

THE RONDO CONSPIRACY

Written by:

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FADE IN:

SUPER:

"IF NEW YORK HAS IT'S LENOX AVENUE, CHICAGO HAS IT'S STATE STREET, PHILADELPHIA IT'S WYLIE AVENUE, KANSAS CITY IT'S EIGHTEENTH STREET AND MEMPHIS IT'S BEALE STREET, JUST AS SURELY HAS ST. PAUL A RIOT OF WARMTH, AND COLOR, AND FEELING, AND SOUND IN RONDO STREET."

Earl Wilkins, The St. Paul Echo, Sept. 18, 1926.

SUPER:

"IN THE 1930'S HALF THE NEGROES IN ST. PAUL LIVED IN RONDO." MNOPEDIA, THE RONDO NEIGHBORHOOD.

SUPER: "1956"

EXT. LOUISIANA CAFE-RONDO-DAY

A mural hangs above the door. New Orleans' skyline in the background and a large bowl of jambalaya in the foreground. Fingers are on the trumpet next to the jambalaya.

O'HEARN, thirties and athletic, stands feet from the cafe and leans on a lamp post. DIRTY WHITE, thirties, grimy bib-overalls and tee shirt, is close to him.

The door opens. REV. MASSEY, early-forties and slim, smiles as he walks down Selby Avenue and greets neighbors in their front yards.

O'HEARN  
(to Dirty White)  
Where the fuck is he?

DIRTY WHITE  
Comin'.

Rev. Massey waves to a neighbor as he steps off the curb. HONK! A battered garbage truck barrels past the reverend and narrowly misses his toes. Two neighbors rush to help him.

Dazed, Rev. Massey brushes himself off, smiles and continues down Selby Avenue. He stops outside Lewis and Son Furniture Store and speaks indistinctly to MR. LEWIS.

ICEBERG, forties, massively-built, bald crown framed by a rim of brown hair, crosses the street.

O'HEARN

What the fuck. You're supposed to follow 'em, not run 'em over with your garbage truck.

ICEBERG

Oh.

DIRTY WHITE

Tho, what do I do?

O'HEARN

(to Dirty White)

You follow Holder. Leave the reverend alone. This ain't Chicago.

O'Hearn turns to the reverend, raises his hand, makes a fist and extends his forefinger.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Bang.

Rev. Massey crosses Selby Avenue at Mackubin. The door to the McRay Law Office opens. FORREST HOLDER, mid-fifties, light-skinned, approaches the reverend. They shake hands and talk indistinctly.

A PAINTER, Black, white tee shirt and painter's pants, joins them. Holder gives the Painter a sheet of paper. The Painter places it in his pocket. He crosses the street and stands on the corner.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)

I follow the reverend.

(to Iceberg)

Follow the Painter waiting for the street car. Walk a block ahead of 'em. If he gets on it, you do.

(to Dirty White)

Follow Holder. Get the address.

ICEBERG

What guy? Don't have any money.

O'Hearn digs in his pocket and hands Iceberg change.

O'HEARN

The guy on the corner. Where the street car stops.

Meet me at Mickey's in two hours.

DIRTY WHITE  
How 'bout Coney Island?

O'Hearn cuts his eyes at him.

O'HEARN  
I'm buyin'. Besides, the Irish  
history in this backwater and  
Mickey's Diner are its only  
contributions to civilized society.

O'Hearn follows the reverend as Iceberg crosses the street.  
Dirty White walks behind Holder.

EXT. CREDJAFAWN CO-OP-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Rev. Massey is outside the grocery store at Rondo and St.  
Albans and talks to a CLERK, tall and thin, who smokes a  
cigarette.

REV. MASSEY  
What are you hearing?

CLERK  
People are anxious.

REV. MASSEY  
We'll protect Rondo.

The Clerk takes the cigarette butt, rubs it against a rain  
barrel next to the store, then holds it in his hand.

CLERK  
Interested in fresh apples?

REV. MASSEY  
Good for apple pie?

CLERK  
Not this time of year.

The Clerk looks around the store.

CLERK (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Reverend, a customer asked if they  
can talk to you on the phone?

REV. MASSEY  
Of course.

CLERK  
They have information about the  
highway.

Rev. Massey nods.

REV. MASSEY  
I'm on my way back to the church.

INT. MICKEY'S DINER-ST. PAUL-EVENING

O'Hearn and Dirty White sit across from each other in a railroad dining car of red and yellow porcelain-enameled interior. Iceberg's crammed in a booth.

O'HEARN  
So, where'd the Painter go?

ICEBERG  
Courthouse to pull a permit. Handed  
the document gave to 'em by Holder.

Dirty White watches O'Hearn spoon soup in his mouth.

O'HEARN  
What's the permit for?

ICEBERG  
Uh, Maxfiled, Maxfield School.  
Something like that.

O'HEARN  
What kind of work?

Dirty White gazes at O'Hearn's soup.

ICEBERG  
Clerk said something.

O'Hearn stares at Iceberg.

O'HEARN  
What?

ICEBERG  
Don't remember.

O'HEARN  
Where's the school?

Iceberg and Dirty White glance at each other.

ICEBERG  
On our garbage run in Rondo.

DIRTY WHITE  
(to O'Hearn)  
By the houth Holder went in. Can I  
git thomethin'?

O'Hearn clenches his teeth, tightens his jaw.

O'HEARN  
What the fuck did the clerk say?  
(to Dirty White)  
I ain't buying you shit.

Dirty White sits up.

DIRTY WHITE  
You thed-

O'HEARN  
I thed I'm buyin', but not for you.  
Should be in prison.

Dirty White's eyes beg for food. He glimpses at Iceberg.  
Iceberg flags the WAITRESS, mid-forties, frazzled.

WAITRESS  
What?

ICEBERG  
Can I git a pot of hot water?

The waitress returns with hot water. Iceberg pours water in  
his coffee cup. He scans the tables.

ICEBERG (CONT'D)  
(to Dirty White)  
Gimme the ketchup.

Dirty White grabs a ketchup bottle. Iceberg pours ketchup  
into the coffee cup, stirs the water and pushes the cup to  
Dirty White.

ICEBERG (CONT'D)  
Tomato soup.

Iceberg pours hot water into another cup, removes a tea bag  
from his pocket and gives it to him.

ICEBERG (CONT'D)  
Hot tea.  
(to O'Hearn)  
(MORE)

ICEBERG (CONT'D)  
Somethin' like don't waste your  
money. School's gonna be tore down.

O'HEARN  
Clerk said that?

O'Hearn scoffs, then knocks the salt and pepper shakers off  
the table.

WAITRESS (O.S.)  
What the hell you doin'?

O'HEARN  
(to Dirty White)  
Pick 'em up.

Iceberg stares at O'Hearn and grabs the metal pot. It  
disappears in his catchers-glove-size hand. He squeezes.  
CLANG, CRUNCH. Then drops the pot on the table.

WAITRESS (O.S.)  
What the hell?

She goes to Iceberg's table and looks at the scrap metal.  
Iceberg looks at the floor. She walks away.

O'HEARN  
(to Dirty White)  
Where'd Holder go?

DIRTY WHITE  
A houth.

O'HEARN  
Addreth?

O'Hearn glances out the window.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit.

O'Hearn points at the window as OFFICER FLANAGAN, ruddy face,  
porky, crosses the street from the Assumption Church. Iceberg  
sneers.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
He comes in here, ignore 'em.  
Internal affairs got his paddy ass.

Flanagan opens the diner's door and steps inside. He trades  
glimpses with O'Hearn, turns up his coat collar and leaves.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
(to Iceberg)  
Get me Holder's address.

The waitress is at the counter and glares at Iceberg.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Don't have all fuckin' night.

Iceberg stands up. His head scrapes the ceiling as he lumbers towards the waitress. She scurries behind the counter. Dirty White stumbles out of the door.

INT. ST. PAUL POLICE STATION-AFTERNOON

CAPTAIN DONNELLY'S OFFICE:

Flanagan sits before CAPTAIN DONNELLY'S desk. The Captain, late-fifties, husky and tall with broad shoulders, reviews a document. He puts it down and slowly shakes his head.

DONNELLY  
What the hell am I supposed to do  
with you?

Flanagan shakes his head.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)  
You were told to stay the fuck out  
of the Irish Viper.

FLANAGAN  
I only went in there-

DONNELLY  
Drunk. Some bullshit about being  
undercover, then fighting?

FLANAGAN  
I don't recall that.

Donnelly slams his ham-fist on the desk.

DONNELLY  
Last suspension. This is it.

The captain picks up a folder and reads it.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)  
Next time you're out on your ass.

Flanagan nods.



DONNELLY (CONT'D)  
Was gonna assign this special  
detail to a younger officer, but...

FLANAGAN  
Lemme.

The captain hands Flanagan the folder.

FLANAGAN (CONT'D)  
I won't disappoint you.

DONNELLY  
Review it.

FLANAGAN  
Saw the cop from Chicago at  
Mickey's with his bruiser.

DONNELLY  
He's in Chicago. Back next week.

FLANAGAN  
You sure?

Donnelly picks up his phone receiver and stares at Flanagan.  
Flanagan hurries out of the office.

EXT. MAXFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-RONDO-AFTERNOON

SCHOOL CHILDREN stand at attention on the street corner. They  
watch Officer Flanagan's arm as he retracts a large red stop  
sign. The children flock across the street as a student  
pushes another student.

FLANAGAN  
Hey, hey, no pushing.

Officer Flanagan extends the stop sign.

SCHOOL CHILDREN  
(in unison)  
Thank you, officer.

Flanagan crosses the street behind the children. As he nears  
the building he hears voices beyond the corner.

ICEBERG (O.S.)  
School's close to Rondo.

O'HEARN (O.S.)  
Clerks were told not to say it'll  
be torn down. Gotta find Holder.

Flanagan peeks around the corner. He steps back and hurries inside the school.

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-EVENING

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest sits in his living room rocker next to NINA, early-fifties and thin, with a Bible. Glasses hang from her neck.

NINA

It's in the air. Even Mrs. Goldfine made a remark about it.

FORREST

If the White folks and Jews know,  
why don't we?

Nina shrugs. Forrest reaches for his Bible. The door bell rings softly.

HALLWAY:

Forrest peers through the lace curtains. He unlocks the door; opens it slightly.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

O'HEARN

Need to talk to you.

FORREST

About?

O'Hearn opens his wallet and flashes a badge. They walk to the living room and sit down.

LIVING ROOM:

Nina looks at O'Hearn, then Forrest.

NINA

Who are you?

O'Hearn opens his wallet. Nina puts on her glasses.

NINA (CONT'D)

FHA?

O'Hearn turns the opposite side of his wallet.

O'HEARN  
Old badge.

Nina squints at the badge.

NINA  
You're from Chicago?

FORREST  
What do you want?

O'HEARN  
Chicago Police need your help.

NINA  
Excuse me.

Nina's out of her chair, then the room. The wood pocket doors close. O'Hearn gazes around the Victorian-style, well-appointed room.

O'HEARN  
Just the two of you here?

Forrest nods.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Must be nice. Mrs. Goldfine must like you two.

