddled with FRANCO SALVATI -- 50's -- and his other son, LUCA SALVATI -- 18, attractive, a more willful but anxious face -- at the moment more interested in the subject at this table, than in his brother's tricks he knows by heart.

POCHÍN (OFF/ON)
What's happening in this country has less to do with ideology now than plain thirst for blood. What they're about to unleash will cause wounds that will take decades to heal. Under a very decent-sounding name, for sure -- Argentine Anticommunist Alliance. (huddling closer)
The Warlock, Lopez Rega, passed the baton long ago. Now Almiron, Villar and a couple of others run this bizarre band of ex Tacuaras, Army thugs and even convicted killers. To "save the motherland." But the Triple-A is nothing more than a death squad.

FRANCO
The boys know--

Luca has been tracing with a ball-pen "L4" on a napkin.

LUCA
We'd only be passing messages.

POCHÍN
 They need to know who they'd be
 fuckin' with. One misplaced look, one
 slip of the tongue...and we are all as
 good as dead.
 (to Luca)
 Your father, your brother, you - me.
 Ricky.

Luca changes the 4 to a 5 -- "L5." CHEERS.

Valentino's finale: eight balls lined against a side bank
 shot at mind-boggling speed into the same, far corner pocket.
 He abandons his cue, takes a bow, joins the table, APPLAUDED.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)
 You fuckin' study philosophy?

VALENTINO
 (drains beer, grins)
 And Literature.

He sits. Pochín huddles them closer.

POCHÍN
 And outside this group, you only take
 orders from Gustavo. No one else.

FRANCO
 They know, Pochín.

VALENTINO
 We do, Pop told us a million times.
 We want to help.

Luca agrees, sets the napkin on fire.

ÑATO, an overweight bartender, unloads fresh beers, snaps the
 napkin from Luca, sticks it in a glass.

ÑATO
 You wanna burn down my joint, kid?
 (to Valentino)
 Hey, got your executioner! Guy from
 Santiago who can really bust them
 balls.

LUCA
 Less than you, I bet.

They laugh.

ÑATO
 You're a jewel, you.

He ruffles his hair. Pochín stands, digs for money.

POCHÍN
 What's the damage?

FRANCO
 I got it--

POCHÍN
 Forget it. This I stick it to them as
 expenses. Protecting the motherland.

Ñato quickly adds tickets in his head.

ÑATO
 Nine sixty seven, Inspector.
 (to Valentino)
 So, I set it up or what?

Valentin heads for the men's room, grins at Ñato.

VALENTINO
 Gotta check with my partner.

Pochín hands Ñato two five-hundreds.

POCHÍN
 We're good.

ÑATO
 Thank you, Inspector.
 (heads back, to Valentino)
 C'mon, lemme make a few bucks..!

9 EXT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY

9

Podestá exits the Italian Embassy, crosses the street toward his dark blue Fiat 124 coupe. An ambulance preceded by a dark green Falcon speeds past down Libertador Ave. Podestá opens the door to his vehicle.

FACTORY WORKER (O.S.)
 Sir, excuse me...

Podestá turns. A FACTORY WORKER, looking gaunt, four-day stubble, sunken eyes filled with dread, still in worker's clothes, emerges from a dark hallway.

FACTORY WORKER (CONT'D)
 (re Embassy)
 You work in there?

PODESTÁ
 What..? Yes, well, no...I'm the
 Vice-Consul, I work at the Consulate,
 a different-- Why?

The man steals a glance up and down the street, comes closer.

FACTORY WORKER
 I need asylum. They're looking for me,
 to kill me.

PODESTÁ
 Who is--?

FACTORY WORKER
 I don't know...
 (alludes to passed Falcon)
 Them... The police raided the factory
 where I work, in Berisso. They took
 several of my union comrades. I was
 out, buying bread, so I... But later
 they went to my home, they beat up my
 parents. They are elderly, they don't
 understand what's happening. They
 fractured my old man's shoulder, mom
 is in very bad shape.

(MORE)

FACTORY WORKER (CONT'D)

The next day two of my friends were found in a garbage dump, shot in the back of the head.

PODESTÁ

When did all this happen?

FACTORY WORKER

Three...no, four days ago... Last night I took a train to the Capital, I had no place to hide anymore.

PODESTÁ

What do you need?

FACTORY WORKER

(eyes Embassy)

That, asylum. It's in there, right? My father is Italian. How does that work? When I saw you come out...I thought your face-- That's why I asked you...

Podestá leaves his briefcase in the car, locks it.

PODESTÁ

What is your name?

FACTORY WORKER

(cautious)

They call me Tito, Sir.

Podestá does not press him.

PODESTÁ

Come with me.

Podestá heads back toward the Embassy. The man hesitates, eyes the TWO POLICEMEN at the corner, finally follows.

AMBASSADOR ENRICO CARRARA -- 60's, haughty, gray, spray-fixed hair, a gold Rolex, well rehearsed smile -- exits the palace with TWO MID-LEVEL DIPLOMATS.

Podestá intercepts him.

NOTE: DIALOGUE IN ITALICS SPOKEN IN SUBTITLED ITALIAN.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

*Ambassador, Sir, excuse me.
Ambasciatore, mi scusi.*

Carrara darts a side-glance at the Worker, signals his party to head for the awaiting limo, steps aside with Podestá.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

*This man needs asylum, Sir.
Quest'uomo ha bisogno di asilo,
signore.*

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

*Asylum?! Out of the question,
Podestá.
Asilo?! Assolutamente no, Podestà.*

PODESTÁ

He's under threat of death, Sir.
Ma lo hanno minacciato di morte!

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

(his rehearsed smile)

*Let me give you a piece of advice:
 think before you act. We don't give
 political asylum in the current
 political atmosphere. Less still to
 this sort of individual.*
**Lasci che le dia un consiglio: pensi a
 lungo prima di agire. Non concediamo
 asilo politico nella situazione in cui
 ci troviamo adesso. Meno che mai a
 uno così.**

PODESTÁ

*Sir, this worker is entitled to
 Italian citizenship on his father's
 side and his life is in mortal danger.
 Police raided his union and two of his
 coworkers have already been murdered.
 Executed.*
**Signore, questo lavoratore è un
 cittadino italiano da parte di madre e
 la sua vita è in pericolo. La polizia
 ha fatto una retata nella sede del
 sindacato e due suoi compagni sono
 stati assassinati.**

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

*And did you bother to ask - WHY?
 (re worker)*
*Don't be fooled by these people's
 stories. Italy does not take in
 criminals. Get him out of here!*
**E non si chiede PERCHÉ? Non si faccia
 incantare dalle favole di questi tipi.
 L'Italia non accoglie delinquenti. Lo
 porti fuori da qui.**

PODESTÁ

But, Sir--!
Ma, signore--!

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

*Podestá, I'm only going to repeat this
 once. Next time you will see it in
 writing, when I relieve you of your
 functions: We do not give political
 asylum under the present situation in
 this country. Do I make myself clear?
 I'm late. Excuse me.*
**Podestá, glielo ripeto una volta
 soltanto. La prossima sarà per
 iscritto, quando la solleverò dal suo
 incarico per insubordinazione. Non
 concediamo asilo politico nella
 situazione attuale di questo paese. È
 chiaro? E tardi, devo andare. Con
 permesso.**

Carrara forces him aside with a glare, walks toward the limo.

PODESTÁ
Excellency..! We cannot abandon--
Eccellenza...! Non possiamo abbandonare--

Carrara looks at him one last time.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA
You're right, let the police handle
this.
Ha ragione. Lasci che sia la polizia,
ad occuparsene.

He waves at the policemen. Podestá jots a number on the back of his business card, hands it to the man in a hurry.

PODESTÁ
 My personal number.
 (the worker runs off)
 Wait! Your name!
 (the man turns the corner)
 Call me!

Podestá turns back, bristling, but the limo has taken the Ambassador and is half way out the gate.

10 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - DAY 10

Podestá parks his Fiat Coupe. A policeman salutes him with exaggerated deference. Podestá ignores him, enters.

11 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - CONTINUOUS 11

Podestá checks out two types screaming "plainclothesmen" fraternize with reception employees, takes the elevator.

12 ITALIAN CONSULATE, FIFTH FLOOR 12

ROSA GENTILE -- 45, Italian of long residence in Buenos Aires, bun, short steps, efficient, permanent smile -- sees Podestá arrive and turns to a bench where A YOUNG WOMAN -- 20, beautiful but gaunt -- and her MOTHER wait.

GENTILE
Good morning, Mr. Consul. This lady
and her daughter ask to see you, Sir.
Bongiorno, Signor Consul. Questa
signora e la sua figlia chiedono de
parlare con lei.

Podestá smiles at them, shows them into his office. Modest, classic, window to a wooded square.

CONSUL GENERAL PERRONE, a pale man with sleek back hair and petty mouth, signals Podestá from his next door office.

PODESTÁ
 Have a seat, be right with you...

He walks to the Consul's office.

GENERAL CONSUL
Hell you doing, Podestá?
Cosa fa, Podestá?

PODESTÁ

*What?
Come?*

GENERAL CONSUL

*Who are those two. More of your
refugees?
Chi sono queste due? Altre sue
vittime?*

No love lost between these two.

PODESTÁ

*I don't know. I see their faces for
the first time--
Non saprei. Le vedo per la prima volta--*

GENERAL CONSUL

*You're digging yourself a grave from
which no one will help you get out!
Lei si sta scavando una fossa dalla
quale nessuno l'aiuterà ad uscire!*

PODESTÁ

*I don't know what you're talking
about, Sir...
Non so di cosa mi stia parlando,
Signor Console...*

GENERAL CONSUL

*Play dumb if you want, but don't say
you weren't warned.
Faccia pure lo gnorri se vuole, però
non dica che non l'ho avvertita.
(Podestá stares, defiant)
Why you insist in getting in the way
of normal state matters?
Perché continua a frapporsi al
regolare andamento degli affari di
Stato?*

PODESTÁ

*Because they are Italians in need of
help. And I'm here for that.
Perché si tratta di italiani che hanno
bisogno d'aiuto. E io sono qui per
questo.*

The Consul is about to retort with violence but an OFFICIAL walks past, he smiles and lowers his voice instead.

GENERAL CONSUL

*You are here to obey, Podestá. The
directives are crystal clear: no
political asylum. I will report this.
Lei è qui per obbedire, Podestà. La
direttiva di Sua Eccellenza è chiara:
niente asilo politico. E stavolta
farò una segnalazione negativa.*

Perrone steps into his office, slams his door. Podestá exchanges conspiring glance with Gentile, goes back to his.

13 INT. SALVATI HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

13

Valentino cooks risotto. Has good hand. A MIXED-BREED BITCH watches him. Luca smokes and argues with LEO, 30, a rail thin hippie that eats peanuts as fast as he talks.

LUCA
You can't expect the capitalists
to serve you life on a platter!

LEO
Look who's talking! Townhouse in
Martinez, week-end cottage in El
Tigre, Risotto al funghi--!

LUCA
Che came from a well-off family!
Didn't stop him from living by his
ideals.

VALENTINO
And dying! You wanna die?

LUCA
And dying if necessary, sure!

LEO
You're outta your mind..! Life is
sacred.

LUCA
Especially yours, right--?!

LEO
Course, you dumb sonofabitch....!
Diderot said it: the only duty of any
man in this world is to be happy!

LUCA
Listen to yourself! One day you fire
a fucking bazooka on the Pink House,
next day you preach moderation?

VALENTINO
Cut it out! I spent an hour making
this risotto!

LUCA
Ma, shove your risotto up your ass!

He storms out, SLAMMING the door.

VALENTINO
Where'ya going, dummy?! Come eat! This
rice was donated by grandma! More
communist than her you don't find in
all of Martinez!

Leo celebrates with a CACKLE OF LAUGHTER.

14 EXT. SALVATI HOME, ACCESS PASSAGE - SAME TIME

14

Franco and RICKY, a perky brunette, with intelligent eyes and dangerous curves, make their way up a long corridor toward the two-story chalet. The shouts inside reverberate against the walls. Franco looks at Ricky, alarmed.

15 INT. SALVATI HOME, DINNING ROOM

15

Valentino serves risotto. Franco and Ricky storm in.

FRANCO
You can hear the shouts all the
way from the street, you dimwits!

RICKY
You want the cops to burst in?!

VALENTINO
Wasn't me!

Ricky pinches his cheek.

RICKY
Course is not him!
(smacks kiss)
Mhm! What a dish!

Valentino almost drops the tray, sets it on the table.

VALENTINO
Watch it!

Luca reappears wearing a Che t-shirt. Sits, begins to rake risotto onto his plate. Franco can't believe his eyes.

FRANCO
Will'ya take that fucking thing off!

LEO
Watch the Guevara fan shovel it in!

Wine is opened. Valentino feeds his bitch.

RICKY
Music to lighten the mood?

16 EXT. SALVATI HOME, ACCESS PASSAGE

16

The chalet at end. LAUGHTER, SOUND OF GLASSES.

VALENTINO (V.O.)
I'm putting grandma's!

RICKY/LUCA (V.O.)
Noooo! The Cinco Latinos nooo!

LAUGHS. CAMARA PULLS AWAY. "Stormy Weather" recedes.

17 INT. ACTIVIST'S HOUSE - NIGHT

17

Smoke, "mate". ACTIVISTS listing. "GUSTAVO" -- tall, 30's, aristocratic, dare-devilish bearing, intense blue eyes -- speaks. And when he does all listen.

GUSTAVO
In the revolutionary struggle, what
we are after is not the physical
destruction of the enemy forces;
because most of them are made up of
soldiers issued from the same social
strata and class as our own.

BIBI -- 17, plump, sexy -- enters, late. Luca listens by the wall. Bibi takes his hand, tries to kiss him, he avoids it. The last ERP's "Estrella Roja" cover is tacked to the wall.

GUSTAVO (CONT'D)
The Enemy is the bourgeoisie, the
capitalist society -- the State.

Luca concentrated. Bibi admiring him.

18

INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY, BALL ROOM - NIGHT

18

SIX MUSICIANS on a platform play "Volare."

Ambassador Carrara makes the rounds with an attractive lady with airs of a COUNTESS. CHIARA, his secretary/aide-memmoire, handles the introductions.

Podestá, in a tuxedo, approaches to declare his presence.

PODESTÁ

Excellency...

Eccellenza...

(kisses Countess' hand)

Madame...

Signora...

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

Evening, Podestá...

Buonasera, Podestá...

Podestá nods formally at Chiara -- she grins, ironic. Something going on between the two.

COUNTESS

I heard you write, Mr Podestá..

Ho sentito che lei scrive, Signor

Podestá?

CHIARA

I that he plays the flute.

E io ho sentito dire che lei suona

il flauto.

Podestá ignores her.

PODESTÁ

Nothing serious, Mam, just--

No, niente di serio, Contessa, solo--

COUNTESS

*No, no, I was told you are a very
gifted poet.*

**No, no, mi hanno detto che lei è un
poeta di tutto rispetto.**

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

*Dangerous talent, these days. I
wouldn't brag about it.*

**Talento pericoloso di questi tempi,
Podestá. Le consiglio di non usarlo.**

Podestá feels the Ambassador's hand on his elbow, begs pardon and moves away with him. Ambassador Carrara looks at him harshly.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA (CONT'D)

*I received a call from a certain
Colonel Roque-Lima.*

(MORE)

AMBASSADOR CARRARA (CONT'D)

You refused to share information concerning individuals they were trying to locate?

Ho ricevuto una chiamata dal colonnello di brigata Roque-Lima. È vero che lei ha rifiutato di condividere informazioni su alcuni ricercati?

PODESTÁ

Italians, Excellency. Even if I had known where they were -- and it was not the case -- I don't see myself having a hand in the detention and torture of our own countrymen. Do you?

Italiani, Eccellenza. Anche se sapessi dove si trovino - e non è questo il caso - non voglio contribuire alla detenzione e alla tortura di nostri compatrioti. Lei?

Carrara bristles at the insolence, swallows his retort to return the greeting of a NAVY COMMANDER. Podestá presses.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

Our first duty is to protect Italian citizens, true?

Il nostro primo dovere è quello di proteggere i cittadini italiani, vero?

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

YOUR first duty is to follow--

Il SUO primo dovere è quello di seguire pedissequamente--

(nod to JAPANESE DIPLOMAT)

Hmmm... How I dislike deja vu... Since you arrived in Buenos Aires I've been trying to get through your thick-- We all must follow orders, Podestá, else the system breaks down--

Ah, come odio i dejà vu. Da quando è arrivato a Buenos Aires cerco di farle entrare in quella testa dura... Tutti dobbiamo compiere degli ordini, Podestá, altrimenti il sistema si--

PODESTÁ

Even if they lead to the death of innocent young--?

Anche se al prezzo della vita di giovani innocenti--?

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

If they're innocent, why are they after them? They must have done something!

Sono innocenti o sono ricercati? Qualcosa avranno pur fatto!

And moves off with a well-rehearsed smile for the Commander approaching with an ADMIRAL. Podestá's gaze falls on the cold eyes of the LIEUTENANT escorting the Admiral.

A sour, rich-looking SPINSTER taps Podestá's shoulder.

SPINSTER
Better them than us, no?

Podestá stares, speechless.

19 EXT./ INT. POLICE HQ, MORENO STREET - DAY 19

Pochín parks his black Torino in zone reserved for officers.
He and Valentino step down.

VALENTINO
What do I say if they ask questions,
something about your family?

POCHÍN
You get who I am around here?
Nobody's going to ask you shit.
Relax. You're my nephew. Period.

Pochín returns salutes as they take the stairs.

20 INT. POLICE HQ, THIRD FLOOR 20

Pochín and Valentino cross TWO POLICE OFFICERS.

FIRST OFFICER
Ovide, you have that deposition
from La Plata?

POCHÍN
No, Agüero, in Embarcadero.
(motions to Valentino)
My nephew.

The officers and Valentino exchange silent greetings.

FIRST OFFICER
Villar wanted to take a look before--

POCHÍN
Don't worry, Velasco, I'll run it by
him.

They move on along a corridor with offices. One door is open.
Leaning back in a couch, POLICE SUPERINTENDENT, GENERAL
ALBERTO VILLAR -- short, heavy -- appears asleep. But...

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR
Ovide!

Pochín goes back.

Sir...? POCHÍN

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR
I heard that weasel of Agüero looking
for excuses to keep me away from the
La Plata report.

POCHÍN
There was no case, Sir. I sent it
back. Don't bother, I've got all
under control.

Villar sees Valentino.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)
My nephew. Dough! Only shows up when
he needs dough.

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR
Don't take after you, with those
looks.

Prieto, the executioner from the Devoto street raid, enters
head down with a tray, picks up used coffee mugs.

PRIETO
Another coffee, my General?

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR
No, thank you, Sergeant.

Prieto gives Pochín and Valentino a side glance and exits
toward a pantry/coffee-room across the hall.

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR (CONT'D)
Alright, Ovide, give me the rundown
later.
(back to the nap)
Mind closing a bit? Thanks.

Pochín pulls the door ajar. Valentino darts one last glance
and, for a second only, Villar catches his eye.

They move on.

VALENTINO
Wasn't that--?

Pochín shuts him up with a glare.

POCHÍN
(to Prieto)
I'll have a couple of coffees,
Negro...

Prieto watches them head for Pochín's office with a resentful
side glance.

Pochín and Valentino enter...

21 INT. POCHIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 21

Pochín pushes his door ajar, tilts a heavy bronze of Martín
Fierro, extracts folded note under it, slips it to Valentino.

POCHÍN
These are top priority.

22 INT. POLICE HQ, COFFEE ROOM 22

Prieto pours two cups of coffee, steals a glance toward
Pochín's office, spits in them.

23 INT. POLICE HQ, POCHÍN'S OFFICE 23

Pochín sees Prieto approach, raises his voice.

POCHÍN
How many words per minute you up
to at the Pitman?

Prieto enters with the tray.

VALENTINO
Eighty, seventy-five...

Pochín hands him an envelope with money.

POCHÍN
Here's for August. Get on with
it, let's hope you get a job, once
and for all!

Prieto sets down the coffee cups.

VALENTINO
Thanks.

POCHÍN
You know my nephew, right?

PRIETO
No... Everything all right?

He wipes his hand on his pants, Valentino accepts it,
forcing a smile.

VALENTINO
Hey.

Prieto leaves grinning as Pochín sips his coffee. Valentino
notices, does not taste his.

24 INT. SALVATI HOME, WORKSHOP - AFTERNOON

24

Valentino types messages. Luca takes pictures, develops
microfilms. They make the small rolls. OVER THIS:

LUCA (O.S.)
What was he doing?

VALENTINO (O.S.)
Nuttin, taking a nap.

LUCA (O.S.)
He talk to you?

VALENTINO (O.S.)
No, it was quick...

Luca puts his tool down.

LUCA
Napping... Murdering piece of shit!

VALENTINO
He didn't look like a bad guy.

Luca glares at him, Valentino replaces typing sheet.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)
Really! Could be a grandpa, a
baker... I dunno, anything--

LUCA
But he's a butcher!

VALENTINO
I know...I'm just saying that all
this...Deep down we're all the same--

LUCA
 (blows up)
 Latinos-Five, we're the same, Val!
 Villar is a degenerate! Gotta kill
 all those motherfuckers!

Valentino looks at him, calm.

VALENTINO
 I imagine that's exactly what he
 thinks.

Luca makes a crazy sign, bolts from the table.

25 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA - NIGHT

25

Valentino and Luca enter. Luca heads for the back. Valentino favors a table near the exit. A WAITER swings by.

DEL GARCIA WAITER
 Gents?

VALENTINO
 Two coffees.

LUCA
 For me, "cortado."
 (for waiter's ears)
 Gotta take a leak!

He heads for the toilet; before entering, he looks at Valentino opening a paper.

26 INT. GENTS RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

26

Luca comes in, waits for TWO CLIENTS wrapping up their business to leave, hurries to pull out a box of Marlboro, from his pocket, from it a cigarette, breaks it up, finds a rolled microfilm.

He searches behind the mirror. TOILET FLUSH. Panic -- tries to stick the message back in his pocket, drops it, sets his foot on it, begins washing his hands, flushes down the drain the remnants of the cigarette.

A SWEATY FAT MAN -- noisy breathing, barely squeezes out the booth. Luca gives way so the man can reach the washbasin.

Luca soaps his hands, leans in so the man can reach a towel, profits to snatch up the message.

The man grins, leaves. Luca hurries to introduce the message in its hiding place. The door opens, Valentino stick his head in, startling Luca.

LUCA
 Fuck you doin' here, man?!

VALENTINO
 What are YOU doin'?! It's been--
 (reacts to smell)
 Phew! That fat guy--?

Luca shoves him back out the door.

LUCA
 Less go, LESS GO! Too many people
 this time of day, see? I told you!

VALENTINO

Pochin said it was urgent!

PHONE RING leads the...

CUT TO:

27 INT. PODESTÁ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

27

Chiara sleeps next to Podestá. Podestá, naked under a blanket, writes in his diary. On the night table rests a flute in its case. PHONE RING. Podestá looks at the digital clock -- 02:22 -- picks up the receiver.

CUT TO:

PODESTÁ

Pronto..?

Chiara murmurs, bothered, turns her back.

FOÁ (OVER PHONE)

Alessandro Podestá?

PODESTÁ

Yes...

(clears throat)

Who is this?

28 INT. FIAT 124 COUPE - NIGHT

28

Podestá drives along a bumpy dirt street, over railroad tracks, beside a shanty town.

A police car ahead, with a driver inside flashes lights. A FEW POOR NEIGHBORS loiter about.

GIANGIACOMO FOÁ -- 45, charismatic Italian journalist, chain smoker, fast-talker, always in a hurry -- approaches with a flashlight, fanning the heat away with his trademark worn Panama hat.

29 EXT. RAILROAD CEMETERY - NIGHT

29

Podestá steps down from his car. Foá offers his hand.

FOÁ

Foá. Corriere della Sera.

Podestá takes it.

PODESTÁ

Yes... Podestá.

Podestá takes in the scene. Foá produces a business card.

FOÁ

*He had this in his pocket.***Aveva questo in tasca.**

Podestá takes his own blood-stained card, nods.

FOÁ (CONT'D)

*Follow me.***Mi segua.**

He leads the way behind a pile of old railroad car parts. TWO UNIFORMED POLICEMEN smoke next to a body covered with an oil-stained tarpaulin.

FOÁ (CONT'D)

It's not pretty.
Non è bello.

Podestá nods. Foá uncovers a man's body, shines his flashlight on it -- worms crawl in the socket of one eye.

FOÁ (CONT'D)

Know him?
Lo conosce?

Podestá is not sure.

PODESTÁ

May I?
Posso?

Foá hands him the flashlight, Podestá covers his nostrils with a handkerchief and shines light closer on the face. It is the Factory Worker who asked for asylum at the Embassy.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

(steps away)
*He came by the Embassy to seek asylum,
about a week ago.*
**Un paio di settimane fa è venuto in
ambasciata a chiedere aiuto.**

FOÁ

You know his name?
Conosce il suo nome?

PODESTÁ

*No. He said they called him Tito.
A factory worker from Berisso. That's
all I was able to find out before--*
**No. Mi ha detto che lo chiamavano
Tito. Operaio in una fabbrica, a
Berisso. È tutto quello che sono
riuscito a sapere prima di--.**

His eyes flood.

FOÁ

You OK?
Sta bene?

PODESTÁ

*No. No! He asked me for help. He
needed asylum. His father is Italian.
The Ambassador would have none of it.
Fuck!*
**No. No! Mi ha chiesto aiuto. Aveva
bisogno di asilo. Suo padre è
italiano. L'ambasciatore non ne ha
voluto sapere. Cazzo!**
(beat)
Will you write about this?
Scriverà di questo?

