

SEQUENCE 25

FADE IN...

Next morning...

106. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE. GROUL IS TALKING TO GATITO AND THE OTHER GUYS, WHO ARE SAT AT A TABLE.

GROUL

I have a name. I can talk to him today...

GATITO (his eyes still on the table)

Do your best. We can give an advance but not full... You know...

107. CUTS TO: INT.: UNTIDY HOUSE, WHERE A FAT DOG WHO LOOKS LIKE A GANG MEMBER HEARS TO GROUL WITH ATTENTION.

GROUL

In this piece of paper you have the name and description of both of them, the point from where they were expelled and the moment when they expelled them. (Thinking: *I have to show I am in control. I can't show any weakness to this piece of shit...*)

GANG MEMBER (with arrogant demeanor)

My partners control the border. We'll find your friends and bring them back. You will give me a day to find them. Then I will give you proof of having found them. The price is five thousand dollars... each.

(CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE. GATITO AND THE GUYS ARE PUTTING MONEY ON THE KITCHEN TABLE)

(CUTS TO: INT.: GANG MEMBER'S HOUSE. THE FAT DOG TALKS TO TWO OF GATITO'S GUYS, A DOG AND A CAT)

GANG MEMBER

I have the proof we have them... But I think I told the other dog the other day that you will have to pay an advance.

GATITO's GUY (dog)

All in advance is out of discussion. We're not bargaining on the price, but no advance in full.

THE GANG MEMBER, SOMEWHAT UPSET, GIVES THEM A HANDFUL OF PIECES OF CLOTH.

GANG MEMBER

Well, you have your fucking proof here. I'll bring them here and you'll bring the money. All. Or I'll keep those two...

108. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE.

MEAU

Yes, that's what they were wearing that day.

THEN GATITO NODS AND THE DOG AND THE CAT, THE GO-BETWEENS, LEAVE THE WAREHOUSE.

Two days later...

109. CUTS TO: EXT.: BEHIND SOME BUSHES AT NIGHT. THE GO-BETWEENS ARE ESCORTED BY GROUL AND SOME OTHER GATITO'S GUYS TO SOME BUSHES FROM WHERE THEY CAN SEE THE GANG MEMBER'S HOUSE. GROUL HUGS THEM AND THEY LEAVE. CLOSE UP OF GROUL'S FACE, THAT LOOKS ANXIOUS. PAN OF THE OTHER GUYS' FACES, WHICH LOOK CONFUSED. CLOSE UP OF GROUL'S FACE, THAT LOOKS WORRIED NOW. CLOSE UP OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE GANG MEMBER'S HOUSE. PAN OF GROUL AND THE OTHER GATITO'S GUY WAITING.

GATITO'S GUY

Groul...

GROUL

I know. They're taking too long. We're going for our friends right now...

110. CUTS TO: EXT.: GANG MEMBER'S HOUSE'S FRONT DOOR. THE IMMIGRATION POLICE COME AND, SOON AFTER, THEIR TWO FRIENDS, HANDCUFFED, ARE PUSHED THROUGH THE DOOR ALL THE WAY TO THE BACK OF THE TRUCK.

111. CUTS TO: EXT.: BEHIND THE BUSHES. GROUL AND THE OTHER GATITO'S GUYS STARTLE.

GROUL (looking furious)

As soon as the police truck leaves we are going for that fat piece of shit... He's going to pay pay for this treason.

112. CUTS TO: EXT.: GANG MEMBER'S HOUSE'S FRONT DOOR. EVEN THOUGH THE IMMIGRATION POLICE ARE STILL THERE, MORE AND MORE GANG MEMBERS COME TO THE HOUSE.

GATITO'S GUY (sounding afraid)

Are you sure you want to do this now, Groul?

113. CUTS TO: EXT.: GANG MEMBER'S HOUSE'S FRONT DOOR. MORE AND MORE GANG MEMBERS ARE COMING.

114. CUTS TO: EXT.: BEHIND THE BUSHES. GROUL, LOOKING BEATEN, CONFUSED, ASHAMED, ENRAGED, SHRUGS AND THEN TURNS TO THE OTHERS AND WITH HIS EYES STILL ON THE FLOOR SHAKES HIS HEAD.

115. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM. GATITO, LOOKING DEVASTATED, FALLS HEAVILY ON THE CLOSEST CHAIR. ASHAMED, GROUL, ON HIS FEET, HAS DROPPED HIS EYES TO THE FLOOR.

GATITO

Do they know where to find us?

GROUL (shaking his head, in a barely audible voice)

No. At least I made sure of that.

GATITO (nodding, pained and somewhat disengaged)

We better go to sleep now. See that we have double guard tonight.

SEQUENCE 26

Next day...

116. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM, AT NIGHT. THE THIRTY MEMBERS OF GATITO'S GROUP ARE IN ATTENDANCE. THE KITCHEN TABLE IS FACING ALL THE ATTENDANTS. GATITO IS SAT IN THE MIDDLE; GROUL IS SAT AT HIS SIDE, HIS EYES DROPPED ON THE TABLE. GROUL LOOKS AS IF HE HAD NOT SLEPT. GATITO GLANCES AT GROUL WITH CONCERN AND THEN OPENS THE SESSION.

GATITO

Before we begin, I need two volunteers to go see the families of the two friends we have lost yesterday. The volunteers will also have to visit the families of our friends we couldn't rescue yesterday and tell them that... we don't expect good news any more.

SEVERAL ANIMALS RAISE THEIR HANDS. ALFGUAU AND GROUL RAISE THEM FIRST THOUGH.

GATITO

Are you sure, Groul?

GROUL NODS, HIS EYES STILL ON THE TABLE. ONE SMALL DOG RAISES HIS HAND AT THE REAR OF THE ROOM. GROUL RAISES HIS HAND AGAIN BUT GATITO TAKES THE QUESTION.

GATITO

Okay, now we're going to discuss what we're going to do about what happened yesterday.

THEN THE SAME SMALL DOG RAISES HIS HAND AGAIN. GATITO NODS AND THE SMALL DOG TAKES THE FLOOR.

SMALL DOG

Gatito, why didn't we go over them yesterday night? We might still have been able to rescue our friends and our money! I'm not afraid to fight!

GROUL RAISES HIS HAND AGAIN. GATITO LETS HIM TAKE THE QUESTION.

GROUL

There were too many of them by the moment the police left and, even if we had fought and prevailed, by the moment we would've broken into their house, it would've been too late to at least get our money back anyway. And our friends were already gone. The immigration police took them before our eyes. And it's obvious our other friends never were there. And, as I said, our money must have been gone soon after. That must be why so many gang members came all of a sudden... They must have come to protect the piece of shit who deceived us and for their cut... Anyway, it was my idea. I assume full responsibility.

GROUL, STILL ASHAMED, DROPS HIS EYES BACK ON THE TABLE.

GATITO

They would've been expecting our attack. That's why there were so many of them. Anyway, we had already lost what was the most precious for us and we would've only put more of us at risk had we allowed ourselves to be carried away by our rage. I, like you, would have liked vengeance, but we have to keep a clear mind. That's why I decided to wait.

A CAT RAISES HIS HAND.

CAT

There must be something we can do about our friends, Gatito, and about our money!

GATITO

The only thing we can do for our friends is to help their families. We have to find alternative channels to learn if they could make it to the Northern Country or what happened to them if they didn't. Although I guess us knowing that is not going to help them very much, so... we better focus on the families. Now, with respect to the money, we'll have to swallow the fact that it's lost.

It's not the first time we have had to go through some financial loss when subcontractors have not paid our friends for their work, although I must admit that this time the loss is big... And now, with Tancruarf, many subcontractors have learned that they can get away with not paying us and that we cannot go to the courts any more... We'll have to live with this as we have learned to live with that. That's precisely why we're fighting, isn't it?

(GATITO THEN DROPS HIS EYES TO THE TABLE AND SOUNDS BEATEN FOR THE FIRST TIME)

I wish there's something we can do. If at least they were not protected by the immigration police...

(THEN GATITO RAISES HIS EYES AGAIN)

If we attack them just for vengeance, we would expose ourselves, our warehouse, and soon the immigration police would be here. And I don't want to lose anybody else.

ANOTHER CAT

But it's not fair, Gatito!

GATITO

I know. If there was something we could do... But there isn't.

A DOG (raising his hand and standing up)

Gatito, what are we going to do if another one of us gets caught?

GATITO (grimacing with bitterness)

I am open to suggestions, but unless we can find a way to bring our friends back that doesn't go through the gangs, I am afraid there's nothing we can do but to help the families.

(THEN GATITO'S EYES SWEEP THE ROOM BUT NOBODY ELSE RAISES HIS HAND)

Unless we find a safe way, I don't want to risk another one of us. Groul did what he believed was right in his heart and did it for love to our friends. But unfortunately the world has changed for the worst and now we have to be more careful. And, as long as we take care of each other, we'll be better off together than if each one of us has to face this new world alone.

A FEMALE DOG (raising her hand)

We are not angry with Groul, Gatito. We all wanted to do what he did. We are angry with the gangs and the immigration police. Why do they hate us so much, Gatito?

GATITO (shrugging)

I wish I knew. I wish I knew why they have projected on us all they hate and despise and why they even blame us for everything that is wrong in the Northern Country as if we were not its victims too. My hope is that Tancruarf's power at some moment will have to decline. And we have to be ready to bring the citizens of Nayak the truth about who we really are when that happens.

(THEN GATITO SIGHS PROFOUNDLY)

We'll think of something to replace the money that has been lost and we'll call another meeting to inform you as soon as possible. Of course, we are all friends here and we welcome suggestions.

GATITO'S FRIENDS LEAVE THE ROOM IN SILENCE. GATITO SEES GROUL RUSHING OUT OF THE ROOM. GATITO FOLLOWS HIM WITH HIS EYES UNTIL HE SEES HIM DISAPPEARING INSIDE A CLOSET. WORRIED, GATITO APPROACHES THE CLOSET.

117. CUTS TO: INT.: BY THE CLOSET DOOR.

THEN GATITO LEANS HIS EAR ON THE DOOR. GATITO HEARS GROUL SOBBING AND DISCREETLY LEAVES.

SEQUENCE 27

That late afternoon...

118. CUT TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE, A SMALL ROOM. GROUL AND ALFGUAU ARE BRIEFING GATITO, WHO LEANS ON A SMALL TABLE.

ALFGUAU

The families of two of our lost friends, the ones we tried to rescue, are canvassing for us in the neighborhood. They are going to talk to their friends about what we tried to do and what had happened to our other friends for trying to help them. It seems as if that way they are trying to give some sense to their loss. But the families of the two who have just been ambushed by the gangs and arrested look still distressed, unbelieving of what has actually happened to them, uninterested in the support we offer them. They only want their loved ones back. And when I explained them the circumstances of their arrest, the reaction was hostile, to say the least. The mother of one of them even blamed Groul for the arrest of their son and tried to scratch him, being barely contained by other relatives who then asked us to leave.

THEN THEY HEAR SOMEBODY KNOCKING AT THE DOOR AND RODOLFO OPENS IT. GATITO SPEAKS TO HIM.

RODOLFO (with a sad smile)

I've been talking to my friend, the chief of staff. There's nothing we can do for your friends, but at least I can see that we make you a loan, so you can cover the basic expenses. We have saved five thousand dollars for some contingency. I'll see that we loan you that. Anything else we can do, the little we can do, count with us.

GATITO (upset now)

Why the regular police aren't protecting us? And the immigration police are protecting the gangs! They came for our friends and not even one of the gang members was arrested.

RODOLFO (closing his eyes with disappointment)

Actually the liaison between the immigration police and the regular police is Tancruarf's political appointee in the police department. Why somebody like Hagel has allowed this to happen? I don't know. I guess there's very little he can do to oppose Tancruarf anyway. He can always resign in protest, but I guess that's all he can do. With Tancruarf at the top of his power, nobody would pay attention to him. Few would miss him now. It wouldn't be a sacrifice. It would be a waste.

(RODOLFO NOTICES THAT GATITO SHRUGS)

Next year Tancruarf is going for reelection. We have to think of something to stop him, Gatito. All this has to stop!

RODOLFO NOW NOTICES SKEPTICISM, DISBELIEF ON GATITO'S FACE AND HIS EYES DROP AGAIN, BEATEN THIS TIME. SO HE JUST PUTS HIS HAND ON GATITO'S SHOULDER.

RODOLFO

Well, I have to go.

GATITO

Thanks for the loan, Rodolfo. We'll repay you as soon as we can.

RODOLFO

Don't worry about that. Besides that, it's not only my money. Now, make sure the sacrifice of your friends is not in vain and that we're going to do something to give their children a better life. We have to stop Tancruarf. [(Thinking: *And the ten thousand dollars robbed that night will have another consequence: the gangs will see the lack of retaliation as a sign of weakness and seek more money on immigrant neighborhoods. Gang activity increased in Miyaff, Rouff and other towns. But why mentioning that? It's already very screwed up as it is...*)]

RODOLFO NOTICES THE SAME SKEPTICISM AND DISBELIEF IN THE FACES OF THE OTHER GATITO'S GUYS.

119. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM, AT NIGHT. GATITO IS READING THE NEWSPAPER.

CUTS TO: INT.: INTERIOR PAGE OF NEWSPAPER: A GANG MEMBER HAD BEEN FOUND DEAD. HIS FACE HAD BEEN SMASHED BY CONTINUOUS AND RELENTLESS BLOWS. IN A FLASH, GATITO SEES GROUL'S FACE. THEN, HE REMEMBERS GROUL TRYING TO HIDE HIS SWOLLEN HANDS AND THEN HIM USING GLOVES FOR DAYS. THEN GATITO REMEMBERS GROUL WATCHING THE DESERTED STREET FROM A WINDOW, DETACHED OF EVERYTHING.

CUTS TO: INT. MEAU BRINGS A BATCH OF LETTERS AND SPREADS THEM ON THE TABLE. GATITO TAKES ONE WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION. GATITO SEEMS IN SHOCK FOR A MOMENT, THEN CAUGHT BY INFINITE SADNESS. GATITO LEAVES THE LETTER ON THE TABLE AND GOES WITH DIFFICULTY TO THE SAME CLOSET WHERE GROUL HAD GONE DAYS AGO AND CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. MEAU, WORRIED, TAKES THE LETTER FROM THE TABLE. IT'S SIGNED '*YOUR LOVING FATHER*' AND DATED TWO MONTHS AGO. ONE PARAGRAPH SAYS '*YOU MOTHER DIDN'T WANT ME TO MENTION ANYTHING UNTIL THE END. SHE WAS PROUD OF YOU, OF YOUR FIGHT, OF YOUR GUYS TO THE LAST DAY AND THAT'S WHY SHE MADE ME PROMISE NOT TO SAY ANYTHING. BUT THE DAMN CANCER FINALLY TOOK HER FROM ME. HER LAST WORDS WERE FOR YOU TO STAY FIRM, SON. IT HURTS LIKE NOTHING ELSE CAN HURT. BUT WE HAVE TO BE STRONG, FOR HER, DON'T WE?*' MEAU SILENTLY APPROACHES THE CLOSET BUT HEARS GATITO SOBBING AND LEAVES DISCREETLY.

SEQUENCE 28

120. CUTS TO: INT.: TANCRUARF'S OFFICE, WHERE HE SMILES SATISFIED AS HE WATCHES NAYAK THROUGH HIS WINDOW. DUKE KNOCKS AND OPENS THE DOOR.

DUKE

I was about to leave, sir... Making plans?

TANCRUARF

The effects of the Big Drought, the way we managed the gang problem and the cowardice of both liberals and conservatives all helped make of 1899 the '*conservative wave*.' It's amazing to see how fragile a society can be, how can it change so fast with the right message... And yes, we need many allies and those many allies have many demands. But managing those demands is also part of the strategy. And the fact that so many changes took place in eighteen ninety nine has made the life of senators like that Sanderf very difficult. That's why, as Sanderf tried to contain the

conservative wave, Tancruarf's wave, overflowing in so many fronts, immigration reform has come to be a forgotten issue for liberals. At the end, even if only for practical reasons, Sanderf himself had to sacrifice that issue, immigration.

And now that everybody sees the illegals as we see them, we can move to reforms that rewarded our allies and put our rivals in precarious situations. And, thanks to the Examining Post and the Nayak Daily, who is going to challenge us when we proceed to realign the political and economic forces of Nayak? Small farmers don't like our *enforcement by attrition*? Fuck them! We have the importers on our side and donors who know how to deal with illegals discreetly and don't forget to whom they should contribute to keep the immigration police at bay.

We are here to stay, Duke. We are here to stay.

SEQUENCE 29

July, 1900...

121. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM. CLOSE UP OF GROUL, VOICE OF MEAU IN THE BACKGROUND. MEAU STOPS TALKING, GATITO NODS AT HIM AND GOES TO THE TABLE, WHERE GROUL IS SAT, RESTING HIS INJURED ANKLE. HE PUTS A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER AND SITS AT HIS SIDE.

GATITO

I know what's going through your mind, Groul. We are coming from mourning our friends who were betrayed by the gangs and now this... Meau told me how you tried to help Raul to the end, that he had to pull you with all his strength... You would not have saved him. You would have only got caught... And if you don't think of yourself, think of us. Without you, I would be lost. And the group would go in disarray in a matter of weeks.

(GROUL SAID NOTHING THOUGH. HIS EYES WERE STILL FIXED ON THE TABLE. GATITO THEN CHECK HIS BANDAGES.)