FORREST  
How would you-

O'HEARN  
Nothing's more important than information.

O'Hearn walks to the mounted wall shelf crammed with figurines. He touches a photo of a young Black woman and stares at it. Nina pokes her head in the room.

NINA  
Forrest, I'm working on dinner.

O'HEARN  
Thanks, but I'm not staying.

NINA  
Excuse me?

Nina stares at O'Hearn, then closes the door.

O'HEARN  
Nice picture. Looks familiar.

FORREST  
You wouldn't know her.

O'Hearn returns to his chair.

O'HEARN  
How does a colored boy have a home  
like this? Three stories.

O'Hearn taps his foot on the floor.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
You educated?

FORREST  
More than you know.

Nina knocks, then opens the pocket door slightly.

NINA  
Rev. Massey's on the phone.

FORREST  
Tell 'em I'll call later.

O'Hearn grins.

O'HEARN  
Taps lightly, then opens the door?  
Housekeeper.

FORREST  
What do you want?

O'HEARN  
What do you have for breakfast?

Forrest shakes his head, shrugs his shoulders.

FORREST  
Grapefruit. Bacon and eggs. Coffee,  
Toast.

O'HEARN  
Thought you'd say oatmeal, not  
cornmeal.

Forrest turns away.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
My apartment floor creaks.

O'Hearn contorts his face.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Because you left Cornmeal Valley  
and crossed Dale Street into  
Oatmeal Hill you're different?

O'Hearn thrusts his finger at Forrest.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Your going to Wilber's tonight or  
you're going to Chicago.

Forrest's eyes widen.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
White slavery and murder.

FORREST  
What?

O'HEARN  
Bringing women here for immoral  
purposes.

Forrest's head shoots up. O'Hearn smirks.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
There's a couple women-of-the-night  
from Chicago. Say you brought them  
here to turn tricks.

FORREST  
Damn lie.

O'HEARN  
Gimme a couple hours. I'll find a  
few more damn lies.

FORREST  
Wilber's? On Rondo?

Forrest sinks into his chair.

O'HEARN  
A guy killed someone I know. He  
went to prison but was released.  
Fled to St. Paul. I want 'em.

FORREST  
Can't help you.

O'HEARN  
You know 'em.

Forrest sits upright.

FORREST

Who?

O'HEARN

Name's Junior.

FORREST

Don't know any Junior.

O'HEARN

Know Alphabet?

Forrest exhales loudly, shakes his head.

FORREST

Last name was too long to say.

O'HEARN

You killed someone to save his worthless ass.

FORREST

That was never proven.

O'Hearn smiles menacingly.

O'HEARN

Until now. Your American Dream is going to be your nightmare.

Forrest shakes his head.

FORREST

What do I have to do?

O'HEARN

Walk around. He'll come to you. He looks different. Prison does that.

FORREST

I'm bait?

O'Hearn stares at him.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Give me your card.

O'Hearn holds a card between two fingers.

O'HEARN

Should just arrest, print and mug shot you in case there's warrants.

FORREST  
Why?

O'HEARN  
Being uppity. And G.P.

FORREST  
G.P.?

O'HEARN  
Shame if Rondo was told you're an informant.

Forrest wrings his hands.

FORREST  
How do I contact you?

O'HEARN  
You don't.

O'Hearn walks to the front door.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
No creaks.

O'Hearn clenches his teeth.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Wilber's. One o'clock.

Forrest closes the door, then goes to the kitchen.

KITCHEN:

Nina's at the breakfast nook. Her hands cuddle a coffee cup.

NINA  
What does he want?

FORREST  
Wilber's. Tonight. Find a criminal.

NINA  
They're all criminals. Gamblers, robbers, pimps of the flesh.

FORREST  
If I don't go he'll arrest me.

NINA  
For what?

Forrest shakes his head.

FORREST  
Something about G.P. Don't know.

NINA  
Truth protects you from enemies.  
Lies expose you to enemies. Can  
getcha killed.

FORREST  
Have no choice.

NINA  
I can't go through this again.

Nina pours Forrest a cup of coffee as he stands near the window and gazes outside.

NINA (CONT'D)  
That life was over.

Nina hangs her head.

FORREST  
It was. It is.

NINA  
Call the reverend. It's urgent.

FORREST  
Always urgent.

NINA  
It's about Rondo.

Forrest places his cup on the counter.

FORREST  
I'm gonna take a nap. You think  
this is too much house?

Nina looks around the room and swells with pride.

NINA  
We struggled for this and we're  
keeping it. And Rondo.

Forrest smiles.

NINA (CONT'D)  
Think he's investigating sterling  
silver being stolen?



FORREST  
 Didn't mention the railroad or  
 Empire Builder.

Forrest walks to the doorway, then looks at Nina.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
 My Black Pearl.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEDROOM-LATER:

A bell chimes inside the bedroom. Forrest rubs his eyes and sits up in bed. He looks out of the window. Night embraces Rondo.

KITCHEN:

Forrest enters the kitchen as Nina points to the table nook.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
 Jambalaya. Crawfish and biscuits.

NINA  
 We're not down-home, but this makes  
 me feel like we are.

FORREST  
 Sometimes it feels like Up-South.

NINA  
 I heard some talk at the social.

FORREST  
 Talk?

NINA  
 Changes in the neighborhood.

FORREST  
 Last week I went to Wilber's and  
 saw a repairman replace the gas  
 lamp with a new street light.

Forrest slurps his gumbo.

NINA  
 Can we read a little before you go?

FORREST  
 Of course.

DISSOLVE TO:

## LIVING ROOM:

Forrest and Nina sit in their chairs; Bibles in their hands. Nina walks to the book shelf.

NINA

Hmmm.

FORREST

What?

NINA

Something's missing.

Nina takes a small cross from the shelf and hands it to Forrest.

NINA (CONT'D)

Take this.

Forrest smiles and puts it in his pocket. Tears moisten Nina's eyes.

## EXT. WILBER'S JOINT-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Forrest walks towards the red light in the window of the well-worn house. Cars squeeze in the lot next to the house. A new, shiny black Cadillac is parked close to the house. Forrest looks in the window and laughs.

He climbs the steps and knocks twice on the door. Waits two seconds and knocks three times. A wooden slat opens; blood-shot eyes stare at him. The door opens, Forrest enters.

FORREST

Howya doin', Shorty?

SHORTY, long legs and short torso, dark skin, late thirties, grins through yellowed teeth. He blocks Forrest's entrance.

SHORTY

'Nother day, 'nother dollar.

Forrest grabs a dollar bill from his pocket and hands it to Shorty. Shorty steps aside.

## HALLWAY:

Forrest passes the living room. Muted colored lights bathe the room crowded with men and women in love seats. Hands glide over bare skin; others slide under clothes.

## DINING ROOM:

Forrest walks to the bar. WILBER, mid-fifties and mortally skinny, leans on the bar as he fills a water-glass with gin. He taps the chair; Forrest sits. A loud, raspy voice BOOMS out of the craps room.

ALEX (O.S.)  
Throw the fuckin' dice, punk-bitch-mother-fucker.

Forrest looks to the craps room.

WILBER  
From Chicago. Came the other night with gamblers.

Forrest shakes his head.

WILBER (CONT'D)  
He pulled a knife. Kicked 'em out. Don't cotton to that.

Forrest stares into the craps room.

FORREST  
Why's he back?

WILBER  
Someone's gotta pay my car note.

FORREST  
Saw your new ride. Black-in-black-on-top-of-black.

Wilber flashes a broad grin.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
I'm told you charge referrals twenty dollars each.

WILBER  
Charging the same again.

FORREST  
I'm charging twenty-five.

WILBER  
Good.

FORREST  
Jack'll charge 'em ten dollars.

WILBER  
Then fuckin' go to Jack. He knows what his referrals are worth.

Wilber picks up the water glass and gulps gin.

FORREST  
You gimme good referrals.

WILBER  
God damn right. Hungry?

Forrest shakes his head.

WILBER (CONT'D)  
How 'bout some possum pie?

FORREST  
Can't wait.

WILBER  
Go on up the back stairs. I'll send  
the first up with the pie.

HALLWAY:

Forrest passes the craps room. He glances at ALEX, blue-black, mid-fifties, and wears a silk scarf on his head. Alex watches Forrest as he walks up the steps.

HALLWAY:

Forrest stops at a door slightly ajar. A jazz tune bleeds from a saxophone. A lithe woman in a sheer, see-through dress drags her spiny fingers over her curves.

Men groan in ecstasy as her hands stroke her perky breasts. A mountain of a MAN stands near the saxophone player, arms crossed. Forrest walks down the hallway. A short, squat WOMAN with ebony skin and a White MAN approach him.

WOMAN  
Hey, Forrest.

FORREST  
Baby Doll.

WOMAN  
You next.

The Woman laughs and enters a room with the White man.

DOOR NUMBER ONE:

Forrest goes inside, walks to a table with two chairs and sits below a light bulb.

LOUIS, caramel-colored skin, mid-forties, blue jeans and a checkered shirt, holds a small plate with pie. He taps on the door frame; Forrest nods. His chapped and cut hands unfold a document. Louis hands Forrest twenty-five dollars.

Forrest places the document on the table and studies it.

FORREST

Louis, correct?

Louis nods.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Wife's filed for divorce.

LOUIS

My lawyer told me that, but I can't get a hold of 'em.

FORREST

That's why I'm here.

LOUIS

That's why I'm here. Wilber said if I give 'em twenty-five dollars you'll answer questions.

FORREST

Twenty-five?

LOUIS

Yes, sir.

FORREST

Go ahead.

LOUIS

We rent. What happens if the home is destroyed?

FORREST

Does your wife work?

LOUIS

No.

FORREST

If your home's destroyed she'll get another home. And custody of the children. You'll have to pay rent, alimony and child support.

LOUIS

Alimoney?

FORREST  
Payments to her to raise the kids  
and stay at home.

LOUIS  
I can't afford this.

FORREST  
It's cheaper to keep her. Why'd you  
say the house could be destroyed?

LOUIS  
Rondo's houses being torn down.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILBER'S JOINT-RONDO-LATER

ROOM NUMBER ONE:

An empty plate rests on the table. CHARLES, mid-thirties,  
light-skinned Black man, sits by Forrest.

FORREST  
This is a standard loan agreement.

CHARLES  
Can I assign it to a friend?

FORREST  
No. Why?

CHARLES  
Doesn't have good credit. I'll  
increase the monthly loan payment  
by fifteen percent.

FORREST  
I'll research it, but you might be  
committing fraud.

CHARLES  
There's 'bout ten more who want to  
use my credit to help 'em.

FORREST  
No bank's going to give you ten  
outstanding loans.

CHARLES  
I'll go to different banks in  
Minneapolis and St. Paul.

FORREST  
I don't know.

BOOM, BOOM. Forrest jumps up. Heavy-footed thunder crashes through the joint. Windows and doors burst open.

POLICE (O.S.)  
THIS IS THE POLICE. You're under arrest.

Women scream. Charles sits on the floor. The cadence of footsteps grows louder. The door blows open; officers enter.