FOÁ

(leads him back)
Sure, I'll report it.

(MORE)

FOÁ (CONT'D)

I have no illusions that it will make any difference, though. But I'll write about it, you can bet your ass. Certo, ne parlerò. Non credo serva a molto, ma può scommetterci le palle che ne scriverò.

Podestá looks at him -- a kindred spirit?

PODESTÁ

I won't let this happen ever again. Non lascerò che accada mai più.

FOÁ

You can't stop it, no more than I can. Non potrà impedirlo. E neanche io.

PODESTÁ

Together perhaps we can. I could have saved his life. I won't stand by and watch our countrymen be slaughtered like this anymore. Forse insieme potremmo riuscirci. Potrei avergli salvato la vita. Non resterò fermo a guardare dall'altra parte mentre ammazzano in questo modo dei compatrioti.

FOÁ

You can count on me. But be careful. I don't want to get a call in the middle of the night, to come find you rotting in a place like this. Può contare su di me. Ma faccia attenzione. Non voglio che mi chiamino un notte per venirla a cercare, mentre marcisce in un posto come questo.

Podestá holds his gaze.

30

EXT. CORRIENTES AV. - NIGHT

30

Podestá wanders along the still busy avenue. Past a library where young people peruse books, converse.

PODESTÁ

"I feel my hours here are counted. Perhaps my hours anywhere. Some mornings I wake up with the certainty that my arrest is imminent, a matter of minutes..."
Sento che le mie ore, qui, sono contate. Forse sono contate le mie ore ovunque. Ci sono mattine in cui mi sveglio agitato, sicuro che il mio arresto sia solo questione di minuti..."

Podestá flips through a tome -- "Giordano Bruno" -- with a distinctive cover, puts it down, crosses the busy street.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

"That soon my name will be added to the long list of 'desaparecidos.'"
"Che il mio nome presto si aggiungerà alla triste lista di desaparecidos."

31 INT. LA PAZ CAFE - NIGHT (LATER)

31

Podestá drinks a coffee, watches the world go by his window. An URCHIN approaches, he gives him the chocolate from his coffee, resumes writing in his diary.

PODESTÁ

"Then I surprise myself having my aperitif and realize I survived one more day."
"Poi mi sorprendo a sorseggiare un aperitivo e mi accorgo di essere sopravvissuto un giorno in più."

His eyes meet a YOUNG WRITER'S at another table. They exchange smiles, the young man resumes work.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

"I confess that I have contemplated abandoning what I am doing."
"Lo confesso, ho pensato di abbandonare tutto quello che faccio."

A grotesque photo on a paper illustrates the news of a dozen bodies tied together, blown up with dynamite in the suburbs. Podestá tears his eyes away. The Young Writer studies him. Or is he just thinking?

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

"But could I exist knowing I stopped saving lives only to save my own?"
"Ma come potrei vivere sapendo di aver smesso di salvare le vite altrui solo per tenermi stretta la mia?"

TOC-TOC. The Urchin is back with a small package. Podestá takes it, puzzled. The boy hurries off.

Podestá unwraps it, rears in shock from the human testicles inside. On the bloody wrapping is written "This guy got in our way far less than you, Podestá." Podestá leaves at once, shoots a last glance at the Writer -- his table is empty.

32 EXT. CORRIENTES AV - NIGHT

32

Podestá stalks down the street. At the corner kiosk, Foá's Corriere della Sera byline denounces the "official indifference to the illegal detention and torture of the Italian citizen, Federico Petrocelli. Freed thanks to consular intervention."

Podestá sees TWO WORRYING TYPES across the street handing the Urchin something. He leaves Corrientes at a brisk pace.

33 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - DAY

33

Podestá studies the ravaged YOUNG MAN before him -- three-day stubble sunken eyes, dirty, wrinkled clothes. The look of someone who slept under a bridge -- very likely.

PODESTÁ
What can I do for you. Mr...?

The Young Man scans the bookshelves behind Podestá.

YOUNG MAN
Primo Levi.

Podestá eyes the shelves, smiles.

PODESTÁ
Ah, yes... You read him?

YOUNG MAN
Yes, of course.

He glances at a cigarettes box, Podestá offers one. The Young Man accepts, lights up with a heavy desk lighter.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
1-7-4-5-1-7.

PODESTÁ
Sorry? Ah, yes, his tattoo... You Jewish?

YOUNG MAN
Me? No... But it made a strong impression.

Podestá studies him, also cautious.

PODESTÁ
And you are here referred by...?

The Young Man can't decide to name names, smokes.

YOUNG MAN
How long since you arrive from Italy?

PODESTÁ
Not too long--

YOUNG MAN
But your Spanish is very good.

PODESTÁ
My mother is from Spain. And I was stationed in Chile before.
(watches him a beat)
All this is strictly between us--

YOUNG MAN
Marta Petrocelli. Federico's mom.

Podestá nods -- trust building.

PODESTÁ
Thank you. What is your name?

The Young Man's words now come like a torrent.

YOUNG MAN
Corro. Hipólito... Polito.

Suddenly he cannot restrain a sob of relief.

PODESTÁ
What can I do for you, Polito?

CORRO
I can't go home. They're looking to
kill me.

PODESTÁ
Who's look--?

CORRO
Hell do I know, what difference?!
Those son's a bitches! The Triple-A!
I ain't even a communist! I teach
grade school! Apolitical, what!

Podestá pats his arm, the young man lowers his voice.

CORRO (CONT'D)
I can't go back to the street.

PODESTÁ
I know. When did you last sleep?

Corro can't say, shrugs, tears flow.

CORRO
I need to ask for asylum.

Podestá hands him a hanky, reaches for a grappa bottle, two
shot glasses. Corro shakes his head, touches his stomach.

CORRO (CONT'D)
Water, please...

Podestá pours a glass of water from a jar. Corro drains it in
three gulps. Podestá observes him, pours him some more.

PODESTÁ
Asylum is not possible for the
time being. But I will help you.

Podestá opens a closet and grabs two large water bottles.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Come.

Corro obeys, puzzled.

34 INT. FIFTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

34

Podestá's office door opens. He steps out with the bottles,
eyes Gentile at her desk, across the hall.

She looks up and down the access hallways, gives Podestá the
"all clear."

Podestá motions Corro to follow and hurries down the
corridor, to the rear.

35 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, MEZZANINE - MOMENTS LATER

35

Podestá and Corro hurry down a set of narrow service stairs.
They reach a mezzanine, Podestá finds a key over a door
frame, opens it. A disaffected room. Inside, several YOUTHS
OF BOTH SEXES are strewn over broken furniture. Frighten
eyes. Podestá sets bottles on the floor, speaks in whispers.

PODESTÁ
This comrade will also be staying
with you. Bathroom?

All hands go up. He motions them to file in silence toward
the toilet across the way. The girls go first.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
(to Corro)
You'll be safe here till I find a way
to get you out of the country.

CORRO
(presses his hands, moved)
Thank you.

Podestá pulls back, addresses group.

PODESTÁ
I'll bring food later. Everyone
all right?

They nod, file into the toilet as the girls return. Podestá
checks his watch.

36 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - SHORT TIME LATER 36

The Doorman lets Podestá out. Two Plainclothes Policemen
we've seen before watch from across the street.

Podestá heads for his Fiat 124 parked up the street. The
cops stroll after him. Podestá drives off. Passing, one
spits into gutter.

37 EXT. UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES, PHILOSOPHY - DAY 37

STUDENTS go in and out. Valentino chats to THREE CLASSMATES.
Luca files out with TWO ATTRACTIVE FEMALE STUDENTS. He bums a
light from Valentino. Valentino's attention is on...

38 INT. BLACK TORINO - DAY 38

Pochín at the wheel, motioning them urgently. A CLASSMATE
watches. Valentino crosses the street, gets in front with
Pochín. Luca follows, gets in back.

POCHÍN
What the fuck happened?!

He drives off. Valentino and Luca exchange puzzled looks.

VALENTINO
What happened with what...?

POCHÍN
They got snatched!

LUCA
Who got snatched?

POCHÍN
The Revolettas! You didn't let them
know?!

He turns at the corner.

VALENTINO
Course we did! Luca left the message.

LUCA
Yeah...Wednesday.

Pochín suddenly pulls over.

POCHÍN
What Wednesday?! T'was Tuesday!

39 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA, MEN'S TOILET - NIGHT 39

An ACTIVIST, 23, checks behind the mirror - nothing.

LUCA (V.O.)
No, no, no... Wednesday... I spoke
to Leo myself!

40 INT. BLACK TORINO - DAY 40

Pochín points to a newspaper article: "SHOOTOUT AT PRINTING
PLANT IN SAN TELMO; ARMED GUERRILLAS SURPRISED. TWO DEAD."

41 INT. PRINTING PLANT IN SAN TELMO - NIGHT 41

Three young men mimeograph flyers.

POCHÍN
Well, they checked Tuesday.

FOUR MEN bust the door in. Two young men are machine gunned
down immediately. The third is wounded in a leg, raises his
hands, receives a brutal rifle butt on the face. A pistol is
dropped on the bodies. The third one is dragged away. SUPER:

"Angel Revoletta, executed by bullet to the
back of the head."

42 INT. BLACK TORINO - DAY 42

Pochín slowly folds the paper, consternated.

POCHÍN
These things can't happen.

Valentino and Luca snap to alarm.

LUCCA/VALENTINO
The microfilm!

43 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA - DAY 43

Luca and Valentino enter, take a seat. The Waiter approaches.

CAFE GARCIA WAITER
Guys..?

VALENTINO
Two coffees.

LUCA
No, for me seltzer with lemon.

Valentino eyes him irritated. Luca's eyes question. *What?!*

CAFE GARCIA WAITER
One coffee. Seltzer and lemon, one!

Luca moves toward the rear. TWO MEN in dark suits and short
hair occupy a table near the toilets. One of them fixes Luca.

Luca knows he is dead, considers turning back, sees Valentino leafing through a paper, walks on.

Valentino looks up, sees him disappear into the...

44 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA, GENTS - CONTINUOUS 44

Luca dashes to the sinks -- suddenly soaked in sweat -- finds the message where he left it, swallow it, waits for his killer to burst in. Nothing. GALLOPING HEART BEAT. He stares in the mirror, tries to rein in the flood of emotions.

45 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA - MOMENTS LATER 45

Luca files past the men's table -- gone. Returns to his table, drinks the seltzer in one go.

VALENTINO
Everything all right?

Luca, nods.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)
Give it to me.

LUCA
I swallowed it. Did you pay?

VALENTINO
What?! Why?

Luca heads for the door, turns back.

LUCA
Those guys...

VALENTINO
What guys?

LUCA
(heads for another exit)
Let's go, please.

VALENTINO
Take it easy...

Signals Waiter he's left the money.

46 EXT. CAFE DE GARCIA - DAY 46

Luca and Valentino chase down the street.

VALENTINO
Fuck happened, man?!

LUCA
I'm useless! Useless!

Picks up the pace, Valentino worried.

47 INT. DEPARTMENT IN BARRIO NORTE - SAME TIME 47

Gustavo lectures activists on interrogation tactics.

GUSTAVO

...What is called rapid-fire approach...This technique consists in a psychological game based on the principle that every man likes to be listened to when he is talking, and becomes confused when constantly interrupted in the middle of a sentence. Don't let this stop you from reasoning, take the questions one by one. But never answer a question with a question. Learn to appear stupid. But don't be, you get my drift? Like comrade Camilo said, "A well managed stupid face goes a long way!"

LAUGHTER. Luca focused.

48

INT. FIAT 124 COUPE - SHORT TIME LATER

48

Podestá drives along Figueroa Alcorta Av. A pearl-grey '74 Karmann Ghia gets too close for comfort. Podestá changes lanes, sees a woman at the wheel flagging him to stop.

Podestá searches for henchmen, none around, pulls over, wary.

CELESTE -- 35, ambiguous beauty, elegantly dressed -- approaches Podestá, prompts him to roll down his window. Podestá looks at her fine velvet gloved hands, complies.

CELESTE

Hi, how are you?

PODESTÁ

Fine... What's wrong?

CELESTE

Nothing. I wanted to meet you.

PODESTÁ

Pardon..?
(now really worried)
Who are you?

CELESTE

Jeez, how mistrustful..! No one ever stopped you in the street?

PODESTÁ

The police!

Celeste lets loose a warm, contagious laughter.

CELESTE

And a lady?

PODESTÁ

Never in my life.

CELESTE

Well, see? In Argentina we are like that. Sometimes. Where you headed?

Podestá looks at the road, can't think of a reply.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Won't you buy me a drink?

Podestá looks at her, dumfounded. She mocks him, laughs.

49

INT. FANCY CAFE ON AV. LIBERTADOR - DAY

49

Podestá and Celeste at a table. She Coke. Podestá coffee.

CELESTE

I noticed your diplomatic plates,
otherwise I wouldn't have dared. But I
wasn't wrong, you are very nice... How
long have you been in Buenos Aires?

PODESTÁ

Almost two years, now.

CELESTE

And how much longer...?

PODESTÁ

They're four-year missions.

CELESTE

Oh, so we have time. Look, Mr. Consul--

PODESTÁ

Vice.

CELESTE

(magnificent smile)
I like to be franc and direct. I am
married but not happy. I have
Wednesdays and Fridays, from five to
seven, free. If you are interested,
occasionally, I would like to spend
those hours with you.

Podestá eyes the waiter -- he could not have missed that.
Celeste fits her gloves.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Well! If you have to think so much--

PODESTÁ

No! No, yes...I could. I can.

Celeste pulls her right glove off, offers her manicured hand.

CELESTE

My name is Celeste.

Podestá takes it.

PODESTÁ

Alessandro.

CELESTE

Two flutes of champagne, please.

The Waiter looks at Podestá with a smirk in his eyes,
retreats. Celeste puts her hand on Podestá's.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

We must celebrate, no?

Podestá finally smiles frankly.

PODESTÁ

Certo.

50 INT. PITMAN ACADEMY - DAY

50

TYPING FILLS THE TRACK. Valentino and 20 speed typing students copy texts. An INSTRUCTOR, with Bardot's body, controls, stopwatch in hand.

PITMAN INSTRUCTOR

Stop!

Everyone pulls back, pass their sheets. She reviews them.

PITMAN INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

Manzi, fast, yes, but might as well be Chinese. Santana, neat but slower than walking backwards with flip-flops.
(eyes Valentino, charmed)
Salvati... Very good.

Valentino grins, seductive.

51 INT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

51

FLOREAL, a surly gardener in his mid fifties, digs with his hands the black dirt of the balcony's flower pots, with wilted plants.

FLOREAL

Where'd this soil come from?

PODESTÁ

Don't know. Was here when I arrived.

FLOREAL

It's peat. Somebody cared. Good for a variety of flowers.

PODESTÁ

What'd you suggest for this place?

FLOREAL

Cyclamens and petunias grow well this time of year.

PODESTÁ

I was thinking Azaleas.

Floreal looks at him with new eyes.

FLOREAL

Those too. And begonias if you like them.

(Podestá agrees)

You gonna take care of them, right?

(Podestá looks at him)

You don't look it. If you're not going to take care of them I ain't i'nerested. Too old to plant flowers they're gonna let die.

PODESTÁ

I don't like to let anything die.

They size each other up a beat, then Floreal sees the flute inside the apartment, resting on a soft flannel.

FLOREAL

All right...

He shakes the peat off his hands outside the balcony.

FLOREAL (CONT'D)
Buy five kilos of manure. Horse. Bat's even better, but it's expensive. I'll bring the seeds. Next Thursday I'll swing by and plant.

PODESTÁ
If you come after five I can help you.

FLOREAL
Pffft! Five... Eight in the morning, I seed!

He offers his wrist, Podestá shakes it. PHONE RINGS.

PODESTÁ
Excuse me. Thursday, then...

Floreal lets himself out. Podestá hurries to the bedroom, answers.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
*Podestá! Yes, Mr. Ambassador...
What's that he's not going? When?
Sì, signor ambasciatore. Come, non va?
Quando...?*
(eyes watch)
*What am I gonna say? I'm no good for
speeches! But, Sir, I'm not even
showered!*
*E cosa dico? Io non sono bravo a
parlare! Ma, signor ambasciatore, non
ho neanche fatto il bagno!*
(shrieking receiver away)
*Of course, Sir... I'm on my way.
Sì, certo. Vado.*

Hangs up, vexed, hurries to the bathroom, shredding his clothes, cursing in Italian, we hear the SHOWER.

"FRATELLI D'ITALIA" by a wind band LEADS THE...

CUT TO:

52

EXT. UNIONE E BENEVOLENZA ASSOCIATION - NIGHT

52

The Fiat station wagon pulls up at the crowded entrance to Argentina's oldest Italian association. Podestá steps down.

PODESTÁ
Don't wait for me, Renzo. Not sure what time I'm getting outta here.

He walks away, fitting the elegant navy blue suit jacket.

FORZONE
Don't worry, I'll be here.

He parks, steps down, lights a cigarette. ELVIRA -- 40's, attractive -- walks into the next building, loaded with work.

FORZONE (CONT'D)
Elvira!

The dark haired turns, recognizes Forzone, smiles, they kiss.

ELVIRA
What are you doing out here?

Forzone cocks his head toward association.

FORZONE
Just now getting out of court?

ELVIRA
With all that's going on, not enough
hours in a day...

53 INT. UNIONE E BENEVOLENZA HQ - NIGHT

53

Podestá hurries toward the ballroom where a members dinner is coming to an end. Flags, posters -- 117th anniversary.

Foá speaks with a group of BUSINESSMEN, among them di Benedetto. We'll meet him later. When he sees Podestá, Foá excuses himself.

FOÁ
Alessandro!
(they kiss)
Ciao. Didn't expect to see you here.
Non mi aspettavo di vederti qui.

PODESTÁ
Me either. Perrone has the flu. At the last minute, the Ambassador--
Neanche io. Perrone ha l'influenza e all'ultimo momento l'Ambasciatore--

FOÁ
Ma, what flu!
Ma quale influenza?!

53A FLASH: FOÁ INTERVIEWS A JOCKEY AT THE PALERMO RACETRACK. CONSUL GENERAL PERRONE AND A COLONEL IN UNIFORM WALK PAST, LAUGHING WITH TWO BLONDS.

53A

FOÁ (V.O.)
This afternoon I'm at the racetrack to do a piece and saw him there, laughing it up with a Colonel and two blonds.
Sono andato a fare un servizio all'ippodromo questo pomeriggio e l'ho visto, piegato in due dalle risate, con un Colonnello e due bionde.

54 RETURN TO U&B HQ:

54

Podestá curses. The PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, a happy, well-fed Italian, takes his arm.

PRESIDENT
Consul Podestá!

PODESTÁ
Vice--

PRESIDENT
A real pleasure. Welcome!

He directs him urgently toward a podium. Off band:

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
I didn't know what else to have them play to kill time!

He waves and the music stops, climbs on the podium, grabs the microphone.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Dear friends...Like every year, we are here to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of our beloved association. And it is with great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, that I leave you with Consul Alessandro Podestá, who wishes to share a few thoughts with you.

(APPLAUSE, to Podestá)

Doctor...

Podestá stares at him like a deer in flood lights. The President urges him on, but Podestá seems glued to the floor. Foá gives him a little push and, like an unstuck toy soldier, Podestá finally climbs the two steps, accepts the microphone, gets too close -- LOUD STATIC -- sets it back, clasps his hands behind his back.

PODESTÁ

Good evening... I'm very... I am Alessandro Podestá... The... first... It's my great pleasure to...for me to be able to address such outstand-- fine group of my countrymen...

SOUND DISTORTS, Podestá about to faint. But his lips don't stop moving. The speakers propagate pieces of his elocution. "...OF THE FAMILY VALUES, WORK AND..." "...THE STRONG BONDS WITH THE OLD COUNTRY," the rest seems to fade under the NOISE OF GLASSES AND SILVERWARE amplified by Podestá's imagination. His audience listens intently...OUR CHILDREN'S HOPES..." and, finally, "...OF THE TIGHT BONDS BETWEEN OUR DEAR ITALY AND THIS GÉNEROUS COUNTRY WE ALL LOVE, ARGENTINA!"

Standing ovation. Podestá looks at Foá surprised. Foá smokes, joins in the APPLAUSE, nodding, highly amused.

55

UNIONE & BENEVOLENZA HQ, LATER

55

The band plays a tarantela. Old, young and children dance. Podestá and Foá share a grappa at the end of a bar.

FOÁ

...Of course I can, but writing vaguely about such matters can backfire.
...Certo che posso, ma scrivere qualcosa di vago è controproducente.

Foá shakes the hands of the many fans. The shawl of one of them gets stuck in one of his links -- it will take several dialogues to free his sleeve.

PODESTÁ

I must go to Rome. Nobody understands what's happening here.
Devo andare a Roma. Non lo capisce nessuno, quello che sta succedendo qui.

FOÁ

They understand all too well. It's us who have a hard time understanding why our government shuts its eyes to this situation.

(MORE)

FOÁ (CONT'D)

Capire, capiscono molto bene. Siamo noi quelli a cui risulta difficile capire che il nostro governo chiuda gli occhi davanti a una situazione come questa.

PODESTÁ

We must mobilize members of parliament. My brother can help. Relatives must identify missing loved ones, publicly demand their whereabouts.

Bisogna smuovere qualche parlamentare. Mio fratello ci può aiutare. Qualche parente di italiani deve chiedere di identificare i sequestrati, chiederlo pubblicamente.

FOÁ

I can exert pressure... But I need concrete facts -- names, precincts, date and time of disappearance, corroborable data. But don't get your hopes up too high. The impunity with which they operate tells you what?

Io posso fare pressione... Però mi servono dati concreti: nomi, cognomi, data e ora dell'arresto, dati che non possano essere negati. Ma non ti fare troppe illusioni. L'impunità in cui agiscono non ti dice niente?

(drains his grappa)

Rumors don't face them.

Se ne fregano delle voci, dei sospetti.

PODESTÁ

Not rumors!

Non sono voci!

Foá motions him to lower his voice.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

Just this past Tuesday! A girl -- twenty, beautiful, refined, smart... Martedì! Una ragazza di vent'anni, bella, elegante, intelligente...

56 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - DAY

56

The Young Woman and her Mother facing Podestá.

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

Arrives with her mother. Kidnapped in broad daylight!

Arriva con sua madre. Sequestrata alla luce del sole.

The Mother incapable of bearing the tale. The Young Woman, on the other hand, recalls with cold detachment.

YOUNG WOMAN

I was on my way to class...

57 EXT. BUENOS AIRES STREET - DAY 57

The Young Woman walking in a hurry -- books, medical student gown. A Ford Falcon without plates screeches to a halt. TWO TRIPLE-A THUGS grab her and shove her into the back. The girl gives a small SHRIEK OF SURPRISE. Her books end in a puddle. She on the floor between the seats. The Falcon skids off -- all in seven seconds.

58 INT. FORD FALCON - DAY 58

Her sweater over her head, a boot pressed on her neck.

FIRST THUG
Move and I break your neck!

59 INT. WAREHOUSE (ILEGAL DETENTION CENTER) - DAY 59

The Two Thugs rush the Young Woman along a dark, lugubrious passageway. SOUND OF TRAINS.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
After what felt like hours driving in circles...we arrived to a horrible place near a railroad, I think...

The First Thug drives her with head down to an area with junked vehicles marked "Ministry of Social Welfare."

FIRST THUG
Close your eyes! Don't look!

Prieto, in civvies, takes two hits of coke, puts envelope away and exits an office to inspect the new arrivals.

The Second Thug rips a piece off the girl's skirt, blindfolds her. A dozen naked PRISONERS of both sexes, wait blindfolded against a wall. TORTURE SCREAMS. A GERMAN SHEPHERD chews on a bar-b-cue leftovers. The Thug shoves the girl in line and moves away. Prieto approaches.

PRIETO
Strip!

YOUNG WOMAN
What?

WHAAAM! Prieto's brutal backslap smashes her against the wall. The Young Woman begins to undress, terrified.

PRIETO
C'mon! All of it, quick! Butt naked!

The Young Woman obeys, drops her garments to the floor. Prieto eyes one of the thugs and he ties her hands with wire behind her back. TELEPHONE. Prieto whispers in her ear.

FIRST THUG
Open your mouth and I'm gonna kick your ass so many times you won't remember how to shit!

He leaves NOISELESSLY. The Young Woman tries to hold back sobs, tries to guess what's next. The rest of the DETAINEES understand they're unguarded, communicate in whispers.

YOUNG WOMAN
(same)
Where are we? Please...

Door opens, TWO SWEATY THUGS drag out a nearly dead PRISONER.

60 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - DAY 60

The Young Woman recounts, impassive, gaze lost in the trees.

YOUNG WOMAN
Hours went by...Don't know how many...
The screaming... It's hard to know...
Then it was my turn.

61 INT. WAREHOUSE- NIGHT 61

The SWEATY THUGS toss the Young Woman onto a cot, in an improvised cell. Prieto forces her face down, splits her legs without preamble, mounts her from behind. The Young Woman lets out a horrified SCREAM, but one of the thugs stuffs her mouth with a dirty rag.

PRIETO
Shutup or I'm gonna beat you so bad
the mirror won't recognize you!

She resists. Prieto punches her in a kidney and she passes out. Then proceeds to rape her. A DESPERATE MUFFLED VOICE, makes him turn.

PRIETO (CONT'D)
Nice and fuzzy, huh?

The VOICE despairs. Prieto eggs on the source.

PRIETO (CONT'D)
And what about this ass? God all
mighty...
(ugly grin)
Least I won't make her pregnant.

He keeps at it, the girl comes around, SCREAMS in terror. The ECHO dies after we...

CUT TO:

62 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - DAY 62

The Mother has no tears left. The Young Woman, casual.

