

**NICK**

(explodes)

**What's that bitch Maggie been saying about me?!  
Twisting every little thing I said, right? Trying to  
make me look bad! 'cause she knows I'm doing a  
better job than her! Than all of you! You can't take  
me off this gig! I was on it before any of you -- I'm on  
the inside, I know these people, I'm like one of 'em!  
They trust me! I hang out with them, I eat with them,  
drink with them, they listen to me -- they confide in  
me, they're like friends, they -- they --**

**Nick trails off -- almost panting. Staring at Ben. Long moment, then**

**BEN**

(softly)

**Nick. You're on our side . . . remember.**

**Nick continues staring at Ben -- then sits down heavily. Stunned.**

**NICK**

**Ben. Ben. What's -- happening?**

**BEN**

**Burn out. Maggie spotted it.**

**NICK**

**I -- almost belted her. Maggie.  
The other night. Came that close.**

**BEN**

**She told me.**

(then)

**You've been in the trenches a  
long time.**

**NICK**

**It's like -- they -- got inside my head. So what. I'm a  
pro . . . I should be able to handle myself.**

**BEN**

**It happens.**

**(CONTINUED)**