POLICE OFFICER  
Hands behind your neck. Lock 'em.

Forrest lifts his arms; officers muscle him to the floor. Officers spread. SGT. MOEN, short and burly, forties, enters.

MOEN  
What's your name?

FORREST  
Forrest Holder.

MOEN  
You're under arrest, Forrest.  
Operating a disorderly house.

FORREST  
Operating? I was sitting up here-

Sgt. Moen lands a punishing hook to Forrest's jaw. His head bounces off the floor.

MOEN  
Listen.

Moen looks at an officer.

MOEN (CONT'D)  
Take 'em to the paddy wagon.

The officer grabs Forrest's wrists, lifts him to his feet, and escorts him to the paddy wagon. O'Hearn watches.

EXT./INT. MCRAY'S LAW OFFICE-RONDO-MORNING

A street car stops outside McRay's office. Forrest, rumpled clothes, bruised and swollen face, steps down gingerly and limps into the law office.

He slips into a chair. ANGELA, mid-thirties with honey-toned skin, looks at Forrest. Her eyes widen.

ANGELA  
Forrest? You okay? Can I get you an aspirin, water?

FORREST  
Only hurts when I think.

An office door opens. PAUL MCRAI, short and stocky, salt and pepper hair, motions to Forrest.

MCRAI  
You got the message?

FORREST  
Yes.

OFFICE:

McRay picks up the receiver, dials a number and hands Forrest the receiver.

MCRAI  
Wilber.

Forrest places the receiver to his ear.

FORREST  
I'm here. Don't worry. I know.

Forrest hands the receiver to McRay.

MCRAI  
Nina called three times.

McRay dials Nina's number and hands the receiver to Forrest.

FORREST  
Honey. I'm okay. How'd you know I was in jail? Now? I'll be there in fifteen minutes. Call 'em back.

Forrest hangs up the phone.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
Wilber in jail?

MCRAI  
No. He posted bail for you.



FORREST

There were twenty players in  
Wilber's. Only three went to jail.

MCRAY

Sometimes it works that way.

Forrest grimaces, shifts in his seat.

FORREST

What way?

McRay looks out of the window.

MCRAY

The joints take hits. Wilber's  
regulars stayed away. Those  
released paid to be turned loose.

FORREST

I didn't get that.

MCRAY

Not a regular.

McRay hands a document to Forrest.

MCRAY (CONT'D)

Sign and date it. I represent you  
and you don't have to be in court.

FORREST

I had a hundred dollars on me.

MCRAY

I'll see if I can get it released.

FORREST

See?

MCRAY

You're charged with operating a  
disorderly house. It's evidence.

FORREST

They know damn well it's Wilber's  
place, not mine.

MCRAY

This could be the least of your  
problems.

Forrest tilts his head.

MCRAV (CONT'D)

The board?

Forrest shakes his head.

FORREST

What do I owe you?

MCRAV

It's taken care of.

FORREST

I need that money.

Forrest limps slowly out of the office.

EXT. LOUISIANA CAFE-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Forrest and Rev. Massey sit at a table. The reverend waves to a customer. With a trim figure, close-cropped hair and a groomed mustache, the reverend appears to be a teacher more than a minister except for his commanding presence.

REV. MASSEY

Glad you stopped by.

FORREST

Anything for the church. You're always there for Nina.

REV. MASSEY

What about Rondo?

FORREST

It's our home.

Forrest scans the menu. JOSEPHINE, light-skinned, late twenties with an olive-green uniform, walks to the table.

JOSEPHINE

What will it be, Mr. Holder?

FORREST

Grapefruit, ham and eggs. Grits, biscuits.

Josephine looks to Rev. Massey. He holds up his empty coffee cup.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOUISIANA CAFE-RONDO-LATER

A dirty dish and empty coffee cups are on the table.

FORREST

When I said anything for the church  
and Rondo I didn't know what you  
were talking about.

REV. MASSEY

This is a time bomb. We have to  
contain it. It could destroy Rondo.

FORREST

How do I help?

REV. MASSEY

Red and I want to meet with you at  
his barbershop and talk.

Forrest looks at his empty cup.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)

Recently, we were told not to  
renovate Maxfield Elementary.

FORREST

Why?

REV. MASSEY

The city will knock the school down  
and build a highway through Rondo.

FORREST

Heard something like that.

REV. MASSEY

I thought I'd be apprised of any  
such development by sitting on the  
city planning committee.

FORREST

How many houses can be lost?

REV. MASSEY

Four hundred. More? And businesses,  
too.

FORREST

What can I do?

REV. MASSEY  
Research. We're going to appear  
before the governor and city  
council. What don't I know?

Forrest avoids eye contact with the reverend.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)  
We lose our identity if we don't  
fight. Residents will be spread  
throughout St. Paul. There will be  
no more Rondo.

The reverend sips his coffee.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)  
Pilgrim Baptist was founded almost  
one hundred years ago by run-away  
Missouri slaves.

FORREST  
Nina told me.

REV. MASSEY  
They were pilgrims. I will not give  
up on the church or Rondo.

Forrest looks at a customer and nods to him.

FORREST  
This type of destruction brings out  
the worst in people.

REV. MASSEY  
I was almost killed by a garbage  
truck. I'm being followed.

FORREST  
What?

REV. MASSEY  
Love is more enduring than hate,  
and hate is all around us.

The reverend shakes his head. Forrest waves to Josephine. She  
saunters over to their table.

FORREST  
Check, please.

Josephine leaves as Forrest searches his pockets. She returns  
to the table; he stares at the check.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
I must've left my wallet at home.  
Can I put this on my tab?

Rev. Massey takes the check from Forrest, then hands it to Josephine with money.

JOSEPHINE  
Thank you, Reverend.

She leaves with a smile.

REV. MASSEY  
Nina told me.

Forrest smiles.

FORREST  
This is difficult for me. I'll  
research and give you copies.

REV. MASSEY  
Your conscience will guide you.

INT 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Forrest closes the front door and stands still.

FORREST  
Nina?

NINA (O.S.)  
In here.

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest enters the room. Nina and Det. O'Hearn sit across from each other. She goes to Forrest and hugs him.

O'HEARN  
Very touching.

The kitchen phone rings. Nina leaves.

NINA (O.S.)  
It's Paul. Needs a minute of your  
time.

Forrest shrugs his shoulders and walks to the kitchen

KITCHEN:

Forrest takes the phone as Nina sits in the nook.

INT. PAUL MCRAV'S LAW OFFICE-SAME TIME

McRay is behind his desk, phone near his ear.

INTERCUT-TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

MCRAY

I talked with the city attorney. He will not release your money.

FORREST

Why?

MCRAY

An informant heard you talk money with Wilber.

FORREST

It related to my reviewing legal documents.

MCRAY

Operating a disorderly house causes other problems for you.

FORREST

I understand.

Forrest tinkers with the teapot on the stove.

MCRAY

The evidence incriminates you.

FORREST

What evidence?

MCRAY

You were on the second floor close to prostitutes and johns.

FORREST

I was in a room with a man discussing a legal document.

MCRAY

They say that's a cover to monitor your prostitutes. You had a dinner plate on the table.

FORREST

It was pie. I don't believe this.

MCRAY

Did Wilber get any money by  
referring clients to you?

FORREST

Yes, but not from me.

MCRAY

Charging customers helped operate a  
disorderly house.

FORREST

I don't believe this.

MCRAY

And you had money.

FORREST

I need that money. Someone's here.  
Gotta go.

Forrest hangs up the phone.

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest goes to Nina's chair as she softly closes the pocket  
doors to the room.

FORREST (CONT'D)

What do you want now?

O'HEARN

Discuss a problem.

FORREST

What problem?

O'HEARN

Last night.

FORREST

I got arrested.

O'HEARN

Bigger problem.

FORREST

What?

O'HEARN

You went to law school.

Forrest stares at him.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
 Didn't take the bar exam.

A beat.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
 Conviction of operating a  
 disorderly house will stop you from  
 taking the bar exam.

FORREST  
 I wasn't operating a disorderly  
 house.

O'HEARN  
 Moral turpitude. And, Wilber made  
 money referring clients to you.

Forrest shifts in his seat and grimaces.

FORREST  
 You said I had to go or be arrested  
 for murder and white slavery.

O'HEARN  
 Didn't tell you to make money with  
 'em. And practicing law without a  
 license?

FORREST  
 This is bullshit.

Det. O'Hearn shakes his head.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
 Did you know that Wilber's was  
 going to be raided last night?

O'HEARN  
 Of course.

O'Hearn nods.

FORREST  
 You knew and sent me in there?

O'HEARN  
 I want that fuckin' Alphabet. I can  
 make it all disappear.

FORREST  
 How?



O'HEARN  
Be my eyes and ears.

FORREST  
An informant?

O'HEARN  
Or white slavery and murder charge.

O'Hearn sneers.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Think you're the first Negro I  
flipped?

Forrest shakes his head.

FORREST  
What do I have to do?

O'HEARN  
Go to Calvin's, Lucille's and  
Elmer's.

FORREST  
Bucket of blood shops. I'm going to  
get killed.

O'HEARN  
You know everybody in Rondo. They  
watch out for red caps.

O'Hearn gets up and walks to the door.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Get your sleep. You got a big week  
ahead of you.

Forrest stares at the detective as he leaves.

KITCHEN:

Forrest joins Nina in the nook. She gets up and gives him a  
cup of coffee.

NINA  
Thought you could use some chicory.

Forrest wipes his forehead; smiles.

NINA (CONT'D)  
What does he want now?

FORREST  
Go to Calvin's, Lucille's, Elmer's.

NINA  
My God. Those are the most  
dangerous places.

FORREST  
Told me if I don't he'll arrest me.  
He's looking for someone.

Nina takes cookies from the cookie jar, places them on a plate and brings them to the table.

NINA  
Should we move?

FORREST  
No.

NINA  
How'd this happen?

FORREST  
He knows us.

EXT./INT. UNION TRAIN DEPOT-ST. PAUL-MORNING

Forrest stands across the street and gazes at the depot's neo-classical concrete columns. A door opens; O'Hearn hurries down the steps. Forrest walks behind a street sign.

Forrest crosses the street and hurries to the depot's brass doors. RED CAP ONE, pencil-thin Black man, mid-fifties, sweeps debris by the entrance. O'Hearn watches from behind a car.

FORREST  
Good morning, George.

Red Cap ONE looks at Forrest.

RED CAP ONE  
Good morning, George.

They laugh.

DEPOT:

Forrest passes the train engine in the center of the massive room of tellers' cages, skylights and impatient passengers.

LOCKER ROOM:

Wooden benches the length of the room divide the rows of lockers. RED CAP TWO, a Brown young man, stares at the top and bottom rows of lockers. Each top locker has a piece of tape with "George" on it. The bottom lockers have none.

FORREST  
Tryin' to figure out which locker  
to use?

RED CAP TWO  
Uh-huh.

Forrest laughs to himself.

FORREST  
Any bottom locker.

Red Cap Two stares at Forrest.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
Confusing?

He nods.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
Porters on the Empire Builder  
understand.

A beat.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
What's the name of the sleepers?