YOUNG WOMAN
I don'y know ow many times... Many.
They took turns...
(looks at Podestá)
I would like to see them dead.

Podestá listen in mute horror -- his eyes also flooded.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
But the worse came after...

63 INT. WAREHOUSE, IMPROVISED CELL - NIGHT 63

Another provincial non-commissioned officer soaked in perspiration, stands up, pulling up his pants, calls out.

FIRST CORPORAL
Anybody else wanna catch a glimpse
of Heaven?!

He chuckles dryly, pulls off her blindfold, turns to a GAGGED YOUNG MAN, tied to the metallic springs of a bed, covered in bruises and burns.

FIRST CORPORAL (CONT'D)
How'bout you?

The Young Woman, shocked, recognizes her fiancée struggling to free himself. He manages to lower his gag some.

YOUNG MAN
She knows nothing!

The girl launches toward him. The Corporal grabs her hairs, drags her out. On a chair lies a "picana." Further back, smoking against the wall with shirt open, Prieto.

PRIETO
If you want her to get out of here
alive, best get your memory back...

He tosses the cigarette butt, exits, leaving us with the young man in PENUMBRA. SUPER:

"Alberto Navali, Disappeared"

64 EXT. STREET NEAR RAILROAD TRACKS - NIGHT 64

The Falcon barely stops, Prieto rides shotgun, starrng ahead while the Young Woman is tossed out, naked, like so much trash. A bundle of clothes lands on her.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
I never saw Beto again. They said if
I open my mouth they would kill me.

65 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - DAY 65

Podestá blows his nose.

YOUNG WOMAN
Mother too.
(takes her hand)
We asked everywhere, didn't we, mom?
Of Alberto Navali, no one knows
anything.

66 INT. UNIONE E BENEVOLENZA HQ - NIGHT 66

Foá listens, consternated. Podestá downs his grappa.

PODESTÁ
*We can't just do nothing. They're
Italians!*
**Non possiamo stare fermi e non fare
niente. Sono italiani!**

FOÁ
Even if they weren't.
E anche se non lo fossero...

PODESTÁ
(beat)
And even if they were't.
E anche se non lo fossero.

Foá stands.

FOÁ

Gimme something to write about and I write. But the main thing is get relatives to raise hell from Rome. It's the best way to stop the Embassy from refusing them asylum.

Dammi qualcosa da scrivere e io scrivo. Ma l'importante è che i parenti facciano casino da Roma. È il modo migliore per costringere l'ambasciata a concedere asilo.

67 EXT. SOCCER PITCH, FRIENDLY FAMILY GAME - DAY

67

Valentino's bitch delivers a tennis ball. Valentino throws it back, grabs discarded paper. Luca smokes, encourages Franco.

LUCa

Come on, old man!

Franco fights a dribble with a much younger player, loses the ball, leaves the pitch, breathless.

FRANCO

Water!

Collapses. Luca passes bottle. Valentino the paper. Franco reads: "TERRORISTS KILL CAPTAIN AND THREE-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER."

VALENTINO

This is what we do?

FRANCO

No. We're saving people.

(to Luca)

Get in there, I'm dead! And ditch the fags, will'ya do me a favor!

Luca stumps out the cigarette, runs into the game.

VALENTINO

People like the ones who did this. They killed a three-year-old!

FRANCO

Yes. Terrible. We live in terrible times. But in life all passes. Never forget that.

Valentino discards the paper. Franco watches him go. SHOUTS, turns to the game. Luca dribbles two, three players, takes the shot. The ball bounces off the frame. The REFEREE blows the end whistle. Luca joins Franco on the grass, coughing.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Almost.

LUCa

Almost is no good.
(sees Valentino)
What happened?

Franco alludes to the paper, Luca picks it up.

68 INT. BOHEMIAN APARTMENT - NIGHT

68

A party. Los Gatos (band) on a turntable. Two dozen young people drink, eat, dance, kiss. We recognize faces from the Gustavo meet.

Valentino and Luca talk politics with a small group by the kitchen. ANA MARIA, 18, attractive, comes and goes with snacks. Offers one to Valentino, obviously interested.

VALENTINO
Mhmm! You made these?

ANA MARIA
I look like I cook?

Bibi goes by with a tray, kisses Luca, serves.

ANA MARIA (CONT'D)
Bibi's the one who'll make a man
happy with her cooking, one day.

VALENTINO
And you?

ANA MARIA
Won't be cooking if I ever make you
happy.

This within Bibi's earshot, trailed by Luca to the kitchen

BIBI
Hoi, hoi...!

VALENTINO
Anyway, I do my own cooking.

ANA MARIA
(to Luca)
This true? Your brother cooks or is
he just one more bullshitter, like
those that abound at the university?

LUCA
Valentino is the only good cook in
my family.

ANA MARIA
Fancy that...

LUCA
But that's the only thing he does
well. Me, on the other hand--

ANA MARIA
You're too green, babe. Take a
look in the mirror?

They laugh. Valentino watches her.

VALENTINO
What do you study?

ANA MARIA
Modern languages. You?

VALENTINO
Philosophy.

ANA MARIA
Really?
(more interested)
You're one of those who wants to
change the world?

VALENTINO
If I can, sure... Not you?

ANA MARIA
To change the world you need balls.

VALENTINO
You're fucked then...

ANA MARIA
No. Balls, balls... Like the ones
you'd need to blow Villar's head off.
You go to his office all the time,
don't you?

Valentino tries to hide his surprise, but Ana Maria is too quick, smiles.

ANA MARIA (CONT'D)
Don't look at your brother. He
didn't tell me.

They hold each other's gaze -- a duel -- she blinks, laughs.

VALENTINO
You drink beer?

ANA MARIA
Depends who asks.

69 INT. BY THE HOUR HOTEL - NIGHT

69

Valentino and Ana Maria make passionate love.

69A SOME TIME LATER

69A

They duel on the mirrored ceiling. Valentino blinks. They laugh.

VALENTINO
You don't mind I brought you here?

ANA MARIA
Not at all. Why?

VALENTINO
Home I can't.

ANA MARIA
It's fine. Me either.

VALENTINO
You remind me of my grandmother.

ANA MARIA
(a stinging spank)
What a jerk!

VALENTINO
Ouch! No, the way you are! She was
beautiful, a model, very independent.
Used to dress as a man so she could
ask the girls to dance tango!

ANA MARIA
Ah! I like your grandmother...

They kiss.

ANA MARIA (CONT'D)
Where do you militate?

Valentino hesitates, avoids her eyes.

VALENTINO
No, me, I...I don't think violence
is the answer.

ANA MARIA
You're one of those that watch from
the sidelines?

VALENTINO
Sidelines no, but--

ANA MARIA
If you want, I can introduce you to
people.

VALENTINO
To do what?

ANA MARIA
What ever it takes! No?

Valentino strokes her legs. Ana Maria springs up.

ANA MARIA (CONT'D)
I'm late.

VALENTINO
What? Where you have to go this
time of night?!

She's already dressing, leaving.

ANA MARIA
You staying?

VALENTINO
What's wrong...?!

70 EXT. RECOLETA (NEIGHBORHOOD)- DAY

70

Podestá drives along Libertador Ave, takes the street toward
cafe La Biela, parks. Celeste, ravishing under a wide-
brimmed ivory hat, at a table by the centenary ombú. Podestá
sees her, approaches, eyes his watch.

PODESTÁ
Am I late?

CELESTE
Not at all. I'm always a couple of
minutes early everywhere.

PODESTÁ
Definitively a very uncommon woman.

Celeste smiles, they kiss on the cheek. Podestá notices two
men ogling Celeste, takes a seat with his back to them.

CELESTE
Why so far?

She pats the chair next to her, Podestá changes places.

PODESTÁ
I didn't think you would show up.

CELESTE
What little faith! Why? You thought
it was a joke?

PODESTÁ
That was my most optimistic guess.

Celeste laughs, puts her hand on his.

CELESTE
Relax, Mr. Consul.

PODESTÁ
Vice.

CELESTE
Fine, Vice. We are both just flesh
and bone.

PODESTÁ
Seeing you gives me great pleasure.

CELESTE
Likewise. We should drop the
formalities, no?

PODESTÁ
Oh, yes?

CELESTE
Well, with what I have in mind...

She watches him, amused by his shyness.

PODESTÁ
Beautiful day.

CELESTE
(laughs)
Nervous?

PODESTÁ
(lies)
No. Why? What shall we order?

A WAITER serves Celeste tall glass of something red.

CELESTE
Kir Royal... Like to try it?

PODESTÁ
Mhmm, don't think so, thanks.
Espresso ristretto, please.

The Waiter goes, Celeste puts on a mocking pout, tastes her
Kier, follows his gaze to the newspaper on another table --
"TERRORIST ATTACK"-- turns his chin.

CELESTE
No! This afternoon is for us. I have
everything planned.

PODESTÁ
Do you?

CELESTE
It bothers you?

PODESTÁ
Not at all. Love to be bossed around.

CELESTE
Unless you have something planned?

PODESTÁ
Didn't I say I didn't even think you'd be here?!

CELESTE
Well, I have a small place not far from here. Nothing...a garçonnière... I thought it would be our refuge.

Podestá smiles. The Waiter sets coffee, Podestá pays.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
What does a Consul do -- sorry, Vice! -
- all day? What ever the Consul
doesn't like to do himself?

PODESTÁ
Now that you mention it, that's probably exactly what I do. Paperwork. Lots! Stand-in at functions for the community. Complaints, lost passports. Nothing of importance.

Celeste eyes her watch, fixes him with a smoldering gaze.

CELESTE
Finish your coffee, Vice.

71 INT. CELESTE'S GARÇONNIÈRE - DAY

71

Celeste steps into 5C -- two rooms well appointed: parquet, antiques, large bed, fine sheets, generous pillows, marble bathroom -- sets hat on a chair, moves to a window, pulls a bit on the rolling shutter, letting some sunset into the penumbra through the slats.

CELESTE
Like it?

PODESTÁ
I do.

Looks through the shutter to the Recoleta cemetery.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
The view, not sure.

CELESTE
Won't be spending much time looking out the window with me, so don't fret.

She pulls his head around to face her open blouse and perfect breasts, takes his hand and slides it between her thighs. Podestá kisses her. She pushes him onto the bed, climbs on him, voracious. The shadows from the shutters make her look like a panting zebra.

72 INT. SALVATI HOUSE, WORKROOM - DAY

72

Luca develops microfilm. Valentino types messages. His bitch lies at his feet. Franco irrupts, agitated.

FRANCO
The Warlock is gone!

He switches on the radio.

VOICE OF NEWSCASTER
"...resignation of Lopez Rega..."

Strong STATIC. Valentino rushes out.

VALENTINO
The TV!

73 INT. SALVATI HOUSE, DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

73

The bitch runs ahead of Valentino, nearly knocks down Ricky coming out of the kitchen with a stew. Valentino turns on the television:

Images of Lopez Rega declaring to the press, soldiers overtaking the Presidential Residence. ARCHIVE MATERIAL.

NEWSCASTER
"...and believed to have organized the Triple AAA, became the *de facto* ruler of Argentina after Peron's death..."

Valentino, Luca, Franco and Ricky listen.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
"The already ex-Minister of Social Services left the Presidential Residence, in Olivos...."..."

Luca turns his back to the TV and sits to eat by himself.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
"...bound for Perón's former home, in Vicente Lopez. He was ordered to leave the country at once..."

74 INT. CELESTE'S GARÇONNIÈRE - DAY

74

Podestá and Celeste have made love, watch the newscast on TV. ARCHIVE IMAGES, DESCRIPTION TO COME.

NEWSCASTER
"The President will soon name a new Minister of Social Services."

PODESTÁ
As if that will make the butchery stop.

CELESTE
You worry too much. What do your superiors say?

PODESTÁ
Precisely, nothing! They don't want to know anything of what's going. Next week I'm off to Rome to look for help.

CELESTE
You're leaving for Rome?

PODESTÁ
Forced vacations. Two weeks. One,
if they let me return early.

Celeste kisses him.

CELESTE
What about me?

Podestá looks at her but does not kiss her back.

75 EXT. ROME, MILVIO BRIDGE - SUNNY DAY 75

Podestá crosses the Tiber.

76 EXT. ROME, PALAZZO DELLA FERNESSINA - DAY 76

Podestá climbs the steps to the imposing former HQ of the
Fascist National Party, today Italy's Foreign Ministry (MAE).

77 INT. MAE - DAY 77

Podestá traverses marbled salons, greets acquaintances, all
business, finally comes to ornate double doors, knocks.

78 INT. MINISTER MARCHESSI'S OFFICE - DAY 78

A SECRETARY answers the door, offers Podestá a seat in the
anteroom. A COUPLE wait to be seen. Podestá checks his watch.
The door to the main office opens and a VISITOR with airs
steps out. The three leave, pleased.

Someone KNOCKS. The Secretary lets a VISITOR in, leads him
directly into the Minister's office, retakes his seat,
ignoring Podestá.

78A NEW ANGLE 78A

The office opens once more. The Visitor and an elegant woman
that we have not seen before steps out, smiling. MINISTER
MARCHESSI, a well-groomed man, colorful silk tie, bids her
farewell with kisses on each cheek. On seeing Podestá, he
taps his forehead in sign of forgetfulness.

MINISTER
Forgive me...
Mi scusi...
(grabs jacket)
Podestá, right?
Podestá, giusto?

PODESTÁ
Excellency--
Signor Ministro--

The Minister signs a document his Secretary holds before him,
checks his watch, points upstairs.

MINISTER
Meeting in three. Walk with me.
**Ho una riunione fra tre minuti. Mi
accompagni.**

Podestá follows him.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?
Cosa posso fare per lei?

PODESTÁ

Sorry, but, didn't you receive my request?
Scusi, non ha ricevuto la mia richiesta?

MINISTER

Yes, yes, of course, your extension. That's a non-starter, the way things stand, Podestá. I thought you were here to discuss your next mission.
Si, si, certo, la proroga. Ma è impossibile, visto come stanno le cose. Pensavo che volesse parlarmi della sua prossima nomina.

PODESTÁ

Minister, Sir. What is happening in Buenos Aires is a scandal. And a tragedy. We cannot abandon the young Italians stranded down there. Hundreds threatened with imminent death!
Signor Ministro, quello che sta succedendo a Buenos Aires è scandaloso, una tragedia. Non possiamo abbandonare gli italiani che si trovano là. Ci sono centinaia di ragazzi condannati a morte!

They climb a wide marble staircase. The Minister dispenses smiles, shakes hands of many of those they cross.

MINISTER

Podestá, I sympathize, but your position is indefensible before the State. There are considerations. Far more important that do not sit right -- Ciao Claudio! -- with what you've been doing back there. I can't see the remotest possibility of you--
Podestá, io la capisco e sono d'accordo, ma la sua posizione è indifendibile di fronte all'interesse dello Stato. Bisogna considerare questioni molto più importanti che si scontrano con quello che lei sta facendo. Ciao Claudio! Sinceramente mi pare molto remota la possibilità di--

PODESTÁ

Italian citizens, Excellency. If you allow me--
Cittadini italiani, Eccellenza. Se mi permette--

MINISTER

If they're Italian citizens what the fuck are they doing, in the Argentinian guerrilla?!
E se sono cittadini italiani, che cazzo ci fanno in mezzo alla guerilla argentina?!

PODESTÁ

It's not that simple... If you let me explain--

Non è così semplice... Mi lascia spiegare--

MINISTER

Call my office on Monday, tomorrow I am in London. But I can tell you already there's very little sympathy for your cause in Rome, Podestá.

Chiami il mio ufficio lunedì, domani sono a Londra. Vediamo se riusciamo a sederci e parlare con calma. Però le anticipo che lei non gode di molta simpatia a Roma, Podestá.

79

INT. PALAZZO DELLA FERNESINA, UPPER FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

79

They arrive to a set of double doors flanked by GUARDS. It is clear he intends to proceed alone.

MINISTER

Want some advice? Use your stay to put some distance from what you've been up to down there. Or I don't think you'll like where you'll be sent next.

Vuole un consiglio? Approfitti del suo soggiorno a Roma per allontanarsi un po' da quello che sta facendo laggiù. Altrimenti non credo le piacerà la sua nuova destinazione.

(puts out hand)

Now, excuse me. Have a great vacation! Ora mi scusi. Buone vacanze!

Podestá almost does not take it; finally does, but Marchessi doesn't even give him the satisfaction of noticing his distaste -- he has turned his back, all smiles, stretching new hands in the meeting. Someone shuts the door on Podestá.

80

INT. PODESTÁ FAMILY HOME, TRASTEVERE - NIGHT

80

Podestá dines with his brother, MARCO, a couple of years his senior, his MOTHER, an elegant Spanish lady, his SISTER IN-LAW, a short-haired Roman with no make up, his NEPHEW, a trendy teenager, and his NIECE, 12.

PODESTÁ'S MOTHER

Eat, Alejandro, look how thin you are, son! Eat!

MARCO PODESTÁ

Eat! Paella like this one you won't find in Buenos Aires!

Mangia, che una paella come questa non la trovi Buenos Aires!

Podestá eats with little appetite.

PODESTÁ

Very tasty, Mother.

SISTER-IN-LAW

Tell... How is life in Buenos Aires?

Racconta un po'... Com'è Buenos Aires?

NEPHEW

*Is it true that women shave their
legs, uncle?*

***E' vero che le donne si depilano le
gambe?***

Grandma protests.

PODESTÁ

It's true.

Sì. E' vero.

(straight face)

Men too.

Anche gli uomini.

NEPHEW

WHAT?!

COME?!

Podestá and his brother laugh.

81 LATER ON THE BALCONY FACING PIAZZA SANTA MARIA 81

Podestá and Marco smoke.

PODESTÁ

*Chile was different, the repression
was in the open, you could see it...*

***In Cile era diverso, la repressione la
potevi vedere con i tuoi occhi...***

81A FLASH: ARCHIVE IMAGES. REPRESSION IN THE STREETS OF SANTIAGO. 81A

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

...photograph it, report it.

...fotografare, denunciare.

81B FLASH: TALCAHUANO ST. AT CORRIENTES: TWO MEN PUSH A YOUNG MAN INTO THE BACK SEAT OF A FALCON, DRIVE OFF. NO ONE NOTICES. 81B

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

*In Argentina it's silent,
subterranean...*

***En Argentina è silenziosa,
sotteranea...***

81C FLASH: ARCHIVE IMAGES: CORRIENTES BY THE OBELISK MONUMENT. 81C

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

*The streets filled with people living
as if nothing was wrong...*

***Le strade continuano ad essere piene
di gente che vive come se niente
fosse...***

81D FLASH: ARCHIVE IMAGES. GOOOL! IN THE PACKED "BOMBONERA". 81D

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

*Stadiums to the rim...Cafés, theaters,
movie houses, all packed.*

***Gli stadi, caffè, teatri, cinema
pieni...***

81E MONTAGE OF FLASHES: ARCHIVE IMAGES: LAVALLE ST. AT NIGHT; YOUNGSTERS IN A CAFE; GAMBLERS TEARING UP TICKETS AT TRACK. 81E

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

All despite a shattered economy where every day makes less sense to keep money in your pocket.

Nonostante un'economia dove ha sempre meno senso avere soldi in tasca.

81F FLASH: SUPERMARKET CLERKS REPLACING PRICE TAGS. 81F

PODESTÁ

Still, Argentinians seem more up on how the National Soccer Team is performing, than what's going on in the dungeons of justice.

E nonostante tutto questo, gli argentini sono più aggiornati sull'andamento della Selección che su quello che succede nelle cantine della giustizia.

RETURN TO BALCONY

Calami and Marco step back into the dining room.

PODESTÁ'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Didn't you want coffee?!

PODESTÁ/MARCO

Yes, Mother.

Podestá's eyes fall on a copy of Corriere della Sera - the title "POLITICAL KILLING IN BUENOS AIRES - Rodolfo Ortega Peña..." Photo of bald man with glasses. He snatches it up.

MARCO PODESTÁ

What's the matter?

Che succede?

Podestá leafs urgently through the body of the paper.

82 INT. PIZZERIA KING GEORGE - NIGHT 82

CONGRESSMAN RODOLFO ORTEGA PEÑA and wife HELENA VILLAGRA after dinner. Debating, laughing, caressing each other.

83 EXT. SANTA FE AV - NIGHT 83

Intensely cold. A Falcon with four thugs drives past the pizzeria. The one riding shotgun speaks on the radio.

WHAT HE SEES:

Ortega Peña asks for the bill.

84 EXT. PIZZERIA KING GEORGE - NIGHT 84

A taxi - Siam DiTella (license C 371002) with the "LIBRE" sign parks outside the pizzeria facing downtown.

A VETERAN WAITER helps Villagra put her coat on.

In the taxi, the DRIVER turns on the cabin light.

TAXI DRIVER
In position.

A RADIO VOICE replies.

VOICE IN RADIO (FILTER)
Keep channel open.

Ortega Peña exits with Villagra, approaches the taxi, asks if it's free, help his wife in back, climbs after her.

ORTEGA PEÑA
Carlos Pellegrini and Juncal, please.

TAXI DRIVER
(loud)
Carlos Pellegrini and Juncal!

85 INT. TAXI 1 - NIGHT 85

Ortega Peña reacts, smiles at his wife, takes her hand. The taxi drives off. Ortega Peña remarks the inside light on.

ORTEGA PEÑA
Could you turn off the light, please?

The Driver looks at him in the mirror.

86 EXT. SANTA FE AV. - NIGHT 86

The taxi makes its way East. The interior light goes off. The Falcon follows the taxi, speeds up to make yellow light.

87 AERIAL 87

The taxi trailed by the Falcon. A green Ford Fairlane joins the caravan from a side street, behind the taxi.

88 INT. TAXI 1 - NIGHT 88

Villagra appears uneasy, kisses Ortega Peña on the temple.

VILLAGRA
You work tomorrow?

Ortega Peña smiles at her, kisses her lips.

ORTEGA PEÑA
Course. Why?

Villagra shrugs, hugs him. They turns left on C. Pellegrini.

89 AERIAL 89

The Falcon falls behind, blocks traffic on C. Pellegrini, toward the river. BRAKES, HORNS. The Fairlane follows taxi.

90 INT. TAXI 1 - NIGHT 90

Ortega Peña touches the driver's shoulder.

ORTEGA PEÑA
Around here is fine...

The taxi double parks. Ortega Peña and Villagra get off on the left.

ORTEGA PEÑA (CONT'D)
How much is it?

TAXI DRIVER
Five hundred eighty.

Ortega Peña hands \$600 through the window.

ORTEGA PEÑA
Keep the change.

The Driver looks at him, opens his door, dives face down on the pavement. Ortega Peña looks at him puzzled. SHRIEK OF BRAKES. The Fairlane skids to a stop across the taxi.

Three men with stockings over their heads jump down with machine-guns. The FIRST ASSASSIN cocks his Sten, puts knee to ground, squeezes a burst of gunfire impacting Ortega Peña in the torso. The Congressman looks at his wife.

ORTEGA PEÑA (CONT'D)
What's happening, Flaca..?

Villagra tries to protect him. A second burst impacts Ortega Peña eight times on the head. A fragment wounds her lip.

Ortega Peña collapses, dragging Villagra down as well as the rear bumper of a Citroën beside them. The taxi driver runs off. Villagra crawls toward the sidewalk having a breakdown.

VILLAGRA
They killed my husband!
THEY KILLED MY HUSBAND!

Someone places a Colt pistol next to Ortega Peña's dead hand.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Let's go, come on!

FOOTSTEPS recede, the Fairlane skids off. Ortega Peña gives one last death-rattle and his wooden pipe slips out of his jacket. About him remain twenty-five empty golden shells.

The Falcon speeds past. Some CURIOUS BYSTANDERS begin to approach. All lasted a scarce 15 seconds. SUPER:

"Rodolfo Ortega Peña. Riddled with bullets
by the Triple-A Death Squad."

91 EXT. PODESTÁ HOME, BALCONY - NIGHT

91

Marco shakes his head, incredulous.

MARCO PODESTÁ
*How things come to that between
brothers?
Come si può arrivare a tanto tra
fratelli?*

PODESTÁ
*History teaches us plenty, but we
learn nothing.
La storia insegna molto ma non
impariamo nulla.*

Podestá puts down the paper, sits at the table.

MARCO PODESTÁ
What do you need from me?
Che posso fare io per te?

His Son serves him a cup of coffee.

MARCO PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Whoa!
Oha!

The Boy shuffles around the table, serves his uncle.

PODESTÁ
*Spread the names of the detained,
mobilize members of parliament. Make
noise. The death squads operate with
total impunity. No one says or does
anything to stop the carnage.*
***Diffondi i nomi dei rifugiati. Smuovi
dei parlamentari, che facciamo rumore.
La repressione opera nella più totale
impunità. Nessuno dice né fa nulla per
fermare la carneficina.***

MARCO PODESTÁ
*If the Communist Party can do one
thing is noise. Millions of Italians
still listen to us.*
***Se il Partito Comunista ancora può
fare qualcosa, è il rumore. Milioni
d'italiani ci ascoltano ancora.***

PODESTÁ
*Each name known in Rome can mean a
saved life in Buenos Aires.*
***Ogni nome conosciuto a Roma può
salvare una vita a Buenos Aires.***

MARCO PODESTÁ
Count on me.
Conta su di me.

PODESTÁ
Always.
Sempre.

He ruffles his nephew's hair, makes sign of shaving his legs.
The boy smiles. Podestá reaches for the cup.

MATCH CU TO:

92 INT. ALITALIA AIRCRAFT, BUSINESS CLASS - SUNSET 92

Podestá accepts a coffee from a FLIGHT ATTENDANT, his
thoughts go to the blanket of blood-colored cirrus outside.

