

# CHICAGO 78

## *Synopsis/Treatment*

### Original Screenplay by Vito Brancato

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*“Business” was good in Chicago in the late seventies. With a firm grip on the rackets, the Mob and enough money, muscle and political connections to fix cases (including murder) and avoid prosecution. Chicago politicians were for sale and lawyers many times acted as their business agents. Most of the cops were on the take, and the ones that weren’t were forced to look the other way. The system ran very smoothly for those in control, and the Feds had yet to break through the thick core of corruption.*

#### Current day:

**Angela** is a middle-aged Southern California housewife living a typical middle-class existence with her husband and their two teenaged daughters. One day while cleaning the attic Angela stumbles upon a forgotten photo of her and an old boyfriend **Tommy Russo** from the Chicago days nearly thirty years ago...

Across the country elderly Chicago mob boss **Tony Ferraro** is released from federal prison early as his lawyers have convinced a federal judge he is sick and feeble. He will live out the rest of his days at his daughter’s upscale home in an exclusive Chicago suburb...

#### Flashback to Chicago, 1978:

After years as a loyal mob soldier and little to show for his efforts, Tommy Russo has decided it was time to cash in. With the help of a high ranking Chicago Police detective, he forms a plan to stage a robbery of a robbery. After Russo and his crew pull off a jewelry heist of a store owned by boss Tony Ferraro (to collect the insurance), they are robbed of the goods by a pair of undercover cops.

With his bosses believing Tommy’s crew was robbed by the cops, Tommy fences the goods with an outside source; a west side drug lord named **Lamar Washington**. Lamar has no ties with Tommy’s people, but has a longtime friendship with Tommy. As children they attended the same Catholic high school and they formed an unlikely but strong bond.

With a suitcase full of cash and nobody the wiser, or so it seems, Tommy sees his chance to get out for good. He’ll marry his girlfriend Angela, move to Florida and open a small restaurant. Tommy and Angie have a volatile relationship with a steamy sex life. They fight hard but makeup harder. Angela is young but tough and completely devoted to Tommy. She turns a blind eye to his activities and protects him like a mother lion protects her young.

Tommy’s plan to live happily ever after suddenly hits a roadblock in the form of the FBI. His police detective cohort has been under investigation for over a year and Tommy is

caught on film and audio tape during the jewelry transaction. Now the Feds have their hooks into Tommy and won't let go until he hands them his immediate boss **Larry Armanetti** who's just beaten a rigged murder case.

Tommy drops out of sight without a word to anyone. He finally visits Angela in the dark of night and breaks off their engagement without explanation. Angie is devastated. Tommy realizes his associates have caught on and her life is in danger. He arranges for his friend Lamar to hide her and get her safely out of town.

Tony Ferraro wisely assesses the situation and dispatches the aging but still dangerous enforcer **Carmelo Brutto** to bring in Tommy's girlfriend. They will use her as leverage to assure that Tommy does not "flip".

Ferarro's plan unfolds: Lamar is "arrested" by two Cook County Sheriff's Police and handed over to Carmello's crew. He is beaten, tortured but refuses to give up Tommy's girlfriend. Finally, he is brutally murdered by Carmelo. Ferraro's attorney visits Tommy at the MCC (Metro Correctional Center). Speaking in code he informs Tommy that they already have Angela and he must take his own life to insure her safety.

Angela is rushed to the airport by one of Lamar's associates. All seems clear until Carmelo's car pulls up behind them. He and two of his goons secretly trail her through the airport and watch her retrieve a suitcase (containing Tommy's cash) from a locker. They grab her at the women's restroom but she manages to break away. A scuffle ensues with the airport cops and the chase is on. Angela zig zags her way through the crowd trailed by Carmelo, who is trailed by the cops. Angela escapes to her gate and disappears. Carmelo and his goons are arrested and hauled away in cuffs.

Unaware that Angela is safely on an airplane, Tommy is alone in his cell, perched atop a small dresser. His hands are bound behind him and a plastic bag is secured over his head like a hood. He dives head first on to the bare cement floor. Knocking himself unconscious, he exfixciates himself.

Angela sits on the plane awaiting takeoff. The small suitcase with the cash is tucked under her seat. She's made a safe getaway, but senses the moment that Tommy has taken his last breath.

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