RED CAP TWO  
Pullman.

FORREST  
Pullman designs and leases the  
sleepers to the railroads.

RED CAP TWO  
Okay.

FORREST  
Pullman's first name?

Red Cap Two shakes his head.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
George. The top row of lockers is  
for the Georges; the bottom row is  
for the red caps.

RED CAP TWO

Okay.

FORREST

Haven't got that far off the plantation.

Red Cap Two agrees.

FORREST (CONT'D)

I'm Forrest. Sweep up by the tellers' cages before your shift. Wear a smile. We live on tips.

RED CAP THREE, middle-aged, enters the room.

RED CAP THREE

(to Forrest)

BOSS wants to see you.

EXT./INT. BOSS MCGUFF'S OFFICE

Forrest knocks on Boss's door.

BOSS (O.S.)

In.

Forrest stands before BOSS MCGUFF, mid-thirties, flushed-face and bronze-tinted hair. He barely sees over his desk and holds a newspaper in his infant hands.

BOSS (CONT'D)

You're Forrest Holder?

Forrest rolls his eyes.

FORREST

You know I am.

BOSS

The last incident you said somebody stole your name.

FORREST

What's this about?

Boss jumps off his chair. His stubby finger points at an article. Forrest starts to read, catches his breath.

FORREST (CONT'D)

I...

BOSS  
My job's to protect the good name  
of this railroad.

Forrest sighs.

BOSS (CONT'D)  
Arrested in one-a-those joints on  
Rondo.

FORREST  
I had to go.

BOSS  
Right. You have to go-

FORREST  
No, no. I said-

BOSS  
I said. Come back when this is  
removed. Good character of the  
railroad restored.

A beat.

BOSS (CONT'D)  
If you're still here in ten minutes  
you'll be escorted off the  
property. Permanently.

INT. CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY-ST. PAUL-CONTINUOUS

Forrest sits at a table surrounded by book shelves. He  
punches keys on a typewriter next to manila envelopes. The  
LIBRARIAN, mid-forties, silver-blue hair, walks over to him.

LIBRARIAN  
How are you today?

FORREST  
Doing research.

She laughs quietly.

LIBRARIAN  
That's what you always say.

FORREST  
I know.

LIBRARIAN  
Can I lend assistance?

FORREST

Where do you keep the city council minutes for the last five years?

LIBRARIAN

They're on reserve. I'll be happy to get those for you.

FORREST

And the U.S. Transportation Department's Interstate Highway plans?

The librarian smiles.

LIBRARIAN

I'll get those as well.

FORREST

Thank you. By the way, I like how you styled your hair today.

The librarian blushes and impulsively touches her hair.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY-ST. PAUL-AFTERNOON

Forrest writes furiously on a legal-size yellow pad. He looks up. The librarian is next to him.

LIBRARIAN

I don't mean to bother you, but you live in Rondo?

FORREST

I do.

LIBRARIAN

Are you researching the highway that's going through St. Paul?

Forrest nods, smiles. The librarian's eyes twinkle. She looks around; her voice softens.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

My cousin's married to a city council member. City's going to do bad things.

FORREST

Does that mean Rondo?

The Librarian nods. Forrest lays his pen down.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Did she say what that would be?

The librarian shakes her head.

LIBRARIAN

She doesn't like what he's doing.  
I'll tell you when she tells me.

FORREST

That would be nice.

LIBRARIAN

That means you have to come here  
more than every two weeks.

FORREST

You noticed?

LIBRARIAN

Of course.

The librarian smooths her skirt and walks away. A slight shadow crosses Forrest's legal pad. Forrest looks up. Det. O'Hearn grabs a chair and sits down.

O'HEARN

My lucky day running in to you.

FORREST

I assumed you'd show up.

O'HEARN

Really?

FORREST

Saw you outside work this morning.

O'HEARN

Oh?

FORREST

Since we met my life has fallen  
apart. You had something to do with  
me being laid off today.

O'HEARN

What are you doin'?

FORREST

Research.

O'HEARN  
We need a means of communicating.

O'Hearn looks at the Librarian.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Since you're on easy terms with the  
librarian-

She smiles at Forrest.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
I'll leave messages with her.

FORREST  
She doesn't know my name.

O'HEARN  
Good. Keep it from Nina.

O'Hearn laughs.

FORREST  
What's so funny?

O'HEARN  
You. Nina.

Forrest squints, tilts his head.

FORREST  
Leave a message for George.

O'HEARN  
Sweet Note. Tonight. One o'clock.

FORREST  
What?

O'Hearn heads to the reference desk, speaks indistinctly to the Librarian and leaves. Forrest gathers his documents, then goes to the Librarian.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
I'm done with the material. The  
gentleman I was speaking with might  
leave a message for George.

The Librarian smiles.

LIBRARIAN  
Nice to finally get a name with the  
face, George. Are you a police  
officer, too?



FORREST

No. Sorry, but I'm late for a meeting.

INT. SAINT CITY BARBERSHOP-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Rev. Massey and RED, mid-forties, copper-toned skin, shark-skin slacks and Italian knit sweater, sit close to a wooden table with magazines.

RED

I don't agree with you, Reverend.

REV. MASSEY

He's Rondo.

RED

He's Chicago. South-side.

REV. MASSEY

Rondo's at stake.

EXT./INT. SAINT CITY BARBERSHOP-SAME TIME

Forrest walks past the barber pole bolted to the building. A stenciled sign on the windows reads "Red's Saint City Barbershop." He enters, walks to the empty chair and places his briefcase on the floor.

Red glances at his watch.

RED

You're punctual. This time.

Forrest squeezes out a thin smile.

FORREST

It looks so clean here. If I didn't know better I'd say you don't have any customers.

Red glares at Forrest. The reverend clears his throat, smiles at Red and Forrest.

REV. MASSEY

What have you found out, Forrest?

FORREST

The seeds of destruction were planted many years ago.

Red sits up.

FORREST (CONT'D)

It's a conspiracy between the federal and Minnesota governments to destroy Rondo.

REV. MASSEY

You sure?

FORREST

The St. Paul City Engineer's Office released a report in nineteen-twenty identifying St. Anthony Blvd. as a route through Rondo.

RED

Why?

FORREST

Help the businesses downtown. They blame Rondo for their losses.

RED

What?

FORREST

In the nineteen-thirties the U.S. Home Loan Corp. surveyed cities that were worthy of federally-backed mortgage guarantees.

RED

What does that mean for Rondo?

FORREST

Cities were color-coded. Red meant the government deemed the city or community hazardous. It's called "red-lining." Rondo is red-lined.

REV. MASSEY

So, obtaining a government-backed mortgage will be difficult?

Forrest scoffs and nods.

FORREST

Housing Act of fifty-four provided mortgages for local developers to acquire land and redevelop it, but not land red-lined.

REV. MASSEY  
The highway will destroy Rondo.

FORREST  
A high-speed wall. Minnesota Dept.  
of Highways approved the St.  
Anthony route in the late forties.

RED  
It's a wall?

FORREST  
It's a highway that's a wall.

The reverend and Red look at each other.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
I have documents of the conspiracy  
of destruction by construction of  
this high-speed wall.

REV. MASSEY  
Why?

Red looks at Forrest, then Rev. Massey. He points to Forrest.

RED  
You're the reason.

FORREST  
What?

Red points to the reverend.

RED  
You're the reason. I'm the reason.  
Rondo's the reason.

FORREST  
Rondo must stand up for itself.

RED  
That's why we have the Rondo-St.  
Anthony Improvement Assoc.

Forrest nods.

REV. MASSEY  
We're not leaving Rondo.

FORREST  
The state wants to eliminate Rondo.

Red looks at the reverend.

REV. MASSEY

We have a meeting with Mr. Herrold tomorrow and want you there.

Forrest blinks, looks away. Red shakes his head.

RED

Herrold supports us.

REV. MASSEY

Anything happening currently?

FORREST

There's a bill that will limit city governments from vetoing construction of the highway.

Red looks at the reverend.

RED

The state legislature?

FORREST

About eighty percent of Negroes live in Rondo. That's a large economic bloc that's going to be destroyed.

REV. MASSEY

We have to contain this. We need you tomorrow.

Forrest glances at the floor, sighs. Red grimaces.

FORREST

I, uh, am not good around-

RED

Look what they did to Rev. George Davis.

FORREST

What?

RED

Almost eighty. His wife, Bertha, is blind. The police came with sledgehammers, removed them and demolished their home.

FORREST

What?

REV. MASSEY

Rev. Davis held Sunday services in his home. The rest of the week the Union Gospel Mission used his home.

There's a loud knock on the door. Red goes to the door and points to the "closed" sign.

RED

Can'tcha read?

O'Hearn flashes a badge in the window. Red opens the door.

O'HEARN

I don't give a shit. Trackin' a young buck through Rondo and thought he came in here.

Red rolls his eyes.

RED

It's not deer huntin' season but-

O'Hearn pushes his way into the barbershop.

O'HEARN

Lemme get a search warrant. Show you funny.

Forrest moans. The reverend stares at O'Hearn.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Hmm.

O'Hearn turns to leave, then stops.

RED

Something I can help you with?

Forrest and Rev. Massey look at each other.

O'HEARN

(to Forrest)

That your briefcase?

Forrest nods.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Mind if I look inside it?

REV. MASSEY

I mind.

O'HEARN

You are?

REV. MASSEY

Reverend Massey of Pilgrim Baptist Church. These are church documents, Officer-

O'HEARN

Detective.

REV. MASSEY

I know the police who work this beat. I don't know you.

O'HEARN

Special investigations.

O'Hearn walks out the door. Forrest removes two thick manila envelopes from his briefcase and hands them to Rev. Massey.

FORREST

One's for you and the other is for Mr. Herrold. They contain documents that establish a conspiracy and the people involved in it.

REV. MASSEY

Why give me these now?

FORREST

In case I can't be there tomorrow.

RED

(to Forrest)

Not reliable.

REV. MASSEY

Forrest, for every civil right given to the Negro he had to fight for it. This is a civil right.

Forrest nods, then grabs his briefcase and leaves.

EXT. TIGER JACK'S SHACK-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

TIGER JACK, lean and short with close-cropped hair, dark skin, is outside his business on the corner of Dale Street and St. Anthony Blvd. with Forrest.

FORREST

I let the reverend down.

TIGER JACK  
Fight. That's when you grow.

Tiger Jack jumps into a boxer's stance, then waves to a family as a car goes by. A little White girl smiles and waves back.

TIGER JACK (CONT'D)  
I fought tough fighters, but never gave up. Called myself Tiger.

FORREST  
This is one heck of a fight.

TIGER JACK  
It's worth it. For Rondo.

Forrest smiles at Tiger Jack.

FORREST  
What else could I expect from you?

A MOTORIST drives by and waves to Tiger Jack.

MOTORIST  
Hey, Tiger.

Tiger Jack waves and smiles.

FORREST  
You still train the kids at Ober Boys Club?

Tiger Jack's eyes shine.

TIGER JACK  
I counsel kids about crime.

FORREST  
Are you moving?

Tiger Jack's eyes harden.

TIGER JACK  
This is my corner.