93 INT. POLICE STATION 1, BUENOS AIRES - DAY 93

Ortega Peña's body, naked and riddled with bullets, lies on
the cement floor, with glassy, half-open eyes -- Deja-vu of
Guevara's death. The room is packed: FRIENDS, POLICE,
JOURNALISTS. Some ARMY OFFICERS.

DIEGO MUNIZ BARRETO (up to now known to us by his *nom de
guerre*, "GUSTAVO") arrives with two congressmen in suits.

BARRETO
We're here to identify the body of
comrade Ortega Peña.

The highest ranking ARMY OFFICER, nods, gives way. Barreto cannot hold back emotion, coughs into his handkerchief. FOOTSTEPS, CHUCKLING. All turn.

POLICEMEN armed with machine-guns open the way so the cheerful Police Superintendent Villar can make his way. One perfunctory look at the body and he cracks a sardonic guffaw.

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR
No more trouble from this guy!

He starts back.

BARRETO (O.S.)
Villar!

Villar turns, Barreto pushes through, shouts in his face.

BARRETO (CONT'D)
Don't laugh so much, you son of a
whore, the next ticket's got your name
on it!

Villar's escort reacts, but Villar holds a hand up, glances at Pedrini and Lastiri restraining Barreto, and pushes his way out through the throng of vociferating journalist.

SUPERINTENDENT VILLAR
Return that trash to his family, see
if the find a hole to dump it in.

Barreto's glares after him.

94 INT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT, BALCONY - DAY 94

Podestá wearing a bathrobe, hair wet, goes through a pile of mail, sips his morning coffee, checks on his plants -- in perfect health. Checks his watch, finishes coffee, hurries into the bedroom.

95 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - DAY 95

Podestá steps off his Fiat. TWO POLICEMEN -- grim, new faces -- watch him from outside the building. Podestá notices a Falcon double-parked before the Consulate.

A truck cannot get through. The TRUCK-DRIVER HONKS, lowers passenger's window.

TRUCK-DRIVER
Move, you dumb ass, can't you see
you're blocking traffic!?

The DRIVER slowly lowers his window, looks at the Truck-driver expressionless, pulls a '45, loads the chamber.

DRIVER
What'd you say?
(bends his ear)
Didn't quite get that...

The truck driver pales -- GEAR BOX SCREAMS -- jerkily backs up. HONKS BEHIND.

A THUG exits the consulate, climbs into the Falcon and the car skids off. Podestá followed the antics tensely, finally locks his car, walks into the consulate.

96 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, RECEPTION - DAY 96

Crowded. Podestá identifies the plainclothes policemen who no longer cloak their presence, steps into the old elevator.

97 INT. FIFTH FLOOR - DAY 97

Podestá emerges from the elevator. Mrs Gentile gets up, happy to see him, hugs him, takes his coat. Several "clients" wait by his office, Podestá smiles at them amiably.

PODESTÁ

Give me five minutes, then send the first one in.

Mi dai cinque minuti e poi faccio entrare il primo.

(moves on, turns)

Oh, and thanks you for taking care of my plants.

Ah, e grazie per le piante.

Gentile smiles.

GENTILE

Now they're a bit mine too.

Ora sono un po' mie.

Podestá extracts a box of chocolates from his briefcase.

PODESTÁ

This is yours too.

Anche questo.

Gentile beams, kisses him on the cheek.

GENTILE

How kind. Thank you.

Che gentile. Grazie.

98 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - LATER 98

Podestá listens to the desperate tale of a MOTHER. FILIPPO DI BENEDETTO, the man we saw with Foá at the U&B -- 50, austere, dignified bearing, franc gaze -- by her side.

WOMAN

They didn't even ring the door. They broke it down and burst in like animals. Actually, no, it wasn't like that, that's how it felt, but they were calm, they busted everything with terrifying calm. When they went into Gabriel's room, he was already on his feet, hands in the air. They made him put on a pair of pants and told him to leave the room. I rushed to mine to call the fire-brigade, but--

PODESTÁ

The fire brigade?

DI BENEDETTO

Yes, Consul, the police don't come, they're in on it.

(MORE)

DI BENEDETTO (CONT'D)

The firemen arrive quickly. And if they hear the sirens, sometimes they leave before they arrive.

WOMAN

But they didn't arrive on time. They took my son in a dark green car. I tried to take down the license plate but it didn't have one.

PODESTÁ

You know where they took him?

The Woman shakes her head, can't hold back a flood of tears.

DI BENEDETTO

They first take them to the nearest police station. But they keep them there a short time. Then...?

He finishes with a vague gesture. The Woman breaks down, Podestá comforts her, offers his handkerchief.

PODESTÁ

I'll see what I can do.

DI BENEDETTO

Thank you, Consul, Sir.

They shake hands, the Woman kisses the other.

WOMAN

Thank you, thank you..!

Podestá pulls it back, uncomfortable.

DI BENEDETTO

Thanks for your help.

PODESTÁ

If not, what are we here for?

99

INT. CAFE DE GARCIA - DAY

99

Luca walks in with books, finds Valentino at a table with his Pitman Academy Instructor, approaches. Valentino introduces.

VALENTINO

My brother, Luca. Miss Sago.

BETTY

Silly..! Betty.

Luca and Betty exchange cheek kisses. Luca eyes Valentino.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I was leaving.

LUCA

No--

BETTY

You have to study.

VALENTINO

A little. I'll call you, Miss.

Betty smiles, gives Valentino a wet kiss and goes.

BETTY
 (to Luca)
 Ciao.

LUCA
 Ciao.

He takes a seat, watches her go with sensuous abandon.

LUCA (CONT'D)
 What a rack! Where'd you dig her up?

VALENTINO
 She's my speed-typing instructor.

LUCA
 Get the fuck out!

Betty waves from the door, Valentino wiggles his fingers.

LUCA (CONT'D)
 How old is she?

VALENTINO
 Thirty?

LUCA
 And?!

VALENTINO
 Should be illegal! The shit she knows!

LUCA
 Well, she's not an instructor for
 nothing, right?

They laugh. Valentina lowers his voice.

VALENTINO
 You bring that thing?

Luca slides a pack of Marlboro, Valentino takes off with it toward gents. Luca signals for a coffee.

100 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA, GENTS - MOMENTS LATER 100

Valentino makes sure the stalls are empty, takes two rolled up microfilms from the pack.

101 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA - SAME TIME 101

A Waiter sets Luca's coffee. Luca reaches for sugar, pales.

TWO PLAINCLOTHES shuffle heavily into the place, exchange words and one of them starts for the head. Luca springs up, hurries ahead. As he reaches the door, Valentino exits. He looks at Luca surprised, Luca glares in warning and Valentino walks on. The FIRST POLICEMAN X-rays Valentino and follows Luca into the gents.

102 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA, GENTS - CONTINUOUS 102

Luca hurries to a urinal, tense as a whip. The Policeman plants himself at the next one, begins to urinate. Luca too, but cannot produce. The Policeman notices and looks at him. Luca forces a smirk.

LUCA
 If you watch me is worse.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Who's watching you, asshole?

Luca casts his eyes.

LUCA
No...just saying...

The Policeman pulls out his shield.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Turn around.

LUCA
What?

FIRST POLICEMAN
You deaf too?

Shoves him violently against the wall.

FIRST POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
ID!

Luca produces, hands over his ID Card, a few bus tickets and small notes. The Policeman inspects them.

FIRST POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
You Italian, Salvati?

LUCA
What?
(sensing the blow coming)
No! Argentinian.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Luca is a faggot's name, no?

Luca about to smile, in second thought goes for stern.

LUCA
No.

FIRST POLICEMAN
No?
(gives him the once-over)
What if I say yes?

Luca glances at his watch.

LUCA
Jeez! Gotta be in class.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Jeez! What else is in your pockets?

LUCA
Nothing...

He turns them inside out -- a few bills, cigarettes, lighter. The cop turns him face to the wall.

Valentino back and forth on the sidewalk, can't decide what to do, watches the Second Policeman talk to the bar owner.

104 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA, GENTS - SAME TIME 104

Luca perspires. The Policeman goes through his back pockets, frisks him, turns him back to face him.

FIRST POLICEMAN
What'd you study?

LUCA
Me..?
(the cop slaps him)
Agronomy!

The Policeman returns his ID.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Not gonna pee?

Luca swallows drily, shakes his head.

FIRST POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
Zip up then! Don't wanna go out with
your willy hanging out, do'ya? Scram!
Weren't you late?!

Luca goes, zipping up.

105 INT. CAFE DE GARCIA - CONTINUOUS 105

Luca exits the men's room soaked in perspiration, sees Valentino gone, hurries outside.

106 EXT. CAFE DE GARCIA - CONTINUOUS 106

Luca sees Valentino, turns the corner.

107 EXT. ADJACENT STREET - DAY 107

Valentino catches up.

VALENTINO
Fuck happened?!

LUCA
I'm no good for this shit! Everything
wrong! Questions with questions! A
jerk-off!

VALENTINO
What?!

LUCA
I'm a militant, Val!

VALENTINO
What militant?

LUCA
They train me! I'm up to anything
they ask of me! But I'm fuckin'
useless--!

He breaks down, Valentino holds him, hails a passing cab.

108 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, FIFTH FLOOR - AFTERNOON 108

Podestá walks a couple to the elevator.

PODESTÁ
Give me a couple of days.

COUPLE
Thank you.

They take the elevator, Podestá check his watch, eyes Gentile, still at her desk, finding what to do.

PODESTÁ
Go home, Rosa...

GENTILE
Sure?

PODESTÁ
Yes, I just have a few calls left to make...

GENTILE
All right...
(picks up her things)
See you tomorrow, Mr Consul. Sure?

PODESTÁ
Sure.

Gentile leaves. Podestá returns to his office, picks up the phone, dials. The ghost of a FEMALE RECORDING is heard.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Ciao, Celeste...Back in Buenos Aires.
If you like, Wednesday--
(PHONE RING)
Call me!
(punches another line)
Pronto!

The telephone continues to RING...Podestá realizes it's a blue phone under papers, hangs up first one, picks up, puzzled.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Pronto..?

MAN'S VOICE (FILTER)
Bianchi, Colonel Fárraga!
(Podestá knits brow)
The case of that Rosario woman--

PODESTÁ
Pardon, no... This is Po--
(thinks again)
His...assistant... Secretary Bianchi's gone for the day. What can I help you with?

A DOOR SLAMS somewhere, Podestá closes his with key. The voice on the phone continues, agitated.

MAN'S VOICE (FILTER)
It's about the woman arriving tomorrow from Rosario, with her two sons to ask for asylum. Bianchi knows. Called me to confirm we'll be there to intercept her, but I was out of the office.

Podestá hesitates only a second, takes a conspiratorial tone.

PODESTÁ
 Don't worry about a thing, Colonel, I
 thank you for the call. I will relay
 the info to the Secretary at once.

MAN'S VOICE (FILTER)
 My men will be there at nine, watching
 the entrance from the cafe on
 Libertad... A Jeep will be stationed
 on Av 9 de Julio, in case they try to
 make a run for it toward the river.

PODESTÁ
 Course...yes... Thanks. I'm on it.

Fárraga hangs up. Podestá sets his receiver as if it were
 made of fragile crystal, unable to fix any spot or object.
 Eyes his watch, picks up the first phone, begins to dial. In
 second thought, grabs his raincoat and goes.

109 EXT. 9 DE JULIO AV, PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT 109

TORRENTIAL RAIN. Podestá speaking urgently into phone.

110 INT. CAFE 9 DE JULIO - LATER 110

Podestá, tense before two drained cups of coffee, his
 raincoat on a chair. Foá enters folding a torn umbrella.
 Podestá springs up, Foá joins him.

FOÁ
*What was so urgent that couldn't
 wait till morning?*
**Cosa c'era di così urgente da non
 poter aspettare fino a domani?**

110A SHORT TIME LATER 110A

Podestá and Foá seating, speaking in urgent whispers.

PODESTÁ
*Course I am sure! He thought he was
 speaking to the Embassy. That line
 appears in no directory. I'm the only
 one who uses it, for international
 calls. Ends in 54, Bianchi's in 55!*
**Certo che sono sicuro! Pensava di
 parlare con l'Ambasciata. È un numero
 che non appare in nessun elenco. La
 uso solo io per chiamare all'estero.
 Finisce con 54. Quella di Bianchi con
 55!**

FOÁ
*Motherfuckers! Today I am ashamed to
 be an Italian... We must let them
 know.*
**Che figli di puttana! Oggi mi vergogno
 di essere italiano... Bisogna avvisarli.**

PODESTÁ
*Who?! Where?! I don't even know
 those people's last name!*
**Dove? Chi? Neanche so come si chiama
 questa gente!**

Foá thinks, Podestá watches him, uneasy. Finally...

FOÁ
*When there are no options, frontal
 attack!*
**Quando non ci sono opzioni, attacco
 frontale.**

PODESTÁ
Sun Tsu?

FOÁ
No. Foá.

111 INT. SALVATI HOME - DAY

111

Franco, Pochín, Ricky, Valentino pass along a "mate." Pochín looks at his watch, vexed.

VALENTINO
 He'll be here. Or he would've called.

POCHÍN
 They're checking anyone who looks them
 the wrong way--

The front door opens and Luca comes in, smiling casually.

FRANCO
 Where the hell were you?! You
 shoulda been here an hour ago!

LUCA
 What? They sent me to stake out
 the Moreno HQ.

POCHÍN
 What?! Who sent you..?

LUCA
 Ricardo. It came from higher up.

FRANCO
 What higher up, you dumb ass?!

POCHÍN
 You speak to Gustavo! The rest
 don't exist! I speak for the walls?!

LUCA
 They said it came from higher up,
 Pochín. Just took notes, nothing else.

POCHÍN
 What notes?!

LUCA
 Nuttin... How many cops in and out,
 how many armored carriers... For the
 Belgrano University thing?

POCHÍN
 (to Franco)
 I'm dreaming. What University thing?!

LUCA
 The car bomb. They're gonna--

POCHÍN
 NO! I don't wanna know! No one here
 wants to know! You're putting the
 entire cell in jeopardy!

LUCA
 I thought you knew.

POCHÍN
 Why would I wanna know?! Don't you
 get it?! Nobody in this room knows
 nothing! That's how it works! If
 they snatch you, we are all fucked!
 You think you're not gonna sing?!

LUCA
 What sing?

POCHÍN
 Everything! When they stick that
 thousand volt prod up your ass, you'll
 turn in even your grandma! Believe
 me! We all sing!

He grabs his scarf and jacket, produces a hand grenade, slams
 it with violence on the table. Everyone freezes.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)
 Why you think I walk around day and
 night with this in my pocket?!
 (dead silence)
 Cause I'd also sing if the catch me
 alive!
 (looks at Franco)
 Far as I'll go, you understand, right?

Franco has no comeback. Pochín storms out, Ricky after him.

RICKY
 Wait, Pochín!

Luca glances at Franco and Valentino.

VALENTINO
 Well... He's right, jerk.

112 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY, SECOND FLOOR - DAY

112

The reception clock says it is nine twenty. Foá and Podestá
 wait on a couch. Foá stands.

FOÁ
 We've been twenty minutes waiting
 for the Secretary!

SECRETARY
 Yes, Mr. Foá, Secretary Bianchi knows
 you're here. Can I offer you a--?

Foá pushes the double doors open. Bianchi is on the phone.

SECRETARY BIANCHI
 Giangiacomo!
 (point to receiver)
Gimme a minute.
Dammi un minuto.

FOÁ

We don't have even a minute!
Non ce l'abbiamo!

Bianchi sees Podestá behind Foá, cuts call short.

SECRETARY BIANCHI

Call you in a little bit, babe?
Ti posso chiamare tra un po', piccola?
Ciao.

(hangs up, on his feet)

What is this?!

Che modo è?!

Foá points at the window.

FOÁ

Any moment, now, out there, your Army buddies will arrest a defenseless woman and her two sons. And I want you to know that if that happens, within an hour, the whole world will know you were directly responsible, as well as for the atrocities they will commit!
Da un momento all'altro, qui fuori, i suoi amici militari arresteranno una signora indifesa e i suoi due figli. E la voglio avvertire che se questo succederà, il mondo intero saprà che lei è il diretto responsabile, così come per le atrocità che saranno commesse.

SECRETARY BIANCHI

How dare you--?!
Come si perm--?!

FOÁ

(booming)

I will make sure the whole of Italy knows you, and no one but you, was responsible for the disappearance and death of these three innocent Italians who all they want it to leave this hell and get back to their country!
Sarà mia cura fare in modo che l'Italia intera venga a conoscenza che lei, e nessun altro che lei, è stato responsabile della scomparsa e della morte di quei tre italiani innocenti, che vogliono solo uscire vivi da questo inferno e tornare nel loro paese!

SECRETARY BIANCHI

Calm down, Foá, it's not like that at all. Course they can return...
Si calmi, Foá, non si tratta di questo. È ovvio che possono tornare...

Bianchi looks at Podestá for support. Podestá is immutable.

SECRETARY BIANCHI (CONT'D)

I never said--

Io non ho mai detto che...

(Foá threatens to go on)

(MORE)

SECRETARY BIANCHI (CONT'D)

I'll take care of it... Calm down.

Me ne occupo io. OK. Si calmi.

Foá nods at the phone. Bianchi eyes his Secretary standing at the door, wringing her hands, with mouth open.

SECRETARY BIANCHI (CONT'D)

What?! Shut the door!

Cos'ha da guardare? Chiuda!

113 INT. FIAT 124 COUPE - DAY 113

Podestá drives satisfied. Switches on radio -- GOYENECHÉ (legendary tango singer), "Balada para un Loco" -- checks time, relaxes.

114 EXT. RECOLETA - DAY 114

The Fiat comes down Guido St, Podestá parks, is surprised to see Celeste, leaning at the window of a dark car, speaking intensely with a MAN with dark glasses. Celeste turns, waves, starts toward Podestá smiling. The dark car takes off.

Podestá locks the Fiat, waits for her to cross the street.

CELESTE

Hey!

(kisses him on the lips)

Early, what a miracle!

PODESTÁ

Few minutes...

(off departing car)

Who was that?

CELESTE

Who? Oh! No idea, some guy... Wanted to know how to get to San Telmo.

(takes his arm)

How was Italy, tell me..?

On an appliance store window TWO STUDENTS watch a TV broadcasting Ortega Peña's funeral.

115 ON THE TV: 115

ARCHIVE IMAGES. Ortega Peña's funeral in Chacarita cemetery. The Ortega Peña widow, with her lip bandaged, accompanying the coffin; sympathizers chanting the Peronist march; others chanting vengeance verses -- "Five for one; no one left alive;" mounted police charging grievers, firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

116 EXT. CHACARITA CEMETERY EXIT - DAY 116

SHOTS, TEAR GAS SMOKE, the deafening CLAMOR OF A THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS ON THE TRACK.

Luca and 50 MILITANTS flee from TWO MOUNTED POLICE AND FOUR ON FOOT. They pour out the cemetery exit. Some militants we recognize. Luca manages to hop into a passing bus.

117 INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS 117

Luca moves to the rear.

WHAT HE SEES THROUGH THE WINDOW:

A militant with a handkerchief over his face trying to catch up with the bus. A MOUNTED POLICEMAN strikes him with his baton. The militant falls, loses his mask -- it's "Gustavo." Two policemen on foot toss him, bleeding, into a van.

Luca follows the scene until the bus turns the corner, then sits, notices his hands trembling.

118 EXT. JUAN B JUSTO AVE - AFTERNOON 118

Luca on a public phone, frantic.

LUCA
They snatched Gustavo!

119 INT. SALVATI HOUSE, BEDROOM - SAME TIME 119

Franco on the phone, dripping from a shower.

FRANCO
Who told you?!

120 INTERCUT WITH LUCA IN THE PHONE CABIN. 120

LUCA
I saw it! They pummeled him and whisked him away in a police van, Dad!

FRANCO
OK, take it easy... Where are you?

LUCA
By Juan B Justo.

FRANCO
Come home.

LUCA
Don't you get what I'm--?!

FRANCO
Come home, goddamnit!

Hangs up violently. Ricky exits bathroom, drying herself.

RICKY
What happened?!

Franco holds his hand up, dials a number.

121 INT. POCHÍN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON 121

Prieto sets a coffee on Pochín's desk, lingers as Pochín reaches for it. PHONE RINGS. Pochín set cup down, answers.

POCHÍN
Ovide!

FRANCO (FILTRO TELF)
Gustavo is sick, they took him to the Hospital.

POCHÍN
Which one?

122 INT. SALVATI HOUSE, BEDROOM - SAME TIME 122

Franco on the phone.

FRANCO
I don't know.

He hangs up, looks at Ricky who having understood the code stares, appalled. Franco takes a pistol out of a drawer.

123 INT. POCHÍN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME 123

Pochín pretends to still be on the phone.

POCHÍN
All right, tomorrow I'll mention
it to Villar. Good job.

He hangs up, eyes Prieto who finally leaves, then takes a list from his desk, stuffs it inside his briefcase, leaves, sees Villar's office is empty.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)
Back in a couple of hours!

Prieto sticks his head out of the coffee room, mumbles a reply, watches Pochín take the stairs, goes back into Pochín's office, sees untouched coffee, searches desk.

124 INT. / EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT 124

Pandemonium. POLICEMEN drag in DETAINED CIVILIANS, answer phones. "Gustavo" (heretofore Barreto) waits on a bench with legs crossed. A bloody handkerchief to the back of his skull. Sees the bleeding has stopped, folds the handkerchief into his pocket, takes out a cigarette, offers one to his custodians. The first one ignores him, the second one accepts, they share a match. SHOUTS.

TWO THUGS drag a sturdy, struggling young man, strong as a gorilla, garments in threads, bloody face.

STRONGMAN
THEY'RE DISAPPEARING ME! THEY'RE
GOING TO KILL ME!
(to Barreto)
SIR!

Barreto tracks him with a grave gaze. One of the thugs turns to the uniformed policemen guarding him.

POLICEMAN
Help us, you dumb fucks!

They policemen leave Barreto unguarded, grab the prisoner's kicking legs, all disappear down a corridor. SUPER:

"Herminio Zuluaga. Disappeared."

Barreto glances left and right, the chaos at the reception, gets to his feet, picks up his elegant Perramus, heads for the exit, waiting for the shout of halt at any moment. It does not come. He greets three cops coming in, and he's on...

125 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 125

Barreto walks away. A taxi drops an OLD LADY, Barreto helps her down, takes her place. The taxi drives on.

126 INT. TAXI 2 - CONTINUOUS 126

Driving past the presinct, Barreto leans back, spies amused as his custodians appear at the door, frantic.

127 INT. CAFE NEAR POLICE HQ - DAY 127

Valentino and Luca read ULTIMAS NOTICIAS. "380 ARRESTS DURING ORTEGA PEÑA'S FUNERAL." Pochín enters, joins their table.

POCHÍN

They released everyone, but these hundred are as good as dead.

He slips them a list that Valentino quickly conceals. Pochín produces a handful of bills and hands them to Luca.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)

We have an hour. Maybe two.

VALENTINO

What are you going to do?

POCHÍN

Do?

LUCA

We save these guys, who will the department figure leaked the list?

POCHÍN

Don't worry about me, kid. Scram!

Valentino and Luca exchange glances, leave. Bump at the door with a familiar face from HQ, but don't notice him. The plainclothes cop does. Pochín pays the check, is facing him.

POLICEMAN

Your nephew don't even say hi!

Pochín makes a sign of scatterbrained, checks the time.

POCHÍN

See the Turk?

POLICEMAN

He was going up fifteen minutes ago. Why..?

Pochín has already patted him on the shoulder and gone. The cop looks after him.

128 INT. "EL CITY" BILLIARDS - DAY 128

Luca and Valentino rush down the stairs. The place is pretty empty. Luca heads for the toilets, Valentino for the bar. Nato chats with a dark-skinned man with a pony tail.

NATO

Hey, kid, this is the guy from Santiago I tol'ya about. If you want--

VALENTINO

Can't today, Nato. You've coins?

(to stranger)

Sorry. Some other day, with pleasure.

The SANTIAGUEÑO, a wiry, bronze colored guy with shifty eyes and a long pinky nail, licks his lips and stares him down.

SANTIAGUEÑO
Don't gimme no jazz.

Valentino looks at him for the first time.

VALENTINO
No..! Tomorrow if you're around we
hit it. Today, I--
(to Ñato)
Coins... For the phone?

ÑATO
(opens register)
H'much you need?

VALENTINO
(hands bills)
You have three hundred?

ÑATO
Three hundred pesos?! How many chicks
you gonna call, dog?!

Hands three coin rolls. Valentino smiles, hurries to back.

ÑATO (CONT'D)
With those dumb grins these kids gonna
fuck'em all!
(calls)
Leave some for us ugly ducklings!

The Santiagueño watches Valentino go, slides off his stool
snake-like, "shoots" him with his finger.

129

INT. CORRIDOR TO TOILETS - SHORT TIME LATER

129

Valentino and Luca share the list in two phone booths, speed-
dial calls. A WOMAN'S VOICE answers Valentino's call.

WOMAN'S VOICE (TELF FILTER)
Hello?

VALENTINO
Martín lives there?

WOMAN'S VOICE (TELF FILTER)
Who's this?

VALENTINO
Tell'im to vanish! The cops are on
their way.

VOZ DE MUJER (TELF FILTER)
Who's this?!

VALENTINO
A friend.

Hangs up, dials next number. Luca's call gets answered.

YOUNG MAN (OVER/TEL)
Hello?

LUCA
Ricardo?
(silence)
Beat it. They're coming.

YOUNG MAN (OVER/TEL)

(beat)
Thanks.

Hangs up.