You are like me. No matter what you try to do, those memories are going to keep chasing you and overwhelming you. (PAUSE). Take your time. Talk to me when you are ready. But never, never, forget that we need you here.

GATITO LEAVES HIM. GROUL TURNS AND NOW SEES GATITO TALKING TO ALFGUAU, WHO SOON AFTER, WITH MOIST EYES, LEAVES THE WAREHOUSE, FOLLOWED BY GATITO
CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE, MAIN ROOM. MEAU IS ADDRESSING THE GROUP.

MEAU

Come on, guys! Gatito has gone to see Rodolfo to see if he can help us about Raul. But right now we need a double guard and you, Rafael, go after Gatito and be his shadow!

122. CUTS TO: EXT.: SOME STREET IN MIYAFF, DAY. GATITO AND RAFAEL ARE TALKING. THEY ARE ARRIVING TO THE TRAIN STATION.

GATITO

I'm supposed to be the leader here and to this day I have not been able to come with an emergency escape plan, with an alternative place in case a raid on their warehouse takes place; with nothing of the sort. It's not that only now I'm thinking about that but...

(CUTS TO: EXT.: MIYAFF TRAIN STATION)

You can go back to the warehouse, Rafael. I'll be okay.

RAFAEL

No, Gatito. I can wait for you at the station or go fill some job applications until you come back. But you are not getting back alone. At what time are you coming back, to meet you at this same spot, Gatito?

GATITO (grinning)

Wasn't I supposed to be the leader?

RAFAEL

No if you are going to say those things. At what time, Gatito?

123. CUTS TO: INT.: TRAIN WAGON. GATITO SITS DOWN AND SURRENDERS TO HIS OWN THOUGHTS. HIS FACE IS REFLECTED ON THE WINDOW'S GLASS.

GATITO (Thinking)

Theoretically we have the numbers and numbers should give us the strength each of us alone would not have to survive in these new times. But for how long? That won't be enough to hold us together. When it comes to living, to have hope, things have not improved. On the contrary. After all this time, it's amazing that we're still thirty or so. But the people of Nayak still can't see us for what they are. They only see us through the caricatures of the Dancing Doggies or through the venomous stereotypes spread by Tancruarf. And for how long I will be able to carry the heavy burden of leading those thirty animals with all their dreams if I myself can't see a way out. Is this burden what doesn't Groul to come back, to be the old Groul?

The months we were more politically active, that burden had seemed more bearable. At least it seemed we were going somewhere... But since we have been reduced to inactivity, to

retreat and react, that burden seemed heavier, by the day... This way, soon their morale will break and the group will disintegrate. Despite the risks, despite the immigration police, we have to do something if we're going to survive as a group. But what...? And Rodolfo? He had promised to get us an alternative place, even if it was only for an emergency, a provisional place to be used if something happened to their warehouse. But no word about a campaign. Nobody wants us.

124. CUTS TO: INT. (BLURRY): COUNTER OF NONPROFIT WHERE RODOLFO WORKS, GATITO'S MEMORY OF THEIR PAST CONVERSATION.

GATITO (looking demoralized)

Thanks. I'll get two of my guys to meet you at the train station.

RODOLFO

That's not necessary. I'll walk.

GATITO

The gangs are everywhere. I'll send you two guys. That's another thing I wanted to talk to you about. Knowing that the immigration police don't care about us and that the regular police won't do anything the immigration police don't let them do, the gangs have been preying on immigrants only. But recently there have been at least two citizens victimized by those pieces of garbage, two volunteers working for a private social services office in downtown Miyaff.

RODOLFO (raising his eyes to him)

Really? That's interesting... Let me see if I can find out something about that too.

THEN THEY SHAKE HANDS AND WITH SADDENED EYES, RODOLFO SEES GATITO LEAVE.

125. CUTS TO: INT.: TRAIN WAGON. GATITO NOTICES THE SIGN OF DOWNTOWN NAYAK STATION THROUGH THE WINDOW.

126. CUTS TO: INT.: COUNTER OF NONPROFIT WHERE RODOLFO WORKS. GATITO NOTICES THAT SOMEBODY ELSE IS AT THE COUNTER.

FEMALE DOG

Rodolfo? He's on the field. He won't be coming back until after lunch. Any message?

GATITO

Ah? Yes... Tell him please that Gatito was here, that I have something urgent to discuss with him when he visits me this afternoon.

SEQUENCE 30

127. CUTS TO: EXT.: MIYAFF TRAIN STATION, LATE AFTERNOON. RODOLFO RECOGNIZES TWO MEMBERS OF GATITO'S GROUP APPROACHING HIM.

RAFAEL

Rodolfo?

RODOLFO

Yes. It's me. Gatito told me...

THE TWO ANIMALS JUST NOD AND BEGIN TO WALK WITH HIM WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING ELSE.

128. CUTS TO: EXT.: SOME STREET OF MIYAFF, POORLY MAINTAINED. RODOLFO NOTICES ANIMALS HE HADN'T SEEN BEFORE. THESE ANIMALS ARE IN GROUPS, LOITERING AROUND THE DOORS OF THE TRAIN STATION. AND HE SEES NO POLICE AROUND TO PROTECT INNOCENT COMMUTERS OR TO INTERVENE IN CASE OF SOME ASSAULT. IT'S THEN THAT HE SEES ONE OF THESE GROUPS FOLLOW A COUPLE DOWN THE OPPOSITE STREET. THEY TURN BY THE CROSSING WITH THE NEXT STREET AND HE LOSES SIGHT OF THE COUPLE AS WELL AS OF THE ANIMALS FOLLOWING THEM. THEN RODOLFO NOTICES THAT HIS TWO BODYGUARDS ARE SWEEPING THE STREETS WITH THEIR EYES.

129. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM. RODOLFO IS BRIEFING GATITO.

RODOLFO

Raul was deported by the same point of entry as the other four. That's all I could learn about him. I come directly from my friend, the chief of staff. Now, with respect to the gangs, what he has heard is gossip, speculation, but it matches what you tell me is happening here. Tancruarf is preparing himself for reelection and guess on what issue he is going to run. He needs the immigrant menace victimizing citizens; he needs to show that in Nayak and the cities where he's strong that threat has disappeared but that in cities like Mewow, Miyaff and Rouff, where liberals, or what passes for liberals these days, that threat is alive and can come back to Nayak to prey on its citizens any time.

GATITO

Tancruarf doesn't need to go after us to secure his reelection. He must want something else.

RODOLFO

Whatever... It seems that immigrants are going to be again the target of his politics... and that may pass through increasing the gang activity in Miyaff. By the way, I have asked my friend, the chief of staff, to please help me find you an emergency place that is not in any of those three cities... at least until after November, when I hope Tancruarf leaves Miyaff in peace.

GATITO

Rodolfo, you know how much I thank you for all you have done and are doing for us, but we are tired of retreating and reacting. We need to do something these elections... The morale of my guys is at an all times low.

RODOLFO

You know? On my way here I was wondering why nobody has cracked down on your group yet. I reached the conclusion that that is because Tancruarf doesn't know you exist yet. If you finally succeed, he will know you exist and then Tancruarf might decide to make of your group an example and a priority. Just see how we are struggling to find an alternative place and that we have no support. Are you ready to accept the cost that that might bring, maybe your whole group dead or deported? And what's going to be of the families of those who have families if the group is cracked down?

GATITO

I have thought many times over about that. What you say is true but here, just waiting for the tide to change by itself, with the Dancing Doggies making our situation even worse by the day, I think we gain nothing hiding. And we might have a chance to succeed, no matter how slim, if we participate in these elections. Besides that, as I said, if we keep ourselves inactive, soon the morale will break and that will mean that every animal is by itself. And I don't think their families are going to be better off if that happens.

RODOLFO (dropping his eyes)

The gangs might actually know already that you are here in this warehouse. Are you aware of that?

GATITO (nodding)

We have discussed that this afternoon, before you came. As one of my guys said, if we're going to be fall, it's better to fall under our own flag than to be taken for one of those clowns, the Dancing Doggies. How much time has passed since we first met, four years? And what has improved since then?

RODOLFO (scoffing)

Actually it has been less. We met in February ninety seven. Don't ask me how I remember that. I just do.

(RODOLFO WANTS TO SMILE NOW BUT HE ONLY GETS A SAD GRIN. THEN HE RAISED HIS EYES AGAIN)

Let me see whether I can get you something to do in Miyaff, some canvassing job like in those elections..., or in Rouff. In Mewow they are too afraid of Tancruarf to let you come back after all... Those cowardly shits!

GATITO SMILES BUT THEN PURSES HIS LIPS. THEN HE PUTS HIS HAND ON RODOLFO'S SHOULDER.

GATITO

It's very late right now. Why don't you stay here tonight and you leave tomorrow early with our guys who are employed or looking for a job? You can have breakfast with us before leaving. We wake up at five and the breakfast is at a quarter to six.

RODOLFO (smirking)

Will you give me a good breakfast?

GATITO

Yes... But we only have cold water.

RODOLFO

You are lying, aren't you?

GATITO

Yes. Not about the water. It's nothing fancy but edible. It won't kill you at least.

RODOLFO

You could never tell a good joke, Gatito.

SEQUENCE 31

130. CUTS TO: EXT. (BLURRY): GATITO'S PARENTS' HOUSE IN THE NORTHERN COUNTRY, DAY, FOGGY. IT'S A DREAM. GATITO IS HURRYING UP TO THE DOOR AND THEN IT'S OPENING IT WITH HIS OWN KEY.

131. CUTS TO: INT. (BLURRY): GATITO'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM. HIS TWO PARENTS AND MIMI ARE THERE (EVEN THOUGH HIS MOTHER IS DEAD

ALREADY). MIMI TELLS HIM SOMETHING (INAUDIBLE). GATITO SAYS SOMETHING CASUALLY (INAUDIBLE TOO).

132. CUTS TO: INT. (BLURRY): KITCHEN, HIS TWO PARENTS ARE SAT AT A COFFEE TABLE, TALKING IN A VERY LOW VOICE, WHISPERING, AND LAUGHING DISCREETLY, AS IF THEY WERE SHARING SOME FUNNY SECRET. THEN GATITO STARES AT HIS MOTHER, REALIZING THAT SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT.

133. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S DORM, NIGHT. GATITO WAKES UP. THE OTHERS ARE SLEEPING.

SEQUENCE 32

Mid July, 1900...

134. CUTS TO: EXT.: NEWSPAPER STAND, MORNING. PASSERSBY GATHER. THEY READ THE COVERS OF THE EXAMINING POST AND THE NAYAK DAILY: 'UNSTOPPABLE IMMIGRANT CRIMINALITY IN MEWOW, MIYAFF AND ROUFF,' 'A RAPE AND TWO MURDERS IN MEWOW. WHEN WILL THIS STOP?' 'CITIZENS OF NAYAK TARGETED BY CRIMINAL ALIENS IN ROUFF IN LIMITS WITH NAYAK CITY.'

CUTS TO: INT.: SMALL AUDITORIUM. SAT AT THE END OF A TABLE, DEPUTY JON SMILES BUT HIS EYES SHOW HOW UNCOMFORTABLE HE IS.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

Both papers practically omitted the explanations given by the officers of those cities: With Nayak cutting funds to their police departments and with the several restrictions to their jurisdictions imposed by Nayak state and the immigration police, their local police can do very little to protect both citizens and immigrants from these gangs, which, by the way, are not conformed only by immigrants. Worse, new state regulations are forcing them to redirect their personnel and resources to support the immigration police. Yet, at the end, both newspapers presented the crimes as committed by immigrants against citizens with the complacency of local police departments under inefficient liberal administrations. The letters repeatedly sent by the mayors of these cities asking these newspapers to rectify were ignored.

And now Tancruarf's political appointee in the Nayak Police Department has the nerve to convoke a press conference ignoring the objections made by Chief Hagel. And Hagel excused himself from the event saying that he was ill, passing me the ordeal to seat here in his name...

135. CUTS TO: INT.: SMALL AUDITORIUM. JOURNALIST ARE GATHERING AT THE ROW IN FRONT OF THE TABLE.

CUTS BACK TO CLOSE UP OF DEPUTY JON.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

The reason alleged by the political appointee to call the press conference was to report the results about cases that are actually still under investigation, cases on which Hagel could've made more progress had not been for the meddling of the immigration police.

CUTS TO: INT.: SAME TABLE. CHIEF KRUORF SMILES SATISFIED.
CUTS BACK TO CLOSE UP OF DEPUTY JON

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

And where could have Tancruarf found this Kruorf, Chief Kruorf now, and name him chief of the immigration police?

THEN THE POLITICAL APPOINTEE STEPS FORWARD TO THE PODIUM FACING THE JOURNALISTS.

POLITICAL APPOINTEE

Another couple has been attacked by a gang in the city of Mewow. The male has been beaten so savagely that he won't be able to move his body again below his waist. His fiancée has been brutally raped and is still under psychiatric treatment in Nayak hospital. The attackers have been identified as immigrants.

CUTS TO: INT.: SAME TABLE. DEPUTY JON DROPS HIS EYES TO THE TABLE.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

How can he know they were immigrants, pets or citizens if they haven't been captured? Who has identified the attackers? He's letting everybody believe it was the victims. What do the local police of Mewow have to say? They must have been the first to come to the crime scene. And why they are not here? The political appointee simply omitted the point. (GLANCING AT THE JOURNALISTS) He knows the journalists won't make these questions, not these.

POLITICAL APPOINTEE

That's why we have commissioned the immigration police with the direction of the operatives. Only one thing I can promise you. We will find these criminal immigrants.

REPORTER FROM THE EXAMINING POST (raising his hand)

Do you believe the time has come to impose harder punishments on those foreigners who, far from being grateful with the legal residents of this land, come to murder them?

POLITICAL APPOINTEE

It's up to the governor to take that decision but I personally agree about the need to increase the punishment to criminal immigrants.

REPORTER FROM THE NAYAK DAILY (raising his hand)
Isn't this proof that the liberal administrations of Mewow, Miyaff and Rouff have failed and that the state government needs to find a way to take over the police departments of those cities if their voters insist on keeping their liberal administrations?

POLITICAL APPOINTEE

I trust that the citizens of those three cities will make the right decisions in the upcoming elections and that such measures won't be necessary.

SEQUENCE 33

Early August, 1900...

136. CUTS TO: EXT.: NAYAK, POLITICAL RALLY, AT NIGHT. FROM A STAGE, TANCRUARF IS GIVING A MESSAGE WITH TAYARIH. A BANNER ANNOUNCES THAT TANCRUARF IS RUNNING FOR REELECTION.

TANCRUARF

Citizens of Nayak, my friends, in these two years we have made progress, progress indeed. The economy is more prosperous because the jobs of Nayak are now for the citizens of Nayak. Our schools are now better because they don't have to bear the burden of undeserving mongrels who before had been used to steal opportunities from our children. Today Nayak streets are safe because immigrants, used to a life of crime since the very first moment they committed their first offense by trespassing, by crossing the border illegally, have been arrested and deported. Now that they have been kicked back to the Northern Country, where they belong, our streets are finally clean and safe.

Today, because we have reformed the state government from top to bottom, the citizens of Nayak can finally trust their police department and enjoy the services they pay with their taxes. Today, free from regulations and taxes, the captains of our economy have put us in an unprecedented path of progress to be enjoyed by the legitimate citizens and residents of Nayak. Today you can tell your children that you are preserving the culture of

Nayak from the mongrelization sponsored in the past by liberals. And today you can tell your children that they will inherit from you the Southern Country instead of the Northern Country. Nevertheless, not everybody in Nayak state has followed us in this path to prosperity. Mewow, Miyaff, and Rouff have stubbornly preferred to stay in the past and that's why they are still poor cities, plagued by crime and immigrants. But because we have to protect the prosperity we are achieving, because we need to make clear to the voters of those cities that if they don't follow us, we will not tolerate the effects their leniency has on our citizens, we are here to ask you for your support to reelect me as governor of Nayak state for the Patriot Party for another term this November.

(THE ATTENDANTS CHEER AND TANCRUARF MAKES A PAUSE TO LET THEM SHOW THEIR SUPPORT)

Now, there is something that has come to my attention. Those three cities have been deliberately exporting us their criminals, their immigrants, and that has to stop. For this second term, I need your support to reform the judiciary, to increase the powers of Nayak state over cities that don't rise to our standards, and to increase the punishment for criminal immigrants. This has to stop!

(MORE CHEERING ENSUES)

Now if you share my vision, vote for the whole ticket of the Patriot Party this November. You know my record as governor. Don't let anybody lie to you. Fortunately, the press has been informing thoughtfully about my administration. If you are happy with that, vote for me. If you come from one of the three cities I have mentioned before, do something about that. Vote for the Patriot Party, so those cities can catch up with the prosperity of the rest of the state. If you are voting for Congress, let's put a conservative in the seat of Senator Sanderf, who has done nothing but fight our path to prosperity all these years and has sympathized with the same criminals that are killing and raping our children. Vote for the Patriot Party for Congress, for the whole list. Either you are with your homeland or you are with the immigrants. Either you are with your homeland or you are with the liberals who oppose prosperity. Vote for the Patriot Party! Thanks! And this November, let's vote!

MORE CHEERING FOLLOWS AND BALLOONS AND FIREWORKS TAKE OVER THE SKIES. TANCRUARF FOLLOWS FROM THE PODIUM THE EXCITEMENT OF HIS SUPPORTERS.

137. CUTS TO: EXT.: STREETS OF MIYAFF, DAY (POOR NEIGHBORHOODS SHOWING A DECLINING ECONOMY). RODOLFO IS IN HIS WAY TO MEET GATITO, FLANKED BY RAFAEL AND ANOTHER ONE OF GATITO'S GUYS.