Hands clap behind Forrest. He turns around.

FORREST  
What are-

O'HEARN  
Let's walk.

They walk around the corner.

FORREST  
Are you following me?

O'HEARN  
No.

FORREST  
Why were you at Red's?

O'HEARN  
Why were you?

FORREST  
Church business.

O'HEARN  
Think you can stop progress?

FORREST  
You mean regress?

O'HEARN  
Tonight. Sweet Note.

Forrest vigorously shakes his head.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Sweet Note.

FORREST  
I want my life back.

O'HEARN  
One o'clock. Supposed to have a  
large ruby ring on his finger.

Forrest looks at the traffic.

FORREST  
Why do you want to destroy Rondo?

O'HEARN  
Legislature does.

FORREST  
How do you know that?

O'HEARN  
Like I know the highway will be  
above-grade.



FORREST  
Above-grade?

O'HEARN  
Slice Rondo wide open.

O'Hearn smiles, laughs bitterly, spits and leaves.

EXT. CREDJAFAWN CO-OP-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Forrest watches as workmen replace the sign above the building. It reads "Martin's Grocery." THOMAS, a clerk, mid-fifties with an apron, sees Forrest.

THOMAS  
Afternoon, Mr. Holder.

FORREST  
Afternoon, Thomas. Changing the name of the business?

THOMAS  
Business and owner.

FORREST  
What?

THOMAS  
Gonna be Martin's. Before it was Credjafawn it was owned and operated by a Jewish man.

Forrest peers through the large street windows and sees the grapefruit for sale.

FORREST  
Rondo's changing.

THOMAS  
Might have to apply for a job as a red cap. I'm a hard worker.

FORREST  
You are. Missus is waiting for me.

THOMAS  
If I was a little older an' she wasn't married I'd ask her out.

Forrest smiles, mutters to himself.

INT. ST. PAUL POLICE STATION-CONTINUOUS

CAPTAIN DONNELLY'S OFFICE:

The captain's face is cherry-red and topped with copper-colored hair; veins swell in his neck. Flanagan stands.

DONNELLY

What the hell's wrong with you? You called Chicago?

FLANAGAN

Needed to talk to O'Hearn. They said he's here.

DONNELLY

About what?

FLANAGAN

A suspect he's been tracking in St. Paul.

DONNELLY

He's not here. Next week, huh?

FLANAGAN

That was last week.

DONNELLY

Don't investigate shit.

FLANAGAN

Okay.

DONNELLY

I assigned you to that Rondo school to keep you out of trouble, but you find a way.

Donnelly's head is a smoldering ember.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)

Only school patrol. No investigations, no parking tickets, no God-damn arrests.

Donnelly sighs in disgust.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)

You were a damn good investigator. What the hell happened?

Donnelly runs his fingers through his hair.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)  
Get out of my office. Don't you  
bother me again.

Flanagan walks out into the hallway and mumbles.

FLANAGAN  
(to himself)  
Fuck you and that mick O'Hearn.

EXT./INT. 700 IGLEHART AVENUE-RONDO-LATER

Flanagan watches as O'Hearn walks from his apartment building and down the street. As O'Hearn disappears, Flanagan leaves his car and enters the building.

SECOND FLOOR:

DOOR NUMBER TWO:

Flanagan removes a paper clip from his pocket, straightens it, thrusts one end into the door knob and jostles it. The door opens.

Flanagan looks up and down the hallway, enters and closes the door. In the center of the room is a coffee table covered with newspaper articles, pictures and figurines.

He goes to the table, looks around, takes items and places them in his pocket.

EXT. 700 IGLEHART AVENUE-RONDO

Flanagan leaves the building as O'Hearn walks up the sidewalk. He sees Flanagan, ducks behind a bush as Flanagan returns to his car and drives away. O'Hearn hurries inside.

SECOND FLOOR:

DOOR NUMBER TWO:

O'Hearn stares at the coffee table. He kicks it, knocks items on the floor, and leaves his apartment.

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Forrest and Nina sit in the breakfast nook with steaming coffee cups before them.

NINA  
You don't have to do this.

FORREST

I need to.

Forrest sips his coffee.

NINA

How can he arrest you?

FORREST

Said being uppity. I'm going to  
Eddie's place. Don't worry, there's  
more crime on a playground.

Forrest smiles to reassure Nina.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Done after tonight. Wouldn't be  
joints if Negroes could enter the  
clubs. Havta take a nap.

NINA

Did you bring Chicago with you?

The phone rings. Nina and Forrest stare at each other; she  
answers it.

NINA (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. PILGRIM BAPTIST CHURCH-RONDO-SAME TIME

OFFICE:

Rev. Massey sits at his desk in his modest office. Behind him  
hangs a picture of the FOUNDER, REV. ROBERT HICKMAN. Stern  
but compassionate.

REV. MASSEY

Nina? Is Forrest there?

INTERCUT-TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Nina glances at Forrest. He clasps his hands and places his  
head on them.

NINA

He's taking a nap.

REV. MASSEY

Remind him of our meetings.

NINA

I will.

Nina hangs up the phone, then turns to Forrest.

NINA (CONT'D)

The church is most important to me.

FORREST

I know.

NINA

The Bible is the highest authority.

FORREST

I know.

NINA

What do the wicked have in common?

Forrest exhales loudly.

FORREST

Fire down below.

NINA

I'm not questioning your faith,  
what little you have.

FORREST

Because I don't go to your church?

Nina places her cup in the sink.

NINA

You don't go to any church.

FORREST

I'm helping Rondo and the church.

She smiles.

NINA

So, you'll be at the meetings with  
the reverend?

Forrest stiffens. Nina walks close to him.

NINA (CONT'D)

Let's read a little.

FORREST

Like you told the reverend, I'm  
taking a nap.

Nina takes a step backwards.

NINA

They could've stayed in Boone  
County even after Lincoln signed  
the Proclamation.

Forrest walks out of the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. SWEET NOTE-RONDO-CONTINUOUS

Forrest stands on the porch and sighs. A rocking chair in the  
corner squeaks, then stops. A MAN, White and mid-forties,  
stocky, comes out of the darkness.

MAN

Sight for sore eyes.

Forrest laughs.

MAN (CONT'D)

Back to throwin' bones? Can't stay  
away.

FORREST

S'posed to meet someone.

MAN

Plenty wild tonight.

The Man opens the door. Forrest heads to the bar.

BAR:

BARTENDER, balding and overweight, approaches Forrest.

BARTENDER

What's your poison?

FORREST

Brandy on the rocks, water back.

An over-heated voice dominates the craps room.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Someone's losing the milk money?

ALEX (O.S.)

Punk-bitch-mother-fucker.

Forrest grabs his drink and walks towards the voice.

CRAPS ROOM:

A hand with a LARGE RUBY RING places a bet. Forrest leans over to see the face that owns the ring.

GAMBLER ONE (O.S.)

Look out.

GUNFIRE erupts. A crush of bodies flees the room. Forrest fights to stay on his feet but falls. He screams, grabs his back and collapses. Blood tatoos his shirt.

O'Hearn looks down at Forrest.

O'HEARN

Anybody know this guy?

GAMBLER TWO

Mr. Holder. A Red Cap.

O'HEARN

Get 'em outta here. Police coming.

INT. SAINT CITY BARBERSHOP-RONDO-MORNING

Rev. Massey and Red sit pensively and watch the wall clock.

RED

Stabs us in the back.

REV. MASSEY

He has a problem with people.

The reverend goes to the phone and dials a number.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)

Nina? Where's Forrest? Huh? Oh.

The reverend hangs up the phone. Red stares at him.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)

He was stabbed last night at the Sweet Note. In the back.

RED

Gambling again.

REV. MASSEY

I have Mr. Herrold's envelope.

There's a tap on the front door. GEORGE HERROLD, fossilized with stooped shoulders and a cane. Red opens the door.

GEORGE

Good morning, Reverend; Red.

George looks around the room.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Someone else joining us?

REV. MASSEY  
Conflict in schedule.

George sighs.

GEORGE  
The governor signed a bill that  
blocks cities from vetoing  
construction of the highway.

Red glances at the reverend.

RED  
(to Rev. Massey)  
State legislature?

GEORGE  
The money at the federal level was  
earmarked and it virtually covers  
the entire cost of the project.

George shakes his head slowly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
The planning board and city council  
will seek a legal opinion. The city  
attorney stands with the governor.

REV. MASSEY  
We must protect Rondo.

GEORGE  
Think I can influence the project.

RED  
How?

GEORGE  
Retail businesses want a direct  
route from downtown Minneapolis to  
downtown St. Paul.

RED  
I been sayin' Rondo's businesses  
affect downtown businesses.

George shrugs his shoulders.



RED (CONT'D)  
There are more than three hundred  
businesses in Rondo.

GEORGE  
Construction is a different story.

REV. MASSEY  
We scheduled meetings with the  
governor and city council.

RED  
What more can we do?

GEORGE  
I'll meet with the city engineer.

REV. MASSEY  
Before your meeting review these  
documents. Eye-opening.

The reverend hands Herrold the manila envelope.

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-AFTERNOON

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest sits in pajamas, robe and slippers. Nina, with her  
Bible and glasses around her neck, sits close by. O'Hearn is  
across from them.

FORREST  
Stabbed. Passed out. Couple fellas  
took me to Ancker Hospital, then  
home. Lucky I didn't get killed.

Forrest moans as he shifts in his chair.

O'HEARN  
I got worse cuts from paper. Sweet  
Note's not that bad.

Nina blinks, closes her Bible.

NINA  
You proclaim "Jesus Saves" on your  
coat button and talk like this?

O'HEARN  
Life's conflicted me.  
(to Forrest)  
Don't try to be a Rev. Massey or  
Roy Wilkins.

NINA

What?

FORREST

I'd rather be a Gordon Parks.

O'HEARN

What was he?

FORREST

He's a photographer. Chronicles the struggles of poor people, civil rights. A poet, author.

O'HEARN

Rest up. You'll need it.

Forrest moans.

FORREST

I'll need it?

O'Hearn leaves the house. Nina shakes her head.

NINA

He needs spiritual guidance.

FORREST

I need legal guidance. Call Paul.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-ST. PAUL-LATER

BEDROOM:

Forrest lays in bed; Nina stands at his bedside.

NINA

Said you were going to Eddie's.

Forrest is downcast. He looks away.

FORREST

I lied.

NINA

Lyin', drinkin', gamblin'. Again. Smelled it when you came home. Liquor leads to debauchery.

FORREST

He's watching us.

NINA

Truth protects you from enemies.  
Lies expose you to enemies. Can  
getcha killed.

FORREST

I need Chicago-style help.

INT. DELL'S-CAFE-RONDO-AFTERNOON

Forrest and SMOKEY sit in a booth. Smokey, mid-fifties, dark skin and rugged looks, wears a tilted Stetson on his head.

SMOKEY

Chicago cop. Think he shot someone  
in their car. Can't prove it.

FORREST

Why's he here?

SMOKEY

Huntin' somebody.

FORREST

Tracking me and Nina. I feel it.

Forrest drops his voice.