130 EXT. EL TIGRE RIVER, NEAR BS AS - NIGHT 130

TWO DIVERS with greased faces, slip into the dark water of the river -- a heavy bag between them. They advance toward the lighted anchorage, three-hundred meters away.

131 UNDER WATER - NIGHT 131

The Divers glide ahead with the load. Only the rhythmic SOUND OF THEIR AQUALUNGS breaks the silence of darkness.

132 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT 132

The Divers emerge fifty meters from the 'MARINA,' a forty-foot wooden cruiser, then once again go under.

133 UNDER WATER - NIGHT 133

We pull the Divers to the cruiser. They extract a massive bomb from the bag, stick it to the hull, throw a switch -- a small red light goes on -- OK signs, head back way they came.

134 EXT. PATRICIOS INFANTRY BARRACKS - DAY 134

Valentino jumps off a moving bus, trots to the gatehouse. A GUARD checks him out.

VALENTINO

I'm here to see Deputy Commissioner Ovide. At the barbecue.

GUARD

Name?

VALENTINO

Valentino.
(before more questions)
His nephew...

The Guard picks up a phone (or radio).

GUARD

Ochoa?!

135 INT. PATRICIOS INFANTRY BARRACKS, QUINCHO GRILL - DAY 135

A half dozen high ranking members of the Triple-A crack jokes heavy with gallows humor. CORPORAL OCHOA picks up leftovers.

INSPECTOR BONIFACIO

(playing desperate victim)
Nooo, the "picana" up my ass nooo!
I've got hemorrhoids..!

All laugh. Except Pochín, who manages to force a smirk. Valentino shuffles in, few show interest.

POCHÍN

You know my nephew, right?

INSPECTOR VEYRA
 You ate, kid? There's some meat
 left. Ochoa!

VALENTINO
 No. I mean, yes, already ate.

Ochoa serves him some meat anyway.

INSPECTOR RODOLFO ALMIRÓN -- 40, dark hair, beard, furtive
 eyes -- exits the "MEN" door, zipping up. Studies the new
 arrival. Sits, leans back against the wall, lights a cigar.

INSPECTOR ALMIRON
 Hey, kid... Give him some wine, Ochoa.
 So, you're family.

Valentino grins, Ochoa pours him a glass of red.

INSPECTOR RUFO DE LA CUADRA, a Northerner from the province
 of Corrientes, arrogant and shrewd, but clearly from a lower
 social strata than the rest, pours himself more wine.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
 You too gonna become a cop, young
 blood?

Valentino looks at Pochín.

VALENTINO
 Don't know yet. Maybe...

INSPECTOR JORGE MUÑOZ -- short, bedroom eyes, the look of a
 bored baker -- looks at him, ironic.

INSPECTOR MUNOZ
 Not gonna become a student, are you?!
 We'd hate to have to pay you visit!

All roar with LAUGHTER. De La Cuadra opens a fresh bottle.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
 What wicked road you're leading that
 kid down, Pochín?

POCHÍN
 Don't worry, fucking's the only thing
 on his mind!

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
 Oh, snatch happy too!

INSPECTOR VEYRA
 (sings Gardel-like)
 "You remember, brother
 Those years of our youth...!"

INSPECTOR EKLUND
 You know why he takes him along,
 don'cha? Pussy bait, the prick!

More LAUGHS.

POCHÍN
 I'm taking him to Argentino Juniors,
 jerks!

INSPECTOR MUNOZ
 Who they playing?

POCHÍN

No, The Cebollitas... To see that new kid, Maradona, that they say can eat the ball for breakfast.

CABO OCHOA

Maradona, sorry, Sir... Fifteen years old and already a crack! Any day Boca nabs him, mark my words...

INSPECTOR ALMIRÓN

Stop taking nonsense, Ochoa. I saw him, kid's four feet tall! No midget will ever make it in soccer!

136 EXT. TIGRE, RIACHO LA ROSQUETA - DAY 136

A SAILOR releases the Marina's moorings, the CAPTAIN steers it into the canal. Villar, straw hat and glasses, sticks his hands in his pockets and moves up to the prow with his WIFE.

On the pier, a German shepherd BARKS incessantly toward the far shore. The soldier handler is perplexed.

137 EXT. TIGRE, BUSHES - DAY 137

Two blue eyes turn to a radio switch in a hand and...

138 EXT. RIACHO LA ROSQUETA - DAY 138

KABOOM!!! An EXPLOSION blows the "Marina" to smithereens. SUPER:

"Police Superintendent Alberto Villar.
Executed by Montoneros' bomb."

139 INT. POCHÍN'S BLACK TORINO - DAY 139

Pochín and Valentino drive out of the barracks.

POCHÍN

Took a good look at those faces? Those were the heavies. The one who offered you the wine--

VALENTINO

Was Almirón, I know. Fuck.

140 EXT. ARGENTINO JUNIORS SOCCER STADIUM - DAY 140

Pochín parks on a spot "RESERVED FOR MANAGEMENT," Valentino heads for the pitch. Pochín greets the TRAINER.

POCHÍN

There he goes, watch!

MARADONA has the ball, dribbles two, three, four defenders, takes the shot and the goalie manages the miracle of pushing it over the bar. UUUUUHs! from the fans.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)

Be right back. Find a seat.

Valentino watches Pochín make his way down a few rows where he speaks to a bearded man in a suit and hat.

140A POCHÍN

140A

Stoops to the unseen man, they speak in low tones.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)
They're gonna come back to us with
everything they've got.

MAN IN SUIT
Sure. When they finish fishing out
the little pieces... You keep on with
what you're doing.

He turns toward Valentino, we realize it is Barreto.

BARRETO
The kids know?

POCHÍN
Don't want them to.

SHOUTS, they turn.

140B ON THE PITCH,

140B

Maradona dribbles three guys, scores a goal.

BACK TO POCHÍN.

He turns to Barreto.

POCHÍN (CONT'D)
Learn some moves from the kid, 'cause
they're looking for you in every nook
and cranny.

BARRETO
Except where I am.
(looks toward the pitch)
But this is just getting started.

POCHÍN
Need anything?
(Barreto shakes his head)
Messages? Family?

BARRETO
They know I'm OK.

POCHÍN
Anything you need--

BARRETO
I know. Thanks.

They shake hands. SHOUTING. They smile toward the pit.

141 THE BALL BOUNCES OFF THE BAR, VALENTINO WATCHES IT SAIL
THROUGH BLUE SKY AS WE...

141

DISSOLVE TO:

142 ANOTHER SKY. CAMERA REVEALS AN AIRLINER ON APPROACH, EZEIZA
AIRPORT, FORZONE'S PARKED FIAT STATION WAGON AND FINALLY...

142

Podestá inside, reading a paper with the passenger's door
open. Forzone stands beside it, face to the sun, smoking.

FORZONE
Mr. Consul...

Podestá looks up and SEES:

143 EXT. EZEIZA AIRPORT - DAY

143

Foá exiting the terminal. He starts for the taxi line.

Podestá steps down from the Fiat.

PODESTÁ
*You that famous journalist Giangiacomo
Foá?! Could I have your autograph?
Scusi lei non è il famoso giornalista
Gian Giacomo Foà? Posso chiederle un
autografo?*

Foá turns toward the sun, shields his eyes, finally makes Podestá out, laughs.

FOÁ
*What the hell are you doing here?!
Che cavolo ci fai qua?*

PODESTÁ
*What I try to do every Sunday: Only
what pleases me!
Quello che provo a fare ogni domenica:
solo ciò che mi piace.*

Foá shuffles over, they share a hug.

FOÁ
*How did you know I was coming back
today?
Come facevi a sapere che tornavo oggi?*

PODESTÁ
*Carrara has the entire corps in a war
footing.
Carrara ha messo in stato d'allerta
tutta l'ambasciata.*

Foá laughs. Forzone shakes his hand, takes his bag, opens the rear door, Foá climbs in.

FOÁ
*And with reason. New Press Secretary.
I've instructions to write to kill
from now on.
E ha fatto bene, Il nuovo ministro
della stampa. Le istruzioni da oggi in
poi sono quelle di sparare ad alzo
zero.*

144 INT. FIAT STATION WAGON - SUNSET

144

Forzone drives toward Buenos Aires on Richieri Highway. Podestá rides shotgun, Foá in back. The Sun sets.

FOÁ
*...What secret? All Rome knows what
you're up to down here.
(MORE)*

FOÁ (CONT'D)

For now they have no proof, but the moment they have concrete evidence you're not following the official line, they'll shove you into the first flight to Timbuktu.

Ma quale segreto? Tutta Roma sa quello che stai facendo qui. Per il momento non hanno prove, ma appena riescono ad avere il minimo indizio ti mettono in un aereo e te ne vai a Timbuktu.

(lights cigarette)

But that's the least of my worries, Alessandro: if the military get their glove on you, I seriously doubt the MAE will lift a finger to find you.

Ma questa è la cosa meno preoccupante, Alessandro. Se arrivano a metterti addosso le mani i militari argentini, dubito che il Ministero degli Esteri alzi un dito per farti riapparire.

Forzone observes him in the rearview mirror.

145

INT. POLICE STATION, RESTING ROOM - AFTERNOON

145

Table, chairs, couple of cots, stove, kettle boiling. A BOY of eleven wearing a school blazer, plays "memory" with a PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN. The kid matches two pairs in a row.

PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN

You're good at this, huh?

BOY

I always play with my dad.

PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN

What's your name?

BOY

Antonio Barreto.

PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN

What grade you in?

BOY

Third. I'll be in fourth soon.

PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN

How'bout that...

146

EXT. / INT. POLICE STATION 2 - SAME TIME

146

A taxi pulls up. Barreto, clean shaven and wearing a fine suit, looks up at the building, pays, marches in. TWO POLICEMEN look up from their desk.

BARRETO

Inspector Soler is waiting for me.

UNIFORMED POLICEMAN

Who should I say?

BARRETO

The father of the boy he's holding here.

The policemen react. The First one hurries inside, the other one snaps his holster open.

BARRETO (CONT'D)
Easy... No need for that.

Moments later, INSPECTOR SOLER, a tightly wrapped man with dry eyes and long strides is beside Barreto, sizing him up.

BARRETO (CONT'D)
Here you have me.

Soler eyes the First Policeman and he frisk Barreto.

BARRETO (CONT'D)
My son.

INSPECTOR SOLER
Come.

Barreto follows him -- the two policemen flanking him. They walk along a corridor to a door ajar. His son -- back to the door -- plays cards with the Policeman.

INSPECTOR SOLER (CONT'D)
You want to speak to him?

Barreto swallows bitterly, shakes his head.

INSPECTOR SOLER (CONT'D)
(to Second Policeman)
Have someone drive the boy home.
(to Barreto)
Let's go.

Barreto glances one last time at his son and precedes Soler toward a barred door. SUPER:

"Diego Muñiz Barreto, 'Gustavo.'
Murdered by drowning March 6, 1977."

The Boy turns to the SOUND OF METALLIC DOOR slamming. The Policia sucks the last of his mate and gets up.

PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN
Let's go kid.

BOY
(shows his pile of cards)
I won.

The policemen exchange looks. The Boy picks up his school pack and follows him toward the exit. Several policemen watch TV -- R. Videla interviewed with the Congress in b.g.

JOURNALIST
"General, will we make it to 1977 with this institution?"

VIDELA
(ironic grin)
"What institution you referring to?"

147 EXT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY

147

Podestá locks his coupe. SUPER:

"March, 1976"

He walks into the palace at Billinghamurst and Libertador. Colleagues come and go. Everyone avoids his eyes.

148 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY 148

Podestá climbs the stairs to the second floor.

149 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 149

FOUR MID- AND LOW-LEVEL DIPLOMATS, FOÁ, TWO JOURNALISTS, wait around a large conference table. Podestá arrives and finds a seat next to Foá.

He is about to speak to him when Ambassador Carrara makes his entrance. Several start to get up but he motions them back to their seats, takes the chair at the head of the table, already talking.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

Gentlemen... A military coup is imminent.

Signori, è imminente un colpo di stato per mano dei militari.

Some show surprise, Podestá and Foá exchange glances.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA (CONT'D)

The military authorities have communicated to me that all will take place in complete order and without violence. Isabelita's government is an unprecedented chaos, and in order to avoid the total collapse of this society, a junta will assume power in the next couple of days. From this moment forward, the presence of political refugees will not be tolerated in any one of our diplomatic missions.

Le autorità militari mi hanno comunicato che avverrà tutto in maniera ordinata e senza alcuna violenza. Il governo di Isabelita ha creato un caos senza precedenti, e per evitare il collasso generale della società i militari assumeranno il potere in un paio di giorni. A partire da quel momento non si tollererà la presenza di alcun tipo di rifugiato nelle nostre sedi diplomatiche.

The new government will launch a police operative without precedent, and there will be many criminals trying to slip through the nets of justice. Ruthless murderers, common criminals and, consequently, with no right to political asylum.

Il nuovo governo militare lancerà un'operazione di polizia senza precedenti, e molti criminali proveranno a passare tra le maglie della giustizia. Si tratta di assassini spietati come di delinquenti comuni, quindi senza alcun diritto all'asilo politico.

An ASSISTANT whispers in his ear.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA (CONT'D)

Yes... A system of double-doors will be put in place. It will only be possible to open the doors from inside the embassy. My directive cannot be more clear: We will not allow individuals into the embassy whose sole purpose is to demand asylum.

Si... Verrà installato un sistema di doppie porte. Si potrà aprire solo da dentro l'ambasciata. Non si autorizzerà l'ingresso in ambasciata di individui il cui unico motivo sia la richiesta di asilo.

He stands to leave, eyes Podestá.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA (CONT'D)

Any divergence will have grave consequences for the official in question.

Qualsiasi divergenza avrà conseguenze gravi per la carriera del funzionario responsabile.

(to Foá)

As far as the Press goes, it will be advisable to have all material go through our Secretary of Culture from now on. Any questions?

Per quanto riguarda la stampa, sarà opportuno far controllare gli articoli per la nostra Segreteria di Cultura. Per evitare fraintendimenti. Ci sono domande?

Foá begins to reply but Carrara has left the room in a hurry. The rest follow. Foá hisses at Podestá.

FOÁ

They will not gag me! I wont conceal what I see coming here. We all die in this life, but the written word stays!
Non mi faccio mettere il bavaglio. Io non nascondo quello che sta per succedere. Passa tutto nella vita, ma quello che si scrive no, quello rimane.

150

INT. SALVATI HOUSE - NIGHT

150

Franco, Ricky, Valentino and Luca ready for dinner.
DOORBELL. Valentino and Luca exchange looks -- tense.

FRANCO

Go'head, open. They don't ring.

Luca peers through the porthole just the same, opens. Outside stand Leo and an ill-kept, gaunt young man.

LUCA

Hell you doin'..?

Leo meets Franco's hard look.

LEO

A friend.

FRANCO
Come in! We're about to eat.

Leo sets his shoulder bag on a chair. The FRIEND follows him, empty handed. Valentino's bitch sniffs him.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
Set a couple more plates.

Luca grabs two plates. Valentino pulls over two chairs. The Friend drops onto the couch. Leo strokes Valentino's neck.

LEO
What'd you cook today, maestro?!

Ricky emerges from kitchen with a steaming tray of ravioli.

RICKY
Nothing. Today, I cooked.

Leo WAILS.

RICKY (CONT'D)
Save it. Come, help me out...

LEO
Actually they look fantastic.

He follows her into kitchen, Ricky shoves him to the wall.

RICKY
Who the fuck is that?!

LEO
Wha?! Nobody...a friend. If you don't want him here I--

RICKY
He's already here, you jerk!

Franco comes in holding back anger.

FRANCO
You got shit for brains?!

LEO
He hasn't slept in four days! What was I supposed to do?

RICKY
Think!

FRANCO
Call.

LEO
I had no coins.

Franco arms a punch, return to the dining room with a bread basket. Ricky shoves grated cheese in Leo's hands.

RICKY
One night! Tomorrow I want him gone.

The stranger is curled in the couch, dead to the world. Ricky and Leo return. Ricky passes ravioli. Valentino spreads a blanket on the stranger.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Come eat.

VALENTINO

Save some for him.

151 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY, SECOND FLOOR - DAY

151

Ambassador Carrara, Perrone, Bianchi, Podestá and other MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS watch Videla take the oath on TV. SUPER:

"29 DE MARZO, 1976"

VIDELA

"I, General Jorge Rafael Videla, swear by God our Savior, and before this Sacred Bible, to perform with loyalty and patriotism, the functions of President of the Argentinian Nation."

The speech goes on. The choreography of the reactions gives a clear sense of where the sympathies for what is taking place lie.

Podestá, ideologically and physically isolated, in back of the room. Forzone and Gentile sympathize from the hallway.

152 EXT. WOODS OF PALERMO - DAY

152

Podestá and Foá walk rubbing elbows, speaking in low tones.

PODESTÁ

Perrone dictated me a telegram for Rome, saying all was quiet and under control!

Perrone mi ha dettato un telegramma da mandare a Roma, per dire che è tutto tranquillo, sotto controllo!

152A FLASH: A FAMILIAR FACE FROM THE CONSULATE SEND A TELEGRAM FROM A PUBLIC POST OFFICE.

152A

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

*And had it sent by open telegram!
Didn't even let me code it!*

E lo ha fatto inviare come telegramma aperto! Non me lo ha fatto neanche cifrare!

RETURN TO WOODS: They cross a PASSERBY, pretend to talk weather. Then...

FOÁ

Obviously, it will be intercepted and the idea is to convey the Italian government's tacit approval.

Ovviamente lo intercetteranno, e così si trasmetterà l'idea dell'appoggio silenzioso del governo italiano.

PODESTÁ

"What happened in Chile never happens here." Ambassador Carrara's own words, you were there.

(MORE)

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

"Quello che è successo in Cile qui non succederà" , parole di Carrara, tu lo hai sentito!

152B FLASH: WORKERS TRY THE NEW DOORS AT THE EMBASSY. 152B

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

"No political asylum!"

RETURN TO WOODS: Foá stops, lets a JOGGER pass.

FOÁ

You must tread carefully, Alessandro. Terrible things are happening...

PODESTÁ

I know...

FOÁ

No. This no one knows yet.
No. Questo non lo sa ancora nessuno.

He pulls Podestá down to a bench, leans in.

FOÁ (CONT'D)

*Some days ago naked bodies started washing up on the shores of Uruguay...
Da giorni appaiono cadaveri nudi sulle coste dell'Uruguay.*

(Podestá stares)

Not drowned...

Non è gente affogata in mare

152C FLASH: A HORRIBLY DISJOINTED, NAKED CADAVER BOUNCING GENTLY WITH THE TIDE AGAINST A ROCKY SEA SHORE. 152C

FOÁ (V.O.)

Fallen from a great hight.
Caduti. Da grandi altezze.

RETURN TO WOODS. Podestá stunned.

PODESTÁ

No...

152D FLASH: ESMA MEDICS ROOM. THREE BADLY TORTURED AND BEATEN PRISONERS BEING INJECTED BY A NAVAL DOCTOR. 152D

FOÁ (V.O.)

*They call them "transfers." But they are death flights. A naval pilot let his tongue loose at a bar-b-cue...
Li chiamano "trasferimenti". Ma sono voli della morte. A un pilota navale si è sciolta la lingua durante un barbecue...*

152E FLASH: THE HEAVILY DRUGGED PRISONERS BEING STRIPPED NAKED INSIDE A NOISY, WINDY CARGO AIRCRAFT. 152E

PODESTÁ (V.O.)

*But who..?
Ma chi..?*

FOÁ (V.O.)
Everyone. Willing or not, they must participate.
Tutti. Vogliano o no, debbono partecpare.

152F THE DOCTOR INJECTS THEM A SECOND TIME. TWO NAVAL OFFICERS 152F
 HOLD THEM UP. SEVERAL SUPERIOR OFFICERS OBSERVE, GRIMM FACED.

FOÁ (V.O.)
The transfers leave every Wednesday from the city airport.
I trasferiti partono tutti i mercoledì da Aeroparque.

152G FLASH: THE GROGGY PRISONERS PUSHED OUT THE OPEN DOOR, ONE 152G
 AFTER THE OTHER. ONE OF THEM AWAKES FROM HIS STUPOR, REALIZES
 WHAT'S HAPPENING BEFORE BEING TOSSED INTO THE BLACK VOID.

FOÁ (V.O.)
One way tickets only. All flights sold out.
Viaggi di sola andata. Tutti pieni.

RETURN TO WOODS: Podestá stunned.

PODESTÁ
No...I don't believe it.
No... Non ci posso credere.

But he does...

FOÁ
It's only the beginning of what we won't want to believe, Alessandro.
È solo l'inizio di cose che faremo fatica a credere, Alessandro.

Podestá turns to the bucolic view of the lake.

FOÁ (CONT'D)
They're past the point of no return.
Hanno già passato il punto di non ritorno.

PODESTÁ
You're writing?
Hai scritto?

FOÁ
Not yet. If they ship me back again to Rome it will be permanently, and I will be no more help to you.
Ancora no. Se mi fanno tornare a Roma, sarà per sempre. Non servirò più a niente.

Podestá turns to him with flooded eyes.

PODESTÁ
My God, where are we headed?
Oh Signore, dove arriveremo?

153

EXT. INSTITUTE OF MODERN LANGUAGES - DAY

153

Ana Maria, loaded with books, laughs with a group of STUDENTS. TELEPHOTO. SHUTTER SOUNDS. SEVERAL FREEZE FRAMES.

Valentino steps up to her, smiling.

VALENTINO
How studious...!

ANA MARIA
(cold)
What are you doing here?

THREE MORE FREEZE FRAMES INCLUDE VALENTINO.

VALENTINO
Nuttin... I was in the area... Want to grab a bite?

ANA MARIA
I can't waste time with someone who ignores what's happening. Ciao.

Ana Maria moved on. Valentino left standing.

VALENTINO
Hold on! Ignore what?!

He thinks to follow, but checks the time, changes his mind.

154

INT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT - NIGHT

154

Podestá at his desk, wrapped in his Scottish blanket, writes in his diary.

PODESTÁ (V.O.)
"No one cares anymore about the articles describing Isabelita's arrest, or the Peronist leaders under arrest on board the ship docked in the port of Buenos Aires. Parents or siblings of young men and women that have been taken away from their homes in the middle of the night begin to arrive at the Consulate. Folks that not know one another, from different neighborhoods, but united by the same uncertainty and abandonment."
"Ormai non interessa più a nessuno l'arresto di Isabelita, o la detenzione dei capi del peronismo a bordo di una nave ancorata nel porto de Buenos Aires. Cominciano ad arrivare al consolato i genitori o i fratelli, le sorelle dei giovani che sono stati prelevati dalle loro case nel mezzo della notte. Persone che non si conoscono tra loro, da quartieri diversi, uniti dalla stessa sensazione di incertezza e mancanza di protezione."

Celeste in bed, opens her eyes: the clock -- 2:40.

CELESTE
What are you writing?

Podestá smiles vaguely but does not reply. CAR speed past.
THREE GUN SHOTS, SCREECHING OF TIRES.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
What do you think of all this?

PODESTÁ
Violence can not be the answer.

CELESTE
But, don't you help them?

Podestá looks at her.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
I mean... Doesn't your consulate
help the subversives.

PODESTÁ
Where did you hear that?

CELESTE
Rumors. I dunno, someone at my
hairstylist was saying you hid her
son.

PODESTÁ
I've made it possible for some who
want nothing to do with violence to
leave the country. If you saw them...
Broken inside and out. I would never
contribute to violence.

CELESTE
And how do you meet them? Someone
introduces them to you?

Podestá is watching her now, Celeste changes subject.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
It's nice here. Your home.

Podestá comes over, sits on the bed, moves a lock of her hair
covering half her face

PODESTÁ
I would have brought you long ago
but your schedule seemed so...
inflexible.

CELESTE
It was. We stopped pretending.
(they kiss)
I'm getting a divorce.

PODESTÁ
I see.

CELESTE
(smiles)
Don't worry. I'm fine like this.
(sees flute on flannel)
You play the flute? You never told
me.

PODESTÁ
A little.

CELESTE
Fancy that... And I saw flowers on
your balcony. Didn't imagine you like
this.

PODESTÁ
Like what?

CELESTE
Like this... I dunno, so...human.
(chuckles, kisses him)
If you play something for me, I'll
give you a prize.

PODESTÁ
And if I don't?

She smiles, Podestá caresses her under the sheets, picks up
the flute, leans against the bed's head rest, begins playing.
CORELLI, CONCERT FOR FLUTE # 4. Celeste cuddles against him.

155 EXT. BUENOS AIRES ROOFTOPS - NIGHT TO DAY TRANSITION 155

Over some bars from Corelli, MUSIC yields to TRAFFIC AND...

CUT TO:

156 EXT. APARTMENT CARDOZO, ZABALA 1762 - DAY 156

POV. Traffic speeds right to left, eight floors below.

GRACIELA (V.O.)
You want more coffee?

157 INT. APARTMENT CARDOZO - DAY 157

Ana Maria smokes by the open window, tosses butt.

ANA MARIA
You have any chocolate?

GRACIELA, a mate we should have noticed at the Institute,
gets up from a low table covered with books, in her ample
family apartment.

GRACIELA
I'll make some!

ANA MARIA
Really?

On a credenza, family photos -- a man in the uniform of Army
Colonel and his wife. Ana Maria studies them.

GRACIELA
It'll just take a minute.

She picks up used cups, Ana Maria helps her load a tray.

ANA MARIA
Your parents get home what time?

GRACIELA
Mom early, depends... Mi old man
almost always around eleven at night.
And he gets up at five, poor thing!

ANA MARIA
Brutal...

GRACIELA
With all the troubles, you know...?

Takes the tray to the kitchen. Ana Maria checks the clock.

ANA MARIA
Can I use the bathroom?!