RODOLFO (Thinking)

Neither in Mewow, nor in Miyaff or Rouff liberals want anything to do with Gatito Inmeegrante and his group. Cowardly shits! Afraid of the relentless pounding by Tancruarf's conservatives, they have limited themselves to declare that they were for 'an immigrant system that is compassionate but, above all else, based on the rule of law and the interests of the citizens of Nayak.' More, the mayors of those three cities didn't even issued a letter of protest when the declarations of the Police Department Political Appointee ignored their rectification letters. They are too afraid of Tancruarf. Fucking cowards!

Just in mid September two citizens of immigrant origin have been arrested, their citizenship revoked and deported in a summary process that broke any judicial precedent. Not a peep from this cowards... Much less from the press. And the Dancing Doggies, long discredited before the citizens of the whole state, far from exposing the arbitrary process followed against the two citizens, again invoked the public pity for those citizens of immigrant origin and their families, just as they had done before for the gang members. Result: people put the two deported citizens in the same sack with the gang members... Of course, the Examining Post and the Nayak Daily answered by publishing another series of photographs of victims of gang crime, which they present as immigrant crimes. The Dancing Doggies's answer? To begin presenting 'honest immigrant families' that tell their stories to show that not all immigrants were criminals. Next day the immigration police rounded up the so identified families and deported them in the middle of the night. How can they be so stupid?!

138. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM. RODOLFO IS TALKING TO GATITO AND HIS FRIENDS.

RODOLFO (shrugged)

I have done everything I could. I have pulled every string... But no campaign wants to risk an association with immigrants.

RAFAEL

What a bunch of cowards, Gatito! That's why Tancruarf kicks their asses! Rodolfo disagrees?

GATITO SHAKES HIS HEAD AND DROPS HIS EYES.

RODOLFO (somewhat annoyed, sarcastic)

No, Rodolfo doesn't disagree, but Rodolfo is as screwed up as you. If it were for Rodolfo, you would be in the place where those assholes and the Dancing Doggies are, but there's nothing Rodolfo can do about that.

GATITO

I understand your resentment with the Dancing Doggies. I feel the same, but remember that Rodolfo was kicked out of the Dancing Doggies with us, that he could have accommodated himself to Kim and Gustavo and still he preferred to side with us, even though that cost him a long unemployment, and that he has helped us on everything he has been able to since then. But there are things Rodolfo can't control. He's just one of us, my friend.

RAFAEL (somewhat ashamed, nodding and dropping his eyes)
Sorry, Rodolfo... It's just that this is so unfair...! We should at least be able to defend ourselves and we have to be like the tail of the Dancing Doggies. Whether we like it or not, we end up represented by those clowns. We lose our friends and on top of that we're piled on the laughingstock with them, as if we followed them.

RODOLFO NODS WITH UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE.

GATITO

They don't want us. What do you suggest then?

RODOLFO

I'd suggest that you keep a low profile for now. With some luck, next elections might find Tancruarf in a weaker position. If you do something to call attention on you and you succeed, the immigration police will target you. And they now can do pretty much whatever they want. You yourselves have seen that now not even citizens of immigrant origin are safe from Tancruarf's arbitrariness. I don't need to tell you what that may mean for you, your group, and your families. And if you don't succeed, you all will have risked your lives and families for nothing, with the additional problem that you may not end up bringing on you the attention of the citizens of Nayak but the attention of the gangs.

GATITO

I don't see it that way. It's true that it's going to be very difficult to separate our image from the Dancing Doggies' but if we fall

into inactivity that probability is not going to be very difficult but zero. I agree that there is nothing we can do to affect these elections, not even in those three cities. We don't have time to change the way they see us, but we gain nothing by going into hiding either. And it could be only worse later on because the Dancing Doggies have always had an ambiguous language with respect to the gangs.

Rodolfo, once you told me about the Study Groups of the Muslim Kitty. And I decided to read a bit more about that. You were right about us needing to make the immigrant communities learn and understand as the only way to make them engage in this fight. Without that, we'll keep retreating until we have only the cliff behind us. There will always be risks and I am aware of them, but without hope we are just waiting for the next crackdown. And only fighting can give us that hope. So, the best way we have before us to engage that community goes, elections or not, through expelling the gangs. We have to stand up to defend our communities. We have to organize the community against the gangs.

RODOLFO (scoffing, skeptical)

Do you realize that you would be fighting criminals protected by the immigration police; that just by waiting you could find in the future a more fertile ground to make the citizens of Nayak see the huge difference between you and the Dancing Doggies?

GATITO

I am just putting my idea on the floor, but I insist: Falling into inactivity will only mean to accept our uselessness or to wait for our turn to be cracked down. And we have to begin now because now the citizens of Nayak are paying attention to politics. And even if we fail on that, the sooner the immigrants of Miyaff know us, the better.

As I said, I realize our chances of success are very low but if we retreat, that probability will be zero. After November everybody will be tired of politics and it will be much more difficult to get anybody to pay attention to our message. That's why we have to try now! Besides that, what is right now on fashion is to label us as gang members, right? That's what's on the top of their minds when they think of us, right?

RODOLFO (frowning and shrugging before scoffing)

I don't know, Gatito... Wouldn't it be an irony that you called attention to you only for Tancruarf to arrest you and present you to the public opinion as a gang leader or something like that, with what you would end up helping his reelection?

GATITO

And isn't it an irony that if we don't do something to bring attention to our message, we will definitely be packed and labeled with the clowns from the Dancing Doggies or with the gangs, no matter what we do to mark a difference between them and us?

RODOLFO (shrugging and nodding again)

Well, then you know what my opinion is and... count with me on anything I can do to help. I'm going to insist about the new place for you then.

SEQUENCE 34

139. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM, AT DAY. SOME OF GATITO'S GUYS ARE PILING PIPES; OTHER ARE TRAINING COMBAT DRILLS. GATITO SUPERVISES THE WORKS. MEAU APPROACHES HIM.

MEAU

Gatito, as you asked, we have reinforced the guard at the perimeter of the warehouse, set also guards in a second perimeter at about nine hundred feet from the warehouse, in the routes that could be used to attack us. In case of an emergency, those guards will warn the guards of the first perimeter, giving the rest enough time to escape. An escape route had also been established through a hidden entrance to an extension of the Miyaff sewage system that had been abandoned years ago. It seems that after Nayak state saw that the city was being populated increasingly by immigrants, they lost interest in the project and the city couldn't afford the extension. And the exit door is at just four blocks from the warehouse.

Now, for training we have the collaboration of four members of his group who have been members of the Northern Country Army. And for weapons we'll use pipes. Are you sure?

GATITO (nodding)

No knives or knives attached to the pipes. We don't want another gang member killed. Remember we want to win the Miyaff community to our cause. A good beating will do [(Thinking) *like those the community gave in my grandpa's stories to the criminals of his town to make them understand that it wasn't a good business to prey on his town just because the police was corrupt. He said that they called their defense groups but the people preferred to call them 'rondas;' that every adult took part in parties that checked that everything was right in town and, if*

not, gave the alarm to the rest; that the ronda was the communal duty to keep the community safe.]

MEAU

Rafael reported that he has gone to talk to the immigrant community of Miyaff to invite them to participate in these new 'rondas' the whole week... As expected, they were skeptical, uncommitted. Nobody wanted to get involved even when most of them knew of somebody who had been victim of those criminals and wanted to do something about the problem. If you let me be frank, here between us, one unintended consequence of Groul's failed attempt of rescuing our friends was that the gangs thought they could make more easy money in the immigrant community of Miyaff...

GATITO

We'll have to show them how wrong they are then.

(CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. MIYAFF'S STREETS. GATITO'S GUYS ENTER THE NIGHT IN TWO GROUPS OF FOURTEEN, THE FIRST ONE LED BY GATITO; THE SECOND, BY MEAU)

(CUTS TO: EXT.: NIGHT. ANOTHER DARK STREET. TWO STARTLED RESIDENTS STARE AT THEM AND OFFER THEM MONEY. MEAU STEPS FORWARD AND INTRODUCES THE GROUP (INAUDIBLE). AS THEY MOVE, THEY SEE ONLY A FEW IMMIGRANTS, HURRYING UP TO THEIR HOMES. SOME OF THEM HAVE MONEY ON THEIR HANDS.

CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. SAME STREET. THE TWO STARTLED ANIMALS SMILE, NOD AT THEM AND LEAVE.

140. CUTS TO: EXT.: ANOTHER STREET. A RESIDENT IS TALKING TO GATITO WHEN A SCOUT, RAFAEL, COMES RUNNING AND APPROACHES GATITO.

RESIDENT (asking Gatito)

Are you with the black cat too?

RAFAEL

We have spotted gang members moving suspiciously two blocks from there, Gatito.

GATITO

What do you mean '*suspiciously*'?

RAFAEL

They are moving tightly close to the walls, like us, following a female.

GATITO (looking worried now)

How many?

RAFAEL

Maybe twenty.

GATITO (turning to one of his guys)

Go for the others. We're going with the scout. Run!

GATITO NOW BREATHES MORE HEAVILY.

141. CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. ANOTHER STREET. TWO ANIMALS, A MALE AND A FEMALE, WALK FAST, PROBABLY AFTER REALIZING ALREADY THAT THEY ARE BEING FOLLOWED. (CLOSE UP OF THE FEMALE) SHE IS A WHITE LABRADOR RETRIEVER WHO LOOKS MORE LIKE A STUDENT THAN LIKE AN IMMIGRANT FROM AROUND THERE. AND SHE LOOKS MORE WORRIED THAN FRIGHTENED. (CLOSE UP OF THE MALE) THE MALE IS A CAT WITH WORKING CLOTHES WHO LOOKS LIKE AN IMMIGRANT.

142. CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. AN ALLEY. SIX GANG MEMBERS ARE GETTING OUT OF THE ALLEY. THEY BLOCK THE PASS OF THE MALE AND THE FEMALE. SHE THEN MOVES FROM THE SIDEWALK TO THE ROAD, TRYING TO MOVE TO THE OPPOSITE SIDEWALK, BUT SOME OF THE GANG MEMBERS ARE ALREADY MOVING TO INTERCEPT HER. BEHIND HER, THE OTHER FOURTEEN GANG MEMBERS ARE MAKING THEMSELVES VISIBLE NOW, OCCUPYING BOTH THE SIDEWALK AND THE ROAD.

THE CAT THEN STEPS FORWARD AND OFFERS SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE MONEY TO ONE OF THE GANG MEMBERS WHO INTERCEPTED THEM FIRST, PRESUMABLY THE LEADER. THE APPARENT LEADER TAKES THE MONEY WITH ONE HAND AND PUNCHES THE CAT WITH THE OTHER. THE CAT FALLS TO THE GROUND AND SEEMS UNABLE TO STAND UP. THEN OTHER TWO GANG MEMBERS HURRY UP TOWARDS THE FEMALE, WHO HIT THE GANG MEMBER CLOSER TO HER WITH HER BAG AS IF IT WERE A FLAIL. THE GANG MEMBER HIT BY THE BAG FALLS TO THE FLOOR. THE OTHER ONE STEPS BACK AND MOCKS HER.

143. CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. SAME STREET. MEAU'S GROUP HAS ALREADY TAKEN POSITIONS BEHIND THE FOURTEEN GANG MEMBERS AS GATITO'S GROUP IS COMING OUT FROM ANOTHER ALLEY BEHIND THE GROUP LED BY THE DOG WHO SEEMS TO BE THE LEADER. GATITO NOTICES THE FEMALE STEPPING BACK AS THE LEADER MOVES FORWARD TO HER WITH A LASCIVIOUS FACE AND THE OTHERS ARE FORMING A CIRCLE AROUND HER AND THE FALLEN CAT, WHO STILL SEEMS TO BE PLEADING TO THE LEADER FROM THE FLOOR. THEN ALL THE EYES TURN TO THEM. NOW THE LEADER OF THE GANG LOOKS AT THEM TOO.

GANG LEADER (with a menacing demeanor)
Who the fuck are you?

GATITO (calmly)
We are tired of your kind preying in our neighborhood. Leave her alone and don't come back.

GANG LEADER (laughing first, then staring at Gatito with eyes injected with hatred)
If you don't leave right now motherfucker, we are going to fucking kill you!

GATITO (getting really angry)
Then *you* are fucked!

GATITO MAKES A HAND SIGNAL TO THE OTHERS TO FOCUS ON THE FEMALE AND THE FALLEN CAT AND WAITS FOR THE ENRAGED DOG, THE GANG LEADER WHO NOW IS RUNNING TOWARDS HIM, GETTING READY TO TAKE HIM DOWN. BUT, AT THE MOMENT OF THE IMPACT, GATITO CONTAINS HIM BY PUTTING HIS HANDS ON HIS SHOULDERS AND JUMPING BACKWARDS TO AVOID THE TAKE DOWN. AND WHEN GATITO NOTICES THAT THE ONRUSH OF HIS ATTACKER HAS LOST POWER, HE GRABS HIS EARS AND PUSHES FORWARD, IMPACTING HIS FACE WITH HIS KNEES RELENTLESSLY UNTIL THE GANG LEADER FALLS TO THE FLOOR SEMI UNCONSCIOUS. THEN THE OTHER GANG MEMBERS RUSH TO ATTACK HIM, BUT GATITO'S GROUP REACTS IMMEDIATELY WITH FURY TO PROTECT THEIR LEADER, STRIKING THE GANG MEMBERS' HEADS INDISCRIMINATELY WITH THE PIPES. THEN A DOG FROM GATITO'S GROUP REACHES THE FEMALE, WHO, STILL CONFUSED AND AFRAID, IS THREATENING TO HIT HIM TOO WITH HER BAG. BUT AT THAT MOMENT THE FALLEN CAT, WHO NOW IS GETTING BACK ON HIS FEET, RAISES HIS VOICE TO ASK THE FEMALE TO ACCEPT THE DOG'S HELP.

FALLEN CAT
He is with Gatito Inmeegrante! He is good!

CUTS TO: EXT.: A WALL, AGAINST WHICH SOME GANG MEMBERS HAVE BEEN CORNERED. HAVING LOST THEIR NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY, THEY ARE WAVING THEIR KNIVES, TRYING TO KEEP GATITO'S GUYS AWAY.
CUT TO: EXT.: SAME STREET. GATITO, WITH A BRUISE ON THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS FACE, IS NOW ADDRESSING THE BEATEN GANG MEMBERS.

GATITO
Take these pieces of shit with you and leave. Don't ever come back or it will be much worse next time. There won't be another warning for you.

THE GANG MEMBERS HELP THEIR FRIENDS TO STAND UP AND CLEAN THE BLOOD ON THEIR FACES AS THEY GET READY TO LEAVE. THAT'S WHEN THEY HEAR THE OTHER ANIMAL YELLING FROM THE OTHER END OF THE STREET.

BIG BLACK CAT

I'm tired of your shit in my hood! Now you are going to get busy with me, you pieces of shit!

CUTS TO: EXT.: THE OTHER END OF THE STREET, FROM WHERE A BIG BLACK CAT WITH A GROUP OF ABOUT TWENTY BLACK ANIMALS IS COMING. THE BIG BLACK CAT, WHO LOOKS ANGRY AND IS ARMED WITH A PIPE, MOVES DECIDEDLY TOWARDS GATITO. GATITO GETS ON GUARD, READY TO COUNTERATTACK. FOR A MOMENT GATITO NOTICES THAT THE FEMALE, THE CAT AND THE DOG HE HAD SENT TO HELP THEM ARE ALL LOOKING AT HIM. THEN THE BIG CAT SWIFTLY RAISES HIS CLUB AND IS READY TO STRIKE GATITO ON THE HEAD, BUT GATITO INTERCEPTS THE BIG CAT'S CLUB WITH HIS, INCLINING HIS CLUB TO THE RIGHT AT THE LAST MOMENT TO LET THE FEROCIOUS STRENGTH OF THE STRIKE PULL THE BLACK CAT FORWARD AND MAKE HIM LOSE HIS BALANCE IN THAT DIRECTION.

THE BIG CAT PUTS HIS HANDS ON THE FLOOR TO NOT FALL AND THAT'S WHEN GATITO CLUBS HIM ON THE RIBS. THE BIG BLACK CAT FALLS TO THE FLOOR AND FROM THERE HE IS USING THE CLUB AS A SPEAR TO STRIKE GATITO IN THE STOMACH AS HE APPROACHES HIM. GATITO HAS TO STEP BACK AND THE BIG BLACK CAT GETS BACK ON HIS KNEES IMMEDIATELY BUT STILL LOOKS HURT, SO HE RAISES HIS CLUB TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM ANOTHER POSSIBLE STRIKE INSTEAD OF GETTING BACK ON HIS FEET OR ATTACKING. BUT THE NEXT STRIKE DOESN'T COME.

SOME ANIMAL (yelling)

The police! The police!

THE FIGHT STOPS AND BOTH GATITO AND THE BIG CAT CALL THEIR FOLLOWERS TO LEAVE. AS HE LEAVES, GATITO CAN SEE ONCE MORE THE IMMIGRANT CAT AND THE FEMALE DOG, THEIR STARTLED EYES STILL ON THEM, BUT ESPECIALLY HER EYES ON HIM. (CLOSE UP OF THE FEMALE). AND THEN HE RUNS AWAY WITH HIS GROUP.

144. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM, LATE NIGHT. IT'S LATE BUT THERE'S STILL FRENETIC ACTIVITY INSIDE. AND ONLY NOW GATITO REALIZES THAT HE IS SHAKING. A MEDICINE STUDENT IS HELPING THE WOUNDED. THEN GATITO BREATHEES DEEPLY AND CALMS DOWN.

SEQUENCE 35

Next morning...

145. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM, EARLY MORNING. GATITO WAKES UP AND TOUCHES THE INFLAMMATION ON THE SIDE OF HIS FACE WHERE HE HAD BEEN HIT BY THE GANG LEADER.

GATITO

Meau, send fourteen of our guys in seven groups to learn Miyaff's first reactions to the *ronda*. Send three to the train station and the other four to the houses of the immigrants we found yesterday. Just in case, keep the rest here if we have to react rapidly to something.

CUTS TO: INT. WAREHOUSE. MEAU IS BACK AND RAFAEL IS WITH HIM.

RAFAEL

Fortunately this time the answer is positive. The fourteen came back with lists of names and the times when they could participate in the *rondas*. (WHISPERING NOW) Even Groul, who had looked distant and disengaged since that day... even him looks much better now. So, as you asked, the four former soldiers will train the new volunteers too, but not in the warehouse.

GROUL GETS IN THE ROOM FOLLOWED BY RODOLFO.

GROUL

Rodolfo is here...

GATITO

Rodolfo, come in. What could you learn about the reaction to our first *ronda*?

RODOLFO (looking amused)

Yeah, it seems the police was tipped by the gangs, but that was the regular police, called at the last moment by the immigration police to assist them in a crackdown of last minute. In short, it seems that Hagel doesn't have control of the fucking police... at least, in cases like this or in cities like Miyaff. That's why they showed up.

About the big black cat, I don't know anything for sure, but the police reports are now being censored more tightly by the immigration police... Anyway, give me a few days to see if I can find out something more.

Come on, cat, show daddy that little face... Who struck you that hard?

(RODOLFO, GRINNING, MAKES A PAUSE TO GIVE HIS SANDWICH ANOTHER BITE. GATITO STARES AT HIM.)

Okay, okay... Now, about the female, I have heard of many citizens coming to Miyaff, Mewow and Rouff as volunteers... working for non profits giving legal aid... help in general to immigrants. Nevertheless, since the gangs began targeting citizens too, most of those citizens gave up and left. Now, if you ask me what a female like that could be doing there at that time of the night, I don't know. When are you going to do the *ronda* thing again?

GATITO (before swallowing the food in his mouth)
Tonight.

RODOLFO
Isn't that too soon? I don't think you will catch the gangs off guard again...

GATITO
No. Ten immigrants have pledged, volunteered to be part of the *ronda* tonight. We haven't trained them yet, but with growing numbers...

RODOLFO (nodding and after giving a sip to his cup of coffee)
Maybe I was wrong. Maybe this time you can succeed, Gatito.
(MAKING ANOTHER PAUSE TO GIVE ANOTHER BITE TO HIS SANDWICH AND THEN FROWNING AS HE LOOKS GATITO STRAIGHT TO THE EYES)

That means that this time you can get famous. I don't need to tell you what that means... Remember that they have even deported naturalized citizens...
(RODOLFO SIGHS)

I don't know why I try to put some sense in your head... I might get soon the new place you want, the one you need in case you have to run away in a rush from here... I might get new donations for you too.

GATITO (grinning, skeptical)
New donations?

RODOLFO
Yes, donations, money animals sympathizing with you send you because they like you.

GATITO
I know what a donation is, but if they are sending it to me is because they know who I am, right?

RODOLFO (scoffing but still frowned)

They don't know you. The donations are for a crazy cat who does the things you do, a stubborn pussycat I don't know what I've done to deserve... If I am warning you about the dangers of getting famous too soon, I'm not going to be the one to expose you, right?

GATITO (grinning)

Just kidding.

RODOLFO

You're kidding me? Cat, that's an improvement. You still can't tell a joke. But that's an improvement.

GATITO

Another coffee, dog? Don't worry. We'll escort you to the train station. Those bad gang members won't take advantage of your innocence... again.

RODOLFO STARES AT HIM, AMUSED AGAIN.

SEQUENCE 36

August, 1900...

146. CUTS TO: EXT.: STREETS OF MIYAFF, at NIGHT. ANOTHER CLASH BETWEEN THE *RONDA* AND THE GANGS. THE GANGS RUN AWAY PRECIPITOUSLY. MEAU TURNS TO GATITO.

MEAU

They are not coming that much now. I think they have realized that preying on Mewow and Rouff is going to be easier. Last numbers, Gatito? As of today, about five hundred of Miyaff animals have pledged to take part in the *rondas*.

GATITO

It's time we pay them a visit, to show them the example of Miyaff. Who do we know there, in Mewow and Rouff too, Mewow and Rouff. The *rondas* are not a solution to the main problem, but can be used as a platform from which he can offer them solutions to the main problems.... Well, let's go. We have work to do in the morning.

(CUTS TO: INT.: PLATFORM AT MIYAFF TRAIN STATION, AFTERNOON. GATITO IS EXITING THE TRAIN WAGON. RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM THERE SHE IS, THE FEMALE LABRADOR RETRIEVER HE HAD RESCUED THAT NIGHT FROM THE GANG. FOR A MOMENT HE WANTS TO SMILE, BUT THEN

HE DECIDES TO PRETEND THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW THE FEMALE. NEVERTHELESS, HE STAYS FROZEN AT THE PLATFORM, IN FRONT OF THE FEMALE. SHE RECOGNIZES HIM, SMILED AND STEPS FORWARD TO HIM.)

FEMALE (with a naughty smile)

I know you! You are the cat who saved me from the gang that night, aren't you?

GATITO (nervous)

You must be taking me for somebody else...

FEMALE

Bullshit! It was you!

GATITO (clumsily)

Are you a volunteer?

FEMALE (giggling)

A volunteer? Ah! You mean if I work for a non profit?

GATITO

Well... yes.

FEMALE

Yes, I do. That's all you want to know?

GATITO (trying to calm down)

There's no non profit around there...

FEMALE (turning her eyes to the exit door)

You want to talk here?

GATITO NODS AND FOLLOWS HER.

147. CUTS TO: EXT.: STREET OUTSIDE THE TRAIN STATION.

FEMALE

No, there is not. I work for a non profit in downtown Miyaff, one working on immigrants rights... if there're still any. That night I had gone to a house ten blocks from where you found me. (THEN SHE STOPS SMILING) A couple had been deported and their children had been left alone at home with their older brother. The cat who was with me was the uncle. It was three children. We had to take the three children to his house before the immigration police could find the house. That was something we could not leave for the day after and we're now pretty

shorthanded at the non profit. He, the uncle, was walking me to the train station when those thugs intercepted us.

GATITO

At least you are not with the immigration police...

FEMALE

With those fuckers?! Hell no!

GATITO

And... if you let me be curious.... How did you take down that gang member... when you hit him with your bag?

FEMALE

The bag? Ah! (SHE GIGGLES) Two bricks... Two bricks I picked up in my way to the train station.

GATITO LAUGHS DISCREETLY.

GATITO

That was a crazy night. Then we had to fight another gang led by a big black cat...

FEMALE

The big black cat? He is not a gang member. I've heard that his name is Mac, Miac or something like that. For some reason he went vigilante too, like you, just a week before, in Rouff. I don't know him. It's just that I've heard of him. Hey! You want to have coffee with me? You saved me, after all. Inviting you coffee is the least I can do...

(GATITO LOOKS A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE AND IS ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING)

Besides that, if you don't have coffee with me now you won't get to have a date with me. Ah! My name is Rachy Corry, and yours?

GATITO (dropping his eyes and laughing)

Joaquin Gatito Migran.

RACHY (giggling, repeat solemnly)

Joaquin Gatito Migran.

GATITO LAUGHS TOO.

SEQUENCE 37

October 1900...

148. CUTS TO: EXT.: STREETS OF MIYAFF, PARADE OF THE DANCING DOGGIES, DAY. GUSTAVO AND KIM ARE AT THE FRONT WAVING WITH THEIR HANDS. AS PART OF THE PARADE, MEMBERS OF THE DANCING DOGGIES ARE DANCING AND OFFERING SAMPLES OF TYPICAL DISHES. THE RECEPTION IS COLD THOUGH. PASSERSBY AVOID THEM. THEN THEY FIND A GROUP OF ANIMALS BLOCKING THEIR PASS. THEY LOOK UPSET. CUTS TO: EXT.: SAME STREET. ONE OF THE DISGRUNTLED ANIMALS STEPS FORWARD IN FRONT OF GUSTAVO AND KIM.

ANIMAL

We are representatives of the Committee and Study Circles of Miyaff and you're not welcomed here. How many immigrants have you saved today with your dancing, Gustavo... or should I say Kim?

GUSTAVO (looking more confused than annoyed)
My friend, this is an authorized march and you are blocking it...

ANIMAL (turning to Kim)

I am a member of the committee of Miyaff. Okay, Kim. I'm done talking to your puppet. I'm here exercising my right to speak freely. You, on the other hand, have taken over the representation of immigrants and have played with our lives irresponsibly...

GUSTAVO (raising his voice)

Sir, I think you are out of order.

ANIMAL (ignoring Gustavo, turning to the attendants)

I call to an assembly right now. Do I have your support?

(ALMOST ALL THE ATTENDANTS CHEER UP AND RAISE THEIR HANDS. THEN THE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE RETAKES HIS QUESTION)

Now we have an assembly. Again, how many immigrants have you saved with your dancing today?

KIM LOOKS WORRIED.

GUSTAVO

Sir, let us first finish with our march. Then we can have an assembly later... And I don't know from where you get that we have misused...

ANOTHER ANIMAL (talking to Gustavo)

Don't play with us, *Kim*. We know that the last time you spoke effectively in favor of an immigrant, it was a gang member. We know that you've gotten donations and connections in our name and never been able to make a proposal to actually help us. We

know that you have never spoken against Tancruarf and his minions, who have made of the state police the bodyguards of the gangs and defunded our local police. We know that you have never spoken against Tancruarf and his minions when they left the border to gangs that rob, abuse and kill our friends and relatives... And we know that you blocked Gatito Inmeegrante when he wanted to help us working with you through your shitty Dancing Doggies.

GUSTAVO (nervous)

My friend, I think you don't have complete information... We have been making progress...

THEN KIM PULLS GUSTAVO'S ARM AND WHISPERS AT HIS EAR. AFTER THAT, GUSTAVO TURNS HIS BACK ON THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE STUDY CIRCLES.

GUSTAVO

Dear friends, for safety reasons beyond our control, I am forced to cancel the march. To our assistants, call the trucks to pick up the equipment.

THEN KIM DIRECTS SOME OF THEIR ASSISTANTS AND A FENCE OF BODYGUARDS ISOLATES GUSTAVO FROM NEW UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS. AS THE DANCING DOGGIES LEAVE, THE IMMIGRANTS OF MIYAFF BEGIN TO CHANT "GATITO INMEEGRANTE! GATITO INMEEGRANTE! GATITO INMEEGRANTE!"

SEQUENCE 38

November 1900...

148. CUTS TO: EXT.: TANCRUARF'S OFFICE, AT NIGHT. TANCRUARF IS LYING ON HIS TALL CHAIR, THINKING WITH DREAMY EYES. DUKE KNOCKS AND GETS IN. TANCRUARF NODS AT HIM.

DUKE

I have just summarized all the reports we've received, sir. November brought us no surprises. You were not just reelected but we're now a regional power. We've even won more seats in the House for the Patriot Party. We've won districts they had no won before in Nayak.

TANCRUARF (looking pleased)

All that will give us more leverage with Speaker Ateh Tayarih. We won't need to trust Ateh the Liar, especially now that we are working to extend our power to other states. Many members of

Congress, especially the new ones, were now more loyal to us than to Taryih. The pledges at work...

The plan for the next two years is to expand our majority in the House and to launch our own candidates for the Patriot Party Senate primaries. And, if I get reelected once more as governor of Nayak, the next step is the presidency. In four years. (SIGHS) If our model has worked in Nayak, there is no reason it should not work in the other states. And now we had four years before the next general elections to make it work.

The only thing that would have made this victory better would have been to get rid of that Senator Sanderf. The old fuck survived... I have more senators than he has. The pledges at work. But I would have felt much better without Sanderf in our way... His defeat would have given us more prestige inside the Patriot Party and would have eliminated a critical voice inside our own state. And then we have the mayors of Mewow, Rouff, and Miyaff. Those cowardly fucks have barely retained their seats by proposing an additional tax on immigrants before the elections. They are not that intelligent to come with something like that. Do you know of some new talent that is feeding them ideas, Duke?

DUKE SHAKES HIS HEAD.

(CUTS TO: INT.: BACKROOM, NIGHT. THE COMMITTEE OF MIYAFF DEBATES. RODOLFO, GATITO AND GROUL ARE THERE)

RODOLFO

Mayor, you have to hear us. Sanderf's Chief of Staff vows for me. And you see that we are moving every immigrant, especially in Miyaff, where we are more organized, to find every animal who can vote and made sure it does. We have made aware the immigrant community see that our lives will turn to hell if the Patriot Party candidate wins. But you have to collaborate with us! We have engaged them like never before, but we fail, they will get back to apathy.

(CUT TO: INT.: MIYAFF MAYOR'S OFFICE. RODOLFO PUTS HIS HAND ON GATITO'S SHOULDER.)

The idea of the additional tax and the first draft were Gatito's. The idea of passing it in September, so by November everybody could see that the surtax worked and that the immigrants of Miyaff were at least a new source of revenue for the city was also his. We don't like the idea of the surtax but, compared to a Patriot Party mayor, the small surtax is a small price to pay indeed. And then, we only asked you that if you lost, the records of the immigrants registered to pay the additional tax would be destroyed.

And yes, aware of the image Tancruarf has painted of immigrants, we agreed to your request of us not making open

demonstrations of support that could be capitalized by your rival. More, an additional tax was something not easy to sell to an immigrant community impoverished by Tancruarf policies and yet Gatito, the committee and the study groups used all their prestige to present this alternative as the lesser evil compared to that of having a Patriot Party mayor. All that allowed you to run telling the citizens of Miyaff about your plans for the city with the new revenue collected from the immigrant tax, as it came to be known. And the mayors of Mewow and Rouff followed Miyaff's example just in time to be reelected, though by razor-thin margins, what will give you allies when Tancruarf rams against the rights of Miyaff. Already, my friend, the chief of staff, told me that the state attorney announced that he's planning to challenge in court the immigrant tax as unconstitutional. And that is a threat, though probably an empty one because Tancruarf doesn't have enough power in the state supreme court to guarantee a decision in his favor... yet. So, to keep the immigrant community on your side despite the tax, Gatito and I have brought you a list of requests for our community...

THE MAYOR, SINKS ON HIS CHAIR, SIGHS AND FINALLY NODS. HIS FACE SHOWS HE DOESN'T LIKE WHERE THE CONVERSATION IS GOING BUT ALSO SOME RESIGNATION. ONLY THEN RODOLFO CONTINUES.

SEQUENCE 39

Early December, 1900...

149. CUTS TO: INT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM. GATITO SHARES THE TABLE WITH GROUL AND MEAU. IN FRONT OF THE TABLE, A DOZEN OF HIS GUYS WAIT WITH EXPECTATION.

GATITO

I know we can't see yet any real change with respect to what matters the most to us, a real chance at legalization, but we have made progress. We have organized the community of Miyaff and challenged the Dancing Doggies inside the immigrant community. You know me. I have been always truthful to you. And there's still a lot we have to do in Miyaff and beyond. But we're in the right path now.

ALFGUAU (raising his hand with a smirk on his face)

I put a motion for our friend Gatito Inmeegrante to inform the assembly about the female he has been dating close to Miyaff train station.

GATITO LOOKS SURPRISED. MEAU BEGINS TO CHUCKLE AND EVEN GROUL IS SMIRKING.

GATITO (stuttering)

My friend, I-I don't think... the-the assembly should...

MEAU (a smirk on his face too)

I support the motion. This assembly should see into this important matter. This cat is in love (TURNING TO GATITO WITH A SERIOUS EXPRESSION NOW) and I believe this assembly needs a report.

GATITO (embarrassed)

Okay, guys... Enough of jokes! We have important things to discuss...

RAFAEL (smirking)

Yes, Gatito but we have to vote the motion first.

RAFAEL IS CHUCKLING NOW AND MEAU IS CALLING TO A VOTE.

MEAU

Okay, all in favor of the motion raise your hands!

MOST RAISE THEIR HANDS.

MEAU

Okay, as those who are working don't count for quorum, we have approved the motion.

GATITO'S GUYS, SMIRKING, WITH EXPECTING FACES, ARE WAITING FOR GATITO TO PRESENT HIS REPORT. SOME CAN'T HELP IT AND BEGIN CRACKING UP.

GATITO (embarrassed)

Come on, guys! Let's be serious!

RAFAEL

It's the rules, Gatito. You have to present your report.

GATITO

That's personal, guys!

RAFAEL

But Gatito, you have told us to always follow the rules. We have voted and we are waiting for your report.

GATITO

Okay, but this stays here. Damn it, Meau! (PAUSE) Well, her name is Rachy...

GATITO'S GUYS LOOK HAPPY, MORE HAPPY THAN PRANKISH, HAPPY FOR GATITO. THEN RAFAEL RAISES HIS HAND AGAIN.

RAFAEL

I have to present another motion, Gatito. We have to invite Rachy to the warehouse to address the next assembly.

GATITO

Ah? No. That can't be.

MEAU (looking serious)

I believe that motion is important. I second it. Vote?