FORREST (CONT'D)

You know anyone inside his  
precinct?

SMOKEY

Hell, no.

FORREST

Said he's lookin' for Alphabet.

SMOKEY

Who?

FORREST

Pray it has nothing to do with the  
Nightlife Club.

SMOKEY

Alphabet's dead. Cripple Dick tried  
to kill 'em but got killed. You  
know that.

Forrest nods, looks away from Smokey.

SMOKEY (CONT'D)  
Streets got Alphabet.

FORREST  
O'Hearn's gonna bring me to  
Chicago. Murder and white slavery.  
He won't if I find Alphabet, but  
Alphabet's dead. Right?

Smokey nods and smiles.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
You gotta watch my back.

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-AFTERNOON

KITCHEN:

Nina reaches for the tea pot, but stares at the phone. She  
dials a number.

NINA  
Reverend? This is Nina Holder.

INT. PILGRIM BAPTIST CHURCH-RONDO-SAME TIME

Rev. Massey stands behind his desk; the receiver to his ear.

INTERCUT-TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

REV. MASSEY  
Afternoon, Nina.

NINA  
You have a minute?

The reverend looks at the stack of mail on his desk.

REV. MASSEY  
I do.

NINA  
I'm worried about Forrest. And  
Rondo.

REV. MASSEY  
Forrest?

NINA  
There's a Chicago cop here who  
keeps following him. Comes to our  
house.

REV. MASSEY

Who?

NINA

Name's O'Hearn.

REV. MASSEY

O'Hearn? He's possessed.

NINA

I don't know what I'd do if  
anything happens to Forrest.

REV. MASSEY

He'll be fine. Maybe you should get  
married?

NINA

You know I can't.

REV. MASSEY

Forrest loves you in his own way.

NINA

People will lose their jobs, homes,  
businesses in Rondo, too.

REV. MASSEY

Love is more empowering than hate.  
We have meetings, and Forrest did  
very effective research for us.

She stares out of the breakfast nook window.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)

Would you be willing to volunteer  
for the Women's Auxiliary Group?

NINA

What would I do?

REV. MASSEY

Be an ambassador for Rondo. You  
hear a negative comment, reply the  
church represents Rondo and has  
this under control.

NINA

I'll try.

MONTAGE: REV. MASSEY AND RED MEET WITH THE GOVERNOR, CITY  
COUNCIL AND CITY ATTORNEY.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE-DAY

Rev. Massey and Red stand in front of GOVERNOR FREEMAN'S ornate and massive desk as the reverend speaks indistinctly. The governor sits passively, listens, scribbles notes.

INT. ST. PAUL CITY COUNCIL-CONTINUOUS

Rev. Massey and Red stand at the podium in the Art Deco city council chambers. Red speaks indistinctly. Only two of the seven COUNCIL MEMBERS are present but are preoccupied.

INT. ST. PAUL CITY ATTORNEY-CONTINUOUS

Rev. Massey and Red sit in front of the CITY ATTORNEY. As the reverend speaks the city attorney watches passively.

END MONTAGE

EXT./INT. CREDJAFAWN CO-OP-RONDO-AFTERNOON

Flanagan walks past the plate glass window. He stops, then steps back a couple of feet and enters the store.

FLANAGAN

Excuse me, but you're Forrest  
Holder?

Forrest looks at Flanagan.

FORREST

Why do you ask?

Flanagan quickly glances around the store, then flashes a badge at Forrest. Forrest sighs.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Now what?

FLANAGAN

We need to talk. I was on my way to  
your house. It's important.

Forrest looks around him, then nods.

FLANAGAN (CONT'D)

You're in danger.

Forrest stiffens. He walks outside with Flanagan.

FLANAGAN (CONT'D)  
I know you from an article in the  
paper; you're a Red Cap. Rondo's  
proud of you.

FORREST  
Okay.

FLANAGAN  
I saw pictures of you and, uh,  
Nina, correct?

Forrest stares at him.

FLANAGAN (CONT'D)  
And pictures of a young Negro  
woman.

FORREST  
Pictures?

Flanagan looks around.

FLANAGAN  
There's a cop from Chicago-

FORREST  
O'Hearn.

FLANAGAN  
I'm on a special assignment.

FORREST  
Why are you telling me this?

FLANAGAN  
My family came from Ireland. We  
attend the Cathedral. O'Hearn isn't  
Irish. He's a liar.

Flanagan removes an envelope from his jacket and hands it to  
Forrest.

FLANAGAN (CONT'D)  
What you'll see and what I'll tell  
you can get me fired.

Flanagan removes an object from his pocket and hands it to  
Forrest.

FLANAGAN (CONT'D)  
This is for your protection.

INT. ARCHIE'S REGAL LOUNGE-RONDO-AFTERNOON

O'Hearn, Iceberg and Dirty White sit at a table. Dirty White pops peanuts from a dish into his mouth and gulps water. O'Hearn looks away in disgust.

O'HEARN  
(to Dirty White)  
Go to the bathroom.

Dirty White shakes his head.

DIRTY WHITE  
I don't-

ICEBERG  
Go on, Dirty.

Dirty White limps to the bathroom. Iceberg looks at O'Hearn.

ICEBERG (CONT'D)  
He's my cousin.

O'HEARN  
Sounds like a personal problem.

Iceberg shakes his head.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Slew-foot's not coming to Chicago.

ICEBERG  
Promised I'd watch out for 'em.

O'HEARN  
I deputize you. Do the job, I'll reconsider.

Iceberg grinds his teeth, nods.

INT. PAUL MCCRAY'S LAW OFFICE-RONDO-AFTERNOON

The lawyer sits at his desk, phone in one hand, as he scribbles on a yellow legal pad.

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-SAME TIME

Forrest stands in the kitchen with the phone receiver at his ear.

INTERCUT-TELEPHONE CONVERSATION



FORREST  
I need to tell you something.

PAUL  
Okay.

Forrest tinkers with the tea pot on the stove.

FORREST  
I was approached by a cop the other day. He gave me an envelope from O'Hearn's house. It has pictures and articles.

PAUL  
Why?

FORREST  
Said he's investigating O'Hearn and that I'm in danger. Gave me this for protection.

PAUL  
Oh.

FORREST  
We have attorney-client relationship, don't we?

PAUL  
Of course.

Forrest peaks around the corner and sees Nina in her living room chair.

FORREST  
O'Hearn threatened to bring me to Chicago for interstate prostitution and murder. He's got evidence.

PAUL  
What?

FORREST  
He's pressuring me to help find someone he knows is dead. If I help, the charges go away.

PAUL  
Find a dead person?

FORREST  
Think he's tryin' to get me killed in these after-hours joints.

PAUL  
Doesn't make sense.

FORREST  
Stalking me. Threatens to bring  
Nina to Chicago as an accomplice to  
me absconding.

PAUL  
Does Nina know this?

A beat

FORREST  
I can't tell her. She'll know I  
been lyin'.

PAUL  
What's the connection with him and  
you?

FORREST  
Can't be good. I took out some  
insurance.

PAUL  
Don't tell me.

FORREST  
I left a large manila envelope at  
your office.

PAUL  
I got it.

FORREST  
Give it to Rev. Massey if something  
happens to me.

Paul leans back in his office chair, gazes at the ceiling.

PAUL  
Something's happened to make this  
cop so dangerous.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-LATE

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest sits near Nina; Rev. Massey sits across from them.

REV. MASSEY  
The governor sent us to the  
planning board.

FORREST  
You're on the planning board.

REV. MASSEY  
The city council ignored us.

FORREST  
Go to their attorney.

The reverend smiles.

REV. MASSEY  
We met with him. Asked for help and  
an open-occupancy law so the  
landlords can rent to anyone.

NINA  
Amen.

FORREST  
And?

The reverend shrugs his shoulders.

REV. MASSEY  
He'll wait until the council asks  
for a legal opinion.

FORREST  
We can't rely on our government  
when we need them.

REV. MASSEY  
That's my experience.

FORREST  
Did my research help?

REV. MASSEY  
So much that no one disputed what  
we said.

Rev. Massey sighs.

REV. MASSEY (CONT'D)  
Rondo must not become overwhelmed  
with the possible consequences.

FORREST

The high-speed wall will destroy  
Rondo.

REV. MASSEY

God never gives us more than we can  
handle.

NINA

The Bible is the guiding light.

FORREST

Nina, could you get me and the  
reverend a cup of hot tea?

Nina walks to the kitchen. Forrest's eyes follow her. He  
quickly turns to the reverend.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Reverend, if anything happens to me  
there is an envelope filled with  
documents that helps Rondo. Paul  
McRay has it.

REV. MASSEY

More documents?

Forrest nods and looks towards the kitchen.

FORREST

Prospect Park, the former home of  
our governor, exerted pressure,  
including from the housing and  
redevelopment authority, to save  
their homes.  
The highway will follow the path of  
the railroad right-of-way.

REV. MASSEY

We don't have that type of  
influence.

Nina returns with a tray of hot tea and cookies. Forrest  
smiles at her.

FORREST

So, as I was saying, I'll finish my  
research regarding the council.

Rev. Massey stares at Forrest.

INT. CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY-ST. PAUL-AFTERNOON

Forrest inserts documents into a manila envelope on the table. The Librarian walks over to him.

LIBRARIAN  
Can we talk?

FORREST  
Oh?

LIBRARIAN  
Haven't seen you since you were speaking with that officer.

FORREST  
Right.

LIBRARIAN  
He stopped by a couple of times.  
Was here yesterday.

FORREST  
Whad you say?

LIBRARIAN  
You're more interested in law.

Forrest laughs.

FORREST  
Hear from your cousin?

The librarian nods.

LIBRARIAN  
The council supports the governor's hands-off policy.

FORREST  
Oh.

The librarian looks around, then pulls up a chair and sits next to Forrest.

LIBRARIAN  
She said there's a cop that's advising the council.

FORREST  
A cop?

LIBRARIAN

I'll find out the officer's name.  
We could discuss this over dinner?

Forrest grins.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

That'll be our secret.

EXT. ST. PAUL TRAIN DEPOT-ST. PAUL-AFTERNOON

Forrest leans against a car across Fourth Street. He watches red caps and passengers come and go.

O'HEARN

What are you doing?

Forrest spins around.

FORREST

Thinking how to get my job back.

O'HEARN

I'm thinking of buying tickets for  
me and you to Chicago.

FORREST

I did what you want.

O'HEARN

One more.

Forrest wipes his forehead and hisses.

FORREST

You said we're done.

O'HEARN

After Calvin's tonight.

FORREST

I'll get killed.

O'HEARN

Alphabet will be there. One  
o'clock. Be in the bar.

FORREST

Everybody in Calvin's got weapons.

O'HEARN

Don't be a problem to anyone and  
you won't get hurt.

FORREST  
Just being there is a problem.

O'HEARN  
There's a cop from Chicago here.  
Ready to arrest Nina.

FORREST  
Don't.

INT. THE IRISH VIPER BAR-ST. PAUL-AFTERNOON

BAR ROOM:

Flanagan's arm rests on the wooden bar. His elbow's in the ashtray and his hand holds the neck of a beer bottle as his other hand traces cigarette burns in the bar.