GRACIELA (O.S.)
Course, babe...!

Ana Maria grabs her backpack, moves towards the bedrooms.

158 KITCHEN 158

Graciela melts chocolate in a pan.

GRACIELA
You staying for dinner, yes?!

159 BATHROOM 159

Ana Maria pulls a Crandall perfume box from her backpack.

ANA MARIA
(calls out)
Can't! Have to get back home at
some point! Thanks!

She extracts a Trotyl bomb, sets timer for 01:30.

160 KITCHEN 160

Graciela adds milk to the melted chocolate, stirs.

161 BATHROOM 161

Ana Maria flushes, returns empty box to back pack, goes to...

162 MASTER BEDROOM 162

Quickly studies layout, sees night Franco's biography and ashtray on night table, places the bomb under that side, activates a switch -- red light goes on. Straightens bed covers that almost reaches the floor, goes. In second thought returns, slides bomb closer to head area, hurries back out.

163 KITCHEN 163

Graciela sets chocolate, cold milk on a tray, returns to...

164 LIVING ROOM 164

Ana Maria stands at the window, catching her breath, turns.

ANA MARIA
Wow, that looks great! You finished
the analysis of The Aleph?

GRACIELA
Yesterday, don't you remember?
Dense... I stuck it in your folder.

ANA MARIA
That's right.

She takes a seat, sips chocolate, hot! She overreact, almost violently. Graciela is taken aback, feels guilty.

GRACIELA

Sorry.

She adds a dash of cold milk to it.

ANA MARIA

It's OK... Did you see again that boy that studies law? What was his name..?

GRACIELA

Mario. No, he didn't call me back...

ANA MARIA

So, call him yourself!

GRACIELA

You mad?!

ANA MARIA

Why not?

GRACIELA

You call them?

ANA MARIA

If you're going to wait for everything to fall on your lap...

GRACIELA

Hi, Mario, I'm in heat, wanna go out?!

She laughs. Ana Maria doesn't, checks her watch. The front door opens and Graciela's Mother, MRS CARDOZO, walks in.

SRA CARDOZO

Hello! Wow, working hard!

GRACIELA

We were, I swear. We just quit, no?

ANA MARIA

Is true, Mam. Since ten this morning we've been at it.

(gathers books)
I was leaving, actually...

SRA CARDOZO

Not staying for dinner, Anita?

ANA MARIA

They're waiting for me at home.
Thanks.

She kisses her. Graciela walks her to the door.

GRACIELA

Tomorrow same time?

Ana Maria looks at her a beat.

ANA MARIA

Right.

They kiss and Graciela shuts the door.

165 EXT. BUILDING CARDOZO, ZABALA 1762 - AFTERNOON 165

Ana Maria struts out of the building. WE PULL her to the corner. She stops in CU, considers, decides to move on.

166 INT. FOÁ'S OFFICE - NIGHT 166

Foá, manic, smokes and types -- a blur of two fingers -- talks as fast as he types. Podestá look over his shoulder.

FOÁ

Behind our politicians's thinly-veiled complicity with State Terror lie enormous financial interests: Pirelli, Ghella, Fiat, Enel, Techint... I can go on... You think they will jeopardize the health of these cash cows, to defend something so minor as our homeland's honor?

Dietro questa velata complicità con il terrorismo di stato da parte dei nostri politici, ci sono enormi interessi economici: Pirelli, Ghella, Fiat, Enel, Techint... Potrei continuare. Pensate che mettano in pericolo tutte queste galline dalle uova d'oro per difendere una cosa così poco importante come l'onore della Patria?

(changes typing sheet)

I have to call Rome.

Devo chiamare Roma.

PODESTÁ

And I go to bed.

E io andare a dormire.

FOÁ

Gotta make sure they understand why they must publish this as is.

What time is it?

Ci dobbiamo assicurare che capiscano il motivo per cui questo articolo va pubblicato così com'è. Che ore sono?

PODESTÁ

(checks watch)

One thirty.

L'una e mezza.

He picks up his coat. An EXPLOSION is heard, Foá springs up.

FOÁ

Now what?

E adesso?

SUPER:

"General Cesáreo Cardozo, killed by bomb
June 17, 1976"

Foá looks out the window.

166A FOÁ'S STREET 166A

A truck drives past the corner, lets out another LOUD EXHAUST EXPLOSION.

167 INT. SALVATI'S KITCHEN - DAY

167

Valentino makes breakfast. Luca comes down in his underwear.

LUCA
Morning!

VALENTINO
Dad up?

LUCA
Did't he go get the paper?

He opens a cupboard, takes out bird seed, fills the plate of their Australian parakeets in a cage.

VALENTINO
Last night I dreamt I came to feed these two and found a large dead parrot instead.

LUCA
Good for you. I haven't dreamt in years.

VALENTINO
No, jerk, I'm serious. Could be an omen--?

LUCA
Omen of what?

Franco enters reading the paper.

FRANCO
They blew Cardozo up!

VALENTINO
Who's Cardozo?

FRANCO
New Police Superintendent! Wake up!

LUCA
Who blew him up?

FRANCO
Some chic friend of his daughter...
(reads)
Ana María Gonzales. Belonged to Montoneros. Put a bomb under his bed.

Valentino grabs the paper. A gruesome picture of the body of General Cesáreo Cardozo incinerated on his bed. Next to it, an ID photo Ana María Gonzales.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
His wife was badly injured, but is still alive.

Valentino is in shock.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

VALENTINO
I know her.
(to Luca)
You too.

FRANCO
Who?

VALENTINO
The chick who put the bomb. I went out with her.

LUCA
How do you know?

VALENTINO
'cause it says right here, jackass!
Ana Maria Gonzales! And because I fucked her!

LUCA
Bibi's friend!

He snatches the paper from him.

FRANCO
Who saw you with her?

VALENTINO
How do I know?! No one.

FRANCO
Think!

Valentino stares at Franco.

167A FLASH: VALENTINO AND ANA MARIA KISS. A HOTEL NIGHT-CLERK PASSES THEM A KEY WITHOUT LOOKING AT THEM. 167A

168 RETURN TO SALVATI HOUSE: 168

Valentino shakes his head.

VALENTINO
I dunno...I think no one.

LUCA
(reads)
She'd been arrested a month ago and they released her because she was a friend of Cardozo's daughter!

Franco shakes his head, worried.

169 INT. TORTURE CELL - NIGHT 169

Leo's "Friend" -- beaten to a pulp -- lies face down, naked on the springs of a bed. His face barely recognizable. Prieto, in shirt sleeves, with bloody fists, shoves a picana into his annus. The young man SCREAMS and BEGS. Unbearable. Before he passes out, Prieto removes the prod.

PRIETO
You misplaced Friday, fuck-face.
Where'd you sleep last Friday?

LEO'S FRIEND
I, I, I told you!

More picana. More SCREAMING.

PRIETO
Gimme an address, something and you go home.

LEO'S FRIEND
Address of what?! WHO'S!

Prieto sighs, raises the picana once more.

PRIETO
I've got all night--

LEO'S FRIEND
Noooo! Please!!! Stop. No more.

SUPER:

"Carlos Fernandez, 'Leo.' Disappeared,
June 30, 1976."

170 INT. POLICE HQ, INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA'S OFFICE - NIGHT 170

Prieto deposits a note -- SALVATI -- on De La Cuadra's desk.
De La Cuadra reads, looks at Prieto.

171 INT. FIAT 600 - NIGHT 171

Ricky brings her car to a stop, checks herself in the mirror.

RICKY
Yo said nothing about my hair.

FRANCO
You cut it?

RICKY
Uff, can't you see I dyed my white
hairs?!

FRANCO
What white hairs?

Ricky takes his face, kisses him, Franco responds.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
Why don't you stay?

RICKY
Tomorrow. Mom has an early call and
is babysitting Luisito.

FRANCO
All right...

He kisses one last time, steps down, pauses a moment.

RICKY
What is it?

Franco scans the surroundings, the deserted streets. A lonely
buss with two passengers drives by the corner.

FRANCO
Nagh... Call me when you get up.

RICKY
Tomorrow I spend the night.

Franco smiles, watches her drive away, starts up the long,
dark access passage toward his home. After a moment, light in
one of his windows calls his attention.

He keeps moving, alert. The front door is ajar. Inside, several MEN IN MILITARY UNIFORM toss the place. Franco begins to back track, knocks down a pot -- catches it inches before it shatters on the tile floor -- walks quietly away, certain that at any instant he'll be shot in the back. A bus passes by on the boulevard. It's GEAR BOX SCREAMS.

One of the uniforms in the house turns...A second after...

Franco has disappeared form view.

172 EXT. SAN ISIDRO AVENUE - NIGHT 172

Franco trotting away, flagging down a cab -- occupied -- walks on. Another taxi -- a Siam DiTella in the opposite direction, WHISTLES, the taxi stops, he crosses the avenue.

173 INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS 173

Franco climbs in, in a cold sweat, steals a glance back.

FRANCO

Turn here!

The driver, the menacing-looking Santiagueño from The City, obeys.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Flores, please. Granaderos and Yermal.

(checks time)

Step on it, please.

174 EXT. SAN ISIDRO AVENUE - NIGHT 174

The taxi drives away under a fine DRIZZLE.

175 INT. TAXI, FLORES - SOME TIME LATER 175

Franco rides spying through the rear window. El Santiagueño scrutinizes him in the mirror. Franco leans forward.

FRANCO

Around here's fine.

Santiagueño stops on Yermal, Franco pays, gets out. Santiagueño drives on, past a group of consternated people crowding a building entrance.

176 EXT. GRANADEROS STREET, RICKY'S BUILDING - NIGHT 176

Franco observes the scene from the shadows, decides to approach. RICKY'S MOTHER, 60, sits on the curb with eyes swollen, sees Franco, springs to her feet.

RICKY'S MOTHER

Franco!

Franco glances up and down the street, hurries across.

RICKY'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

(clasps his hand)

They took her, Franco! They were waiting!

176A FLASH: TWO THUGS DRAG RICKY OUT OF THE HOUSE, BUNDLE HER INTO THE BACK OF A DARK FALCON. A THIRD MEMBER OF THE RAID TEAM, ARMED WITH A MACHINE GUN, GETS IN FRONT, THE CAR SKIDS OFF.

RICKY'S MOTHER (V.O.)
They broke the door down and dragged her way by the hairs! Threw her in back of a car and took away my child!

SUPER:

"Raquel 'Ricky' Petoello. Disappeared,
June 30, 1976"

BACK TO SCENE: Franco embraces her.

FRANCO
Calm down, Marta... The boy?

MADRE DE RICKY
No. He's sleeping. What happened, Franco?!

Franco is already elsewhere. TIRES SCREECH, he turns. A Di Tella taxi approaches, he flag it down.

FRANCO
Don't call anyone, Marta. Do nothing!
I'll find her!

177 INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

177

Franco climbs in a hurry.

FRANCO
Martinez!

He recognizes the driver from before, pulls out his gun.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
Who are you?! Stop!

SANTIAGUEÑO
A friend.

FRANCO
(the barrel to his head)
Friend my ass! Stop, you son of a bitch or I blow your head off!

Santiagoño stops the taxi, lets go the wheel. A car drives past, he lowers them to avoid calling attention.

SANTIAGUEÑO
I came back to help you.

FRANCO
Why?!

SANTIAGUEÑO
I've seen this... My brother... They took him too. Let me help.

Franco considers.

178 EXT. MARTINEZ - NIGHT

178

WIDE. An ambulance WAILS past in the distance. The taxi turns the corner by Martinez train station, takes a side street.

179 INT. TAXI - NIGHT

179

Franco, sunk in back, peers into the badly lit street.

FRANCO
Time is it?

SANTIAGUEÑO
(checks time)
Three ten.

FRANCO
Don't stop. The green house but
don't stop.

Santiagoueño eyes a green chalet with light on the portico.
Franco scans a car passing in the opposite direction.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
Go around the block, please.

Santiagoueño turns the corner.

180 EXT. 2ND MARTINEZ STREET - NIGHT

180

The DiTella turns another corner.

181 INT. TAXI - NIGHT

181

Santiagoueño approaches a police cabin. One of the cops eyes
the taxi, Santiagoueño stops. Franco tightens his grip on gun.

FRANCO
What are you doing?!

SANTIAGUEÑO
Pretend to be a priest.
(lowers window)
Excuse me, officer. Where is the
Methodist church?

The cop approaches, looks at Franco who fixes him with his
best priest mug. The policeman turns to his superior.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Methodist church...

SECOND POLICEMAN
The only church around here is the one
on Tres Sargentos Street. Must be it.
(eyes passenger)
From this corner no, from the next,
two blocks to the right, I think.

SANTIAGUEÑO
Thank you, boss.

He rolls up the window, drives on, spies rearview mirror.

FRANCO
Fuck was that all about?!

SANTIAGUEÑO
He was going to ask for ID's.

Franco spies back -- the Second policeman returns to the
post, the other one passes a mate. Franco puts the gun away.

FRANCO
You didn't know that.

SANTIAGUEÑO
Yes, I did. He was going to stop us.

182 EXT. 3RD MARTINEZ STREET - NIGHT 182

The taxi turns another corner.

FRANCO (V.O.)
Drop me off before, just in case.

183 INT. TAXI - NIGHT 183

Santiagoño pulls over twenty yards before the chalet, sees Franco in the mirror digging into his pocket.

SANTIAGUEÑO
Go ahead, I'll wait for you.

Franco looks at him a beat.

FRANCO
You sure?

SANTIAGUEÑO
Yeah. No problem.

Franco nods, gets off.

184 EXT. MARTINEZ STREET 1 - CONTINUOUS 184

Franco eyes his surroundings, walks slowly to the house, knocks on the door. No reply, tries bit louder. Light.

185 INT. GRANDMOTHER ALMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 185

ALMA, a tall, slender woman in her 70's, with the fading features of the former top-model she once was, hurries toward the door, wrapping herself in a robe.

ALMA
Who is it?

FRANCO (O.S.)
(loud whisper)
Franco!

Alma opens the door, puzzled. Franco hurries in, shuts door.

ALMA
What happened?!

FRANCO
The boys...
(his eyes flood)
Wake them, Alma.

Valentino appears in his underwear.

VALENTINO
What's up, Pop?

FRANCO
They got her... Ricky. They were at the house. I--

He breaks in sobs. Valentino speechless. Franco recovers.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
We have to go. Now.

Luca appears behind Valentino.

LUCA
What happened?

FRANCO
We have to go. Get dressed.

LUCA
Go where?

FRANCO
I don't know, we can't stay here!
Any moment--

LUCA
Out on the street no! We have to know
where we're going!

FRANCO
If they had the other addresses, this
one is also blown! We can't stay
here. We have to go!

VALENTINO
But Luca is right, Pop. Where?!

ALMA
I know where.

186 EXT. ALMA'S HOME - NIGHT 186

Franco exits followed by Valentino and Luca, searches for the
taxi. Not there. He worries.

187 INT. TAXI - NIGHT 187

Santiagoño, up the street, sees them, drives in reverse.

188 EXT. ALMA'S HOME - SAME MOMENT 188

Alma locks the house. They hurry to climb into the taxi.

189 INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS 189

Franco in front, Alma, Valentino and Luca in back.

ALMA
Good evening...

VALENTINO
I know you! You, you're the guy,
Santiagoño.

FRANCO
(new alarm)
What?!

SANTIAGUEÑO
Yeah... It's all good... Where to?

ALMA
Constitución.

Santiagoño drives off.

SANTIAGUEÑO
Don't worry, Sir.

190 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 190

The taxi drives away.

FRANCO (V.O.)
How the fuck you know him?!

191 EXT. CONSTITUTION QUARTER - NIGHT 191

Alma talks to a FRIEND her same age in the hallway of an old house. The woman glances toward the double parked taxi.

FRANCO

Smokes pacing on the street. Valentino and Luca watch the negotiation from the back seat. Finally, Alma signals to approach. Valentino and Luca get out. Franco leans into car.

FRANCO
Thanks.

He digs for money.

SANTIAGUEÑO
Nah... Who you take me for?

FRANCO
You know the risk you took?

Santiagoño shrugs.

SANTIAGUEÑO
One day this will end.

FRANCO
But until then...?

SANTIAGUEÑO
Until then, we're all Argentinians,
no?

Franco shakes his hand. Firmly.

SANTIAGUEÑO (CONT'D)
(to Valentino)
One of these days we rack'em up...

VALENTINO
I'll even let you win.

Santiagoño smiles -- his first -- tobacco-stained teeth. Alma climbs in back, Franco shuts the door. Santiagoño waves and drives off. SUPER:

"Honrado Leiva-Genares. Disappeared"

192 EXT. DOWNTOWN BS AS STREET - NIGHT 192

RAIN. Podestá and Celeste walk briskly, laughing. Podestá holds a theatre program over their heads. TWO YOUNG MEN run around the corner, crash into him, knock the program to the ground, keep running.

CELESTE

Is true--!

FIRST POLICEMAN

Didn't he tell you to shut your
fucking mouth?!

A brutal gun but blow to her ribcage send Celeste to the
ground, gasping.

The Second Policeman strikes Podestá on the head with his
gun. TWO THUGS grab him by the armpits, drag him toward the
van. The other one lifts Celeste and starts to do the same.

SECOND POLICEMAN

No. Put her in my Falcon.

The Thug gives him a knowing glance, drags her to the Ford.

PODESTÁ

Let her go immediately!

The FIRST THUG buries a set of brass knuckles into his
kidneys, tosses him inside the vehicle.

The First Policeman fishes Podestá's ID from the stream, a
second before the current flushes it away.

FIRST POLICEMAN

Wait, man! Look.

He hands the diplomatic ID to the Second Policeman.

SECOND POLICEMAN

What?!

(discards ID)

Fuck'm. They were with them, so--

FIRST POLICEMAN

You lost it?!

(to Third Thug)

Take him down!

The Thug kicks Podestá off the van. The Second Policeman gets
into a Falcon, cursing, skids off.

Podestá paws for his ID, helps Celeste, in a state of shock,
sit on the curb, cleans the blood from her mouth. The street
is deserted and silent, Podestá takes her arm.

PODESTÁ

Let's not stay here.

193 INT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT - NIGHT

193

Podestá and Celeste enter. Podestá removes her wet jacket,
sits her on the Chesterfield.

PODESTÁ

Sit here.

He removes his own jacket, moves into the kitchen.

CELESTE

Can I use your toilet?

PODESTÁ

Course.

Celeste stands, goes into...

194 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

194

Celeste shuts the door, looks in the mirror, rinses her hands, cleans her face. She inspects delicately Podestá's toiletries, now studies her own reflection, inquisitively. Her eyes swell. She lifts her skirt and sits on the pot, squeezes the tears from her nose.

195 INT. KITCHEN - SHORT TIME LATER

195

Water boils. Podestá applies a BandAid to his head wound. Celeste exits the bathroom, approaches.

CELESTE
Let me see that?

PODESTÁ
It's OK now. Here, sit.

Celeste sits at the table, Calami serves tea.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Sugar or honey?

CELESTE
Honey, thanks.

She suddenly breaks down. Podestá takes her hands.

PODESTÁ
What is it? It's over.

CELESTE
No. I'm a piece of shit.

PODESTÁ
What are you saying...? It's over now.

CELESTE
No. You don't understand. I... The last thing I... But it happened. Feelings...I--

PODESTÁ
Me too.

CELESTE
I work for them!

PODESTÁ
For who?

CELESTE
For who! Them! The services...
(Podestá stares, stunned)
Yes..! They put me in your path.

Podestá stands slowly, looks through her.

195A TWO FLASHES -- FLASH A: PODESTÁ IN HIS FIAT, STOPPED ON FIGUEROA ALCORTA, WATCHING CELESTE APPROACH IN HIS REARVIEW MIRROR TO KNOCK ON HIS WINDOW.

195A

195B FLASH B: CELESTE TALKING TO THE MAN ON DARK GLASSES, THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE DARK CAR ON GUIDO STREET, TURNING BACK TOWARD CAMERA AS THE CAR SPEEDS OFF.

CELESTE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
They know what you do, Alessandro!
You are under surveillance.

BACK TO KITCHEN. Celeste reaches for his hand.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
They know you help terrorists...

Podestá slides hand back.

PODESTÁ
No, not terro--

CELESTE
Yes! Daddy was killed by one of
their bombs!
(she stands)
You don't know the atrocities they
have committed! But these now are
the same.
(her eyes brim over)
I hate this fuckin' world! I'm sorry.

Podestá avoids her, picks up cups, thoughtful.

PODESTÁ
I get up early in the morning.

CELESTE
No, Alessandro..I need you to
understand.

PODESTÁ
I understand.

CELESTE
No. You feel betrayed, but now is
different...

PODESTÁ
Between the feeling of betrayal and
betrayal itself there is but a very
short distance.

CELESTE
I've been wanting to tell you. I
didn't know how. You wouldn't have
understood. I love you. At first--

Calami has opened the entrance door.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
Don't do that... Let me explain.
Let me help.

Podestá holds her gaze a moment.

PODESTÁ
Mi dispiace.

Celeste is about to reply, but instead picks up her things and leaves the apartment. Calami shuts the door slowly, sits on the Chesterfield's arm rest.

196 EXT. PARQUE PATRICIOS, UNCLE ITALO'S HOUSE - NIGHT 196

Valentino and Luca arrive before an old, three story house. Valentino rings the bell. Nothing. Luca rings. A light goes. UNCLE ITALO, 77, messy white hair, opens, worried.

UNCLE ITALO
What are you doing here?

VALENTINO
Can we come in, grandpa?

Uncle Italo, scans the street, reluctantly lets them in.

197 INT. UNCLE ITALO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SOME TIME LATER 197

Valentino, Luca and Uncle Italo around a table with an oilcloth. A kettle WHISTLES, Valentino makes mate.

UNCLE ITALO
You can't stay here.

LUCa
Uncle, we have nowhere to go.

UNCLE ITALO
Yeah, but Alma said they're after you.

LUCA
Right!

UNCLE ITALO
What'd you do?

LUCA
Nothing!

VALENTINO
Defend defenseless people.

The grand-uncle looks at them, uncertain.

LUCa
Grandpa, just for tonight.

Uncle Italo considers, Valentino puts the mate in his hands.

UNCLE ITALO
I'm not feeling too well--

VALENTINO
Tomorrow we have where to stay.
(Luca eyes him puzzled)
We'll leave early.

Uncle Italo sucks on the metal straw, likes how it's brewed. Luca sees an opening.

LUCA
You still have the penguin?

Uncle Italo's eyes come alive.

UNCLE ITALO
Yeah...On the roof. He won't eat.
(takes fish from fridge)
Maybe, with you...

198 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

198

A PENGUIN look at the fish plate with no interest. Valentino and Luca watch it, the terrace full of penguin droppings.

LUCA
How can he crap so much if he don't eat?

Valentino looks up at the starry sky.

VALENTINO
Maybe he gets visitors.

They look at the sky together, then at the penguin, begin to laugh. Till tears flow. Luca turns to grief. Valentino puts his arm around him, kisses him on the head.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)
(at penguin)
Eat, you jerk!

GOAL SCORE CLAMOR. Valentino and Luca turn to the balustrade from where the glare of the Huracán stadium can be perceived.

198A WIDE, ABSURD FRAME: THE SHIT-COVERED TERRACE, THE PENGUIN NIBBLING AT THE FOOD, THE BROTHERS WATCHING IT, SMOKING AGAINST THE WALL, THE GLOW AND THE CLAMOR BEHIND THEM. 198A

199 INT. POLICE HQ, THIRD FLOOR - DAY

199

Prieto walks past Pochín's empty office, heads for Inspector De La Cuadra's office. De La Cuadra pours over files, ill humored.

PRIETO
Sir...

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
What you want, Prieto?

PRIETO
Permission to work in Records, Sir.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
Fuck you want with records?

PRIETO
Well, pending cases... Help break these sons of bitches's backs--

De La Cuadra looks up at him for the first time.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
The street bores you? Not what they tell me...

PRIETO
No! I just--

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
Go! Your coffee is worth shit. Maybe they find you some hidden talent down there!

200 EXT. CORRIENTES AVE - NIGHT

200

MONTAGE. Franco walks the streets. Franco has a coffee. Talks to a bootblack, buys cigarettes. Reads theatre marquees.

201 EXT. 24/7 LIBRARY ON CORRIENTES - NIGHT

201

Franco peruses the Giordano Bruno a previous night viewed Podestá. Di Benedetto gets off a taxi, recognizes him.

DI BENEDETTO
Franco?!

Franco turns, uncertain. Then beams, surprised.

FRANCO
Filippo?!

DI BENEDETTO
Yes! How the hell you doin' bandit?!
(they hug)
How long has it been?

FRANCO
Damn if I know. Ten years?

DI BENEDETTO
No!

FRANCO
Think... Since the Bianca thing.

DI BENEDETTO
Bianca! What a woman... What ever happened to her?

FRANCO
Beats me, I lost her trace.

DI BENEDETTO
Still with your wife?

FRANCO
No. Eva took another road.

DI BENEDETTO
Still dances naked?

He laughs.

FRANCO
You never know... She passed a few years back. Cancer.

DI BENEDETTO
Oh... I'm so sorry. And you? How you doin'? Your boys?

Franco steals a glance over his shoulder.

FRANCO
What are you doing right now?

DI BENEDETTO
Now? Nothing.
(off theatre marquee)
Have to write a review for that, but I already know it's garbage.
(senses tension)
Wanna have a drink?

FRANCO
If you have time...

DI BENEDETTO
 Course?! Let's go... Around the
 corner is Edelweiss, remember?

202 INT. ZUM EDELWEISS, BAR - NIGHT

202

Franco and Di Benedetto speak in low tones before emptied
 whisky glasses. A WAITER arrives with fresh ones.

DI BENEDETTO
 Thanks...