GATITO'S GUYS, LAUGHING AGAIN, PRANKISH AGAIN, RAISE THEIR HANDS TO APPROVE THE MOTION.

MEAU

Motion approved...

GATITO (embarrassed again)

Well, I'll implement it when the security conditions make it possible. Session adjourned!

SEQUENCE 40

Mid December, 1900...

150. CUTS TO: EXT.: SOME WAREHOUSE IN ROUFF, EARLY MORNING. AN OLD DOG FROM ROUFF IS GREETING THEM. THE THIRTY VOLUNTEERS FROM ROUFF ARE IN FRONT OF THEM, STANDING AT ATTENTION.

OLD DOG

At last we meet, Gatito! I wanted to thank you for your guys. They have made a great job organizing our *ronda*. It was a pretty chaotic start... Yeah, a hell of a start. But we're finding our own path I think.

GATITO

Glad to know. This should be the start for a closer collaboration between Rouff and Miyaff. But the military instructors tell me that they would like to stay another week or so, to train your guys in combat techniques a bit more...

Anyway, they tell me yesterday they had a simulacrum and that today will be having their first experience.

OLD DOG

Yeah... They're ripe enough for a first experience. One thing is training and another the real thing. They told me. And with that extra training, they'll be tough enough for next times. Let's see, Gatito. Let's see. Let's hope they don't fuck up...

151. CUTS TO: EXT.: SOME STREET IN ROUFF. GATITO IS TALKING TO AN OLD DOG.

GATITO (somewhat hesitant at first)

Have you ever heard of a big black cat of name Mac or Miac?

OLD DOG (grinning amused now)

That cat! His name is Miac and yeah, he is a very unruly cat. He got tired of us and created his own patrol weeks ago, even before you created yours, full of big cats and dogs, all black like him. Nevertheless, he wanted to be the boss. He didn't want volunteers with schedules, but a permanent unit. His unit.

(NOW THE OLD DOG IS CHUCKLING)

He is a very brave cat. I know him since he was a kitten, but he did get my attention when he alone fought five gang members with a pipe, rocks and, at the end, with his bare hands. But had not been for other immigrants who ran to help him, the gang members would've killed him probably. Why are you asking?

GATITO SPEAKS (INAUDIBLE). (CLOSE UP OF THE OLD DOG LAUGHING)

OLD DOG (still amused)

He must've been following a gang and took you for members of the gang. Miyaff gangs those days were crossing daily to victimize our community and he must've been following them... You said he got beaten? I would've liked to see his face at that moment... (CHUCKLES) What happens is that both Miac and the gangs are not used to the kind of fight your instructors have taught us here.

(THE OLD DOG LAUGHS AGAIN)

I would've liked to see that cat's face...

152. CUTS TO: ROUFF STREETS, at NIGHT. THE ROUFF *RONDA* BEGINS TO PATROL THE DARK STREETS AND TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES TO THE PASSERSBY.

GATITO

Even even the old and the handicapped have found ways to participate. They watch through their windows with the lights off and, if they see something revealing gang presence, they use pots and whistles to bring the attention of the *ronda*. Not just that, they use a different string of sounds to reveal the presence of the police. They have become our eyes and made of the *ronda* an omnipresent entity.

OLD DOG (nodding approvingly)

You have those nerdy words, son... But I'm taking note. You have made a friend in Rouff for life, Gatito.

THEN A SCOUT, A HOUND, INTERRUPTS THEIR CONVERSATION AND WHISPERS.

HOUND

Somebody is trying to surround us, Gatito

GATITO (frowning)

Send the other scout for help. Warn the others. We have to take a defensive position and find routes of escape just in case. Remember the group is still green.

SOUNDS, STEPS AND THUDS, MAKE EVIDENT THAT SOMEBODY IS TAKING POSITIONS. GATITO REMAINS ALERT BUT CALMED. GATITO CHECKS THE TIME IN HIS WATCH. AND THEN HE SEES SOMEBODY AT THE OTHER END OF THE STREET.

CUTS TO: THE OTHER END OF THE STREET. IT WAS THE BIG BLACK CAT, WHO IS NOW WALKING TOWARDS HIM LEADING HIS GROUP.

MIAC

Gatito Inmeegrante? Are you Gatito Inmeegrante?

GROUL (stepping forward)

Who is asking?

MIAC (dismissively)

I'm not asking you, doggie.

GROUL (snarling)

But it's me who is answering, pussy.

THEN GATITO STEPS FORWARD AND PUTS A HAND ON GROUL'S SHOULDER. WHEN GROUL TURNS TO HIM, HE CAN SEE A SMIRK IN GATITO'S FACE. GROUL LOOKS CONFUSED NOW.

GATITO (whispering)

No problem, Groul. It's Miac. (TURNING TO MIAC NOW) It's me!

BEHIND GATITO, THE LOCAL LEADER CAN BARELY REFRAIN HIMSELF FROM LAUGHING OUT LOUD.

MIAC (smirking, his eyes fixed on Gatito)

So you're the pussycat who caught me by surprise the other day in Miyaff? Welcome to my hood, Gatito Inmeegrante. My name is Miac. So you're the famous Gatito Inmeegrante? Let my guys give your guys a tour while we talk.

GROUL LOOKS AT GATITO WITH ALARM BUT GATITO NODS.

GATITO

It's okay, Groul. Replace me at the front of the *ronda*.

MIAC (now closer to Gatito)

First of all, that day we were following those motherfuckers who had beaten and cut a friend of ours after robbing him his wages of the whole week. Is it true that you beat unconscious that motherfucker gang leader? Yes, you did. I know that. That makes you my friend. Miac...

MIAC EXTENDS HIS HAND TO GATITO. SOMEWHAT ASTONISHED, GATITO OFFERS HIM HIS AND BOTH SHAKE HANDS. MIAC SMILES NOW.

OLD DOG

Always cocky, Miac Tony.

MIAC (turning to the old dog)

Who invited you to this conversation, ma'am? Go prepare coffee, light a candle or inspect the pavement. Make yourself useful.

OLD DOG (laughing again, this time even louder)

I know what you... ha, ha, ha, ha... track the gang leader and... ha, ha, ha, ha... beaten by Gatito Inmeegrante.

MIAC (somewhat embarrassed)

You are so funny, you old joke! Any real animal can make a mistake! At least I have been trying. So far, you have been just making poses only.

BUT THE OLD DOG KEEPS LAUGHING AND MIAC TURNS TO GATITO WITH A SMIRK ON HIS FACE.

MIAC

Do you see what I have to deal with here? I swore that I would help the animals of my community and that no motherfucker gang would prey on them if it depended on me with just one exception... That exception is this old joke.

(MIAC POINTS WITH HIS HAND TO THE OLD DOG, WHO KEEPS LAUGHING)

If a gang preys on him, I might even help them.

(THEN MIAC SEEMED TO ADOPT A MORE SERIOUS TONE. THE LOCAL LEADER UNDERSTANDS AND STOPS LAUGHING)

You've been cracking up at my expenses old timer, but have you told him more about me?

(THE LOCAL LEADER SHAKES HIS HEAD)

Come to my house tomorrow evening, Gatito Inmeegrante. I'll invite you dinner. Bring the old timer too if you want. He knows where I live.

THEN MIAC GETS BACK TO HIS GROUP WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE AND THEY LEAVE TOGETHER.

SEQUENCE 41

Next day...

153. CUTS TO: EXT.: A HUMBLE HOUSE, NIGHT. THE OLD DOG KNOCKS AT THE DOOR IN A PARTICULAR WAY. AFTER A FEW SECONDS, MIAC HIMSELF SHOWS UP AT THE DOOR WITH A WIDE SMILE.

MIAC (smirking)

So you didn't get lost, old timer.

OLD DOG (smirking too)

Have you made a decent meal for your guests, fatty?

MIAC

I hope you brought your false teeth, you old timer. Come on! Get in before somebody thinks I'm running a museum here illegally! Gatito, get in! Feel yourself at home!

GATITO (trying to suppress a laugh)

Thanks.

OLD DOG

Can you believe that I know him since he was a kitten, when I still thought he was going to grow to be smart?

BLACK FEMALE CAT (coming from another room)

It's been a long time... Why haven't you come before? Has it been because of this quarrelsome cat?

(THE FEMALE THEN HUGS THE OLD DOG. MIAC IS LAUGHING BEHIND HER. THEN SHE TURNS TO GATITO WITH THE SAME SPONTANEOUS SMILE)

And who is our guest here?

MIAC

Remember I told you about the cat I found that night in Miyaff...?

OLD DOG

The cat who beat him.

MIAC (pretending to be annoyed)

The cat who got me by surprise.

FEMALE (turning to Gatito)

So you beat my husband?

GATITO SEEMS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED, TRYING TO ARTICULATE AN ANSWER. THEN A SMALL TUXEDO KITTEN SHOWS UP BY THE DOOR FROM WHERE THE FEMALE HAD COME. MIAC PRACTICALLY JUMPS IN FRONT OF THE KITTEN AND RAISES HIM OVER HIS HEAD. THE KITTEN GIGGLES. THEN MIAC TURNS TO GATITO WITH THE KITTEN ON HIS ARMS.

MIAC (proud)

This is my son Miac.

THE LOCAL LEADER APPROACHES THE KITTEN WITH HIS ARMS EXTENDED AND A SMILE ON HIS FACE. THE SMALL KITTEN SMILES BACK. MIAC THEN TURNS HIS BACK ON THE OLD DOG WITH THE KITTEN STILL ON HIS ARMS, AS IF DENYING HIS REQUESTED.

MIAC

Have you got disinfected of old germs and all?

THEN MIAC TURNS BACK TO THE OLD LEADER AND PUTS HIS SON ON HIS ARMS. THE KITTEN GIGGLES AGAIN.

FEMALE (glancing disapprovingly at her husband and extending her hand to Gatito)

And I'm Giselle. This cat has no manners

KITTEN

Daddy crazy...

THE KITTEN BEGINS TO GIGGLE AGAIN.

OLD DOG (his kind eyes on the kitten, who now is playing with his ears)
He's smart.

MIAC

Giselle, this old timer here's asking me if we have a decent meal for him.

OLD DOG

You didn't let him help, Giselle, did you?

GISELLE

Of course not. I want my guests happy and asking for second helpings.

THE OLD LEADER LAUGHS. THE KITTEN, UNINTERESTED OF THE OTHERS, KEEPS PLAYING WITH HIS EARS. AND MIAC TURNS TO GATITO.

MIAC

You see what you get when you get married, Gatito? (TURNING TO GISELLE) Hey Giselle, before I forget, take me a photograph with Gatito!

OLD DOG (serious now)

I don't think it's a good idea to have photographs of us running around...

MIAC

Come on, old timer! I'll be careful! When I want something hidden in a good place, I ask Giselle to hide it for me. Right my love?

GISELLE NODS WITH RESIGNED EXPRESSION.

MIAC

Oh, Come on, Giselle! You'll hide it for me. I won't take it with me outside... I promise! Old timer...

154. CUTS TO: INT.: MIAC'S LIVING ROOM. MIAC BRINGS GATITO TO HIS BEDROOM. THE MUFFLED SOUND OF THE OLD DOG AND GISELLE TALKING COMES FROM BEHIND THE DOOR AS MIAC CLOSES IT BEHIND HIM.

MIAC

You are a bit stiff, but I like you, Gatito. I'd like we could do something together. Besides, those gangs have retreated from Miyaff. Though I don't think they have gone for good.

GATITO

Of course, I'd also like we could do something together. Now that we know each other...

MIAC

The problem is that I don't like taking orders. I wouldn't take orders even from you, Gatito Inmeegrante and all.

GATITO

I don't give orders. It's just that they trust me over there in Miyaff. We have assemblies and everybody speaks his mind. I just execute what everybody has already decided and... they trust me. Why don't you give the Rouff *ronda* a try?

MIAC (smirking, skeptical)

Do you think I can do a good job?

GATITO

Of course I do! The cats and dogs who follow you, they trust you...

MIAC

But you know I'm hard headed, don't you? I've argued with everybody in the Rouff immigrant committee, everybody but the old timer.

GATITO

Miac, I've fought many so-called leaders too. I'm an undesirable at the Dancing Doggies' offices...

MIAC

The Dancing Doggies are assholes! I hate those assholes! They've done nothing but making us look like fools before everybody! That's why nobody takes our suffering seriously in Nayak!

GATITO

As a leader you first have to learn to listen. You won't always like what others do and sometimes you'll have to reach compromises... and live with those compromises. It is not easy. And if you need a motivation to stay calmed when you're about to explode, think of those you love. Think of your family.

(MIAC GRINS SKEPTICALLY)

Come on! Give the *ronda* a try. If you need help, I'm close, in Miyaff...

MIAC (his expression turns from playful to a bit somber)
I don't know why but I trust you, cat. Maybe it's because of all I've heard about you... You know what my nightmare is? That someday something happens to me and my wife and my kitten are left on their own. I've heard that when your friends were deported, you took care of their families. I respect that. Can I ask you something?

(GATITO NODS)

If something happens to me, please see that my wife and kitten don't have to go hungry or homeless.

GATITO (dropping his eyes)

Miac, look...

MIAC

Promise, cat! If somebody like you promises that to me, then I know I'll feel better. More at peace.

MIAC (nodding)

Okay, I promise. You have my word. Will you...

MIAC (more confident now)

The Rouff *ronda*? Sure! Now lets' go see if the old timer needs a diaper change.

SEQUENCE 42

155. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE DORM, LATE NIGHT. Gatito is lying on his mattress.

GATITO (Thinking)

Why I can't stop thinking of Mimi and Rachy as if they were related to Miac and his fear for his family? Mimi is now just a vanishing painful memory, but what if letting the relationship with Rachy goes far enough to put her at risk?

(GATITO TURNS FROM ONE SIDE OF HIS MATTRESS TO THE OTHER, UNABLE TO SLEEP.)

Rodolfo warned me, didn't he? As soon as I got some notoriety, Tancruarf and his minions at the immigration police will put their eyes on him. Am I in borrowed time? The gangs could even target Rachy.

But everything had felt so different since the first time I kissed her... It was as if, for a moment, nothing else existed. No

Tancruarf, no immigration police, no gangs. When I'm with her, it's as if I was home, like the home I had with my parents, when I was a child, but in the right country... No worries, no injustice coming to knock at the door; just them talking, laughing, telling stories ...living in peace. Was that happiness? But what could I expect from this new year with Tancruarf at the top of his power? Maybe it's for the best to renounce to this dream of her right now before I end up hurting her...

GATITO SIGHS. HE THEN NOTICES THAT A FEW FEET AT HIS RIGHT GROUL IS AWAKE ON HIS MATTRESS.

Did I wake you up?

GROUL (shaking his head)

You know? This afternoon we have been talking about your girlfriend. We are happy for you because since you are together you look better. We worried about something though. We worried about her safety, so we have decided to put two more guys checking on her security... Something discreet, of course. We don't want her to feel uncomfortable, as if we were surrounding her with bodyguards... I just wanted you to know.

GATITO (smiling, his eyes on the ceiling now)

Thanks, I guess...

SEQUENCE 43

Late December, 1900...

156. CUTS TO: EXT.: NEWSPAPER STAND, EARLY MORNING. PASSERSBY ARE WATCHING THE COVERS OF THE EXAMINING POST AND THE NAYAK DAILY: *'RESURGENCE OF GANG VIOLENCE AGAINST THE CITIZENS OF NAYAK,' 'GANG VIOLENCE IS DIRECT RESULT OF THE LIBERAL VICTORIES IN MIYAFF, MEWOW AND ROUFF,' 'IMMIGRANTS ATTACK ANOTHER COUPLE OF CITIZENS IN NAYAK CITY, CLOSE TO THE LIMITS WITH MEWOW. THE FEMALE WAS RAPED AND THE MALE SO SAVAGELY BEATEN THAT HE IS STILL IN INTENSIVE CARE; THE DOCTORS CAN'T SAY WHETHER HE'LL SURVIVE.'*

157. CUTS TO: INT.: SMALL AUDITORIUM, AT NIGHT. A BANNER ANNOUNCES: *'PRESS CONFERENCE CONVOKED BY THE IMMIGRATION POLICE ON BEHALF OF THE NAYAK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT.'* DEPUTY JON IS AGAIN FILLING FOR CHIEF HAGEL.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

Again chief Hagel sent me to this cheap show, to fill for him. And again this Chief Kruorf of the immigration police and his two nefarious deputies in the same table. Another one I have to take for the boss, though I see how all of this have been affecting him,

impotent to stop the way Kruorf is corrupting his beloved police department.

And the journalists are again gathering in front of the table as vultures, ready to take notes, make the usual questions and then do their usual hit job. Even I expected that, once the elections passed, the gangs would prey exclusively on immigrants. Nobody cared when the victims were immigrants after all. Nevertheless, something must be happening at the top because here we are having another press conference about crimes committed against citizens of Nayak City.

THE POLITICAL APPOINTEE THEN JOINS THEM AT THE TABLE AND CHIEF KRUORF STANDS UP.

CHIEF KRUORF

Well, we are beginning with the press conference programmed for today. As I think you know, two citizens of Nayak have recently been beastly attacked by gang members in Nayak City, close to where the jurisdiction of the Nayak police ends and the jurisdiction of the Mewow police should've begun. Governor Tancruarf has made clear in the last months the state of disarray in which the police departments of those three cities, Miyaff, Mewow and Rouff, are and the way they have resisted our help. Our first priority is the victims though. We have decided not to reveal their names to respect their privacy. The male is still in Intensive Care in Nayak Main Hospital. The doctors don't know whether he'll survive or, if he survives, whether he will have to deal with some permanent disability. The female was savagely raped. She remains in the psychiatric unit of Nayak Main Hospital. The doctors don't know whether she'll be able to make a full recovery. We'll bring you updates on their condition as soon as we have news.

