

EXT. DOWNTOWN - ROBINSON BUILDING - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Wet and dark from the storm. Cordoned off by a dozen squad cars and two dozen officers. A helicopter screeches past overhead, blasting its searchlight on surrounding buildings.

JARED AND HICKS

arrive, step out of their unmarked car as

NICO

steps to them from the crowd of law enforcement, a deep gash clearly running across his forehead.

HICKS

(to Nico)

What the hell happened to you?

JARED

Jeez, almighty, man. Did you piss off your wife again?

Nico gives them both a crooked glance...

NICO

While you two shits are off trying to get the low-down on the station, guess who decides they don't like me hangin' around anymore?

JARED

(suddenly alarmed)

Wait a minute, wait a minute...

HICKS

You mean this was Black Hand?

NICO

No. And it wasn't Wonder Bread, either, I can guarantee it.

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HICKS

Bull shit, you're going off the deep end again, man -- Jeezus, man, will you get somebody to look at that wound on your head? It's making me sick!

JARED

How do you know this wasn't either of them?

NICO

This shit is military. You can't get this shit on the street. I don't care who you are or how much money you have.

HICKS

Bull shit.

JARED

You mean to tell me I run this stuff through the computer, and it ain't gonna pop up?

NICO

It will pop up. But it'll be marked "military." Besides, this crap's supposedly been banned since the late seventies -- considered inhumane under any circumstances -- went against all Geneva Convention bullshit.

Hicks shakes his head...

HICKS

You can't be sure. We'll have to analyze it, put it through the lab.

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Nico visibly gets upset.

NICO

You do that. And while you're off covering your ass as fucking usual, I'll draw out the real prey! I'll catch the real deal.

Hicks flares up, but Jared intervenes.

JARED

Hold it, both of you. Nico, if you're correct, do you have any idea what you're saying?

Nico reluctantly shakes his head "yes."

HICKS

If you're fucking right, then you're saying there's a third player.

NICO

You're so bright, Hicks.

JARED

You're saying it's not Black Hand. It's not Wonder Bread. Then who?

NICO

Somebody who wants to see them blow each other away. Somebody who has more to gain by laying low in the shadows, manipulating the events as we're seeing them now. Somebody who would rather not get its hands directly dirty, but destroy from a distance. Somebody's going head-on after the hunter, my friends. No fear. No caution. No worries.

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