TWO GRAVE-LOOKING MEN enter the restaurant-bar, Franco
 tenses. The men see the person they are meeting and beam.
 Franco relaxes. Di Benedetto hasn't missed a beat.

DI BENEDETTO (CONT'D)
 And when did all this happen?

FRANCO
 Two nights ago. An eternity.

Di Benedetto leans closer.

DI BENEDETTO
 There's a *paisano*...a friend...in the
 Italian Consulate. He helps. Podestá.
 Alessandro. You go see him from my
 part. First thing Monday.

FRANCO
 Tanks. You don't know how--

DI BENEDETTO
 Ma, what thanks! Gonna let these sons
 of bitches crush our hearts with their
 boots? We're guineas, goddamnit!

203 INT. POLICE HQ, RECORDS MEN'S ROOM - DAY

203

Prieto in a locked cabin, sniffs two thick coke lines, tosses
 empty wrapping into the toilet, flushes, exits.

204 INT. POLICE HQ, RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

204

Prieto exits the men's room, crosses the long archive
 underground room, high as a kite. A group of THREE, WELL-
 GROOMED, YOUNG CAUCASIAN POLICE OFFICERS, smoke, joke and
 consult records in no hurry. Prieto walks past, gives them
 the mandatory military salute. They barely acknowledge him.

In the other end of the room, a CORPORAL with marked Native-
 American features, classifies suspects' photographs:
 militants at Ortega Peña's funeral; students loitering before
 the University of Law -- some with faces circled in red
 grease pencil.

Prieto joins him, cursing and darting furious glances at the
 officers.

PRIETO
 (drug speed)
 See those fuckin' faces? All mamma's
 boys. Watch what they call work!
 Whadda they gonna find? Jack shit!
 Fucking arrogant prick "porteños!" Me
 and you, we gonna show'm what's what.
 Where are you from, Tucuman, Jujuy?
 I'm from Salta.

(MORE)

PRIETO (CONT'D)

We northerners have to stick together.
Dig, dig, something has to give, you
watch...

The Corporal obeys, but clearly uneasy with the officers hearing Prieto's offensive venting. Prieto can't concentrate, moves files with little sense.

PRIETO (CONT'D)

Think these motherfuckers even grasp the glory Perón was? They think they know it all. Ovide, same fuckin' piece of shit. Thinks he's so fuckin' handsome. Gonna get'm smoked, mark my words. Trash. Don't know why Villar gave him so much respect. I make him swallow my sputum. One of these days I'm sending him on vacation where there is no return. His family too. Phonier than Bolivian ceviche, the son of a bitch!

(Corporal holds laugh)

Villar was the only man in this fuckin' sewer.

Under a heavy ledger, surveillance photos: Ana Maria Gonzales talking to Valentino. Prieto misses them, sets a file on top.

205 EXT. / INT. PALERMO RACE TRACK - DAY 205

The gates open and ten thoroughbreds are off and running!
CLAMOR OF FANS.

206 INT. RESTAURANT WITH A VIEW OF THE TRACK 206

Podestá and Foá have had lunch, chat over coffee.

FOÁ

(off Podestá's head wound)

*You are conscious that you are here,
breathing still, by pure chance? You
have to leave Argentina.*

**Tu sei cosciente del fatto che se oggi
sei qui e respiri è solo perché hai
avuto un gran culo? Te ne devi andare
di corsa dall'Argentina.**

PODESTÁ

*I can't.
Non posso.*

FOÁ

*And don't discard the complicity of
someone at the embassy...*

**E non sottovalutare la complicità di
qualcuno dell'ambasciata...**

PODESTÁ

No... Impossible...
No... Impossibile...

FOÁ

*Impossible? Alessandro, I think you
ignore how deep you've got your thumb
up their asses... It's been a while
since you've been persona non grata
there. Each day that passes it will
be more difficult to protect you.*

(MORE)

FOÁ (CONT'D)

Impossibile? Alessandro, mi pare che tu non ti renda conto di quanto gli hai rotto il cazzo! E' da parecchio che ti considerano una persona poco non gradita. Ogni giorno che passa sarà sempre più difficile proteggerti.

A TRACK EMPLOYEE hands Foá validated betting tickets. Foá tips her, turns to the window. Podestá ignores the show.

PODESTÁ

What I'm asking you is to report what happened. Best way to protect me.
Ti chiedo di denunciare quello che mi è successo. È il miglior modo per proteggermi.

FOÁ

The best way is to get the hell out while these animals are in power! I don't want to get your balls in a little package!
Il modo migliore è andartene, e non tornare finché ci sono questi animali al potere. Non voglio ricevere le tue palle in un piccolo pacchetto!

PODESTÁ

I can't go! I won't...
Non posso andarmene! Non me ne andrò.

Foá makes "crazy" sign, roots for then furiously curses his horse, jockey and trainer in florid Italian. Then, as if nothing happened, miles, takes Podestá's face in his hands.

FOÁ

My friend Podestá. So few left like you. What an honor to know you!
Il mio amico Podestà. Ne restano pochi come te. È un onore conoscerti.

He kisses him, raises his glass. Podestá checks time, stands.

PODESTÁ

I'm late.
Sono in ritardo.
 (walks away)
Write!
Scrivi!

Foá tears up his tickets, looks after Podestá, concerned.

207

INT. BODEGON (POPULAR EATERY) - NIGHT

207

NOISy. Franco, Valentino and Luca, at a table in the back.

VALENTINO

Can he be trusted?

FRANCO

Totally.

LUCa

But you said you hadn't seen each other for ten years. People change, Pop.

FRANCO
Not Filippo.

VALENTINO
Everyone changes when it's a matter
of life or death.

LUCa
Why don't one of us go first?

FRANCO
No! We all go Monday first thing.
All three. If we keep jerking around,
we're dead--

Valentino follows his frozen stare. THREE THUGS have entered the establishment. One goes to the register, speaks to the PATRON . The others check ID's table by table.

The one talking to the owner turns back -- Prieto in civvies.

Valentino lowers his gaze.

VALENTINO
That one knows me! Works with Pochín.

Luca springs up, Franco pulls him back to his seat. A SOUR-LOOKING NEIGHBOR looks at them, exchanges a look with his SOUR-LOOKING DATE.

The OWNER complains. Prieto whispers in his ear. What he hears chills him to the bone. He returns behind the register.

Franco calmly folds his napkin on the table.

FRANCO
Kitchen. Service back door. One a at
time. Calmly. You...

Valentino stands brusquely, makes his chair SCREECH. The Prieto glances in their direction but Valentino is already out of sight.

Valentino hurries through the kitchen full of pans and EMPLOYEES, bumps into a parrot cage, the LARGE GREEN PARROT inside SHRIEKS, Valentino reacts.

Franco eyes Luca, Luca addresses an OLD WAITER carrying a loaded tray.

VALENTINO
Where is the toilet, Sir?

OLD WAITER
Rear, to the right!
(to bartender)
Three Bieckert, three!

LUCa looks anxious at his father, walks to the kitchen.

208 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT 208

Valentino exits the building through a service door, waits.

209 INT. BODEGÓN - NIGHT 209

Franco leaves bills on the table, eyes the register. Prieto meets his gaze briefly, continues checking ID's.

Luca goes through the kitchen, sees parrot. Employees make comments.

Franco, quietly loads the chamber of his '45, stands and heads for the kitchen, goes through it. KITCHEN HELPERS confront him, someone calls "They're skipping the bill!" The CHEF grabs at him, a tall stack of pots tumble down.

Prieto reacts to the CRASH...the vacant table, charges.

PRIETO

In back!

210 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT 210

Valentino and Luca wait, anxious. Franco runs out.

FRANCO

What the hell are you waiting for?!
Run, damnit!

211 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 211

Franco, Valentino and Luca run all out, turn a corner.

212 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT 212

Prieto and a Thug holding guns exit the restaurant. A Falcon with no plates screeches to a halt, they bundle inside.

213 EXT. SECOND STREET - NIGHT 213

Franco, Valentino and Luca try not to call attention, slow to a fast walk. Worse -- all eyes on them. The Falcon speeds past the corner - BRAKING IS HEARD. Franco pulls Luca.

FRANCO

Here!

Valentino follows them to a door marked CINECLUB.

214 INT. CINECLUB, STAIRS - NIGHT 214

Franco, Luca and Valentino rush down the stairs two at a time, leer at a PROJECTIONIST carrying film cans up stairs.

215 INT. CINECLUB, LOBBY - NIGHT 215

Deserted. Box-office lighted, no one inside. Projection room open, VOICES in the back office. Franco pulls them into...

216 INT. SCREENING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 216

Bertolucci's "Novecento" plays in original version. The small theater half full, perfectly silent. Valentino, Franco and Luca take seats in back. A door opens on one side of the screen.

Luca reacts -- just a man returning from the toilet. Valentino sinks in his seat, eyes entrance, they catch their breath, finally turn their attention to the...

217 ON THE SCREEN 217

The Fascist, Attila Mellanchini (Donald Sutherland), hurls a baby by the feet against a wall. GASPS OF HORROR. Franco breaks down.

RETURN TO SCREENING ROOM:

Franco silently begins to cry. Valentino leans in, worried.

VALENTINO
What's wrong, Pop?

Franco shakes his head, lets tears flow, takes their hands.

FRANCO
I want to ask you to forgive me.

LUCA
For what--?

SPECTATOR (OFF)
SHHHHT!

FRANCO
For getting you into-- I'm sorry.

LUCA
We wanted to--

FRANCO
No...
(strokes their faces)
You're still boys. I never should've--

Another SPECTATOR COMPLAINS. Franco pulls out a hanky, squeezes his nose. Valentino and Luca exchange looks.

VALENTINO
Come, let's go, Pop...

They file out.

218 INT. CINECLUB - CONTINUOUS

218

They exit the projection room. Valentino sees a toilet door.

VALENTINO
Right back.

LUCA
Me too.

FRANCO
Quick.

He continues up the stairs.

219 INT. GENTS CINEMA - NIGHT

219

Valentino and Luca at the urinals.

LUCA
Never saw him like this.

VALENTINO
He's not Superman. He's flesh and bone, Luca.

LUCA
What'd you think of the consul thing?

VALENTINO
The old man reads people well.

LUCA
I don't like putting my life in the
hands of someone I don't know.

The finish their business. NOISES, LIKE CORN POPPING. But
the cadence is off. They run out...

220 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT 220

From here it is clearly MACHINE GUN FIRE. Valentino and Luca
look at each other, run up stairs.

221 EXT. STREET NEAR CINEMA - NIGHT 221

Franco lies in the middle of the street, shot in the hip and
face. Prieto makes his way through the soldiers. SATURDAY
REVELERS crowd the street.

PRIETO
Where are the other two?!

Franco spits blood at him, tries to reach his '45 on the
pavement. Prieto kicks him in the gut.

PRIETO (CONT'D)
Get up, you piece of shit!
(kicks him harder)
Get up and get in that car!

Franco tries, but the shattered hip makes it impossible.

Valentino and Luca join the CROWD. Franco sees them. Luca
about to charge, Valentino holds him back. Franco frowns
adamantly for them to go. Prieto turns to the crowd.

Franco manages to get to his feet, tries to run off. Prieto
follows him a few steps, shoots him in the back.

Luca SHOUTS but Valentino's hand silences him. Some of those
around them notice. Prieto walks to where lies Franco, fires
a coup de grace in his head.

Luca nearly faints, Valentino drags him to the corner, flags
a passing taxi.

Prieto comes back to de corner, primed, does not see...

222 INT. TAXI 6 - NIGHT 222

Driving away. Luca in shock, short of breath, Valentino
tries to calm him, meets the DRIVER's eyes in the mirror.
POLICE SIRENS.

VALENTINO
Just drive.

The Driver hesitates, Valentino reaches inside his jacket.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)
Doubt and you're dead.

The Driver turns to the road. Several patrol cars speed pas
in the opposite direction. Valentino embraces Luca.

LUCA
And now..?

Valentino turns to the gliding night with eyes flooded.

- 223 EXT. AVENIDA DE MAYO - NIGHT 223
The taxi blends with the traffic.
FADE OUT AND CUT TO:
- 224 INT. POLICE HQ, RECORDS - NIGHT 224
Prieto and the Corporal sort cases. The Corporal lifts a file revealing a folder titled "Cardozo Case." Prieto lunges at it, opens it. Inside are b & w photos of Ana Maria Gonzales leaving the institute. Prieto puts a magnifying glass to them.
THROUGH THE GLASS -- Ana Maria approached by a young man with his back to camera. Prieto finds more photos. One with the young man in profile -- Valentino. Prieto holds the glass closer, cannot believe his perverse fortune.
PRIETO
Well, well, lookee here...
- 225 INT. APARTMENT PODESTÁ - NIGHT 225
FLUTE MUSIC - Vivaldi. An LP on a turntable. Podestá, in pajamas, moves his bed closer to the telephone, writes on a piece of paper: FIRE BRIGADE: 542222, weighs the note down on his night-table, sets the telephone at arm's length.
He inspects the rearranged bedroom, tense. TELEPHONE RING. Podestá starts, answers, says nothing. After a silence...
CONSULATE NIGHTWATCHMAN (PHONE)
Hello..? Mr. Consul?
PODESTÁ
Who's this?
CONSULATE NIGHTWATCHMAN (PHONE)
Ramón. The nightwatchman, Sir.
PODESTÁ
Ah, yes, Ramón...
- 226 EXT. PODESTÁ BUILDING - NIGHT 226
Podestá exits on foot, hurries down the street. The Falcon across the street starts up and follows him.
Podestá waits for another vehicle to appear, turns on his heels, hurries in the opposite direction so the Falcon cannot follow. Instead it SCREECHES around the corner. Podestá stops a passing taxi.
- 227 INT. TAXI - NIGHT 227
Podestá keeps an eye out the rear window.
PODESTÁ
Turn here, please.
The Driver watches him in the rearview mirror.
- 228 INT. POLICE HQ, THIRD FLOOR- NIGHT 228
Prieto irrupts into De La Cuadra's office. He is on the phone. Before he can chastise him, Prieto smugly puts the photo of Valentino and Ana Maria before him.

PRIETO
Who is this little weasel, Inspector?

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
What?
(into phone, vexed)
I'll call you back, Mayer.

Hangs up. Takes the magnifying glass, examines photo.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA (CONT'D)
Looks like Ovide's nephew. So?

PRIETO
What's he doing talking to that
little cunt who blew up General
Cardozo, Sir?!

De La Cuadra focuses glass on Valentino, looks at Prieto,
nonplussed.

229 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - NIGHT 229

Podestá gets off the taxi, watches the two plainclothes
lurking near the entrance, walks in with out greeting them.

230 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - CONTINUOUS 230

RAMON, the nightwatchman, waits wringing his hands. Podestá
follows him.

RAMON
...They say they know you...They
wouldn't leave without talking to you.
Y told them to come back Monday but--

PODESTÁ
You did the right thing.

They arrive in the small Nightwatchman's office. Valentino
and Luca put aside the mate they are sharing.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Thank you, Ramón.

Ramón understands they want privacy, grabs the round clock.

RAMÓN
I have my round.

PODESTÁ
(holds out hand)
Podestá.

Caludio and Luca take it.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
You speak Italian?

LUCA
Some--

VALENTINO
No.

PODESTÁ
Why are you here?

VALENTINO
Mr Di Benedetto said you would
help us.

PODESTÁ
How do you know Di Benedetto?

LUCA
No... Father knows--

He breaks down.

VALENTINO
He knew him. The bastards murdered
our father less than two hours ago
before our eyes.

Podestá processes.

PODESTÁ
I'm so sorry...

He glances at the front door, where the shapes of the
policemen can be perceived behind the coated glass.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Come.

He heads for the elevator.

231 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - NIGHT 231

Podestá, Valentino and Luca come in, Podestá turns light on.

232 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - SAME TIME 232

RADIO STATIC, VOICES. The policemen react to the light on in
the fifth floor, exchange looks with thugs in the Falcon.

233 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - SAME TIME 233

Podestá spies through the drapes.

PODESTÁ
How did you manage to get in?

VALENTINO
The police were not there when we
rang the door.

PODESTÁ
We must leave here now.

LUCA
But we want to ask for asylum. Dad
was Italian--

PODESTÁ
That's at the Embassy. Here there is
no extraterritoriality, you are not
protected by--

Luca blows up on Valentino.

LUCA
Why did di Benedetto say to see him?!
See, what'd I tell you?!

PODESTÁ
Yes... I will help you.

Podestá sees the terror in their eyes, spies out once more.

233A WHAT HE SEES:

233A

A dark Falcon stops before the consulate, one of the policemen speaks with the driver through the window, they look toward CAMMERA. We HEAR him talking briefly on the RADIO, then drives on.

PODESTÁ (V.O.)
The important thing now is to get you out of here.

LUCA (V.O.)
But how--?!

RIING!

BACK TO SCENE 251

They turn to the blue phone, startled.

LUCA
What's going on?!

Podestá holds his finger to his lips -- RIIING! -- picks up the receiver, listens in silence. Finally, the ghost of a VOICE surprises him. He listens a moment.

PODESTÁ
All right.

He hangs up. The Salvatis stare.

234 INT. BACK SERVICE STAIRS - NIGHT

234

Podestá, Luca and Valentino quickly descend the narrow service staircase.

235 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, SERVICE CORIDOR - NIGHT

235

Valentino and Luca follow Podestá along a long dark corridor to a service door at the front of the building.

Podestá operates a combination lock, quietly opens the door a few centimeters, spies out to the street. Cinco eternal seconds while all we hear are the VOICES of the policemen charing a mate with Ramón.

LUCA
What are we waiting for?

VALENTINO
Shhh...

AN ENGINE APPROACHES. After a few more seconds, a pearl gray Karman Ghia turns the corner.

PODESTÁ
That.

236 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - NIGHT

236

Podestá, Valentino and Luca exit the service door, some twenty meters past the main entrance.

The policemen react.

237 INT. KARMAN GHIA - NIGHT 237

Celeste accelerates and stops where the three wait. Luca and Valentino bundle in the narrow rear.

The Policeman hands back the gourd to Ramon and hurries toward the vehicle.

Podestá climbs next to Celeste, shuts the door.

The Policeman is upon them, eyes the frightened brothers bundled up in back. Podestá waves.

PODESTÁ
Everything OK, thanks.
(elbows Celeste)
Hell are you waiting for?!

She steps on it, the Policeman stands dumbfounded, reacts, focuses on...

The Karman Ghia's distancing license plate.

238 INT. KARMAN GHIA - NIGHT 238

Celeste drives, peers into her rearview mirror, smiles to Luca and Valentino.

CELESTE
Hello.
(to Podestá)
So young!

LUCA
I'm eighteen.

CELESTE
Wow...

239 EXT. MOTORIZED POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT 239

Prieto leading FIVE THUGS, bundle into three black Falcons, screech out of a parking lot.

240 EXT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT - NIGHT 240

The Karman Ghia stops at the corner.

241 INT. KARMAN GHIA - NIGHT 241

Podestá watches the Falcon parked across the street, in front of his building.

PODESTÁ
You stay with her a moment.

LUCA
No!

PODESTÁ
I must go inside to open the garage.
I don't have the--

LUCA
We came because fo you!

PODESTÁ
You can't be seen. Wait here!

CELESTE
It's alright. You'll be OK with me.

VALENTINO
It's fine, Luca.
(to Podestá)
Go ahead...

Podestá steps out of the car, turns the corner, walks casually toward his building -- some 30 meters away.

242 IN THE FALCON 242

The Policemen watch Podestá's figure approach. Podestá pulls out his keys, glances at the cops before opening his front door.

One of the policemen notices the front of the idling Karman Ghia at the corner. He steps down from the Falcon, lights a cigarette, strolls toward the corner like someone stretching his legs.

243 INT. KARMAN GHIA 243

Luca sees the cop coming.

LUCA
What does he want?!

VALENTINO
Take it easy.

244 INT. PODESTÁ'S BUILDING - NIGHT 244

Podestá runs down the entrance hallway, opens a door marked PARKING.

245 INT. KARMAN GHIA - SAME TIME 245

Valentino leans into Celeste.

VALENTINO
We can't stay here.

CELESTE
Alessandro said we wait.

LUCA
Drive off!

246 INT. PODESTÁ'S BUILDING - SAME TIME 246

Calami flies down the stair, bursts into the parking lot, runs to his Fiat, looks for the key.

247 EXT. PODESTÁ BUILDING - SAME TIME 247

The Policeman strolls toward the corner, glances at the dark windows, starts crossing toward the corner.

248 INT. KARMAN GHIA - SAME TIME 248

Celeste shifts into first gear, tense.

LUCA
Take off, Mam!

Celeste dart him a piqued side glare.

CELESTE
Make yourself small, kid.

VALENTINO
(into Luca's ear)
Miss, jerk...

The Policeman closes in, Valentino pushes Luca low.

249 INT. PODESTÁ'S BUILDING - SAME TIME 249

Podestá takes garage opener form the Fiat, activates gate.

250 EXT. PODESTÁ BUILDING - SAME TIME 250

The Policeman hears the MOTOR, stops. The metal gate begins to roll up. The Policeman looks at he Karman Ghia that lights its headlights and starts moving.

251 INT. KARMAN GHIA - SAME TIME 251

Celeste turns the corner, drives past the Policeman, to the building, heads into the ramp.

The Second Policeman watches from the Falcon, eyes his partner, gets out of the car.

252 INT. PODESTÁ'S BUILDING, PARKING - NIGHT 252

Podestá spies from the shadows of the garage. The gate rolls up painfully slowly.

253 INT. KARMAN GHIA - SAME TIME 253

Celeste tense, revs the car. The VOICES of the policemen approach. Luca and Valentino sweat vinegar.

LUCA
(What's going on?)

CELESTE
(Don't breathe...)

The policemen practically on top. Celeste chances it, drives forward, makes it under the gate with millimeters to spare.

254 INT. PODESTÁ BUILDING, PARKING - NIGHT 254

Podestá reactivates the gate and it closes faster. Celeste pulls up in front of the Fiat.

CELESTE
You can get out.

Valentino and Luca don't waste time. Podestá approaches.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
You want me to stay?

PODESTÁ
No, you've done enough. How'd you know where I was? Nobody has that number.

Celeste eyes the brothers, can't say more than...

CELESTE
You're wrong.

Podestá holds her gaze.

PODESTÁ
Thanks.

CELESTE
To you for letting me help.

PODESTÁ
You're going to be OK?

Celeste smiles, takes his head, kisses him on the lips.
Podestá presses the garage opener.

Celeste turns the car around.

LUCA
Miss...
(she smiles)
Thanks.

VALENTINO
Yeah.

CELESTE
Good luck.

She looks at Podestá one last time and drives up the ramp.

255 EXT. PODESTÁ BUILDING - NIGHT

255

The Karman Ghia emerges from the ramp, stops at the street to let a couple of cars drive past, while the gate closes. She watches the policemen leaning on the Falcon, smoking. One of them puts down the radio mike.

Celeste drives away after the last passing car. The policemen get in the Falcon and follow her. SUPER:

"Maria Celeste Cano. Found in a garbage dump,
shot in the head July 8, 1976."

256 INT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

256

Podestá opens the two sets of doors, Valentino and Luca enter. Podestá locks with key, turns on a lamp in the living.

PODESTÁ
You guys hungry?

Luca discovers a white couch under a Modigliani, collapses on it already asleep. Valentino curls up in a Chesterfield and closes his eyes. Podestá watches them a moment.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Make yourselves at home.

257 EXT. FLORESTA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

257

The three black Falcons come to a quiet stop before a corner house. Prieto and THREE PLAINCLOTHES bolt from the first two vehicles. Prieto directs the driver of the third vehicle to drive to the corner and cover the rear of the house. The others draw guns, one a sledgehammer from a trunk.

- 258 INT. POCHÍN'S HOME - DAWN 258
- The door implodes. Prieto enters first, gun cocked. The others spread through the house, guns out. Prieto inspects framed photos on a credenza: Pochín with military and political personalities. With Ricky on the day of their wedding, many years ago.
- The other policemen return shaking their heads. Prieto bristles, heads out, sweeping slowly the pictures off the furniture with his arm.
- 259 INT. PODESTÁ APARTMENT - DAY 259
- Valentino and Luca -- clean shaven, combed sleek back, wearing borrowed shirts and ties -- drink coffee. Podestá readies his still camera on a tripod.
- Valentino first, then Luca, share Podestá's dark jacket, pose against a white wall. Podestá takes their passport photos.
- 260 INT. FIAT 124 COUPE - SOME TIME LATER 260
- Podestá drives up the ramp, Valentino and Luca out of sight. After some moments, Podestá checks the rearview mirror.
- PODESTÁ
All right...
- Valentino and Luca sit up.
- 261 EXT. LIBERTADOR AV - DAY 261
- The Fiat speeds through traffic.
- 262 INT. FIAT 124 COUPE - DAY 262
- Podestá drives, Valentino and Luca holding tight.
- PODESTÁ
At the door you ask for the Secretary
of Culture. A matter of scholarships.
- 263 EXT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY 263
- Podestá pulls up past the embassy, on Libertador.
- PODESTÁ
Once inside you ask to see Ambassador
Carrara. You refuse to leave until
you see him. This is crucial. OK?
- Valentino and Luca exchange a tense look, step out. Podestá watches them enter the property, exchange words with the Doorman, get admitted through the double doors.
- Podestá prepares to drive off, but...
- An EMBASSY OFFICIAL we have seen before waves hello on his way to the embassy. Podestá curses, they'll know he brought them. Has no option but to pretend he was parking.
- 264 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - MOMENTS LATER 264
- Podestá enters. The Official now is chatting with a SECRETARY. Podestá addresses her.

PODESTÁ
 Good morning. I misplaced a telegram
 from the MAE. Who can get me a copy?