Coming back to our relationship with those three cities, Governor Tancruarf has informed me that he will be addressing the citizens of Nayak tonight about the package of measures he has prepared to deal with the epidemic of immigrant violence in our neighboring cities.

REPORTER FROM THE EXAMINING POST (raising his hand)
Do you have anything on which you could give us an advance, sir?

KRUORF (shaking his head)

You'll have to wait for Governor Tancruarf's press conference tonight.

REPORTER FROM THE NAYAK DAILY (raising his hand)
Why Chief Hagel is not here? Are you receiving enough
collaboration from his department?

DEPUTY JON CAN SEE THE SMIRK ON THE FACE OF ONE OF KRUORF'S
DEPUTIES.

KRUORF

We are all together in our mission to protect the citizens of
Nayak. As the last wave of immigrant violence against the
citizens of Nayak has proved our warnings right, time has also
proved wise our governor's decision to restructure the police
department of Nayak. Now, I'll let Deputy Jon, who is here
representing Chief Hagel, give you his impressions about your
question.

DEPUTY JON (uncomfortable, shaking his head, worried)
I have nothing to add.

158. CUTS TO: INT.: AUDITORIUM, AT NIGHT, BEHIND A PODIUM.

TANCRUARF (giving a furtive glance to the journalists)
My friends, when I first ran for office I wanted to bring the
weight of our values over those who had betrayed their
constituents and their party, over those who had let illegal aliens
run over our citizens, rob our citizens, rape our citizens, kill our
children. And we also brought sanity to our finances, eliminated
suffocating regulations, cut taxes and heard the voice of the
people. But that's not the reason I've called this press
conference.

Anyway, the people of Nayak spoke in November and we made
a series of reforms, which the people of Nayak have endorsed
through their vote because they have worked. Nevertheless, some
cities in our state have stubbornly refused to hear the voice of the
people and now they are trying to reverse our achievements for
petty political ends. I won't repeat again the name of those three
cities but you know of whom I'm talking about. How could you
not? One of our sisters has just been brutally raped and she might
never recover from the trauma. As far as to our brother, who was
brutally attacked by these immigrant gangs as he tried to defend
his female, he's still in Intensive Care and, if he survives, he
might have to spend the rest of his life with a paralysis from the
neck down.

I say that enough is enough! I say that we have been patient
enough but there's a limit for everything. That's why I have
decided to bring to the state legislature a piece of legislation that,

one, will create the Immigration Tribunal, with jurisdiction over all criminal matters relating immigrants, what will imply a deep reform in the internal structures of the judiciary and of the offices of the district attorneys. As deep as necessary to protect the citizens of Nayak.

And, two, we are creating a new punishment for atrocious cases like the tragedy that has unfortunately convoked us today. The new punishment will be named *Infamous Hanging* and we hope will deter many of these cowards from preying again on our citizens. I've heard that Senator Sanderf has said that all I want is to frighten innocent immigrants and political enemies. So, here you can see who is with you and who with the criminals! Senator Sanderf, so you can't make excuses, I here accept your amendment to also subject to *Infamous Hanging* those whose abuse of authority ends up in an innocent's death. Now I dare you to vote for the bill! My conscience is clean. And if I have some regret is that the criminals who committed the crime that has motivated this bill will not be punished by it because their crime preceded the law. These are some of the frustrations my administration will have to bear to respect the sanctity of law, so nobody accuses us later of arbitrariness.

Well, that's all I can say for now. We'll bring you details during the week. And thanks for coming, my friends.

159. CUTS TO: INT.: DEPUTY JON'S LIVING ROOM. Deputy Jon (IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, FROWN) turns the radio off.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

With the police submitted and now, with the judiciary and the district attorneys following the same path, there is no way to say where the power of Tancruarf will stop. Unsympathetic judges, no surprise, will see their budgets cut and then, later, will be defeated in the next elections for being incompetent. Unsympathetic district attorneys will be reassigned to places where they will literally rot to make room for more sympathetic ones. Actually, only the federal government will be able to challenge Tancruarf after this but, afraid of the growing influence Tancruarf is gaining nationwide inside the Patriot Party, it is very unlikely they will move a finger. I will have to think of a nice way to brief the boss about the news.

SEQUENCE 44

New Year eve...

160. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE MAIN ROOM, AT MORNING. GATITO AND SOME OF HIS GUYS ARE TALKING. GATITO LOOKS UNCOMFORTABLE, AS IF

TRYING TO FIND THE WORDS TO SAY SOMETHING. FINALLY ALFGUAU SPEAKS.

ALFGUAU (solemnly)

Aren't we bored having Gatito here every New Year eve, guys.
We have to decide something about that issue.

GATITO

Are you starting again...?

ALFGUAU (solemnly)

Okay, okay... But just let us know something. Has your father in law invited for New Year eve?

GATITO

Don't we have something more important to talk about, guys?

ALFGUAU

So, that is a yes...

GATITO

Guys...

ALFGUAU, SOLEMNLY AGAIN THOUGH OTHERS ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO CRACK UP IN LAUGHTER, RAISES HIS HANDS TO MEAN HE WANTS PUT A MOTION TO VOTE.

ALFGUAU

My motion is that Gatito should be allowed to spend New Year eve with his father in law if he brings us something for breakfast tomorrow morning.

LAUGHING, EVERYBODY RAISES THEIR HANDS.

GATITO

Okay, guy, whatever. You think this is funny?

ALFGUAU

In that case, you'll bring ravioli. Vote?

LAUGHING, EVERYBODY RAISES THEIR HANDS AGAIN.

GATITO

Guys, I don't have a father in... Guys, please, you know I can't afford ravioli...

RAFAEL (smirking)

In that case, you'll bring us a photograph of you with your bride Rachy.

GATITO (Thinking)

If they knew that I had decided to end with Rachy, that after having dinner with Miac and his wife in Rouff, I didn't want her to end up as collateral damage in an attack against me, that I realized that anybody, Tanbruarf, the gangs could end up targeting Rachy just to hurt me. And if they knew that once I had her in front of me..., I just couldn't.

161. CUTS TO: EXT.: NAYAK, NIGHT OF NEW YEAR EVE, AT THE SIDE OF RACHY'S FRONT DOOR.

GATITO

Does he approve of me...?

RACHY

Yeah, he trusts my judgment.

GATITO (somewhat afraid)

What I mean is... does he know that I am...?

RACHY

Illegal? Yes, I told him. He looked worried, but I told him more about you and he understood. He supported me. What? Are you afraid of him? (SMILING NAUGHTILY NOW) He's going to be waiting for you with *Tanbruarf* at the table for messing up with his daughter.

162. CUTS TO: INT.: RACHY'S HOUSE. RACHY INTRODUCES GATITO TO HER FATHER AND BOTH SHAKE HANDS.

SEQUENCE 45

January 6, 1901...

163. CUTS TO: INT.: SMALL AUDITORIUM, at NIGHT. A BANNER SAYS: 'NAYAK POLICE PRESS CONFERENCE.' CHIEF KRUORF IS PRESENTING THE FIVE SUSPECTS OF THE ATTACK OF LATE DECEMBER 1900. THE FIVE LOOK BADLY BRUISED. KRUORF'S DEPUTIES FORCE THE FIVE PRISONERS TO RAISE THEIR HEADS FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHS THE JOURNALISTS ARE WAITING TO TAKE. DEPUTY JON IS THERE TO FILL FOR CHIEF HAGEL. CHIEF KRUORF STANDS UP AND EVERYBODY KEEPS SILENCE.

CHIEF KRUORF

It's obvious that we don't convoke a press conference for every arrest we make but this case has moved so deeply every nerve of

our society that I thought we owed you this update. On the night of December thirty first, we arrested these criminals as they were hiding, ready to prey on another couple in the vicinity of Nayak train station. With the description provided by the victims of their previous attack, we launched a patient but relentless investigation that led us to these individuals. And on the night of December thirty first we followed them to their gathering point, close to Nayak train station, where they were getting ready to commit another infamous crime. We are currently investigating other crimes that might be related to this gang and we'll be bringing you updates soon... as we see that those releases won't hurt our work...

THEN ONE OF THE FIVE PRISONERS, THE YOUNGEST, INTERRUPTS CHIEF KRUORF.

PRISONER

That's not true! That's not true! We are innocent! They arrested us in the morning, in a parking lot while we were...

IMMEDIATELY, ONE MEMBER OF THE POLICE GAGS THE PRISONER.

CHIEF KRUORF (scoffing)

Can you see the audacity of these criminals? The prisoners have been presented to both victims and both victims have recognized the five prisoners as the gang that attacked them. We could fortunately get the notarized testimony of the male just before his death at Intensive Care. As you already know, despite the good efforts of our doctors the male died two days ago due to the traumas inflicted on him by these beasts. We are now putting these criminals and our investigation at the consideration of the district attorney and the judiciary. Once these criminals meet justice for their heinous acts, we'll be able to say that the people of Nayak have restored their trust on the authorities... on which it trusted its safety.

CUTS TO: INT.: AT THE TABLE. DEPUTY JON, WHO FROWNS, TURNS TO SEE (PAN OF THE POLICE REMOVING THE PRISONERS) THE POLICE PUSHING THE FIVE PRISONERS OUT OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

That poor guy.... Could he have really thought that interrupting Chief Kruorf could get him anything but a beating after they closed those doors and there were no witnesses? Could he really have thought somebody was going to hear him? Would the Examining Post or the Nayak Daily report on the words of that

young, expendable immigrant, much less investigate his plea? Not in this lifetime. They will just take the version of the police reports and add the photographs.

Nobody would investigate anything despite the brutal flaws of this case... The time of departure of the interrogators and the notary don't match the time of death of the victim. Actually, Kruorf had rushed to send them when he learned that the male had entered in coma and that the male would not survive to deny the testimony the notary stated he had given. The female, on the other hand, with her mental health maybe beyond repair, would have testified anything her interrogators would have led her to believe. Why only the youngest prisoner had dared to challenge Chief Kruorf's version? Was it that they had not only been battered but also threatened by their captors, that they would accept their fate in silence to avoid retaliation against their loved ones? On top of that, the file was sent to the offices of the immigration police, in whose growing and unclear jurisdiction we have no part...

JON SIGHS.

SEQUENCE 46

Early February, 1901...

164. CUTS TO: EXT.: NEW WAREHOUSE'S MAIN ROOM, EARLY MORNING. RODOLFO IS OPENING THE DOOR WITH HIS KEY. HIS FACE IS GLOOMY. GATITO AND HIS GUYS WAIT FOR THE REPORT.

RODOLFO

What we expected.... The dog who officiated as judge humiliated and yelled at the five prisoners before sentencing them to death by hanging. The youngest one still wanted to say something but the guards didn't need to gag him this time because his own sobbing was drowning every word he uselessly was trying to get out of his mouth.

(CUTS TO: EXT.: GALLOWS, NOON, THE PRISONERS ARE PLACED IN FRONT OF THE NOOSES)

That same afternoon the five prisoners were brought to a platform and they put the nooses around their necks...

CUTS TO: EXT.: BACKYARD, FIRST ROW. IN A LINE OF TALL BACK CHAIRS TANCRUARF, KRUORF, HIS DEPUTIES, JON AND OTHER ANIMALS SIT IN FRONT OF THE PLATFORM. FROM THERE THEY CAN HEAR AN OFFICER READING THE DEATH WARRANT (MUFFLED).

165. CUTS TO: EXT.: PLATFORM OF EXECUTION. THE PLATFORM IS OPENED AND THE FIVE PRISONERS FALL TO THEIR DEATHS.

CUTS TO: EXT.: BACKYARD. AMONG THE PUBLIC, RODOLFO IS WATCHING THE EXECUTION.

CUTS TO: EXT.: BACKYARD, FIRST ROW. DEPUTY JON TURNS TO TANCRUARF.

CUTS TO: EXT.: BACKYARD, FIRST ROW. TANCRUARF WATCHES THE EXECUTION WITH FRANTIC EYES.

166. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE MAIN ROOM. THEN GATITO FROWNS AND DROPS HIS EYES DROPPED TO THE FLOOR.

There was nothing anybody could've done for them, Gatito.

GATITO (with some bitterness)

Anything any of us could've done? Of course not, but what about those like Senator Sanderf, who could've actually done something?

RODOLFO (shrugging)

What can I say, my friend? Sanderf can't control the courts, anyway... But Tancruarf can...

RODOLFO PUTS HIS HAND ON GATITO'S SHOULDER. GATITO NODS.

GATITO (somewhat discouraged)

We are alone, Rodolfo...

RODOLFO (sighing)

We are, indeed.

SEQUENCE 47

March 1901...

167. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE IN SHAMBLES NEAR A PIER IN NAYAK, LATE NIGHT.

GANG LEADER

Sir, we have supported you on everything you have asked us, sir. We have waited a long time. But we need your support here, sir...

KRUORF'S DEPUTY

Don't bother me trying to sound articulate, you fuck shit. Just tell me what you want.

GANG LEADER

Sir, there is some Gatito Inmeegrante that is screwing up our business. He has organized the immigrants against us and even killed one of our leaders. If it were just this Gatito Inmeegrante, we would not ask your help, but they have organized the immigrants of Miyaff. And with that black cat Miac from Rouff and now the immigrants of Rouff are doing the same. Even the

immigrants of Mewow say they are going to do the same. That's too many against us, sir, and we have served you well, sir.

DEPUTY (staring at the gangster impatiently, annoyed)
Gatito Inmeegrante? Miac? Are those the leaders? Are those their real names? Are they immigrants? Do you know where we can find them?

GANG LEADER

Sir... I'm sure we were close to find out, but then the immigrants organized... *rondas* they call them, and now we are not allowed to get close to Miyaff or Rouff. They are armed with pipes and stones. They have even killed one of our leaders...

DEPUTY

Yeah! Yeah! I heard you the first time. You already told me. So you don't know shit.

GANG LEADER

Miac is the leader of the Rouff *ronda* and Gatito Inmeegrante is the leader of the Miyaff *ronda*. Well, not exactly, there is a committee, but it was that Gatito Inmeegrante who gave them the idea.

DEPUTY (annoyed, raising his voice)

That Gatito Inmeegrante *is or is not* the leader of the Miyaff *ronda*. And what the fuck is a *ronda*? No, no! Wait! I have no patience for your stupidity. I'm sending you tomorrow one of my assistants to make sense of all that fucking shit you've spilled here tonight, okay? He'll try to make sense of all this, so we know who this Gatito Inmeegrante is and who this Miac is and why are they fucking with us... if they are not the same animal after all because I can't get anything clear from your bullshit tonight. You'll wait for him here tomorrow night, at this same time. Do you understand?

GANG LEADER (ashamed, dropping his eyes)

Yes, sir.

Then the DEPUTY stands up and leaves without saying goodbye. CLOSE UP of the GANG LEADER, who sees the deputy leave with resentment.
May, 1901...

168. CUT TO: INT.: TANCRUARF'S OFFICES, AT NIGHT. CHIEF KRUORF APPROACHES TANCRUARF'S OFFICE THROUGH A CORRIDOR.

CHIEF KRUORF

We have a pretty good idea who Miac is and where he can find him although we still can't find out whether Gatito Inmeegrante is a name or an alias, where in Miyaff is his center of operations and whether there is a connection between the two. In the case of Miac, that hasn't been that difficult because the immigrant community is less organized and much easier to infiltrate, not to say that that Miac is much careless than that Gatito Inmeegrante. Besides that, Miac has insisted on personally commanding the *rondas* in the field. And it seems he himself has beaten many gang members to the point that some of them have actually ended up in the local hospital. We've had to erase from our books the hospital reports as it is now a hospital obligation to report immigrants seeking their services. So, those assets are still safe...

TANCRUARF (increasingly annoyed)

So, I have to understand that there is some rival gang which is trying to take the streets from them and that they're trying to get us involved in his gang war? Are you aware of how busy I am right now in other states? Who the fuck do they think we are, their impact force?

KRUORF

No, no, sir. It's not another gang. It's a vigilante group. It began in Miyaff and then it spread to Rouff. And now it seems to be spreading to Mewow. The leader seems to be some cat named Gatito Inmeegrante, but we are not sure about whether that is his real name.

TANCRUARF (disdainful)

Really? Gatito Inmeegrante a real name...?

CHIEF KRUORF

We have to cover all ends, sir... But we have made no progress on that, no matter how much pressure we have put in our interrogatories. It seems they have a committee in charge, but nobody has been willing to talk, no matter the pressure we put on them... Well, I said that already.

We have broken some of them under pressure, but then the stories given by some seem to contradict the stories given by others... It's like they have in them some new motivation we have not seen before. We have not even been able to identify the members of the committee. In Rouff, on the other hand, we have been luckier. We have identified some Miac, who is the leader of the vigilante group of Rouff, and we believe he's the Miac we're

looking for. We have not cracked down on him yet because we want to see whether he can lead us to this Gatito Inmeegrante... And the gangs have been there for us every time we have asked them to do something, sir...

TANCRUARF (looking hesitant)

How long do you think you need to see whether there is a relationship between the two, an active relationship?

KRUORF (stuttering)

I don't know. You never know in these situations...

TANCRUARF (raising his voice)

Two weeks, three weeks?

KRUORF

Possibly...