Drunks are stuffed in their chairs. Some lie across the tables or lean against the walls. Empty beer bottles are scattered around the room. Two drunks fight in slow motion.

O'HEARN  
Small world.

Flanagan lifts his head. O'Hearn stands next to him.

FLANAGAN  
Whaa...?

O'Hearn waves to the bartender. He drags the bar towel down the bar as he walks to O'Hearn.

O'HEARN  
Get my friend another.

Flanagan jeers at O'Hearn.

FLANAGAN  
Frr...?

O'Hearn goes to the jukebox and selects Irish show band songs. Music blasts through the bar. He returns to Flanagan, then inches closer to him.

O'HEARN  
It's a crime to break into  
someone's home and steal.

FLANAGAN  
Huh?

O'HEARN  
Some countries it's the death  
penalty. Drink up.

Flanagan gulps his beer, belches and drops the bottle.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Good aim.

O'Hearn looks around the bar.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
We've had our differences. Wanna  
take you to a new bar downtown.

Flanagan sneers at O'Hearn.

FLANAGAN  
Don't talk Irish, act or think it.

O'HEARN  
Hit the shitter. Look presentable.  
It's all-you-can-drink day.

Flanagan stands and braces himself against the bar.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Can you make it?

Flanagan nods, then slumps to his knees. O'Hearn props him up. The bartender looks at Flanagan and yawns. Flanagan staggers to the bathroom and bangs into the door. It opens.

BATHROOM:

Flanagan grabs the sink. He looks in the stained mirror, squints, shakes his head. Iceberg towers behind him.

He grabs Flanagan in a bear hug, lifts him off his feet and smashes his head into the sink. Flanagan collapses on the floor next to the mop bucket.

Iceberg knocks the bucket over; dirty water seeps under Flanagan. He leaves the bathroom, sees O'Hearn and walks out the front door. O'Hearn walks out the back door. The bartender wipes the bar.

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-EVENING

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest and Nina have Bibles in their laps.



FORREST  
We have any clean handkerchiefs?

NINA  
Got a cold?

FORREST  
Feel it's comin' on.

Nina goes to the wood cabinet, opens a drawer and removes a fresh handkerchief. She looks at the pictures on the shelf and grabs one of a young Black woman.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
What's wrong?

Nina wipes the glass clean, then replaces it on the shelf.

NINA  
Don't want mother's picture to have  
that detective's prints on it.

FORREST  
I'm tired. Wake me for dinner.  
Gotta tell you something.

NINA  
You're going out?

FORREST  
Not what I want to talk about.

Forrest goes to the kitchen phone and dials a number.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
Smokey in the back room? Tell 'em  
it's Forrest. Okay.

A beat.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
Tonight. Calvin's. One o'clock.  
Okay.

Forrest hangs up the phone.

NINA  
Smokey?

FORREST  
Insurance.

NINA  
Truth protects you from your  
enemies. Lies expose you to your  
enemies. Can getcha killed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-LATER

KITCHEN:

Nina and Forrest sit in the breakfast nook. Forrest finishes dinner as Nina stares at him.

NINA  
What did you want to talk about?

Forrest places a folded envelope on the dinner table, then empties it. He puts the lamb figurine on the table.

NINA (CONT'D)  
What's this?

FORREST  
A cop gave me these.

Nina's eyes search Forrest's face. She picks up the lamb figurine.

NINA  
O'Hearn took this. Mom gave this to  
you. What cop?

FORREST  
At the co-op. Gave me this.

Nina looks at the articles and pictures.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
It worries me.

NINA  
What's this?

Forrest'S POV: Pictures of Forrest, Nina and their mother. Articles about their father's imprisonment for murder; the suspicious death of a motorist named Junior in his car; the suicide death of a Chicago engineer named O'Hearn.

BACK TO SCENE

Nina looks at Forrest, then separates the pictures and the newspaper articles.

Nina picks up the pictures and studies them.

NINA (CONT'D)  
Look at the house in the  
background. Grandma's.

FORREST  
God-damn it.

NINA  
No blasphemy.

FORREST  
How the hell-

NINA  
No blasphemy.

Nina glances at an article.

NINA (CONT'D)  
Don't you know a man named junior?

Forrest shakes his head.

FORREST  
No. What's it say about 'em?

NINA  
Shot to death on the south-side in  
his car. Think a cop's involved.

FORREST  
Can I see it?

Nina hands it to him, then looks at another article. She places her hand to her mouth.

NINA  
Uh.

FORREST  
What?

NINA  
It's about daddy. Mom.

FORREST  
Why does he have that?

Nina shakes her head.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
I'll find out tonight.

Nina reads another article.

NINA

This article's about a man named  
O'Hearn in Chicago. He was a city  
engineer and committed suicide.

Nina reads more.

NINA (CONT'D)

Has a son that's a city engineer.  
He quit and became a cop.

Forrest stares at the pictures and articles on the table.

FORREST

This is trouble.

Nina and Forrest glance at each other.

Forrest goes to the kitchen closet and returns with a manila  
envelope. He places it on the table. Nina looks at it.

FORREST (CONT'D)

I'm giving this to the reverend  
next week. Leave it here.

NINA

What is it?

FORREST

Documents to help Rondo.

NINA

I'm scared.

Nina walks to the doorway. She looks at Forrest.

LIVING ROOM:

She grabs her Bible and sits in her chair.

KITCHEN:

Forrest opens the closet door, grabs his jacket. He peeks  
around the door, retrieves a folded knife and stuffs it in  
his waistband in the small of his back.

HALLWAY:

He stops at the living room and glances at Nina.

FORREST

Last time tonight.

Nina looks up with sadness in her eyes.

NINA  
Got your protector?

Forrest nods. Nina resumes reading a Bible passage.

Nina's POV: Proverbs 22:24-25 "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get ensnared."

BACK TO SCENE

She closes the Bible and sobs as tears stain her face.

INT. CALVIN'S-RONDO-NIGHT-CONTINUOUS

Forrest taps on the door of a broken-down house. A wood panel opens; EYES stare at him.

EYES (O.S.)  
What do ya want?

FORREST  
Tell Ronnie it's Forrest.

EYES (O.S.)  
Tell 'em what?

FORREST  
I'm here to sport.

The panel shuts, then reopens.

EYES (O.S.)  
Who's McGuff?

Forrest sighs.

FORREST  
Captain of the red caps.

The panel closes; the door opens. EYES, a small White man, mid-thirties and scruffy, sits on a chair. Eyes bulge like light bulbs. The man points down the hallway.

EYES  
Go to the end of the hallway an'  
buy a drink. No drink, no enter.

Eyes hands Forrest two brown-paper sacks.

EYES (CONT'D)

Bring this to the room next to the bar. Order a little boy or girl.

FORREST

Don't want a little boy or girl.

EYES

Ronnie trusts you. I never did.

Forrest takes the bags and enters the bar area.

BAR:

The BARTENDER, thin with bronze skin and a seductive gleam in her eyes, smiles.

BARTENDER

What's your desire besides me?

FORREST

Rum and coke.

Her arms and hands move quickly.

BARTENDER

Two for one.

FORREST

Should be three for one these prices.

Forrest places money on the bar. She looks at the two bags.

BARTENDER

Next room.

ROOM:

Forrest knocks on the door and enters. Irritable men sit at small tables. A WOMAN takes drink orders. A SECOND WOMAN, thirties, tall and thin, approaches Forrest.

SECOND WOMAN

That's mine.

She takes the bags to a table, opens one and removes small glassine pouches with white powder in them. She opens the other bag and removes small glassine pouches with brown powder in them.

Two beefy men stand behind her, arms crossed, guns on their waist. The Woman approaches the table.

WOMAN

Two boys an' a girl.

The Second Woman takes two envelopes with brown powder, one with white powder and hands them to the Woman. The Woman takes the envelopes to the testy men. They snatch them.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Like that, baby? Boy'll bring you  
to your knees faster than pussy.

Her hand muffles a laugh. The man straightens his arm. A belt is around his bicep.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

God is great to those who wait.

She looks at Forrest.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Wanna little somethin'?

Forrest shakes his head.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

That's right. Leave this shit  
alone. Make you bust a nut.

Forrest walks up the steps to the third floor.

THIRD FLOOR:

CRAPS ROOM:

Men cluster around the craps table smoking, drinking,  
yelling.

ALEX

Punk-bitch-mother-fucker.

Forrest turns to the voice. Smokey's there. They nod to each other. The CHIPS DEALER, gray-tinged hair and a bright vest, yells to Forrest.

DEALER

Hey! Can't go there without buying  
chips. Minimum ten dollars.

Forrest pays and goes to the table. Alex's hands clutch dollars. A LADY, scantily-clad, youthful with caramel-colored skin, approaches him.

LADY  
(to Forrest)  
Wanna drink?

He holds up one and points to the other on the table.

LADY (CONT'D)  
You need a napkin. She places a  
napkin under the drink.

She whispers.

LADY (CONT'D)  
Open it.

The Lady looks at O'Hearn. O'Hearn watches Forrest, then  
leaves the craps room.

HALLWAY:

Smokey leans against the wall with his Stetson and smokes a  
cigarette. O'Hearn sees him.

O'HEARN  
Can't hide behind a Stetson.

Smokey grins at O'Hearn.

SMOKEY  
Without me, he wouldn't be here.

O'Hearn nods.

O'HEARN  
Your Chicago problem's gone.

Smokey wipes his forehead with his hand.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
You know Det. Evanston?

Smokey laughs.

SMOKEY  
Know 'em all in that precinct.

O'HEARN  
He'll watch out for you.

O'Hearn points east.

CRAPS ROOM:



Forrest drains his glass and grabs the other one. He opens the napkin, reads it, then goes to the Lady.

FORREST

How do I get to the back porch?

LADY

Out the door, turn left, walk to the end of the hallway. Blue door.

Forrest swallows his drink as Alex watches. He searches the room for Smokey. Gone.

BACK PORCH:

Forrest opens the door. O'Hearn is at the screen windows with Iceberg. Dirty White wobbles between O'Hearn and Forrest.

O'HEARN

(to Forrest)

The lawyer that isn't a lawyer.

ICEBERG

Huh?

Iceberg glances at Forrest.

O'HEARN

(points at Dirty White)

Ignore Stumpy. Fuckin' drunk.

DIRTY WHITE

Whad you they?

O'HEARN

I thed thop your damn drinking.

Dirty White turns to Iceberg; Iceberg shrugs.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)

Where you been?

FORREST

Doin' what lawyers do: research.

O'HEARN

He's at the craps table.

FORREST

Who?

O'HEARN

Alphabet.

FORREST  
Fuckin' liar.

O'Hearn smirks.

O'HEARN  
Watch yourself.

FORREST  
You gonna bring me to Chicago?

O'HEARN  
God-damn right I will.

ICEBERG  
I'm goin' to Chicago.

DIRTY WHITE  
What 'bout me?

O'HEARN  
What about you? Fuckin' slew-foot.

O'Hearn glares at Forrest and Dirty White.

FORREST  
I got pictures and news articles  
from Chicago.