TWO YOUNG EMPLOYEES trot down the stairs, excited.

FIRST EMBASSY EMPLOYEE
 Two kids just asked for asylum!

Podestá fakes surprise, resumes the conversation.

SECRETARY
 End of the hall, second floor, Mr.
 Consul. Sofia can help you.

265 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY, SECOND FLOOR

265

Podestá makes his way. Through a door ajar, he sees the
 Salvatis facing the SECRETARY OF CULTURE, on the phone.

SECRETARY OF CULTURE (O.S.)
Podestá!

Podestá winces, turns. The man hangs up, steps out, incensed.

SECRETARY OF CULTURE (CONT'D)
What did you bring?

PODESTÁ
I beg your pardon?

SECRETARY OF CULTURE
*I have two individuals asking for
 political asylum in there!*

Podestá spies innocently into his office.

SECRETARY OF CULTURE (CONT'D)
*They're asking for the Ambassador!
 They told me you brought them?!*

Behind his back, Valentino shakes his head, adamantly.

PODESTÁ
Me?! Who said that?

The Secretary sputters a curse, stalks back to his office.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)
Tell me who! Was it The Ambassador?!

The Secretary slams the door on his face.

266 EXT. CHALET IN SAN ISIDRO - DAY

266

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN in a sexy bathrobe, gives Pochín a wet
 post-coitum kiss. Pochín climbs in his Torino and drives off.

267 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

267

Podestá exits the elevator in a hurry, hands Gentile his
 camera and an envelope bearing the Embassy seal.

PODESTÁ
*Call at once the Foreign Ministry. I
 want to come see Rear-admiral Guzzetti
 right away.*

GENTILE
What's going on?

PODESTÁ
Right away, Rosa. And Forzone to pick me up upfront.

Gentile consults urgently her Rolodex.

268 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE 268

Podestá shuts the door, dials in haste on the blue phone.

269 INT. PUBLISHER, ROME - DAY 269

Marco Podestá at his desk in *Rinascita*, the Communist Party's magazine. PHONE RINGS, he answers.

MARCO PODESTÁ
Foreign Relations! Podestá...

270 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - SAME TIME 270

Podestá pulls four blanc passports from a safe.

PODESTÁ
Ciao, Marco. Alessandro. Take note... Valentino and Luca Salvati. One T.

271 INT. PUBLISHER, ROME - SAME TIME 271

Marco Podestá takes note.

PODESTÁ (VO, PHONE)
Arrived at the Embassy half hour ago.

MARCO PODESTÁ
I'm on it.

He hangs up, dials a number.

272 INT. PODESTÁ'S OFFICE - DAY 272

Podestá dials a new number. Foá replies.

FOÁ (VO, PHONE)
 Pronto!

PODESTÁ
The Salvati brothers, Valentino and Luca, nineteen and eighteen. Italian father shot by the military twelve hours ago. In the Embassy since thirty minutes ago.
I fratelli Salvati, Valentino e Luca, venti e diciannove anni. Padre italiano. Nell'ambasciata da trenta minuti.

273 INT. FOÁ CORRIERE DELLA SERA OFFICE - SAME TIME 273

Foá behind a cluttered desk, smokes and takes notes.

FOÁ
Leave it with me.
Lascialo con me.

PODESTÁ (VO, TELF)
*You still play poker with Alitalia's
 Manager?*
**Giochi sempre a poker con
 l'amministratore delegato di Alitalia?**

FOÁ
*Every Wednesday. I'll take care of
 that as well.*
**Tutti i mercoledì. Mi occupo anche di
 questo.**

Podestá hangs up, Foá dials a number. It RINGS.

274 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY 274

The ambassador's secretary -- MRS. GIUMELLI -- 50, answers.

SRA. GIUMELLI
 His Excellency the Ambassador's
 office!

275 INT. FOÁ'S OFFICE 275

Foá swivels his chair toward his window.

FOÁ
*Good day, Signora Giumelli.
 Giangiacomo Foá. May I speak with
 Dr Carrara?*
**Buongiorno, Signora Giumelli.
 Giangiacomo Foá. Posso parlare con il
 Dott. Carrara?**

276 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, FIFTH FLOOR - DAY 276

Podestá hands Gentile the two blank passports, and a note.

PODESTÁ
*Get these ready for my signature.
 Valentino and Luca Salvati. It's all
 there.*
**Li prepari per la mia firma. Valentino
 e Luca Salvati. È tutto qui.**
 (re camera)
*Pictures. On Libertad, the one-hour
 shop.*
**Foto. In via Libertad sviluppano in
 un'ora.**

GENTILE
Yes, Mr. Consul.
Si, Sig. Console.

PODESTÁ
There is no time to waste.
Non c'è tempo da perdere.

277 EXT. ITALIAN CONSULATE - DAY 277

Forzone smoking -- the blue wagon idling. Podestá climbs in.

PODESTÁ
 Foreign ministry!

Forzone tosses cig. Two policemen watch them speed off.

278 INT. FIAT STATION WAGON - DAY

278

Podestá inspects two blank passports, sees Forzone watching.

PODESTÁ
I've no alternative.

FORZONE
What if the Minister asks to see them?

PODESTÁ
(beat)
When there are no options...Frontal
attack.

Forzone looks at him.

279 INT. ARGENTINIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY - DAY

279

Podestá across REAR ADMIRAL CÉSAR GUZZETTI.

PODESTÁ
They only wish to leave the country.
They are not militants.

GUZZETTI
That's what they all say, Mr. Consul.

PODESTÁ
No. I know these two, excellency.
They lost their father yesterday.
Murdered before their eyes.

GUZZETTI
We had nothing to do with that.

PODESTÁ
I'm not suggesting that was the case.
I mention it only because these are
two boys that have never been in any
trouble, now orphaned. Italian
citizens -- like us -- who deserve a
chance to rebuild their lives. I am
just asking for a safe-conduct, your
laissez passer to personally get them
out of the country safely.
(offers passports)
Here are their Italian passports if
you need to request authorization from
your superiors.

Guzzetti watches him two endless seconds, then discards the
offer with a haughty wave of his hand, grabs fountain pen.

GUZZETTI
Give me their names.

Podestá breathes.

280 INT. / EXT. POLICE HQ - DAY

280

Pochín parks his Torino, enters, climbs the stairs, crosses
TWO OFFICERS who exchange surprised looks.

281 INT. POLICE HQ, THIRD FLOOR, POCHÍN'S OFFICE

281

Pochín moves toward his office, salutes a POLICE OFFICER who
remains staring. Pochín senses something is off. Prieto
leans out of the pantry.

PRIETO (O.S.)
Little mate, Ovide?!

Pochín looks back, sees Prieto leaning on the pantry door, sucking on a mate straw, grinning insolently. He goes on to his office. TWO UNIFORM POLICEMEN approach down the corridor with their hands on their side arms. Suddenly all is clear. He runs.

282 INT. POCHÍN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 282

Pochín storms in, slams the door shut, finds himself face to face with De La Cuadra, Veyra and Muñoz. They pounce on him.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
You rat, son of a bitch!

Pochín pulls the grenade out of his jacket.

283 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY 283

JUDGE IGNACIO IRIBARREN, peruses the "Cardozo" file on his desk. After a moment, he looks up.

JUDGE IRIBARREN
You are certain of their presence at the Italian Embassy?

De La Cuadra and Prieto stand before him.

INSPECTOR DE LA CUADRA
Someone we have inside confirmed it less than an hour ago, Judge.

Iribarren considers.

PRIETO
At least one of them is involved in the General Cardozo's murder, Sir.

The Judge looks at him for the first time, points to file.

JUEZ IRIBARREN
I can read, Sergeant.

De La Cuadra drills holes into Prieto. The Judge turns to his assistant, Elvira, dictates order for the arrest of Valentino and Luca Salvati.

284 INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE, KITCHEN - DAY 284

The Doorman and TWO CLEANING LADIES watch Forzone flip an omelette.

FIRST CLEANING LADY
A miracle you're not married, Forzone?

SECOND CLEANING LADY
See what a hand he has?

FIRST CLEANING LADY
If my husband could cook like that, I never would have cheated on him!

They LAUGH. The wall PHONE RINGS. The Doorman picks up.

DOORMAN
Hello? Who?! What Renzo?

Forzone wipes his hands.

FORZONE
Gimme, gimme...
(takes receiver)
Hello? Elvira! What a surprise!

285 INT. FIAT STATION WAGON - DAY 285

Forzone speeds along Libertador Av. Podestá beside him.

FORZONE
She didn't say exactly. Half hour ago?

PODESTÁ
Step on it!

286 INT. UNDERGROUND POLICE MOTORIZED UNIT - DAY 286

Prieto and FIVE COMBAT CLAD POLICEMEN board two official JEEPS, drive out of the parking lot, burning rubber.

287 INT. / EXT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY 287

The Fiat pulls up. Podestá rushes down, knocks on the glass door, showing his ID. A NEW DOORMAN opens. Podestá climbs the stairs, two at a time.

288 INT. ITALIAN EMBASSY, SECOND FLOOR 288

Hurries straight for the Ambassador's suite. Mrs. Giumelli prepares a smile, Podestá ignores her and opens the Ambassador's double doors without knocking.

Relaxing on a chair, wearing a cocktail gown, Chiara sips Champagne and laughs with the Ambassador. Ambassador Carrara -- tuxedo shirt, purple bowtie -- stares with his mouth open.

Podestá charges the desk.

PODESTÁ
(en crescendo)
Dr. Carrara, I know perfectly you have been spreading the rumors that it was I who let those two young men into the embassy!
Dott. Carrara, so perfettamente che è stato lei a mettere in giro la voce secondo la quale io ho fatto entrare questi due ragazzi nell'ambasciata!

Ambassador Carrara begins to get up, holding his hands up as protection.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA
Take it easy, Podestá! Calm!
Si calmi, Podestá! Si calmi!

Podestá -- white knuckles on the desk -- projected forward so his face is inches away from Carrara's, is beside himself.

PODESTÁ
No! I will not allow you to sully my name with these lies! You accuse me without any proof! If you do not immediately cease to persecute me, I will file charges for libel and abuse of authority!

(MORE)

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

And believe me when I tell you that that will only be for openers! I know we do not share ideology, but I will not allow you to destroy mi career with calumnies. To show you my good will, I have secured a laissez passer to get those poor boys off your hands. I am here prepared to take them with me immediately.

Se non smette immediatamente di perseguitarmi, la denuncerò per calunnia e abuso di potere! E mi creda, questo sarà solo l'inizio! So che non condividiamo le stesse ideologie, ma non permetterò che per questo motivo lei distrugga la mia carriera. Perché dimostrarle la mia buona volontà, ho trovato un salvacondotto per togliere questi due poveri ragazzi dalle sue mani. Sono qui per prenderli immediatamente con me.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

*There is no need to dramatize--
Non faccia drammi inutili--*

PODESTÁ

Yes! We both know police are on their way to claim them. And if any harm should come to them, believe me the whole of Italy will learn that it was you who personally denied them the protection to which they have absolute right as fellow Italians!

Sappiamo entrambi che la polizia sta venendo a riprenderseli. E se gli succede qualcosa, mi creda, tutta l'Italia saprà che è stato lei a negare la protezione a cui hanno diritto assoluto in quanto compatrioti italiani!

Ambassador Carrara eyes Giumelli, frozen behind Podestá, nods consent.

PODESTÁ (CONT'D)

*I'll wait for them downstairs.
Li aspetto giù.*

Podestá turns on his heels, leaves the office. In a mirror, he sees Ambassador Carrara collapsing to his throne. Chiara avoids his eyes.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 289 | EXT. LEANDRO N. ALEM AV - SAME MOMENT | 289 |
| | The Jeeps stuck in traffic. Prieto orders driver to sidewalk. | |
| 290 | EXT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY | 290 |
| | Podestá and Forzone wait in the Fiat. Valentino and Luca exit the embassy, climb in. Forzone speeds away. | |
| 291 | EXT. LIBERTADOR AV - DAY | 291 |
| | The station wagon speeds North. | |

292 EXT. FIGUEROA ALCORTA AV, PALERMO PARK - DAY 292

The Police Jeeps cross Libertador the wrong way.

293 EXT. ITALIAN EMBASSY - DAY 293

The Jeeps stops before the palace. Prieto rushes down with two policemen toward the entrance. The Doorman steps out.

PRIETO

We understand you have two terrorists hold up here.

DOORMAN

Oooh...I couldn't tell you. If you wish I can call-- Mister Ambassador!

Ambassador Carrara, in full gala outfit, smoking a cigar, makes his way with Chiara, wrapped in a fur coat. His limousine awaits.

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

What's going on here?

PRIETO

Afternoon, Mr. Excellency. We've been said that...that two wanted fugitives, responsible for the murder of General Cardozo--

AMBASSADOR CARRARA

If you're referring to the Salvati bothers, I understand they're on their way to Ezeiza, escorted by an official of our consulate, to take Alitalia's flight to Rome.

(ironic smirk)

Have enough? Excuse me, I'm late.

He waves his way through with the amber of his Cohiba.

294 INT. FIAT STATION WAGON - DAY 294

Forzone speeds down the Richieri Freeway. Podestá signs the two passports. Valentino watches passing fields, the horses.

VALENTINO

I'll never return to this country.

Podestá turns to look at him, pats him on the knee.

PODESTÁ

Don't say that. In life all passes.

Valentino holds his gaze a beat; his eyes flood with tears, he turns back to the window.

295 EXT. EZEIZA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY 295

The Fiat pulls up before the International Terminal. Podestá takes in the heavy police and military presence. Valentino and Luca exchange anguished glances.

PODESTÁ

Relax. Let's go.

Valentino steps out -- the lion's den. Luca follows.

FORZONE
Good luck boys.

Valentino and Luca try but can't manage to smile.

PODESTÁ
You wait for me here?

FORZONE
Till the Final Judgement.

PODESTÁ
Hope to get back a little sooner.

He marches with the Salvati's into the terminal.

296 INT. EZEIZA AIRPORT, CHECK-IN AREA - DAY

296

Podestá, Valentino and Luca reach the Alitalia desk. Passports. The AGENT recognizes the names, consult a veteran FLIGHT SUPERVISOR. The man eyes the boys, pulls two tickets from his jacket.

Podestá checks the time and his gaze falls on the cold stare of the Frigate Lieutenant who escorted the Admiral at Ambassador Carrara's reception. The Lieutenant does not greet him, instead speaks to someone out of sight.

The Agent cuts the flight coupons.

ALITALIA AGENT
Luggage?

Valentino and Luca shake their heads. The Agent issues boarding passes, hands them to Valentino.

ALITALIA AGENT (CONT'D)
Have a good flight.

Valentino and Luca manage to smile, follow Podestá toward the immigration area. Podestá searches for the Lieutenant.

VALENTINO
What is it?

PODESTÁ
Nothing.

297 INT. EZEIZA AIRPORT, IMMIGRATION - DAY

297

Podestá, Valentino and Luca move slowly up the line. A man with military stamp, dressed in a sharp suit, approaches.

COMMODORE TAJO
Are you Consul Podestá?

PODESTÁ
That's right.

He steps away from the line, they shake hands.

COMMODORE TAJO
Commodore Tajo, Airport Director.
(eyes Salvatis)
These are the individuals?

PODESTÁ
Mr Valentino and Luca Salvati.

COMMODORE TAJO
This is highly irregular, you are aware, right?

PODESTÁ
No. Why? Italian citizens going back to their country.

Tajo offers his most mordant grin.

COMMODORE TAJO
You have their passports?

Podestá hands them over, together with the safe-conduct. Tajo peruses them. Luca has his gaze fixed on a TV screen, pulls Valentino's sleeve, pale as death.

On the monitor an official photograph of Pochín and the title: "HIGH RANKED POLICE OFFICIAL COMMITS SUICIDE. DEPRESSIVE." A grinning Prieto exhibits the grenade.

298 INT. POCHÍN'S OFFICE - DAY 298

FLASHES. De La Cuadra and Veyra on Pochín. The grenade rolls on the floor. Veyra kicks Pochín on the face. Pochín punches Muñoz, leaps on his desk. De La Cuadra and Veyra ram him, Pochín is pushed out the third floor window.

COMMODORE TAJO (V.O.)
Can you come with me, please?

299 INT. EZEIZA AIRPORT, IMMIGRATION - DAY 299

Valentino and Luca turn. Panic.

PODESTÁ
It's all right.

LUCA
Don't leave us here.

Valentino darts a glance at the wall clock.

VALENTINO
We'll miss our flight!

Tajo drills them with a glare, leads Podestá into an office. The half frosted windows conceal the identities of those inside. Only boots and legs visible through the bottom half.

300 EXT. RICHERI FREEWAY - DAY 300

The two Jeeps overtake vehicles at high speed.

301 INT. FIRST JEEP - DAY 301

Prieto looks at his watch, the speedometer on 160 km/h.

302 INT. EZEIZA AIRPORT, IMMIGRATION - DAY 302

Tajo and Podestá come out of the office, Tajo with a stern look on his face, passports in hand. FOUR ARMED SOLDIERS march toward the scene. Luca feels sick.

LUCA
We're fucked...

VALENTINO

Shut up.

Tajo stops before them, stares them down, manufactures some sort of smile and holds out their passports.

COMMODORE TAJO

You'll never be able to say we are mean.

He looks at Podestá, turns on his heels. The Four Soldiers march past. Luca's legs fail him, Valentino holds him up.

303 EXT. / INT. EZEIZA AIRPORT - DAY 303

The police Jeeps skid before the International Terminal. Prieto and the policemen run into the check-in area. An AIRPORT OFFICIAL leads them into an off-limits corridor.

304 INT. IMMIGRATION, ZONE B - DAY 304

Podestá shows his diplomatic ID. Valentino and Luca their passports. They get through.

305 INT. INTERNAL CORRIDOR - SAME TIME 305

Prieto runs all out, trailed by the policemen.

306 INT. BOARDING HALL - SAME TIME 306

Podestá, Valentino and Luca reach the closing gate of Alitalia's flight 161. Valentino turns to Podestá.

VALENTINO

We owe you our lives.

PODESTÁ

No, just 90 pesos for the photos.

They smile.

307 INT. CORRIDOR - SAME TIME 307

Prieto bursts into the immigration zone.

308 INT. BOARDING GATE - SAME TIME 308

Luca looks at Podestá, tries to say something, tears up. Podestá embraces both. The Alitalia Agent prepares to close the flight.

AGENTE DE ALITALIA

You traveling...?

309 INT. IMMIGRATION ZONE - SAME TIME 309

Prieto bursts into Tajo's office, breathless, unable to make words, agitates the arrest warrant.

COMMODORE TAJO

What are you doing?!

PRIETO

(salutes)

Prieto. Federal Police. You let board two terrorists!

Tajo is facing a mad man.

COMMODORE TAJO

What?!

PRIETO

Stop the flight!
(checks note)
Salvatis...Alitalia 161!

COMMODORE TAJO

Who the fuck you think you are?!

Prieto slams the arrest warrant on his desk.

PRIETO

By order of Judge Iribarren, First
Court of Appeals, and Federal Police
Inspector Rufo De La Cuadra, stop that
aircraft!

Tajo tops his warrant with the safe-conduct, he pulls out.

COMMODORE TAJO

Laissez passer! Minister of Foreign
Affairs, Rear-Admiral César Guzzetti!

PRIETO

We're all nuts?! Those are the
assassins of General Cardozo!

One of his policemen gestures urgently from the end of the
hall. Prieto runs off.

310 INT. ALITALIA DC-10 - DAY

310

Valentino and Luca board the aircraft, find their seats in
the first rows.

LUCA

Pop should be here.

VALENTINO

The old man is in peace.

LUCA

What peace?!

VALENTINO

Sit down.

LUCA

The old man should be here!

VALENTINO

You want to get off?
(steps aside)
G'head, get off. You think Pop would
prefer that?

Luca drops on the window seat, Valentino sits beside him.
The crew shuts the door. The DC-10 begins to move.

311 INT. BOARDING HALL - SAME TIME

311

Prieto and the Policeman run up to the gate. TWO ALITALIA
AGENTS are changing signs. Prieto runs into the jet bridge.

ALITALIA AGENT

Where are you going?!

312 INT. JET BRIDGE 312

Prieto reaches the end. The DC-10 moving away. He turns to the approaching Agent.

PRIETO
Stop that plane!

He runs back to...

313 BOARDING HALL 313

Confronts the Flight Supervisor.

PRIETO
Stop that flight goddamnit!

He pulls is service revolver, bangs on the counter, shattering the glass.

PRIETO (CONT'D)
STOP IT, GODDAMN YOU!

314 INT. DC-10 COCKPIT - DAY 314

The Pilots request authorizations, check boards.

PILOT
Ezeiza ground, Alitalia 1-6-1 ready to taxi IFR, with sierra to Fiumicino.

VOICE TOWER (RADIO FILTER)
Alitalia 1-6-1, follow Pan Am 0-5-7 onto taxiway uniform, then whiskey to two niner.

315 INT. BOARDING HALL - SAME TIME 315

Prieto sets his gun on the counter, confronting the Flight Supervisor.

PRIETO
You understand what I am trying to get through your thick skull, motherfucker?!

Podestá watches the scene from a kiosk, buys mints.

316 INT. DC-10 CABIN - DAY 316

Luca begins to bang his head against the window, each time harder. Valentino whispers in his ear.

VALENTINO
You really want them to kick us off this flight?

A STEWARDESS approaches.

STEWARDESS
What's wrong?

VALENTINO
Nothing.
(strokes his neck)
Never been on a plane.

La Stewardess smiles, moves on.

STEWARDESS
Fasten your seat-belts.

317 INT. BOARDING HALL - SAME TIME 317

Prieto apoplectic.

PRIETO
Two terrorists are on that plane! I
am ordering you to stop it, you dung
head!

FLIGHT SUPERVISOR
(smooth, enjoying it)
It can't be done, Sir. That flight
has been cleared for take-off.

Podestá pops a mint, walks calmly away.

318 INT. DC-10 CABIN - SAME TIME 318

A SECOND STEWARDESS comes by with a tray with cigarettes,
offers it to Valentino. He takes two.

VALENTINO
Thanks.

He turns and fastens Luca's belt.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)
Luca, please... We made it, bro!

Luca looks at him a moment. Valentino offers him one of the
cigarettes. Luca looks at it.

LUCA
I don't smoke any more.

Valentino holds his gaze, smiles, hands the cigarettes back
to the Stewardess.

VALENTINO
Thanks... We don't smoke anymore.

The stewardess smiles, moves on.

319 EXT. EZEIZA TERMINAL - DAY 319

Forzone waits by the Fiat, face to the Sun. Podestá exits
the terminal as a taxi pulls up, disgorging Foá and a FEMALE
PHOTOGRAPHER, rushing, notebook in hand. He sees Podestá.

FOÁ
Ciao, Alessandro! So, the kids?
Alessandro! Che fai? E i ragazzi?

PODESTÁ
We saved two more.
Ne abbiamo salvati altri due.

Forzone opens the door for Podestá, shrugs at Foá as he makes
his way around to take the wheel.

FORZONE
Two holes in the ocean.

FOÁ
 (laughs)
More cynical than me! Bravo!
Più cinico di me! Bravo!

The Photographer urges Foá from the terminal, he dashes off.

FOÁ (CONT'D)
Let's grab a bite tomorrow!
Mangiamo qualcosa domani!

Podestá assents, climbs in, turns to Forzone.

PODESTÁ
 Better two holes in the ocean than
 in the ground, no?

FORZONE
 No doubt, Mr. Consul. No doubt.

He drives off.

320 INT. DC-10 COCKPIT - DAY 320

The pilots face the runway, final checks.

VOICE TOWER (RADIO FILTER)
 Alitalia one-six-one, winds two eight
 zero at eleven, cleared for takeoff.

PILOT
 Clear for take-off runway two-niner,
 Alitalia one-six-one.

The PILOT shoves the throttle forward.

321 EXT. RUNWAY - DAY 321

The DC-10 picks up speed, lifts off.

322 INT. FIAT STATION WAGON - SAME TIME 322

Driving away from the airport. Podestá looks after the DC-10
 gaining altitude, satisfied.

323 INT. DC-10 CABIN - DAY 323

Luca and Valentino -- noses pressed to the window -- watch
 the Airport -- their past -- recede.

VALENTINO
 Madness...

After a moment they sit back, suddenly very tired, spent.

The CAMERA also rests. On their faces. Contemplating a very
 uncertain future. And under this whirlpool of emotions
 builds Podestá's FLUTE -- THIS TIME ACCOMPANIED BY STRINGS --
 Corelli, Sonata Op. 5 n° 12, "La Follia." WE HOLD THE SHOT
 THROUGH END TILES.

SUPER, ROLL:

DURING THE SO-CALLED "DIRTY WAR" IN ARGENTINA, IT IS
 ESTIMATED THAT UP TO 30,000 PEOPLE "DISAPPEARED" AT THE HANDS
 OF THE REGIME.

SOME 4,000 OF THEM WERE TOSSED INTO THE OCEAN FROM THE
INFAMOUS, WEEKLY NAVY'S "DEATH FLIGHTS."

UNTIL JANUARY, 1977, WHEN HE WAS ORDERED BACK TO ROME,
ALESSANDRO PODESTÁ SAVED 433 MEN AND WOMEN DESTINED TO JOIN
THAT LIST.

TO SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION, A YEAR LATER, THE ITALIAN
GOVERNMENT TRANSFERRED HIM TO NEPAL.

TODAY ALESSANDRO PODESTÁ LIVES IN ROME.

THE SALVATI BROTHERS TOO. THEY NEVER RETURNED TO ARGENTINA.

ROLL REAL IMAGES OF THOSE SAVED BY PODESTÁ.

THE END