TANCRUARF (sighing and then with an arrogant tone)

Make your best in the next three weeks. If you can't get this Gatito Inmeegrante too, get at least that Miac and make him talk. Make this a priority for you. Is that clear?

KRUORF (nodding)

Yes, sir.

TANCRUARF (hesitant again)

Now, this is what I want the gangs to do for us in a week...

CLOSE UP OF KRUORF'S FACE AS HE HEARS TANCRUARF SPEAKING. HE LOOKS SHOCKED.

SEQUENCE 48

Mid May, 1901...

169. CUTS TO: EXT.: NEWSPAPER STAND, MORNING. PASSERSBY GATHER AROUND TO READ THE COVERS OF THE EXAMINING POST AND THE NAYAK DAILY: *'TWO SMALL CHILDREN RAPED AND MURDERED; THEIR BODIES LEFT IN AN ALLEY. ALIEN CRIMINALS MUST BE STOPPED! GOVERNOR, SWIFT ACTION AGAINST IMMIGRANT GANGS IS NEEDED! A CRIME LIKE THIS IS BEYOND THE GOOD NATURE OF ANY LEGAL RESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY.'*

170. CUTS TO: INT.: SMALL AUDITORIUM. CHIEF KRUORF IS GIVING A PRESS CONFERENCE.

CHIEF KRUORF

It is the top priority for the Nayak police to find the criminals responsible for this terrible act...

171. CUTS TO: INT.: GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, at NIGHT. TANCRUARF IS GIVING A PRESS CONFERENCE TOO.

TANCRUARF

I trust the Nayak state police can deal with the situation...

172. CUTS TO: INT.: SMALL AUDITORIUM. CHIEF KRUORF IS GIVING AN UPDATE ON THE CASE. DEPUTY JON IS AGAIN FILLING FOR CHIEF HAGEL.

CHIEF KRUORF

We are following the leads brought to us by a witness who, attracted by the cries of the small children, approached the crime scene only to see two cats over the bodies of the children. The two cats were presumably immigrants because when they looked at the witness, afraid, as they realized that he was a citizen, ran and jumped over a fence.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

'Afraid, as they realized that he was a citizen, ran and jumped over a fence....' Have we come to this? Can somebody in office make a statement so stupid and get away unchallenged? And, of course, nobody in the press questioned the obvious holes in the story. Besides the widespread caricature of immigrants living in fear of the citizens of good race, how the citizen could know the two cats looking at him and subsequently jumping the fence were immigrants? Why had he not yelled for the police to come at that same moment if the immigrants were already on the run? Then there were the contradictions. At some moment the witness had said he had come to the alley when the cats were killing the children and, when asked why he had not cried for help, as that might have still saved the children's lives, he rectified his testimony to say that the children were already dead when he showed up at the crime scene even though he had been supposedly attracted by their cries; only to rectify his story later by saying that he didn't scream because he was at first frozen by panic even when he had said before that, instead of calling for help, he had decided to step forward in the alley alone to face the criminal immigrants.

On the other hand, the crime must have taken place over several minutes, minutes during which the children must have been crying for help, cry he seemed to have noticed only at the last minute despite it having been a quiet night. And he could not give a good reason for him being there since he did not live in

the area. And, of course, nobody asked about his relationship with the office of the governor, where he worked, or about his long time support for the political career of Michelle Tanbruarf.

(CUTS TO: INT.: SAME SMALL AUDITORIUM, THE PRISONERS ARE BROUGHT AND PRESENTED TO THE PRESS. NOW FLANKED BY HIS TWO DEPUTIES, KRUORF RESUMES HIS REPORT. THE REPORTERS KEEP TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PRISONERS.)

Will some of those assholes notice that they have applied make up to their faces to make the inflammation less visible...?

CHIEF KRUORF (behind a podium)

The two prisoners were captured precisely when they were on the tracks of another child. They have been positively identified by the witness of their alleged previous crime...

CLOSE UP OF DEPUTY JON, WHO FROWNS

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

Should I give the boss all the details when I brief him? It affects him, I know, but he will have to come up with something at some point. He can't solve the problem by sending me all the time they make a political point at our expenses. For now, they have reduced us to decoration in their press conferences. But it won't stop there...

DEPUTY JON TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO SOME POINT IN THE BACKGROUND AND DISCONNECTS FROM THE CONFERENCE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

SEQUENCE 49

173. CUTS TO: INT.: TANCRUARF'S OFFICE. TANCRUARF IS INVITING CHIEF HAGEL TO SIT.

TANCRUARF (smiling)

Some time I have not seen you, Chief Hagel...

HAGEL (dropping his eyes)

My health, sir...

TANCRUARF (smirking)

Your health? Hmm... Is it not a nuisance that your health seems to weaken every time we have a press conference or an execution?

CHIEF HAGEL

Sir... I have really...

TANCRUARF (with an accusatory expression)
Are you really with your governor, Hagel?

CHIEF HAGEL

Yes sir, you know I am.

TANCRUARF (staring at him with distrust)
Then I want you to be there representing your department next time we have a press conference or execution, or whenever I need you to be there. I don't want to learn you have sent your deputy again. Is that clear? It looks bad!

CHIEF HAGEL (nodding with his eyes still dropped)
Yes, sir.

TANCRUARF (smiling, satisfied)
You're a good conservative, at least you have the reputation of being a good one, but if you don't have the strength to do this job anymore, I hope you are honest with me, so I can appoint a successor. (HAGEL NODS IN SILENCE, HIS EYES DROPPED IN SHAME) Fine! Then we are good again, Hagel. And raise those eyes! Cheer up! (PAUSE) You can leave...

SEQUENCE 50

Late May, 1901...

174. CUTS TO: COURTROOM, AT NOON. THE JUDGE IS YELLING FROM HIS COUNTER. DEPUTY JON IS AMONG THE PUBLIC IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES.

DEPUTY JON (Thinking)

It came to nobody's surprise when by late May the two cats were found guilty and sentenced to the new Infamous Hanging. The two cats had no lawyers to assist them and their request to interrogate the prosecution witness themselves was denied. The two cats swore that they had been at home with their relatives when the crime was committed, but that they were afraid of calling their relatives to testify as they did not want their loved ones to be subject to retaliation. So, they asked for some guarantees for their witnesses, but these were denied too. At the end, the judge made a long rant about the depravity of those cats who had come from a foreign country only to prey on the innocence of the children of Nayak, about an immigrant race that had lost its moral compass, about the need to show these criminals that the people of Nayak was tired to their abuse.

(CUTS TO: INT. COURTROOM. THE TWO PRISONERS HOLD HANDS)

And, no surprise, they were sentenced to die in the new Infamous Hanging in two days. Their bodies would be dumped in an

undisclosed location, as garbage. And nobody said they could not be tortured during those two days, so I'm afraid they won't let them have even those two days in peace. I have no doubt the next two days will confirm those fears.

(CUTS TO: EXT.: BACKYARD, EARLY AFTERNOON. THE GALLOWES HAVE BEEN ERECTED. THE TWO PRISONERS, SHOWING BRUISES ON THEIR FACES, ARE LED TO THE PLATFORM OF EXECUTION. THEY ARE LIMPING TOO. THE PRISONERS SEE THE POLES, PULLEYS, CANS AND CHAINS WAITING FOR THEM AND LOOK AFRAID. THEN, ONE OF THEM, THE ONE LAGGING THE OTHER CONDEMNED, IS PUSHED BY THE GUARDS ESCORTING THEM, TRIPS AND FALLS. NOBODY IS MOVED WHEN ONE OF THE GUARDS KICKS HIM AS HE ORDERS HIM TO STAND UP. BUT AS HE CAN'T GET UP, THE OTHERS LOSE PATIENCE AND DRAG HIM TO THE PLATFORM, ONLY TO DROP HIM AT THE SIDE OF THE OTHER CAT. FOR A BRIEF MOMENT THE CATS TURN THEIR HEADS TO LOOK AT EACH OTHER, AFRAID, SEEKING STRENGTH. THE GUARDS THEN PUSH THEM, MAKING THEM FACE THE TABLE, WHERE TANCRUARF HAS THE MAIN PLACE AT THE CENTER, SURROUNDED BY THE SENTENCING JUDGE, CHIEF KRUF AND HIS DEPUTIES AND CHIEF HAGEL. AT THAT MOMENT THE JUDGE STANDS UP AND READS THE SENTENCE AGAIN WITH A SOLEMN TONE (INAUDIBLE). TEARS BEGIN TO ROLL FROM THE CATS' EYES. THEN THE EXECUTIONER TIGHTS A CHAIN AROUND THEIR NECKS AND THE CHAINS ARE PULLED UPWARDS. HAGEL CLOSES HIS EYES WHEN HE HEARS THEIR VAIN ATTEMPTS, CUT BY THE CHAINS THAT ARE STRANGLING THEM, AT SAYING SOMETHING, AT BREATHING; AND THEN THE TRUNCATED WORDS THAT WERE NOW TRYING TO ESCAPE THROUGH THEIR DESPERATE EYES. THE CHAINS ARE PULLED UP ENOUGH TO START ASPHYXIATION, UP TO THE POINT WHERE THE PRISONER'S FEET COULD BARELY TOUCH THE FLOOR FOR A MINUTE OR SO. THEN THE EXECUTIONER BEGINS TO POUR THE LIQUID FROM ONE CAN, OIL OR GASOLINE, ON BOTH PRISONERS AFTER WHAT HE PROCEEDS TO SET THEM ON FIRE AND THEIR BODIES ARE PULLED UP HIGHER. AS THE CHAINS PULL THEM UP, HAGEL CLOSES HIS EYES EVEN TIGHTER. WHEN HAGEL OPENS HIS EYES AND TURNS TO TANCRUARF, HE CAN SEE HIM FOLLOWING THE EXECUTION WITH FRANTIC EYES. TANCRUARF SEEMED TO BE HAVING AN IMMENSE PLEASURE WITH THE SPECTACLE. HAGEL FINALLY DROPS HIS EYES AGAIN AND MAKES AN EFFORT TO NOT CRY.)

SEQUENCE 51

175. CUTS TO: EXT.: GATITO'S WAREHOUSE, LATE NIGHT. A DOG, ONE OF THE GUYS MAKING GUARD AT THE OUTER PERIMETER COMES RUNNING TO THE WAREHOUSE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER DOG, AN OLD DOG, OPENS THE DOOR AND ASKS FOR GATITO. GROUL IMMEDIATELY COMES TO THE DOOR.

GROUL (frowned)

What happens?

THE GUARD SHOWS HIM THE OLD DOG COMING WITH HIM.

GUARD

We found him approaching the warehouse. We stopped him and he said he had something important to say.

GROUL (turning to the old dog)

You are...?

OLD DOG (still panting)

I'm the old leader from Rouff. Don't you remember me? Gatito knows me. We were together at Miac Tony's home last year.

GROUL (nodding)

Wait here...

SOON AFTER, GATITO SHOWS UP AT THE DOOR WITH A SLEEPY FACE.

GATITO

Ah! It's you! Everything is okay?

OLD DOG (struggling at first to find the words)

They have Miac, Gatito. They have him!

THEN THE OLD DOG BEGINS TO SOB.

SEQUENCE 52

176. CUTS TO: EXT.: ROUFF, LATE NIGHT. THE MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE ARE CORDONING MIAC'S NEIGHBORHOOD.

177. CUTS TO: EXT.: ROUFF. SOUND OF SOME BANGING ON THE DOOR AND A SLEEPY MIAC APPROACHING THE DOOR.

MIAC (whispering, grabbing a club and asking through the door)
Giselle, take our son to the back. Hurry up!
(YELLING NOW) Who the fuck is there at this hour?

ANIMAL (desperate voice)

Miac, it's me! The immigration police is rounding the neighborhood! They're sweeping in this direction!

MIAC OPENS THE DOOR. THERE ARE A BLACK DOG AND A BLACK CAT IN FRONT OF HIM, BOTH WITH ANGUISHED FACES.

MIAC (turning to the black dog)

Take my wife and my son to where you know. You answer to me for them with your life.

BLACK DOG (with moist eyes, nodding)

With my life, Miac.

MIAC (turning to the black cat and beginning to run with the black cat)
Where are the others?

BLACK CAT (panting)

They have killed and captured many of us already, I don't know how many. They're setting on fire the shacks they leave behind as they tighten the circle around your house. The others are trying to defend the neighborhood with stones, with whatever they can, to hold a bit longer... There's panic in the whole hood, Miac.

MIAC (panting)

Is the way through the sewage still free?

BLACK CAT (panting)

I think so.

MIAC (somewhat irritated, raising his voice)

You think so?

BLACK CAT

Everything is happening too fast, Miac. It was, the last time I checked...

MIAC

Then we have to move fast.

(CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. MIAC CAN NOW SEE THE SPOT WHERE THE REST OF HIS GROUP IS TRYING TO SLOW DOWN THE IMMIGRATION POLICE. THREE MEMBERS OF THEIR GROUP NOTICE THEIR PRESENCE AND APPROACH THEM.)

BLACK CAT

And the others?

BLACK DOG (panting)

Dead. There's nothing we can do...

MIAC

To the sewers! Now!

THE FIVE OF THEM RAN AS FAST AS THEY CAN. SOUND OF PANTING.
CUTS TO: EXT. NIGHT. ENTRANCE TO THE SEWERS. THE FIVE REACH THE ENTRANCE AND PUSH OUT THE BOXES THEY HAD USED TO DISGUISE THE GATE.

CUTS TO: INT. NIGHT. SEWERS. THE FIVE KEEP RUNNING THROUGH THE DIRTY WATERS. THE SOUND OF THE DIRTY WATER, SPLASHING AT THE CONTACT OF THEIR FEET, SPLASHING OVER THEIR OPEN WOUNDS, IS GETTING ON THEIR NERVES BUT THEY KEEP RUNNING.

CUTS TO: INT. NIGHT. SEWERS. MIAC CAN SEE THE END OF THE SEWER.
178. CUTS TO: EXT.: EXIT OF THE SEWERS. AS SOON AFTER THE FIVE LEAVE THE SEWERS THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A CIRCLE OF LIGHT.

VOICE (Yelling)

Freeze!

FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, ANOTHER LIGHT CAME TO DRAW A SMALLER CIRCLE OVER THEM.

MIAC

Break!

THE OTHER FOUR BLACK ANIMALS GET READY TO RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, TWO AROUND THE LIGHTS AND THE OTHER TWO, IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, BACK TO THE SEWER. MIAC STAYS THERE AND GRABS HIS CLUB WITH THE LEFT HAND AND A STONE WITH THE RIGHT, READY TO COVER THE ESCAPE OF HIS FRIENDS. SOON AFTER, THE TWO WHO HAD TRIED TO ESCAPE GOING AROUND THE LIGHTS ARE BEING PUSHED BACK TO THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT. MIAC THROWS THE STONE TO ONE MEMBER OF THE POLICE WHO IS TRYING TO GRAB ONE OF HIS FALLEN FRIENDS, BUT MANY MORE MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE RUN TOWARDS HIM. MIAC STILL HAS TIME TO CLUB ANOTHER ONE IN THE HEAD, WHO FALLS AT HIS FEET, BEFORE THE OTHERS MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE GRAB HIM BY THE ARMS, DISARM HIM AND PUSH HIM TO THE GROUND, WHERE THEY ARE ALREADY HANDCUFFING HIS OTHER TWO FRIENDS. THEN SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE COME OUT OF THE SEWERS WITH THE OTHER TWO, ALREADY HANDCUFFED. ONE OF THEM IS BLEEDING FROM THE FOREHEAD. THE TWO PRISONERS ARE ALSO PUSHED TO THE GROUND, AT THE SIDE OF THE OTHER THREE.

OFFICER OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE (seemingly an officer, yelling)

Who of you is Miac?

BLACK DOG WITH MIAC (with arrogance)
I'm Miac! Who the fuck wants to know?

THEN THE OFFICER WHO HAS MADE THE QUESTION RETURNS TO THE DARKNESS BEHIND THE LIGHT PROJECTED BY HIS FLASHLIGHT AND WHISPERS A QUESTION TO SOME OTHER ANIMAL, ONE WHO HAD JUST ARRIVED, AS HE BLINDS MIAC AND HIS FRIENDS WITH THE LIGHT OF HIS FLASHLIGHT. THEN THE OFFICER APPROACHES THE FALLEN BLACK DOG, THE ONE WHO HAD JUST SPOKEN, AND KICKS HIM FEROCIOUSLY IN THE MOUTH.

BLACK DOG WITH MIAC (still defiant)
Sissy!

OFFICER OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE
Who of you is Miac Tony?

THE OTHER FRIENDS OF MIAC (shouting)
I am!

OFFICER OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE (annoyed, yelling)
Fuck this! (TURNING TO THE ANIMAL WHO HAD JUST ARRIVED) Hey, you! Come here!

A CAT STEPS FORWARD SHYLY, EITHER FRIGHTENED OR ASHAMED.

OFFICER OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE (yelling)
Who is Miac?

MIAC STARES AT THE CAT. NOW HE SEEMS TO REMEMBER.

CAT (pointing at Miac)
That one.

OFFICER OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE
Okay, we don't need the rest.