O'HEARN  
You don't say.

FORREST  
An article says Alphabet was shot  
in his car by a cop. You.

O'Hearn grins.

O'HEARN  
If Alphabet's dead, why'd I have  
you in these joints?

FORREST  
Get me killed.

Iceberg and Dirty White stare at each other.

O'HEARN  
So Nina suffers?

FORREST  
You're evil. Is that because your  
father committed suicide? He was a  
city engineer, right? Like you.

O'Hearn glares at Forrest.

O'HEARN  
Your father killed my mother, and  
that killed my father. You die and  
Nina suffers.

FORREST  
Your mother?

O'HEARN  
You have pictures?

Forrest stares at O'Hearn.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
People say you and Nina are  
married. You're brother and sister.

Dirty White wobbles closer to O'Hearn. He leans against the  
screen windows.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Where'd you get the pictures?

Forrest stares at O'Hearn.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
A drunken cop stole 'em from me.

FORREST  
Where'd you get 'em?

A beat.

O'HEARN  
You know. We're family.

FORREST  
Whad you say? Fuck no.

Forrest slowly reaches for his knife.

FORREST (CONT'D)  
You're a Mulatto?

ICEBERG  
(to O'Hearn)  
You're a Negro?

O'HEARN  
What's in your hand?

O'Hearn slips his gun from his waist. Iceberg steps back.

O'HEARN (CONT'D)  
Go outside the door an' a Chicago  
cop will kill you, then Nina.

FORREST  
We don't want trouble. I'll show  
you something.

Forrest hands an article to O'Hearn. O'Hearn looks at it and  
drops it to the floor.

O'HEARN  
You don't know my father.

Dirty White lifts his head, leans towards O'Hearn.

DIRTY WHITE  
A fuckin' Negro's takin' Ithberg to  
Chicago an' leavin' me here?

FORREST  
I got so much on you. Working with  
the council and legislature to  
destroy Rondo. All in an envelope.

O'HEARN  
Where is it?

FORREST  
I'll give it to you but leave us  
alone.

Forrest moves towards Dirty White, then shoves him into  
O'Hearn. BANG!

DIRTY WHITE  
Ahh...

Dirty White grabs onto O'Hearn and they fall through the  
screen window.

DIRTY WHITE (CONT'D)  
Ohh...

Iceberg looks at the screen window, then Forrest.

ICEBERG  
You made O'Hearn shoot Dirty.

Iceberg rushes to the window and looks down.

Iceberg's POV: O'Hearn and Dirty White are impaled on a  
fence. Iceberg wails.

BACK TO SCENE

ICEBERG (CONT'D)  
We was goin' to Chicago.

He turns to Forrest; Forrest is gone. Iceberg jumps up and down, slams and pounds on the walls.

CRAPS ROOM:

BOOM! The dice on the table tremble. A GAMBLER, thin and young, looks around.

GAMBLER  
Did you hear gunshot? Minnesota get earthquakes?

Gamblers shake their heads. The Gambler runs outside.

EXT./INT. CALVIN'S-RONDO-MINUTES LATER

The Gambler sees O'Hearn and Dirty White on the fence. The back porch shakes, then tilts.

ICEBERG (O.S.)  
Dirty.

The Gambler runs back inside.

CRAPS ROOM:

The Gambler pants and holds his side. He catches his breath.

GAMBLER  
Call the police. Bodies stuck on the fence. Think there's a gorilla on the porch.

Alex steps back from the craps table, flashes a badge, pulls his gun. BOOM. The gamblers look to the backstairs. BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. Thunder descends the back staircase.

ALEX  
Someone call downtown. You can leave, but leave the money. Or go to jail.

The gamblers scramble out of the room. Alex and the DEALER, mid-forties and tall, stare at each other.

DEALER  
I'll call.

Alex throws dollars at the dealer. The dealer runs from the room.

HALLWAY:

Alex stuffs money in his pockets and shirt, then runs to the backstairs. His gun leads the way.

BACK PORCH:

Alex carefully enters the porch. He looks down and sees O'Hearn under Dirty White. He makes the sign of the cross.

ALEX  
(to O'Hearn)  
This your idea of revenge?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 737 RONDO AVENUE-RONDO-MORNING

KITCHEN:

Forrest, Paul and Nina stand close to each other.

PAUL  
(whispers)  
Remember, you're O'Hearn's victim.  
He wants you to be an informant.

FORREST  
Informant?

PAUL  
Nobody's alive who was there except  
you. It'll be confidential.

FORREST  
What does he know?

PAUL  
Gunfire, banging on the porch and  
the back staircase. Two bodies.

Forrest nods.

NINA  
(whispers)  
Remember, truth protects you from  
enemies. Lies expose you to-

FORREST  
(whispers)  
-I know.

PAUL  
Don't mention Chicago. He's from there, but moved here as a young boy. He's a proud Irishman.

NINA  
Why'd the reverend call?

FORREST  
Good news. Tell you later.

Forrest looks at the manila envelope on the kitchen table, then he, Nina and Paul leave the kitchen.

LIVING ROOM:

Forrest and Nina sit next to each other; Nina holds her Bible. Paul McRay sits close to Captain Donnelly. A detective, youthful and obedient, is by the captain.

CAPTAIN  
I wanted to meet with you, Mr. and Mrs. Holder, and apologize.

Forrest and Nina glance at each other. Nina slowly nods.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
On behalf of the St. Paul Police Department, I'm sorry for the trauma you went through.

The captain shakes his head, tightens his jaw.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
I'm ushering in a new era. We must correct injustices.

McRay smiles at Forrest and Nina.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
I told Mr. McRay that you are not a suspect and will not be charged for being in a disorderly house.

Forrest nods. The captain looks at the detective. The detective nods, makes a note on his note pad.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
I have a couple of questions, if you don't mind.

Forrest and Nina nod.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Why were you on the back porch and left before the police arrived?

FORREST

O'Hearn pressured me to identify a murderer who fled Chicago. Imma red cap. Thinks I know everybody.

The captain stares at Forrest.

CAPTAIN

Why didn't you wait until the police arrived?

FORREST

O'Hearn and the other gentleman were swearing at each other. O'Hearn yelled the man was not a police officer. He's the fugitive. I said no, he's not a Negro.

The captain nods.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Honestly, when two officers argue and a Negro is present, it's best that he leave otherwise he'll be blamed for whatever happens.

CAPTAIN

Do you recall hearing any pounding or banging on the porch?

FORREST

O'Hearn stomped his foot repeatedly and slammed his fist against the walls. He was crazy.

CAPTAIN

Did you see any, uh, fisticuffs?

FORREST

O'Hearn punched the officer in the face. Then the officer charged him and they got to tussling.

CAPTAIN

Did you see O'Hearn shoot the other man?



FORREST

When the officer charged O'Hearn,  
O'Hearn pulled his gun. I left.  
I was walking down the steps when I  
heard the gunfire, then I jumped  
two steps at a time.

The captain looks at the detective.

CAPTAIN

(to detective)

That explains the banging on the  
porch and the steps.

The detective nods, makes notes.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

It was a mistake to allow a Chicago  
officer to work here, especially  
when he was under suspension.

Forrest shrugs his shoulders.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

The worst is O'Hearn isn't even  
Irish. He's English.

FORREST

I'm not surprised.

CAPTAIN

That he's English?

FORREST

We grew up on the south-side of  
Chicago. I had a friend named  
Connelly. Lived in Bridgeport.

Paul and Nina cut their eyes at Forrest.

CAPTAIN

You did?

FORREST

Told me about the Irish. How  
important family is. How they were  
discriminated against here after  
the Great Famine.

The captain vigorously nods.

CAPTAIN

I lived on the south-side as a  
young lad before I moved here.

FORREST

I learned a lot about the Irish.

CAPTAIN

All charges by O'Hearn are dropped  
and the record sealed. I called  
McGuff. You're a Red Cap again.

Forrest smiles. The captain looks at the detective.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

We're done. Thank you.

The captain shakes hands with Paul and Forrest. The detective follows the captain to the door. Paul stares at Forrest, then goes to the door.

FORREST

It's a beautiful day in Rondo. Oh,  
the reverend called to tell me the  
city's agreed to the highway being  
below-grade.

NINA HOLDER

What's that?

FORREST

Below ground, not above ground.  
Fewer homes and businesses will be  
taken.

Forrest stretches his arms. Nina turns to face him with tears in her eyes.

NINA

Why'd you say that?

FORREST

What?

NINA

Connelly wasn't your friend. You  
beat him up. You learned about  
Ireland in school.

Forrest laughs.

FORREST

It was a little white lie.

NINA

It's a lie.

FORREST

Any idea how many times I've heard  
that in the depot as a red cap?

NINA

Still a lie.

Forrest shakes it off.

FORREST

I'm going to the co-op and get some  
grapefruit. Wanna come?  
Oh, can you bring that envelope in  
the kitchen to Rev. Massey this  
weekend?

Nina nods her head.

NINA

Want to think about what happened.  
Feels like a new life for us, but  
can't start a new life on a lie.

INT. CREDJAFAWN CO-OP-ST. PAUL-LATER

Forrest is at the check-out counter with Thomas. He holds a  
bag of grapefruit.

THOMAS

Sure like our grapefruit.

FORREST

Don't like it; love it.

THOMAS

Glad you stopped by. We've all been  
depressed lately.

FORREST

Not many days when you can leave  
the front door open.

THOMAS

Enjoy the fresh air.

FORREST

Weight of the world has been lifted  
from my shoulders. I'm reborn.

THOMAS

Goin' to church now?

Forrest laughs.

FORREST

No, but never know when you need  
the Lord.

THOMAS

I need a recommendation, Mr.  
Holder. Today's my last day.

FORREST

Not a problem. I'll do it tomorrow.

Forrest leaves through the open door. Thomas grabs the broom  
and dustpan. THUD.

FORREST (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ugh.

INT./EXT. CREDJAFAWN'S CO-OP-ST. PAUL

Grapefruit roll into the store. Thomas picks them up. He goes  
outside. Grapefruit are on the sidewalk.

THOMAS

My God.

Thomas' POV: A bloody and mangled body lays like a pretzel in  
the gutter. A battered garbage truck barrels down Rondo  
Avenue. Thomas walks over and glances at Forrest.

BACK TO SCENE

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Oh, Mr. Holder.

FADE OUT

SUPER:

"IN THE 1950'S 85 PERCENT OF THE NEGROES IN ST. PAUL  
LIVED IN RONDO." RECONNECT RONDO.

"FROM 1957 TO 1969 APPROXIMATELY 700 HOMES AND 300  
BUSINESSES WERE RAZED." RECONNECT RONDO.

"1983 RONDO DAYS FESTIVAL WAS LAUNCHED." WIKIPEDIA,  
RONDO DAYS.

"JULY 2015 MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER AND  
ST. PAUL MAYOR APOLOGIZE FOR DESTRUCTION OF RONDO."  
KARE11.COM.

"APRIL 2024 CONCORDIA AVE. RENAMED RONDO AVE. BY THE  
ST. PAUL CITY COUNCIL." ST. PAUL/GOV.

FADE OUT.