THEN TWO MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE PULL MIAC UP WHILE A THIRD ONE PUNCHES HIM IN THE JAW REPEATEDLY. DEFIANTLY, MIAC SPITS AT HIM BLOOD AND SALIVA. BUT NOW MIAC, IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS STRUGGLE, CAN SEE HOW FOUR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE ARE PUTTING THEIR FEET BEHIND THE NECKS OF HIS FALLEN FRIENDS AS OTHER FOUR ARE RAISING THEIR RIFLES ONLY TO VIOLENTLY STRIKE THEM ON THE BACK OF THEIR HEADS WITH THE BUTTS OF THEIR WEAPONS. MIAC BEGINS TO SCREAM AND, AS HE FEEL

THE TEARS ON HIS EYES AND STARTS TO FIGHT AGAIN, HE SEES THE MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE REPEATING THE PROCEDURE. A POOL OF BLOOD IS FORMING AROUND THE IMMOBILE BODIES OF HIS FRIENDS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE WHO HAD STEPPED BEFORE ON THEIR NECKS ARE NOW RETIRING THE HANDCUFFS FROM THEM. A SEMI UNCONSCIOUS, BEATEN MIAC IS DRAGGED TO A TRUCK.

SEQUENCE 53

179. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE. MAIN ROOM. GATITO IS TALKING TO THE OLD DOG.

GATITO

His family?

OLD DOG (raising his eyes from the floor)

They're safe. A black dog from his group brought them to my house. That same dog updated me just when I was getting ready to come here, Gatito

GROUL (turning to the rest of Gatito's guys)

Wake up! Wake up, everybody! We have an emergency. Rafael, go warn the guards at the perimeter.

GATITO

We'll provide for them.

OLD DOG

We all will do.

GATITO

Groul, ask those who have to leave in the morning to work to use an alternative route and to leave earlier. Also send two scouts to the house of one of the members of the committee of Miyaff to see whether he knows something else. And send somebody to Rodolfo's house to ask him to find out anything he can about Miac.

(MIAC'S FACE AND RACHY'S KEEP COMING TO GATITO'S MIND)

MEAU (coming back from checking on the perimeter guards)

How can we be sure that nobody in Miac's group is going to talk?

OLD DOG (outraged, stand up, raising his voice)

Because they are all dead, because they're fucking dead and Miac would never talk. That cat may be a bit stupid, but he would never betray anybody. Never!

MEAU TURNS AT GATITO AS IF ASKING HIM TO CALM THE OLD DOG DOWN.

GATITO

(TO THE OLD DOG) We need to keep our heads cool or we're lost.

(TURNING TO MEAU) I know Miac would die before betraying anybody. He is that kind of cat, Meau. We have nothing to worry from him.

(GROUL ENTERS THE ROOM AND GATITO TURNS TO THE REST AS IF READY TO ADDRESS THE GROUP)

Nevertheless, the immigration police knew where to find him. For what you say, they didn't lose time and at every moment they seemed to know where to go...

OLD DOG (with bitterness)

There has to be a fucking traitor! I'll do everything in my power to know who he or she is!

GATITO

It has to be somebody who has recently joined your *ronda* or has been making activism for you in Rouff only in the last weeks; somebody no one of you knew enough...

OLD DOG (hesitant, trying to remember and then standing up abruptly)
Three faces come to my mind... Some of them could've died or been captured in the fight though. I need to come back!

MEAU

Do they know where you live?

GATITO

That's important. Do they know where you live?

OLD DOG (paying attention, hesitating now)

I don't know... but Miac's wife and son are there. I have to come back.

GATITO

It's okay. We'll come back. (TURNING TO MEAU) I need four scouts, four smart and fast ones. Our friend from Rouff is going to make you a map right now, while you select the scouts. They

will take them from his house and bring them to our old warehouse for tonight. If nobody tries to stop or follow them, we are good.

MEAU NODS AND LEAVES THE ROOM IMMEDIATELY. THEN GATITO TURNS TO THE OLD LEADER, WHO STILL SEEMS CONFUSED.

GATITO (turning to the old dog)

We need that map!

THE OLD DOG NODS AND BEGINS TO DRAW ON A PIECE OF PAPER AS FAST AS HE CAN. THEN MEAU COMES BACK WITH GROUL AND THE FOUR SCOUTS.

GATITO

Good, I'm going with the first two scouts.

GROUL (protesting)

No! I was with you in Rouff and I remember the city. I'll go with the first two scouts!

GATITO (annoyed)

I've said that I will go with the first two scouts!

MEAU

No! We have decided that we can't afford to lose you. Groul will go with the first scouts and I'll stay here.

GATITO (irritated, yelling)

What's the meaning of this? This is not the moment for this kind of shit!

GROUL

If you insist, we'll bring this to a vote. You want to lose another vote? If this is an ambush, we can't afford to lose you, Gatito. That would be the end!

GATITO (frustrated, mumbling)

Fuck!"

GATITO DROPS HIS EYES TO THE FLOOR AND NODS. THEN GATITO TURNS TO THE OLD DOG AND NOTICES THAT HE IS LOOKING AT THEM WITH MOIST EYES.

180. CUTS TO: EXT.: STREETS OF ROUFF, AT NIGHT. GROUL AND TWO SCOUTS ARE WALKING FAST THE ALMOST DESERTED STREETS,

SCREENING THE STREETS AS THEY MOVE FORWARD. GROUL IS PANTING. THEN THEY APPROACH A HOUSE. ONE OF THE SCOUTS KNOCKS AT THE DOOR.

SCOUT

We come on behalf of the old dog who is a leader of the Rouff Committee.

VOICE BEHIND THE DOOR (afraid, somewhat nervous)
What old leader? There's nobody here with that description...

SCOUT

Cut the crap! He came to Miyaff and told us that you are with Miac's wife and son. We don't have time to lose!

AFTER A FEW SECONDS A BLACK DOG, MIAC'S FRIEND, OPENS THE DOOR. THE SCOUT CAN SEE THE LONG KNIFE ON HIS HAND, BUT IGNORES IT. THE SCOUT STEPS FORWARD AND THE BLACK DOG LET HIM IN, AFTER THAT, HE CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND THE SCOUT. THEN THE SCOUT LOOKS AT GISELLE, WHO HAS HER SON ON HER ARMS. SHE LOOKS ALARMED.

SCOUT

Don't worry Giselle. I'm with Gatito Inmeegrante. The old leader reached us at Miyaff. We are taking you out of here because it might not be safe for you.

(THE SCOUT TURNS TO THE BLACK DOG, GIVING HIM THE PIECE OF PAPER ON WHICH THE OLD DOG WROTE NAMES)

We need you to get us information about these three names. We need that already! Urgent!"

BLACK DOG (nodding, more relieved now)

When is the rest coming?

SCOUT (losing patience)

I'll stay with them. You leave now! We need that information by the time we leave from here!

AGAIN A BIT HESITANT, THE BLACK DOG LOOKS AT GISELLE, WHO NODS AT HIM. THEN THE BLACK DOG TURNS BACK AT THE SCOUT.

BLACK DOG (anguished)

If something happens to them, I'll find you and I'll kill you before I die, no matter where you hide.

THE SCOUT SEEMS NOT INTERESTED IN THE THREAT THOUGH. HESITANT STILL, THE BLACK DOG LOOKS AT THE SCOUT ONCE MORE AND THEN LOOKS AT THE DOOR BEFORE LOOKING AT GISELLE ONE LAST TIME AND AT LAST LEAVING RELUCTANTLY.

A FEW MINUTES LATER GROUL IS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR AND THE SCOUT LET HIM IN. GISELLE LOOKS NERVOUS, HESITANT. SHE HUGS HER SON MORE TIGHTLY. THE KITTEN LOOKS CONFUSED.

THEY STAY IN SILENCE UNTIL THEY HEAR ANOTHER KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

OLD DOG (voice)

It's me!

GROUL, RELIEVED, OPENS THE DOOR IMMEDIATELY TO LET HIM, GATITO AND THE TWO SCOUTS IN. NOW GROUL IS LOOKING FURIOUS AT THE SCOUTS.

GATITO (turning to Groul)

Don't blame them. I insisted.

GISELLE APPROACHES GATITO WITH HER SON ON HER ARMS, CRYING AT LAST. GATITO HUGS HER IN SILENCE.

OLD LEADER

And the black dog who was here?

GROUL

We sent him with the names you gave us. I'll wait for him here with one of the scouts while you leave...

THEN THEY HEAR SOMEBODY KNOCKING AT THE DOOR. THEY STARTLE AT FIRST.

BLACK DOG (voice, panting)

It's me!

(ONCE HE'S INSIDE THE HOUSE) Of the list you gave me, two died defending the line. The other one, nobody has seen him since.

GATITO (hesitant at first)

We have to get back to Miyaff tonight. The gangs might be aware of what has happened. Groul, you take the first group with Miac's friend and two scouts.

GROUL ACCEPTS RELUCTANTLY.

OLD DOG (angry)

So we have a name... Don't worry. That piece of shit never came to my house...

GATITO (nodding, turning to the rest)

We have to be very cautious now.

OLD DOG (with moist eyes)

He said he admired Miac and that he had come from Mewow, from fucking Mewow, to learn and open a branch in that fucking place. We were rushing to train the *ronda* and could never check his story. We were careless. We never checked it. That's the fucking traitor. I want him dead!

GATITO TURNS TO GISELLE AND SEES THE ANGUISH RETURNING TO HER FACE.

GATITO (turning to the old dog)

He must have come from Mewow. The immigration police must have covered that end even if you never checked it, but I don't think he's in Mewow now. Right now he must be in Nayak, getting ready to leave to some other state. But now we have to worry about Giselle and her son. We also need news about Miac.

THEN THE FIRST GROUP LEAVES. GATITO TURNS TO THE OLD LEADER AND SEES HIM CRYING.

OLD LEADER (crying, mumbling)

That stupid cat! That stupid cat!

SEQUENCE 54

181. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE. MAIN ROOM. GATITO IS SAT AT THE TABLE, THINKING. ONE OF HIS GUYS ANNOUNCES THAT RODOLFO HAS JUST COME. RODOLFO GETS IN.

RODOLFO (sighing)

Still no news or public announcement about the crackdown in Rouff. That can only mean that they are interrogating Miac. And is likely they are interrogating him about your whereabouts.

GATITO (calling one of the scouts and pulling him apart)

I need you to make me a favor. One moment, please, Rodolfo.

(THEN GATITO WRITES IN A PIECE OF PAPER AND SHOWS HIM THE PHOTOGRAPH OF RACHY)

(TO THE SCOUT) Please, escort her to the train station. She must be leaving her office at five. Explain her that I can't meet her today.

GATITO SIGHS. THE SCOUT NODS, PUTS THE PIECE OF PAPER IN HIS POCKET AND LEAVES.

RODOLFO

I was fearing the worst, Gatito.

GROUL (leaving the room)

I'll bring some coffee.

GATITO (anxious)

Something else...?

RODOLFO (nodding)

With Tancruarf's last reforms, the friends on whom I relied for information have been purged from the judiciary, the district attorney's office and from the Nayak Police Department. Anyway, I have brought you the best I've been able to get. It seems they, inside the immigration police, had been planning that crackdown without giving notice to justices, prosecutors or even to the Nayak or Rouff local police. In the state police, they just learned about it when the immigration police returned to headquarters with one prisoner, a big black cat, who, I guess, is your friend Miac. Neither the Nayak Daily nor the Examining Post has reported on the crackdown because they have been asked by Tancruarf to hold the news. And I'm sorry for your friend, but that means that they are going to try to make him talk as hard as they can before they decide what to do with him. That also means that he wasn't the real target or they would have cracked down earlier. I assume they were expecting him to lead them to their real target and I'm afraid tht real target is you. They haven't been able to find you, otherwise they would've already been here. But the real target must be you. Today I have brought you the keys and the address of a new place here in Miyaff. This place isn't safe anymore...

MIAC

Miac is not going to talk.

RODOLFO

Gatito, right now they must be torturing him and they will keep torturing him for days, until he breaks. All these animals depend

on you. It's the warehouse I talked to you about the other day. It's a bit farther from the train station but is safer.

GATITO, WITH PAINED EYES, NODS.

RODOLFO

Another rumor I've heard was that one of Tancruarf's assistants, though most probably it must've been somebody from the immigration police, has had a meeting with some gang leaders some time ago. It seems they were complaining about vigilante groups that had expelled them from Miyaff. Some agreement must've come from that because, just after that, gang activity began to spread in three states on which Tancruarf is interested for his expansion... possibly a presidential bid.

GATITO (a bit skeptic)

Do you mean that Tancruarf planned this crackdown in secret, far from even the judiciary and the district attorney, just to reward the gangs?

RODOLFO (shaking his head)

Tancruarf doesn't give a shit for the gangs. He despises them. He has gone through all this planning because he wants to motivate the gangs while keeping them in line... to direct them to where he wants to expand politically. He's planning ahead.

GATITO (still unconvinced)

That could explain the crackdown but that doesn't explain the Infamous Hanging. I don't know... Why didn't he just hang them and that's it? If he knows about me, he must also know that the Miyaff community is organized now and that Rouff and Mewow are making progress.

RODOLFO

So Tancruarf is a sadist... What's new? So he hates immigrants and has given years of his life to create a stereotype of them that makes his '*enforcement by attrition*' strategy more palatable to the citizens of Nayak... Nothing new on that either. What is more important for him, his presidential ambitions or making your lives a living hell? I honestly don't know, but the result is the same. He wants both things and seems determined to get them.

GATITO (dropping his eyes and making a pause)

What do you think of his possibilities... as a presidential candidate, I mean?

RODOLFO

I don't know... I guess he's going to try in other three states what has worked well for him here. Maybe that's why he's exporting gangs to other states, to then *save* them from those same gangs by, you guess, targeting the immigrants over there. Nevertheless, over there he doesn't have a friendly press, immigrants are not that numerous and the establishment of the Patriot Party is not going to be happy to see his advances, but he has time to solve that problem. It could work.

GATITO SIGHS. MOMENTS LATER THE SCOUT RETURNS WITH RACHY.

SCOUT (upset)

I couldn't convince her, Gatito. She is too stubborn. She threatened to begin to scream if I left her at the train station. She don't listen, Gatito. I don't want you to send me to escort her again, Gatito. She don't listen. She made me stop to call her father too.

RACHY, WORRIED BUT DEFIANT, STARES AT GATITO WITH UNFORGIVING EYES.

GATITO (dropping his eyes)

That's okay, my friend. I'll take it from here.

THE REST LEAVE THE ROOM. GATITO SIGHS ONCE AGAIN.

RACHY (with hurt eyes)

I've learned of a crackdown in Rouff; that they might be after you. And you wanted me to go home? I want to know what's happening, Gatito?

HER MOIST EYES KEEP LOOKING AT HIM. GATITO DROPS HIS EYES.

GATITO

Rachy, you knew from the beginning that something like this could happen; that some day I could bring my problems to your life. They have been trying to track me and, on their way, they have arrested a good friend of mine and I think that...

RACHY (protesting, raising her voice)

You know that that's not what I mean! Don't make it look as if I were blaming you for '*bringing your problems to my life.*' What hurts me is that you're in trouble and you seem to think that that is a reason to expel me from your life! I am your female or not?

How could you believe that I could go to Nayak without worries knowing that they are after you?

GATITO (pleading)

Rachy...

RACHY (raising her voice even louder)

No *Rachy* this time! Listen! I am an adult and I decided to be part of your life. If you are in trouble there's no other place in the world where I want to be but at your side and I want to be with you no matter what you go through. You understand? I love you!

RACHY BEGINS TO CRY.

GATITO

I could never forgive me if something happens to you, Rachy!

RACHY

And I could never forgive me if I'm not there with you if something happens to you.

GATITO HUGS HER TIGHTLY, THEN KISSES HER EYES AND LET HER HEAD REST ON HIS SHOULDER.

Early June, 1901...

182. CUTS TO: EXT.: NEWSPAPER STAND, EARLY MORNING, PASSERSBY ARE READING THE COVERS OF THE EXAMINING POST AND THE NAYAK DAILY: '*IMPORTANT GANG LEADER CAPTURED, HAS THE BLOOD OF MANY NAYAK CITIZENS, CHILDREN INCLUDED, ON HIS HANDS,*' '*TRIAL IS EXPECTED BY THE END OF JUNE, WHEN THE POLICE WAS EXPECTED TO HAND THE PROSECUTOR A FINAL DRAFT OF THEIR REPORT.*' MIAC LOOKS WEAKENED THOUGH STILL DEFIANT IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS.

183. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE. MAIN ROOM. GATITO ENTERS THE ROOM AND SEES GISELLE TEARING THE PAGES AND WRINKLING THE PIECES ON HER HANDS OF A NEWSPAPER AS TEARS ROLL OVER HER CHEEKS. THEN SHE, FURIOUS, HER LIPS PURSED, BEGINS TO PRONOUNCE CONFUSING WORDS.

GISELLE

How...? How can they throw mud on my husband on top of all they had done already, disgracing him *even more* before the innocent eyes of his son? How?

OLD LEADER

I think it's safe for us to return to Rouff, Gatito...

GATITO

You know you can stay here for as long as you...

OLD LEADER

I have to reorganize the *ronda* of Rouff. I can't let it die. Besides that, I still have to find the coward who betrayed us. Some day his head will pop out somewhere and we will find him.

184. CUTS TO: INT.: WAREHOUSE. MAIN DOOR. THE DOOR OPENS AND THE OLD DOG AND GISELLE WITH HER SON ON HER ARMS ARE GETTING READY TO LEAVE FOLLOWED BY TWO SCOUTS. GISELLE LOOKS BROKEN, EMPTY. GATITO SEES THEM CROSSING THE FRAME OF THE DOOR AND FOR AN INSTANT HE SEES RODOLFO CROSSING THAT SAME FRAME WITH AN EMPTY, BROKEN RACHY.

FADE OUT....

-----END EPISODE TWO